



Meeting note

Project name	Southern Water Strategic Water Resource Project
Status	Final
File Reference	WA010002
Author	The Planning Inspectorate
Date	15 June 2021
Meeting with	Southern Water
Venue	Virtual – Teams Meeting
Meeting objectives	To introduce the proposal
Circulation	All attendees/ <additional circulation>

Summary of key points discussed and advice given

The Planning Inspectorate (the Inspectorate) advised that a note of the meeting would be taken and published on its website in accordance with section 51 of the Planning Act 2008 (the PA2008). Any advice given under section 51 would not constitute legal advice upon which applicants (or others) could rely.

The Inspectorate explained that the publication of the meeting note could be delayed up to six months, or until a formal scoping request had been submitted.

The Applicant explained that their Water Resource Management Plan for 2020-2070 (December 2019) states that they must supply water to the South East over the next 50 years and the region is currently 'water stressed'. A key part of its WRMP is to provide a drought resilience project to ensure Hampshire's water supply can be maintained in a drought. The preferred solution set out in its WRMP was for a desalination plant near Southampton however this is now being considered alongside other alternatives, that include the transfer of water and water recycling.

The Applicant has been in discussions with Defra in regard to s35 of the PA2008, as for some or parts of the proposals it is unclear if they do or do not meet the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) thresholds for water resources projects under s28/28A of the Planning Act 2008 (PA2008). The Applicant has drafted a s35 direction request for the proposal but has yet to formally request a direction.

The Applicant intends to determine its preferred solution by September 2021 in readiness for submission to regulators, and is considering the implications of the draft National Policy Statement for Water Resources Infrastructure on its proposals.

The Planning Inspectorate explained the PA2008 timeframes as follows:

- upon submission of the application, a decision on whether the application can be accepted will be taken in 28 days

- there is no statutory timeframe for the pre-examination stage
- the examination stage can take up to 6 months
- the recommendation stage can take up to 3 months
- the decision stage can take up to 3 months.

