Partnership Meeting

[2 July 2026] Supplement 1 to the agenda for

Wye Catchment Nutrient Management Board

Monday 6 July 2026

2.00 pm

Conference Room 1 - Herefordshire Council, Plough Lane Offices, Hereford, HR4 0LE

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3.	**QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**	3 - 4
	Question received from Alison Caffyn attached.	
5.	**REVIEW OF A NITROGEN (N) TARGET FOR THE RIVER WYE AND LUGG SSSIs**	5 - 6
	Update from Natural England attached.	
9.	**ITEMS FOR INFORMATION FROM THE STATUTORY AGENCIES**	7 - 12
	Updates from Environment Agency attached.	

Question from Alison Caffyn
Question: Can the appropriate NMB members provide an update on the planning moratorium in the Lugg catchment? Specifically: • How many years has the moratorium been in place? • How many homes have been built in that period, and with what nutrient mitigation? • How many homes (approximately) have not been able to go ahead? • What are the calculated amounts of P that the homes built have added to the catchment? And what P would the homes not built have similarly contributed? • What are these volumes of P as a percentage of P in the Lugg catchment? • When is the planning moratorium likely to be lifted or is it effectively permanent for the foreseeable? • Have the economic and social impacts of the moratorium been calculated at any stage, and if so what are the results?

Reviewing a Nitrogen Target for the River Wye and Lugg SSSI's Update for NMB June 2026

The River Wye is achieving phosphorous targets. There is currently no nitrogen (N) target for the river. This is because the guidance we use (common standard monitoring) assumes that controlling phosphorus alone is enough to stop problems like algae growth (eutrophication).

A question has been raised by the Nutrient Management Board as to the role of N in the observed eutrophication effect. Natural England will carry out an evidence review which will consider the potential role of N in the current condition of the Wye and Lugg and whether N levels are limiting achieving favorable condition.

The initial evidence review will be developed with input from the Environment Agency.

Following the evidence review, consultation with-in Natural England and the Environment Agency will need to take place to consider the evidence and the options. This could involve legal and senior level scrutiny across a number of Natural England departments.

Estimated Timeline

May 2026-Dec 2026 - NE Specialist Review using condition assessment data and input from EA technical leads

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Jan 2027- March 2027 - NE internal engagement to review evidence and consider options

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April 2027-July 2027 - Consultation with EA and NRW and agree way forward – provide update to NMB

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Next steps dependent on outcomes of above

Environment Agency

Message from Martin Quine, 29 June 2026: Please accept my apologies, but due to the change in date, I am unable to attend Monday's meeting. I have a couple of items that the NMB may be interested in:

- We have recently updated our River Wye webpage at River Wye Water Quality | Engage Environment Agency where the following information can be found:

  In the summer months, the Environment Agency collects water quality data using a remote monitoring device called a sonde to monitor water temperature and signs of algal bloom. The data from these sondes are publicly available and shared here: MDC - Meteor Data Cloud (telemetry-data.com). Further guidance on how to use the site can be found here: MDC sonde website guidance.

  Published annually, our data and analysis report captures monitoring data from across the River Wye catchment in England for the year 2025: Release of our River Wye Data Analysis Report (2025) | River Wye Water Quality | Engage Environment Agency

- Please also find the attached summary from project TARA – Testing Approached to Regulating Agriculture, which I have mentioned previously at the NMB.

- As referenced in the notes but for ease of reference, responses to queries raised at the previous meeting (in relation to Ground Water Source Protection Zones and Fixed Monetary Penalty trial) are available here: Matters arising from the meeting held on 29 April 2026

Environment Agency

For homes and habitats

Project TARA – Testing Approaches to Regulating Agriculture

Poultry Manure Regulation: Exploring regulatory approaches to the use of poultry manure within the English stretches of the River Wye catchment.

To ensure a balanced assessment, the project targeted farms with more than 1,000 birds, including:

- Sites with capacity for over 40,000 birds which are regulated under the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations (EPR) 2016
- Smaller, non-permitted farms, which are not routinely inspected

The inspections focussed on poultry production sites and their associated farmed land. Compliance checks relating to the export of poultry manure from the site of production were also carried out but inspection of farms receiving exported manure did not fall under the scope of this project.

- 63 sites with over 1000 poultry were inspected
- 94% compliant with NVZ regs
- 89% compliant with FRfW
- No difference in compliance between permitted and unpermitted farms
- The most common non-compliance with the Reduction and Prevention of Agricultural Diffuse Pollution Regulations (England) 2018 was associated with autumn **applications of poultry manure prior to winter cereal planting**
- Although this project's focus has been on the poultry sector, the findings from assessment of their nutrient plans and records have shown a notable environmental risk to be associated with the **growing of potatoes.** Regulatory non-compliances found on

potato crops were associated with both **organic manure and manufactured fertiliser applications** – i.e. were not solely due to excess nutrient applications from organic manures.

- Of the 63 poultry sites inspected, 30% had purpose-built covered manure stores, while **41% relied on temporary farmyard manure (FYM) heaps**. Many of the latter farms indicated a preference for covered storage but cited prohibitive costs - particularly the expense of concrete and galvanised steel - as a key barrier. The remaining 29% exported manure directly at clean-out, eliminating the need for on-site storage.
- Poultry farmers and their agronomists in **the River Wye catchment demonstrated strong awareness of local water quality issues.** Assessing historical records as well as current nutrient plans has enabled us to observe changes in practice over the last 4-5 years. There have been changes in practices observed in phosphate management over this time. Where soil phosphate levels have historically been elevated, management practices have been adapted to mitigate this.
- Many poultry farms in the River Wye catchment supply a major processor, who works with a **manure broker to facilitate the export of poultry litter from their supply farms**.
- We are seeing some very innovative and forward-thinking solutions implemented and proposed from poultry and AD site operators to address the management of phosphate. We have been working with several AD operators and poultry farms within the West Midlands to provide permitting advice on the treatment of manures and digestate. Several of these have trialled the use of **phosphate stripping equipment**, with two AD operators in the Wye catchment planning to install plants to remove phosphate into a marketable phosphate product that can be easily transported to other areas of the country. **This will reduce the application of phosphate containing digestates to land in the River Wye catchment**.
- **Agronomists** provided feedback that they found the in-depth nutrient management assessment very helpful, and some have **changed their practice** in response. They welcomed the opportunity to gain clarity on the Reduction and Prevention of

Agricultural Diffuse Pollution Regulations (England) 2018 and the associated Secretary of State's Guidance, which was issued in June 2022. They have found the opportunity for open discussion very constructive. Good working relationships with the industry have `formed as a result.

- There is a lack of detailed understanding within the agricultural industry about **the factors that affect phosphate cycling within the soil and subsequent crop assimilation**. A number of farms have reported high levels of (available/potentially available) phosphate in the soil, which have not reduced despite omitting phosphate applications for many years. This has been particularly evident in apple orchards which have not received phosphate applications for many years.

July 2026