

Minutes from the Havant Thicket Reservoir
Strategic Advisory Group

Meeting presentations / discussions	Actions
<p>Attendees from Portsmouth Water:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ruari Maybank (RM), Havant Thicket Reservoir Project Director, Portsmouth Water • Sam Donovan (SD), Project Delivery Manager, Agilia • Rebecca Holmes (RH), Environmental Lead, Agilia • Jim Barker (JB), Head of Water Resources, Portsmouth Water • Eleanor Shipton (ES), Communications & Engagement Lead, Portsmouth Water • Joel Hufford (JH), Senior Communications Consultant, Create 51. <p>Other attendees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ingrid Strawson (IS), Independent Chair of Havant Thicket Reservoir Strategic Advisory Group and Community Advisory Group. <p>Stakeholder attendees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nat Belderson, South Downs National Park Authority • Andrew Biltcliffe, Havant Borough Council (Regeneration team) • Jeremy Burgess, South Downs National Park Authority • Joan Clark, Forestry England • Dave Collins, Stop the Chop group • Jon Dyer-Slade, Hampshire County Council (Countryside Service) • Sue Fewings, Environment Agency • Karen Gibbs, Consumer Council for Water (CCW) • John Goodspeed, Hampshire Ornithological Society • Chris Janes, Southern Water • Lakh Jemmett, Portsmouth Water Customer Challenge Group (CCG) • Nik Knight, Hampshire Bat Group • Lewis Oliver, Havant Borough Council (Planning) • Sam Underwood (SU), Southern Water • Mark Wintringham, Southern Water. <p>Apologies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Louise Bardsley, Natural England • Keith Betton, Hampshire Ornithological Society • Tina Cuss, Hampshire County Council (Countryside Service) • Jo Heath, Hampshire County Council (Countryside Service) • Adrian Legg, Portsmouth City Council • Cllr Robert Mocatta, East Hampshire District Council • Gareth Russell-Hughes, Project Manager, Agilia. 	

Welcome and Introductions

Ingrid Strawson welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced herself as the Independent Chair of the Strategic Advisory Group (SAG).

She thanked everyone who was able to attend the Havant Thicket Reservoir project site visits that were held during August, to show people around the main reservoir site and along the route of the reservoir pipeline.

She then gave a brief update about the interim advisory groups meeting held on 9 September and thanked people for the queries and issues raised at the session, which are being responded to by the reservoir project team. The next interim meeting will be held in early November, with the next main advisory groups meetings taking place at the end of November / early December.

Next, Ingrid ran through the agenda for the meeting (as set out on slide 2 of the attached meeting presentation pack).

Each of the attendees then introduced themselves and outlined their role and organisation, as well as their key interests in the Havant Thicket Reservoir scheme.

The minutes from the previous meeting in late June were reviewed, including each of the recorded actions. This included an update to the group's Terms of Reference, based on feedback from group members. A copy of the updated Terms is attached to these minutes. In the section on the role of the Strategic Advisory Group, changes to the text include replacing the phrase 'environmental impact' with the term 'sustainability'. The strategic group is focusing on environmental, social and economic mitigation strategies, for example, minimisation of carbon emissions. The role of the Community Advisory Group has not changed. An escalation process for issues raised and managed through the Havant Thicket Reservoir Stakeholder Issues and Actions log, is included for both groups.

There were no further comments from the group about the minutes from the previous meeting, with Ingrid then confirming that the minutes had been accepted.

Agenda Item 1: Havant Thicket Reservoir project update

Please also see slides 6-14 in the attached presentation pack from the meeting.

Project Director Ruari Maybank introduced himself and spoke about his background and career, prior to joining Portsmouth Water and the reservoir scheme in the summer. His previous roles include senior leadership positions on major infrastructure projects such as the O2 Arena, London 2012 Olympics, the redevelopment of Colchester Barracks and a number of projects overseas.

