



**Environment, Food
and Rural Affairs
Committee**

12 August 2026

Iain Coucher
Chair, Ofwat
[by email]

Subject: Possible unauthorised disclosure of confidential correspondence to the EFRA committee

Dear Mr Coucher

I am writing about the letter sent to me by Sir Adrian Montague, Chair of Thames Water, on 4 August 2026 concerning the company's Management Retention Plan.

The letter was prominently marked "Highly Confidential". It was addressed to me as Chair of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee and copied to you, Helen Campbell and Anna Payton at Ofwat, and David Hallam at the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

At 6.48 am on 10 August, before the Committee had published the letter or authorised any disclosure of its contents, Sky News reported detailed information contained in it. The report attributed information about the letter to a "Whitehall source". The Committee subsequently published the correspondence later that day.

The Sky News report does not establish that Ofwat, or any individual within it, was the source, nor that the full letter was supplied to the journalist. Nevertheless, the attribution and level of detail reported raise a serious concern that confidential correspondence to a parliamentary committee, or information taken from it, may have been disclosed without authorisation. This may be considered a prima facie contempt of Parliament.

Given the importance of establishing the facts, I am writing to ask Ofwat to urgently investigate the matter. The investigation should examine Ofwat's receipt and handling of the letter and whether the document, or information contained in it, was disclosed without authorisation.

In particular, the investigation should establish whether any Ofwat board member, official, or person acting on Ofwat's behalf communicated about the letter or its

contents with Sky News, the author of the article, any other media organisation or any external organisation before the Committee published it.

Once the investigation is complete, please provide the Committee with its outcome, including whether any unauthorised disclosure was identified and what remedial or other action Ofwat intends to take in response. I would be grateful for your response by Wednesday 19 August 2026.

The Committee places considerable importance on organisations respecting the confidentiality of material provided to it. Premature disclosure risks undermining the trust on which effective parliamentary scrutiny depends.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Alistair Carmichael." The signature is written in a cursive style, with the first name "Alistair" and the surname "Carmichael" clearly legible. A horizontal line is drawn under the end of the surname.

Alistair Carmichael MP
Chair, Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee