

Phosphates Management Strategy

Position Statement June 2021

The five Somerset Local Planning Authorities jointly appointed Royal HaskoningDHV in March 2021 to develop a Phosphates Management Strategy to enable future development to take place within the catchment of the Somerset Levels and Moors Ramsar Site. The intention to commission consultants to prepare the strategy was reported to the SSDC District Executive on Thursday 4th February 2021¹. The programme is to deliver the strategy by the autumn of 2021.

The strategy will address the following matters:

Description	Project Timeline
<p>Confirmation of the area of risk: A review Natural England’s initial map, pulling together information from a range of organisations including Wessex Water, the Environment Agency, the Internal Drainage Board, and LPA’s to refine the “area at risk” in terms of where new development may impact on the phosphorus levels of the Ramsar Site.</p>	<p>Summer 2021 – dependent on agreement with Natural England</p>
<p>A review of the types of development that will require a Habitats Regulations Assessment: Within the “area of risk”, to review and develop as necessary the interim list of types of activities / types of development management activities that may add to phosphate loading and require a Habitat Regulations Assessment to assess potential significant effects on the Somerset Levels and Moors designations. Recommendations for thresholds or criteria for some types of development, for example commercial/industrial development. Revisions to the interim list has to be evidenced, involve stakeholders, and be fit for purpose.</p>	<p>End June 2021</p>
<p>Methodology/Calculator: As Royal HaskoningDHV developed the phosphate budget calculator for use by the Local Planning Authorities in February 2021, they will continue to adapt the calculator as further amendments arise from changes in Natural England’s guidance and when appropriate scientific research is made available.</p>	<p>Summer 2021 – dependent on agreement with Natural England</p>
<p>Mitigation/Solutions: With the input of key stakeholders and be fit for purpose, review and update as necessary the agreed list of interim avoidance and mitigation options. This will include a mitigation hierarchy for managing phosphate concentrations. Solutions will be categorised and aligned to their achievement over various timescales. These will be costed, relate to the need for phosphate solutions to reflect needs of each river sub-catchment and demonstrate that they comply with other permitting legislation implemented by Natural England and the Environment Agency. Consideration will be given to dual-use mitigation schemes that take account anticipated changes in legislation e.g. The Environment Bill (2020) 10% net gain requirement.</p>	<p>Summer 2021</p>

¹ <https://modgov.southsomerset.gov.uk/documents/g2854/Public%20reports%20pack%2004th-Feb-2021%2009.30%20District%20Executive.pdf?T=10>

Description	Project Timeline
Solutions will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Catchment-based solutions (e.g. agricultural management, offsetting schemes/accredited projects); • Nature-based solution (e.g. habitat creation); • Asset-based solutions (e.g. improvements to water recycling centres). 	
<p>Model Policy: Develop a model nutrient neutrality policy for Local Plans that can be agreed by all partners including Environment Agency and Natural England.</p> <p>Scope: should provide the technical work that underpins an agreed method and tariffs for administrating, implementing, managing and monitoring phosphate neutral development.</p>	Initial draft policy currently scheduled to be completed by August 2021
<p>Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) Developing a SPD to build upon policies outlined in the Local Plan and provide more detailed guidance to assist applicants in making successful applications.</p> <p>Scope: an agreed method and tariffs for administrating, implementing, managing and monitoring to ensure phosphate neutral development, that can be adopted by all the LPA's which is easy to read and focused on development management and guidance for developers.</p>	Initial draft currently scheduled to be complete by the end August 2021

The work on the strategy is currently on schedule to deliver the agreed objectives by autumn 2021. The SPD will be developed as a draft version that will be progressed through the democratic decision-making process for each Local Planning Authority to approve the document for the purpose of consultation and subsequent adoption, as required by Local Planning regulations².

² The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended)