

Havant Thicket Winter Storage Reservoir



Newsletter Issue 4b

Summer 2008

In the spring of 2008 Portsmouth Water undertook an extensive public consultation exercise, to seek the views of the local community about our proposal to build a winter storage reservoir on the open land north of the Staunton Country Park, between Rowlands Castle and Warren Park. Local residents and community groups were asked to consider key aspects of the layout of the reservoir and what facilities might be provided. We have listened to these views and the responses have been very helpful in guiding the future direction of the outline design. We hope to submit a planning application to the local authorities in summer 2009.

This newsletter explains:

- *How the local community were consulted*
- *The outcome of that consultation*
- *How Portsmouth Water has taken on board the feedback*
- *The proposed way forward & timescales*



BACKGROUND

Portsmouth Water has owned the land needed for the reservoir since 1965. However, the Company did not initially progress the reservoir proposal because it was able to meet customer water supply needs by providing a new water treatment works on the River Itchen.

Overall demand for water is rising. The latest demand forecasts made in 2008 confirm that by 2020 the company will not be able to meet customer demands for water in dry years. Therefore work must begin now to seek permission to build a reservoir to store surplus winter water from the Havant and Bedhampton Springs.



PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Since 2004 we have been working with a Stakeholder Group comprising local community representatives including councillors, local authorities, wildlife organisations, the Consumer Council for Water, Staunton Country Park and the Forestry Commission. This resulted in a preferred reservoir layout being selected

for public consultation, which aimed to maximise the volume of water which could be stored, while minimising the impact on the local woodland to the north and south. The Company recognise that the local communities value this rural area and its wildlife, with many residents using the open land as an important space for leisure. Consequently we were keen to seek local views, by undertaking an extensive public consultation exercise in spring 2008 which included:

- Sending out 17,000 letters to local residents
- Placing notices at the site, in local libraries & shops
- Publicity via newspaper, local radio & TV
- Presentations to local organisations (inc. local authorities)
- Public exhibitions between 8th and 18th March at Leigh Park (5 days), Rowlands Castle (4 days) & Horndean (1 day)
- Workshops with local schools & colleges
- Display boards at local supermarkets
- A community workshop held on 29th March 2008. This was attended by 30 individuals, with a balance between people from different local communities and varying interests, to discuss the issues being raised at the exhibitions in greater depth.

The public response to the proposal for a reservoir at the exhibitions was generally very supportive, with the majority of people indicating that they viewed it as a potential benefit for the local area. The key concerns raised were:

- The loss of existing habitat and potential impact on wildlife
- Potential for increased traffic in residential areas
- The need for adequate parking provision for visitors
- Whether there would be any risk from flooding

These concerns are covered later in the newsletter.



RESIDENTS VIEWING PUBLIC EXHIBITION DISPLAYS

RESPONSE TO THE CONSULTATION

More than 850 people visited the exhibitions, where staff were on hand to answer questions. We were very pleased to receive more than 250 feedback forms in response to the consultation, along with a number of letters and emails. There was a balance in the number of responses received from the different local communities

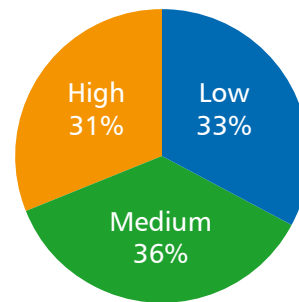
surrounding the site. More than 60 responses were from young people as a result of the workshop events with local schools.

It was clear from the consultation exercise that those attending the exhibitions, community workshop and who completed the feedback form attached great value to the area proposed for the reservoir. They were keen to ensure that:

- The rural character of the area is maintained
- Public access to the site is maintained and improved, with opportunities investigated to provide links into the wider area
- Damage to wildlife is minimised and mitigated
- A wetland area is provided to increase biodiversity
- Recreational facilities for the local community are provided, such as walking, cycling, horse riding, angling and bird watching. Many indicated that it was important not to waste the opportunity that the planned reservoir provides.
- The route selected for access to the reservoir (and for the pipeline route) is chosen to minimise the potential impacts on the local community, as traffic management issues were a key concern.
- Construction impacts be minimised

The community were asked to comment on whether they favoured a low, medium, or high level of recreational activity to be provided at the reservoir. Figure 1 shows that opinion from the feedback forms was divided fairly equally.

