



## Compton Parish Council

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### Compton Parish Council – Standing Statement on Foul Water Network Capacity

Compton Parish Council submits this statement as a standing material consideration for all planning applications within the parish that would result in additional foul water loading on the existing sewer network. Based on extensive evidence, professional advice, and repeated operational failures, the Parish Council maintains that **no new residential development should proceed until the necessary foul water network upgrades have been delivered by Thames Water.**

This position is supported by the following evidence.

#### 1. The foul water network is already operating beyond safe capacity

Thames Water's published information confirms that:

- A major upgrade to Compton Sewage Treatment Works (STW) is **planned but not yet delivered.**
- The network remains under investigation for **groundwater infiltration.**
- Compliance with storm overflow targets is not expected until **2030.**

These statements demonstrate that the system is currently **deficient, under investigation, and not compliant with future regulatory expectations.**

#### 2. Groundwater infiltration continues to compromise the network

The Thames Water Groundwater Impacted System Management Plan (2021–2025 updates) identifies:

- **73 infiltration points** in the 2020 survey.
- **65 manhole infiltration points** were also identified.
- Historic surcharging, tanker operations, and restricted toilet use.
- High-risk zone sealing not programmed until **2025-2030.**

- No STW upgrade delivered to date.

The network remains structurally compromised and cannot safely accommodate additional foul flows.

### 3. Recent operational failures confirm ongoing system overload

Multiple incidents across the village demonstrate that the network is already failing under existing loading:

#### a) February 2025 - Overloaded sewer on High Street (near Recreation Ground)

A resident reported that the foul drains at their property were full. Thames Water attended and confirmed that:

- The sewer in the adjacent Recreation Ground was **full to the top**.
- This is a **known issue** in Compton.
- They were actively **pumping out the system**.
- Residents should call back **only if internal flooding occurred**.

This incident demonstrates that the network cannot cope even under normal winter conditions.

#### b) Regular tankering at Aldworth Road Pumping Station (winters 2023/24 and 2024/25)

Repeated tanker operations were required to prevent surcharging and sewage escapes.

#### c) Sewer surcharging on Aldworth Road (May 2025)

Foul water was observed emerging from the sewer. The Parish Council holds photographic and video evidence.

#### d) “Sewage on Road” warning sign outside Compton Primary School (January 2024)

West Berkshire Council erected an official warning sign due to sewage contamination on the highway.

These incidents provide clear, recent evidence that the network is **not functioning adequately today**, even before any additional development.

#### 4. EDM data confirms groundwater-driven system failure

Event Duration Monitoring (EDM) data for Compton STW (2021–2024) shows:

- Extremely high spill duration in 2021 (1,110 hours).
- Rising spill duration in groundwater years (e.g. 52 hours in 2024).
- No improvement works delivered in any year.
- 2025 data not yet published, and no upgrades have been reported.

This pattern aligns with the Parish Council’s direct experience of repeated tankering and surcharging during high-groundwater periods.

#### 5. Required network upgrades have not been delivered

Thames Water’s formal responses to the outline application for the former Pirbright Institute (20/01336/OUTMAJ) confirmed that:

- Capacity existed for **only the first 20 dwellings**.
- **Network reinforcement works** were required for the remainder.
- These works were necessary to avoid **sewage flooding and pollution incidents**.
- A planning condition was required to prevent occupation until upgrades were complete.

No evidence has been provided to show that these upgrades have been carried out.

Until they are delivered, **no additional foul water can be safely accommodated**.

#### 6. Professional advice supports this position

Independent technical advice obtained by the Parish Council confirms that:

- The foul water network remains inadequate.
- The system is vulnerable to groundwater infiltration.
- Approving new development would expose residents and the environment to unacceptable risk.

The Parish Council will continue to rely on specialist advice to ensure that all planning submissions are scrutinised to an appropriate technical standard.

## 7. Planning conclusion

Given:

- The absence of completed network upgrades.
- The ongoing groundwater infiltration issues.
- The repeated operational failures.
- The high risk of sewer flooding and environmental harm.
- The vulnerability of the River Pang.
- The clear evidence that the system is already overloaded.

**Compton Parish Council objects to any planning application that would increase foul water loading on the existing network.**

No new dwellings should be approved until:

1. **All required foul water network upgrades have been completed, and**
2. **Thames Water provides clear, verifiable evidence of increased capacity, and**
3. **The system demonstrates reliable performance under high-groundwater conditions.**

This position is necessary to protect residents, public health, the environment, and the integrity of the planning process.

## Appendix A - Photographic Evidence of Network Failure (2023–2025)

The following images provide visual evidence of foul sewer network failure within Compton. Locations are approximate, and no private addresses are identified.

### A1. February 2025 - Overloaded sewer on High Street (near Recreation Ground)

- Drains at a residential property were full to the top.
- Thames Water confirmed the sewer in the adjacent Recreation Ground was also full.
- TW operatives stated this is a known issue, and they were pumping out the system.



### A2. May 2025 - Sewer surcharging on Aldworth Road



**A3. May 2025 - Tanker stationed at Aldworth Road Pumping Station**



**A4. January 2024 – “Sewage on Road” warning sign outside Compton Primary School**

