

Cabinet Secretary considers a Wales wide approach to tackle nitrate pollution

Following an extensive [consultation on Nitrate Vulnerable Zones](#) last year, the Cabinet Secretary said work would get underway with partners over the coming months to develop the right balance of comprehensive regulatory measures, voluntary measures and investment.

This will also include exploring further options to provide land managers with flexibility, where these would achieve the same or better outcomes than a regulatory approach.

Cabinet Secretary said:

“Pure, clean water is vital to human health and well-being, as well as to natural ecosystems and economic development. While nitrogen is a vital nutrient that helps plants and crops grow, high concentrations are harmful. The agricultural use of nitrates is a major source of water pollution.

“We had a considerable interest in our consultation on Nitrate Vulnerable Zones, reflecting the importance of water quality to Wales as a nation.

“Most respondents recognised the significant impact nitrate pollution is having on our waters, businesses and human and environmental well-being throughout Wales and agreed further action was needed.

“Poor nutrient management is still a major problem across Wales. Pollution of this kind is entirely preventable and is simply not acceptable in the 21st century.

“We should not at the end of 2017 see significant stretches of some of our most well known and popular rivers largely devoid of fish, proving just how much work remains to be done.

“Wales’ waters need much greater protection from agricultural pollution and that is why I am minded to introduce a whole Wales approach to tackling nitrate pollution from agriculture.

“Over the coming months, I intend to work in partnership with our stakeholders to get the right balance of comprehensive regulatory measures, voluntary measures and investment. I also intend to explore further options to provide land managers with flexibility, where these would achieve the same or better outcomes than a regulatory approach.

"We have some of the finest countryside and stretches of water in Europe which we have a duty to protect and enhance. This new regulatory approach will help deliver this and ensure current and future generations continue to benefit from our natural resources."