

Testwood Water Supply Works Low Voltage Assembly (LVA) Kiosk

Planning, Design and Access Statement

Planning Portal Reference: PP-12928888.

Date: March 2024

Version 1

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Statement has been prepared by Arcadis on behalf of Southern Water Services Ltd, hereafter referred to as Southern Water, in support of its planning application to install a Low Voltage Assembly (LVA) kiosk at the Testwood Water Supply Works (WSW).
- 1.2 Testwood WSW provides drinking water to large parts of Southampton and the surrounding area, including Totton, the Waterside and parts of the Isle of Wight. Water is drawn from the River Test and treated at the WSW prior to distribution to the supply zone.
- 1.3 Investment is being made at Testwood WSW to improve the resilience and ensure the quality of public water supplies. The proposed kiosk forms part of a scheme of improvements which the Drinking Water Inspectorate (DWI) require to be operational by March 2025.
- 1.4 This statement outlines the background to the scheme and describes the proposed development. It includes a design component and access component, and it describes the relevant policy background.

Application No:	PP-12928888 Full Planning Permission
Applicant:	Southern Water Services Ltd
Site:	Testwood Surface Water Abstraction Site, Nutsey Close, Totton, SO40 3QU
Proposal	Installation of a Low Voltage Assembly Kiosk.

Applicant

- 1.5 Southern Water is a statutory water undertaker, which supplies 541 million litres of drinking water each day across an area of 10,530km³, extending from East Kent through Sussex to Hampshire and the Isle of Wight. It has a statutory duty under the Water Industry Act 1991, as amended by the Water Act 2014, to provide a reliable supply of water. This duty is enforceable by the Secretary of State and the industry's financial regulator, the Water Services Regulation Authority (Ofwat).

The Decision-Making Framework

- 1.6 Southern Water's operational site at Testwood includes land within both the New Forest District Council and Test Valley Borough Council administrative areas. However, the proposed LVA kiosk and the access to it from the public highway is only located within New Forest District Council's area.
- 1.7 Only the proposed LVA kiosk is the subject of this planning application, the other works are being delivered using permitted development rights under the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order (England) 2015, as amended, namely:
- *Part 13, Class A (a) development not above ground level required in connection with the supply or water...;*
 - *Part 13, Class A (g) any other development in, on over or under operational land other than the provision of a building....*
- 1.8 Temporary works and compounds for welfare, administrative facilities and storage of materials and equipment associated with construction of the scheme are permitted development under Part 4, Class A.

- 1.9 Southern Water notified New Forest District Council by letter of its intention to carry out those works using permitted development rights on 7 March 2024.
- 1.10 The WSW is in proximity to the Solent and Southampton Water Ramsar/Special Protection Area (SPA); Solent Maritime Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Mottisfont Bats SAC. Under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, as amended (the 'Habitats Regulations') any plan or project which is likely to have a significant effect on a national site network site (either alone or combination with other plans or projects) and is not directly connected with or necessary for the management of the site, must be subject to an appropriate assessment to determine the implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives. The purpose of an appropriate assessment is to determine if there will be an adverse effect on site integrity. This is dependent on-site specifics, including condition, status and conservation objectives.
- 1.11 Southern Water, as a competent authority, has carried out a Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) Stage 1 Screening. The HRA Stage 1 Screening concluded that there will be no adverse effects on the site integrity, on the Solent and Southampton SPA/Ramsar, Solent Maritime SAC and Solent and Dorset Coast SPA.

Land Ownership

- 1.12 Drawing 795023-JTX-XX-XX-DR-T-00002 illustrates the extent of Southern Water's land ownership and the red line planning application boundary. Southern Water owns the site. Therefore, this planning application is accompanied by a Certificate A.

