



Meeting note

Project name	Hampshire Water Transfer and Water Recycling Project
File reference	WA010002
Status	Final
Author	The Planning Inspectorate
Date	16 March 2023
Meeting with	Southern Water
Venue	Microsoft Teams
Meeting objectives	Project update meeting
Circulation	All 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

The Applicant confirmed that it is continuing to consider the implications of increasing the capacity of the water recycling plant (WRP), in a phased approach, from 15 M/ld to 60 M/ld.

The Applicant explained that Portsmouth Water has consulted on a new tunnelled pipeline between Bedhampton Springs and the new Havant Thicket reservoir, as an alternative to the consented open-cut route, which is likely to reduce impacts on the local environment and community.

The Applicant explained that, as its proposed tunnelled pipeline between the WRP and the reservoir follows a similar alignment to Portsmouth Water's proposals, the possibility of a shared tunnel with Portsmouth Water is under consideration. The Applicant explained that a decision on the possibility of a shared tunnel with Portsmouth Water will likely be decided in the coming weeks following further analysis. The Applicant added that if a shared tunnel is progressed, it is likely to follow the same alignment as the tunnelled pipeline that Portsmouth Water is currently consulting on. Portsmouth Water's consultation began on 9 February 2023 and concludes on 22 March 2023. The Applicant added that this potential change would likely require a new Section 35 Direction in relation to Southern Water's proposal, as any combined underground route would likely progress through a Town and Country Planning Act (TCPA) planning application.

The Applicant outlined that proposals for the interface connection works with the Havant Thicket Reservoir are still under consideration, particularly the last 300 metres of the pipeline



at the south-west corner of the reservoir. It was noted that Portsmouth Water has consent under its TCPA planning permission for a bidirectional pipeline through a culvert into the reservoir; however, current analysis indicates that the culvert could not accommodate the Applicant's additional pipeline connection into the reservoir so alternative options are being explored, including an option through the embankment of the reservoir. The Applicant is in discussion with Havant Borough Council about the options and consenting approach.

Further development on design of the Project – construction phase.

The Applicant has been discussing the location of the construction compounds for the pipeline route with consultees. The Applicant explained that each potential compound location has been reviewed against planning and environmental criteria and feedback has been received from Natural England, the Environment Agency and the local authorities. It explained that the exact locations may need to be amended following confirmation of the preferred pipeline route and/or from further information gained from surveys.

The Applicant has also been discussing the use and installation of lagoons with the local authorities, which are used for water storage during pressure testing of the pipe and cleaning. The Inspectorate queried how many lagoons were being proposed and whether they are temporary or permanent. The Applicant explained that the lagoons would be located approximately every 3 kilometres along the pipeline with 11 in total currently proposed. The Applicant confirmed that the lagoons would be temporary and anticipated to be in-situ for approximately three to six months.

The Applicant explained that Above Ground Plant including Intermediate Pumping Stations and Break Pressure Tanks are required to assist the movement of water along the pipeline. Locations were discussed at the previous consultation and continue to feature in discussions with stakeholders. The Applicant outlined that stakeholder feedback will be incorporated into the review process and decision making.

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) scoping

The Applicant explained that good progress has been made on its EIA Scoping Report during 2022. Key findings had been presented to the EIA Working Groups and the Applicant stated that there had generally been good levels of engagement and agreement from consultation bodies about the proposed scope of the EIA.

In November 2022 work was paused on the EIA Scoping Report whilst the team considered potential changes to the scheme and how these might impact the proposed scope of the Environmental Statement (ES). Work has recently restarted, with updates being made to the EIA Scoping Report to reflect the scheme changes.

The Inspectorate asked whether the EIA Scoping Report would include optionality for the shared tunnel with Portsmouth Water and the Applicant stated that it was aiming to make a decision prior to submitting its request but if this was unresolved then optionality would be retained. The Applicant noted that there would be an increase to the EIA Scoping Area and associated EIA topic study relating to the potential shared tunnel option.

