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Cllr Allan Glass
Chairman, Partnership for South Hampshire
Overview and Scrutiny Committee
New Forest District Council
Appletree Court, Beaulieu Road
Lyndhurst
SO43 7PA

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26 November 2019

Dear Cllr Glass,

Thank you for your letter of 1 November to the Secretary of State requesting support to implement mitigation measures that offset the impact of housing development growth on levels of nitrate discharge. I have been asked to reply.


Defra has been working closely with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), the Environment Agency (EA) and Natural England (NE) to support the individual local authorities and members within the Partnership for South Hampshire (PFSH) to develop short and medium to long term solutions to this issue. As part of this work, NE and EA have recently issued a joint position statement clarifying the agencies' respective roles in managing impacts on sensitive sites through the planning and permitting regime. This was shared with the PFSH secretariat for distribution to members on 18 November.

In addition, Defra is working with MHCLG, the EA and NE to ensure that action is appropriately coordinated. This includes: reviewing the scope for adjustments to NE's nutrient neutral methodology; confirming the evidence base to trigger a review of discharge consents affecting the Solent and its harbours (NE will be submitting evidence to EA within the next few weeks); and considering how we can assist stakeholders in the development of a strategic mitigation approach to addressing nitrate pollution issues. We are also exploring opportunities to minimise the costs of mitigation for developers, for example by delivering this as part of environmental improvements already required by national or local planning policy, such as securing biodiversity net gain and sustainable drainage.

We will continue to liaise with the PFSH local authorities and members as we progress this work, including at the upcoming PFSH Water Quality Working Group.

Thank you once again for taking the time to contact the Secretary of State about this important issue.

Yours sincerely,


Maria Klavsen
Ministerial Contact Unit

