

Amendment Received for Council – 27 July 2022

Item 11 (a) CONSERVATIVE GROUP AMENDMENT of the Motion Submitted by the Liberal Democrats Group

Save Our Rivers

Our local rivers, brooks and watercourses are invaluable assets to our borough. They make up a vital part of our natural ecosystem, providing habitat for bird, fish and insect life as well as being sites for recreation for Trafford residents. Flash flooding is an increasingly prevalent issue in Trafford and this is likely to continue in the years ahead as a direct result of the climate emergency.

This Council gives thanks to its officers and environment agency workers who go above and beyond the call of duty, to offer support to our residents during instances of severe weather.

Local waterways are also subject to harmful sewage dumping practices, which damage ecosystems and pose a significant public health risk, especially in the context of flash flooding.

This Council notes that:

- Every river in England is now polluted beyond legal limits; with the Environment Agency rating only 14% as Good in 2019.
- This chemical pollution is mostly caused by sewage discharges from water companies and the run-offs of nutrients from farms.
- ~~Government funding to the Environment Agency to monitor river quality and regulate farms and water companies has dropped 75% over the last 10 years and as a result, farms are now almost never inspected, water quality is rarely tested, and water companies can pump raw sewage into rivers with virtual impunity.~~
- In recent years, flash flooding has been a growing issue across Trafford, with many residents facing risks to their homes during severe weather.
- That councillors, residents and the Environment Agency are required to work together towards flooding resilience goals, in line with resolutions passed by this Council.
- That whilst residents wait for long-term flood mitigation schemes, the issue of contaminated water from sewage dumping poses a potentially serious health and environmental risk – especially if homes flood during severe weather.
- At a local taskforce meeting, The Environment Agency only committed to clearing the brooks that flow through Timperley twice a year, which repeated late-night emergency call outs have shown to be insufficient to avoid flooding.

Amendment Received for Council – 27 July 2022

- ~~That in October 2021, 265 Conservative MPs – including Altrincham and Sale West MP Sir Graham Brady – voted against provisions in Lords Amendment 45 to the Environment Bill which would have curtailed sewage dumping, removing proposals that would have placed a legal duty on water companies to “take all reasonable steps to ensure untreated sewage is not discharged from storm overflows.”~~

This Council believes that the UK Government should commit to:

- Restoring Environment Agency budgets for river quality monitoring.
- Increasing inspections of water companies and farms, and prosecuting offenders.
- Funding local and highways authorities to introduce treatment systems to prevent road pollutants from entering our water courses.
- ~~Implementing a ‘Sewage Tax’ on water companies and other industries who persist in knowingly polluting our rivers and waterways.~~

This Council resolves to:

- Ask the Flood Resilience Working Group created in March 2021 to support the Environment Agency to inspect and clear Fairywell Brook more frequently. Reducing the build-up of debris that causes the Brook to flood and sewage-contaminated water to enter residents’ homes during flash floods.

This Council resolves to ask the Leader of the Council and the Executive Member for the Environment to write to:

- The Environment Minister calling for the Government to adopt the ~~four~~ **three** commitments outlined above.
- The Chief Executive of United Utilities calling for further urgent action to address the impact of waste-water discharges on our local rivers.
- The charity ‘River Action’ expressing this Council’s support for their campaign to restore the health of Britain’s rivers.

~~This Council also calls upon the three Members of Parliament who represent Trafford to support the resolutions of this motion and advocate for a ‘Sewage Tax’ in Parliament.~~