

Agenda

Title of meeting: NRW Board Meeting - Public Session

Date of meeting: 18th May 2023

Time of meeting: 9:00-14:35

Location: Microsoft Teams
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Time

Item

**9:00
(5 mins)**

1. Open Meeting

- Welcome
- Declaration of Interests
- Explain conduct of meeting

Sponsor and Presenter: Sir David Henshaw (Chair)

Summary: To NOTE any declarations of interest.

**9:05
(5 mins)**

2. Review Minutes and Action Log
2A. Review Minutes from Public 23rd March meeting
2B. Review Public Action Log

Sponsor and Presenter: Sir David Henshaw (Chair)

To APPROVE the minutes of the previous meeting and the action log.

**9:10
(5 mins)**

3. Update from the Chair

Sponsor and Presenter: Sir David Henshaw

Summary: To NOTE the Chair's update to the Board.

**9:15
(15 mins)**

4. Report from the Chief Executive

Sponsor and Presenter: Clare Pillman, Chief Executive

Summary: To NOTE the current position and update the Board on key activities.

Paper ref: 23-05-B04

**9:30
(20 mins)**

5. Update Reports of Committees and Forums

Sponsors and presenters: Committee Chairs

Audit and Risk Assurance Committee
Evidence Advisory Committee – 10th May
Finance Committee – 28th April

Paper ref: 23-05-B05

Flood Risk Management Committee – 18th April

Paper ref: 23-05-B06

Land Estate Committee – 5th May

People and Customer Committee

Protected Areas Committee – 4th May

Forum Updates

Wales Land Management Forum

Paper ref: 23-05-B07

Wales Fisheries Forum

Wales Water Management Forum

Paper ref: 23-05-B09

National Access Forum for Wales

Paper ref: 23-05-B10

Summary: To NOTE the updates from the Board committees, both within and outside of any meetings held.

**9:50
(20 mins)**

6. Finance Performance Report

Sponsor: Rachael Cunningham, Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Services

Presenter: Rob Bell, Head of Finance

Summary: To NOTE the latest financial position

Paper ref: 23-05-B11

**10:10
(20 mins)**

7. UK Board Apprenticeship Programme

Sponsors: Sir David Henshaw, Chair / Clare Pillman, Chief Executive

Presenter: Natalie Williams, Team Leader & Deputy Board Secretary, Board Secretariat

Summary: To APPROVE NRW's involvement in the UK Board Apprenticeship Programme

Paper ref: 23-05-B16

**10:30
(5 mins)**

8. Proposed Changes to the Statutory and Legal Scheme (SaLS)

Sponsor: Clare Pillman, Chief Executive

Presenter: Clare Jones, Lead Specialist Advisor, Governance

Summary: To APPROVE changes to the Statutory and Legal Scheme (SaLS)

Paper ref: 23-05-B13

10:35
(35 mins)

Break

11:10
(90 mins)

9. Discussion with Dŵr Cymru/Welsh Water and Hafren Dyfrdwy

Sponsor: Ceri Davies, Executive Director of Evidence, Policy and Permitting

Presenters: Peter Perry, CEO, Dŵr Cymru; James Jesic, Managing Director, Hafren Dyfrdwy

External Attendees: Steve Wilson, Managing Director – Wastewater Service, Business Customers & Energy, Dŵr Cymru; Stephanie Pullen, Environmental Regulations and Permits Lead, Hafren Dyfrdwy; Gwenllian Roberts, Director of Ofwat for Wales; Eifiona Williams, Head of Water Branch, Welsh Government; Andy Fraser, Welsh Government

NRW Attendees: Sian Williams, Head of Operations North West Wales; Ruth Johnston, Lead Specialist Advisor, Water Strategy; Natalie Hall, Sustainable Water Manager

Summary: To DISCUSS the follow-up to the business plan presentation to the November 2022 Board meeting

Presentation

12:40
(60 mins)

Lunch

13:40
(20 mins)

10. Wellbeing Health & Safety Annual Report 2022-23

Sponsor: Prys Davies, Executive Director of Corporate Strategy and Development

Presenter: Charlotte Morgan, Wellbeing Health & Safety Manager

Summary: To APPROVE the Wellbeing Health & Safety Annual Report 2022-23

Paper ref: 23-05-B12

14:00
(5 mins)

11. Board Forward Look

Sponsor: Sir David Henshaw

Presenter: Natalie Williams, Team Leader & Deputy Board Secretary, Board Secretariat

Paper ref: 23-05-B14

14:05
(5 mins)

12. AOB

End of Public Board meeting

14:10
(25 mins)

Public Q&A

14:35

Close Meeting

Unconfirmed Minutes

Title of meeting: **NRW Board Meeting – Public Session**
The Clayton Hotel, Cardiff and Microsoft Teams

