White Horse Reservoir

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Developing our plans for access points for the proposed construction of White Horse Reservoir

September 2026

Since our statutory public consultation, which was held between October 2025 and January 2026, we have been busy considering all the feedback received and continuing to develop our designs for the proposed new White Horse Reservoir, in preparation for our application for development consent later this year.

As part of this, we have been looking in more detail at how the project could be built and developing our assessments of the impacts of construction work on the environment and local communities, and how we might be able to avoid, reduce or mitigate these impacts.

This factsheet describes our updated proposals for construction accesses for the reservoir site. If you want more general information about the project, you can visit our website, at: **thames-sro.co.uk/whitehorsereservoir**, where you'll also find the information that we published as part of the statutory public consultation last year.

Moving construction equipment, materials and workers to and from the reservoir worksite

During the construction period, large amounts of materials and equipment would need to be transported to the site, and construction workers moved to, from and around the site. The type and intensity of these activities would vary considerably over time because construction would happen in stages.

Construction work is expected to take place in three overlapping phases: early works, enabling works and the main construction works. The early works phase could start as early as next year (2027), before development consent for the project is granted and would include creation or enhancement of ecological habitats, in advance of enabling works beginning. Enabling works would include starting to build the new East Hanney to Steventon road, and other access roads onto the site. We would also begin site clearance, demolitions, establishing main compounds and carrying out utility diversions and watercourse diversions. The main construction works phase is then likely to take around 10 years, from 2032.

Much of the material needed for construction would be brought in by rail, using a new temporary rail siding and materials handling (RSMH) facility linked to the Great Western Main Line at the southern end of the reservoir site. Our current assessment indicates that the use of rail could reduce the total number of heavy goods vehicle (HGV) journeys required during construction by approximately 31% compared with a scenario in which all materials were transported by road. During some periods of construction activity, the reduction in HGV movements could be substantially higher. These reductions are an important reason why the temporary RSMH forms a central part of our construction strategy.

However, on its own, rail transportation would not be enough – the surrounding road network would also need to be used, with several temporary access points required for construction traffic to access locations around the site.

We know that moving equipment, materials and workers to, from and around the site is likely to be one of the major sources of impacts during the construction period. Construction access points could result in:

- increased construction traffic on some local roads
- temporary changes in traffic conditions close to access locations
- construction noise associated with vehicle movements and site activities
- dust generated by vehicle movements and construction works
- temporary effects on access to land, property and businesses
- changes to the experience of people using nearby roads, footpaths and public rights of way.

To manage these impacts, we are currently considering a range of potential measures, such as agreeing fixed routes for HGVs, avoiding unsuitable local roads, keeping HGVs away from sensitive areas such as schools, and monitoring noise and air quality throughout construction. We will set out some of these measures in a Code of Construction Practice, which we plan to publish as part of our application for development consent, and we will continue to listen to stakeholder and local feedback as our plans develop.

How our understanding of construction traffic has evolved

Since our statutory public consultation last year, we have continued to develop our construction plans and undertake more detailed technical assessments. This work has provided a more complete understanding of how the reservoir could be built and the access, workforce and traffic requirements needed to support construction. We also have a clearer understanding of the timing and location of construction activities across the site and have added light goods vehicles (LGV) – used by suppliers, subcontractors and specialist trades – into our modelling. As a result, current modelling suggests that overall construction traffic movements will be higher than previously forecast and reported during our statutory public consultation.

We are engaging closely with the relevant highways authorities, and continue to develop our traffic and transport assessments, and identify the measures that could be put in place to avoid, reduce and mitigate impacts. The final traffic forecasts and assessments will be included in our Environmental Statement, which will be submitted with our Development Consent Order application later this year.

Updated construction access proposals

During our statutory public consultation, we identified a number of locations that could potentially be used to access different parts of the site during construction. Our Preliminary Environmental Information (PEI) Report, which was published at the time, assessed six construction access points based on the level of design development at that point.

