

4th December 2014

Paper Title	Outdoor Recreation and Access Strategy 2015-2020
Paper Reference:	NRW B B 82.14
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Purpose of Paper:	Decision
Recommendation:	To approve the Outdoor Recreation and Access Strategy 2015-2020 and the associated Outdoor Recreation and Access Action Plan 2015-2020 and the indicative RBA Plan.
Decision Required:	YES

Impact: To note – all headings might not be applicable to the topic	Impact on the Environment: Environmental impacts from recreational access and activities can be both positive and negative. Our work in this area will be planned in ways that maintain and enhance the natural resources they utilise, and will help people understand and care for the environment through appropriate methods. Impact on the Economy: Economic prosperity and employment opportunities for communities and local enterprises are often derived from recreational opportunities in the outdoors, particularly in and around areas that are economically reliant on tourism activity. Impact on Community: Outdoor recreation makes a significant contribution to the health and well-being of the population of Wales. The outdoors can offer opportunities for all sectors of society and appropriate promotion, facilities and access can improve social inclusion Impact on Knowledge:
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	Our delivery of this Strategy and associated Action Plan must be based on robust and coherent evidence – making best use of available evidence and ensuring robust monitoring and evaluation of our activities. Our RBA plan spells out the data and evidence required and our data development requirements.
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Issue

1. Our move towards natural resource management will require recreation and access user needs and any provision to be considered within a wider management plan: where social, environmental and economic benefits can be considered in the round.
2. Delivering, enabling and facilitating outdoor recreational opportunities cuts across many work areas of NRW and the recognising this is key to delivery of this strategy. There are clear synergies with community regeneration, education, communication and the benefits these deliver.
3. This Strategy and Action Plan sets out our high level intent for outdoor recreation and access activity for NRW staff and our stakeholders for years 2015-2020. We recognise that priorities for both Welsh Government and NRW may change in this time period and a strategy review will be required at appropriate junctures.
4. The Strategy provides a link between the Corporate and Business Plans and the Directorate Delivery Plans. It is intended to aid each Directorate in planning and implementing recreation and access related activity and it is an important role for KSP to help 'translate' this strategy and action plan into the Directorate Delivery Plans on an annual basis.
5. This Strategy and Action Plan is supported by our 'Spatial Targeting for Social Benefits' (see annex 4) programme, which is being undertaken by URS consulting. This work will be finalised by end of March 2015 and, by using an evidence based approach, will provide NRW with a spatially based approach for informing decisions on the best use of our resources in order to deliver benefits to the areas and people most in need of them. Delivery of our action plan will be guided by this approach.

Summary

6. The scope of this Strategy is wide – it covers the way in which:
 - We ourselves manage and facilitate use of our estate for recreation and access
 - we work with others to facilitate and promote recreation and access across Wales, reflecting our target markets and audience needs
7. The strategy document is concise and high level and supported by a more detailed action plan and results based accountability plan which will be further developed over the implementation of the new approach.

8. The Strategy will both guide the work of NRW and enable us to talk to and work with stakeholders, partners and the Welsh Government with confidence, sure of our strategic direction.
9. The content of this Strategy and associated Action Plan has been developed using information and ideas gathered during a series of internal and external stakeholder events.
10. We have contextualised this Strategy at a Wales level – thus ensuring that our Action Plan will help us deliver appropriate Welsh Government agendas as well as our own Corporate and Business Plans.
11. The role of NRW as an enabling organisation is key to this strategy: facilitating and encouraging others and working with our partners will be a core part of our work. Helping others to deliver where they are best placed to do so, both on and off our own managed land, will be embedded in our work.

