

Farndon Holt Bridge

PLANNING, DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

Installation of a temporary overland
water pipe across Farndon Holt Bridge

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01 Introduction

Severn Trent Water

Severn Trent Water Limited (STWL) is a regulated business with statutory responsibilities for the provision of water and sewerage services to over eight million people and businesses in an area stretching across the heart of the UK, from the Bristol Channel to the Humber, and from the West to the East Midlands.

STWL is currently implementing its Asset Management Plan for AMP7 (April 2020 to March 2025), which is the mechanism by which the regulator OFWAT defines in a five year capital expenditure programme for all water companies. Investment during the AMP7 period is in response to a number of key challenges including population growth and the importance of protecting the environment. Investment during this period seeks to build the resilience of water supply, reduce leakage and pollution incidents. There will also be investment in treatment works and plans to protect the environment.

Scope of Project/Background

This document has been prepared on behalf of STWL to support the planning application seeking consent for the installation of a temporary overland water pipe over Farndon Holt Bridge which is required to act as a resilience main whilst the long-term solution of two new pipes below the river is confirmed.

This application is submitted with the following plans and documents:

- A7W127560441-STW-XX-XX-DR-C-0003 - Site Location Plan
- A7W127560441-STW-XX-XX-DR-C-0001 - Existing Site Layout
- A7W127560441-STW-XX-XX-DR-C-0001- Proposed Site Layout
- S00242184 – Scheduled Monument Consent (Historic England)
- DE024 - Scheduled Monument Consent (Cadw)

STWL/External Driver

Severn Trent Water has two. 6inch pipes crossing beneath the River Dee between Farndon and Holt to supply a population of circa 1133 households in the villages of Farndon and Churton. In June 2021 one of these pipes burst and could not be repaired, leaving this population with a single pipe as their supply.

In periods of extreme cold weather, water pipes are more vulnerable to bursting and increased demand over the Christmas period usually increases and exacerbates the impact of any potential burst. If the remaining 6inch pipe beneath the river bursts, it cannot be repaired, as was the case when the first of the two pipes burst. If this pipe bursts, it would result in significant pollution of chlorinated water into the River Dee and the circa 1133 households would be left without a water supply.

If this burst occurred without any backup measures in place (as is the current situation) then Severn Trent Water would have to take emergency action. This would include isolating the river pipe via valving and placing a new 125mm pipe on top of the bridge structure with overland connections either side the river, HGV tankers injecting water into the network and setting up bottled water stations for the affected customers. This would be highly disruptive to the Farndon and Holt Villages.

02 Site and Surrounding Area

The proposed works are on top of Farndon Holt Bridge, which is situated at Bridge Street, Holt, crossing the River Dee between Farndon and Holt at grid reference: SJ 41154 54383 (Easting: 341154, Northing: 354383). The site falls on the border between England and Wales and therefore is within the jurisdictional area of Cheshire West and Chester Council, on the English side, and Wrexham County Borough Council, on the Welsh side. A site location plan is submitted with the application reference A7W127560441-STW-XX-XX-DR-C-0003.

Farndon Holt Bridge is designated as a Scheduled Monument and a Grade I Listed Structure. The bridge is topped with a single-track tarmac road and allows vehicles to cross in both directions, controlled by traffic lights at either end of the bridge. There is also a footpath alongside the highway on one side of the bridge to allow pedestrians to cross.

The River Dee, which flows below the bridge is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and a Special Area of Conservation (SAC).

The application site is located within Flood Zone 3 and therefore has a high risk of flooding.

The nearest residential properties are located approximately 30m to the south of the proposed works in Holt and 50m north of the proposed works in Farndon.

There is a public footpath along the northern bank of the river, on both sides of the bridge and along the southern bank of the river on the west side of the bridge.

03 The Development Proposal

The proposed development comprises the installation of a temporary overland pipe across Farndon Holt Bridge, whilst the long-term solution of two new pipes below the river is confirmed. It is expected that the permanent solution can be designed, necessary consents obtained and construction undertaken before the end of March 2023. The temporary above ground pipe will be removed as soon as possible once the permanent solution is installed. Consequently, this planning application seeks temporary consent for the overland pipe until 31st March 2023.

The proposed solution is to install a temporary 125mm pipe across Farndon Holt Bridge. The pipe will be laid along the western side of the bridge, on top of the small section of kerb, opposite the footpath. This solution will mean that the bridge can remain open to both vehicles and pedestrians.

The proposed works are on top of the bridge and will not impact this environmental designation.

