

Questions under Procedure Rule 10

The following question has been submitted by Councillor Colin Winder under Procedure Rule 10:-

The council received a letter on the 1st of October from Natural England about the levels of phosphate pollution effecting large areas of Somerset. This pollution was causing problems within the planning system, both for agricultural development, and development for housing development. There appeared to be a diversity of agencies responsible for areas of control, but no overall body with the legal backing to ensure total pollution control.

The Environment Bill is at present at the committee stage in the House of Commons. I searched this week through the list of written submissions and could find nothing from South Somerset, or the joint Somerset district councils. The Bill proposes the formation of "An Independent Office for Environment Protection" which I would expect to control pollution and provide the overriding body to deal with cross departmental problems, which is at present missing. It is essential to understand that Nature does not read policy documents, or abide by district or county boundaries.

My question is:-

- (1) have SSDC made representation to the Department for Environment, Food, and Rural Affairs to ensure that pollution of our rivers and streams is covered by the proposed Office for Environment Protection (OEP).
 - (2) if you have not submitted a written representation to the committee on the Environment Bill can you do so? This is a critical problem throughout the district.
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