Date of meeting: 23rd March 2023

Present Board Members: Sir David Henshaw, Chair
Clare Pillman, Chief Executive
Prof Steve Ormerod, Deputy Chair
Karen Balmer
Julia Cherrett
Geraint Davies
Prof Peter Fox
Zoë Henderson (from 11am) (*Teams*)
Prof Calvin Jones
Mark McKenna
Helen Pittaway
Prof Peter Rigby (*Teams*)

Present Executive Team Members: Rachael Cunningham, Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Services
Ceri Davies, Executive Director of Evidence, Policy and Permitting (Item 1 to Item 8)
Prys Davies, Executive Director of Corporate Strategy and Development
Sarah Jennings, Executive Director of Communications, Customer and Commercial
Gareth O’Shea, Executive Director of Operations

Additional Attendees Present: Colette Fletcher, Head of Governance & Board Secretary (All items)
Mark Collins, Business Finance Team Manager (Item 6) Teams
Sarah Williams, Head of Corporate Strategy & PMO, (Items 7 and 9)
Catrin Hornung, Head of Communications and Digital Transformation (Item 7)
Lynette Bowley, Senior Specialist Advisor, Media (Item 7)
Ben Wilson, Principal Advisor, Fisheries (Item 8 and Public Q&A)
Caroline Hawkins, Corporate Planning, Performance & Strategic Assessment Manager (Item 9) Teams
Sarah Stacey, Head of Organisational Development, (Item 10 and 11)
Shaheen Sutton, EDI Specialist (Item 10)
Phil Mostyn, Lead Specialist Advisor, Wellbeing Health & Safety (Item 11) Teams
Rhian Jardine, Head of DPAS and Marine (Public Q&A)

NRW Observers: Prof Rhys Jones
Kathleen Palmer
Michael Evans, Head of Operations South Central
Kate Evans, Manager, Private Affairs / Private Secretary to CEO

	David Mee, Lead Specialist Advisor, Freshwater Fisheries Management (Item 8 and Public Q&A)
External Observers:	Julie James, Minister for Climate Change (Item 7) Claire Bennett, Director of Environmental Sustainability, Welsh Government (Item 7) Nathan Huish, Welsh Government (Item 7) Nick Sharratt, Welsh Government (Items 1 to 7) Catryn Holzinger, Audit Wales (Item 7) Nigel Milner (Item 8)
Public Observers:	Harriet Alvis - CEO, West Wales Rivers Trust Kim Waters – Welsh Rivers Union
Declarations:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prof Steve Ormerod – Member of two Welsh Wildlife Trusts (no influence on policy); Vice President of RSPB (no influence on policy); Member of the National Trust (no influence on policy); Fellow of Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (no influence on policy); Scientific research interest in water quality through Cardiff University and the status of rivers, Co-Director of the Cardiff Water Research Institute. • Geraint Davies – Member (no influence over policy): RSPB Cymru; National Trust; National Farmers Union of Wales; Farmers Union of Wales; Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust; Member of an advisory group working on the future direction of the Efyrynwy/Lake Vyrnwy Estate that has land in a SSSI • Mark McKenna – Chief Executive of Down to Earth which has an ongoing planning application in a SAC area; Velindre Cancer Centre – Down to Earth part of the Design Advisory Group; Skyline • Prof Calvin Jones – Management Board Member for Skyline which has interests on NRW managed Estate
Apologies:	Dr Rosie Plummer Zoe Henderson (9am to 11am) Ceri Davies (from Item 9)
Secretariat:	Jocelyn Bengier Natalie Williams

Item 1. Open Meeting

1. The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed everyone. Declarations of interest and apologies were made as noted above.

Item 2. Review Minutes and Action Log

2A. Review Minutes from 27th January Public Board Meeting

2. The minutes from the public Board meeting on 27th January were reviewed and agreed.

2B. Review Action Log

3. The action log was reviewed and noted.

Item 3: Update from the Chair

4. The Chair updated the Board on positive meetings held with the Minister, who would be joining the meeting later. The new Corporate Plan would be officially launched in June in the Senedd. The positive working relationships with Welsh Government (WG) officials were noted.
5. The First Minister's second Water Summit had recently taken place. The Summit had received updates on progress on the issues around the paused planning applications. It was accepted that there were a broad range of issues to tackle on water quality. This was being worked on by teams within NRW and offers of support from other organisations involved in the Water Summit had been received along with resources to accelerate the work on water quality. Discussions had taken place in the private Board meeting on the need to be more forthcoming on NRW's work on water quality, including around the signs of progress.
6. Prof Steve Ormerod provided an overview of the Water Summit Action Plan, which included improving the roll out of nature-based solutions, working more constructively with the agricultural community, and looking at blockages to planning. The Summit had been a positive meeting with contributions offered from all quarters.

