

Consultation on our Fees and Charges for 2017-18

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Annex 1 Charge Payers Consultative Group Membership

2 Introduction

Natural Resources Wales' purpose is to ensure that our natural resources and environment are sustainably maintained, enhanced and used in a way that is good for people, good for the environment and good for the economy.

This means that our remit is wide and includes providing a range of regulatory services. We are required by Government to recover the costs of these regulatory services from those we regulate, rather than through general taxation. The fees and charges raised to cover regulatory costs account for approximately 20% of Natural Resources Wales total funding of £180m¹.

We currently review our Fees and Charges Schemes on an annual basis to ensure we recover our costs and meet any technical requirements. When setting fees and charges, we follow the requirements set out in '*Managing Welsh Public Money*'² ensuring that only eligible costs are included within calculations. You can download a copy of our existing charging schemes from our website³.

Alongside this, we also review our work, ensuring our processes are efficient and effective, to keep charges as low as possible. We have undertaken a recent review and therefore we are proposing to make some changes to abstraction charges, to environmental permitting charges and to introduce some new charges.

We regularly meet and discuss our proposals with a Charge Payers Consultative Group, consisting of the various trade and representative organisations of our stakeholders. This helps us to develop our charging strategy and schemes for the future. We would like to thank those in the group for their commitment in representing their member's views and continuing to work with us in this way, now and in the future. We annually review the membership of this group to make sure we have members relevant to the changes proposed. A list of current attendees is attached in Annex 1.

As well as following our regulatory principles⁴, the Regulators' Code⁵ and Managing Welsh Public Money, we are committed to the following charging principles:

- transparency of our charging decisions
- avoidance of cross subsidy between regimes
- providing longer term planning horizons wherever possible
- avoiding cycles of cutting then raising charges by actively managing our surpluses and deficits
- keeping charges as low as possible through a continued drive for increased efficiency

¹ <http://naturalresourceswales.gov.uk/about-us/our-reports-and-priorities/our-corporate-plan>

² <http://gov.wales/funding/managing-welsh-public-money>

³ www.naturalresources.wales/how-we-regulate-you/our-charges

⁴ www.naturalresources.wales/how-we-regulate-you/regulatory-principles

⁵ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/300126/14-705-regulators-code.pdf

Throughout our charging schemes we refer to two groups of charges: permitting charges and subsistence charges. Both these groups of charges are explained in our guidance document on the scheme. However, for clarity in the consultation document subsistence fees will be referred to as the Annual Compliance Monitoring Charge. This covers the cost of all work done by us to monitor and report compliance at places we regulate. Our compliance monitoring work includes, but is not limited to site visits, desktop reviews, maintaining the public register and providing technical advice and guidance.

We will keep under review any impact on our charges that the UKs exit from the European Union (EU) may have in future especially in areas where our regulation is determined or influenced by EU legislation.

We are seeking your views and opinions on proposals for our fees and charges for 2017-18. **This consultation closes on 13 January 2017.** We will use the results to inform our final schemes. The statutory schemes will be submitted to Welsh Government for approval with the aim of introducing the new scheme from 1 April 2017.

3 Increases to our existing charges

We continue to review our service delivery to drive further efficiencies in our systems and processes. . We are furthering our place-based approach to regulation, helping us deliver the outcomes needed for the Welsh environment and green growth, forming stronger connections with people and business. This helps us to achieve the saving targets identified in the business case for forming Natural Resources Wales, and also enables us to keep our charges as low as possible.

We continue to develop our cost modelling to make our long-term cost base more certain and increase the transparency of individual schemes for our stakeholders.

3.1 Key Messages

Based on the proposals within this document, most charges raised by Natural Resources Wales for 2017-18 will stay at the current 2016-17 levels. We will endeavour to deliver sufficient efficiency savings to absorb inflationary and other pressures on our costs for 2017-18. The exception to this is Abstraction Charges.

3.2 Abstraction

There are several pressures on abstraction funding over the next few years, these include:

3.2.1 New Capital requirements

Section 20 Reservoir Operating Agreements exist to fund capital works by Dwr Cymru Welsh Water (DCWW) on reservoirs so that assets are maintained at the appropriate levels. Capital upgrades are required to Llyn Brenig and Llyn Celyn following safety inspections and these are currently estimated to cost approximately £4m over the next 2-3 years. To fund these works we are proposing to increase the Standard Unit Charge (SUC) by 6% in 2017-18. The SUC will be maintained at this level in 2018-19 and then reduced to current levels in 2019-20, on the underlying assumption that all other relevant areas remain constant. We are currently working with DCWW to look at alternative ways of spreading the cost of capital works over a longer timescale, thus reducing the impact of cycles of cuts and increases, which will give chargepayers longer-term certainty.

