

PORTSMOUTH WATER COMPANY

HAVANT THICKET RESERVOIR

Question	Answer
<p>1 When did Southern Water first raise with Portsmouth Water the potential for the Havant Thicket Reservoir to have recycled water pumped into it as part of the 'water mix'?</p>	<p>Southern Water raised recycled water as a back-up option to desalination in 2020. Portsmouth Water also discussed this with Havant Borough Council and East Hants District Council planning officers in 2020, as the use of recycled water was an option being considered as part of our own Water Resource Management Plan as a long-term solution to pressures on the water balance from 2050 onwards.</p> <p>Water recycling was not selected as Southern Water’s preferred option for the immediate term until late 2021, after Portsmouth Water had submitted its planning application.</p> <p>In 2020, it was Southern Water’s plan to build a desalination plant at Hythe on the Solent, which would treat seawater to drinking water standards. This would provide a new source of water, enabling Southern Water to meet its targets for minimising abstraction from the River Test and River Itchen during times of drought. At the same time, water recycling was being actively explored as a viable “back up” option and Portsmouth Water was aware of this. Under this scheme, more water would be available to take from Havant Thicket Reservoir and Southern Water would be able to transfer that water directly to its Water Supply Works in Otterbourne (near Winchester).</p> <p>The possibility of using recycled water for Portsmouth’s own supply was also included as a long-term solution in the Water Resource planning process, for potential pressures that might be experienced from the 2050’s. Both Southern Water’s option and the inclusion of the long-term options in Portsmouth Plan was discussed with Havant Borough Council and East Hants District Council Planning Officers by Portsmouth Water’s Head of Water Resources in 2020. At that time the planning process for the new Water Resource Management Plans were in the early stages (and will only be concluded at the beginning of 2024). At the time of the conversation, it was made clear that neither Southern Water’s or</p>

	<p>Portsmouth Water’s possible schemes were part of the companies’ active plans and that should they become active choices in the future, that new planning approval would be required and that it would be separate from the current plans for Havant Thicket Reservoir.</p> <p>Following further investigations and public consultation into desalination, Southern Water found the desalination scheme to be unfavourable in this location, mainly for environmental reasons. As a result, Southern Water put forward water recycling as their active preferred option in late 2021.</p> <p>At the time of Portsmouth Water submitting the planning application for Havant Thicket Reservoir, desalination was still Southern Water’s preferred option. During the planning application process, Portsmouth Water was aware that Southern Water had alternative options to desalination, including recycled water, but at that point they were simply options under consideration.</p> <p>As a result, Portsmouth Water progressed the planning on the basis that it had strong public support for the capture of surplus water from the Havant and Bedhampton springs with storage in the new reservoir at Havant Thicket. Any changes to this approved plan would require further consultation and planning approval.</p>
<p>2 I was for some time the HBC representative on the Havant Thicket Reservoir Stakeholder's Committee, can I ask why at no time during these meetings was the possibility of water recycling discussed or even mentioned as a possibility. It was also not a part of the planning application for the reservoir?</p>	<p>Information was shared about water recycling during the original planning process for the Havant Thicket Reservoir. During the Planning Committees, members raised questions about the scheme and it was highlighted that any changes to the current application would require separate planning approval, as is still the case.</p> <p>There is a written record of this in the minutes (see pages 4, 10 and 32) and information about the scheme was also shared with Havant Borough Council’s Planning Committee for consideration in this public document (see page 3).</p> <p>Much information was also publicised ahead of both Planning Committees through Southern Water’s consultation which ran until 16th April 2021. Portsmouth Water was consistently open and upfront about these proposals, answering questions with the limited information available at the time.</p>

3 At the above meetings, much was made of non motorised water sports being allowed to take place on the reservoir. Residents were told this would in part make up for the inconvenience that the building works would cause. This is now not shown as possibility. Will there be access for water sports and leisure activities on the reservoir for local residents or not?


The approved planning application includes a recreation strategy that was consulted with stakeholders and the local community. The consultation concluded that water sports should not be allowed, but that there should be footpaths for walking, as well as routes for cycling and horse riding, facilities for bird watching and a visitor centre with a play and picnic area.

