

Summary of recommendations to the executive and executive responses
Scrutiny Committee: Environment and Sustainability
Date: 22-01-2024

Agenda item title: Nutrient Management Board

Recommendation 1	After almost 10 years of operation, plus a change in governance, the executive should consider rescinding the chair and secretariat to another partner, in accordance with the original nutrient management plan that the nutrient management board chair should be rotated among partner members.				
Executive Response	The governance for the Board states that it will be chaired by a Local Authority elected representative. Identifying Herefordshire as Chair and Powys as vice chair.				
Action	Owner	By When	Target/Success Criteria	Progress	
Not Agreed					

Recommendation 2	To achieve value for money from the nutrient management board, the executive should set business objectives with key performance indicators for what is expected from our nutrient management board membership.				
Executive Response	The purpose of the Nutrient Management Board is to bring together all stakeholders to work in partnership to bring forward the delivery of an evidence led Nutrient Management Plan. The purpose of the plan is to establish actions to reduce Nutrient levels in the River Wye and its tributaries. Each identified action will have its own set of measures to assess performance against the overarching ambition of the plan.				
Action	Owner	By When	Target/Success Criteria	Progress	
Not Agreed					

Recommendation 3	Complementary to the nutrient management board, the executive should pursue an informal alliance with Herefordshire sectors responsible for diffuse pollution, including agriculture and livestock representatives, to sharpen the focus on reducing it through voluntary arrangements.				
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Response	Herefordshire already possesses a coherent network of alliances which seek to address diffuse pollution and support sustainable farming practices. These include the Wye Catchment Partnership and Farm Herefordshire. The Council is an active member of both steering groups and participates in shaping the purpose and direction of these alliances. In addition it runs its own annual Rivers Conference to highlight the key role farming plays in ensuring the future health of our waterways.				
Action	Owner	By When	Target/Success Criteria	Progress	
Not Agreed					

Recommendation 4	The executive to look at the resources available for the new environmental advice service to ensure that it is properly resourced, to react in a prompt way to any private mitigation initiatives, and that statutory partners respond at pace to such initiatives.				
Executive Response	The Environmental Advice Service is a service paid for by its applicants. The uptake of these services will enable reinvestment into the team, in order to ensure it is fully resourced. At present the take up has been limited, however this will continue to be monitored and reported to the senior team.				
Action	Owner	By When	Target/Success Criteria	Progress	
Partially Agreed	ED	To be monitored	Ensure timescales for response times are met.	Take up will continue to be monitored over the next 12 month period and reported to the senior team.	

Recommendation 5	The executive to approach the cabinet commission and statutory officers group to shape future planning to delineate between actions requiring reasonable scientific certainty and other actions for the general benefit of the river.				
Executive Response	As part of the review of the governance of the Nutrient Management Board, clarification has now been provided around the purpose of the Nutrient Management Plan which is to seek to reduce Phosphate levels and return the river to				

	favourable conservation status. The Council will continue to progress its own Strategic Mitigation and support private mitigation schemes in coming forward in order to enable growth within the north of the county.			
Action	Owner	By When	Target/Success Criteria	Progress
Not Agreed				

Recommendation 6	The executive should set key performance indicators to reflect the recommended delineation between actions requiring reasonable scientific certainty and other actions for the general benefit of the river.			
Executive Response	The purpose of the Nutrient Management Plan is to identify evidence led actions to reduce the exceedance of Phosphates in the river and return it to compliance. Each identified action will have measures of success and where achievable quantifiable outcomes; this includes Luston Wetland which delivers both strategic mitigation and river restoration.			
Action	Owner	By When	Target/Success Criteria	Progress
Partially Agreed – Where the Council is able to contribute to quantifiable outcomes, these actions will be shared with Natural England and the Environment Agency the authors of the plan.	ED	As part of the delivery of the plan	Published in Plan	Targets will be shared with the authors of the plan as appropriate.

Recommendation 7	To contact Welsh Water to ask for data from the redacted Water Industry National Environment Programme in order to identify collaboration opportunities with Herefordshire Council.			
Executive Response	The request for the Asset Management Plan (AMP 8) has been made by the Council to Welsh Water and is due to be shared in December 2024 once approved by OFWAT.			
Action	Owner	By When	Target/Success Criteria	Progress

Agreed	ED	Completed	AMP shared	Awaiting sharing with the Board.

Recommendation 8	The executive should seek clarification from the statutory officers group on its plans for a timetable of action on nutrient recovery towards a possible end result of introducing a water protection zone, the so called glide path.			
Executive Response	The Diffuse Water Pollution Plan is under development by the Environment Agency, this will set out priority actions with timescales to return the catchment to favourable conservation status. A final option within the plan will be the designation of a WPZ. DEFRA have confirmed this will only be considered once all other measures have been explored. The plan is due to be published in April 2025.			
Action	Owner	By When	Target/Success Criteria	Progress
Partially Agreed	ED	April 2025	Publication of DWPP	The Environment Agency have confirmed this work is already underway.