

Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee

Policy Review: Evidence Gathering Session 4

WATER TREATMENT WORKS VISIT

Meeting Objectives: To look at a water treatment plant and understand the process for artificially fluoridating the water supply.

In attendance: Cllrs Dixon (Chair), Davison, Leadbitter and Cunningham.

Lynne Bennet (Governance Law Specialist – Sunderland City Council), Kathryn Bailey (Public Health Specialist), Ben Seale (Public Health Lead) and Nigel Cummings (Scrutiny Officer).

Apologies: Cllrs Mann, Butler and McDonough

The main points arising from the visit were as follows:

- It was noted that typical shelf life of a water fluoridation plant was approximately 20 years. Public Health England cover the capital costs for any scheme with local authorities covering the revenue costs for a CWF Scheme.
- Raw material comes in a liquid form and the site is manned 24 hrs/day.
- Safety features include a trip point at 1.4mg/l from the normal dosage of 1.0mg/l. This was monitored by analyser equipment as well as a chemical flow meter to ascertain the true value.
- In terms of the Sunderland water distribution system there are three water treatment plants with a further eight groundwater stations (GWS). The water from these stations is abstracted from the Durham Magnesian Limestone Aquifer whose water is naturally fluoridated. In some cases, this water is fluoridated to 1.1 ppm in others it is as low as 0.3 ppm.
- It was noted that the simplest and most cost effective option to provide a CWF scheme would be to install fluoridation plants at the three major treatment works, this would provide coverage to all areas of the City of Sunderland.
- Members were informed that the conventional treatment method for water purification is a complex, multistage process that generally consists of five primary steps. Following treatment, the water is available to the distribution system via service reservoirs.
- It was also noted that demand for water is often in spikes through the day with early morning and early evening being the key pressure times of the day.

The Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and contribution. All the comments would be noted and these would contribute to the final report.