

Guidance notes

Legislation

Legislation covering the adoption of sewers, which includes pumping stations and other accessories, is contained within the Water Industry Act 1991 (the Act). Section 102 of the Act covers the adoption of existing private sewers. Once adopted they become public sewers and will be maintained by Thames Water.

Circumstances for adoption

When deciding whether Thames Water should adopt a private sewer we must have regard to all the circumstances of the case, in particular, the following points are taken into consideration:

- Whether the sewer is adapted to, or required for, any general system of sewerage which the undertaker has provided, or proposes to provide, for the whole or any part of the area;
- Whether the sewer is constructed under a highway or under land reserved by a planning scheme for a street;
- The number of buildings which the sewer is intended to serve, and whether (regard being had to the proximity of other buildings or future development) it is likely to be required to serve additional buildings;
- The method of construction and state of repair of the sewer; and
- In a case where an owner objects, whether the making of the proposed declaration under Section 102 of the Act would be seriously detrimental to him/her.

Inspection of the sewer

If the sewer is one that Thames Water considers should form part of the public sewerage system and provided there are no fundamental legal objections, such as ownership disputes and appropriate design and location, we will inspect the sewer at the applicant's expense. This inspection will include a closed circuit television survey

If the sewer is defective, you will be required to bring it up to the specified standard, following which we will make a further inspection. The standards required are those set out in Sewers for Adoption - a Design and Construction Guide for Developers. Copies are available from the Water Research Centre web site at www.wrcplc.co.uk/sfa.

Adoption

Before adopting the sewer, Thames Water must first give notice to the owner(s) of the sewer. Only after two months have elapsed and no objections have been raised, may we adopt the sewer.

Subject to the above and any legal formalities (for example the transfer of land for a pumping station and rights to discharge surface water to a watercourse) we will make a declaration of vesting, which completes the adoption.

Your right to appeal

- If Thames Water refuse to adopt your sewer, you may appeal to OFWAT
- Anyone objecting to the proposal may also appeal to OFWAT

A request to appeal should be sent to the following address:

Office of Water Services
Centre City Tower
7 Hill Street
Birmingham B5 4UA

Applying for adoption of an existing sewer

When you apply to have a sewer adopted under Section 102, you must complete the application form together with the following items:

- A deposit of £1000 must accompany your application to cover our initial costs. All additional costs incurred throughout the adoption process will be recharged to the applicant.
- The parameters used in the design of the sewers and calculations (if available).
- The specifications of the materials and workmanship used in the construction of the sewer (if available).
- Location plan highlighting the sewer to be adopted and "as constructed" drawings.
- Details of all properties connected to the sewer.
- Confirmation that all owners of the sewer support the adoption of the sewer.
- The Developer's Health and Safety file prepared in accordance with the Construction Design and Management Regulation 1994, (if appropriate).
- Acceptable CCTV survey and report of the sewer.