

SWT Phosphates Planning Sub-Committee - 24 March 2022

- Present: Councillor Simon Coles (Chair)
Councillors Mark Blaker, Norman Cavill (via zoom), John Hassall and Sarah Wakefield
- Officers: Alison Blom-Cooper, Paul Browning and Martin Evans (Shape Legal Partnership) and Tracey Meadows (Governance and Democracy)

(The meeting commenced at 1.00 pm)

8. **Apologies**

Apologies were received from Councillors Habgood, Rigby and Wren.

9. **Minutes of the previous meeting of the Subcommittee**

Councillor Wakefield proposed and Councillor Hassall agreed the minutes from the last meeting.

10. **Declarations of interest**

Councillor Cavill declared that he was a trustee for the Taunton Heritage Trust. No further declarations of interest were declared.

11. **Technical report: Somerset Levels and Moors Phosphate Mitigation Solutions (2022)**

The purpose of the report presented to the Sub-Committee was to convey the key findings and recommendations of the consultants Mitigation Solutions Report (2022) to Members to address the impact of development on the Somerset Levels and Moors Ramsar Site. The report to the sub-committee was for information and noting as background evidence to support future work and development of planning guidance.

In collaboration with the other Somerset Authorities, Consultants were appointed in May 2021 to provide further technical support and develop mitigation solutions following the Natural England letter received in August 2020 and to respond to the phosphate issue affecting the Somerset Levels and Moors Ramsar site. The purpose of the commission was to investigate a range of matters. These included the review of the geographical extent of the catchment area in Somerset, to make improvements to the phosphate calculator and provide information on potential mitigation options that could be delivered within the affected river catchments of the Rivers Tone, Parrett, and Brue.

Comments/ questions from Members included;
(summarised)

- Concerns that Wessex Water had not taken into account or projections for our build out rate in our Local Plan to 2032;
- Concerns that we have a heavier Phosphate burden compared to other districts;
- Concerns that the numbers quoted for Phosphate removal were based on our old housing numbers;
- Concerns with 5.2 in the report stating the temporary measure of taking land out of agricultural production and assurance for food security and distribution due to the current Ukraine situation;
- Can the water be filtered further back from the Ramsar sites to enable us to take this project forward ?;
- Was there an update for the SES and our planning application and the order that they would be determined;

Councillor Wakefield proposed and Councillor Blaker seconded a motion for the recommendations below to be approved.

Recommendations;

The Phosphate Planning Sub Committee to note;

- A. The contents of the recently published technical report: Somerset Levels and Moors Phosphate Mitigation Solutions (2022);
- B. The use of the revised boundary of the affected river catchment areas .
- C. The use of updated data sets for the phosphate calculator which will be used to update the information on the website.

The motion was carried.

12. **Any other business and actions arising**

Actions arising;

- Talks were needed with Somerset County Ecology services;
- Mitigation calculator to get projects going to break the deadlock;
- An updated was needed on the impact on the building trade due to the Phosphate problem;

(The Meeting ended at 1.40 pm)