

HAVANT BOROUGH COUNCIL

At a meeting of the Operations and Place Shaping Board held on 6 February 2019

Present

Lloyd (Chairman), Buckley, Davis, Howard, Milne, Raines and Satchwell

35 Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors Patrick, Shimbart and Thomas.

36 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 December 2018 were confirmed and signed as an accurate record.

37 Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

38 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

39 Environment Agency Update

The Chairman introduced Richard O'Callaghan, Area Environment Manager (Environment Agency) who gave a short presentation outlining the EA's role as an environmental regulator. A copy of the presentation is appended as Appendix 1 to these minutes.

He explained that Southern Water's performance was in line with the national average with a compliance to Environmental Permit Conditions of 98.2%. Incidents were categorised in severity between 1-4, with the EA generally attending category 1 and 2 incidents. The pump failure at Stoke Pumping Station had been a category 2 incident and the electrical failure at Budds Farm had been a category 3.

With regard to bathing water quality, he confirmed that sample testing was only carried out during the bathing season between March and September. The water quality had been excellent during this period and all points tested met the bathing water quality standard for a Blue Flag accreditation.

In response to questions the Board was advised that the quantity of wastewater discharged could be estimated by the duration and in any investigations the EA would try to quantify the amount of pollutants released and the potential impact upon the environment. With regard to any infrastructure issues the EA expected water companies to keep them informed in a timely manner. Residents could also report any issues to the EA directly, which would add to the EA's evidence base for monitoring performance.

With regard to performance, Southern Water would require a reduction in the number of pollution incidents and improved compliance with permits in order to achieve a four star performance rating. There was no driver for improvements on bathing water standards, however the shellfish beds could be viewed as a driver for improvement due to the frequency of releases exceeding the guidance for shellfish. This was however different to non-compliance to the permits issued.

Infrastructure was discussed and capacity was reviewed by PUSH as part of the infrastructure required for future development. The EA had concerns about the capacity of Budds Farm, however expansion would require significant investment and there were doubts as to whether there was enough land to do so.

Discharges into seawater was not unusual in coastal areas and was necessary in situations such as prolonged heavy rainfall to prevent the sewerage system being overcome and potentially discharging into residents' homes. Increased storage or significant infrastructure investment could decrease the number of discharges into Langstone Harbour, however preventing and rectifying incorrect connections to the system and preventing clean surface water from entering it would help. Local councils had enforcement powers in relation to incorrect connections.

In respect of pumping stations, these did not have permits for discharging as in normal operation they should not discharge. Any discharges from pumping stations were therefore breaches and were investigated by the EA. A high-risk pumping station would typically have three pumps and the EA would expect that they would also have some form of monitoring.

The EA did not expect any water company to pollute and would take action where necessary. There were consequences for permit breaches in terms of financial penalties.

The Board highlighted that the waters around Haying Island were used all year round. Mr O'Callaghan confirmed that there could potentially be an increased risk to those using the water in the Winter months, as heavier rainfall had the potential of causing an increased number of discharges and the lower level of sunlight would cause bacteria to live in the water longer.

Mr O'Callaghan confirmed that the EA would be interested in the results of the crowd funded water testing that had been carried out, although the specific details of the testing process would be required to confirm the validity of the data.

The meeting commenced at 5.00 pm and concluded at 6.12 pm

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Chairman