

Ref: Consultation Request for APP/26/00425 Havant Thicket Reservoir Site

Ref: Application for approval of all Reserved Matters (siting, scale, external appearance, and landscaping) relating to Phase 4 (Southern Access Road) of the Havant Thicket Reservoir development pursuant to Condition 2 of the S73 consent planning reference APP/24/00312 dated 6th December 2024.

Attn: Planning Officer - Narinder Lakhan

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this planning application. We are generally happy with the application but do have concerns over the details as far as they affect the PRow (Public Rights of Way) on the site. See below.

1). The previous design for the SAR (Southern Access Road) and the diversion of PRow bridleway Havant120 was not fit for purpose. It did not '*protect or enhance*' the PRow network as required. The previous design required PRow users wishing to travel from Swanmore Road to Rowlands Castle to perform a needless ½ mile loop ending only 20 metres from their starting point before continuing around the southern edge of the reservoir. They would have needed to travel ¼ mile north on one side of the access road (on Havant121) before crossing the access road and travelling ¼ mile south again on the other side of the road (on the diverted Havant120). This would have been a ½ mile journey to simply cross the road.

This application attempts to avoid this problem by the provision of an extra permissive bridleway crossing at the southern end of the SAR. This extra crossing is welcome but is only a permissive path. As such it can be withdrawn at any time and so can not be said to '*protect or enhance*' the PRow network. This extra crossing point must be dedicated as a PRow bridleway before we can agree to this planning application.

2). There seems to be very limited signage at the bridleway crossings of the SAR. (files: Southern Access Road - Road Signs and Markings.pdf and Signage Details.pdf). The only indication of a bridleway crossing is a '*Be nice say Hi*' sign and that is only for bridleway users. There is no indication of a crossing for the vehicles on the SAR. The PRow bridleway is a Public Right of Way. Users of this PRow have priority over vehicles on the SAR which is only a permissive path. The crossing signage and road markings must make this clear. 'Give Way' signs are needed on the SAR at the very least. We cannot agree to this application without these changes.

3). The details of the 'maintenance track/bridleway' alongside the SAR and around the southern edge of the reservoir are unclear (see Statement of Community Involvement.pdf – page 9). This document states that: *The maintenance track is required to provide access to the Control House for authorised vehicles, including HGVs and a 300t mobile crane for major planned maintenance.* It is unclear whether the maintenance track is only to be used for access to the Control House, or for other access and maintenance of the reservoir.

The PRow bridleway is planned to be diverted on to this track. For this to happen the track must not be subject to regular, expected blockage. It must only be used for access or inspection, except in emergency. It must not be blocked by parking or routine maintenance vehicles (eg. for mowing). There should be a condition to this effect on any planning permission given.

Peter Westron. Footpath Secretary SEHants Group.

For the SEHants Group of the Rambler's Association.