

Email to Lewis Oliver 16 April 2021

Local Planning Authority (EHDC & HBC) re Havant Thicket Reservoir APP/20/00990

Objections & request for conditions on revised application

Thank you for notifying me that additional information had been provided by the applicant and that there was a new period of consultation. The additional information provided on the southern access, construction management, traffic management, improvements proposed to existing access points, off site biodiversity mitigation and compensation is helpful, but does not address all of the concerns raised by stakeholders, councillors or myself in previous comments.

While I continue to support the development of the reservoir, following submission of additional information, I wish to set out my objections and areas where I believe planning conditions need to be applied to control the development.

While I support the provision of a Visitor Centre, I object to the outline box showing the Visitor Centre Location Zone (VCLZ) on the NW Corner Plan, which is shown as extending a long way out into the wetland conservation area. I note that the wetland specialists who sat on the Wetland Specialist Stakeholder Group have also objected to the VCLZ shown. The LPA should not approve the VCLZ box currently shown, instead the LPA should apply a planning condition to prevent the Visitor Centre being located within the wetland, and instead restrict the outline location zone box for the Visitor Centre to the extent of the wetland edge on the west side of the reservoir, where it will still have great views over the reservoir and provide excellent educational opportunities. Extending the VCLZ out into the wetland conservation area is not necessary or appropriate. Allowing the visitor centre to be built within the wetland would take up valuable wetland space, cause disturbance to the wetland conservation area (noise & litter), reduce biodiversity net gain, restrict the future use of the visitor centre and flexibility for expansion.

I also object to the current concept design set out for the Visitor Centre. The LPA should require a more intelligent environmentally led design, which is in keeping with the rural and heritage character of the area for both the Visitor Centre & education hide. As indicated by the police both buildings need to be much more robust to anti-social behaviour in terms of their layout and the materials to be used during construction. The LPA should clarify the size of the education hide as 10m x 20m, as the information presented is inconsistent.

The Capital Grant Scheme proposed for off site mitigation/ compensation biodiversity projects is welcome, but the value should be confirmed as £1.2 million (inconsistent in the text). The start date must be revised to ensure project funding is initiated as soon as the development commences when habitats/ species will be lost or impacted and not upon completion of the reservoir filling (2029) as currently proposed.

There should be a requirement for the newts and frogs in Upper Lake to be relocated.

I object to the width of the southern access road (6m). As a secondary access route for local visitor traffic only there is no reason for it to be much wider than the main northern access which is only 3.65m wide. There are many benefits to limiting the width as set out in my previous comments, including reducing traffic speed in what will be a recreational area.

While the commitment from the applicant to provide a physical barrier within the car park to prevent the creation of a rat run is welcome, there did not appear to be a commitment to provide gates at the entrance to the north and south access to prevent vehicle access to the site at night. The provision of gates to be locked at night on the south and north access should be a requirement of any permission granted.

To address concerns about motorcycle access a planning condition should be included to require the provision and maintenance of an appropriate horse and cycle friendly barrier at the entrance to bridleway 121 off Swanmore Road before the development commences. The LPA's need to make sure that measures are specifically required to ensure adequate barriers and fencing do form part of the detailed design to protect the woodland habitat, ecology, health and safety of recreational users.

I welcome confirmation that there will be a circular route for cyclists and horses. A planning condition should require the detailed design to include a minimum 4m wide surfaced robust all weather path construction for all multi-user routes at the site.

I attach as Appendix A more detailed comments on these and other matters. I would be grateful if you could add this to the documents available on the website.

Yours sincerely,



Enclosure

Appendix A sets out comments under the following topic headings;

- 1.0 Site Access
- 2.0 2.0 Traffic Management Plan (HTR-ATK-XX-XX-RP-Z-0077 dated 31/03/21)
- 3.0 Site Management
- 4.0 Travel Plan
- 5.0 Visitor Centre
- 6.0 Implementation Plan for Off Site Biodiversity Mitigation & Compensation
(HTR-ATK-XX-XX-RP-T-0003 dated 1/04/21)
- 7.0 Other previous comments not yet addressed by the applicants additional information

1.0 Site Access

1.1 Southern access route only to be used for local visitor traffic

It is good that the latest information confirms that the southern access will only serve as;

- a secondary route for local visitor traffic only, it will not be sign posted as a reservoir access,
- as a minor construction access, accommodating only a 6 month period of construction traffic for the northern third of the pipeline route which would generate limited HGV traffic (15 departures and 15 arrivals a day along Swanmore Road)
- the access for a short period for the construction of the reservoir site compound & associated utility links.

This clarification and assurance is very welcome given the residential nature of Swanmore Road and previous commitments made by P.Water not to bring the construction or visitor traffic through a residential area.

A planning condition is required which needs to be very carefully worded to ensure that the southern access cannot be used as the main construction or visitor access now, or at a later date in the future.

To minimise and control the impact of construction and operational traffic on residential areas the LPA should include planning conditions which require that prior to the commencement of development the submission, approval, implementation and monitoring of a detailed;

- **Traffic Management Plan**
- **Construction Environmental Management Plan**

1.2 Wider southern access route is not justified?

Despite previous concerns expressed by the Highway Authority, local councillor the latest information provides no explanation or justification as to why the southern access needs to be a 6m wide two way carriageway?

