

# Press Release

From the Partnership for South Hampshire



July 2019

## **Organisations across South Hampshire are calling for millions of pounds in water company fines to be used to address environmental concerns.**

The Partnership for South Hampshire (PfSH), which brings local councils and other partners together with a focus on sustainable growth in the area, has called on water company regulator Ofwat to set up an environmental remediation fund.

The move comes in response to Ofwat asking how it should use money generated by a recent fine to Southern Water.

Cllr Seán Woodward, chairman of PfSH, said: "Water companies are fined where they are operating outside their licence and release pollutants into the environment, so it's only right that the money generated is used to address the impact this causes.

"Councils in the Solent region are already under pressure to tackle significant water quality issues around nitrates entering the Solent, and it is only right that money generated by fines is used to support this work. We have to look at the situation holistically which is why PfSH is coordinating work across the area and Ofwat needs to make sure it is feeding into this. Setting up an environmental remediation fund is a positive solution than can benefit local residents"

PfSH has proposed an environmental remediation fund is set up with the proceeds of the fine, as this will have much more significant and tangible benefits for local communities and sustainable growth than other measures. PfSH is keen to discuss with Ofwat how a fund could work in order to direct the financial payment to where environmental damage has been caused by water companies' actions, and to where local authorities are already under immense pressure to meet regional housing demands.

Councils across South Hampshire are currently trying to balance government requirements to build extensive numbers of new homes in the region with Natural England's guidance that only developments which are nitrate neutral, or that do not raise on the level of nitrates being deposited into the Solent, should be permitted. As well as approaching Ofwat, PfSH and its members have made representations to government ministers in MHCLG and DEFRA to highlight the issue and request assistance in resolving the situation.

**ENDS**

1. PfSH is a partnership of twelve local authorities including unitary authorities of Portsmouth, Southampton and Hampshire County Council, and the district authorities of Eastleigh, East Hampshire, Fareham, Gosport, Havant, New Forest, Test Valley and Winchester.

2. PfSH in collaboration with local partners and government agencies continues to work to deliver sustainable, economic-led growth and regeneration to create a more prosperous, attractive and sustainable South Hampshire, which offers a better quality of life for all who live, work and spend their leisure time in the sub region.

3. For more Information about PfSH please visit the PfSH website at [www.push.gov.uk](http://www.push.gov.uk)