

PfSH Meeting Notes 17-09-25

Update from previous actions

- In relation to the LNMF legal and compliance training, whether planning authorities can send several officers, anything to add to the [draft agenda/programme](#). The training will be on 28th of November 2025
- Bird Away event on the 27th of November 2025

1) **General Update on the work of the Solent Mitigation Partnership (standing item) (Rachel Jones)**

Projects — imminent / in delivery

- East Hampshire Rivers — open for nitrogen (and biodiversity/BNG) credits.
- River Itchen / Winchester upgrade — in-ground project delivering phosphorus and nitrogen; final details being agreed with Winchester.
- Test Valley (land purchase) — proposed purchase (~44 ha) with Test Valley BC; offer agreed and undergoing due diligence. Once complete this will deliver nitrogen and BNG credits and may provide Suitable Alternative Natural Green-space (to help relieve New Forest pressure). Benefitting authorities will be contacted about taking those credits once governance is in place.

Stubbington (split into Phase 1 & Phase 2)

- Phase 1 — World Wildlife Trust (Titchfield Haven adjacency) remains involved; legal agreements near signing. Credits will be sold for nitrogen now and for BNG when finalised.
- Phase 2 — World Wildlife Trust trustees uncertain about the BNG market, so SMP will bring a contractor on-site to start restoration and pause a permanent long-term partner decision for up to 3 years to allow market conditions to settle.

Winchester & other technical work

- One Winchester treatment-works upgrade is complete (in the ground); further phases are being progressed with a cabinet decision due in September and a business case to follow — procurement to start after approvals.
- Work on headwaters (Nitrogen & Phosphorus) continuing (example: the Stoken Dean / headwaters project).
- Early discussions with New Forest Trust partners and workstreams on septic tank upgrades are being scoped — likely to start as focused pilots rather than a single large roll-out.

- Water-efficiency projects: several local authorities are signing up

Project evaluation & grant compliance:

- SMP is evaluating projects against the Local Nutrient Mitigation Fund grant conditions: unlocking housing is the primary focus, plus project quality, wider public/environmental benefits, and constraints around converting agricultural land.
- The team is assembling evidence for each evaluation and will develop a broader strategy/vision for the Solent mitigation programme to bring back to this group. Input on evaluations is requested.

Demand / supply, governance & land:

- SMP is progressing demand–supply analysis and expects to take outputs to the joint committee in December.
- World Wildlife Trust is now positioned as a responsible body for some activity; SMP can help coordinate biodiversity reporting where useful.

Engagement, training & next events:

- Nutrient training proposed for Winchester in October (offer open to all local authorities).
- Possible January workshop to discuss land pressures, environmental sensitivities, and how to layer strategies (links to Local Nature Recovery Strategy work).

2) Update on Havant Borough Council Work on calculating nutrient budgets for Homes of Multiple occupancy (HMOs). (Tom Bell)

- Option 7 was chosen on how HMO should be charged based on the Bird Away Strategy Note 29.05.25 document
- Formal written version will be circulated for consideration on option 7

3) Appraisal of the implementation of BNG monitoring and compliance by local planning authority. (David Illsley)

- Discussions on potential for area-wide compliance monitoring — currently, implementation is handled by individual local authorities. Is there interest or capacity for a coordinated, wider-scale monitoring approach
- Going through the spreadsheet on what each local authorities have done on BNG monitoring and compliance

- Few local authorities have raised issues of local government reorganisation and how this could affect the monitoring and compliance of BNG
- James (Isle of Wight) noted that their authority offers the lowest rates among others. They have three charging levels depending on the complexity of the proposed habitat and whether the assessment involves a desktop review, a site visit, or both. Charges are based on hourly rates and estimated time required — typically around five hours for the ecologist and two hours for team leader review, which together determine the overall cost.

Resource Implications:

- Monitoring requires site visits, document reviews, and potential enforcement
- Frequency of monitoring varies: some councils opt for long-term, less frequent checks (eg: 5 visits over 30 years)

Consistency vs variation:

- Authorities currently adopt different fee levels, frequencies and software systems
- Debate over whether to seek a strategic/joint approach or leave it to each authority

4) Appraisal of River Catchment Partnership membership and recent meeting subject matter. (Millie Payne)

- The group provisionally agreed to invite relevant catchment partnership chairs to the October PNEG meeting (around 29th-30th October)
- An opportunity for partnerships to introduce themselves and their work particularly on landowner engagement, water quality and related issues.
- Members in the PfSH agreed it would be helpful if the catchment partnerships gave an overview of who they are, what they do and their key projects

Action: *Any specific topics members would like the partnerships to cover in their introduction*

Other matters discussed (not mentioned in agenda item)

- PfSH joint committee will be on the 9th of December
- Project board on the 24th November and an away day for the steering group on the 27th of November.

- Recruited monitoring staff officer hosted by the Wildlife Trust and support Tom Bell who has been doing work on the Bird Away. New staff member will be starting on the 6th of October 2025