



Councillor Emily Smith  
Leader of the Council  
Vale of White Horse District Council

[Emily.Smith@whitehorsedc.gov.uk](mailto:Emily.Smith@whitehorsedc.gov.uk)

By email only

21 October 2022

Dear Emily,

Sarah Bentley has asked me to thank you for your letter dated 12th October and to arrange to meet you to discuss the issues you have raised relating to water supply and management in the Vale of the White Horse.

We do understand the concerns of local residents about the significant impacts of the burst at Heywood Hill, and particularly at a time when the prolonged lack of rainfall means we need to have restrictions in place. We have apologised for the inconvenience that this incident caused to our customers and for the fact that technical issues at our reservoirs meant that some people were out of service for longer than expected. We have also apologised to drivers affected by wider traffic disruption, due to the need to close the lane on Heyford Hill roundabout on the Oxford Ring Road.

All aspects of that incident are currently being examined and we will publish a report in due course. The report will include looking at the reasons for the burst, the response of our repair teams, the way we communicated with local people, the provision of alternative water supplies, what lessons have been learnt and what improvements we should make as a result. Once the report is available we will be keen to discuss it with you and your officers.

We would welcome a meeting in the near future to discuss the other issues you have raised: an update on our work to reduce leakage, our plans for upgrading parts of the local water network and meeting future demand, and the application for a Temporary Drought Permit to increase abstraction from the River Thames to Farmoor reservoir. On the final point, I should point out that we did send you a notice, dated 23rd September (copy attached) about the application. This was sent by special delivery but may perhaps not have reached you.

It would be helpful if you could suggest some convenient dates and times for us to meet.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Richard Aylard".

Richard Aylard CVO  
Sustainability Director