



SPINDAG@outlook.com

Date

22nd October 2024

Contact

Tel 0330 303 0368

Dear Mr Stone

**The Environmental Information Regulations 2004
Request for Information
EIR reference 2898**

Thank you for your request for information which we received on 13th September 2024. We have dealt with your request under The Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIR 2004). This letter provides the response to your request, as follows: A complete copy of your original request is provided in Appendix A.

New Housing Developments in Bexhill

We can confirm that Southern Water does hold information of the type you have requested as follows:

Given the above and the fact that you have already agreed there is a capacity problem with the main 9" sewer running along Barnhorn Road, have you notified RDC about the sewage capacity issues along Barnhorn Road and are you aware that Rother District Council has put in place the relevant conditions for the protection of your assets for the planning approval of the following sites?

- 1. Ashridge Court (29 dwellings currently under construction) – planning reference RR/2020/1410/P)?*

For developments involving fewer than 50 properties, we don't conduct a capacity check. However, we do document these developments in our base model and will initiate a growth scheme if the cumulative impact of new developments significantly increases flood risk. In this case, capacity is not a concern, and connections will be permitted.

Southern Water has, however, conducted a detailed network modelling as part of a network growth review for this specific case. The assessment shows that the additional foul sewage flows from the proposed development will not raise the risk of flooding in the existing public sewer network. As a result, Southern Water can accommodate foul sewage disposal for the proposed development.

2. *Spindlewood Drive proposal (currently at Reserved Matter) for the construction of 135 dwellings - planning references RR/2023/1427/P and RR/2023/1202/P?*

The planning application held under reference RR/2023/1427/P is on our growth tracker awaiting the planning decision, and therefore not included within a growth scheme.

The planning application held under reference RR/2023/1202/P is on our growth tracker and has been incorporated within the schemes for growth which is to be delivered in the next 5-year plan under our Asset Management Plan 8 (AMP 2025-30).

It should, however, be noted that Southern Water are not able to start funding improvements until such time as planning has been fully granted but any necessary upgrades are typically completed within 24 months of approval.

If the council have not done so, will these additional dwellings simply add to the capacity problems for the Barnhorn sewer and be likely to exacerbate the sewage overflow problems already experienced?

I appreciate you're concerned about the new developments in the area and the impact this may have on our sewer network. Please let me reassure you, when we receive any applications for new connections, our Developer Services team will complete the necessary checks in line with the application process.

Following these checks, we will provide advice to the Developer on whether we have any capacity concerns. This information should be taken into consideration before any developments go ahead, but unfortunately, we do not have the authority to stop developments being build, regardless of the outcome of our checks.

With specific regard to the Spindlewood development proposals, where you have already confirmed in the previous EIR response that sewage flooding occurs,

a) what further studies have you undertaken to assess the current and future sewage capacity requirements in Barnhorn Road?

b) what specific detailed plans are in place to increase capacity in the existing sewers in Barnhorn Road?

c) when are any works confirmed under (b) above programmed to be carried out? and

c) what specific budget has been set aside for any works planned under (b) above?"

Southern Water recognises that with the ongoing development in the area, there is a requirement to build capacity into the network and a Growth Scheme is being progressed to seek to address this. Part of this process is to use modelling to understand how flows from developments in the catchment will impact on the existing system to ensure that we provide a holistic solution, as opposed to piecemeal fixes that may in themselves cause problems downstream in the network. In the interim we are continuing to maintain and operate the existing sewer system

Following on from an initial assessment, Southern Water will instigate a network reinforcement scheme to mitigate the impact of the foul flows from the proposed developments. As part of addressing the impact of additional flows to the network, Southern Water will carry out the following work:

- Detailed network modelling to understand the extent of the flooding in the network as a result of new growth i.e. from the above development as well as other relevant development sites within the sewerage catchment. Where this modelling shows that reinforcement is required, we will:
- identify options to address the risk and determine the best whole life cost solution to cater for the overall growth.
- carry out detailed design the preferred option including undertaking site surveys to inform the design.
- construct the required reinforcement.