The level of recreation at the reservoir has been agreed with Portsmouth Water’s Havant Thicket Stakeholder forum (which is made up of local community groups, councillors, schools and environmental organisations) after many years of discussions, surveys with local communities and learning from other reservoir sites and public parks. It is important to note that, while different activities were put forward as suggestions, Portsmouth Water did not commit to providing specific water sports as a part of this planning application.

Portsmouth Water has carefully considered a range of potential leisure activities at the reservoir site, including sailing and canoeing. As part of this process, Planning Solutions Ltd, whose team are experts in developing and managing water-based visitor attractions, were asked to review the visitor experience offer at the reservoir.



All three scenarios scoped by Planning Solutions (Low, Medium and High activity levels) were tested extensively with our Havant Thicket Reservoir stakeholder forum. The overwhelming feedback received, both from written surveys and discussions with the local community, has been not to offer large-scale public water sports, including canoeing, at the reservoir. The forum members selected the ‘Medium’ level plan, with the proviso of providing scope for future expansion. This was because it would feel like a much busier place if there was a more intense water sport offer, attract more people and put greater strain on the environment, facilities and local communities.

	<p>Portsmouth Water is now developing a more detailed recreation strategy in consultation with a Recreation Stakeholder Group. Their input will help to finalise the design of recreational facilities Portsmouth Water will offer at the reservoir when it is full and operational. This will include footpaths for walking, as well as routes for cycling and horse riding, facilities for bird watching, picnic and play areas and car parking. There will also be a visitor centre with a café, toilets and space for community and education activities.</p>
<p>4 Why was the ancient woodland felled? Why couldn't it have been kept, which could have meant a spit of land sticking out in the reservoir was retained, containing the ancient woodland?</p>	<p>The Havant Thicket reservoir was selected over other locations, in part because it had less impact on trees than other sites. The design was optimised during the planning application process to minimise tree loss. A smaller reservoir that protected the Avenue would not have delivered the volume of water required to protect chalk streams.</p> <p>Portsmouth Water was granted planning permission for Havant Thicket Reservoir, and the required removal of The Avenue, because of the exceptional need to protect world-renowned habitats, the River Test and the River Itchen, in Hampshire by providing a new sustainable source of water. Chalk rivers are some of the rarest habitats in the world and Southern Water has entered into a long-term agreement to significantly reduce abstraction of water from the rivers.</p> <p>Many years of research went into preparing the planning applications for a new reservoir, including the consideration of more than 70 alternative sites before selecting this one. It was by far the most suitable because of its underlying geology and the fact it is close to a sustainable source of water (springs which currently flow out to sea during winter) of which there are very few available in the country.</p> 

	<p>Other sites were located too far from a sustainable water source, were not large enough to supply the water required or were home to larger areas of woodland.</p> <p>Portsmouth Water also looked closely at eight potential designs for the reservoir. These included building a smaller reservoir, or two separate reservoirs on the site, however they simply wouldn't have provided the amount of water needed. Furthermore, high embankments would have been required on either side of The Avenue which would have resulted in the woodland being in shadow for long parts of the day. This would have adverse impacts upon the vegetation and ecology of the woodland due to greater humidity and a lack of sunlight.</p> <p>As a result of the need to remove this woodland, Portsmouth Water is carrying out extensive environmental mitigation works both on and off site. The environmental works being carried out on site are primarily to compensate for the removal of areas of grassland and wood pasture as it is recognised that saplings and new planting cannot replace well established ancient woodland. Separate off-site environmental works are being carried out to mitigate for the loss of ancient woodland including improvements to Southleigh Forest, working with private landowners to convert 80 hectares of local agricultural land into woodland, wood pasture and grassland and a capital grants scheme for local environmental projects.</p>
<p>5 How has that loss of unique habitat been mitigated? New tree planting is not mitigation</p>	<p>Havant Thicket Reservoir is an environmentally led project that will deliver a significant environmental net gain to the area. Mitigation started in 2019, with Portsmouth Water planting over 6,000 trees and creating wildlife corridors on the reservoir site. The project will deliver over 200 hectares of new and improved woodland and wood pasture, to compensate for the loss of 12.5 hectares of ancient woodland.</p> <p>In usual circumstances, planning permission would not be granted to remove ancient woodland such as The Avenue. Permission was granted, in this case, because of the exceptional need to protect world-renowned habitats, the River Test and the River Itchen, in Hampshire by providing a new sustainable source of water.</p> <p>The environmental mitigation and compensation works being carried out on site are primarily to compensate for the removal of areas of grassland and wood pasture as it is recognised that saplings</p>

