



Alan Lovell DL
Chair
The Environment Agency
Via Email

16 March 2023

Dear Alan

Unauthorised Moorings Within Elmbridge Borough

We are writing to you on behalf of Elmbridge Borough Council and its residents, to ensure you are aware of the significant issues that Elmbridge faces in terms of unauthorised moorings. We would like 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. Our Chief Executive, Adam Chalmers has provided an update to Sir James Bevan, however we would like to reiterate the following concerns with yourself, with the hope of ensuring that we can all work together to resolve these matters as partners:

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 in 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 the EA accepting an invitation from Elmbridge officers to meet with your Chief Executive and other colleagues we can start to make some progress. This is an issue of deep concern for our residents, and we would also like to reiterate the reassurance that EBC, local partners, and residents are fully committed to working with you on this issue.

As a result of the above, the opportunity to meet and discuss these ongoing issues would be most welcome. We would like to invite you to visit our stretch of the river in Elmbridge so that we can show you first hand the situation we are facing in our borough and work together to form a partnership approach to providing solutions. We look forward to working with you on this going forward.

Yours sincerely

Handwritten signature of C. Sadler in black ink, enclosed in a thin black rectangular border.

Councillor Chris Sadler
Leader, Elmbridge Borough Council

Handwritten signature of B McDonald in black ink.

Councillor Bruce McDonald
Deputy Leader, Elmbridge Borough
Council