White & Sons Est. 1817

13 November 2025

Barbara Childs
Director of Place
Horsham District Council
Parkside
Chart Way
Horsham
West Sussex
RH12 1RL

Dear Ms. Childs,

Re: DC/25/1223 - Removal of condition 7 (water neutrality) Stoneleigh, Tower Hill, West Sussex, Horsham RH13 0AQ Conversion of a garage with annexe to a separate dwelling.

I refer to the above. We have been instructed by Mr Peter Westergaard to prepare an application to remove condition 7 (water neutrality) of permission ref: DC/25/1223 in respect of the property Stoneleigh, Tower Hill, West Sussex, Horsham RH13 0AQ.

The development has been started but not completed.

For clarification the condition to be removed states:

"The dwelling hereby permitted shall not be first occupied until evidence has been submitted to and been approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority that the approved water neutrality strategy for that dwelling has been implemented in full. The evidence shall include the specification of fittings and appliances used, evidence of their installation, and completion of the as built Part G water calculator or equivalent. The installed measures shall be retained as such thereafter.
Reason: To ensure the development is water neutral to avoid an adverse impact on the Arun Valley SACSPA and Ramsar sites in accordance with Policy 31 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015), Paragraphs 193 and 194 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024), and to enable the Local Planning Authority to discharge its duties under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), and s40 of the NERC Act 2006 (Priority Habitats & Species)."

The condition was imposed as a result of the development falling within the Sussex North Water Supply Zone which covers the whole of Horsham District and parts of the administrative areas of Chichester and Crawley. Natural England had written to these authorities and provided a Position Statement in 2021 on developments which may place increased pressure on water abstraction in this zone. The Position Statement explains in greater detail (including with reference to recent case law) that abstraction from the Sussex North Water Supply Zone may be having an impact on protected sites, namely the Arun Valley Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar. In order not to exacerbate the potential impact, developments within this zone were prevented from taking place unless they can be considered water neutral and do not result in an increase in mains water usage to avoid an adverse impact on the Arun Valley SAC, SPA and Ramsar sites.

It has since been confirmed by the Government by a Press Release on 8th October 2025 that an agreement between government, regulators and industry had been reached to avoid an adverse impact and enable development to go ahead.

On 31 October 2025, Natural England issued a Withdrawal Statement confirming that its Water Neutrality Position Statement of September 2021 has been withdrawn. This means that development within the Sussex North Water Supply Zone will no longer be required to demonstrate that it is water neutral due to a reduction in the licence cap on water abstraction and a package of ecological resilience measures.

Having regard to the above the water neutrality condition is no longer considered reasonable or necessary and therefore it is contrary to these tests for conditions at paragraph 57 of the NPPF. As such it should be removed with immediate effect and therefore this application is submitted to remove the condition.

If you have any comments or queries, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely

Gillian Fensome
Planner
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