

## **Motion on Failure of Water Supply in Tunbridge Wells**

**Proposer:** Mr Antony Hook

**Seconder:** Mr Richard Streatfeild, MBE

### **Background Information provided by the Liberal Democrat Group:**

1. On 29<sup>th</sup> November 2025, 24,000 households in and around Tunbridge Wells began to experience either no water supply or significantly reduced water pressure. This disruption has continued through to 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2025 (the time of writing), leaving many homes without water for a fifth consecutive day.
2. South East Water, the company responsible for the water supply to the affected areas, has advised residents that, even after the water supply is restored, they should boil any water intended for consumption for a period of 10 days.
3. The cessation of water supply has not only affected families but has also had a significant impact on businesses, schools, care homes, and a wide range of social infrastructure across this part of Kent.
4. Many residents have been forced to collect rationed bottled water to meet their basic needs.
5. The ongoing shortage of water presents clear and serious risks to public health.
6. There was a previous water crisis in Tunbridge Wells in December 2022, as well as other incidents in different parts of Kent in recent years. These repeated events raise serious concerns that key lessons have not been learned and that the region's water system lacks sufficient resilience to prevent such crises in the future.

Kent County Council should recognise that access to water is a fundamental necessity for life and wellbeing.

### **Motion**

The Council expresses:

1. Its formal thanks to KCC Staff who have worked to support help local people during this major incident.
2. Its deep concern about the approach of South East Water and its failures to deliver a vital service to Kent Residents.
3. Support for any formal investigations or inquiries into the failures.

The Council calls for:

4. The establishment of a Short-Focussed Inquiry by the Scrutiny Committee.

This inquiry should seek:

- to identify what lessons were learned but not enacted between 2022 and 2025.
- what can be learned from the recent water outage in Tunbridge Wells, including steps required to prevent recurrence of similar incidents and measures to build greater resilience, particularly for care homes, schools and other KCC services.
- How KCC can best contribute to effective support and relief efforts in the event of similar incidents in the future.

5. Officers from the Chief Executive's Department to draw the Council's resolution to the attention of the relevant Minister.