United Utilities Water Limited
Haweswater House
Lingley Mere Business Park
Lingley Green Avenue
Great Sankey
Warrington WA5 3LP

Telephone: 01925 237000
unitedutilities.com

Our ref: EIR-762
Date: 27/03/2026
Email: EIRRequests@uuplc.co.uk

Dear [redacted]

Thank you for your request for environmental information. We appreciate your interest, and we want to let you know that your request has been carefully considered in accordance with the Environmental Information Regulations (EIR). As your request contained a number of specific questions, this response, restates each part of the request (in bold) and then follows this with our response.

I am interested in the Austwick WWTP storm overflow which discharges into Fen Beck and which according to the River Wenning Group was "in the top 3% of overflow spillage treatment works and spilled 117 times in 2024". The Austwick WWTP is ref Cra0010 and the discharge permit number is EPREP3526GE. The River Wenning eventually joins the Lune at Hornby.

For awareness, Austwick is a pumping station, and not a wastewater treatment works.

Can you please inform me:

1. **The OS grid reference for the discharge point for overflows originating from Austwick WWTP into Fen Beck (not the WWTP itself which is obvious). Please note the Rivers Trust website for sewage in rivers indicates the overflow discharges to Fen Beck "via Drying Beds". However, on a site visit earlier today the sludge drying beds were obvious but there was no indication of any outfall into the beds-so it must discharge somewhere else.**

The OS grid reference for Austwick wastewater pumping station (WwPS) outlet discharge point is 376450 , 467283. This can also be found under the National Grid Reference of SD7642067270. The outlet discharges to a drain which subsequently discharges to Fen Beck.

2. **The number of times the above works overflowed in 2025 and for how many hours in total.**

Austwick WwPS spilt 97 times during 2025, with a total spill time of approximately 1,842 hours.

3. **What plans UU have to address this excessively high level of spillage into the beck and if so when the work is scheduled to be carried out, and if the capital expenditure for the measures have been included in the latest OFWAT approval for the next 5 years' capital works improvements.**

We recognise that Austwick WwPS discharges relatively frequently and as a result of this, and in accordance with regulatory requirements, we have undertaken a Storm Overflow Assessment Framework (SOAF) investigation of the site. The SOAF process is a structured, multi-stage process used by English water companies to identify and investigate frequently spilling storm overflows. It involves monitoring spill frequency via event duration monitor (EDM) data, assessing environmental impact, and where available, implementing cost-beneficial solutions to meet regulatory targets, such

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as reducing average spills.

This investigation did not identify any cost beneficial solutions to reduce discharges from the overflow. However, this does not mean no improvements will be delivered. Irrespective of SOAF cost-beneficial schemes, all overflows are expected to be improved following the Government's Storm Overflow Discharge Reduction Plan (SODRP).

The timing of schemes to comply with the SODRP is specified by the guidance set out by the environmental regulators - predominantly the Environment Agency (EA). Their guidance requires that water companies' shorter-term investment is focussed on sites discharging to watercourses with the highest environmental sensitivity and on those overflows causing the most significant environmental harm. Unfortunately, Austwick WwPS does not meet the environment Agency's criteria under this guidance and as a result of this, there is no scheme planned within the AMP8 period (2025-30). The exact timing of the works is yet to be agreed with the EA, although we currently have this work planned for a 2040 target when the overflow is expected to be improved to meet a maximum 10 spill/year SODRP target.

As we recognise that this overflow is discharging frequently, we are not simply waiting until 2040. We are also carrying out significant works this year to investigate and reduce the amount of surface water entering the upstream sewer network, which will reduce the number of discharges from the WwPS. As part of this work, we have identified areas of the network that are suffering from relatively large amounts of infiltration. We are currently in the planning phase with our partners and will be aiming to line approximately 400 metres of the sewer to remove this infiltration.

4. **The Rivers Trust website explains the reason for the overflow having high spill counts as "(Inadequate) Hydraulic Capacity" (of the pumped main to Clapham WWTP). In reality it is clear that the root cause of the problem is the absence of any storm drainage storage tanks at Austwick WWTP (despite the presence of historic sludge drying beds adjacent to the WWTP).**

As set out in response to point three, we have investigated the potential options to reduce discharges from Austwick WwPS and whilst we recognise the root of the issues is the volume of flow arriving from the network, our shorter term focus is on reducing infiltration to the network rather than providing additional storage. It is however likely that the longer term solution that will be required to meet the SODRP requirements will involve the provision of additional storm drainage storage tanks.

We hope that this response answers your request. However, if you're not satisfied with how we've handled it, you can request an internal review. To do this, please write to us at Environmental Information Office, Haweswater House, Lingley Mere, Warrington, WA5 3LP or email us at EIRRequests@uuplc.co.uk, addressing your request to [redacted] and explaining why you're unhappy with our response. We'll be very happy to review your request and ensure we've done everything we can to assist you.

Any request for an internal review should be made within 40 working days of receipt of this

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response, and we will reply within 40 working days from receipt of the request for internal review.

Many thanks

[redacted]

We'd love to hear your feedback on how we handled your request! If you have a moment, please complete our short survey here – your input helps us improve our service.