

It's been an incredibly busy but enjoyable first month as ward councillor.

On the 27th May the new administration held its first Full Council meeting where committee positions were appointed. I was very pleased to take up places on the Policy Finance and Resources Committee (PFR), the Environment and Community Protection Committee (ECP), and was particularly proud to be elected as Vice Chair of the Audit and Governance Committee (A&G).

On 11th June councillors met with CEO of Southern Water Mr Lawrence Gosden.

On the specific subject of the Bembridge Point CSO, I pointed out that whilst they were correct in their assertion that the pipe had been in place for decades, it should also be accepted that it hasn't been **used** for decades. Any new spills due to the works on the pipe would therefore be a 100% increase in real terms. This makes this issue unique and justifies bringing forward planned investments to cut overflows in the area before any thought can be given to opening the CSO.

Mr Gosden listened and showed a real willingness to attempt to find a satisfactory solution. On a follow up email after the meeting, he confirmed that they would be looking at 'a different short-term solution whilst accelerating medium term plans.'

Late last week I received further confirmation that Southern Water were no longer looking to carry out works on the CSO and instead were planning to install temporary tanks, which they hope will be in place by the beginning of September. In the meantime, they will carry on using the standby tankers.

In addition, they are also going to bring forward their plans for a permanent solution by looking at three areas:

- Impermeable Area Survey – Seeking to deal with any significant surface water ingress – Survey completion date 9th Oct 2026.
- Flood Defence – Engagement with a flood defence company to explore options to protect properties – Due date 31st July 2026.
- Permanent Storm Tank/Storage – scoping and options – Due date 31st July 2026.

I've made it clear to them that both I and the Parish Council wish to be consulted about next steps and would be more than willing to help organise a public meeting to keep residents informed. Adam Wilds at Southern Water will discuss this option further in the coming weeks.