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Ref: APP/20/00990 | Hybrid application seeking: 1) Full Planning permission for Development of a reservoir for raw water storage, A pumped storage reservoir, with the minimum required total storage capacity of 8,700 million litres (Ml), to support the planned bulk supply transfer of at least 21Ml/d in extreme (currently defined as 1:200 year) drought conditions; Construction of an earth embankment adjacent to Staunton Country Park ; Construction of an overflow discharge/spillway at the south-western side of the reservoir and associated works; Construction of a new junction on the B2149 Manor Lodge Road and a new junction on Swanmore Road. Provision of viewing areas on the southern embankment and western edge of the reservoir. 2) Outline application for (matters to be considered outlined in Table 2.2 in the submitted Development Specification) control house partially incorporated within landscaped earth mounding adjacent to the south west embankment; together with provision of other earth embankments. Construction of a visitor centre / cafe, with storage areas and welfare facilities to the northwest of the reservoir to be used for recreational and education purposes; Provision of picnic area(s) and children's play area(s). Access routes from both junctions to the visitor car park; visitor car park comprising 193 car parking spaces and between 70 and 75 overflow spaces plus spaces for staff, coach/minibus and disabled drivers sited to the north west of the reservoir. Creation of a permanent wetland on the northern side of the reservoir and construction of bird watching hide/screen(s); recreational facilities for public amenity. Provision of perimeter tracks and a network of bridleways, cycle paths and footpaths; Construction of a slipway on the western bank of the reservoir for operational use only and a small section of the proposed pipeline (210m). | Havant Thicket, adjacent to Sir George Staunton Country Park, Reservoir and Pipe Line, Middle Park Way, Havant

Comment: On behalf of the Ramblers Association. SEHants Group

The application makes great play of the access and paths created with the reservoir project. However, there are very few new paths or access being created. The only new paths are a few paths around the southern edge of the new reservoir some of which are necessary for the maintenance of the reservoir and another for the diversion of an existing PRoW (Public Rights of Way - Havant 120/RowlandsCastle29). Undoubtedly, the new reservoir and visitor centre will encourage the use of the site for outdoor activities, walking, cycling, horse riding, etc. something we welcome. However, as Ramblers, we are more interested in the routes through the site rather than within the site and feel the application misses the opportunity to improve the connectivity of the greater path network and the resulting encouragement of walking.

The existing permissive paths and access to the site has little legal protection now or after the proposed reservoir is completed. We suggest that the paths suggested below be dedicated as PRoW so that they have more legal protection. As PRoW they would also appear on Ordnance Survey mapping and thus be more visible to people who are planning routes through the area without having local knowledge.

We suggest the following improvements to the application.

The proposed temporary diversion of PRoW Havant120/RowlandsCastle29 to the north of the reservoir site be dedicated as a permanent new path. The diversion is likely to extend for the ten years or so of the reservoir construction and so it is absurd to consider it temporary. Dedicating this new path around the north of the reservoir in addition to the diverted route of Havant120/RowlandsCastle29 around the south would give a complete circle of the reservoir. This complete circuit of the reservoir would be a popular route.

A PRoW should be dedicated to directly link the above northern path around the reservoir to the junction of Castle Road and Manor Lodge Road and onwards into Rowlands Castle. This access into Rowlands Castle would be closer to the likely continuation of routes on the far (north east) side of the village.

We agree that it is important to prevent the combined north and south access roads from turning into through 'commuter runs' for motor traffic. However this through route would be useful for other traffic and should be available as a bridleway for walkers, cyclists, horse riders. It provides access to and through the site for Horndean, its proposed new developments east of Hazelton junction (A3M J2), and also for access to The Holt woodland and Southdowns National Park. The proposed northern access road is not suitable for non-motor traffic and a suitable parallel route should be provided for such traffic. This route should be dedicated as a PRoW. Although outside the application boundary, in the future, consideration should be given to connecting this PRoW to the bridleway bridge (RowlandsCastle502), just south of Hazelton junction. This would improve access to the reservoir area from the north west.

For and on behalf of the Rambler's Association - SE Hants Group.

Peter Westron.