



Value My Land

Maximising Returns for Landowners

Utilities & Infrastructure

A Practical Guide for Landowners

How electricity, water, sewerage, telecommunications, pipelines and wider infrastructure can influence development land - and how early planning can improve certainty and deliverability.



Value My Land

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Utilities & Infrastructure

Utilities and infrastructure are central to the deliverability of development land. A site may be well located and supported by planning policy, but development still needs practical and commercially realistic connections to electricity, water, foul drainage, telecommunications and other essential networks.

For a landowner, the existence of nearby mains or apparatus does not automatically confirm that sufficient capacity is available or that a connection can be achieved without reinforcement, diversion works or rights over third-party land. Early enquiries can distinguish a manageable servicing issue from a constraint that materially affects capacity, programme or value.

The presence of nearby utility apparatus does not automatically confirm capacity or deliverability. A realistic connection, land and infrastructure strategy is still required.

Why do utilities and infrastructure matter in planning?

Councils and developers need confidence that a site can be serviced and supported by the infrastructure required for its intended use. The assessment should consider both the physical ability to connect and the cost, land, phasing, consents and delivery arrangements needed to make those connections work.

- Identify existing utility apparatus, easements and safeguarded corridors
- Understand available capacity and realistic points of connection
- Establish whether reinforcement, diversion or new infrastructure is required
- Coordinate utilities with access, drainage, landscape and the masterplan
- Demonstrate a deliverable programme, cost allowance and servicing strategy

Where do utilities sit in the development process?

Initial site review → utility searches and enquiries → capacity and connection strategy → coordinated masterplan → cost and phasing → Local Plan or planning application

[Read the Full Online Utilities & Infrastructure Guide](#)

Why Landowners Should Address Utilities Early

Utilities are sometimes investigated only after an indicative layout has been prepared. By that stage, development parcels, access roads, drainage features and open space may already conflict with existing apparatus, required easements, substations, pumping stations or connection routes.

Early infrastructure work allows the design team to understand where services are located, whether the network is likely to have capacity and what off-site works or land rights may be required. It can also prevent a council from relying on a broad assumption that the site is unserviceable when it is assessed through a HELAA, SHLAA, Local Plan review or planning application.

Nearby apparatus does not prove capacity

A water main, sewer, electricity cable or substation close to the land may appear to provide an obvious connection. However, the network may be constrained, the apparatus may be unsuitable for the proposed demand or the viable point of connection may lie elsewhere. Provider enquiries are needed before proximity is treated as evidence of deliverability.

Existing services can influence the layout

Overhead lines, underground cables, pipelines, sewers, water mains and telecommunications equipment can require protection zones, easements, access for maintenance or diversion. Mapping these features early helps the masterplan avoid sterilised land and identify where roads, open space or landscape areas can accommodate necessary corridors.

Off-site works can affect timing and cost

A connection may depend on reinforcement beyond the site, a new substation, pumping infrastructure, network upgrades or works across third-party land. These matters can involve separate approvals, provider programmes and land negotiations. Early investigation allows realistic allowances to be built into the planning strategy, viability assessment and delivery timetable.

The best time to understand utility constraints is before assumptions about capacity, layout, cost and programme become fixed.

Find Out Whether Utilities Could Affect Your Land

Utility & Infrastructure Factors That Can Influence Development

Utility and infrastructure constraints can arise from limited network capacity, existing apparatus, unsuitable connection points, third-party land, strategic upgrades or the wider demands generated by development. The effect is site-specific and should be assessed against the proposed scale, use and phasing of the scheme.

Electricity Networks Capacity, connection voltage, substations, overhead lines, underground cables and reinforcement can influence layout, cost, phasing and occupation.	Water Supply Development may require a suitable point of connection, network reinforcement, pressure assessment, off-site works and space for on-site distribution.
Foul Drainage & Wastewater Sewer capacity, treatment constraints, pumping requirements and connection routes can affect delivery even where a public sewer is nearby.	Gas & Other Pipelines High-pressure gas, fuel and other pipelines may require protection zones, access, easements or diversion and can materially constrain development.
Telecommunications & Digital Fibre, mobile and communications infrastructure should be planned early so new development can be connected without avoidable later disruption.	Strategic Infrastructure Schools, healthcare, transport, energy and community facilities may affect phasing, planning obligations and the wider deliverability of larger sites.

What will the council and development team assess?