Background

12. At a Wales level, key to our strategy are that
 - a. Healthy life expectancy varies hugely across Wales (57.1 years in Blaenau Gwent to 68.2 years in Monmouthshire).
 - b. The majority of people living in Wales take part in outdoor recreation occasionally but there is a high level of demand to do so more often.
 - c. The activities people take part in are becoming more diverse,
 - d. People are travelling shorter distances and the use of cars, even for these short journeys, is increasing
 - e. About 30% of visitors to Wales take part in an outdoor activity during their trip
13. Our Outdoor Recreation and Access Strategy sets out the context and drivers that inform our approach. We have set out, at a Wales level, the overarching aim for outdoor recreational activity and the benefits to be derived from it. From this we have derived our Strategic Action Plan, which sets out – based on the benefits we wish to deliver – what NRW can do, and how we can do it, to deliver the maximum benefit to people and communities most in need. Our indicative Results Based Accounting Plan details how we will monitor what we, NRW, are doing in contributing to the Wales level aim and what benefits we are delivering.
14. Results Based Accountability is an outcomes focused performance management system to improve outcomes for service users and their community. Welsh Government have tasked NRW with using this approach across and throughout the organisation
15. Please refer to: Annex 1 – Outdoor Recreation and Access Strategy 2015-2020; Annex 2 – Outdoor Recreation and Access Strategic Action Plan 2015-2020 and; Annex 3 – Outdoor Recreation and Access Indicative Results Based Accounting Plan 2015-2020 Annex 4 – Spatial Targeting for Social Benefits Programme description

Next Steps

16. If **approval** is given to Strategy and associated Action Plan and RBA Plan, we will:

- Ensure colleagues across NRW, and external stakeholders, are aware of its status and contents
- Work with colleagues in all Directorates to facilitate the appropriate actions being included in Directorate Delivery Plans (to 'translate' the strategic actions into operational deliverables)
- Apply an RBA approach to monitoring the implementation of the Strategy
- Work with colleagues to develop our data and evidence requirements

Risks

17. If **approval** is given to this then, given our reducing resource, NRW will need to ensure that the realignment of our delivery (as a result of our spatial targeting approach) will need to be applied consistently and coherently on both a national, regional and local basis. Not doing so will risk a misalignment of the use of our resources and those people and areas that could benefit the most from our recreation and access delivery.

Financial Implications

18. The need to assure and maintain our recreational access opportunities and obligations and externally facing programmes at a time of limited resources will require careful planning across Directorates. Spatial targeting (as detailed in the strategy) will help Directorates plan delivery in a consistent way, ensuring the delivery of the right thing in the right place. Using our resources in a targeted way, and ensuring the spatial targeting approach is utilised in our decision making will help us make the best use of our resources, both staff and monetary.
19. Work that helps deliver our recreation and access function is spread across the organisation and is not limited to those staff and resources specifically named as 'recreation and access' in our financial systems. Much of our recreation work is delivered by people in roles that are much wider than recreation and access, for example our local area teams or our partnership officers. Recognising and accounting for this synergy will be key moving forward.

Communications

20. We have an existing communications plan that was developed for the planning and consultative stages of this strategy. When approved we will require a new Communications plan in order to ensure all staff and stakeholders are aware of the strategy and its contents.
21. Communications and marketing, including working with Visit Wales to facilitate and enable effective communications about our work and services, are a key part of this Strategy and associated Action Plan. Cross referencing this strategy with our developing approach set out in our Communications Strategy will be key for delivery.

Equality impact assessment (EqIA)

22. NRW has statutory obligations under the Equality Act 2010. On our own land we are classed as a service provider under this Act. We have determined that this Strategy requires a full EqIA and, once approved, will work with Diverse Cymru in order to develop this.

Index of Annex

1. Annex 1 – Outdoor Recreation and Access Strategy 2015-2020;
2. Annex 2 – Outdoor Recreation and Access Strategic Action Plan 2015-2020 and;
3. Annex 3 – Outdoor Recreation and Access indicative approach to our Results Based Accounting Plan 2015-2020
4. Annex 4 - Spatial Targeting for Social Benefits Programme description