



Havant Thicket Winter Storage Reservoir: Visitor number and recreational amenity facilities review



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Executive summary

It is clear the Havant Thicket Winter Storage Reservoir (HTWSR) will act as an attraction for additional visitors and this study aims to assess the respective merits of different levels and intensity of recreation provision.

In developing HTWSR, Portsmouth Water identifies seven drivers or ‘touchpoints’. The main elements of these which relate to the recreation provision on the site focus on quality, connectivity (with customers and the local community) and the environment. It is essential that any project and its uses gain positive community buy-in, respect the historic landscape and foster a net biodiversity gain. Visitor flows to the site must be managed effectively in line with its environmental capacity and it is important to ensure that the HTWSR site has a distinctive offer which complements and does not draw visitors away from the neighbouring Staunton Country Park.

The study considers three lead scenarios for the recreation provision. The research also aims to identify the likely level of visitor generation for each scenario and the associated level of car parking provision to service each level of provision.

Scenario 1

A low level of intervention with a kiosk and range of external trails.

Scenario 2

A medium level of intervention with a visitor centre and supporting facilities with external play and recreation routes. This Option is akin to a country park facility with high quality infrastructure and services, including a main hub in the form of a purpose-built visitor centre. This scenario is closely in line with the post public consultation plan (2009) of Portsmouth Water.

Scenario 3

This scenario represents a higher level of intervention creating more of a visitor destination with a greater intensity of recreation and commercial use. It incorporates a beach and commercial water-sports provision with facilities on a larger scale compared to Scenario 2.

Our approach has been to carry out a detailed market assessment including a demographic analysis, a competitive review and detailed case example comparisons which comprise different levels of facilities and activities to reflect the different scenarios evaluated. The case example sites were chosen in conjunction with the client to provide an extensive range of comparable examples for the different scenarios relating to elements such as site

characteristics, range of built facilities, presence of a large waterbody and urban edge locations.

Our work has also included a facilities review of varied component elements and establishes the respective pros and cons of each.

From the market and facilities review we have considered the different options and provided a weighted scoring matrix analysis based on the priority strategic objectives for the scheme. **The Medium Scenario (Option 2) emerges as the highest scoring proposal.**

From the demographic review and case examples we have carried out visitor modelling and produced a schedule of estimated visitor throughput for each scenario. This shows an incremental approach whereby the larger degree of visitor provision and intensity of use will attract higher volumes of visitors.

The estimated level of visitor numbers for the three scenarios is shown in the table below:

Table ES1: Estimated visitor numbers to HTWSR

Estimated visitor throughput	Current users	Additional visitors	Total estimated visitors
HTWSR Scenario 1 (Low)	93,176	95,325	188,501
HTWSR Scenario 2 (Medium)	93,176	224,422	317,598
HTWSR Scenario 3 (High)	93,176	331,861	425,037

These estimated visitor numbers are cross-referenced against the case examples and also compared to the multiple of the residential population within 30 and 60 minutes against selected examples for each scenario.

The study also assesses the car parking requirements for each of the scenarios based on TRICS analysis and case example comparators. The overall requirement in terms of car parking provision is shown in the table below:

Table ES2: Estimated car parking requirements for HTWSR

Parking Space Requirement (Additional)	Scenario 1	Scenario 2	Scenario 3
Main car park	70	193	281
Overflow	20-25	55-60	81-100
Total	90-95	248-253	362-382

The preferred option for recreation provision to emerge from the study is Scenario Two (Medium Option) which would respond to the strategic priorities and service the main user market groups (likely to be families and older people).

The study findings suggest that Scenario 2 has the strongest fit with the key objectives and the site's environmental capacity. This scenario is also best aligned with the planning opportunity and community aspirations.