

Interruption of Water Supply - Southern Water

Overview & Scrutiny Panel 16 February 2023

Report Author Charles Hungwe, Senior Democratic Services Officer

Status For Decision

Classification: Unrestricted

Key Decision No

Ward: Thanet Wide

Executive Summary:

A member of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel requested that an item on the interruption of water supply be added to the agenda for a future Panel meeting.

Recommendation(s):

Members are being asked to provide some steer on how they would like to progress this matter.

Corporate Implications

Financial and Value for Money

There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

Legal

The role of scrutiny is set out in section 9F of the Local Government Act 2000. The council must also have regard to the statutory guidance on Overview and Scrutiny from the ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government when exercising its functions.

Furthermore, according to the Council's Constitutional Rules of Procedure, Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 8a; "Any member of an Overview and Scrutiny Panel shall be entitled to give notice to the Committee Services Manager that they wish an item relevant to the functions of the Panel to be included on the agenda for the next available meeting of the Panel."

The Overview and Scrutiny panel can scrutinise the activities and services provided by external bodies or other agencies operating in the local area covered by Thanet District Council. However the Panel cannot oblige those external bodies to act upon their findings.

Risk Management

There are risks arising directly from this report.

Corporate

This report is to introduce an item that was requested by a Member of the Panel to discuss an issue that was raised by a resident. The Panel can scrutinise any matter that affects the wellbeing of Thanet residents.

Equality Act 2010 & Public Sector Equality Duty

Members are reminded of the requirement, under the Public Sector Equality Duty (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010) to have due regard to the aims of the Duty at the time the decision is taken. The aims of the Duty are: (i) eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act, (ii) advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it, and (iii) foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

Protected characteristics: age, sex, disability, race, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, religion or belief and pregnancy & maternity. Only aim (i) of the Duty applies to Marriage & civil partnership.

This report relates to the following aim of the equality duty: -

1. To eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
2. To advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it
3. To foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

No implications arise directly but the Council needs to retain a strong focus and understanding on issues of diversity amongst the local community and ensure service delivery matches these.

It was important to be aware of the Council's responsibility under the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) and show evidence that due consideration has been given to the equalities impact that may be brought upon communities by the decisions made by Council.

Corporate Priorities

This report relates to the following corporate priorities: -

- Communities

1.0 Introduction and Background

- 1.1 Democratic Services received an email request from Councillor Heather Keen requesting that an item be added to the next Overview and Scrutiny agenda to discuss residents' concerns regarding water supply interruptions in parts of the district.

- 1.2 Councillor Keen advised that these water supply interruptions were “far from an isolated case, the recent outages negatively affected many residents and businesses and it is not clear what actions have been taken to prevent a future occurrence.”
- 1.3 The Panel member therefore further requested that the item be added to the OSP work plan and that a representative from Southern Water be invited to a Panel meeting as soon as possible to discuss this matter with Members.

2.0 Options

- 2.1 Members could agree to add the “Interruption of Water Supply - Southern Water” to the OSP work Programme for 2022/23 and invite the Southern Water to the March Panel meeting.
- 2.2 Members could choose not to add the item to the work programme, but agree on a different course of action regarding this matter.

3.0 Next Steps

- 3.1 If the Panel agrees to add the item to the work programme, an invitation will be sent out to Southern Water to attend the next meeting of the Panel on 14 March 2023.

Contact Officer: *(Charles Hungwe, Senior Democratic Services Officer)*
Reporting to: *(Nick Hughes, Committee Services Manager)*

Annex List

Annex 1: A letter from a resident

Background Papers

None

Corporate Consultation

Finance: *Chris Blundell (Acting Deputy Chief Executive)*

Legal: *Sameera Khan (Interim Head of Legal & Monitoring Officer)*