From: [redacted]
To: [redacted]
Cc: [redacted]
Subject: FW: Aberlady Bay sewage pollution (Case Ref: PM42)
Date: 07 October 2021 17:40:00
Attachments: image001.png
image002.png
image003.png
image004.png
image005.png
image006.png
Gullane and Aberlady Community Update - July 21.pdf
Gullane WWTW Catchment.pdf
Aberlady Network.pdf
501300_34_DG_351 Gullane, Muirfield Grove, Saltcoats Stage 1 Rerun (Fire College Assessment).pdf
210722 - Aberlady Bay - EMAIL TO MSP.msg

Hi [redacted],

We have previously engaged with the MSP and provided significant information to the community council (please see attached email).

Below is the most recent correspondence with Paul McLennan MSP on this issue.

Apologies for sending this so late but I was waiting for some further information from our regional manager.

If you think that it would help, we could arrange for our regional team manager to further discuss this with the MSP, however our position hasn't changed.

Kind Regards,
[redacted]

[redacted] **Public Affairs Officer**
Castle House, 6 Castle Drive, Dunfermline, KY11 8GG
M: [redacted] | **E:** [redacted]@scottishwater.co.uk
Scottish Water, Corporate Affairs

SW Public
General

From: [redacted]@SCOTTISHWATER.CO.UK>
Sent: 05 August 2021 12:11
To: Paul McLennan MSP <paul.mclennan.msp@parliament.scot>
Cc: [redacted]@SCOTTISHWATER.CO.UK>
Subject: RE: Aberlady Bay sewage pollution (Case Ref: PM42)

Hi Paul / [redacted],

Emailing a number of documents following our meeting and discussion with colleagues which hopefully cover everything we discussed and also some of the questions you may be getting asked by the community. Included is:

- Summary document – this includes info on Waste Water Treatment and network capacity, new development connections and CSO investigations
- 2 network maps which have key information labelled on them

- The report on the CALA development modelling (this is a bit of technical report which is mostly just numbers, but has been requested by the Community Council)

My intention is that I send the same information to the community council who have made a number of contacts in to Scottish Water in recent weeks, but emailing to you first.

In relation to the BBC report, I was involved in the Scottish Water response to this and briefed our Director, Simon Parsons, who was interviewed. Specifically in relation to the Aberlady part of this news report we have investigated the report that the Aberlady Green CSO outfall was running when it was dry weather. We visited yesterday and are going again today to check this. There was no running water from this pipe when we attended yesterday.

The other area filmed in this report showed the end of 2 pipes. These pipes can be seen on the attached 'Aberlady Network' map, as Loan Cottage CSO and Surface Water outfall. There are 2 pipes, one which is purely for surface water and the other is surface water but has a connection from a CSO also. It is worth pointing out that if there is liquid running from either of these pipes this does not indicate that there is necessarily as CSO overflow, as it is very likely to be surface water from the village and surrounding land.
Information on CSO's is available on our website also for reference - https://www.scottishwater.co.uk/help-and-resources/faqs/waste-water-faqs/cso-faqs

If you wish to discuss any of this please don't hesitate to get in contact. We feel that we have always been open and transparent with the community in the area and responded to and investigated anything that has been raised with us and want to continue to do so.

Kind regards

[redacted]

[redacted]

Mob. [redacted]

For news about our work in the south east, follow us on Twitter @SWsoutheast

www.scottishwater.co.uk

From: [redacted]
To:
Subject: MR 202100260744 - Contribution from Scottish Water - Ash Regan MSP - Sewage Pollution Portobello
Date: 03 August 2022 14:00:00

From: [redacted]@SCOTTISHWATER.CO.UK> **On Behalf Of** Public Affairs
Sent: 07 December 2021 16:41
To: [redacted]@gov.scot>
Subject: RE: Portobello Beach Pollution (Case Ref: AD8935)

Hi [redacted],

We were made aware of sewage spilling onto the Portobello beach by the Figgate Burn at the beginning of November. Our sewer response team investigated and found that a section of sewer had collapsed.

We made the area safe to the public by putting up barriers around the collapsed sewer to create a temporary boundary and monitored the area closely in order to keep the beach clean from any sewer related debris.

Due to the location of the collapse it was deemed the repair was complex therefor it was passed over to our partners, George Lesley to carry out.

We issued communication to stakeholders and a letter drop was carried out to the properties local to the beach. Posters were also displayed around the area and we engaged with SEPA to make them aware of the situation.

Fortunately, due to where the collapse was located on the beach and the tidal nature of its location the sea water made its way into the sewer rather than the sewer spilling onto the beach, which meant there was less impact of pollution to the sea. Our sewer network was monitored closely to ensure this had no effect on our network.

George Lesley completed the full repair on the 22nd of November but remained onsite the following week to undertake CCTV surveys of the surrounding sewers.

Hope this is enough info, if you need anything else let me know.

Kind Regards,
[redacted]

[redacted] | **Public Affairs Officer**
Castle House, 6 Castle Drive, Dunfermline, KY11 8GG
M: [redacted] | **E:** [redacted]@scottishwater.co.uk
Scottish Water, Corporate Affairs

SW Public
General

From: [redacted]@gov.scot <[redacted]@gov.scot>

Sent: 06 December 2021 11:29
To: Public Affairs <Public.Affairs@scottishwater.co.uk>
Subject: FW: Portobello Beach Pollution (Case Ref: AD8935)

Morning [redacted],

Please see the email below. We can offer the standard lines on water quality etc but do you have any information about a burst affecting the beach?

Our deadline to respond is 13 December.

Thanks,

[redacted]
Policy Officer
Water Industry Team
Scottish Government
Office: [redacted]
Mobile: [redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

Scottish Water

www.scottishwater.co.uk

From: [redacted] on behalf of Public Affairs
To: [redacted]
Cc: [redacted]
Subject: RE: River Almond - Sewage Pollution
Date: 13 April 2021 14:04:24
Attachments: image001.jpg
image002.jpg

Sorry for the delay, [redacted]

[redacted], our [redacted], has been in contact with [redacted] and there has been some discussion about arranging a site visit with him We re also aware he has been in contact with SEPA and we are currently planning on further engagement in the area

Given [redacted] background, it may be worth providing information in the reply on our surface water management policy, which is something with the Cab Sec and the Scottish Government have been very supportive of Here is a link to our policy on the website: Scottish Water Surface Water Management Policy

A few points specific to the River Almond which might help:

- Scottish Water and Veolia wish to actively engage with the local community groups around the River Almond and will be open and transparent about our operations, assets and future plans for the area
- The waste water network and treatment works are operated under strict regulatory policy Scottish Water and our partners are always striving to protect the environment whilst providing an essential service to our thousands of customers and businesses who live and work in West Lothian
- We are engaged with local stakeholders and community groups who are interested in helping protect the River Almond from pollution, as well working with SEPA and West Lothian Council to ensure we are clearly communicating about any operational activity on our assets around the River Almond
- In Oct last year we hosted a number of local councillors, community council representatives and the Forth Rivers Trust at the East Calder WWTW, where we helped explain the treatment process and capacity We intend to have further visitor events at the works
- We are regularly engaging with the River Almond Action Group to ensure we are providing accurate information regarding the operation of local assets and welcome the opportunity to continue further dialogue with the community on any concerns they have
- We are aware of reports of Sewage related debris in the river from storm overflows and have been carrying out clean-ups along the river bank to remove items that have been wrongly flushed down toilets and can make their way into the river following heavy rainfall
- Combined sewer overflows are an integral part of most of the sewer networks in Scotland and the UK, ensuring that sewers do not back up and flood homes, streets and sewage works during heavy rainfall These CSOs are licensed by SEPA and discharges into water courses must comply with quality standards set in these licences The levels of untreated sewage in storm water that is discharged is very dilute so is unlikely to cause harm to the environment SEPA monitor and take samples from the watercourses to understand if there is any impact to the environment What can impact the environment from CSOs discharging, is when there are items which have wrongly been flushed down the toilet mixed in with the storm water Items commonly flushed down the toilet are wet wipes, cotton buds and female sanitary products Items commonly put down drains are fats, oils and grease These items can make their way into rivers, burns and coastal waters from CSOs, however this is easily preventable by only ever flushing the 3Ps (pee, poo and toilet paper)
- We have recently agreed to instigate a study into the local CSOs and sewer network We are funding the installation of monitors on the CSOs which will provide data on their performance Monitors won t prevent overflows, but this will help pinpoint any issues and potentially identify future improvements in the area

I hope this helps If you need any more information, please let me know

[redacted]

SW Private
Personal

From: [redacted]@gov scot>
Sent: 13 April 2021 09:47
To: Public Affairs <Public Affairs@scottishwater co uk>
Subject: RE: River Almond - Sewage Pollution

Morning [redacted],

Were you able to provide any information on this issue?

Thanks,

[redacted]
Policy Officer
Water Industry Team
Scottish Government
Office [redacted]
Mobile: [redacted]

From: [redacted]
Sent: 31 March 2021 09:40
To: Public Affairs (Public Affairs@scottishwater co uk) <Public Affairs@scottishwater co uk>
Subject: FW: River Almond - Sewage Pollution

Hi [redacted]

You may have already seen this email. Would you be able to provide any background information?

Our deadline is 12 April.

Thanks for your help,

[redacted]
Policy Officer
Water Industry Team
Scottish Government
Office [redacted]
Mobile: [redacted]

From: [redacted] gov scot> **On Behalf Of** Cabinet Secretary for the Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform
Sent: 16 March 2021 13:07
To: Public Engagement Unit <CorrespondenceUnit@gov scot>
Cc: Cabinet Secretary for the Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform <CabSecECCLR@gov scot>
Subject: FW: River Almond - Sewage Pollution

AO Stuart McCaskell

For response please.

Kind regards,

[redacted]

[redacted] Roseanna Cunningham MSP | Cabinet Secretary for Environment Climate Change and Land Reform | Scottish Government | cabsececclr@gov.scot

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Out of Hours Advice

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From: Cunningham R (Roseanna), MSP <Roseanna Cunningham msp@parliament scot>
Sent: 16 March 2021 12:59
To: Cabinet Secretary for the Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform <CabSecECCLR@gov scot>
Subject: Fwd: River Almond - Sewage Pollution

Sent from my iPad

Begin forwarded message:

> **From:** [redacted] gmail com>
> **Date:** 16 March 2021 at 10:41:03 GMT
> **To:** [redacted] scottishwater co uk>, [redacted] westlothian gov uk>, "Constance A (Angela), MSP" <Angela Constance msp@parliament scot>, hannah bardell mp@parliament uk, [redacted] westlothian gov uk, "Macpherson B (Ben), MSP" <Ben Macpherson msp@parliament scot>
> **Cc:** "Cunningham R (Roseanna), MSP" <Roseanna Cunningham msp@parliament scot>, '[redacted] sepa org uk>, [redacted] westlothian gov uk>, '[redacted] westlothian gov uk>
> **Subject: Re: River Almond - Sewage Pollution**
>
> **CAUTION:** *This e-mail originated from outside of The Scottish Parliament. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognise the sender and know the content is safe.*
>
> Good morning all,
>
> As a local resident, who happens to be a Civil Engineer, I have raised the following petition which now has over 1,100 signatures: https://www.change.org/p/encouraging-sepa-to-hold-scottish-water-and-veolia-to-account-for-recurrent-sewage-overflows-stop-polluting-the-river-almond-with-sewage?recruiter=259032946&recruited_by_id=7ee86c50-ce59-11e4-8adb-2520e2a1038f&utm_source=share_petition&utm_medium=copylink&utm_campaign=petition_dashboard
>
> It is evident that local communities along the River Almond are fed up of the recurrent sewage overflows, the standard "we are meeting regulations" response from Scottish Water and SEPA We need short and long-term action to be taken to address the recurrent sewage overflows happening in the first place i e better management of rainwater so that it is not sent directly to undeground sewers and wastewater treatment plant capacity upgrades The prevalence of sewage debris along the river banks following moderate to heavy rainfalls is shocking
>
> Do Scottish Water really consider this to be acceptable? Overflows are meant to be screened to 6mm but there is toilet roll and wet wipes etc evident downstream of several Wastewater Treatment Works in West Lothian SEPA seems to do little as an environmental regulatory body who are meant to protect our watercourses as we strive to meet Water Framework Directive targets or similar, following Brexit
>
> These photos taken by a couple of residents walking downstream of the East Calder Wastewater Treatment Works this morning
>
> Please inform me and the general public why you find this to be acceptable and if any action is going to be taken The least you could do is inform the public when these discharges are likely to or are happening to avoid people letting their dogs swim in the river or partaking in water-related recreational activities
>
> As you may be aware, I have a research/ work-related background into flooding and sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) and this is one option that I hope would be encouraged as we make our environments more climate-resilient and sustainable so that we are fit for 21st century challenges
>
> Kind regards,
> [redacted]
>
> MSc BSc (Hons)
> MICE
>
> On Fri, 12 Mar 2021, 11:52 [redacted] scottishwater co uk> wrote:
>
> > Hi [redacted],
> >
> > Thanks for your thoughtful email outlining your concerns and knowledge on the subject As per my other emails regarding a site visit, please let us know if you would like to follow this up
> >
> > Just wanted to pick up and clarify one point below regarding 'screens' The photos you attached (which I've attached again to this email) show the overflow outfall from the storm tanks and the outfall from the CSO with 'ragging' on them The metal grills on these outfalls are not what we refer to as 'screens' They are really only designed and installed as a security measure, to prevent people (possibly children) or animals trying to go up the pipe They do catch rags (wipes and other non-flushables) on them sometimes, but this is not what they are primarily designed for
> >
> > The 'screens' that are installed as part of treatment works or CSOs are built into the actual assets themselves For example there are large screens at the inlet works which catch the vast majority of rags (see photo attached) on a daily basis Some items get past these screens into the Storm Tanks and in storm event out the outfall (if storm tanks are full) We had an issue last year when we had to take one of the tanks offline to remove a big 'rag ball' of items that were blocking the tanks
> >
> > The photo of the 6th December shows when there was such intense rainfall that volume of flow for a period meant that some flows couldn't be screened This was an extreme event when the River Almond was at the highest it's been in 18years (I think I recall this being the stat)
> >
> > I'm not an engineer, so this email is written in my words and language rather than being technical, but I hope it helps on the point about screens I do think there is a misconception that these simple metal bars are our defence against wipes etc entering the river and in fact it is much more sophisticated than this at a treatment works like East Calder
> >
> > In terms of any warnings around outfalls, this is something we are looking at to improve advice for those who use the river recreationally I'm tempted to generally use SEPA advice on this that they use for both bathing waters and non-designated bathing waters, which I think is a general statement of 'Bathing is

From: [redacted] on behalf of Public Affairs
To:
Cc: [redacted]
Subject: RE: MiCase - River Almond
Date: 06 May 2021 15:20:17

Hi [redacted],

I think maybe [redacted] tried to phone you about this query, as he was involved in some discussions with Jon Rathjen at the end of last week about this. Some high level messages have been agreed along the lines:

1. SW is committed to playing its part to help achieve "good" status in the River Almond by 2027.
2. We are currently in the planning stages to understand what investment will be required both capital and operational, and also how the introduction of more blue / green infrastructure will help achieve the aims. Individual projects and scopes will emerge in due course as more information and options become more established
3. SW assets are only one component within what will need to be considered: others such as agriculture/land management, other organisations who discharge into the river and other river users will also need to be part of the plan
4. We are happy to discuss how RAAG can support our 3 P's messaging moving forward
5. We are engaged with the RAAG and have regular dialogue with [redacted], the local MSP and MP, SEPA and West Lothian Council on this matter.

