

Maidstone Borough Council - Local Plan Workshop 17th September

Statement from Southern Water

Southern Water is the statutory sewerage undertaker and provides wastewater services in Maidstone Borough.

Southern Water has a statutory duty to serve new development, and is committed to providing the right wastewater infrastructure in the right place at the right time. Capacity above that which is currently available can be provided in parallel with development, providing there is good forward planning.

Adopted Local Plans and Neighbourhood Plans will inform Southern Water's investment planning. Adoption provides the planning certainty required to support investment proposals to Ofwat, the water industry's economic regulator. The next price review is this year. Ofwat's price determination will fund the company's investment programme in the period to 2020. There will be another price review in 2019, covering the investment period 2020 to 2025, and so on.

Strategic infrastructure such as extensions to wastewater treatment works can be planned and funded through the price review process, and co-ordinated with new development. However, local infrastructure, such as local sewers, should be funded by the development if this is specifically required to service individual development sites. To this end, the principle is that new development needs to connect to the sewerage system at the nearest points of adequate capacity. This may require off-site infrastructure if the nearest point is not located within the immediate vicinity of the site. Southern Water would take future income from customers into account, so that the developer would only need to fund a proportion of the total cost.

We look to the planning authority and Neighbourhood Plans to ensure through planning policies and planning conditions that development is co-ordinated with provision of infrastructure and not permitted to proceed unless it connects to the sewerage system at the nearest points of adequate capacity, as specified by Southern Water. This will ensure that levels of service are maintained to both new and existing customers, and that the risk of flooding is not increased to unacceptable levels.

Southern Water has carried out sewerage capacity assessments of all the sites identified in Maidstone Borough Council's draft Local Plan. We have provided comments to the planning authority to inform Local Plan policies. We have responded to a number of Neighbourhood Plans including Broomfield & Kingswood, Coxheath, Harrietsham, Loose, Marden, North Loose and Staplehurst Neighbourhood Plans. We hope that the information we have provided is of assistance to progress the plans so that planning certainty is achieved to support investment proposals to Ofwat.