

Progress Summary for Priority Lists: Relieving
pressures on Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)
river catchments to support delivery of affordable
housing: Action plan

Reporting Period Feb 2024

Summary

The Programme for Government sets out the Welsh Government's intentions for this Senedd (up to May 2026); the actions it intends to take, targets it wants to meet and legislation it expects to bring forward, among other things. It was first published in June 2021 and updated in December 2021 following the Co-operation Agreement with Plaid Cymru.

The PFG has been structured around the 10 wellbeing objectives, with each having a number of commitments to deliver against. The Phosphates in SAC (special areas of conservation) Rivers has been progressed due to the impacts and interdependencies with the following PFG commitments:

- Make our cities, towns and villages even better places in which to live and work
 - Build 20,000 new low carbon social homes for rent.
- Build a stronger, greener economy as we make maximum progress towards decarbonisation
 - Create a new system of farm support that will maximise the protective power of nature through farming, recognising the particular needs of family farms in Wales and acknowledging ecologically sustainable local food production.
- Embed our response to the climate and nature emergency in everything we do
 - Work towards the establishment of an Environmental Governance Body, a statutory duty and targets to protect and restore biodiversity.

SAC Rivers (Special Areas of Conservation)

Wales has different classes of protected water bodies. Each is managed according to different designation and water quality management regulations, which NRW is responsible for implementing.

Special Areas of Conservation (SAC's) are ecologically important water areas, which are protected under "the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017". The objective of regulations are to protect biodiversity through the conservation of natural habitats and species of wild fauna and flora, by laying down rules for the protection, management and exploitation of such habitats and species.

In Wales there are nine rivers designated as SACs under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. They are the; Afonydd Cleddau, Eden, Gwyrfai, Teifi, Tywi, Glaslyn, Dee, Usk, and Wye.

These river ecosystems support some of Wales' rarest and most important wildlife including Atlantic salmon, freshwater pearl mussel, white-clawed crayfish, and floating water-plantain.

Public bodies in Wales have a statutory duty to achieve targets adopted by NRW, following recommendations made by the JNCC and protect the river SACs through regulation of activities for which they are responsible.

In 2021 NRW investigated phosphorous levels at SACs in Wales and reported that the majority of SACs failed phosphorous targets, leading to renewed efforts to control SAC nutrient pollution.

Phosphate and the environment

Phosphates are a class of compounds containing the element phosphorous, which like nitrates are essential biological nutrients. Phosphorus enters rivers from a wide range of sources that include wastewater treatment work discharges, farmland and farming systems and private drainage discharges.

Excess Phosphates can severely damage a water body's quality and ecology by encouraging excess algae growth. This depletes water systems of oxygen and renders them uninhabitable for other organisms, a process called eutrophication. As well as disrupting the ecology and biodiversity of affected waters, eutrophication reduces the recreational value of waters and can make them harder to navigate.

The prominence of phosphate pollution as a water quality issue has been increasing in recent years. Following advice from the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) NRW started significantly tightening phosphorous targets in SACs in 2017.

In 2021, NRW published a report on phosphate levels across Wales'. NRW reported that 39% of assessed SAC water bodies passed their targets. 61% of the 125 water bodies surveyed failed to meet phosphorous targets. The river with the highest level of failures was the Usk with 88% of its water bodies failing the target.

Housing and Phosphate

Following the river phosphorous pollution report, NRW advised local planning authorities in SAC catchments to adopt a policy of 'nutrient neutrality' for managing new development and water discharge permit proposals.

This meant planning permission would be denied if a proposal's Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) found it would likely increase nutrient levels in SAC waters.

The new phosphate control measures stalled a number of housing projects, making them controversial in Senedd debates and the media. The Welsh Government sought to address these issues in its SAC pollution Action Plan.

Phosphorus pollution dominates land use planning considerations in a number of predominantly rural areas because the levels of pollution are above set thresholds and are impacting our ecosystems

The Phosphate Action Plan

In July 2022, the River Pollution Summit brought together senior representatives from regulators, water companies, developers, local government, farming unions, academia and environmental bodies to discuss the development of a strategic and joined-up approach to dealing with this multi-faceted issue.

In a written statement on 1 August 2022, a detailed programme of work and action plan, which had been agreed at the summit to tackle phosphorus pollution in Wales' SAC rivers was published. The Welsh Government received input from a range of key stakeholders on the development of the Plan including DCWW, NRW, Local Planning Authorities, Nutrient Management Boards, Agri unions, industry stakeholders

The Action plan is broken down into 8 themes with additional actions branching off to support the delivery of each overarching theme.

