

Havant Thicket Reservoir – General Q&As

(Updated December 2020)

Havant Thicket Reservoir planning applications

We submitted planning applications for Havant Thicket Reservoir and an associated pipeline to Havant Borough Council and East Hampshire District Council in late October 2020.

The application documents have been published by the councils for consultation and people can now explore in greater detail the benefits we'd like to deliver for our communities and the environment and share their comments.

The documents also provide more information about the changes we've made to our plans, following feedback gathered during a public consultation in May / June 2020. This includes reducing the amount of woodland which needs to be removed and increasing our plans to create more native woodland and pasture.

Details of the applications can be found on the councils' websites as per the links below. All comments should be shared directly with the councils during the public consultation period.

- Havant Borough Council - [Reservoir application](#) and [Pipeline application](#)
- East Hampshire District Council - [Reservoir application](#).

Please note that the reservoir planning application is a 'hybrid' proposal - this means part of the scheme is submitted in detail (for example, storage capacity, embankment, access points and viewing areas), and part is submitted in outline (such as, the wetland, control house, visitor centre and car park, access routes and recreational facilities).

The designs for the outline elements of the reservoir are currently illustrative, but within certain parameters - for example, maximum height and footprint or area covered - to ensure that the impacts of the scheme can be properly assessed and the benefits guaranteed.

If the reservoir planning application is approved, we'll be submitting detailed planning applications for the above elements later on.

To support the consultation on the planning applications, we released a series of new short films about key aspects of the reservoir scheme, which can be found on [the Portsmouth Water YouTube channel](#).

As always, people can also get the latest reservoir project updates at www.portsmouthwater.co.uk/havant-thicket-reservoir or via @HavantReservoir on Facebook.

Key benefits of the reservoir

Havant Thicket Reservoir, which we are progressing in collaboration with Southern Water, would cost £120 million to build over nine years.

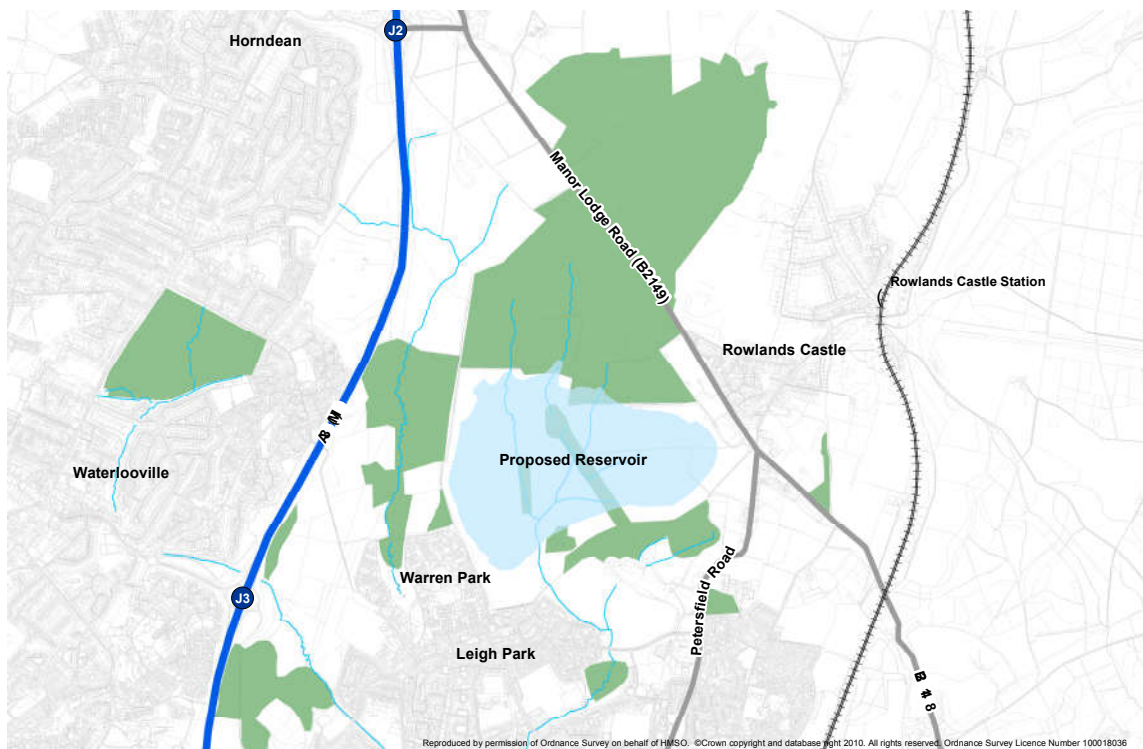
Key benefits of the project include:

- Securing vital water supplies for the water-stressed South East
- Safeguarding world-famous chalk streams in Hampshire - the River Test and the River Itchen
- Boosting local communities and wildlife by creating a new, green leisure hub with a visitor centre, network of trails and a 10-hectare wetland and bird watching area.

Where would the reservoir be built?

The reservoir is planned for a 160-hectare site next to Havant Thicket, which has been owned by Portsmouth Water since 1965.

The site is in between Rowlands Castle, Leigh Park and Warren Park as shown on the map below.



It's bordered by the Havant Thicket woodland to the north, which is owned by Forestry England, and Staunton Country Park to the south, which is owned by Hampshire County Council.

The proposed site for the reservoir is currently made up of grazed grassland, with small areas of trees and paths for people to walk and explore.

Why is the reservoir needed?

The South East of England, as a whole, is under 'serious water stress' and water companies are being asked to take less water from some of their sources - such as the chalk streams and rivers in Hampshire - to keep them healthy and protect wildlife.

At the same time, water companies need to find more water to cater for the effects of climate change and a growing population.

This major change is going to particularly affect Southern Water, which needs to find new water resources for the customers it supplies drinking water to in Hampshire, to replace water taken currently from the River Test and the Itchen.

Portsmouth Water is in a better position, as our supply area is only under 'moderate water stress'. This is because there are underground springs which provide plentiful, clean water.

In winter, much of this water is surplus to our requirements and flows out to sea, so we could make better use of some of it by capturing it and storing it in the reservoir until it's needed.

This would allow us to share more water from our network with Southern Water's customers in Hampshire and increase the resilience of water supplies in the South East.

- We already have agreements to share up to 30 million litres of water a day with Southern Water (in West Sussex and Hampshire)
- We can share a further nine million litres a day from 2024 from other sources (Hampshire)
- We can provide an extra transfer from a mix of sources when the reservoir is built - 21 million litres of water a day (to Hampshire)
- The total would be up to 60 million litres of water per day provided to Southern Water.

Overall, building the reservoir would make the whole South East of England much more resilient to droughts, which are likely to happen more often in the future due to climate change.

Why has the reservoir not gone ahead before?

We first received planning permission for the reservoir back in 1964 and we carried out a lot of work towards a new planning application in 2008.

However, at the time there wasn't enough demand for the water, either from our customers or across the South East.

Since then, Southern Water has agreed to reduce the amount of water it takes from the rivers Test and Itchen in Hampshire, to protect the environment, so they need to find new sources.

So, we're now working in partnership with Southern Water to go ahead with the reservoir to secure more reliable water supplies for the region as a whole. It will also help cater for population and housing growth, as well as the likelihood of more droughts as a result of climate change.

How much water would it hold?

The reservoir would be able to hold about 8.7 billion litres of water when full and supply an average of 21 million litres of water each day.

That's enough water to supply about 160,000 people during an average year.

What would the reservoir offer to Portsmouth Water customers?

As well as being supplied with water from the reservoir, our customers would have the benefit of a new green community and leisure facility on their doorstep.

The reservoir site would provide a new, healthy and safe place for people to visit - with a 10-km network of trails for walking, cycling and horse riding, facilities for bird watching, picnic and play areas and car parking.

There would also be a visitor centre with a café, toilets and space for community and education activities.

Our proposals for the site so far have been developed over many years with local communities, young people and organisations such as Staunton Country Park and Forestry England.

What would the reservoir offer to Southern Water's customers?

Building the reservoir would allow us to share water supplies with households in Hampshire (outside of our supply area), which receive their drinking water from Southern Water and where there is a severe shortage.

