

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 1

MONDAY, 15 NOVEMBER 2021

Present:

Councillors H Cox (Chair), Jenks (Vice-Chair), Clarence, D Cox, Hocking, Mullone, Nutley, Parker, Parker-Khan and Thorne

Members in attendance:

Councillors Connett, J Hook, G Hook and Taylor

Apologies:

Councillors Foden, Orme and Rollason

Members in attendance virtually:

Councillors Dewhirst, Keeling, L Petherick, Purser and Wrigley

Officers in Attendance:

Neil Blaney, Head of Place & Commercial Services
Amanda Pujol, Head of Community Services and Improvement
Richard Rainbow, Drainage and Coastal Manager
David Eaton, Environmental Protection Manager
Rebecca Hewitt, Community Safety and Safeguarding Manager
William Elliott, Climate Change Officer
Jack Williams, Performance Data Analyst
Trish Corns, Democratic Services Officer
Christopher Morgan, Trainee Democratic Services Officer

57. BRIEFING FROM REPRESENTATIVES OF EA AND SWW - RIVER TEIGN

The Chair welcomed representatives from the Environment Agency and South West Water who gave a presentation in response to public and councillor concerns of CSO spills into the Teign Estuary.

The Chair commented that this was a topical and sensitive subject. Concern about pollution events in any of the headwaters of the catchments, in local rivers and downstream into our estuaries and affecting designated bathing beaches is valid. South West Water operates under a series of consented discharge conditions which are regulated by the EA, under guidance set by Central Government. The consented discharge process does have to accommodate storm events where existing infrastructure can be at risk of surcharge. Whilst the main focus of the presentation is the catchment, river and estuary of the Teign, the same principles apply to all other water courses, and others in the Teignbridge area including Holcombe, Dawlish Water and those on the western side of the Exe.

The Chair added that given the amendment to the Environment Bill, with regard to sewage discharges, was only passed by Parliament last week, it would not be appropriate for South West Water or the Environment Agency to answer questions relating to this until their respective organisations have understood the implications of the proposed amendments within their own organisations.

The presentation included information relating to: delivery of environmental improvement; statutory requirements; sewerage and infrastructure; regulation and improvements; treatment works; pumping stations and asset management; analysis of data; pollution pressures including that from rural areas; businesses and domestic households; and new housing developments.

Responses to questions raised included: the long sea outfall pipe was 500 metres off shore; all sewerage was treated and all treatment works are compliant with the regulatory licence; all new housing development have a legal right to connect into the sewerage and surface infrastructure; and improvements are being made to infrastructure to accommodate additional housing.

Written questions were submitted (Minute 61 below refers).

The full presentation can be seen at [Agenda for Overview and Scrutiny Committee 1 on Monday, 15th November, 2021, 10.00 am - Teignbridge District Council](#)

58. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 13 September 2021, and the Minutes of the joint Extraordinary Meeting with Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2 held on 26 August 2021 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

59. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Councillor Hoking declared an Appendix 2 interest in agenda item 10 Voluntary Sector Task and Finish Group in his capacity as a Trustee of Newton Abbot Community Transport association. He spoke but did not vote on this item.

Councillor D Cox declared an Appendix 2 interest in agenda item 10 Voluntary Sector Task and Finish Group in his capacity as a Chair of Homeless in Teignbridge, HITS Trustee and past employee of Teignbridge CVS. He spoke but did not vote on this item.

Councillor Clarence declared an interest in agenda item 9 Climate and Ecologic Emergency Task and Finish Group by virtue of his ownership of a property on low lying land.

60. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

The following question were asked by Nigel Canham, Chair of Newton Abbot Community Transport Association of the Chair of the Committee

Question

'Will the committee please recognise the potentially extremely damaging impact of removing annual financial support worth £7,610 from Newton Abbot Community Transport Association?

Our charity has operated for 30 years, serving some of the district's most isolated and vulnerable residents.

We have been able to do so only through the extraordinary efforts of staff, volunteers and, long before my time, board members.

The pandemic almost brought the organisation to its knees and only last month we decided it was essential to invest in additional staff hours simply to maintain our current levels of service.

This will probably not be possible should we lose our grant as we need a certain level of guaranteed income before undertaking additional expenditure. Relying on the chance of winning a share of the small grants fund does not provide a sound basis upon which to make strategic decisions.

Additionally, our plans to generate new sustainable transport services such as car sharing and e-bike hire for people with mobility issues, as part of a Newton Abbot transport hub that TDC would like to develop, will be jeopardised.

Year after year NACTA has demonstrated that the financial support offered by TDC has been more than repaid in the form of increased economic activity within Newton Abbot.

