

## **Cabinet Lead for Local Plan, Environment and Water Quality – Councillor Elizabeth Lloyd**

### **Planning Policy**

On 16<sup>th</sup> March, Full Council voted to commence the production of a new local plan for the Borough.

This Full Council marks the first key step in the production of that new local plan, named Building a Better Future. Following scrutiny at the Planning Policy Committee on 6 September, the Full Council will today be considering the consultation on this local plan.

More detail can be found in the report which accompanies this agenda item and its appendices.

### **Water Quality**

Over the summer period, a great deal of consultation has taken place on the future of water supply and wastewater treatment in our area.

Firstly, Southern Water undertook consultation on the proposed project to use recycled water from the Budds Farm Wastewater Treatment Works, to top up the Havant Thicket Reservoir prior to it being pumped to the Southampton area for further treatment to drinking water standards.

The Council fully recognises the significant and urgent need to address Hampshire's water shortfall and welcomes the efforts that are being made by Southern Water, not least the rivers Teste and Itchen, two heritage chalk streams, must be protected and enhanced due to the rarity of these habitats. Nonetheless, the Council's response raised serious concerns relating to the use of recycled wastewater as a new water source to top-up the Havant Thicket Reservoir and stated the Council's opposition to any such use.

It is understood that whilst this technology is used widely overseas, mainly in the USA, this would be the first project of its kind in the UK. It is therefore of the utmost importance that the project and the proposal are correctly scrutinised to ensure it is the most appropriate way to deliver safe drinking water in an environmentally responsible manner. Our view is this necessitates additional engagement and scrutiny beyond what has taken place so far.

Further concerns were raised regarding the use of the Brockhampton West site for the proposed pumping station and filtration plant. Recent planning permission which was granted for the site would bring forward up to 29,000 sqm of commercial floor space and support between 335 and 652 jobs, depending on its final commercial use.

It was suggested through the response that engagement with our residents needs to be on an ongoing basis between now and when Southern Water submit the Development Consent Order and a further, statutory consultation should take place.

The Council remains supportive of the Havant Thicket Reservoir based on the permitted scheme to use surplus water from the Bedhampton Springs. It should be noted that the current reserved matters application (APP/22/00681) relates to the approved scheme and not Southern Water's proposal.

Moving forwards, we look to Southern Water to roll out a further package of engagement, focussing on raising awareness of the project and what it entails.

The second consultation was on Southern Water's Draft Drainage and Wastewater Management Plan (DWMP) for the East Hampshire Catchment. The Council's response recognises the need for the DWMP to provide a long-term investment plan for drainage and wastewater management to ensure it meets the needs of both customers and the environment into the future. However, the Council would have expected to see proposals to upgrade Budds Farm Wastewater Treatment Works to feature front and centre, but instead there was only very limited detail.

The need to increase storage or a programme for the separation of surface water as an investment need, was welcomed. However, concern was expressed because the proposal seeks only to reduce frequency of urgent releases of partially treated waste water to less than 20 per annum. The focus should be on ending the use of Combined Sewage Outfalls altogether. Investment should be directed towards upgrades to the sewer system to divert rainwater in times of heavy rainfall.

Regrettably the draft DWMP was also not presented well, with documents unduly technical and inaccessible without non-technical summaries. It focussed on the process to arrive at a DWMP, rather than identifying the problems and setting out a series of planned improvements with timeframes and costs.

There is clear concern with the recent performance of Southern Water due to the record £90 million fine it received for 6,971 unpermitted sewage discharges. Whilst the company says it has changed, residents in this borough need to be able to clearly identify Southern Water's plans to understand how this they may affect service delivery, and ultimately how the DWMP will protect rather than pollute the environment - especially our rivers, harbours and seas.

### **Climate Change and Sustainability**

Arguably the most pressing concern facing the UK at this time is the inflation in the cost of energy. In a borough with a higher than average levels of deprivation and ill health, the increases expected in the cost of energy could drive many households further into poverty.

Addressing the energy efficiency of the Borough's homes is critical in the long term, to addressing the causes of climate change, to meet net zero and reduce long-term temperature rises. In the short term, this can have a direct and meaningful impact on the bills that residents will face. As such, ensuring that residents have access to energy efficiency improvements is a key priority.

Havant Borough Council is part of the Warmer Homes consortium of 21 local authorities, led by Portsmouth City Council. The consortium was successful in their bid to the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy across two funding streams. A total of £31.8 million was awarded across the 21 authorities.

Through the grant funding process, eligible households can gain access to up to £10,000 if "on" the gas network or £25,000 if "off" the gas network. In order to be eligible, households must have an Energy Performance Certificate of E, F or G (a limited number of D rated properties can be funded) and either an annual household income of £30,000 or less, or receive a means tested benefit.

The funding can be used to provide:

- Solid wall insulation
- Cavity wall insulation
- Room-in-roof insulation
- Underfloor insulation
- Loft insulation
- High heat retention storage heaters (off-gas homes only)
- Air source heat pumps
- Solar PV panels
- Heating controls

To date, 186 properties within the Borough have had a direct mailing informing them that they are likely to be eligible for the funding. Further communication will be taking place shortly to encourage as many households who can benefit from this scheme as possible to sign up.

Further information can be found at [www.warmerhomes.org.uk](http://www.warmerhomes.org.uk). Any households who consider they could be eligible can apply either online or by calling for free on 0800 038 5737.

### **Bathing water standards**

The Beach Buoy was deployed with its water quality monitoring was installed on Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> August, at around midday. RS hydro had a video drone on board the vessel which was used to gather images & film of the installation procedure.

The installation went smoothly, with the deployment location within 120m of the target location. A local notice to mariners was issued on The Council's behalf by Chichester Harbour Conservancy, and the Langstone Harbour Board has also

publicised the deployment. The buoy is, for safety purposes, clearly marked in low light / at night strobe. Calibration sampling will now be undertaken.