	<p>and new planting cannot replace well established ancient woodland. Separate off-site environmental works are being carried out to compensate for the loss of ancient woodland including improvements to Southleigh Forest, working with private landowners to convert 80 hectares of local agricultural land into woodland, wood pasture and grassland and a capital grants scheme for local environmental projects.</p> <p>In total, we have committed to plant and improve more than 200 hectares of woodland and wood pasture. Portsmouth Water has gone above and beyond with regards to the commitments made in its planning application. In addition to the projects mentioned above, we are working with stakeholders and volunteers to relocate more than 200 young trees from within the reservoir footprint, as well as translocating saplings, bluebells and creating an “acorn nursery” of acorns found within The Avenue.</p>
<p>6 Previously the residents were promised that non-motorised watercraft and other leisure activities were going to be allowed (on Havant Thicket Reservoir), but why are they now told instead that they were not allowed these leisure activities in the future?</p>	<p>The approved planning application includes a recreation strategy that was consulted with stakeholders and the local community. The consultation concluded that water sports should not be allowed, but that there should be footpaths for walking, as well as routes for cycling and horse riding, facilities for bird watching and a visitor centre with a play and picnic area.</p> <p>The level of recreation at the reservoir has been agreed with Portsmouth Water’s Havant Thicket Stakeholder forum (which is made up of local community groups, councillors, schools and environmental organisations) after many years of discussions, surveys with local communities and learning from other reservoir sites and public parks. It is important to note that, while different</p>



<p>Please could Southern Water (and Portsmouth Water) explain why the promised water-based amenities are no longer part of the Havant Thicket proposal? We were originally assured the reservoir would provide a variety of water sports and other activities. Why is this no longer the case?</p>	<p>activities were put forward as suggestions, Portsmouth Water never promised or committed to providing specific water sports.</p> <p>Portsmouth Water has carefully considered a range of potential leisure activities at the reservoir site, including sailing and canoeing. As part of this process, Planning Solutions Ltd, whose team are experts in developing and managing water-based visitor attractions, were asked to review the visitor experience offer at the reservoir.</p> <p>All three scenarios scoped by Planning Solutions (Low, Medium and High activity levels) were tested extensively with our Havant Thicket Reservoir stakeholder forum. The overwhelming feedback received, both from written surveys and discussions with the local community, has been not to offer large-scale public water sports, including canoeing, at the reservoir. The forum members selected the ‘Medium’ level plan, with the proviso of providing scope for future expansion. This was because it would feel like a much busier place if there was a more intense water sport offer, attract more people and put greater strain on the environment, facilities and local communities.</p> <p>Currently a draft Recreation Strategy for the reservoir has been circulated to the stakeholder forum members. Their input will help to finalise the exact recreational provision Portsmouth Water will offer at the reservoir when it is full and operational. This will include footpaths for walking, as well as routes for cycling and horse riding, facilities for bird watching, picnic and play areas and car parking. There will also be a visitor centre with a café, toilets and space for community and education activities.</p>
<p>7 What percentage of Portsmouth Water customers have water meters? How does this compare with one year ago?</p>	<p>We currently have 105,875 water meters in use across our network of homes that we supply water to. This equates to 34% of our total network of domestic properties (311,314 households) and won’t have changed much from a year ago.</p> <p>Currently we are not allowed to charge household customers on a metered basis without their consent and therefore the demand for ‘optional’ meters has dropped off considerably in recent years. Meter options are usually requested by people living in large houses with a small family as this will save money. From 2025 we hope to have the right conferred by the Secretary of State to compulsory meter in order to roll out meters to all customers over a period of 8 to 10 years. This will help our customers</p>

