[redacted]
Concept Town Planning Ltd
Concept House, 7 Scotland Street,
Ellesmere, SY12 0DG

Our reference: EPR/BP3926LB
Date: 15/10/2025

Dear [redacted]

Pre application advice – Basic service

Site: **Hamsterley Forest, Hamsterley, County Durham, DL13 3NL**

Thank you for your pre application enquiry on 16/07/2025

Based on the information contained in the enquiry form you submitted:

I will begin by going through your questions as outlined in Section 4. There will also be a lot of valuable information outlined throughout this document that can assist you with your application. I believe this to fall under the category of basic pre-application due to the queries posed.

- Please can the EA confirm that a Joint Operator bespoke WDA permit will be most suitable to regulate the proposed WDA from the PSTPs discharging into Bedburn Beck?

This depends on how you intend to operate the activity. If there will be one package treatment plant, joint operators will be the most reasonable option. If you are sharing an outlet but treating the discharges separately, two operators will likely be the most suitable to manage.

- Please can the EA confirm that the application for a bespoke WDA permit will require the completion of the following application forms: Part A, Part B2, Part B6 and Part F1 with appropriate appendices?

If the water discharge activity is over 20m^3 in volume, these are the correct forms. If the volume is under 20m^3 to surface water, form B6.5 is required. I will link these forms below.

- For the proposed WDA, as this will comprise the discharge of treated domestic sewage effluent to a receiving watercourse, it is acknowledged that a Surface Water Pollution Risk Assessment (or 'H1' screening assessment) may be required to support the WDA permit application, if there are substances present that are listed on the EA's EQS spreadsheets.

  However, at this stage, if the effluent does not contain any specific substances from these lists (subject to final PSTP design) it is envisaged that an H1 assessment will not be required.

Please can the EA confirm that this approach is suitable and in line with their expectations for these types of WDAs?

This is dependent on what is entering the treatment plant. The effluent is domestic in nature and treatment will be in 2 stages of settlement; balancing and dosing- what is being used for dosing ? This may require a H1 assessment. Particularly if the hot tub effluent will be entering the package treatment plant. The requirement of a H1 assessment is subject to final PSTP design.

As for additional modelling, we can provide modelling to rivers. As of yet we do not have volumes and we are no longer able to provide indicative limits. It would be best to put your application in and we will be able to determine it then and find the best way to permit the activity.

- Please can the EA provide indicative emission limit values (ELVs) that the PSTP should be designed to?

We are not able to provide indicative limits as this falls beyond the scope of water quality pre-application.

- Please can the EA indicate what will be expected to be included in permit applications in relation to the potential cumulative effect of the discharge into the Bedburn Beck from the joint WDA, downstream from the discharge into the Euden Beck (a tributary of Bedburn Beck) arising from Forestry England's The Nest development, mentioned in this document?

The Environment Agency will likely be conducting a habitats risk assessment due to the proximity of local habitats sites. The potential cumulative effects will be taken into consideration during our risk assessment. We would typically consider volumes of discharge and what is contained in the effluent. We would suggest that you submit any information that can assist us to determine your application. If the permitting officer requires more information, it will be requested.

- Please can the EA provide confirmation of the charges associated with a Joint Operator WDA permit?

More information is needed, it is dependent on volume. I will link our charging scheme here.

- Please can the EA estimate the timeframe that can be expected for permit determination?

The EA aims to acknowledge and classify your application as "duly made" within 12 weeks of receipt.

Decisions about your permit

The Environment Agency will write to you to tell you their decision. The time this takes depends on:

- the complexity of the application
- whether they need to consult
- whether they need to ask you for more information so they can complete their assessment

- the number of applications they are dealing with
- They usually make decisions on applications within:
- 4 months if you are applying for a new permit
- 3 months if you want to change a permit or cancel it
- 2 months if you want to transfer a permit
- They will tell you if your application will take longer.
- Public consultation is required.
- The site is in a sensitive location.
- Additional information or assessments (e.g. H1, habitat risk) are needed.

