

A large, colorful, abstract pattern of hexagons in shades of purple, blue, green, yellow, and orange, arranged in a honeycomb-like structure. Several small blue dots are scattered across the pattern.

Providing Drainage for New Developments where Public Sewers are not available

Planning advice
PA2023-22

September 2023

Purpose of this Planning Advice

This Planning Advice sets out Aberdeenshire Council and our partners approach to providing drainage for new developments where public sewers are not available. The advice contained within this document sets out the considerations relating to private drainage arrangements that should be taken account of prior to the submission of an application. The advice is largely targeted at developments of a smaller scale.

This Planning Advice supports Policy RD1 Providing Suitable Services as set out in the Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan (LDP) 2023. Specifically, paragraphs RD1.9 – RD1.15 detailing requirements for water and wastewater.

National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) puts infrastructure considerations at the heart of placemaking through an infrastructure first approach (Policy 18 *infrastructure first*). NPF4 underpins the importance of considering potential impacts of development proposals on infrastructure and these needs being understood early in the development planning process as part of an evidenced based approach. Policy 18 of NPF4 highlights that development proposals that provide infrastructure in line with that identified as necessary in LDPs will be supported.

This Planning Advice provides guidance on considerations to be accounted for where the use of the existing public sewer infrastructure is not feasible and new drainage infrastructure is required.

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Development where Public Sewers are not available

It is the policy of the Planning Authority that before a decision is taken on any application for planning permission that it can be proven that any proposed

development can be adequately drained without causing ground water or watercourse pollution. Connection to the public sewage system is the most sustainable and preferred option.

However, if it is proposed to drain a new development by any arrangement other than to a publicly adopted sewer, it will be necessary to demonstrate, as a first option, that the ground permeability conditions are acceptable for the disposal of effluent. It is the responsibility of applicants or their agents to provide Certification that any proposed soakaway arrangement will perform satisfactorily in all weather conditions and will not be in close proximity to private water sources. The Certification must be provided by a recognised professional in this field with the appropriate qualifications, and who is indemnified against professional risk.

It is therefore essential that all the points listed in Section 2 are considered before an application is submitted and that relevant information is shown on the submitted plans. It is the policy of the Planning Authority to refuse any planning application where drainage test certificates are not supplied. Applications will be recommended for refusal where a requested certificate has not been submitted on time. It is therefore important for the test certificates to be submitted when the application is lodged.

The Planning Authority reserve the right to seek further advice on the findings of test certificates. Where a test certificate indicates that drainage may only be marginally successful, then further precautionary provisions may be required.

Applicants and their agents should note that consent to discharge to a soakaway may be required, and consent to discharge to a watercourse is always required, from the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA). Applicants should also have regard to SEPA's Waste Water Consultation Areas where specific drainage issues require to be examined more closely.

Further information can be found on SEPA's website regarding septic tanks and private sewage treatment systems¹. Alternatively, you can contact the nearest SEPA office.

¹ SEPA Septic tanks and private sewage treatment systems:
www.sepa.org.uk/regulations/water/septic-tanks-and-private-sewage-treatment-systems/

SEPA Contact Details	
SEPA (North Region) Inverdee House Baxter Street Aberdeen AB11 9QA Tel: 01224 266600	SEPA (East Region) Strathearn House Broxden Business Park Lamberkine Drive Perth PH1 1RX For St Cyrus/Laurencekirk area only Tel: 01738 627989

Considerations prior to submission of a Planning Application

Applicants are recommended to have regard to the following points before submitting planning applications:

- The siting of the drainage system must be in accordance with the Building Standards Service's requirements.
- Where available, details of any potable water supply located within 100 metres of the proposed soakaway should be clearly marked on the site plan. Private water supplies should be verified, and no soakaway should be within 50 metres of any well supplying potable water or animal watering. All aspects of the drainage system should normally be within the application site.
- Adequate access must be provided for vehicles to empty septic tanks/treatment plants.
- Soakaways must not be positioned so as to soak into ditches or drainage channels within the limits of any public road.
- Submitted site plans must show all aspects of the proposed drainage system and the location of any watercourses and ditches situated within 100 metres of the proposed drainage system.
- Soakaways must be located at least 10 metres from any watercourse, ditch or field drain or any other soakaway.
- Submitted drawings must show clearly the location of the septic tank/treatment plant, sampling chamber and soakaway and notes should be provided on the design and construction of the soakaway.
- A detailed report and Certification must be provided by a recognised professional indemnified against professional risk, that the soakaway location and design will be effective in all weather conditions and will not contaminate water supplies. The certificate must show that tests have been carried out in compliance with BS6297, 1983 as amended by AMD 6150, 1990, and in conjunction with the full requirements set out within the Domestic Scottish

Building Standards Technical Handbook (Environment Standard 3.9 Infiltration Systems). A copy of the report, site plan and Certificate should be copied to the area Scottish Environment Protection Agency.

- The test should be carried out at the position of the final soakaway.
- It is the policy of the Planning Authority that private drainage systems are not normally acceptable within settlements or in close proximity to an existing public sewer.
- Individual drainage systems should be provided for each property proposed. Communal septic tanks may be acceptable in certain circumstances. Private drainage systems should be installed to Scottish Water's standards to ensure suitability for potential future adoption.
- A maintenance agreement may be required for private sewerage treatment works.