

Motion 2:

Proposed by Cllr N Lloyd, seconded by Cllr E Withington.

### **Motion calling for reduction of sewage discharges**

#### **Preamble to Motion**

Now, more than ever, water quality is at the forefront of public consciousness. National news reports have revealed the shocking levels of sewage pollution that plague England's rivers and coastal areas. Public outrage is growing as they see pollution events occurring in many ecologically important areas many of which sustain high levels of biodiversity whilst also being important in terms of recreation, well-being and tourism.

In September this year the Government told wastewater plants in England they may be able to discharge effluent that has not been fully treated because of disruption caused by "supply chain failure". The Environment Agency subsequently introduced a waiver that would mean some companies would not have to go through the third stage in the treatment of sewage if they did not have the right chemicals.

In October the Government voted to reject an attempt by the House of Lords to toughen up the approach to the discharge of sewage in the Environmental Bill .

The move sparked an uproar on social media and appalled environmental campaigners.

In a change of heart the following day, the Government now says it will force water companies to make a "progressive reduction" in the sewage it dumps in rivers. Environment Secretary George Eustice has now promised to bolster measures by making them a legal duty.

North Norfolk has 6 Blue Flag beaches and many ecologically important water ways including parts of the Broads and the renowned chalk streams. Protecting these water courses and our coastal areas are vital if we are to maintain North Norfolk's natural beauty and remain attractive to the visitors that sustain our tourist industry.

Sewage effluent entered into the Eastern region's rivers, Broads and coastline more than 4,000 times last year. This Council finds this situation unacceptable and resolves to....

#### **Motion - The Council resolves to:**

- 1) Request the Leader of the Council write to the Chief Executive of Anglia Water and seek the following information:
  - a) Report to the year-round figures for sewage discharges (including Combined sewage outfall) across the North Norfolk District Council area

- b) Explain how this information shared with the public to help them make informed decisions as to water safety for recreational use
  - c) Explain what percentage of reporting of CSOs is live or from modelling?
  - d) Complete the process of identifying and classifying the performance (from both daily events and through extreme weather conditions) of CSOs in order to focus remedial action and investment across the district
  - e) Confirm which assets have been prioritised for investment and what plans are in place to reduce and prevent CSO events
  - f) Report on Anglian Water targets for reducing CSO events in the short term and longer Term
  - g) Report much money is being invested in infrastructure improvements in the area covered by North Norfolk District Council and what measures are being taking to ensure this infrastructure is climate resilient?
  - h) Explain what additional measures are being taken to reduce sewage discharges or other pollution incidents in those parts of the North Norfolk river systems including its canal and the coastal waters that lie within the area covered by North Norfolk District Council?
- 2) Request the Leader of the Council write to the Chair, Phillip Dunne MP, of the Parliamentary Environmental Audit Select Committee stating :
- a) This Council is in agreement with the Government U turn on supporting the amendment which will place a new legal duty directly on water companies to progressively reduce the adverse impacts of storm overflow discharges and provide enforcement of the duty by the secretary of state, or OFWAT (the Water Services Regulation Authority).
  - b) This Council considers it vital that in addition to setting targets for CSO prevention, the government places a legal obligation on the water companies to classify CSO discharge outlets according to their condition and subsequent performance and produce action plans for infrastructure improvement since there is currently no legal obligation to do so.
- 3) The Council Overview and Scrutiny committee consider including periodic review of sewage water discharge events in North Norfolk on their agenda's by engaging with Anglia Water and asking them to report to NNDC on the progress and investments being made.