

**Deputation to Havant Borough Council Planning Committee on 20th May 2021
on Hybrid Planning Applications APP/20/00990 and APP/20/00991
Havant Thicket Reservoir and associated Pipeline
on behalf of Havant Climate Alliance and Havant Friends of the Earth**

We object to this scheme as it stands, although we accept the need for another reservoir in southern Hampshire to deal with increasing population, climate change and the need to protect our rare chalk streams from overextraction.

We call for the Reservoir to be smaller and for decisions to be delayed until firm commitments on emissions and biodiversity have been resolved.

1. Capacity

The reservoir will have an operational capacity of 8,700 million litres which will support a planned supply of 21 million litres per day during extreme drought. This will be 414 days supply. Why is so much needed? Couldn't the reservoir be smaller, retaining more ancient woodland and reducing the risk to Leigh Park in the event of the embankment failing?

2. Loss of biodiversity

13.67 hectares of irreplaceable ancient woodland and 17 veteran trees will be lost. (More will be lost unless the northern road access route is changed). 80 hectares of new woodland and pastureland will not adequately compensate. The Woodland Trust has highlighted that new planting cannot support the same level of biodiversity because the complex web of habitats within ancient woodland can take hundreds of years to develop. The cumulative loss of ancient woods across the UK is closely linked to the decline of biodiversity and loss of species, despite new woodlands being planted.

The UK has signed up to the Aichi Targets, agreeing to halt biodiversity loss by 2020 as part of the Convention on Biological Diversity. Plans to compensate for loss of habitat should be assessed against these targets, but their implementation has been delayed by Covid 19. As wholesale retrospective changes reflecting new regulations are not allowed once a planning application is approved, we would like to see this planning decision delayed until late 2022 to allow for this.

3. Carbon emissions.

From the Atkins Report, construction of the reservoir and pipeline will generate approximately 178,331 tonnes of CO₂ over 3 years. Over the reservoir's 60 year design life a further 42,984 tonnes will be generated. Atkins say that this will have a minor effect, but the emissions from each of the first 3 years of construction will be equivalent to the total emissions from 5,700 homes. This runs counter to the government's target of cutting emissions by 78% before 2035. The emissions will have a cumulative effect with others locally and nationally. Planning approval should be delayed until there is a viable plan to mitigate/compensate for these emissions e.g. extensive tree planting elsewhere, in addition to that already planned to compensate for trees lost.

4. Long term environmental mitigation

Environmental mitigation must be greater than what it replaces. Tree planting to mitigate for carbon emissions must allow that young trees can absorb far less carbon, on average 6 kg per year, compared to trees over 10 years old, which can absorb an average of 22 kg of carbon per year. A commitment to the long term ecological monitoring and management of new woodland and pasture habitats is essential to its maintenance and encouragement of biodiversity.

5. Planning conditions for the Visitor Centre

a) Its present planned location is too near the wetland site which will result in disturbance to wildlife. It should be placed further away to the south where it could still be by the water's edge for views.

b) It should be built as an example of the highest standards of sustainability with net zero carbon emissions.

6. Electricity generation

Water flowing downhill through the pipeline could be used to generate electricity.

7. Cycle and pedestrian paths.

So called wheelchair accessible footpaths can provide too uncomfortable a ride, preventing their use by disabled people. They should be surfaced with tarmac which not only will last longer but will be more comfortably usable for wheelchairs and pushchairs. Joint use paths should also clearly separate cyclists and pedestrians.

Patricia Brooks