

PPWG 14 Dec 2017 Neil Hargreaves

My subject is water supplies. I'm going to emphasise some things you already know, but there is a final point, so please bear with me.

We are all aware of the environmental damage already done in the district and getting worse. Streams now dry or only intermittent flow and water related life just gone. We used to have kingfishers in Newport.

On p296 of the consultation summary the Environment Agency say that the water consumption standard for houses in the garden villages should be enforced at 110 litres per inhabitant per day. That is the very highest standard, not what is being applied to houses going up now. Multiplying by the number of people per house and by 365 days that's about 100,000 litres per house per year. To make the sums easy if we say build 10,000 houses across the district that means another 1 million tonnes of water a year has to be found. And round here 'found' mostly means pumping out of the ground.

It's not just houses. On p443, policy SP11 Stansted airport expansion, the EA says failure to consider both water supplies and sewerage means the application for expansion will be 'unsound'. 10 million more passengers per year, and what do we all do before going on a long flight?

On p596 the EA says the level of discharges from sewage works into watercourses is at its limit (euphemism by the way, look at their maps from the Hyder report of 7 years ago and the whole district is in red for over abstraction) and additional permits may not be granted, breach of environmental legislation and no water cycle study. Unsound. A word repeated several times.

P604 - EA again - our rivers are headwater only with not enough dilution volume and 'permitted nutrient limits could be extremely challenging to meet' What that means is the output from our sewage works has biological material in it which consumes oxygen. So the sewage works output is further damaging our rivers.

In the absence of an up to date Water Cycle Study, I went through Affinity Water's 2015 documentation. Full of acronyms, but even without the scale of development now being planned, and factoring in all the water savings, it says they would have deficits in their ability to supply.

My point is this. No doubt discussions have already been held with the DCLG so they know there is a water problem. But would it be a good idea, to challenge them now with the strong possibility that the answer on water supply from Affinity, from the EA, and therefore from UDC, may be that the number of houses requested is not sustainable? And ask them now what would be their position if we said they must significantly reduce the housing requirement demanded of this area?