The timescale for the delivery of the required reinforcement will vary from site to site depending on scheme complexity and extent of reinforcement, however, it is anticipated that in the majority of cases this will be completed within 24 months of the planning application being approved.

You should also be aware of the following developments that are being planned or are under discussion as part of Rother's 2020-2040 Local Area Plan and which if developed will connect to the Barnhorn Road sewer.

1. Rosewood Park extension – planning reference RR/2023/1721/P – 340 dwellings

We are aware of this development, and it has been added to the growth tracker. Until such time that planning permission has been granted, we will not promote this development onto our Growth Scheme.

2. Conversion of an existing static caravan site at Barnhorne Manor into permanent dwellings (c 100) – reference RR/2024/1235/P. This site is not currently connected to the main sewer.

Southern Water have been consulted on this application but due to there being no mention of a connection to a public foul sewer, we had no comments to make.

3. Site to the south of Barnhorn Road – BEX0050 – likely to entail 300+ dwellings.

Southern Water have not received any notification concerning this planning application and it has not been added to the growth tracker, at this time.

Clearly if all or even some of these proposals are implemented, the current 9" sewer will not cope at all.

Assuming therefore that you would have to upgrade the sewer in the near future, what would the impact be on Barnhorn Road?

At what cost?

Over what time frame?

What other sewage pipes would need to be upgraded as a result further downstream?

Would the Bulverhythe water works cope with this extra capacity?

If not, at what cost to upgrade it and over what time frame?

Will the extra capacity result in even more unplanned sewage dumping events into the sea around Hastings?



Until such time as any of the above planning applications are granted Southern Water will add the development to the Growth Tracker to better understand the impact on our network but the development will not be promoted to a growth scheme until planning has been granted.

Once the planning application has been granted the application will follow the Risk and Value process, as detailed in our previous letter.

Sewage Overflow at Cooden Beach Station

I am attaching 3 photographs of a sewage overflow event that occurred on 5 September at Cooden Beach station and along Cooden Sea Road.

This event occurred during a major rain storm that day at around 13:30 and this event coincided with a very high tide at that time. Two manhole covers were seen to be discharging sewage along with rain water so presumably at least one sewage pipe contains both rain water and sewage but was unable to discharge due to the high tide.

What plans are there to rectify this problem please?

At what cost?

And when?

The issues in September around Cooden Beach Road were not down to capacity issues as we had a problem with a building collapsing at the Wastewater Pumping Station (WPS) on the street.

The flows were being controlled by tankers as the WPS could not cope with the large deluge of rainfall in that storm.

This was exacerbated by surface water run-off which could not get into the surface water sewer through the gullies and ran down the road making the issue worse.

All Southern Water sewers are built to national agreed standards, but at times of such heavy rainfall the sewers may not be able to cope with the increased amount of surface water entering the waste system. This leads to everything backing up and even flooding at lower points. This is known as hydraulic overload. Once the rain stops, the surface water should naturally drain away within a three-hour period.

We are entitled to make a reasonable charge for information provided under the Regulations. Details of our charging scheme can be found on our website: <https://www.southernwater.co.uk/water-for-life/protecting-the-environment/environmental-information>. In this case we have decided to waive our charge.

If you are dissatisfied with the handling of your request, you have the right to ask for an internal review. Internal review requests should be submitted within forty working days of the date of receipt of this response and should be addressed to Head of Legal, Southern Water Services Ltd, Southern House, Yeoman Road, Worthing, West Sussex BN13 3NX or you can email EIR.Internal.Review@southernwater.co.uk.

If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of the internal review, you can apply, without charge, to the Information Commissioner, who will consider whether Southern Water has complied with its obligations under the Regulations, and can require Southern Water to remedy any problems. You can find out more about how to do this, and about the Regulations in general, on the Information Commissioner's website at: www.ico.org.uk. Complaints to the Information Commissioner can be made via the "report a concern" section of the Information Commissioner's website.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any queries.



Yours sincerely

EIR Officer