3.2.2 New Authorisations

There is potential for future compensation claims if existing exempt abstractions need to be curtailed when brought under licensing control. This will not impact on 2017-18 Environmental Improvement Unit Charge (EIUC), but may do in subsequent years.

Question 1. What are your views on the proposed level of the Standard Unit Charge (SUC)?

3.3 All Other Statutory Schemes

All other charge levels will remain at 2016-17 levels, apart from the various changes and new charges outlined in the following paragraphs within this consultation document.

4 Changes and additions to Statutory Charging Schemes

This section deals with changes and additions to statutory charging schemes where we propose to introduce charges from 1 April 2017. In reviewing our approach to regulation we identified where we had not previously fully recovered costs. Further activities are under review and maybe considered for future charging schemes.

4.1 Changes to the Environmental Permitting Scheme

We propose the following change to the Environmental Permitting (EP) Charging Scheme for 2017-18.

4.1.1 Intensive Farming (Pig and Poultry)

The current approach to charging for Intensive Farming is different to other installations, reflecting the lower environmental risk of the activity. However, our current fees are lower than the cost of the necessary permitting and compliance work.

Our current charges fall into two sections: permitting (applications and variations) and the annual compliance monitoring charges. Our permitting activity currently costs us around £230,000 more each year than we currently are able to cost recover from the permit fees. Conversely, our annual compliance costs are lower than the actual compliance monitoring fees we receive. This leaves this area of work with a net deficit each financial year.

Alongside this, the Environmental Permitting regulations now require regulators to carry out inspections related to the amount of risk posed by the activity and to review all relevant permits within four years of the publication of the Best Available Techniques Reference Documents (BRef). The BRef for the Intensive farming sector is nearing completion and we expect publication early in 2017. This means we must secure information and review each Intensive Farming permit against the standards in the BRef by 2021. This is funded from variation fees rather than the annual compliance monitoring charge.

Therefore, we intend to change the proposed charges to reflect the cost of providing the service and properly reflect the cost of regulation. We are seeking to increase the initial application cost for new permits and variations where operators are seeking to increase the number of animals at a site. At the same time, we will be reducing the annual compliance monitoring charge. For other variations we will hold the fee at the current rate.

Almost all intensive farming operations in Wales relate to poultry with currently only one intensive pig rearing operation. When permit holders increase the number of animals at a site we have to reassess the nuisance and habitats aspects in the permit. The current fee does not reflect the additional work needed, so we are proposing to increase our charges for variations increasing the number of animals or birds permitted.

Variations to increase the number of animal places at farms also require a re-assessment of both nuisance and habitat issues. This additional work takes more than the current fee covers so we are proposing to increase the variation fee to £3,500 for an increase of animal places at sites dealing with either pig or poultry. Increasing animal places at permitted sites with more than 80,000 birds would cost £5,000. These figures are based on data collected by our permitting service on the time taken to determine a variation request.

Using information gathered on current regulatory activity, and reviewing what will be needed in the future, we estimate that just over 8 hours of compliance activity is needed each year to monitor compliance. Charging £1,040 each year enables NRW to cover the cost of doing this.

We are also changing the way we permit Intensive Farming, reducing our costs and ensuring that permitting officers spend more time on relevant site-specific issues. We will be splitting permits into a more generic, sector specific section and a site-specific section. Taking this approach means we can consult once on general changes in legislation, standards and methods. We can then make these updates without needing to review every site-specific permit individually. This saves costs overall and ensures permits are always up to date, the same requirements applying equally across Wales.

These proposals reduce the annual compliance monitoring charge to a level that simply covers our ongoing costs of compliance. The proposed changes benefit all current farming operations by £500 per year and are cost neutral for new farms by year 7 when balanced against the proposed changes to application fees. The proposed charges are as follows:

Charge Type	Current Charge	Proposed Charge
Application Fee	£3,650	£7,150 for: More than 2,000 pigs >30kg More than 750 Sows More than 40,000 Poultry
		£10,000 80,000 Poultry or more
Compliance Monitoring Charge	£1,540	£1,040
Variation	£379	£379 for variations other than expansions
		£3,500 Increasing animal places at a site where: More than 2,000 pigs >30kg More than 750 Sows More than 40,000 Poultry
		£5,000 Increasing animal places at a site of 80,000 Poultry or more

Question 2. Are there any reasons why these changes would adversely affect Intensive Farming Operations in Wales?