If you need to discuss this further, just let us know.

[redacted]

From: [redacted]@gov.scot>
Sent: 04 May 2021 10:45
To: Public Affairs <Public.Affairs@scottishwater.co.uk>
Cc [redacted]@gov.scot
Subject: RE: MiCase - River Almond

Good question [redacted]

We weren't aware of the initial contact here, but given our environment colleague contributed, I believe he would have obtained the information direct from SEPA.

Thanks,

[redacted]
Policy Officer
Water Industry Team
Scottish Government
Office: [redacted]
Mobile: [redacted]

From: [redacted]@SCOTTISHWATER.CO.UK> **On Behalf Of** Public Affairs
Sent: 04 May 2021 10:42
To: [redacted]@gov.scot>
Cc: [redacted]@gov.scot>
Subject: RE: MiCase - River Almond

Hi [redacted]

Just to confirm that we've received this query and will reply as soon as possible.

I'm just curious if you know where the information about investment came from for the original reply? Was it a SEPA report?

Many thanks

[redacted]

[redacted]
[redacted]
Scottish Water
Tel: [redacted]
Working days: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday

From: [redacted]@gov.scot>
Sent: 04 May 2021 09:03
To: Public Affairs <Public.Affairs@scottishwater.co.uk>
Cc: [redacted]@gov.scot
Subject: FW: MiCase - River Almond

EXTERNAL MAIL - Think Before You Click

Morning [redacted]

We have received another email on this issue. Would you be able to provide some information to answer points 2-7?

We're ideally looking to clear this week if possible.

Thanks,

[redacted]
Policy Officer
Water Industry Team

Scottish Government
Office: [redacted]
Mobile: [redacted]

[redacted]

wastewater treatment works have been agreed, planned with the

[redacted]

We look forward to hearing from you and remain committed to working

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

****

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From: [redacted] on behalf of Public Affairs
To: [redacted]
Cc: [redacted]
Subject: RE: MiCase - River Clyde. Sewage Pollution and potential overspill incidence.
Date: 19 November 2021 17:13:50
Attachments: SEPA Regulatory Returns for Mauldslie WWTW Overflows - 2020.xlsx

---

Hi [redacted],

I have consulted with colleagues and discussed this with [redacted] and we think we should supply the reported overflow data for Mauldslie WwTW along with the following covering text for consistency:

Storm and emergency overflows are licensed by the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) to discharge to the water environment under the Water Environment (Controlled Activities) (Scotland) regulations (CAR). Licenses contain conditions set by SEPA to protect the environment and include overflow settings, storage, screening, event recording and reporting requirements.

Licenses do not require permanent flow monitors or spill event monitors to be installed on all overflows. A number of Scottish Water overflows have licence requirements for permanent flow or spill event duration monitoring and of these a small subset requires annual reporting of flows, pass forward flows and/or spill events to SEPA by the 31st of January for the previous calendar year. We collate and update data throughout the year to support this, but data for 2021 has not been cleansed and checked ready for issue at this point.

The attached information is based on the annual overflow event submissions to SEPA for 2020 for Mauldslie Waste Water Treatment Works (WwTW). Please note that the number of overflow events does not correlate to the number of days where there have been spills as there could be multiple spills in any one day, spills may start one day and end on another and there may be days with no spills. There may also be multiple overflow measurement points at one asset.

Further information on SEPA reporting requirements at Sewage Treatment Works and Sewer overflows is contained in SEPAs regulatory method RM-07 and guidance document SG-13 which are available on SEPAs website:

- SG-13 - Municipal Sewage Treatment Works - Section 2.8
- https://www.sepa.org.uk/media/152905/wat_sg_13.pdf

- RM-07 - Sewer Overflows - Section 4.5.4
- https://www.sepa.org.uk/media/152727/wat_rm_07.pdf

Acronyms (if required)

- CSO - Combined Sewer Overflow
- SSSO - Settled Storm Sewage Overflow

- WWTW - Waste Water Treatment Works

Descriptions of Overflows (if required)

- Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) – These are intermittent discharges. CSOs can be located anywhere on the sewerage network, at a sewage pumping station or on an inlet sewer to the Waste Water Treatment Works (WwTW). Flows in excess of the license pass forward flow will discharge to the environment.

Settled Storm Sewage Overflow (SSSO) - These are intermittent discharges that receive settlement before discharge to the environment. Settlement can be in primary tanks or storm tanks. Storm tanks can be located on the sewer network or at a Waste Water Treatment Works (WwTW).

Let me know if you need any more information for your response.

Kind Regards,
[redacted]

[redacted] | **Public Affairs Officer**
Castle House, 6 Castle Drive, Dunfermline, KY11 8GG
M: [redacted] | **E:** [redacted]@scottishwater.co.uk
Scottish Water, Corporate Affairs

SW Public
General

From: [redacted] **On Behalf Of** Public Affairs
Sent: 11 November 2021 16:44
To: [redacted]@gov.scot
Cc: [redacted]@gov.scot
Subject: RE: MiCase - River Clyde. Sewage Pollution and potential overspill incidence.

Hi [redacted]

Thanks for your email regarding the above. I'll check this with my operational colleagues and provide you with an update.

Kind regards
[redacted]

[redacted] | **Public Affairs Officer**
Castle House, 6 Castle Drive, Dunfermline, KY11 8GG
M: [redacted] | **E:** [redacted]@scottishwater.co.uk
Scottish Water, Corporate Affairs

SW Public
General

From: [redacted]@gov.scot [redacted]@gov.scot>
Sent: 11 November 2021 13:06
To: Public Affairs <Public.Affairs@scottishwater.co.uk>
Cc: [redacted]@gov.scot
Subject: FW: MiCase - River Clyde. Sewage Pollution and potential overspill incidence.

Morning [redacted]

Please see the email below. Are you aware of any issues at this location?

Our deadline is 26 November.

Thanks for your help.

[redacted]
Policy Officer
Water Industry Team
Scottish Government
Office: [redacted]
Mobile: [redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

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****
*****

From: [redacted]
To: [redacted]
Cc: [redacted]
Subject: RE: MiCase - Water spillages
Date: 13 June 2023 09:51:47
Importance: High

Hi [redacted]

Further to my email last night, I have received the following update from [redacted] explaining our current understanding of this issue.

Following further investigations, we have ruled out a possible connection with the nearby network of surface water sewers, which we have confirmed are connected to a different outfall.

It appears that the origin of the discolouration reported must be the outfall from the Waste Water Treatment Works, but the cause of this has not yet been established. The issue appears to have been transient, with the treatment process operating well and the final effluent running clear by Monday 15th May when the report was received (as well as on the preceding Friday when our operators were also on site).

In order to investigate further, a turbidity probe has been installed at the WWTW to allow the clarity of the final effluent to be monitored on a continuous basis. Work is planned to connect this with the site's telemetry system which will allow performance to be monitored remotely. This will support prompt operational investigation if there is any recurrence – and might also provide insight to potential causes.

We are sorry for the concern the discoloured discharge has caused, but would like to assure stakeholders of our efforts to investigate and our commitment to operate Ellon's WWTW to a high standard.

We will be able to discuss tomorrow with Cllr Kloppert the further action that we're taking, but I wanted to update you after receiving the findings from the dye-testing which have significantly change the focus of our follow-up activity.

Kind regards,
[redacted]

[redacted]
Public Affairs Specialist
M: [redacted] | **E:** [redacted]@scottishwater.co.uk
Scottish Water, Corporate Affairs

SW Public
General

From: [redacted]
Sent: 12 June 2023 17:46
To: [redacted]@gov.scot
Cc: [redacted]@gov.scot; [redacted]SCOTTISHWATER.CO.UK>
Subject: RE: MiCase - Water spillages

Hi [redacted],

I have discussed this enquiry with [redacted] and he confirmed that he was in correspondence with the [redacted] following his initial email dated 15th May 2023.

We have carried out some investigations since the initial report and we currently believe the issue is likely to have originated from the surface water network. Our Operational colleagues have advised that the Waste Water Treatment Works has been operating normally over the period when the discharge to the Ythan was observed.

To get more certainty on the source of this issue, we will needed some rain so our Operational colleagues could do drain-tracing. Confirming where the surface water sewers discharge will support our understanding on what caused the issue. We have a team that will follow-up to see if they can identify any potential source of the problem and take appropriate action.

We appreciate it is frustrating that we can't identify a definitive source at this stage.

Please note that, we are meeting [redacted] and other stakeholders on site on Wednesday 14th June and this matter may be discussed, although we expect greater focus will fall on the November environmental incident when the plastic biofilters were spilt to the environment.

I hope this is helpful, but please let me know if you need any more information.

Kind regards,
[redacted]

[redacted]
Public Affairs Specialist
M: [redacted] | **E:** [redacted]@scottishwater.co.uk
Scottish Water, Corporate Affairs

SW Public
General

From: [redacted]@gov.scot <[redacted]@gov.scot>
Sent: 01 June 2023 15:45
To: Public Affairs <Public.Affairs@scottishwater.co.uk>
Cc: [redacted]@gov.scot
Subject: FW: MiCase - Water spillages

Hi [redacted]

Please see the email below.

Do you have any information about this incident? Is it a pollution incident or a discharge from a CSO?

Our deadline to respond is 12 June 2023.

Thanks,

[redacted]
Policy Officer
Water Policy
Scottish Government
Office: [redacted]
Mobile: [redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

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order to secure the effective operation of the system and for other lawful purposes. The views or opinions contained within this e-mail may not necessarily reflect those of the Scottish Government.
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RIVER TAY SEWAGE

23 Aug 2 Courier articles regarding sewage entering the River Tay at Dundee due to a collapsed public sewer main that is being repaired by Scottish Water.

Background:

- SEPA regulates and licences activities that may impact water environment to protect "good" ecological status.
- There is a heightened interest in sewage pollution of the water environment by the media and public in Scotland mainly driven by events in England reported in UK media.
- Minister for Environment and Land Reform's statement in Parliament last December set out comprehensive plans to reduce sewage spills over the coming decade.
- In December 2021, SEPA published Scotland's third River Basin Management Plans and Scottish Water published the Improving Urban Waters Route Map.

TOP LINES

We take very seriously the issue of sewage spills, and the Minister for Environment and Land Reform's statement in Parliament last December set out comprehensive plans to reduce sewage spills over the coming decade.

- Scottish Water's Improving Urban Waters Route Map, published in December 2021, sets out a programme of continued action to reduce wastewater pollution and sewage litter over the coming decade, with investment of half a billion pounds.
- As of May 2022, Scottish Water had committed 71(of 108 identified) high priority unsatisfactory Combine Sewer Overflows (CSOs) into the solutions development phase due to their impact on water quality or sewage related debris. It is assessing the planning work required for the remaining 37.
- 27 high priority unsatisfactory Combined Sewer Overflows (CSOs) are included as improvement measures in the third River Basin Management Plans, and Scottish Water is also developing solutions for 40 waste water treatment works which are included as improvement measures.
- As of May 2022, Scottish Water had identified the first programme of around 250 Combined Sewer Overflows (CSOs) monitors that will be delivered to meet its commitment to install 1,000 new monitors before 2024.

RIVER TAY SEWAGE INCIDENT

Scottish Water has been working hard with contractors since last Friday to repair the broken sewer on the A85 at Riverside Drive, Dundee, which they completed on Wednesday.

- As part of the emergency repairs sewage is receiving primary treatment to remove solid debris before being discharged to the River Tay as a temporary measure.
- SEPA was notified by Scottish Water of the incident on Friday and is continuing to monitoring the environment. However, any impact on the River Tay is likely to be minimal and short term.

[redacted]

- As a precautionary measure the public has been advised not to bathe at Broughty Ferry and Monifieth Bathing Waters until the repairs are complete and SEPA monitoring indicates it is safe to bathe.

ROLE OF COMBINED SEWER OVERFLOWS (CSOs)

Combined Sewer Overflows (CSOs) are an integral part of Scotland's sewer networks, ensuring sewers don't back up and flood homes, streets and sewage works during periods of heavy rainfall.

- SEPA is required by law to identify unsatisfactory CSOs, primarily for water quality or sewage related debris impacts, in order to reduce those impacts on the water environment.
- Rather than permanent monitoring, which is the more common approach for water companies in England, Scottish Water carried out a Scotland-wide environmental study programme to assess the impacts of its assets on water quality during the 2015 to 2021 investment period costing around £40m.
- This comprehensive Scottish Water environmental study programme contributed significantly to 654 out of 3,614 CSOs being identified as unsatisfactory by SEPA.
- SEPA regularly monitors the water environment to ensure it is not impacted by sewage spills. In 2019, it took around 12,000 monitoring samples across Scotland to safeguard the water quality of our rivers, lochs and coastal areas.
- SEPA licences and regulates 345 sewer networks operated by Scottish Water carrying out inspections on a rolling basis and in 2019 there were 7 out of 100 found not to be compliant with their licence conditions.
- Scottish Water continue to record levels of Environmental Pollution Incidents that are well below the target for the 2015-21 period of no more than 330 per year.
- SEPA regulation has reduced pollution events from the public sewage system by 60% over the last decade from 800 each year to fewer than 300.

RIVER AND LOCH POLLUTION LEVELS AT RECORD LOW

87% of Scotland's entire water environment, which includes coastal waters, estuaries, and groundwater as well as rivers and lochs, is assessed by SEPA as having a 'high' or 'good' classification for water quality – up from 82% six years ago.

- This upgrade in water quality reflects improvements made through Scottish Water's investment programme, and work by a range of stakeholders to improve rural land management practices to reduce diffuse pollution.
- SEPA reports that 66% of Scotland's water environment meets 'good' ecological status, whereas, Environment Agency figures for England are only 16%.

[redacted]

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[redacted]

[redacted]

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25 Aug Daily Mail (Scotland) reported sewage spillages into rivers and burns hit 10-year high, 282 were recorded 2021/22 up 45% from 194 in 2020/21. It comes the same week that warning signs were placed on two beaches to alert people to the risks posed by a sewage leak.

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- Following SEPA monitoring this advice ended on Thursday 25 August as it was considered safe to bathe.

