

## Appendix D1 – Environment: Water Neutrality

Water neutrality is a cross-boundary issue that affects a small part of Mid Sussex District. The limited extent of this issue in Mid Sussex has meant this issue has not had a direct bearing on the Strategy of the Plan.

As set out in the Duty to Cooperate Statement of Compliance [DC1], Mid Sussex District Council is working in partnership with other local authorities and prescribed bodies (Environment Agency and Natural England) to address water neutrality matters including seeking solutions. It is important to note that there is an agreed joint local authority approach that is based on the water neutrality evidence. This includes the development of the Sussex North Offsetting Water Scheme (SNOWS) and a consistent approach to a water neutrality policy.

The table below sets out the outcomes from each of the water neutrality groups. Agendas and minutes/notes of these meetings have not been provided due to the limited implications for plan-making for Mid Sussex and the key outputs from these meetings being set out elsewhere, such as SoCGs.

Cooperation Mechanism	Group/Prescribed body	Membership	Date of Meeting	Agenda - Key Issues Covered	Outcomes
Water neutrality governance structure	Water Neutrality Lead Officers Group (WNLOG)	Planning and water neutrality officers from Chichester District Council, Crawley Borough Council, Horsham District Council, Mid Sussex District Council, South Downs National Park Authority and West Sussex County Council, as well as Natural England and Environment Agency	Monthly from January 2022	Regular agenda items: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Executive Board update</li> <li>Policy update</li> <li>Development Management update</li> <li>Environment Agency update</li> <li>Natural England update</li> <li>Water Neutrality Project Manager update</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SNOWS set up and delivery</li> </ul>

Water neutrality governance structure	Planning Policy Working Group	Planning policy and water neutrality officers from Chichester District Council, Crawley Borough Council, Horsham District Council, Mid Sussex District Council, South Downs National Park Authority and West Sussex County Council	Monthly from January 2022	Regular agenda items: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local Plan progress and updates</li> <li>Updates to water neutrality documents</li> <li>Water Neutrality Project Manager update</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Water Cycle Study Part C</li> <li>PINS advisory visit (September 2022)</li> <li>Joint topic paper (May 2023)</li> <li>PINS advisory visit (June 2023)</li> <li>Statement of Common Ground (July 2023)</li> <li>Joint policy approach and wording (July 2023)</li> <li>Policy update paper (July 2024)</li> </ul>
Water neutrality governance structure	Executive Board	Senior management officers from Chichester District Council, Crawley Borough Council, Horsham District Council, Mid Sussex District Council, South Downs National Park Authority and West Sussex County Council as well as representatives from Defra, MHCLG, Ofwat, Natural England, Environment Agency and Southern Water	Every two months from January 2022	Regular agenda items: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Updates from statutory bodies</li> <li>Southern Water update</li> <li>Local Plan matters</li> <li>Development Management update</li> <li>Offsetting Implementation Group</li> <li>Resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensuring ongoing liaison with the government and water company</li> <li>Securing additional resources to provide solutions for water neutrality</li> </ul>

**Explanation of how the cooperation has influenced plan making**

Participation in and contribution to the water neutrality partnership work has led to the inclusion of a policy on water neutrality in the Submitted District Plan (Policy DPS5). To ensure a joint and consistent approach on this strategic issue, the policy wording has been developed with the

other local authorities and there is agreement with them to use the same policy wording. The policy approach has recently been tested and found sound, subject to Main Modifications, at the Crawley Borough Council Local Plan Examination [O8] and it is now an adopted policy. There are no proposed allocations in the DP review within the Sussex North Water Resource Zone.