

From Dr Roger F Smith DPhil BA (Hons) FRGS, Trustee CPRE Sussex

For the attention of Planning Inspector J Bore MRTPI

c/o The Programme Officer
Horsham District Local Plan Examination
Horsham District Council

5 October 2026

Dear Sir,

Examination of the Horsham District Local Plan (2023–2040): Request for Attendance and Participation of Southern Water Representatives Regarding Havant Thicket Reservoir Delays

I am writing to you in your capacity as the appointed Planning Inspector examining the Horsham District Local Plan 2023–2040.

I wish to draw your attention to Ofwat's recent announcement, on 21 September, that completion of the Havant Thicket Reservoir, including integration with the yet to be approved Hampshire Water Transfer and Water Recycling (HWTW) Project, will be delayed by five years, moving the reservoir's expected operational date from 2029 to 2034.

Integration of the reservoir with the foul water recycling scheme, a joint Portsmouth Water/Southern Water scheme, would transform the reservoir from a seasonal asset into an all-year strategic resource.

Water supply resilience, abstraction restrictions, and historic water-neutrality requirements have significantly affected strategic planning and delivery across Horsham District.

Delaying a key regional water-resilience asset by five years may materially change the assumptions underpinning the Local Plan's housing trajectory, infrastructure sequencing, and compliance with environmental obligations.

To ensure the Local Plan can be found sound, robust, and deliverable, I respectfully request that you invite, please, a formal representative from Southern Water to attend and actively participate in the forthcoming hearing sessions.

Southern Water's direct participation is necessary to allow the examination to clarify:

1. **Supply Mitigations:** How Southern Water intends to bridge the five-year deficit in regional supply capacity between 2029 and 2034 without impacting the Horsham District housing trajectory or local water resources.
2. **Certainty of Delivery:** The technical and financial viability of their revised network strategies, given the complexity and escalating costs of the scheme.

Without direct evidence from and questioning of Southern Water's technical representatives, the Local Plan may rely on outdated infrastructure assumptions, weakening its effectiveness and legal soundness.

Thank you for your time and for considering this procedural request.

Yours faithfully,

Roger Smith

Dr R F Smith

Copies to:

John Milne MP (Horsham)

Andrew Griffith MP (Arundel and South Downs)