

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

PLANNING and TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY BOARD

22 February 2011

Report of the Director of Planning, Transport and Leisure

Part 1- Public

Matters for Information

1 SOUTH EAST WATER RESOURCES MANAGEMENT PLAN

Summary

South East Water produced a Water Resources Management Plan (WRMP) in May 2008 (revised in January 2010) which was the subject of a Public Inquiry during May and June 2010. The WRMP is a plan for managing the supply of and demand for water in South East Water's area of supply for the period up to 2035. The Secretary of State determined that it should be published at the end of 2010 on the condition that it is subject to review, particularly the policies and proposals for the post-2020 period.

1.1 Background to South East Water's WRMP

1.1.1 South East Water's WRMP was originally published in May 2008. This was followed by a revised Plan in January 2010. The WRMP is a Plan for managing the supply of and demand for water in South East Water's (SEW) area of supply. It indicates how SEW intends to provide security of supply to its customers to defined levels of service in the most cost effective and sustainable way. The Plan focuses on the period up 2035.

1.2 Implications for Tonbridge and Malling Borough

1.2.1 There are no significant infrastructure proposals in the WRMP that directly affect the Borough. Within Kent, the only new reservoir proposed is at Broad Oak near Canterbury in the post 2026 period. To help meet future demand, the output from Bewl Reservoir is proposed to be increased by raising the level of the dam and drilling new boreholes.

1.2.2 Within the Borough itself, a new groundwater source is proposed at Browns Wood near Tonbridge in the post 2020 period. In the post 2021 period, an effluent reuse scheme at Aylesford is identified.

1.2.3 To address future deficiencies that are likely to occur in certain zones of SEW's area, the Plan proposes inter-zonal transfers. For example, once the new reservoir at Broad Oak is developed the WRMP proposes to lay a new strategic main to a zone that includes Snodland.

1.2.4 In addition to specific infrastructure proposals, the WRMP also includes policies that will be implemented across the whole of the SEW's area. These are:

- further leakage detection and reduction
- universal metering programme.

1.2.5 In a letter dated 28th January 2011 SEW indicated their intention to embark on a compulsory metering programme this year, commencing initially in Sevenoaks, Burgess Hill and Haywards Heath in July and then rolling out across the supply area so that by 2020 some 90% of the customers will be on a meter. This will impact on residents in the Borough with many households, in particular smaller ones, likely to benefit from the move to payment for only what they use. At this stage, it is difficult to assess the impact on larger family households.

1.3 Secretary of State Decision

1.3.1 Following the Public Inquiry into the WRMP, the Secretary of State decided, in November 2010, that the Plan should be published. However, SEW have been advised that the published plan must be subject to a review process, in particular the policies and proposals for the post 2020 period. The Inspector who presided over the Public Inquiry concluded that, post 2020, there are doubts about the fitness of the plan for the purposes of managing and developing South East Water's water resources. These doubts arise in respect of the demand forecasts post 2020 and the justification for some of the supply side options. The Inspector has also raised concerns that reservoir options have not been adequately assessed in terms of their appropriateness and deliverability against alternative options. However, the Inspector did conclude that the demand forecasts and the options appraisal and selection are fit for purpose for the period to 2020.

1.3.2 The Secretary of State decided that these doubts should not prevent the publication of the Plan because it will be subject to statutory annual reviews and also the preparation of a new water resources management plan will be required to take place within five years. In response to this decision SEW, in a letter dated 28th January 2011, stated that it will determine, by 2014, what the projected demand for water will be from 2020 to 2035 and the associated infrastructure projects that may be necessary to meet demand. This means that the proposals outlined above may be subject to review depending on the outcomes of this process.

1.4 Legal Implications

1.4.1 The WRMP has been published by SEW in accordance with the Secretary of State's decision. There are no legal implications for the Council.

1.5 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

1.5.1 There are no value for money considerations because the WRMP has been prepared and published by SEW. The compulsory metering programme will

impact financially upon residents in the Borough but it is not possible to assess the significance to particular households at this stage.

1.6 Risk Assessment

1.6.1 No risks to the Council because this is a WRMP produced by SEW, but clearly achieving the appropriate level of quality water is a critical factor.

1.7 Equality Impact Assessment

1.7.1 See 'Screening for equality impacts' table at end of report

1.8 For Members to note.

Background papers:

contact: Nigel De Wit

South East Water's Water Resource Management Plan (2010-2035)

Secretary of State's Decision Letter (30 November 2010)

South East Water Letter (28 January 2011)

Steve Humphrey

Director of Planning, Transport and Leisure

Screening for equality impacts:		
Question	Answer	Explanation of impacts
a. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper have potential to cause adverse impact or discriminate against different groups in the community?	No	This report is a matter for information about a plan produced by a body outside of the Council.
b. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper make a positive contribution to promoting equality?	No	There is no direct impact because this report is a matter for information about a plan produced by a body outside of the Council.

In submitting this report, the Chief Officer doing so is confirming that they have given due regard to the equality impacts of the decision being considered, as noted in the table above.