	to save water and become more water efficient. They will also save on wastewater charges and energy, water heating being the single biggest use of water in the household.
8	<p>What percentage of Portsmouth Water customers are on the Helping Hand Tariff? How does this compare with one year ago?</p> <p>We currently have 12,207 customers on the Helping Hand Tariff, this compares to 11,494 customers on the tariff at this time last year. We attribute this to the increased threshold that has been introduced. Previously, households with an income of £17,005 or below could use the tariff – this threshold has now moved to £21,000.</p>
9	<p>What percentage of Portsmouth Water customers are on a payment break? How does this compare with one year ago?</p> <p>We provide figures to Ofwat each quarter on the number of new customers who are entering a payment break. The data below is for the number of new customers entering a six-month payment break from the past four quarters:</p> <p>01 July 2022 - 30 September 2022: 27 customers</p> <p>01 October 2022 - 31 December 2022: 33</p> <p>01 January 2023 - 31 March 2023: 42</p> <p>01 April 2023 - 30 June 2023: 31</p>
10	<p>The Portsmouth Water web site references the Portsmouth Water 2025-2030 business plan several times. The only document I can find is the Interactive Vision Brochure. When can</p> <p>Portsmouth Water will publish the 2025-2030 Business Plan in October 2024, when it will be issued to government for review.</p> <p>In September 2022, we published our vision for the future: Excellence in water. Always. This was the first step for us developing our next five-year business plan. Our vision set out what we want to achieve and the investment we need to make to maintain and improve our services.</p>

<p>we see the due to be published Summer 2023?</p>	<p>Customers and stakeholders were invited to have their say on our vision, both by emailing us directly and by survey.</p> <p>Our next step was to better understand what's most important to customers. We carried out a Planned Choices survey, which gave customers the opportunity to choose where we invest to further improve services.</p> <p>We'll take the anonymous results from this survey and combine them with our other customer engagement. This included targeted interviews with specific stakeholders, as well as feedback from our Consumer Barometer Panel which resulted in 700 completed surveys.</p> <p>We'll use all this information to finalise our business plan which we'll submit to government in October. We'll hear back from government in 2024, telling us how much we're able to invest in services between 2025 and 2030.</p>	 <p>EXCELLENCE IN WATER. ALWAYS. OUR 25-YEAR VISION</p>
<p>11 Portsmouth Water have an excellent local reputation. What are they doing to prevent this being damaged by association with Southern Water?</p>	<p>Portsmouth Water is working with Southern Water to investigate the potential to enhance the wider environmental benefit from the reservoir by using recycled water to further reduce the need to abstract water from globally rare chalk streams. Our support for the scheme is absolutely dependent on there being no detrimental impact on the local environment around the reservoir and our ability to maintain excellent drinking water standards. While this has been discussed at Stakeholder Group meetings and in public consultations, we will be increasing public engagement and communications.</p> <p>We will be taking a much more proactive approach and will be going out to speak to our customers directly about the Hampshire Water Transfer and Water Recycling proposals.</p> <p>We've already been using a range of channels and methods to communicate with local residents about Havant Thicket Reservoir including drop-in events, community talks, newspaper articles, social media,</p>	

	<p>leaflets and newsletters. We are going to build on this to make sure all our customers can learn about these proposals and ask us questions.</p> <p>We will reassure our customers that Portsmouth Water will not allow the water recycling scheme to progress if we are in doubt over the safety of this water, or the impact it might have on the environment and leisure facilities at Havant Thicket Reservoir.</p> <p>Portsmouth Water will be in sole control of the water entering and leaving the reservoir. We already continuously monitor the quality of water at all of our sites and would do the same here. If there were any issues with the quality of the water, the system would automatically shut down.</p>
<p>12 At present water from Bedhampton Springs is contaminated with nutrients which flow into the harbour. What is Portsmouth Water doing to combat this, will the reservoir have an impact and how would this change if Southern Water build the water recycling plant?</p>	<p>Water from the Bedhampton Springs contains high levels of nitrates. At the moment, whilst some of this water is used as a source for drinking, in winter and during times of high rainfall, much of it flows straight out to sea.</p> <p>Under the approved plans for Havant Thicket Reservoir, this surplus water will be captured and stored in the reservoir for use in periods of drought. This will result in less spring water flowing out to sea and therefore lower levels of nitrates entering Langstone Harbour.</p> <p>Initial modelling suggests that recycled water would be cleaner than spring water.</p> <p>Portsmouth Water abstracts groundwater found within the chalk rock (aquifer) of the South Downs to supply public drinking water in the area. Around 85% of the water comes directly from groundwater, sourced from boreholes or springs, with the remaining 15% being derived from the River Itchen - itself being groundwater fed. Some land practices have increased the levels of nitrogen, which flows into Langstone Harbour.</p> <p>The Downs and Harbours Clean Water Partnership (Home cleanwater (cleanwaterpartnership.co.uk)), is a forward thinking initiative between Portsmouth Water, Catchment Sensitive Farming and the Environment Agency which is taking action to tackle water pollution issues affecting the quality of ground, surface and coastal waters in West Sussex and East Hampshire. The Partnership is focused on working with landowners to reduce the amount of polluting nutrients, particularly nitrate, currently entering the water environment.</p>

