Havant Thicket Winter Storage Reservoir

Portsmouth water
150 years of quality service

Interim Report on Community and Stakeholder Involvement: Executive Summary

October 2008

ARUP

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Havant Winter Storage Thicket Reservoir

Summary of 2008 Consultation Feedback and Portsmouth Water Response

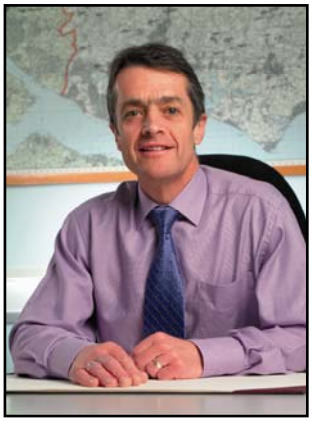
Portsmouth Water has reached an important stage in planning for a winter storage reservoir at Havant Thicket. Our draft Water Resource Management Plan published in May 2008 confirms that a reservoir is likely to be required by 2020 to help meet the needs of our customers. The long process of developing a major new reservoir which began in 2004 means that we need to be designing and planning the detailed scheme now. This work is well underway and we are pleased with the progress that has been made so far.

Our vision for the reservoir proposal is to provide an integrated solution so that the facility will not only meet water supply needs but also provide benefits to the local area. The solution is expected to provide value for money to our customers, demonstrate best practice in design, deliver environmental and social benefits and, importantly, provide opportunities for partnerships with key stakeholders and the local community.

In Spring 2008, after several years of assessment, options appraisal, outline design and consultation with our key stakeholders, we undertook a pre-planning application public consultation. We adopted a public consultation strategy that sought to provide the local community, local organisations and other stakeholders with the opportunity to clarify their understanding of the need for the reservoir and to comment on our proposals.

Throughout March 2008 we held public exhibitions and a community workshop and undertook radio and television interviews, to ensure maximum publicity for our proposals and the consultation process. Presentations were made to local organisations and we carried out a programme of engagement with local schools to ensure that young people were involved in the consultation process.

The consultation encouraged the local community and stakeholders to raise issues and consider the options proposed in relation to the design, engineering and construction of the reservoir. It also put forward ideas and suggestions for access, the landscape, conservation, recreation, and educational aspects of the design. Our response to your suggestions and concerns, and how they are to be incorporated into our proposals are set out in the summary and conclusion section of this report.



We hope that by acting upon your suggestions and recommendations we can deliver a scheme which not only provides a long term water resource, but also delivers a lasting benefit to the communities we serve. The revised Outline Plan (Appendix A) illustrates the range of facilities that are proposed to be taken forward as a result of consideration of all the feedback. The main principle behind the solution being developed is the importance of retaining the natural rural environment of the site whilst providing a range of facilities for the local community.

I trust that you will find the report's findings and our response to your suggestions and concerns useful. I very much look forward to meeting many of you again during later stages of the project.

Andy Neve

Technical Director

1 Summary and Conclusions

1.1 Consultation Process

Since 2004 Portsmouth Water has been working with a Key Stakeholder Group comprising local community representatives including councillors, local authorities, wildlife organisations, the Environment Agency, the Consumer Council for Water, Staunton Country Park and the Forestry Commission. This resulted in a preferred reservoir layout being selected for public consultation, which aimed to maximise the volume of water which could be stored, while minimising the impact on the local woodland to the north and south.

1.1.1 Publicity

- Over 17,000 letters were sent to addresses in the vicinity of the site inviting residents to attend the exhibition held at Leigh Park Community Centre, Horndean Technical College and Rowlands Castle Parish Hall between 8 and 18 March.
- Letters were sent to national bodies and local organisations, and a report on the proposals was made available both in hard copy and on the website.
- Publicity was also provided through interviews with the press, radio and local television, notices on site, and stands at local supermarkets.
- A special effort was made to involve local schools (five of whom responded) and the Havant Youth Council.

1.1.2 Feedback

- Over 850 people attended the exhibition, and the Havant Thicket website received over 200 unique visitors in April 2008 alone.
- Over 250 feedback forms were received, more than 60 of them from young people as a result of the school visits. There was a balance in numbers of responses between the different local communities
- In addition there were 10 letters / emails from organisations.
- A community workshop was held on Saturday 29 March at Leigh Park Community Centre attended by 30 individuals, with a balance between people from different communities and varying interests, to discuss the options and issues being raised in greater depth.

This very helpful feedback has been used by Portsmouth Water to develop the reservoir proposal and in particular to revise the Outline Plan. The following sections summarise the public consultation response and the proposals for each consultation topic that we intend to incorporate in the planning application.

The text in italics presents the response from Portsmouth Water.

2 The Case for the Reservoir

The main impression from the discussions at the exhibition, from the feedback forms, the letters / emails and the community workshop was that the majority of people were aware of the scheme and did not have a fundamental objection to the development of a reservoir in this location.

The main issues raised by those who expressed any concerns about the case for the development were as follows.

- Most respondents accepted the need for a reservoir, but a few people suggested the case had not been made clearly enough, and that means of reducing demand and alternative provision to meet any future shortfall could be pursued instead.

With population growth, the increasing number of single person households and the growth in use of new appliances (washing machines, dishwashers, power showers) overall demand for water is rising. This, in conjunction with the need to supply new housing, means there is now a clear need for the reservoir to be provided by 2020.

