

# Helping to unlock developments across the Solent

**A proactive offset credit scheme  
to support developers achieve  
nutrient neutrality.**



## Protecting the Solent

The Solent region is known for its internationally important ecology yet faces a growing problem of excess nutrients, particularly Nitrates and Phosphates, polluting its waterways.

Excessive nutrients flowing into the Solent have led to a growth of dense mats of green algae, which has caused severe long-term consequences for marine life, protected habitats and bird species.

Man-made sources, including agricultural fertilizers and household wastewater, introduce these nutrients into rivers, lakes, and other water bodies, negatively impacting local wildlife and ecosystems.

Addressing Nitrate and Phosphate pollution is essential for the well-being of our ecosystems and communities but also for the future of housebuilding in the region.

## The Development Challenge

Housebuilders, developers, and planners have a responsibility to support sustainability, protect biodiversity, and address nutrient pollution. To combat the growing nitrates issue, the government introduced 'nutrient neutrality' to address environmental and water quality issues associated with nutrient pollution. This means housebuilders and developers must demonstrate how they will be 'net neutral' when developing near water bodies.

Developers investing across the Solent must address unwanted pollution from their sites, considering the specific waterways they impact within the six 'fluvial catchment' zones in the Solent region. This requirement has held back much-needed housing and other tourism-related development in the region for over four years.



# A solution for the Solent

With Hampshire's population expected to increase by **4.5%** and reach **2 million by 2029**, future development is essential for the Solent region.

In response to the nutrient pollution challenge, we have taken a proactive approach to protect local wildlife and ecosystems while enabling development to proceed without delay.

The introduction of our cost-effective 'nutrient offset' credit scheme helps developers to achieve nutrient neutrality by offsetting excess nutrient outputs against Council-owned land through the purchase of credits.

## Helping to unlock development across the Solent, the scheme provides developers with a range of benefits including:

- A valuable opportunity for long-term sustainability to achieve nitrate neutrality and meet compliance.
- Enablement to meet the need for new housing - unlocking investment for developers and the region - and moving forward stalled sites.
- The elimination of the need for offset providers to enter individual S106 agreements due to the scheme being enforced through Section 33 Agreements directly between Eastleigh Borough Council and the local authorities that wish to access the scheme for development in their areas.

This initiative aligns with our Climate Change and Environmental Emergency action plan and supports the Housing Development and Healthy Communities themes outlined in the Council's Corporate Action Plan 2023-2026 and it is now the 'Protecting Our Environment' and 'Creating Homes & Communities' themes.

Section 33 Agreements have already been successfully entered into with several local authorities including Winchester City Council, New Forest District Council, New Forest National Park, Test Valley Borough Council, Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council, Southampton City Council and East Hampshire District Council.

Find out more about the credits scheme and how this can be used to benefit developers across the Solent.



