

14th December 2020

Havant Borough Council,
Public Service Plaza,
Civic Centre Road,
Havant PO9 2AX

Havant Thicket Reservoir planning application APP/20/00990. November 2020

1. Introduction

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this planning application.

The proposal to construction the reservoir is supported as are many of the associated aspects. Comments are limited to opportunities for cycling and walking that might improve the health and well-being of the local community.

2. Present position & proposed evolution of routes during development

Cycling is currently permitted on Havant Thicket and Staunton CP in accordance with HCC SCP-LPG Map. See [STAUNTON 6806 Farm and LPG - Hampshire](#) Permissive routes on Havant Thicket have been promoted as easy mountain bike routes. Most are in reasonable condition for that purpose and all are away from traffic. Cycle routes connecting the site to the outside world are shown on Havant BC cycling map. See [Havant area cycle map \(pdf 9.2 mb\)](#).

The table lists routes & tracks on & to the site, their present state and proposed future role.

Use of the site will help local communities to consider it part of their domain and help to prevent damage.

Track/route	Present state	Will become
North south service track, along the eastern edge of Bell's Copse	Good base, reasonably dry and free of mud. Rough to cycle.	Part of access road.
East West service track from Castle Road to Bells Copse.	Reasonably dry and free of mud but rough to cycle.	Diverted during construction. Part of active user's loop after reservoir completion.
North / south track parallel to B2149 between Red Hill & Castle road.	Compressed surface rough but mainly dry & mud free	Remains part of active user loop.
North / south track parallel to B2149 from Castle road to north of site.	Poor surface can get wet & muddy but pleasant situations.	Seems to be being abandoned.
Diversion Loop on Castle Rd., to Bell's Copse Track during reservoir construction.	Experience is that diversion get boggy in wet weather raising concern that the diversion might not work.	Returns to being pedestrian track.
Track along north boundary of Thicket	Patched up surface. Often wet & muddy. Good views north.	Part of access road.
BW121	Has compressed surface in good condition.	Becomes part of Access road
BW 120 bridleway across wet meadow that will be	It's too wet to cycle all the year.	Moved to south bank of reservoir giving a more direct & better

moved to south bank of Reservoir from what will become centre of reservoir.		connected route. Proposed loose gravel surface will discourage use by many including disabled people & children cycling. Asphalt or Tarmac surfaces would increase use & reduce maintenance costs.
BW120 west of reservoir Outside PWC site.	Poor state. Rough surface, overhanging vegetation, mud & steep incline.	Most direct route to Cowplain but condition & steep incline limit use.
Permissive track south from BW120 at Red Hill to Staunton CP entrance. Outside PWC site.	Surface badly damaged. With deep ruts, mud & water. Parts feels unsafe to cycle. Old Tarmac on steep section.	Links BW120 to Petersfield Rd., off road cycle way to Havant Station. Application says it will be updated. Tarmac or Asphalt surface is essential.
BW123 from Calshot Rd., to Cowplain (with cycle links to Waterlooville, Horndean & Denmead.) Plus, off road cycle route south from Calshot Rd. to Havant College. Outside PWC site.	BW123's surface is rough, loose & badly rutted with mud & standing water. Surface & drainage need replacing. When in good condition it was used by large numbers of cyclists & walkers, including children. Route south is in Good state.	Combined route is shown in draft Havant LCWIP as NW/SE strategic cycle route across Borough. Off road link over A3(M) into Cowplain with only moderate inclines.
B2149 to Horndean. A gap of about 300m from planned north entrance to pavement being provided for East of Horndean site. Outside PWC site.	Traffic on B2149 is gradually increasing. Cycling on B2149 has been unrealistic for almost all the day since about 2015. There is no alternative direct route.	This link or an off road route west of East of Horndean development is needed to re-instate 2 way cycle commuting between Horndean & employment areas in Havant/Emsworth.
Pedestrian crossing is probably needed at Red Hill/ B2149 junction. It's the most direct access for most from Rowlands Castle	Crossing road at roundabout is difficult for cyclists & pedestrians & B2149 traffic is increasing. Outside PWC site.	The direct link via BW120 from Rowlands Castle to Warren Park & Cowplain will increase numbers crossing road at this point.

3. Existing use of Thicket tracks.

The present tracks were built to service the site & several have been used as easy mountain bike routes. Most are in reasonable condition for that purpose. All are away from traffic. Many people, including children, use the tracks to improve their cycling competence & confidence and becoming more likely to cycle to school or work. Also a few people cycle commute across the site and along BW123 from Rowlands Castle & Westbourne to Waterlooville. The easy mountain bike capacity should be retained as it's the only facility of its type in South East Hampshire.

4. Comments on proposals in application

Retention of tracks used for easy mountain biking is supported, noting that the length of track available for easy mountain biking will be significantly reduced even with the addition of a refurbished permissive track to Staunton CP entrance from BW120 at Red Hill.

Moving BW120 to the south bank of the reservoir is supported as is the proposed 4m wide maintenance track that will minimise conflict between user groups, encourage people to visit the site, increase cycling and walking. It could be a useful disability route especially from the Swanmore Road gate access. A small number of people cycle commute across the Thicket from Rowlands Castle and Westbourne to Waterlooville using BW123 across the A3(M).

The new BW120 would be a more direct and easier cycled route. Numbers commuting will increase especially if BW123 is also improved.

It's understood that it's proposed to surface BW120 track with loose gravel. That would be inappropriate for an urban cycle/walking route between sizable communities. The use of loose gravel would contravene standards described in the Department for Transport Local Transport Note 1/20, which indicates that a sealed Asphalt or Tarmac surface would be essential. Also, HCC's Path surfacing design standard dated 2020 acknowledges that urban paths such as this need a 'Tarmac' surface.

The permissive route between BW120 and Staunton CP entrance could be an attractive and well used active travel route linking to the present route from Havant Station to Staunton CP. To achieve that will need an Asphalt or Tarmac sealed surface as described in the previous paragraph and also as it has a steep incline that often has running water. If it remains as it is or gets a loose gravel surface it's likely to be avoided by most potential users.

There's confusion in the application as to whether the track between Castle Road and Bell's Copse will be accessible for cycling once the reservoir is complete. The Design and Access statement page 52 para 6.79 says: "Cyclists: There will be new cycle trails around the reservoir and therefore the provision of adequate bike parking and trail materials to be considered." Paragraph 6.84 says: The longest route would be 5.5km. A distance that would need to encompass most of the site including the reservoir. The Reservoir outline master plan shows the section of the Castle road to Bell's Copse track to be for only pedestrian use. **Clarification is needed.** We had understood it would be open to cyclists as at present.

Several routes just outside the site and detailed in the table above have a bearing on numbers of people will be able to cycle or walk into the site. Action is needed to open them up with BW123 from Cowplain being the highest priority.

5. Recommendation

The application to build a reservoir on the Thicket site is supported. To maximise visitor numbers and make the site as successful as possible the comparatively minor changes detailed above need to be undertaken. It's considered that the proposal does not fully meet the requirements of The Havant BC local Plan, clause DM11: Planning for More Sustainable Travel: The council will seek to ensure that every opportunity is taken to increase integration of sustainable travel modes and availability of non-motorised modes by appropriate measures including: 1. Securing on-site and/or off-site interventions that promote integrated travel and access by non-motorised modes, in respect of track surfaces and especially BW120. (i.e., It fails to provide safe, suitable and convenient access for all potential users regarding the new section of BW120 & the link from it to Staunton CP entrance)



A Cycling UK local campaigner.