



BLUE Print is an ambitious plan that brings together researchers, landowners & farmers, households, local government and businesses to deliberate their joint responsibilities for the state of our waterbodies, loss of wildlife habitat and how they could work together to make them safe for future generations. Our BLUE Print for catchments, where people and nature thrive, has been devised by our Steering Group and submitted to the [Water Restoration Fund](#) for funding consideration
 June 2024

The programme will include work in the River Avon, River Gara & Slapton Ley and the Salcombe Kingsbridge Estuary. Our proposal was well-supported by local catchment community groups, local government, environmental organisations and the South Devon Catchment Partnership. The Water Restoration Fund is financed by fines levied on South West Water for pollution in 2023 and amounts to £2.2 million. The fund is competitive. We have made a bid for a design project.

The outcome of our bid will be known on 24th July 2024. If successful, we will have £138,000 and 12 months to implement an inspirational public communication and consultation programme ahead of a cross-sector Catchment Planning Summit proposed to be held in February 2025. We aim to engage the support of riparian landowners and farmers in their transition to more river-sensitive farming methods and the installation of nature-based solutions to pollution, households and businesses in river-sensitive use of their drainage and sewage systems and local government in river-sensitive planning approvals. The BLUE Print programme will devise a follow-on Development Project which will subsequently fund the implementation of the actions agreed.

- A series of online questionnaires ahead of the Catchment Planning Summit will be shared through all social media channels and riparian parish magazines. They will determine the level of understanding of the issues affecting our water bodies and the range of solutions possible. Questionnaires aim to enlist volunteer teams and identify landowners and farmers who want to contribute to the proposed BLUE Print programme.
- Prior to the Catchment Planning Summit, the BLUE print team will have undertaken e-DNA analysis of water quality at strategic monitoring points in our three catchments to provide unambiguous, quantifiable evidence of the scale and source of pollution (animal or human waste) that needs to be addressed.
- The Steering Group will have reviewed all recent monitoring data from the Environment Agency water quality reports and summarise the Reasons For Not Achieving Good (RNAG) ecological status. Experts with in-depth local knowledge of water quality and reasons why our rivers are not all of Good Ecological status will enlighten all sectors at the Catchment Planning Summit of

the range of pollution sources affecting our rivers and estuaries – urban, highways, agriculture and South West Water assets.

- Delegates will be provided with a summary of the South West Water pollution events in relation to their Discharge Permits and the size of the villages and towns served by the waste water and sewage treatment works. South West Water will be invited to share its catchment specific investment plans to address inadequate hydraulic capacity and conclude ‘On-Going Investigations’ where unacceptable periods of Combined Sewer Overspills have occurred.
- The location and importance of designated nature areas and the water-dependent species that are affected by pollution will be an important feature of the Catchment Planning Summit considerations.
- Delegates from all sectors will view aerial footage of each of our catchments from moor to sea to better appreciate the extent of our catchment, its fragmented habitats, the topography and the location of communities in relation to the tributaries and the main water body. This dynamic aerial footage aims to inspire a deeper relationship and commitment to the restoration and maintenance of the health of our water bodies – than would be achieved by simply viewing a map. Reels of this birds-eye view of our catchments will be shared on social media with associated river-sensitive messaging.
- Delegates will view underwater videos of the seagrass meadows in our estuaries and introduce a vulnerable habitat and the aquatic life it supports. This visual aid aims to highlight the opportunity to restore seagrass meadows through collective actions to reduce pollution – and allow seahorses and young fish should thrive again.
- Experts will guide delegates in their appreciation of the way ‘nature-based solutions’ are able to slow down runoff and filter out pollution of our rivers whilst also providing habitat for wildlife.
- Three catchment-specific teams will be facilitated to identify pollution hotspots in their catchments and consider the locations, scale and type of intervention necessary.
- Delegates will be invited to confirm their Expression of Interest in a future Delivery Programme by either hosting nature based solutions on their land, joining volunteer teams led by experts to assist in installation of nature based solutions (tree-planting, fencing, leaky dams etc), forming an inter-parish Water Quality Group or leading village/town campaigns to influence a paradigm shift in river-sensitive use of our household and business sewage and drainage systems

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