



Derwent Dam wall

The Proposal

Severn Trent Water (STW) have submitted a proposal to the Water Services Regulation Authority (Ofwat) suggesting that they might be able to collect more water in the Upper Derwent Valley (UDV) if either Ladybower and/or Derwent and/or Howden dam walls were to be raised or new higher dam walls were to be constructed in front of them. The other

possibility was to erect a new, fourth dam wall on the northern arm of Howden. Feasibility studies were undertaken when Ofwat agreed to provide STW and Yorkshire Water (YW) with £36 million. The purpose was initially described as to prepare for a 1 in 500 year drought. The scheme was entitled the Upper Derwent Valley Expansion/Extension (UDVRE) Scheme and if approved, construction is projected to start in 2027. Depending upon which option(s) are chosen, Howden and/or Derwent Dam walls could disappear under earth, concrete or water.

A rise of 20m was employed by Ofwat on 1st March 2022 to estimate funding. On 11th April 2022, the Chief Executive Officer of STW stated "We recommend that the most likely solution is to raise the two dams and that this is used to determine the Gate 2 funding. However, it should be noted that future scenarios may lead to the fourth new reservoir becoming the most likely option as the SRO progresses". (SRO = Strategic Resource Option)

When the level of water in the Ladybower Reservoir is lower in late summer, the foundations of buildings which formed the villages of Ashopton and Derwent are exposed as are the remains of the Duke of Norfolk's Derwent Hall and its estate. When the Ladybower was being constructed, the area was compulsorily purchased and the villagers required to leave their homes. Today, there are 14 homes remaining as a reminder of the estate's past. Now, 75 years on, yet again, people will be forced to leave their homes if any dam wall is raised.