2. Site Location and Description

- 2.1 The site is located on operational land at Testwood WSW. The WSW is accessed via Nutsey Lane from the Calmore Industrial Estate in Totton. Refer to Area Location Plan 795023-JTX-XX-XX-DR-T-00001 and Site Location Plan 795023-JTX-XX-XX-DR-T-00002.
- 2.2 The site of the proposed kiosk is within an area of the securely fenced operational site at Testwood WSW that is surrounded by existing plant and equipment. Immediately to the south are existing Sludge Thickening Tanks, to the west are existing Washwater Tanks, to the north east are the Clarifiers and to the south east are the Rapid Gravity Filters (refer to Drawing 795023-JTX-XX-XX-DR-T-00003 and Drawing 795023-JTX-XX-XX-DR-T-00004).
- 2.3 The operational site includes multiple similar kiosks, buildings, plant, tanks and access roads. The WSW is well screened from the surrounding area by mature trees and woodland, located both within the site and along its boundaries.
- 2.4 The wider surrounding area comprises low lying land within the lower reaches of the Test Valley. To the south of the WSW are the South Hampshire Industrial Estate, Calmore Industrial Park, and Westwood Business Park. Beyond the industrial and business parks are the densely developed residential areas of Testwood and Calmore to the south and southwest. The closest residential properties to the WSW, which were originally built to accommodate employees of the WSW, are located within the site boundary of the WSW and access from the site access road.

- 2.5 To the west are the Testwood Lakes, which are water storage areas used in conjunction with the WSW. They also form part of the Testwood Lakes Nature Reserve, an area used for nature conservation, recreation and education.
- 2.6 To the north and east of the WSW are the Rivers Test and Blackwater and the confluence of these rivers is immediately north of the WSW. Their combined floodplains separate the site from the industrial and residential areas of Southampton to the east and the M27 and M271 motorways. To the east, the Test Valley becomes tidal and this area of marshland, forming the northern reaches of the Test Estuary, is a nature reserve. The River Test is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).
- 2.7 There are no Public Rights of Way nor any other areas of public access at the site. A public footpath runs along the western edge of the WSW site linking Brunel Road (the public highway from which Testwood WSW is accessed) to a footbridge across the River Blackwater. A network of footpaths, the closest 300m from the southern edge of the WSW, cross the tidal marshes of the northern Test Estuary.
- 2.8 Road access from the site entrance is via Nutsey Lane, then Brunel Road at the southwest corner of the WSW site. Brunel Road in turn joins the A36 at a roundabout junction 200m southwest of the site.

3. Proposal

- 3.1 The proposed LVA kiosk is a key component of a scheme of upgrades at the WSW. The kiosk will provide secure weatherproof housing for electrical equipment and controls.

Design Component

- 3.2 The design component of this Statement outlines the original design process for the structure in the context of the physical, social and economic environment. This includes descriptions of the amount of development, the layout, scale and appearance of the proposals.

The Design Process

- 3.3 The design rationale for the scheme was informed and constrained by:
- Operational parameters, including the volume of water to be treated.
 - The need to provide a safe working environment to enable regular routine maintenance of equipment.
 - The context of the surrounding existing land uses and landscape character, including the topography, ground conditions and above ground features.
 - The potential environmental and economic effects of the construction and operation of the scheme.
 - The unique way in which Southern Water is funded to deliver the scheme.

Amount & Density of Development

- 3.4 The proposed kiosk is modest in scale. In floor plan it is 7.9 metres (m) x 3.8 m and 3.64 m high. Refer to Drawing 795023-JTX-XX-XX-DR-T-00005.
- 3.5 The need to safely carryout regular routine maintenance and health and safety requirements were key design requirements. The structure is considered to be appropriate in size and in respect of the functional requirements.

Layout

- 3.6 The location of the WSW is dictated by the location of the facilities for water supply abstraction from the river. The position of the proposed kiosk is determined by the space available within the operational site and the need for it to be in proximity to the plant and equipment it will operate. The design provides a safe working environment to carryout routine maintenance of plant and the requirements of health and safety legislation.

