

REFERENCE

2425178

RELEASE DATE

July 2024

SUBJECT

Planning applications for which NI Water has recommended refusal since 2018.

REQUEST

Number of planning applications for which NI Water has recommended refusal since 2018:

1. On the basis of insufficient wastewater infrastructure; and
2. On the basis that there is not enough capacity in the storm overflow system.

RESPONSE

Properties impacted

NI Water advised the Infrastructure Committee that 19,000 properties in its pre-planning enquiry process will not be able to connect to the system. To enable connection, NI Water must make investment to upgrade pumps, replace sewer mains or increase capacity at a treatment works to accommodate these developments. If a fully funded PC21 investment plan had proceeded, connections would have been limited to 4,500 of these 19,000.

Table A below gives the breakdown of affected properties by Council area.

Council Area	Total new units affected
Derry City & Strabane	5,300
Ards & North Down	3,300
Belfast	2,400
Lisburn & Castlereagh	1,700
Fermanagh & Omagh	1,600
Newry, Mourne & Down	1,300
Mid Ulster	1,200
Antrim & Newtownabbey	900
Armagh, Banbridge & Craigavon	450
Causeway Coast & Glens	400
Mid & East Antrim	150

Table A. Developments unable to proceed without NI Water investment. Numbers rounded to nearest 100.

Other development that can proceed

NI Water has separately been able to advise developers of approaching 18,000 additional properties (see table B) that can connect, if the developer self-funds action to offset storm (rain) water entering the wastewater system.

Council Area	Total units
Belfast	3,500
Derry City & Strabane	2,400
Causeway Coast & Glens	1,800
Newry, Mourne & Down	1,800
Antrim & Newtownabbey	1,500
Mid & East Antrim	1,400
Lisburn & Castlereagh	1,400
Mid Ulster	1,200
Armagh, Banbridge & Craigavon	1,000
Fermanagh & Omagh	800
Ards & North Down	700

Table B. Developments able to proceed with developer self-funded storm offsetting. Numbers rounded to nearest 100.

This requires the developer to find existing sources of incoming storm water that can be diverted from other local properties; for example, the piping of storm water from a nearby car park to a local storm drain or water course. They must pay for the necessary work. The opportunity for storm water offsetting is reducing.

With regard to the specific questions you ask, NI Water's determination of wastewater infrastructure is specific to the sewer network. NI Water recommends refusal where the constraints are in relation to:

- proposals upstream of Unsatisfactory Intermittent Discharges (UIDs),
- known out of sewer flooding events,
- where there is sewer incapacity,
- where a proposal is large enough to potentially create issues, or
- where there is no Wastewater Treatment Works [WwTW] available (although

NI Water refers to these as assets rather than infrastructure).

UIDs can be Wastewater Pumping Stations or Storm Overflows; NI Water records do

not distinguish between the types of UID.

From June 2021 to May 2024:

Council area	Network	WwTW
Causeway Coast & Glens	127	10
Mid- & East Antrim	169	104
Antrim & Newtownabbey	119	10
Belfast	249	126
Lisburn & Castlereagh	39	7
Ards & North Down	149	9
Newry, Mourne & Down	195	20
Armagh, Banbridge & Craigavon	91	16
Mid-Ulster	145	59
Fermanagh & Omagh	84	13
Derry City & Strabane	119	5
Total	1486	379

For the period prior to June 2021, NI Water retains no related data. As such, for this period, Regulation 12(4)(a) of the EIR applies.

Regulation 12(4)(a) (Information not held) provides that “a public authority may refuse to disclose information to the extent that it does not hold that information when an applicant’s request is received”.

All exceptions under the EIR are qualified and so, in deciding whether to disclose the requested information, NI Water must consider the public interest. However, this is not possible where the information is not held.