Portsmouth Water has submitted a draft Water Resources Management Plan to the Secretary of State setting out the water resource needs for the future and how these will be met using a twin track approach. This will include demand management, further leakage control and more effective use of water. The plan sets out the detailed evidence that a reservoir of the scale proposed is needed by 2020. The Company anticipate that this will be confirmed by the Secretary of State. A full copy of the draft Water Resources Management Plan is available at www.portsmouthwater.co.uk.

- The issue of alternative sites was raised at the community workshop, with a question asked as to whether the site at Southleigh Farm was a viable option.

Over the past 40 years Portsmouth Water has looked at many potential sites and options for different reservoir layouts. The outcome of these studies has confirmed that the Company land at Havant Thicket provides the most robust, sustainable and cost effective location for the reservoir, with the best opportunities for provision of environmental and community benefits. There was much less opportunity for environmental mitigation and recreational provision in association with the Southleigh Farm option because of the need to completely enclose the reservoir within steep, visually intrusive, embankments to impound the water and this created a smaller water area.

- The cost of the reservoir and its funding was raised as a question at the community workshop and by some of the young people.

An independent survey of Portsmouth Water customers was undertaken in 2007. This indicated that people value security and reliability of supply and would not want to see the level of service they currently receive decline in the future. Customers have indicated that they support the development of a winter storage reservoir at Havant Thicket and are willing to see bills rise to maintain the current level of service, especially in relation to maintaining a reliable and continuous supply of water. It is estimated that the cost of the reservoir will raise bills by between £3 and £7 per household per annum (at today's prices), with the first small increase from 2009.

3 Scenarios

Three levels of activity were described in the consultation report and exhibition, together with three early-stage Scenario Plans illustrating the possible layouts of the site and locations for specific facilities. Respondents were given the opportunity to express a preference for one of the scenarios, but also to consider how they would like their preference to be improved. The same opportunities were provided to the young people and those attending the community workshop.

3.1 Low level of Activity

In the general feedback forms there was no clear preference for any of the scenarios. Those preferring this lower scale of activity cited the importance of maintaining the natural environment, and concern about the pressure on local roads and services of larger numbers of visitors.

There was least support for the Low Level of Activity from the young people.

At the community workshop, one out of the two groups expressed a preference for this scenario, but with something above the minimum by adding a few of the features from the Medium Level of Activity (eg a small visitor centre to provide toilets).

3.2 Medium Level of Activity

In the general feedback forms there was no clear preference, but those who supported this scenario mentioned that it offered a balance between providing local recreational facilities while still protecting the environment.

Young people gave some support to this level of activity citing that the reservoir must not be too busy, but should also not be a wasted opportunity. Some mentioned that the addition of a few of the facilities from the High Level of Activity might be appropriate (eg café related to the visitor centre).

At the community workshop the second group favoured this scale of activity as the starting point, with the addition of some facilities from the High Level of Activity (eg supervised sailing for young people).

3.3 High Level of Activity

In the general feedback forms this was the least favoured scenario, but those who supported this scenario mentioned the importance of provision of facilities for the local community.

Young people gave the highest level of support to this scenario, stating reasons that included the provision of a range of activities for local people and the attraction of visitors bringing money and jobs to the area. Some of the young people suggested that particular activities should be excluded (e.g. the skate park).

At the community workshop neither group favoured this as the starting point for the reservoir design.

3.4 Conclusions on Scenarios

The responses on the feedback forms were divided fairly equally between the different scenarios. Overall it was clear from those attending the exhibitions and the community workshop that a low to medium activity scenario was favoured, with different people wanting to select a variety of uses from the activities proposed. On the whole young people favoured a higher level of activity.

This very helpful feedback has been used by Portsmouth Water to develop the reservoir proposal and in particular to revise the Outline Plan. The aim of this section of the feedback forms, and of this part of the workshop discussion however, was not to get a vote on which

level of activity was preferred, but to clarify the thinking behind the preferences so that these could be taken into account in developing the Outline Plan for the scheme.

The revised Outline Plan illustrates the range of facilities that are proposed to be taken forward as a result of the consideration of all the feedback (see sections below). The main principle behind the solution developed is the importance of retaining a natural rural environment while providing a range of facilities for the local community.

4 Main elements of reservoir design

4.1 Embankment

The reservoir will be approximately 1 mile (1.6km) from east to west and 0.5 miles (0.8km) from north to south. There was a slight preference expressed in the feedback forms for the location of the southern embankment to be further from the woodland to protect the habitat along the fringe of the existing woodland. However, others were keen to ensure that the opportunity was taken to create the maximum water volume possible.

We propose to position the embankment far enough away from the woodland to prevent damage and ensure the embankment is not in the shadow of the trees. This will create a sunny south facing slope for wild flowers and reptiles. A distance somewhere between the two options of 15 and 40 metres is expected to be shown on the final plans.

There was some concern expressed at the exhibition and at the community workshop that the embankment might not be able to cope with severe weather conditions and could either overflow or become unstable endangering local residents.

The reservoir will be filled in the winter under controlled conditions with surplus water from the Havant and Bedhampton Springs, as there is very little rain water available from the natural catchment to the north. As a compensation measure a water flow will be maintained from the reservoir to the existing Riders Lane Stream to the south. There will also be a carefully designed spillway to the existing stream to enable any storm water to be dealt with safely. Initial studies indicate that the reservoir will in fact reduce the risk of flooding downstream during storm events. In the case of an extreme event the new pipelines, used to fill the reservoir, can be utilised as an additional safety feature to drain water more quickly from the reservoir back to Langstone Harbour.

