# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **TITLE** | **Launch of the ‘Teifi Demonstrator Catchment’ project** |
| **DATE** | **27 November 2023** |
| **BY** | **Julie James, Minister for Climate Change** |

On Friday 24 November, Natural Resources Wales (NRW) launched a new multi-year initiative - the ‘Teifi Demonstrator Catchment’ project. This is a cross-sectoral collaboration project supported by Welsh Government, aimed at improving water management in Teifi catchment. The launch of the project was marked by a stakeholder engagement event convened by NRW Chair Sir David Henshaw attended by key partners including Rivers Trusts, Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water, the Farming Unions and Local Authorities

I have said many times, both in an out of the Senedd, that improving water quality is a complex issue which defies easy solution. Our ambitions can only be realised if we have full engagement from government, regulators, and all relevant sectors in Wales working together to maximise investment and resources. This is why Welsh Government has been advocating for a ‘Team Wales’ approach to improving water quality. I am delighted that the Teifi Demonstrator Catchment project will build on this collaborative approach.

The Teifi is one of Wales’ nine Special Area of Conservation (SAC) catchments. It supports an important salmon and sea trout fishery which is under multiple pressures including pollution from abandoned metal mines at the top of the catchment to pollution from wastewater assets and diffuse pollution from land runoff. It is also home to strategically important public drinking water abstractions. We know from independently verified [source apportionment data](https://corporate.dwrcymru.com/en/community/environment/river-water-quality/sac-rivers) that the leading source of phosphorus loading varies from catchment to catchment, but in six of the nine SAC catchments, the leading cause is rural land use. Meanwhile, the major contributor for phosphorus in the Teifi catchment is discharges from water company assets.

There is already significant work underway throughout the Teifi catchment to improve water quality. This project is about thinking differently and using innovative solutions to make things happen. It will build on work already taking place, focussed on how we can add value and demonstrate additionality. This Demonstrator Catchment Project offers an exciting opportunity for all parties to try a different approach. I see citizen science as an integral part of the project to drive solutions and contribute to evidence-based catchment management and I want to see how we can make best use of all the available data and evidence. I’m also keen to see consideration given to using NRWs experimental powers where appropriate.

I hope we can use the work in the Teifi to develop a ‘best practice’ model which can subsequently be replicated across all of Wales’ catchments.

The Teifi Demonstrator Catchment project will form part of the wider holistic approach we are taking to improve water quality. This Thursday 30 November, I look forward to chairing the third River Pollution Summit where we will continue our open dialogue both on the Teifi and our other SAC Rivers, with all key sectors around the table.