

## **Comments on Notice of Motion for July 13th Council**

It is fully recognised that there is much concern among communities about the problems caused by discharges of sewage into watercourse and the sea. A significant part of the problem stems from historic development and there are currently some mechanisms in place to minimise the impact of new development on surface and foul water management:

1. Building Regulations require that foul sewage should be separated from surface water systems in accordance with a specific hierarchy which expects surface water to be discharged (in order of preference) via a soakaway or a watercourse. If neither option is possible then a combined sewer can only be considered where there is capacity to accommodate it and subject to the agreement of the sewage undertaker.
2. The Local Planning Authority consults the flood risk management team on planning applications who will advise on how surface water needs to be managed and this will consider the need for surface water attenuation and permeability of surface treatment to ensure that the development does not lead to local flooding, or surface water problems of overcharging of drains.
3. The Local Planning Authority does engage with water management companies at a strategic level when preparing development plans to ensure that any planned growth can be supported by any essential infrastructure. The issue of regulating reductions in sewage discharges is the responsibility of Defra and does not fall within the remit of the Local Planning Authority.

Notwithstanding the above, it is accepted nationally that more can be done to secure robust and sustainable water management principles when new development is proposed to help address the impacts of climate change, while achieving multiple benefits such as reducing surface water flood risk, improving water quality, and harvesting rainwater. To this end, the Government commissioned an independent review of the arrangements for determining responsibility for surface water and drainage assets, the findings of which were published in January this year. The review concluded that sustainable drainage systems which properly manage surface water (to segregate from foul water discharges) should become mandatory, and subject to adoption in accordance with national standards on their design, construction and operation. Approval for connection to sewers will also be needed in advance of any construction. This will be secured via the implementation of Schedule 3 to the Flood and Water Management Act 2010, and consultation on the review findings will take place in the forthcoming months. It is proposed that Lead Local Flood Authorities (LLFAs) become the approving body.

Therefore, I have no difficulty in principle with the intent of the motion as originally proposed, but would suggest that it could be amended to reflect the forthcoming changes affecting the implementation of sustainable drainage systems, and in turn propose that Dorset Council engages positively with Government in the forthcoming consultation and thereafter the implementation of the review's findings.

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**Head of Planning**