

Ms Sonia Brown
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Date : 21 October 2013

Dear Ms Brown

DEEPHAMS SEWAGE WORKS

At its meeting on 17 October, the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee received a petition from Enfield's community with 2,239 signatures raising concern regarding the odour nuisance over much of Eastern Enfield caused by the sewage works. We were sorry that Ofwat declined our invitation to be represented.

We have referred the matter to the full Council for debate but in view of the timetable for Thames Waters' application to you. I am writing to set out the concerns expressed at the meeting, as Chair of the Committee.

We heard very clear testimony from residents about the level of odour nuisance. They spoke of their disgust at the smell, from the time they get up to the time they go to bed; the embarrassment they feel when visitors notice the smell; and the impact on the economic well-being of the community in terms of property values and the disincentive to invest in the area (e.g. the cancellation of the World Athletics Championship at Pickett's Lock in 2002, partly due to the stink). A number of young people were particularly eloquent about having to grow up in such an environment.

Thames Water said that recent works had led to a 15% reduction in odour levels, though it was clear from the audience reaction this had not affected public perceptions. Thames Water explained that following the previous consultation they were progressing an application to rebuild Deephams, which would lead to significant odour reduction. However there will still be a significant odour nuisance that will affect a large number of Edmonton

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residents. They said the cost of fully enclosing the plant so that odour could be contained within the site boundary would be beyond the cost levels that Ofwat would approve.

The Committee did not feel that an adequate cost-benefit analysis had been undertaken of the odour-reductions achievable with modern technology. The drivers for the rebuild seemed to be much more about water quality, than about the much more direct human impact of the Deephams stink, not only in LB Enfield but also in LB Waltham Forest.

We asked that Thames Water should share their economic analyses with the LAs affected, so that we can review the metrics used and the values ascribed to them.

As a Committee we felt that the starting point should be that odour should be confined within the plant boundaries. The prioritisation of funding for odour reduction should depend on objective factors rather than on who shouts loudest.

We hope that this will assist you in evaluating the Thames Water submission. I expect that the LA will write further, after we have seen the figures and held a debate in full Council.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Toby Simon', written in a cursive style.

Councillor Toby Simon
Chair, Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Cc: Stephen St Pier, Ofwat
Cc: Mark Worsfold, Ofwat
Cc: Rob Leak, Chief Executive
Cc: Andy Love, MP
Cc: Nick Butler, Thames Water