

Appendix 1 - River Water Pollution report Recommendations to Cabinet from Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee 25 September 2023

Background:

At its meeting on 25 September 2023, in regards to the River Water Pollution report it received, the Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee voted unanimously to make the following recommendations to the Executive:

Recommendations:

That:

a) The Executive should consider drawing up a River Improvement Direct Action Plan itself, constructed around the Council's existing statutory responsibilities, to inform policy development, prioritisation on actions to be taken, including those in the pipeline, budgeting and resourcing. This would also refer to and draw from related plans being constructed by partners; and

b) The Executive should collect its own water quality samples, through funding analysers (*set out in appendix 2*) on the river Lugg specifically.

* first to fulfil its role as the "competent" authority under the "Habitat regulations"

* second, to use as evidence on the true state of our rivers in our catchment area, in negotiations with partners on the required river improvement actions;

* third, as a response to the claim by RePhokus in their latest report, "that current inconsistencies in river water quality monitoring programmes are confounding understanding of the impact of variable farming pressures and P surpluses on river P pollution; and

c) With the EA, an awareness and engagement campaign should be run within the livestock and agricultural sector, covering manure management plans and compliance with the requirements of the "Storing silage, slurry and agricultural fuel oil regulations"; and

d) With livestock and agricultural producers, the Executive should explore the value of a kitemark designation for local sourced produce to indicate they have come from "Catchment Sensitive Farming (CSF)" practices. This should include discussion with the Herefordshire Food Alliance and any other interested partners; and

e) That the Executive should push strongly through the existing Cabinet Commission, for the proposed SoS led plan for the river Wye to include a glide path to a Water Protection Zone, if all voluntary arrangements fail to achieve river recovery.