As our understanding of construction activities, logistics and the potential sequencing of the construction activities has developed, so have our proposals for construction access points. Some of the access points previously identified have been kept in our designs, one has been removed and several additional temporary access points have been identified.

How our proposals have changed

Presented during our statutory public consultation last year

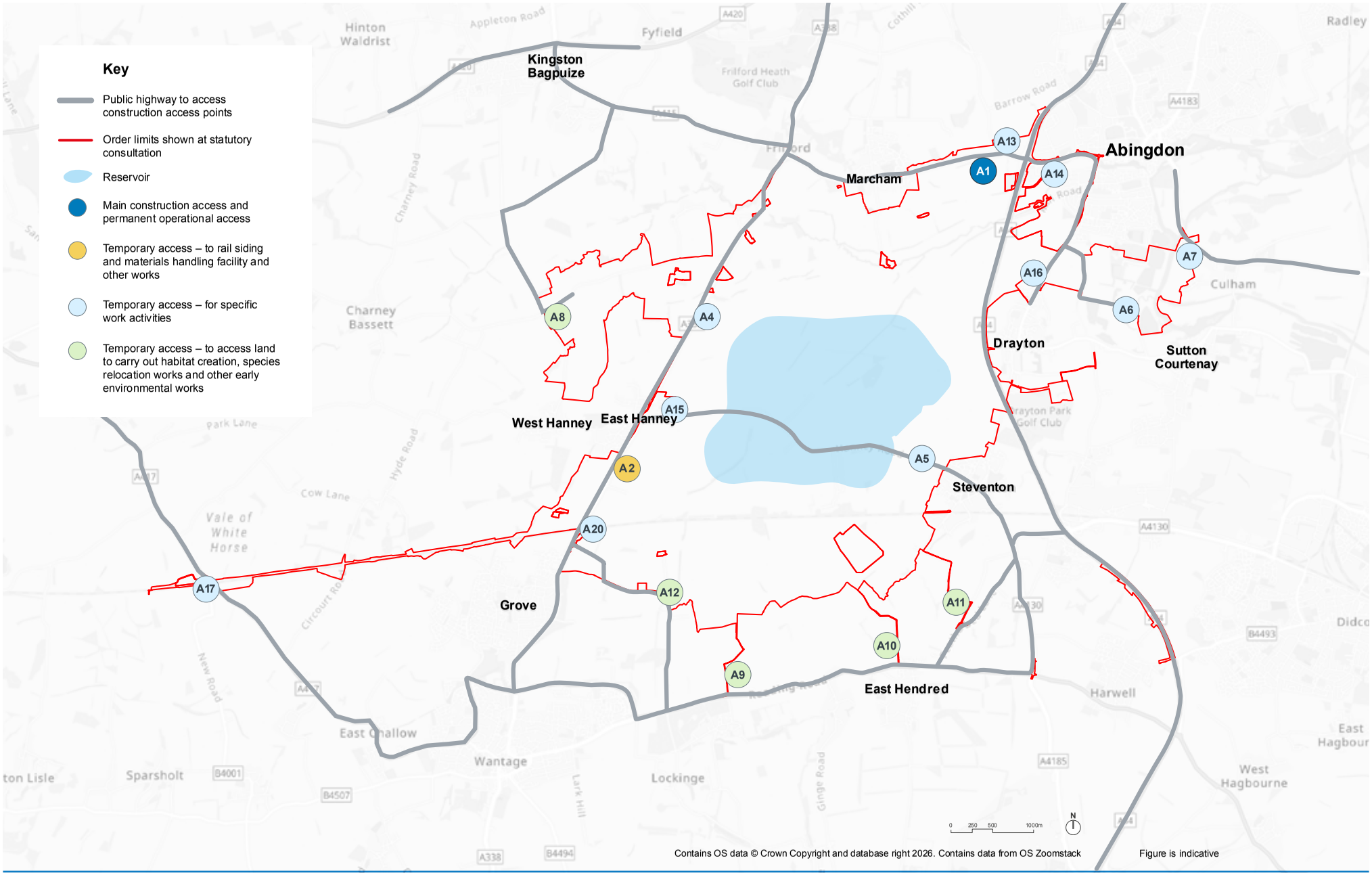
- Six construction access points assessed in the PEI Report.
- A number of additional potential access locations identified.

