

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 • 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 • Joanne Farrar (JF), Planning Director, Atkins • Liz Brown (LB), Environment Lead, Atkins. <p>Stakeholder attendees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nat Belderson, South Downs National Park Authority • Andrew Biltcliffe, Havant Borough Council (Regeneration team) • Patricia Brooks, Havant Climate Alliance and Havant Friends of the Earth • Jeremy Burgess, South Downs National Park Authority • Kirstie Butler, Portsmouth City Council • Dave Childs, Stop the Chop group • Joan Clark, Forestry England • Chris Janes, Southern Water • Lakh Jemmett, Portsmouth Water Customer Challenge Group (CCG) • Nik Knight, Hampshire Bat Group • Lewis Oliver, Havant Borough Council (Planning) • Harnish Patel, Portsmouth City Council • Shelley Saunders, Havant Green Party and Stop the Chop group • Sam Underwood (SU), Southern Water • Matthew Woodcock, Forestry Commission. <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) • Jon Dyer-Slade, Hampshire County Council (Countryside Service) • Karen Gibbs, Consumer Council for Water (CCW) • Jo Heath, Hampshire County Council (Countryside Service) • Adrian Legg, Portsmouth City Council • Cllr Robert Mocatta, East Hampshire District Council 	

- Gareth Russell-Hughes (GRH), Project Manager, Agilia.

PLEASE ALSO SEE ATTACHED SLIDE PRESENTATION PACK

Welcome and Introductions

Ingrid Strawson opened the meeting and welcomed attendees. She expressed her gratitude to Havant Borough Council for use of the meeting room, for those joining the session ‘face to face’.

Ingrid reminded attendees that the meeting was being recorded and that the minutes will be published on the public Havant Thicket Reservoir web pages – see <https://www.portsmouthwater.co.uk/new-reservoir/contact/library/>.

Ingrid explained that there had been a second interim stakeholder groups meeting held in early November 2021 and thanked everyone who attended.

Ingrid talked through the meeting agenda (See Slide 2 of attached pack), before asking everyone in the session (online or in person in Havant) to introduce themselves.

Finally, Ingrid ran through the actions from the previous meeting (28 September 2021) and explained the progress on these / how each had been addressed by the reservoir project team, as detailed in the Havant Thicket Reservoir Stakeholder Issues and Actions Log.

The minutes were accepted.

Agenda Item 1: Havant Thicket Reservoir project update

Please also see Slides 3-13 in the attached presentation pack from the meeting.

Ingrid handed over to Ruari Maybank, Havant Thicket Reservoir Project Director, for his project update.

He first reiterated that safety, of the public, staff and contractors, is the project’s highest priority, especially on the reservoir site during site clearance and construction activity (See Slide 3).

Ruari went on to explain that the programme / timetable for the overall reservoir scheme is unchanged from the previous meeting (See Slide 4). He also added that Portsmouth Water is recruiting an ‘in house’ project management team, now that the scheme is moving into its construction phase.

At the previous round of stakeholder group meetings in September 2021, some stakeholders had requested details of the organisational structure for the Havant Thicket Reservoir team - See Slide 5. Ruari explained that he reports directly to Bob Taylor, CEO of Portsmouth Water, with the project management team predominantly made up of staff from consultancy Agilia Infrastructure Partners.

Of these colleagues, Gareth Russell-Hughes is looking after planning and environmental issues, John Reed is overseeing clearance work on the reservoir the site and Sam Donovan is looking after the Farlington Water Treatment Works to Nelson Service Reservoir.

Environmental and ecological expertise is being provided by sub-contractors, Ecosa and Five Rivers, with Atkins now working on certain aspects of planning, such as the reservoir’s northern access route, and Tilhill contracted to complete the site clearance work, including tree removal.

Ruari reminded attendees that final planning permission for Havant Thicket Reservoir and its pipeline was granted in October, after Portsmouth Water signed the Section 106 legal agreement (See Slide 6). He also thanked everyone who was involved in helping secure

planning permission, including members of the stakeholder groups through their input on the planning applications that were submitted. European Protected Species Licences, covering bats and dormice, have been issued to the reservoir project, with pre-construction traffic management plans also progressed.