- Existing electricity, water, sewerage, gas, pipeline and digital networks
- Available capacity and the feasibility of suitable points of connection
- Easements, wayleaves, access rights and land needed for off-site works
- Diversions, reinforcement, substations, pumping stations and compounds
- Coordination with access, drainage, landscaping and development parcels
- Strategic infrastructure, cumulative demand, phasing and provider timescales
- Connection costs, abnormal works, adoption, viability and deliverability

The absence of an immediate connection does not automatically make land unsuitable. The key issue is whether a technically feasible, commercially realistic and appropriately phased servicing strategy can be delivered.

What Makes a Strong Infrastructure Case?

A strong infrastructure case does not simply state that services are located nearby. It explains what apparatus exists, which providers have been consulted, where realistic connections may be made and how any reinforcement, diversion, land or phasing requirements can be addressed.

1. **Establish the utility baseline** — Obtain statutory undertaker searches, available network records, title information and site survey data to identify existing apparatus and rights.
2. **Define the development demand** — Set out the proposed use, capacity and phasing so that electricity, water, wastewater and digital requirements can be considered realistically.
3. **Seek proportionate provider enquiries** — Request information about network capacity, possible points of connection, reinforcement requirements and indicative delivery constraints.
4. **Identify land and access requirements** — Establish whether easements, wayleaves, maintenance access, compounds or third-party rights are needed for connections and upgrades.
5. **Coordinate the masterplan** — Allow for substations, pumping stations, service corridors, diversions and connection routes without undermining access, drainage, landscape or capacity.
6. **Demonstrate cost, phasing and delivery** — Include realistic allowances, provider lead-in periods, adoption requirements and a programme showing how infrastructure can support development.

A strong infrastructure case does more than identify nearby services: it demonstrates realistic connections, land requirements, cost, phasing and delivery.

Is My Land Suitable for Development?

Utility Evidence That Can Strengthen a Site

The level of infrastructure work should be proportionate to the scale of the site and the stage of promotion. The objective is not to secure every final connection offer immediately, but to address matters that could materially affect the developable area, viability, timing or the council's confidence in delivery.

Utility Constraints Search Network records and title information can identify known mains, cables, sewers, pipelines, easements, wayleaves and safeguarded corridors.	Electricity Capacity Enquiry A network enquiry can identify possible points of connection, reinforcement, substations and indicative constraints affecting programme and cost.
Water Supply Enquiry Early engagement can test available capacity, pressure, connection options, off-site reinforcement and likely requirements for the proposed demand.	Wastewater Enquiry A foul drainage enquiry can assess sewer and treatment capacity, gravity connections, pumping needs, upgrades and the effect of development phasing.
Pipeline & Telecoms Search Targeted searches can identify gas, fuel, communications and other apparatus requiring protection, access, coordination or diversion.	Topographical & Utility Survey A detailed survey can confirm visible features, levels and detected apparatus so service routes and development areas are coordinated accurately.
Infrastructure Delivery Plan A delivery and phasing plan can set out required works, dependencies, provider approvals, land rights, costs, lead-in periods and responsibilities.	Coordinated Masterplan A concept plan can integrate connections, corridors, compounds, substations, pumping stations, access, drainage, landscaping and development parcels.

The strongest utility evidence is targeted and coordinated: it identifies realistic connections, defines the principal infrastructure requirements and shows how they can be accommodated within a deliverable development strategy.

How Utilities Are Assessed Through Planning

Utilities and infrastructure work normally develops in stages as the planning and design strategy becomes more detailed. The exact sequence varies by site, but the process commonly includes the following steps.

1. **Baseline searches** — Identify known mains, cables, sewers, pipelines, telecommunications equipment, easements, wayleaves and existing service corridors.
2. **Development demand assessment** — Estimate the likely electricity, water, wastewater, digital and other infrastructure requirements generated by the proposed development.
3. **Provider enquiries** — Seek proportionate confirmation of capacity, feasible connection points, likely reinforcement, diversion requirements and indicative lead-in times.
4. **Rights and route review** — Establish whether connections can be delivered within controlled land or whether third-party easements, access or acquisition may be needed.
5. **Masterplan response** — Reserve space for compounds, substations, pumping stations, corridors and connection routes and coordinate them with access, drainage and landscape design.
6. **Delivery and cost strategy** — Prepare realistic allowances, phasing assumptions and a programme for provider approvals, reinforcement, construction, adoption and occupation.
7. **Planning and implementation** — Submit proportionate infrastructure evidence and address conditions, obligations, connection agreements, technical approvals and adoption where required.

Utility evidence should inform the development strategy - not simply be used to justify a layout that has already been fixed.

Read: Flood Risk & Drainage Guide

Read: Access & Highways Guide

What If the Council Raises Infrastructure as a Constraint?

