



Natural England's Nutrient Mitigation Scheme for developers

Details

If you want to build new housing within [the Tees catchment area](#) you may need to offset any excess nutrients that may be released and pollute the environment.

This guidance is for anyone who plans to build housing and wants to buy credits under Natural England's nutrient mitigation scheme to continue their planning application with the local planning authority.

This guidance will be superseded by formal guidance on GOV.UK on the 31st of March, but is provided here ahead of that date, to enable developers to prepare in advance. This guidance is supplemented by a Frequently Asked Questions Section which can be found [here](#).

How to apply for nutrient mitigation credits from Natural England

If you want to build new housing within [the Tees catchment area](#), you may need to mitigate any nutrient pollution it will create in order to get planning permission. To do this, you can apply to buy credits that fund mitigation activities, such as creating a new woodland or wetland. This will balance out any nutrient pollution produced by your housing development.

This guidance explains how to buy credits from Natural England's nutrient mitigation scheme when it is launched on the 31st of March.

More catchment areas will be added to this scheme in the future. This guidance will be updated when catchments are added.

Who can apply

You can apply to buy nutrient mitigation credits from Natural England if you want to build any number of housing units, including if you want to build just one house. You can be:

- an individual
- a housing developer of any size

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- a consultant working on behalf of an individual or a developer

You must be planning to build housing within the Tees catchment area.

When to apply

To purchase credits from Natural England's Nutrient Mitigation Scheme, you will need to complete an application form and submit it within a credit round.

This application form will be available to download when the GOV.UK page goes live on the 31st of March at 10:00 AM.

The [FAQS document](#) will be updated prior to 31st of March to include the relevant GOV.UK link for Natural England's Nutrient Mitigation Scheme.

Please note that submitting this form does not guarantee you will receive credits.

The first round of applications opens on the 31st of March at 10:00 AM. You must submit your application by 30 April 2023.

There will be further rounds of applications. Choose the round of funding that best fits your planning application timings. The next 3 rounds will be open from:

- 3 to 28 July 2023
- 2 to 27 October 2023
- 8 January to 2 February 2024

Step 1: Calculate how many nutrient mitigation credits you need

You will need to calculate how many credits you need to buy, based on how many nutrients your development needs to mitigate.

To calculate how many credits you need, contact your local planning authority (LPA) and request to use the Teesmouth nutrient budget calculator **version 2.2 (March 2023)**.

The Teesmouth nutrient budget calculator can also be found [here](#), on Darlington Borough Council's website.

The calculator will tell you the total amount of nitrogen you need to mitigate. To mitigate one kilogram, you need to buy one credit. For example, to mitigate 2.75 kilograms of nitrogen you'll need to apply for 2.75 credits.

You must submit your calculations to your local planning authority (LPA) as part of your planning application. Your LPA will confirm if your calculations are correct.

You can apply for credits with Natural England before your calculations are confirmed.

If your LPA notifies you that the number of credits you have applied for is incorrect, you must notify Natural England by email at nutrientmitigation@naturalengland.org.uk. Natural England will then advise you on what to do next.

The cost of credits

For the first round of applications the cost of one credit is £1,825.

For example, if you need to buy 2.75 credits, the total cost will be £5,018.75.

Step 2: Apply for credits from Natural England

You will need to submit information about your development using the form *Apply to buy nutrient mitigation credits from Natural England*, this form will be available for download on the 31st of March at 10:00AM from the GOV.UK page.

Information you will need to provide includes:

- the developer's contact details
- the consultant's contact details (if applicable)
- the sites location as an [Ordnance Survey \(OS\) grid reference](#)
- the development site's address
- a map showing the boundary of the development site as a geographic information system (GIS) polygon shapefile or Google Earth KML file
- the number of housing units you are building
- the number of units classed as affordable housing
- your planning application reference (if you have this)
- the date you expect the first unit to be occupied
- your planning permission reference number (if you have one)
- the number of credits you need to buy

Email your completed form to the email address provided on the GOV.UK page when it goes live at 10:00AM on the 31st of March.

Natural England will send you an email within 10 working days of your submission with a unique reference number and confirmation that they have received your application.

