



# INFORMATION SHEET

## CABINET

Issue No: 2/2019

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**Response to the recommendations of the Improvement and Review Commission 28 November 2018 concerning the River Wye - Update**

**Cabinet Members:** Councillor D Johncock, Cabinet Member for Planning  
Councillor Steve Broadbent, Cabinet Member for Economic Development & Regeneration

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**Ward affected:** Abbey

## Background

On 28 November 2018 Improvement and Review Commission (IRC) considered the recommendations of the River Wye Task and Finish Group and recommended to Cabinet eight recommendations.

These were reported to the 17 December meeting of Cabinet which received the recommendations, and resolved that a further report be presented to a future Cabinet meeting responding to each of the recommendations in detail.

## Update

This note provides an update on the work areas that are under way to inform Cabinet's response to the recommendations.

As previously agreed, before a decision can be taken on Phase 7 of the Town Centre Master Plan (TCMP), officers need to refresh the Business Case and produce a detailed, costed programme plan. Work is already underway to confirm the costs and benefits of the scheme which includes:

1. Updating the scheme design, as well as reviewing the costs and programme of works that would be necessary to implement the river and/or the highway works

*A Contact Name is shown above and Members are asked to contact that person if they have any queries etc.*

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around Oxford Road. (This includes assessing the time necessary to secure planning permission and any other consents that may be required.)

2. Reviewing estimates of how many town centre visitors would be likely to directly experience the river if it were restored.
3. Reviewing baseline data on estimated property vacancies, and the extent to which experience from other case studies is applicable to the situation in High Wycombe.
4. Reviewing the financial benefits to the Council as a result of reopening the river and when these would be likely to arise.
5. Dialogue with the Environment Agency to confirm their position, identify the scope to secure Environment Agency or other government funding, and to quantify some of the wider benefits.
6. Reviewing how the scheme would be likely to affect Eden, both positively and negatively (in terms of traffic disruption during construction).

In parallel, the Council is currently starting work to develop a Regeneration Strategy for the key settlement areas in the district to complement the existing district wide Economic Development Strategy. Buckinghamshire County Council is also developing a Transport Strategy with input and support from Wycombe District Council which will be significant in relation to the town centre. Both of these require us to establish a new vision for the town out to 2050 and that work will produce outputs relevant to the IRC recommendations within the next 3 months.

At that stage, we will have the benefit of significant further information to respond to all of the IRC recommendations. It is therefore proposed that responses to these will be recommended to June Cabinet. The report will also update on progress on the Transport Strategy and Regeneration Strategy.