This means Southern Water's customers would have reliable water supplies and less water would need to be taken from the River Test and River Itchen, which will be better for the environment and wildlife

Our customers in Hampshire, who we supply water to, are also customers of Southern Water for their wastewater services, so everyone in the area would benefit from the community and leisure facilities at the reservoir.

What would the reservoir look like?

The reservoir would be about one mile (1.6 km) long from east to west and 0.5 miles (0.8 km) wide from north to south. It would be up to 18 metres deep and have an embankment on three sides. A new wetland would be created on the reservoir's northern edge, as per the image below.



What activities would there be on the reservoir site?

We're planning to build a visitors' centre on the site with a café, toilets and space for education and community activities.

There would also be a 10-km network of trails for walking, cycling and horse riding, facilities for bird watching, such as bird hides, and picnic and play areas.

There would also be car parking and cycle racks.

We're working in partnership with neighbouring Staunton Country Park and Forestry England, organisations we already work very closely with, to make sure the facilities and activities are a good fit with those on their sites.

What about the environment and wildlife on the site?

We are planning extensive efforts that would deliver an overall benefit for the environment through the reservoir project.

This includes looking at 70 sites before selecting the one that offers the most sustainable source of water and on-site material to create a reservoir, in order to meet the growing need in the water-stressed South East and protect Hampshire's precious chalk streams.

We are working closely with environmental partners to make the most of this one-off opportunity to benefit the environment, to create a large new wetland for wildlife, replant and improve up to 180 hectares of woodland and grassland near to the reservoir and further afield and have established a grant scheme to get other environmental projects in the area off the ground.

Building the reservoir would regrettably require the removal of 12.5 hectares of ancient woodland.

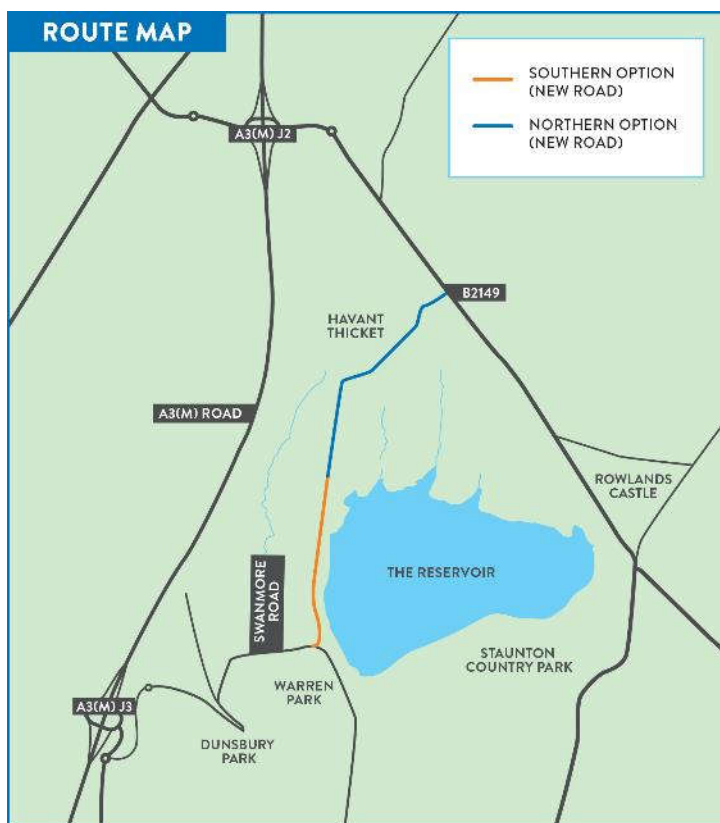
As we've updated our designs during the last few years, we've managed to reduce the loss of the woodland in three areas - by changing the line of the reservoir embankment, moving the parking area out of Bell's Copse Wood and reducing the width of the access road from the north.

Where would road access to the reservoir be?

We're proposing to create access roads from the north and the south, as per the map below, which would help minimise the overall impact of traffic and almost halve the amount of ancient woodland we'd need to remove along the northern route.

