United Utilities Water Limited
Haweswater House
Lingley Mere Business Park
Lingley Green Avenue
Great Sankey
Warrington WA5 3LP

Telephone: 01925 237000

unitedutilities.com

Our ref: EIR/ID611
Date: 22/12/2025
Email: EIRRequests@uuplc.co.uk

Dear [redacted]

Thank you for your request for environmental information. We appreciate your interest, and we want to let you know that your request has been carefully considered in accordance with the Environmental Information Regulations (EIR).

Your request:

I would like to request information on any planning applications which have been made in your area within the last 5 years where the sewage capacity has been deemed inadequate.
Please can you list in the format below:
The date and location of the planning request
The number of properties planned
Whether the system in the location has/had enough capacity to support the development
What decision was ultimately made and whether the development was built - and whether it was connected to the sewage system.

Date (month/year) and loc of planning request	No of properties planned	Sewage capacity status of the site (spare capacity/ at capacity/ overcapacity)	Planning decision (e.g. pre commencement sewage system expansion, preoccupation etc)	Was the development built?	Was the development connected to the sewage system?

Please can you also list the sites in your jurisdiction where sewage infrastructure is over or at capacity.

Our response:
United Utilities comments on many applications in any given year. We provide around 4,000 responses per annum to planning application matters with a number of these applications responded to more than once. Our engagement in the planning process reflects the expectations of our regulators and customers to promote sustainable development. We comment on several matters including (amongst other things):

- the detail of drainage proposals;
- asset protection;
- encroachment around our treatment works and pumping stations, e.g. where amenity may be a concern;
- the location of development in groundwater source protection zones;
- the detailed design of a site, for example, ground and finished floor levels to ensure that a proposal is resilient to the impacts of climate change; and

- where there is a risk of sewer or reservoir flooding.

Whilst we recognise that there is a provision within national planning policy to phase the delivery of development with the timing for infrastructure upgrades, we rarely raise the capacity of wastewater treatment works in our planning application responses. To date we have raised this for one development, due to the capacity at the receiving wastewater treatment works. The details of this development have been added to the table below. This development has been delayed until the receiving wastewater treatment works has been upgraded.

Date (month/year) and loc of planning request	No of properties planned	Sewage capacity status of the site (spare capacity/ at capacity/ overcapacity)	Planning decision (e.g. pre commencement sewage system expansion, preoccupation etc)	Was the development built?	Was the development connected to the sewage system?
May 2023, Far Sawrey, Cumbria.	Conversion to hotel	At capacity	Pre-occupation	Conversion not yet completed	N/A

When it comes to sewer network capacity, we do not object to individual applications for foul only connections based on their forecasted impact on the network. If we have any concerns with the potential impact of a development on our sewers, we would consider whether investment in our sewer network is required in response to any permitted proposal. This could include changing the point of connection.

There are occasions when we raise concerns with the capacity of a sewer passing through a site which is at risk of flooding. In such circumstances, we would seek to work with the site promoter to ensure that any proposal avoids the flood risk and does not make the flood risk worse.

Whilst we do not maintain a list of network sites that are at or near capacity, United Utilities and other water companies are now managing and prioritising investment on the sewer networks using more advanced, data driven Drainage and Wastewater Management Plans (DWMPs). These plans cover wastewater treatment works as well as sewer networks and use agreed national guidance to assess all the current and potential future risks to those assets, including growth and development risks to network capacity.
This approach allows these DWMPs to be developed in a way which more effectively aligns with the requirements of other regulators, such as the Environment Agency and directly meets the Water Regulator (Ofwat) requirements in terms of developing and supporting long-term planning.
More detail on United Utilities current DWMP is available via this link.
https://www.unitedutilities.com/corporate/about-us/our-future-plans/Our-long-term-plans/ .

We hope that this response answers your request. However, if you're not satisfied with how we've handled it, you can request an internal review. To do this, please write to us at Environmental Information Office, Haweswater House, Lingley Mere, Warrington, WA5 3LP or email us at EIRRequests@uuplc.co.uk, addressing your request to [redacted] and explaining why you're unhappy with our response. We'll be very happy to review your request and ensure we've done everything we can to assist you.

Any request for an internal review should be made within 40 working days of receipt of this response, and we will reply within 40 working days from receipt of the request for internal review.

Many thanks