Question 3. Are initial higher set up costs prohibitive to development or is the lifetime cost of the Intensive Farming Operation taken into account?

4.1.2 EPR Waste Operations Facilities - Poor Performer Multipliers

Last year we consulted upon a proposal to add an additional tier of multipliers for poor performing EPR Waste operations facilities. The proposal was not implemented as it was not deemed to represent true cost recovery. A change is still needed however as we are still currently under-recovering our costs within EPR Waste Operations. One of the main reasons for this is the significant extra regulatory effort required to monitor compliance and improve performance at poor performing sites.

The Compliance Classification Scheme (CCS) is used to classify in a consistent way, any non-compliance with a permit condition according to its potential severity.

- Category 1 – a non-compliance at a regulated site that could foreseeably result in major pollution of the environment. A category 1 breach attracts 60 CCS points;
- Category 2 - a non-compliance at a regulated site that could foreseeably result in significant pollution of the environment. A category 2 breach attracts 31 CCS points;
- Category 3 - a non-compliance at a regulated site that could foreseeably result in minor pollution of the environment. A category 3 breach attracts 4 CCS points;
- Category 4 - a non-compliance at a regulated site that could foreseeably result in no environmental impact. A category 4 breach attracts 0.1 CCS points

A facility's compliance performance band is determined by the total CCS score identified through compliance assessment activities recorded on Compliance Assessment Report forms throughout a calendar year. In addition to this we use a risk assessment tool called Operational risk appraisal (Opra). The Opra assessment provides a risk-rating, or profile, which we use as part of our compliance assessment process, see more in section 6.2.

A facility's total CCS score (and associated band) will increase in accordance with relative risk posed and the number of the non-compliances identified. For example a Band D site typically would have an average of 10 category 3 non-compliances identified and a Band F site typically 6 category 2 non-compliances identified. These non-compliances signify the potential for systemic or management failure of the operations at the facility.

All D, E and F sites have a site specific compliance plan in place that details time-limited actions agreed with the regulator, to ensure that sites work towards improving their performance and compliance with their permit. Our compliance assessment resource allocation planning is determined by the compliance monitoring deemed necessary and is proportionate to the risk posed by the facility.

An assessment of resource needed to monitor compliance of the actions identified within the Compliance Assessment Plans has shown that the level of effort required to regulate a site to improve compliance performance far exceeds the income collected for that purpose.

For example a poor performing site can require 43 days of regulatory effort^[1] and a significant number of these sites remain within these bands for a number of years.

To ensure the fees charged at such sites are set on a cost recovery basis to cover the additional resource required for the extra compliance monitoring effort needed, we are proposing an amendment to the existing multipliers, as shown in the table below.

Proposed amendment to compliance band multiplier

Compliance Band	Compliance Band Multiplier	
	Current value for sites in Band D, E and F	Proposed value for sites in Band D, E and F
D	125%	200%
E	150%	300%
F	300%	500%

The impact of applying these proposed amendments to existing poor performing facilities would result in recovering a further ~£87k (table below details impact by band), which is equivalent to 694 hours (based on EPR hourly charge rate of £125).

Impact of proposed amendment to existing charge payers (Based on 2015 billing)

Compliance Band	Number of Permits	Total of Existing Charges	Total of New Charges
D	14	£35,085	£56,718
E	14	£39,498	£80,022
F	4	£36,933	£61,555
Grand Total	32	£111,516	£198,295

We propose to introduce a check of the compliance scores of all D, E and F banded sites after the first 6 months to see if their compliance has improved sufficiently to move them to a higher band and amend their fees half way through the year to reflect this.

Question 4. What are your views on our proposal to change the approach for Band D, E and F performing EPR Waste Operations Facilities?

4.2 Reservoir Compliance

The Reservoir Act 1975 is a piece of public safety legislation that seeks to protect people, property and infrastructure by reducing the risks associated with an uncontrolled release of

^[1] Average regulated effort estimated from Compliance Assessment Plans for Poor performers.

water from large raised reservoirs. The Act requires that these reservoirs are constructed, altered, inspected and discontinued under the guidance of a suitably qualified engineer.

