

Motions to Council 9 September 2020

Chief Executive's accompanying notes

Motion 864

Restoring our rivers

Proposed by Cllr Paul Hodgkinson

Seconded by Cllr Bernard Fisher

This Council notes that:

- Gloucestershire is fortunate to have 28 rivers running through our county, including the River Severn and River Thames, Britain's longest and second longest rivers.
- However, many of these waterways are flooded with harmful pollutants, including raw sewage discharges from water treatment operators Thames Water, Severn Trent and Wessex Water.
- This pollution is causing extensive damage to the fragile ecosystems around our county.
- It can also prove a serious public health concern for those residents living near rivers or using them for leisure activities; with pathogens able to cause serious illnesses.
- Furthermore, traces of Covid-19 have been found in sewage outputs in global hotspots.

This Council recognises that dumping raw sewage into rivers is currently legal in extreme circumstances, but also recognises claims that the use of these measures has become routine for some operators.

This Council believes that the adverse impacts on the county's waterways are unacceptable and that water treatment operators need to adjust their behaviour and invest more in the networks to avoid damaging our county's public resources.

This Council also believes that the county's waterways are a resource that every resident should be confident in using safely, and that we should

	<p>strive to have the country's first designated bathing waters in rivers, which could bring great economic and social benefits to Gloucestershire.</p> <p>This Council therefore resolves to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call on the Cabinet to take urgent action with District Councils, the Environment Agency, local partners and communities to lead comprehensive monitoring of the county's waterways to determine the extent of the damage caused by raw sewage and pollutants. • Call on the Cabinet to work with local partners, including The Rivers Trust and water treatment operators to promote better use of sewage facilities – recognising that everyone has a role to play in improving our waterways. • Write to the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, to ban the routine dumping of raw sewage into our rivers, with the ultimate aim of restoring our rivers to a state where we can safely swim in them and to protect their environment and biodiversity.
Climate change implications	There are no climate change implications in raising awareness with local partners, companies and communities
Resource implications	There are no direct resource implications for the County Council in raising awareness with local partners, companies and communities if delivered within existing boards.
Human Rights implications	N/A
Other implications relating to Council's policy framework	Whilst the Council has some responsibility for the smaller rivers ('Ordinary Watercourses'), this does not extend to the larger ('Main') rivers or to pollution control, which are the responsibility of the Environment Agency.

Motion 865

Public Health England

Proposed by Cllr Iain Dobie

Seconded by TBA

This Council recognises the hard work of the County Council's Public Health officials when looking to tackle the first wave of the Covid-19 pandemic in Gloucestershire.

This Council also notes that the team has had to work within the confines of a 25 per cent cut to the whole public health budget in England compared to 2015, which commentators have said limited the UK's ability to respond effectively to Covid-19.

This Council further notes, with dismay, that the current Government is seeking to dismantle Public Health England at a time when the Office of National Statistics estimate that some 2,400 people are still being infected every day.

This Council believes that the break-up of PHE at this time is politically motivated to shift the blame from this Government to unelected state officials, that it will take time and resources away from tackling the pandemic and that it will harm the country's recovery and ability to tackle local outbreaks as we move into the potentially dangerous winter months. This council is also concerned that doing so without any plan for preventative functions (such as tackling smoking) could leave these critical services rudderless.

This Council also believes that it will be essential, as soon as this pandemic is under control, to hold a thorough and transparent investigation into the Government's handling of the pandemic, which may well have implications for the agency responsible for pandemic planning – though only when appropriate – and will likely acknowledge the need for greater delegation to local public health experts.

	<p>This Council resolves to request the Chief Executive and Council Leader to write to the Secretary of State for Health to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Express this Council's grave concerns about the dismantling of Public Health England in the midst of a pandemic. • Reiterate the need for a thorough and transparent enquiry into why the UK has one of the highest Covid-19 mortality rates in the world. • Call for the 25 per cent cut in funding since 2015 to be reinstated.
Climate change implications	N/A
Resource implications	In 15/16 the PH grant to Gloucestershire County Council was £27.67m, in 20/21 it is £24.28m. A reduction of £3.39m. The grant has increased in 20/21 by £0.65m to cover inflation and some of the Agenda for Change costs
Human Rights implications	N/A
Other implications relating to Council's policy framework	N/A

<p>Motion 866</p>	<p>Rainbow flag crossings <i>Proposed by Cllr Kate Haigh</i> <i>Seconded by Cllr Lesley Williams</i></p> <p>This Council notes that the public realm can be used by local authorities to promote inclusivity and community cohesion and to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.</p> <p>Council further notes that long lasting and colourful road crossings can also enhance the design of the public realm and provide interesting and safer places to cross the road.</p> <p>This Council therefore resolves to call on the Cabinet to create inclusive rainbow flag crossing in Gloucester City centre in time for Pride month 2021 and to enter into discussions with other districts about suitable locations for crossings to be located over the next 2 years. This will support Pride in Gloucestershire’s bid for Europride 2026 to be held in the county.</p>
<p>Climate change implications</p>	<p>There are no significant climate change implications. However, removing and re-laying the road surface would generate some carbon emissions.</p>
<p>Resource implications</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>Human Rights implications</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>Other implications relating to Council’s policy framework</p>	<p>The DfT have provided the following advice regarding Rainbow Crossings:</p> <p>“The Department for Transport is aware that this has been used in a few places and our view is that you would need to seek your own legal advice as to whether your proposals comply with the relevant legislation.</p> <p>All pedestrian crossings are regulated by the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2016 (TSRGD). This includes zebras, puffins, and the type of pedestrian facilities at junctions referred to here.</p>

TSRGD prescribes the signs, signals and markings that must be used to create the different types of crossing. The Traffic Signs Manual gives guidance on the use of road markings in Chapter 5, but the requirements of TSRGD take precedence over any good practice guidance.

In the Department's view, coloured surfacing is not considered a traffic sign or road marking and therefore doesn't come within the scope of the TSRGD. It has no legal meaning and therefore could be placed within the crossing studs at a signal-controlled crossing, or pedestrian facility at a junction.

The use of surfacing in this way needs careful thought. Striped designs must be avoided – there is a trend to use surfacing materials (e.g. different types of stone paviour) in patterns to mark informal crossings, including some that are striped. Our view is that any crossing that is not a zebra must not resemble one. That would extend to using a striped pattern at a signalled crossing. Zebra crossings have a defined priority in law, and anything that looks like one could lead pedestrians to assume priority when it doesn't exist. The artwork must not alter the appearance of the prescribed crossing signals, signs and markings in any way, as this may mean they were no longer compliant with TSRGD.

I would like to draw a couple of practical points to your attention – if there is a notice or poster explaining what the artwork is, then it should be sited so that people don't block the footway when they stop to read it, or have to put themselves in a dangerous position. And if this is to be a permanent installation, then there is a need to think about maintenance in the longer term as surfacing can have quite a short life.

Any authority using these should consider the possible impact on road users, perhaps through a

risk assessment process.”

Therefore such crossings should be seen as informal in nature, and as such are suitable in a shared use street, pedestrian zone or somewhere there was already slow / controlled vehicle speeds and that there was doubt /uncertainty as to who has the right of way. They are not suitable as a replacement for an existing zebra crossing or as an alternative to a new one on a traditional main road where vehicles and pedestrians are clearly segregated.