

**PLANNING AND
INFRASTRUCTURE POLICY
ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

20 February 2023

MBC Response to Water Supply Consultations

Timetable	
Meeting	Date
PAC for Planning & Infrastructure	20 February 2023
Lead Member for Planning and Infrastructure	20 February 2023

Will this be a Key Decision?	No
Urgency	Not Applicable
Final Decision-Maker	Lead Member for Planning and Infrastructure
Lead Head of Service	Philip Coyne (Interim Director for Local Plan Review)
Lead Officer and Report Author	Tom Gilbert (Principal Planner)
Classification	Public
Wards affected	All

Executive Summary

This report covers three water supply consultations. One by the regional water company alliance (Water Resource South East), and the others by the water supply utility companies that operate in the Borough (South East Water & Southern Water). The consultations referred to in this report include:

- Water Resources South East – Draft Best Value Regional Plan
- South East Water – Draft Water Resources Management Plan
- Southern Water - Draft Water Resources Management Plan

Purpose of Report

To inform members of the key elements affecting the Borough from the consultations and to seek agreement from the Lead Member on the Executive for Planning and Infrastructure to submit the response appended to this report.

This report makes the following recommendation to the Committee:

1. That the Lead Member for Planning and Infrastructure be recommended to agree the proposed responses to the three water supply consultations at Appendix 1 of this report.
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MBC Response to Water Supply Consultations

1. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	<p>The four Strategic Plan objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embracing Growth and Enabling Infrastructure • Safe, Clean and Green • Homes and Communities • A Thriving Place <p>We do not expect the recommendations will by themselves materially affect achievement of corporate priorities. However, they will support the Council’s overall achievement of its aims as set out in section 3</p>	Interim Director Local Plan Review
Cross Cutting Objectives	<p>The four cross-cutting objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heritage is Respected • Health Inequalities are Addressed and Reduced • Deprivation and Social Mobility is Improved • Biodiversity and Environmental Sustainability is respected <p>The report recommendations support the achievements of the four, cross cutting objectives by ensuring that plans from another body do not materially harm the council’s ability to achieve these objectives.</p>	Interim Local Plan Director
Risk Management	Already covered in the risk section	Interim Local Plan Director
Financial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proposals set out in the recommendation are all within already approved budgetary headings and so need no new funding for implementation. 	Head of Finance
Staffing	We will deliver the recommendations with our current staffing.	Interim Local Plan Director
Legal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are no legal implications arising 	Senior Legal Advisor (Planning)

	from the report	Mid Kent Legal Services
Information Governance	The recommendations do not impact personal information (as defined in UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018) the Council Processes.	Information Governance Officer
Equalities	The recommendations do not propose a change in service therefore will not require an equalities impact assessment	Equalities and Communities Officer
Public Health	We recognise that the recommendations will not negatively impact on population health or that of individuals.	Housing and Inclusion Team Leader
Crime and Disorder	The recommendation will not have a negative impact on Crime and Disorder	Interim Local Plan Director
Procurement	The recommendation has no immediate impact on budget headings or expenditure in the current year	Interim Local Plan Director and Head of Finance
Biodiversity and Climate Change	The implications of this report on biodiversity and climate change have been considered and aligns with action 5.7 of the Biodiversity and Climate Change Action Plan to strengthen water supplies and other critical infrastructure to be prioritised alongside ensuring more resilient settlements in respect to longer term climate projections including heat waves, droughts, and water scarcity.	Biodiversity and Climate Change Manager

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

2.1 There are three consultations running concurrently on water supply. These involve two water companies operating in the Borough (South East Water & Southern Water) and the south east regional alliance of water companies (Water Resource South East), which covers the Borough. The consultations run from **14 November 2022** to **20 February 2023**.

2.2 The consultations are as follows:

- Water Resources South East –Best Value Regional Plan
- South East Water –Water Resources Management Plan
- Southern Water - Water Resources Management Plan

2.3 This report summarises the consultations. All three consultations have a standard template to collect responses.; The Council’s proposed responses to each of the three consultations is attached in Appendix 1.

2.4 The relevant consultation documents can be found in background documents 1 to 3.

Background

2.5 There are two water companies that operate within Maidstone Borough providing water supply services. The companies are Southern Water and South East Water. Southern Water supplies water to north the Borough on the border with Medway. Whilst South East Water supplies water to the rest of the Borough.

2.6 Both these companies are required every 5 years to produce a water resource management plan. The aim of the plan is to maintain water supply over the timeframe 2025-2075.

2.7 A third consultation is being run by Water Resource South East (WRSE), and is the Best Value Regional Plan. WRSE is a south east regional alliance of the six operating water companies within its geographical area. WRSE is not directly involved in the provision of water supply. Like the WRMP produced by the water companies the Best Value Regional Plan produced by WRSE assesses the water needs for the region and identifies strategic solutions to the problems identified. The plan covers the same timeframe as the WRMPs and is also similarly a requirement within the water regulatory system.

