Water Neutrality Statement – Regulation 77 application associated with General Permitted Development Order

Construction of an in-ground swimming pool

Coolham House, Billingshurst Road, West Sussex, RH13 8QN

Background

The site falls within the Sussex North Water Supply Zone (SNWSZ) which covers the whole of Horsham District and parts of the administrative areas of Chichester and Crawley. Natural England have written to these authorities and provided a Position Statement on developments which may place increased water pressure on water abstraction in this zone. The Position Statement explains in greater detail that abstraction from the SNWSZ 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 impact, it is a condition of Permitted Development that development likely to have a significant effect on a European Site "must not be begun" until an application has been made to Natural England for its opinion as to whether the development is likely to have a relevant effect. This is made by securing written notification of the approval of the Local Planning Authority under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulation 2017 (General Development Orders).

Proposal

The proposal is to construct a seasonal (primarily May to October) swimming pool measuring 5m x 12m, of which 1m would be an internal benched step area, with the remaining depth sloping from 1.2m to 1.8m (taken as 1.6m average). This provides a maximum capacity of 96,000 litres.

Assessment

The water demand required to initially fill the pool once will be met by sourcing water from a private supplier licenced to draw water outside of the SNWSZ. Delivery would be via tankers which can park, discharge and turn within the site off the A272 Billingshurst Road. This approach has been accepted on other applications in the District.

Maintenance of the pool would utilise:

1. A Puronizer system to reduce chlorine content to tap water levels thus minimising chemical usage, and an Activated Filter Media (AFM) to reduce backwashing frequency. The latter is the highest-performing filter media

available, with a certified 1-micron filtration rate and 100& bio-resistance, preventing bacterial growth in the filter bed and reducing the frequency of backwashing by up to 50%. Specification details of this system are included for reference.

2. An Ocea automated, solar pool cover to minimise evaporation. Covers of this type are estimated to reduce water loss through evaporation by up to 85%. The operational period of the pool will be May to October only which also reduces the period of active evaporation. The benefits as described are highlighted on the Ocea website (Ocea: Automatic Pool Covers - Benefits (oceacovers.co.uk)).
3. The pool, which has a large 60m^2 collection area, will naturally harvest rainfall. If needed on top of this, the pool will be topped up as required with water from outside of the NSWSZ.

Conclusion

These measures ensure that the pool operates sustainably during its active months, achieving water neutrality by minimising net water usage and relying on natural resources to replenish the pool's water needs where possible. It is therefore demonstrated that the proposal will be water neutral. There will be zero impact on the NSWSZ public water network as a result of the proposal at initial fill or for the ongoing requirements of water replacement lost through use and evaporation. The implementation of the strategies described not only conserves water but also aligns to environmental best practices for seasonal swimming pool management.