A concern was raised during the consultation by some people about reservoir safety.

It is a requirement of the Reservoirs Act 1975 that the design of the reservoir is supervised by an independent engineer called the 'Construction Engineer', who is selected from a panel of engineers approved by the government. The Construction Engineer has already been appointed to approve the design of the reservoir embankments and associated structures, and he will also inspect the works during construction if planning permission is granted. Filling of the reservoir cannot be undertaken until the Construction Engineer has issued a certificate. Monitoring devices will be installed in the reservoir banks, and the embankments will be inspected by an independent engineer at regular intervals, as prescribed by the requirements of the Reservoir Act, which is regulated by the Environment Agency. This will include regular inspection and testing of the spillway and other draw down facilities.

4.2 Access and parking

Local residents were very concerned about the potential impacts the reservoir proposal might have on traffic levels in Leigh Park and Rowlands Castle. A clear majority of respondents (79%) were in favour of the longer northern access route into the site from the B2149 Horndean to Havant road. This is the route closest to junction 2 on the A3(M) and avoids the need for traffic to pass through Leigh Park and Rowlands Castle.

Given the strong level of support for this route we have included the northern access route on the revised Outline Plan. Selecting this route also limits the potential impact the access might have on the ecology of Havant Thicket and on walking, cycling and horse riding routes within the woodland.

Some people attending the exhibition and workshop indicated that a more direct access route from the A3(M) would be preferable and should be investigated, or that a bypass route for the B2149 should be considered.

Alternative routes have previously been considered, including a direct route from Junction 3 of the A3 (M). These routes will be reviewed again by our consultants in conjunction with the

ongoing work to undertake an environmental impact assessment for all aspects of the scheme.

There was support at the community workshop for parking areas to be limited to the edge of the site (except for disabled access), and concerns that there should be no overspill parking on local roads for instance in Leigh Park. Concerns were raised about the management of the current car park on the Forestry Commission land adjacent to Manor Lodge Road, at Rowlands Castle.

It is clear from the feedback received that any parking areas provided must be well managed and controlled. The amount of parking needed will be determined by the Transport Assessment which is ongoing. It is anticipated that some parking areas would be provided at the periphery of the site, with some parking also at the visitor centre. The parking locations have not yet been fixed. The areas shown on the Outline Plan are for illustration only and will be subject to further discussion with the planning authorities and our Key Stakeholder Group once the traffic studies and Environmental Impact Assessment are complete.

4.3 Pipeline route

There was a clear preference (77%) from the public expressed in the feedback forms for the pipeline to be constructed along the red route that followed alongside the Riders Lane / Hermitage Stream, since it would limit disruption locally, and provide potential opportunities for improvement to the ecology of the stream. This alignment was tentatively supported by the Wildlife Trust. There were some concerns expressed about the potential impact construction would have on the area of woodland known as the Great Copse.

Given the strong preference expressed by the public Portsmouth Water propose to develop the pipeline route alongside the Riders Lane / Hermitage stream. The exact pipeline route will be investigated further to try to identify an alignment which can avoid the Great Copse woodland, in order to help minimise any adverse environmental impacts.

4.4 Renewable Energy

Respondents were supportive of the need for renewable energy to be used. This was particularly important to the young people in their feedback forms with mention made of off-setting the total carbon footprint of the construction, as well as operation of the reservoir. None of the alternative sources were particularly favoured, though the potential visual impact of turbines was noted by some young people and some attendees at the community workshop.

A study of alternative sources of renewable energy is proposed to cover water and wind turbines, wood fuel, solar power, and use of ground heat pumps. Factors to be considered during the assessment will include likely effectiveness and local environmental impacts.

5 Construction

5.1 Habitat relocation

Impacts on wildlife were the greatest concern in the feedback forms and were also mentioned in letters and emails. It was considered vital to provide alternative habitat for species such as dormice, reptiles, bats and nightjars well before construction commences.

To address this we propose that habitat creation and species relocation would take place in the two years before the main construction phases begin. Environmental survey work is ongoing but it is anticipated that most relocation should be possible locally, by working with the Forestry Commission and Staunton Country Park to enhance the wildlife value of adjacent habitats.

Both the Forestry Commission and Staunton Country Park have indicated a willingness to work with Portsmouth Water to achieve this. Reintroduction on to the reservoir site will be possible in the longer term post construction. For example, reptiles can be relocated on to the new south facing embankment. The woodland edges of the reservoir will provide an ideal foraging area for bats.

5.2 Construction traffic, noise and dust

General access issues are described in 4.2 above, but the potential impact of lorry movements during construction was raised as a concern during the consultation process.

Most of the material needed for construction of the reservoir is to be excavated from the good natural clay below the site itself, minimising the need for lorry movements on to the site. It is proposed that a Construction Management Plan be agreed with the relevant local authorities. This would require that all construction traffic will be directed to enter the site from junction 2 of the A3(M), to ensure that lorry movements do not take place through local residential areas.

Noise and dust were also identified as important in the feedback forms and were discussed at the community workshop.