1. the need for a **joined-up approach** and the need for **fit for purpose governance** and oversight arrangements to support decision making in failing SAC rivers;
2. the need to **use natural solutions** more effectively in order to deliver multiple benefits;
3. the need to **work constructively with the agriculture sector** to find solutions to reduce and address excess nutrients in the soil and SAC rivers of Wales;
4. delivering **short term solutions** to address current planning constraints;
5. development of a **unified nutrient calculator** to directly aid planning decisions on nutrient neutrality which will have the ability to take account of catchment-level data, local features and needs;
6. provide clarity to stakeholders on the **suitability of potential mitigation actions** and interventions to reduce pollution;
7. a unified approach to **catchment consenting** in failing SAC rivers; and
8. increasing our understanding of practical measures within catchments which could be provided by **Nutrient Trading**

Delivery of the plan requires a cross sectoral collaborative approach, bringing together government, regulators, developers, farming unions, water companies and communities, to implement sustainable solutions to reduce the pollution in our rivers and unlock development in line with nutrient neutrality principles.

The intention of the Action Plan was to be the start of work on river restoration, with further work to follow in the medium to longer term, focusing in on practical plans for reducing the nutrient loading of rivers and improving their health and biodiversity.

The Summit has now reconvened three more times to take stock of the work since the first Summit and to drive progress in implementing sustainable solutions to improve water quality in our rivers.

Progress to date of the Action plan

An in depth update against each action is available further below in this progress summary.

Theme 1 - the need for a joined-up approach and the need for fit for purpose governance and oversight arrangements to support decision making in failing SAC rivers;

The Welsh Government has provided funding for the Nutrient Management Boards in the failing SAC rivers and issued strategic steer through the Grant award letters of expected outcomes and outputs from the funding. Which include the requirement of a terms of reference for each board and the production of a Nutrient Management Plan for each SAC river within their remit.

To support this work Welsh Government have allocated internal resource to co-ordinate the work programme and provide joined up Welsh Government representation at the relevant governance groups.

Theme 2 - the need to use natural solutions more effectively in order to deliver multiple benefits;

The Welsh Government has made £4.6 million available over the next two years through their Natural Flood Management Accelerator Programme. The programme is funding 23 projects, across 8 different Authority areas and will enhance our natural environment, expand wetland and woodland habitats, and reduce flood risk to up to 2,000 properties, bolstering the number of NFM schemes across Wales.

DCWW have facilitated visits to their constructed wetlands to demonstrate a natural solution in action for interested stakeholders. They are also progressing with NRW the development of a suitable regulatory approach at two further constructed wetlands at Tremeirchion and Pontyfelin.

NRW have also reviewed their guidance in relation to constructed wetlands and have updated this on their website.

Theme 3 - the need to work constructively with the agriculture sector to find solutions to reduce and address excess nutrients in the soil and SAC rivers of Wales

The Welsh Government's Farming Connect service incorporates a continued offer of advice, training, and support to farm businesses on actions to improve water quality and address agricultural pollution. This offer includes access to subsidised specialist advice and a range of e-learning and in person training.

The Welsh Government continues to offer grant schemes to make infrastructure improvements for improved nutrient management and pollution prevention domestic support grant schemes. Welsh Government continues to work with existing groups, including the Wales Land Management Forum, and has also attended a number of visits to farms along the Wye to look at the work they are doing to improve and enhance water quality through their farming practices.

There is far more to be achieved in this space with to ensure all stakeholders are aware of the issue, the support available and best practice. As the Sustainable Farming Scheme closes and final discussion are had it is important that all parties remain focused on achieving lasting and long-term benefits for SAC rivers.

Theme 4 - delivering short term solutions to address current planning constraints

The Welsh Government made additional funding available to NRW to carry out a one-off permit review to try and identify where there is potential headroom at water treatment works to enable stalled development proposals to move forward. NRW have reviewed over 125 of the 171 permits held by water companies in Wales, which has enabled 3000 developments held in abeyance in the Wrexham area to continue to progress through the planning process.