Ruari explained that the high-level programme for the Havant Thicket Reservoir scheme (see slide 7) is unchanged from the one that was presented at the last SAG meeting in late June. However, he added that the project team are looking to bring forward the timing for some aspects of the project, such as the access routes for the site. Ruari also thanked everyone who has been involved in the group and has helped to shape the project so far.

Next, Ruari provided an update on planning permission for the reservoir and its pipeline. In June, both Havant Borough Council and East Hampshire District Council's planning committees resolved to grant planning permission. This was subject to final legal agreements (Section 106 agreements) being completed and those documents are currently being prepared / progressed. He clarified that there can be no construction activity until final planning permission has been formally granted, with the Section 106 agreements including a number of commitments, such as improving pathways and access

points for non-motorised users to the reservoir site and a range of environmental mitigation and compensation measures.

Ruari updated that the reservoir project team have been working with the Stop the Chop group, including a proposal for the relocation of additional trees from the reservoir site ahead of the construction work. The team are working on making a further announcement on this soon.

Work to secure a site for 80 hectares of woodland creation / restoration, as part of the overall 200 hectares total under the reservoir project's environmental mitigation and compensation plan, is progressing well, with a site identified and terms being negotiated for a long-term agreement.

As part of ongoing environmental work, ecologists and tree climbing specialists have been out on site, with 200 bat boxes and over 100 dormice boxes installed to help wildlife translocate in the future and wildlife 'corridors' being created for wildlife to move from the reservoir site to other nearby areas.

Ruari stressed that any tree removal on the reservoir site will not start until final planning permission has been granted, with European Protected Species Licences (for bats and dormice) to be issued also for work to get underway. There has been close liaison with Natural England over a number of months on the licences. Traffic management plans also need to be finalised with Forestry England, Hampshire County Council and the local highways authority. Ruari thanked the Forestry England team for their work on this issue.

There is a narrow time window this autumn to carry out tree removal activity and it is dependent on the weather. There could be further tree removal activity needed next year and some of this could take place in Spring 2022 if weather permits.

Tree removal will take place at around five different locations at any one time, with the North / South pathway through the Avenue closed during felling activity for safety reasons.

Portsmouth Water is currently in the latter stages of procurement for the contractors to work on the reservoir scheme – one contract for construction of the reservoir pipeline and one for building the reservoir itself. Ruari explained that the procurement process would be progressed in the coming months, so that contracts can be awarded in March 2022.

Finally, Ruari shared a map (see slide 14) showing the future route for walkers and cyclists which will go all the way around the reservoir site. This will help improve access for the public to the reservoir site.

Q&A section

Question: What area of woodland will be harvested each day?

Answer: It will be up to a quarter of a hectare (2,500 square metres) per day in each of the five locations mentioned above. This will help enable wildlife to safely move away from the site as trees are harvested and the site is cleared.

IMPORTANT UPDATE: The above information was correct at the time of the meeting. However, since then, and following positive discussions with Natural England, we are now planning to remove trees at a quicker rate than originally anticipated, while still making sure to protect and support wildlife throughout. Subject to weather, this would enable us to complete the required work this calendar year.

Question: Is the map showing cycle routes (see slide 14) included in the planning application?

Answer: Yes, there is a technical drawing version of the map you saw in the planning application, which is attached with these minutes.

Question: Can you tell us more about securing land for the 80 hectares of woodland creation / restoration you will be delivering as part of the reservoir scheme's overall 200 hectares of woodland creation / restoration?

Answer: As this is commercially confidential, we can't reveal details, but good progress is being made and we're hoping to be able to share more information soon.

Agenda Item 2: Future water resources planning

Please also see slides 17-25 in the attached presentation pack from the meeting.

Jim Barker, Head of Water Resources at Portsmouth Water and representatives from Southern Water provided an update on planning for future water resources in Hampshire.

