

HAVANT BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

08 February 2023

RESPONSES TO THE DRAFT WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN CONSULTATIONS FOR PORTSMOUTH WATER AND SOUTHERN WATER

FOR DECISION

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Elizabeth Lloyd – Cabinet Lead for Local Plan, Environment and Water Quality

Key Decision: No

Report number: HBC/116/2023

1. Purpose

- a. This paper is submitted to for decision.

2. Recommendation

- a. Cabinet are requested to:
 - i. Approve the consultation responses to the Draft Water Resources Management Plans for Portsmouth Water (Appendix A) and Southern Water (Appendix B) for submission to the two water companies.
 - ii. Delegate authority to the Cabinet Lead for the Local Plan, Environment and Water Quality (in consultation with the Leader) to submit any further relevant responses, including any arising out of the consultation responses (at Appendices A and B) as a result of the residents' meeting with Portsmouth Water and Southern Water.

3. Executive Summary

- a. The history of Havant Borough is inherently linked to water. The Homewell Springs are one of the best examples of chalk springs in the UK. It is incumbent upon the Council to ensure that the feature for which Havant is best known is protected for future generations.

- b. Water companies are required to prepare Water Resource Management Plans (WRMP) every five years and these are subject to statutory consultation.
- c. This report proposes a response to both Portsmouth Water and Southern Water's Draft Water Resources Management Plans. These are attached at appendices A and B respectively.

4. Additional Budgetary Implications

- a. None.

5. Background and relationship to Corporate Strategy and supporting strategies and policies

- a. As part of the Pride of Place theme, the Corporate Strategy highlights that the Council will "aim to take measures to promote and embed environmental matters and consider environmental impacts in all our decisions to help tackle climate change".
- b. Water is intrinsically linked to Havant's history and development. The Homewell Spring saw Havant become a centre for the treatment of animal skins for leather and parchment making, as well as the production of tallow and other by-products. The mineral-rich qualities of the spring water gave Havant parchment its distinct whiteness. It is said that it was used for the Magna Carta (1215) and the Treaty of Versailles (1919).
- c. This has continued since with the water from the springs now supplying most of southern Hampshire and West Sussex.
- d. Effective water resource planning is essential in striking the correct balance and ensuring that there is a plentiful supply of water to residents and businesses, that this can adapt to the challenges of climate change and protect the natural environment. Every five years, statutory Water Resources Management Plans set out each company's intended approach for at least the next 25 years.
- e. Water companies are increasingly required to work collaboratively and on a regional basis, in order to ensure that areas where water is more plentiful are able to assist those where there is less water or where abstraction licenses need to be revisited.

- f.** Within this context, abstraction licenses on the Rivers Test and Itchen must be reduced to protect those chalk streams. This led to the bringing forward of the Havant Thicket Reservoir, which has now been granted planning permission. The planning permission relates to the reservoir's use as a winter storage reservoir – storing excess spring water emitted during the winter in order for it to be used during the summer months when water is scarcer.
- g.** Since planning permission was granted, the project has developed into a proposal to further treat wastewater which would be discharged from the Budds Farm Wastewater Treatment Works. Under the proposals, this water would then be pumped to the relevant treatment works and processed to drinking water standards.
- h.** The project has been classified as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project. As such, the eventual Development Consent Order application will not be determined by Havant Borough Council but by the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities through the Planning Inspectorate. Havant Borough Council would be a consultee on the application.
- i.** The proposed responses (Appendices A and B) to the consultation raise concerns regarding the proposals and the potential for environmental harm. In addition, concern is raised regarding the uncertainties which remain.
- j.** The Leader has arranged a question and answer session with residents, Portsmouth Water and Southern Water about the proposals on 15 February 2023. There may be additional matters arising from this meeting which the Leader may wish to address. As such the recommendations within this report delegate authority to the Cabinet Lead for the Local Plan, Environment and Water Quality (in consultation with the Leader) to submit any further relevant responses on this topic.
- k.** Moving forwards, the Council should continue to closely monitor the emerging proposals and engage with both water companies and other stakeholders in the process.

6. Options considered

- a. The main alternative would be to 'do nothing' and not respond to either consultation. This is not recommended as, whilst the Council will not be the determining authority for the eventual application, it remains a key consultee and custodian of the Borough's environment.

7. Resource implications

a. Financial implications

- i. There are no immediate financial implications of the submission of the proposed consultation responses. A Planning Performance Agreement (PPA) is in the process of being agreed which will cover staffing costs of engagement with this project at this stage. Moving forwards, particularly at the stage of the submission of a Development Consent Order, it is likely to require specialist advice in order for the Council to appropriately and robustly respond. This would have a cost implication.

Section 151 Officer comments

24 January 2023

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. Any future requirement to engage specialist advice, (with associated costs), will be subject to a further report to, and decision from, committee.

b. Human resources implications

- i. Similar to financial implications, there are no human resources implications of the submission of the proposed consultation responses. Moving forwards, whilst the PPA would cover staffing costs, particularly at the stage of submission of a Development Consent Order, it is likely require internal as well as specialist resources in order for the Council to appropriately and robustly respond. This would likely require diversion of officer resource from other projects.

c. Information governance implications

i. None.

d. Climate and environment implications

i. The environmental impact of various ways of ensuring adequate water supply need to be carefully considered. This is the main theme highlighted in the proposed responses.

e. Other resources implications

i. None.

8. Legal implications

a. No immediate or direct legal implication arise

Monitoring Officer comments

Water companies have a statutory duty to prepare, consult, publish and maintain Water Resource Management Plans (WRMPs). These documents demonstrate how sufficient water will be provided to meet the demands of customers over a certain period.

In anticipation of this, they consult with regulators and stakeholders during the preparation of their plans and then publish a draft for wider consultation. As Portsmouth Water and Southern Water supplies water to the Borough, the Council is considered one such stakeholder and is expected to formally contribute to the development of the WRMP.

Any representations must be considered and responded to in a Statement of Response, which is also published. The Secretary of State will then decide whether the plans can be finalised or whether a hearing or inquiry should be held beforehand

31/1/23

9. Risks and mitigations

a. The proposals within this report constitute responses to consultations only. There are no discernible risks from responding to the consultations.

10. Consultation

a. No specific consultation is necessary.

11. Communications

a. It is notable that the proposed water recycling project is advancing. As such, it is considered appropriate for the Council to publish a page on the website explaining the proposals, Havant Borough Council's role

and linking residents to Portsmouth Water and Southern Water's websites where they can find out more.

12. Appendices

- a. Response to the Water Resources Management Plan for Portsmouth Water.
- b. Response to the Water Resources Management Plan for Southern Water.

13. Background papers

- a. None.

Agreed and signed off by:

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Elizabeth Lloyd	30/01/2023
For Executive Head: David Hayward	30/01/2023
Monitoring Officer: Mark Watkins	31/01/2023
Section 151 Officer: Malcolm Coe	24/01/2023

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