



DAERA Environmental Advice for Planning

**Standing Advice**  
**Multiple Dwellings**

Advice for Planning Officers to inform decision making and applicants seeking planning permission for multiple dwellings which may impact on upon the water environment.

## Scope of this Standing Advice Guidance Document

This standing advice on planning applications applies specifically to the potential impact of multiple dwellings upon water quality with regards to water sources and wastewater and rainwater management. Issues such as contaminated land, badgers, bats etc. are not covered by this document.

Any development proposal where the site is located on potentially contaminated land will require an assessment of the risk to the water environment to accompany the application.

For contaminated land the applicant should refer to the webpage Planning and land contamination on the DAERA website: <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/planning-and-land-contamination>

## When should the planning authority consult NIEA in relation to potential impacts upon water quality

NIEA **do not** need to be consulted in relation to water quality impacts in the following circumstances:

- A consent to discharge treated sewerage effluent issued under the Water (NI) Order 1999 (consent) has been granted for the new development and proof has been provided to the Planning Authority.
- An application for replacement dwellings, which will not increase the existing loadings to the sewer; or an existing consent is in place.
- A change in house type related to an already approved development.

For these developments, the Planning Authority should insert the conditions and Informatives contained in this Standing Advice document in any decision notice.

NIEA **do** need to be consulted in relation to water quality impacts in the following circumstances:

- If the site boundary is within 10m of a waterway or 50m of a spring or borehole.
- Septic tanks or a package treatment plant is proposed, and no consent has yet been granted.
- A proposal to connect to a public foul sewer.
- Any other proposed method of wastewater disposal.
- An alteration or culverting of a waterway is proposed.
- If there is suspected soil or groundwater contamination on site.
- Where a private water supply is to serve two or more dwellings.
- A proposal to use a private water supply at any dwelling for a commercial activity (e.g., Bed & Breakfast, holiday let).

NIEA Standing Advice on planning consultations for multiple dwellings.

### **Wastewater Treatment and Drainage**

All proposed developments should connect to a mains sewer, where available, and providing that the sewer and associated Waste Water Treatment Works (WWTW) can support the additional load. Applicants should apply for a pre-development enquiry (PDE) with Northern Ireland Water Limited (NI Water) The PDE will set out clearly if the proposal can connect to a mains sewer. Where NI Water assets are constrained NI Water will not permit connection and will seek the applicant to complete a Wastewater Impact Assessment to identify any other alternatives to facilitate connection. Where required this should be completed before planning.

If it is not possible to connect the proposed development to the mains sewer, then discharge consent under the terms of the Water (NI) Order 1999 will be required for the discharge of sewage effluent from the proposed development. The applicant should be aware that NIEA will seek evidence of a completed NI Water Wastewater Impact Assessment to confirm private sewage infrastructure is the only option.

Should a sewage pumping station be required for a development then the applicant must apply to NIEA Water Regulation Unit for Water Order (1999) consent for an 'emergency overflow'. The applicant should be aware that NIEA will seek evidence of a NI Water PDE to provide evidence that the NI Water asset can receive the proposed flow from the private pumping station.

NIEA require all private sewage infrastructure (pumping station and treatment) to meet the NI Water specification for adoption. NIEA application process now includes additional consultation with NI Water and is linked to the NI Water Article 161 Adoption process. No

private sewage infrastructure will be granted unless a valid Article 161 Agreement and bond is in place.

There is no guarantee that consent will be granted, as a number of site-specific factors need to be taken into account in assessing the suitability of the proposed means of sewage disposal, and the available environment to receive the proposed discharge.

It should be noted that the minimum discharge consent processing time is 4 months.

If the applicant possesses an existing discharge consent for the address, this will need to be reviewed if any aspect of this consent is altered i.e., there is an increase in the volume of effluent discharged, structural changes to the treatment system or to reflect a change in the ownership of the consented premises.

All wastewater treatment systems and soakaways must be located in such a position that they cannot affect surface or ground waters and cannot cause a nuisance to any nearby properties.

NIEA would like to highlight that treatment plants and soakaways should not be installed in the vicinity of any well, borehole or other source of water supply intended for human consumption. There should be a minimum distance of 50 metres between the drainage field and the source of water supply.

NIEA recommends that **no** development should take place on-site until the method of sewage disposal has been agreed in writing with NI Water or a consent to discharge has been granted.

Care should be taken to ensure that only clean surface water is discharged to the surrounding water environment during the construction and operational phases of the development. NIEA recommend that the applicant considers the implementation of SuDS (Sustainable Drainage Systems) to deal with this storm water runoff.

### **Drinking Water Sources**

If you intend to use a private water supply as your source of drinking water, it is recommended that you seek advice/guidance to ensure you have a safe and clean drinking water source. You should contact either the Drinking Water Inspectorate (DWI) or the environmental health department of your local council to obtain appropriate advice/guidance.

You are required to register a private water supply with the DWI where:

- The supply is to serve two or more dwellings; or
- The supply to a single dwelling will have a commercial use (e.g., Bed and Breakfast, holiday let).

If you are intending to use an alternative water source such as a greywater or rainwater harvesting systems it is **not recommended** to use these systems for drinking water or sanitary uses (e.g., hand washing) within dwellings, but may be used for toilet flushing and garden use etc.

