

SCRUTINY COMMISSION – 8 MARCH 2017 AT 10.30AM**QUESTIONS FOR SEVERN TRENT WATER (STW)****Are STW prepared for housing growth in Leicestershire?**

1. Is there enough water supply and waste water treatment capacity to meet Leicestershire's planned growth?
2. If not, how will any shortfalls be met?
3. Do you have any plans to increase your reservoir capacity and if you do are those plans likely to affect Leicestershire in any substantive way? (For example Leicestershire is a mineral rich County that has potential for water storage capacity).
4. Is there a lesser or greater issue between rural and urban areas in meeting the water supply and treatment capacity demands of new developments in the future?
5. How is the standard of water treatment regulated to ensure it is safe for introduction back into the water cycle?
6. There have been a number of flooding incidents in Leicestershire involving foul sewage from combined surface water and sewerage systems over the last 12 months. Are you investing in existing waste water conveyance systems, as well as planning for future increased demands?

To what extent have STW been involved in the planning process to date

7. How does or has STW engaged with planning authorities in Leicestershire about planned growth?
8. How does the distribution of water supply and treatment affect where development can or can't go?

How can the County Council assist STW in preparing for the housing growth agenda?

9. Are you aware of the Strategic Growth Plan for Leicester and Leicestershire?
10. How is STW planning to engage with the preparation of the SGP? Did STW see, and provide comments on, the Draft Strategic Growth Statement which was consulted on in 2016?
11. How can the County Council assist in speeding up utilities connections to new homes? (Ref: LGC article – 4 Jan 2017 – Essex and Kent CC infrastructure pilot - appended)

Are there any capacity issues in respect of sewage and water treatment?

12. Is it more difficult to supply water or waste water treatment to rural areas than to urban areas? (similar to Q4 above)
13. Are there any particular areas within the County that are more difficult than others to service?
14. If there are such areas are these clearly identified to local planning authorities in order for them to take into account when planning for future developments?
15. What do you expect of developers?
16. Can you explain how Severn Trent Water is tackling the issue of leakage from the water supply system?
17. Does STW have published response times for attending to burst pipes and water leaks affecting the public highway?
18. How are you getting customers to use less water and has it been successful?
19. How are your plans, for waste water conveyance and treatment, considered against the need to tackle the growing problem of flooding in this county?

Do some parts of the County require more investment than others?

20. Where does Leicestershire mainly get its water from, how does it get here and is that source secure and sustainable?
21. How does the transfer of water from one region to meet the demands of another take place?
 - a) Could this affect where development can go?
 - b) Are there any such issues in Leicestershire?
22. To what extent are aquifers the main supply of domestic water?
23. Are there any issues in terms of overall abstraction (from aquifers or rivers) that has led to falling river levels creating dangers for long-term water supply or impacts on sensitive environments?
24. It is understood that one of the issues facing water supply is replacing licensed water abstraction that is no longer environmentally sustainable. What is the position in Leicestershire and how is it being tackled?
25. Are the issues that you have identified for investment likely to increase the cost of water supply to domestic and commercial customers?

26. It is understood that nationally a significant amount of water mains and sewers are more than 100 years old.
 - a) Is Leicestershire typical?
 - b) Do they cause a problem?
 - c) What plans do you have to replace them?
 - d) How do you prioritise the resources available to deal with their replacement?
27. Spreading of sewage sludge is a practice that can cause significant concerns in localities at certain times of the year.
 - a) Can you explain the reasons for that and the benefits it brings?
 - b) What is your practice in dealing with community concerns?
 - c) Do you have sufficient land holdings to undertake this activity?
 - d) Is there an alternative to this land spreading activity?
28. What is the potential for generating more bio-energy from sewage/water treatment facilities?
29. Are there opportunities to combine the use of the bio-energy with other forms of development? (eg. combined heat and power for housing, commercial or other development?)
30. How do you prioritise investment in waste water conveyance and treatment systems, particularly in light of historic flooding events?



Counties join infrastructure pilot to speed up house building

4 January, 2017 **By Mark Smulian**

Two county councils are participating in a pilot scheme to speed up utilities connections to new homes.

The government-backed pilot will seek to reduce delays caused by builders being unable to secure water, gas, or electricity supplies to homes with a view to rolling it out across the UK later this year, if the initiative is successful.

It follows a report last year from the Housing & Finance Institute (HFI) on how delays by water companies specifically were holding up progress on home building.

Essex and Kent CCs are taking part in the pilot along with the South East Local Enterprise Partnership, the Home Builders Federation, developers Laing O'Rourke and Keepmoat, Anglian Water, and the Department for Communities and Local Government.

The pilot will look to identify, assess, and unblock infrastructure problems that delay construction. The scheme will focus on housing developments that have been delayed due to a lack of water, sewage, electricity, gas or road connectivity.

Housing and planning minister Gavin Barwell said: "I welcome this new pilot scheme and its focus on identifying ways of working together to overcome infrastructure barriers, and I look forward to seeing the initial report on its findings."

HFI chief executive Natalie Elphicke said developers often complained that poor utilities and infrastructure connections prevent them from building homes more rapidly.

"Water and sewage connectivity is a particular problem, with some water companies completely failing to deliver what housing developers require," she said.

"This has been slowing down the rate of housing completions right across the country."

HFI research found water companies could take up to a year to connect a property and still meet their regulatory target.