The councils will stipulate conditions for noise and dust control, and hours of working. It may be possible to use stockpiles of soil as noise bunds to protect nearby housing where appropriate, and haul roads would be damped down to minimise dust generation. The main excavation will take place within the centre of the site. It is envisaged that there could also be some tree planting on the edge of the site in the years prior to construction to assist with screening.

5.3 Other issues

The loss of existing access routes during construction was of concern, and suggestions were made at the community workshop and in letters / emails about replacement routes and opportunities for viewing the construction activity (particularly for young people).

Relocation of footpaths, cycleway and bridleway is proposed to be to the north of the site away from the embankment construction, and consideration will be given to provision of a view point during construction.

There was some concern that not enough attention had been given to the archaeology of the site.

Further investigation is taking place as a part of the Environmental Impact Assessment work to ensure anything of archaeological interest is identified and addressed in an appropriate way.

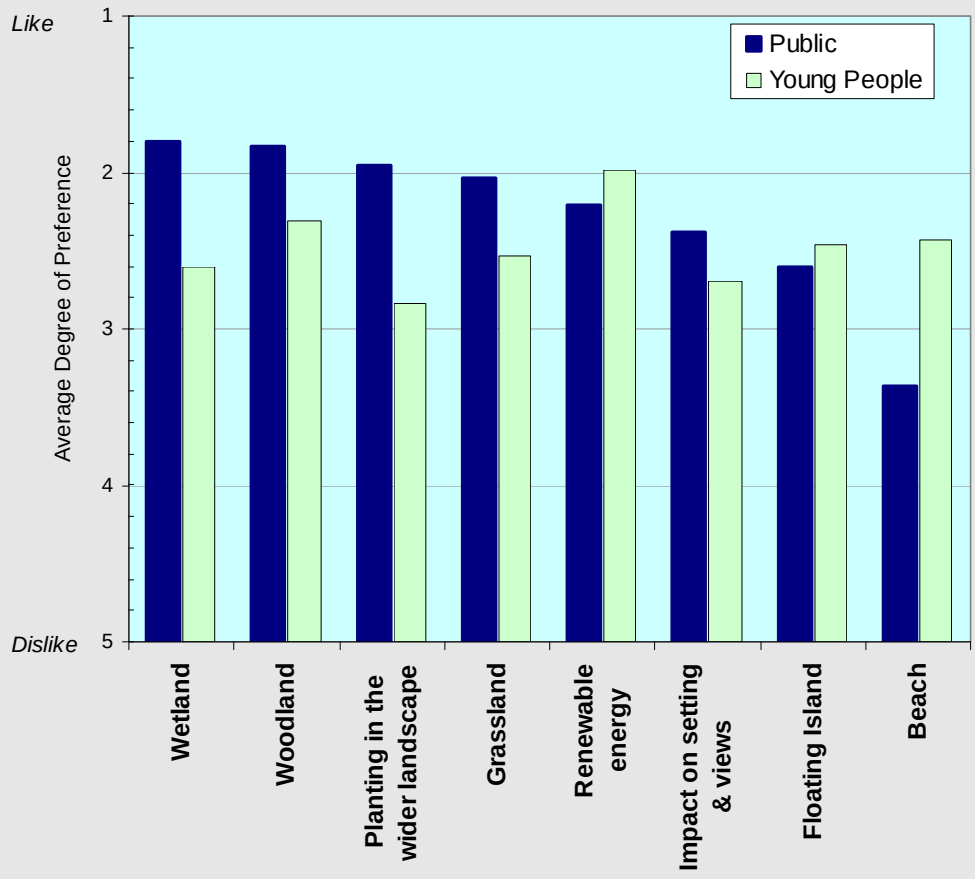
On the subject of employment generation the emphasis was on local benefits but also the potential impact of the construction workforce.

It is expected that specialised skills and services will need to be brought in. The site compound and any on site accommodation is likely to be located to the north west of the site close to the proposed new access route.

6 Landscape and habitats

The responses in the feedback forms on these issues both from the general public and young people are shown in Figure 1. Methods of enhancing the natural landscape were considered particularly important in the general responses, while young people were also interested in the provision for renewable energy (see 4.4 above) and the beach (see section 7.3 below).

Figure 1 Average degree of preference for aspects of landscape and habitat



6.1 Wetland

There was considerable support for the wetland from the general public and young people, including at the community workshop, since this together with the main water body, would attract new species to the area.

The general concern was that the wetland area should be protected from visitor pressure and from the effects of lowering the water level.

Following concerns expressed during the consultation about the visual and environmental impacts of low water levels when the reservoir is drawn down, a retaining bund has been included in the revised design. We propose that this is of variable height in order to create a series of islands that provide suitable habitat for breeding birds (see Outline Plan). This bund will ensure that the water level in the wetland area can be retained even when the level in the reservoir has to be dropped to meet water supply needs.

We plan to make provision for a large wetland area along the north edge of the reservoir, to ensure there is a net increase in biodiversity in the longer term. The design of the wetland has been changed from the consultation draft to remove the boardwalk from the main wetland area, in order to minimise the potential for disturbance of wildlife.

6.2 Woodland

There was concern about the loss of woodland including The Avenue, and a desire expressed particularly by some at the community workshop, for replacement of at least the equivalent in new planting for habitat creation, screening of construction, carbon dioxide sequestration, and softening of views towards the embankment.

