

Meeting of the Communities, Environment and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee

15 June 2026

Recommendations / Additional Information Requested

	Recommendations / Information Requested:	Response:	Accepted / Partially Accepted / Not Accepted:
Bathing Water Quality Issues and Impacts of the River Ogmore			
Recommendation			
1	Given the poor water quality reported at Ogmore By Sea, and that those who bathe in the waters on the other side of the river, at Merthyr Mawr / Newton being unaware whether the water was safe to bathe in without monitoring, the Committee recommended that consideration be given to an application to Welsh Government for designating Newton as a bathing water under the Bathing Water Regulations, having regard to the impact on all users e.g. bathers, small boat clubs, dog walkers, etc. and meanwhile options be explored for live monitoring of the water quality at Merthyr Mawr / Newton.	The Council and Shared Regulatory Services (SRS) will jointly explore the feasibility of seeking Bathing Water Designation for Newton Beach. As Newton Beach is privately owned, the support of the landowner will be a fundamental requirement. Welsh Government guidance on the designation of bathing waters in Wales specifies that applications must include a letter of support from the landowner. Consequently, landowner support will be a critical factor in determining whether an application can be successfully progressed. Officers will engage with Natural Resources Wales (NRW) and Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water (DCWW) to assess the feasibility, benefits and resource implications of implementing live water quality monitoring. SRS is not currently aware of any bathing waters in Wales that provide real-time monitoring data. However, approximately 15	Accepted

Meeting of the Communities, Environment and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee

15 June 2026

Recommendations / Additional Information Requested

	Recommendations / Information Requested:	Response:	Accepted / Partially Accepted / Not Accepted:
		bathing waters across Wales are supported by daily water quality forecasting arrangements, which provide the public with advance information on anticipated water quality conditions and potential pollution risks.	
2	Given the importance of the safety of all users, the Committee recommended that consideration be given to exploring and investigating the potential of taking action against Dwr Cymru Welsh Water (DCWW) on statutory nuisance, environmental health and public health grounds.	Whilst the statutory nuisance provisions contained within Part III of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 provide a mechanism for addressing pollution that is prejudicial to health or amounts to a nuisance, there are significant practical challenges associated with applying these powers to sewage discharges. In particular, establishing the existence of a statutory nuisance requires robust evidence, to the criminal standard of proof (beyond reasonable doubt), demonstrating that the pollution is causing a substantial and unreasonable interference with public health or the use and enjoyment of land. This often requires direct observation of the nuisance together with clear evidence of causation. Such evidence can be difficult to obtain where pollution events are intermittent, originate from multiple or diffuse sources, or occur within a	Not Accepted.

Meeting of the Communities, Environment and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee

15 June 2026

Recommendations / Additional Information Requested

	Recommendations / Information Requested:	Response:	Accepted / Partially Accepted / Not Accepted:
		complex catchment system such as that of the River Ogmore. Furthermore, Natural Resources Wales (NRW) is the primary regulatory authority for discharges to controlled waters and is responsible for issuing and enforcing environmental permits relating to discharge consents. As such, NRW is best placed to regulate and take enforcement action in relation to pollution arising from permitted discharges to rivers, coastal waters and other controlled waters.	
3	The Committee discussed the increased rainfall and extreme weather being experienced and its increased impact on the rivers flowing into the River Ogmore and recommended that options for mitigating against the effects of excess rainfall across the County Borough, be explored.	As part of the South Central Bathing Water Project as part of the catchment wide solution, nature based solutions are being assessed as a key priority to reduce pollution loading to the Ogmore. More details of these solutions will be detailed in the final business case report which the project aims to produce by the end of March 2027. Officers will also request that further information is provided by DCWW, and investment plans in the	Accepted

Meeting of the Communities, Environment and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee

