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Paper Title	Invasive Non Native Species (INNS) strategic management mechanisms and recent developments.
Paper Reference:	NRW B B 86.14
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Purpose of Paper:	Information
Recommendation:	To note progress
Decision Required:	N/A

Impact: To note – all headings might not be applicable to the topic	Impact on the Environment: INNS are considered the second biggest threat to biodiversity after habitat loss. INNS management is becoming increasingly important in relation to Wales' (and the UK's) environmental and associated socio-economic outcomes and poses significant risks for achieving Water Framework Directive 'Good Ecological Status' and getting Habitats Directive sites into favourable condition.
	Impact on the Economy: INNS have socio-economic implications such as blocking intakes, damaging commercial fisheries and forestry stocks and increasing flood risk through bank erosion. Their impacts and management costs are estimated at £1.7 billion per year across the UK, and the combination of global movement of people and goods and climate change are expected to increase the threat and impacts over the next few decades.
	Impact on Community: INNS management requires active support from potentially

	<p>hundreds of different partners including third sector organisations, industry and businesses, Local Authorities, recreational interest groups, landowners and individuals. This need for multiple partner input reflects the way Governments around the UK are tackling INNS through the work of the GB's INNS Programme Board and the Non Native Species Secretariat.</p> <p>Impact on Knowledge: Prevention, education, early detection, containing spread and eradicating where possible are all essential activities that are needed to effectively tackle INNS through a risk-based approach. Improving the knowledge base about INNS and developing appropriate monitoring and reporting mechanisms are key to supporting rapid intervention and more cost effective targeted management responses.</p>
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Issue

1. This information paper is to provide the Board with an overview of Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS) management mechanisms and recent strategic developments that Natural Resources Wales is involved in as part of its role in supporting Welsh Government's INNS management response. We are committed to use opportunities to address this high profile issue. INNS include flora, fauna, bacteria and viruses in air, soil, fresh water and marine environments.

Summary

2. INNS pose an increasing risk to Wales' environmental and associated socio-economic outcomes and their management requires active support from many interests. Delivering action can be a significant challenge considering the current financial pressures facing all organisations and the fact that there's no overarching INNS legislation requiring landowners to take action.
3. A new European Invasive Alien Species Regulation is expected to come into force in January 2015. A revised GB INNS Framework Strategy is expected to be completed early in 2015 and Government is proposing Species Control Order legislation for England and Wales.
4. Welsh Government (WG) chairs the Wales Biodiversity Partnership INNS Group which helps co-ordinate INNS action and reporting. Many organisations and interests have a role

in INNS management and outside Government departments; no other UK country has a single organisation that's responsible for co-ordinating INNS action.

5. The Welsh Assembly's Environment and Sustainability Committee's Inquiry into INNS recommended that Welsh Government designates NRW as the lead organisation for co-ordinating data collection and action to address INNS in Wales. This would be a substantial 'new duty' for NRW and we are working closely with WG to help them understand what actions and resources would be needed to respond to these recommendations.
6. The approach to INNS prevention, detection and control has often been opportunistic or reactionary and finding funds for these activities is challenging in the current economic climate. While some INNS management actions can be costly, there are also low cost proactive actions that can help manage the risk e.g. promoting Check, Clean, Dry.
7. Reflecting the financial constraints for delivering INNS management, NRW looks to use resources as they can be made available across NRW teams to support our strategic and operational INNS work. NRW is also looking at other opportunities and innovative approaches to enhance INNS management capacity in Wales through delivery of our other powers and duties.
8. **The Board is asked to note the wide range of strategic INNS management activities that NRW is currently involved in, and its approach of working with others to find new ways of developing Wales' INNS management capacity.**

Background

9. INNS impacts and subsequent management costs are estimated at £1.7 billion per year across the UK and the combination of climate change and global movement of people and goods are expected to amplify the INNS threat and impacts over the next few decades.
10. The *P. ramorum* work that NRW is dealing with in is a good illustration of the scale of impact that INNS can have. Whilst some aspects of INNS management can be expensive and technically challenging eg eradicating top mouth gudgeon from Wales or controlling the carpet sea squirt in Holyhead marina, there are also potentially some very cost effective actions that can help with managing the risk eg promoting the national Check, Clean, Dry good practice advice.
11. INNS control is generally the responsibility of individual landowners or site managers and currently there's no overarching INNS legislation requiring them to take action. One of the biggest challenges is finding ways to enable those unaware of or who fail to appreciate the significance of the risk or may be reluctant to help because of resource constraints or other pressures and getting them to respond appropriately.
12. INNS management is becoming increasingly important in relation to NRW's fisheries, flood risk, forestry and site management interests. We conduct marine, terrestrial and freshwater partnership work and site specific INNS activities and provide advice through planning

applications for example. We also support and advise the Welsh and UK Governments on strategic Welsh, UK and international issues.