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- In 2019, it took around 12,000 monitoring samples across Scotland to safeguard the water quality of our rivers, lochs and coastal areas.
- SEPA licences and regulates 345 sewer networks operated by Scottish Water carrying out inspections on a rolling basis.
- In 2019 there were 7 out of 100 found not to be compliant with their licence conditions. SEPA took action to ensure compliance was achieved.
- Scottish Water works hard to reduce environmental pollution incidents; the number recorded has reduced significantly from nearly 1,000 incidents in 2006, in spite of increasingly challenging weather patterns

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[redacted]

SEWAGE SPILLAGES

2 Oct The National accused SEPA of allowing illegal operation of a Scottish Water East Lothian site (Eastfield) which they state has polluted a beach with sewage for a decade.
4 Sept The Ferret and National reported 49 Scottish beaches polluted by sewage. This year 49 of the 87 designated bathing waters around the country have recorded levels of faecal bacteria that could endanger the health of swimmers, surfers and paddlers. The data quoted in the report has been sense checked with SEPA as accurate.
25 Aug Daily Mail (Scotland) reported sewage spillages into rivers and burns hit 10-year high, 282 were recorded 2021/22 up 45% from 194 in 2020/21. It comes the same week that warning signs were placed on two beaches to alert people to the risks posed by a sewage leak. The data quoted in the report was sourced from Scottish Water's most recent 2021/22 annual report.

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- Scottish Water has reduced environmental pollution incidents by 60% over the last decade from 800 each year to fewer than 300, in spite of increasingly challenging weather patterns.
- Scottish Water's Improving Urban Waters Route Map, published in December 2021, sets out a programme of continued action to reduce wastewater pollution and sewage litter over the coming decade.
- This route map is backed by investment of half a billion pounds.
- Scottish Water is in the process of developing solutions for 90 (of 108 identified) high priority unsatisfactory Combined Sewer Overflows (CSOs) due to their impact on water quality or sewage related debris.
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- Scottish Water has identified the first programme of around 250 Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) monitors that will be delivered to meet its commitment to invest up to £70m to install 1,000 new monitors, including those at bathing waters, before 2024.
- Work is underway to identify the next priorities based upon predicted spill frequency, potential impacts and receiving water amenity with further programmes expected by December 2024.

SEWAGE SPILLAGES

EASTFIELD PUMPING STATION

[redacted]**Eastfield pumping station in East Lothian is regularly inspected by Scottish Water and is operating as designed.**

- Over recent years, the pumps at Eastfield have been either refurbished or replaced and all routine maintenance has been carried out.
- Fisherrow in Musselburgh was de-designated as a bathing water in 2020 due to being classified in 2020 as ‘poor’ for the fifth year in a row.
- 2021 sampling showed pollution in the Brunstane Burn was due to upstream sources rather than the Eastfield pumping station outfall.
- Since then, there has been extensive work by Scottish Water to improve the classification including the Scottish Government-funded Misconnections project which focused on the Brunstane Burn sewer catchment upstream of Fisherrow.
- Scottish Water have agreed with SEPA to undertake further surveys around Eastfield pumping station now that bathing season has finished to determine if any further maintenance work is required.

BATHING WATERS

Last year, 99% of designated bathing waters (85) achieved the bathing water quality standards.

- Bathing Waters classification gives an overall indication of expected water quality, but there can be short term fluctuations in water quality driven by heavy rainfall.
- Bathing Water classification in Scotland is undertaken by SEPA following strict EU standards. These were reviewed by the World Health Organisation in 2018, which concluded they were fit for purpose.
- SEPA investigates poor water quality sample results to seek overall improvements to bathing water quality.
- SEPA’s monitoring of Bathing Waters shows water quality can be impacted by a range of bacterial sources including sewage spills, agricultural land runoff, urban runoff, dog and seagull faeces.
- A small number of ‘poor’ monitoring results at each designated Bathing Water does not mean that water quality is continually poor on all days. SEPA has analysed 1,297 water quality samples from 87 designated Bathing Waters this season and 93% were found to be at safe levels.

SEWAGE SPILLAGES

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[redacted]

POLLUTION OF RIVERS AND LOCHS

12 May: Alex Cole Hamilton cites The Ferret (24 Apr) 'routine dumping' of raw sewage into rivers with over 10000 recorded incidents last year / 30 sewage spills daily – repeating lines that Scotland is 'way behind' England'. Article also cites "Campaigners' fears as Scottish Water warns price hike U-turn could impact on sewage spills target" and "condemned the enormous bonuses of SW staff".
21 Dec: Express report 'Unacceptable!' SNP 'MUST take action' over damaging leaks - Scotland 'way behind' England' as per previous 13 Nov articles quoting LD Liam McArthur calling for SNP to address the problem and announce measures to counter it before matters get worse.
13 Nov: Herald reported internal SG emails issued under FoI, reflecting SG concerns at "unacceptably high" number of sewage leaks, and view that we are "way behind" England in monitoring/solving issues. Limited other media follow-up but LD Liam McArthur called for ministerial statement on "sewage leak crisis" and Lab's Monica Lennon urged SG to act as "our rivers are treated like sewers"
Background:

- SEPA regulates and licences activities that may impact water environment to protect "good" ecological status.
- Minister for Environment and Land Reform's statement in Parliament last December set out comprehensive plans to reduce sewage spills over the coming decade.
- In December 2021, SEPA published Scotland's third River Basin Management Plans and Scottish Water published Improving Urban Waters Route Map.
- 654 Storm overflows/Combined Sewer Overflows (CSOs) out of a total of 3,614 in 50,000km of sewer network in Scotland have been identified by SEPA in 2019 as unsatisfactory.
- SEPA have identified 24 CSOs (just 4% of the 654 'unsatisfactory' CSOs, or 0.6% of all 3,614 CSOs) which are impacting on water quality. These are identified for improvement through River Basin Management Planning by 2027.
- The remaining 630 CSOs with unscreened intermittent discharges cause significant sewage related debris and are being prioritised for improvement.

TOP LINES

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- As of May 2022, Scottish Water has committed 71 (of 108 identified) high priority Unsatisfactory Intermittent Discharges (UIDs) impacting on water quality or sewage related debris into the solutions development phase of activity and is assessing the planning work required for the remaining 37.
- 27 high priority UIDs are included as improvement measures in RBMP3 and SW is also developing solutions for 40 Waste water treatment works which are included as improvement measures.

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RIVER AND LOCH POLLUTION LEVELS AT RECORD LOW

SEPA's monitoring and assessment of the water environment shows that the number of rivers and lochs rated as bad or poor due to pollution is at its lowest level ever. Just 1% were classified this way in 2019.

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[redacted]

From: [redacted]
To: Public Affairs; [redacted]
Cc: [redacted]
Subject: RE: PQ - S6W-00499 - Deadline Date 10th June
Date: 10 June 2021 16:58:19

Hi [redacted],

Just to add is that the recent E Coli reading was measured when it was dry weather, not during a wet weather event.

We met with SEPA this morning at Luss and they are carrying out inspections in the area following Monday's sample at Luss Bay. We've carried out manhole inspections of the sewer network along the beach area at Luss Bay and there were no chokes/blockages or obvious sources of sewage spilling from our system into Loch Lomond. Our operations have also confirmed the daily checks on the final effluent discharge from our WWTW have been within our licensed parameters and we will be forwarding these to SEPA>

I hope this has been helpful.

[redacted]

SW Internal
Personal

From: [redacted] **On Behalf Of** Public Affairs
Sent: 10 June 2021 16:47
To: [redacted]@gov.scot
Cc: [redacted]@SCOTTISHWATER.CO.UK>; [redacted]
[redacted]@SCOTTISHWATER.CO.UK>
Subject: FW: PQ - S6W-00499 - Deadline Date 10th June
Importance: High

Hi [redacted]

I wanted to follow up with you about the PQ about Luss Bay.

The public sewerage network in Luss, including Luss Bay, is a relatively small catchment and there are no combined sewer overflows from our network in this vicinity to Loch Lomond. The Luss public sewerage network drains to our Waste Water Treatment Works (WwTW). Scottish Water works with SEPA very closely and through regular monitoring have not found issues with respect to our discharge in the area. The final effluent discharge from the WWTW is sampled on a regular basis and we are not aware of breaches of our license parameters.

We this week we have received communication from SEPA for Luss Bay to indicate that testing has shown the E Coli count has fallen within in the "sufficient" category for bathing water standards. This has triggered an investigation to check our assets.

As this is a bathing water, it may be best if SEPA give input into the reply, if possible, as they may have a broader picture. The current status on SEPA website for Luss Bay is "sufficient" and the bathing water profile on their website suggests "the principal risks and source of wet weather driven short term pollution at this bathing water arise from surface water urban drainage and agricultural run-off. There is a risk that water pollution may occur after heavy rainfall. Bathing is not advised during or 1-2 days after heavy rainfall. This is due to the risk to bathers' health from water pollution. Our regulatory and scientific assessment indicates that potential sources of short-term faecal indicator pollution at this bathing water can originate from human or animal sources."

In relation to the news article I sent you (https://www.helensburghadvertiser.co.uk/news/18697864.luss-bay-pollution-levels-six-times-limit-early-august/)
, our operations team carried out tests of the final effluent discharge at our WWTW on 5th August 2020 and there were no issues found. Scottish Water's customer contact centre also did not receive any reported sewer flooding incidents in Luss at that time to indicate that sewage escaped from our network to Loch Lomond.

I hope this has been helpful.

[redacted]

SW Internal
Personal

From: [redacted]@gov.scot>
Sent: 07 June 2021 11:35
To: Public Affairs <Public.Affairs@scottishwater.co.uk>
Subject: FW: PQ - S6W-00499 - Deadline Date 11th June

EXTERNAL MAIL - Think Before You Click

Morning [redacted],

Please see the query below. Can you provide any lines on the issue in Luss?

Thanks for your help, grateful for any contribution by cop 10 June.

Regards,

[redacted]
Policy Officer
Water Industry Team
Scottish Government
Office: [redacted]

Mobile: [redacted]

[redacted]

www.scottishwater.co.uk

From: [redacted]
To: [redacted]
Cc: [redacted]
Subject: RE: PQs - Spills from CSOs
Date: 01 June 2023 11:16:39

Hi [redacted]

Please see below proposed response lines to this PQ. Let me know if you need any further information.

As this is an operational matter for Scottish Water I have asked them to respond. Their answer is:
"The number of sewage discharge points for each river including its tributaries is: River Don 42 Waste Water Treatment Works and 99 discharge points. River Dee is 26 Waste Water Treatment Works and 69 discharge points. Scottish Water is currently not required to report discharge data as part of its agreed licence conditions at these locations.

SEPA publish river water quality data on their website at: www.sepa.org.uk/data-visualisation/water-classification-hub."

Kind regards,
[redacted]

[redacted]
Public Affairs Specialist
M: [redacted] | **E:** [redacted]@scottishwater.co.uk
Scottish Water, Corporate Affairs

SW Public
General

From: [redacted]@gov.scot>
Sent: 30 May 2023 14:11
To: Public Affairs <Public.Affairs@scottishwater.co.uk>
Subject: RE: PQs - Spills from CSOs

Hi [redacted],

I think the only question we need help with is **S6W-18285** **Alexander Burnett:** To ask the Scottish Government whether it can confirm how many sewage discharge points there are along the River (a) Don and (b) Dee; when these monitors were last monitored, and what assessment was made of them.

I propose that the answer will be along the lines of:
"As this is an operational matter for Scottish Water I have asked them to respond. Their answer is:
The number of sewage discharge points are…

Spill data is available on Scottish Water's website at https://www.scottishwater.co.uk/help-and-resources/document-hub/key-publications/urban-waters-improvements."

[redacted]
Policy Officer
Water Policy
Scottish Government
Office: [redacted]
Mobile: [redacted]

From: [redacted]@SCOTTISHWATER.CO.UK> **On Behalf Of** Public Affairs
Sent: 25 May 2023 16:30
To: [redacted]@gov.scot>
Subject: RE: PQs - Spills from CSOs

Hi [redacted]

Thanks for the heads up on this, we have made our colleagues aware.

Kind regards
[redacted]

[redacted]
Public Affairs Specialist
M: [redacted] | **E:** [redacted]@scottishwater.co.uk
Scottish Water, Corporate Affairs

SW Public
General

From: [redacted]@gov.scot>
Sent: 25 May 2023 14:01
To: Public Affairs <Public.Affairs@scottishwater.co.uk>
Subject: FW: PQs - Spills from CSOs

All,

To make you aware that we have a further batch of questions. We are still discussing the approach as we may be able to answer some by pointing to previous questions. Also, many of the answers would simply be "The SG doesn't hold that information"

I'll write to you on Tuesday 30th if we do need a contribution but thought it would be helpful to give a heads up!

Thanks,

[redacted]
Policy Officer
Water Policy
Scottish Government
Office: [redacted]
Mobile: [redacted]

S6W-18227 Jamie Greene: To ask the Scottish Government, in light of reports that at least 11 sites that have specially protected status, including Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Ramsar sites and Special Protection Areas, received an intake of sewage overflow in 2022-23, what discussions it has had with Scottish Water on this matter, and what steps are being taken to prevent sewage from entering and damaging protected areas.
S6W-18273 Liam Kerr: To ask the Scottish Government what data it has on the number of sewage discharges, broken down by (a) incidence and (b) hours of discharge, into the North Sea from any point within 5 km north or south of Peterhead, in each year since 2017 up to the latest available data; what the approximate volumes were of any such discharges in each year; what assessment has been made of the potential impact of any such discharges on the health of users of the waters within that area; for what reasons there were any such discharges; what action it has taken since 2017 to reduce the number of discharges, and what is currently being done to prevent any further discharges.
S6W-18284 Alexander Burnett: To ask the Scottish Government how many of the proposed 1,000 new sewage monitors will be installed along the (a) River Dee, (b) River Don and (c) north east of Scotland in total.
S6W-18285 Alexander Burnett: To ask the Scottish Government whether it can confirm how many sewage discharge points there are along the River (a) Don and (b) Dee; when these monitors were last monitored, and what assessment was made of them.

PQ deadline is – 01/06/2023

system.

Scottish Water

www.scottishwater.co.uk

From: [redacted] on behalf of Public Affairs
To: [redacted]
Cc: [redacted]
Subject: RE: PQ Reference: S6W-15908
Date: 17 March 2023 16:43:16

Hi [redacted]

We've discussed this with colleagues and would suggest the following lines for response.

Scottish Water operates 151 waste water treatment works (WWTW) in North Lanarkshire, South Lanarkshire and Falkirk areas. These WWTWs treat waste water to the required standards before returning the water to the environment. These WWTWs operate to standards set out within licences issued by the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) under the Urban Waste Water Treatment Regulations 1994 and the Water Environment (Controlled Activities) (Scotland) Regulations 2011. Scottish Water also operates a large sewer network which includes Combined Sewer Overflows (CSOs). These are designed to spill storm water in extreme weather conditions to protect homes and businesses from flooding when the network is operating at full capacity. Scottish Water reports the spill data that it is required to under the terms set out within sewer network and WWTW licences.

This reported information is also available on-line for the period 2017-2021 and the data for 2022 will be available by the end of March 2023 at www.scottishwater.co.uk/Your-Home/Your-Waste-Water/Sewer-Overflow-Spill-Data

Kind regards

[redacted]
Public Affairs Specialist
M: [redacted] | **E:** [redacted]@scottishwater.co.uk
Scottish Water, Corporate Affairs

SW Public
General

From: [redacted]@gov.scot>
Sent: 16 March 2023 14:50
To: Public Affairs <Public.Affairs@scottishwater.co.uk>
Cc: [redacted]@gov.scot>
Subject: FW: PQ Reference: S6W-15908

All,

Just checking you are content with our answer to this question.

