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Democratic Services

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Date: 21 April 2022

Dear Councillor

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - MONDAY 25 APRIL 2022

I am now able to enclose the following reports for the agenda of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee due to take place on Monday 25 April 2022

Agenda No	Item
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| 6. | <u>Sewerage review report</u> (Pages 3 - 7) |
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Yours sincerely

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Report to Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Subject: Sewage review - discharging into rivers

Date: 25 April 2022

Author: Head of Environment

Purpose

To advise members of the different agency's responsibilities with regards to our waterways and to suggest the committee form a working group to consider the issue of sewage discharge and how this could be mitigated, cross agency.

Recommendation(s)

That the overview and scrutiny committee:

- 1- Notes the responsibilities that different agencies hold regarding sewage and discharging into watercourses; and
- 2- Form a working group to complete a more thorough review of waterways and sewage discharge within the borough.

1 Background

1.1 Following a motion to Council on 17 November 2021, this committee has been tasked with assisting in holding to account those agencies responsible for discharging raw and untreated sewage into our waterways and rivers locally.

1.2 As members will be aware, there are multiple partners who contribute to the different functions surrounding the waterways and sewage. Environment Agency (EA) (formerly national rivers authority) are responsible for water quality matters. Below is an outline of the Councils interactions with the EA and more generally an overview of the EAs work in water quality.

1.3 **Public Protection Section**

In terms of the Council's role in recent years officers have worked in partnership with Severn Trent Water (STW) to address misconnections and ensure grease traps are installed in food businesses in the town centre/urban areas to reduce discharges to water courses.

STW have the enforcement powers at the businesses and officers worked in partnership to utilise our local knowledge of businesses and address food hygiene non-compliance simultaneously. This project is now concluded but officers are aware that this was driven by the potential fines STW could receive as the result of EA enforcement.

- 1.4 More generally, and away from sewage in particular, officers liaise with the EA regarding the potential for pollution to surface and groundwater from historic pollution/land contamination (particularly through the planning system). Officers also sample drinking water from private water supplies (residents not on the mains water) as part of a statutory duty, under The Private Water Supplies (England) Regulations for supplies deemed to be 'commercial' and when requested, in the case of single dwelling supplies (which are the ones most likely to have a water source from a shallow well or spring).

1.5 **Environment Agency**

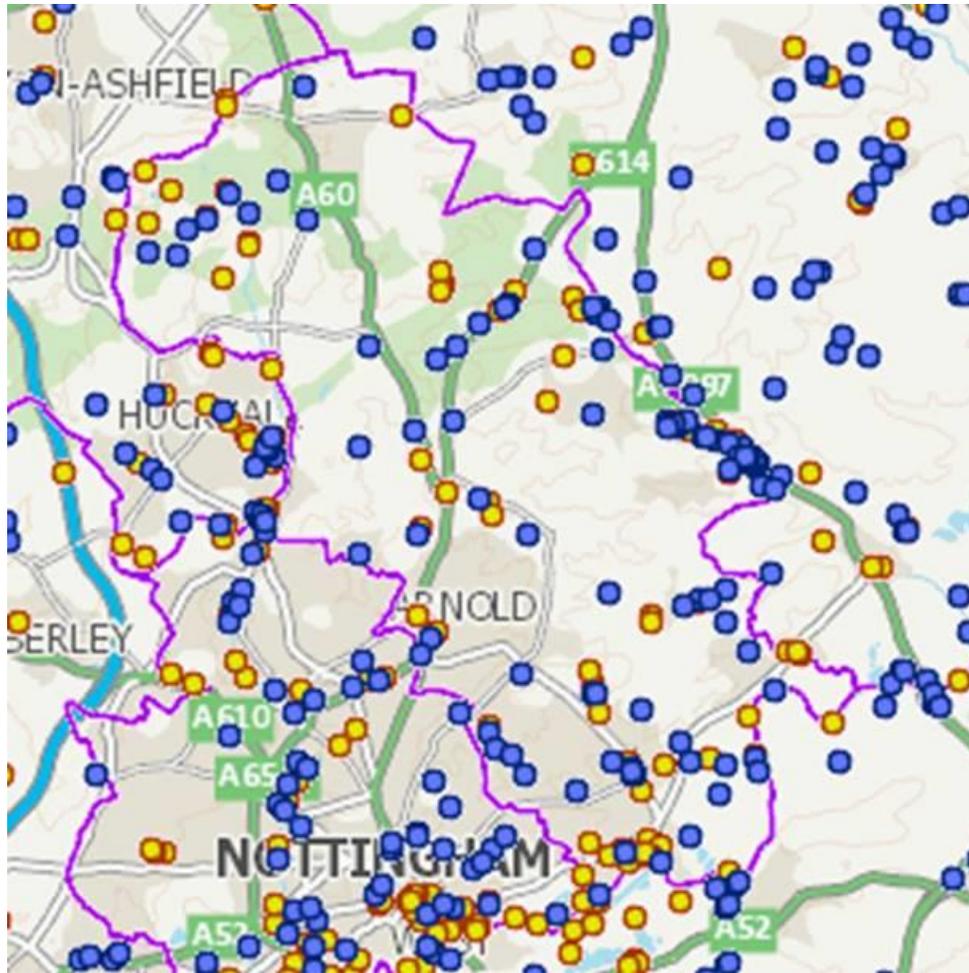
The agency has a duty to maintain and improve the quality of surface waters and ground-waters and, as part of the duty, it monitors the quality of rivers, lakes, the sea and groundwater on a regular basis.

