

Mid Kent Planning Support
Maidstone Borough Council
Maidstone House
King Street
Maidstone
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By email: planningsupport@midkent.gov.uk

Subject: Wellwood Reservoir to Potters Corner Reservoir – Request for an EIA Screening Opinion for South East Water Limited

Dear Sir or Madam,

I write on behalf of South East Water to request an EIA Screening Opinion under Regulation 6 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (as amended 2018) for the Wellwood Reservoir to Potters Corner Reservoir water mains pipeline Scheme. As the Scheme extends into three local planning authority district areas, I am sending this screening request to Maidstone Borough Council, Swale Borough Council and Ashford Borough Council.

The Proposed Development

South East Water is one of a number of statutory water undertakers that manage the public water supply across England and Wales. Each water undertaker has the statutory duty under Part III Chapter I Section 37 of the Water Industry Act 1991 to develop and maintain an efficient and economical system to provide a clean and reliable supply of water in its operational area. South East Water supplies clean, potable water to around 2.2 million people living in parts of Kent, Sussex, Surrey, Berkshire and Hampshire.

South East Water has identified the need for the installation of new water supply mains to provide greater resilience and reduce the potential customer impact in the event of a simultaneous failure of associated water treatment works in the Ashford area where there is the potential for deteriorating raw water quality in the future if left unmitigated. These new pipelines will enable the transfer of up to eight megalitres per day from Wellwood Reservoir (Seed Road, Sittingbourne, ME9 0NN) into a system where the headroom is currently limited and storage at Potters Corner Reservoir (Maidstone Road, Ashford, TN25 4GF) would be maintained for a longer period of time. These new

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pipelines will result in a reduction of 16,000 properties potentially at risk after five days of supply interruption. These new pipelines will provide improved flexibility, connectivity and therefore enhanced resilience in the wider pipeline network area.

The proposed development consists of two sections, the first being the installation of approximately 2.6km of a new water main in Wichling in the borough of Swale with the second section of the Scheme involving the installation of approximately 12.8km of new water main from Warren Street to Potters Corner Reservoir, Maidstone Rd in the boroughs of Maidstone and Ashford respectively. Appendix A illustrates the Scheme alignment in regards to the respective borough boundaries.

Although the Scheme is divided into two sections of pipeline, South East Water consider these works to comprise only one project due to the sections being dependent on each other to function.

EIA Considerations

South East Water considers that the proposed development falls under Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (the EIA Regulations), specifically category 10(l) 'installations of long-distance aqueducts'. An EIA is only required for a Schedule 2 development if it is 'screened in' on the grounds that it is likely to have significant effects on the environment by factors such as size, nature or location.

A development falls under Schedule 2 if it matches one of the categories described in column 1 of the table in Schedule 2 of the EIA Regulations and:

- any part of that development is to be carried out in a sensitive area; or
- any applicable threshold or criterion in the corresponding part of column 2 of that table is respectively exceeded or met in relation to that development.

With respect to 'sensitive areas' the proposed development is located partly within the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), a 'sensitive area' and therefore, the Scheme should be screened to determine if an EIA is required. Additionally, with respect to applicable thresholds or criteria, category 10(l) of the Regulations has a size threshold of a 1ha working area, which is exceeded in the case of the proposed development.

As required by the EIA Regulations the following information is provided in support of the EIA Screening Opinion request within the attached EIA Screening Report prepared by South East Water:

- a plan sufficient to identify the land;
- a description of the site and proposed development, including in particular: a description of the physical characteristics of the development, and where relevant, of demolition works; a description of the location of the development, with particular regard to the environmental sensitivity of the geographical areas likely to be affected;
- a description of the aspects of the environment likely to be significantly affected by the development;
- to the extent the information is available, a description of any likely significant effects of the proposed development on the environment resulting from:
 - the expected residues and emissions and the production of waste, where relevant; and the use of natural resources, in particular soils, land, water and biodiversity; and
 - such other information or representations as the person making the request may wish to provide or make, including any features of the proposed development or any measures envisaged to avoid or prevent what might otherwise have been significant adverse effects on the environment.

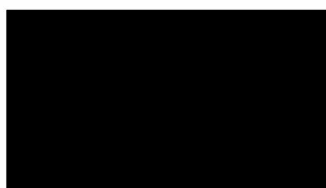
The Wellwood Reservoir to Potters Corner Reservoir Pipeline EIA Screening Report submitted alongside this letter contains the following documents within its appendices:

- Appendix A Scheme Plans
- Appendix B Environmental Designation Plans
- Appendix C Construction Information
- Appendix D Ecology Survey Reports
- Appendix E Arboriculture Reports
- Appendix F Archaeology Reports

Our conclusion, set out within the EIA Screening Report, is that an EIA of the proposed project is not required as there are no significant environmental effects, and the project can therefore proceed. An EIA screening opinion is requested to confirm this, and we look forward to receiving it within the 21-day period. Subject to the Council issuing a Screening Opinion agreeing that an EIA is not required, South East Water intends to commence the works in February 2023 using their permitted development rights as a Statutory Undertaker.

For any queries you have, please do not hesitate to contact me. We would also be happy to meet in person or virtually to discuss the Scheme.

Yours faithfully



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CC Mid Kent Planning Support, Swale Borough Council

CC Head of Planning, Ashford Borough Council

Appendix A: Scheme Alignment