Why does the southern access need to be a two way carriageway which is 6m wide, with a 4m wide operational access track immediately alongside, when the main sign posted northern construction and visitor access will only be a 3.65m single lane carriageway with passing places to enable two way access? This makes no sense. As explained in my original response to the planning application (Section 1.1 & 2.1) submitted on 7/12/20 there are many advantages to revising the design of the secondary southern access route to be no wider than the main northern access. Having a narrower southern access would provide a more natural rural gateway to the site, reduce traffic speed, reduce urbanisation of the site helping to maintain the rural character and provide more space for landscape planting to screen the road from impacting upon heritage views.

It is clear in the submission that the northern access is kept as narrow as possible to minimise the impact on Ancient Woodland, which is understood. But if a 3.65m road with passing places is big enough to serve as the main construction and visitor access, why should the secondary southern access be any wider? I understand that there was a previous suggestion that the 2 way carriageway in the south may be needed for emergency access. However, this is not a valid argument as emergency vehicles can enter via the north or the south, or if the southern access were blocked emergency vehicles could also be directed via the 4m wide operational access track which will run alongside the southern access. The operational access track construction will be built to accommodate large vehicles to facilitate future embankment maintenance, so it could easily accommodate emergency vehicles if needed.

I object to the width of the southern access road. Unless there is a robust justification provided for a wider southern access the LPA should require through condition that the southern access is constructed no wider than 3.65m with passing places.

1.3 Provision of a physical barrier along the dual access route to prevent creation of a rat run

To address significant concerns raised by the Police, Highway Authority, local councillors and the public regarding the creation of a rat run / through route the latest information set out in Technical Note HTR-ATK-XX-XX-RP-Z-0075 (Section 2.4) states that; Portsmouth Water is willing to commit at this outline stage to provision of a physical barrier within the car park to ensure visitors cannot travel between the north and south access. This commitment is welcome.

However, the revised southern access route drawing (HTR-ATK-AR-RE-DR-D-0005) submitted at the same time as the Technical Note does not show an indicative location for the new physical barrier and the disabled parking is still only shown in the south side of the car park. With the provision of a physical barrier disabled parking should be shown on the north and south side of the car park.

If the drawing is not to be updated to show an indicative location for a physical barrier and revised provision for disabled parking then this should be required by a planning condition.

1.4 Night time barriers need to be provided at the entrance to the north and south access route

I could not find any details in the latest information committing to the provision of robust gates on the north and south access roads to prevent night time vehicular access to the site. This is essential to protect the night time ecology from disturbance and to minimise the risk of anti-social behaviour. Gates are not shown on the revised southern access route drawings and are not mentioned in Technical Note HTR-ATK-XX-XX-RP-Z-0075.

Local councillors, Rowlands Castle Parish Council and members of the public have highlighted the needs for robust gates to prevent vehicle access to the site at night. My original response to the planning application (Section 1.3 & 2.3) submitted on 7/12/20 also refers. Providing gates is a necessary part of the biodiversity mitigation strategy, Section 4.3.2 of the Outline Biodiversity Mitigation & Compensation Strategy refers.

A planning condition should require the provision and maintenance of robust gates at the entrance to both the north and south access roads to prevent vehicle access to the reservoir site at night. The condition should require the time of day that the gates will be locked to be agreed in writing with the LPA.

Note 1: The car park is likely to need to be kept open for recreational access for a longer period of time each day than the visitor centre is open, to allow for early morning and early evening dog walking, jogging etc. However, the barriers must be closed during the hours of darkness.

Note 2: The Highway Authority, local councillors and RCPC have all previously expressed concerns about the potential increased risk of on street parking, a planning condition was suggested by the applicant in the response to concerns raised by the Highway Authority.

- **Will the LPA apply a planning condition to address street parking?**

1.5 No commitment to measures to prevent motor cycle access / abuse at the site?

Despite this issue being raised by the Police, Highway Authority, local councillors, Rowlands Castle Parish Council, the public and in my original comments (Section 1.6 & 2.6) submitted on 7/12/20, no measures have been proposed to address these concerns. Simply referring to anti-social behaviour being dealt with through the Tripartite Site Management Plan does not provide sufficient reassurance on this key issue of concern.

The LPA's need to ensure that measures are specifically required to ensure adequate barriers and fencing do form part of the detailed design to protect the woodland habitat, ecology, health and safety of recreational users. There must also be an ongoing requirement to monitor and maintain any measures approved as part of the detailed plans submission. This could be achieved through a planning condition, or be specifically included as a requirement within the s106 agreement.

Technical Note HTR-ATK-XX-XX-RP-Z-0076 (Section 3) states that;

- The existing access point at Cedar Drive will be upgraded with cycle and horse friendly accessible gates (this is to accommodate the diverted bridleway entry point from the B2149 and to prevent motorcycle access at Rowlands Castle)
- The pedestrian entrance along Swanmore Road will include a new gated entrance (accessible and cycle friendly). I assume this is the new main pedestrian entrance adjacent to the bus stop, where there is currently a farm gate (Access 7 on Figure 2)

It is very disappointing that there is no commitment to provide a cycle and horse friendly access gate/barrier at the existing bridleway access off Swanmore Road, which is within Portsmouth Water's ownership. This is one of the key existing entry points for motorcycles and as it will be retained both during and post construction of the reservoir, it needs to have an appropriate barrier to make access for motorcycles much more difficult.

