

## HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

### Officer Decision Report

<b>Decision Maker:</b>	Director of Culture, Communities and Business Services
<b>Date:</b>	11 May 2020
<b>Title:</b>	Havant Thicket Reservoir Memorandum of Understanding

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### Purpose of this Report

1. Is to progress a Memorandum of Understanding with Portsmouth Water and Forestry England that expresses an intent to work together on the development and management of the Havant Thicket Reservoir. It is understood that this will form a planning condition for Portsmouth Water to discharge.

### Recommendation(s)

2. To approve the progression of a Memorandum of Understanding with Portsmouth Water and Forestry England that expresses an intent to work together on the development and management of the Havant Thicket Reservoir.
3. Notes a further decision report which outlines details of the MOU will be produced ahead of the planning application submission.

### Executive Summary

4. The Havant Thicket Reservoir scheme provides an opportunity to complement existing outdoor recreational facilities in the area, with the presence of both Staunton Country Park next door and Queen Elizabeth Country Park only a few miles away.
5. The Countryside Service have expertise in operating country parks to a high standard with clear public benefits and a commercial emphasis that ensures their long-term operational sustainability.
6. It has been made clear that the costs of operating any facility would be met by the Water companies with no financial burden on Hampshire County Council.

## Contextual Information

7. Havant Thicket Water Storage Reservoir is a £100m scheme and the first time two companies (Portsmouth Water and Southern Water) have worked together to make sure there is enough reliable water to meet future demands.
8. The site for the reservoir sits next to Rowlands Castle and Leigh Park and is bordered by Forestry England woodland at Havant Thicket and Staunton Country Park, owned by Hampshire County Council. It has been owned by Portsmouth Water since 1965 and covers 160 hectares. The site measures one mile (1.6km) in length from east to west and half a mile (0.8km) from north to south (see Map at Appendix A).
9. It is currently grassland managed by the HCC Countryside Service on behalf of Portsmouth Water with a network of rights of way including bridleways that link Havant Thicket woodland and Staunton Country Park
10. The Countryside Service manage Staunton Country Park. The Park has two distinct areas: The Farm and the Parkland. The Parkland is adjacent to the Portsmouth Water land and is currently being transformed with funding from Heritage Lottery England. The £4m transformation project improves and enhances the historic features of the parkland landscape, providing a new catering and information facility and a car park which will serve both farm and parkland. This car park is located close to the Portsmouth Water land boundary.
11. Plans for the reservoir were originally drawn up in 1964 and then again in 2008. In 2008 the scheme details were shared with the public, the local community, businesses, organisations and schools through a series of talks, workshops and exhibitions. The Countryside Service was also involved at this time as a key stakeholder.
12. The plans were not taken forward at this time as the Government did not agree that the projected demand for water was enough to require a Reservoir in this area.
13. Now there is a shortfall of water across the South East as a whole and plans for the reservoir have been included in both in Portsmouth Water's and Southern Water's long-term water resource plans.
14. The current proposal will see the majority of the 160 hectare site planned for water catchment (see [flythrough](#)). The proposals also include community and visitor facilities such as a visitor centre, play and picnic sites, path network, potential for managed water sports and bird watching hides.
15. The scheme also requires habitat mitigation and Portsmouth Water are working with Natural England, the Environment Agency and others to refine the conservation proposals. The Forestry Commission owned land to the

north is likely to provide some mitigation for the site as some woodland habitat will be lost to the reservoir.

16. This is a ten-year project with a view to being operational in 2029. Site preparations 2021/23, main reservoir construction period is between 2023 – 2026 and visitor/community facilities from 2027/2029.
17. The planning application is due to be submitted in August/September 2020 with public consultation period (still planned) for 11 May – 8 June.

## REQUIRED CORPORATE AND LEGAL INFORMATION:

### Links to the Strategic Plan

Hampshire maintains strong and sustainable economic growth and prosperity:	no
People in Hampshire live safe, healthy and independent lives:	yes
People in Hampshire enjoy a rich and diverse environment:	yes
People in Hampshire enjoy being part of strong, inclusive communities:	yes

### Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents

The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)

Document

Location

None

## **EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT:**

### **1. Equality Duty**

The County Council has a duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 ('the Act') to have due regard in the exercise of its functions to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by or under the Act with regard to the protected characteristics as set out in section 4 of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation);
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation) and those who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (see above) and persons who do not share it.

Due regard in this context involves having due regard in particular to:

- The need to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
- Take steps to meet the needs of persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- Encourage persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

### **2. Equalities Impact Assessment:**

The EIA will be completed once the terms of the Memorandum of Understanding have been proposed and in time for the formal decision on signing up to the MoU.

Map showing the location of the proposed Reservoir