As shown in plan reference A7W127560441-STW-XX-XX-DR-C-0001, the proposed pipe will be entirely above ground along the length of the Scheduled Monument, as detailed by the green line. At either end of the scheduled monument the pipe will then be installed below ground, under the road, and connected to the existing 6inch mains, these sections are detailed in red. This will be installed using an open cut method and will not impact the Scheduled Monument.

The above ground section of the pipe requires planning permission.

Amount and Scale

The total pipe length will measure 214m and the above ground section of the pipe, over the scheduled monument will measure 128m.

Layout

The location of the proposed pipe is shown on plan reference A7W127560441-STW-XX-XX-DR-C-0001, which has been submitted as part of the application.

Appearance

The 125mm pipe will be sleeved inside a 160mm pipe for additional protection. Both pipes will be blue Polyethylene (PE). The pipe will be secured to the bridge by placing sandbags on top of the pipe every 3m. The sandbags will be white polypropylene, measuring 330mm by 760mm.

Access

The proposed works are along the edge of the highway. The duration of the construction period will be a maximum of 3 weeks. During the construction period the bridge will be closed to both vehicles and pedestrians.

Landscaping

No existing landscaping is affected as part of the proposed works, so no compensatory planting is proposed.

Flood Risk/Drainage

The proposed works are located within Flood Zone 3 which is at high risk of flooding. However, the proposed works are on top of the bridge and therefore should not be impacted by any flooding.

The proposed pipe will be situated on existing impermeable surfacing, so the existing drainage is unlikely to be affected.

Ecology

The River Dee, which flows below the bridge is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and a Special Area of Conservation (SAC).

The proposed works are entirely within the highway and therefore no ecological features will be impacted by the proposed works.

Heritage

Farndon Holt Bridge is designated as a Scheduled Monument and a Grade I Listed Structure. Scheduled Monument Consent has already been approved by Cadw and Historic England. Copies of these consents are submitted as part of this application.

The proposed works will have no physical impact upon the Scheduled Monument as sandbags will be used to secure the pipe, rather than any physical attachments. Additionally the pipe will be temporary so any visual impacts will be short lasting.

Noise

There may be temporary short-term impacts associated with the installation of the proposed pipe. However, once the construction works are complete, there will be no noise omitted from proposed pipe.

Odour

The proposed works will not produce any odour.

04 Planning Policy

Planning policy relating to the application site is formed through:

- Local Planning Policy
- National Planning Policy

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires applications for planning permission to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The development Plan material to the proposal consists of:

- Wrexham Unitary Development Plan (Adopted February 2005)

In addition to the Development Plan, applications should also have regard to Planning Policy Wales and Technical Advice Notes, which are material considerations in any determination.

Wrexham Unitary Development Plan (Adopted February 2005)

This plan provides a framework for local decision making and the reconciliation of development and conservation interests in order that land use changes proceed coherently and with maximum community benefit.

Policy PS2

This policy states that development must not materially detrimentally affect countryside, landscape/townscape character, open space, or the quality of the natural environment.

Policy GDP1

This policy states that all new development should:-

g) Secure public services (e.g. gas, water, electricity) to development at minimum public cost.

Policy EC7

This policy states that within, and in close proximity to, conservation areas, the priority will be to preserve and/ or enhance those buildings, structures, streets, trees, open spaces, archeological remains, views, and other elements which contribute to the unique character of the area. New buildings and alterations or additions to existing buildings in conservation areas, whether listed as of special architectural or historic interest or not, must reflect the design and character of the area as a whole and the form, scale, detailing and materials of existing buildings.

Policy EC9

This policy states that alterations or additions to, and development or redevelopment within the curtilage of, buildings or structures listed as of special architectural or historic interest must respect the setting and character of the listed buildings or structures.

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National policy is set out in the Planning Policy Wales document with the latest version (Edition 11) published in February 2021. This framework sets out the land use planning policies of the Welsh Government.

Paragraph 3.13 states that existing infrastructure must be utilised and maximised, wherever possible.

Paragraph 3.36 states that the key features of the Sustainable Management of Natural Resources (SMNR) approach to which the planning system can contribute are:

- ensuring resilient locational choices for infrastructure and built development, taking into account water supplies, water quality and reducing, wherever possible, air and noise pollution and environmental risks

Paragraph 3.61 states that adequate and efficient infrastructure, including services such as water supply, is crucial for economic, social and environmental sustainability.

Paragraph 6.1.1 states that the historic environment comprises all the surviving physical elements of previous human activity and illustrates how past generations have shaped the world around us. It states that it is central to Wales' culture and its character, whilst contributing to a sense of place and identity. It enhances quality of life, adds to regional and local distinctiveness and is an important economic and social asset.