Item 4: Report from the Chief Executive

7. The Chief Executive gave an update on items in addition to the written report.
8. The week had seen high tides, flood warnings and alerts. Work was also taking place with the Drought Group to consider what would happen if there was a second dry summer with lessons learnt from last year on early engagement with the public and abstractors.
9. The Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Bill had been passed and was now heading for Royal Assent. An overview was provided on the Social Partnership element, including working with the Trade Unions. NRW were deeply engaged with WG on the changes brought by the Public Procurement element on the way that procurement was managed in Wales. The emphasis in the Corporate Plan on the impact that could be made in the supply chain on the climate and nature emergencies gave a real impetus to this. This would be brought to a future meeting of the Finance Committee.
10. Thanks were offered to Prof Steve Ormerod and Dr Rosie Plummer for their contributions to the celebration of neurodiversity week, noting their powerful contributions which had enabled staff to talk and share their experiences.
11. The Angel Shark Project had been nominated for a St David's Award, and the announcement was expected on 20th April.
12. The official opening of the scheme at Llyn Tegid would be taking place on Friday 31st March. The completion of the important reservoir safety works was welcomed and the support from the people of Bala was recognised and appreciated.
13. The Board considered the content of the update. It was queried whether the decision for the declaration of drought against a rising baseline of climate change had implications for how water resources were managed. The Executive Director of Evidence, Policy and Permitting (EPP) confirmed that learning from the last drought would include reviewing the information and data for NRW's and the water companies' drought plans, which would lead to a change in the process.

14. Prof Steve Ormerod thanked the team involved in yesterday's Incident Room site visit and also thanked them for their efforts under challenging circumstances during incidents. The recent grim reading regarding leaking sewage pipes and diesel spills was raised and the work on this was queried.
15. The Chief Executive acknowledged the recent issues and confirmed that the appropriate action to be taken was being considered. The clean-up was underway and was being paid for by insurance. The prevention of pollution was a key focus of the new Corporate Plan and the challenge on addressing the root causes was recognised. The response by NRW on taking appropriate action and enforcement was highlighted. It was recommended that Board members and the Minister should be provided with regular updates on enforcement actions. Board members welcomed this and noted the issues around ageing infrastructure in relation to the burst sewer pipe incident but also the random circumstances of the diesel spill incident.

ACTION: Board members and the Minister to be provided with regular updates on enforcement actions

16. The Executive Director of Operations gave an update on incidents, noting that there were around eight to nine thousand per year, some of which were high profile. The Board's recognition of the work involved in incidents was welcomed. An overview of some of the notable incidents from this quarter was provided. The sewer main incident in Magor was described in more detail. The Executive Director of Operations and Executive Director of Evidence, Policy and Permitting (EPP) had met with the Directors of the water companies and discussed the incident on the River Taff, which was related to ageing infrastructure. The water companies had explained their mechanisms for dealing with this in both the short and long term. The discussions around developing a water quality narrative at the Board private session on the previous day were highlighted. This approach could be applied to incidents and enforcements, however, the challenge of doing this during the incident response stage was recognised, particularly when gathering legal evidence. The team were dedicated to getting this right and shared the public's deep concern when seeing these incidents in the environment.
17. Board members suggested that the approach to the immediate communications' response to incidents should be reviewed, for example, a holding response on social media recognising the issue and the public concern to ensure that NRW were visible on incidents. The publication of reasoning behind enforcement approaches should also be considered.
18. The Board reflected on the focus of the new Corporate Plan on pollution prevention and the need to be more assertive in this area. It was queried whether there was an analysis of trends in pollution which could be used to build a strategy on how to tackle pollution. A presentation on the work on minimising pollution was requested at the next meeting. The recent work published on catchments and water quality data was highlighted.

ACTION: A presentation on the work on minimising pollution to be presented at a future Board meeting

19. Board members highlighted the Natur a Ni Citizens' Assembly in Swansea, noting that this had been very impressive and suggesting that this approach could be taken forward for engagement with the Board.
20. The diversity of attendees at the Citizens' Assemblies was discussed. It was noted that the team had made a careful selection on representation to ensure diversity. Some of the issues over attendance were considered, such as transport and personal difficulties,

particularly in light of the cost-of-living crisis. The importance of working in partnership with other organisations was recognised. The Executive Director of Corporate Strategy and Development would consider how to take this forward to ensure the spread of voices. It was suggested that using large survey panel companies could be considered.

