

MOTION ON NOTICE

Full Council | Tuesday, 12 July 2022

1. That Oadby and Wigston Borough Council (“the Council”) notes:

- 1.1. Every river in England is now polluted beyond legal limits;
- 1.2. Appointing a Councillor to represent the Council on the Plastic Free Oadby Steering Group;
- 1.3. The Environment Agency rated only 14% of rivers as ‘Good’ in 2019;
- 1.4. This chemical pollution is mostly caused by sewage discharges from water companies and the run-offs of nutrients from farms;
- 1.5. 36% of rivers have been damaged by water companies;
- 1.6. In England, water companies released untreated human waste directly into our waterways over 400,000 times for a total of 3 million hours in 2020 alone;
- 1.7. Government funding to the Environment Agency to monitor river quality and regulate farms and water companies has dropped 75% since 2010/11;
- 1.8. In 2020 just 3.6% of pollution complaints made to the agency resulted in penalties;
- 1.9. Farms are now almost never inspected, water quality is rarely tested, and water companies can pump raw sewage into rivers with virtual impunity;
- 1.10. In addition. Tyre particles, metals from brake pads, and hydrocarbons from vehicle emissions wash off road surfaces and into rivers introducing potentially carcinogenic material into the water supply;
- 1.11. Our local rivers are particularly threatened by further sewage discharges; and
- 1.12. Making information about the reduction of plastic use available to local residents via all Council-ran communication channels, including on the Council’s website, its social media platforms and Letterbox.

2. That the Council believes that the UK Government should commit to:

- 2.1. Restoring Environment Agency budgets to deliver the necessary oversight; and
- 2.2. Increase inspection regularity of water companies and farms, and rigorously prosecute offenders.

3. That the Council resolves to request the Chief Executive write to:

- 3.1. The Secretary of State for Environment, Food and rural affairs calling for the Government to make these commitments;
- 3.2. The Chairperson of the Parliamentary Environmental Audit Committee to advocate for greater enforcement of existing regulatory powers;
- 3.3. The Chief Executive(s) of local utility companies calling for urgent action to address the impact of waste-water discharges on our local rivers;
- 3.4. The Regional Director of the National Farmers Union requesting clarification on the action being taken locally by farmers to prevent nutrient run-off; and
- 3.5. The charities River Action and The Rivers Trust expressing this Council's support for their campaign to restore the health of Britain's rivers.

Councillor Michael Charlesworth
(Proposer)

Councillor Mrs Linda M Broadley
(Seconder)

The above motion was duly received by the Head of Law & Democracy on 1 July 2022
in accordance with Rule 14, Section 1 of Part 4 of the Constitution of the Council.