A planning condition should be included to require the provision and maintenance of an appropriate horse and cycle friendly barrier at the entrance to bridleway 121 off Swanmore Road before the development commences.

1.6 The southern access route should not impact on the 15m Ancient Woodland buffer

The latest information set out in Technical Note HTR-ATK-XX-XX-RP-Z-0075 (Section 2.3.1) states that the southern access road is offset by a distance of 15m from the Ancient Woodland boundary, to address concerns raised by Natural England. This is to be welcomed.

However, the southern access design drawings include a dashed green line to illustrate the location of the 15m Ancient Woodland off-set boundary. The dashed green line is still shown under the southern access carriageway on drawing HTR-ATK-AR-RE-DR-D-0006, indicating that a 15m buffer zone has not been achieved on the revised drawing.

The southern access road drawings need to be updated to reflect the latest commitment to a 15m buffer from the Ancient Woodland before consent is granted, as this detail is not in outline.

1.7 Landscape screening to prevent the southern access being visible from key view points

The latest information remains unclear as to whether landscape screening will be provided along the southern access route especially where there is no embankment to screen the road/ traffic from key view points such as The SCP Terrace and The Avenue Staircase view points. Previous comments submitted on 7/12/20 referred at Section 3.8.

A green strip is shown on the latest revision of the southern access route drawings (HTR-ATK-AR-RE-DR-D-0005 & 0006), but there is no key to indicate whether this is just grass or a hedge which would provide screening?

A planning condition will be needed to require the submission, approval, maintenance and monitoring for a detailed landscape scheme and this needs to specifically include landscape screening along the southern access route to protect key views and reduce the urbanisation impact of the road.

1.8 Pedestrian permissive access points to be retained?

A Technical Note HTR-ATK-XX-XX-RP-Z-0076 dated 1/04/21 provides more detail on the access routes for non-motorised users. Figure 2 highlights the access points into the reservoir site. The map still does not show all of the existing permissive access points onto the reservoir site. The kissing gate access points off Well Meadow and south-west of Winterslow Drive are not shown. Nor is the bridleway access and stile access point in the north-west corner of Swanmore Road.

Whilst the text above Figure 2 indicated that the existing entry points will remain unchanged and the access points shown represent the 'main access points', given the title of the map is "Outline Plan with access points highlighted" it is surprising that all access points have still not been shown, as proposed in my previous response submitted on 7/12/20 (Section 3.16). I note that in February 2021 the applicant submitted a table giving their response to comments made on the application; "Consultation Comments & Responses Log 1116346". On page 3 in the row responding to Ramblers comments it is stated that; Existing Non Motorised User entry locations will remain unchanged at Well Meadow, Winterslow Drive, Durrants Road and Staunton Country Park."

Section 4.3 of the Technical Note sets out the improvements to the numbered access points shown on Figure 2 which will be made following discussion with HCC. These improvements are to be welcomed. As indicated in 1.5 above, improvements are also needed to the bridleway 121 access entrance north-east of Swanmore Road to provide a horse and cycle friendly barrier. In addition, an all-weather surface needs to be provided to connect the existing bridleway 121 to the existing road edge and planned new path, along the alignment of the dashed blue line shown on revised drawing HTR-ATK-AR-RE-DR-D-006.

The LPA need to ensure that it is clear that all existing formal permissive access points are retained (a formal permissive access point is one where Portsmouth Water have previously provided a kissing gate entrance).

The LPA need to ensure that the entrance to bridleway 121 is improved prior to the commencement of works to provide a motorcycle barrier and an all-weather surface to the existing highway.

The LPA should also ensure that a permissive access route is retained in the south-west area of the site on Gammons Hill during the period of construction to provide a short walking route for local residents that is safely fenced off from the main reservoir construction site.

1.9 Multi-user routes should be a minimum of 4m wide

Technical Note HTR-ATK-XX-XX-RP-Z-0076 dated 1/04/21 Section 3 confirms the multi-user operational access track and embankment crest path will each be 4m wide, permissive paths around the visitor centre will be a minimum of 2m wide. The text confirms that there will be a permissive circular cycle and bridleway route which addresses previous comments, but there is no detail on the width of path to be provided for these multi-user circular routes when they move north of the embankments. The HCC design standards are said to 'suggest' a 3m wide path for bridleways. Feedback from the Water Industry Conservation Access & Recreation workshop was that multi user paths needed to be as wide as possible to be safe and minimise conflicts between different types of user. They recommended a minimum 5m width for a multi-user route, which with the lesson of recent social distancing associated with the covid crisis would be very sensible .

You may recall in my original comments 7/12/20 (Section 3.11) I had suggested that the LPA request a plan to show how the merger of the operational access track, vehicle turning head, crest path, and other existing multi use paths would be accommodated safely on the east side of the site where the space is very constrained. No additional information has been provided by the applicant to clarify this.

A planning condition should require the detailed design to include a minimum 4m wide surfaced robust all weather path construction for all multi-user routes at the site, which must be maintained to a good standard so that it is always fit for purpose, otherwise users will stray off the path causing negative impacts on the landscape and ecology of the site.