Scottish Water does not discharge sewage into bodies of water from its wastewater treatment works (WwTW). WwTW must meet very tight standards which are set out within licenses issued by the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) under the Water Environment (Controlled Activities) (Scotland) Regulations 2011. WwTW remove the majority of pollutants from sewage to ensure that river and coastal water quality is protected.

Have there been instances (mechanical failure etc) where SW has discharged sewage from works? Could we add any lines to say "since 2021 there have only

been x number of failures from y works over that time?" We could instead add the number of environmental pollution incidents if that seems better?

Grateful for a response by 12pm on Monday 20th.

Thanks,

[redacted]
Policy Officer
Water Industry Team
Scottish Government
Office: [redacted]
Mobile: [redacted]

- MSP: Monica Lennon
- Due at MPO: 20/03/2023
- Question Text: To ask the Scottish Government how much sewage has been discharged by Scottish Water into bodies of water in (a) North Lanarkshire, (b) South Lanarkshire and (c) Falkirk since 2021.

www.scottishwater.co.uk

From: [redacted]
To: [redacted]
Cc: [redacted]
Subject: RE: PQ Reference: S6O-02060 - Colin Beattie re sewage in rivers
Date: 21 March 2023 12:00:17
Attachments: SRD Beachwatch report PR.pdf

Hi [redacted]

We've had some further information that Colin Beattie may ask a supplementary question around the installation of spill monitors and the commitments under the Urban Waters Routemap.

I think we recently worked on a written reply to Alex Cole-Hamilton about progress on the installation of the spill monitors which may be helpful in this regard.

Also, we've become aware of the MCS beachwatch report which is being issued and is leading with a story about sewage-related debris (see attached). It may be something that comes up.

I hope this further information has been helpful.

Kind regards

[redacted]

[redacted]
Public Affairs Specialist
Scottish Water
Tel: [redacted]
[redacted]

SW Private
Personal

From: [redacted]@gov.scot>
Sent: 21 March 2023 09:43
To: [redacted]@SCOTTISHWATER.CO.UK>; [redacted]
[redacted]@gov.scot>
Subject: RE: PQ Reference: S6O-02060 - Colin Beattie re sewage in rivers

Many thanks [redacted] to note for background note to PQ and any Q&A from main points

[redacted] | Water Policy and DECC Operations Division |

Scottish Government | 3F South | Victoria Quay | Edinburgh | EH6 6QQ | [redacted]

I am currently working from home, my normal working hours are 07:30-17:00

From: [redacted]@SCOTTISHWATER.CO.UK>
Sent: 20 March 2023 17:51
To: [redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted]@gov.scot>
Subject: FW: PQ Reference: S6O-02060 - Colin Beattie re sewage in rivers

Hi [redacted],

I have some information for you about recent engagement with Colin Beattie. Hopefully this is helpful.

Scottish Water engagement with Colin Beattie – sewage in rivers

Esk River Improvement Group

- Scottish Water are a member of the Esk River Improvement Group which Colin Beattie MSP chairs. It is a stakeholder group of the many interested parties regarding the health of the River Esk (Midlothian all the way to Musselburgh and the Firth of Forth)
- Scottish Water provides Colin and this stakeholder group with regular updates on any operational activity, impacts of weather events and Capital Investment
- There are historical issues with sewage-related debris from a CSO at the Mary Burn/Lord Ancrum's Wood (near Newtongrange), which flows into the River Esk. Scottish Water carried out operational improvements to the network around this CSO and ran a local customer behaviour campaign, both of which has significantly improved the situation. Mary Burn/Lord Ancrum's Wood CSO is also receiving capital funding for further improvements (approx £1m).

Operational Issues – Esk Waste Water Pumping Station (Musselburgh)

- In recent weeks, there has been an operational incident at Esk Waste Water Pumping Station (Musselburgh). Scottish Water responded quickly to a problem with the pumps to mitigate any environmental impact and kept Colin Beattie's office informed.

Development Impact on Sewer Network

- Colin Beattie has also expressed concern about development/growth in Midlothian and the impacts on the sewer network. Scottish Water have provided him with information on its approach to developments and its surface water management policy, which requires any new development to have a separate means of managing surface water outwith any existing combined sewer network.

Flooding - Lasswade

- Colin Beattie asked for information on a flooding event on the North Esk in Lasswade on 30th December 2022.
- This flooding was a result of high river levels in Musselburgh on 30th and 31st December which

were due to the sheer volume of rainfall throughout the area between the 29th and 31st of December. SEPA issued flood alerts and warnings throughout this time for Central and Southern Scotland due to heavy rain, surface water flooding and rising river levels.

Newbattle Abbey Crescent, Midlothian – overflowing manholes

- Scottish Water's PFI partner have investigated some historical flooding issues at Newbattle Abbey Crescent and following this have made changes to the way pass forward flow is controlled at Hardengreen to address this.
- Subsequent to this, there was some more recent localised flooding due to a blockage which was identified in August. There was also heavy rainfall at the end of December, which led to SEPA issuing flood warnings.
- Scottish Water is also aware of some further concerns by the local community about the impact of new development in the area.
- The work currently underway in land between the A7 and Newbattle Abbey Crescent is the addition of storage on the public combined sewer which was a requirement identified to enable the Miller Homes site at Cockpen Farm to connect to the sewer network without causing a detrimental impact on the existing network. This work being carried out is the responsibility of the developer and has been developed following a Drainage Impact Assessment (DIA) which was required to be carried out.
- Although Scottish Water requires there to be no detrimental impact from a new development, developers are not required to address or fix any known existing issues on the public sewer network. Developers are also required to ensure that surface water from any new development is dealt with separately from the combined sewer network to reduce the risk of the sewers becoming overwhelmed during times of rainfall in the future.
- Scottish Water are also looking strategically across the area and the Esk Valley Strategic Drainage Impact Assessment being carried out which is looking at longer term development plans in the region and what may be required for the network to be able to accommodate this development.

Newbattle Road, nr Ancrum Road

- An obstruction was found in the sewer in November which has resulted in the surcharging of the sewer during heavy rain.
- Whilst plans were made for a contractor to carry out work to remove this obstruction, the defect identified had unfortunately moved downstream by the time the required traffic management was confirmed. As such, Scottish Water have had to put in a new request for traffic management and have been working to confirm this with the local authority. Work is scheduled to be carried out following the agreement for traffic management at the end of April to remove this obstruction and carry out any necessary remedial work.

SW Private
Personal

From: [redacted]
Sent: 20 March 2023 14:15
To: [redacted]@gov.scot
Subject: RE: PQ Reference: S6O-02060 - Colin Beattie re sewage in rivers

Hi [redacted],

I've checked with [redacted] and he is fine with the reply and hasn't suggested anything further.

We've got some information for you we are pulling together about some of what Colin Beattie has approached us about recently and will get this over to you as soon as we can.

I don't suppose you have had any steer on what the follow up question might be or who might ask a further supplementary question?

[redacted]

SW Private
Personal

From: [redacted]@gov.scot>
Sent: 20 March 2023 12:49
To: [redacted]@SCOTTISHWATER.CO.UK>
Subject: RE: PQ Reference: S6O-02060 - Colin Beattie re sewage in rivers

Thanks [redacted] – indeed. My working draft, subject to SW comments and input looks like this:

As I have reported previously to Parliament, the River Basin Management Plans set out our long-term aims for improving our water environment. The plans are supported by Scottish Water's 'Improving Urban Waters Routemap' which commits to half a billion pounds of investment to improve wastewater treatment works, address unsatisfactory discharges and increase monitoring on Combined Sewer Overflows (CSOs). Scottish Water published its first annual report on progress against the Routemap in December 2022 on their website.

[redacted] | Water Policy and DECC Operations Division | Scottish Government | 3F South | Victoria Quay | Edinburgh | EH6 6QQ | [redacted]

I am currently working from home, my normal working hours are 07:30-17:00

From: [redacted]@SCOTTISHWATER.CO.UK>
Sent: 20 March 2023 12:42
To: [redacted]@gov.scot>
Subject: FW: PQ Reference: S6O-02060 - Colin Beattie re sewage in rivers

Hi [redacted],

I think [redacted] is off today. I'm working on pulling together some information about the Colin

Beattie PQ and wanted to check about the initial reply which you are intending. I'm assuming it is around the urban waters route map?

SW Private
Personal

From: [redacted]
Sent: 20 March 2023 11:12
To [redacted]@gov.scot
Subject: FW: PQ Reference: S6O-02060 - Colin Beattie re sewage in rivers

Hi [redacted],

I'm just pulling together some information for you about contacts/engagement we've had with Colin Beattie recently.

Can I just check what your reply is to this initial question:

- Question Text: To ask the Scottish Government what plans are in place to eliminate any spillages of sewage from the sewer network into rivers and lochs.

For oral PQ's, I'm aware they get a follow up, although doesn't an additional person get an opportunity to ask a question? Do you know who that is?

Many thanks

[redacted]

[redacted]
Public Affairs Specialist
Scottish Water
Tel: [redacted]
[redacted]

SW Private
Personal

From: [redacted]@gov.scot>
Sent: 16 March 2023 09:21
To: Public Affairs <Public.Affairs@scottishwater.co.uk>
Cc: [redacted]@gov.scot>
Subject: FW: PQ Reference: S6O-02060

EXTERNAL MAIL - Think Before You Click

All,

You may be aware that we have received this question.

We already have standard lines to respond to the general problem, but are there any specific issues in Mr Beattie's constituency that we need to be aware of?

Appreciate a response as soon as possible, and by 20 March at the latest.

Thanks,

[redacted]
Policy Officer
Water Industry Team
Scottish Government
Office: [redacted]
Mobile: [redacted]

- MSP: Colin Beattie
- Due at MPO: 21/03/2023
- Question Text: To ask the Scottish Government what plans are in place to eliminate any spillages of sewage from the sewer network into rivers and lochs.

PRESS RELEASE, EMBARGOED UNTIL 00:01, 21st MARCH 2023

Sewage-related litter washing up on UK beaches

- 75% of beach litter surveys across the UK find at least one sewage-related item
- Rise in the number of sewage-related litter items found on beaches in UK hotspots, including the Northeast of England and central belt of Scotland
- Over 30,000 wet wipes found on Scottish beaches in 2022
- Almost 30 years of Beachwatch data shows promising trend with total litter decreasing by 11% across the UK compared to 2021

The Marine Conservation Society, the UK's leading ocean charity, has been running it's Beachwatch litter survey programme for almost 30 years. The charity's year-round beach cleaning programme asks volunteers to record all litter that they find within a 100m stretch of beach. By gathering vital data, the charity can create change for cleaner seas and a healthier planet.

Over the last 30 years, data has been used to shape and influence many policy decisions in all home nations, such as the introduction of carrier bag charges and bans on many single-use plastic items. The Marine Conservation Society's beach clean survey results also contribute to a global database, tracking pollution trends around the world.

> **Clare Trotman, Beachwatch Officer at the Marine Conservation Society**, said, "Thanks to our volunteers, we're collecting year-round data which we use to campaign for action on ocean pollution. The good news is that we've seen the amount of litter recorded on beaches decrease by 11% across the UK compared to 2021.
>
> "Overall, the number of litter items found per 100m has decreased by 38% since 2016, when litter levels peaked. This highlights the effectiveness and influence of policies which reduce pollution, and the impact our volunteers have every time they join a beach clean."

Beachwatch data from 2022 shows that sewage-related litter is washing up on beaches all around the UK, with hot spots for pollution including wet wipes in the Northeast of England and Scotland's central belt.

Volunteer data shows that 75% of beach litter surveys across the UK in 2022 found at least one sewage-related item, such as wet wipes or sanitary products. Scotland's beaches were polluted with the most flushed litter. Over 30,000 wet wipes were found mainly around the

Firth of Forth and Firth of Clyde, and a total of 58,030 sewage-related litter items found across the UK.

Sewage-related litter can make its way into our rivers and seas when untreated sewage is released from storm overflows. This outdated system was designed to only be used in cases of extreme rainfall but are increasingly used as a way of routinely dealing with sewage, even during dry weather.

There are over 20,000 storm overflows in England, Wales and Scotland. Monitoring in each country, which records the number of times and duration of overflows, varies widely. Almost all storm overflows are monitored and reported in Wales and around 89% in England but only 4% in Scotland*.

The data that is available shows that storm overflows are being used far too frequently in each country, with an average of 29 discharges per overflow annually in England, 44 in Wales and almost double this amount, 81, in Scotland. The average duration of discharges is also highest in Scotland, at 11 hours per recorded discharge event. Scotland has the highest percentage (25%) of storm overflows with more than 100 discharges from storm overflows annually.

The Marine Conservation Society's 2022 Beachwatch programme found that sewage-related litter across Scotland's central belt was as high as an average of 88 items per 100m in Renfrewshire on the Firth of Clyde, and 274 items per 100m in West Lothian on the Firth of Forth.

This data underlines the need to take urgent action to tackle sewage-related litter both at source, preventing it from reaching sewers in the first place, and by reducing the occurrence of storm overflows and preventing the release of debris from any that remain.

> **Catherine Gemmell, Scotland Conservation Officer at the Marine Conservation Society**, said: "The new First Minister must prioritise action to drastically reduce the amount of sewage and sewage-related litter polluting Scotland's seas. With published information on less than 5% of combined sewage overflows in Scotland, better monitoring is the first step in reducing the flow of sewage into our seas. We also need to see action to stop pollution at source, including a ban on plastic in single-use wet wipes and support for reusable sanitary products as part of a Circular Economy."

In England, as a last resort, the Marine Conservation Society has joined a legal case against the UK Government's Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) to protect

English seas from sewage dumping. The legal case seeks to compel the UK Government to rewrite its Storm Overflows Discharge Reduction Plan 2022, to impose tighter deadlines on water companies and redevelop the Plan to effectively apply to England's coastal waters which are, currently, almost entirely excluded.

To find out more about the Marine Conservation Society's Beachwatch programme, please visit [www.mcsuk.org/what-you-can-do/join-a-beach-clean.](www.mcsuk.org/what-you-can-do/join-a-beach-clean)

Ends

For more press releases and up-to-date information visit the charity's Media Centre.

Press Contact

Evie Martin, Media Relations Manager (evie.martin@mcsuk.org / 07579 814217)

Images

Please find the selection of high-resolution imagery linked here.

Notes to editors

2021 Storm Overflow Summary Statistics from the Marine Conservation Society UK Combined Sewer Overflow Policy

2021 Storm Overflow Summary Statistics	England	Wales	Scotland
Total number of Storm Overflows	14, 470	2,202	3,576
%age of storm overflows monitored and reported	89%	99%	4%*
Total number of monitored spill events	372,533	94,033	10,763
Total duration (hrs) of monitored spill events	2,667,452	785,576	123,110
Average spills per overflow with spill data	29	44	81
Average duration (hrs) per monitored spill event	7	8	11
%age with at least one spill	90%	88%	80%
%age with more than 10 spills	60%	67%	65%
%age with 100 or more spills	5%	13%	25%

Scottish Water made data available in November 2022 for the first time – view here.