We expect to use the northern route for most of the reservoir construction vehicles and people travelling from further afield to the site, with the southern route mainly used by local communities.

We've designed it so both roads end in the site's car park and the northern route is single track, to avoid them being used as a 'rat run' - something people told us they were particularly concerned about.



Where would the new reservoir pipeline run?

We would need to lay a pipeline to fill the reservoir in the winter from the Bedhampton Springs and to draw water off to supply it to our customers when it's needed.

The same pipeline could also be used to steadily draw off water into the Hermitage Stream in the unlikely event we need to empty the reservoir.

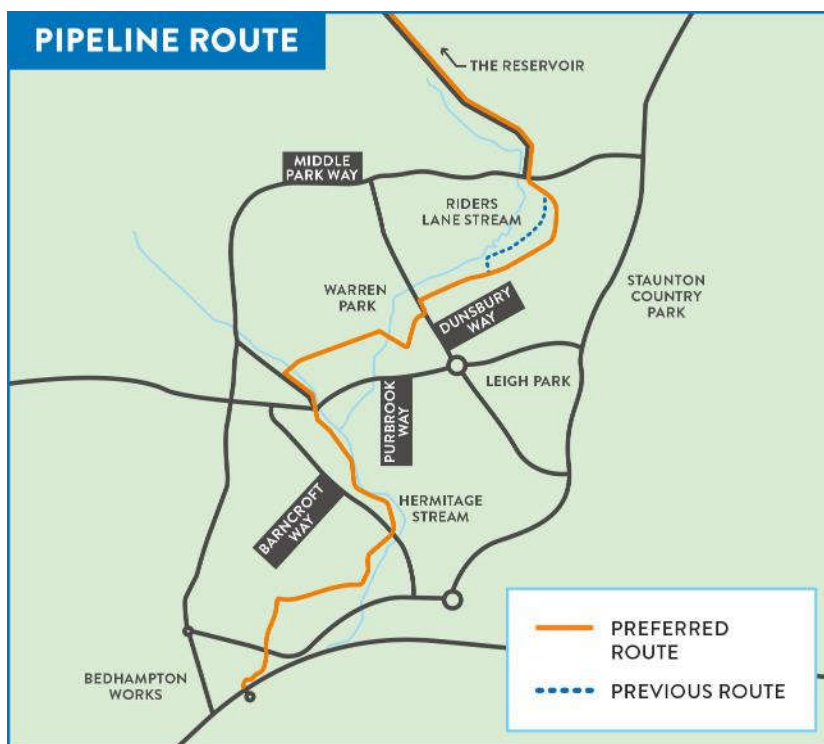
During the 2008 consultation on the project, we heard support for a pipeline route that followed the Riders Lane and Hermitage Stream corridors.

Since then, we've had a look in more detail at how we would lay the pipe along this route and the disruption it might cause, as well as considering new ways of laying pipe.

We've looked at:

- The engineering and how difficult it would be to build
- Disruption to the local community and traffic
- The health, safety and wellbeing of the people building the pipeline and maintaining it in the future
- Environmental effects and sustainability
- Overall cost.

As a result of this we've slightly updated the route - which you can see on the map below.



This route minimises the impact on communities, environmentally sensitive areas and areas of open space with trees and grass (which would be restored after the pipe is in place).

Most of the pipe would be installed using an 'open cut' method - where we dig down from the road or land, lay the pipe and then fill in the ground above it.

In some places we would tunnel underground using a 'pipe-jacking' method to push the pipe into place underground from one open-cut hole, for example, under the railway line.

Where we cross the Riders Lane and Hermitage streams, we can also take the opportunity to improve these watercourses.

We'd plan the work so it could be carried out as quickly as possible and cause as little disruption to as few people as possible.

Our updated proposed route was shared during our public consultation in May / June 2020, with all the views we received helping to shape our pipeline planning application.

What happens next

We've submitted a separate planning application for the pipeline, with a larger application for all the other aspects of the scheme.

This would enable the pipeline to be delivered more effectively and efficiently, as there would be technical planning conditions very specific to this which would be best handled in their own right.

