

# Agenda Item 8.

<b>TITLE</b>	<b>Thames Water</b>
<b>FOR CONSIDERATION BY</b>	Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee on 12 June 2023
<b>WARD</b>	None Specific
<b>DIRECTOR</b>	Graham Ebers, Deputy Chief Executive

## **OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY**

Effective Overview and Scrutiny helps to improve services, holds decision makers to account and engages with local communities. In so doing it helps to demonstrate that the Council and other public service providers, such as Thames Water, are open and transparent and are delivering high quality, value for money services.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

The Committee is requested to:

- 1) consider responses to the Key Lines of Enquiry to Thames Water, as set out in the report;
- 2) consider any supplementary questions and additional lines of enquiry as necessary;
- 3) discuss an appropriate response from the Committee to Thames Water.

## **SUMMARY OF REPORT**

As requested by the Committee, officers have contacted Thames Water to request that a representative attend a meeting of the Management Committee to discuss issues of interest to residents and community groups.

Richard Aylard, Thames Water's External Affairs and Sustainability Director, has agreed to attend the meeting on 12 June 2023.

In order to frame the discussion, Members have suggested a number of Key Lines of Enquiry which are set out in the report.

## Background

Proposed format for the Scrutiny Session:

### 1. Short Introduction/Presentation by Thames Water

- Thames Water - main activities and relationship to other key stakeholders.
- Key concerns affecting local waterways and infrastructure.
- Examples of work being undertaken by Thames Water to address these concerns.
- Opportunities for future joint working with WBC to achieve improvements.

Note: It is worth noting that, whilst Thames Water deal with sewage services throughout the Borough, drinking water is supplied by South East Water within most of the Borough (apart from some areas in the west of the Borough - Earley, Woodley Winnersh, Shinfield and Swallowfield).

### 2. Key Lines of Enquiry

- (i) Local discharge of sewage into rivers and waterways – action plans, targets and timeline for reducing incidents. Data for discharges in Wokingham Borough. What plans are there for increasing sewage treatment capacity/facilities in order to decrease the level of discharges? Is there pro-active reporting of incidents?
- (ii) Condition and maintenance of some of the older infrastructure e.g. impacts that works are having on the highways network and progress on replacing brittle water mains. What preventative maintenance is Thames Water carrying out?
- (iii) Capacity of some of the newer infrastructure e.g. to ensure adequate water pressure/supply for all new housing developments.
- (iv) Pro-active maintenance – when was the most recent infrastructure survey of the Borough carried out? What are the prioritised plans to fix/update existing infrastructure? Are there any significant known issues which are not going to be addressed in the near term?
- (v) Service Level Agreement for repair of manhole covers and report to fix times.
- (vi) Programme for flood prevention and cleaning culverts (especially in Earley but more widely as well).
- (vii) Response to unexpected events – including details of the governance, including third parties involved in the rectification of significant events (e.g. the sewer collapse and sinkhole in Evendons Lane). Process, SLAs, KPIs and resident/Council communications when unexpected events happen. What are the learnings taken from the Elms Field and Evendons Lane events?

- (viii) Finance - current and planned Thames Water budgets for Wokingham Borough. Infrastructure investment in the Borough. Any financial constraints which will limit investment in the Borough.
- (ix) Supply versus demand – projections of future demand and measures to manage demand, including strategies for avoiding the need for water restrictions, reducing the level of leaks and the roll-out of water meters.
- (x) Climate Emergency – what is Thames Water doing to tackle and adapt to the impact of climate change? How are partners involved? What are the opportunities for more effective joined-up working?
- (xi) Customer satisfaction – how does Thames Water measure customer satisfaction with its services? What plans are there to improve customer satisfaction and engage with residents/businesses across Wokingham Borough?

Note: see recent Bracknell News article – What toxic chemicals are poisoning the Loddon – link below:

<https://www.bracknellnews.co.uk/news/23556890.toxic-chemicals-poisoning-loddon/>

### 3. Next Steps

Following the Scrutiny session, Members may wish to authorise the Chair to write to Thames Water with any comments or concerns identified by the Committee – together with any requests for follow-up action and reporting.

## FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

**The Council faces severe funding pressures, particularly in the face of the Covid-19 crisis. It is, therefore, imperative that Council resources are focussed on the vulnerable and on its highest priorities.**

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1)	0	NA	NA
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	0	NA	NA
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	0	NA	NA

<b>Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision</b>
None

**Cross-Council Implications**

Effective Overview and Scrutiny helps to drive service improvement, policy development and the achievement of value for money for the Borough's residents.

**Public Sector Equality Duty**

Due regard has been given to Council's Public Sector Equality Duty.

**Climate Emergency – The Council has declared a Climate Emergency and is committed to playing as full a role as possible – leading by example as well as by exhortation – in achieving a carbon neutral Wokingham Borough by 2030**

One of the Key Lines of Enquiry set out in the report relates to the actions being taken by Thames Water in response to climate change.

**List of Background Papers**

None

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