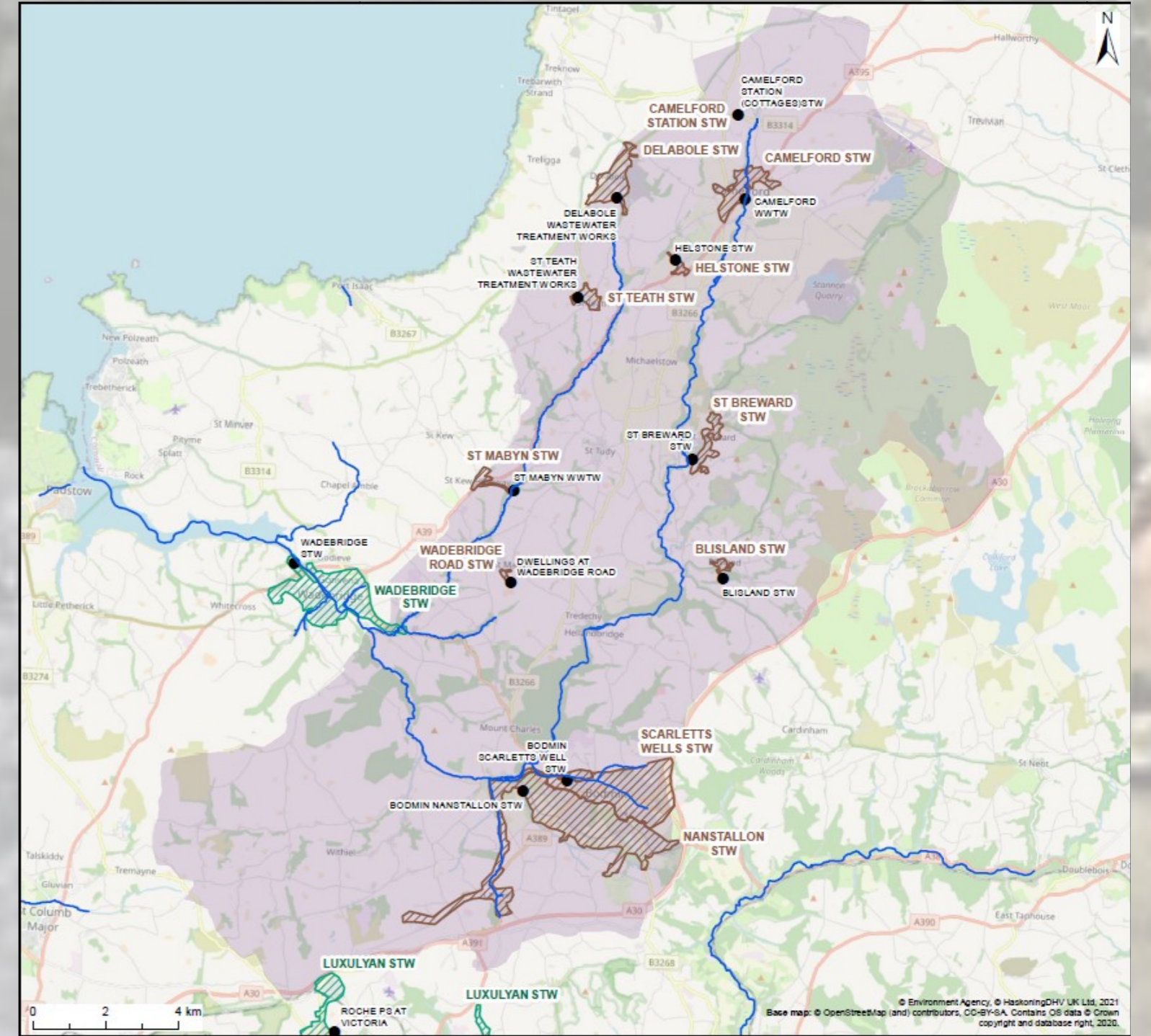


The Conundrum in the Camel

The River Camel is designated as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) for priority habitats that include European dry heaths, Old sessile oak woods and Alluvial Forests and priority species including the Bullhead, Otter and the Atlantic Salmon. Natural England considers the conservation status of protected natural habitats of the River Camel are unfavourable, due to excessive phosphates. Good water quality is critical to the maintenance and functioning of the River Camel's designated sites, but high phosphate levels in the catchment pose a threat to recovery.

Following the Dutch Nitrogen Case ('Dutch-N'), which ruled that where an internationally important site is failing to achieve a good condition due to pollution, the potential for a new development to add to the nutrient load is 'necessarily limited'. The Dutch-N case has informed the way in which Regulation 63 of the Habitats Regulation 2017 should apply to pollution related incidents.

As a result of the Dutch-N case, Natural England have advised Cornwall Council that no further housing development can take place without a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA). This would determine whether a planning application may give rise to additional phosphates within the catchment.