Jim explained the context for this agenda item, starting with the fact that water companies, like Portsmouth and Southern, have each developed a Water Resource Management Plan (WRMP), setting out how they will make sure there is enough water for all in the years and decades ahead.

These plans are reviewed every five years, with companies preparing to update their WRMPs for 2024. The draft WRMPs will be published for consultation and will, ultimately, be signed off by regulators and the Government. The WRMPs will be based on a new regional water resources plan for the South East, which is being developed currently and will be published for consultation in early 2022, before being finalised in 2023.

The Government has asked water companies to plan 75 years in advance and to plan for more severe dry weather events. Water companies must also work regionally, with companies in the South East of England, including Portsmouth Water and Southern Water, having been working together since 1996. This process is about water companies ensuring there is a sustainable supply of water for the region.

Jim also discussed Strategic Water Resource Options (SROs), which are different potential schemes for providing enough water for the region. For example, Havant Thicket Reservoir is an SRO that was selected for the current regional plan for the South East and was then included in both Portsmouth Water and Southern Water's WRMPs.

As part of the normal cycle of planning for the future (as set out above), potential enhanced uses of Havant Thicket Reservoir, to provide additional water supplies, are being looked at, although these ideas are at an early stage of development, with no firm plans in place. As with any proposals for the future, should these ideas progress further, they would be subject to public consultation and scrutiny / approval from regulators and Government. They would also require planning permission in their own right.

Sam Underwood, Stakeholder Lead for Southern Water's Water for Life Hampshire programme, and Mark Wintringham, Head of Delivery for the programme, provided an update on their work to explore new ways of supplying water to customers. This is to cater for a growing population and the impact of climate change, while protecting and enhancing the environment – most notably the River Test and River Itchen in Hampshire, two rare chalk streams.

Further detail is set out in Sam and Mark's presentation slides (17-25 in the attached pack), with the update focusing on a wide-ranging assessment of the potential options, involving regulators and other statutory consultees, stakeholders and customers, that has recently been completed.

**ACTION (GRH):
More information about the location of the 80 hectares to be provided at future meetings.**

The proposals that were assessed (see slide 19 in the attached pack) include a desalination plant (see slide 20) and several different configurations of water recycling - using advanced treatment techniques to turn what was previously regarded as wastewater into drinking water (see slide 21). One option could be to top up Havant Thicket Reservoir with recycled water to provide greater resilience to drought. The option of building a new pipeline, to transport more water from Havant Thicket Reservoir to Southern Water's Otterbourne Water Supply Works, is also being explored, in consultation with Portsmouth Water.

From the options appraisal process, water recycling and water transfers were assessed as preferable, particularly when impacts on the environment were considered. Desalination ranked lower than these options.

As a result, Southern Water has written to the regulators informing them that it is continuing to explore proposals for water recycling and water transfer solutions and is not intending to further develop plans for desalination.

Southern Water is now progressing further investigations and development of the remaining options ahead of its next submission to regulators in December 2021, where it will select its preferred solution, before carrying out further engagement and consultation, and starting the planning process.

For further information, please visit <http://www.southernwater.co.uk/our-story/water-for-life-hampshire>.

Q&A section

Question: Is the yield of recycled water the same as desalinated water? Will this result in less untreated water ending up in the sea?

Answer: There is a better yield of water from the water recycling option than desalination. Southern Water are looking at how this will impact their wastewater operations. This will be picked up in the feasibility and design phases of the option development process.

Question: In terms of the option for a new direct pipeline from Havant Thicket Reservoir to Otterbourne Water Supply Works, would areas with ancient woodland be avoided, so there will be no ancient woodland losses as part of the scheme?

Answer: Where possible, ancient woodland will be avoided and Southern Water will be working closely with Forestry England (as the owner of Havant Thicket woodland) and others.

Question: Do the other options include filling Havant Thicket Reservoir with recycled water? What would happen in extreme conditions?

