Wye Catchment Nutrient Management Board **Questions**

[Version date: 16 January 2026]

Questions received for the 21 January 2026 meeting

Questioner: James Marsden [received 14 January 2026]

Context [note: corrected text shown in *red italics* below]

Taken together, the Office for Environmental Protection (OEP) report on protected sites in England (December 2025) and progress report on improving the natural environment in England 2024/25 (January 2026), make grim reading.

https://www.theoep.org.uk/report/review-implementation-laws-terrestrial-and-freshwater-protected-sites-england

https://www.theoep.org.uk/report/progress-improving-natural-environment-england-20242025

The OEP progress report (January 2026) foreword states:

"There has been no step change in progress in this last year. Instead of seeing positive progress overall, we continue to find that government remains largely off track to meet its environmental targets and obligations, including biodiversity targets set under the Environment Act and the UK's twin 30 by 30 commitments for protected areas and, additionally, for restoring degraded ecosystems.

To meet or to miss 2030 targets is now a choice for this government.

In December 2025, government published a revised Environmental Improvement Plan (EIP25). Government describes EIP25 as a roadmap for improving the natural environment and as a prioritised, systems-based plan that is clear on what, how and who will deliver environmental ambitions."

EIP25 includes:

- Commitment 26: Reduce total nitrogen, phosphorous and sediment pollution from agriculture to the water environment: a by at least 12% by December 2030, compared to 2018 levels, and b by at least 18% in catchments containing protected sites in unfavourable condition due to nutrient pollution by December 2030 (Environment Act interim targets).

In addition to this EIP25 interim target by 2030, there is a long-term Environment Act (EA21) national water quality target for 40% reduction in P nutrient and sediment load by ~~2037~~ *December 2038*, using 2018 baseline.

Both EIP25 and EA21 targets against 2018 baseline fall woefully short of 85% reduction the DWPP shows needed to achieve WFD WQ targets for the Lugg.

Question to NMB

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Whether, and if not why not, the Board will adopt and promote a nutrient and sediment target for the River Wye/Lugg SSSIs and SAC aligned with EIP25 Commitment 26, such as:

Reduction in total N , P and sediment pollution (tonnes) from agriculture by at least 18% by December 2030 from 2018 baseline.

The new Wye Catchment Management Plan (CMP) should at least align with EIP25, and arguably should be more ambitious, so a nutrient and sediment target (eg as proposed above) could be adopted now without pre-empting what the CMP may say about the 'what, where, how and who by when' trajectories to achieve the target?