

## DETR CIRCULAR 03/99 – PLANNING REQUIREMENTS IN RESPECT OF THE USE OF NON-MAINS SEWERAGE FOR NEW DWELLING UNITS

### EXPLANATORY NOTES TO ACCOMPANY THE FORM

DETR Circular 03/99, relating to the use of non-mains sewerage arrangements, came into effect on 1<sup>st</sup> April 1999 and places the responsibility on the developer to demonstrate that a new development is to be effectively served by an adequate sewerage system. Applications for planning permission where foul drainage is to discharge to any new non-mains sewerage now need to be supported **prior to registration** by an assessment of the likely effects of using septic tanks, cesspools and package sewage treatment plants. This also applies for an existing system if extra use will be made of it, for example in the conversion of farm buildings to dwellings or holiday lets.

For **Septic Tanks** soil porosity (percolation) tests are seen as an integral part of the assessment and should be carried out before submitting a planning application. Where septic tanks are unlikely to produce an acceptable solution the advice is that the application may be refused. This decision would of course take into account the views of the Environment Agency and other bodies including the Council's own Environmental Health and Building Control Departments.

**Cesspools** will now be discouraged, but any proposal will need to be supported by full details of capacity and size, and may need an agreement as to maintenance and regular emptying.

**Package sewage treatment plants** are considered a sustainable alternative to septic tanks, but we will need details of the product type, capacity, and whether the final discharge will be to a ground soakaway or watercourse. The Environment Agency advise that for soakaways, percolation tests will still be needed, and if discharge is to be to a watercourse, a Consent to Discharge will be needed. However we can register applications of this type prior to receiving the results.

For all types of non-mains sewerage we will need a **block plan** showing the location of the chosen system, and the extent of any soakaway area.

The form overleaf asks you for the basic information, and will comprise part of your application. You may wish to hold your application pending percolation test results, as applications may be delayed or refused if adequate information is not supplied.

If you need further advice, please contact the Planning Officer for your area, or Building Control Section.