The links below are some general information that members may find useful about the planned improvements in water quality and how this is to be implemented.

[The state of the environment: water quality](#)

[EA2025 Creating a Better Place](#)

1.6



The map above shows all sampling sites in Gedling-the border for LA areas is shown in purple , the **blue** ones are open sampling sites the **yellow** ones are ones which have been used previously and which may relate to outfalls that are now defunct.

The map illustrates the volume of sites sampled in Gedling and the ones that may still be sampled. Regular surface water monitoring gives the EA the data to programme improvements and identify issues.

2 Proposal

That the committee note the responsibilities that different agencies hold regarding sewage and discharging into watercourses. It is proposed that the committee form a working group to complete a more thorough review of waterways and sewage discharge within the borough.

3 Alternative Options

The Committee could determine not to do any further investigation into this issue as the matter involves a multi -agency approach and may sit more comfortably with another agency, however, the Council wish to find ways to reduce this problem working with partner agencies, ways of achieving this could be established through the working group.

4 Financial Implications

There are no additional costs for the Council arising from the report. The costs of Council officers assisting with this work is met from existing resources.

5 Legal Implications

The responsibility in relation to discharge into waterways sits across a range of agencies; discharge to waterways is all regulated by the Environment Agency.

6 Equalities Implications

None

7 Carbon Reduction/Environmental Sustainability Implications

7.1 The effects of sewage on the environment are largely negative. It needs to be properly treated before it can be disposed of usually into the ocean. There are two problems, however. If sewage is only partially treated before it is disposed of, it can contaminate water and harm huge amounts of wildlife. Alternatively, leaking or flooding can cause completely untreated sewage to enter rivers and other water sources, causing them to become polluted.

7.2 By better monitoring, of which GBC plays a small part, and improved sewage treatment and the elimination of emergent pollutants and, when necessary, sludge filterability by adding substances to the activated sludge through automatically controlled dosing. The EA work with partners like STW to prevent any impact on the environment.

7.3 But anyone spotting an environmental pollution incident can report it directly to the EA, local authority and The Rivers Trust charity who monitor

sewage pollution via their website under their current campaign [Together for Rivers](#).

- 7.4 The Rivers Trust have pledged that '*until cleaner rivers become a reality*', they will apply pressure to lead organisations such as the EA and water utilities companies (i.e. STW) for public access to data on sewage pollution with the aim of eventually reaching bathing water status in all our rivers.
- 7.5 The Rivers Trust also publish a map where the sewerage network discharges treated sewage and overflows of untreated sewage and storm water into rivers in England & Wales in 2021:

[Raw sewage in our rivers | The Rivers Trust](#)

8 Appendices

None

9 Background Papers

None

Statutory Officer approval

Approved by: Paul Adcock
Date: 20.04.22
On behalf of the Chief Financial Officer

Approved by: Fran Whyley
Date: 20.04.22
On behalf of the Monitoring Officer

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