

Hampshire Water Transfer and Water Recycling Project Pre-application Programme Document

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from
**Southern
Water.** 

The Southern Water logo consists of three stylized, wavy blue lines of varying lengths, positioned to the right of the text 'Southern Water'.

Hampshire Water Transfer and Water Recycling Project Programme Document

SOUTHERN WATER
March 2026

1. Purpose of this document

This Programme Document has been prepared by Southern Water and issued pursuant to the Planning Inspectorate's new Pre-application Prospectus¹ published in May 2024.

The Prospectus requests applicants to provide a pre-application Programme Document setting out the main steps that the applicant anticipates taking during the preparation of its DCO application. Whilst not a statutory requirement, it sets out the timetable and activities necessary for an effective pre-application process.

This Programme Document is intended to remain a live document during the pre-application period to reflect the evolution of the project and programme. It is currently anticipated that the Development Consent Order application will be submitted by the end of May 2026.

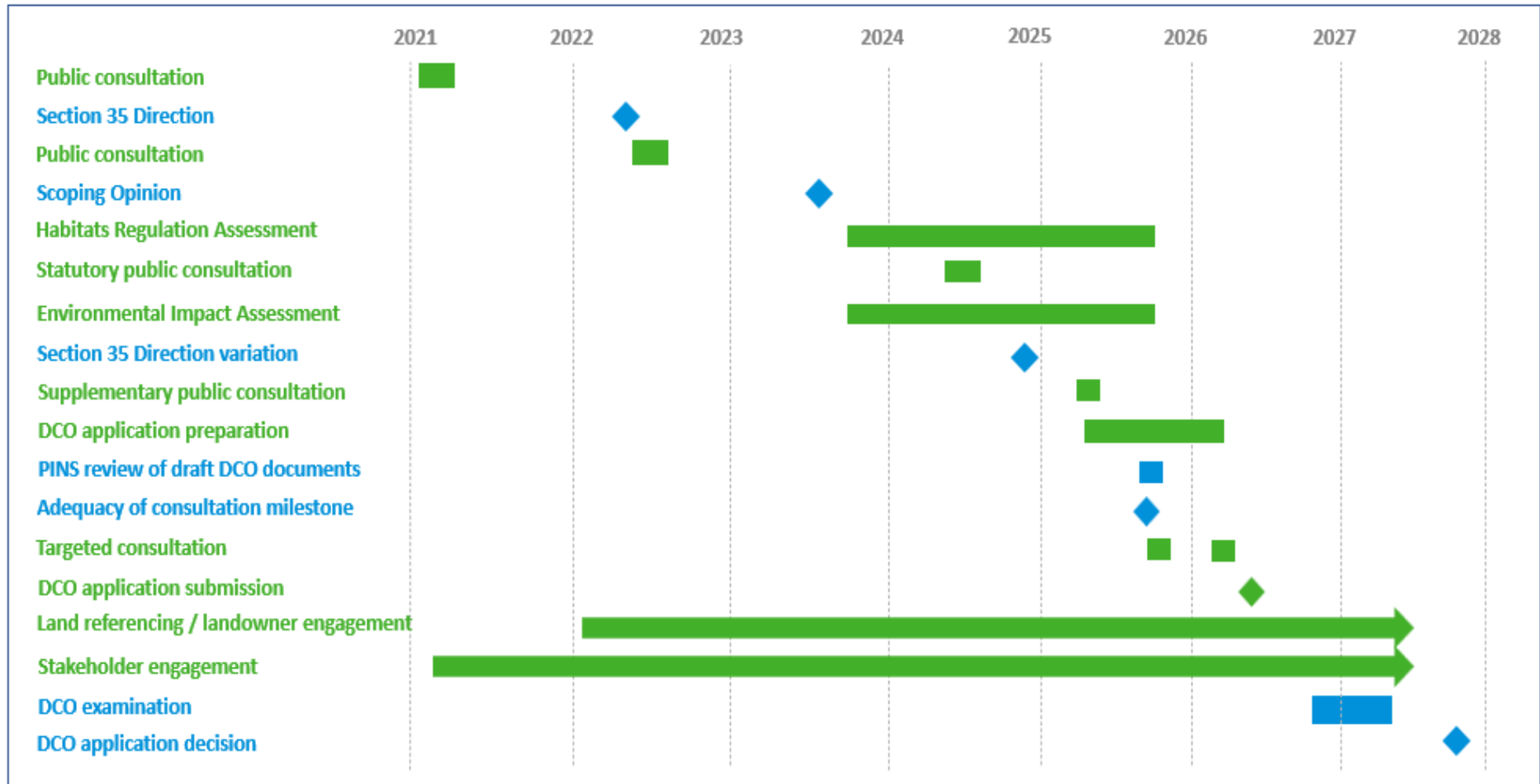
Southern Water has been engaging with statutory bodies and local authorities on the Project since 2021, including on the DCO pre-application programme and key milestones, such as the earlier non-statutory consultation held in 2022, and the more recent statutory Summer 2024, Spring 2025 and Autumn 2025 consultations. Southern Water will continue this ongoing engagement with those bodies to ensure awareness of the project programme.