It will not be possible to plant trees on the embankment itself, as the tree roots could affect the safety of the reservoir, but other planting to soften the profile is possible (see 6.3 below). It will be possible to provide strategic new woodland planting in some areas on the edge of the site; this will also help with screening. Only native species would be planted.

6.3 Grassland and other habitat

There was less emphasis on grassland in the feedback forms, but the opportunities for creating wildflower meadows on the embankments were discussed at the community workshop. The importance of seeing the whole site as an integrated ecological system, with an overall gain in biodiversity was stressed in letters / emails.

It is envisaged that the embankments will be seeded with wild flowers to create new meadow areas. This will create a very good reptile habitat. The wider landscaping will include new woodland and hedgerow planting to create an integrated ecological system. Only native species would be used. When planning the new planting, opportunities will be investigated to ensure the new habitats around the reservoir link into the wider area to create wildlife corridors.

6.4 Impact on setting and views

There was some concern expressed about the views towards the embankments if the slopes were just mown grass (see response in 6.3 above), but also of the effect of the drawdown during drought on the visual quality of the inner slope.

It is proposed that a full study will be carried out on the alternative facing material for the inner embankment slope to take into account its effectiveness as a protection material, availability, sustainability of provision and visual quality. No decision has yet been made on the material to be used. This information will be available for consideration when the planning application is made.

There was also concern about views into the site particularly from residential property (see response in 6.2 above), and of views from the embankment toward private gardens.

It is expected that views to private gardens will be obscured by distance from the embankment top, strategic planting and potentially by use of landscaped soil bunds.

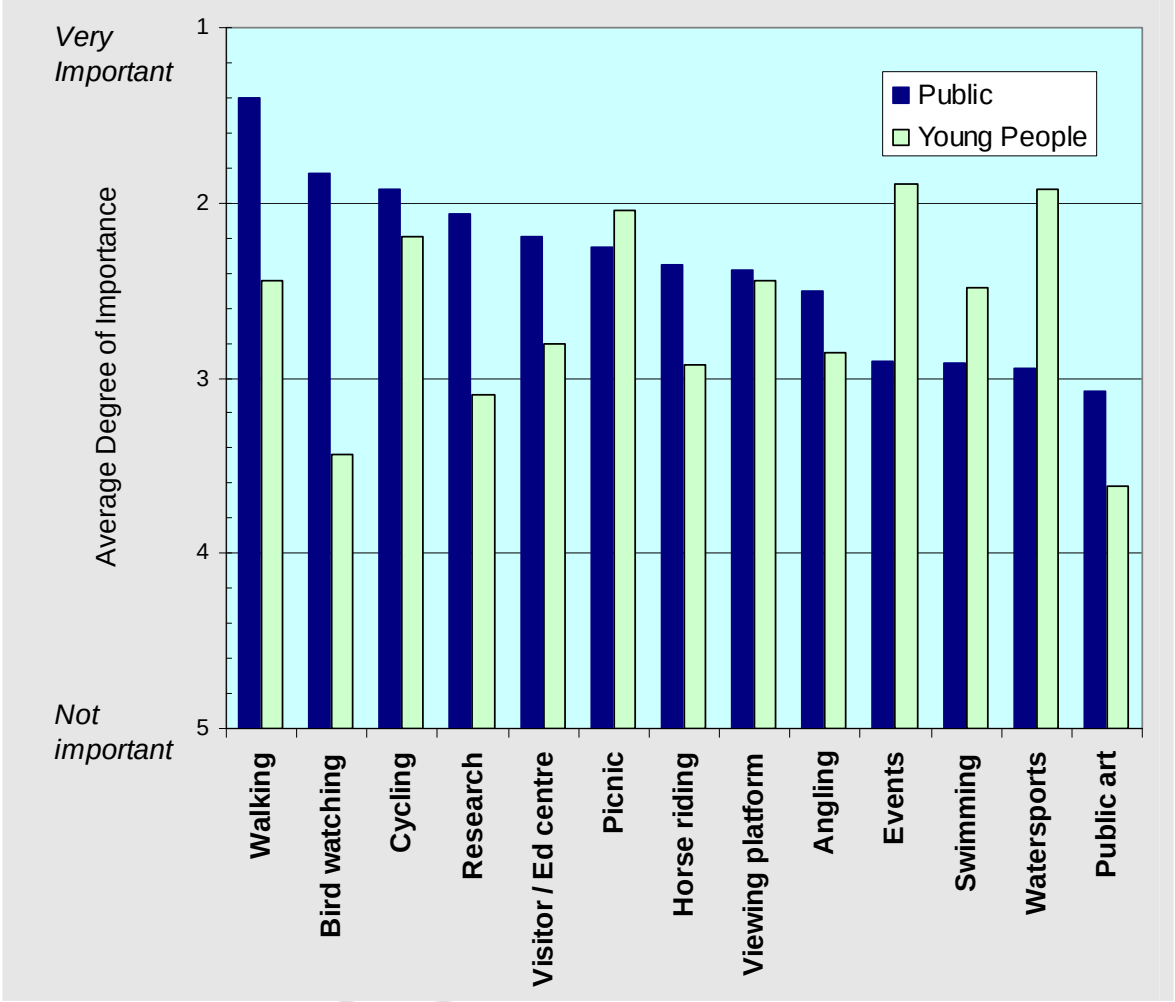
The need to consider the context of the wider historic environment was noted, with particular mention of the historic park and garden.

