

Mr Graham Melton  
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**By Email Only**

23 February 2024

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SWS/1872

Dear Mr Melton

**Southern Water Services – Southampton Link Main Scheme :  
Request for EIA Screening Opinion under Regulation 6 of The Town and Country Planning  
(Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017**

Further to our previous discussions, I am writing to formally request that Test Valley Borough Council as local planning authority issues an EIA Screening Opinion for the Southampton Link Main Scheme (the Proposed Scheme).

A similarly worded letter has been submitted to Winchester City Council seeking the same decision from that Council, as the Proposed Scheme crosses the two local authority boundaries.

**Background**

Southern Water is a statutory undertaker under the Water Industry Act 1991, and as such is responsible for the supply of water for the Hampshire Area. It has a legal duty to ensure that water is supplied to customers and must plan ahead to ensure that supplies are protected into the future. It does this by preparing a statutory Water Resources Management Plan (WRMP), regulated by Defra.

Southern Water's WRMP clearly states the need to provide new water resources to mitigate significant water supply deficits in the Hampshire region up to a 1:200 year drought event. The deficits arise largely as a result of changes to existing Southern Water abstraction licences on the River Test and River Itchen, made in 2019 following an Abstraction Licence Inquiry. The proposals in the WRMP include new resources developments including water recycling schemes and other measures, including significant improvements to the existing water transfer network within Southern Water's supply area in Hampshire. A number of specific transfer improvements are identified in the WRMP, including the Proposed Scheme that is the subject of this Screening Request.

During a drought event, the existing abstraction license at Testwood WSW is limited, requiring additional water to be imported from elsewhere. The most appropriate option to supply this demand has been identified as a transfer pipeline between the Southampton East, Winchester and Southampton West WRZs in Hampshire. The Proposed Scheme will deliver this transfer pipeline and improve essential resilience and security of supplies to SWS customers in the Southampton area. The Proposed Scheme is included within Southern Water's WRMP and Business Plans, for delivery by March 2027.

The Proposed Scheme starts at Otterbourne Water Supply Works (WSW) south of Winchester, the pipeline then continues north to connect to Yew Hill Water Service Reservoir (WSR) south of Winchester. From Yew Hill WSR, the pipeline continues south west to Rownhams Water Service Reservoir (WSR), north of the M27 near Southampton. Otterbourne WSW, Yew Hill WSR and sections of the transfer pipeline lie within Winchester District. The remaining sections of the transfer pipeline and Rownhams WSR lie within Test Valley Borough.

The Proposed Scheme is a potable (treated) water transfer scheme that will enable the transfer of up to 60 megalitres/day (MLD, or million litres of water a day) between SWS's existing operational sites at Otterbourne WSW, Yew Hill WSR and Rownhams WSR. The Proposed Scheme comprises the following:

- A new High Lift Pumping Station and suction tank on operational land within the existing Otterbourne WSW;
- A new buried pipeline between Otterbourne WSW and Yew Hill WSR, with a diameter of 700mm and an approximate length of 4.35km.
- A new additional 9 ML (million litre) buried storage tank at SWS's existing operational Yew Hill WSR.
- A new buried pipeline between Yew Hill WSR and Rownhams WSR, with a diameter of 800mm and an approximate length of 14.7km.
- Associated temporary works required for construction, including compounds, accesses etc, together with the reinstatement and landscaping post completion of construction works.

### **Request for EIA Screening Opinion under Regulation 6 of The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017**

The Proposed Scheme, is considered to be Schedule 2 Development under the EIA Regulations, and specifically Schedule 2, Part 10 (I) as a 'long distance aqueduct'. The site area for the Proposed Scheme exceeds 1 hectare.

Under Regulation 6 of the EIA Regulations, Southern Water formally requests that Test Valley Borough Council issues an EIA Screening Opinion as to whether the Proposed Scheme is EIA Development.

All of the necessary information under Regulation 6 to enable the Council to reach its decision is included within the enclosed Request for an EIA Screening Opinion Report (February 2024). The schedule at Appendix 1 to this letter sets out the detailed contents of the Report and Appendices - due to the overall filesize of the submission, we will transmit the documents to the Council via a series of separate emails. Please note that as part of the overall submission there are Confidential Reports on [REDACTED] and Water Vole and Otters respectively, **which should not be published online.**

The conclusion of the enclosed Report is that Southern Water is of the opinion that the Proposed Scheme would not generate likely significant environmental effects and therefore does not constitute EIA Development.

If Test Valley Borough Council and Winchester City Council determine that the Proposed Scheme is not

EIA Development, then Southern Water will have Permitted Development Rights for the construction of various elements of the Proposed Scheme (principally the buried sections of pipelines, buried valves, other works on operational sites etc). However, as identified in Section 3.2 of the Screening Report, planning permission may be required for elements of the Proposed Scheme including:

The proposed additional buried storage at Yew Hill WSR and the high lift pumping station at Otterbourne WSW, which are to be located on Southern Water operational land. The extent to which the proposals may require specific planning permission will be reviewed in discussion with the LPA (Winchester City Council).

The proposed temporary main site compound on Badger Farm Road south of Winchester will require temporary planning permission (Winchester City Council).