This document provides the following information:

- Project programme illustrating key project milestones and associated timescales for the pre-application process
- The anticipated timescale for submission of the application for development consent
- Main issues for resolution and how these are being addressed
- Details of pre-application engagement with statutory consultees
- Cross references to Southern Water's Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC)
- Consideration of the identification of risks to achieving the pre-application stage and how these are being managed

¹ [Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects: 2024 Pre-application Prospectus - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/118122/nationally-significant-infrastructure-projects-2024-pre-application-prospectus.pdf)

2. Project Programme



3. Key Issues

Southern Water considers the following to be the main issues arising for resolution to date and has set out the activities that are being, or will be undertaken, to address these during the pre-application period.

Issue	Activity to address the issue
Ensuring sufficient resourcing of statutory bodies, in particular local planning authorities and statutory environmental bodies, so that they can meaningfully engage with our proposals prior to submission of the application.	Ensuring financial support and engagement programme in place with key statutory consultees to cover the pre-application period. Planning Performance Agreements are in place with host local authorities to support cost recovery. For some statutory environmental bodies, 'Discretionary Advice Service' agreements have been utilised in the majority of cases, with some of these now replaced with new cost recovery agreements enabled through changes in 2024 to the Infrastructure Planning (Fees) Regulations 2010.
Clarity of the relationship between Havant Thicket Reservoir and HWTWRP schemes, including in relation to operational interfaces.	Maintaining collaborative working with Portsmouth Water and ensuring clear communications with stakeholders and communities for both projects.
Clarity of the respective roles of the planning and RAPID gated processes.	Engagement with Planning Inspectorate and RAPID, including input into RAPID guidance, to ensure processes can operate effectively in tandem and, wherever practicable, do not duplicate each other.
Alignment of project with Southern Water's Water Resource Management Plan.	Articulating a clear need case for the Project in the event the latest WRMP is not published ahead of DCO examination. A draft need case for the Scheme has been shared with relevant stakeholders for comment.
Securing land interests and rights required for construction and operation of the Project	Progressing land referencing and engagement with relevant landowners to enter into agreements during the pre-application process wherever practicable.
Existing statutory undertaker apparatus that is in close proximity to, or interfaces with, the Project.	Identification of existing apparatus and interfaces to inform technical engagement with statutory undertakers during the design of the Project and to inform the negotiation of protective provisions with third parties.
Concern over future drinking water leads to significant objections to the Project	Ongoing engagement with the Drinking Water Inspectorate to demonstrate compliance with regulatory requirements. Maintain distinct communications with those potentially affected by the construction and operation of the Project that is the subject of the DCO application and with customers likely to be subject to a future change to their drinking water source.
Relevant stakeholders (including statutory consultees/local authorities) expecting more design detail than is proposed at DCO application stage.	Ongoing engagement with relevant stakeholders to underline and provide assurance on the approach to providing an 'outline' level of detail at DCO application informed by parameters, limits of deviation, illustrative designs and design principles.

4. Pre-application Engagement

Planning Inspectorate

Pre-application engagement with the Planning Inspectorate is based on maintaining updates and dialogue at key stages of the project. During the latter half of 2025, the focus of engagement was on the Adequacy of Consultation milestone and pre-application document reviews. A number of pre-application documents were shared with the Planning Inspectorate for review in September 2025. The Adequacy of Consultation Milestone was issued to the Planning Inspectorate in October 2025.