The Applicant explained that no works are proposed in the marine environment, and therefore it had been intending to seek to scope out several topics relating to the marine



environment from the ES. The Applicant stated that its dispersion modelling (associated with the reject water entering the Solent via Eastney Long Sea Outfall) on the basis of 15 M/l/d capacity provided evidence that the marine water environment would not be impacted significantly by the scheme. However, the Applicant confirmed that the modelling would be revisited to consider the phased increase to 60 M/l/d capacity and this may result in a change in approach in the EIA Scoping Report.

The Applicant confirmed that it would communicate the changes to the Scoping Report to the EIA Working Groups prior to submission.

Programme update

The Applicant explained that the programme has been extended because of the outstanding design changes, including the potential shared tunnel and the associated feasibility and implications of this. The Applicant explained that ideally it would like the tunnel issue to be resolved prior to any subsequent public consultation.

The Applicant anticipates submitting a request for a Scoping Opinion to the Inspectorate in mid-2023 and explained that Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PIER) assessments would be conducted in parallel. The Applicant aims to conduct Statutory Consultation in Q1/Q2 2024, with a view to submit an application for development consent in early 2025. The Applicant agreed to keep the Inspectorate updated on its programme. The Applicant confirmed that it was content with the Inspectorate updating the National Infrastructure webpage to reflect the revised anticipated DCO submission date.

Engagement update

The Applicant explained that it has continued to engage with stakeholders, including ongoing workshops with local authorities to discuss detailed aspects of the scheme; pipeline crossing sensitivity methodology and the construction of compounds, lagoons and tunnel shaft locations. The Applicant noted good feedback and explained that scheme development continues to progress as a result. Bilateral meetings with the local authorities to discuss borough-specific issues are also ongoing.

The next round of EIA Working Group meetings are being scheduled with local authorities and Statutory Environmental Bodies (SEBs) to obtain feedback on scheme development and to discuss implications for EIA scoping. The Applicant holds monthly project update meetings with Natural England and the Environment Agency.

Landowner discussions are ongoing since the previous non-statutory consultation. The Applicant intends to determine the preferred pipeline route before the next consultation. The Applicant is about to start targeted landowner discussions on the micro-siting work for the Above Ground Plant.

The Applicant has commenced engagement with the Environment Agency regarding the environmental permits that would be required for the Proposed Development and how these



interface with existing permits for Budds Farm Wastewater Treatment Works. The Applicant is currently programming the activities in more detail to inform the permits.

The Applicant now has Planning Performance Agreements (PPAs) in place with seven of the eight host Local Authorities.

The Applicant discussed a recently held public meeting at Havant Borough Council. It explained that it provided a good opportunity to answer questions from the public, including queries on the impact of the Proposed Development on drinking water and the water quality of the reservoir.

WRMP24 update

The Applicant explained that the draft Water Resources Management Plan (WRMP) had been published in November 2022; the consultation of which had closed on 24 February 2023. The Applicant is now analysing the responses to consultation and intends to publish a response to the feedback in May 2023 (the 'Statement of Response') and a revised draft in Summer 2023.

The Inspectorate queried whether there are any implications of the WRMP process on the timing of the DCO submission. Given the DCO submission has been revised to 2025, the Applicant explained that the timing is not currently an issue. The Applicant outlined the importance of a robust WRMP in establishing the need for the Proposed Development.

There was a discussion on the timing of the National Policy Statement (NPS) for Water Resources. The Inspectorate explained that it could not provide any further information on the NPS that isn't already publicly available. The Applicant raised the issue of uncertainty around Section 35 Directions and policy in the draft NPS for Water Resources, and noted that the water industry is raising these issues more widely.

Next steps/ Any other business

The Applicant and the Inspectorate agreed to arrange a project update meeting in June prior to the request for a Scoping Opinion.