Item 5: Update Reports of Committees and Forums

21. Karen Balmer as Interim Chair of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC), updated the Board on the meeting held on 9th March. Kath Palmer was welcomed to the team, as the proposed new Chair of ARAC. A good meeting had taken place with several Internal Audit Reports. A restructure of the Internal Audit team was endorsed. Discussion on Strategic Risk 07 (SR07) took place with more detailed feedback to be picked up outside the meeting. Webinar training on risk deep dives had been recorded and shared. The Cyber Risk was discussed, following a report in January from Audit Wales. The ICT Strategy and disaster recovery piece would be brought to a future Board meeting. Closed sessions took place with Audit Wales and the Head of Internal Audit; no concerns were raised by either party.
22. Prof Peter Rigby, as Chair of the Evidence Advisory Committee (EAC) gave an update on the meeting which took place on 21st February. The paper was taken as read. The membership of EAC would need to be refreshed as Prof Lorraine Whitmarsh had stepped down from the Committee. There would be an opportunity to adjust the membership informed by the requirements of the Committee going forward.
23. Sir David Henshaw as the Chair of the Finance Committee (FC) updated the Board on the meetings held on 9th February and 7th March, which had mainly focused on the budget. The paper was taken as read. Financial performance had been reviewed and a slight forecasted overspend was noted. An update on Charges had been considered. FC would be taking on additional responsibilities going forward with a focus also on performance. Helen Pittaway was welcomed as the proposed new Chair of FC.
24. Julia Cherrett as Interim Chair of the Flood Risk Management Committee (FRMC) updated the Board on work since the meeting held on 24th January, noting that there were no further updates.
25. Professor Calvin Jones as the Chair of the Land Estate Committee (LEC) updated the Board on work since the first meeting held on 19th January. An update was provided on the Land Stewardship Business Plan Performance Dashboard measures, which were noted as mainly Green in Red Amber Green (RAG) status, apart from Amber on National Nature Reserve (NNR) Management due to issues with contractor availability. Issues with the reduction in forecasted timber income were noted, particularly the implications on ability to spend on nature management improvements. The Recreation Strategy was underway, and a draft was anticipated by the autumn before going out to consultation. The Commercial Strategy was underway, with increased maturity in negotiations ensuring that value was achieved from the land within NRW's management.
26. Julia Cherrett as the Chair of the People and Customer Committee (PCC) (formerly the People and Remuneration Committee) updated the Board on the meeting held on 15th March. An update was provided on the Transformation Programme, with confidence that the building blocks were being put in place and quick wins being realised. PCC had requested more tracking on the benefits of the Programme. A new approach would be taken on Wellbeing, Health and Safety (WHS) which would provide a drill-down on cause and effect and lessons learned. The WHS Manager was undertaking a training needs analysis for high-risk activities and hostile sites training. A new Construction Design and Management (CDM) process had been put in place following learning from a Serious

Incident Review (SIR). Board members were urged to look at their own online training. Recruitment remained an ongoing challenge and a deep dive on recruitment had taken place and a project looking at business critical roles in the Flood team. The quarterly Communications Report was received with lots of activity, and questions around actionable insights. Presentations were received on good engagement practice, the pilot to centralised correspondence, and the new website. The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Report was scrutinised and endorsed for Board. A deep dive took place on the Resourcing Strategic Risk.

27. Prof Steve Ormerod deputising for Dr Rosie Plummer as the Chair of the Protected Areas Committee (PrAC) provided an update on the meeting held on 7th February. An item on the retained EU Bill was received. Issues were considered around the current condition of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). It was noted that only around 20% were in favourable condition and PrAC had considered what was needed to turn this around. An item was received on Net Benefit for Biodiversity. Biodiversity Net Gain was in place in England which looked to either levy funds or install specific features for biodiversity as a result of development. Wales was looking for its own version of this in the form of Net Benefit for Biodiversity. PrAC considered the development of a protocol to properly appraise management issues or unfavourable condition issues for incidences where NRW had an involvement on its own Estate where the land was a SSSI.
28. Zoe Henderson as the Chair of the Wales Land Management Forum (WLMF) updated the Board. The paper was taken as read. The focus on innovation in the Agricultural Pollution Sub-Group was highlighted. This was an opportunity to focus on innovation in eliminating agricultural pollution.
29. Professor Steve Ormerod as Chair of the Wales Fisheries Forum (WFF) and Wales Water Management Forum (WWMF) gave an update. A substantive item on the plight of the Atlantic Salmon would follow which had been presented to the WFF. An item was received which linked to the status of sea trout and the extent to which they were also declining. Discussions were ongoing with net fisheries' licensees on how this would go forward. An item on Fishing in Wales was highlighted which considered the economic, recreational, and wellbeing importance of angling, and included interesting statistics on people who were angling in Wales.
30. The WWMF had discussed an update on bathing waters and the notion of designating bathing waters. There were now candidate rivers and standing waters identified which would be part of a pilot in 2023, the concept acting as a means for strengthening water quality monitoring and potentially driving improvement. A presentation was provided on the analysis of NRW and Environment Agency (EA) regulatory data illustrating some of the trajectories of biological communities in relation to pollution. An item was received on Citizen Science in relation to water including consideration of the challenges on quality assurance, and data collection organisation. There was also a presentation from WG including data on the analysis on waste water treatment works and sewer misconnections giving rise to pharmaceuticals in the river environment.
31. Zoe Henderson highlighted that the same presentation on Citizen Science had been received at WLMF and expressed some disappointment that it had focused largely on the challenges rather than the opportunities.
32. Geraint Davies as Chair of the National Access Forum for Wales (NAFW) updated the Board on the meeting held on 14th March. Geraint Davies gave an update to the NAFW on his meeting with Lesley Griffiths, the Minister for Rural Affairs and North Wales, and Trefnydd, on discussions on the role and value of NAFW to WG and stakeholders. The Minister was invited to the next meeting in the summer and would be taking part in a walk

