

From: Mr John Moreland, Chairman of the Water Supply Short Focused Inquiry (SFI)

To: Scrutiny Committee – 13 May 2026

Subject: Short Focused Inquiry – Water Supply

Classification: Unrestricted

1. Introduction

- a) County Council, at its meeting on 18 December 2025, called for Scrutiny Committee to establish a Short Focused Inquiry (SFI) following a major water supply failure in Tunbridge Wells and surrounding areas. Scrutiny Committee subsequently agreed to establish the SFI on 22 January 2026.
- b) The purpose of the SFI was to examine the causes, handling and impacts of the December 2025 water supply failures affecting Tunbridge Wells and the surrounding areas along with subsequent Kent-wide supply interruptions in January 2026.
- c) Oral evidence was gathered from the following areas across KCC:
 - Education
 - Adult Social Care
 - Resilience and Emergency Planning
 - Economy
 - Flood and Water Management
 - Strategic Planning and Infrastructure
 - Public Health
 - Marketing and Resident Experience
- d) Oral evidence was gathered from the following external organisations:
 - National Farmers Union
 - DryWells Action
 - Staplehurst Emergency Planning Group
 - South East Water
 - Affinity Water
 - Small group of Parish Councils
- e) In addition, the Committee received written evidence from the following:
 - Tunbridge Wells Borough Council
 - Swale Borough Council
 - Head of Kent Resilience Team
 - Several Parish Councils by way of questionnaire
- f) The recommendations and findings of the Inquiry are set out in the report contained in Appendix 1.

2. Next Steps

- a) Once formally considered by the Scrutiny Committee, the report and recommendations should be submitted to the Leader and relevant Cabinet Members along with a request for a formal response to the recommendations within two months.

3. Recommendation:

That the Scrutiny Committee note the Short Focused Inquiry Report into Water Supply, and confirm that it be submitted to the Leader and relevant Cabinet Members along with a request for a formal response to the recommendations within two months.

4. Appendices

Appendix 1 - Water Supply Short Focused Inquiry Report

5. Background Documents

None.

6. Contact details

Anna Taylor
Assistant Democratic Services Manager
Tel: 03000 416478
Email: anna.taylor@kent.gov.uk

Hayley Savage
Democratic Services Officer
Tel: 03000 414286
Email: hayley.savage@kent.gov.uk

Maya Bundy
Democratic Services Officer
Tel: 03000 416072
Email: maya.bundy@kent.gov.uk