

Water Targets Expert Advisory Group: Wastewater

Meeting notes, Thursday 5 July 2021, 10:05-12:00 on MS Teams

Defra and Environment Agency (EA) attendees

Expert Attendees: Kevin Hiscock, Paul Withers, Paul Whitehead, Penny Johnes (Chair), Joseph Holden, Nicci Russell, Rob Lawson

1) Defra Presentation

Defra presented the evidence which underpins the proposed metric for the target on wastewater.

2) Discussion

Discussion between Defra and members of the Water Expert Advisory Group included the following topics:

- Exploration of the evidence for the percentage reduction in the target.
- The current regulatory environment for water company investment including Asset Management Plan cycles and the Price Review process.
- The numbers/proportions of larger treatment works and smaller treatment works that would be subject to this target.
- The need for nutrient discharges from septic tank systems to be decreased in rural catchments.
- Potential options for pollutants and sources that a target could cover.
- The relative effectiveness of nature-based solutions in removing phosphorus and nitrogen from effluent streams, and the need for catchment specific solutions.
- The potential use of a circular economy and capturing phosphorus at water recycling centres in a way that could allow for phosphorus re-use.

A summary of the advice and discussion from the Water Expert Advisory Group has been incorporated into the Detailed Evidence Report which accompanies our Environment Act 2021: environmental targets.