13. Resource constraints means INNS work has often been delivered in an opportunistic and reactionary manner. Reflecting this, NRW does not have dedicated INNS management posts or funds, so we look to use resources as they can be made available across NRW teams to support our strategic and operational INNS activities.
14. Although there is currently no overarching INNS legislation requiring action to be taken, the GB Invasive Non Native Species Strategy Review, the forthcoming European Union Regulation, the potential introduction of Species Control Orders, the development of 2nd Cycle Water Framework River Basin Management Plans and the Marine Strategy Framework Directive together with some very recent Welsh-specific initiatives provide significant strategic opportunities to help improve how INNS can be tackled more effectively at a Wales and UK level.

GB INNS Programme Board & Non Native Species Secretariat

15. Chaired by DEFRA, the GB INNS Programme Board (established in 2005) comprises representatives from English, Welsh and Scottish Governments and their agencies which includes Natural Resources Wales. Its role is to co-ordinate INNS policy across GB and provide strategic direction for INNS work across governments.
16. It will also coordinate actions across GB on implementing the forthcoming EU Invasive Alien Species Regulation. The Board is reviewing its own Terms of Reference which it will implement when the revised GB Strategy is completed. The Non Native Species Secretariat (NNSS) supports the Board and helps co-ordinate communications and technical input on strategic issues including species risk assessments, briefing notes and promoting good practice advice for example.
17. NRW works closely with Programme Board members including Welsh Government, DEFRA and NNSS to ensure NRW and Welsh interests are recognised and accounted for.

GB INNS Framework Strategy Review

18. Developed between government, industry and conservation NGOs, the GB Invasive Non-Native Species Framework Strategy is the overarching INNS management framework for England, Wales and Scotland and currently under review by DEFRA. It's overall aims are:
 - develop widespread awareness and understanding of INNS risks, their adverse impacts and secure greater vigilance against these;
 - create stronger shared responsibility across government, key organisations, land managers and the general public;
 - provide a guiding framework for national, regional and local control / eradication work.

New European Invasive Alien Species Regulation

19. In response to supporting a range of European Directives, the Convention on Biodiversity and other obligations, a new European Regulation has been developed to prevent and minimise invasive alien species (ie INNS) impacts. The European Council approved the Regulation in September and it is expected to come into force on 1 January 2015.

Wales-level INNS Management Mechanisms & NRW Input

20. Welsh Government leads on INNS policy in Wales and chairs the Wales Biodiversity Partnership INNS Expert Group. This advisory group helps co-ordinate INNS action across Wales and also to report back on work being delivered by other strategic mechanisms eg INNS management under the Woodlands for Wales strategy. While the Group isn't representative of all who need to be involved in INNS, it includes key eNGOs among others and has NRW representatives to cover our marine, terrestrial and freshwater interests.
21. Last year the National Assembly's Environment and Sustainability Committee conducted an inquiry into INNS. One of their main recommendations was that:
"..the Welsh Government designates NRW as lead organisation for co-ordinating data collection and action to address Invasive Non Native Species in Wales, maintaining a link with the GB Non-Native Species Secretariat."
22. While NRW has no dedicated resource for co-ordinating INNS activities, we are committed to working with Welsh Government and help them respond to the recommendations via our strategic INNS management work with partners and mechanisms outlined in this paper.
23. We have also created an internal INNS Working Group to provide a 'single voice' on INNS strategy and policy issues and to promote information sharing across the organisation. Under NRW's new structure this group will be led by KSP's Biodiversity and Fisheries Manager who has responsibility for INNS strategy and policy advice.

Next Steps

24. NRW staff have provided input to the GB Strategy Review process including the DEFRA run workshops during 2014. Rather than finding any need for major changes to the overall approach, and following international peer review, DEFRA's proposed amendments are expected to enhance and build on the Strategy's original objectives and help clarify governance arrangements, roles and responsibilities. The revised Strategy is expected to be finalised in early 2015 and will assist GB countries with implementing the forthcoming EU Regulation.
25. NRW along with other GB Programme Board members has been supporting DEFRA and WG in their work to influence the European Regulation's development. In general terms the Regulation will set a programme for the next 18 months and beyond for establishing a wide range of management mechanisms including lists of priority INNS, associated risk assessments, pathway action plans and control, surveillance and monitoring. DEFRA and WG are now working out what the Regulation's implications will be for the UK and Wales.

New Species Control Orders Legislation for England and Wales

26. The Government's Species Control Order (SCO) proposals are a response to a recommendation in the Law Commission's review of wildlife legislation on the lack of INNS control powers. The proposals - based on similar legislation in Scotland - will provide powers for WG or NRW to help prevent further costs and impacts by providing the ability to gain access to land and remove recently arrived INNS. The intention is to use SCOs for

new INNS in exceptional circumstances where voluntary measures have otherwise failed rather than routinely for widely spread INNS. WG will be developing a supporting Code of Practice and NRW is engaged with them, DEFRA and English agencies including Environment Agency on this work.

