

The Rt Hon Michael Gove MP
Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing
and Communities

Please ask for: Cllr Bill Revans

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Sent by email :
Michael.gove@levellingup.gov.uk

Date: 29 September 2023

Dear Secretary of State,

Local Nutrient Mitigation Fund

Following the House of Lords rejection of the Government's amendments to the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill, where consideration of nutrient flows from urban wastewater would not be part of the Habitat Regulation Assessment, we are keen to progress our local nutrient mitigation measures to help unlock impacted housing development in our catchment areas. In order to accelerate these projects we urgently need confirmation of the outcome of our Local Nutrient Mitigation Fund bid, which we submitted in May 2023.

Our funding bid will deliver nature-based solutions alongside innovative technology to unlock development at scale and subject to the outcome of a six-month trial with Salinity Solutions, this technology could assist many areas impacted by nutrient neutrality requirements in England. We worked in partnership with Dorset Council, Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG), Plymouth University, Wessex Water and Salinity Solutions to deliver a cost-effective solution to unlock housing delivery at scale, without compromising environmental protections. The 2 week pre pilot in July 20223 demonstrated the efficacy of the technology in unlocking homes within a couple of days of installation with independently verified removal rates of 98% (phosphates) and 88%(nitrogen). Please see attached for [further details](#)

Our work to date has secured mitigation to unlock c. 2,000 dwellings across the Somerset area but we urgently need the Nutrient Mitigation Funding in order to progress additional nutrient mitigation projects, in order to meet our Government housing targets, as we still have approximately 16,000 housing units that require mitigation.

We are keen to work in partnership with Natural England and Defra to pilot the delivery of Protected Sites Strategies and Catchment Management Plans in Somerset, to look at

water quality, management and resources in a holistic manner, so we can ensure we are taking a long term planned approach to protecting our water ways and Special Protection Areas. We need to ensure that future planned growth is able to come forward in a sustainable manner and respects environmental protections. Somerset is well placed to be a pilot area for this critical work. We created one of the first phosphate credits schemes in England and have produced a wealth of guidance to support developers and applicants find solutions. It would be much appreciated if you could provide further clarity on when we will know the outcome of our funding bid and the Government's plans to progress Protected Sites Strategies and Catchment Management Plans.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bill Revans', with a long horizontal flourish underneath.

Cllr Bill Revans
Leader of Somerset Council