Other scheme elements requiring planning consent may include any new temporary vehicular accesses that are required from classified roads, removal of protected hedgerows, or works to protected trees. Any such requirements will be reviewed in discussion with the LPAs (Winchester City Council and Test Valley Borough Council).

Southern Water has appointed a contractor to design and build the Proposed Scheme, and detailed Construction Environmental Management Plans, Traffic Management Plans and other construction related documents will be approved by Southern Water prior to any works commencing. In addition, a series of detailed environmental permits, licences and other (non-planning) approvals would also be required to be secured from bodies including the Environment Agency, Natural England, and Hampshire County Council in relation to works relating to main rivers, protected species, highways, rights of way and other matters.

### **The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017**

Southern Water has prepared a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Stage 1 Screening Report which is included as Appendix B to the EIA Screening Opinion Report.

Southern Water requests that Test Valley Borough Council confirm agreement with the conclusions as demonstrated within the HRA Stage 1 Screening Report provided, that the Proposed Scheme has no adverse effect on integrity of qualifying features of designated sites (European/National Site Network Sites) and would not give rise to likely significant effects. This is to ensure that the potential for likely significant effects on a Habitats Regulations Designated site, arising from the works that would otherwise be permitted development (if the Proposed Scheme is not EIA Development), have been considered and that requirements under Regulation 77 of The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 are discharged using the conclusions of the HRA Stage 1 Screening Report provided.

The Habitats Regulations Assessment Stage 1 Screening Report has been shared with Natural England which has confirmed in its Discretionary Advice Service response dated 24<sup>th</sup> August 2023 that Natural England broadly agree with conclusions of the draft HRA, that the Proposed Scheme is not likely to give rise to likely significant effects on a Habitats Regulations (European/National Site Network) Designated site.

## **Timing of the EIA Screening Opinion decision, in relation to Andover Link Main Scheme**

As you are already aware, Southern Water has submitted an EIA Screening Direction request for the separate Andover Link Main Scheme, following Winchester City Council and Test Valley Borough Council's screening opinions issued in December 2023 which concluded that that Scheme was EIA Development. The Secretary of State's Screening Direction is anticipated in March 2024.

**Southern Water formally requests that the Council undertakes any necessary consultations with internal and external consultees on the Southampton Link Main Scheme (the subject of this request) and reaches any preliminary conclusion on it, but that the Council does not issue its EIA Screening Opinion until the Secretary of State has issued its Screening Direction for the Andover Link Main Scheme.** The two Schemes are similar pipelines in similar geographical and environmentally constrained areas, and it is considered that enabling any Secretary of State conclusions on the Andover Link Main Screening Direction to be taken into account in the Council's concluding their EIA Screening Opinions for the Southampton Link Main would be appropriate, for consistency of decision making. Southern Water will be willing to agree extensions of time that may be necessary for this to take place.

## **Conclusion**

The Council's EIA Screening Opinion for the Southampton Link Main is requested, based on the information in this letter and the enclosed EIA Screening Opinion Report and Appendices.

Should the Council have any queries on the content of the Report or require any further information or clarification to enable it to reach its decision, please contact Andy Blaxland at Adams Hendry on [a.blaxland@adamshendry.co.uk](mailto:a.blaxland@adamshendry.co.uk).

Yours sincerely



Andy Blaxland  
Director

*Enc: Southampton Link Main EIA Screening Opinion Report (February 2024) and Appendices*

## Appendix 1 – Detailed Contents of Southampton Link Main EIA Screening Opinion Report

Covering Letter (this letter)
Request for an EIA Screening Opinion: Southampton Link Main Report (Feb 2024)
Appendix A – Plans <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A - Site Overview Plan</li> <li>B - Environmental Information Plans (12 sheets)</li> <li>C - Water Environment Map</li> <li>D – Surface Water Flood Risk Plan</li> <li>E - Proposed Areas of Works Plans (12 sheets)</li> <li>F – Typical Construction Working Strips plan</li> <li>G - Temporary Haul Road Proposal (Yew Hill WSR) Plan</li> </ul>
Appendix B – Habitats Regulation Assessment – Stage 1 Screening Report
Appendix C – Designated Sites Technical Report
Appendix D – Habitats Survey Report
Appendix E – River Habitat Survey Report
Appendix F – Breeding Birds Survey Report
Appendix G – Bat Survey Report
Appendix H – Dormouse Survey Report
Appendix I – Great Crested Newt Survey Report
Appendix J – Reptile Survey Report
Appendix K – Aquatic Ecology Report
Appendix L – Archaeological Desk Based Assessment
Appendix M – Geophysical Survey Report (Phase 1) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Geophysical Survey Report (Phase 2)</li> </ul>
Appendix N – Landscape Figures <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Figure 01 – Landscape Context</li> <li>- Figure 02 – Landscape Character</li> </ul>
Appendix O – Arboricultural Impact Assessment (and Appendices)
<b>Confidential Reports</b>
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Water Vole and Otter Surveys

**Please Note:** ██████████ Water Vole and Otter Surveys Report are Confidential Reports, which must not be published in order to protect the location of the relevant species. We have provided these as separate PDFs so that it can be made available to the Council’s Ecologist for review, without it being published on the Council’s website.