Ruari then went on to explain that full planning permission has been granted for certain aspects of the reservoir scheme, including the reservoir embankment's outer side and the site's northern access route. Outline planning permission has been granted for other aspects, such as the visitor centre and the reservoir pipeline (See Slide 7).

Next came an update on activity at the reservoir site since the previous main group meeting in late September 2021. Further detail is set out on Slide 8 of the attached pack, with tree removal work carried out at Middle Clearing, following initial inspections to ensure no wildlife was present. Tree removal work was stopped on 2 November 2021 for environmental reasons – the drop in temperatures leading to start of hibernation season, particularly for dormice.

Ruari gave a special mention in thanking the Stop the Chop group, who came up with the idea of identifying an additional 80 trees for relocation from the reservoir site. He explained that more than 80 trees were marked up on site, to allow for a number of trees that would not survive (See Slide 9).

Other works (See Slide 10) on site include maintenance of the 6,000 trees that have been planted at Gypsies Plain and Memory Park and habitat improvement on Forestry England's Havant Thicket woodland, under the reservoir scheme's environmental protection and mitigation plan.

Ruari then introduced a short video, which is available via Portsmouth Water's YouTube channel at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UNeyS8EsQX8>, setting out an overview of the environmental benefits of the scheme.

In terms of planning and future consents (See Slide 12), the project team are looking to progress improvements to the B2149, related to where Forestry England's logging road joins it. The logging road will be used for removing felled trees from the reservoir site. Work is also underway on the detailed environmental mitigation and compensation strategy for the reservoir scheme, along with the plan for woodland restoration at Southleigh Forest (land owned already by Portsmouth Water) – as part of the overall 200 hectares of woodland and grassland that will be created or restored through the reservoir scheme.

Finally, (See Slide 13), Ruari updated the meeting on two locations being considered for the site for 80 hectares of woodland creation / restoration (as part of the 200 hectares total). The reservoir team are working to secure the required land by Spring 2022.

He also reiterated the additional benefit that the reservoir will have, in terms of preventing nitrates from entering Langstone Harbour, something that is having an adverse impact on the harbour environment – for example, leading to algal blooms during warm weather. The reservoir will capture nitrate-rich spring water and so stop it flowing into the sea, as it otherwise would. Any nitrates in the reservoir would naturally settle to the bottom of the body of water and be absorbed into the surrounding soil where they, and other nutrients, would be taken up by surrounding trees and plants. Ruari stated that a fact sheet on this is being developed to provide more information for stakeholders and the wider public.

Ruari then answered questions from attendees.

<u>Q&A section</u>	
<p>Question: What are the names of the two potential compensation sites for the 80 hectares of woodland?</p>	
<p>Answer: South Holt Farm at Finchdean, near Horndean, and Broadreed Farm on the Stansted estate near Rowlands Castle.</p>	<p>ACTION: (GRH) More information about the location of the 80 hectares to be provided at future meetings.</p>
<p>Question: Where would the nitrates in the spring water that would be pumped into the reservoir go?</p>	<p>Action: (RM)</p>
<p>Answer: It's a process called denitrification, drawing the nitrates out of the water at the base of the reservoir, where the water loses its oxygen content and mixes with the sediment at the bottom of the reservoir. This allows the nitrates to be drawn out of the water and absorbed into the soil. The nitrates are in the spring water in the first place due to them making their way into the underground water sources that feed Bedhampton Springs, having been washed off surrounding land during wet weather – for example, farmland where fertiliser (which contains nitrates) has been spread.</p>	<p>Provide further detail at next main group meeting on the issue of nitrates.</p>
<p>Question: What is the percentage of nitrates (that would otherwise enter Langstone Harbour via local streams and springs) being removed via the reservoir?</p>	<p>ACTION: (GRH)</p>
<p>Answer: At this stage it's an estimate, but between 30 and 45 per cent, which equates to a reduction of 2,500 kilogrammes of nitrates a year. Further work is needed to refine this, as the reservoir is commissioned and put into use.</p>	<p>Follow up on updated query in Issues and Actions Log.</p>
<p>Question: Query (already raised and included in Stakeholder Issues and Actions Log) on the direction that streams running across reservoir site flow in, and implications for flows in River Lavant</p>	<p>ACTION: (GRH)</p>
<p>Answer: This further detail will be added to the log and followed up appropriately.</p>	<p>Share further detail (on water flows) at next main group meeting.</p>
<p>Question: Is there a map showing where all the water from the streams is being diverted to? Keen to understand how much water will be flowing through Havant town centre in future?</p>	<p>ACTION: (GRH)</p>
<p>Answer: We can share further detail on this, with flows in local streams to be maintained to protect local ecology and wildlife, during construction and operation of the new reservoir.</p>	<p>Share plan on next steps for newly planted areas of trees on</p>
<p>Question: How many of the 6,000 trees planted at Gypsies Plain and Memory Park have died?</p>	
<p>Answer: The team are completing a survey of the trees to inform a plan for what needs to happen next (such as further planting), but we are happy to update stakeholders once that plan has been finalised. With any tree planting, typically, around 10 per cent of the trees will not survive.</p>	
<p>Question: Do the trees dying in the above areas affect those areas being used as mitigation for loss of trees elsewhere on the reservoir site?</p>	
<p>Answer: If we need to replace any trees, then we will do so, and we would not expect some of the trees dying at these sites to impact our mitigation plan.</p>	
<p>Question: One of the proposed compensation sites for the 80 hectares of woodland is South Holt Farm, which is within the South Downs National Park. Has there been any dialogue with the National Park Authority on this, or is any planned?</p>	
<p>Answer: The selected sites will need to be feasible, in terms of planning and permitting, so we'll be looking at this, with the relevant bodies, before making any commitment on</p>	

