

Cllr Wragg  
Ed Freeman  
East Devon District Council  
Blackdown House  
Border Road  
Heathpark Industrial Estate  
Honiton  
EX14 1EJ

*Sent via email*

Friday, 15<sup>th</sup> December 2023

Dear Cllr Wragg and Ed Freeman,

We are writing to provide clarity and reassurance regarding the processes we follow, especially in strategic planning and responses to planning applications.

As custodians of the environment in the region we serve, we take our responsibilities seriously. Our recently submitted Business Plan for the 2025-2030 period reflects our commitment to meeting the needs of our customers, the region, and the environment. Enclosed is a high-level summary of the plan, which we would like to share with you in more detail.

As a Statutory Undertaker, we recognise our obligation to support growth and we are dedicated to developing our investment plans to enhance the capacity of our infrastructure to accommodate new development across the region. We understand the impact our decisions can have on the region and communities, affecting customers and the environment for years to come. Therefore, it is imperative that we make informed and responsible decisions.

Our focus on the planning process covers two key areas:

**Strategic Planning:**

To support strategic growth, we have developed Drainage and Wastewater Management Plans (DWMP) and Water Resource Management Plans (WRMP). DWMPs outline our approach to managing sewerage and wastewater over the next 25 years, considering factors such as population growth, climate change, and urban development. WRMP ensures a secure and sustainable water supply while prioritising environmental protection, wildlife preservation, and support for tourism, farming, and economic health.

Both DWMPs and WRMPs align with the growth areas identified in Local Development Plans. We engage with developers to understand their programs, allowing us to prioritise investments effectively.

Additionally, our Asset Management continue to engage with Planning Authorities to support the production of draft Local Plans and we have recently strengthened our team so that we can continue to provide input and feedback to your strategic proposals.



## Planning Application Responses:

Our Developer Services team engages with development customers to understand their needs and timelines through key account engagement. We offer a pre-planning service providing access to public records, data on connection points, and cost estimates. This proactive approach allows us to address concerns, ensuring our assets can handle the additional pressure from new developments. In reviewing planning applications, we:

Use a computer-based capacity assessment tool to evaluate our sewerage network's ability to cope with increased demand. Undertake detailed hydraulic modelling to address specific areas highlighted by the assessment tool. Finally, we collaborate with our drinking water team to ensure network capacity for drinking water needs.

Ian Lake, our Head of Technical Performance and Solution Development, would like to arrange an opportunity to share insights into how we balance our growth facilitation obligations with the protection of existing services and the environment if you would be interested in setting up a session in the New Year. Ian's email is [ilake@southwestwater.co.uk](mailto:ilake@southwestwater.co.uk) should you wish to make arrangements for a meeting.

We remain committed to transparent communication and collaboration and so, please do not hesitate to contact us if we can help in any way further.

Looking forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience.

Yours sincerely,



**Richard Price**  
**Chief Engineering Officer, Pennon Group**

