

SANDWELL LOCAL PLAN 2024-41 EXAMINATION**SCHEDULE OF ACTION POINTS FOR THE COUNCIL****Day 1- Matter 1**

1.10	Confirm the details of the engagement with South Staffs Water (see HRA para 6.3.4) and any response. Include any contact under the Infrastructure Delivery Plan process.
------	--

Habitats Regulations Assessment of the Sandwell Local Plan - Regulation 19, September 2024**Para 6.3.4**

“As set out in Section 3.5, STW and SSW supply water to Sandwell. The STW WRMP154 and SSW WRMP155 forecast a deficit that is likely to develop between supply and demand for water over time unless action is taken. The WRMPs outline a number of demand management measures that need to be taken to ensure continued sustainable sources of water supply. The SLP WCS156 indicates that although SSW and STW have not relied on new homes being more water-efficient than existing metered homes, the opportunity through the planning system, to ensure that new homes do meet the higher standard of domestic water usage would be in line with general principals of sustainable development, and reducing energy consumed in the treatment and supply of water. This is set out in SLP policy wording (see below Policy SDM2). Growth during the Plan period is expected to be in the region of 16% between 2022 and 2041. This is higher than the percentage growth forecast in the South Staffs, Strategic grid and Wolverhampton WRZs. In those WRZs where the water company forecast is lower than the SLP, assurance will be sought from the company that the Council's growth forecast can be accommodated. This is based on data published as part of the draft WRMP24, updated in 2023. The Council has been in ongoing liaison with the water companies throughout the plan making process to ensure that appropriate and sufficient supply can be made for infrastructure, and that the emerging growth proposals can be supported. This forms part of the Duty to Cooperate on strategic cross border issues and will inform the Infrastructure Delivery Plan which forms a critical component of the SLP evidence base.

<https://www.south-staffswater.co.uk/media/2676/final-wrmp-2019-south-staffs-water.pdf>
(this link has been superseded by the 2024 WRMP)

Since the HRA was produced, SSW has updated their WRMP to 2024. The final supply/demand balance, as set out in the diagram below, shows that there is no need for additional supply options to meet any deficit and that a healthy surplus will be created and maintained.

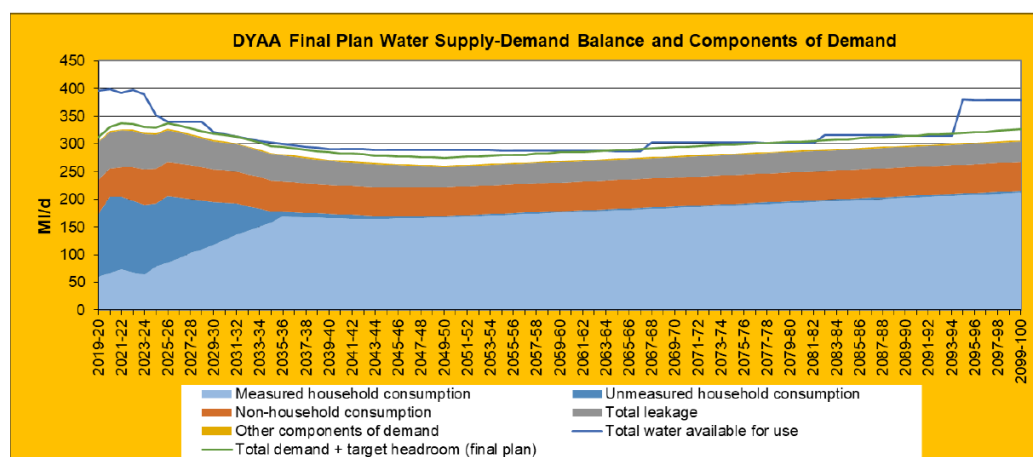
<https://www.south-staffs-water.co.uk/media/rdydrzxq/sst-final-wrmp-aug-2024-v2.pdf>

11. Final supply/demand balance

Our proposed demand management programme delivers a 73.93 Ml/d reduction in demand by 2049/50. This offsets the growth in demand associated with population increases in our region, as well as the necessary abstraction reductions we must make to protect the environment. As such, we have no need for additional supply options to meet the deficit.

The chart below shows the final planning supply/demand balance for the DYAA scenario. A healthy surplus will be created and maintained.

Figure 22 Final planning DYAA supply/demand balance and components of demand



Sandwell Council's Engagement with South Staffs Water

Initial Engagement with South Staffs Water (SSW) began in 2020 with the production of the Black Country Water Cycle Study. SSW engaged with the phase 1 scoping study as follows:

Black Country Councils Water Cycle Study: Phase 1 Scoping Study, May 2020

Water Supply Infrastructure - South Staffs Water

South Staffs Water (SSW) were engaged with the phase 1 scoping of the Black Country Councils Water Cycle Study. Phase 2 of the Study was completed as a purely Sandwell study following the demise of the Black Country Plan.

The following comments were received from SSW:

“There are no parts of the South Staffs water resource zone with any constraints in terms of how much water we have. There may be individual locations where we need to adapt our infrastructure (e.g. install new pipes or booster stations) to accommodate new developments but this is very much a site by site process.”