Note: The circular bridleway route (5.75km) and circular cycle route (5.5km) are indicated to be slightly different lengths. The outline plan illustrates a shared circular route?

1.10 No specific commitment to a safe pedestrian and cycle access from Horndean?

Technical Note HTR-ATK-XX-XX-RP-Z-0076 dated 1/04/21 at Section 4.3 indicated that cyclists could use the northern access route off the B2149. There is still no safe pedestrian or cycle access to the site from the north. The public have repeatedly made it clear that the B2149 is not considered to provide a safe route for cyclists and pedestrians wishing to visit the site from the Horndean area. The need for this access link was highlighted in the comments on the application by the Highway Authority and in Section 3.19 of my response dated 7/12/20.

Section 5 of the Technical Note refers to the fact that; "the detailed design of the scheme will inform the final layout of paths and will open up further recreational, access and movement opportunities including from the north (in consultation with the landowner)." I understood that EHDC had already agreed a new route for pedestrian and cycle access through the Land East of Horndean development.

If a cycle/ pedestrian route has already been agreed through Land East of Horndean the LPA should request that the Outline Plan for the reservoir be updated to show a link to the planned new path. Or in some way require the link to be included at the detailed design stage, rather than leave this as an aspiration which may not be delivered.

1.11 Wayfinding strategy

The LPA should set out the requirement for a wayfinding strategy in a planning condition to ensure that neither construction nor operational visitor traffic is directed through any residential areas. The strategy should include;

- **Signage strategy**
- **Marketing strategy to encourage visitors to use the northern access route**
- **Active promotion of non vehicle access routes to the site**

2.0 Traffic Management Plan (HTR-ATK-XX-XX-RP-Z-0077 dated 31/03/21)

2.1 The designated access point(s) for construction traffic for the north and south access routes are not clear?

The overview in Section 2.1 makes it clear that the north and south access route construction will take place in the same phase as the site compound set up. However, there is no indication as to how the construction traffic for building the roads will arrive at the site? This is important as initially there will be no functional road connection from the B2149 to the FE track proposed as the northern access for use by the reservoir construction traffic. Section 2.2 states that; The construction of the compound will begin when the construction works for the access routes are due to commence. Table 2.1, row 2 states; As part of the site set up there will be a need to connect to utilities on Swanmore Road which will require some minimal construction traffic movements through the southern access. In Technical Note HTR-ATK-XX-XX-RP-Z-0075 (Section 2.3) there is reference to the southern access being used for the reservoir compound set up.

The number of lorry movements needed to build the access routes for the reservoir site will be significant. **The applicant needs to provide a clear statement to the LPA to confirm that construction traffic for building the access routes will not enter the site from the south via Swanmore Road.**

The Traffic Management Plan (TMP) should make it clear where/ how the access road construction traffic will be routed until there is a functional northern access in place for construction traffic? For example, will it be routed via the main FE timber lorry access from the B2149?

Section 1.2.1 states that there will be one overarching Construction Traffic Management Plan for the reservoir and pipeline, with subsequent addendums for different phases where appropriate. It also suggests that there could be separate contracts for the reservoir, the access routes and pipeline. **Could the access route construction contract be let before the main reservoir contract?** If so, might a different contractor have to prepare a CTMP for building the access routes? If so, this makes it even

more important that **the applicant should confirm an appropriate access haul route for the road construction phase now.**

2.2 Working hours - 0600 start for the pipeline construction work would not be appropriate

Section 2.1 of the TMP states the contractor must adhere to the hours of working stated as;

0600-1800 Monday to Friday, 0600 – 1300 Saturday, with no Sunday working

These also appear to apply to the pipeline route as no alternative working hours are proposed for the pipeline. The pipeline is located through a residential area. Undertaking the construction of the pipeline would not be appropriate between the hours of 0600 and 0800 in residential areas. Nor would it be appropriate for construction traffic to pass from the northern section of the pipeline route and along Swanmore Road to access the reservoir compound between these hours. **The Environmental Health Department should be consulted about appropriate working hours and alternative working hours should be proposed for the pipeline work as a minimum.**

Note: Table 2.1 indicated that HGV movements will be confined to the 6 hour interpeak period Mon-Fri (hours not specified but presumably 0900-1500? and 0900-1300 on a Saturday?).

Section 2.4.3 (page 11) refers to; HGV's will avoid the AM and PM peaks of 0800-0900 and 17.00 to 18.00. **It should be made clear in the Traffic Management Plan that HGV movements in residential areas before 0800 are not appropriate.**

Night time working?

The working hours proposed make no allowance for night time working. Yet on page 8 of the TMP it states that for the pipeline work (Section 2.3.2); "Night time closures will be operated where possible to minimise traffic impacts". Similar text is included in Section 2.4.3. **Night time working on the culverts and pipeline would need to be for exceptional reasons in such a residential area, rather than the norm. Further clarity should be provided on night time working.**

2.3 Compound access & lay out will impact Ancient Woodland & conflict with recreation uses;

The 6m wide proposed haul road alongside the compound is shown on Figure 1 as being between Bells Copse and the west edge of the compound. This will result in an unnecessary and avoidable adverse impact on the Bells Copse Ancient Woodland as a result of;

- 9 years increased noise and air pollution (including dust) as all construction traffic will be routed immediately adjacent to the Bells Copse woodland when this is not necessary.
- Loss of trees on the woodland edge to accommodate adequate turning space into the compound for large / articulated lorries from an access on the west side.
- The compound access route is within the 15m Ancient Woodland buffer zone?