Confidentiality

I understand that there is a request for confidentiality. Please note that the pre-application requests are not on the public register. You can find guidance on confidentiality in 'Environmental permitting guidance: core guidance' published by Defra and available at Environmental permitting guidance: Core guidance - GOV.UK.

Please ensure that you include a copy of your supporting statement detailing why you are requesting confidentiality and what information you believe should be kept confidential. We advise you to have a pre-application discussion with NPS, Pre-Application service before deciding if anything is confidential information. We will then assess your statement. Please note, we will not be able to consult fully on your application until your confidentiality request is decided.

Below are details about how to apply for this permit and how much it will cost.

Habitats

Habitats and/or protected species have been identified which you need to consider in your permit application.

The nature and heritage screening we have conducted as part of this advice is subject to change as it is based on data we hold at the time the report is generated. We cannot guarantee there will be no changes to our screening data between the date of the screening report and the submission of the permit/standard rules application, which could result in the return of an application or requesting further information.

The following additional advice relates specifically to the habitats and foul sewer connection aspect of your proposal:

Habitats Assessment

Where full application fee is applicable, and screening confirms habitats assessment is required Based upon the information in your pre-application request your site is located within/in proximity of a designated area and a habitats assessment will be undertaken during the determination of your application, you will need to pay an extra charge of £2,035 to cover the costs of this assessment.

Further details of what “habitats assessment” refers to can be found in the charging guide at the following link: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/environmental-permits-and-abstraction-licences-tables-of-charges

Sewage discharges close to a public foul sewer

According to our records you may be proposing to discharge within a ‘reasonable distance’ to a sewered area. We recommend that you see our position on discharges within sewered areas: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/discharges-to-surface-water-and-groundwater-environmental-permits#discharges-in-sewered-areas. The Environment Agency will not grant a permit for a private treatment system (e.g. septic tank, sewage treatment plant, etc.) if it is reasonable for you to connect to the public foul sewer. If you choose to apply for a permit within a sewered area, you will need to send us the evidence outlined in section 1.6 of form Part B6.5 or Section 5 of Guidance Form B6.

In order to apply for a permit, you would need to:

- Give us a formal response from your sewerage undertaker.
- Tell us how much it will cost to connect to the nearest public sewer.
- Tell us the cost of the private sewage treatment system you want to use. When we assess whether it’s reasonable for you to connect to the public sewer we take into account:
- The comparative costs of connecting to public sewer and installing a private sewage treatment system.
- Any physical barriers that would prevent you connecting to the public sewer.
- Any environmental benefits that would arise from installing a private sewage treatment system such as the reuse of treated effluent.

Advice that is not covered by our pre-application service

The purpose of the ‘basic’ (free) pre-application service is to provide simple guidance to help people submit their environmental permit applications (e.g. advice about whether a permit application is required, which forms to complete, application fees, and supporting information, etc.). We do not have the remit to pre-determine permits nor act as a consultant for applicants.

Please be aware that our pre-application service cannot comment on whether a specific proposal will be granted a permit or what conditions a bespoke permit (should it be granted) will contain prior to a permit application being submitted. To answer these types of questions requires the determination of a complete permit application and all the site-specific information necessary for a permitting officer to complete their determination assessment. For instance, the determination process includes working with other Environment Agency teams to identify the impact of a proposed discharge activity or groundwater activity on the environment and any sensitive sites. Thus, it is not possible for us to pre-determine permits.
The ‘basic’ (free) and ‘enhanced’ (paid for) pre-application service are only designed to provide advice about applying for an environmental permit. We cannot act as a consultant and provide advice confirming the most appropriate treatment method for a particular site. Our standard response to such enquiries is to direct the applicant to seek advice from an accredited drainage consultant who will be able to look at the site-specific requirements and advise which treatment method is most appropriate for the site.

The pre-application service does not have the remit or resources to check applications prior to their submission to the Environment Agency. In cases where applicants require significant help to complete an application form, or request us to check application forms prior to submission, we direct them to seek advice from an accredited consultant/drainage specialist.

