

[REDACTED]

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**From:** EIR  
**Sent:** 23 September 2025 11:19  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** [REDACTED]

Dear Requester

Thank you for your request for guidance on the terms used in our previous reply 1854, which we received on 16 September 2025. Your request has been considered under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIR).

You requested:

The meaning of

1. Object - descriptive
2. Pre Occupation condition
3. Object SSD

#### **EIR Response: Provision of Requested Information**

Please find attached:

- Descriptive-works-position-statement-march-2025.pdf

**Item 1** is held by Anglian Water and has been provided as an attachment and below.

Object Descriptive means Anglian Water will object, due to the WRC having a Descriptive Permit. Descriptive permits apply to small water recycling centres (WRCs), often referred to as Descriptive Works. They serve a small number of properties within an existing settlement (predominantly served by private wastewater treatment measures - e.g. septic tanks) or small settlements. Descriptive permits are for a low-risk discharge which does not contain any numerical limit conditions (other than volume) for the discharge, but relies on descriptive conditions only – meaning there is generally no requirement for flow measurement at these sites.

**Item 2** is held by Anglian Water and has been provided as an attachment and below.

Pre occupation conditions are recommended for WRCs included within our Business Plan as a named growth scheme with investment delivery planned between 2025-2030. To ensure there is no pollution or deterioration in the receiving watercourse due to the additional foul flows that would arise from the development, we are recommending the following planning condition is applied if permission is granted:  
Condition: Prior to occupation written confirmation from Anglian Water must be submitted confirming there is sufficient headroom at the water recycling centre to accommodate the foul flows from the development site. This condition shall cease to have effect if the development is first occupied after April 2030.  
Reason: to protect water quality, prevent pollution and secure sustainable development having regard to paragraphs 7/8 and 187 of the National Planning Policy Framework

**Item 3** is held by Anglian Water and has been provided as an attachment and below.

Object SSD means Anglian Water will object, due to the WRC having a Small Sewage Discharges classification.

SSDs are defined as WRCs which either discharge no more than 5m<sup>3</sup> /day of effluent to watercourse (roughly equivalent to the daily flow from 8 houses), or 2m<sup>3</sup> /day if they discharge to a soakaway. The EA have decided that these types of discharges no longer need to have an Environmental Permit. Instead, they are bound by a series of 'General Binding Rules'<sup>1</sup>. Anglian Water still undertakes site visits and maintenance of these sites as if they were descriptive works. However, as a result of the very limited capacity of these dischargers, there are no permits for these WRCs and no capacity for additional connections. Anglian Water would therefore object to growth (Local/Neighbourhood Plans and planning applications) in locations where a connection is proposed to these SSDs, and alternative wastewater treatment facilities would need to be considered.

Under the Water Industry Act 1991, sites with planning consent have an automatic right to connect to Anglian Water (and other water company) owned foul sewers. This means that legally we cannot refuse connections to our sewer networks. Once a development has planning permission, developers have an automatic right to connect to our network. It's worth noting that England is an outlier within the UK on this – elsewhere in the country, water and sewerage capacity is taken into account alongside other planning considerations.

The Barratt Homes vs Welsh Water legal case established the principle for water companies to utilise the planning system to control connections and we do actively engage in the planning process. Although we aren't a statutory consultee on planning applications, we can object to planning applications, or ask for planning conditions to be applied to sites. Planning authorities do not have to take our conditions or objections into account, because we are not statutory consultees in the planning process. So we do not have the power to prevent connections if a local authority chooses to grant planning permission.

To help protect the environment, we are objecting to planning applications or asking for conditions to be placed on planning permission in some areas, which state that the houses should not be occupied until we've completed planned upgrades.

However, it is for local authorities to decide whether they accept or reject our recommendations. We intend to continue working closely with developers and planning authorities in the impacted areas, to coordinate the timings of upgrades so that, where conditions are placed on sites, new homes don't remain unoccupied for any longer than necessary.

We are funded by Ofwat through the Price Review process to account for growth, however successive Price Reviews have underfunded the industry so not everywhere has capacity for growth. Government has also recently significantly increased the level of growth planned – and this was announced after we submitted our PR24 plans. The updated housing figures in the National Planning Policy Framework have resulted in an uplift of c.75,000 homes across our region by 2030, for which no funding has been provided by Ofwat in our current Final Determination. Local authorities are still working through revising their local plans to account for these increases and we are working to prioritise our growth investment to account for planned growth. However it is likely that many will come forward in areas where we do have capacity to accommodate the growth. We anticipate that 175,000 new homes will come forward in locations where we currently have capacity to the end of AMP8.

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If you are unhappy with the service you have received in relation to your request and wish to request an internal review, you should email [EIR@anglianwater.co.uk](mailto:EIR@anglianwater.co.uk) or write to:

Legal Director, Anglian Water Services, Lancaster House, Lancaster Way, Ermine Business Park, Huntingdon PE29 6XU

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF

If you have any queries about this email, please contact us via [EIR@anglianwater.co.uk](mailto:EIR@anglianwater.co.uk) .

Yours sincerely

**EIR Team**

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