Our current proposals

- Construction planning has been developed in greater detail.
- Some access locations are unchanged.
- A previously identified access is no longer required.
- 17 construction access points are now identified – five were identified at statutory consultation and 12 have been identified since.
- 16 of the accesses will be temporary.

The updated proposed locations of construction access points is provided on the next page.

Updated plan showing indicative location of construction access points



What access points would be used for

The table below indicates the primary purpose of each construction access point. In some cases, there may be alternative, ancillary uses for access points, though these are expected to be minimal. Access points that have been identified after statutory consultation are indicated with a * symbol.

Access point	Indicative route to access	Purpose
A1	Via A415 Marcham Road	Permanent - to set up and access the main construction compound. Will become the main access for the reservoir following construction
A2	Via A338	Temporary for construction - to set up and operate the temporary rail siding and materials handling facility and compounds, and for access to build Steventon to East Hanney road diversion
A3	Access point identified as needed during our statutory consultation, but has since been combined with access A2	
A4	Via A338	Temporary for construction - to access land for works associated with the eastern wetlands
A5	Via Steventon to Hanney road	Temporary for construction - to access works at the eastern end of the East Hanney to Steventon road diversion realignment
A6	Via Drayton Road, Stonehill Lane and on to Peep-O-Day Lane	Temporary for construction - to set up and access construction compound needed to create the intake-outfall structure on the River Thames riverbank, and associated work
A7*	Via A415 (East) and The Buycroft	Temporary for construction - to access land to establish a berm on the east bank of the River Thames
A8*	Via A415 (Kingston Road), Fyfield Wick and Hanney Road	Temporary for construction - to access land to carry out habitat creation, species relocation works and other early environmental works
A9*	Via A417 and Ardlington Lane	Temporary for construction - to access land to carry out habitat creation, species relocation works and other early environmental works
A10*	Via A417 and Wood's Farm Road	Temporary for construction - to access land to carry out habitat creation, species relocation works and other early environmental works
A11*	Via A417 and Featherbed Lane	Temporary for construction - to access land to carry out habitat creation, species relocation works and other early environmental works
A12*	Via A417/A338 and Grove Park Drive	Temporary for construction - to access land to carry out habitat creation, species relocation works and other early environmental works
A13*	Via A415 Marcham Road and road to Dalton Barracks	Temporary for construction - to set up and access a construction compound for the A34 Marcham Interchange works (west) and A415 Marcham Road roundabout
A14*	Via A415 Marcham Road	Temporary for construction - to set up and access a construction compound for the A34 Marcham Interchange works (east)
A15*	Via East Hanney to Steventon Road	Temporary for construction - to set up and access a construction compound for works at the western end of the East Hanney to Steventon road realignment, and undertake works including a trial embankment, ecology works, archaeological investigations, utility diversion and demolition works
A16*	Via Drayton Road	Temporary for construction - to set up and access construction compound for works associated with the intermediate shaft for the river tunnel
A17*	Via A417 Faringdon Road and Network Rail land alongside Great Western Railway	Temporary for construction - to set up and access a compound for works to the railway
A18 and A19	A18 and A19 were identified as potential construction access locations during the development of the construction strategy. Following further design development and construction planning, these access points are no longer proposed and would not be used during construction	
A20*	Via A338 and Network Rail land alongside Great Western Railway	Temporary for construction - to set up and access a compound for works to the railway

Plans showing indicative proposed access points in more detail can be found in the Construction Access Points Map Book. This is available on our website at: thames-sro.co.uk/whitehorsereservoir.