The proposed pipeline route, construction techniques and timeline all remain as consulted on from 11 May to 8 June 2020.

The pipeline application is an 'outline' proposal and, if it's supported, we'll submit a detailed planning application with more information on construction and traffic management later on.

For the detailed plans, we'll be looking at how we can:

- Limit the size of the areas we're working in to reduce disruption to footpaths, residents and local roads
- Propose alternating routes for construction traffic to relieve congestion
- Route construction vehicles along main roads, such as the A3(M), to divert them away from residential areas for most of their journeys
- Use other areas for parking for the construction teams away from the site
- Store materials away from the working sites to reduce the number of construction vehicles travelling there
- Stagger site activities to reduce traffic
- Restrict when work can be carried out i.e. not overnight
- Consider noise insulation measures.

We'll speak to everyone again about these detailed plans for the pipeline to hear what you think.

[How much would the reservoir cost and who would pay for it?](#)

It would cost about £120 million to plan, build and fill the reservoir with water.

The scheme would be funded by payments from Southern Water to purchase the water it needs to supply its customers. Southern Water has considered a number of options to supply water to its customers and the reservoir is considered to be very good value.

Only Southern Water customers who receive drinking water supplies from them will have the cost of the reservoir reflected in their bills. So, this does not include our customers who receive drinking water from us and wastewater services from Southern Water.

Portsmouth Water already has the lowest water bills in the country (£100 on average).

[What is new and innovative about this reservoir?](#)

This would be the first new reservoir to be built in the South East since the 1970s.

The Government is currently calling for water companies to invest in more projects to help supply water, such as reservoirs and regional transfers. Projects like this are needed to secure reliable water supplies for the future, alongside reducing the amount of water lost through leaks and encouraging people to use less water.

This will help the country tackle extremes in weather such as droughts, which are likely to happen more often and be more serious as our climate changes. It will also help us provide water supplies to more customers in the future as the population grows in the UK.

The reservoir was selected as part of work carried out by the Water Resources South East (WRSE) group, which includes six water companies in the region and their regulators. It is one of a collection of schemes which could deliver more than 15 million litres of water each day.

The reservoir would be the first regional scheme of this type to be developed in collaboration between two companies (Portsmouth Water and Southern Water) for the greater good of the region and environment.

[When would the reservoir and pipeline be built?](#)

We submitted planning applications for the reservoir and its associated pipeline to Havant Borough Council and East Hampshire District Council in late October 2020.

The application documents have been published for consultation, enabling people to explore in greater depth the benefits we'd like to deliver for our communities and the environment for decades to come.

The documents also provide more information about the changes we've made to our plans, following feedback gathered during a public consultation in May / June 2020. This includes reducing the amount of woodland which needs to be removed and increasing our plans to create more native woodland and pasture.

Details of the applications can be found on the councils' websites as per the links below. All comments should be shared directly with the councils during the public consultation period.

- Havant Borough Council - [Reservoir application](#) and [Pipeline application](#)
- East Hampshire District Council - [Reservoir application](#).

A decision on the planning applications is expected to be made in Spring 2021. If the applications are successful, the timeline would be as is set out further below.

Please note that the reservoir planning application is a 'hybrid' proposal - this means part of the scheme is submitted in detail (for example, storage capacity, embankment, access points and viewing areas), and part is submitted in outline (such as, the wetland, control house, visitor centre and car park, access routes and recreational facilities).

The designs for the outline elements of the reservoir are currently illustrative, but within certain parameters - for example, maximum height and footprint or area covered - to ensure that the impacts of the scheme can be properly assessed and the benefits guaranteed.

If the reservoir planning application is approved, we'll be submitting detailed planning applications for the above elements later on.

Projected timeline

2021-2022:

- Ongoing creation of new woodlands and habitats for wildlife migration
- Prepare planning applications for the detailed design of the reservoir operational and visitor facilities, access and recreational routes and the pipeline route
- Build the access roads
- Start work to prepare the site
- Divert paths
- Community engagement.

2023-2026:

- Dig out the clay and move within the site to shape the reservoir bowl
- Build the embankment
- Lay the pipeline which will transfer the water from the springs to the reservoir
- Community engagement.

