

Wednesday 13th May 2009

Dear Resident,

Bath Road Reservoir – Revised Planning Application

Please accept my apologies for not being at tonight's meeting as I'm stuck in the Commons on the concluding stages of the Finance Bill. However, I wanted to update you on the campaign against the overdevelopment of this site.

Back in 1996 councillors of all political parties on Reading Borough Council approved a planning brief for the reservoir site which accepted the principle of some development but made it clear that this is an important site for wildlife and therefore "appropriate mitigation measures should be proposed". In addition any development proposal should be accompanied by a full ecological survey so as to protect and enhance any areas of wildlife value. Existing mature trees should also be retained.

The planning brief also requires any proposal to include the retention of the existing reservoir embankments as far as possible.

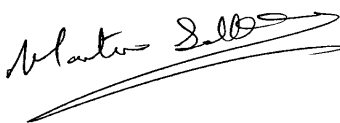
Last year I pressed Thames Water to produce a revised scheme with no development on the rear of the site which could then be managed as a local nature reserve (please see letter overleaf). They rejected this idea and came forward with a scheme for 101 units up to four storeys high across the whole of the site. This was withdrawn last November.

Thames Water's new application is still unacceptable and fails to retain the existing reservoir embankments which could provide essential screening for neighbouring properties, particularly those in Western Road and Glenbeigh Terrace. This is in contravention of the 1996 planning brief.

I am acutely aware that various unelected candidates will seek to use this issue for their own ends but all I'm interested in doing is protecting the environment and quality of life of the people I represent until the next election. The reservoir site is a designated housing site agreed in response to housing requirements placed on Reading by a previous Government and continued by the current Government. It was never going to be possible to resist all development on the site, particularly at the Bath Road end but I am convinced that this application is an overdevelopment and can be resisted successfully by Reading Borough Council for the reasons I have outlined.

Please be assured I will continue to work with your elected councillors to seek to achieve the best possible outcome for the local area. I hope you have a successful and informative meeting this evening.

Yours sincerely



Martin Salter MP