Natural Resources Wales has a duty to ensure undertakers⁶ of large raised reservoirs across Wales observe and comply with the legislation. Since April 2016, the Flood & Water Management Act 2010 introduced significant changes in Wales, including reducing the threshold capacity of a regulated reservoir to 10,000 cubic metres, along with other new regulatory responsibilities.

We propose introducing a tiered system of charges for registration and compliance monitoring. There will be a:

- Registration and Risk Designation Charge of £510
- Annual Compliance Monitoring Charge - based on risk:
 - High-risk reservoirs of £230
 - Large raised reservoirs not considered high-risk of £150

The proposed charge for each activity is set to allow cost recovery across the regime, reflecting the work necessary based on risk. The Annual Compliance Monitoring charges cover our ongoing regulatory costs after registration and risk designation of the reservoir.

Reservoir undertakers have a legal duty to register their reservoir and these proposals will only come into effect for those reservoir undertakers registering with us on or after 1 April 2017. We will work to communicate the implementation date for these proposed charges, encouraging undertakers to take advantage of the free registration and designation period finishing on 31 March 2017.

Multiple party responsibilities

Where there are multiple undertakers with responsibilities under the Reservoirs Act 1975, we propose that one charge is applied to the reservoir. To avoid additional costs, Natural Resources Wales will issue one invoice to all reservoir undertakers for payment. The multiple parties will be required to apportion costs between themselves and NRW will not dictate or recommend apportionment of costs.

Question 5. What are your views on the proposed level of charges for registration and risk designation?

Question 6. What are your views on a tiered risk-based charge for annual compliance monitoring and the level of these charges?

Question 7. What are your views on the approach to require multiple parties to apportion costs between them?

⁶ Undertaker is the legal term for reservoir owners and operators as defined in the Reservoirs Act 1975

5 Discretionary charges

Charges in this section are drawn under Article 10 of the Natural Resources Body for Wales Establishment Order and are subject to individual agreements between NRW and the person receiving the service, based on a contractual agreement.

5.1 Discretionary Advisory Service

Before accepting an application for a licence, consent or permit, applicants are encouraged to contact the NRW team that is responsible for the relevant regime, and initiate a pre-application discussion. Pre-application discussions can help reduce the risk and uncertainty applicants face when applying for permits for regulated activities, and potentially improve the quality of the application by making applicants better aware of regulatory requirements and what information is required to support the application.

We value the importance of early and effective engagement and the benefits this can bring to both our customers and the environment. However, applicants often want us to be involved at a level that goes beyond our statutory duties, or any advice we provide as part of the application fee. In such cases, the advice we would be offering would be provided on a discretionary basis as supplementary to that which we are required to provide by statute.

It is increasingly challenging to balance the resourcing of this discretionary advice with our statutory work. To ensure that we can continue to meet the needs of our customers and deliver a consistent service across Wales, NRW proposes to offer applicants a discretionary pre-application advisory service for all regimes where NRW is the determining body (and does not already charge for pre-application advice), subject to the payment of an appropriate charge.

5.1.1 Scope of the service

Pre-application advice is considered to be advice provided to an applicant before formal submission of an application (or any other formal request for a permission where there is no distinct application procedure), and may include circumstances where the applicant chooses not to proceed with the formal application.

The charged discretionary pre-application advice service encompasses advice that is considered to be:

- outside of any statutory requirement to provide the advice for free,
- outside of any regime specific agreement with Welsh Government to provide the advice for free, and
- outside of any advice provided under another funding mechanism, including any application fee.

5.1.2 Limitation of the service

Only regimes that publish appropriately robust and freely available guidance to support the application process will be considered suitable for the charged discretionary advice service.

The scope of the discretionary advice that is appropriate to provide will be regime specific, but as a regulator, we must not provide any advice or service that might prejudice the determination of an application. Therefore, the service will be limited to advisory activities, and will not include preparing reports for applicants or undertaking assessments that should form part of the application.

The service will only be offered where NRW has the available resources and expertise to provide the discretionary advice. The service will be offered at the discretion of NRW and there will be no obligation for the applicant to accept the offer.

Uptake of this service is no guarantee that a permit will be granted.

5.1.3 Cost of the service

NRW has a discretionary power under article 10 of the Establishment Order to provide advice, and to charge for such advice. In setting the level of charges the general principles set out in Managing Welsh Public Money will apply, and full cost recovery is the appropriate basis for charging for discretionary pre-application advice.

