



**Solent
Mitigation
Partnership**

**Solent Mitigation Partnership
Rachel Jones, SMP Manager
Solent Forum Meeting 15 October 2026**

Topics for Today!

Who we are and what we do

Dive into our projects

What new projects are we looking for?

How the policy is changing

SMP & Local Authority Partners



Who we are

- Solent Mitigation Partnership – create **mitigation schemes** protect the Solent while allowing urgently needed new homes to be built
- The Solent is internationally important for its wildlife – at risk from excessive nutrients
- Developers are required to mitigate against any increase in nutrient levels caused by new homes - concept known as ‘**nutrient neutrality**’
- Local Nutrient Mitigation Fund grant – to develop schemes that generate nutrient credits and help unlock housing





Our Vision

- High-integrity, **nature-positive** solutions
- Safeguard the internationally important habitats of the Solent
- Enable urgently needed new housing
- Wide coverage across the Solent
- Deliver **wider benefits for communities and wildlife**
- 100% of funds generated by credit sales are reinvested in new mitigation schemes supporting further housing - we are a '**not for profit**' organisation
- Once nutrient mitigation is no longer required, fund to enable the restoration of protected waterways



DELIVERING PROJECTS

We deliver a growing programme of projects designed to:



REDUCE
POLLUTION



ENHANCE THE
ENVIRONMENT



IMPROVE THE
RESILIENCE OF
OUR RIVERS
AND ESTUARIES

This includes:



RESTORING
FARMLAND TO
NATURE-RICH
HABITATS



CREATING NEW
PUBLIC GREEN
SPACES AND
COUNTRY PARKS



IMPROVING
SEPTIC SYSTEMS IN
RURAL AREAS



REDUCING WATER
USE IN HOMES

These projects not only...



SUPPORT
NEW HOUSING



CREATE LASTING
ENVIRONMENTAL AND
COMMUNITY BENEFITS

Solent Strategy

- The Solent nutrient neutrality catchments extend beyond local authority areas – hence the need for a **strategic and dynamic response!**
- Our strategy is influenced by:
 - Housing demand and mitigation supply analysis
 - Spatial constraints to where mitigation can be delivered
 - River Itchen – more difficult to achieve phosphorus neutrality