2027-2029:

- Create a new network of paths
- Pump water from the springs to fill the reservoir (during winter)
- Build the visitors' centre and other facilities
- Open to the public.

How are you involving local residents and communities and other organisations?

During 2019 and 2020, we carried out a wide range of activities to raise people's awareness about the reservoir project and encourage them to find out more and tell us their views on a variety of issues related to the scheme.

This included holding a public consultation during May / June 2020, to help inform the content of our planning applications.

Our activities over the last two years have included the following:

- We sent out a letter from Portsmouth Water CEO Bob Taylor in October 2019 to 27,000 local homes and businesses to tell them about the reservoir and direct people to where they can find out more
- We followed this up during our 2020 public consultation, with promotional leaflets distributed to 50,000 properties around the proposed reservoir site
- We carried out customer research in January and July 2020 to gauge people's attitudes on the reservoir, with the vast majority of those surveyed supportive of the project
- We set up a dedicated Facebook page and detailed web-pages for Havant Thicket Reservoir, enabling people to learn more and get in touch to raise queries
- During our public consultation in May / June 2020, we had over 102,000 page impressions on our Facebook page and almost 4,200 visits to our consultation website
- We held a series of public exhibition events in November 2019, allowing us to have face to face discussions with local residents
- During our 2020 public consultation, to keep everyone safe during the coronavirus pandemic, we held seven public webinars, with a total of more than 150 attendees 'on the day' and the recordings of the sessions viewed online on 250 occasions after the events
- We continue to liaise closely with a wide range of community representatives, via our dedicated Havant Thicket Reservoir stakeholder group and other channels, to get their input into our proposals. For example, we've been talking to local MPs, councillors, council officers, environmental and community groups and organisations like Forestry England, the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust, and Staunton Country Park (Hampshire County Council) as well as key bodies including Natural England and the Environment Agency.

Do people support the reservoir?

We have carried out detailed research with people living locally to the proposed reservoir site, most recently in July 2020.

The vast majority, 99%, of those surveyed then said they are supportive of the reservoir. 99% of people are also behind the environmental plans we want to deliver via the reservoir project.

Following our public consultation during May and June, we published a [‘You said, we did’ report](#), setting out a summary of the feedback we received and how those opinions have shaped our plans.

The report showed the consultation was a great success, with hundreds of people having their say online, through social media, by post and phone, and showing strong support for this important project.

How can I find out more?

You can get the latest reservoir project updates at www.portsmouthwater.co.uk/havant-thicket-reservoir or via @HavantReservoir on Facebook.

If you’d like to ask questions, share your views or invite us to give a talk you can get in touch via email to havantthicket@portsmouthwater.co.uk or on by messaging us on Facebook.

You can also phone us between 9am and 4.30pm (Mon-Fri) on 02392 499888 or follow our updates on Twitter via [@PortsmouthWater](#).

What else are we doing to secure water?

It’s important we make the best use of the supplies we already have, so we can leave as much water as possible in rivers and underground to support our environment and wildlife.

Filling the reservoir with water which would normally flow out to sea in winter is one way to do this, but we’re also planning to become more efficient with our existing supplies.

Leakage

It’s really important to you and to us that we lose as little water as possible through leaks.

We’ve set ourselves challenging targets to reduce leakage by 20% by 2025 and by 50% by 2050.

We’re making good progress - in 2019/20, we cut leakage in our area to its lowest ever level, a reduction of 19%, putting us up among the best-performing water companies in England and Wales on this issue.

We’re continuing to trial new technology to help us find and fix leaks more quickly and investing millions of pounds to improve things further.

Saving water

We’re also helping our customers to use water more efficiently in their homes, to bring down average daily water use.

We’re doing this by sharing advice and water-saving products. Find out more at portsmouthwater.co.uk.

Metering

We'll also be encouraging more customers to have water meters installed - particularly where this will save money on their water, wastewater and energy bills.

We're planning to install 3,000 'SMART' meters by 2025, to give customers much more information on their water use and opportunities to save. Find out more about switching to a meter at portsmouthwater.co.uk.