These adverse impacts can very easily be overcome by amending the plan to ensure all traffic enters the compound in the NW corner, where there is already ample space for lorries to turn as there is an existing large gravel turning head for timber lorries. This could be accommodated by rearranging the layout to swap features 2 and 11 around. A temporary access from the south can be added alongside the pipeline laydown area (3) to accommodate pipeline construction traffic for the short period the northern section of the pipeline is being constructed.

The two way 6m wide site access shown on Figure 1 to the west of the compound will conflict with recreational uses. The existing east to west bridleway will be diverted north to Havant Thicket along the same route as the compound access is shown. This is already a busy path used by dog walkers, families and cyclists. It can be expected to be even busier when the bridleway route is diverted north during construction. Construction traffic using this significant length of track will conflict with the recreational use giving rise to significant health & safety concerns. If the access for construction traffic was in the NW corner of the compound a single safe crossing point for recreational users can more easily be provided for the duration of the construction works.

The LPA should require that the Indicative Construction Support Site Layout Plan (Figure 1) in the Traffic Management Plan be updated to remove the haul road along the western edge of the compound which is not necessary and will adversely impact Ancient Woodland and recreational use of the perimeter route around the reservoir site.

2.4 Allowing space for early planting of landscape screening for wetland in compound area;

Section 2.2 of the TMP recognises the need for the compound layout to avoid the visitor centre construction area. However, in order for the wetland landscape screening to have time to grow to establish and be effective in the NW corner it will need to be planted during the first phase of the development. The compound layout and phasing plan must therefore recognise this and be adjusted to avoid the area of the proposed bird hide and landscape planting which will screen the wetland from disturbance, as well as the visitor centre. It is not clear if the compound layout shown on Figure 1 overlaps the proposed planting areas, but I suspect that it currently does?

The LPA should make sure that the Indicative Construction Support Site Layout Plan (Figure 1) is updated to ensure it does not overlap the area designated for landscape planting which needs to be planted in phase 1.

2.5 HGV route for concrete crushing materials?

The applicant has indicated that concrete excavated along the pipeline route would be taken to the reservoir site for crushing / recycling. Figure 1 in the TMP shows area 17 as a large space allocated for 'Crushing and screening (3500m2).' It is good to see that this facility has been located away from residential areas.

Vehicle movements associated with the construction of the northern section of the pipeline are to be directed via Swanmore Road and the southern access to the Construction Support Site Compound.

If it is found that large quantities of concrete need to be moved and crushed can the LPA seek written reassurance that lorries containing concrete for crushing, or crushed concrete, will not be directed via Swanmore Road and the southern access to the reservoir compound?

Note 1: The provision for concrete crushing is not currently addressed in the Outline Environmental Management Plan. This is a very dusty and noisy process, the LPA must ensure that control measures are specifically included in the Construction Environmental Management Plan.

*Note 2: Package 2 of the river improvement works are indicated to have been agreed with the EA in Technical Note HTR-ATK-XX-XX-RP-T-003 relating to implementation of the Off site Biodiversity Mitigation & Compensation Strategy. This will include the removal of long sections of existing concrete stream channel. Presumably this material will need to be crushed and recycled. **Can the applicant provide a reassurance that the HGV's undertaking river improvement works will not be directed via Swanmore Road and the southern access to the reservoir compound?***

2.6 Construction vehicles will be present when the reservoir is filling;

Traffic Management Plan, Section 2.2, page 7; refers to there being no reservoir construction traffic being generated when the reservoir is filling. This is potentially misleading as the visitor centre and recreational paths/ facilities form a part of the reservoir application and these facilities will be constructed while the reservoir is filling. Therefore construction traffic will be present over a long period.

2.7 Traffic management associated with the Bedhampton Community Centre?

While the Transport Management Plan makes specific reference to minimising impacts when working in the vicinity of schools, there is no mention of the impacts on the Bedhampton Community Centre. The

pipeline route passes through the community centre car park and the applicant has indicated that the car park is also likely to be the location for the start of a trenchless technique to drive the pipeline south below the railway line. As a result the car park to the community centre will be out of action or disrupted for a significant period of time. **Special provision will need to be made to provide alternative parking facilities or transport for users of the Bedhampton Community Centre. The LPA need to ensure that this is considered as a part of the Traffic Management Plan.**

Note: Consultation with community centre representatives could identify the period of the year when the impact could more easily be accommodated. Previously this was indicated to be in August.

3.0 Site Management

3.1 Site Management Plan to ensure facilities and habitats are maintained

HTR-ATK-XX-XX-RP-Z-0076 (Section 3.2) refers to Portsmouth Water, HCC(SCP) and FE being committed to a tripartite management agreement for the long-term management of the visitor centre, car parking, public amenity and publicly accessible woodland and wetland areas of the site, which is to be enshrined in a Management Agreement. The text states that the site management arrangements will be the subject of a planning obligation. There is no indication, nor commitment, as to how long the tripartite agreement would run for?

