**A Position Statement on managing new housing development in the Thornham Waste Water Treatment Works catchment.**

*This is a joint Chichester District Council, Southern Water Services and Environment Agency position statement. Havant Borough Council has been kept informed but is not a signatory.*

*The purpose of this statement is to support planning officers and developers working within this catchment. It focusses on the local Wastewater Treatment works at Thornham. The Thornham Wastewater Treatment Works (WwTW) serves an area including the parishes of Southbourne, Chidham and Hambrook, Westbourne, and in adjoining Havant Borough, Emsworth.*

*This statement builds on policies in the “Chichester Local Plan: Key Policies 2014-2029”, the “Surface Water and Foul Drainage Supplementary Planning Document – September 2016”, the “Water Quality Assessment Report – 2018”, and a Statement of Common Ground being prepared between Chichester District Council, Southern Water and the Environment Agency.*

**The current position:**

The Thornham Wastewater Treatment Works (WwTW) operates under a Permit issued by the Environment Agency. It is subject to environmental permit constraints, one of which is the volume of flows that Southern Water is authorised to process through the wastewater treatment works during dry weather. This is known as Dry Weather Flow (DWF). The permit limit on DWF restricts options to increase treatment capacity beyond the current DWF environmental permit level. Consideration of any development in the Thornham catchment therefore needs to take into account whether there is sufficient infrastructure available to convey, manage, treat and discharge the wastewater that will be produced, whilst complying with HRA requirements to ensure there is no adverse impact on the protected area of Chichester Harbour.

The latest DWF headroom information from Southern Water indicates that there was available headroom for up to 950 new dwellings at the Thornham WwTW as at January 2021, based on average flow of 500l per dwelling.

Due to the environmental restrictions in Chichester Harbour (as set out in the Statement of Common Ground between Chichester District Council, The Environment Agency and Southern Water – Waste Water Treatment in the Chichester Plan Area), the provision of additional treatment capacity at Thornham WwTW is constrained. Southern Water is currently preparing a Drainage and Wastewater Management Plan (DWMP) which will look at the need for and wider options to deliver infrastructure improvements to accommodate growth across the area. The DWMP will be finalised in 2023 as part of the next price review, to inform investment in the period 2025-30. There is at present no certainty of a deliverable solution for the Thornham catchment and any solution will take time to deliver.

In the meantime infiltration reduction work in Thornham catchment may help slow take up of the available headroom.

**Managing development:**

More homes have been built since January 2021 and others have planning permission but are not yet built. Taking these into account as commitments reduces the headroom available for other future development to 298 as at 1st September 2021. Information about the remaining capacity not committed will be kept under review and published on Chichester District Council’s website, on the [Supplementary Planning Document](https://www.chichester.gov.uk/article/29757/Supplementary-planning-documents-and-policy-guidance) page.

New development proposals within the area served by Thornham WwTW will have to demonstrate that, taking account of both the latest DWF based headroom information and the needs of extant planning permissions yet to be built/completed, sufficient headroom exists to serve the development, or alternatively that no net increase in flows to Thornham WWTW will result from the development. Capacity will be taken up on a first come first served basis.

The available headroom position will be reviewed annually as new DWF data becomes available, with more frequent monitoring of planning permissions in the catchment. Remaining headroom should be considered when considering development proposals in the catchment.

In order to maximise the use of remaining available headroom no surface water from new development will be discharged to the public foul or combined sewer system. Applicants should also demonstrate that techniques such as SuDs have been used to minimise the flow to the treatment works and are encouraged to include water efficiency measures to achieve Southern Water’s Target 100.

Development in this catchment also needs to be nutrient neutral in line with Natural England guidance.

Agreed on 25 November 2021 by:

**Chichester District Council – Cllr Susan Taylor, Cabinet Member for Planning Services**

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**Southern Water- Sandra Norval, Future Growth Lead**

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**Environment Agency – Kate Banfield, Environment, Planning & Engagement Manager, Solent & South Downs Area**

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