

Revamp Your Tank project update

Briefing Note No. 26-02

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Summary

Revamp Your Tank is a septic tank upgrade scheme delivered by the council in partnership with the Wessex Rivers Trust. Full details of the scheme can be seen here: [Biodiversity and development - Wiltshire Council](#).

We are updating councillors on the status of Revamp Your Tank in your area in order to keep you informed as there are some changes that are affecting the scheme that maybe helpful for you to be aware of.

The council received a grant from Government to help deliver nutrient mitigation projects to improve water quality in the River Avon (Hampshire). This grant must be used to offset the impacts of new housing development in this important river catchment and ensure the development is [nutrient neutral](#).

The mitigation projects meet the [principles set out by Natural England](#). We must also meet the requirement of the Environment Agency, planning regulations and building control, as well as meeting the tight conditions of the grant set out by Government.

Whilst we are aware that domestic sewage systems can impact all parts of the river, the grant must deliver projects that meet Natural England's mitigation principles and, be in the right location of the river catchment to offset new development coming forward.

The initial Government funding, through the Local Nutrient Mitigations Fund (LNMF), which pump-primed the replacement tank projects as well as some other bespoke schemes is required to be replenished by the sale of nutrient credits arising from the improved performance of the new tanks compared to the old ones in removing harmful nutrients from entering the sensitive watercourse.

These nutrient credits are made available for purchase to developers who need to mitigate the impacts of new developments in the sensitive catchment. By selling the nutrient credits, the fund can be re-charged, as per the fund's conditions.

Whilst the council has always reserved the right not to take projects forward at any point before a customer contract is signed, we are aware that some applicants to the scheme are becoming frustrated by the delays to implementation.

The condition of the grant is that it is replenished by the nutrient credits sold and so the pace and location of the new tanks is largely dictated by the need for nutrient credits from developers.

To assist with the understanding of applicants we have updated the website and added more standard questions and answers to the FAQs.

Whilst the nutrient market has already slowed due to the needs of developers, recent changes in legislation arising from the Planning and Infrastructure Act 2025 may also impact the scheme and further slow down delivery of replacement tanks.

Background

Nutrient Neutrality

Nutrient neutrality (for phosphorus and nitrates) is a legal requirement where there are protected European wildlife sites in unfavourable condition. This is required by Natural England. In affected areas, the only way to permit more housing is to offset the nutrient burdens from wastewater arising from the new dwellings. It is the developers' responsibility, not the council's, to deliver (pay for) mitigation if that development is within the catchment for the sensitive rivers. That is the same for one house or 100 houses. WC has set up strategic approaches to help developers and enable sustainable development.

The main council-led approach to phosphate mitigation is the Revamp Your Tank scheme (RYT), which since its inception has enabled housing growth in key affected area. Other mechanisms include upgrading council owned sewage works and wetland creation.

Planning and Infrastructure Act December 2025 Environmental Delivery Plans (EDPs)

The royal assent of the recent Planning and Infrastructure Act in December 2025 heralds the introduction of Environmental Delivery Plans (EDPs). EDPs addressing nutrient neutrality will be written by NE for 16 areas in the UK including the Hampshire Avon in Wiltshire.

[The Planning and Infrastructure Act \(Royal](#)

[Assent: 18 December 2025\)](#) fundamentally introduced a new mitigation route for developers required to mitigate schemes that are caught by the nutrient neutrality requirement and will change delivery from the current site by site nutrient neutrality approach to a strategic, catchment scale system centred on:

- Environmental Delivery Plans (EDPs)
- A national Nature Restoration Fund (NRF)

Together, these are designed to meet Habitats Regulations requirements without requiring each individual development to demonstrate nutrient neutrality on its own. EDPs will be a new mechanism for compliance which will be prepared and operated by Natural England and apply to defined catchments or protected sites. Once an EDP is in force,

developers no longer need to demonstrate nutrient neutrality individually for impacts covered by that plan instead, they can contribute financially via the NRF should they prefer.

How Councillors can help

- **Raise awareness**

Please share information about the slow down in demand for credits by developers and the resulting slowing of replacement tanks.

- **Direct any queries to the FAQ section of the website**

- **Understand the grant purpose and conditions**

Whilst we understand that there are many reasons that some applicants believe their need for a new tank is greater than other people's, the scheme has strict criteria and is related to environmental benefits. If a resident's tank is failing, we strongly suggest that they do not wait for a replacement through this scheme.

There is no guarantee of tank replacement until an applicant has signed the contract directly with the contractor.

More information

Frequently asked questions for Revamp Your Tank can be found on the following link: [Biodiversity and development - Wiltshire Council](#)

END

Additional information

Work on the first nutrient EDPs is already underway, with implementation expected to be phased through 2026–2027. Upcoming EDPs relating to Wiltshire's sphere of influence as an LPA include:

- *River Avon SAC (for Phosphorus, and interfacing with our Phosphorus mitigation strategy and LNMF-funded mitigation projects)*
- *Solent SAC/SPA/Ramsar (for Nitrogen, and interfacing with Wiltshire's Nitrogen mitigation strategy and mitigation project at Roundbarrow. Also includes consideration of Phosphorus impacts in the River Itchen)*
- *River Lambourn SAC (for Phosphorus, and interfacing with Wiltshire's mitigation strategy and water efficiency requirements for developments)*
- *Somerset Levels and Moors Ramsar (for Phosphorus, and interfacing with Wiltshire's mitigation strategy and water efficiency requirements for developments).*

EDPs are intended to speed up planning decisions, improve environmental outcomes and reduce legal risk for authorities. Whilst much of the details are as yet unknown and how it will impact schemes that the council runs and the impact on the Local Nutrient Mitigation Fund grant the council received, we know that in the short term (2026) existing nutrient neutrality requirements and plans remain in force until a relevant EDP is adopted (potentially as early as summer 2026). LPAs must continue to undertake Habitats Regulations Assessments (HRAs) as at present. However, LPAs should begin planning for transition, including: understanding draft EDP boundaries; assessing likely levy implications for viability; and updating Local Plans and guidance.

In the medium term (once EDPs are live), LPAs will no longer need to assess nutrient impacts for covered development where a developer has chosen to use the EDP route and paid the required levy.

Local Nutrient Mitigation Fund – Grant

The council was awarded £9.8m from the Local Nutrient Mitigation Fund (LNMF, from MHCLG) for capital projects to help pump-prime nutrient neutrality mitigation in the Hampshire Avon catchment, as well as a further £100,000 to help with resources. The condition of the funding is that it rechargeable (e.g. selling P credits to fund more council sewage or septic tank upgrades) to deliver further mitigation to continue to support the delivery of housing or other overnight accommodation such as new hotels or care homes. It has been used primarily to pump prime the supply of RYT mitigation projects.