Figure 1: General public response on level of activity



Overall it was clear from those attending the exhibitions and the community workshop that a low to medium activity scenario was favoured, with different people wanting to select a variety of uses from the activities proposed. On the whole young people favoured a higher level of activity.

This very helpful feedback has been used by Portsmouth Water to develop the reservoir proposal and in particular to revise the outline plan. The following sections summarise the public consultation response and the proposals for each consultation topic that we plan to incorporate in the planning application.

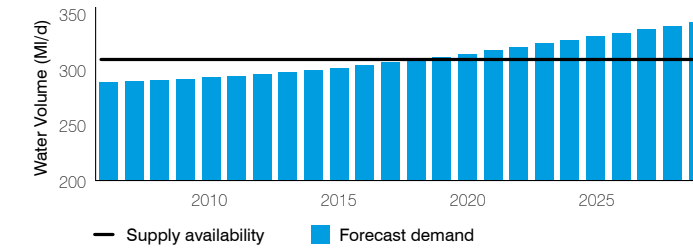
THE NEED FOR THE RESERVOIR

Some people raised questions about whether there was definitely a need for the reservoir and if it was needed, why could it not be constructed elsewhere?



With population growth, the increasing number of single person households and the growth in use of new appliances (washing machines, dishwashers, power showers) overall demand for water is rising. This in conjunction with the need to supply new housing means that there is now a clear need for the reservoir to be provided by 2020 (Figure 2). More information is provided in the latest draft Water Resources Management Plan which is available at www.portsmouthwater.co.uk

Figure 2: Water demand forecast



Over the past 40 years Portsmouth Water has looked at many potential sites and options for different reservoir layouts. The outcome of these studies has confirmed that the Company land at Havant Thicket provides the most robust, sustainable and cost effective location for the reservoir, with the best opportunities for provision of environmental and community benefits.

An independent survey of our customers was undertaken in 2007. This indicated that people value security and reliability of supply and would not want to see the level of service they currently receive decline in the future. Customers have indicated that they support the development of a winter storage reservoir at Havant Thicket.

ACCESS & PARKING

Local residents were very concerned about the potential impacts the reservoir proposal might have on traffic levels in Leigh Park and Rowlands Castle. A clear majority of respondents (79%) were in favour of the longer northern access route into the site from the B2149 Horndean to Havant road. This is the route closest to junction 2 on the A3(M) and avoids the need for traffic to pass through Leigh Park and Rowlands Castle. Given the strong level of support for this route we propose to include the northern access route in the planning application (see outline plan). Selecting this route also limits the potential impact the access might have on the ecology of Havant Thicket and on walking, cycling and horse riding routes within the woodland.

Most of the material needed for construction of the reservoir is to be excavated from the good natural clay below the site itself, minimising the need for lorry movements on to the site. It is proposed that a Construction Management Plan be agreed



VIEW FROM THE LAKE AT STAUNTON COUNTRY PARK TOWARDS THE TERRACE

with the relevant local authorities. This would require that all construction traffic be directed to enter the site from junction 2 of the A3(M), to ensure that lorry movements do not take place through local residential areas.

