

Appendix A

Draft Cabinet response to recommendations of the Scrutiny Committee

The document sets out the draft response of the Cabinet Member to recommendations made by the Scrutiny Committee on 4 November 2024 concerning the Update on the development of Oxford River Charter (and Council’s engagement with Thames Water). The Cabinet is asked to amend and agree a formal response as appropriate.

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Recommendation	Agree?	Comment
1) That the Council formally requests a structured meeting with Thames Water, for Council Members to put forward resident concerns about water issues in the city, and for officers to provide support in proposing the structuring of the meeting.	Yes	While officers should seek to set up a further structured meeting for Council Members to raise concerns with a senior Thames Water representative, this should wait until after there is clarity on proposed investment in the Thames Water Sewage Treatment Works and on the results of the Environment Agency analysis of sources of pollution in the river Thames. Both elements are central to informing the issues we may want to raise with Thames Water and its ability to offer responses.
2) That Officers develop a proposal for a council to convene multi-stakeholder dialogue event between Members, local Members of Parliament, industry and other water quality stakeholders to inform the content of a future Oxford City River Action Plan, to identify coordinated efforts to safeguard Oxford’s water resources for the future.	In part	While a Council motion supports the creation of an Oxford City River Action Plan, it would be premature to consider its content ahead of the position becoming clearer in respect of investment plans for the Oxford Sewage Treatment Works and results of the EA analysis of river pollution. Both will be vital in establishing what additional actions will be required to safeguard Oxford’s water resources. Other Risk Management Authorities (such as District councils, Oxfordshire County Council, and the Environment Agency) also have statutory responsibilities in respect of water courses and the River Thames flows through West Oxfordshire prior to reaching the city. All organisations

		have held multi-stakeholder events linked to waterways over the past 12 months and so it is not yet clear whether Oxford City Council or a partner organisation might be best placed to convene a further dialogue event.
3) That the Council commissions a review by Officers to clarify its powers, obligations and the potential actions based on good practice to: identify and enforce existing domestic misconnections in residential properties that the Council has control or influence over; and to prevent future misconnections, in order to safeguard against water contamination.	No	A review is not required. The Council's only enforcement powers in respect of domestic water misconnections sit with Building Control, which looks at water connections as part of its work.