There will be a further study to ensure that the new landscape is integrated with the historic landscape, for instance by the consideration of a viewpoint and by the sensitive treatment of the landscape and design of structures (see also sections 7.4 and 7.7 below).

7 Recreation and Education

The responses in the feedback forms on these issues both from the general public and young people are shown in Figure 2. The quieter forms of activity were particularly favoured in the general responses, while the young people favoured the more active pursuits.

Figure 2 Average degree of importance for specific recreation and education activities



7.1 Walking, cycling and horse-riding

There was significant support from the public for the extension of walking and cycling routes, linked to a circular route around the reservoir, especially one on the top of the embankment. There was also support for similar facilities for horse-riding, though with some concern that the routes should be kept separated.

We propose to work with the adjacent landowners to provide a circular footpath approximately 3 miles (5km) long around the reservoir, with a slightly longer circular cycle route (see outline map). An application will be made to Hampshire County Council to divert the existing public bridleway which currently crosses the site to the north. In addition we hope to be able to provide a permissive horse riding route to the south, creating a circular route for horse riders. These additional walking and riding routes would provide a valuable additional facility for local people. Access points and path surfacing would need to be designed to provide easy access routes for the disabled and elderly, while excluding motorcycles.

Support was also given to the importance of recreational route linkages to the wider area, both from residential areas into the site and from the strategic recreational opportunities in the vicinity, and to the possibility of cycle hire.

Meetings with other stakeholders will take place to investigate how improved public access links into the wider area for walking, cycling and horse riding might be achieved. Cycle hire is already provided at the Country Park, but there may be opportunities for extra temporary provision on the reservoir site at times of peak demand. A separate building is not proposed.

7.2 Bird watching and angling

Bird watching was particularly supported in the general public feedback, but there was concern that disturbance to wildlife should be kept to a minimum.

It is proposed that bird watching and interpretation facilities will be provided. Hides in the wetland will be approached via specific feeder paths to minimise the potential for disturbance (see Outline Plan). Use of screens with different viewing heights will also be explored.

Angling including for the disabled, was also supported, with positive comments in the general public feedback and from young people. There was, however, concern at the community workshop about the potential impacts of fish stocking on the quality of the water.

It is envisaged that fishing platforms would be provided on the embankment, with a minimum of two locations close to parking areas at the western and eastern end of the reservoir for disabled anglers (see Outline Plan). There may be controlled stocking of specific fish species with the help of the Environment Agency. A permit system for fishing is likely to be used, as an extension to the existing system at the Country Park. This will provide a good recreational resource for local people.

7.3 Picnic, play areas and beach

There was general support for picnic and play areas (including pond dipping suggested by young people). However there was a mixed response to swimming facilities related to the beach. Young people were more in favour, with some suggesting additional facilities such as diving boards and slides. However, even among the young people there were those with concerns about the safety of using the reservoir, and the need for facilities in the context of sea bathing being available nearby. In addition concerns were also expressed about the high cost and difficulties associated with maintaining and replacing sand on an artificial beach. At the community workshop the possibility of large numbers of visitors especially at peak times was also mentioned as a concern in relation to the beach with related problems of access and parking.

The idea of a beach put forward in the consultation is not to be progressed as there was no strong public support for this. Instead Portsmouth Water proposes to provide an amenity grassland area for picnic and play to the northwest part of the reservoir, close to the main access route into the reservoir site. A pond dipping area will also be provided close by (see Outline Plan).

7.4 Visitor / education centre and research

Provision of a visitor/education centre was considered important, particularly in the general public responses. Positive comments from young people included the extent to which visitors would be attracted to the site (with positive impacts on local employment), and the use that could be made of education facilities by schools. Discussion in the community workshop was divided between those who wanted a major facility with shop and café, and those who preferred a more modest information centre with toilets.

It is currently envisaged that the visitor/ education centre would be located in the northwest of site, providing toilets, a small cafe, some storage and a multi-purpose room which can be used as a class room. Schools would have access to the whole site, including the wetland and bird hides for educational purposes.

The brief for the design of any building or structures required will include the need to ensure that they are in keeping with the rural landscape. Designers would be encouraged to consider the extent to which timber or other material removed from the site during

construction could be re-used. In addition, the layout of the building would need to be designed to facilitate future extension, in order to accommodate any future changes in the needs of the local community.

Although there was some support for the site to be a centre for fieldwork, there was no support for provision of a separate building.

As a result there are no plans to include a separate building for research on the site.

7.5 Other land based recreation/activity

An events arena was strongly supported by the young people as providing an outlet for local music and other groups; a floating stage was also suggested. However there was much less support from the general public with concerns about noise, visitor numbers and parking. The skate park was opposed by some of the young people, since there is already provision in Warren Park.

The outdoor events venue area will not be pursued due to concerns about the potential impact of noise and disturbance on nearby residents, and because there is already a facility available at the Country Park.

A skate park is also already available close by in Warren Park, so there is not considered to be a need for a further facility on the reservoir site.

There were a large number of suggestions for additional facilities from the young people. These included a woodland adventure trail, canopy walk, go ape and zip wire. Other suggestions would take larger land areas than are available within the site: rock climbing, archery, fencing, air ballooning, animal care centre, camping or other on site accommodation. An urban farm was another idea, but this is already provided at the Country Park.

Provision of a woodland adventure trail, primarily in the woodland to the north, is being investigated to encourage young people into the countryside. This could link to the existing trail now available in the Country Park.

