

Scrutiny Board

Discharges into Local Harbours (Update)

Report by: Tristan Fieldsend

Cabinet Lead: Councillor Tony Briggs

Key Decision: N/A

1.0 Purpose of Report

1.1 Southern Water will attend the meeting of the Scrutiny Board scheduled for 24 February 2015 to provide an update on improvements made to their drainage systems following a number of episodes of discharges into local harbours.

2.0 Recommendation

2.1 That the Scrutiny Board notes progress made to date.

3.0 Subject of Report

3.1 In 2011 the Environment and Neighbourhood Quality Panel were asked to investigate a number of episodes of discharges into local harbours from Southern Water's drainage systems. This followed concerns over the number of occasions Councillors had been notified of discharges into Langstone Harbour and the effect this was having upon the water quality.

3.2 The Panel investigated how and why discharges occur and explored options available to overcome any problems and concerns. One of the actions arising from the Panel's report was that the progress of improvement works carried out by Southern Water at the Fort Cumberland plant be monitored.

3.3 Southern Water attended the Scrutiny Board on 19 November 2013. An update on improvement works undertaken at the Fort Cumberland plant were provided along with details of significant planned improvements for the future. The Board requested that Southern Water attend a future meeting of the Board to update members on how the improvement works were progressing.

3.4 Subsequently Southern Water will attend the Scrutiny Board on 24 February 2015 to provide an update on discharges into local harbours along with the current status of the improvement works to their drainage systems.

4.0 Implications

4.1 Resources:

None arising directly from this report

4.2 Legal:

None arising directly from this report

4.3 Strategy:

None arising directly from this report

4.4 Risks:

Discharges may have financial implications for the commercial harvesting of local oyster beds, as the shellfish will require additional processing before they can be put to market. This does not affect the council, but may affect local businesses.

Perhaps more pertinent to Havant Borough Council are the risks relating to communication. The public (and as a consequence, the media) do take an interest in water quality. There appears to be a public perception risk which despite the blue flag status of the borough's beaches the public may perceive the borough's coast not to be a safe leisure destination. It is conceivable that this public perception risk may have implications for tourism for the area, and potentially the Council's reputation; whether or not there is a risk that the blue-flag status is at risk of being lost.

4.5 Communications:

In view of the poor publicity that may arise from discharges into local harbours it is important that Havant Borough Council is seen to be acting on these issues.

4.6 The Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) has been completed and concluded the following: No IIA has been completed in the preparation of the report.

Agreed and signed off by:

Legal Services: 9 February 2015

Executive Head of Governance & Logistics: 5 February 2015

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