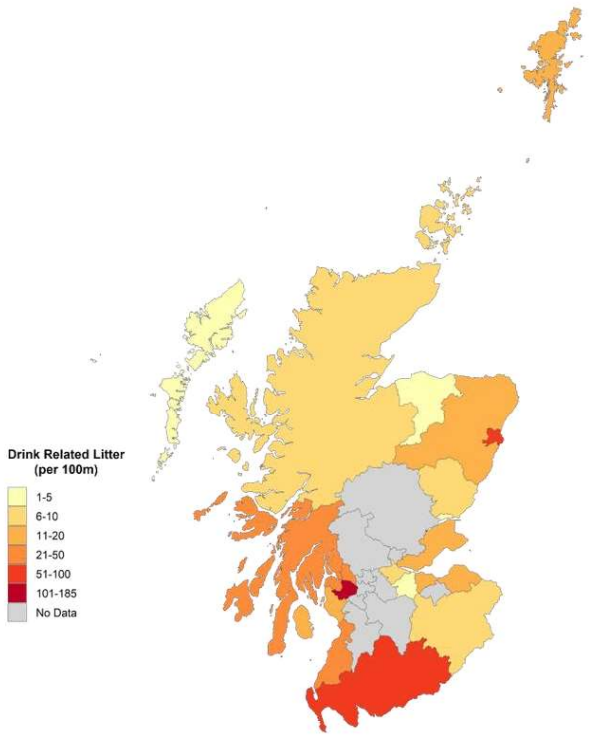
* The percentage of overflows with monitors which are reported annually. 9.5% of storm overflows are monitored in Scotland, although data is only available for around half of those monitored (4%).

Beachwatch report – 2022 Scotland drinks-related litter statistics:

The Marine Conservation Society's 2022 Beachwatch data shows:

- 95% of surveys found drinks-related litter
- 82% of surveys found caps or lids
- 72% of surveys found plastic bottles
- 63% of surveys found metal cans
- 52% of surveys found glass bottles
- Caps and lids were the 3rd most abundant item after plastic pieces and plastic packets
- Plastic bottles were the 7th most reported item
- Metal cans were the 8th most reported item

Drinks-related litter heat map



The Marine Conservation Society has been campaigning for the implementation of Deposit Return Schemes for decades.

> **Calum Duncan, Head of Conservation Scotland at the Marine Conservation Society** said, "Sadly, our volunteers found drinks-related litter on 95% of beach litter surveys in 2022. Our seas cannot continue to pay the price for our waste. The new First Minister must ensure the Deposit Return System starts in August, to boost recycling and turn the tide on this kind of pollution. We know that these systems work, and we can't afford any more delays. The Deposit Return System must be implemented on schedule, for both people and planet."

The Marine Conservation Society campaigns with the Association for the Protection of Rural Scotland on the issue.

> **Kat Jones, the director of the Association for the Protection of Rural Scotland, said,** "You only have to look around you to see that litter is plaguing our countryside and beaches, and threatening both human health and wildlife. The fact that bottles and cans were found on 95% of beaches surveyed shows how critical it is that we introduce deposit return for these items.
>
> "The good news is that this will decrease massively once deposit return is introduced this August in Scotland, and eventually across the rest of the UK. We need more internationally proven policy measures like this, and less foot dragging if we are to have any hope in tackling the litter blight we are currently facing."

The **Marine Conservation Society** is the UK's leading ocean charity, fighting for cleaner, better-protected, healthier seas. The charity works to highlight the importance of our ocean, and the life within it, through working with government, industry and education, to take action to restore and protect the marine environment.

From:	[redacted]
To:	
Subject:	The Ferret waste water spills - Scottish Water Lines - 15 November 2021
Date:	03 August 2022 10:34:00
Attachments:	The Ferret response 10-11-21 Final. KS.docx

From: [redacted]@SCOTTISHWATER.CO.UK>
Sent: 15 November 2021 09:43
To: [redacted]@gov.scot>
Subject: Scottish Water The Ferret waste water spills

Hi [redacted], [redacted] asked me to forward you the statement Scottish Water issued last Wednesday to The Ferret following their enquiry about waste water spills etc.

The SW statement, which I sent to [redacted] and [redacted] on Wednesday and gave SEPA comms visibility of, is attached here.

Kind regards

[redacted]

[redacted]
Scottish Water
Buchanan Gate Business Park
Cumbernauld Road, Stepps,
Glasgow G33 6FB
Tel: [redacted]
Skype: [redacted]
Twitter: @scottish_water
Facebook: www.facebook.com/scottishwater

SW Public
General

www.scottishwater.co.uk

A Scottish Water spokesperson said: “We take our environmental responsibilities very seriously and are committed to working with the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA), the Scottish Government, communities and interest groups to transform our waste water network - as outlined in our strategic long-term plan published in February 2020.

“We have undertaken a significant amount of investment to deliver improvement in our waste water networks and treatment works. This investment has supported the improvements seen in water quality across Scotland over the past two decades.

“We have recently agreed investment of more than £150 million to allow upgrades and climate change adaptation at a number of our wastewater treatment works and sewer overflows, and together with separating surface water, this will further improve water quality across Scotland.

“Alongside making these improvements to support water quality, we recognise there is more we can do to reduce unsatisfactory spills into rivers from our Combined Sewer Overflows (CSOs).

“Today, we estimate that the overall cost of improving all currently unsatisfactory CSOs in Scotland is at least £650 million, and possibly substantially more, given the pressure of climate change and population growth.

“We currently monitor more than 350 of our CSOs and plan to increase this number significantly over the next few years as part of our intelligent sewer network initiatives.

“This will provide us with improved visibility and intelligence about our network performance to intervene early to reduce the impacts of flooding and spills.”

Recent PQs from Mark Ruskell MSP

[redacted]

Lines to take – Investment and Scottish Water

[redacted]

Background – Investment and Scottish Water

- Combined Sewer Overflows (CSOs) are an integral part of most of the sewer networks in Scotland, ensuring sewers don't back up and flood homes, streets and sewage works during periods of heavy rainfall. With climate change we are seeing an increase in the frequency and intensity of these types of rainfall events beyond what was predicted. The visibility of large amounts of sewage debris as a result of such spills has attracted public interest, which has grown due to "stay local" COVID restrictions, as well as the rise in popularity of wild swimming. Scottish Water's progress in resolving the issue of sewage spills is seen to be too slow.

- SEPA licenses Scottish Water's discharges of sewage effluent under the Water Environment (Controlled Activities) (Scotland) Regulations 2011, known as "CAR". These licences specify the water quality standards to be met, and the requirements concerning the recording and reporting of pollution events. Activities controlled in this way include discharges from Wastewater Treatment Works (WwTW) and intermittent discharges at WwTWs or from the sewerage network.

- There are 3,697 sewer overflows in Scotland. To date SEPA has focused its regulatory effort on addressing those sewer overflows which were causing the worst impacts. This has led to the upgrading of over 250 unsatisfactory sewer overflows over the past decade.

- In Scotland Ministers set Scottish Water's objectives and priorities and the independent economic regulator Water Industry Commission for Scotland (WICS) ensures necessary funding is in place to deliver them. In the current 2021-2027 regulatory period Ministers have already directed Scottish Water to take measures to further improve the water quality of Scotland's, rivers, lochs and bathing waters, including improving storm overflows to reduce the impact from their discharges.

- The 3rd River Basin Management Plans and the Improving Urban Waters Routemap were both published in December 2021.

Commitments in Scottish Water Route Map

Key aims of the Route Map include:

- Improved water quality (to support Scotland's RBMP objectives).
- Monitoring and reporting of discharges from all CSOs that discharge into the highest priority waters.
- Significantly reduced sewer related debris in the environment, and
- Reduced spills from the sewer network.

The Route Map identifies the following key short term activities (2021-24)

- Develop solutions for CSOs confirmed as impacting water quality and identified as measures in the third RBMP to allow delivery of improvements by December 2027. Investment is already agreed to deliver these solutions.
- Install monitoring on network and treatment works CSOs discharging to the highest priority waters (including all designated shellfish and bathing waters), representing approximately 1,000 CSOs.
- Develop and roll out a campaign to educate customers to reduce instances of flushing items which impact the sewerage system.
- Develop solutions for those CSOs that are already confirmed as being high priority having significant sewage debris impacts on rivers (85 locations).
- Identify the next tranche of priority (medium impact) CSOs and agree timescale for solution development.

The Route Map also identifies further actions for the period to 2031, subject to investment availability.

- Develop solutions for all medium priority CSOs (around 150 locations) and agree delivery timetables for these (currently estimated to cost around £150m - £200m).

Background - Wet wipes

- Wet wipes are a significant growing source of beach litter pollution, and are more of an issue in Scotland than elsewhere in the UK. [Scotland is the only administration to exceed the UK average each year, and 2022 results saw a 150% increase in Scotland from 2021 - Marine Conservation Society, Great British Beach Clean. *Although note that this is a snapshot of litter collected at this point in time, and that 2021 data collection was affected by Covid restrictions.*]
- Behaviour change campaigns and varying labelling has failed to address this issue. Nor has the introduction of some plastic-free alternatives to the market.
- We have conducted a call for evidence which showed wide support for a ban on wet wipes containing plastic and all remaining products to disintegrate upon flushing.
- DEFRA conducted a call for evidence, not yet published, and water industry respondents questioned the use of plastic free alternatives as they may cause additional chokes in the sewage systems.
- DEFRA has commissioned further research into alternatives, which is expected to conclude at the end of 2022.
- Scottish Water continue to call for a ban with alternatives being flushable, and additionally clearer labelling applied across all product lines to bin not flush.

- Since the introduction of the Internal Market Act 2020, we are unable to introduce legislation alone on this issue, and it is acknowledged that UK-wide action would be required to make any legislation effective and enforceable.
- We continue to encourage action from all UK administrations to tackle the issue of plastic wet wipe pollution, and await a UK position following research results. The Welsh Government strongly supports legislative action. Northern Ireland is restricted by the protocol on this issue.

Sensitivities

- It is assumed that Scotland has more wet wipe pollution that elsewhere in the UK due to proportionally higher CSO use, and lack of grids to block rubbish on those CSOs.
- Scottish Water supports Water UK's Fine to Flush 'standard' which requires wipes to be plastic free and able to fragment through flushing.
- Welsh Water also supports this 'standard'
- The water bodies in England have supported and promoted this 'standard'. However, they feel that it is not conclusive and wished further research on plastic free alternatives (see point above on Defra additional commissioned research, although not yet published). They are concerned about increased blockages as plastic free substrate may combine more easily with fats to cause fatbergs etc.
- The scope of any proposed legislation would have to be considered carefully as wet wipes include products used for bodily fluids, cosmetics and disinfectants, and across domestic, industrial and medicinal settings.

Background - Period products

- A Scottish Government campaign, in partnership with Zero Waste Scotland, launched in November 2019 to promote the use of reusable period products in an effort to reduce marine litter, help address social inequality and work towards Scotland's vision for a low carbon economy www.trialperiod.scot
- #trialperiod was extremely well received, with more than nine out of ten survey respondents switching to reusable products following the campaign.
- We are supporting the development of an ISO standard for period products. This new international standard is being developed for products intended for single-use as well as re-use ISO - ISO/TC 338 - Menstrual products
- Note the standard is at an early stage, and the British Standards Institution (BSI) has formed a mirror committee to feed into its development.
- It is expected that the standard will have a wide scope to include all forms of period product, including pads, tampons, applicators and reusable cups, pants and pads.
- The Scottish Government will be contributing to that mirror committee (Morag Campbell) to reflect on the need for products that are safe, effective, accessible, and have minimal impact on our environment.

Lines to Take – River Basin Management Planning

[redacted]

Background – River Basin Management Planning

- The River Basin Management Plans are important tools for the protection and enhancement of Scotland's rivers, lochs, estuaries and coastal waters. These support a range of priorities:
    - ensuring we have a healthy water environment that underpins the nation's wellbeing, supplies drinking water and supports sustainable economic growth;
    - providing a high quality environment that attracts visitors to Scotland and promotes our export of high quality produce;
    - contributing to our targets for biodiversity, including wild salmon populations;
    - stimulating regeneration of green space and helping to reduce flood risk in our towns and cities, often in the most deprived areas.

- SEPA's most recent classification results show that 66% of Scotland's water bodies are now in good ecological condition or better (compared to England's 16%). Although this 3% increase suggests a relatively small degree of improvement, there is a much stronger picture when this headline figure is disaggregated into separate assessments of water quality (87%), water resources (90%), physical condition (90%) and fish migration (88%)

- The third RBMPs set out revised objectives for the 2021-27 period, and the associated work programme aims to ensure that **81%** of Scotland's water bodies achieve a 'good' or better classification by 2027, and continue to improve as natural conditions recover beyond that date. This proposed 15% improvement would reflect a huge step change in the condition of our water environment. The disaggregated figures indicate the following proportion of water bodies expected to achieve a good or better classification by 2027 – water quality (92%), water resources (96%), physical condition (92%) and fish migration (99%).

- Any new **activities** likely to have an adverse impact on the water environment, require authorisation from SEPA under the Water Environment (Controlled Activities) (Scotland) Regulations, known as 'CAR'. These are authorised in line with environmental standards introduced using the best available science. SEPA is progressively reviewing all activities which were on-going at the time of introduction of CAR in 2005/6, in order to bring these in line with the requirements of the WFD – these include abstractions for irrigation, hydropower, drinking water and Scottish Water's sewage discharges. The pace of this work will be accelerated.

- SEPA licenses Scottish Water's discharges of sewage effluent under the Water Environment (Controlled Activities) (Scotland) Regulations 2011, known as "CAR". These licences specify the water quality standards to be met, and the requirements concerning the recording and reporting of pollution events. Activities controlled in this way include discharges from Wastewater Treatment Works (WwTW) and intermittent discharges at WwTWs or from the sewerage network.

Lines to Take – Bathing Waters

[redacted]

Background – Bathing Waters

The Bathing Water Directive (BWD) introduced tougher standards from 2015. SEPA monitors water quality throughout the season, and bathing waters are then classified as ‘excellent’, ‘good’, ‘sufficient’, or ‘poor’.

In 2015, the first set of new classifications for the 84 bathing waters designated at that time, were as follows: 17 ‘excellent’; 38 ‘good’; 12 ‘sufficient’; 17 ‘poor’.

Since 2015, measures have been in place to improve compliance with the standards. Such measures include improvements to Scottish Water assets and measures to reduce diffuse agricultural pollution.

Classification is calculated using the monitoring data from the current year and the preceding 3 years. With there being no 2020 monitoring due to COVID restrictions, the 2022 classification was based on 2017/2018/2019 and 2021 data.

Under the BWD, if a bathing water receives 5 consecutive ‘poor’ classifications, certain actions must be taken, including the posting of permanent ‘bathing not advised’ signs. The Bathing Waters (Scotland) Regulations 2008 make provision for SEPA to consider using only one year’s monitoring data in classifying bathing waters where significant infrastructure improvements have been made, with associated improved monitoring results. This is known as the ‘step change approach’.

