

# HAVANT BOROUGH COUNCIL

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## Scrutiny Board

### DISCHARGES INTO LOCAL HARBOURS (UPDATE)

Report by: Democratic Services Assistant

Environment and Neighbourhood Quality Portfolio: Councillor David Collins

Key Decision: N/A

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#### 1.0 Purpose of Report

1.1 To present an update to the Board of progress made by Southern Water following the scrutiny of a number of episodes of discharges into local harbours in 2011 from Southern Water's drainage systems.

#### 2.0 Recommendation

2.1 That the Board considers the report and notes progress made to date.

#### 3.0 Summary

3.1 The Scrutiny Panel's brief was to investigate a number of episodes of discharges into local harbours from Southern Water's drainage systems following concerns over the number of occasions councillors had been notified of discharges into Langstone Harbour and the effect this was having on water quality within the harbour.

3.2 The Panel investigated how and why discharges occur and explored options available to overcome any problems and concerns. The Panel's original report was published on 26 August 2011 and is set out in Appendix A.

3.3 An extract of the minutes of the Scrutiny Board meeting held on 6 September 2011 detailing the recommendations arising from the scrutiny of discharges into local harbours is set out in Appendix B. The following actions were undertaken following this meeting

- The Portfolio Holder wrote to Southern Water expressing concern over discharges and requesting details of planned improvements. A reply was received from Southern Water in December 2011 and circulated to all members.
- The Scrutiny board asked that progress of work carried out at the Fort Cumberland plant be monitored and this follow up review forms part of that process.

- The Building Control Team were requested to ensure that rainwater is disposed of correctly, through monitoring of improper connections. The Building Control Team Leader provided an update for members which explained that drainage for newly built dwellings and extensions to dwellings was already monitored by the Building Control Team as part of its statutory function. Smaller minor works such as conservatories or porches were exempt from building regulations and therefore not monitored. If this was to be done it would have significant resource and legal implications.
- Potential joint PR with Southern Water to educate residents on correct disposal methods of waste has not yet been undertaken but methods of achieving this could be explored in the future.

**3.4** Representatives from Southern Water will attend the Scrutiny Board on 19 November 2013 and provide an update on progress made on discharges from their drainage systems into local harbours since the publication of the Panel's original report.

#### **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:**

The increasing incidence of discharges under storm conditions, and the clear deterioration of the quality of shellfish beds has already led to the down-rating of some shellfish beds within the harbours. This may have financial implications for the commercial harvesting of the 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 if the trend continues (which it appears likely to do).

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, particularly if there is no short - medium term solution to these issues, that despite the blue flag status the beaches may not 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:**

The report has identified gaps in the provision of public information relating to both the usage of domestic sewerage system, and to the health implications of sewage discharges. As a result Havant Borough Council may have to review and revise the information it provides to the public.

#### **4.6 For the Community:**

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

Appendices:

**Appendix A** - Discharges into Local Harbours – Report by the Environment and Neighbourhood Quality Panel (6 September 2011)

**Appendix B** – Extract of the minutes of the Scrutiny Board held on 6 September 2011

Agreed and signed off by:

Legal Services: 6 November 2013

Financial Services: 6 November 2013

Relevant Executive Head: 11 October 2013

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