

Hants 2050 – Southern Water response

Southern Water enjoys a productive and strategic partnership with Hampshire County Council across many different levels of our respective organisations and welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the Commission of Inquiry.

Much of the following comes from our proposed Business Plan for 2020-2025, which was submitted to Ofwat in September 2018 for approval during 2019.

The South East is designated as a water stressed region, and this is particularly true in Hampshire. In addition to the interventions we are planning, expanding partnership working is critical to meet this challenge and secure a resilient water future.

1. What do you think might happen in the future?

Water is one of life's essentials, is fundamental for the production of energy and food and is a vital element of our precious natural environment. It is also integral to every product we own and directly supports the local economy.

However, water resources across the South East, are under increasing pressure. In 25 years' time we will have lost one-third of our water sources through climate change and will have seen a reduction in the amount of water we are allowed to take from rivers and underground sources.

Alongside this, more people are moving to Hampshire and the South East to live and work – a 15% growth in the population is expected by 2045 across our region. If no action is taken, demand for water will outstrip supply by 245 million litres per day (around 50% of our current supply) and severe water shortages would be expected by the 2050s.

In Hampshire, there is currently a supply-demand surplus which is why the region has historically been resilient to drought events in the past. The anticipated licence changes to our abstractions in the Test and Itchen catchments will have an immediate impact of reducing available supplies by approximately two-thirds in Hampshire. By 2027 these licence changes amount to a reduction in supplies of approximately 190 million litres a day (MI/d) compared to a current supply availability of approximately 250MI/d in south Hampshire. In addition there is the potential for further licence reductions pending the outcome of investigations to be completed over the next few years.

A growing population will produce more wastewater from homes and businesses that needs effective and efficient treatment. Additions and expansions to the existing wastewater network will cater for much of this growth, supported by the adoption of sustainable drainage systems and rainwater capture to ensure we support sustainable growth.

2. How will that effect/impact on what we do?

Southern Water is continuing to plan alongside Hampshire County Council and other stakeholders to meet these future challenges. Working together in this way will help transform the county's understanding of the value of water as our most precious resource and encourage people to help us conserve it.

In the coming years, there will be many opportunities for the council and Southern Water to work together to promote shared ideals and support each other's campaigns.

To help protect and enhance the environment, we are investing more than £800m on environmental improvements across our region. This includes improving bathing and coastal water quality, collaborating with farmers and landowners to keep pesticides out of rivers and using new technology to improve river water quality.

Additionally, our Catchment First initiative puts catchments at the heart of our decision making in order to achieve a more resilient environment and service. We envisage catchments where groups of stakeholders, including Hampshire County Council, work together to develop and deliver benefits in water quality and availability, flood management and wildlife as well as improving access to the nature to improve people's wellbeing.

3. How will the County Council and Partners need to react in light of this?

As mentioned above, Hampshire is water-stressed. To facilitate growth and protect the environment, we are promoting water efficient behaviour, encouraging sustainable development and seeking out innovative new sources of supply.

Equally, we will continue to extract every bit of value from wastewater – recycling used water to rivers, recovering valuable biosolids for agriculture and gas for energy and increasing customer use of grey water and rainwater.

Hampshire County Council is already supportive of our Target 100 water efficiency ambition to reduce water consumption to 100 litres per person, per day. Helping us promote this water efficiency standard in new developments alongside planning authorities would be an important next step in our partnership.

We will ensure we are also doing our bit to conserve water and will reduce leakage from our network by 15% by 2025 and 50% by 2050.

We would encourage the council to continue to promote environmentally sustainable solutions such as sustainable drainage from medium / large-scale development and to continue to work with the Partnership for Urban South Hampshire to understand the impact of growth and what is required to service it.

Additionally, we would welcome the council's support in helping us promote water efficiency, along with our Unflushables campaign to reduce sewer blockages, in local schools. This will help encourage long-term behaviour change with the customers of the future.

4. Any other relevant evidence or views (i.e. facts/figures, personal experience etc.)

We have explored these future challenges in more detail in the following document:

www.southernwater.co.uk/media/1844/water-futures-in-the-south-east.pdf

Our response to them is outlined in the following document, *Southern Water Futures*:

www.southernwater.co.uk/media/1846/southern-water-futures.pdf

