

Agenda Item IMD21

INDIVIDUAL EXECUTIVE MEMBER DECISION

REFERENCE IMD: 2018/21

TITLE	Wokingham Borough Council response to South East Water's consultation on the draft Water Resource Management Plan 2019
DECISION TO BE MADE BY	Leader of the Council - Charlotte Haitham Taylor, Executive Member for Environment - Norman Jorgensen
DATE, MEETING ROOM and TIME	18 May 2018 11am in SF1
WARD	None Specific;
DIRECTOR	Director of Corporate Services - Graham Ebers, Interim Director of Environment - Josie Wragg

OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

To ensure that South East Water's draft Water Resource Management Plan 2019 has minimal negative impacts upon Wokingham Borough and that any positive benefits are maximised.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Leader of the Council and the Executive Member for Environment agrees that Wokingham Borough Council:

- 1) Recognizes that South East Water (SEW) has identified the area of Wokingham Borough located in Water Resource Zone 4 (Bracknell) as an area of high water stress and also an area of higher risk uncertainties;
- 2) Notes SEW's short term initiatives of water efficiency and leakage reduction, which have been applied to all 8 Water Resource Zones, as well as the longer term initiatives specific to Water Resource Zone 4 (WRZ 4);
- 3) Requests that South East Water produce an Action Plan that addresses how the requirements of future housing supply in Wokingham Borough will be taken into account and mitigated where required, given the substantial increase in population in Wokingham Borough and future planned growth to be advanced through the Local Plan Update;
- 4) Continues to welcome further engagement with SEW as work on the dWRMP 2019 continues.

SUMMARY OF REPORT

South East Water (SEW) has published a draft Water Resource Management Plan 2019 (dWRMP19) which will update and replace South East Water's (SEW) current water resources management plan, which was approved in June 2014.

The dWRMP19 sets out SEW's estimate of the amount of water required and the measures considered necessary to maintain the supply-demand balance over the period covered by the plan, from 2020 to 2080.

Background

The draft Water Resource Management Plan 2019 (dWRMP19) will update and replace South East Water's (SEW) current water resources management plan, which was approved in June 2014. The dWRMP19 has been prepared to meet the statutory requirements of section 37A to 37D of the Water Industry Act 1991 (as amended by the Water Act 2003) and the Water Resources Management Plan Direction 2016; which require each water company to prepare a water resources management plan showing how it intends to manage and develop water resources to maintain an efficient and economical system of water supply within its area.

The dWRMP19 sets out SEW's estimate of the amount of water required and the measures considered necessary to maintain the supply-demand balance over the period covered by the plan, from 2020 to 2080. It explains how SEW have taken into account the implications of climate change, sustainable abstractions, future population and housing growth, and other factors that affect long term future uncertainty.

SEW's supply area covers an area of some 5,657 square Km, across parts of Kent, Sussex, Surrey, Berkshire and Hampshire (see Figure 13). This area is divided into 8 Water Resource Zones. The zones form the basic framework SEW use for planning water resources, managing supply and demand, and identifying investment priorities. The boundary of each zone describes an area within which the supply and demand for water is largely self-contained; they do not follow administrative boundaries.

Water is supplied in the borough by both SEW and Thames Water. Eastern parts of Wokingham Borough are mostly served by South East Water, with parts also served by Thames Water. The areas served by South East Water fall into Water Resource Zone 4, which covers parts of Wokingham, Bracknell, Basingstoke, Farnborough and Maidenhead. This Zone is known collectively as 'Bracknell'.

It should be noted that Thames Water provides a separate service for the removal and treatment of wastewater that spans the whole of Wokingham Borough.



Figure 13: Supply area map showing Local Planning Authority areas (taken from page 50 of the dWRMP19)

Analysis of Issues

Serious Water Stress

SEW operate in an area of serious water stress, which was designated by Defra in 2007 and is defined by the Environment Agency as an area where current (or future) household demand for water is a high proportion of the current effective rainfall available to meet that demand.

Together with the Environment Agency, SEW have worked to review the risks and uncertainties in water supply/demand and derived a risk score for each Water Resource Zone. The parts of Wokingham Borough located in Water Resource Zone 4 (Bracknell) are considered to be within an area of high water stress and also an area of higher risk uncertainties. WRZ4 received one of the highest risk scores of the 8 Water Resource Zones that SEW have responsibility for.

Studies undertaken by SEW as part of the draft Water Management Plan 2019 confirm that around 26,000 more people now live within SEW's supply area than was forecast at the time of WRMP14. The trend of accelerated population growth is likely to increase, which will drive demand for additional water.