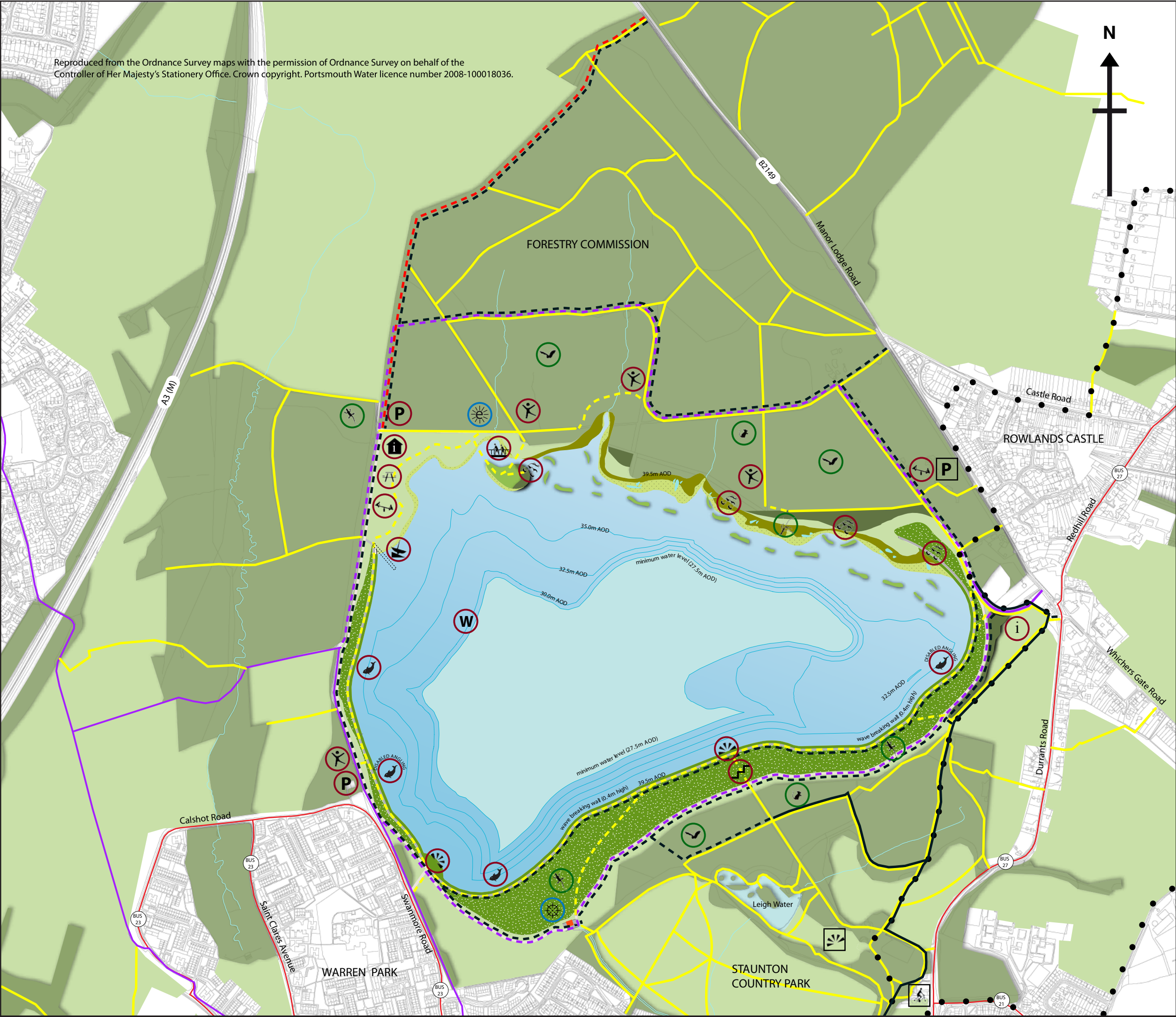
It is clear from the feedback received that any parking areas provided must be well managed and controlled. The amount of parking needed will be determined by the Transport Assessment which is ongoing. It is expected that the parking areas will be kept mainly at the periphery, with some parking at the visitor centre. The parking locations have not yet been fixed, the areas shown on the outline plan are for illustration only and will be subject to further discussion with the planning authorities and our Stakeholder Group, once the traffic studies and Environmental Impact Assessment are complete.

EMBANKMENT LOCATION

The reservoir will be approximately 1 mile (1.6 km) from east to west and 0.5 miles (0.8 km) from north to south. There was a slight preference expressed in the feedback forms for the location of the southern embankment to be further away from the existing woodland boundary to help to protect the habitat. However, other respondents were keen to ensure that the opportunity was taken to maximise the water volume. We propose to position the embankment far enough away from the woodland to prevent damage, while creating a sunny south facing slope for wild flowers and reptiles. The photograph below of the view from the lake at Staunton Country Park shows the gentle slope of the ground up towards the Terrace, which is slightly steeper than the proposed embankment slopes for the reservoir.

PIPELINE ROUTE

There was a clear preference from the public (77%) for the pipeline to be constructed along the red route that followed alongside the Riders Lane / Hermitage Stream, since it would limit disruption locally, and provide potential opportunities for improvement to the ecology of the stream. There were some concerns expressed about the potential impact construction would have on the area of woodland known as Great Copse. Given the strong preference expressed by the public we propose to develop the pipeline route alongside the Riders Lane / Hermitage Stream. The exact route will be investigated further to try to identify a route which can avoid the Great Copse woodland, in order to help minimise any adverse environmental impacts.