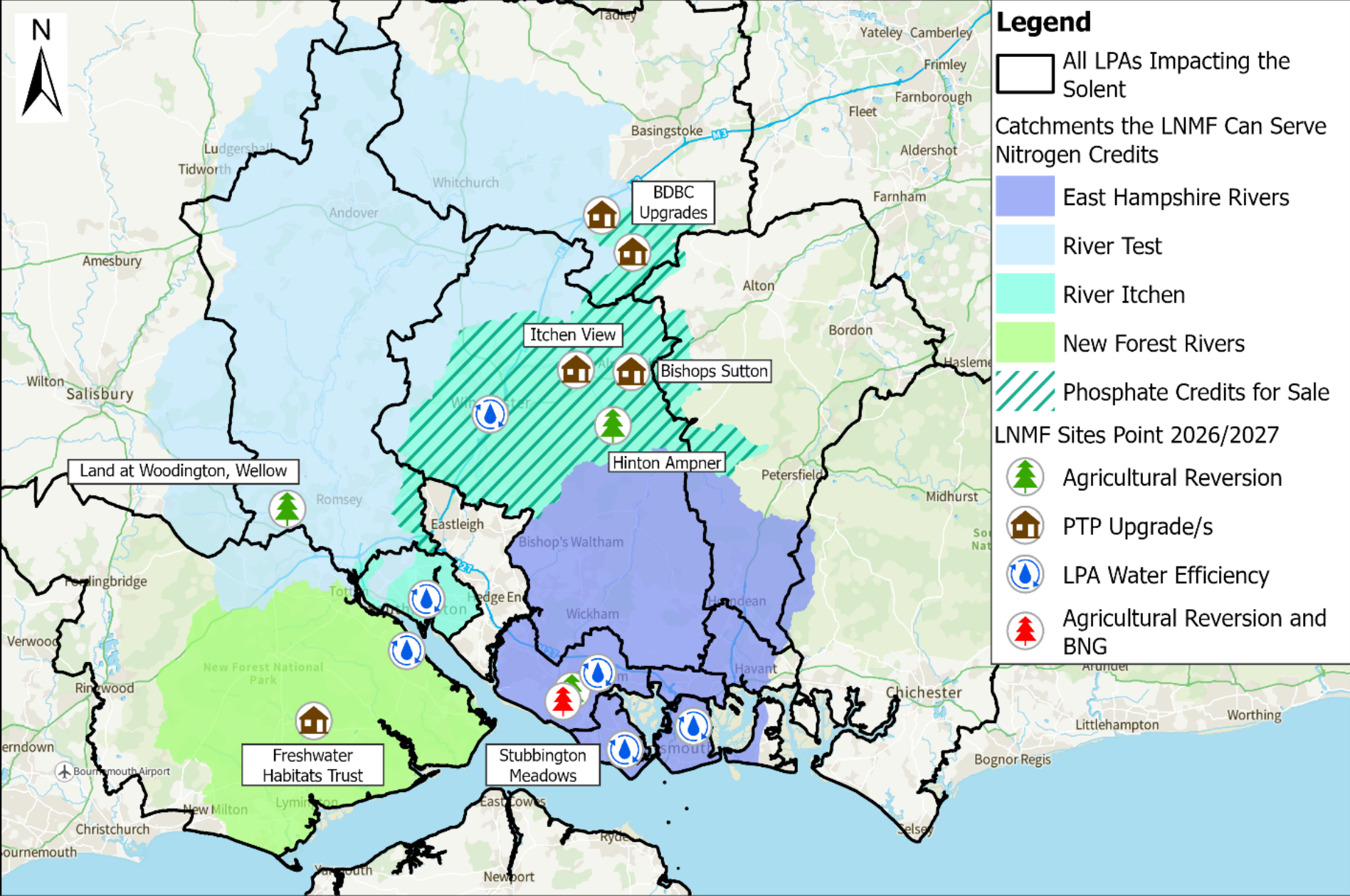




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Our Projects

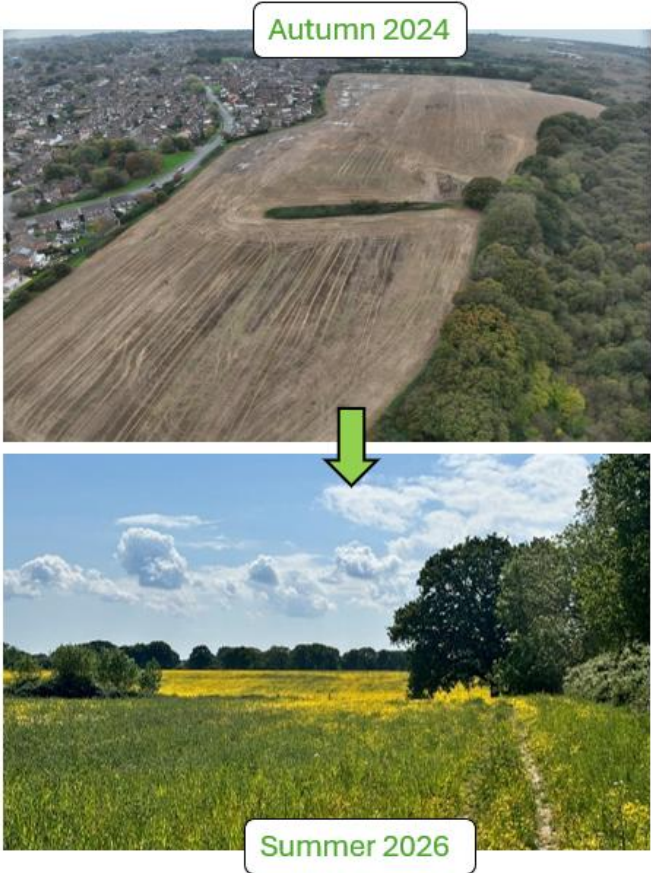
Mitigation Projects



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Stubbington Meadows

- Creating a new Nature Reserve at Stubbington, Fareham
- Partnership with Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust
- Extension of the Titchfield Haven NNR
- New meadow, hedgerows, bird scrapes and scrub
- Creates nitrogen credits and biodiversity net gain units
- Widens a public footpath so more accessible
- Creates a new circular footpath
- Opportunity area in Local Nature Recovery Strategy



Stubbington Meadows Wildlife Trust Nature Reserve

What's special about this nature reserve?

Did you know, this meadow was once an arable field? It now provides food for pollinators, a nesting site for birds and cover for small mammals.