Additionally, we have worked with some of the hardest to reach individuals, providing support that would otherwise have to come from families or hard-pushed statutory authorities.

NACTA welcomes TDC's scrutiny of its expenditure but asks that it considers the wisdom of derailing an established and proven charity for the sake of experimenting with other, perhaps fledgling groups who may not have the expertise or experience required to achieve their aims.

Please, let us continue to provide excellent value for money and to increase our demographic reach through the development of new services which are in line with TDC's climate, regeneration and social aspirations.

*Members, please be careful in what you wish for and I implore you, don't be the straw to break the camel's back.
Thank you.'*

Answer

The Committee recognises the work Newton Abbot Transport Association, and all voluntary and community organisations across Teignbridge undertake to support vulnerable residents and would like to take the opportunity to thank all the volunteers who give their own time and effort to support others in the District.

The proposals put before O&S for discussion today aim to widen the availability of Council funding to a greater number of voluntary and community groups, rather than a few organisations that currently benefit. The proposals include the creation of a small grants fund which will be open for applications from any voluntary and community organisation, including those organisation who are losing funding. This enables the Council to have an open, transparent and equitable process to award funding to the third sector and ensures as broad a cross section of residents as possible can benefit from the funding available.

The Committee acknowledges these proposed changes will have an impact on groups who have historically received Council funding, and it is important for members and the Executive to understand that impact before any final decisions are made. Hence there is a 4 week consultation period to give the opportunity for all organisation impacted to comment on the changes and for their comments to be included in any final recommendations put before Executive for agreement.

Mr Canham asked a supplementary question as follows:

Does the committee acknowledge that it isn't NACTA which benefits from the TDC grant but the thousands of isolated and elderly people who have used our services for the past 30 years? Further, will the committee acknowledge that increasing the number of groups able to claim a share of the small grants fund will not necessarily increase the number of residents who benefit? The current SLA has proven its effectiveness and again we would urge that any changes are considered with the utmost care and recognition of the hurt it will cause those who ultimately lose out through reduced funding.

The Chair advised that he did not have the information at hand to answer the question and that Mr Canham would be advised of the answer following the meeting.

61. COUNCILLOR QUESTIONS

Councillor Clarence asked the following questions of the Executive Member for Environmental Health, Waste and Recycling. Cllr Clarence advised they were split into two criteria, those being to establish the current actual situation followed by what proposed remedies will/should follow.

The questions were asked in relation to Minute 57 above. The responsibility for the matters the subject of the questions is not in the remit of the District Council and therefore the answers would be provided at a later time if not covered in the presentation at minute 57 above.

Criteria 1.

1. Operation Clean Sweep intentions were to pipe as much raw sewage to Buckland for full treatment as possible. I know that in times of stress this isn't able to happen with discharges into the river estuary. I know the discharge point for Shaldon as being the pipe marked by the stake off Ringmore Towers Shaldon, plus Teignmouth discharge points being certainly off Milford Park and Gales Hill. Is the Point outlet still in use? What other discharge outlets are there in the Estuary? Is there one for Bishopsteignton and does Buckland have an outlet, serving the entire Newton Abbot catchment area, thus confirming or not that the entire Estuary is contaminated by diluted raw sewage in times of stress?

2. What other emergency outlets are there in the actual rivers that feed the Teign Estuary, notably the River Teign itself, up river from the racecourse main road bridge, the River Lemon and the Aller Brook?

3. Have you any figures on the actual outlets how many times you have used these outlets on an annual basis? This should establish exactly where failures occur most, plus the number of times at each outlet, over a number of years recently.

4. The holding tanks firstly take the strain. For example, the one put in at Shaldon, in 1994/96, under the bund in the KG5 field becomes surcharged all too often, hence the final relief being the Estuary. What do you identify as being the main contributory factors causing this situation? Is it too smaller holding tanks, pumping too slowly to the Buckland Works, insufficient capacity at the Buckland Works, the inability to stop so much rain water from getting into the sewer?

5. If for example you were able to pump at a greater speed/rate to Buckland, from Shaldon/Teignmouth through your near one metre diameter pipe, do you feel the piping pipe joints would stand the strain?

6. Not knowing the exact catchment area for Buckland, how many properties do you believe the Buckland Works serves?

7. How many new connections, properties will suffice, to do estimate have been added to your system since Clean Sweep was completed in 1996?

Criteria 2

8. In the light of answers to the questions above, what plans do you have to remedy/rectify the current situation in the River Teign Estuary?