Scale and Appearance

- 3.7 The kiosk, which will be preassembled off-site, will be manufactured from Glass Reinforced Plastic (GRP) and it will be dark green in colour. Refer to Drawing 795023-JTX-XX-XX-DR-T-00005. Utilitarian in design and modest in scale, the kiosk will be similar to multiple other equipment kiosks at the WSW and will be unseen from outside the securely fenced area.

Access Component

- 3.8 The access component of this statement explains the vehicular and transport links to the development and how the principles of inclusive design have been integrated.

Access

- 3.9 As the kiosk is manufactured and pre-assembled off-site there will be only 2 HGV movements associated with its transport to site.
- 3.10 The only operational vehicle movements to the WSW are associated with maintenance visits, these are not expected to increase as a result of installation of the proposed kiosk. The existing access to the SWA is from Nutsey Close, via the Calmore Industrial Estate.
- 3.11 Routine maintenance and servicing of plant and equipment is undertaken in accordance with Southern Water's normal site operating procedures and in accordance with health and safety policy. The structure was designed to allow plant and equipment to be serviced in a safe and secure manner, and to enable access by emergency vehicles.

Equality Act

- 3.12 In formulating the proposals, Southern Water has had regard to the relevant provisions of the Equality Act. The layout and form of the proposed kiosk is primarily determined by functional requirements. The design avoids unnecessary additional physical barriers to authorised personnel.

Construction Management

- 3.13 Construction activities associated with the scheme and proposals will be temporary. Construction of the scheme as a whole is scheduled to be completed in 52 weeks. Construction activities will typically be:

- Monday to Friday 07:00 - 18:00.
- Saturday 07:00 - 14:00

There will be no work on Sundays or public holidays, unless otherwise agreed with the planning authority.

- 3.14 Construction activities will be managed in accordance with the Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP). The purpose of the plan is to reduce the risk of adverse impact of construction on sensitive environmental receptors, including human health, and to minimise disturbance to the surrounding area. It will include:

- General environmental guidelines and standards, plus any additional requirements set by the planning and other consenting authorities.
- Environmental monitoring procedures during the works.
- Best practice guidance.
- Normal working hours.
- Communication and training methods: site inductions and regular toolbox talks.
- Environmental Incident Reporting Systems.
- The roles of environmental staff and others in implementing the environmental actions.

3.15 The CEMP will be kept on site and regularly updated during the construction phase.

4. History

4.1 The planning history of the site, across the two planning authorities, is fairly complex.

4.2 Over the last five years the following applications have been submitted to New Forest District Council:

21/11162	Equipment kiosk and installation of security fencing – 29 September 2021 - granted subject to conditions.
20/10610	Variation of Condition 2 of Planning Permission 19/10600 – 7 August 2020 – granted.
20/10292	Retention of a demountable building comprising steel panel walls.
19/10600	Planning Permission – Chemical dosing building - 5 August 2019 – granted.
18/10346	Planning Permission – continued temporary siting of a demountable building – 18 May 2018 – granted.
16/11336	EIA Scoping Opinion – Testwood to Otterbourne pipeline – May 2016.
16/11007	Certificate of Lawfulness - 21 October 2016 – Use of permitted development rights for a solar photovoltaic array – approved.

5. Planning Policy Context

The Statutory Development Plan

5.1 This section of the Planning, Design and Access Statement identifies the statutory development plan, relevant national policy and guidance and emerging policies that are material to determination of the planning application.

5.2 Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that applications be determined in accordance with the statutory ‘development plan’ unless material considerations indicate otherwise (as confirmed in paragraph 47 of the National Planning Policy Framework – NPPF).

5.3 The statutory development plan for the planning application as a whole comprises of:

- The Hampshire Minerals and Waste Plan 2013

- The New Forest Local Plan 2016 – 2036 Part 1: Planning Strategy, adopted 6 July 2020
- The New Forest District Local Plan First Alteration 2005 – saved policy DW-12
- The Local Plan Part 1: Core Strategy 2009 – saved policies CS7, CS19 and CS21
- The Local Plan Part 2: Sites and Development Management 2014

5.4 The statutory development plans together with the NPPF, the National Planning Practice Guidance and other statutory non-statutory guidance documents have informed the design of the scheme.