Relevant stakeholders

As at the start of 2026, over 400 external meetings related to the HWTWRP had been held with relevant stakeholders. Engagement with statutory consultees and environmental bodies is ongoing throughout the pre-application period through a structured engagement programme including:

- **Joint Officer Group:** a bi-monthly meeting with local authority lead planning officers to facilitate updates on project progress, opportunities to influence project development and resolve key issues;
- **Local authority bilateral meetings:** ad-hoc one-to-one meetings with local authority lead planning and technical officers to enable focused discussions on project development and localised issues, structured around key project stages and themes (e.g. consultation, design freeze, pipeline routes, above ground plant, mitigation);
- **EIA Working Groups** (local authorities, statutory environmental bodies): 12 structured sessions during the pre-application period with prescribed bodies and local authority technical and lead planning officers to facilitate engagement on the EIA process and supporting environmental assessments and outcomes. The 12 sessions are run in parallel across five sub-groups – Community, Historic Environment & Landscape, Resilience, Emissions & Transport, and Biodiversity & Water; and
- **EA/NE/MMO Technical Working Group:** monthly meeting with technical and area leads to facilitate engagement on matters specific to these environmental bodies (Environment Agency, Natural England, Marine Management Organisation)

To facilitate collaboration and engagement, Planning Performance Agreements are in place with host local authorities to provide financial support via cost recovery. For some statutory environmental bodies, 'Discretionary Advice Service' agreements have been utilised in the majority of cases, with some of these now replaced with new cost recovery agreements enabled through changes in 2024 to the Infrastructure Planning (Fees) Regulations 2010.

In addition to the above, four public consultations on the Project have now been delivered including a targeted consultation during September/October 2025, enabling all consultees and interested parties to comment on the emerging proposals for the Project. The approach to the statutory Summer 2024 consultation is set out in the Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC) which can be found on the HWTWRP consultation website here: [Statement of Community Consultation.pdf](#)

Relevant stakeholders are regularly provided with lookaheads to upcoming discussion topics and timescales for the sharing of draft pre-application documentation.

5. Risk Identification and Management

Set out below are what Southern Water considers to be the main risks to achieving the DCO pre-application programme and the process by which these risks are being managed. All project risks are actively managed using an established risk assessment and mitigation methodology.

Main risks to pre-application stage	Process by which these risks are tracked and managed
<p>Perception of not meeting adequacy of consultation test requiring further pre-application consultation to be undertaken</p>	<p>Delivering a clear approach to consultation, including delivery of four public consultations so far on the Project, including a non-statutory consultation prior to statutory consultation, coupled with tracking compliance with the SoCC and the Gunning Principles, and following a robust feedback loop process to have regard to feedback from the consultations. Consultation is supplemented by regular ongoing engagement with statutory bodies, landowners and communities throughout the pre-application process.</p> <p>The project's 'Adequacy of Consultation Milestone submission presents the 2024 and 2025 statutory consultations in detail, demonstrating the thorough conscientious consideration of all issues raised and official responses to these matters. The submission has been written to present the consultations in more detail to the Planning Inspectorate and demonstrate the adequacy of consultation and engagement activates undertaken prior to submission.</p>
<p>Feedback from statutory consultation triggering a change to the project that could have a material impact on the current pre-application programme as it could, for example, require material design changes or further targeted consultation.</p>	<p>As noted above, Southern Water has already undertaken non-statutory consultation in Summer 2022 in advance of its statutory consultation in Summer 2024, and regularly engages with stakeholders and landowners as it develops the project to understand feedback and reduce the risk of material issues being raised during statutory consultation. Consideration continues to be given to the need for further consultation on any design changes following consultation in line with relevant guidance, and this has supported the Project's approach to its two consultations in 2025 which consulted on design refinements made to the project since Summer 2024. Many of these design refinements were proposed in response to feedback from our Summer 2024 consultation and ongoing engagement.</p>
<p>Material design changes post-Spring 2025 Consultation and Autumn 2025 Targeted Consultation require further public consultation and delay schedules for preparation of the Environmental Statement and DCO application.</p>	<p>Maintain adherence to scheme development process to ensure design development for DCO is progressed in line with the schedule. Effectively manage design issues through risk management and design change processes.</p>
<p>Difficulties in engaging with landowners leading to delays in securing land rights or control over the proposed sites prior to submission</p>	<p>Undertaking detailed land referencing on an ongoing basis to inform landowner engagement with relevant interests and the early negotiation of agreements prior to submission of the DCO application. Southern Water is regularly engaging with landowners and their agents, keeping them updated on progress with the project and discussing their issues and concerns. A Land Agent Group has been established to discuss and agree Heads of Terms ahead of them being issued to landowners.</p>