Theme 5 - development of a unified nutrient calculator to directly aid planning decisions on nutrient neutrality which will have the ability to take account of catchment-level data, local features and needs;

In April 2023 the Welsh Government a contractor was appointed to deliver a nutrient calculator, which will the extent of mitigation required to offset the adverse impacts of phosphorus and nitrogen resulting from new development.

A draft calculator was delivered to the Welsh Government in early 2024 and the Welsh Government has scheduled training for nominated planning leads in late March.

Theme 6 - provide clarity to stakeholders on the suitability of potential mitigation actions and interventions to reduce pollution;

NRW have published a menu of potential phosphorus mitigating measures on their website to support planners when considering proposed Habitats Impact Assessments from developers, this is publicly available. The purpose of the menu is to acknowledge measures which have been identified through available evidence as having the potential to reduce nutrient input into freshwater environments.

Theme 7 - A unified approach to catchment consenting in failing SAC rivers;

With a more robust Governance and oversight arrangements now in place. The Nutrient Management boards have been enabled to pool together learnings and best practices, through a cross co-ordination group, which in turn supports the provision of evidence to Welsh Government, when considering policy and regulatory changes.

One such example is the NMB's combined consultation response to the Welsh Government's Sustainable Farming Scheme Consultation in early 2024.

Theme 8 - increasing our understanding of practical measures within catchments which could be provided by Nutrient Trading

The Welsh Government convened a Nutrient Trading Task and Finish Group, which met between April and October 2023. The group consisted of representatives of stakeholder organisations from across the potential nutrient trading landscape – buyers, sellers, regulators, and planning authorities, with Welsh government facilitating.

The group was tasked to consider the feasibility of phosphorus trading as a solution to the challenges posed to development by nutrient neutrality requirements, and the

guidance, policy, regulation and legislation that would need to be in place to enable nutrient trading in Wales.

Nutrient trading is a relatively simple concept, but there are a number of complexities in the details. The group produced an initial information briefing for Welsh Government officials and Ministers to consider, which included explanatory narrative around some of the evidence requirements needed to reach different decision points to inform against feasibility of such a scheme in Wales.

Officials continue to consider this report and the implications of progressing with this work.

Action tracker - all actions

RAG	Item ID	Item Title	Item Status	Update Progress
	5640	Local Authorities (LAs) / National Parks will set up Nutrient Management Boards / Catchment Partnerships and Welsh Government will provide up to £415,000 of revenue funding in 2022-23.	Completed	All NMB grant claims for 2022/23 have been paid, a total of £347,554.78 has been successfully claimed by Bannau Brycheiniog (Usk) Carmarthenshire (Cleddau, Tywi and Teifi) and Herefordshire (Wye) councils, Wrexham Council (Dee) officials made the decision not to make a claim for 2022/23. Grant claim for 2023/24 are now being welcomed from NMBs. The Welsh Government shall make funding available for the financial year 2024/25 for the NMBs, to support the development and implementation of Nutrient Management Plans.
	5641	Natural Resources Wales and Welsh Government will provide a clear direction on the role and function of the Nutrient Management Board's as a result of the review undertaken by Afonydd Cymru.	Completed	Welsh Government and NRW considered the review undertaken by Afonydd Cymru and have now provided joint steer to the Nutrient Management Boards through an oversight group regarding the function and role of Nutrient Management Boards in Wales. Grant funding has been made available to NMB's, with the expected terms and reference and delivery outcomes detailed in each grant award letter. Welsh Government and NRW continue to meet with the NMB oversight/co-ordination group on a monthly basis to provide strategic steer. NRW have continued to meet with the officers supporting the NMB's as an informal group on a regular basis and invited WG. NRW has also met with Afonydd Cymru and provided comments on the review. NRW has contacted WG to progress. Next step is for WG and NRW to meet to agree the clear direction referenced.
	5642	Natural Resources Wales and Welsh Government will work with Nutrient Management Boards to draft a Nutrient Management Plan template.	Completed	The final version of the Nutrient Management Plan template was issued to all Nutrient Management Boards on 20th October.
	5643	Each Nutrient Management Board shall produce an outline Nutrient Management Plan.	Completed	Nutrient Management Boards have gathered evidence and data and established stakeholder engagement groups and Governance mechanisms to support in the development of Nutrient Management Plans, as well as an agreed template to work from and are identifying catchment specific solutions to include in their full Nutrient Management Plans which are expected to be delivered by 2025.
	5644	Nutrient Management Boards and Welsh Government will work together to provide sufficient levels of funding for 2023-24 and 2024-25 and then to explore future funding options.	Completed	The Welsh Government provided grant award letters to NMB's for the financial year 2022/23, 2023/24, which the boards have been utilising to set up their Governance structures and initial evidence reviews. The Welsh Government has received most of the formal Grant bids from NMBs for 2024/25 and will be reviewing them in due course to ensure the bids help to support the Welsh Government's intended outcomes for each SAC river.

