

Water Supply provision in Swale and Kent

This Council notes that:

1. Residents and businesses across Swale Borough have experienced repeated, prolonged and, in some cases, severe failures in water supply in recent years.
2. The scale, frequency and duration of these incidents go beyond isolated or exceptional events and point to systemic shortcomings.
3. Across areas of Kent including within Swale, residents, including vulnerable individuals, families, schools, and care settings, have been placed in unacceptable situations as a result of these failures.

This Council believes that:

1. Reliable access to clean water is a fundamental public service and persistent service failure is unacceptable.
2. Without decisive intervention and investment, there is a real risk of continued disruption and further erosion of public trust.

This Council resolves to:

1. Formally state its dissatisfaction with the performance of South East Water and Southern Water in relation to water supply provision within Swale Borough.
2. Write to the Chief Executives and Boards of South East Water and Southern Water to:
 - Demand a comprehensive written account of the causes of recent failures.
 - Require a clear explanation of why existing contingency and resilience plans were insufficient.
 - Seek firm, time-bound commitments to infrastructure investment, operational improvement and enhanced customer communication.
3. Request South East Water and Southern Water to attend a public meeting or relevant Council committee, at senior executive level, to:
 - Account publicly for recent service failures.
 - Respond to questions from councillors.
 - Set out how confidence will be restored and future failures prevented.
 - Explain how they plan to supply the 17,875 new dwellings that form the Swale Local Plan housing need target to 2042.
4. Escalate the Council's concerns to Ofwat, the Environment Agency, and the Drinking Water Inspectorate, requesting:
 - Formal scrutiny of South East Water's and Southern Water's performance in Swale.
 - Consideration of enforcement action where standards have not been met.
5. Request that Council officers assess whether further representations should be made jointly with other affected Kent authorities to strengthen the call for regulatory intervention.
6. Commit to keeping residents informed of outcomes arising from this motion and to continue to press for tangible improvements until a reliable and resilient water supply is demonstrably achieved.

Proposed by: Cllr Bowen

Seconded: Cllr Speed