



Meeting note

Project name	Hampshire Water Transfer and Water Recycling Project
File reference	WA010002
Status	Final
Author	The Planning Inspectorate
Date	15 November 2022
Meeting with	Southern Water
Venue	Microsoft Teams
Meeting objectives	Project Update Meeting
Circulation	All attendees/ Named attendees

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.

Scheme Development Update

Southern Water ('the Applicant') explained that there had been several scheme changes since the last project update meeting.

In respect of the first change, the Applicant explained that the proposed maximum capacity of the water recycling plant has increased from 15 million litres per day (MI/d) to 60 MI/d in order to meet the demand outlined in the draft Water Resources Management Plan 24 (WRMP24). The Applicant noted that this had already been contemplated in its public consultation in the summer. The Applicant explained that it is now considering how to phase the construction of a 60 MI/d capacity plant. The Applicant explained that this will be determined prior to submission of its EIA Scoping Request and the commencement of Statutory Consultation. It noted that the increase from 15 MI/d to a 60 MI/d capacity plant means that its draft EIA Scoping Request will need to be revised.

The Applicant outlined a second potential change, involving a combined tunnel with Portsmouth Water. The Applicant explained that, as part of its delivery of the Havant Thicket Reservoir, Portsmouth Water is now pursuing a new tunnelled pipeline as a more preferred solution to its approved open-cut pipeline route. As this new tunnelled pipeline follows a very similar alignment to the Applicant's pipeline between the water recycling plant and the reservoir, it presents an opportunity to utilise a shared tunnel to incorporate the pipelines for both schemes and reduce disruption to the local area. The Applicant explained that both companies were exploring the feasibility of this option and no decision had been finalised yet.

The Applicant explained that there were also other connection interfaces between the reservoir and the DCO project that were under consideration with Portsmouth Water. The current intention is to progress any minor connection works through the detailed approvals for the reservoir rather than the DCO to avoid delays to the delivery of the reservoir.

The Inspectorate queried whether the Applicant may need to request a new Section 35 Direction from the relevant Secretary of State with regard to a potential combined tunnel. The Applicant acknowledged this.

The Applicant highlighted that the approach to procuring the delivery of the project was driving the need for some flexibility and an outline level of detail in project design. The Inspectorate advised that there should be a clear need for the flexibility sought within the parameters set and advised the Applicant to ensure that any flexibility sought is fully explained and justified.

EIA scoping

The Applicant noted that the baseline and assessment scenarios will need to be updated in response to scheme changes highlighted above. The Applicant outlined that the marine sediment/water quality chapter will require review as this depends on the outcomes of ongoing dispersion modelling.

The Applicant noted that, based on the 15 Ml/d scenario, a limited impact was found on water and sediment quality for the parameters modelled from reject water from the water recycling plant following consultation with the Environment Agency, Natural England and the Marine Management Organisation, and that there was a strong position to scope out these issues. However, the Applicant explained that the increase in the capacity of the water treatment plant would mean further dispersion modelling would be required, and thus the approach to scoping will need to be reviewed.

The Applicant explained that it has conducted a series of EIA Working Groups and these were providing a focus for discussing environmental assessment matters, including providing information on the likely content/scope of the Scoping Request.

Programme Update

The Applicant outlined that there is a degree of programme uncertainty at present due to the above scheme changes. The Applicant explained that the request for a Scoping Opinion from the Inspectorate is programmed for Q1/Q2 2023, and that Statutory Consultation would commence no earlier than Summer 2023, dependent on the nature of scheme changes. The Applicant explained that the earliest it could foresee a potential DCO submission was Summer 2024.

The Applicant agreed to keep the Inspectorate and stakeholders updated on the DCO programme.

The Applicant explained that it is looking to align its requirements under the RAPID regulatory system with its DCO programme.

The Applicant noted that it may be useful for the Inspectorate to understand the technology involved in the water recycling process. The Applicant agreed to look into a potential tour of its water recycling pilot plant in 2023 for the Inspectorate to attend.

Engagement Update

The Applicant provided an update on its pre-application engagement to date. The Applicant explained that it has held ongoing workshops with Local Authorities focused on scheme development (for example, the above ground plant zones) and construction (compounds and tunnel shaft locations) with feedback received. The Applicant conducted meetings with Local Authorities to discuss borough specific matters and has established EIA Working Groups with Local Authorities and Statutory Environmental Bodies to obtain feedback on its approach to EIA Scoping. The Applicant explained that it has held regular meetings with Natural England and the Environment Agency. The Applicant has progressed targeted landowner discussions to help inform scheme development and secure access for surveys.

The Applicant queried whether the Inspectorate plans to conduct some outreach with Local Planning Authorities regarding the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Planning (NSIP) process. The Inspectorate advised that it no longer conducts targeted outreach but would seek to add value to the process where appropriate.

The Applicant explained that key technical stakeholders now have access to the projects GIS platform to enable review of the pipeline route, siting, and scheme data.

The Applicant outlined that it has agreed Planning Performance Agreements (PPAs) with seven of the eight Local Authorities.

WRMP

The Applicant explained that its draft WRMP24 had been submitted to DEFRA in October 2022 and this had been sent out for consultation on 14 November 2022. The Applicant noted that the WRMP reaffirms the need for the water recycling plant to provide between 15 and 60 mld. It noted that a revised draft would be published in May 2023.

The Inspectorate queried whether the Applicant was intending to submit a suite of draft DCO application documents to the Inspectorate for review. The Applicant confirmed that this was the case.