A final group of suggested activities would create noise intrusion and safety concerns. These included paint balling, lazer shooting, helicopter rides and quad biking.

These more active pursuits are not considered to be in keeping with the rural nature of the site and will not be pursued.

7.6 Other water based recreation/activity

There was major support for the provision of water sports from the young people, though with less support from the general public. Almost all respondents agreed that motorised sports (such as jet skiing) should be excluded. Specific proposals came mostly from the young people and discussion at the community workshop:

- kayaking, canoeing and rowing boats were widely supported as being a water based use which could take place while having minimum adverse impacts on the environment, apart from concerns related to storage issues;
- model boats (electric or sailing only) were also supported, with the potential need to provide a designated separate area for their use to avoid conflicts;
- club sailing and rowing were more contentious, with concerns about lack of access for local people, and the availability of club sailing facilities elsewhere close by;
- windsurfing and kite surfing were also more contentious, with concerns about safety and about conflicts with other users and the wildlife using the wetland;
- under water activity was only mentioned by a few people (sub aqua diving; underwater viewing platform possibly associated with a ‘coral reef’).

It was suggested in the community workshop that it might be preferable to start with a lower level of provision focusing on low impact uses (for example canoeing) which can be more easily managed, and to consider other activities (such as sailing) at a later stage.

It is proposed that activities to be supported in the first instance would be for low impact uses such as model boats (electric/wind powered) kayaking, canoeing. These would take place in the west of the site. It is envisaged that management and supervision of water based activities would be undertaken in conjunction with local schools, the Country Park and/or other local organisations. The extent to which facilities would be needed to support such uses are under investigation. However, a slipway will be provided at the construction stage to ensure flexibility for the future (see Outline Plan).

We have endeavoured to propose activities that will not conflict with one another. Activities requiring powered engines such as jet skiing or water skiing are not proposed. The only exception might be for a safety boat to support a low impact activity. This will remove the need to store any significant volume of fuel and help protect the quality of the water from hydrocarbon leaks or spills.

The work with of the Riders Junior School during the consultation phase in Spring 2008 included a competition to show what activities and facilities the young people preferred. A significant number of the young people showed an island in their design with access via a bridge.

We have included on the revised Outline Plan an island accessed via a bridge. This will be located in the northwest corner of the reservoir. This would enable the public to walk on to the island to sit and enjoy the view, or have a picnic.

7.7 Viewing platforms and public art

Viewing platforms were given a moderately high level of support by the general public and young people. There was some concern that they could be subject to vandalism, and queries as to the need given that views will be available along the embankment. There were suggestions that more traditional designs might be appropriate, particularly in the context of the historic park.

One major view point feature is proposed on the southern embankment where it joins The Avenue, linking through from the historic park/ garden (see Outline Plan). The design brief will cover issues of historic context to ensure the feature is of an appropriate design. In addition, in order to provide a local amenity for Leigh Park residents, a view point will be developed on the western bank of the reservoir (see Outline Plan). Portsmouth Water is discussing with other stakeholders how the local community (including young people) might be involved in the design.

Both the general public and young people rated public art as the least important of the aspects listed in the consultation. There were, however, some suggestions for enhancement of the reservoir from the young people including a fountain in the centre, and an avenue of lights across the water. Both would, however, involve high energy use and potentially conflict with conservation objectives and other activities on the water.

The use of art will be explored with other stakeholders. It is envisaged that art will be integrated into the design of the reservoir and its accompanying features rather than as stand alone objects in the landscape (for example with respect to the design of the view points).

There were concerns raised especially in the community workshop on the future management of the site, particularly in the context of the possibility of vandalism. Issues such as the number of rangers on site, and the extent of fencing and lighting were raised

The Forestry Commission, Staunton Country Park and Portsmouth Water have all indicated that they are interested in developing some form of site management partnership for the three land holdings. Each organisation has committed to working with the Company to

develop an integrated scheme and there will be continued close working with both organisations as the proposals are refined over the coming year.

8 Consultation Response – Key Conclusions

The public response to the proposal for a reservoir at the exhibitions was generally very supportive, with the majority of people indicating that they viewed it as a potential benefit for the local area. The key concerns raised during the consultation were:

- The loss of existing habitat and potential impact on wildlife
- Potential for increased traffic in residential areas.
- The need for adequate parking provision for visitors.
- Whether there would be any risk from flooding.

As at 31 August 2008 only five specific objections to the proposal had been received by Portsmouth Water from a member of the general public.

It was clear from the consultation exercise that those attending the exhibitions, community workshop and who completed the feedback form attached great value to the area proposed for the reservoir. They were keen to ensure that:

- The rural character of the area is maintained.
- Public access to the site is maintained and improved, with opportunities investigated to provide links into the wider area.
- Damage to wildlife is minimised and mitigated.
- A wetland area is provided to increase biodiversity.
- Recreational facilities for the local community are provided, such as walking, cycling, horse riding, angling and bird watching. Many indicated that it was important not to waste the opportunity that the planned reservoir provides.
- The route selected for access to the reservoir (and for the pipeline route) is chosen to minimise the potential impacts on the local community, as traffic management issues were a key concern.
- Construction impacts be minimised.

Overall it was clear from those attending the exhibitions and the community workshop that a low to medium activity scenario was favoured, with different people wanting to select a variety of uses from the activities proposed. On the whole young people favoured a higher level of activity.