A council may raise infrastructure as a concern because provider capacity is uncertain, a connection appears remote, existing apparatus crosses the site or strategic upgrades have not been identified. A high-level conclusion should be tested against current provider information and a realistic site-specific servicing strategy.

The first step is to identify the precise issue. A network may have limited current capacity but a planned upgrade, alternative connection point or phased solution may be available. Equally, a connection shown close to the site may require substantial reinforcement or third-party rights. Targeted enquiries can distinguish assumption from evidence.

A focused response can include:

- Reviewing the council's assessment and identifying unsupported assumptions
- Obtaining updated utility searches, capacity enquiries and connection advice
- Testing alternative connection routes, points of connection and phasing options
- Revising the masterplan to accommodate apparatus, corridors and compounds
- Demonstrating land control, rights, reinforcement and realistic cost allowances
- Submitting updated evidence through Local Plan representations or an application

Evidence can materially change the assessment

Infrastructure constraints are often more detailed than a desktop map suggests. Existing apparatus may be diverted, incorporated within open space or protected beneath roads, while an apparently distant connection may be deliverable through controlled land. The response should explain the actual technical solution, land requirements, cost and effect on development capacity.

An infrastructure concern should be understood and tested through current evidence - not treated automatically as the end of the site's prospects.

How Can Utilities Affect Land Value?

Utilities and infrastructure can affect land value where reinforcement, diversions, new compounds, pumping stations, service corridors or off-site rights reduce the net developable area or create abnormal costs. Provider lead-in periods and uncertain network capacity can also increase planning and delivery risk.

Early work can also improve value certainty. A credible connection strategy, realistic cost allowance and coordinated masterplan allow developers to assess the site with greater confidence. Defined infrastructure requirements are generally easier to price and manage than unresolved assumptions applied during a land acquisition.

The value outcome is site-specific

The effect on value depends on the scale and use of development, available network capacity, connection distance, reinforcement, diversion works, third-party land, adoption requirements, phasing and the relationship with other site constraints. A nearby utility main should not be assumed to provide either a cost-free connection or an insurmountable obstacle.

Understand the infrastructure position before agreeing terms

Before selling or entering into an option or promotion agreement, it is sensible to understand whether utilities could materially affect capacity, cost or timing. A purchaser may otherwise apply a cautious discount for unresolved servicing risk, while a well-evidenced strategy can provide greater confidence about the development that can realistically be delivered.

The important question is not simply whether services are nearby, but whether capacity, connection routes, land rights, cost and timing support a deliverable scheme.

Find Out What Your Land May Be Worth

How Value My Land Can Help

Value My Land can review utilities and infrastructure as part of a wider development potential assessment and coordinate specialist enquiries where they are needed. The aim is to identify genuine servicing requirements early and integrate them into a planning, masterplanning and promotion strategy rather than allowing broad assumptions to reduce the site's prospects.

Initial Utilities Review We review available network information, existing apparatus, likely servicing constraints and the wider planning and development context.	Provider Enquiry Coordination We can coordinate proportionate electricity, water, wastewater, telecommunications and other utility enquiries required for the promotion strategy.
Technical Team Management Where specialist work is needed, we can coordinate engineers, utility consultants, surveyors, planners, masterplanners and other advisers.	Local Plan Representations If infrastructure is cited as a reason to discount a site, we can prepare an evidence-led response and submit updated material at the appropriate stage.
Masterplan & Delivery Strategy We can help integrate connection routes, apparatus, compounds, land rights, phasing, cost and provider requirements into a realistic framework.	Landowner-Focused Approach The strategy is matched to the site and stage of promotion, avoiding unnecessary work while addressing matters that could affect value or delivery.

Promotion Agreements

Where we enter into a Promotion Agreement, we fund and manage the agreed planning process at our own cost and risk. This can include utility searches, provider enquiries, engineering advice, infrastructure planning and specialist work required to support the development strategy. If planning permission is not secured, the agreed promotion costs are written off.

The landowner retains ownership and control of the land throughout the promotion process. Because our return is linked to the sale proceeds, our objective is aligned with securing a deliverable planning position and maximising the value achieved for the land.

[Request a Free Development Potential Assessment](#)



Could Utilities Affect Your Development Land?

If you own land and want to understand whether electricity, water, sewerage, telecommunications, pipelines or wider infrastructure could affect its development potential, contact Value My Land for a free, no-obligation initial assessment.

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**Value
My Land**

Delivering Sustainable Development

Further reading: [Utilities & Infrastructure Guide](#) | [Flood Risk & Drainage Guide](#) | [Access & Highways Guide](#) | [Is My Land Suitable?](#)

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