

Meeting:	Sustainable Development and Enterprise Scrutiny Sub-Committee
Date:	25 September 2006
Subject:	Challenge Panel – Water Management and Drought Final Report
Responsible Officer:	Paul Najsarek, Director, People Performance and Policy
Contact Officer:	Ed Hammond, Scrutiny Officer
Portfolio Holder:	Business Development
Key Decision:	No
Status:	Part I

## **Section 1: Summary**

### **Decision Required**

Members are requested:

- 1) To note the report.
- 2) To endorse the report's findings and recommendations
- 3) To submit the report to Cabinet at the next available opportunity.

### **Reason for report**

At the first meeting in July, the Sustainable Development and Enterprise Scrutiny Sub-Committee agreed to establish a panel to consider water management and the current drought situation.

The panel met in early August and is now reporting its findings to committee.

## **Benefits**

Approving the report and recommendations will provide guidance and assistance for officers and executive members working in partnership with Three Valleys and Thames Water. It will allow scrutiny to make an impact upon an issue of importance to local people.

## **Cost of Proposals**

Not applicable

## **Risks**

Not applicable

## **Implications if recommendations rejected**

- 1) Scrutiny will be unable to impact upon an important area of policy development.
- 2) An opportunity to effectively hold an external agency to account and build inter-organisational relationships will have been lost.

## **Section 2: Report**

### **2.1 Brief History**

The Sustainable Development and Enterprise Scrutiny Sub-Committee decided in July 2006 to establish a panel to examine issues relating to water management and the drought. The panel consisted of four members and two co-optees (one representative of Harrow Agenda 21 and a representative of the Consumer Council for Water).

### **2.2 Challenge Panel**

The panel met on 9 August. Four officers from Urban Living attended, and Mike Pocock, Head of Strategic Planning at Three Valleys Water gave evidence. Members were provided with a detailed briefing, which is partially reproduced in the report's appendices, in advance of the meeting, and a pre-meeting was held the night before to plan the panel's questions.

A subsequent meeting was held in late August to approve the report and its recommendations. Officers have also made comments on the various issues covered by the report, which have been incorporated.

This draft of the report has already been forwarded to Three Valleys Water as an element of the council's response to the company's strategic planning process, the consultation period for which ended on 1 September.

### 2.3 Consultation

Members and officers directly involved in the review have been consulted on the findings and recommendations in the report.

### 2.4 Financial Implications

This report is not seeking additional financial resources. Any expenses eventually agreed for this project will be met from the agreed scrutiny budget for 2006/07, which is £340,400, of which £266,050 is paid in salaries and £74,350 is available for projects and other expenditure, but no call on this budget will be requested until the final scope is submitted to Committee in November.

### 2.5 Legal Implications

The challenge panel's recommendations assist with the exercise of the Council's power to promote or improve the environmental well-being of its area under section 2 of the Local Government Act 2000

### 2.6 Equalities Impact

None specific to this report.

### 2.7 Section 17 Crime and Disorder Act 1998 Considerations

None specific to this report.

## **Section 3: Supporting Information/Background Documents**

Challenge Panel Report on Water Management and Drought Appendices