



The Scottish Parliament  
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba



**Ben Macpherson MSP**  
**Edinburgh Northern and Leith**

11 May 2020

**Roseanna Cunningham MSP**  
**Cabinet Secretary for Environment and Climate Change**  
St Andrew's House  
Regent Road  
Edinburgh EH1 3DG

Dear Roseanna,

**Seafield Waste Water Treatment Works**  
**Odour in the community**

I am writing in my capacity as constituency MSP for Edinburgh Northern and Leith in which, as you are aware, the Seafield Waste Water Treatment Works is situated.

As you know, there have been long-standing issues with odour from the Works that can cause a nuisance in the local community. Indeed, I am grateful for your intervention previously in establishing a Strategic Review into the Works and the network of sewers that feed into it. This review is informing future investment in the Works with the aim to minimise odour and make the Works fit for the challenges of a growing population and climate change. In due course, the community looks forward to implementation of the previously announced ~£10 million of proposed capital investment: <https://www.scottishwater.co.uk/About-Us/News-and-Views/170120-Seafield-Announcement>.

Notwithstanding the good work of the Strategic Review, however, several constituents have informed me that there remains frequent and prolonged periods of odour intrusion into the community. Over the past two months my office has received a spike in the number of complaints made by residents, from the period from the end of March to date. Scottish Water have stated that the odour is as a result of essential works to remove sludge from tanks coinciding with onshore winds. I very much value the contributions and dedication of the key workers at Seafield, especially at this challenging time for us all. However, constituents have raised their discontent about a regular presence of odour in the community recently during this coronavirus lockdown period.

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**Ben Macpherson MSP**

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Our Ref: BM/RM

My constituents maintain that the response from Scottish Water and their PFI operators Veolia has thus far been reactive and inadequate. Moreover, although the regulators are made aware of issues with odour from the Works through complaints by the public, regulators have been unable to compel Scottish Water and its PFI operator Veolia to reduce odour intrusion into the neighbouring community.

My constituents have asked me to bring these concerns and operational problems to your attention, as they have been recurring in recent months and have led to discomfort and frustration in the local community. Recently, the regulatory framework has seemed inadequate to many of my constituents and has not given comfort to the community that action is being effectively taken to ensure that odour is minimised. The regulators do respond to complaints but state that while odour is present it does not constitute a nuisance, and state that Scottish Water/Veolia are taking adequate steps to address the issues causing the odour. Meanwhile residents have relayed to me their irritation about regular odour occurrences and their growing despondence that their complaints feel ignored.

Therefore, I would welcome any further action that the Scottish Government can take to reemphasise and/or reinforce to Scottish Water and their PFI operators Veolia that they have a duty to minimise odour in the community. I'd also welcome any further analysis of how effectively the current regulatory framework enables City of Edinburgh Council and SEPA to address odour incidences when they occur.

Many thanks for giving this matter your attention and in advance for your response.



**Ben Macpherson MSP**

CC:

Ash Denham MSP, Edinburgh Eastern  
Tommy Sheppard MP, Edinburgh East  
Deidre Brock MP, Edinburgh North and Leith  
Cllr Adam McVey, Leith Ward

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