The LPA's need to include a condition which requires;

- **the Site Management Plan to be submitted and approved before development commences to run for a minimum initial period (e.g. 25 years), and**
- **for there to be an ongoing commitment to review, and for the agreement to be renewed at the end of the first period for a further specified period. For example, habitat development and maintenance over a period of 80 years.**

As a part of the Section 106 agreement the LPA's should require that the Management Board & technical supporting group(s) who will oversee the establishment, monitoring and update of the Site Management Plan include local public representation.

Note: The FE response to the planning application suggested that there was not yet agreement on a number of key issues. The Memorandum of Understanding between the three parties has not been submitted with the planning application documents.

3.2 Control and supervision of ecological management actions

The Outline Environmental Management Plan commits under the biodiversity section to;

B1 Develop a detailed Biodiversity Mitigation & Compensation Strategy

B2 Develop a long term Ecological Management Plan (EMP) for the reservoir site including; management measures, monitoring and plan review arrangements. B4 clarifies that the project design and EMP should include measures to control and direct visitor access to minimise disturbance in sensitive areas.

B3 Ecological clerk of works to be appointed, to be full time on site during the site preparation and clearance and during any works in sensitive areas, and to undertake regular monitoring visits throughout the construction programme.

The requirement for these actions (listed above) should be set out by the LPA in pre-commencement planning conditions. It is important that planning conditions are added to ensure that the new and enhanced on and off-site habitats are created in an appropriate time frame and managed to ensure a net biodiversity gain is delivered. For example; planting which is needed to perform a screening function to the wetland and hides must be planted early in phase 1 to enable it to establish during the construction phase. The Ecological Management Plan should cover pre-construction, construction and post construction activities.

4.0 Travel Plan

The Technical Note called Transport Addendum – Framework Travel Plan; states that it is expected that a full operational travel plan and construction work travel plan will be a condition of any approval. The Framework Travel Plan only appears to relate to staff working at the site.

Will the LPA's require some sort of pre-occupation Travel Plan to be produced to ensure that visitors to the site are encouraged to walk, cycle or use sustainable transport options to get to and from the site?

5.0 Visitor Centre

5.1 Visitor Centre Location Zone – no revision to the NW Corner Plan to restrict the area/impact?

I could not find any details in the latest information committing to a reduced size for the Visitor Centre Location Zone (VCLZ) box, nor limiting the location to the western shore of the retained wetland, to prevent the visitor centre being located within the wetland conservation area. The NW Corner Plan which showed the VCLZ as a dashed line extending right out into the wetland conservation area has not been revised and resubmitted.

I fully support and agree with the objections to the Visitor Centre location made by expert members of the Wetland Specialist Stakeholder Sub-Group who were appointed to help guide the design of the retained wetland. Their objections to the Visitor Centre location (VCLZ) were submitted to the LPA on 13/12/20 (RL) and 18/12/20 (RC). I note that the Natural England representative on the Wetland Specialist Stakeholder Sub-Group also made it clear that the Visitor Centre should be located on the wetland edge and not within the retained wetland. The County Ecologist response to the planning application indicated that he would be comfortable with a 'water's edge' location. The wetland specialists rightly made the point that it is not appropriate to create a retained wetland to provide a biodiversity net gain, then put the honey pot location for visitors 'within it' when that will clearly reduce the wildlife value of the surrounding wetland due to disturbance. The footprint of the building will also take up valuable wetland space which is completely unnecessary.

I refer you to my previous detailed comments submitted to the LPA on 7/12/20, Section 2.4 & 2.5 which all remain valid concerns. Objections to the visitor centre location/ layout were also raised by Friends of the Earth, local councillors and RCPC. There is no technical/engineering reason to show such a large box for the outline extent of the VCLZ, extending out into the wetland conservation, as the shoreline of the reservoir in this area is fixed by the top water level which is already stipulated in the application and the existing ground contours. The applicants landscape architect has previously demonstrated that there is adequate space for a wetland edge visitor centre location, whilst also having sufficient space for car parking in the NW, with no need to extend the car parking into woodland areas, nor the visitor centre into the wetland.

I object to the outline plan for the Visitor Centre Location Zone shown on the NW Corner Plan.

The LPA should not approve the VCLZ box currently shown on the NW corner plan extending out into the wetland conservation area. The LPA should apply a planning condition to prevent the Visitor Centre being located within the wetland, instead restricting the extent of the outline location zone for the Visitor Centre to the wetland edge on the west side of the reservoir to prevent the building and terrace being located within the wetland.

Excellent public interaction and education opportunities can be achieved with a water's edge location without the need to extend the Visitor Centre and terrace out into the wetland. Locating the Visitor Centre further into the retained wetland will also reduce the flexibility for future expansion, a key requirement expressed by many stakeholders during public consultation. I am very concerned that if the planning application is approved based on the current NW Corner plan, the Design & Build Contractors architect can place the visitor centre anywhere within the VCLZ shown, not just restrict the location to the western wetland edge. With outline consent in place then it will be very difficult to stop this at the reserved matters stage. Action is needed now to limit the extent of the VCLZ to only extend as far east as the wetland edge.

Note: The Water UK Conservation Access & Recreation Conference workshop referred to by the applicant supported a wetland edge, not an island location for the visitor centre extending out into the wetland conservation area. This was due to the disturbance it would cause, difficulties servicing the facility and the limitations it would impose on future use and potential expansion.

