

**MOTION ON NOTICE**

City Council

**Opposing Routine Discharges of Raw Sewage in Plymouth's rivers and marine habitats**

Last year raw sewage was put into coastal waters and rivers in England more than 400,000 times which is totally unacceptable, this practice has to be stopped and should be a statutory requirement of all water companies to put into place the actions needed to not just reduce the practice but to stop the practice.

The south west has some of the most valuable bathing waters in the country but not a single river in our region meets good chemical standards and only 14% of rivers across England meet good ecological standards. England has the worst river quality in Europe.

Measures to end the routine discharge of raw sewage were opposed by the Government in the Environment Bill but following public outcry the Government performed a U-turn and has now adopted some of the measures to tackle combined sewer outflows but has not adopted measures to reduce sewage discharges from the wider sewer system, nor have they specified how much sewage must be reduced by when.

The Rivers Trust has published details of raw sewage outflows in the rivers across Plymouth and into Plymouth Sound. We note that sewage discharges may be unavoidable in the event of extreme weather but should not be used on a routine basis.

Notes that Plymouth Sound is the UK's first National Marine Park and believes that our city should be leading the way in making the case for cleaner waters while preserving the wide variety of jobs that rely on the water.

If you are a keen swimmer in the coastal waters in and around Plymouth there is an interactive App managed by Surfers Against Sewage which gives you the current state of the waters around the coast, the water quality varies. South West Water are constantly doing work around the coast but there needs to be a clear statement of intent for how this issue is going to be managed to reduce the impact of sewage dumping and to improve the water quality.

This council asks the Leader of the Council to:-

1. Write to all local MPs to lobby the Environment Secretary to provide a timetable for the ending of raw sewage discharges into rivers and seas and call for swift implementation of provisions in the Environment Bill.
2. For the Leader of the Council to write to South West Water for their plans to eradicate the practice in rivers and coastal areas around Plymouth and rivers that flow through the city.
3. For the Council Chief Executive to investigate whether water quality of our city's bathing waters could be better communicated to the people of Plymouth so they can be informed about when it is safe to swim in the sea or rivers around Plymouth.

**Proposed by: Councillor Sue Dann**

**Signature: Approved by email**

**Seconded by: Councillor Tudor Evans OBE**

**Signature: Approved by email**