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HAVANT THICKET WINTER STORAGE RESERVOIR OUTLINE PLAN AUGUST 2008

EXISTING

- | | | | |
|--|------------------------|--|-----------------------|
| | Existing Viewing Point | | Watercourse |
| | Existing Car Park | | Existing Path / Track |
| | Existing Cycle Hire | | Existing Bridleway |
| | Existing Woodland | | Existing Cyclepath |
| | Existing Grassland | | Bus Routes |
| | | | Staunton Way |

PROPOSED

- | | | | |
|--|-----------------------|--|------------------------------------|
| | Marshland | | Access road (along existing track) |
| | Reedbed | | Proposed Footpath |
| | New Woodland Planting | | Proposed Bridleway |
| | Wildflower Meadow | | Proposed Cyclepath |
| | | | Reservoir Control House |

ACTIVITIES

- | | | | |
|--|----------------------------|--|-----------------------------------|
| | Childrens Playground | | Information Nature Interpretation |
| | Possible Car Park Location | | Visitor / Education Centre |
| | Slipway | | Woodland Adventure Trail |
| | Water Sports | | Boardwalk |
| | Bird Watching | | Angling |
| | Picnic Area | | Viewing Point |
| | Feature Stairway | | |

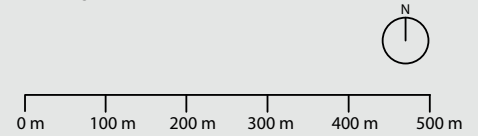
ENERGY

- | | | | |
|--|-----------------------------|--|------------------|
| | Energy Recovery Water Power | | Renewable Energy |
|--|-----------------------------|--|------------------|

NATURE CONSERVATION

- | | | | |
|--|------------------------|--|----------------------------|
| | Bat Habitat Mitigation | | Dormice Habitat Mitigation |
| | Wetland Habitat | | Reptile Habitat Mitigation |

NOTE: This plan is for illustrative purposes only. All information shown is subject to further consultation and modification with the Planning Authorities and other stakeholders.



RESERVOIR SAFETY

The reservoir will be filled in the winter under controlled conditions with surplus water from the Havant and Bedhampton Springs, as there is very little rain water available from the natural catchment to the north. As a compensation measure a water flow will be maintained from the reservoir to the existing stream to the south. There will also be a carefully designed spillway to the existing stream to enable any storm water to be dealt with safely. Initial studies indicate that the reservoir will in fact reduce the risk of flooding downstream during storm events. In the case of an extreme event the new pipelines, used to fill the reservoir, can be utilised as an additional safety feature to drain water more quickly from the reservoir back to Langstone Harbour.

A concern was raised during the consultation by some people about reservoir safety. It is a requirement of the Reservoirs Act 1975 that the design of the reservoir is supervised by an independent engineer called the 'Construction Engineer', who is selected from a panel of engineers approved by the government. The Construction Engineer has already been appointed to approve the design of the reservoir embankments and associated structures, and he will also inspect the works during construction if planning permission is granted. Filling of the reservoir can not be undertaken until the Construction Engineer has issued a certificate. Monitoring devices will be installed in the reservoir banks, and the embankments will be inspected by an independent engineer at regular intervals, as prescribed by the requirements of the Reservoir Act, which is regulated by the Environment Agency. This will include regular inspection and testing of the spillway and other draw down facilities.

LANDSCAPE & HABITATS

Impacts on wildlife were of the greatest concern in the feedback forms and were also mentioned in letters and emails. It was considered vital to provide alternative habitat for species such as dormice, reptiles and bats well before construction commences. To address this we propose that habitat creation and species relocation would take place in the two years before the main construction phases begin. Environmental survey work is ongoing, but it is anticipated that most relocation should be possible locally, by working with the Forestry Commission and Staunton Country Park to enhance the wildlife value of adjacent habitats.



