



Pollution in Buckinghamshire's Rivers and Chalk Streams Rapid Review – Recommendations from the TECC Select Committee Review Group

Chairman – Cllr Robert Carington

Response from Cabinet

Recommendation	Cabinet's Response – Y/N & comments	Six Month Update	Twelve Month Update	Lead Member/Officer & Timelines
<p>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.</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>We will continue to look at innovative and practical ways when updating and maintaining our gully systems, working with our current and future Highways Maintenance Contractors, to reduce the extent and impact of highways related pollutants entering water course.</p>	<p>New Term Maintenance Contract now in place alongside our new Term Consultancy Contract and this new technology will be considered as part of the emerging innovation workstream.</p>	<p>Future capital drainage schemes will have pollution capture included in the scope. Current maintenance approach is to ensure silt levels are monitored and kept at the optimum level for capturing pollutants, with arisings disposed of appropriately.</p>	<p>Steve Broadbent</p> <p>Kevin Goad Dave Roberts Alan Rouse</p>

<p>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.</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>Maintaining optimum silt levels in gullies and soakaways through a data lead approach to cleansing is important. A certain level of silt helps to filter pollutants, that are then disposed of appropriately in cleansing. Not allowing them to be overly full will automatically reduce the amount of harmful pollutants that would otherwise enter watercourses as a result of overflowing gullies and/or saturated silt levels that no longer act as filters.</p>	<p>The planned gully emptying programme is underway and on target with the aim to ensure all 85,000 of the County's gullies are inspected and maintained appropriately.</p>	<p>Gully cleansing remains on target, with a little over 51,000 cleaned as of 13th October.</p>	<p>Steve Broadbent</p> <p>Kevin Goad Dave Roberts Alan Rouse</p>
<p>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,</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>We would support this recommendation. This page can be created with input from both the Flood Risk team, Environmental Health team and Highways to signpost to the relevant organisations with responsibilities in this area</p>	<p>Complete.</p> <p>New web page is live: Link to page</p>	<p>n/a</p>	<p>Gareth Williams / Mark Winn</p> <p>Karen Fisher</p>

<p>spillages on highways and misconnections.</p>	<p>Page likely to be to be owned by Planning & Environment. The situation will be monitored to determine that amount of “enquiry” traffic to Buckinghamshire Council which is generated by having a page for water quality and any increase in staff resources that may be required as a result</p>			
<p>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.</p>	<p>EA In part</p> <p>The Council can continue to use Helen Smith as the Area Environment Manager that covers the Buckinghamshire area. Liz Robinson can also be used as a more local contact that covers pollution incidents and regulates the water companies and other water users (discharge consents and water resources permits) in Buckinghamshire area.</p> <p>Bucks Council</p>	<p>n/a</p>	<p>EA</p> <p>An overview of the Buckinghamshire area is that we have responded to water quality incidents over the last year including sediment suspension in some tributaries of the Padbury Brook due to cattle poaching and from the building works of the East West Railway and HS2. We responded to a maize effluent incident from a failing slurry tank on the Padbury Brook. Advice</p>	<p>EA</p>

	The Strategic Flood Management Team already have a point of contact within Environment Agency for flooding matters. There also is currently a method of escalating matters to more senior people within the Environment Agency but this is more related to flooding matters. To be included in letter for recommendation 5		and guidance have been provided to all parties and pollution prevention advice given to prevent further pollution incidents.	
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.	Yes Letter being drafted and will be sent in near future.	Letter was sent by Martin Tett and Peter Strachan to the Secretary of State regarding these concerns. The letter and response are included as appendices.	n/a	Martin Tett / Gareth Williams Steve Bambrick
6. The Cabinet Member for Environment & Climate	Yes	Lobbying being done through relevant groups and Thames Water and Anglian	Continued discussions with Thames Water and	Gareth Williams Karen Fisher

