

Environment Agency: Ground Water Source Protection Zones**Question from Councillor Elissa Swinglehurst, Chairperson of the Wye Catchment Nutrient Management Board**

With reference made to note 31 (Diffuse Water Pollution Plan Update) paragraph n. (notes of the meeting held on 21 January 2026), it was noted that a response was awaited in relation to the query ‘whether the number of Ground Water Source Protection Zones within the English portion of the catchment, as referenced at page 67 of the DWPP, had resulted in guidance being issued.’

Response from the Environment Agency, provided by Martin Quine

The Environment Agency monitors groundwater quality using our network of boreholes in the catchment, alongside some third-party assets. We aim to expand the network in the area to provide wider coverage and have added five new sample sites for 2026/27 and 2027/28.

Further information on the groundwater body, the “Wye Secondary Devonian ORS,” can be found at:

- <https://environment.data.gov.uk/catchment-planning/WaterBody/GB40902G205200>
- <https://environment.data.gov.uk/water-quality>

The connectivity between surface water and groundwater is predominantly in the Secondary gravel aquifers, with any interaction with solid bedrock geology typically occurring at shallow depths.

Groundwater is protected through land management practices within Source Protection Zones and Nitrate Vulnerable Zones, as well as through targeted farm inspections in areas of concern. We also promote and protect groundwater quality through the planning and permitting processes when consulted.

Environment Agency: Fixed Monetary Penalty (FMP) trial**Queries from Councillor Elissa Swinglehurst, Chairperson of the Wye Catchment Nutrient Management Board**

Further to the brief update provided in the meeting, the Chairperson forwarded the following queries to the Environment Agency:

1. When does the fixed penalty pilot project start?
2. Does it cover the whole of the English catchment or specific areas?
3. Are NRW doing a similar project?
4. What types of infraction are likely to be included?
5. What is the length of the pilot?
6. Where else have pilots taken place and what was the learning?
7. What is the criteria for success?
8. What are the specifics of the new enforcement role and when will the new person be in post?

Response from the Environment Agency, provided by Martin Quine

The Fixed Monetary Penalty trial isn't specific to the Wye. It is being coordinated through our national team and like project TARA will also review our internal processes.

It is still in the early stages, but these are the key headlines:

- We are in the early stages of a national Fixed Monetary Penalties Trial.
- Under the Farming Rules for Water and the Nitrate Pollution Prevention Regulations, Fixed Monetary Penalties can be issued for low-level agricultural offences where the offence is clear, the offender is known, and no serious pollution incident has occurred.

Wye Catchment Nutrient Management Board**Matters arising from the meeting held on 29 April 2026**

- The FMP amount is set by legislation and is based on the type of offender (£100 for individuals and £300 for corporate bodies). The amount can vary depending on when payment is made, with a 50% reduction for early payment and an increase of up to 150% for late payment.
- The Fixed Monetary Penalty trial will consider how we can use our powers for some agricultural offences.
- The trial isn't specific to the Wye and at this stage will not form part of a wider roll out across the catchment. Civil Sanctions imposed by the Environment Agency form part of our [Offence Response Options](#) for environmental offending and can be found here: [Civil sanctions imposed by the Environment Agency: 1 January 2025 to 30 September 2025 - GOV.UK](#).

Civil sanctions aren't new and because they relate to our enforcement work, there is a limit to what can be shared publicly. Once a civil sanction has been issued, they are published on gov.uk ([Civil sanctions imposed by the Environment Agency: 1 January 2025 to 30 September 2025 - GOV.UK](#)).

Herefordshire Council: April 2026 Update**Wye Catchment Partnership Plan**

Oliver Bowers, Haskoning UK Ltd, provided an update at the [Wye Catchment Nutrient Management Board on Wednesday 29 April 2026 \(link\)](#).

Motion to support Charter for the Rights of the River Wye

Cllr Swinglehurst, Chairperson, provided an update at the [Wye Catchment Nutrient Management Board on Wednesday 29 April 2026 \(link\)](#).

Environmental Development Plans (EDPs)

Herefordshire Council is committed to working collaboratively with statutory agencies, to improve outcomes for both the environment and sustainable development. We have therefore welcomed recent engagement between Natural England's regional and national teams in preparation for the Environmental Development Plans (EDPs), as well as discussions on how to accelerate practical solutions for phosphate credit generation while EDPs are being developed. Officers are seeking to enable private mitigations as well as continuing to explore opportunities for the council to generate credits.

Herefordshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS)

The LNRS has been through a successful public consultation and is now being refined into its final version for publication.

Approx 400 individual comments were submitted through the website, as well as approx. 200 comments received through emails, telephone calls, events and partners. Team carried out 22 events, including webinars, market stalls, parish summit, wildlife trust branch meetings and nature conservation group meetings. Plus adverts on social media and relevant partner newsletters and Hereford Times news article. Ran from Thursday 5 February and closed on Sunday 29 March 2026 (7 weeks).

Refinements are being made to the map functionality, map specific layer data, priority species suggestions, priorities and measures detail and strategy area description additions. A public consultation summary document is being produced. The aim for the work to be completed during May, with final reviews and corporate sign off in June.

Work has begun on setting out how the LNRS will be implemented, with HC having a facilitation role, together with monitoring and annual reporting to DEFRA / NE. This will include setting up a delivery group to cover both strategic county wide nature recovery and networking with local groups for on-the-ground delivery. It is also intended to work in collaboration with the Herefordshire Environment Board.