We have sought to calculate a consolidated cost recovery hourly rate that would be applicable to multiple permitting regimes. The adoption of a consolidated hourly rate provides clarity for service users on the expected costs of advice across regimes.

NRW has assessed the costs that are associated with providing this service. Based on this, we propose to set the hourly rate at £125/hr per person. This rate is based on staff costs, overheads and other costs that will be incurred by NRW in the delivery of this discretionary service.

In exceptional circumstances, NRW may offer applicants the option to pay for the employment of dedicated staff within NRW. This option will only be used in cases where offering the charged service could negatively affect NRW's overall service, for example where providing the requested service would result in NRW having to take staff offline for an extended period of time.

NRW intends to prepare a number of standardised agreements that would outline the service we could provide. However, where we consider it more appropriate, we may enter into an application specific negotiation with the applicant to agree the terms for the provision of discretionary advice.

5.1.4 Implementation

We intend to start implementing the service from 1 April 2017; however, the start date for implementation will differ according to the regulatory regime. We will only apply the service to regimes where we are satisfied that appropriate technical guidance has already been published. To facilitate its delivery we will prepare and publish guidance on our website that will explain to applicants what service they can expect for free, and what service is provided for within the application fee.

Question 8. What are your views on the arrangements for pre-application advisory services and do you believe they are beneficial to the applicant, leading to better quality applications?

Question 9. What are your views on standardised agreements for the provision of the service and are they preferable to application specific negotiations?

Question 10. If NRW offered a concessionary rate, under what circumstances should the concession be applied?

6 Other Matters to Note

There are other changes in relation to our charges that we wish to highlight. These either have been consulted upon separately in the past year or relate to particular aspects of our charges that may be of specific interest to charge payers and merit further explanation

6.1 Discretionary Planning Advice Service

NRW is a statutory consultee in the development planning system. In this capacity, we advise both decision makers and developers on the likely environmental impacts of planning policies and development proposals at specific points in the planning process.

Developers often want us to be involved at a level that goes beyond our statutory duties, particularly at the early pre-application stage. We value the importance of early and effective engagement and the benefits this can bring to both our customers and the environment. It is, however, increasingly challenging to balance the resourcing of this discretionary advice with our statutory work.

To ensure we can continue to meet the needs of our customers and deliver a consistent service across Wales, we intend to introduce charges for those aspects of our 'planning' advice that are discretionary, i.e. where there is no statutory duty or requirement for NRW to provide the advice. We have previously consulted on our intention to introduce charges for our advice and the principles that this service would be built on. The feedback we received as part of these consultations has been generally supportive. We therefore intend to start rolling out this charged for service from 1 April 2017 onwards.

When providing this service we will limit our charged-for advice to services that are in line with our role as an advisor in the planning process. We will not, for example, be involved in preparing reports for developers or undertaking assessments. Our website sets out additional information on the types of advice that will be included as part of this service.

The charged discretionary planning advice service will be offered in cases where:

- There is no statutory duty on, or responsibility for, NRW to provide the advice that is requested by the applicant
- The proposed development meets at least one of the criteria on NRW's priority checklist for engagement, which can be accessed on our web pages.

NRW intends to offer the charged discretionary service for all development types, regardless of size, as long as these meet the criteria set out above. This will apply to both marine and terrestrial developments as well as developments that are dealt with under non-planning legislation, such as the Harbours Act or section 36 of the Electricity Act.

The service will be offered on a voluntary basis and there will be no obligation on the developer to enter into a contract with NRW for the provision of this advice.

As part of our discretionary service, we will offer developers a free preliminary opinion on their proposal. This service will provide developers with an indicative view of potential issues related to the development proposal, “showstoppers”, and advice on potential mitigation measures. NRW will also provide an indication of the related consents that the developer may require.

Any discretionary advice that is requested in addition to this will be chargeable. We will use an hourly rate to recover the full cost of these services. In exceptional circumstances we may offer the developer the option to enter into a bespoke arrangement with NRW for an enhanced service.

Further information on the discretionary charged and free planning advice service that we will roll out from April 2017 onwards can be found on our website⁷.

6.2 Links to Environmental Permitting (EP) Operational Risk Appraisal (OPRA) Scheme

The EP Operational Risk Appraisal (OPRA) Scheme is currently used to calculate charges for some Natural Resources Wales regulated activities. We have previously outlined our intention to carry out a substantial review of our fees and charges and our approach to the OPRA scheme. Until that time the EP Operational Risk Appraisal (OPRA) Scheme will continue to be used to calculate charges for those activities.

