

## Chichester District Council

Cabinet

6 December 2022

### Public Questions and Answers Sheet

#### Question from Andy Sargent:

*Residents west of Chichester City are disgusted with pollution of Chichester Harbour, and on Saturday 26 November stood by the side of the road to show their concerns.*

*Also, road tankers taking household sewage from houses in Minerva Heights because no waste water connections are available is not acceptable. I understand some Minerva Heights new home owners only discover these arrangements after moving into their new homes.*

*On what date will Chichester District Council stop approving house building planning applications when it is known there are very few remaining connections possible to the waste water treatment plants?*

#### Answer from Cllr Taylor:

Thank you for your question.

The first thing to say is that the District Council is aware of and shares residents' concerns about the impact of pollution of Chichester Harbour. The Council has, as a consequence, set out its concerns to Southern Water and the Environment Agency on a number of occasions regarding the incidents of partially treated sewage discharging into the harbour as a result of the use of the storm water bypass at the wastewater treatment works (WWTW) and the consequences for water quality and nutrient deposition. However, the Environment Agency have in the past confirmed that Southern Water are not in breach of their permit to discharge foul water into the Harbour and have advised that they do not consider that the imposition of a 'moratorium' for housing development is justified on environmental grounds. In these circumstances and without the support of the Environment Agency, it would be unreasonable for the Council to refuse planning applications due to concerns about capacity within the system.

It is also the case that developers have a right in law to connect to the foul drainage network and Southern Water does collect a surcharge from developers of all new development that requires a new connection to the public sewer network. The developer contributions, together with funding from Southern Water's capital programme is then used to upgrade Southern Water's infrastructure, to accommodate additional flows across the network as they are required by law to provide the necessary capacity. The District Council consults Southern Water on all major residential housing developments. As such, if Southern Water advise that there is available capacity or that they are able to provide the necessary capacity, then there is limited scope for the District Council to object on foul water disposal grounds. All new housing development that drains to Chichester Harbour is also

required to demonstrate that it is 'nutrient neutral' to avoid further environmental harm to the harbour and comply with Natural England's requirements.

With regards to the sewerage arrangements for Minerva Heights (i.e., phase 1 of the West of Chichester strategic development), the outline planning permission allows for dwellings to be serviced via tankering arrangements prior to the development's connection to the Tangmere Strategic wastewater pipeline. The reasons for this approach are twofold. Firstly, because of the complex nature of the pipeline delivery and secondly, due to the site being located at the very western end of the pipeline, the pumping station cannot operate effectively until a point has been reached where a certain minimum effluent flow is received from the development.

At Minerva Heights the developers have permission for up to 437 dwellings to be served via the temporary storage/tankering arrangements. Tanker movements must not take place within a window around school drop off and pick up times and best endeavours must be used to not empty the tanks during night-time hours. To date approximately 200 occupations have taken place and the developers have last week confirmed that the pumping station is on track to be handed over to Southern Water in March 2023. Officers have visited the site recently and have confirmed that the pumping station's construction is well-advanced and therefore it is expected that the development will be connected to the strategic pipeline in line with the requirements of the planning permission prior to the occupation of the 437th dwelling.