5645	As part of the wider consideration of water quality challenges, Welsh Government will set out a streamlined, focused, and cost-effective governance framework with representation from government, regulators, and partners...	Completed	<p>The Minister for Climate Change agreed and issued a Governance Structure for the work regarding water quality in SAC rivers on 01/06/2023.</p> <p>Additional Welsh Government resource to co-ordinate the programme of work has been allocated, with an official taking up the post in Feb 2024.</p> <p>The Welsh Government co-ordinator will now provide a streamlined link between the various meetings and groups within the governance structure.</p>
5646	Welsh Government established the SACROG to provide strategic direction and guidance to the Welsh Government, regulators, and delivery organisations...	Completed	A new governance framework has been drafted and approved by Ministers. This governance structure effectively expands and splits the former SAC Rivers Oversight Group (SACROG) into discrete units, each with a key focus and role in the delivery of the action plan. However, the SACROG as it was may be reconvened when appropriate on an ad-hoc basis to discuss technical issues.
5648	Natural Resources Wales and Welsh Government will agree a Service Level Agreement on the enforcement of the Control of Agricultural Pollution (CoAP) Regulations, to mitigate nutrient loading and to reduce the impact on the environment.	Completed	<p>The SLA is based on the premise that enforcement will be targeted towards those farm businesses that pose the biggest risks in terms of activities (either due to nature of the business and/or size and scale).</p> <p>Natural Resources Wales has been recruiting to meet the SLA, with the officers having been recruited, trained and are now carrying out inspections.</p>
5649	Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water to share information and learning on wetland schemes currently under development.	Live	Local landowners and Clwyd Forum members have now visited the constructed wetland at Luston Wastewater Treatment Works. Developing a suitable regulatory approach to constructed wetlands at Tremeirchion and Pontyfelin is progressing through Natural Resources Wales' (NRW's) Discretionary Advice Service (with the aim of clarifying the required approach at new sites for Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water or other organisations).
5650	Natural Resources Wales will clarify its permitting policy on Constructed Wetlands for treatment.	Completed	NRWs Constructed wetland policy has been shared with Welsh Government to circulate to the external groups and is pending publication on Natural Resources Wales' website.
5651	Welsh Government Programme for Government is delivering nature-based flood management in all major river catchments, expanding wetland and woodland habitats, working across government to better integrate nature-based solutions...	Live	<p>The 2-year £4.6m Natural Flood Management Accelerator Programme was announced in Oct 2023 which will further expand our commitment to working collaboratively with Welsh farmers, landowners and third sector organisations across Wales.</p> <p>This scheme builds upon our learning from previous successful projects and bring together multiple innovative solutions to develop nature-based solutions through our rural catchments. The programme is funding 23 projects, across 8 different Authority areas and will enhance our natural environment, expand wetland and woodland habitats, and reduce flood risk to up to 2,000 properties, bolstering the number of NFM schemes across Wales and putting us well on track to deliver our Programme for Government Commitment by 2026.</p>

