

Partnership Meeting

Supplement 1 to the agenda for

Wye Catchment Nutrient Management Board

Wednesday 22 October 2025

2.00 pm

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

	Pages
4. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC	3 - 4
The attached document was received from CPRW (Campaign for the Protection of Rural Wales) after the identified deadline for questions.	
13. CORRESPONDENCE WITH WATER COMPANIES ABOUT BIOSOLIDS	5 - 6
The purpose of this item is to receive a verbal update on correspondence, principally with Severn Trent and United Utilities. The attached note has been provided by Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water.	

Please can NRW, NE, and the Wye Catchment LPAs in England and Wales explain how their policies and decision-making about IPU's ensures no further deterioration in the Wye Catchment waterbodies.

Please would the NMB consider this and organise a response.

Future poultry numbers and the nutrient output of intensively reared poultry in the Wye catchment, and where this ends up, is fundamental to the NMP.

The LPA approves planning applications for IPU's and NRW/NE grant permits for those IPU's with numbers over the Permitting threshold.

Applications reduced to a trickle over the last few years but are now accelerating again with:

- plans for expanded shed capacity to meet the Better Chicken Commitment and changes from turkey rearing to chicken rearing.
- extra bird numbers justified on grounds of "betterment" through the addition of ammonia scrubbers or advanced heating systems or changes in standard official coefficients.

At the last NMB Meeting, Ann Weedy reported that NRW had announced it was resuming the determination of permits for new or expanded IPU's under Environmental Permitting Regulations (EPR) and these permits did not include the topic of manure management. NRW also acts as Statutory consultee to Wye Catchment LPAs in Wales as does the EA in England.

We do not know NRW's policy as Statutory Consultee in advising LPAs about the conditioning and monitoring of manure management plans, about the fate of exported nutrients and about ensuring these do not pose a risk to rivers in the Wye catchment or elsewhere. Nor do we know the corresponding policies for the EA in Permitting or in advising LPAs about Planning assessments.

We do not know the various LPA's positions on planning determinations.

In Wales, for the past two years, almost all IPU applications have been under consideration by the Welsh Government for call-in and are mostly listed as "awaiting sight of LPA Officer's Report". There are also ongoing applications in the Welsh side of the Catchment and I will provide a list to the Board as soon as I have checked for any Monmouthshire records to add to the Powys records.

In Herefordshire there are up to seven applications awaiting determination, some in the most at risk Lugg Catchment.

planning app no.	Free Range	Category	Name	Location	Post code	bird no.s (x1000)
P251744/PA7		broiler	Lady Arbour Farm	Eardisley	HR3 6NU	same?
P251383/F		broiler	Oakfields Farm	Kingsland	Leominster HR6 9QU	168 to 200
P204516	FR	egg	Wiley cottage Farm	Wiley	Presteigne LD8 2ND	16 to 32
P203904/F	FR	egg	Northgate Farm	St Weonards	HR2 8QF	32 to 48000
P203642/F	FR	egg	Farlands Farm	Lingen	SY7 0DX	32,000
P202062/F		broiler	Arkstone Court Farm	Clehonger	HR2 9TR	252-336 84 extra
P172845/F		broiler	Stag Batch House	Monkland Road	Leominster HR6 9DA	100

The Wiley Cottage application for extension involves adding scrubbers to free range layer sheds. We have no information on whether these are effective in sheds with pop-holes. We are puzzled by the intention to permit doubling or the use of an outdoor range in Lugg headwaters (Lime Brook) and the basis for the (new?) arrangement of compensating poultry impacts by undertaking to remove cattle.

There are also ongoing applications in the Welsh side of the Catchment and I will provide a similar list to the Board as soon as I have added in any Monmouthshire records to the Powys records.

The NMB should understand how these decisions are made. The NMB should be updated by NRW, NE, and the Wye Catchment LPAs in England and Wales about how their policies and decision-making ensures no deterioration in the Wye Catchment waterbodies.

Thanks for your help.

Best wishes,

Christine

Dr Christine Hugh-Jones

Trustee CPRW and Secretary of Brecon and Radnor Branch.

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Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water Biosolids

Process

Not all Biosolids in the Wye catchment will necessarily come from Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water. Different water companies have differing approaches to how they process sewage sludge.

All sewage sludge produced by Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water is processed in one of four Advance Anaerobic Digestion (AAD) treatment facilities. What makes the anaerobic digestion advanced compared to conventional digestion is that prior to being fed into the anaerobic digester the sludge is treated in a thermal hydrolysis process (THP). To undergo THP all sludges are first thickened, to approximately 22% dry solids (DS) which makes the process more efficient in terms of energy and the time taken to process.

THP itself involves heating the sludge to a temperature of between 140-165°C (under a pressure of 2.6-6 bar) and holding it at the temperature for 20-30 minutes. During the THP treatment the sludge is made more biodegradable by releasing intracellular material and by breaking down large organic compounds into smaller more bioavailable organic compounds. This process also sterilises the sewage sludge, removing all pathogens including *E. coli* and *Salmonella*.

Once the sludge has been through the THP it is cooled and fed to the anaerobic digesters. During anaerobic digestion microorganisms break down the biodegradable matter into two main products, methane and carbon dioxide, the sludge is held in the digester for on average 12-18 days after which it is dewatered, and the resultant product is known as **biosolids**.

The green energy generated by this process is used for generating energy to run our plants and the remainder is returned to the grid.

Spreading

There are measures in place to ensure that they are applied in a way that reflects best practice and does not harm the environment or public health. Biosolids are supplied as a 'cake' that can be spread using a muck spreader. There is no charge for Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water's biosolids and the biosolids team meet regularly with the farmers and landowners to ensure responsible spreading.

Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water Biosolids Team carry out soil sampling, to assess land suitability and offer ongoing support and guidance to ensure efficient utilisation of nutrients. When identifying suitable fields for spreading, the following factors are considered and areas selected or rejected based on findings -

- 50 metres of an identified spring, well or borehole.
- 10 metres of a surface water course
- An Environment Agency or Natural Resources Wales identified Groundwater Source Protection Zone 1
- If the proposed spreading area is within a designated Nitrate Vulnerable Zone
- Do not apply on land with a slope greater than 12° if there is a significant risk of nitrogen getting into surface waters

We operate under the UKAS accredited Biosolids Assurance Scheme, which sets environmentally conservative limits to protect soil and water courses. Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water have been accredited since 2016. This helps to ensure that the biosolids are produced, stored, and spread appropriately and ensure no environmental damage.