Policy E7: Water Management

Development will be permitted provided that:

a) it does not result in the deterioration of and, where possible, assists in improving water quality and be planned to support the attainment of the requirements of the Water Framework Directive;

b) it complies with national policy and guidance in relation to flood risk;

c) it does not result in a risk to the quality of groundwater within a principal aquifer, including Groundwater Source Protection Zones and there is no risk to public water supplies;

d) all new homes (including replacement dwellings) achieve a water consumption standard of no more than 110 litres per person per day; and

e) all new non-residential development of 500sqm or more achieve the BREEAM[1] 'excellent' credit required for water consumption (reference Wat 1).

Criteria d) – e) need to be satisfied unless it can be demonstrated that it is not financially viable.

7.52 The water environment of the Borough is important for a number of reasons including its ecological value[2], its influence on the character and setting of the Borough and as a source of drinking water for the Borough, South Hampshire and the Isle of Wight. Approximately 77% of Test Valley overlies chalk strata and is defined as a principal aquifer. There are a significant number of public and private abstractions. Groundwater in the Borough is also very important in supplying the base flows to local rivers and supporting habitats.

7.53 Water resources within Test Valley are largely identified as having restricted water available for licensing purposes at moderate and low flows[3]. On this basis the Environment Agency has advised that there is no likelihood of increasing the amount of water licensed to be taken out of local rivers or aquifers. Development will have to be planned within existing water resources, it is therefore particularly important to carefully manage how we use water. The Council will work with water utility providers and the Environment Agency to ensure that new developments (including their phasing) do not exceed water supply, waste water treatment and sewerage capacity.

1 Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method – using the BREEAM 2011 standards

2 This includes designated sites, such as the River Test SSSI, and habitats that are dependent on water inputs

3 Test and Itchen Abstraction Licensing Strategy, Environment Agency, 2013

7.54 Promoting more efficient use of water will be essential to help balance the needs of the community and the environment. The policy uses the proposed higher Building Regulations requirement for housing and BREEAM to secure increased water efficiency. Alternative approaches to securing the equivalent level of water efficiency sought through criteria d) to e) will be considered by the Council, where supported by appropriate evidence.

7.55 It will also be important to ensure the delivery of development is phased to take account of any ecological or capacity constraints, including environmental constraints for Fullerton Waste Water Treatment Works[4]. Development draining to this treatment works will be monitored in collaboration with the Environment Agency and Southern Water to ensure water quality objectives are not compromised.

7.56 There are legal requirements through the Water Framework Directive to give full consideration to the quality and quantity of ground and surface water bodies in order to aim to achieve 'good' status or 'good ecological potential' in all water bodies by 2027[5]. The Council has a role in supporting the delivery of these objectives. It is essential that development does not cause deterioration in the status of water bodies. Where possible, schemes to enhance the status of the water bodies should be undertaken.

7.57 The Environment Agency has defined Groundwater Source Protection Zones across the Borough in order to protect these sources. When considering development proposals within these zones and principal aquifers, the Council will assess the likely risk of harm to groundwater resources from pollution or other activities such as engineering works.

Flood Risk

7.58 The NPPF sets out the approach to take in managing flooding from all possible sources[6]. This can include river floodplain[7] but also sites without adequate surface water run off, seasonal groundwater or where natural drainage is obstructed. Development may be permissible provided that it complies with the NPPF and national guidance, has regard to local evidence and strategies including the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy, and appropriate mitigation has been secured.

4 This serves Andover and a number of the surrounding settlements

5 For more information see the River Basin Management Plan South East River Basin District, Environment Agency, 2009

6 Paragraphs 100 – 104 of the NPPF, 2012 and the National Planning Practice Guidance

7 An indication of the location of floodplains can be found on the Environment Agency website

7.59 Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) can have a role in the management of rainfall and surface water, as well as helping to improve water quality. In line with national guidance, major development will need to ensure SuDS are provided to manage runoff unless exceptional circumstances apply.

7.60 There are a number of organisations involved in flooding matters, including the Environment Agency[8] and the Lead Local Flood Authority (Hampshire County Council)[9]. In addition to its responsibilities as a local planning authority the Council is committed to working with relevant organisations managing flooding across the Borough. Following the flooding within the Borough in 2013/14, the Council is working in partnership with the relevant agencies to develop measures to manage risks of flooding in the future. Implementation of any measures would depend on the availability of funding.

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[8] Environment Agency is responsible for flood risk from rivers and the sea, as well as regulating large reservoirs.

[9] The Lead Local Flood Authority is responsible for managing the risk of flooding from groundwater, surface water runoff and 'ordinary watercourses' (i.e. water courses that are not part of a main river).