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PRESS RELEASE: End discharging of sewage into Sussex rivers and coastal waters

Duty to upgrade wastewater treatment works will only apply to Chichester District.

CPRE Sussex is calling for an end to the discharge of partially and untreated sewage in our rivers and coastal waters.

This autumn, the Government will table an amendment to the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill.

The amendment will place a new statutory duty on water and sewerage companies to upgrade wastewater treatment works to the 'highest technically achievable limits' by 2030 in nutrient neutrality areas.

The aim is to tackle nutrients causing pollution in 'habitats sites'.

However, despite the presence of habitats sites across the county, Chichester is the only district in Sussex deemed a 'nutrient neutrality area'.

This means the requirement to upgrade by 2030 will only apply to the Chichester District, leaving many questions unanswered about how to end the discharge of untreated or partially-treated sewage into rivers and coastal areas.

CPRE Sussex Trustee Dr Roger Smith said: "When will these upgrades be expedited in Sussex outside of Chichester District? Will they provide the additional foul-water treatment capacity needed in consequence of the huge and unprecedented housing targets imposed across Sussex? Clarification is needed."

Another cause for concern is the caveat that wastewater treatment works should be upgraded 'to the highest technically achievable limits'.

Dr Smith said: "Surely, the Government, in consultation with Natural England, should set and enforce the level of treatment needed, not leave it to the water companies to decide."

Councils across Sussex have received a letter from the Government's Chief Planner, Joanna Averley, informing them of the proposed amendment.

The letter followed a written statement 'on improving water quality and tackling nutrient pollution' issued on July 20 by Secretary of State George Eustice MP.

CPRE Sussex is calling on our MPs and councillors to ensure Mr Eustice's amendment to the Bill sets enforceable targets and ends the discharging of partially and untreated sewage into our rivers and coastal waters.



To support this call, contact your local councillor and MP.

-ENDS-

For press inquiries and interview opportunities contact sheena.journalism@gmail.com.

Notes for editors:

About CPRE Sussex

CPRE Sussex is the local branch of CPRE, working for a countryside that's rich in nature, accessible to everyone and responding to the climate emergency. We want sustainable, vibrant communities in the Sussex countryside. We believe that good land-use planning is the unsung hero of environmental protection. It can help slow the growth in road traffic, encourage urban regeneration, curb urban sprawl, protect the beauty and tranquillity of the countryside and safeguard wildlife habitats.