taking these sites forward. We can happily provide more detail at the next main group meeting in February 2021.

Question: When is tree removal on the reservoir site going to restart?

Answer: We can't confirm a date at this stage, as this will depend on the weather, due to the need to protect and support local wildlife. For example, if we get a warm spring, we may be able to start sooner, as wildlife will come out of hibernation sooner. However, it could be something that we cannot restart until September potentially, for environmental reasons.

Agenda Item 2: Northern access route update

Please also see Slides 16-18 in the attached presentation pack from the meeting.

Liz Brown from Atkins provided an update on the detailed design of the northern access route for Havant Thicket Reservoir (See Slide 16). The planning permission granted for the reservoir stipulates that work on the northern access route - which will be 1,400 metres long and will follow the route of an existing forestry track for much of its length - must be completed before construction of the reservoir itself begins. This is because the northern access will be used for construction traffic. The above limitation excludes the initial site clearance work, which is already underway, with separate accesses agreed for this.

As part of the planning and consultation process, it was agreed that improvements need to be made to the B2149, where the northern access road route will connect to it (See Slide 17). The latest design includes a right turn filter lane for traffic heading south on the B2149 and entering to the reservoir site, with ongoing liaison with Hampshire County Council Highways and the local planning authorities.

In order for work to start on the northern access route, the construction design needs to be developed in much greater detail, with the team from Atkins focused on this currently. Liz explained that the design is being refined to minimise its footprint – i.e how much space the road would take up.

The majority of trees along the northern access route have been found to be non-native species, particularly turkey oaks. A number of other surveys, including for bats, also need to take place.

Up to ten trees will be affected by the northern access route being built and these have been identified in the planning application – they are all individual trees along the route where access / passing bays are needed. Where trees overhang the construction route, there will not be any excavation into the soil. Instead, a geo-grid which is backfilled with an aggregate will be used to install the road, to avoid impacting tree roots.

The ten trees that will need to be removed include small yew, a birch and an oak tree. These would likely be cleared in April or November 2022, which falls into bird nesting season, so there would be an ecologist on site to check each tree.

Multi-user access for the northern access route, such as cyclists, was looked at, but was not feasible, as it would involve widening the route, which would impact more trees and the local environment more.

Liz also set out the forward timetable (See Slide 17) for the northern access route design, with engagement initially with Hampshire County Council's Highways and Ecology teams, before consultation with Forestry England and members of the reservoir stakeholder groups in the early part of 2022. The further planning applications will then be finalised and submitted in February and March.

reservoir site.

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

A key part of the process is the development of a detailed Biodiversity Mitigation Compensation Strategy. This will also capture some of the offsite interventions as well.

Q&A section

Question: What lighting will there be at the junction with the B2149, as that could impact the local bat population crossing the road? Lighting was mentioned in the Section 106 agreement paperwork published online.