in her constituency to raise awareness of the importance of increasing diverse access to the countryside. Other items covered at the meeting included the Wales Coast Path, and an update on Creative Nature. An interesting presentation was also received on the work by Parc Cenedlaethol Eryri/Snowdonia National Park on disability access which highlighted the positive benefits of accessing the countryside.

Item 6: Finance Performance Report

Presenter: Mark Collins, Business Finance Manager

33. The Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Services introduced the item. The Business Finance Manager presented the Finance Performance Report and took the paper as read for the financial position to the end of January. This had presented to the Finance Committee and the Executive Team (ET) with the February position, which included a likely forecast to the end of the financial year. The paper noted the Income position as largely on target at £237m, but with potential additional funding of £1.1m for Peatlands and £2m for Flood Capital. These had both now been approved by the Minister and therefore the overall income for this year was now just over £240m. The paper noted that in January, £33.8m was forecast for timber income. The forecast had fluctuated in recent months but with predictions falling by around £1m. However, dispatches had improved, so the likely outturn was now around £33.7m. WG had now confirmed a payment of £6.9m to the pension fund. The end of year position was likely to be around £247m. The only potential variant to this figure would be if the additional external funding was not drawn down.
34. Expenditure was ahead of profile by £5m at the end of January, £3m of which was related to the Flood Capital Programme, but the additional £2m noted above would enable the target to be achieved at year end for Flood Capital. The remaining £2m noted in the paper related to Land Stewardship activities. Savings had been diverted from other areas to support this alongside a review of the Programme, but it was still likely that there would be an overspend of £1m at year end. WG had been kept updated and had been formally notified of the likely overspend. WG had suggested that the pension payment could be reduced but this would add to budgetary pressures for next year. The final position would be known by mid-April after the final accruals had been processed.
35. Board members considered the content of the report and queried the overspend in Land Stewardship. It was explained that overspend had taken place on expenditure items such as roads and civils. A thorough lessons learned exercise and a deep dive were due to take place. It was noted that the starting position had been based on timber income and lessons from this would be taken forward.
36. The Board noted the financial performance to end of January 2023 and approved the change to the bottom-line forecast increase to £237.1m

APPROVED: The change to the bottom-line forecast increase to £237.1m

Item 7a: Minister for Climate Change – Q&A

37. The Chair welcomed Julie James, Minister for Climate Change, to the Board meeting.
38. The Minister thanked the Board for the invitation to join the meeting and praised the work on the new Corporate Plan, commenting that it had been an inspiring read and that there was an opportunity to make a serious difference. The shared determination between NRW and WG to achieve this was welcomed. The Minister welcomed the new Board members and commented on the current vibrant and forward-looking Board. Thanks were offered to the long-standing Board members, in particular Karen Balmer and Zoe

Henderson, who were coming to the end of their term of appointment. Prof Calvin Jones and Mark McKenna were congratulated on their renewed appointment to the Board and their ability to bring a different perspective to issues was welcomed. The importance of speaking the truth to power was highlighted.