Nutrient Offset Schemes

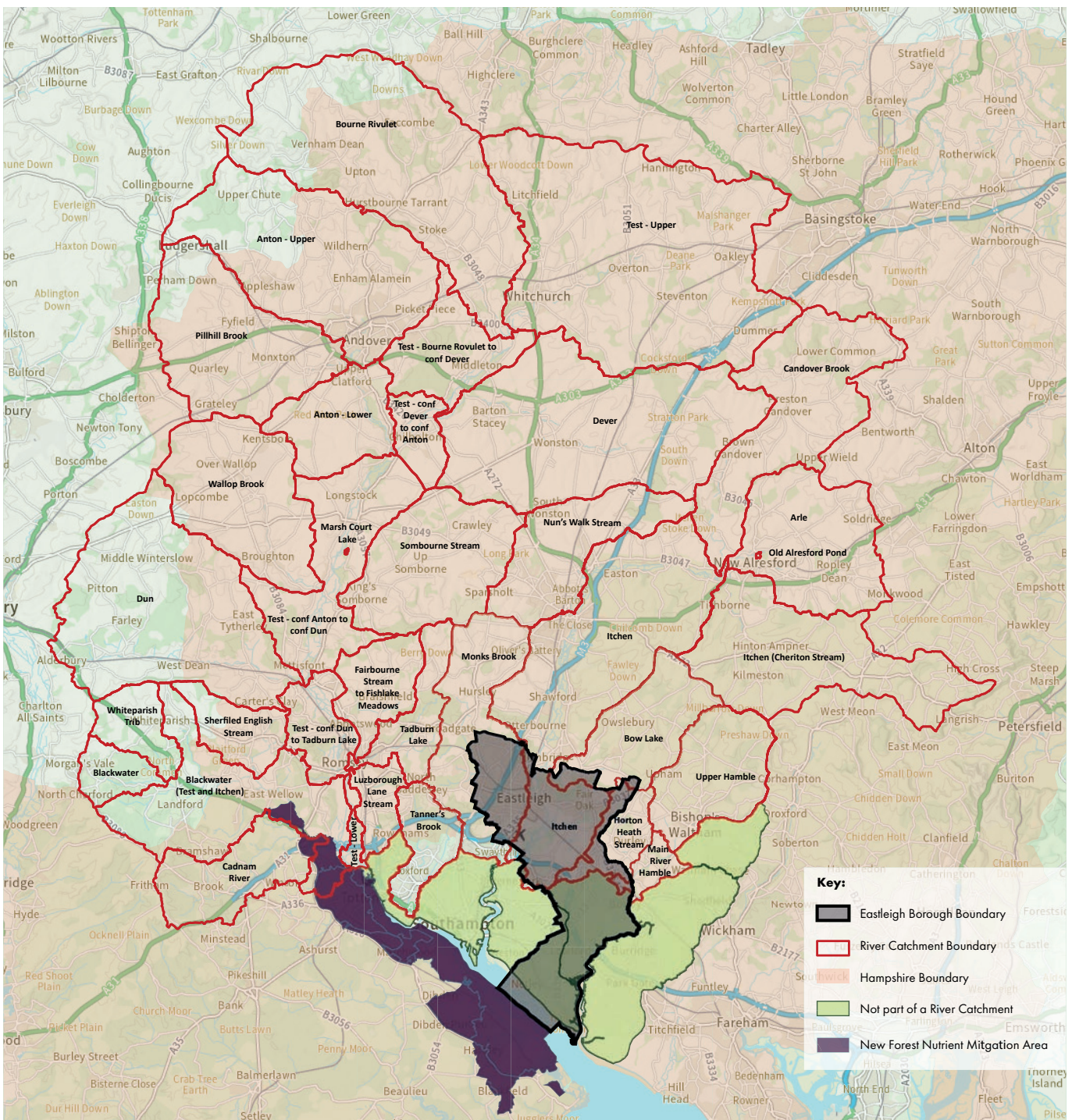


# Areas covered and costs

We currently manage over **238 hectares** of mitigation land, totalling **11,354 Nitrate credits** and **151 Phosphate credits**.

We can provide Nitrate credits to mitigate development in Itchen, Test and Hamble rivers and those parts of the New Forest that discharge to Southampton Water. Each Nitrate credit costs £3000\* + VAT, plus a one-off fee of £500\* + VAT for our legal and administrative costs.

We can also provide Phosphate credits for the Lower Itchen catchment which can be used in the Lower Itchen catchment, where wastewater is treated at Chickenhall Lane. Each Phosphate credit costs £50,000\* + VAT, plus a one-off fee of £500\* + VAT for our legal and administrative costs.



# Register your interest

These Nitrate and Phosphate credits are an enormously important factor in enabling development, and are in extremely limited supply within the region.



If you are looking to develop within the Solent area and want to mitigate your scheme with Nitrate or Phosphate credits, visit [eastleigh.gov.uk/nutrients](https://eastleigh.gov.uk/nutrients) for more information and to register your interest.

Developers interested in purchasing Nitrate or Phosphate credits from us can start the process by filling out the relevant interest form and emailing it to [nutrientoffset@eastleigh.gov.uk](mailto:nutrientoffset@eastleigh.gov.uk)

## Next Steps

Once an interest form has been received, we will confirm whether credits are available to meet anticipated need, and work with you through the process outlined below:

**1**

Developer and Local Planning Authority go through planning process as usual.

**2**

Local Planning Authority confirms offset requirement and suitability of the scheme to us.

**3**

We confirm credits are still available.

**4**

Local Planning Authority grants consent, probably with a pre-start or Grampian condition relating to nitrate mitigation.

**5**

Developer buys credits from us.

**6**

We issue a vesting certificate to developer.

**7**

Developer applies to Local Planning Authority for discharge of condition.



[www.eastleigh.gov.uk](http://www.eastleigh.gov.uk)

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