

Planning Statement

Project no: 24029
Project Name: Ebbsworth Cottage - Annex

Planning Application ref: DC/21/2802

Application Description: Erection of a two-bed annexe building providing ancillary residential accommodation in place of a previously demolished annexe building (Retrospective).

Introduction:

This Planning Statement has been prepared to support the Section 73 – Variation of Conditions Application to remove the following:

Condition 05 – Pre-commencement (Slab Level) Condition: *No development above ground floor slab level shall commence until full details of the water efficiency measures and rainwater harvesting system required by the approved water neutrality strategy (received 11.01.2024) have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The rainwater harvesting system shall include suitable storage tanks to provide a minimum 35 days storage capacity, and shall accommodated below ground.*

Condition 07 - Pre-occupation Condition: The development hereby permitted shall be undertaken in full accordance with the water neutrality strategy (Water Neutrality Statement received 09.08.2023 No development hereby permitted shall 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.

Background:

On 14th September 2021, Natural England identified and issued a Position Statement noting that the Sussex North Water Resource Zone (WRZ) was in an area of serious water stress, as defined by the Environment Agency. The Position Statement required developments within the region to demonstrate that they will not increase the water demand and demonstrate how they would achieve water neutrality. This impacted Applications in Horsham District, the majority of Crawley District, the Northern region of Chichester District, and areas within the South Downs National Park.

In response to the Position Statement, it was necessary for Planning Applications to provide evidence within three key categories:

1. Reduction of water usage;
2. Reuse of water on site;
3. Offsetting of residual water demand.

These requirements led to many planning applications, through a Water Neutrality Statement, evidencing water reduction and re-use solutions, including water saving fixtures and fittings and the costly introduction of rain water harvesting systems into schemes.

The measures set out within the Water Neutrality Statements were secured via Planning Conditions and usually require adherence to the measures and compliance evidence to be submitted to the LAP prior to occupation of the scheme.

On the 31st October 2025 Natural England issued a Withdrawal Statement confirming that its Water Neutrality Statement from September 2021 has been withdrawn.

The Statement was issued following an agreement between Natural England, Southern Water and the Environment Agency in regards to the abstraction licence to ensure that development would not adversely affect the protected habitats within the Arun Valley.

Horsham District Council have welcomed the withdrawal of the Position Statement, but as the competent authority under the Habitats Regulations the Local Authority recognises that the area is still under severe water stress and still require some form of water saving measures within all new residential developments.

This is to be achieved by the use of the optional requirement under *Approved Document G – Water Efficiency* of the Building Regulations, which requires a calculated water usage of 110l/p/d rather than the standard 125l/p/d.

Proposal:

Following the withdrawal of the Position Statement and in line with the standing guidance from Horsham District Council we are seeking the removal of Condition nos. 05 & 07 as sated above from the Planning Approval Notice to remove all restrictions placed on the development by the Water Neutrality Statement and the proposed/ agreed water efficiency measures.