



Sir James Bevan
Chief Executive
The Environment Agency
Via email

16 March 2023

Dear Sir James

Unauthorised Moorings within Elmbridge Borough

I know you are already aware of the significant issues that Elmbridge faces in terms of unauthorised moorings, and I am writing to you on behalf of the borough council and its residents to advise you that despite our best efforts locally, the situation is deteriorating. Sadly, our view is that the Environment Agency (EA) is not fulfilling its enforcement role when it comes to unauthorised moorings and not acting in best faith as a partner. I have set out some initial concerns below with the hope of working with you and your colleagues at the Environment Agency to resolve this matter.

1. **Lack of enforcement:** The EA is the key landowner of the river network in our borough, but we see very little evidence that it is using its enforcement powers to swiftly move on unauthorised moored boats. Recent correspondence from the EA to residents has also suggested that it does not see itself as having primary responsibility for the enforcement of unauthorised moorings on its own land. This has further undermined confidence and reinforced the view that the EA is not committed to enforcement within our borough.
2. **Strategic approach to enforcement:** We are concerned that the EA does not have a strategic approach for the enforcement of unauthorised moorings. We would like to understand the EA's long-term approach to unauthorised moorings, how the EA intends to adequately resource its strategy, and the measures of success it intends to use.
3. **Working in partnership:** for the second year running the EA has failed to attend a meeting of the Council's Overview & Scrutiny Committee. We would like to understand why, despite agreeing to attend in advance, the EA was unwilling to attend? Public meetings offer a good opportunity to talk to locally elected members and to reassure residents. We therefore hope that the EA will agree to attending in the future.
4. The Council is also currently seeking views on whether we should introduce a new Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) to protect the parts of the riverside it owns (as well as our countryside and green spaces) from unauthorised moorings, overnight camping, and activities involving lighting fires. This demonstrates our commitment to tackling difficult issues and we would like to discuss why the EA does not want to use PSPOs to supplement its existing enforcement powers on land it owns.

We understand that the enforcement of unauthorised moorings can be time consuming and challenging and we hope by meeting with you and your colleagues we can start to make some progress. We would also like to reassure you that EBC, local partners, and residents are fully committed to working with you on this issue.

I understand that you will be shortly stepping down from your role and I hope that you will have time to meet with us before the 31 March. We look forward to working with you on this pressing issue for our borough.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Adam Chalmers".

Adam Chalmers
Chief Executive
Elmbridge Borough Council