

Annex C - Secretary of State's statement of 16 November 2010

Draft Waste Water National Policy Statement

The Planning Act 2008 provides for national policy statements (NPSs) that set out Government policy for particular types of development. It requires the draft NPSs to be publicised, consulted on, and laid in Parliament with the intention of enabling public and parliamentary debate to take place.

Public consultation on the waste water NPS for England started today, 16 November 2010, lasting for 14 weeks. At the same time I have laid it before Parliament for a period of scrutiny (the "relevant period") ending 17 May 2011.

The waste water NPS sets out our need for waste water infrastructure to protect public health and ensure the health of our water environment with the consequent benefits for our water supply and biodiversity. Although we intend to slow the growth in demand for new waste water infrastructure in England, through the use of sustainable drainage systems for example, we will need to continue investment in new waste water infrastructure. This will modernise outdated infrastructure, meet future demands from a growing population and the effects of climate change, and fulfil our EU obligations.

Two projects of potential national significance have been identified through this process: the new sewage treatment works at Deephams in north-east London and a sewerage collection and a transfer scheme along the Thames in London (the Thames tunnel). In line with the Planning Act 2008, the waste water national policy statement has been drafted on the basis that once the particular projects are designated, development consent will be determined by the Infrastructure Planning Commission (IPC). The Government announced in June 2010 their intention to amend the Planning Act 2008 and abolish the IPC and replace it with a major infrastructure planning unit (MIPU) within the Planning Inspectorate. Until such time as the Planning Act 2008 is amended, the IPC will continue as set out in that Act.

Publication of the draft waste water NPS follows my statement of 7 September 2010 in which I indicated that development consent for the Thames tunnel should be dealt with under the regime for nationally significant infrastructure projects. I intend to bring the tunnel within the direct scope of the Planning Act 2008 by amending the thresholds in section 14(3), Part 3 of the Act 2008. I plan to consult on the draft order in early 2011. Thames Water also commenced in September a separate consultation on the site specific issues raised by the proposed development of the Thames tunnel in September 2010.

The waste water national planning statement (NPS) is available on the DEFRA website at the following link: <http://archive.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/waste-water>