

Water firm blasted for seafront floods



Seafront arcade hit by the floods

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A SENIOR councillor claims Anglian Water is more interested in supporting its shareholders than tackling flooding issues in Southend.

Martin Terry, Southend councillor responsible for public protection, waste and transport, launched the attack on the firm due to serious concerns he has about drainage on the seafront.

Homes and businesses along the Golden Mile, now dubbed the Golden Nile, have been left with huge clean-up bill after they were flooded out again – the second time in just over a year.

Anger is also growing that a report into the flooding from August 2013 has still not been published.

Mr Terry said: “I don’t understand why the report hasn’t come out yet, but I believe as a result of what happened last year and pressure from Southend Council, faults were identified and a number of repairs were carried out in the meantime.

“Anglian Water say they spent £250,000 in Southend, but that was just maintenance.

There was no capital investment and that’s what we need.

“The water pipe infrastructure dates back to the 1900s. It doesn’t matter what gullies we put in unless the pipes underground are big enough.”

He added: “The people that own our water companies are foreign investors and hedge fund investors. They have no regard for the people of Southend and are only interested in taking care of shareholders.

PROMOTED STORIES

The owners of the Happidrome amusement arcade and Ye Olde Chippy in Marine Parade have both said they may quit the seafront as they can’t afford to deal with another flood.

Paul Thompson, chairman of the Southend Seafront Traders Association said: “I am meeting with representatives of the council this week.

“If action had been taken sooner and the report was produced it is possible the seafront wouldn’t have flooded, or not have been so bad.”

Emma Staples from Anglian Water defended the company’s investment in the area.

She said: “We know flooding is devastating for those people affected and we do understand residents’ concerns, especially as extreme, intense rainfall like this has affected parts of Southend before.

“An independent, joint investigation began with Southend Council after the first incident last August. This is a shared system with shared responsibility between different organisations.

“Since last August we have invested more than a quarter of a million pounds in Southend to replace and upgrade a pump at Eastern Esplanade, survey the sewers with CCTV cameras to check they are flowing freely and continue a programme of jetting to ensure they stay clear. We are also refurbishing the pumps at [Chalkwell](#) and this will finish soon.

“Over the past five years we have invested around £8million in Southend’s water recycling and drainage infrastructure.

An additional £600,000 has been spent running the system day-to-day in the past year alone, and hundreds of those and more has been spent on maintaining it.

“Our planned investment programme over the next five years will total more than £5billion across our region.”