Summary of latest Bathing Water classification.

Classification	**2022**
Excellent	38(44%)
Good	35(40%)
Sufficient	12(14%)
Poor	2(2%)
Total	87

That means 98% of our bathing waters have met the necessary sufficient or better standards.

The 2022 Bathing Water classification results, which include this seasons monitoring data, were published by SEPA in November.

Wild swimming
Rivers and other open water locations that are not designated as bathing waters are managed for the purpose of protecting fish and wildlife, not people, so health risks from using these locations may be higher than at designated bathing waters. They

can contain levels of pathogens which are harmless to wildlife but would not be acceptable in designated bathing waters.

The UK Health Security Agency advises that anyone can become unwell from swimming in any open water, as there will always be micro-organisms present.

From:	[redacted]
To:	Minister for Environment and Land Reform
Cc:	McFarlane J (John) (Special Adviser); [redacted] Communications Net Zero & Rural Affairs; Berge K (Kersti); Rathjen J (Jon); DECC: Operations Team Mailbox; Deputy Director Environmental Quality and Resilience; [redacted]
Subject:	Briefing and Speaking Notes: Motion S6M-06148: Sewage and Scotland's Waters - Wednesday 26 October 2022
Date:	17 October 2022 16:25:34
Attachments:	Annex A - Closing Statement.docx Briefing - Closing Statement - Sewage and Scotland"s Waters - 26 October 2022.doc RBMP & Bathing Waters Q&A.docx

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Minister, please find enclosed briefing and speaking notes (annex A) for use as a Closing Statement in responding to Motion S6M-06148: Sewage and Scotland's Waters in the Scottish Parliament on Wednesday 26 October 2022

Separately to the briefing pack I attach Q&A on RBMP/Bathing Waters issues. While I understand questions are not expected following the Minister's statement you may consider the material helpful for inclusion in case of interjections from the floor, if these are permitted.

[redacted] | Water Policy and DECC Operations Division | Scottish Government | 3F South | Victoria Quay | Edinburgh | EH6 6QQ | [redacted]

I am currently working from home, my normal working hours are 07:30-17:00

Motion S6M-06148: Sewage and Scotland's Waters

Date and Time of debate	Wednesday 26 October 2022 17:40
Where	Scottish Parliament Chamber
Purpose of Statement	To provide a closing statement to Parliament on motion S6M-06148 and to highlight how the Scottish Government is protecting and improving the water environment through the use of River Basin Management Plans; supported by Scottish Water's Improving Urban Waters Route Map.
Official Support Required	Not requested
Comms Support/Media handling	[redacted]., Communications: News (Net Zero and Energy) Mobile: [redacted].

Annex A – Closing Statement

Attached as separate document

Annex B – Contents

Annex C – Key Messages

- A clean and healthy water environment is vital for our nation's health and well-being, our biodiversity, and a sustainable economy.

- 66% of our water environment is already in good condition and 99% of bathing waters passed bathing water quality standards in 2021.

- The third River Basin Management Plans published in December 2021 are our most ambitious Plans yet, and build on substantive programmes of work set in train during the last decade.

- The Plans set out targeted measures to further improve Scotland's water environment to 81% in good condition by 2027.

- The way we use our land and water has an impact on our water environment, and we all - public bodies, businesses, land managers and individuals - have important parts to play in reducing pollution from our day-to-day activities.

- A significant share of the responsibility for delivering the targets in the Plans rests with SEPA and its regulatory functions, and SEPA is committed to playing its part in ensuring delivery.

- Scottish Water also has a key role to play in protecting our rivers from wastewater pollution and sewage litter.

- Since 2010 Scottish Water has worked with SEPA to upgrade 104 wastewater treatment works and 279 storm overflows by investing £686 million.

- The River Basin Management Plans are complemented by Scottish Water's 'Improving Urban Waters Route Map', which describes how Scottish Water will take further action to reduce wastewater pollution and sewage litter over the coming decade.

- Scottish Water has committed to investing £150 million over the next 6 years to develop solutions for 40 wastewater treatment works and 24 storm overflows.

- Scottish Water will also develop solutions for another 235 storm overflows by 2031, costing a further £150 million in its current investment period up to 2027. Some £200 million to deliver improvements after 2027, subject to approval, is needed to complete this programme of work.

- Scottish Water will also improve information available to the public and increase monitoring on over a 1000 highest priority storm overflows by 2024 through investing a further £70 million.

- The legislative and policy mechanisms are already in place to enable the objectives set out in the Plans to be achieved.

Annex D – Briefing - River Basin Management Plans

- The River Basin Management Plans are important tools for the protection and enhancement of Scotland's rivers, lochs, estuaries and coastal waters. These support a range of priorities:
    - ensuring we have a healthy water environment that underpins the nation's wellbeing, supplies drinking water and supports sustainable economic growth;
    - providing a high quality environment that attracts visitors to Scotland and promotes our export of high quality produce;
    - contributing to our targets for biodiversity, including wild salmon populations;
    - stimulating regeneration of green space and helping to reduce flood risk in our towns and cities, often in the most deprived areas.

- SEPA's most recent classification results show that 66% of Scotland's water bodies are now in good ecological condition or better (compared to England's 16%). Although this 3% increase suggests a relatively small degree of improvement, there is a much stronger picture when this headline figure is disaggregated into separate assessments of water quality (87%), water resources (90%), physical condition (90%) and fish migration (88%)

- The third RBMPs set out revised objectives for the 2021-27 period, and the associated work programme aims to ensure that **81%** of Scotland's water bodies achieve a 'good' or better classification by 2027, and continue to improve as natural conditions recover beyond that date. This proposed 15% improvement would reflect a huge step change in the condition of our water environment. The disaggregated figures indicate the following proportion of water bodies expected to achieve a good or better classification by 2027 – water quality (92%), water resources (96%), physical condition (92%) and fish migration (99%).

- Any new **activities** likely to have an adverse impact on the water environment, require authorisation from SEPA under the Water Environment (Controlled Activities) (Scotland) Regulations, known as 'CAR'. These are authorised in line with environmental standards introduced using the best available science. SEPA is progressively reviewing all activities which were on-going at the time of introduction of CAR in 2005/6, in order to bring these in line with the requirements of the WFD – these include abstractions for irrigation, hydropower, drinking water and Scottish Water's sewage discharges. The pace of this work will be accelerated.

- SEPA licenses Scottish Water's discharges of sewage effluent under the Water Environment (Controlled Activities) (Scotland) Regulations 2011, known as "CAR". These licences specify the water quality standards to be met, and the requirements concerning the recording and reporting of pollution events. Activities controlled in this way include discharges from Wastewater Treatment Works (WwTW) and intermittent discharges at WwTWs or from the sewerage network.

Annex E – Briefing - Wastewater pollution and sewage litter

Background

- Combined Sewer Overflows (CSOs) are an integral part of most of the sewer networks in Scotland, ensuring sewers don't back up and flood homes, streets and sewage works during periods of heavy rainfall. With climate change we are seeing an increase in the frequency and intensity of these types of rainfall events beyond what was predicted. The visibility of large amounts of sewage debris as a result of such spills has attracted public interest, which has grown due to "stay local" COVID restrictions, as well as the rise in popularity of wild swimming. Scottish Water's progress in resolving the issue of sewage spills is seen to be too slow.

- SEPA licenses Scottish Water's discharges of sewage effluent under the Water Environment (Controlled Activities) (Scotland) Regulations 2011, known as "CAR". These licences specify the water quality standards to be met, and the requirements concerning the recording and reporting of pollution events. Activities controlled in this way include discharges from Wastewater Treatment Works (WwTW) and intermittent discharges at WwTWs or from the sewerage network.

- There are 3,697 sewer overflows in Scotland. To date SEPA has focused its regulatory effort on addressing those sewer overflows which were causing the worst impacts. This has led to the upgrading of over 250 unsatisfactory sewer overflows over the past decade.

- In Scotland Ministers set Scottish Water's objectives and priorities and the independent economic regulators [Water Industry Commission for Scotland] WICS ensures necessary funding is in place to deliver them. In the current 2021-2027 regulatory period Ministers have already directed Scottish Water to take measures to further improve the water quality of Scotland's, rivers, lochs and bathing waters, including improving storm overflows to reduce the impact from their discharges.

Development of current position in Scotland

- Following Ms McAllan's ask for further action on sewage spills, officials engaged in intensive discussions at senior levels with SEPA and Scottish Water, with the aim of identifying a programme of work that substantially ramped up progress in tackling these issues.

- Over the course of several months, SEPA and Scottish Water worked closely together to identify what steps could be taken to deliver Ministers' aims in this space.

- The original intention was to develop a joint SEPA/SW route map; however it was subsequently agreed that in recognition of SEPA's regulatory remit, SEPA would set out its regulatory position on this matter and Scottish Water would respond with its Route Map, and SEPA would then formally respond accepting the Route Map

- The 3rd River Basin Management Plans and the Routemap were both published in December 2021.

Commitments in Scottish Water Route Map

Key aims of the Route Map include:

- Improved water quality (to support Scotland's RBMP objectives).
- Monitoring and reporting of discharges from all CSOs that discharge into the highest priority waters.
- Significantly reduced sewer related debris in the environment, and
- Reduced spills from the sewer network.

The Route Map identifies the following key short term activities (2021-24)

- Develop solutions for CSOs confirmed as impacting water quality and identified as measures in the third RBMP to allow delivery of improvements by December 2027. Investment is already agreed to deliver these solutions.
- Install monitoring on network and treatment works CSOs discharging to the highest priority waters (including all designated shellfish and bathing waters), representing approximately 1,000 CSOs.
- Develop and roll out a campaign to educate customers to reduce instances of flushing items which impact the sewerage system.
- Develop solutions for those CSOs that are already confirmed as being high priority having significant sewage debris impacts on rivers (85 locations).
- Identify the next tranche of priority (medium impact) CSOs and agree timescale for solution development.

The Route Map also identifies further actions for the period to 2031, subject to investment availability.

- Develop solutions for all medium priority CSOs (around 150 locations) and agree delivery timetables for these (currently estimated to cost around £150m - £200m).

[redacted].

Annex F – Briefing – Bathing Waters

Background

The Bathing Water Directive (BWD) introduced tougher standards from 2015. SEPA monitors water quality throughout the season, and bathing waters are then classified as ‘excellent’, ‘good’, ‘sufficient’, or ‘poor’.

In 2015, the first set of new classifications for the 84 bathing waters designated at that time, were as follows: 17 ‘excellent’; 38 ‘good’; 12 ‘sufficient’; 17 ‘poor’.

Since 2015, measures have been in place to improve compliance with the standards. Such measures include improvements to Scottish Water assets and measures to reduce diffuse agricultural pollution.

Classification is calculated using the monitoring data from the current year and the preceding 3 years. With there being no 2020 monitoring due to COVID restrictions, the 2022 classification was based on 2017/2018/2019 and 2021 data

Under the BWD, if a bathing water receives 5 consecutive ‘poor’ classifications, certain actions must be taken, including the posting of permanent ‘bathing not advised’ signs. The Bathing Waters (Scotland) Regulations 2008 make provision for SEPA to consider using only one year’s monitoring data in classifying bathing waters where significant infrastructure improvements have been made, with associated improved monitoring results. This is known as the ‘step change approach’.

The 2021 results showed improvement across all classes. Ayr South and Rockcliffe have benefitted from the ‘step change approach’. Only one site, Dhoon Bay, remains at poor.

Summary of latest Bathing Water classification.

Classification	**2021**
Excellent	32
Good	35
Sufficient	17
Poor	1
Total	85

That means 99% of our bathing waters have met the necessary sufficient or better standards.

The 2022 Bathing Water classification results, which include this seasons monitoring data, will not be published by SEPA until November.

Wild swimming
Rivers and other open water locations that are not designated as bathing waters are managed for the purpose of protecting fish and wildlife, not people, so health risks from using these locations may be higher than at designated bathing waters. They can contain levels of pathogens which are harmless to wildlife but would not be acceptable in designated bathing waters.

The UK Health Security Agency advises that anyone can become unwell from swimming in any open water, as there will always be micro-organisms present.

Ayr (South Beach) – moved from poor to good

Since 2018, the Scottish Government has driven an intensive programme of action at Ayr (South Beach) bathing water, in partnership with SEPA as follows:

- Scottish Government commissioned intensive on-the-ground studies to identify the exact location of pollution sources in the urban areas draining via watercourses to those poor bathing waters;
- Scottish Government funded action to remediate misconnections of foul drains to surface water drains from residential and commercial properties identified via those studies;
- SEPA continued its programme of work with farmers to protect and improve water quality in relevant catchments, building on 12 years of engagement with around 350 rural land managers to implement appropriate diffuse pollution control measures;
- Scottish Water has undertaken work to fix problems with its sewer network identified through the above studies, repairing damaged sewers, and cleaning out blockages;
- Scottish Government funded a campaign in partnership with Keep Scotland Beautiful to raise public awareness of the impact that dog and gull faeces can have on bathing water quality, with the aim of reducing pollution from such sources;
- During 2020/21, Scottish Water completed substantive new capital improvement works at Ayr (approx. £12 million) which were built and brought into operation prior to the 2021 bathing season, to minimise overflows from the sewers into the surface water drains.

Further improvement work is in train with SEPA and Scottish Water to connect many private septic tanks in Ayr to the public sewer. We have invested £3m in this programme of work to date.

Rockcliffe – moved from poor to excellent

- SEPA carried out work with farmers to protect and improve water quality in relevant catchments. SEPA has worked closely with 60 rural land managers over the last 8 years in the coastal and Urr Water catchments providing advice on the diffuse pollution control measures;
- Temporary chemical dosing was put in place by Scottish Water at Kippford septic tank, prior to the 2021 bathing season.

It is proposed to continue chemical dosing until a new wastewater treatment works is constructed and relocated along with a new discharge point by 2024/5 (£1.5 million spent to date, long-term estimate around £7.5 million).

Dhoon Bay – currently poor

In conjunction with SEPA, we are working to improve private septic tank discharges at Dhoon Bay, which will contribute to achieving the necessary bathing water quality in future years.

Fisherrow Sands – de-designated in 2019

Fisherrow Sands in Musselburgh was de-designated in 2019, following 5 years in a row of poor classifications. There was a problem at Eastfield pumping station ,identified in 2019, which Scottish Water has now rectified.

SEPA is currently reviewing recent bathing water monitoring data in order to consider whether the permanent advice against bathing can be lifted in the near future.

Current bathing water applications

Applications can be made to SEPA for consideration to designate new bathing waters. The Bathing Water Panel, established by Ministers, considers these applications and makes recommendations to Ministers about designation.

Key criteria for these considerations are evidence of substantial user numbers; evidence of support from the relevant local authority including active beach management (for health and safety reasons); and evidence of support from local residents.

There are currently no new bathing water designation applications. However, Wardie Bay in Edinburgh is awaiting support from City of Edinburgh Council.