Using Other Mechanisms to Develop and Deliver INNS Action in Wales

27. Managing INNS needs to be an integral component of the Natural Resource Management approach being developed in Wales because effective INNS management is essential to optimising the benefits Wales enjoys from its natural resources. NRW is looking to see how INNS management can be incorporated into work being taken forward under this agenda.
28. As an example, INNS are a key ecosystem pressure threatening Wales' ability to achieve 'Good Ecological Status' under the Water Framework Directive with over one third of water bodies at immediate risk from them. NRW is promoting INNS issues through its WFD 2nd Cycle River Basin Management Plan consultation work with the aim of developing agreed actions to be delivered with and by partners to manage the INNS risk for WFD objectives. When these actions are signed off by WG they will comprise Wales-wide and catchment specific activities that will need delivering between 2015 and 2021.
29. The current economic climate and funding pressures means NRW is also seeking other opportunities and innovative approaches to develop INNS management capacity in Wales. NRW recently developed and submitted two INNS proposals through the Welsh Government's Small Business Research Initiative (SBRI) to find new ways to control aquatic INNS and re-instate native species following INNS control work. Competing with over 25 other entries, the two INNS proposals were shortlisted for SBRI Panel consideration and were subsequently approved, resulting in NRW securing an additional £320k alongside its own £8k contribution toward this work.
30. NRW is also working very closely with WG on an underspend opportunity that has recently arisen for this financial year. We are looking to use it to support strategic INNS actions including the SBRI projects and have influenced Welsh Government to also use it to fund INNS co-ordination related work including 'phone app monitoring technology and translating national good practice guidance so it can be disseminated more widely in Wales.

Risks

31. NRW looks to support and utilise all the mechanisms noted in the paper to help reduce the strategic risks that INNS pose to Wales' environmental and socio-economic objectives. The wide range of risks associated with INNS are often specific to the type of species involved and the terrestrial, marine or freshwater environment that's affected and when deciding how best to support relevant action, NRW considers the following issues:
 - Legal compliance
 - Environmental impact
 - Social impact
 - Wider economic impact
 - Health and safety

- Direct costs for NRW
- Sector/partnership capacity to support/deliver action
- Reputational risks

Financial Implications

32. Whilst there are many factors beyond NRW's immediate control or influence such as import/customs controls or shipping for example, our aim is to help reduce INNS threats as available resources allow and NRW will look to support action through the application of other powers and duties e.g. WFD, where it can secure additional resources to do so. NRW's overall approach is to work in partnership to pool resources and maximise the outcomes that can be delivered - as with the work to control grey squirrel for example which involves 3rd sector organisations, Local Authorities, private landowners and communities.
33. There are actions to help reduce risk which are relatively low cost e.g. promoting the national Check, Clean, Dry good practice advice. For INNS actions that are likely to be extremely costly and/or technically challenging we look to deliver in partnership wherever possible. For example we are contributing £177k to the £657k 'Marine Pathways' project and eradicating top mouth gudgeon at the remaining two Welsh sites - estimated at over £500k in total (including £100k for the Millennium Coastal Park) - will also need Environment Agency technical support that NRW doesn't have. An initial estimate for NRW's combined INNS control work in 2009/10 was £192k rising to £370k in 2013/14. Co-ordinating our own response to the Invasive Shrimp for the first three months of its discovery in Wales was estimated at £24k, our *Didemnum Vexillum* response work in Holyhead Harbour has cost £800k to date and NRW received an additional £2.5m this year to support *P. ramorum* control work it is involved in along with the private forestry sector.
34. The Committee's recommendation for NRW to co-ordinate INNS work across Wales' marine, terrestrial and freshwater environments would effectively be a new duty that's beyond our current remit and would be a substantial undertaking. In addition to the support NRW already provides WG and others, this role would require new staff to co-ordinate local and all-Wales activities. Welsh Government understand we could only take this on if we were provided with adequate and sustainable funding for this which we have initially estimated at £340k annually (excluding any project specific funding needs).

Communications

35. NRW works closely with WG and other GB Programme Board members on developing communications around INNS including national briefings, alerts and good practice advice which are disseminated via the GB NNS website and other contact routes including the Wales Biodiversity Partnership for example. We also look for opportunities to promote INNS issues and activity as appropriate, acknowledging the significance and capitalising on its high profile e.g. via the WFD

2nd cycle conservation work. INNS is also specifically referenced in our Corporate Plan and supporting Business Plan.

36. Shortly after we became NRW, we disseminated an aquatic INNS awareness and biosecurity eLearning tool that we inherited from the Environment Agency to relevant key staff. We have subsequently been working closely with the GB NNSS to expand this eLearning tool for use by all other field staff and we expect this to be available for wider dissemination shortly. We have also persuaded WG to utilise some of their underspend opportunity to fund Welsh translation of nationally developed materials so that these can be more proactively disseminated in Wales as current good practice.

Equality impact assessment (EqIA)

37. The variation in impact by the wide range of INNS in their marine, terrestrial or freshwater environments means EqIA needs to be considered at an individual issue level. Under the Government's SCO proposals for example, the Government's intention is that the impact on people and individuals would need to be part of the overall assessment for pursuing any such Order. In the context of the strategic INNS management work that NRW is involved in and covered by this paper, an EqIA is not considered required.