



Date 07/10/2026

Reserved Matters Planning Application by Portsmouth Water Ltd, APP/26/00574 (siting, scale, external appearance, and landscaping) relating to Phase 9 (Northwest Corner and Visitor Centre) of the Havant Thicket Reservoir development.

Objection Comment

Rain Water Harvesting for the Flushing of Toilets in the Visitor Centre & Visitor Hub Building:
At the end of my objection lodged 23/08/2026 'Wastewater & Sewage Management of the Visitor Centre and Visitor Hub Building', I briefly asked whether collected rain water from the roofs of the facilities would be used for flushing toilets because I was unable to find any information in the submitted planning application documents. Here I aim to push home the importance of the issue but before I do, first to my stance position.

Ethically in the interest of reducing water demand and also leading through example, I think Portsmouth Water Ltd should be required to install a rain water harvesting system for the visitor centre and visitor hub for flushing toilets. It should be made a condition in the reserved matters planning application.

Portsmouth Water Ltd is building a reservoir to secure drinking water resilience in the water stressed South East far into the future, due to population growth, consumption rates and climate change; and also, to protect the ecology of rare internationally important Chalk river habitats.

At the same time the government and water industry is trying to persuade customers to reduce water consumption and use water more wisely - particularly during drought periods, such as in 2026 - which in large part is the aim of water meters. In Britain we use an average of around 144 litres of drinking water per person each day (flushing toilets, washing, laundry, bathing, showering, cleaning the car and watering the garden etc). In Germany the figure is around 123 litres per day and in Belgium the average is approximately 100 litres. However, impressively in the Flanders region of Belgium (45% of the country's land area), average household tap water use has dropped to 80.8 litres per person per day. And here comes the but, there is a legal requirement in Belgium to install rain water harvesting systems for non-potable purposes; flushing toilets, running washing machines and watering the garden. It is also a part of the Belgium culture. While in Britain we flush treated drinking water down the toilet, rain water harvesting systems can reduce potable water consumption by around 30%. Some sources state up to 50%; although I remain sceptical of the higher figure.

If it was a legal requirement in Britain that every newly built home had to have a rain water harvesting system installed (and I think this will happen due to climate change within the next two decades, if not faster), it would add up to significant savings in drinking water demand; especially important at a time when farmers may want to use more water, not less. If rain water harvesting systems were retrospectively fitted to homes and industrial buildings gradually over decades (which would probably need subsidies) the savings would be even higher, perhaps even reducing the long-

term demand and need for reservoirs to be built, which cost hundreds of millions; perhaps billions at the national level. Consumers will pay for new reservoir infrastructure in their water bills over the next 100 years. It's not a case of either reservoirs or rain water harvesting systems but both and how they are paid for. We know we need new ways of thinking; new ways of solving resource shortage issues in a rapidly changing world, where even the Natural History museum in London has a permanent exhibition on the nature and climate emergency; the unsustainability of the path we are on.

The vast majority of the raw resources, oak and clay needed to construct the visitor facilities will be sourced from the reservoir site itself, almost free; other than storage of the wood and treatment. Consequently, there are likely to be significant savings in construction costs compared with the use of traditional building materials. Portsmouth Water will also be making a long-term profit from selling water from the reservoir to Southern Water Authority whenever it is needed during drought conditions, which are likely to become more frequent due to climate change. And today's scientific climate change data projections could become future heresy in the face of advanced AI assisted science and improved modelling in the next two decades, if climate change happens faster than predicted and the consequences are more severe than currently anticipated. Portsmouth Water Ltd could afford to install rain water harvesting systems where technically possible; and perhaps the company and LPA should also seriously consider grey water waste recycling from the kitchen in the visitor centre.

No doubt when the visitor centre is completed Portsmouth Water will want to incorporate an educational exhibition about reducing water consumption and using it more wisely. The Water Company & the Local Planning Authority are morally obligated to seriously consider the issue of rain water harvesting. Think of it an insurance policy and an example of progressive leadership.