Some of the special wildlife protected here

Chrysomelids are tiny beetles that feed on the leaves of plants. They are important for the ecosystem as they help to control the growth of plants. They are also a food source for birds and other animals.

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New Green Spaces for Communities

- Land at Woodington, Wellow, near Romsey
- Partnership with Test Valley Borough Council
- Creation of a new Country Park ~ 44 hectares
- New access and car park
- Creation of diverse grasslands, tree planting and woodland, hedgerows and ponds
- Dog exercise areas
- Reduce pressure on New Forest
- Creates Nitrogen credits
- Creates Biodiversity Net Gain units
- Planning application – Winter 2026
- Aim is for park to open in 2027



Improving Water Quality at Source

- Upgrading Council Owned and Householder Septic Tanks in vulnerable catchments
- Many rural rivers are impacted by sewage from individual households as well as larger assets
- 1000s of homes rely on old septic tanks across Hampshire
- Expensive to replace when faulty or old
- Upgrading to modern package treatment plants reduces the nutrients entering the rivers



Partnership Projects – Freshwater Habitats Trust

- The SMP is currently working with the Freshwater Habitats Trust (FHT) in the New Forest
- Built upon the FHT's work on identifying areas heavily impacted by sewage and community awareness campaigns
- Targeted to where septic tank upgrades are most beneficial to the New Forest National Park's freshwaters
- Creates locally sourced mitigation for local development
- Approach is informing future phases of the project





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Seeking New Projects

Future Partnership Projects

- **Strategic Projects** to create environmental credits with a strong focus on community and wildlife benefits
- Large-scale, long-term projects
- Examples -
 - River channel improvements
 - Drainage ditch enhancements
 - Agricultural reversion
 - Riparian planting
 - Sediment control
 - Woodland creation



Solent Nature Innovation Fund



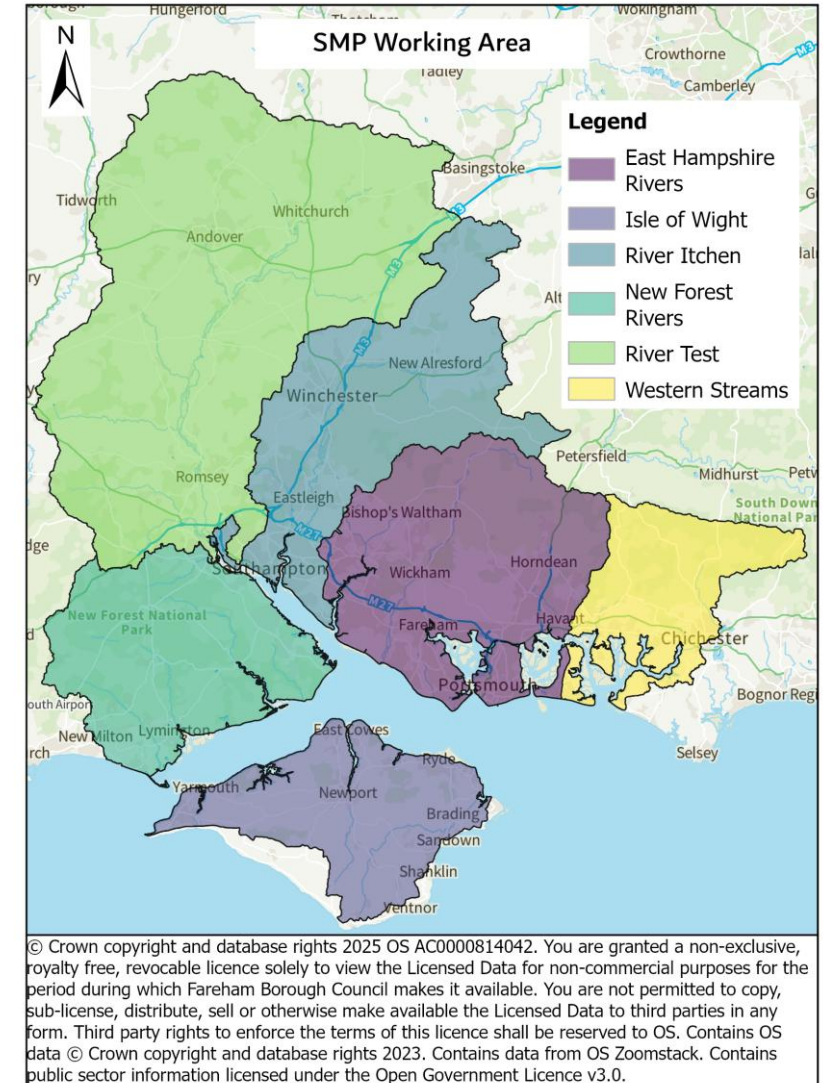
- Seeking **smaller scale** community / partnership projects for nature recovery
- Round 1 - £30,000 fund for 2026/27