15 June 2026

Recommendations / Additional Information Requested

	Recommendations / Information Requested:	Response:	Accepted / Partially Accepted / Not Accepted:
		County Borough on any green infrastructure projects proposed within the County Borough over the existing spending period of 2025-2030 Since January 2019, new developments of at least two properties or over 100m2 of construction area require sustainable drainage to manage on-site surface water. The surface water drainage systems must be designed and built in accordance with standards for sustainable drainage. These systems must be approved by the SuDS Approving Body (SAB) before construction work begins.	
Additional Information Requested			
4	The Committee requested regular progress reports be provided.	Officers welcome the opportunity to present further on Bathing Water issues to the Committee. It may be beneficial for a further report to taken towards the end of Q3 when updated	Accepted

Meeting of the Communities, Environment and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee

15 June 2026

Recommendations / Additional Information Requested

	Recommendations / Information Requested:	Response:	Accepted / Partially Accepted / Not Accepted:
		Classification data is normally published by Welsh Government.	
5	The Committee welcomed the general discussion about interventions, but requested that more technical detail be provided in future reports to the Committee, including, specifically, planned mitigations and timescales e.g. details of how many sewers were to be relined, where Combined Sewer Overflows or rain gardens were to be installed, etc. and how the Authority could work with DCWW e.g. to separate rainwater from the sewage system, etc.	Officers will continue to work with partners, including Natural Resources Wales (NRW) and Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water (DCWW), to identify opportunities to provide more detailed and accessible technical information in future reports, where this is feasible and supported by the availability of relevant data.	Accepted
6	The Committee requested that the presentations made by representatives from DCWW and Natural Resources Wales be circulated to all Committee Members.	Officers will seek to obtain copies of the presentations from representatives of Natural Resources Wales (NRW) and Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water (DCWW) to ensure that the information presented is made available to all Committee Members. These will be circulated following the meeting where permission is granted by the presenting organisations.	Accepted

Meeting of the Communities, Environment and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee

15 June 2026

Recommendations / Additional Information Requested

	Recommendations / Information Requested:	Response:	Accepted / Partially Accepted / Not Accepted:
Audit Wales Report – Bridgend County Borough Council Planning and Development Service			
Recommendation			
7	The Committee recommended that haste consideration be given to the sufficiency of funding for the Service.	The Budget for 2026/27 includes an EMR for Planning for 900K which is being used to recruit to the enhanced structure. This is a one-off revenue allocation, so a review is being undertaken of planning fee income over the next three years, so that the revenue gap can be fully understood to ensure that the service is finically sustainable. In addition, it has been agreed that any planning fee will be ringfenced for use within the service area.	Accepted
8	The Committee discussed public perception of the Development Control (DC) process and recommended the provision of more communication and raising public awareness of the planning process, particularly regarding large scale planning applications and consultations.	Agreed – A communication plan and protocol will be discussed with the Chair of DCC, Cabinet Member and officers in Communications.	Accepted

Meeting of the Communities, Environment and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee

15 June 2026

Recommendations / Additional Information Requested

	Recommendations / Information Requested:	Response:	Accepted / Partially Accepted / Not Accepted:
9	The Committee also discussed instances when the DC Committee refuses an application recommended for approval and recommended that consideration be given to providing DC Committee Members with appropriate Officer support with finalising their reasons for refusing a planning application.	This was not a topic that could be discussed in the Scrutiny Committee as it did not form part of the scope of the Audit. However, where the DCC makes a decision against an officer recommendation, Officers of the LPA cannot assist in finalising the reasons for refusal. This is because it would compromise their professional integrity where a decision has been made to approve. The protocol in such a situation is that Members are signposted to external support via organisations such as Planning Aid Wales, who will provide the appropriate help and guidance.	Not Accepted
Forward Work Programme Update			
10	The Committee requested a Member Briefing be held to provide an update on Maesteg Town Hall and the Grand Pavilion in the meantime, whilst awaiting the reports scheduled for the 12 October meeting.	A Members Briefing can be prepared for the Grand Pavillion Project, to give an update on the progress of this large capital project. This can take place during the summer. However, whilst the final account is still being settled for Maesteg Town Hall, a briefing may not be possible before the October Scrutiny Session. Should this be concluded earlier a briefing can be held.	Partially Accepted