

Cabinet

27th March 2025

Report of the Chair of Infrastructure, Safety and Growth Scrutiny

Matters referred to Cabinet in accordance with the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules

Scrutiny Committee	Title of Matter referred	Date of Scrutiny meeting
Infrastructure Safety & Growth Scrutiny Committee	Improving Water Quality Within Tamworth's Rivers	18 th February 2025

Exempt Information

None.

Purpose

To notify Cabinet of the recommendations from the Improving Water Quality Within Tamworth's Rivers item that was discussed at the meeting of Infrastructure Safety & Growth Scrutiny Committee on the 18th February 2025.

Recommendations:

Following consideration of the item the Committee agree to the following recommendations being made to Cabinet:

1. The relevant portfolio holder along with the relevant senior officer at the Council attend the catchment partnership meetings.

(Moved by Councillor J Oates and seconded by Councillor N Statham)

Background Information

The following motion was submitted to Full Council on the 28th February 2023:

According to a map produced by The Rivers Trust using the latest available public data, there has been hundreds of hours of raw sewage discharge in Tamworth during 2021.

These discharges are across multiple sites in the borough, and we are sure that residents will be shocked to find raw sewage is being dumped in local rivers in the 21st century. Residents should have access to clean rivers and open water and we very much support the steps the government is taking towards a 'polluter pays' principle when it comes to tackling river pollution.

A referral was made by Full Council to the Infrastructure, Safety and Growth Scrutiny Committee to:

ask scrutiny to look into this matter and engage with local partners, environmental bodies and utility providers to develop a broader approach to improving water quality in rivers in Tamworth

The current Chair of the Committee proposed an item be added to the agenda on the 21st March 2024 which was agreed. As a result this meeting has been arranged to bring key partners together to discuss the issue.

Executive Summary

At the meeting on the 18th February 2025 partners from the Trent Rivers Trust, Severn Trent Water, the Environment Agency and Staffordshire County Council attended a meeting of the Committee.

The Committee received presentations from Trent Rivers Trust and Severn Trent Water which included data on rivers, factors affecting water quality, ideas for nature based solutions as well as information on the types of sewer systems in place and work being done by Severn Trent Water to improve water quality within rivers.

Discussions were held around the who was responsible for different water courses and what consideration is given to new planning developments where it was explained that larger (main rivers) are the responsibility of the Environment Agency whilst smaller water courses which flow into larger course (ditches/streams) are looked after by the County Council as the lead local flood authority however but they do not maintain these, this is the landowners duty and responsibility (riparian ownership responsibilities). It was also confirmed that Severn Trent Water was not a statutory consultee for planning. Clarification was sought around work being done on flood defences and it was highlighted that the Environment Agency were currently working on a new flood defence scheme.

The importance of 'catchments' was discussed as water can come together from different areas which can be rural and urban, and that it was important to work with neighbouring authorities to agree on a policy to support local rivers. Trent Rivers Trust confirmed that they support local catchment meetings and encourage Tamworth Borough Council to attend a meeting and encourage partners to attend as well. The Committee moved a recommendation to ask Officers to attend.

Options Considered

None.

Key considerations

1. Scrutiny committees have statutory powers to make recommendations to the Executive, and the Executive (Cabinet) has a statutory duty to respond. They may also make reports and recommendations to external decision making bodies.
2. The agenda for Executive meetings shall include a standing item entitled 'Matters Referred to the Cabinet In Accordance with the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules'. The reports of overview and scrutiny committees and sub-committees referred to the Executive shall be included at this point in the agenda (unless they have been considered in the context of the Executive's deliberations on a substantive item on the agenda) within one

calendar month of the overview and scrutiny committee or sub-committee completing its report/recommendations.

3. Scrutiny recommendations are addressed to the Cabinet, as the main Executive decision making body of the council (or, where appropriate, an external agency).
4. Cabinet is being asked to note the scrutiny report / recommendations and that an Executive Response to the scrutiny recommendations be prepared for consideration by the Cabinet within two months from receiving the report or recommendations.
5. The minutes of the meeting of the scrutiny committee provide the record of the scrutiny committee's consideration of the issue and the scrutiny recommendations made during the meeting.
6. The scrutiny committee will be notified of the Executive Response made in respect to the scrutiny recommendations and may track the implementation of the Cabinet decisions and any actions agreed. This enables the scrutiny committee to track whether their recommendations have been agreed, what actually was agreed (if different) and review any outcomes arising

Report Author

Councillor M Couchman
Chair of Infrastructure Safety & Growth Scrutiny

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