This very helpful feedback has been used by Portsmouth Water to develop the reservoir proposal and in particular to revise the outline plan. A copy of the Outline Plan is included in Appendix A.

In summary our proposal for the way forward is to:

- Utilise the northern access route into the site from, the B2149 Horndean to Havant Road, avoiding all residential areas.
- Construct the pipeline alongside the Riders Lane / Hermitage Stream (the red route).
- Provide car parking at a number of locations.
- Provide mitigation for wildlife currently using the site, including bats and reptiles.
- Create a wetland to help increase biodiversity and provide hides for bird watching, with nature interpretation.
- Plant wildflower meadows on the embankments.
- Provide circular routes for walking, cycling and horse riding.
- Provide picnic and play areas.

- Provide a visitor / education centre.
- Make provision for angling (including disabled angling)
- Provide a slipway and investigate facilities needed for provision of supervised watersports run in conjunction with local schools, the Country Park and / or other local organisations.
- Continue to investigate opportunities for alternative energy provision.

9 Next Steps

9.1 Proposed way forward

The new *Outline Plan* illustrates the range of facilities that are proposed to be taken forward, for further discussion with the planning authorities, community representatives and other stakeholders, as a result of the consideration of all the feedback. The main principle behind the solution developed is the importance of retaining a natural rural environment, while providing a range of facilities for the local community.

The set of proposals could be extended further at a later date if there were a strong demand from the local community, but only following monitoring of the impacts of the already developed uses, and in response to changing local objectives. Any such changes would need to be the subject of a further planning application.

9.1.1 Areas of work

There are several areas where further work is needed to address the issues raised in the consultation and ensure the environmental impacts are fully considered. The following work is being undertaken in 2008/09 for incorporation with the planning application:

- **Further ecological studies:** relating to the species present on the reservoir site and on adjacent land, the provision of replacement habitats and the ecology of the Riders Lane / Hermitage Streams.
- **Transport assessment:** undertaking noise and traffic surveys, assessing the potential impacts of the scheme on the local road network and designing the access routes; Work to estimate visitor numbers and determine parking needs; meetings with other stakeholders to investigate how improved public access links into the wider area for walking, cycling and horse riding might be achieved.
- **Renewable Energy:** exploring options for renewable energy use at the site.
- **Landscape:** undertaking a design study to cover the relationship to the historic environment, the visual impact of draw down of the reservoir, illustrative outline design of structures and consideration of views into and out of the site.
- **Management:** clarifying the nature of the usage of the proposed facilities and their longer term management.

9.1.2 Involvement of local community and stakeholders

Technical stakeholders (e.g. Local Authorities, English Heritage, Environment Agency, Natural England, Highways Authority) will be involved in the relevant studies. The Interim Report on Community and Stakeholder Involvement will be made available on the website, and all those individuals and organisations involved in this stage of consultation will receive a newsletter summarising the consultation response.

Stakeholders will be consulted on how Portsmouth Water can best involve the local community in the design of the Leigh Park view point facility. The Forestry Commission and Staunton Country Park will continue to be consulted on how the new recreational facilities can be developed and managed effectively.

In this context it is appropriate to reconsider the original Strategy for Community and Stakeholder Involvement (March 2008). The actions that will be appropriate up to submission of the planning application will be discussed with the local planning authorities. It is currently envisaged that a revised document will be prepared and placed on the website in Autumn 2008.

Appendix A

Outline Plan

HAVANT THICKET
WINTER STORAGE RESERVOIR
OUTLINE PROPOSAL
AUGUST 2008

FORESTRY COMMISSION

B2149

Manor Lodge Road

A3 (M)

ROWLANDS CASTLE

Castle Road

Redhill Road

Whichers Gate Road

Durrants Road

Calshot Road

Saint Clares Avenue

Swanmore Road

LEIGH PARK

Leigh Water

STAUNTON
COUNTRY PARK

39.5m AOD

35.0m AOD

32.5m AOD

30.0m AOD

minimum water level (27.5m AOD)

wave breaking wall (0.4m high)

DISABLED ANGLING

BUS 23

BUS 27

BUS 21

EXISTING

- Existing Viewing Point
- Existing Car Park
- Existing Cycle Hire
- Existing Woodland
- Existing Grassland
- Watercourse
- Existing Path / Track
- Existing Bridleway
- Existing Cyclepath
- Bus Routes
- Staunton Way

PROPOSED

- Marshland
- Reedbed
- New Woodland Planting
- Wildflower Meadow
- Access road
- Proposed Footpath
- Proposed Bridleway
- Proposed Cyclepath
- Reservoir Control House

ACTIVITIES

- Childrens Playground
- Possible Car Park Location
- Slipway
- Water Sports
- Bird Watching
- Picnic Area
- Feature Stairway
- Information Nature Interpretation
- Visitor / Education Centre
- Woodland Adventure Trail
- Boardwalk
- Angling
- Viewing Point

ENERGY

- Energy Recovery Water Power
- Renewable Energy

NATURE CONSERVATION

- Bat Habitat Mitigation
- Dormice Habitat Mitigation
- Wetland Habitat
- Reptile Habitat Mitigation

NOTE: This plan is for illustrative purposes only. All information shown is subject to further consultation and modifcation with the Planning Authorities and other stakeholders.

N

0 m 100 m 200 m 300 m 400 m 500 m