39. Prof Steve Ormerod described the analysis carried out by Cardiff University which had found that the regulatory actions brought in during the 1990s had had an effect on improving the urban river environment and that sight should not be lost of the positive impact that could happen when action was taken.
40. In response to a question from Prof Steve Ormerod on how the nature, climate and pollution emergencies could be kept at the heart of Government business, the Minister highlighted that her Ministerial portfolio supported coverage of these issues. There were challenges around the budget, which was described as one of the worst with only £1m of capital, but despite the hard task, NRW's budget had been supported and there was visible proof that nature was prioritised. The budgetary pressures in the NHS were acknowledged but the link between the health and environment agendas was recognised. The Minister described her mission in enmeshing the direction of travel on the environment and ensuring legislation was fit for purpose for protecting the environment, particularly as a result of the UK exit from the European Union. The number of challenges on this were described. The role of NRW, WG officials, and Environmental Non-Governmental Organisations (eNGOs) in continuing to work on these issues would be key with a Team Wales approach.
41. Julia Cherrett asked the Minister for her views on the struggle on attracting new talent and the challenge on broadening the reach of NRW on recruitment and engagement on the environment. The Minister explained that a behaviour change programme was about to be launched in Wales, which would reach out to more diverse communities and engage on opportunities around shadowing, mentoring and internships. NRW would have an important role in supporting the campaign. It was also planned to look internally at the public appointments' process on this issue.

Item 7b: Formal Approval of the Corporate Plan 2023-2030

Sponsor and Presenter: Clare Pillman, Chief Executive

Attendees: Sarah Williams, Head of Corporate Strategy and Programme Management Office; Catrin Hornung, Head of Communications and Digital Transformation; Lynette Bowley, Senior Specialist Advisor, Media

42. The Chief Executive introduced the item. Thanks were offered to the Board, ET, Leadership Team (LT) and everyone who had been involved. It had been a detailed process, involving rigorous debates and discussion. The Plan was of the moment, post Conference of the Parties 15 (COP15) and COP26, and the recent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) publication. The Vision, 'Nature and People Thriving Together', would need everyone's support. The considerable challenge on this was recognised with the ongoing issues of flood, wildfire, drought, and the loss of habitats and species against a backdrop of economic and international concerns. NRW would be working with WG and others towards the 2030 targets with a long-term view to 2050. The planning for delivery had already begun and the proposed internal changes within NRW were described. Each member of ET would lead on a key area within the Plan – Pollution, Nature, Climate, Resources, Transformation. The Corporate Plan was recommended to the Board and then the Minister for approval.
43. The Chair commented on the discussions on delivery of the Plan at the private Board meeting. There was a need to fundamentally challenge the way that NRW operated within the legislative and regulatory frameworks, in particular around the culture and

thinking differently, taking a Team Wales approach, working with WG and others on implementation.

44. The Minister noted that the Plan was reflective of the Remit Letters and discussions that had taken place. The relationship between NRW and WG had transformed and developed into an effective, open, and honest working relationship. The work on the Baseline Review was praised and had helped WG to arrange the budget more effectively.
45. Board members considered the new Corporate Plan, reflecting that it was both aspirational and inspirational. The work on enmeshing the Minister's agenda with the other agendas within Government was noted. It was also emphasised that help would be needed with the transformational change required. The discussions on the role of the Public Service Boards' (PSB) Wellbeing Plans at the private Board meeting were noted.
46. There would be a need for a radical approach to a variety of issues, for example, that not everyone could be protected from flooding, and the Minister's support on this was welcomed. The importance of leading by example and the role of WG in this was highlighted. The Minister emphasised the importance of working together and a unified approach on difficult issues to bring about change, for example, in flooding. The radical agenda by WG was highlighted, for example, with the Roads Review, Clean Air Act, and the introduction of 20mph speed limits. The role of the First Minister in driving change forward was recognised. The Minister described her reasons for entering politics and her desire to see positive change. The importance of appropriate UK Government funding was emphasised and the example of the issues around the Celtic Sea developments were described.
47. The discussions that had taken place around the tone of the Corporate Plan, particularly on whether it was too pessimistic, were noted. Board members welcomed the Minister's approach to the importance of speaking truth to power and honesty in facilitating open discussions.
48. It would be important to bring Nature into the heart of the discussion on the economy. The Minister commented on the importance of shifting the dial on the circular economy and highlighted the success in recycling and its role in attracting jobs and economic benefit to Wales. The Chief Executive described a meeting with the group in Milford Haven on the decarbonisation agenda. The need for a regulatory shift but with a just transition were recognised.
49. Board members highlighted the role that farmers could take in helping to tackle the climate and nature emergencies and urged the WG to look at more ways of working together. The Minister agreed on the important role of farmers but recognised the importance of farmers working together to share best practice and develop approaches with their peers, in conjunction with legislation such as the Sustainable Farming Scheme and economic policies.
50. The Chair offered sincere thanks to the Minister for her attendance at the Board meeting.
51. The Minister left the meeting.
52. The Board approved the Corporate Plan to 2030.

