

Somerset West and Taunton Council

Full Council – 5 October 2021

Somerset Levels and Moors Phosphate Mitigation: Somerset West and Taunton - proposed programme of interim measures.

This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Member for Planning and Transportation: Mike Rigby

**Report Authors: Paul Browning: Strategy Specialist and Alison Blom-Cooper:
Assistant Director Strategic Place and Planning**

1 Executive Summary / Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to demonstrate the Council's commitment to the delivery of, and allocation of funding for, a proposed programme of interim measures to secure phosphate neutral development in the District. This includes the appointment of dedicated officers to support the unlocking of development in the catchment of the River Tone and the setting up of a Phosphates Planning Sub Committee to oversee the delivery and implementation of the interim measures. These measures will allow some of the planning applications currently held in abeyance to be determined.
- 1.2 The report sets out the background to the issue and the response undertaken by the Council following the advice from Natural England issued in August 2020 concerning the unacceptable levels of phosphates in the Somerset Levels and Moors and provides information on the further work to be undertaken to bring forward a longer-term solution.
- 1.3 The report is focused on interim solutions that are in the gift of the Council to control or influence. Whilst there is no statutory responsibility for us to take this route the impact locally on businesses, developers, supply chain, and housing supply is a clear challenge. The Council will continue to lobby on the strategic solutions.

2 Recommendations

2.1 That Full Council resolves to:

- a) Confirm that the Council will, until such time as the responsibility falls to others, adopt interim measures to secure in perpetuity development which is phosphate neutral in the River Tone catchment.
- b) Confirm that the interim measures will include monitoring with annual reporting, to take an evidence led approach to ensure that phosphate offsets arising from the measures secured keep pace with permissions granted.