5652	Welsh Government will commission follow up work on the CIRIA "Using Sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) to reduce phosphorus in surface water runoff" for new developments to determine how SuDS can further contribute to nutrient neutrality.	Completed	CIRIA have confirmed that the methods described in their document "Using Sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) to reduce phosphorus in surface water runoff" and use of the existing Welsh statutory SuDS standards for new development (using the accepted SuDS hierarchy) meets their criteria to minimise phosphates found in surface water run-off from new developments. As such, it is not necessary to commission further research on the use of SuDs to contribute to nutrient neutrality.
5653	Natural Resources Wales will explore the provision of a database of projects undertaken, ...which contribute to reducing nutrient loading in the catchment and move towards meeting water quality targets to bring the sites into favourable condition.	Completed	Natural Resources Wales have submitted their final report to Welsh Government.
5654	Environment Platform Wales will, through working across Welsh universities & partner research institutions, facilitate the provision of existing water quality related evidence and act as a catalyst for the delivery of new research to fill knowledge gaps.	Live	Environment Platform Wales's Water Quality Community of Research has met twice since the last update, receiving presentations from Natural Resources Wales' (NRW's) research requirements in relation to SAC and wider water quality research needs. Our next event will be focused on NRW's groundwater research needs. The Reservoir Water Management Community of Research has held sub-group sessions exploring the use of floatovoltaics and also the removal of harmful algae at source. Space Wales have been successful in securing funding from UK Space Agency to deliver workshops exploring the use of space data (satellite imagery etc) to assist in the management of harmful algal blooms. These workshops will be taking place in N.Ireland, Wales and East Anglia.
5656	Environment Platform Wales will deliver a 'Better Water Quality for Wales' Conference in June 2023 with the aim of expanding awareness of existing policy needs and the research initiatives providing the evidence to support them.	Completed	Environment Platform Wales delivered a three-day, hybrid conference as promised. The event, held in Newport (and online) received over 240 registrations with up to 131 delegates attending one of the eleven sessions. There were 45 presentations on different aspects of water quality monitoring, technologies, partnership working and key research projects. The latter included presentations from the five project leads of the UKRI NERC funded 'Understanding Changes in UK Freshwater Quality' funding call.
5663	Farming Connect will offer advice and support to help farmers to take action to improve water quality, including training and on-farm events in failing SAC catchments.	Completed	Farming Connect offer advice, training and support to farm businesses on actions to improve water quality and address agricultural pollution. This offer includes access to subsidised specialist advice and a range of e-learning and in person training. This package will continue to be offered throughout the duration of the contract.

5664	The Welsh Government domestic funding programme offers 40% grants to make infrastructure improvements for improved nutrient management and pollution prevention.	Live	Our domestic support grant schemes continue to operate as planned. We are making £20m of additional funding available to help farmers comply with the requirements of the CoAP Regulations and we will be launching a new round of the Nutrient Management Investment Scheme shortly, which will be specifically targeted at supporting the investment and improvements to help farm businesses to mitigate risks to the environment.
5665	Welsh Government will ensure that Agricultural representation is present at all Nutrient Management Boards / Catchment Partnerships in Wales	Completed	National Farmers Union (NFU) Cymru and the Tennant Farmers Association (TFA) have agreed to represent at Nutrient Management Board / Catchment Partnerships. Action completed.
5666	Welsh Government will work with existing groups, including the Wales Land Management Forum sub-group on agricultural pollution, to encourage innovation and achieve measurable outcomes in reducing excess nutrients in SAC rivers.	Live	Our regular engagement and work with existing groups continues, with a visit this month to farms along the Wye to explore opportunities to improve decision making to address the causes of pollution.
5667	Farming Unions and organisations will promote and provide sources of advice and guidance to farmers on good practice with regards to nutrient management planning and other measures to enhance water quality...	Live	Farming Unions continue to operate dedicated web pages on the issue of water pollution. This includes signposts to sources of advice, guidance, and good practice.
5668	Farming Unions and organisations will continue to work with the Wales Land Management Forum sub-group on agricultural pollution, in line with the framework agreed in the 2018 Progress Report.	Live	Welsh Government discussed proposals for the forthcoming statutory review of the regulations with members of the WLMF sub-group.
5669	Farming Unions and organisations will continue to advocate and explore options to progress the implementation of the Water Standard...	Live	arrangements for updating of this item by relevant bodies not yet agreed

