

News Release
11 October 2004

GLA ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE - LONDON WATER RESOURCES

Dr Peter Spillelt, Thames Water's Head of Environment & Sustainability, said:

"Along with growing individual demand for water, population growth and climate change pose big challenges for Thames Water.

"For example, over the next ten years London is expected to grow by 800,000 people, the equivalent of Leeds moving to the capital.

"Though it often seems always to be raining in the capital, it's also a little known fact that per head of population London is already drier than Madrid and Istanbul.

"Our proposed £4 billion investment programme for the next five years is critical to help us ensure London continues to get all the water it needs.

"Tackling leakage in the clay basin north of the river in central London is our biggest short-term priority. Over the next five years we want to replace 1000 miles of Victorian water mains in this area. We have already replaced 100 miles over the last 1-2 years, as you will have probably noticed if you live in Camden, Islington, or Kensington and Chelsea, for example.

"We have also submitted a proposal for a desalination plant in east London, due to come on stream in 2007/08. For the even longer term we are developing plans for a major new storage reservoir in Oxfordshire, which would store water over the winter ready to boost supplies in summer, both locally and in London.

"It's not a question of saving water or developing new resources - to meet demand we have to do both.

"Protecting the environment is everybody's responsibility. Everybody can do their little bit by saving water wherever they can, for example by not leaving taps running unnecessarily and having a short shower, rather than a bath."