“Because we have a legal duty to connect household properties that require mains water supply, it is not a question of whether we can supply new homes with water or not but a question of how do we adapt our network in order to accommodate them. This legal duty to connect doesn't apply to new non-household connections but, unless they are really large, these would be processed via our established, BAU new connections process.”

The Study concluded that there are no limitations on the provision of water supply infrastructure during the Black Country Plan period to 2039.

A site by site assessment was not completed as part of this study as a suitable list of sites was not available at this stage. It was intended that a further assessment of preferred option sites would be undertaken as part of phase 2 to ensure that the water supply network has sufficient capacity locally to accommodate the additional demand without detriment to existing customers.

Following the demise of the Black Country Plan in October 2022, a phase 2 of the Water Cycle Study was commissioned by Sandwell Council to cover the Sandwell area.

Sandwell Water Cycle Study (WCS) - Phase 2, September 2024

The WCS identifies South Staffordshire Water as the water supplier for the majority of Sandwell. Therefore, as the main water supplier, South Staffordshire Water have the responsibility to maintain an efficient and economical system of water supply.

Collaboration with Water Companies and Risk Management Authorities	
Engaged Parties	Details
Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council (LPA)	Scope of works and data collection requirements.
Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council (LLFA)	
Severn Trent Water	
South Staffordshire Water	
Environment Agency	

Para 5.2 Methodology

A list of potential allocations was provided to Severn Trent Water and South Staffs Water as part of the Regulation 18 consultation in December 2023. This has been used to inform the Stage 2 assessment.

Para 5.3 Results

Severn Trent Water provided the following comments on water supply: "For the majority of new developments, we do not anticipate issues connecting new development, particularly within urban areas of our water supply network. When specific detail of planned development location and sizes are available a site-specific assessment of the capacity of our water supply network could be made. Any assessment will involve carrying out a network analysis exercise to investigate any potential impacts. If significant development in rural areas is planned, this is more likely to have an impact and require network reinforcements to accommodate greater demands."

South Staffs Water did not provide any comments for use in this study.

In addition to the Water Cycle Study, the Council commissioned an Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) which looked at water supply as one of the key infrastructure needs.

Infrastructure Delivery Plan

Part 1: Infrastructure Needs Assessment

Page 11, Table 2 sets out the engagement with the infrastructure providers. In terms of water and sewerage. Severn Trent Water and South Staffs Water were identified as the main providers.

The views of all infrastructure providers within the IDP area are noted as valuable to understanding infrastructure delivery, therefore as part of the stakeholder engagement process, all relevant infrastructure providers were contacted via email and Teams meetings arranged to discuss the key issues. As it was not possible to arrange a meeting with SSW prior to the completion of the report, an analysis of available data sources was undertaken and the consultants used various standards and assumptions that are widely used in IDP work elsewhere in the country. The consultants also attempted to speak to SSW as part of the second phase of the IDP and would have used any representations received during the course of the Regulation 18 consultation on the Draft Local Plan had any been submitted.

Chapter 4 - Infrastructure Needs

Page 80: Water and Sewerage

The consultants identified South Staffs Water (SSW) as the potable water supplier for the borough. They operate in an area covering north and west of Birmingham, up to Burton Upon Trent and Uttoxeter. Historically Sandwell was an industrial area which had high demand, and therefore large trunk mains serve the area. From the available data, the consultants are of the view that there is currently spare capacity in the supply network.

Sewerage within the borough is managed by Severn Trent Water (STW). This includes foul and surface water as well as combined provision. STW is the sewerage undertaker for a wide area covering the Midlands and parts of Wales.

Infrastructure Delivery Plan

Part 2: Infrastructure Schedule

Stakeholder Re-engagement

In order to try and establish specific infrastructure schemes for Part 2 of the IDP, re-engagement with infrastructure providers was attempted, particularly where Part 1 identified the likely need for such schemes. Unfortunately, it was not possible to obtain full responses from South Staffordshire Water at any stage of IDP preparation. However, since the Council was undertaking a Water Cycle Study as another component of the local plan evidence base, it was anticipated that this would highlight specific water-based infrastructure needs to be captured and costed where necessary. In addition, with regard to the future potable water supply, the assessment of available evidence indicated spare capacity in the network.

4.Sandwell Local Plan – Regulation 18 and Regulation 19

South Staffs Water were consulted at both Regulation 18 and Regulation 19 stages. They did not make any representations at the Regulation 18 stage.

At Regulation 19 they made representations to policies SDS1, SDS3 and SEC4. The representations relate to the employment land policies as they own a site in Tipton which is allocated as a SEC4 site, i.e. a site in an employment area that is not designated as either a Strategic Employment Area or a Local Employment Area on the Policies Map, but which comprise land / sites that are currently in use (or if currently vacant, were last used) for employment purposes. This policy supports the redevelopment of the site for either new industrial employment uses or extensions to existing industrial employment uses, or housing or other non-ancillary, non-industrial employment uses.

SSW would like the site to be allocated for housing specifically. However, it is currently operational employment land that was assessed as part of the Black Country Employment Area Review (BEAR) which lends itself to being an SEC4 site.

They did not make any representations with regard to the implications for potable water supply. Both the IDP and the WCS were part of the evidence base at the Reg19 stage.