5670	Farming Unions and organisations will continue to signpost farmers to advice and guidance in relation to the requirements of the Control of Agricultural Pollution Regulations, alongside the development of advice and guidance from Welsh Government...	Live	Farming Unions continue to operate dedicated web pages on the issue of water pollution. This includes signposts to sources of advice, guidance and good practice.
5671	Welsh Government will provide refresher training for local planning authorities on Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) and detailed training on phosphates and HRA for authorities within affected SAC catchments.	Completed	This item is completed
5672	Welsh Government to facilitate a case study workshop to take an in-depth review of a small number of housing schemes delayed due to phosphate issues.	Completed	A data collection exercise identified 58 delayed affordable housing schemes, which could provide c.1795 affordable homes. Data was shared with Natural Resources Wales (NRW) to inform site prioritisation in their review of permits. Three case study workshops were held in March 2023 with key partners focusing on delayed affordable housing schemes in Flintshire, Monmouthshire, and Wrexham to explore areas that could be unblocked or given more consideration. Participants included Clwyd Alyn Housing Association, Monmouthshire Housing Association, local authority planners, NRW, Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water, Community Housing Cymru, the Home Builders Federation, and officials from Planning, Water Branch, and Housing and Regeneration. As well as scheme specific outcomes, general outcomes from the workshops included a need for improved lines of communication between partners, an improved shared understanding of planning processes related to phosphates, and NRW's review of permits work. Housing officials commissioned Local Partnerships to undertake detailed work to identify the affordable housing sites where development has not or will not be freed up through NRW's wastewater treatment works permit review.
5673	Welsh Government will provide practical guidance for local planning authorities on Habitats Regulation Assessments and phosphates to consolidate training already completed.	Live	Contract has been let to DTA consultants; work is underway. Initial technical steering group meeting was held on 9 Feb 2024. Estimated completion May 2024.
5674	Welsh Government and Home Builders Federation have established a task and finish group to identify options for temporary private treatment plants in seweraged areas.	Live	No progress due to Planning Directorate competing priorities. To complete this project advice needs to be drafted for the Minister on the findings of the working group and some form of agreement would be required from a trusted maintenance organisation who could deliver an amended policy.

5675	Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water will discuss with Welsh Government any additional investment available from the current Asset Management Plan (AMP).	Live	No new progress to report. Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water's focus is on delivering on the commitments it has already made and finalising affordable investment plans for the next Asset Management Plan period.
5676	Natural Resources Wales to undertake a review of water discharge permits prioritising those from wastewater treatment works affecting social housing and in failing SAC catchments where possible for those in scope...	Live	Natural Resources Wales' Review of Permits has issued 125 permit variations to date and will have issued 171 by the end of July 2024.
5677	Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water to monitor discharges for phosphorus and assess headroom in relevant permits.	Live	Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water's (DCWW's) sampling programme is ongoing at a number of waste water treatment works (WWTW) in the SAC catchments in support of the Review of Permits and they have been undertaking reviews of how quickly those sites that cannot meet the backstop limits today could be improved. DCWW has now concluded that 96 WWTWs can meet the can meet the backstop phosphorus limit of 5 mg/l or already meet a tighter phosphorus limit. 11 sites should be able to meet the backstop limit within the next 12 months with further work but 20 sites will need longer to meet the limit. A further 15 require further analysis of the sample data to determine their status and finally 26 have yet to complete their sampling programme.
5678	Welsh Government will consider funding innovative technologies to enable near real time monitoring of our rivers and waterways.	Live	The Welsh Government continues to consider proposals. A PHD student on placement with Welsh Government has been assigned the task of considering the area for funding and providing further advice to the suitability of near real-time monitoring of our rivers and waterways.
5679	Natural Resources Wales will explore the acceptability of Citizen Science data.	Completed	The assessment of the acceptability of Citizen Science data produced by NRW is now available and published on NRW's website. A link will also be added to the Welsh Government webpages in due course. Link to NRW webpage – Natural Resources Wales / River water quality: our responses to your questions / Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru / Ansawdd dŵr afon: ateb eich cwestiynau (naturalresources.wales) Link directly to document – An assessment of the use and acceptability of citizen science data to support better water quality for Wales (naturalresources.wales) / Asesiad o ddefnydd a derbynoldeb data gwyddoniaeth dinasyddion i gefnogi ansawdd dŵr gwell i Gymru (naturalresources.wales) Link to the WG page – River pollution summit action plan GOV.WALES
5680	Local Planning Authorities will continue to allow developer led mitigation to be brought forward unless it compromises the strategic mitigation strategies of the Nutrient Management Boards.	Live	Welsh Government Officials are not aware of Local Planning Authorities providing update in 2024 to date. There is currently an issue of a general survey of development on hold, this was raised at the last Planning Sub-group meeting on 8 February 2024 but no action has yet been agreed.

