

**From:** Anna Whitty  
**Sent:** 12 February 2021 10:03  
**To:** All City Councillors; Marianne Hosken; Rodney Duggua  
**Subject:** FW: Agricultural Land and Nitrates Policy

Dear all,  
Please see below the response from CDC regarding their Nitrates Policy.  
Thank you.

Kind regards,

**Anna Whitty**  
**City Planning Adviser**

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**From:** Vicky Owen <[vowen@chichester.gov.uk](mailto:vowen@chichester.gov.uk)>  
**Sent:** 10 February 2021 15:05  
**To:** Anna Whitty <[a.whitty@chichestercity.gov.uk](mailto:a.whitty@chichestercity.gov.uk)>  
**Subject:** Agricultural Land and Nitrates Policy

Thank you for your enquiry. In terms of guidance I understand Toby has already provided you with a link to information on our website, including the guidance from Natural England. As present, applicants are being asked to provide their own mitigation which can be along the lines of the example you suggest. Agricultural land use is currently a significant source of nitrate pollution into the harbour and as such converting agricultural land to forestry is one of the mitigation options presented by and supported by Natural England, who would have been asked to confirm that the mitigation proposed was appropriate.

In terms of a more strategic solution Chichester District Council is working together with other local authorities affected by this issue across the wider Solent area. With these other authorities, we have joint funded a new post of Strategic Environmental Coordinator, who began work just before Christmas, to investigate and coordinate options for appropriate mitigation across the area, including identifying specific options for mitigating impacts upon Chichester Harbour. DEFRA and the MHCLG are also working on a 2 year project to develop a mitigation scheme for the Solent, most likely based on credit trading although there is little detail at this stage. However it should be noted that even once these more strategic schemes are in place, every applicant will still have the right to propose their own mitigation, as they do with other impacts such as the disturbance of Birds in Chichester and Pagham Harbours.

In respect of the Local Plan Review there will be a policy requiring that development in relevant parts of the Plan Area should be nutrient neutral, but it is unlikely the policy will require a particular mechanism for how this should be achieved, given new options will continue to emerge. Policies

S26 and DM28 of the Preferred Approach Local Plan set out that development of poorer quality agricultural land is preferred to development of the best and most versatile agricultural land. On a similar principle if there are alternative options for providing mitigation which involve the loss of agricultural land, then the loss of poorer quality agricultural land would be preferred to loss of land identified as the best and most versatile, although as above the applicant will be entitled to propose their own mitigation approach. These policies are still evolving and will be published for consultation when the Local Plan Review reaches formal Publication stage (known as Regulation 19) – the timetable for this is currently being reviewed and will be reported to Cabinet in March.

We do not have specific information about the area of land in use for agriculture readily available. However, the Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment published in October 2020 identifies all the locations that have been proposed to us for consideration for development, and notes if they are in current agricultural use. You can find it on the Council's website at <https://www.chichester.gov.uk/article/29759/Housing-and-Economic-Land-Availability-Assessment>. As always, please note that inclusion in the HELAA does not mean the sites would necessarily be taken forward for allocation or that permission would be granted for their development – the HELAA is a high level list of the large pool of sites that *may* be suitable subject to more detailed assessment.

Population projections are available from the Office for National Statistics, although it should be noted that these are for the whole District rather than just for the area covered by the Local Plan (which only covers parts of the District outside of the National Park). This shows the population as 121,748 in 2019 and 134,121 in 2037: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationprojections/datasets/localauthoritiesinenglandtable2>. The amount of agricultural land required to feed the change in population is not information we hold for planning purposes and would depend to some extent on people's food choices and other government policies.

I hope this is of some assistance.

**Vicky Owen**  
Principal Planning Policy Officer  
Planning Policy  
Chichester District Council

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