TYPICAL RESERVOIR WETLAND WITH GRASS SNAKE

It is envisaged that the embankments will be seeded with wild flowers. The wider site landscaping will include new woodland and hedgerow planting. Only native species would be used. Figure 3 confirms strong public support for the creation of the proposed wetland habitat. We plan to make provision for a large wetland area along the north edge of the reservoir, to ensure there is a net increase in biodiversity in the longer term. The design of the wetland has been changed from the consultation draft to remove the boardwalk from the main wetland area, in order to minimise the potential for disturbance of wildlife.

Following concerns expressed during the consultation about the visual and environmental impacts of low water levels when the reservoir is drawn down, a retaining bund has been included in the revised design. We propose that this is of variable height in order to create a series of islands that provide suitable habitat for breeding birds (see outline plan). This bund will ensure that the water level in the wetland area can be retained even when the level in the reservoir has to be dropped to meet water supply needs.

Further work will be undertaken to ensure that the new landscape is appropriately integrated with the existing landscape of the historic park, garden and the woodland to the north.

PUBLIC ACCESS & CIRCULAR ROUTES

There was significant support from the public for the extension of walking and cycling routes, linked to a circular route around the reservoir, especially one on the top of the embankments. We propose to work with the adjacent landowners to provide a circular footpath approximately 3 miles (5km) long around the reservoir, with a slightly longer circular cycle route (see outline plan). An application will be made to Hampshire County Council to divert the existing public bridleway which currently crosses the site to the north. In addition we hope to be able to provide a permissive horse riding route to the south, creating a circular route for horse riders. These additional walking and riding routes would provide a valuable additional facility for local people. Access points and path surfacing would need to be designed to provide easy access routes for the disabled and elderly, while excluding motorcycles.



LAND BASED RECREATION

Individuals taking part in the consultation emphasised that the value of the area relates to its openness (no built structures) and the opportunity it provides for quiet recreation away from noisy traffic. Thus the open and wild nature of the site needed to be retained. The extent to which different activities were supported is shown in Figure 4.

Portsmouth Water has taken on board this feedback and does not intend to provide recreational facilities that would detract from the rural character of the area. It is proposed that the following land based recreational facilities be included in the planning application:

- footpaths, cycle and horse riding routes,
- bird watching hides / screens
- angling platforms (inc. disabled facilities)
- nature interpretation
- picnic and play area
- viewing areas (inc. an accessible island)
- visitor / education centre

It is currently envisaged that the visitor / education centre will include toilets, a small cafe, some storage and a multi-purpose room which can be used as a classroom. Schools would have access to the whole site, including the wetland and bird hides for educational purposes. Provision of a woodland adventure trail, primarily in the woodland to the north, is being investigated to encourage young people into the countryside. This could link to the existing trail now available in the Country Park.

The brief for the design of any building or structures required will include the need to ensure that they are in keeping with the rural landscape. Designers would be encouraged to consider the extent to which timber or other material removed from the site during construction could be re-used.



WATER BASED RECREATION

There was major support for the provision of water sports from the young people, though with less support from the general public. Almost all respondents agreed that motorised sports (such as jet skiing) should be excluded.

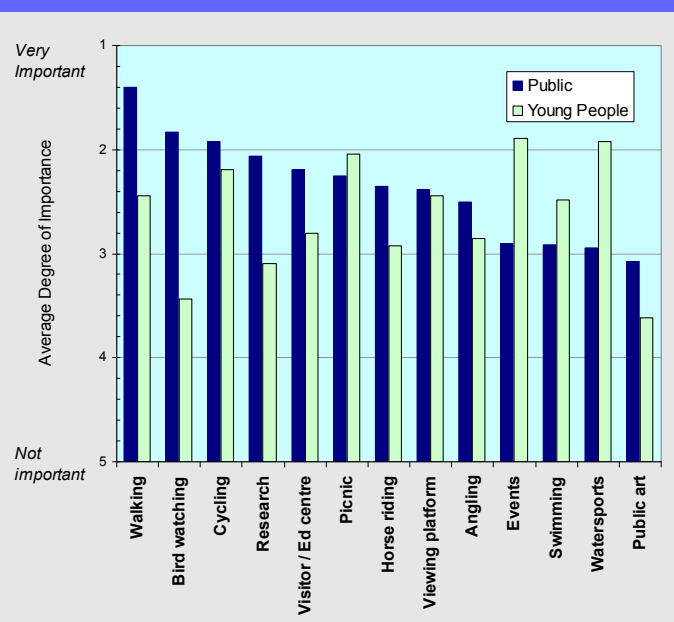
We have endeavoured to propose activities that will not conflict with one another.