Until we have completed our wider review, as indicated above, we are proposing to continue to mirror the most up to date version of the Environment Agency’s (EA) EP OPRA Scheme. Their OPRA Scheme is amended from time to time, for example through technical changes within their charging consultations and we therefore encourage Natural Resources Wales charge payers to refer to the EA website⁸.

6.3 Hydropower Charges

In the previous consultation on our fees and charges we had stated that we would review the hydropower charges introduced. However, we have decided to postpone this review and retain the current fee structure for one more year in 2017-18 for a number of reasons as follows:

- A reduction in number of hydropower licences;
- Our ongoing review of hydropower licensing processes and other regimes; and,

⁷ <https://naturalresources.wales/planning-and-development/discretionary-planning-advice-service>

⁸ <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/environment-agency-charging-schemes>

- A need for clear guidance on charge out rates.

6.4 Flood Risk Activity Charges

From 1 April 2017 we will incorporate the separate compliance fee for flood risk activity permits within the application fee. This does not change the charge; rather simplify the charging process for flood risk activity permit applications.

Current Flood Risk Activity Permit Application Fees

Band	Charge	Pre-application allowance included in charge (max amount)
Low	£230	1 hour
Medium	£320	2 hours
High	£500	3 hours

Current compliance charge

Band	Charge
Low	£40
Medium	£40
High	£40
Multi	£40

Revised from 1 April 2017 – Flood Risk Activity Permit Application and Compliance Monitoring Fee

Band	Charge	Pre-application allowance included in charge (max amount)
Low	£270	1 hour
Medium	£360	2 hours
High	£540	3 hours

6.5 Medium Combustion Plant Directive

The Medium Combustion Plant Directive was published in November 2015 and Member States have two years in which to transpose this Directive into domestic legislation. Welsh Government is working on this transposition, and it may be (subject to consultation) that NRW will have some role in the regulatory delivery of this directive. It is therefore possible that there will be a need to include charging provisions in future; however, the exact role of NRW will not become clear until Welsh Government's consultation of the transposition of this directive (anticipated in the autumn of 2016).

7 Responding to this Consultation

We are seeking your views and opinions on proposals for our fees and charges for 2017-18, as well as seeking initial views and ideas on the future look of our charging strategy and schemes.

7.1 How to Respond

The closing date for replies is 13 January 2017.

You can reply in the following ways:

Email

feesandchargesconsultation@naturalresourceswales.gov.uk

Post

Charging Consultation Response
Natural Resources Wales
Ty Cambria
29 Newport Road
Cardiff
CF24 0TP

Telephone

0300 065 3000

Online

Available on our website at www.naturalresourceswales.gov.uk

7.2 Data Protection

How the views and information you give us will be used

Any response you send us will be seen in full by Natural Resources Wales staff dealing with the consultation. It may also be seen by other Natural Resources Wales staff to help plan future consultations.

We intend to publish a summary of the responses to this document. We may publish responses in full. Normally the name and part of the address of the person making the response are published with the response. This helps to show that the consultation was carried out properly. If you do not want your name and address to be published let us know when making your response and we will remove them from published material.

Names and addresses we remove might still be published later, although we do not think this would happen very often. The Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 allow the public to ask to see information held by many public bodies, including Natural Resources Wales. This includes information which has not been published. However, the law also allows us to withhold information in some circumstances. If anyone asks us to seek

information we have withheld, we will have to decide whether to release it or not. If someone has asked for their name and address not to be published that is an important factor that we would take into account. However, there might sometimes be an important reason why we would have to reveal someone's name and address, even though they have asked them not to be published. We would get in touch with the person and ask their views before we finally decide to reveal the information.

7.3 Next Steps

Following the consultation, we will make all comments (excluding personal information as detailed above) and our responses publicly available on our website. If you respond with an email address we will acknowledge your response and will notify you when the summary of responses has been published on our website.

Annex 1

Charge Payers Cosultative Group

Membership List

Federation of Small Businesses
Dwr Cymru/Welsh Water
Welsh Environmental Services Association
Countryside Landowners Association
British Hydropower Association
Micro Hydro Association
National Farming Union
Energy UK
Farmers Union Wales
UK Petrochemical Industries Association
Chemical Industries Association
CONFOR
Chartered Foresters
Confederation of British Industries
Resource Association