## **Drinking Water Inspectorate (Private water supplies)**

**Tel:** 028 90569282 <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/private-water-supplies> **Email:** [dwi@daera-ni.gov.uk](mailto:dwi@daera-ni.gov.uk)

**Local Council Environmental Health Departments** These can be contacted via the relevant council website. A list of council websites can be found at: [www.nidirect.gov.uk/local-councils-in-northern-ireland](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/local-councils-in-northern-ireland)

## Recommended Conditions and Informatives

### Conditions

**Condition:** No development should take place on-site until the method of sewage disposal has been agreed in writing with Northern Ireland Water (NI Water) or a consent to discharge has been granted under the terms of The Water (NI) Order 1999.

**Reason:** To ensure a practical solution to sewage disposal is possible at this site.

**Condition:** Each building shall be provided with such sanitary pipework, foul drainage and rainwater drainage as may be necessary for the hygienic and adequate disposal of foul water and rainwater separately from that building. The drainage system should also be designed to minimise the risk of wrongly connecting the sewage system to the rainwater drainage system once the buildings are occupied.

**Reason:** In order to decrease the risk of the incorrect diversion of sewage to drains carrying rain/surface water to a waterway.

### Informatives

1. The storm drainage of the site, during site clearance, construction, and operational phases of the development, should be designed to the principles of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) in order to minimise the polluting effects of storm water on waterways.
2. Construction of SuDS should comply with the design and construction standards as set out in various documents produced by the Construction Industry Research and Information Association (CIRIA) in relation to SuDS. These can be found by visiting their website. <https://www.ciria.org/>
3. All private sewage infrastructure discharges require consent under the Water Order (1999) inclusive of pumping stations and treatment. An application form for consent to discharge under the Water (NI) Order 1999 can be obtained at the link <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/regulating-waterdischarges>.
4. The applicant should consult with the Water Regulation Unit within the NIEA regarding any potential dewatering that may be required during the redevelopment works including the need for discharge consent. Discharged waters should meet appropriate discharge consent conditions.

5. The applicant should ensure that the management of all waste is suitably authorised through the Waste Management Regulations (NI) 2006 and/or the Water Order (NI) 1999. This should be demonstrated through a Site Waste Management Plan (see <http://www.netregs.gov.uk/>)
6. The applicant should comply with all the relevant Pollution Prevention Guidance (PPG's) and the replacement guidance series, Guidance for Pollution Prevention (GPPs) in order to minimise the impact of the project on the environment, paying particular attention to:
  - GPP 1 - Understanding Your Environmental Responsibilities - Good Environmental Practices
  - GPP 2 - Above ground oil storage tanks.
  - GPP 4 – Treatment and disposal of sewage where no foul sewer is available.
  - GPP 5 - Works and maintenance in or near water.
  - PPG 6 - Working at construction and demolition sites.

Compliance with the advice in GPP 5 and PPG 6 will help to minimise the impact of the site clearance and construction phases of the project on the environment. These PPGs/GPPs can be accessed by visiting the NetRegs website at

<https://www.netregs.org.uk/environmental-topics/guidance-for-pollution-prevention-gpp-documents/guidance-for-pollution-prevention-gpps-full-list/>

7. Should any culverting or piping of watercourses be required, the applicant will be required to adhere to the guidance detailed in Standing Advice – Culverting. Our standing advice can be found by following the link:  
<https://www.daerani.gov.uk/publications/standing-advice-development-may-have-effect-waterenvironment-including-groundwater-and-fisheries>
8. General advice and guidance on private water supplies can be obtained from the DWI' information leaflet 'Is your private water supply safe?' <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/doe/water-leaflet-is-your-private-water-supplysafe-2015.pdf>. Further information can be found on private water supplies at: <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/private-water-supplies>

Borehole construction should be undertaken by a competent contractor taking account of best practice. Guidance on best practice can be accessed by the Institute of Geologists of Ireland (IGI) at: <http://igi.ie/publications/guidelines/>

9. Environment Agency (EA) Guidance on Rainwater Harvesting Guidance can be obtained from:  
<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140328084622/http://cdn.environmentagency.gov.uk/geho1110bten-e-e.pdf> (PDF 767KB)
10. The applicant should comply with all the relevant DAERA Standing Advice in order to minimise the impact of the project on the water environment).

*Standing Advice Notes are available on the DAERA website under the Topic: Standing advice for development that may have an effect on the water environment (including groundwater and fisheries). Alternately the following address can be copied and pasted to a web browser: <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/standing-advised-development-may-have-effect-water-environment-including-groundwater-and-fisheries>*

11. It is an offence under the Water (Northern Ireland) Order 1999 to discharge or deposit, whether knowingly or otherwise, any poisonous, noxious, or polluting matter so that it enters a waterway or water in any underground strata. Conviction of such an offence may incur a fine of up to £20,000 and / or three months imprisonment.

### **Final Comments**

Effective mitigation measures must be in place to protect the water environment and surrounding water bodies from any discharge into them that may damage ecological status and to ensure that the Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2017 objectives for the water body are not compromised nor the objectives in other downstream water bodies in the same and other catchments.

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Jul 2016	References to DOE changed to DAERA; References to Inland Fisheries requirements added
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**Agriculture, Environment  
and Rural Affairs**

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