<p>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.</p>	<p>Thames Water have an ambition to roll this project out to other catchment partnerships. This will be dependent upon OFWAT's decision, regarding future funding, following the completion of the Smarter Water Catchment projects. Lobbying should therefore also include OFWAT.</p> <p>Lobbying of Thames Water and Anglian Water can be through existing partnership channels.</p>	<p>Water keen to pursue more opportunities through Drainage and Wastewater Management Plans with more details being worked on.</p>	<p>Anglian Water. Work on Smarter Water Catchments is ongoing. Meeting/River Walk/visit to Chesham sewage works (during Rivers Week in September 2023) arranged with DEFRA Minister and local MPs by Cllr Gareth Williams with Chilterns Conservation Board, Thames Water and Buckinghamshire Council in attendance. Opportunity to raise the good work done by the organisations and the collaboration and need for further collaboration and funding for initiatives similar to Smarter Water Catchments.</p>	
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<p>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.</p>	<p>Anglian Water Yes</p> <p>Anglian Water is currently increasing understanding of storm overflow operation across the region through the delivery of investigations in our Water Industry National Environment Programme (WINEP). We recognised the imperative of this work and have accelerated the programme to deliver 100% coverage of storm overflows by December 2023, with 73% already delivered. This has included ecological modelling of storm overflows in targeted river catchments.</p> <p>The storm overflow investigation programme includes approximately ten (10) assets within Buckinghamshire and is helping to inform our storm overflow strategy for 2025-2030 (AMP8) and beyond.</p>	<p>Anglian Water Position remains the same as 6 months ago.</p> <p>Thames Water We will be happy to provide an annual update on an agreed date each year. We have set out our plans for reducing harm to rivers and communities in a document which can be downloaded from our website: https://www.thameswater.co.uk/media-library/home/about-us/performance/river-health/river-health-report.pdf This includes a commitment to reduce the total annual duration of discharges by 50% by 2030, and within that a commitment to achieve at least 80% in sensitive catchments. This will see us progressing further and faster than the targets set in the Government’s Storm Overflow Reduction Plan.</p>	<p>Anglian Water 12-month update not received.</p> <p>Thames Water 12-month update not received.</p>	<p>Anglian Water Thames Water</p>
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	<p>Our AMP8 target is to understand the ecological impact across all of our 1552 overflows, with 38% of the high-priority overflows achieving 10 or fewer spills per year. We are currently assessing options to achieve this objective through our business planning process and hope to be able to outperform this target through a combination of tradition and nature-based solutions.</p> <p>Thames Water Response was not received.</p>			
<p>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.</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>Collaboration with River Trusts is essential to the delivery of water quality improvements in Buckinghamshire. Buckinghamshire Council would be well positioned to engage with the River Thame Conservation Trust to understand and support,</p>	<p>Initial meeting held with officers and the River Thames Conservation Trust and a meeting date has been set up to meet with Deputy Cabinet member.</p> <p>Trust advised that they are no longer looking to expand into the Ouse – a new nascent organisation will cover this area.</p>	<p>Cllr Jilly Jordan, Deputy Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change presented at the River Thame Conservation Trust Liaison meeting in late March 2023 to explain Buckinghamshire Council's responsibilities.</p>	<p>Gareth Williams Karen Fisher</p>

	<p>where appropriate and feasible, their ambitions.</p> <p>The proposed expansion has potential benefit to the northern catchments in Buckinghamshire which currently lack an active rivers trust.</p>		<p>Discussions held with new CEO of River Thames Catchment Trust to discuss ongoing collaboration for Natural Flood Management Projects.</p> <p>Contact made with the newly established Great Ouse Rivers Trust (GORT) and initial chat with officers from Buckinghamshire Council to set up a meeting with members and the trustees of GORT. GORT currently has no funding nor any staff members.</p>	
<p>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.</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>This decision on the enactment currently sits with Defra with a possible announcement this Autumn 2022. Lobbying has already taken place through the consultation process. Any further lobbying should be</p>	<p>Complete.</p> <p>An announcement was made in January 2023 that Schedule 3 will be enacted with DEFRA working with Lead Local Flood Authorities on further detail and a consultation through the summer. Enactment likely will be in 2024</p>	<p>n/a</p>	<p>Gareth Williams / Jilly Jordan</p> <p>Karen Fisher</p>

	<p>directed at both the Minister for Environment and Defra officers.</p> <p>The impact of Schedule 3 on the Council and resource requirements will need careful assessment.</p>			
<p>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.</p>	<p>Partial agreement.</p> <p>The Water Companies and Environment Agency have regular communication out to the public on these and other flooding issues. It would be useful to have forewarning of these communications so that Buckinghamshire can share re-tweet these messages and reinforce the message going out to local residents. Any comms campaign by the Council would duplicate the efforts made by the other agencies identified above and it would not be value for money for Buckinghamshire Council to embark upon a communication campaign.</p>	<p>Publication of messages retweeted and shared by comms team where appropriate</p>	<p>n/a</p>	<p>Gareth Williams / Peter Strachan</p> <p>Steve Bambrick</p>