National Planning Policies

5.5 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published on 24 July 2018 and most recently updated on 21 July 2021. The policy guidance it contains, which is of relevance to the determination of this application, includes provision for:

- A presumption in favour of sustainable development.
- Approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay.
- Identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure to help build a strong responsive and competitive economy.

5.6 **National Planning Practice Guidance:** recognises the importance of identifying suitable sites for water supply infrastructure and acknowledges that water infrastructure can have specific locational needs. This means exceptionally otherwise protected areas may have to be considered.

New Forest District Council Planning Policy

5.7 The New Forest District Council planning policies of relevance to determination of this planning application include:

The New Forest District Local Plan First Alteration 2005

- DW-E12 Protection of landscape features

The Local Plan 2016 – 2036 Part 1: Planning Strategy, adopted 6 July 2020

- Policy STR1: Achieving sustainable development
- Policy STR2: Protection of the countryside
- Policy STR3: The strategy for locating new development
- Policy STR8: Community services, infrastructure and facilities
- Policy ENV1: Mitigating the impacts of development on International Nature Conservation sites
- Policy ENV3: Design quality and local distinctiveness
- Policy ENV4: Landscape character and quality
- Policy CCC1: Safe and healthy communities

The Local Plan Part 1: Core Strategy 2009

- CS7: Open spaces, sport and recreation
- CS19 Tourism
- CS21 Rural economy

Local Plan Part 2: Sites and Development Management (DPD) 2014

- DM1: Heritage and Conservation

- DM2: Nature conservation, biodiversity and geodiversity
- DM3: Mitigation of impacts on European nature conservation sites
- DM5: Contaminated land
- DM9: Green Infrastructure linkages

6. Planning Considerations

6.1 The main considerations in relation to this application are its acceptability in terms of:

- The principle of development
- Biodiversity
- Landscape and visual
- Flood risk

The principle of development

New Forest District Council (NFDC) Planning Policies: STR1 and STR8

- 6.2 Water supply works are vital community infrastructure, which underpin sustainable communities. The Testwood WSW is an established and essential public water supply abstraction and treatment location. The principle of water infrastructure development in this location has been accepted.
- 6.3 NFDC Policy STR8 requires the Council to work with infrastructure providers to enable the delivery of infrastructure that helps to address the current and future needs of communities and businesses for adequate infrastructure and services, ensuring that any adverse impacts arising are minimised. The primary purpose of the proposal is to safeguard resilient public water supplies.

Biodiversity

NFDC Policies: STR3, ENV1, DM2, DM3 and DM9

- 6.4 The site sits in a landscape heavily influenced by the river Test and its tributaries, with numerous waterbodies present and ditches crisscrossing areas of flood plain grazing marsh and wet woodland. However, the proposed works would take place within the centre of the site in areas of developed land with habitats including well managed modified grassland, buildings and roads.
- 6.5 The River Test, where it passes through the WSW is designated a SSSI before entering the Solent and Southampton Water Ramsar/Special Protection Area (SPA), 250m east of the works and the Solent Maritime Special Area of Conservation (SAC) approximately 750m downstream.
- 6.6 The 'Kingfisher & Nutsey' and 'Lower Test Valley: Nursling Mill Fen' Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) are adjacent to the site but are over 230m from the proposed works which are unlikely to affect these site's qualifying features.
- 6.7 Southern Water's Ecologist has carried out a preliminary ecological appraisal of the site in August 2023, which identified the following:

- Three outlier badger setts are present on the WSW site.
- Buildings in proximity to the proposed works were assessed to have negligible potential to support roosting bats. However, habitat features (e.g., river, linear woodlands) present at the edges of the site likely offer opportunities for commuting and foraging bats.
- No potential otter holts/dens were observed but otter spraint was encountered under the bridge that crosses the river Test (approximate grid reference SU 3560 1516, which is over 80m from the proposed development).
- Himalayan balsam is growing over much of the riparian habitat along the river Test, again this is over 80m from the proposed development.