APPROVED: The Corporate Plan to 2030

Item 8: Update on Atlantic Salmon

Presenter: Ben Wilson, Principal Advisor, Fisheries

53. The Executive Director of Evidence, Policy and Permitting (EPP) introduced the item, and highlighted that this was another piece of evidence which illustrated how nature and people were not thriving together. Prof Steve Ormerod explained that the evidence presented was a piece of commissioned, complex, fisheries science. Prof Ormerod commented on the salmon as an iconic, highly protected, economically important organism, the protection of which was being failed in the areas of landscape, inland water, and marine management. This, combined with the impact of climate change, meant that the salmon was facing extinction in various rivers in Wales. There was an opportunity to turn the situation around but urgent action was needed.
54. The Principal Advisor, Fisheries, gave a presentation to the Board on the findings from the Evidence Report 674 'The identification and characterisation of small salmon populations to support their conservation and management' by Carlos Garcia De Leaniz and Nigel Milner. It was highlighted that salmon, along with the closely linked sea trout, were a key indicator of environmental quality. They were noted as a feature of many of the designated sites of Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and there were international obligations to manage them. It was recognised that they were economically and socially important, and in decline not just in Wales but across the British Isles and North Atlantic. In light of this declining population in Wales, the Report considered when the critical point would be reached. It was highlighted that this situation could also be applied to other species such as curlew and water voles. The reduction in population size made them more vulnerable to pressures such as hot summers, warm winters, land management issues, and water quality issues. The resulting reduction in genetic diversity and fitness was explained.
55. It was projected that 15 of the 22 principal salmon rivers in Wales would not have salmon in them in the next ten to 20 years. The outlook was bleak, and this was the first time that the term 'extinction' had been used. However, the Report highlighted that there was room for hope and some of the possible interventions were explained. The Plan of Action was described, which included Nature-Based Solutions as an integral part. Capital funding from the Nature and Climate Emergency (NACE) fund would be helping to address a wide range of issues, alongside projects tackling metal mines, peat remediation and tree planting. Tree planting in riparian zones was highlighted, particularly ensuring the right tree in the right place. The importance of taking action now was emphasised and the Salmon and Sea Trout Plan of Action would be embedded within NRW and beyond.
56. The Board considered the update, noting the content with deep concern, and that this epitomised what was going wrong in the freshwater and marine environment. The urgency of the situation was recognised. The conversations earlier in the meeting around speaking truth to power were highlighted.
57. Discussion took place on how to reach all the target audiences on this issue. The importance of a combined approach was emphasised.
58. The measures that could be taken to improve the situation were considered, for example, around woodland planting along the river banks for shade, pollution reduction, and structural habitats. It was suggested that riparian owners could be mobilised to take rapid action. The role of the NRW Estate in this was highlighted. Prof Calvin Jones, as Chair of the LEC, proposed that the Committee could consider the information that was held on NRW's riparian habitat.

ACTION: A discussion on the condition of the riparian habitat on the NRW Estate to be added to the Land Estate Committee Forward Look.

59. The importance of working with others was emphasised, such as landowners, the Woodland Trust, and River Trusts in Wales. It would be important to understand the challenges for landowners and the role of grant funding in supporting work was highlighted.

60. It was recognised that this was a complex situation but also a good case study for the new Corporate Plan, with the combined issues of climate, nature, and pollution coming together. The compelling story could be used to engage and mobilise people to act, harnessing anger around the issues to create a campaign. The challenge to think differently and come up with radical ideas was emphasised. The Board discussed how this could happen and some examples of radical thinking were suggested. The work by the education team in schools on rivers and salmon was explained. The Chair requested that the Principal Advisor, Fisheries, return to the July Board meeting with suggestions on a radical approach to the plight of the salmon. Zoe Henderson, as Chair of the WLMF, requested that the presentation be provided to the next meeting of the WLMF Sub Group on Agricultural Pollution.

ACTION: The Principal Advisor, Fisheries, to return to the July Board meeting with suggestions on a radical approach to the plight of the salmon.

ACTION: The presentation on the plight of the Atlantic Salmon to be presented to the Wales Land Management Forum Sub Group on Agricultural Pollution.

Item 9: Business Plan Performance Dashboard Quarter 3 Report

Sponsor and Presenter: Clare Pillman, Chief Executive

Attendees: Caroline Hawkins, Corporate Planning, Performance & Strategic Assessment Manager, Sarah Williams, Head of Corporate Strategy and Programme Management Office

61. The Chief Executive presented the Quarter 3 (Q3) Business Plan Performance Dashboard Report. The paper was taken as read. It was explained that the RAG status of two measures in Q3 were Red, however these were different to the two Red measures noted in Q2. The two Red measures for Q3 were likely to still be Red at year end. The Flood Risk Management Plans were considered at ET in the autumn but would need to align with the new Corporate Plan and were therefore delayed. The other Red measure on 'delivery of programmes to review statutory water quality requirements' required additional quality assurance work on the nutrients review. No RAG status was applied to the measure on 'work to set the strategic direction for development and implementation of projects' due to changes in the WG planned timescales. The Internal Performance measures were explained. Three indicators were Red, although Health and Safety Near Miss Reporting was expected to be Green at year end. Absence had moved to Red in Q3. The rise in the sickness absence rate had been noted by PCC and a deep dive would take place on this.

