



## Report to Cabinet

**Date:** 15 November 2022

**Title:** **Pollution in Buckinghamshire's Rivers and Chalk Streams – Select Committee Report**

**Relevant councillor(s)** Councillor Robert Carington, Chairman of the Review Group

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**Ward(s) affected:** *Not ward specific*

### Recommendations:

Recommendations made by the Transport, Environment & Climate Select Committee to Cabinet are that:

- 1) The Cabinet Member for Transport should investigate the use of new and practical gully technology with the intention of reducing harmful chemicals from the highways entering the watercourse.
- 2) The Cabinet Member for Transport should consider pollution contribution as a category that impacts the frequency of gully cleaning in the future programme of maintenance.
- 3) The Cabinet Member for Environment & Climate Change and the Cabinet Member for Homelessness & Regulatory Services should liaise to implement an update on the council website to include a page on water quality. This page should contain signposting for residents on who to contact regarding issues such as pollution incidents, spillages on highways and misconnections.
- 4) The Environment Agency should assign a dedicated, single point of contact that is of suitable seniority that can signpost queries from Local Authorities to the relevant EA Team or contact.
- 5) The Leader writes to the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs regarding the council's concern with engagement from the EA on this particular

**inquiry and other concerns reported to the Council regarding the EA's discharge of its statutory functions and its conduct.**

- 6) The Cabinet Member for Environment & Climate Change to lobby Anglian Water and Thames Water to invest in further catchment programmes in the county that emulate the benefits of the River Chess Smarter Water Catchment programme.**
- 7) Anglian Water and Thames Water submit annual reports to the TECC Select Committee on the progress towards reducing the amount and duration of storm overflows and discharge events in the county, as well as improving their infrastructure in Buckinghamshire.**
- 8) The Cabinet Member for Environment & Climate Change should engage with the incoming new CEO of the River Thame Catchment Trust and support the Trust's expansion into the Upper Great Ouse catchment area.**
- 9) The Deputy Cabinet Member for Environment lobbies further regarding the enactment of Schedule 3 to the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 with further support from the Council if necessary.**
- 10) A communications campaign be promoted through existing channels (e.g. newsletters and planning informatives) to encourage residents to ensure that their builders/contractors connect the right drain to the right place on works that are exempt from checks by Building Control.**

**Reason for decision:** For Cabinet to consider the recommendations of the Transport, Environment & Climate Change Select Committee.

## **1. Executive summary**

- 1.1** The Transport, Environment & Climate Change Select Committee agreed to set up a rapid review into Water Quality at its meeting on 20 January 2021. The Chairman asked Cllr Robert Carington if he would chair the review group and five other councillors volunteered to participate.
- 1.2** Between March – June 2022, the review group collected evidence through meetings both in person and on Teams. The review group then met in June to discuss and agree its key findings and recommendations which are presented in the report found at Appendix 1.
- 1.3** The report was presented to the Transport, Environment & Climate Change Select Committee on 3 November 2022.

## **2. Other options considered**

- 2.1 Appendix 1 provides further context to the Select Committee's recommendations. Cabinet is asked to consider these recommendations and provide a response.

## **3. Legal and financial implications**

- 3.1 These will be considered as part of the Cabinet's response.

## **4. Corporate implications**

- 5.1 These will be considered as part of the Cabinet's response.

## **5. Next steps and review**

- 5.1 As noted above, Cabinet will provide a response to the Select Committee recommendations at its meeting on 15 November 2022. The Transport, Environment & Climate Change Select Committee will then receive an update after 6 months and 12 months to monitor the implementation of these recommendations.

## **6. Background papers**

- 6.1 Agenda and Minutes of the Transport, Environment & Climate Change Select Committee meeting 20 January 2022:  
<https://buckinghamshire.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=343&MId=16766&Ver=4>