



LAURA FARRIS MP

Member of Parliament for Newbury

Anna Burns
Area Director – Thames
Environment Agency

13 May 2024

Dear Anna,

Thank you for your email and for taking the time to meet on Tuesday. I wanted to follow up and I'm afraid reiterate my disappointment and confirm the agreed actions from the meeting.

First, you told us you were currently engaged in bringing legal action against polluting water companies but were not considering doing the same in respect to Thames Water's performance in Lambourn because the environmental damage was "low". I have to say I found this extraordinary in circumstances where you did not bring any data to the meeting to substantiate your conclusion, could give no example of an occasion when you had conducted analysis on the River Lambourn, and had not bothered to write to Thames Water at any point during the winter months despite the numerous complaints you received.

I would be grateful if you could provide detailed information on the levels of monitoring carried out by the Environment Agency since January in Lambourn, which you refer to when explaining your current position on enforcement action.

The lack of action to date is very disappointing. I expect the Environment Agency to put pressure on Thames Water to carry out urgent improvement works in line with the lessons learnt from this winter. Following the Thames Water Directors' meeting on 21 May, I look forward to seeing your letter to Thames Water outlining the Environment Agency's clear expectations to ensure that the company is meeting its legal obligations. I would also like to see what sanctions you will apply if these obligations are not met.

As confirmed at our meeting, I am asking for the Environment Agency to engage a hydrology engineer to undertake a formal assessment of the water flows between Upper Lambourn and the main village.

I look forward to hearing from you later this month with an update on these actions.

Very best wishes,

Laura Farris MP