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Anti-fluoride campaigner in bid to become MP

An anti-fluoride campaigner has been selected as a Green Party candidate for the next general election.

Mr Justice Millett has given permission for a Judicial Review of the strategic health authority’s (SHA) decision stating that the case raised important questions of public law. However the South Central SHA claims it is confident it followed the law.

The South Central Strategic Health Authority (SCSHA) board’s decision was made in February, despite 72 per cent of 10,000 respondents in a public consultation opposing the move.

The judge accepted the SHA’s defence it followed the law, which says it only had to “pay regard” to public opinion, but wants the lawfulness of that approach to be looked at in court.

Government ministers had said that SHAs could only go ahead with fluoridation if they had the residents’ support.

The application for a judicial review has been lodged by a Southampton resident, Geraldine Milner. The legal challenge argues that the SCSHA failed to have regard to the government’s policy that mass fluoridation of drinking water should only go ahead in any particular area if a majority of the local people are in favour of it.

Leigh Day & Co claim in part of the Water Bill that became the Water Act in 2005, Lord Warner, the Junior Health Minister, stated in Parliament that it was government policy that ‘no new fluoridation scheme would go ahead without the support of the majority of the local populations determined by local consultations conducted by strategic health authorities’.

The SCSHA said in a statement that the board is ‘satisfied that, based on existing research, water fluoridation is a safe and effective way to tackle tooth decay and that the health benefits outweigh all other arguments against water fluoridation’.

If the SCSHA gets its way, Southampton will be the first place in England to introduce fluoridation since Health Minister Alan Johnson’s ‘fluoridation for all’ proposal in February 2008.

The SHA remains confident that the decision that has been made by the SHA board was carried out in accordance with the relevant legislation laid down by Parliament, and is in the best interests of the health of local people.

Health chiefs want to add fluor- ride to the water supplies of 200,000 households covering parts of Southampton, Eastleigh, Totton, Netley and Rownhams.

The law was changed in 2002 to allow SHAs, rather than water companies, to decide on fluorida- tion. Any result from a judicial re- view will not be known until Feb- ruary 2010.

Following the successful request for a Judicial Review of the South Central SHA decision on fluoridation, all proposals for schemes in the North West of Eng- land have been put on hold.

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