

NRW Board Meeting – 18th May 2023

Public Question and Answer Session

Question from: Alexander Hickey KC

Question. The Monmouth STP at Redbrook Road is not a CSO but continually discharges to the River Wye, it is polluted with high levels of phosphate (reading I took was 0.88 mg/l); but I was told it had p- stripping. I've asked for the permit and data monitoring, but it has not been given I believe the plant is non-compliant. Can you tell me why it is allowed to discharge pollution into the Wye which is killing it?

NRW Response:

Monmouth Sewage Treatment Works (STW) is a large sewage works serving Monmouth town. This is a continuous discharge of secondary treated sewage effluent into the River Wye at Monmouth. At this time there is no separate numeric limit for phosphorous (P) and there is currently no P-stripping at the works.

An improvement scheme for Monmouth STW is planned as part of Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water's (DCWWs) next Asset Management Plan. These improvement schemes are generally large capital schemes that can take years to complete but improvements to Monmouth STW are being prioritised. We will issue a new permit when the works are complete, which will include a numeric limit for phosphorous.

Environmental permits and their inspection reports are public register information which are available on our online public register here: [Public register - Customer Portal \(naturalresources.wales\)](https://naturalresources.wales/public-register). Previous inspections have not identified any significant breaches, but as this is a large STW we plan to inspect at least annually.

Question from: Kim @ Welsh Rivers Union

Any update on the urgent salmon plan given that the main breeding season is now six months away. Any changes implemented that will see an improvement in salmon recruitment or is this breeding season already written off?

NRW Response:

The salmon and sea trout plan of action ([here](#)) sets out the current range of measures being taken to address salmon and sea trout decline since 2020. We will be providing an update on action to the Wales Fisheries Forum later this year.

The Annual Progress Report on Actions taken under the Implementation Plan for the Calendar Year 2022 UK – England and Wales ([here](#)) describes the progress being made against our obligation to NASCO.

These both describe the wide range of measures being taken now to support salmon and sea trout stocks:

- Evidence gathering and evaluation
- Regulation and enforcement

- Habitat connectivity and quality
- Addressing predation pressures.
- Water quality
- Land management
- Marine pressures

Following the publication of the identification of salmon populations report we will be seeking to re-prioritise the NRW plan of action, to ensure that we are targeting the most urgent pressures. There will be an increased emphasis on working with land owners, government and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) on initiatives to improve the climate resilience of rivers.

Question from: Kim @ Welsh Rivers Union

Do NRW have very clear pollution reduction targets to give to Dwr Cymru?

NRW Response:

NRW uses the Environmental Performance Assessment (EPA) methodology to set stretching environmental performance targets for water and sewerage companies. The EPA is standardised across England and Wales. This allows the performance of the ten largest water and sewerage companies to be monitored and assessed in a consistent way by the environmental regulators. We work with the Environment Agency to put the spotlight on poor performance by bench marking companies. Our performance assessment includes targets for reducing total pollution incidents, serious incidents and self-reporting. The red, amber and green thresholds for EPA metrics are set out in our EPA methodology (which the Environment Agency publish on their website here [Water and sewerage companies in England: EPA metric guide for 2021 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/444444/water-and-sewerage-companies-in-england-eпа-metric-guide-for-2021.pdf))

- For total pollution incidents our methodology sets a glide path for the five years of AMP7, aiming for less than, or equal to 19 incidents per 10 000km sewer by 2025 (year 5).
- For serious pollution incidents our methodology sets a glide path for the five years of AMP7, the target is zero by 2025.
- For self-reporting of incidents the target is equal to or greater than 80% and greater than, or equal to 90% for Pumping Stations and WwTW combined.

We report water and sewerage company performance annually, publishing our reports every July (therefore 2022's report due to be published soon):

Annual [DCWW's 2021 performance report](#)

Annual [HD's 2021 performance report](#)

Note that the EPA metric thresholds are reviewed every five years to continually drive improvements. The report on 2021 performance is the first year where we assessed performance against the tighter and broader EPA metrics of the new five-year EPA period (2021-25). The changes to the metrics ensure we continue to press the water companies to meet their statutory obligations and ensure our expectation for the water companies to continue to push for improvement are clear.