

Proposed by Cllr Jon Tankard, seconded by Cllr Chris Lloyd

Council notes the twin threats to our rivers from the Conservative government's failure to act on sewage discharges by privatised water companies, together with the recent pronouncement by the previous Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities of the then-government's intention to remove regulations regarding nutrient neutrality. Council believes that both Conservative policies will add to the pollution of our precious waterways, seas and oceans and the habitats that depend on them.

Council further believes that extensive building in our Green Belt is also a threat to local habitats, and that whilst the then-Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities had brought forward this plan to amend the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill, he had not sought to introduce an amendment to change the Standard Methodology or enable Local Planning Authorities to safeguard Green Belt land.

Council therefore calls for:

1. The immediate end to the threats to our waterways by a commitment to keep rules on nutrient neutrality and the retention of the entire Habitats' Directive.
2. A speeding up of the Environment Agency's largest ever criminal investigation into potential widespread breaches of environmental permit conditions at wastewater treatment works by all water and sewerage companies.
3. A reduction in the amount of sewage which can legally be discharged into waterways and the sea.
4. Changes to the National Planning Policy Framework, backed by primary legislation to enable the safeguarding of valuable Green Belt land. Council therefore calls for the Chief Executive to write to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, and the Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs stating the council's views on these matters.