As a regulator, we are not in a position to recommend a particular consultant, however, British Water has a list of accredited service engineers on their website https://www.britishwater.co.uk (other competent service engineers and drainage consultants are available).

Forms

You will need to submit the following forms. Please ensure you download the latest version of the forms, as your application will be returned if an old version of the forms is used:

Form B6.5 Discharge treated domestic sewage effluent (no trade) of up to 15m3 a day into ground oe up to 20m3 a day to surface water.

Or

If the discharge is over 20m3 to surface water:

Part A – General information about the application

Part B6 – For a new bespoke water discharge activity

Part F1 – Charges and declarations

You must read all accompanying guidance when completing the forms to ensure you do not miss anything out.

Declaration

Please ensure the Declaration section is completed by each “relevant person”.

- For an application from an individual, a relevant person is the person to be named on the permit.
- For an application from more than one individual, each person who is applying for their name to be on the permit must complete the declaration – you will have to print a separate copy of the declaration page for each additional individual to complete.
- In the case of a company, a relevant person must be an active director/company secretary as listed on Companies House – https://beta.companieshouse.gov.uk/
- For a charity, a relevant person is a key post holder, i.e., chair, chief executive, director or trustee.

Additional information required

The following additional documents and supporting information will be required as part of your application:

Site Plan

The site plan must be clearly marked including the full extent of the land ownership relating to the permit application and labelled with the locations of the treatment and discharge systems, discharge point(s) and sample point(s), if applicable.

Environmental Management System

You must also send a summary of your environmental management system (EMS). Guidance on this is available from Gov.uk:

https://www.gov.uk/guidance/develop-a-management-system-environmental-permits

Application Fees

The application fee will be: Dependent on the volume of the activity. You can find our charging scheme here

(Dependent on volume)

+

£2,035 Habitats assessment

Please note that your application will not be processed until we receive the full application fee payment.

Please note that a subsistence charge is an annual charge which is based on the type and scale of the permitted discharge. Payment of this charge must not be included with payment of an application fee. Subsistence charges are invoiced to operators annually, after a permit is issued. The subsistence charge given above may change if we issue you a permit for an activity of a different type and/or scale to the proposed activity in this pre-application request.

What happens next?

If you submit an environmental permit application, then please quote this pre-application reference number: **EPR/BP3926LB**

If the advice above details using the online digital application form, your application can be submitted using this method. If not, please send your completed application documents via email to:

psc-waterquality@environment-agency.gov.uk

Or by post to:

Environment Agency, Permitting Support Centre, Quadrant 2, 99 Parkway Avenue, Sheffield, S9 4WF

Disclaimer

The advice given is based on the information you have provided and does not constitute a formal response or decision of the Environment Agency with regard to future permit applications. Any views or opinions expressed are without prejudice to the Environment Agency's formal consideration of any application. Please note that any application is subject to duly making and then full technical checks during determination, and additional information may be required based

on your detailed submission and site-specific requirements and the advice given is to address the specific pre-application request.

This advice covers water discharge activities only.

Other permissions from the Environment Agency and/or other bodies may be required for associated or other activities.

This pre-application request is now closed.

Further enquiries resulting from this response must be logged as a new request using the online form: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/environmental-permit-pre-application-advice-form

Our basic pre-application service is free and is limited to the information detailed on section 2 of the Environmental permits: when and how you are charged - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk).

If you need more extensive or technical pre-application advice, you can ask for our enhanced pre-application service. The enhanced pre-application advice is charged at £100 per hour plus VAT. You will need to complete and submit a new online pre-application request to request enhanced pre-application advice.

Priority Tracked Service

We offer coordination for pre-application advice and decisions for large or complex projects which require multiple environmental permits or licences, or a combination of both. You can use this optional service to help you submit multiple applications effectively. Further information is available via Request environmental permit coordination for major projects - GOV.UK.

If you have any questions, please call 03708 506 506.

Yours sincerely

Pre-application Service, PreApplicationService@environment-agency.gov.uk.