Answer: There will be no lighting at the junction or along the northern access route, based on the presumption that the main use of the reservoir will be during daytime hours.

Question: What about the idea of integrating the reservoir's northern access route junction with what's required for the Land East of Horndean Development which is further north?

Answer: An area to the north was also looked at as an option, as part of a wide-ranging appraisal process. However, there were more issues with visibility (for motorists) with this option that ruled it out. We want to work with the adjoining landowner to ensure good connectivity / access for non-motorised users to the reservoir site from the north – i.e. access for walkers, cyclists and horse-riders.

Question: How will you minimise the impact on the park pale (defined as a ditch and bank that formed the boundary of a medieval deer park) that is along the northern access route?

Answer: An action has been recorded to provide detail on this.

Question on clarifying what northern access route will be used for?

Answer: The southern access is predominantly for local people and the northern access will be for people coming from outside the area, as well as construction traffic while the reservoir is being built. The northern access road through the site will be single traffic with passing bays. At point it meets the B2149, will be two lanes, to allow traffic to get in and out easily. The thinking behind having two access routes is to dilute impact of traffic on both routes and to minimise the impact (of the northern access route) on woodland.

Question: The northern access route seems very focused on vehicles rather than active travel, such as walking or cycling. When will there be more detail on alternative, active travel access to the site?

Answer: A key part of the reservoir project detailed design will be developing an access strategy, integrating an active travel plan to support and promote travel / access to the site on foot, by bike and horse. Through the reservoir project, Portsmouth Water is already funding improvements to the wider active travel network. The Section 106 legal / planning agreement for the reservoir also covers all of the access points there will be to the site.

Agenda Item 3: Havant Thicket Reservoir Issues & Actions Log

Ingrid talked through the updated Havant Thicket Reservoir Stakeholder Issues and Actions Log, which formally records all questions, comments and ideas from stakeholder groups members, together with responses from the reservoir project team. Ingrid explained that the format of the log has been revised to make it clearer what progress has been made to date on a particular issue, and what the next steps are. A copy of the log is being circulated for stakeholder groups members to review and comment on.

Ingrid also updated the meeting on progress in setting up stakeholder sub-groups, to enable interested group members to explore particular issues or topics in greater depth,

**ACTION:
(GRH)
Share overall access plan for the reservoir site E.g. for walkers, cyclists, horse riders etc.**

**ACTION:
(GRH)
Response on park pale issue to be provided asap).**

including further engagement with the reservoir project team. She reviewed the list of proposed sub-groups and the potential chairs for each (See Slide 21), adding that she has created a draft Terms of Reference for the sub-groups to work to, with the proposed Terms to be shared for comment. She has also had initial discussions with the proposed chairs of the sub-groups and plans to follow this up with a further call, with a view to the groups having their first meetings in the early part of 2022.

Q&A section

Question: Could you please share more information about the goals and expectations of the sub-groups at the next meeting?

Answer: Taken as an action.

Agenda Item 5: AOB

Sam Underwood from Southern Water provided an update on developing proposals for new sustainable water resources for Hampshire – to protect the county’s chalk streams and maintain supplies to customers, especially during drought.

In summary, the revised plans would involve:

- Building a new pipeline to transport more water from Havant Thicket Reservoir to Southern Water’s Otterbourne Water Supply Works
- Using an innovative technology called water recycling to maintain levels in the reservoir, so there is more water available.

Southern Water submitted updated proposals to regulators on 6 December 2021, with the plans now being reviewed in detail. More detail on the submission can be found on the Southern Water website via the following link: <https://www.southernwater.co.uk/our-story/water-for-life-hampshire/latest-updates>.

A draft decision from water industry regulator Ofwat on the proposals is due to be published on 1 March next year, with a final decision to follow on 17 May 2022.

As with any proposals for the future, should these ideas progress further, they would be subject to public consultation and further scrutiny / approval from regulators and Government. They would also require planning permission in their own right.

Sam also explained some additional targeted qualitative and quantitative customer and stakeholder research is taking place, with the results feeding into the above water resources proposals. The research has involved 200 Portsmouth Water (water supply) customers, as well as Southern Water (water supply customers). More detail will be presented at the next main stakeholder group meetings in late February / early March 2022.