5.2 Visitor Centre Design Concept – Not robust and not in keeping with rural character

I could not find any details in the latest information committing to any revision to the outline concept design for the Visitor Centre. I very much share the concerns expressed by the police, local councillors, parish council and Wetland Specialist Sub-group members that the current design concept is not appropriate and will not be robust to anti-social behaviour. The concept of a pier/ island design with a terrace is a particular concern as it will be used by local youths as a diving platform and result in disturbance to the wetland.

I refer you to my previous detailed comments submitted to the LPA on 7/12/, Section 2.5 which all still remain valid concerns.

I object to the current concept design set out for the Visitor Centre.

The LPA should require a more intelligent, environmentally led design, which is in keeping with the rural and heritage character of the area. It must be much more robust to anti-social behaviour in terms of its layout and materials to be used during construction.

5.3 Education Hide Design Concept – not updated?

I could not find any details in the latest information providing new or revised information to confirm the size of the education, nor update the design concept.

I refer you to my previous detailed comments submitted to the LPA on 7/12/, Section 3.9 which all still remain valid concerns.

The LPA should clarify the size of the hide as 10m x 20m and require a more intelligent, environmentally led design, which is in keeping with the rural and heritage character of the area. It must be much more robust to anti-social behaviour in terms of its layout and materials to be used during construction.

6.0 Implementation Plan for Off Site Biodiversity Mitigation & Compensation (1/04/21)

I welcome the provision of additional information in Technical Note HTR-ATK-XX-XX-RP-T-0003 to clarify through Action Plans how the Outline Biodiversity Mitigation and Compensation Strategy will be implemented and managed to provide long-term ecological benefits, as well as funding for third party projects. **There are some aspects where the detail of the proposals being made need to be clarified in order to ensure the commitment is legally binding.** I have set these out below.

6.1 Creation of 80 ha of new pasture woodland – no deadline for commencing planting?

There is currently no commitment to ensure land is secured and off site planting commences before woodland clearance at the reservoir site commences, even though the new pasture woodland is to mitigate and compensate for the loss of these habitats. **It should be clear in the s106 agreement that planting of the new pasture woodland should commence before the clearance of the woodland on the reservoir site starts.**

6.2 Commitment to the long-term ecological management of Southleigh Forest for 80 years?

Table 3.1 does not specifically commit to an 80 year ecological management plan for Southleigh Forest. It only refers to "restoration to a more semi-natural woodland over a 30 year period?"

Within Appendix 2 it is not clear if the proposed 80 year management for conservation objectives at Southleigh Forest will be legally binding within the s106 agreement? The overview refers to the implementation of an 80 year management plan, but on page 11 it states the plan beyond 10 years will be high level aspirations with no legal standing, so the commitment is unclear.

While I acknowledge that detailed management beyond 10 years needs to remain flexible, **the requirement for the applicant to fund and undertake 80 years of positive ecological management should be a binding commitment specifically included on page 6(2) of the Technical Note and in the s106 agreement key commitments.**

Appendix 2, page 11, Off site planning/ preparation row; confirms the need to review and update the management plan every 10 years. However, it is not clear who will review the updated management plan and agree it? Will the County Ecologist review and agree the plans on behalf of the LPA? **The process for review and approval of the updated Southleigh Forest Site Management Plan should be clarified in Appendix 2, which is to form part of the s106 agreement.**

6.3 Capital Grant Scheme to fund biodiversity enhancements – inappropriate start date?

It is very positive that the applicant has committed to a £1.2 million fund for off site conservation compensation projects, with the objective of funding £40,000 worth of projects per year for a period of 30 years. However, it is indicated in Appendix 4, page 18 of the programme that the first grants for conservation projects will not be awarded until 2029 when the reservoir is completed and in operation. This is not appropriate. The grant for off site conservation projects is a key mitigation and compensation measure to help address the impacts that cannot be off set on or immediately adjacent to the site. For example; the loss of grassland and habitat for ground nesting birds such as skylark. These habitats and species will be adversely impacted as soon as the ground clearance for the reservoir construction commences, based on the current published programme this will be in 2023. Therefore, under the current proposal if the grant scheme does not commence until 2029 the key habitats and species would be lost or impacted for 6 years before any action is taken to compensate for the loss.

In order to provide robust mitigation and compensation measures and ensure that biodiversity net gain is delivered the LPA must ensure that it is a condition of any consent granted that the applicant is required to initiate the Capital Grant Scheme prior to the commencement of development, to ensure the funding for compensation work is in place before existing habitats are destroyed. Or if not a condition, this requirement should be legally binding within the s106 agreement.

6.4 Capital Grant Scheme - fund cap?

The total fund cap for the Capital Grant Scheme is to be £1.2 million as stated on page 6(4) and in Appendix 4 (page 17).

The LPA should ensure that the error on page 18 which refers to £1 million is corrected before the document is attached to the s106 agreement.

