

River Wye Nutrient Management Board Update

7 October 2026

Natural England has recently completed a procurement exercise under the Nature Restoration Fund (NRF) to commission a high-level assessment of opportunities for in-perpetuity conservation measures within the River Lugg SAC catchment.

The tender closed on 19 September 2026 and applications are currently being evaluated. Contract award is expected in early October, subject to completion of evaluation and governance processes. No contract award will be made before this Board meeting.

The commission reflects the opportunities created by the Planning and Infrastructure Act and the shift from a predominantly nutrient accounting and nutrient offsetting approach towards a broader focus on delivering overall improvement for protected sites. Rather than focusing solely on nutrient balancing, the study will explore measures that improve the condition, resilience and ecological function of the River Lugg SAC, while supporting wider nature recovery and climate resilience objectives.

The appointed consultant will review existing evidence and engage with local stakeholders, landowners and catchment partners to identify and prioritise potential conservation measures capable of delivering long-term benefits for SAC features affected by nutrient enrichment. Potential measures may include river restoration, floodplain reconnection, habitat enhancement, improvements to river morphology and actions to improve water quality and catchment resilience.

A key objective is to combine Natural England's technical expertise with local knowledge to identify measures that are practical, deliverable and capable of being secured in perpetuity. The study will help:

- identify potential conservation measures across the catchment;
- understand what can realistically be delivered;
- identify indicative costs, constraints and timescales; and
- prioritise actions likely to deliver the greatest ecological benefit.

The work will also be undertaken in collaboration with key partners, including Herefordshire Council, to ensure alignment with the Wye Catchment Partnership's emerging Catchment Management Plan and wider catchment restoration priorities. This will help ensure that future conservation investment complements existing local initiatives and supports a shared long-term vision for the River Lugg catchment.

Key outputs will include a high-level conservation measures list, an executive summary report and a catchment opportunity map. The project is expected to run for approximately 8-10 weeks from contract award.

Next Steps

This is one of six similar studies commissioned across nutrient-affected protected sites in England. Following completion of these studies, Natural England will review the evidence across all locations and, during early 2027, determine priorities and indicative timescales for progressing Environmental Delivery Plans and associated conservation measure delivery.

A further update will be provided once the procurement process has concluded and a supplier has been appointed.

Further information

For further information and general Nature Restoration Fund updates please join the Business Readiness Forum (BRF) for regular updates.



The most recent session of the BRF dedicated to the recently launched [Nutrient pollution – draft Norfolk Environmental Delivery Plan consultation](#), which is open until 27 October 2026. Attendees heard from a member of Natural England's senior leadership team on the latest updates on the NRF programme. The NRF team's senior leaders and subject matter experts then provided further detail, including a walk-through of the draft EDP chapters, updated information on the Nature Restoration Levy process, information on the live consultation and an extended Q&A session with the programme team.

The forum was recorded for those unable to join live. You can watch it back on our [YouTube channel](#).