9. What sort of timescale on what has to be done?

10. Have you any costings of the overall works that will be needed to rectify the situation, from hopefully what answer you have given to my second paragraph in question 4? Are you also intending to increase water bills over the rate of inflation to cover such capital costs?

62. EXECUTIVE MEMBER BIENNIAL REPORT-COUNCILLOR J HOOK

CLIMATE CHANGE, COASTAL AND FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT

The Executive Member for climate change, coastal and flood risk management, Councillor J Hook updated the Committee on progress of services within the portfolio.

The U-Tube video from the Council's website on Teignbridge carbon footprint was presented, and Cllr Hook made reference to the current global COP 26 event with world leaders hosted by the UK

Update issues included:

Climate Change

- The County's Devon Climate Emergency strategy document has been published, of which Teignbridge was a partner.
- The decarbonisation project for Forde House and the three leisure centres Newton Abbot, Broadmeadow and the Lido was progressing and being funded from grant money. Total carbon savings 372 tonnes per annum.
- Planning policies for new developments were included in the draft Local Plan.
- The procurement portal included 5k Devon suppliers.

Ecological Emergency

- Ongoing site management by rangers and greenspaces including wild flowers instead of bedding plants.
- Ongoing tree planting.
- Dawlish and Matford SANGS demonstrated quality green spaces were successful next to development.
- Connecting to nature project and workshops for the community.
- Cycle Improvements.

Flood and Coastal Risk Management

- Funding had been secured by County for flood risk management projects.
- Teignbridge garden communities flood risk and resilience strategy has been published.

The full update can be seen at [Agenda for Overview and Scrutiny Committee 1 on Monday, 15th November, 2021, 10.00 am - Teignbridge District Council](#)

63. CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCY TASK AND FINISH GROUP REPORT

The Chair presented the findings and conclusions of the Task and Finish group as detailed in the agenda report.

On behalf of the task and finish group he thanks officers for their work in progressing the issue.

RESOLVED

- a) The outcomes of the group and progress the officers are already making on each item, as set out in the report be noted.
- b) That a member of the task and finish group attend the officer group meetings and report back to the Committee quarterly.

64. VOLUNTARY SECTOR FUNDING TASK AND FINISH GROUP REPORT

Councillor G Hook, as Chair of the task and finish group presented the agenda report. There were some 700 not for profit groups in Teignbridge, all undertaking valuable work in supporting the community.

On behalf of the task and finish group he thanked officers for their work in conjunction with the review and in their continual work supporting the voluntary groups.

Cllr G Hook requested that the Committee approved the recommendations of the task and finish group as set out in the agenda report, He also requested that a further recommendation be added that *climate change mitigation* and *environmental and bio diversification* be added to paragraph 4.2.1 of the agenda report.

RECOMMENDED

The Committee recommends to the Executive that:

- (1) The Policy statement be adopted
- (2) The proposals detailed in sections 4 are approved subject to consultation with those organisations with current SLAs, the consultation findings to be shared with Executive
- (3) A further review to take place in October 2022 making proposals for 2023/24
- (4) A task and finish group is convened to carry out a full review of the Business Rates Discretionary Relief policy and take recommendations to a future O&S meeting specifically relating to charity shops
- (5) Teignbridge voluntary sector funding programme be reported to Overview and Scrutiny on an annual basis
- (6) Crowdfunding is no longer supported as organisations can be encouraged to raise funds through the lottery or apply to the Voluntary Sector Small Grant Scheme
- (7) Work with Town and Parish Councils to understand how they are supporting the voluntary sector
- (8) To work with any organisations impacted by the proposal to encourage them to utilise the alternative funding streams available.
- (9) *Climate change mitigation* and *environmental and bio diversification* be added to paragraph 4.2.1 of the agenda report.

65. EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN

The Executive Forward Plan listing items to be considered by the Executive over the next few months was noted.

66. WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee's work programme as circulated with the agenda was noted.

67. Q2 COUNCIL STRATEGY PERFORMANCE MONITORING

The Leader as Executive Member for Strategic Direction referred to the agenda report covering the period 1 August to 31 October \2021, which updated performance of the Council's Strategy 2020-2030 T10 priorities, under the auspices of the Committee. Details of the programmes, projects and performance indicators with a concern or caution status together with an explanation of the performance and improvement plan was detailed in the appendix of the agenda report.

Councillor Wrigley, Executive Member for communities, housing and IT referred to the current delays in building materials supply chains which was affecting the progress of developing new homes including self-build and affordable housing.

It was also noted that private rented affordable housing was in short supply, and that new innovations for the private rented sector was required.

RESOLVED

The report be received and actions being taken to rectify performance issues detailed in the agenda report appendix be noted.

CLLR H COX
Chairman