At the start of the 2022 bathing water season Lower Largo in Fife and Barassie in Ayrshire were designated as bathing waters. However, the River Almond in Livingston was not designated as it was determined that a large number of people do not bathe at the location.

Annex F – Flood Risk Management

Background

- It is estimated that 284,000 homes, businesses and services are at risk of flooding in Scotland. Climate change will increase the numbers at risk by an estimated 110,000 properties by 2080.
- The risk of flooding to people, communities and buildings remains the biggest risk for Scotland from climate change.

TOP LINES

- Managing our exposure to floods and their impacts is a significant and growing challenge as climate change brings more severe and frequent flood events
- Improving resilience to flooding is a priority for the Scottish Government.
- Since 2008, the Scottish Government has made available £42 million per year to local authorities to invest in flood risk management actions – a commitment that is in place until 2026.
- The 2020 Programme for Government committed an additional £150 million over the course of this Parliament for flood risk management actions.
- We continue to fund the Scottish Flood Forum (SFF) to provide help to businesses and individuals in the event of flooding and to establish a network of community resilience groups in areas at risk of flooding.
- In 2023 we will consult on a first National Flooding Strategy for Scotland which will seek to engage a broader range of delivery partners to deliver more diverse flood management actions faster.

Managing our future exposure to flooding is one of Scotland's biggest climate resilience challenges.

- We will consult with stakeholders in the coming year with a view to developing a flooding strategy that will seek to embed flood management as a fundamental component in the design of our places.
- It will also seek to address some of the bigger flood risk management challenges we currently face such as how our larger flood protection schemes will be financed and how we can implement more blue and green solutions to surface water flooding to increase climate resilience in our urban areas.

We are providing a policy framework for surface water management and blue-green infrastructure

- Scottish Government recognises the multiple benefits that blue and green infrastructure (BGI) provides, including combined sewer overflow spill reduction, and published the Water Resilient Places Policy Framework in February 2021.
- Scottish Water, SEPA and the local authorities support the framework and we will continue to see increased use of BGI in future as this becomes the primary infrastructure for managing surface water in new developments.
- Under the Edinburgh Blue-Green City Partnership the Edinburgh and Lothian Strategic Drainage Partnership is being used as a platform for enabling a radically different approach to urban water planning and management.
- We recently held a Creating Water Resilient Places event in Edinburgh (on 20 September) where Chief executives and other senior leaders from Scotland's eight cities and key government agencies met to discuss the opportunities and

challenges of making our urban areas water resilient places to help them respond to climate change.

The Flood Risk Management (Scotland) Act 2009 creates a joined up and coordinated process to manage flood risk at a national and local level.

- It sets a framework for coordination and cooperation between all organisations involved in flood risk management, particularly responsible authorities such as local authorities and SEPA.
- It moved us away from short-term reactive decisions based on the latest flood event, towards proactive long-term planning and investment.
- Flood Risk Management Plans for the period 2022-2028 were approved by Scottish Ministers in December 2021 and published by SEPA in January 2022.

Flood Risk Management Plans have been developed to reduce the devastating and costly impact of flooding in Scotland.

- They coordinate the efforts of all organisations that tackle flooding, be it in our cities or rural areas and be it from rivers, the sea or from surface water.
- The strategies concentrate the work of these organisations to where the risk of flooding and benefits of investment are greatest.
- Local authorities are now in the process of preparing Local Flood Risk Management Plans which are due to be published by December 2022.
- These will provide more detail on how the actions set out in the flood risk management plans for 2022-2028 will be delivered.
- They will also provide further information on when the actions will take place and how they will be funded.

No country has enough money to remove entirely the risk of flooding.

- What is important is that the money invested is targeted to where the risks and benefits of investment are greatest, and that is the real value and purpose of the FRM Strategies.
- The 2020 PfG committed an additional £150 million over the next five years for flood risk management actions. This is in addition to the £42m provided annually to LAs for flooding through the general capital grant.
- Consideration is being given to how the additional flooding money will be allocated and officials have set up a Flood Risk Management Working Group with COSLA to discuss funding arrangements for flood risk management actions going forward.
- Group is considering funding arrangements going forward. It will put recommendations to the joint Scottish Government/COSLA officers' Settlement Distribution Group with Ministers and Council Leaders' subsequently being provided with advice later in 2022.

We have funded the Scottish Flood Forum since 2009 to work with communities to build resilience and to support those affected by flooding.

- The Scottish Flood Forum offers free advice about property and community flood resilience.
- It encourages families and businesses to prepare a flood emergency plan and to have a flood kit and communities to set up flood resilience groups.

Annex G - Current Media and Opposition Issues

[redacted].

Other media issues

2 October 2022 The National accused SEPA of allowing illegal operation of a Scottish Water East Lothian site (Eastfield) which they state has polluted a beach with sewage for a decade.

[redacted]**. Eastfield pumping station in East Lothian is regularly inspected by Scottish Water and is operating as designed.**

- Over recent years, the pumps at Eastfield have been either refurbished or replaced and all routine maintenance has been carried out.
- Fisherrow in Musselburgh was de-designated as a bathing water in 2020 due to being classified in 2020 as 'poor' for the fifth year in a row.
- 2021 sampling showed pollution in the Brunstane Burn was due to upstream sources rather than the Eastfield pumping station outfall.
- Since then, there has been extensive work by Scottish Water to improve the classification including the Scottish Government-funded Misconnections project which focused on the Brunstane Burn sewer catchment upstream of Fisherrow.
- Scottish Water have agreed with SEPA to undertake further surveys around Eastfield pumping station now that bathing season has finished to determine if any further maintenance work is required.

4 September 2022 The Ferret and National reported 49 Scottish beaches polluted by sewage. This year 49 of the 87 designated bathing waters around the country have recorded levels of faecal bacteria that could endanger the health of swimmers, surfers and paddlers. The data quoted in the report has been sense checked with SEPA as accurate.

Last year, 99% of designated bathing waters (85) achieved the bathing water quality standards.

- Bathing Waters classification gives an overall indication of expected water quality, but there can be short term fluctuations in water quality driven by heavy rainfall.
- Bathing Water classification in Scotland is undertaken by SEPA following strict EU standards. These were reviewed by the World Health Organisation in 2018, which concluded they were fit for purpose.
- SEPA investigates poor water quality sample results to seek overall improvements to bathing water quality.
- SEPA's monitoring of Bathing Waters shows water quality can be impacted by a range of bacterial sources including sewage spills, agricultural land runoff, urban runoff, dog and seagull faeces.
- A small number of 'poor' monitoring results at each designated Bathing Water does not mean that water quality is continually poor on all days. SEPA has analysed 1,297 water quality samples from 87 designated Bathing Waters this season and 93% were found to be at safe levels.

From: [redacted]
To: Minister for Environment and Land Reform
Cc: Director of Environment & Forestry; Deputy Director Environmental Quality and Resilience; [redacted]
Subject: River Almond Water Quality meeting with Angela Constance MSP
Date: 09 September 2022 16:37:29
Attachments: Briefing - 13 September meeting between Minister for Environment and Land Reform and Angela Constance MSP.docx
River Almond Improvement Group - meeting minutes 01 July 22.pdf
River Almond Questions and answers - August 2022.pdf

Hi [redacted]

Please find attached an engagement briefing for the meeting between Ms McAllan and Angela Constance MSP on Tuesday regarding the water quality of the River Almond and sewage spills.

I have also included the most recent minute of the River Almond Water Quality Improvement Group chaired by Angela Constance MSP and a draft Q&A for local communities to give a wider context to the issues the community raises.

Let me know if Ms McAllan requires any clarification.

Regards

[redacted]

(I am currently working from home and can be contacted via email only)

Water Environment Team
Environmental Quality & Resilience Division
Environment & Forestry Directorate
Tel: [redacted]

MEETING BETWEEN THE MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND LAND REFORM AND ANGELA CONSTANCE MSP AND REPRESENTATIVES OF THE RIVER ALMOND ACTION GROUP REGARDING RIVER ALMOND WATER QUALITY AND SEWAGE SPILLS	
TIMING	09:00 to 09:30, Tuesday 13 September 2022 Microsoft Teams meeting Click here to join the meeting
ATTENDEES	Official(s) in attendance: John McFarlane, Special Advisor [redacted] Water Environment Team [redacted] Water Environment [redacted] [redacted] water Industry Policy
AGENDA	**1. River Bathing** Q to Minister: What are your aspirations for Scotland's waters - 'Hydro Nation' -should we be able to use our rivers recreationally? **2. The problem (as we see it)** Q to Minister: Do you acknowledge the three dimensions of the problem (sewage itself, sewage related debris e.g. plastics, lack of accountability) and what could you do along each of this axis to improve this? **3. Commitment to end sewage pollution** Q to Minister: Will the Minister drive the conversation about this and make a commitment to end sewage pollution of Scottish rivers and beaches? Yes, it might take 30 years to achieve but the commitment to get there is already overdue. If not now, when? **4. Specific investment for the River Almond.** Q to Minister: How can the public be assured that sewage pollution won't become worse with new housing developments? Scottish Water is currently undertaking planned investment work. How much would it cost Scottish Water to disinfect the sewage overflows from East Calder WwTW to help make the river safer to swim in? Could this be included in the planned investments?
MEETING OBJECTIVE(S) AND OUTCOME(S)	1. To discuss Angela Constance's concerns and clarify the Scottish Governments position in relation to the water quality protection and improvement work undertaken by SEPA and Scottish Water.

General background

River Almond Water Quality Improvement Group
Since June 2021, Angela Constance has chaired the River Almond Water Quality Improvement Group.

Membership of the group is drawn from: Friends of Almondell and Calderwood Country Park; River Almond Action Group (RAAG); Forth Rivers Trust (FRT); West Lothian Council; SEPA; Scottish Water; Veolia; East Livingston and East Calder Ward Councillors.

Along with Scottish Water and SEPA, we presented the detailed aims and objectives of the River Basin Management Plans and Improving Urban Waters Route Map in relation to improving water quality at the River Almond Water Quality Improvement Group in January 2022. Following the presentation RAAG's response was that the Plans were not ambitious enough. RAAG call for no sewage spills from storm overflows in Scotland and that rivers should be safe for people to swim in.

River Almond Action Group (RAAG) (River Almond Action Group)
RAAG is a community group that was form in early 2021 by the Forth Rivers Trust. The aim of this group is to highlight the current issue of water quality in the River Almond and their primary mission is to monitor the volumes of litter and sewage being released into the river throughout its course. A key focus of the group has been on East Calder Wastewater Treatment Works, which is immediately upstream of the location of the River Almond Bathing Waters application.

RAAG also supported the bathing waters application for the River Almond. As it states on their website: 'One of the main motivations for the bathing waters application is to hold water authorities to a higher standard of water quality control and monitoring for the River Almond'.

The Scottish Government has undertaken general correspondence with RAAG in relation to their concerns regarding River Almond water quality, sewage spills and the bathing waters application on behalf of the Minister and Cabinet Secretary. Scottish Government responses have set out its position regarding the policy, legislation and planned investment around the issues raised.

Forth River Trust (FRT) (Forth Rivers Trust)
The Forth Rivers Trust aims to engage people with rivers and wildlife that live within the Forth catchment whilst conserving rivers and their important species for future generations.

SEPA has briefed FRT on the detailed planned water quality improvement measures for the River Almond since 2020. This includes the improvements to the seven Scottish Water Wastewater Treatment Works and six combined sewer overflows (CSOs) to address water quality downgrades by 2027.

The Forth Rivers Trust submitted the River Almond Bathing Waters application in 2021. Again on the FRT website it states, 'One of the main motivations for the bathing waters application is to hold water authorities to a higher standard of water quality control and monitoring for the River Almond' (Forth Rivers Trust).

[redacted]

1. River Bathing
Q to Minister: What are your aspirations for Scotland's waters - 'Hydro Nation' - should we be able to use our rivers recreationally?

4 Sept The Ferret and National reported 49 Scottish beaches polluted by sewage. This year 49 of the 87 designated bathing waters around the country have recorded levels of faecal bacteria that could endanger the health of swimmers, surfers and paddlers. The data quoted in the report has been sense checked with SEPA as accurate.

25 Aug Daily Mail (Scotland) reported sewage spillages into rivers and burns hit 10-year high, 282 were recorded 2021/22 up 45% from 194 in 2020/21. It comes the same week that warning signs were placed on two beaches to alert people to the risks posed by a sewage leak. The data quoted in the report was sourced from Scottish Water's most recent 2021/22 annual report.

The River Basin Management Planning (RBMP) process, undertaken by SEPA, is a 6 year cycle of monitoring, assessing, classifying, and setting objectives aiming to protect and improve the water environment. Monitoring of the water environment under RBMP does not include bacteriological monitoring (it is not relevant for the protection of aquatic wildlife) unless it is associated human health at protected areas such as Bathing Waters.

Within the Plans, designated Bathing Waters aim to reduce the risks to human health, where a large number of people bathe, by protecting and improving bathing water quality. There are currently 87 designated Bathing Waters in Scotland with 3 being inland lochs.

Bacteriological monitoring associated with human health impacts is only primarily carried out at designated Bathing Waters where a large number of people bathe. A proportionate approach is taken to designating bathing waters as minimising the risks to bathers health in a wild dynamic environment can require tens of millions of pounds of investment to the public sewer infrastructure at a bathing water.

Top lines
- A clean and healthy water environment is vital for our nation's health and well-being, our biodiversity, and a sustainable economy.
- 66% of our water environment is already in overall good condition, whereas, Environment Agency figures for England are only 16%.
- The River Basin Management Plans published on 22 December 2021 are our most ambitious Plans yet, and set out targeted measures to further improve Scotland's water environment to 81% in good condition by 2027.
- The River Basin Management Plans are complemented by Scottish Water's 'Improving Urban Waters Route Map', which describes how Scottish Water will take further action to reduce wastewater pollution and sewage litter over the coming decade.
- This route map is backed by investment of half a billion pounds.
- 99% of bathing waters passed bathing water quality standards this year.
- It is important to remember that a small number of 'poor' monitoring results at each designated Bathing Water does not mean that water quality is continually poor on all days at Scotland's Bathing Waters. SEPA has analysed 1,297 water

quality samples from 87 designated Bathing Waters this season and 93% were found to be at safe levels.

- Whilst, there will be many other undesignated beaches, lochs and rivers across Scotland that are fit for bathing it remains the personal responsibility of every individual to assess the risks before entering open water, whether at a designated bathing water or otherwise.
- Public Health Scotland (PHS) has not produced public health guidance relating to wild swimming. However, it is aware of the work that SEPA carries out in relation to designated bathing waters in Scotland, as well as guidance produced by the Environment Agency and Public Health England (now UK Health Security Agency) relating to open water swimming.
- The UK HSA advice is also applicable to open water swimming in Scotland. As PHS remobilises its services following the COVID-19 response, it will consider priority work areas relating to Environmental Public Health, and this topic will be included within these considerations alongside other priority areas. Queries regarding specific bathing water applications or incidents are managed at local level by either the local authority or the local Health Protection Team.

