



Meeting note

Project name	Hampshire Water Transfer and Water Recycling Project
File reference	WA010002
Status	Final
Author	The Planning Inspectorate
Date	25 January 2024
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.

Programme Update

The Applicant explained that by the end of May, Portsmouth Water's Town and Country Planning Act (TCPA) application for twin tunnelled pipelines is likely to have been submitted, which will coincide with the launch of the Applicant's statutory consultation taking place from June-July 2024. The Applicant currently anticipates that the Development Consent Order (DCO) application will be submitted in mid-2025. If Portsmouth Water's TCPA application is approved, the Applicant would potentially descope its proposal for tunnelled pipelines between the Water Recycling Plant (WRP) and Havant Thicket Reservoir from the DCO application.

The Applicant has two joint officer meetings with Local Authorities coming up and several bilateral meetings planned.

Summer 2024 Consultation

An initial draft Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC) will be issued to Local Planning Authorities on 16 February 2024 for informal feedback and the formal SoCC consultation is expected March or April 2024. The launch date for the Summer Consultation is expected end of May 2024, however this is still to be confirmed. The consultation would last for 8 weeks and consists of 6 in-person events plus the website. This would include a Consultation Feedback report for the Summer 2022 consultation



which looked at the preferred pipeline corridor, proposed WRP and potential zones for above ground plant.

The Summer 2024 consultation will look at proposed pipeline routes, draft Order Limits, an illustrative pipeline location, proposed sites for above ground plant, including the water recycling plant, and a preliminary environmental information report (PEIR) to present likely environment effects.

The Planning Inspectorate suggested ensuring the access of hard-to-reach groups like traveller groups when going out for consultation. The Applicant agreed and confirmed the SoCC is seeking feedback from Local Planning Authorities on hard-to-reach groups.

Scheme Development Update

The Applicant confirmed that the WRP is now proposed to be delivered in a single phase with a total capacity of 60 million litres a day (Ml/d), rather than the phased approach previously being considered, due to the need for increased resilience in water supplies.

The Applicant outlined the draft Order Limits using draft plans and explained how areas of optionality previously presented at summer 2022 consultation have now been refined.

The Applicant has now refined the pipeline route south of Wickham, due to conflict with Welborne Garden Village proposals. The proposed pipeline is now taking a northern route to avoid this interface.

The River Itchen tunnel area of optionality has now also been refined following further assessment work – the southern option has been selected which is outside of the South Downs National Park.

In respect of the proposed tunnel options between the WRP and Portsdown Hill, the southern option has now been selected. Intermediate shafts are less constrained in this scenario.

Optionality for the pipeline route at Fisher's Pond has also been addressed by selecting the southern option as there would be less impact on highways, amongst other benefits.

The Applicant has engaged with Local Authorities and Hampshire County Council when selecting options.

The Applicant then outlined the two options for the tunnel between the WRP and Havant Thicket Reservoir i.e. the Portsmouth Water option using Portsmouth Water's twin tunnelled pipelines and the Southern Water option of providing its own independent tunnelled pipelines. The Applicant confirmed that its statutory consultation will explain why



there are two options, and that the preference is to utilise the twin tunnelled pipelines being proposed by Portsmouth Water to minimise disruption on local communities.

EIA Update

The Applicant provided an update on a suite of baseline surveys recently completed or now underway. The geomorphology survey of main rivers is now complete. The Settings Assessment (heritage) was completed in October 2023 and will be used to inform the PEIR.

The Applicant has used EIA Working Groups to agree the scope of most baseline surveys. At the time of DCO submission, 3-4 years of survey information will be available for some receptors.

The Applicant is in the process of agreeing noise survey locations which were issued to Local Authorities for comment in December 2023. Spring Migratory Fish Surveys (intertidal and freshwater areas) have been undertaken.

There has been significant progress on terrestrial ecology surveys which will continue up to DCO submission. This includes UK Habitat surveys, badgers, dormice, bats, birds, otters/water vole and hedgerow surveys.

The Applicant is developing mitigation measures for the proposed development as part of scheme refinement and development of preliminary environmental assessments.

In January and February the Applicant is focussing on:

- the assessment of the combined tunnel option;
- cumulative effects assessment (the list of developments has been discussed with the Local Authorities); and
- Decommissioning assessment.

Key assessments nearing completion:

- Water Environmental Regulations 2017 (WER) Compliance Assessment (Scoping);
- Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment; and
- Noise/Air Quality model outputs.

Following completion of the PEIR chapters, work is due to commence on the production of the Non-Technical Summary.

Engagement update

There have been two rounds of EIA working Groups since the last project update meeting.



- Session 4 Oct/Nov 2023 'post scoping' discussion of scoping report and relevant responses;
- Session 5 Jan/Feb 2024 will discuss baseline, methodology and approach to mitigation;
- Session 6 is proposed for March/April 2024 to discuss the emerging impacts and emerging mitigation measures.

The EIA Working Group schedule for the upcoming 8 meetings was outlined with the final meeting set to take place in Spring 2025.

The Applicant has completed member briefings with Fareham Borough Council, Havant Borough Council and Eastleigh Borough Council, with other briefings scheduled for the remaining authorities.

Further briefings are being held with Parish Council members and local environmental groups to provide an update on the progress of the project and specifically the water quality results of the water recycling pilot plant. The results from the water recycling pilot plant have so far been really helpful in building understanding of the effectiveness of the water recycling process.

The Applicant advised that a meeting with its Wildlife and Water Interest Group was held in January 2024.

Technical Working Group meetings continue with the Environment Agency, Natural England and Marine Management Organisation to discuss Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening Assessment, approach to water quality modelling and assessment (ecology, WQ and WER compliance), and watercourse crossings, amongst other things.

The Applicant outlined that there are meetings ongoing with Local planning Authorities to provide an update on the proposed pipeline route, draft Order Limits and site selection for above ground plant.

Following refinement of tunnel options near Otterbourne Water Supply Works (WSW), South Downs National Park are no longer a host authority, however engagement continues on relevant matters.

Land Interest Questionnaires have been issued.

Next steps/Any other business

Discussed other Consents, Permits and Licenses.

An updated table on other consents, permits and licenses that may be required for the proposed development will be provided by the Applicant as part of its Gate 3 submission to



The Planning Inspectorate

RAPID. RAPID may issue the Gate 3 submission to consultees including the Planning Inspectorate.

The Applicant advised that it has held helpful discussions with RAPID to ensure risks of stakeholder confusion between the RAPID gated process and the consent process are minimised as far as possible.

Next meeting was agreed for early May 2024, prior to the launch of statutory consultation.