

Proposal form for items for consideration by Scrutiny Committee



Submitted by: Cllr Jess Bailey

Date submitted: 18 November 2021

Item for Consideration: **scrutiny of the performance of South West Water by reference to (a) its sewage discharges into rivers in our district and the sea (b) processing of domestic sewage in our district**

Expected outcome (i.e. new policy, new action, new partnership, review and/or scrutinise the performance of other public bodies or of the Council in relation to its policy objectives, performance targets and/or particular service areas):

Priority for matter to be considered (please tick):

High (up to 3 months)	x
Medium (3 to 6 months)	
Low (over 9 months)	

Basis on which priority has been set:

The suggested item should be included in future programme(s) because: (please tick as appropriate)

a) It is a district level function over which the district has some control	
b) It is a recently introduced policy, service area of activity which would be timely to review	
c) It is a policy which has been running for some time and is due for review	
d) It is a major proposal for change	
e) It is an issue raised via complaints received	x
f) It is an area of public concern	x
g) It is an area of poor performance	
h) It would be of benefit to residents of the district	x

Which of the Council's objectives does the issue address?

Tackling climate change and the ecological emergency is a key priority of EDDC. EDDC is striving for a 'Greener East Devon' which it states to mean "placing the highest emphasis on the natural capital of our

stunning environment – coast and countryside – and the value and importance of biodiversity within it”. At present the biodiversity of our district, including beavers, is under threat from sewage discharges by South West Water into our rivers and sea. The Rivers Trust interactive map show the extent of discharges. [Is my river fit to play in? \(arcgis.com\)](http://arcgis.com)

Sewage discharge is a matter of significant public concern and EDDC must play a leadership role in examining and assessing the performance of South West Water.

Is there a deadline for the Council to make a decision? (If so, when and why?):

No

Members are requested to provide information on the following:-

What do you wish to achieve from the review?:

I would like EDDC to use this review as an opportunity to understand:

- (a) Why such large volumes of sewage is being discharged into the waterways of the district
- (b) Explore what commitments SWW will make to update and improve infrastructure to reduce sewage discharges
- (c) Why it is not publishing real time data of its sewage discharges and what it will do to rectify this

Are the desired outcomes likely to be achievable?:

Yes. South West Water is a £0.5 billion pound company which has distributed dividends to shareholders of £150 million on average in the last two years. If the desire is there for change, then change can happen.

Will it change/increase efficiency and cost effectiveness?:

Additional information – an explanatory sentence or paragraph to be provided below to support each box which has been ticked:

Please can you return the completed form to Democratic Services via email to democraticservices@eastdevon.gov.uk.

MONITORING OFFICER COMMENTS

This is within the remit of the committee to consider. It is worth pointing out that while SWW may be invited to attend committee meetings to answer any questions there may be, they cannot be compelled to do so.

Date: 19.11.21