Water Quality

- 87% of Scotland's entire water environment is assessed by SEPA as having a 'high' or 'good' classification for water quality – up from 82% six years ago.
- This upgrade in water quality reflects improvements made through Scottish Water's investment programme, and work by a range of stakeholders to improve rural land management practices to reduce diffuse pollution.
- Since 2010, Scottish Water has worked with SEPA to upgrade 104 wastewater treatment works and 279 storm overflows by investing £686 million.
- The Plans include a wide range of measures, which aim to ensure that 92% of Scotland's water environment has a classification of 'good' or better water quality by 2027.

Bathing Waters

- Scottish Ministers designate Bathing Waters where a large number of people bath as set out in the Bathing Water (Scotland) Regulations 2008 and the Bathing Waters Directive.
- The bathing water user limit for determining a large numbers of bathers was chosen by Scottish Ministers following consideration of comprehensive user surveys of bathing locations across Scotland and a formal public consultation.
- Bathing Waters classification gives an overall indication of expected water quality, but there can be short term fluctuations in water quality driven by heavy rainfall.
- Bathing Water classification in Scotland is undertaken by SEPA following strict EU bacteriological standards. These were reviewed by the World Health Organisation in 2018, which concluded they were fit for purpose.
- SEPA's monitoring of Bathing Waters shows water quality can be impacted by a range of bacterial sources including sewage spills, agricultural land runoff, urban runoff, dog and seagull faeces.

2. The problem (as we see it)
Q to Minister: Do you acknowledge the three dimensions of the problem (sewage itself, sewage related debris e.g. plastics, lack of accountability) and what could you do along each of this axis to improve this?

Through the River Basin Management Planning (RBMP) process SEPA monitors and assesses the water environment on an annual basis against a wide range of standards set by the Scottish Government aiming to protect and improve it. These water quality standards were determined by groups of experts in their field at an EU or UK level and received public consultation before implementation.

The RBMP identifies a range of impacts on the water quality of rivers, lochs and estuaries including rural diffuse pollution, public waste water discharges, acid rain, wastewater discharges from industry, aquaculture, and distilleries.

Emerging contaminants of concern such as microplastics, pharmaceuticals, antimicrobial resistance and other substances can come from a range of pathways in to the water environment with the sewer infrastructure being one such pathway that is being monitored assessed through research.

Top Lines

- We take very seriously the issue of sewage spills, and in Parliament last December I announced comprehensive plans to reduce sewage spills over the coming decade.
- SEPA is required by law to identify unsatisfactory CSOs, primarily for water quality or sewage related debris impacts, in order to reduce those impacts on the water environment.
- Scottish Water carried out a comprehensive Scotland-wide environmental study programme to assess the impacts of its assets on water quality, which was reviewed by SEPA, during the 2015 to 2021 investment period costing around £40m.
- This comprehensive Scottish Water environmental study programme contributed significantly to 654 out of 3,614 Combined Sewer Overflows being identified as unsatisfactory by SEPA.
- 27 high priority unsatisfactory Combined Sewer Overflows (CSOs) were identified by SEPA as impacting on water quality are included as improvement measures in the River Basin Management Plans.
- Scottish Water is also developing solutions for 40 Wastewater Treatment Works which are included as improvement measures in the Plans.
- SEPA regularly monitors the water environment to ensure it is not impacted by sewage spills.
- In 2019, it took around 12,000 monitoring samples across Scotland to safeguard the water quality of our rivers, lochs and coastal areas.
- SEPA licences and regulates 345 sewer networks operated by Scottish Water carrying out inspections on a rolling basis.
- In 2019 there were 7 out of 100 found not to be compliant with their licence conditions and SEPA took action to ensure compliance was achieved.

Microplastics

- Marine litter is a global challenge, affecting the world's oceans, seas, coastlines and shores.
- Microplastic pollution results from the breakdown of larger plastic items as well as direct sources. Our refreshed Marine Litter Strategy, to be published later this year, has an action plan to reduce sources of large litter such as fishing gear, and micro such as plastic pellets.
- This builds on previous legislation which banned microbeads in rinse-off personal care products, plastic-stemmed cotton buds and many single-use plastic items often found as beach litter. Scotland was the first in the UK to ban plastic-stemmed cotton buds, and joined other UK administrations to ban microbeads at the same time. We have moved to ban other single use plastics and will develop the UK's first deposit return scheme.
- We will also continue to support developments in microplastic monitoring, improving scientists' understanding of the microplastic pollution problem, and enabling more effective solutions that can be taken across the world to protect our environment.
- The updated Strategy also includes actions which are focused on reducing the volume of plastic entering our rivers and ending up in our seas. We have supported Keep Scotland Beautiful's Upstream Battle project since its inception in 2018. This project engages local communities and businesses to prevent and remove litter from rivers, thereby reducing this source of marine pollution.
- Since the introduction of the Internal Markets Act, we are unable to introduce legislation alone on this issue, and it is acknowledged that UK-wide action would be required to make any legislation effective and enforceable.
- We encourage the UK Government and other administrations to work with us to bring forward a ban on wet wipes containing plastic, and to ensure that products on the market meet the Fine to Flush standard.
- Scottish Water's new national campaign 'Nature Calls' urges customers not to flush wet wipes (and other items) down the toilet.

3. Commitment to end sewage pollution
Q to Minister: Will the Minister drive the conversation about this and make a commitment to end sewage pollution of Scottish rivers and beaches? Yes, it might take 30 years to achieve but the commitment to get there is already overdue. If not now, when?

Scotland has 50,000km of sewer network and a large proportion of it is combined ie it receives rainwater runoff and wastewater in one pipe. There are around 3,614 combined sewer overflows that temporarily spill a mixture of rainwater and sewage effluent into the water during heavy rainfall.

These CSOs are regulated by SEPA to protect the environment. At bathing waters CSO sewage spill frequency is reduced to minimise their impact on bathing water quality. On average the investment required to reduce sewage spills from one CSO is £2 to £3m.

SEPA's River Basin Management Planning (RBMP) water quality classification indicates that the River Almond is at moderate status. This is due to the level of nutrients, e.g. phosphorus, detected by SEPA in the river. The most likely source of these nutrients is effluent from Scottish Water's wastewater discharges.

Top Lines
- As I announced to Parliament in December last year, Scottish Water's Improving Urban Waters Route Map sets out a programme of continued action to reduce wastewater pollution and sewage litter over the coming decade by investing half a billion pounds.
- Combined Sewer Overflows (CSOs) are an integral part of Scotland's sewer networks, ensuring sewers don't back up and flood homes, streets and sewage works during periods of heavy rainfall.
- Scottish Water has estimated that in order to eliminate CSO intermittent discharges it would need to invest £13 billion to replace the combined sewer infrastructure across Scotland.
- Scottish Water has reduced environmental pollution incidents by 60% over the last decade from 800 each year to fewer than 300, in spite of increasingly challenging weather patterns.

Scottish Water's Improving Urban Waters Route Map progress
- Scottish Water is in the process of developing solutions for 90 (of 108 identified) high priority unsatisfactory Combined Sewer Overflows (CSOs) due to their impact on water quality or sewage related debris.
- It is continuing to assess the planning work required for the remaining 18.
- Scottish Water has identified the first programme of around 250 Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) monitors that will be delivered to meet its commitment to invest up to £70m to install 1,000 new monitors, including those at bathing waters, before 2024.
- Work is underway to identify the next priorities based upon predicted spill frequency, potential impacts and receiving water amenity with further programmes expected by December 2024.

Planned River Almond water quality improvements

- Plans have been agreed between SEPA and Scottish Water for upgrades to seven Scottish Water Wastewater Treatment Works (WwTWs) and six CSOs on the River Almond with the aim of improving water quality to 'good' status by 2027.
- Scottish Water is also progressing on two identified high priority sewer overflows in the River Almond catchment requiring screens to address significant litter issues.
- All this work is on track and Scottish Water estimates that it will invest £30-50m to deliver improvements in the River Almond.
- Scottish Water has installed sensors in the East Calder sewer system, as well as event data loggers to monitor spills at key sewer overflows in the Almond as part of its intelligent sewer network trial. This will help identify any issues with sewer flows and determine future investment requirements in the sewer networks.
- SEPA's Almond Compliance Audit project for Scottish Water assets is underway, with its Environmental Performance team currently undertaking preparatory work prior to onsite inspections.
- The River Almond is the focus for one of two pilot 'Lighthouse' projects. This aims deliver and showcase water environment improvements including spill reductions, surface water removal and place-making opportunities with a focus on partnership working with communities.
- The Almond catchment is a planned SEPA priority catchment project for 2023, involving 133 initial farm inspections aiming to reduce rural diffuse pollution.

4. Specific investment for the River Almond.
Q to Minister: How can the public be assured that sewage pollution won't become worse with new housing developments? Scottish Water is currently undertaking planned investment work. How much would it cost Scottish Water to disinfect the sewage overflows from East Calder WwTW to help make the river safer to swim in? Could this be included in the planned investments?

New property developments have been required to separate rainwater and wastewater, where practical, for decades. Rainwater has been required to be managed sustainably aboveground using sustainable urban drainage system, which treat and attenuate the runoff water.

Top Lines

- Scottish Water anticipates that the impact from housing development in the River Almond catchment can be mitigated to ensure that there is no detriment in current performance levels of its Wastewater Treatment Works.
- Any connections from new housing will include only waste water (foul) connections with surface water (rainfall runoff) being managed via Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems.
- Housing developers, working with and supported by Scottish Water, are required to ensure that the sewerage system is reinforced to deal with increases in foul flow.
- Scottish Water has not undertaken a cost analysis in relation to “making the River Almond safe to swim in”; this is because it is not designated as a bathing water.
- Scottish Water’s investment programme for the 2021-27 period is focussed on meeting legally binding standards in relation to the public water and sewerage infrastructure.
- Ministers’ Objectives require Scottish Water to:
    - improve the current level of compliance with its environmental licences by preparing and implementing investment plans that address the risks of impacts on the environment from its assets.
    - prepare and implement delivery plans throughout the 2021-27 period which set out how improvements to its water and sewerage infrastructure are expected to contribute effectively to the RBMP objectives.
- Scottish Water estimates that it will invest £30-50m to deliver the current planned improvements in the River Almond.

Blue/ Green infrastructure

- Scottish Government recognises the multiple benefits that blue and green infrastructure (BGI) provides, including combined sewer overflow spill reduction, and published the Water Resilient Places Policy Framework in February 2021.
- Scottish Water, SEPA and the local authorities support the framework and we will continue to see increased use of BGI in future as this becomes the primary infrastructure for managing surface water in new developments.
- Under the Edinburgh Blue-Green City Partnership the Edinburgh and Lothian Strategic Drainage Partnership is being used as a platform for enabling a radically different approach to urban water planning and management.

The following are questions that have been raised by local community groups regarding the River Almond in the East Calder area. The answers are a combination of information from Scottish Water, SEPA and other agencies:

1. Do all the current CAR licenses along the River Almond fully comply with the Water Framework and Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive? SW – possibly answered before under FOI.

Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive requirements as transposed into the Urban Wastewater Treatment (Scotland) Regulations 1994 are set out within current licences. However, some improvement measures set out within RBMP3 (River Basin Management Plan 3rd Cycle) which are required to meet environmental standards the Water Framework Directive have not yet been captured within current licences. SEPA has made it clear that these RBMP3 improvements are required prior to 2027.

2. SEPA's river monitoring strategy (and what it classifies as a "pollutant") appears to date back to 1998 – is this adequate to protect Scottish Water's environment and human health from pollution?

SEPA and its predecessor organisations have been monitoring the quality of Scotland's water environment for many years. In 2007, the water monitoring programme was expanded significantly to meet the requirements of the Water Framework Directive (WFD). This requires a broader, more holistic approach to monitoring and classifying Scotland's aquatic environment. In particular, the Directive, and the associated River Basin Management Planning process, aim to protect and improve water bodies to meet targets for ecological condition, as well as water chemistry standards. The environmental standards that we monitor against are set by Scottish Government in the form of a direction to SEPA.

SEPA's monitoring networks were designed following the detailed EU guidance required for the WFD, which remain the foundation of our water quality monitoring today. Our surveillance network of long-term monitoring sites is geographically distributed across Scotland and is designed to reflect the range of natural conditions and man-made pressures found across the country. A wide suite of chemical, biological and physical parameters are monitored at these sites to provide a full picture of environmental quality. Risk based monitoring is also an important part of SEPA's water quality assessment. This is targeted at areas of the water environment which are known to be at risk of being impacted by specific pressures and focusses effort on the elements which are most likely to be affected by the specific pressure being assessed. For example, in areas where eutrophication is likely, we would focus on chemicals most associated with nutrient enrichment, and the algae and invertebrate species which are most sensitive to these pressures. Finally, we also carry out reactive monitoring, for example to assess the impact of unplanned discharges and pollution events. Our assessment of pollution events in the water environment usually involves chemical and biological assessment.

3. Is there a long-term aspiration to eliminate or significantly reduce the number of CSOs? Could SEPA agree a long-term target with Scottish Water to address this?

At previous River Almond Improvement Group meetings and in other correspondence, we have outlined the plans for improving the monitoring and visibility of CSO performance and reducing the impact of CSOs on water quality and on sewage related debris (SRD) in the environment.

Combined sewer overflows are an integral part of most of the sewer networks in Scotland and in the wider UK, ensuring that sewers do not back up and flood homes, streets and sewage works during heavy rainfall. However, these spills should not cause significant environmental harm

In 2021, SEPA wrote to Scottish Water setting out our expectations and timetable for a route map to improve urban waters as part of the actions required in the River Basin Management Plan 2021-2027

In response to this challenge, Scottish Water published the Urban Waters Routemap in Dec 2021- Urban Water Routemap - Scottish Water

The route map sets out work which Scottish Water will take forward to address environmental impacts from CSOs, increase monitoring and public transparency and reduce spills in the long term.

Targets for reducing spills from CSOs are currently set only where environmental impacts have been confirmed.

4. In relation to the River Almond: will the frequency and volumes of combined sewage being discharged into the river reduce by 2027? If so, by how much?

There are 5 CSOs where spills are causing impacts on water quality and these have been included in the River Basin Management Plan for improvement by 2027. We expect Scottish Water to identify the most sustainable solutions to reduce spills in these locations. We will ensure that solution design is complete by 2024 at which point will be able to confirm the expected reduction in spills.

Where CSOs are identified as causing significant litter, then SEPA has asked Scottish Water to make improvements. Solutions for addressing litter may include a reduction in spills and/or improved screening.

Following discussions with SEPA, Scottish Water published a **prioritisation method** for sewer overflows in Scotland in May 2022. Based on extensive ground survey and modelling studies of environmental impact, Scottish Water also published a **list of 108 overflows**, which are considered high priority and are currently being progressed for improvement.

During 2021, **SEPA wrote to Scottish Water** setting out our expectations and timetable for a route map to improve urban waters as part of the actions required in the River Basin Management Plan 2021-2027. We highlighted the need for a step change in our efforts to tackle the most significant environmental impacts as soon as possible and to take a One Planet Prosperity approach to improving our urban waters for the long term. This includes progressively reducing sewer spills through a step change in blue green infrastructure across out towns and cities.