### Key Issues

Water and wastewater utility companies undertake a significant numbers of projects as part of their Asset Management Plans.

The companies have extensive permitted development rights under the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015.

However, where a project is EIA development all permitted development rights are removed and planning permission is required.

Not all companies regularly undertake EIA Screening with the relevant local planning authorities, and some do not consider EIA issues at all. This can lead to risk, uncertainty and significant time and cost implications for projects.

Routinely undertaking EIA Screening can avoid or minimise these risks to the benefit of the companies, the environment and customers.

### Purpose of the projects

To provide Water Company staff engaged in the promotion of development projects with the knowledge and skills to be able to identify projects requiring EIA Screening, and to prepare and submit Screening requests to LPAs, coupled with confirmation of the use of Permitted Development rights.

### Description of the projects

Provision of EIA Screening and Permitted Development advice and training for Water Company staff engaged in the promotion of development projects, including the preparation and submission of EIA Screening requests. Projects ranged in scope from small scale infrastructure enhancements in sensitive locations to £ multi-million major projects.
Lessons learnt

The findings of our work to date is that:

• water companies are aware of the EIA Regulations, however many only consider them relevant to large projects
• approaches to EIA Screening vary both between companies and between staff within the companies
• EIA Screening is sometimes undertaken ‘informally’ without any recourse to the relevant LPA
• internal decision making on projects requires consideration of the need for planning permission, but not always explicit confirmation of whether project is EIA development or not

The use of standardised proformas and checklists provide a means to ensure consistency of approach to EIA Screening across the range of projects.

The need for EIA Screening should be considered for projects irrespective of scale or location, avoiding the risk that small scale projects in environmentally sensitive locations fall through the EIA Screening net.

Lessons learnt cont. -

EIA Screening checklists enable early warnings to be flagged for projects, whether:

• EIA Screening will be required with LPA
• Potential need for EIA Screening
• No risk of EIA Screening

Early consideration of EIA Screening enables confirmation of whether planning permission will be required or permitted development rights can be relied on. The time and cost associated with securing planning permission can be a major element in the risk attached to the project.

Early consideration of potential environmental effects through use of an EIA checklist can identify scheme changes or mitigation that can be incorporated into the scheme, providing wider environmental benefits.

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