



Sent by email to: [planningpolicy@hart.gov.uk](mailto:planningpolicy@hart.gov.uk)

**22 July 2019**

## **Hart – Crondall Parish Neighbourhood Plan 2017-2032 Submission Version**

Dear Sir/Madam,

Thank you for allowing Thames Water Utilities Ltd (Thames Water) to comment on the above.

As you will be aware, Thames Water are the statutory sewerage undertaker for the Hart District and are hence a “specific consultation body” in accordance with the Town & Country Planning (Local Planning) Regulations 2012. Thames Water are not the statutory water undertaker for the area, Mid Southern Water is. We have a number of comments on the consultation document as set out below:

### **2. Infrastructure – general comments on Wastewater/Sewerage Infrastructure**

We consider that this section requires more detail relating to wastewater/sewerage infrastructure.

Wastewater/sewerage [and water supply] infrastructure is essential to any development. Failure to ensure that any required upgrades to the infrastructure network are delivered alongside development could result in adverse impacts in the form of internal and external sewer flooding and pollution of land and water courses and/or low water pressure.

Thames Water seeks to co-operate and maintain a good working relationship with local planning authorities in its area and to provide the support they need with regards to the provision of sewerage/wastewater treatment [and water supply] infrastructure.

A key sustainability objective for the preparation of Local Plans and Neighbourhood Plans should be for new development to be co-ordinated with the infrastructure it demands and to take into account the capacity of existing infrastructure. Paragraph 20 of the revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), February 2019, states: “Strategic policies should set out an overall strategy for the pattern, scale and quality of development, and make sufficient provision for... infrastructure for waste management, water supply, wastewater...”

Paragraph 28 relates to non-strategic policies and states: “Non-strategic policies should be used by local planning authorities and communities to set out more detailed policies for specific areas, neighbourhoods or types of development. This can include allocating sites, the provision of infrastructure...”

Paragraph 26 of the revised NPPF goes on to state: “Effective and on-going joint working between strategic policy-making authorities and relevant bodies is integral to the production of a positively prepared and justified strategy. In particular, joint working should help to determine where additional infrastructure is necessary....”

The web based National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) includes a section on ‘water supply, wastewater and water quality’ and sets out that Local Plans should be the focus for ensuring that investment plans of water and sewerage/wastewater companies align with development needs. The introduction to this section also sets out that “Adequate water and wastewater infrastructure is needed to support sustainable development” (Paragraph: 001, Reference ID: 34-001-20140306).

It is important to consider the net increase in wastewater [and water supply] demand to serve the development and also any impact that developments may have off site, further down the network. The Neighbourhood Plan should therefore seek to ensure that there is adequate wastewater [and water supply] infrastructure to serve all new developments. Thames Water will work with developers and local authorities to ensure that any necessary infrastructure reinforcement is delivered ahead of the occupation of development. Where there are infrastructure constraints, it is important not to under estimate the time required to deliver necessary infrastructure. For example: local network upgrades take around 18 months and Sewage Treatment & Water Treatment Works upgrades can take 3-5 years.

The provision of water treatment (both wastewater treatment and water supply) is met by Thames Water’s asset plans and from the 1st April 2018 network improvements will be from infrastructure charges per new dwelling.

From 1st April 2018, the way Thames Water and all other water and wastewater companies charge for new connections has changed. The economic regulator Ofwat has published new rules, which set out that charges should reflect:

- fairness and affordability
- environmental protection
- stability and predictability
- transparency and customer-focused service

The changes mean that more of Thames Water’s charges will be fixed and published, rather than provided on application, enabling you to estimate your costs without needing to contact us. The services affected include new water connections, lateral drain connections, water mains and sewers (requisitions), traffic management costs, income offsetting and infrastructure charges.

Thames Water therefore recommends that developers engage with them at the earliest opportunity (in line with paragraph 26 of the revised NPPF) to establish the following:

- The developments demand for Sewage/Wastewater Treatment and network infrastructure both on and off site and can it be met; and
- The surface water drainage requirements and flood risk of the development both on and off site and can it be met.
- The developments demand for water supply and network infrastructure both on and off site.

