

Draft Drought Plan 2027

Annex 9: Strategic Environmental Assessment

May 2026



from
**Southern
Water** 

IMPORTANT NOTE:

This Annex is incomplete and the table below describes progress, along with work still to be completed.

Annex 9 SEA	Description
Annex % Complete	10%
Work Completed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drought Plan 2022 including its Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Environmental Report were published in August 2025 • Scope of works for the environmental assessments for Drought Plan 2027 issued August 2025. • Contracts signed February 2026. • Mott MacDonald (Motts) instructed to update the SEA for DP27 and submitted a Methodology Statement for regulator review on 13/03/2026. • SEA scoping report consultation issued to regulators on 30/04/2026. <p><i>This Annex is in draft form only. As indicated below, the content remains subject to further analysis, regulatory input and evidence and may be amended prior to finalisation of the Drought Plan. Southern Water does not invite reliance on this section in its current form.</i></p>
Work Remaining	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Close of SEA scoping consultation by 05/06/2026. • Full update to the SEA
External Deliverables	<p>Consultancy support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In addition to the SEA, Motts is also reviewing and updating the plan level Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA), and 10 of the drought permit/order HRAs for Isle of Wight, Kent and Sussex (excluding Pulborough). • WSP Binnies (Binnies) is updating the plan level Water Framework Directive (WFD) assessment. • Atkins is reviewing and updating surface water triggers. • Haskoning is updating 10 of the Environmental Assessment Reports (EARs) for the drought permits and orders for Isle of Wight, Kent and Sussex (excluding Pulborough). • WSP is updating the Hampshire (ie; Test/Itchen/Candover) drought order HRA and EARs. • Atkins is updating the Pulborough drought order HRA and EAR.

	<p>Regulatory support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environment Agency (EA) and Natural England (NE) to review the methodology statement and SEA scoping report. • EA to review outcomes of trigger reviews for surface water, ground water and reservoirs. • EA & NE to review draft EARs and HRAs for drought permits/orders.
<p>Dependencies</p>	<p>The SEA will be informed by updates to the drought plan HRA and WFD assessments, and updated drought permit/order HRAs and EARs. Due to their complexity and volume of work, the Hampshire and Pulborough HRAs and EARs have a longer timeline for delivery and are due to be complete in Autumn 2026. The Test drought order HRA and EAR has been prioritised by WSP to ensure drought application readiness for 2026. As the Candover drought option won't be available until 2027, the HRA and EAR for this option will be updated following completion of the Test and Itchen updates.</p> <p>As a result, there is a risk that the SEA may need to rely on some older HRA and EAR assessments. If this is the case, it will be made clear within the Environmental Report, and will be resolved by the time of final draft submission in 2027.</p>
<p>Critical Path</p>	<p>The Hampshire HRA updates will assess impacts covering an extended timeframe for reliance on drought permits and orders from 2030 up to 2034. These updated HRAs will determine any new mitigation and compensation needed to secure the use of these options beyond 2030.</p> <p>There is a risk of either delay or reliance on older data within the SEA Environmental Report should any of the dependencies outlined above be delayed.</p> <p>Natural England have advised that assessments of the Hampshire drought orders beyond 2030 are required for the submitted drought plan to be compliant with Habitats Regulations.</p>
<p>Timeline</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SEA scoping report due by end of April 2026, with consultation to follow in May 2026. • Majority drought permit/order EAR updates due by the end of May 2026 with the exception of Hampshire and Pulborough which are due by Autumn. • Majority drought permit/order HRA updates due by July/August 2026 with the exception of Hampshire and Pulborough which are due by Autumn.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Binnies draft WFD Assessment due by end July. • Motts draft plan HRA due by end August. • Motts draft SEA ready for SW review – August 2026 • Internally reviewed and assured draft SEA due October 2026
<p>Decision points, meetings and workshops</p>	<p>Fortnightly progress meetings with Motts are taking place, along with regular coordination/update meetings with other suppliers.</p> <p>Meetings with regulators will be arranged as required.</p>