We propose that activities to be supported in the first instance would be low impact uses such as model boats (electric / wind powered), kayaking and canoeing. These activities would take place in the west of the site. It is envisaged that management and supervision of all water based activities would be undertaken in conjunction with local schools, the Country Park and/or other local organisations. The extent to which facilities would be needed to support such uses are under investigation. However, it is likely that a slipway will be provided at the construction stage to ensure flexibility for the future (see outline plan). Activities



TESTWOOD LAKES VISITOR / EDUCATION CENTRE

Figure 4: Public response on individual activities



requiring powered engines such as jet skiing or water skiing are not proposed. This will remove the need to store any significant volume of fuel and help protect the quality of the water from hydrocarbon leaks or spills. The only exception might be for a safety boat to support a low impact activity.

The idea of a beach put forward in the consultation is not to be progressed as there was no strong public support for this. People questioned if such a facility was needed, given the proximity to good local beaches. Concerns were also expressed about a number of health and safety issues. Instead of providing a beach we propose to provide an amenity grassland area for picnic and play in the north-west part of the reservoir, close to the main access route into the reservoir site.

The work with the Riders Junior School during the consultation phase in Spring 2008 included a competition to show what activities and facilities the young people preferred. A significant number of the young people showed an island in their design layout with access via a bridge. We have included on the revised outline plan an island accessed via a bridge in the north-west corner of the reservoir. This would enable the public to walk on to the island to sit and enjoy the view, or have a picnic.

RENEWABLE ENERGY

Respondents were supportive of the need for renewable energy to be used. This was particularly important to the young people in their feedback forms. A full study of alternative sources of renewable energy is proposed to cover water and wind turbines, wood fuel, solar power, and use of ground heat pumps. Factors to be considered during the assessment will include likely effectiveness and local environmental impacts.





NEXT STEPS

The outline plan illustrates the range of facilities that are proposed to be taken forward for further discussion with the planning authorities, community representatives and other stakeholders as a result of the consideration of all the feedback. The main principle behind the solution being developed is the importance of retaining a natural rural environment, while providing a range of appropriate facilities for the local community.

There are several areas where further work is needed to address the issues raised in the consultation and ensure that the environmental impacts are fully considered. The following work is being undertaken in 2008/09 for incorporation with the planning application:

- **Further ecological studies:** relating to the species present on the reservoir site and on adjacent land, the provision of replacement habitats and the ecology of the Riders Lane / Hermitage Streams.
- **Transport assessment:** undertake noise and traffic surveys, assess the potential impacts of the scheme on the local road network and design the access route. Work to estimate visitor numbers and determine parking needs. Meetings with other stakeholders to investigate how improved public access links into the wider area for walking, cycling and horse riding might be achieved.
- **Landscape:** design study to cover the relationship to the historic environment, the visual impact of draw down of the reservoir, illustrative outline design of structures and consideration of views in to and out of the site.
- **Management:** clarification as to the nature of the usage of the proposed facilities and their longer term management.

TIMESCALES	ACTIVITIES
Planning application incorporating: Year 1 & 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site layout plans • Traffic assessment • Environmental impact assessment
Early preparatory work: Year 3 & 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Habitat creation, enhancement and species relocation • Removal of trees where necessary • Diversion of paths and bridleway
Site preparation phase: Year 5 & 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction of access road and site compound • Fencing of the site • Stripping and storing soil
Main construction phase: Year 6 to 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drainage works • Excavation of clay • Embankment construction • Creation of path networks
Filling and commissioning: Year 10 & 11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water pumped up from the springs • Construction of ancillary amenities



FURTHER INFORMATION

If you have any questions or require further information please visit our website. The Havant Thicket Winter Storage Reservoir website has recently been updated to make it easier to navigate. The content is regularly updated and includes copies of previous newsletters, the consultation documents, maps, photographs and a broad range of information ranging from construction to wildlife. In September 2008 the full report summarising the consultation feedback and the Company response will be published on the website.



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If you do not have access to the internet you can telephone: 023 9249 9888