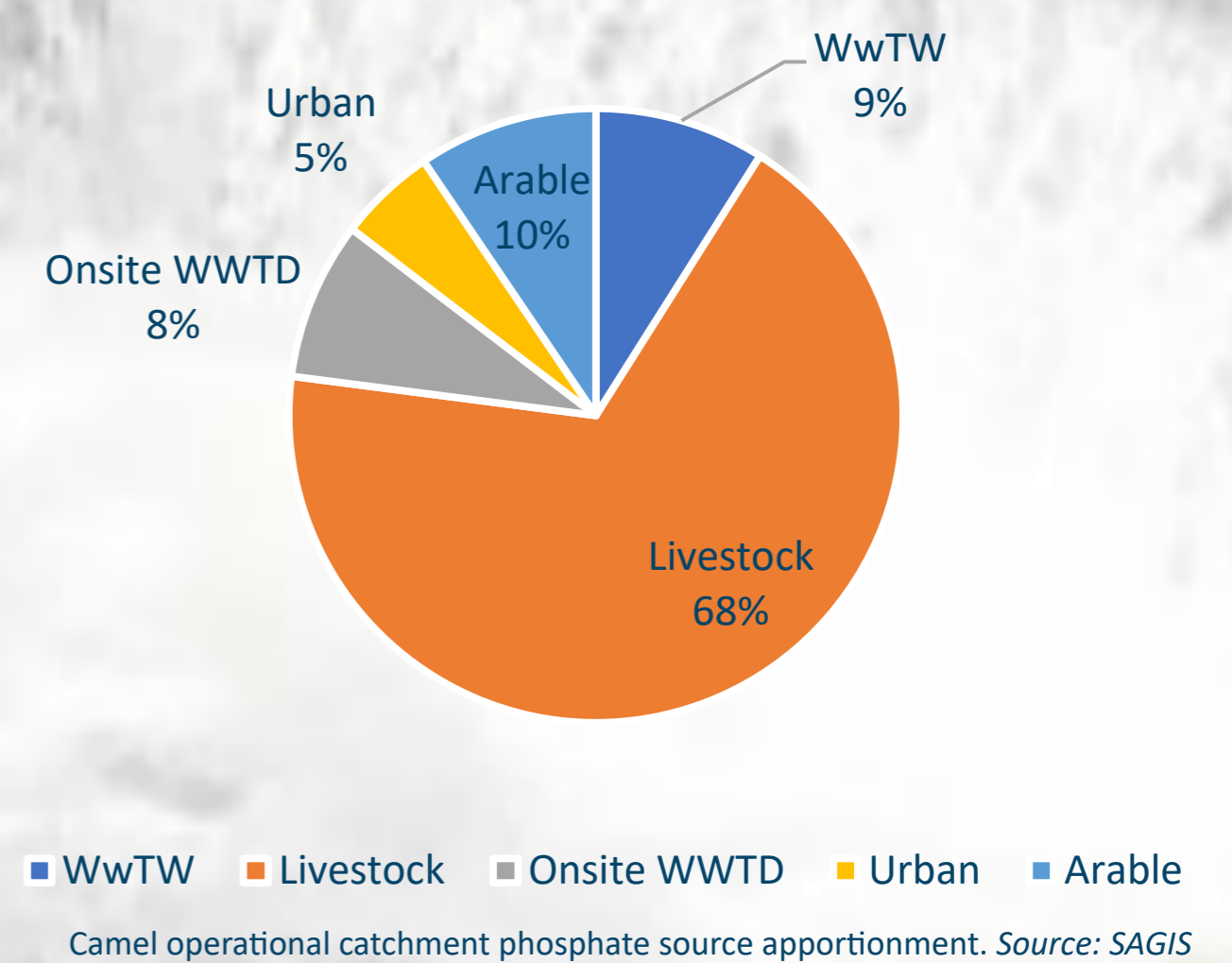
River Camel area of risk map showing the surface water catchment and wastewater treatment works

The Approach

The overall approach undertaken for the project includes:

- ⇒ **Camel Catchment Mapping:** The area of risk map defines the spatial limit where developments may increase phosphate loading to the designated site. It is based on topographical evidence to determine the runoff of surface water and the catchments of wastewater treatment works.
- ⇒ **Source Apportionment:** Review of source apportionment will allow us to gain an appreciation of the phosphate issue at a catchment and sub-catchment scale. Understanding the sources of phosphate inputs at a sub-catchment scale allows for targeted mitigation measures to be identified.
- ⇒ **Phosphate Calculator:** Produce a phosphate calculator to rapidly assess the phosphate loading from developments. The calculator acts as the appropriate assessment stage of the HRA.
- ⇒ **GIS Screening and Heat Mapping:** Develop a GIS tool for screening potential mitigation sites based on a criteria of environmental designations.
- ⇒ **Solution identification:** Establish appropriate solutions by assessing the cost, regional constraints, phosphate removal, maintenance requirements, additional benefits and timescales for delivery and duration. Further assessing how the solutions comply with permitting legislation implemented by Natural England and the Environment Agency.
- ⇒ **Policy / Supplementary Planning Document:** Develop a nutrient neutrality policy for Local Plans that provides technical work that underpins an agreed method and tariffs for administrating, implementing, managing and monitoring phosphate neutral development.

Camel Operational Catchment



The Solutions

We are currently working with key stakeholder in the catchment to develop the following solutions:

