

# Thanet District Council Overview and Scrutiny Committee

14 March 2023

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from  
**Southern  
Water** 

# Water supply disruption

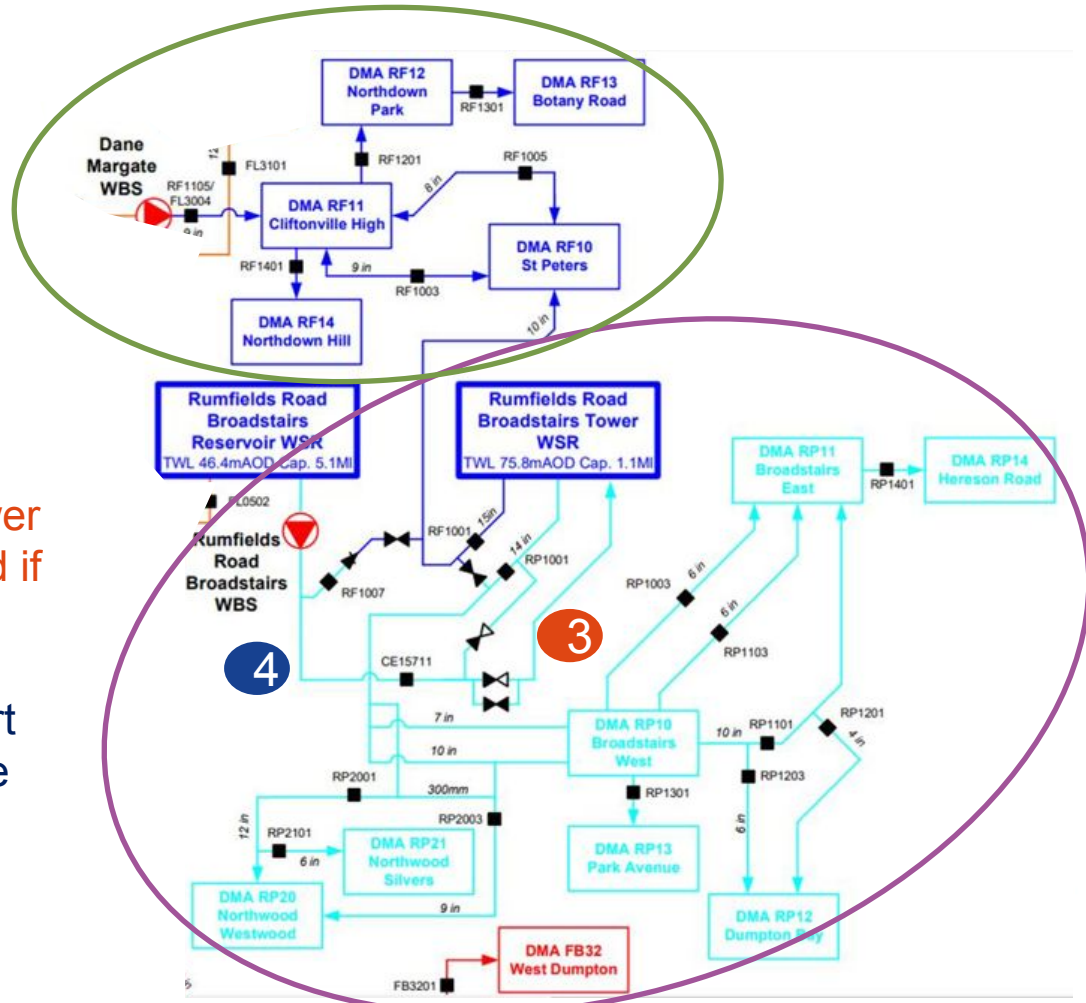


- The water supply to customers in Broadstairs, Ramsgate, Manston and Margate has been interrupted in recent months
- This was initially due to a burst water main, followed by multiple power failures at Rumfields Water Booster Station (WBS)
- The **purpose of this briefing** is to give you an overview of what happened and how we are resolving it



# How the network works

1. Rumsfield Tower fields ~ 13300 properties
2. With ~7000 properties fed through Margate Water booster station
3. Normally when the Tower is in operation the booster feeds the tower which gives us ~6 hours to respond if there is a problem with the booster
4. With the Tower out of supply as part of asset improvement works we are reliant on the boosters, which sees immediate customer impact



# Issues at Rumfields WBS

## 19 December 2022

- This was caused by a burst water main that occurred when temperatures increased suddenly after a cold spell. More than 9,000 properties were out of supply for 33 hours

## 12 and 15 January 2023

- These outages were due to local power interruptions, which tripped the booster pumps on site. These short interruptions lasted for an hour

## 21 January 2023

- A mains power failure occurred at approximately 7pm and our generators also failed due to a faulty starter motor (Despite being tested and proven as working the week prior). This resulted in 4,413 properties being left without water for 11 hours
- If power fails, we have generators on site which should turn on automatically to ensure we continue to provide water to our customers



# Issues at Rumfields WBS

## 30 January 2023

- As part of our improvements to the water tower, maintenance work unexpectedly caused an outage and we quickly resolved the issue within 30 minutes

## 23 February 2023

- Our booster pumps on site failed, which resulted in low pressure or a loss of water supply for customers in the area. The pumps failed due to surge from the mains power supply, which blew a fuse on the inlet into site. Unfortunately, there was also an issue with the back-up generator
- As the site is currently permanently manned, we were able to investigate immediately and fix the issue. Water supply was restored within 45 minutes



# Improving our resilience

## Short Term

- We successfully completed electrical maintenance work in January, which including the installation of a new temporary generator and mains fail testing
  - The site is now permanently manned until the new starter motor is installed, which provides resilience in the event of a power issue
  - During power issues, the team now switch power over onto the generator and keep customers in supply
- 
- The Tower is now back in supply post ~£1m



# Improving our Resilience

## Long term

- To further improve our resilience, we're looking at proposals to overhaul the power supply and the generator management control system at Rumfields WBS, along with other upgrades which will allow us better visibility of how the site is operating
- This upgrade would cost more than £250k and would take at least six months to complete. We will keep you updated
- We're also currently in the process of developing a draft plan for AMP8 (2025 to 2030). Details are yet to be confirmed but we're looking at a variety of schemes, some of which are in Thanet, including the impact and management of growth across the area and resilience of the supply to the Rumfields area
- Please note that this is a very early stage of the development of the AMP8 business plan and is subject to development and change



# How we Compensate Customers

- The compensation household and non-household customers receive in respect of water supply interruptions is based on our Guaranteed Standards Scheme (GSS)
- This is a regulatory condition set by our Regulator
- This is set at £30 for every 12-hour period customers' water supply has been disrupted for households and £75 for non-households
- Proactive identification of customers impacted is determined by pressure readings from critical control points and manual checks undertaken off high / low points in the network.





# Compensation update regarding December's incident

- The burst water main incident in December impacted a total of 13,395 customers (12,352 household / 1,043 non-household) for a duration of up to 24 hours
- GSS payments were made to 9,696 household customers and 1,043 non-household customers well within the 20 days deadline, being paid by 20 January 2023
- Unfortunately, due to a processing error, there were 2,656 household customers who were paid late. They received their payment, along with an additional late payment of £20 by 9 February 2023
- Household customers received letters with information on their payment
- For non-household customers, we advised their retailer of the payment, so they can credit the customers' account



# Customer drop-in

- We know that we've caused distress and disruption, and earlier today (14 March) we held a drop-in to ensure customers could speak to us in-person about their concerns
- Colleagues from different departments spoke with residents and answered queries about our water networks, compensation payments and our priority support services
- The drop-in was promoted in local news, social media, text messages and word of mouth. Thank you for your support in sharing details



Southern Water ✓  
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Calling all #Thanet residents! 🗣️

Come to our community drop-in, 3-5:30pm today, St Andrew's Community Hall, #Broadstairs, to learn how we're creating a more resilient water supply and about our work to reduce storm overflow use in your local area. 5.30pm [ow.ly/9qNp50NhEWn](https://www.southernwater.co.uk/ow.ly/9qNp50NhEWn)



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