Answer: Yes, however, the recycled water would only be a small percentage of the overall water in the reservoir. Recycling water is about stripping out all the impurities, making it cleaner than any other type of water. Any topping up of the reservoir would be with this highly treated and purified water. Extreme conditions (such as very heavy rain) would not result in untreated water entering the reservoir, as it would be a separate 'stream' to recycled water.

Agenda Item 3: Havant Thicket Reservoir Issues & Actions Log

Please also see slide 28 in the attached presentation pack from the meeting.

The Issues & Actions Log, recording queries and concerns from stakeholder advisory group members for response by Portsmouth Water, was shown to attendees, with a copy of the

ACTION (SU): Southern Water to share updates about the new preferred solution at future meetings.

ACTION (ES): Present an updated

log also circulated to all advisory group members separately. The log is designed to act as a 'one stop shop' for any questions or issues raised by stakeholders.

Ingrid explained how each member of the group could quickly find the issues they had raised and whether they had been responded to. She added that the wording for issues could be changed if needed and explained the process for issues being signed off / closed.

Question: How can issues that have already been discussed be added into the log?

Answer: Email either Joel Hufford or Eleanor Shipton and the log will then be updated.

Agenda Item 4: Subgroups

Please also see slides 30-31 in the attached presentation pack from the meeting.

Ingrid explained that a number of different topics have been raised by stakeholders via the Havant Thicket Reservoir Issues & Actions log, for example, access, environment and recreation. She briefly ran through the different topics on the register to show the sort of concerns and questions which have been raised and the most common themes / topics.

Ingrid then reminded attendees of the idea (discussed at previous meetings) of having topic-based subgroups, enabling people to focus on a particular issue or area of interest. She highlighted the benefits of such an approach and proposed that the groups should be set up and led by volunteers from the main advisory groups. The running of the subgroups would be supported by Ingrid and Portsmouth Water.

A list of potential subgroups was proposed by Ingrid (see slide 31) and Ingrid invited comments on potentially establishing these subgroups.

Rebecca Holmes supported the idea of subgroups and welcomed the opportunity to work with Dave Childs and other members of Stop the Chop, as well as other environmental stakeholders, to address specific points.

Andrew Biltcliffe from Havant Borough Council volunteered to lead on a local economy subgroup.

Q&A section

Question: Will there be a system for prioritising issues and actions (recorded in the log), and will there be any milestones to show how more long-term issues are being addressed over time?

Answer: Ingrid explained that those points will be addressed and an updated and clearer Issues & Actions log will be presented at the next main advisory group meetings in a couple of months' time.

Agenda Item 5: AOB

Dave Childs from Stop the Chop commented that Natural England had launched a nature recovery initiative to link up areas of wildlife. He said this would fit with their proposals for an additional wildlife corridor on the reservoir site.

Meeting close

Ingrid Strawson closed the session by thanking everyone for attending and for their contributions.

Joel Hufford asked for feedback on the meeting and how it was run, to help make any improvements for the future.

PLEASE SEE SUMMARY OF ACTIONS FROM MEETING BELOW

and clearer version of the Issues & Actions log, showing priorities and milestones for longer-term issues.

ACTION (ALL): Advisory group members to consider joining a subgroup or subgroups focused on particular areas of interest

Meeting actions

<u>Action</u>	<u>Owner</u>	<u>Date to be completed</u>
Provide an update about the location of the 80 hectares of new / restored woodland	Gareth Russell-Hughes	At next advisory group meeting on 30 November 2021
Future updates about Water for Life – Hampshire to be provided at future meetings, including which option is taken forward as the “preferred option” as part of the regulatory assessment process.	Sam Underwood	Via email following next submission to regulators in December 2021
Present an updated and clearer version of the Issues & Actions log, showing priorities and milestones for longer-term issues.	Eleanor Shipton	At next advisory group meeting on 30 November 2021
Advisory group members to consider joining a subgroup or subgroups focused on particular areas of interest	ALL	By next advisory group meeting on 30 November 2021