6.8 The following measures, together with the principles set out in CIRIA Working with Wildlife: guidance for the construction industry (July 2011) will be set out in the CEMP and implemented to minimise potential adverse impacts on ecology:

- Information on the presence of badgers and invasive species on site will form part of the Construction Team induction.
- No construction activities will take place within 30m of a badger sett.
- Trenches/excavations will be covered at night or provided a means of escape.
- To avoid disturbance to bat construction will be undertaken during daylight hours. Where night working is unavoidable, lighting will be set up in accordance with Guidance Note 8: Bats and Artificial Lighting in the UK (2018) – Bat Conservation Trust & Institution of Lighting Engineers.
- No construction activities will take place within 30 m of the River Test.
- No construction activities will take place within 15m of areas containing Himalayan Balsam.

6.9 With these measures in place, it is concluded that the proposed development will not adversely impact ecology.

6.10 In accordance with NFDC Policies ENV1 and DM2 and DM3 the requirements of the Habitat Regulations have been satisfied. Southern Water's HRA Stage 1 assessment concluded that installation of the proposed kiosk and the other associated components of the upgrade scheme would result in no adverse effects on the site integrity of the Solent and Southampton SPA/Ramsar, Solent Maritime SAC and Solent and Dorset Coast SPA.

Landscape and visual

NFDC Policy: STR2, ENV3 and ENV4

- 6.11 Testwood WSW comprises a variety of buildings, plant, equipment and structures, which vary in height and are constructed from a variety of materials. The surrounding buildings and plant, together with the tall trees and hedgerows that enclose the operational WSW restrict views of the proposed kiosks, which is a modest structure, only 3.64m in height.
- 6.12 The nearest residential dwellings are located 220m to the west of the WSW and will have no view of the proposed kiosk.
- 6.13 The proposal aligns with NFDC Policies ENV3 and STR2, which seek to protect the landscape of the New Forest National Park and the countryside and land adjoining it.

Flood risk

NFDC Policy: CCC1

- 6.14 According to Environment Agency mapping (<https://flood-map-for-planning.service.gov.uk/>), Testwood WSW is defined as a Flood Zones 2 and 3 (medium and high probability, respectively). However, the LVA kiosk will be located on a slab at an elevation higher than the 1 in 1000 year flood level.
- 6.15 A Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) has been prepared, which is submitted with this planning application. The FRA confirms:
- The proposed Kiosk will be elevated above the modelled 1 in 1000-year flood level,
 - The proposal will not involve an increase in the number of staff working within a flood risk area;
 - The LVA Kiosk will remain operational in times of flooding over the duration of its intended lifetime, and will not result in a significant loss of floodplain storage capacity or reduce floodplain conveyance; and
 - The proposed development will not result in a significant increase in the volume and rate of surface runoff leaving the site.
- 6.16 The FRA notes that the proposal represents ‘essential infrastructure’ development required in conjunction with the water supply treatment process. It demonstrates that the proposed kiosk is appropriate for its location and will remain operational in during flood events and will not result in an increase in off-site flood risk.

7. Conclusion

- 7.1 In accordance with Section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 this application should be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 7.2 The proposal has been assessed against the requirements of national policy, the statutory and emerging development plan, and the principle of the development is considered to be acceptable.
- 7.3 The application site is located within Testwood WSW, a large and longstanding water supply works adjoining the River Test. The principle of the use of this location for water supply infrastructure is established.
- 7.4 The proposed kiosk is considered to be acceptable in terms of design, scale and appearance. It represents a well-considered development, which responds positively to the relevant planning policy context and will support the continued resilience of public water supplies from the Testwood WSW.