
SPECIAL MOTION NO. 9 – CALLING ON THE GOVERNMENT TO TACKLE SEWAGE DISCHARGES

Standing in the names of:

- (i) Councillor Helen Rowbottom
- (ii) Councillor Max Schmid

The Council notes that:

- Thames Water is regularly using sewage overflows as the standard reaction to increased rainfall. There are four local discharge sites in Hammersmith and Fulham, with more than 100 dumping sites across London.
- These discharges pose a significant threat to public health and to the ecosystem and biodiversity of the Thames. Four local boat clubs and those living on houseboats near Hammersmith Bridge, near one of the local discharge sites, are particularly exposed. Over 125 species of fish, a large range of resident and migratory birdlife, and other animals depend on the river, including endangered species.
- This problem was both predictable and preventable. London's sewage system has remained largely unchanged since the Victorian era, but population growth and climate change – leading to increased instances of high-volume rainfall – have led to a foreseeably overloaded sewage system.
- More widely, raw sewage being pumped into our rivers and the ocean is a huge national problem, with urgent action needed to overhaul our outdated sewage systems.

The council is disappointed that Greg Hands, MP for Chelsea and Fulham, voted against the national Labour Party's plan to address the sewage problem. The Labour party is calling for:

- Mandatory monitoring of all sewage outlets
- The introduction of automatic fines for discharges
- Water bosses who routinely and systematically break the rules to be held professionally and personally accountable

The council regrets that Mr. Hands has failed to acknowledge the urgency of the issue and has undermined efforts to safeguard the Thames, local residents and wildlife.

The council believes there is a need for significant investment to upgrade and modernise London and national sewage infrastructure. This should include

sustainable infrastructure schemes, which help lower the risk of flooding by diverting rainwater to the ground instead of roadside gullies that push it directly into the sewer network.