

Statement of Common Ground

Between: Sevenoaks District Council (SDC) and Thames Water (TW)

Relating to: Water supply and wastewater infrastructure requirements to support the Sevenoaks District Local Plan and supporting Infrastructure Delivery Plan

1. Purpose of this Statement

- 1.1 This Statement of Common Ground records the shared understanding between Sevenoaks District Council (SDC) and Thames Water (TW) regarding the water supply and wastewater infrastructure required to support the level and distribution of growth proposed in the Sevenoaks District Local Plan. It provides evidence of ongoing engagement and collaboration and supports the Infrastructure Delivery Plan by confirming areas of agreement and identifying any matters where further work is required.

2. Roles and Responsibilities

- 2.1 SDC is responsible for preparing the Local Plan and Infrastructure Delivery Plan, identifying infrastructure needs arising from growth, and securing delivery through planning policy and developer contributions.
- 2.2 Thames Water is one of four statutory water supply undertakers operating within Sevenoaks District. It supplies clean water to approximately the north-western quarter of the District, including Swanley, Hextable, South Darenth, Horton Kirby, Farningham, Halstead, Knockholt, Sundridge, Brasted and Westerham. Thames Water is responsible for planning, maintaining and upgrading water supply infrastructure, assessing capacity, and ensuring a secure and sustainable supply in line with statutory obligations.
- 2.3 Thames Water is also one of two statutory wastewater undertakers operating within Sevenoaks District. It collects and treats sewage and wastewater for the northern half of the District, covering an area stretching from Sevenoaks and Westerham up to Swanley, Hextable and Hartley. Thames Water is responsible for maintaining and upgrading sewerage networks and treatment works, assessing capacity, and ensuring compliance with environmental and regulatory requirements.

3. Evidence Considered

- 3.1 Both parties have considered the following evidence in forming this Statement:
- The scale and distribution of growth set out in the Sevenoaks District Local Plan;
 - The Infrastructure Delivery Plan;
 - Thames Water's Water Resources Management Plan 2024 (WRMP24);

- Thames Water's Drainage and Wastewater Management Plan 2023 (DWMP23);
- Thames Water's business plan 2025-2030 (AMP8);
- National policy and regulatory requirements, including Ofwat and Environment Agency guidance;
- Site-specific assessments and ongoing discussions between SDC and Thames Water; and
- Information on existing and planned water supply and wastewater infrastructure across the District.

4. Areas of Agreement

4.1 SDC and Thames Water agree that:

1. The level and distribution of growth proposed in the Sevenoaks District Local Plan has been reviewed and understood.
2. Thames Water's current WRMP24 does not fully reflect the scale of growth proposed in the Sevenoaks District Local Plan. WRMP24 is based on 2022 population forecasts, and similar discrepancies are being experienced across the wider region due to recent changes in national housing requirements.
3. Thames Water has commenced preparation of WRMP29, which will incorporate the full level of growth proposed in the Sevenoaks District Local Plan and identify the measures and investment required to meet future demand, including any upgrades to existing water supply infrastructure.
4. The majority of new housing in the District is expected between 2030 and 2042, and both parties are committed to working collaboratively to ensure WRMP29 appropriately plans for this impact.
5. Strategic upgrades to wastewater treatment works required to support growth will be included in Thames Water's business plans for AMP9 (2030-2035) and AMP10 (2035-2040).
6. The impacts of new development on existing treatment works can be minimised by applying planning conditions requiring all development to comply with the optional water efficiency standard set out in Building Regulations, calculated using the fittings-based approach. This measure is recognised by SDC and is included in Local Plan Policy W3.
7. It is anticipated that Long Reach Sewage Treatment Works will require treatment capacity upgrades over the next 25 years to accommodate forecast growth. The Infrastructure Delivery Plan will be updated regularly and will incorporate all relevant upgrade projects as they are identified through WRMP29, DWMP28 or other technical assessments.

8. Modelling for network upgrades will proceed once sites have planning approval and there is certainty that development will come forward. Where network upgrades are required, it can take 18 months to 3 years to plan and deliver from the point at which development is confirmed.
9. The costs of strategic upgrades are funded through customer bills, while the costs of local network upgrades are covered by infrastructure charges for new connections. As a result, the delivery of water and wastewater infrastructure upgrades is not expected to impact the wider delivery of infrastructure through CIL, S106 or the viability of development.
10. SDC and Thames Water will continue to work collaboratively on planning applications to secure appropriate water supply and wastewater infrastructure, including on-site and off-site reinforcement, flow management measures and treatment capacity upgrades where required.
11. Delivery of water supply and wastewater infrastructure will be secured through planning conditions and developer contributions, in line with Local Plan Policy UD1 and Thames Water's published requirements for development engagement.
12. Both parties recognise the importance of early engagement, particularly where infrastructure constraints may require long lead-in times for delivery.

5. Areas of Ongoing Work / Matters Not Yet Agreed

5.1 The following matters require further work or clarification:

1. Incorporation of Local Plan growth into Thames Water's population forecasts for WRMP29 and DWMP28, expected later in 2026.
2. Identification of specific upgrade schemes required to support Local Plan growth, to be confirmed through detailed modelling and capacity assessments.
3. Detailed feasibility, costings and sequencing for any required network or treatment works upgrades.
4. Ongoing refinement of modelling as site-specific development proposals progress to planning application stage.
5. Confirmation of any environmental permit implications arising from increased flows at wastewater treatment works.

5.2 Both parties are committed to resolving these matters through continued engagement.

6. Delivery and Phasing

6.1 SDC and Thames Water acknowledge that the delivery of water supply and wastewater infrastructure will depend on:

- The timing and phasing of development;
- Detailed design and feasibility;
- Alignment with Thames Water's investment programmes;
- Availability of land and access for construction;
- Environmental permitting requirements; and
- Funding availability and developer contributions.

6.2 Indicative delivery timescales are set out in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan and will be refined as further information becomes available in due course.

7. Signatures

Signed on behalf of Sevenoaks District Council	
Name:	
Role:	
Date:	

Signed on behalf of Thames Water	
Name:	
Role:	
Date:	