	<p>A 2021 report estimates that naturally occurring processes in the reservoir will result in a 30% to 45% reduction in nitrogen loading to Langstone Harbour. This translates to a reduction of around 2,500kg of nitrogen a year to the Harbour, which will improve the quality of coastal waters in the area.</p> <p>If the Hampshire Water Transfer and Water Recycling Scheme were to go ahead, spring water would continue to be captured in the reservoir in line with the original approved plans for the scheme.</p> <p>Our support for the water recycling scheme is absolutely dependent on there being no detrimental impact on the environment and our ability to maintain excellent drinking water standards. Southern Water is currently carrying out detailed studies and investigations as it explores this option further, including the impact on nitrate levels in Langstone Harbour. We are keeping an open mind as we await the outcome of these.</p> <p>Recycled water is highly treated, purified water and would be cleaner than the spring water feeding into the reservoir. For example, initial modelling indicates that the average concentration of nitrates in the recycled water put into the reservoir would be significantly lower than the levels found in the spring water – 0.1mg/l (milligrams per litre) in recycled water, compared to 30mg/l in Havant spring water and 34mg/l in the water from Bedhampton springs.</p>
<p>13 How closely is Portsmouth Water’s future coupled to that of Southern Water? If Portsmouth Water do not work with Southern Water on the reservoir, what would the future look like for Portsmouth Water? If Southern Water are refused permission to build an effluent processing facility in</p>	<p>Water companies need to work together to share water resources if we are to address the challenges posed by climate change, population growth and the need to protect fragile ecosystems. Portsmouth Water maintains a long-term water resource management plan for our area, and this is integrated with a wider model, the Water Resource Management Plan for the South-East (Home WRSE - Water Resource South East). We are required to do this by the regulator Ofwat, and it is the right thing to do.</p> <p>In some of the more extreme scenarios for the future, we may require an additional source of water for ourselves from the late 2040s and water recycling would be one possibility. If Southern Water are refused permission to build the water recycling plant in Havant, it would not affect Portsmouth Water customers in the short-term, but a precedent to refuse applications for such infrastructure could reduce the resilience of our supply in the medium to long-term.</p>

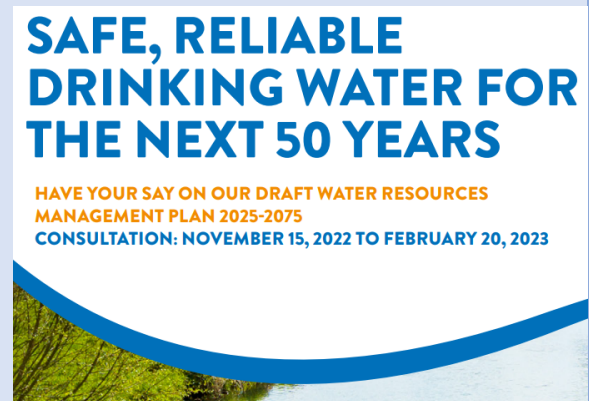
Havant how will this affect Portsmouth Water?

In 2018, following a detailed study completed by the water industry, the National Infrastructure Commission produced an important ‘state of the nation’ report about our national water infrastructure called, ‘Preparing for a Drier Future’ ([Preparing for a drier future \(nic.org.uk\)](http://Preparingforadrierfuture.nic.org.uk)). The report observed that England faced a potential shortfall of 4 billion litres of water a day in meeting demand in the 2050s and this resulted in a dramatic change in government policy, to avoid future water shortages. Leakage and demand reduction continued, but in addition there was a need for a ‘*national transfer network in England and new infrastructure, such as reservoirs and water re-use systems.*’

The water supply networks of the two companies are physically connected, with Portsmouth Water currently having the ability to supply up to 15ML/d into Southern Water distribution network both to the West into their Southampton zone and East into their West Sussex zone. Because of this our water resource planning needs to be closely coupled.