Application forms sent to nutrientmitigation@naturalengland.org.uk, will NOT be considered for credits.

Step 3: Agree to buy your credits

If your application is successful, you will receive an unsigned certificate by email and an invoice for 10% of the total cost of the credits.

You have 36 weeks from being sent this certificate to get planning permission.

If you do not obtain planning permission in these timescales, your credits may be reallocated to someone else. You may request an extension in writing, outlining the circumstances for the delay.

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You must check that the information on your certificate is correct, including:

- how many credits you have been allocated
- details of the development
- the total cost of credits for mitigation
- the scheme's terms and conditions

If the information is not correct, you must let Natural England know by email at nutrientmitigation@naturalengland.org.uk.

If the information is correct and you agree to join the scheme, you must:

1. Sign your certificate and email it to Natural England at nutrientmitigation@naturalengland.org.uk.
2. Pay the balance of the invoice for 10% of your credits.

Once Natural England receives your payment, they will countersign your certificate and send you a copy.

This is your provisional certificate. You can use this within your planning application.

If your application is unsuccessful

Natural England will let you know by email if your application is unsuccessful.

Applications can be unsuccessful for several reasons, including:

- your development is not inside a catchment area that Natural England can provide credits for
- your application form has incorrect or missing information
- Natural England did not have enough credits left to allocate during the current application round
- you did not pay the invoice

If your application has been unsuccessful, you can reapply when Natural England opens the next application round.

Step 4: Continue your planning permission application with your LPA

You need to send a copy of your provisional certificate to your LPA as proof that you have been allocated nutrient mitigation credits. You will then be able to continue with your planning application and find out if you are allowed to build.

Once you have confirmation your development can go ahead, you can move to step 5.

If you are not continuing with your planning application

You should email Natural England if you no longer need the nutrient credits.

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You may be able to get a refund of your 10% deposit from Natural England if you contact them within 28 days of one of the following happening:

- you withdraw your planning permission application
- your development is refused planning permission
- you are given planning permission, but you do not agree to its terms and decide to withdraw from the development

To request a refund email Natural England at nutrientmitigation@naturalengland.org.uk. You need to include the reason for your refund and your unique reference number.

Natural England will deduct an administration fee from the deposit to cover costs incurred during the application process.

Step 5: Pay for your credits

Once your LPA has confirmed your development can go ahead, you can then buy your allocated credits.

Send proof of your planning permission to Natural England. You can do this by emailing a link to the decision notice on your LPA's website to nutrientmitigation@naturalengland.org.uk.

Natural England will then send you an invoice for the remaining 90% of the total cost of your credits.

You must pay the balance of the invoice within 12 weeks of the date of your planning decision. If you do not, your credits may be reallocated to someone else.

To meet this 12 week period, the developer must notify Natural England within 8 weeks of receiving planning permission. This is to allow Natural England to issue an invoice for the remaining cost of credits, with a payment deadline of 4 weeks.

Once Natural England has received full payment, they will send you your final confirmation certificate.

Step 6: Send certificate to your LPA

Once you have received your final confirmation certificate, you can send a copy of this to your LPA to complete your planning permission application.

When you have been granted your full planning permission from your LPA, you can then start building your development.

If the size of your development changes

If the size of your development changes you must let your LPA and Natural England know.

It's your responsibility to calculate and confirm how many credits you now need.

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When you contact Natural England, provide your unique reference number and details of what has changed, including:

- how much the development has changed in size
- a map showing the new boundary of the development site as a geographic information system (GIS) polygon shapefile or Google Earth KML file
- how many credits you now need

Natural England will advise you if you need to change and submit a new application.

If the number of credits you need has increased, Natural England cannot guarantee it will be able to allocate you the additional credits. This may lead to a delay in your planning decision. You can apply for the additional credits in the next round of applications.

If the number of credits you need has decreased, you may be entitled to a partial refund. Natural England will advise you if this is possible.

Get help

Email the nutrient mitigation team if you need more information on this Natural England scheme and how to apply at nutrientmitigation@naturalengland.org.uk.