When the access points would be needed

Construction access points would not all be used at the same time, and many would only be required for specific activities or limited periods. As a result, the level of construction traffic at each access point would vary throughout the construction programme, depending on the activities taking place in that part of the site.

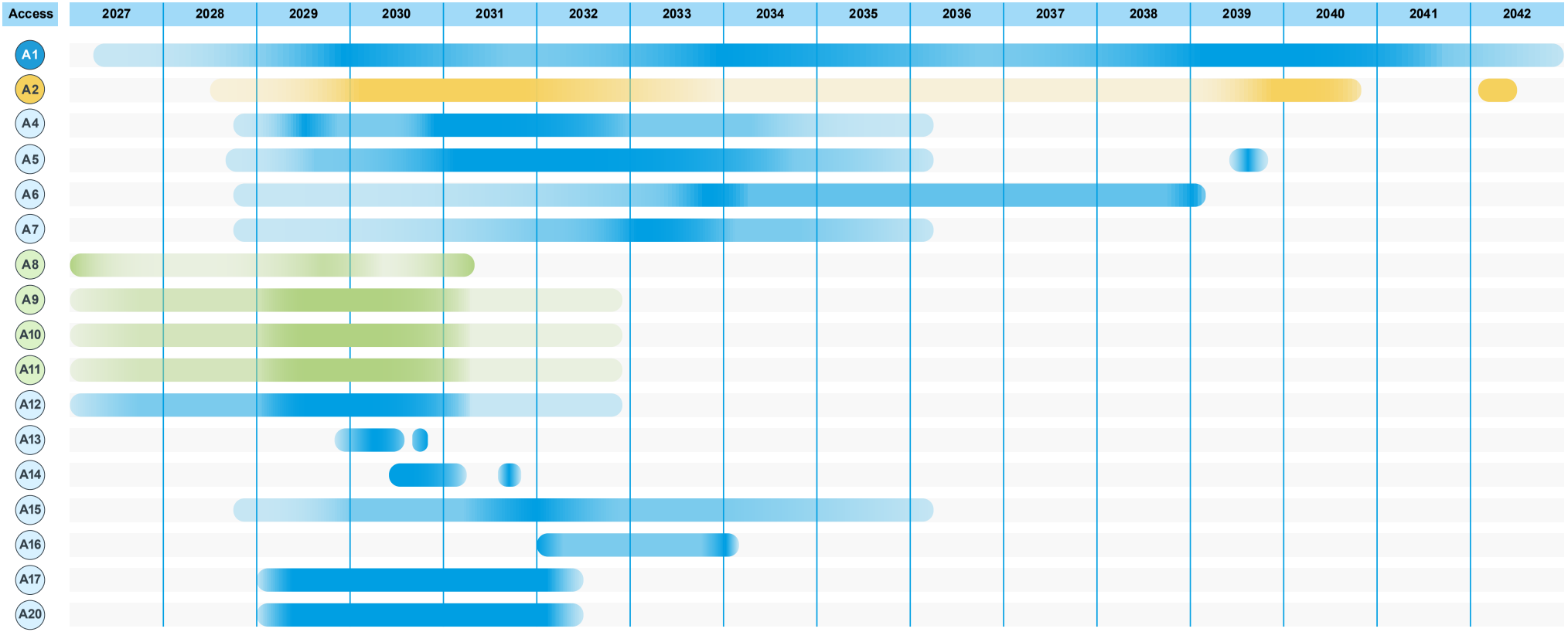
As our understanding of construction logistics has developed since our statutory public consultation last year, we now expect the overall peak period of construction traffic across the project to occur earlier – in 2030 rather than 2036 as previously forecast. This reflects, among other factors, the concentration of enabling works and early construction activities before the temporary rail siding and materials handling (RSMH) facility becomes operational, after which a greater proportion of construction materials could be transported by rail instead of road.