Solent Nature Innovation Fund



- Aim to fund around six projects of up to £5,000 each. In exceptional circumstances, grants of up to £10,000 may be awarded for high-quality projects that deliver significant benefits.
- Focus on project delivery rather than surveys
- Improve water quality and catchment resilience rather than generating nutrient credits – no long term legal agreements
- Build evidence for nature-based solutions – learning, trialling and demonstrating what works
- Offer good value for money



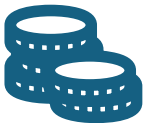
What Could We Fund?



Fund is opening soon



Simple Expression of Interest form on website



Projects can be funded in full, or match funding can be applied



Community groups, landowners, environmental organisations

Ditch management	Ditch enhancement	Riparian buffer strips (incl. fencing off watercourses from livestock)	Wetland creation or restoration
Run-off capture or storage (e.g. sediment traps)	Scrapes or temporary ponds	Riparian management	Riparian habitat restoration
In-channel river restoration (e.g. gravel augmentation)	Leaky barriers (e.g. leaky dams or engineered logjams)	Removal of structures (e.g. daylighting)	Modification of structures (e.g. fish passages)
Coastal habitat restoration (e.g. salt marsh, sand dunes)	Seagrass or kelp forest restoration	Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS) management	Assisted natural regeneration (e.g. rewilding)



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New Policy Horizon

Environmental Delivery Plans

- A **new strategic approach** to addressing environmental impacts from development - developed by Natural England
- First ones - 16 Nutrient Neutrality, 6 Great Crested Newts
- Designed to deliver environmental improvements at a larger scale than individual site mitigation
- EDPs are intended to provide **greater certainty and speed for development** while delivering environmental improvements
- An EDP identifies the measures needed to address environmental impacts
- Developers can contribute through a **Nature Restoration Levy**
- Cost savings by reducing site survey work and nutrient budgets
- Pay levy to deliver strategic environmental projects rather than sorting bespoke mitigation or buying credits



EDP Consultation – Norfolk

- First consultation is for 3 catchments in Norfolk for nutrient enrichment, closes 27 October 2026
- EDPs last for up to **10 years** and set out the type and amount of development it can support
- Nature Restoration Levy: £2,675 per dwelling (house or flat), before indexation and any VAT – *only indicative costs for Solent!*
- Housing unlocked/offset up to 15,780 homes across the affected Norfolk catchments
- Some overnight accommodation out of scope of EDPs eg care homes, hotels, and sites within 50m from protected sites
- In perpetuity conservation measures proposed include **wetland creation, river restoration, and habitat management** delivered at a landscape scale



EDP – Pros and Cons

● Benefits

- Faster route to compliance
- Greater certainty
- No need to source nutrient credits
- Strategic mitigation delivery and investment in nature recovery
- Larger-scale environmental projects
- More coordinated delivery across catchments

● Risks

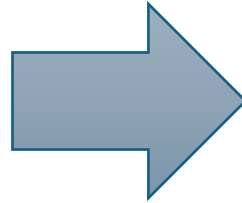
- Limited EDP capacity (7 year mark)
- Six-month commitment expiry
- Payment required before commencement (phased developments – complex)
- Other environmental obligations remain
- Reliance on Natural England scheme availability
- Potential transition period with parallel systems
- Local delivery arrangements are yet to be confirmed

Timescales for the Solent

- Solent has been identified as an early nutrient EDP area
- Early work started on River Itchen
- **Details, timescales and delivery arrangements are still being developed**
- Existing nutrient mitigation arrangements will remain important – some applications out of scope, EDPs voluntary so developers can choose
- Short to medium term - **transition period with parallel systems**
- Local authorities and delivery partners will continue to play a key role in implementation
- Local partners are advocating for a strong role in future EDP delivery
- Approach seeking delivery of **greater environmental benefits through coordinated action**



Painful rollercoaster



Plain sailing





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Questions?