Planned and future growth of Wokingham Borough

WBC is a proactive planning authority, seeking to shape future development through a carefully managed approach. As part of the current Local Development Plan, large-

scale, strategic development is being delivered at four Strategic Development Locations (SDLs) across the Borough:

- Land at Arborfield Garrison
- Land South of the M4 in Shinfield
- Land North of Wokingham Town Centre
- Land South of Wokingham Town Centre

It is expected that in total over 9,500 homes are to be delivered across these SDLs and development at each of the four sites is already underway. Indeed as at 30 November 2017, works have been either completed or have commenced on over 2,600 homes across each of the four sites. Particularly strong progress is being made at both the Arborfield Garrison and South Wokingham Strategic Development Locations.

WBC's planning strategy is to deliver sustainable, infrastructure rich communities. There are significant infrastructure investments being made, a number of which have been delivered, with several more planned. WBC's approach is enabling £400m worth of investments in 7 new primary and 1 new secondary schools; 7 new strategic roads, 6 new neighbourhood centres and 1 new district centre, 3 new sports hubs and one enhanced sports hub, parkland and improvements to public transport, as well as over 30% affordable housing.

Work is currently underway on a new local plan (the Local Plan Update) which will guide development in the Borough for the next 20 years up until 2036. The Council needs to plan for more housing and employment facilities, schools, roads, shops and community facilities and may need to accommodate further large-scale strategic developments through the Local Plan Update. This will have the potential to significantly increase the Borough's population, over and above that which is anticipated as a result of development that is already underway.

SEW's Preferred Plan - dWRMP 2019

In the first five years of its adoption, SEW's Preferred Plan is to rely predominantly on initiatives to reduce customer demand for water and to reduce leakages and improve water efficiency.

These shorter term plans are standard initiatives that will apply to all 8 Water Resource Zones across SEW's supply area. Within Water Resource Zone 4 specifically (the zone that covers the eastern part of Wokingham Borough) SEW's Preferred Plan measures include:

- Catchment management improvements between 2025 and 2045
- Development of a new groundwater source near Farnborough in 2057
- Development of a new aquifer storage and recovery scheme in Maidenhead in 2067.

These planned initiatives are all longer term solutions and WBC is concerned that the dWRMP 2019 does not address the short-to-medium term water supply issues that will arise as a result of the Borough's population increase and planned growth detailed in the Council's current Development Plan and the future Local Plan Update. It is anticipated that such schemes would go beyond straightforward initiatives to reduce customer demand.

Conclusion

WBC recognize that SEW has identified the area of Wokingham Borough covered by Water Resource Zone 4 (Bracknell) as an area of high water stress and also an area of higher risk uncertainties. Indeed, WRZ4 received one of the highest risk scores of the 8 Water Resource Zones managed by SEW.

WBC notes SEW's short term initiatives of water efficiency and leakage reduction, which have been applied to all 8 Water Resource Zones, as well as the longer term initiatives specific to WRZ4. However, it is requested that South East Water produce an Action Plan that addresses how the requirements of future housing supply in Wokingham Borough will be taken into account and mitigated where required, given the substantial increase in population in Wokingham Borough and future planned growth to be advanced through the Local Plan Update.

WBC continues to welcome further engagement with SEW as work on the dWRMP 2019 continues and as work on the Local Plan progresses.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

The Council faces severe financial challenges over the coming years as a result of the austerity measures implemented by the Government and subsequent reductions to public sector funding. It is estimated that Wokingham Borough Council will be required to make budget reductions in excess of £20m over the next three years and all Executive decisions should be made in this context.

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1)	Nil	Nil	Nil
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	Nil	Nil	Nil
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	Nil	Nil	Nil

Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision

None anticipated

Cross-Council Implications

The ability of South East Water to plan, manage and deliver water resources across the Borough will be significantly affected by the amount of development that is already planned for the Borough as part of the current Local Development Plan, as well as future growth as part of the Local Plan Update.

SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Director – Corporate Services	No response received
Monitoring Officer	No comments
Leader of the Council	No response received

Reasons for considering the report in Part 2
N/A

List of Background Papers
Information published by South East Water regarding the draft Water Resource Management Plan 2019: https://corporate.southeastwater.co.uk/about-us/our-plans/your-water-your-say?utm_source=All+contacts+27%2f02%2f18&utm_campaign=2821e72102-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2018_02_27&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_7ba035fd27-2821e72102-59682879

Contact Heather Read	Service Place Commissioning
Telephone No Tel: 0118 974 6453	Email heather.read@wokingham.gov.uk

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