

Dear Tina,

Apologies for the delay, the updates took inputs from multiple people and we have tried to respond to the majority of the consultation comments with the updated covering statement and plans.

The Ground Investigations programme is an important step in the scheme development of the Hampshire Water Transfer and Water Recycling Project (the Development Consent Order project) and is vital in understanding the route alignment and reducing impacts.

The ground investigations comprise a large number of boreholes and trial pits extending along the 40km pipeline search corridor across multiple Local Planning Authorities. The vast majority of these boreholes have been drilled using Southern Water's statutory undertakers' permitted development rights, under the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015, Part 13, Class A(c) Water or hydraulic power undertakings:

*A. Development for the purposes of their undertaking by statutory undertakers for the supply of water or hydraulic power consisting of—*

*(c) the provision of a building, plant, machinery or apparatus in, on, over or under land for the purpose of survey or investigation;*

However, Class A(c) is time limited to 6 months from the commencement of the development. In the case of BH101 and 102, we require the boreholes for 12 months in order to capture a full year's seasonality data of the local water table. As such, we are required to apply for a temporary planning permission for the monitoring of these two boreholes.

We previously notified Havant Borough Council of the boreholes that we intended to drill under permitted development rights in October 2022. At the time, it was anticipated that BH101 and 102 would only require a 6 month monitoring period, however as soon as our hydrogeological engineers raised the need for 12 months monitoring, we took appropriate steps to progress a full planning submission for these two sites.

In respect of the SPZ, we continue to work very closely with Portsmouth Water, who manage the Bedhampton Springs aquifer. They have not raised any objections to the drilling of the boreholes. Their preference had been for the boreholes to be drilled no later than February whilst the groundwater aquifer was at it's highest level.

With regards to the numerous objections, these can be categorised into those that are relevant to this planning application, for which we have addressed in the revised materials; and those objections that relate to the principle of the wider DCO project and water recycling more generally, which are not materially relevant to this planning application. I consider that the revised covering statement adequately addresses the need for the ground investigations prior to the DCO application, as we covered in the 'Background' section of the revised covering statement:

*'The test boreholes, which are the subject of this planning application, are needed as part of our overall ground investigations to provide information on ground gas and groundwater critical to the development of the design and alignment of the proposed pipeline tunnels.'*

Kind regards

Lawrie