

Rother District Council

Report to - Council
Date - 21 September 2022
Subject - Motion – Council Motion – Sewage and Southern Water

Motion submitted by Councillor Thomas, seconded by Councillor Gray

1. Rother District Council notes that, according to the latest EPA report for Southern Water, it is one of two companies, out of nine, rated red for pollution incidents. It also has the lowest rating, 1, as a water company, as well as having the highest ever fine, in the 25 years existence of the Environmental Agency, of ninety million pounds, for pollution related incidents
2. Rother District Council notes that on Wednesday 17 August, equipment problems at Galley Hill led to sewage discharges into the sea. On other occasions stormwater processes have led to the issue of 'pollution risk advisory notices' such as those posted on Monday 15 August and again on August 17.
3. Beaches have had to be closed to the public entailing a loss of amenity, health risks, unfavourable publicity, and a negative impact on the visitor economy.
4. Rother District Council is very aware of the importance of the beach and the sea for relaxation, recreation and health. It believes that clean beaches and clean seas make a vital contribution to the ecological well-being of the District and the planet.
5. In response to a petition on discharges, the Government has stated that 'Tackling the harm caused by sewage is a top priority for the government'. Furthermore, the government has stated that 'Climate change has led to increased rainfall and water infrastructure has not kept pace with development growth.'
6. Rother District Council therefore urges Southern Water and all associated companies to:
 - a) make public an investigation into the causes of the equipment failures at the Galley Hill pumping station, and of actions to be taken to prevent a recurrence;
 - b) install back-up equipment capable of taking over and managing key functions in the event of a breakdown of the primary machinery;
 - c) set a date, no later than 2027, for all sewage discharges into the sea to cease in the Rother District area, and areas adjacent to it;
 - d) increase investment in the sewage and wastewater systems within Rother to ensure efficient treatment of the same, sufficient to meet present and predicted demand; and
 - e) provide compensation for the losses and costs suffered because of the calamitous failures of Southern Water.