6.5 Capital Grant Scheme – clarification of objectives especially in relation to grassland?

The useful detail in Section 2.5 of the Technical Note regarding the broad scoring criteria priorities for grant funding is not included as part of the commitments in Section 4 on page 6, nor in Appendix 4 and as a result will not be legally binding under the s106 agreement. The loss of grassland habitats which support ground nesting birds, such as skylark, at the reservoir site was a key driver for establishing an off site grant scheme. Both Portsmouth Water and Natural England recognised that the loss of grassland

habitats and associated species could not be mitigated/ compensated for on or immediately adjacent to the site. As a key objective for the grant scheme priorities this should be more clearly included in the text in Table 3.1 and in Appendix 4 under the aims and objectives.

To provide additional clarity on the objectives of the Capital Grant Scheme and the priorities for funding the LPA should ensure that the Section 2.5 text in the Technical Note is included in Appendix 4 before it is appended to the s106 agreement. For example, it could be included in the row of Appendix 4 relating to Off site planning /preparation.

6.6 Capital Grant Scheme – Steering Group and/or committee?

Section 3.3(4) of the Technical Note refers to a Steering Group and a Capital Grant Scheme committee. Appendix 4 (page 17 & 18) refer to a Steering Group. It is not clear if the Steering Group and the committee are the same thing?

Before the LPA accept the Action Plans the applicant should provide further clarification on;

- **Whether the Steering Group and a Capital Grant Scheme committee are the same thing?**
- **If not, what the different role of each would be?**
- **What representation there will be on each group? (The LPA should ensure that there will be representation from an independent local naturalist, and a wildlife organisation such as the Wildlife Trust)**

6.7 Capital Grant Scheme – Reporting requirements

Appendix 4 indicates under roles and responsibilities that grant applicants will be responsible for delivery of funded projects and that they will be required to report on progress. While this is appropriate there must be a role for Portsmouth Water to at least ensure / confirm that the work funded has been undertaken. It would be reasonable to expect Portsmouth Water to provide a report every 5 years to the LPA & County Ecologist setting out details of the projects that have been funded / completed through the Capital Grant Scheme, setting out in broad terms the project and it's anticipated value as a mitigation / compensation measure for the impacts of the reservoir.

The LPA should ensure that it is clearly stated in Appendix 4 of the Technical Note that Portsmouth Water have a duty to ensure / confirm that funded projects have been completed and provide an appropriate report on the Capital Grant Scheme every 5 years.

7.0 Other previous comments not yet addressed by the applicants additional information

7.1 Relocate amphibians from Upper Lake – no commitment?

No new specific commitment is provided by the applicant to relocate the amphibian populations (newts and frogs) currently living in the Upper Lake on the reservoir site. I refer you to my previous detailed comments submitted to the LPA on 7/12/20, Section 3.2 which remain valid. Portsmouth Water have previously indicated at a number of public events that relocation of amphibians to ponds on the adjacent site will be undertaken before construction commences in the area of Upper Lake.

The LPA should require that the Biodiversity Mitigation & Compensation Strategy and the Environmental Management Plan include a specific project to move and relocate to nearby ponds the populations of newts and frogs present in the Upper Lake, at an appropriate time of year, before construction commences.

7.2 Minimisation of lighting

To protect the night time ecology and rural character of the site and to prevent urbanisation of the site, as indicated in my previous comments (Section 3.10) lighting needs to be kept to the absolute minimum needed for health & safety reasons.

The LPA should apply a planning condition to require a sensitively designed task specific lighting scheme to be submitted, approved and maintained.

7.3 Comments to be addressed in the detailed design

A number of issues raised in my response on 7/12/20 with respect to the outline design have not been addressed in the additional information provided by the applicant and need further attention at the detailed design stage. These include;

- a) Detailed landscape planting plan and programme, including clarification of planting to screen the wetland (Section 3.7) and southern access.
- b) Detailing for dog proof fences and hedges to prevent dog access to the water and provision of a designated dog dip zone away from the wetland conservation area (Section 2.5, 3.6, 3.7)
- c) Details of the vehicle turning head for operational vehicles at the north end of the eastern embankment referred to in supporting documents but still not shown on the plans.
- d) Clarification of how different user routes and the vehicle turning head will merge safely on the east side of the reservoir site (Section 3.11)
- e) Revision to the route of the new path in the south-west which currently passes through a bog designated for priority habitat enhancements (Section 3.13)
- f) The location and layout of the outside education space(s) (Section 3.14)
- g) Detail of how the fossiliferous limestone to be excavated at the site can be put to a positive use (Section 3.18)
- h) Re-use of woodland soils along the northern access route (Section 3.20)
- i) Use of art in reservoir embankment pipework and screens (Section 3.21)
- j) Future proofing for potential expansion of facilities (Section 3.3)

7.3 Errors / inconsistencies

The following errors and inconsistencies previously highlighted in my response to the LPA dated 7/12/20 have not yet been addressed;

- a) Error in the location of the middle wetland view point on the key plans. Shown correctly on the Outline Master Plan (see Section 3.5).
- b) Inadequate extent of fencing / barriers to protect the wetland (see Section 3.6)
- c) Car park surfacing details (see Section 3.7h)
- d) Discrepancy in size stipulated for the education hide (see Section 3.9)
- e) Newly planted hedges missing on the Gipsies Plain Outline Landscape Plan & visualisation (Section 3.17)

7.4 Description of the development

If the LPA propose to approve the planning application then the description of the development on the consent granted should be clarified to refer to 'storage of raw spring water'.