The current reservoir, as consented, will enable us to increase our water transfers to Southern Water’s Hampshire Southampton zone with an extra 21ML/d of water in the event of a prolonged period of dry weather. The proposal for recycled water currently under discussion is to provide an additional supply of water to Southern Water’s Otterbourne Water Treatment Works in similar circumstances. In the short term, not getting permission to build this facility would not affect the provision of water to Portsmouth Water customers but would directly affect the security supply of drinking water to Southern Water customers.

However, our mandated strategic planning, encapsulated in our Water Resource Management Plan, requires us to plan for a different scenarios involving variations of population numbers, demand profiles, climate change impacts and environmental considerations. In some of the more extreme scenarios, involving higher populations and environmental considerations, our planning suggests in order to supply enough water to satisfy the demand of our own customers, we would require a water recycling option for ourselves from the late 2040s. Therefore, a precedent



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	<p>against the provision of facilities to allow the use of recycled water to secure the public water supply might impact Portsmouth Water customers in the medium term.</p>
<p>14 Does Portsmouth Water have any concerns about Southern Water drilling boreholes in Bedhampton to investigate the areas where the water processing plant may go? Is there a risk that drilling will contaminate the aquifers?</p>	<p>Protection of the aquifers which present the source of our water is critical to Portsmouth Water and no drilling will be carried out that would carry a risk of contaminating aquifers.</p> <p>Portsmouth Water and Southern Water are working in close consultation over investigations into the proposed location of the water recycling plant and associated pipeline. Before any ground investigations take place, geotechnical investigations are carried out, including desk top studies which draw on previous investigations. These geotechnical investigations include consideration of the location and depth of chalk aquifers in order to identify and mitigate against the risk of contamination of the aquifers. No work will be carried out by Southern Water which would create a risk of contamination to the chalk aquifers.</p> <p>There is potential for Portsmouth Water to provide pipework between Bedhampton and the reservoir, which would have additional capacity to supply recycled water to the reservoir in addition to spring water. Advantages of this would be to reduce the environmental impact and disruption to local residents from potentially two separate pipeline construction projects, and also the delivery of significant cost savings to Southern Water customers (estimated to be around £100m).</p>
<p>15 “We need to work with customers to help them reduce their water use. If we don’t, they may become less clear on the link between their water and the environment it comes from and not support our efforts</p>	<p>In Portsmouth Water’s supply area, we have a particular issue with high water consumption. Our water is the cheapest in the industry, most customers do not have a water meter and as such Portsmouth Water’s customers are amongst the highest per capita water users in the UK. This is an issue that we will be addressing in the years to come with the help of SMART meters. Rolling out SMART meters will be supported by a customer communications campaign which raise awareness of the need for water conservation, methods of doing so along with using meters to help detect leaks and promote the benefits of reducing water consumption.</p>

<p>to reduce leaks and save resources.” I applaud this ambition but how are you doing this?</p>	<p>As we move towards universal metering throughout our area, customers will have the tools to see personalised live water usage, and we’ll be able to identify leaks and fix them using the new technology far quicker than we currently can.</p> <p>Fundamentally, water use is complex and nuanced. We are passionate about working together with our customers and community to bring them on this journey with us. Being community-led will ensure fairness and vulnerable customers who, require higher water usage, will never be penalised.</p> <p>To reduce leaks and improve water efficiency immediately, we are encouraging customers to be proactive and visit our Get Water Fit site to order free water efficiency kit, such as leaky loo tests, water efficient shower heads and discounted water butts.</p>
<p>16 I understand that extracting from the lower reaches of a river (aka Last Weir Extraction) is much less damaging to the environment than the current practice of extracting from the upper reaches of a river. I also understand that Portsmouth Water is planning to look doing this. Can you confirm this and provide an update and timeline please. IS there any chance of this work being done in time to make</p>	<p>Portsmouth Water is reviewing options including lower reach river abstraction, but this will not affect the amount of water Southern Water need. We can’t comment on Southern Waters position directly, although they will be going through a similar process as they develop their next Water Resource management Plan and so you may wish to ask them a similar question.</p> <p>With regards to river abstraction, Portsmouth Water has one key surface water abstraction point, which is already on the lower reaches of the River Itchen. The rest of our water we take from 20 boreholes drilled around 100 meters into the chalk aquifer and from the 40 or so natural springs in Havant and Bedhampton</p> <p>As part of our preparations for the next round of Water Resource Planning, we have already begun to look at a range of new or previously dismissed options. One of these options is to consider if we can move our abstraction locations to points further down catchment – and therefore leave water in local river systems for longer. Whilst there are environmental benefits to this, we would need to assess new locations for water yield, water quality and the risk of encouraging saline intrusion.</p> <p>This work will be progressing over the next three years and the conclusions of this work will be recognised in our options appraisal work for our next Water Resource Management Plan.</p>