Lastly, Joel explained that the plan is to move the date for the next group meeting back a week in February (from 22 to 28 February) in order to avoid half term.

Q&A section

Question: Concerns raised, in particular in terms of impact on local bat population and establishing wildlife corridors, about developments near to / adjacent to the reservoir site and whether any liaison is taking place between Portsmouth Water and other developers

Answer: Portsmouth Water has been supporting the development of an ecological strategy for the local area, in liaison with Hampshire County Council’s Ecology team, with the environmental mitigation and compensation plan for the reservoir project aligning with that wider approach. We would suggest that it would be best to ask the council’s

**ACTION:
(IS) Provide update at next main group meeting on how sub groups will work in practice.**

**ACTION:
(GRH) Hampshire County Council Ecology team invited to**

ecology team to provide an update at the next group meeting to discuss the developing strategy.

Question: Has Portsmouth Water made any progress in recruiting a replacement Environmental Lead for the reservoir scheme?

Answer: Atkins are providing additional resource in the short-term. Portsmouth Water is also working to recruit a full-time Environmental Manager.

Question: It's good that Portsmouth Water is part of the water industry initiative to be carbon neutral by 2030. Can a report be published in relation to the reservoir?

Answer: Yes, this will be possible and we can come back to the group with more details. As an example, the reservoir visitor centre is intended to be a carbon-neutral facility

Question: Can more detail be provided on the clearance of trees from the streams in the south west corner of the reservoir site?

Answer: Response to be provided asap, after reservoir team have checked with relevant colleagues / contractors

Question: Is the 'Master Plan' map included in the planning documents a fully accurate representation of the site?

Answer: The Master Plan is an illustrative plan. However, we'd be happy to clarify the detail on any particular area shown on the Master Plan.

Meeting close

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

She reiterated the change of date for the February meeting (now on 28 February, not 22 February), to avoid clashing with the school half-term holidays.

PLEASE SEE SUMMARY OF ACTIONS FROM MEETING BELOW

Meeting actions

<u>Action</u>	<u>Owner</u>	<u>Date to be completed</u>
Provide further detail at next group meeting on the issue of nitrates.	Ruari Maybank	Update provided for next group meeting on 3 March 2022
Provide an update on the 80 hectare compensation site to be provided at the next meeting, including liaison activity with the South Downs National Park.	Gareth Russell-Hughes	Update provided for next group meeting on 3 March 2022
Respond to query on direction that streams running across reservoir site flow in, and implications for flows in River Lavant	Gareth Russell-Hughes	Update provided for next group meeting on 3 March 2022

present at next group meeting

ACTION: (GRH) More detail to be provided on carbon plan for reservoir project

ACTION: (ES) Response to be provided as soon as possible to group member who raised this issue (on streams clearance).

Provide detail on how reservoir project may affect water flows via streams running through Havant town centre	Gareth Russell-Hughes	Update provided for next group meeting on 3 March 2022
Share plan on next steps for newly planted areas of trees on reservoir site.	Gareth Russell-Hughes	Update provided for next group meeting on 3 March 2022
Share overall access plan for the reservoir site E.g. for walkers, cyclists, horse riders etc.	Gareth Russell-Hughes	Update provided for next group meeting on 3 March 2022
Report back on the impact to the park pale, a historic feature which runs along part of the Northern Access route.	Gareth Russell-Hughes	Update provided for next group meeting on 3 March 2022
Provide update at next main group meeting on how the various sub groups will work in practice	Ingrid Strawson	Update provided for next group meeting on 3 March 2022
Hampshire County Council Ecology team to be invited to present at next main stakeholder groups meetings to provide update on wider ecological strategy development and how reservoir project fits into this	Gareth Russell-Hughes	Update provided for next group meeting on 3 March 2022
More detail to be provided on the reservoir project's overall carbon plan and reporting an annual assessment on carbon for the scheme	Gareth Russell-Hughes	Update provided for next group meeting on 3 March 2022
Detail to be provide to group member, who raised the issue of stream clearance in the South West corner of the site.	Eleanor Shipton	As soon as possible, with update provided for next group meeting on 3 March 2022
Issue invites to group members for tours of Southern Water's Budds Farm Wastewater Treatment Works to understand more about water recycling.	Joel Hufford	As soon as possible, with tours proposed for Late Feb / early March 2022.