

**You are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of the
MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

Date: Wednesday 20 July 2022
Time: 6.30 p.m.
Venue: Town Hall, High Street, Maidstone

Membership:

Councillors Bartlett, Mrs Blackmore, Brice, Brindle, Bryant, Burton, Cannon, Clark, Cleator, Coates, Conyard, Cooke, Cooper, Cox, English, Eves, Forecast, Fort, Garten, Mrs Gooch, Mrs Grigg, Harper, Harwood, Hastie, Hinder, Holmes, Jeffery, Joy, Khadka, Kimmance, Knatchbull, McKenna, Mortimer (Mayor), Munford, Naghi, Newton, Parfitt-Reid, Perry, Mrs Ring, Mrs Robertson, Rose, Round, Russell, J Sams, T Sams, Spooner, Springett, Trzebinski, R Webb, S Webb, de Wiggondene-Sheppard, Wilby, D Wilkinson, T Wilkinson and Young

AGENDA

Page No.

1. Prayers
2. Apologies for Absence
3. Dispensations (if any)
4. Disclosures by Members and Officers
5. Disclosures of Lobbying
6. To consider whether any items should be taken in private because of the possible disclosure of exempt information
7. Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Borough Council held on 21 May 2022 1 - 6
8. Mayor's Announcements
9. Petitions
10. Question and Answer Session for Local Residents

Issued on Tuesday 12 July 2022

Continued Over/:

Alison Broom

Alison Broom, Chief Executive

11. Questions from Members of the Council to:
 - (a) The Leader of the Council
 - (b) Lead Members
 - (c) The Chairmen of Decision-Making Committees
12. Current Issues - Report of the Leader of the Council, Response of the Group Leaders and Questions from Council Members
13. Report of the Democracy and General Purposes Committee held on 22 June 2022 - Pre-Review Constitution Changes 7 - 8
14. Notice of Motion - Water Quality

Notice of the following motion has been given by Councillor Jeffery, seconded by Councillor English:

Preamble

Residents are deeply concerned about water quality and the impact of regular wastewater discharges, which include untreated sewage, into our local rivers and seas and the impacts on wildlife and on human health.

The UK has the dirtiest rivers in Europe. Here in this Borough we have two river systems, the Medway and the Stour. Southern Water reported around 42,000 hours of sewage spills into the Medway and its tributaries in 2020 and the Environment Agency reports show large sections of the river as having poor or bad water quality. River Beult's SSSI categorisation, for instance – one of the few UK examples of a lowland Clay river, is consistently in a 'poor' chemical and ecological state (EA data). In addition to the Medway, the Stour rises in Lenham and becomes an important designated wildlife area after flowing through Ashford and Canterbury yet it too has similarly poor water quality reports.

Releasing sewage into rivers is no longer an emergency-only situation occurring as a result of severe rainstorms, but an everyday occurrence even in 'normal' rainfall events, exacerbated because of new properties adding to the existing drainage infrastructure without modification or upgrading, and that we are in a situation of cumulative overload on the sewerage and wastewater treatment systems.

Whilst there are long term commitments, there are no plans in place which will address the immediate unacceptable situation either locally by Southern Water or by national government. Both the local (e.g. LPRSP14A) and national planning policy requires a robust approach to both water quality and pollution, and a recent legal opinion from the Environmental Law Firm confirms the need to consider cumulative impacts. Yet planning consultation documents show that it has not been the practice of Council planners to ask Water Companies to report on cumulative impact, i.e. whether or not one or more developments may lead to any potential increase in 'emergency' discharges into rivers through stormwater overflows (CSOs) or

because of sewage treatment works' capacity constraints.

This Council resolves to:

1. Recognise this Council's obligation to protect its streams and rivers, including from the cumulative impacts of pollution, in line with its local planning policy and the National Planning Policy Framework.
 2. Recognise that there is clear evidence of deterioration of water quality due to cumulative impacts of multiple sewage discharge events or 'sewerage overload'.
 3. Ensure that an evidence base is compiled that assesses the cumulative impact of sewage discharges so that this is factored into decisions made in new iterations of the local plan, including the overall level of future development.
 4. Seek to better understand the cumulative impact of wastewater discharges including untreated sewage on our local rivers, wildlife and the health of our residents.
 5. Continue to take a lead on addressing this issue, working constructively with other agencies and local authorities.
 6. Ask the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to invite the Chief Executive of Southern Water plus senior representatives from the Environment Agency and Natural England to attend a meeting to answer questions on the current levels of CSO and sewage plant discharge.
 7. Ask Southern Water, from this date onwards, in its planning consultation responses for major developments, to clarify which treatment works will be managing the sewerage; whether it has the information available to assess the impact on the number or duration of sewage discharges into local rivers or seas, and if it does have this information to share it (noting that this can only be requested not required).
 8. Request that planning officers, from now onwards, include in all reports relating to major development a specific section on the impact on watercourses, including the potential for the development to affect sewage outflow into watercourses (i.e. cumulative impact), or to flag if this information is not fully available, so that this information (or the lack of it) is clearly and transparently set out.
15. Report of the Leader of the Council - Urgent Decisions Taken by the Executive Between 23 May 2022 - 20 July 2022 (for information)

INFORMATION FOR THE PUBLIC

In order to ask a question at this meeting in person or by remote means, please call **01622 602899** or email committee@maidstone.gov.uk by 5 p.m. one clear working day before the meeting (i.e. by 5 p.m. on Monday 18 July 2022). You will need to provide the full text in writing.

In order to make a statement in relation to an item on the agenda, please call **01622 602899** or email committee@maidstone.gov.uk by 4 p.m. one clear working day before the meeting (i.e. by 4 p.m. on Monday 18 July 2022). You will need to tell us which agenda item you wish to speak on.

If you require this information in an alternative format please contact us, call **01622 602899** or email committee@maidstone.gov.uk.

To find out more about the work of the Council, please visit www.maidstone.gov.uk.