The main construction access from the A415, to the north of the proposed reservoir site (access A1), would be the primary point of access during construction and would be kept as a main visitor access once construction is complete. Around 60% of overall construction vehicle movements are currently expected to use this access point during construction. The remaining movements would be distributed across the other access points depending on when they are needed and the activities taking place.

Plans showing the proposed planned access routes, along with indicative numbers of traffic movements for each access, can be found in the Construction Access Points Map Book.

These are available on our website at: thames-sro.co.uk/whitehorsereservoir. The graphic on the next page shows approximate durations and timings for each of the access points, although these could change, depending on the final construction schedule and further consultation with appointed construction contractors.

Indicative duration and traffic volumes for construction access points



Key

- Main construction access and permanent operational access
- Temporary access – to rail siding and materials handling facility and other works
- Temporary access for specific work activities
- Temporary access – to access land to carry out habitat creation, species relocation works and other early environmental works

Traffic volume

← Less More →

Please note: Colour gradient represents predicted traffic demand at each access point during operational periods.
Darker shades indicate higher traffic volumes; lighter shades indicate lower traffic volumes.

Durations and traffic volumes are indicative and subject to change based on the final construction programme and appointed contractor.

Access points are also subject to ongoing engagement with landowners and occupiers, particularly early works prior to the development consent order being granted.

Targeted consultation and ongoing engagement on construction plans

Following our public consultation on the wider project, we are carrying out targeted consultation with landowners, occupiers and nearby parties who could be affected by the proposed construction access points. We are seeking information on constraints, operational requirements and potential mitigation measures that should be considered as the access proposals continue to develop.

The information provided through this consultation will help us with the ongoing development of designs for the construction accesses and feed into the Code of Construction Practice, which sets out how construction impacts will be managed and mitigated by our appointed contractor.

This consultation focuses on the proposed construction access arrangements and their potential local effects. It is not a consultation on the need for the project, the location of the reservoir, predicted traffic numbers or other changes to the project proposals since statutory consultation.

Alongside this consultation, we are also engaging with stakeholders such as local authorities and National Highways on the development of our traffic and transport assessment. This will help us identify any mitigation needed for the wider road network.

The proposed construction access arrangements and associated traffic movements will be considered as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment process. The findings will be reported in the Environmental Statement submitted with the Development Consent Order application, which will identify likely significant environmental effects and the measures proposed to avoid, reduce or mitigate them.

Looking forward: Application submission and examination

We are currently finalising our plans and environmental assessments and we are on track to submit our application for development consent to the Planning Inspectorate (PINS), which manages the application on behalf of the Secretary of State for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs, later this year.

If our application is accepted for examination, PINS will open a registration period during which anyone who wants their views to be formally considered must register with PINS and submit a Relevant Representation. Doing so makes them an Interested Party, which gives them the right to participate in the examination process and have their views taken into account by the Examining Authority.

Examination

The examination stage is a six-month period during which the Examining Authority will scrutinise the application, hear from stakeholders and Interested Parties, assess effects and mitigation, and determine whether the proposed project should be recommended for consent. At the end of this examination, the Examination Authority has three months to prepare a recommendation report for the relevant Secretary of State. The Secretary of State then has a further three months to make the final decision as to whether to grant development consent.

More details about this process can be found on the PINS website at **national-infrastructure-consenting.planninginspectorate.gov.uk**.

Continuing our engagement with local communities is important to us, and we will keep everyone updated as the project goes through the examination process.

Find out more

If you would like to be kept informed about the White Horse Reservoir project, you can register for updates on our website, at **www.thames-sro.co.uk/contact-us**.

More details about the Development Consent Order process can be found on the Planning Inspectorate website, at **national-infrastructure-consenting.planninginspectorate.gov.uk**.