

South of Pulborough, there is a waterworks called Hardham. It supplies water to a vast area stretching from Chichester up to Horsham and Crawley.

Natural England has just advised HDC that Hardham will not be able to supply water to all the thousands of new houses contained in HDC's Local Plan.

This does not mean that HDC's Local Plan is redundant. But, work on the Local Plan is likely to be held up whilst HDC grapples with Natural England's requirement that new housing must be "water neutral".

This means that new housing must not add to the existing level of demand for water which sounds pretty hard to achieve, even given the possible re-use of "grey" water, collection of rainwater from roofs and water-saving devices such as short flushing toilets.

Natural England is apparently working on a policy and guidelines for "water neutrality" as a way forward to try and solve the problem at Hardham.

An alternative way forward would be to increase the supply of water, assuming that is geologically possible. Southern Water would have to find the money for huge amounts of investments in new or extended waterworks and all that would not happen quickly.

HDC thus have a problem with its Local Plan and it seems very likely now to be delayed. Keep watching for further updates.