

NOTICE OF MOTION	Date of Council Meeting: 09/04/25
	Mover: Councillor Tarmey
	Seconder: Councillor A Carter
	Title of Motion: Save our Rivers: Residents shouldn't pay for water company pollution

That this Council notes that:

- Every river in England is now polluted, with Environment Agency data showing that water companies spilled raw sewage for a record time of 3.61 million hours into the sea and rivers in England in 2024.
- This included, amongst others: 203 times for 2012 hours in Ravenfield, 137 times for 460 hours near Greasbrough, 108 times for 1897 hours in Letwell, 82 times for 630 hours in Dinnington and Anston, 96 times for 265 hours near Eastwood, 62 times for 614 hours near Woodsetts and 53 times for 100 hours near Thorpe Hesley.
- Yorkshire Water is one of four water companies who are collectively responsible for over 90% of all serious pollution incidents; council believes that such companies should withhold bonuses for senior executives until the sewage problem is fixed. Whilst Severn Trent Water performs much better, there are still an unacceptable number of incidents overall across the borough.
- Rotherham residents will be left to pay for the profiteering behaviour of our water companies and the mishandling of the sewage scandal by successive governments; with water bills expected to increase by an average of £123 this year in England.
- Government funding to the Environment Agency to monitor river quality and regulate farms and water companies has dropped 75% since 2010/11 and in 2020 just 3.6% of pollution complaints made to the Agency resulted in penalties.

Council welcomes the establishment of a new Independent Water Commission but believes that further action is required on the part of the water industry and central government to tackle the sewage crisis.

Therefore, this Council resolves to request the Chief Executive write to:

1. The Chief Executive(s) of Yorkshire Water and Severn Trent Water calling for urgent action to address the impact of waste-water discharges on our local rivers.
2. The Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs asking for the budget of the Environment Agency to be increased.
3. The Chairperson of the Parliamentary Environmental Audit Committee to advocate for greater enforcement of existing regulatory powers.