5681	Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water has identified where investment or modifications are required at its sites based along SAC river catchments to be delivered as part of their Phosphorus program over the next Asset management Period.	Live	In response to an Ofwat request, Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water provided an updated National Environment Programme in January 2024. The updated information includes additional wastewater treatment works (WWTWs) with phosphorus backstop limits in SAC rivers compared to the draft business plan submission in October 2023. A number of these sites have outstanding queries over their inclusion or scheduled delivery but were included in the latest update as agreed with Natural Resources Wales.
5682	Welsh Government ...will appoint a contractor to develop a nutrient calculator(s) suitable for all Local Planning Authorities to use across Wales, building on the calculators already produced for specific catchments.	Completed	Welsh Government and NRW drafted a specification for a calculator, in collaboration with an informal steering group of stakeholders (DCWW, HBF, Carmarthenshire CC). NRW had reviewed the calculator produced for Carmarthenshire County Council, so the specification takes account of the learning points identified. Following a mini-competition under the SEWTAPS procurement framework, the contractors Arup, assisted by Ricardo were appointed on 14 April 2023 to deliver a calculator (similar to that being used in Carmarthen and being extended to the other West Wales Authorities) A nutrient calculator identifies the extent of mitigation required to offset the adverse impacts of phosphorus and nitrogen resulting from new development.
5683	Welsh Government will endorse and promote use of the All-Wales calculator.	Live	A final draft calculator has now been delivered by the Contractor (March 2024). Training is scheduled for the end of March 2024. The calculator will be published on the WG website towards the end of March.
5684	Natural Resources Wales will publish a menu of mitigating measures.	Completed	NRW have produced Mitigations Measures Menu which is publicly available. Welsh Government have published the document at https://www.gov.wales/river-pollution-summit-action-plan
5685	Welsh Government will continue to work with stakeholders, through the Wales Land Management Forum subgroup on agricultural pollution, on interventions to tackle agricultural pollution...	Live	we continue to work closely with the WLMF subgroup and most recently discussed plans for the statutory review. this was ahead of the announcement that an independent chair will now be appointed to oversee the process.
5686	Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water will commission work to prepare a proposal for SAC Rivers Oversight Group following pre-consultation with Welsh Government.	Live	No new progress to report following sharing the updated review in September with Natural Resources Wales (NRW) and confirmation of the funding required from Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water to enable NRW to review the proposals.

5687	Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water and Natural Resources Wales will review similar policy and permitting approaches in England and identify lessons that can be identified from these projects.	Live	NRW have held discussions with DCWW and agreed a common understanding of what catchment permitting means in Wales. It closely aligns with that used by the EA in England. NRW will now progress developing a process to trial the delivery of a catchment permitting approach to DCWW assets in a specific river or part of river. We see this as the first step of developing different approaches to permitting to enable nutrient reduction in our SAC rivers. See action 5649 above in relation to wetland trials at Tremeirchion WWTW. On track for delivery by deadline.
5688	Welsh Government will map out the policy and regulatory framework needed to support catchment permitting approaches in failing SAC rivers.	Live	<i>Options for delivery of this action are being considered by Natural Resources Wales and Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water. (Item 5687).</i>
5689	Welsh Government will commission Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) to produce a high-level report exploring how the approach of the Netherlands could be used to reduce the nutrients entering the Wye and Usk catchments...	Completed	The final Report was delivered in April 2023 and has been shared with the Agriculture Technical Group. The report was published on WRAPs website in June 2023.
5690	Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water are undertaking a detailed feasibility study of a trading platform for the Usk.	Completed	NRW and DCWW supported the work of the Nutrient Trading Task and Finish group, with DCWW delivering briefing sessions in 2023 to the group. These sessions led to DCWW commissioning additional analysis. DCWW confirm, the initial scoping study has been completed and the next stage of the feasibility study is underway in the Usk. DCWW have engaged consultants experienced in such markets to assist as we develop the detailed market mechanisms. Progress is being reported to a steering group led by Welsh Government and with representatives from NRW, eNGOs and other sectors.
5691	Welsh Government will convene a Nutrient Trading Task and Finish Group, which will consider the outputs from the feasibility study.	Live	The Task and Finish Group presented their final report the Summit in November 2023.
5692	Welsh Government will produce a report for the Ministerial Oversight Group on the findings of the Task and Finish Group and report on the next steps required to take forward nutrient trading.	Live	A report was provided to the MCC in November 2023. Welsh Government officials are now considering the content of the report to establish next steps for consideration.

	5693	Natural Resources Wales and Welsh Government will consider the proposed regulatory changes recommended in the other workstreams and identify any further principles or regulatory requirements that may be required...	Live	The Welsh Government issued a white paper consultation in January 2024, which sets out the Welsh Government's policy proposals for legislative intervention in relation to Environmental Governance, Environmental Principals and Nature targets. The White Paper signals how Environmental policy and law will be taken forward in Wales.
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