

Suffolk County Council meeting Thursday 19 May 2022, vote taken on Motion 2 as amended.

Motion 2 – Proposed by Councillor Penny Otton and seconded by Councillor Caroline Page.

Motion text: This Council recognises the immense importance of rivers and waterways to the environment, biodiversity, and quality of life in Suffolk and the nation. This Council believes that every community in Suffolk should have access to waters - whether coastal or inland – that are uncontaminated and safe for the use and enjoyment of both people and wildlife, and to maintain ecological balance. We note that only 14% of rivers nationally are of good ecological standard and that the River Waveney was highlighted by the Invertebrate Charity, Buglife, as having the highest neonicotinoid pollution levels of all those they sampled in 2017.

The Council recognises the excellent work going on in river and waterway conservation in our county through organisations such as Suffolk Wildlife Trust, Essex and Suffolk Rivers Trust, The Norfolk and Suffolk Nature Recovery Partnership, and voluntary groups across Suffolk and thanks all involved.

Noting that responsibility for rivers and waterways does not sit with Suffolk County Council and therefore a partnership approach is essential, the Council commits to:

- Continue to support and engage with environmental trusts and voluntary groups in Suffolk
- Investigate what further work could be done, as part of our wider efforts on biodiversity, to continue to address polluting run-off from roads and urban areas in Suffolk
- Ask Suffolk Catchment Partnerships if they have established what additional resource they would need to ensure they can put in place those measures they have identified as necessary to reach good ecological status in our rivers
- Ensure the Local Nature Recovery Strategy pay due regard to rivers and waterways and, following consultation and engagement, outlines key steps in improving the ecological status of our rivers
- Work with our County Farm tenants, and the wider agricultural sector, to encourage good practice
- Work with Suffolk's District and Borough Councils, in their role as Local Planning Authorities, to deliver development with appropriate water treatment and sustainable drainage systems (SUDS)

Write to Local MPs and DEFRA Minister Rebecca Pow MP to (i) highlight the importance of rivers and waterways to Suffolk's residents, (ii) thank them for their efforts to ensure funding for river projects in Suffolk via Anglian Water, the Environment Agency, the NFU and others, (iii) ask what more can be done to improve the condition of our county's rivers and (iv) that they continue to raise this vital issue at Westminster.

Members present agreed the motion by general assent.