2.8 It should be noted that outside of these consultations the Council has been engaging with the relevant water companies through the Local Plan Review to confirm if there is capacity for the planned growth. This engagement has taken place at the statutory consultation periods at Regulation 18 and 19, plus through the development of the Infrastructure Delivery Plan that is evidence to support the Local Plan Review. Therefore, water supply capacity has been factored into the Local Plan Review.

Content of the consultations

2.9 Within each consultation document a set template is used and they include the following elements:

- What is the consultation?
- What is the challenge?
- The proposed solutions to the challenge
- How to respond, and,
- Next steps

2.10 Set out below are the highlights of each consultation

Water Resource South East: Best Value Regional Plan

2.11 The highlights of the Best Value Regional Plan produced by WRSE include:

- reduce leakage by at least 50% and lower water use by 40 litres per person per day (on average) by 2050.

Between 2025 and 2035:

- Complete the construction of 1 new reservoir in Hampshire and start building 3 more in Oxfordshire, Kent and West Sussex
- Use the Grand Union Canal to transfer water from the Midlands to South East England
- Develop 6 water recycling schemes in Kent, Sussex, London, Hampshire and the Isle of Wight to supplement our water supplies
- Build 1 desalination plant on the Sussex coast
- Develop new transfers so we can move up to 600 million litres of water per day around the South East and between other regions

Between 2035 and 2075:

- Develop a further 6 water recycling schemes across the region
- Transfer more water from the Midlands and the North West using the River Severn and the River Thames
- Build desalination plants at a further 5 locations in Kent
- Build 1 new reservoir in East Sussex
- Store extra water underground at 3 sites
- Develop new transfers so we can move up to 1,400 million litres of water per day around the South East and between other regions

Southern Water – Water Resource Management Plan 2025-75

2.12 The highlights of the Southern Water WRMP include:

- Reducing leakage by at least 50% by 2050 and could reduce it by as much as 62% - by embracing new technology and replacing old water mains
- Our ambition to reduce average daily use to 100 litres per person per day by 2040. However, our demand forecast requires a reduction to 109 litres per person per day by 2040
- Developing water recycling schemes in several locations providing extra water to help supplement the flows in rivers and to refill reservoirs, particularly during dry weather
- Building more pipelines to transfer water from our neighbouring companies, following the development of new sources of water in other areas
- Using desalination plants to turn seawater into drinking water in some areas
- Collaborating with land users and environmental groups to improve the water sources we rely upon, so they are resilient for the future.

South East Water - Water Resource Management Plan 2025-75

2.13 The highlights of the Southern Water WRMP include:

- Leak reduction and water efficiency activities
- New pipelines to increase the amount of water that moves between water companies and also within our supply area
- A new reservoir at Broad Oak (Kent) in 2036
- Water recycling between Peacehaven Wastewater Treatment Plant and Arlington Reservoir (East Sussex)

- Water treatment works improvements
 - Desalination at Reculver (Kent)
 - New reservoir at our preferred location of Arlington, or at Broyle Place, Eastbourne (East Sussex)
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3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 3.1 Option 1: That the Planning and Infrastructure Policy Advisory Committee recommend that the response to the consultation at Appendix 1 of this report be approved by the Lead Member for Planning & Infrastructure. This would allow the response to be sent by the submission deadline.
- 3.2 Option 2: That the Planning and Infrastructure Policy Advisory Committee recommend that the response at Appendix 1 of this report be approved by the Lead Member for Planning & Infrastructure, subject to further comments and changes. The consultation deadline is 20 February 2023 and so comments and changes would need to be of a relatively minor nature so as to meet the deadline.
- 3.3 Option 3: That the Planning and Infrastructure Policy Advisory Committee recommend that the response at Appendix 1 of this report is not approved by the Lead Member for Planning & Infrastructure. However, this would mean the response would not be sent and the Council's views would not be factored in.
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4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 Option 1: That the Planning and Infrastructure Policy Advisory Committee recommend that the response to the consultation at Appendix 1 of this report be approved by the Lead Member for Planning & Infrastructure. This would allow the response to be sent by the submission deadline.
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5. RISK

- 5.1 The risk associated with these proposals, as well as any risks should the Council not act as recommended, have been considered in line with the Council's Risk Management Framework. We are satisfied that the risks associated are within the Council's risk appetite and will be managed as per the Policy.
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6. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

- 6.1 The MBC Response to Water Supply Consultation provided alongside this report will have been considered by the Planning and Infrastructure Policy

and Advisory Committee on the 20 February 2023 and their comments will be reported to the Lead Member.

7. REPORT APPENDICES

The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:

- Appendix 1: MBC Responses to Water Supply Consultations
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8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Background document 1: Water Resource South East – Draft Regional Plan [1a9b2728e7384d4a4bb97a2313d06aa3_10306a_WRSE_BV_Plan_2022FINAL_Online.pdf \(amazonaws.com\)](#)
- Background document 2: South East Water – Draft Water Resource Management Plan - [04e9cbe34f2bf1559afa39043f0580b3_1_Highlights_document.pdf \(amazonaws.com\)](#)
- Background document 2: Southern Water – Draft Water Resource Management Plan - <https://www.southernwater.co.uk/our-story/water-resources-management-plan/draft-wrmp-24-technical-documents>