

Cabinet



Date of meeting:	11 March 2024
Title of Report:	Recommendations from the Water Quality Select Committee Review
Lead Member:	Councillor Ian Tuffin, Vice-Chair, Water Quality Select Committee Review
Lead Strategic Director:	Giles Perritt (Assistant Chief Executive)
Author:	Hannah Whiting, Democratic Advisor
Contact Email:	Hannah.whiting@plymouth.gov.uk
Your Reference:	WQSC Recs
Key Decision:	No
Confidentiality:	Part I - Official

Purpose of Report

The Growth and Infrastructure Overview and Scrutiny Committee identified Water Quality as a subject for a Select Committee Review in 2023 following a report on Water Quality presented to the Committee.

The committee heard evidence from Plymouth City Council officers and the relevant Cabinet Member, South West Water, Environment Agency, Tamar Catchment Partnership, Ocean Conservation Trust, National Marine Park, Plymouth University and local sea swimmers.

Following evidence, the Committee heard recommendations from the floor and agreed the recommendations below.

Recommendations and Reasons

That Cabinet note the recommendations from the Water Quality Select Review below:

The Committee:

1. Accept the conclusion in the report that the issues and challenges with water quality are complex, will increase with predicted climate change and needs an enhanced and urgent approach to delivery;
2. Support the collaboration set out in the MoU, for a long term delivery focused relationship of Plymouth City Council with the Environment Agency and South West Water;

Recommended to South West Water

3. That they ensure existing investment identified for drainage infrastructure of the city is delivered in line with the ambition of the MoU where there are no legal constraints;

Recommended to the Environment Agency:

4. That they make sampling data from Firestone Bay taken over the winter available to the public at the earliest opportunity;
5. That they carry out winter pilots in the 3 bathing areas to improve water quality data, and make this available to the public;

In addition, the Committee recommend to Cabinet that:

6. Signage is increased and improved at the sea fronts when storm drains discharge;
7. SWW and EA work with PCC officers to increase education across the city on what communities can do to improve water quality;
8. The National Marine Park school engagement programme includes education on improving water quality;
9. A water ambassador programme is developed with the National Marine Park;
10. The MoU is more specific on how other stakeholders will be engaged with when improving water quality;
11. They lobby government for Plymouth be a pilot for an area of water quality improvement;
12. They improve and increase facilities/infrastructure for sea swimmers, such as life rings, defibrillators, hot showers and bins, in consultation with local sea swimming groups;
13. Green jobs and growth opportunities in Plymouth for future generations are promoted;
14. The Cabinet writes to the relevant minister to ask when schedule 3 to The Flood and Water Management Act 2010 is going to be enacted;
15. The Cabinet writes to the relevant minister to ask them to update bathing legislation.
16. Made a request to trading standards to provide Committee Members with information on environmental enforcement in Plymouth.

Alternative options considered and rejected.

None – the recommendations represent the views of the committee.

Relevance to the Corporate Plan and/or the Plymouth Plan

Pre-decision scrutiny of this nature reflects national best practice and aligns with the Council's value of democracy as expressed in the Corporate Plan.

Implications for the Medium Term Financial Plan and Resource Implications:

None as a direct result of this report.

Financial Risks

None as a direct result of this report.

Carbon Footprint (Environmental) Implications:

None as a direct result of this report.

Other Implications: e.g. Health and Safety, Risk Management, Child Poverty:

* When considering these proposals members have a responsibility to ensure they give due regard to the Council's duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote good relations between people who share protected characteristics under the Equalities Act and those who do not.

None as a direct result of this report.

Appendices

*Add rows as required to box below

Ref.	Title of Appendix	Exemption Paragraph Number (if applicable) <i>If some/all of the information is confidential, you must indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box.</i>						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Background papers:

*Add rows as required to box below

Please list all unpublished, background papers relevant to the decision in the table below. Background papers are unpublished works, relied on to a material extent in preparing the report, which disclose facts or matters on which the report or an important part of the work is based.

Title of any background paper(s)	Exemption Paragraph Number (if applicable) <i>If some/all of the information is confidential, you must indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box.</i>						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Sign off:

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Originating Senior Leadership Team member: Giles Perritt (Assistant Chief Executive)

Please confirm the Strategic Director(s) has agreed the report? Yes

Date agreed: 29/02/2024

Cabinet Member approval: Councillor Ian Tuffin

Date approved: 29/02/2024