

Cyngor Sir CEREDIGION County Council

REPORT TO: **Thriving Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

DATE: **31st July 2023**

LOCATION: **Hybrid - Neuadd Cyngor Ceredigion, Penmorfa,
Aberaeron/remotely via video conference**

TITLE: **Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water (DCWW) Planning and
phosphates discussion**

PURPOSE OF REPORT: **To Introduce Officers from DCWW**

REASON SCRUTINY HAVE REQUESTED THE INFORMATION: **Members requested that Officers from DCWW were invited to Scrutiny**

BACKGROUND:

Natural Resources Wales (NRW) released interim planning advice regarding development within the catchments of riverine Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) in Wales in January 2021 (updated May 2021 and June 2022). This advice was to ensure that following updated compliance monitoring of the river Teifi which was suffering from episodic failure of its Phosphate level monitoring, no further development would be allowed which could or potentially could increase phosphate levels in the riverine SAC.

High phosphate levels in surface water, leads to eutrophication of our rivers. Eutrophication adversely affects the quality of the water and ecology. Essentially it starves the river of oxygen harming the wildlife and plant life. The problem is complex with many contributing factors, one stretch of a given catchment is different to another stretch of river in another catchment – and the solutions are equally complex and multi-faceted.

Rivers are vital to our health, economy and wellbeing as well as the ecology and biodiversity of the county.

CURRENT SITUATION:

The size of the SAC catchment across Ceredigion is 806 km² equating to 44.6% of the total land area of the county. It impacts upon 3 of our 6 main settlements, representing the most sustainable locations for future growth namely Tregaron, Llandysul and Lampeter, (Newcastle Emlyn being located in Carmarthenshire) and partially constrains a 4th Ceredigion settlement; Cardigan. These settlements comprise one of only 2 regional growth areas in the county as defined in Future Wales The National Plan 2040 titled the 'Teifi Valley Growth Zone' and are now undevelopable for new developments that require waste water discharges.

As an authority we are leading with our regional partners on work streams facilitated by the Nutrient Management Board to deliver strategic solutions through the Nutrient Management Plan.

For DCWW to understand their contribution to the phosphorus load to the rivers, and to assess any improvements they may need to make to their WwTW discharges, they have updated and re-calibrated their water quality models using the regulator and industry standard tool known as SAGIS (Source Apportionment Geographical Information System). This was a joint exercise run in collaboration with their environmental regulator NRW.

The DCWW SAGIS modelling on the Teifi (published February 2023) shows that WwTW contribute 66% of the phosphorus in the SAC waterbody, with Combined Storm Overflows (CSOs) responsible for 3%. The remaining sources have been identified as rural land use and other sources that include private septic tanks and surface water run-off.

DCWW: [Our Manifesto for Rivers in Wales \(March 2023\)](#) notes that two schemes on the Teifi within the Asset Management Plan for the period 2025 -2030 (AMP8) have been brought forward to the AMP7 period (2020 - 2025):

- Lampeter Wastewater Treatment Works — AMP8 scheme brought forward
Objective: Reduce phosphorus discharged from works

Expected completion date: March 2025

Investment: £1.3m

- Llanybydder Wastewater Treatment Works — AMP8 scheme brought forward

Objective: Reduce phosphorus discharged from works

Expected completion date: March 2025

Investment: £TBC

For the AMP8 period and beyond DCWW have recently published a suite of information supporting their future phosphorus investment programme on [SAC Rivers: Source Apportionment Reports | Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water \(dwrcymru.com\)](#). They have also committed to adding a phosphorus permit condition to all but the smallest of their wastewater treatment works in Wales that discharge to a Special Area of Conservation within their [Manifesto for Rivers March 2023](#).

Officers from DCWW have been invited to Scrutiny to discuss their ongoing plans for nutrient mitigation for the Teifi SAC given their Section 6 duty through the Habitats Regulations under the 'polluter pays' principle.

Has an Integrated Impact Assessment been completed? If not, please state why

No as this discussion is not producing or developing policy.

Summary:

WELLBEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS:

Long term:

Integration:

Collaboration:

Involvement:

Prevention:

RECOMMENDATION (S):

No formal recommendations, for information only.

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION (S):

For Information Only

Contact Name: Dr Sarah Groves-Phillips

Designation: Planning Policy Service Manager

Date of Report: 10/07/2023

Acronyms: DCWW - Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water

NRW – Natural Resources Wales

SAC - Special Area of Conservation

AMP - Asset Management Plan

WwTW – Waste Water Treatment Works

CSOs - Combined Storm Overflows

SAGIS - Source Apportionment Geographical Information System