Thames Water offer a free Pre-Planning service which confirms if capacity exists to serve the development or if upgrades are required for potable water, waste water and surface water requirements. Details on Thames Water's free pre planning service are available at:

<https://www.thameswater.co.uk/preplanning>

In light of the above comments and Government guidance we consider that the Neighbourhood Plan should include a specific reference to the key issue of the provision of wastewater/sewerage [and water supply] infrastructure to service development proposed in a policy. This is necessary because it will not be possible to identify all of the water/sewerage infrastructure required over the plan period due to the way water companies are regulated and plan in 5 year periods (Asset Management Plans or AMPs). We recommend the Neighbourhood Plan include the following policy/supporting text:

### **PROPOSED NEW WATER/WASTEWATER INFRASTRUCTURE TEXT**

***“Where appropriate, planning permission for developments which result in the need for off-site upgrades, will be subject to conditions to ensure the occupation is aligned with the delivery of necessary infrastructure upgrades.”***

***“The Local Planning Authority will seek to ensure that there is adequate water and wastewater infrastructure to serve all new developments. Developers are encouraged to contact the water/waste water company as early as possible to discuss their development proposals and intended delivery programme to assist with identifying any potential water and wastewater network reinforcement requirements. Where there is a capacity constraint the Local Planning Authority will, where appropriate, apply phasing conditions to any approval to ensure that any necessary infrastructure upgrades are delivered ahead of the occupation of the relevant phase of development.”***

### **3. Flooding - Comments in relation to Flood Risk and SUDS**

The National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) states that a sequential approach should be used by local planning authorities in areas known to be at risk from forms of flooding other than from river and sea, which includes "Flooding from Sewers".

When reviewing development and flood risk it is important to recognise that water and/or sewerage infrastructure may be required to be developed in flood risk areas. By their very nature water and sewage treatment works are located close or adjacent to rivers (to abstract water for treatment and supply or to discharge treated effluent). It is likely that these existing works will need to be upgraded or extended to provide the increase in treatment capacity required to service new development. Flood risk sustainability objectives should therefore accept that water and sewerage infrastructure development may be necessary in flood risk areas.

Flood risk sustainability objectives should also make reference to 'sewer flooding' and an acceptance that flooding can occur away from the flood plain as a result of development where off site sewerage infrastructure and capacity is not in place ahead of development.

With regard to surface water drainage it is the responsibility of the developer to make proper provision for drainage to ground, watercourses or surface water sewer. It is important to reduce the quantity of surface water entering the sewerage system in order to maximise the capacity for foul sewage to reduce the risk of sewer flooding.

Limiting the opportunity for surface water entering the foul and combined sewer networks is of critical importance to Thames Water. Thames Water have advocated an approach to SuDS that limits as far as possible the volume of and rate at which surface water enters the public sewer system. By doing this, SuDS have the potential to play an important role in helping to ensure the sewerage network has the capacity to cater for population growth and the effects of climate change.

SuDS not only help to mitigate flooding, they can also help to: improve water quality; provide opportunities for water efficiency; provide enhanced landscape and visual features; support wildlife; and provide amenity and recreational benefits.

With regard to surface water drainage, Thames Water request that the following paragraph should be included in the Neighbourhood Plan: ***“It is the responsibility of a developer to make proper provision for surface water drainage to ground, water courses or surface water sewer. It must not be allowed to drain to the foul sewer, as this is the major contributor to sewer flooding.”***

## **Policy 2: Housing Site Selection**

The information contained within the Neighbourhood Plan will be of significant value to Thames Water as we prepare for the provision of future infrastructure.

The attached table provides Thames Water’s site specific comments from desktop assessments on sewerage/waste water network and waste water treatment infrastructure in relation to the proposed development sites, but more detailed modelling may be required to refine the requirements.

Early engagement between the developers and Thames Water would be beneficial to understand:

- What drainage requirements are required on and off site
- Clarity on what loading/flow from the development is anticipated
- Water supply requirements

It should be noted that in the event of an upgrade to our sewerage network assets being required, up to three years lead in time is usual to enable for the planning and delivery of the upgrade. As a developer has the automatic right to connect to our sewer network under the Water Industry Act we may also request a drainage planning condition if a network upgrade is required to ensure the infrastructure is in place ahead of occupation of the development. This will avoid adverse environmental impacts such as sewer flooding and / or water pollution.

Waste-water/Sewage Treatment Works upgrades take longer to design and build. Implementing new technologies and the construction of a major treatment works extension or new treatment works could take up to ten years to plan, design, obtain approvals and build.

We trust the above is satisfactory, but please do not hesitate to contact David Wilson on the above number if you have any queries.

Yours faithfully

**Thames Water Utilities Ltd**