Paragraph 6.1.5 states that the planning system must take into account the Welsh Government's objectives to protect, conserve, promote and enhance the historic environment as a resource for the general well-being of present and future generations. It outlines that the Welsh Government's objectives are to conserve and enhance the historic environment, which is a finite and non-renewable resource and a vital and integral part of the historical and cultural identity of Wales. It notes that the historic environment can only be maintained as a resource for future generations if the individual historic assets are protected and conserved.

Paragraph 6.1.10 states that there should be a general presumption in favour of the preservation or enhancement of a listed building.

Paragraph 6.1.11 states that for listed buildings, the aim should be to find the best way to protect and enhance their special qualities, retaining them in sustainable use. The continuation or reinstatement of the original use should generally be the first option.

Paragraph 6.6.9 states that the planning system has an important part to play in ensuring that the infrastructure on which communities and businesses depend is adequate to accommodate proposed development.

Technical Advice Notes

Technical Advice Note (TAN) 5 – Nature, Conservation and Planning (2009)

TAN 5 provides advice about how the land use planning system should contribute to protecting and enhancing biodiversity and geological conservation

Technical Advice Note (TAN) 6 – Planning for Sustainable Rural Communities (2010)

TAN 6 provides practical guidance on the role of the planning system in supporting the delivery of sustainable rural communities.

Technical Advice Note (TAN) 12 – Design (2016)

TAN 12 equips all those involved in the design of development with advice on how 'Promoting sustainability through good design' and 'Planning for sustainable building' may be facilitated through the planning system.

Technical Advice Note (TAN) 15 – Development and Flood Risk (2004)

TAN 15 advises caution in respect of new development in areas at high risk of flooding by setting out a precautionary framework to guide planning decisions. The overarching aim of the precautionary framework is, in order of preference, to:- Direct new development away from those areas which are at high risk of flooding. Where development has to be considered in high risk areas (zone C) only those development which can be justified on the basis of the tests outlined in section 6 and section 7 of the TAN are located within such areas.

Technical Advice Note (TAN) 18 – Transport (2007)

TAN 18 details the integration of land use planning and development of transport infrastructure with the aim to secure the provision of transport infrastructure services, which improve accessibility, build a stronger economy, improve road safety and foster more sustainable communities.

Technical Advice Note (TAN) 24 – The Historic Environment (2017)

TAN 24 provides guidance on how the planning system considers the historic environment during development plan preparation and decision making on planning and Listed Building (LBC) applications.

05 Planning Policy Assessment

This application seeks consent for the installation of a temporary overland water pipe over Farndon Holt Bridge which is required to act as a resilience main whilst the long-term solution of two new pipes below the river is confirmed.

The proposed works are crucial to safeguard the water supply to 1133 households in the event of a burst scenario. Therefore, it is considered that Policy GDP1 and paragraph 3.61 are in support of the proposed works.

The proposed pipe is situated along the kerb and not within the highway as it crosses the bridge. The pipe is also a bright blue colour and therefore will be obvious to drivers. It is therefore considered that the proposed works will not impact highway safety as the pipe is not within the highway and will be obvious to drivers.

The proposed pipe crosses Farndon Holt Bridge which is a Scheduled Ancient Monument and Grade I Listed. The pipe is temporary and will not be physically fixed to the bridge structure and therefore will not impact the heritage asset. Scheduled Monument Consent has already been granted by Historic England and Cadw in relation to the proposed works. The proposed works are therefore in line with Technical Advice Note (TAN) 24.

Although the river below the bridge is designated as a SSSI and a SAC, the proposed works are small scale and will be on top of the bridge. There will be no impact on the river or the riverbanks and therefore it is considered that the proposed works will have no impact on the environmental designation or any protected species or habitats associated with this designation. The proposed works are therefore in line with Technical Advice Note (TAN) 5.

Although the proposed pipeline is above ground it is temporary and will be designed to be of minimal scale possible to fulfill its duty in order to limit the impact on amenity. The pipe will be at ground level and hidden by the sides of the bridge. The pipe will therefore only be visible when on the bridge or in close proximity to the end of the bridge. It is important the pipe is blue so it is visible to road users to avoid damage to the pipe or the bridge.

The proposed development is considered to accord with the main aims of both local and national planning policy.

06 Conclusion

This application seeks consent for the installation of a temporary overland water pipe over Farndon Holt Bridge which is required to act as a resilience main whilst the long-term solution of two new pipes below the river is confirmed.

The proposed works are temporary and will be situated on top of Farndon Holt Bridge. The development is not considered to result in any significantly adverse impacts on heritage, highways, ecology, or amenity. The proposed development is considered to be in accordance with the relevant local and national planning policy. It is therefore respectfully requested that planning permission be granted.