

Brighton & Hove City Council

City Environment, South Downs & The Sea Committee

Agenda Item 38(c)

Subject: Deputations

Date of meeting: 23 January 2024

A period of not more than fifteen minutes shall be allowed at each ordinary meeting of the Council for the hearing of deputations from members of the public.

Notification of one Deputation has been received. The spokesperson is entitled to speak for 5 minutes.

1) Deputation: Patcham Water

Patcham has become known for its recurrent flooding, and regrettably, we have grown accustomed to considering this as normal. However, it is neither normal nor acceptable for hundreds of children to navigate through raw sewage on their way to and from school, a grim reality regularly faced by students from Patcham High, Infants, and Juniors throughout 2023. Without prompt action from the Council, there is a growing apprehension that the situation continues to worsen, ushering in an era where getting to school in Patcham routinely poses a sewage-related health risk.

Concerned residents have reported dislodged manhole covers, used tampons floating down the roads, and pools of sewage. An independent assessment revealed alarming levels of E-coli in water allowed to stream from a drain by the schools for 10 days. E-coli has also been found on the Junior School playing field, when campaigners tested flood water this month. Moreover, the government's Drinking Water Inspectorate is currently monitoring Patcham's drinking water for e-coli risks, amid the Inspectorate's existing concerns about the overall unwholesomeness of Brighton and Hove's drinking water. Residents, local councillors, and the Patcham and Hollingbury Conservation Society have been reporting water issues in Patcham to Southern Water and Brighton and Hove Council for years, if not decades. However, the situation has deteriorated significantly, particularly in flooding hotspots such as Winfield Avenue, Carden Avenue, Warmdene Road, as well as Old London Road, and Mill Road which adjoin the strategic highway network of the A27 and A23. A prevailing concern is that the quality of our drinking water and the severity of both flooding and sewage leaks in Patcham is not being taken seriously enough. This is evidenced by the lack of intervention to halt Royal Mail's proposal to concrete over a natural flood defence at Patcham Court Farm. The chalky and absorbent land at Patcham Court Farm is categorised as a Zone 1 Source Protection Zone, the highest-rated groundwater protection zone, and forms part of the Drinking Water Protected Area and the Inner Source Protection Area. The plan from Royal Mail's executives to concrete over Patcham Court Farm poses a threat to Brighton's water security for the 116,000 city residents who receive their water from the Patcham Pumping Station just 750 metres away. Additionally, the proposed plans may exacerbate the already prevalent local flooding issues by diverting more rain to

overloaded sewers. Our concerns extend beyond Patcham and reflect a national trend of companies that used to be owned by the taxpayer, now prioritising shareholder profits over services and public welfare. There is growing concern that executives at Royal Mail and Southern Water are relinquishing their responsibility, letting standards slip, and when problems arise seek to shift the financial burden on to taxpayers and the council. We propose the following actions: 1. Urgently conduct a comprehensive flood mitigation and drinking water review for the area, sharing the results with local councillors, the Patcham and Hollingbury Conservation Society, local schools, and concerned residents. 2. Implement the findings of this review/s, marking a departure from previous inquiries where recommendations have gone unheeded. 3. Reject Royal Mail's application and investigate their alternative plans for Shoreham, as reported by a Royal Mail representative addressing members of the Hove Station Neighbourhood Forum.

Supported by:

Rebecca Kimber (Lead Spokesperson)

Rebecca Bunker-Fellingham

Paul Mannix

Mike Howard

Rebecca Mintrim

Jack Riches

Mandy Pachol

Jill Carr