<p>effluent recycling unnecessary?</p>	<p>The outcomes of this work may reduce Portsmouth Water’s need for water recycling in the future but will not affect the amount of water Southern Water need and therefore unlikely to impact the case for Havant Thicket. Whilst we can’t comment on Southern Waters position directly, they will be going through a similar process for their sites as they develop their next Water Resources Management Plan and so you may wish to ask them a similar question.</p>
<p>17 What does Portsmouth Water feel about the speed with which Southern Water is working to impose effluent recycling on Havant?</p>	<p>Water is scarce in the South-East, yet the impacts of climate change and population growth are increasing. Southern Water has been instructed to take less water from world-renowned chalk streams, the River Test and the River Itchen, which will leave the company with a daily deficit of 192 million litres in the event of prolonged dry weather. As a company, Portsmouth Water is committed to doing the right thing, and that includes helping our neighbours to supply their customers with water.</p> <p>Water recycling would provide Southern Water with up to an additional 90 million litres per day during periods of prolonged dry weather, as opposed to 21 million litres per day from the current approved proposals, and we will support this solution on the basis that it is safe and has no detrimental impacts on environment or leisure facilities at Havant Thicket Reservoir. If proven to be safe and effective, the Hampshire Water Transfer and Water Recycling scheme would be a valuable and sustainable new source of water for the water-stressed South-East.</p> <p>We are working closely with Southern Water to ensure enough time is spent explaining the scheme to the public, reassuring them of the safety of the water, and that all the water quality checks and modelling have taken place, before the scheme could become operational.</p> <p>To be clear, if Southern Water secures planning permission for these proposals, then nearly all of the time the water supply to Portsmouth Water customers would come directly from Bedhampton springs via Farlington Water Treatment Works and therefore remain unchanged. In prolonged dry weather or emergency conditions, Portsmouth Water customers would receive some recycled water mixed with spring water (blended water), treated to meet our usual, regulated, high standards at the Farlington Water Treatment Works. At all other times, the situation would remain as it is today. If there is any change to the taste of the water as a result of us taking water from the reservoir, this can be controlled</p>

	<p>through the treatment process at Farlington and the use of activated carbon (it is well known that natural processes in open bodies of water such as algal blooms, can impact the taste of the water).</p>
<p>18 Commendably, Portsmouth Water acknowledge the need to make water affordable for all and also the importance of making everyone appreciate that it is a priceless asset. Could you explain how Portsmouth Water will achieve both these aims?</p>	<p>For many years, Portsmouth Water has been in the fortunate position to able to supply its customers with plentiful, high-quality water, at the lowest cost in the country. This has resulted in high water consumption, in fact, our customers are amongst the highest per capita water users in the UK.</p> <p>However, the water resources situation is changing. Water is scarce in the South-East, yet the impacts of climate change and population growth are increasing. Portsmouth Water’s supply area is now classed as “water stressed.”</p> <p>Having said this, we remain committed to ensuring our bills continue to stay the lowest in the country but recognise we must do more ensure our customers appreciate the importance of water and in turn, reduce their consumption.</p> <p>Our bills currently average 33p per day. We have also recently increased eligibility of our Helping Hand Social tariff to customers with incomes of £21,000 or below per year. This was previously set at incomes of £17,005 or below.</p> <p>In order to reduce water consumption, we will be rolling out SMART meters, supported by a customer communications campaign to raise awareness of the need for water conservation. This will focus on how customers can achieve lower water usage via meters to help detect leaks, as well as promoting the benefits of reducing water consumption.</p> <p>We are also looking at more options for innovative support tariffs that link Per Capita Consumption to water tariffs in a move to help customers become more engaged with their usage and understand what is beyond essential water use.</p> <p>We remain committed to help customers become more water efficient, as well as educate from an early age through education initiatives. We are increasingly aware there is a need for us to do more in</p>



	<p>these areas; through more targeted campaigning to higher usage households, tailored support for high-usage businesses and more interactive educational resources.</p>
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