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Michael Letch
Ongar Town Council

 0118 9520 502

18th March 2021

By Email: np@ongartowncouncil.gov.uk

Draft Ongar Neighbourhood Plan 2020-2033 Consultation

Dear Mr Letch,

Thank you for consulting Thames Water on the above document. Thames Water is the statutory sewerage undertaker for the area is hence a "specific consultation body" in accordance with the Town & Country Planning (Local Development) Regulations 2012. In relation to the draft Neighbourhood Plan we have specific comments in relation to sewerage infrastructure and as such have provided comments in writing rather than the consultation form.

Delivery of Wastewater Infrastructure

In relation to the delivery of wastewater infrastructure since the 1st April 2018 all off site wastewater network reinforcement works necessary as a result of new development will be delivered by the relevant statutory undertaker. Local reinforcement works will be funded by the Infrastructure Charge which is a fixed charge for each new property connected. Wastewater treatment works infrastructure upgrades will be funded through water companies' investment programmes which are based on a 5 year cycle known as the Asset Management Plan process.

Thames Water will work with developers and local authorities to ensure that any necessary infrastructure reinforcement is delivered ahead of occupation. However, in some circumstances Thames Water may seek the inclusion of phasing conditions in order to avoid adverse amenity impacts for existing or future users such as internal and external sewer flooding or pollution of land and water courses. To minimise the likelihood of requiring such conditions developers are advised to contact Thames Water as early as possible to discuss their development proposals and intended delivery programme.

While housing allocations for Ongar are set out in the emerging Epping Forest Local Plan, we would welcome the inclusion of supporting text within the Neighbourhood Plan further encouraging developers to liaise with Thames Water. The scale of development proposed in Ongar is likely to result in a requirement for upgrades to Stanford Rivers Sewage Treatment Works. As such Thames Water are keen to work closely with developers and the Council to ensure that any necessary upgrades are programmed to align with the delivery of development. This will assist with reducing the risk of Thames Water requiring phasing conditions to ensure that development is not occupied until any necessary upgrades have been completed.

Proposed Supporting Text

Thames Water have commented on the emerging Epping Forest Local Plan and support the inclusion within the Local Plan of Policy DM15 in relation to flood risk, DM16 regarding surface water drainage and DM18 in relation to water and wastewater infrastructure although some amendments have been put forward in relation to Policy DM18. It is considered that the Neighbourhood Plan should make reference to the requirements of Policy DM18 of the emerging Epping Forest Local Plan along with reference to the need for early engagement with Thames Water. It is therefore suggested that the following text is included in the Neighbourhood Plan:

“Developers are encouraged to contact Thames Water as early as possible to discuss their development proposals and intended delivery programme to assist with identifying any potential wastewater network reinforcement requirements and to allow upgrades to Stansted Rivers Sewage Treatment Works to be programmed. Developments will be required to comply with Policy DM18 of the Epping Forest Local Plan in relation to wastewater infrastructure. Where there is a capacity constraint, phasing conditions should be applied to any approval where appropriate to ensure that any necessary infrastructure upgrades are delivered ahead of the occupation of the relevant phase of development.”

Developers can liaise with us in advance of the submission of any planning applications through the use of our pre-planning service at: www.thameswater.co.uk

I trust the above and enclosed comments are satisfactory, but please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any queries.

Yours faithfully,

Thames Water Utilities Limited