62. Board members considered the content of the update. It was queried when the measure on water quality was expected to move from Red. The Executive Director of Operations explained that this was expected to happen from the first quarter of 2023/24.

APPROVED: The Business Plan Performance Dashboard Q3 Report and Internal Performance Quarter 3 Report

Item 10: Diversity and Inclusion Report 2022-23 and Discussion

Presenters: Sarah Stacey, Head of Organisational Development, Shaheen Sutton, EDI Specialist

63. The Executive Director of Corporate Strategy and Development introduced the item, noting that time had been spent last year on developing the Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) Strategy which was now being implemented and built into the People programme of work. The Report included details on the progress tracked against the Action Plan. The work of the staff networks was highlighted. Thanks were offered to Zoe Henderson for her work and support on the Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Forum.
64. Julia Cherrett as Chair of the People and Customer Committee, commented on the Report noting that there had been a slight decline in the Gender Pay Gap. PCC had reviewed the information and considered that it was reasonable due to the small numbers involved and that this did sometimes occur between years. There were some interesting questions about what the Board could do to get behind this sort of work. Discussions would follow in areas such as Associate Director roles.
65. The Head of Organisational Development posed the following questions for the Board: How could the Board further support D&I in NRW? Any examples that could be shared of best practice to promote inclusion and diversity?
66. The Chair requested that a special session should be created to enable sufficient time to focus and develop the themes around this issue. The Head of Organisational Development agreed to build a special EDI session into the Board Development Programme.

ACTION: The Head of Organisational Development to build a special EDI session into the Board Development Programme

67. Zoe Henderson, as Chair of the EDI Forum, commented on the importance of active support from the Board and the value of the EDI Forum, noting the rich, open discussions and the opportunity to highlight the work of various groups. The importance of the work carried out in increasing understanding of neurodiversity was highlighted and the training on this issue had been very enlightening. It would be important not to restrict discussion to the nine protected characteristics, as Inclusion and Diversity was relevant to everyone in the way in which all different people could be included. The unintended consequences of creating new excluded groups (for example, rural communities) would need careful consideration along with awareness of the broader aspects of Diversity and Inclusion.
68. The Chair invited Zoe Henderson to join the future EDI discussion session which would take place after the end of her Board appointment and noted that a replacement would be sought for her role as EDI Forum Chair.

ACTION: Zoe Henderson to be invited to join the future EDI discussion session

69. Board members considered the content of the Report. The approach to understanding staff turnover was queried, especially where staff were from more diverse backgrounds. It was suggested that more could be done as part of exit interviews to understand the lived experience of people in order to act proactively. The Head of Organisational Development confirmed that this would be part of the work over the next six months.
70. The outward-facing approach was considered. Best practice could be shared on working with communities who were not normally engaged in the work of NRW. It was suggested that there was an opportunity to link the radical thinking on supporting the salmon population and engaging with different communities. The external messaging on the website was highlighted for development.

71. The Anti-Racism Pledge was discussed, and it was queried what NRW could do with this, particularly around tracking career experiences. The Head of Organisational Development confirmed that this was one of the areas being considered for assurance as progression was an important indicator of inclusivity. Recruitment was discussed and the importance of offering support and proactive opportunities for were recognised.
72. Geraint Davies, as Chair of NAFW, offered his support in developing access to, and understanding of, the countryside for people of all backgrounds.
73. The Board approved the Diversity and Inclusion Report 2022-23.

APPROVED: The Diversity and Inclusion Report 2022-23

Item 11: Wellbeing, Health and Safety Quarter 3 Report

Presenter: Sarah Stacey, Head of Organisational Development; Phil Mostyn, Lead Specialist Advisor, Wellbeing Health & Safety

74. The Executive Director of Corporate Strategy and Development introduced the item. This was explained as a regular Report, which was also scrutinised by PCC. The recertification of the international standard for occupational health and safety, ISO 45001, was highlighted, along with a positive review by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) in relation to forestry inspections, which provided good assurance for the Board. Looking ahead, work would continue on active monitoring and reporting, and also Near Miss reporting. A significant piece of work was taking place on training and development, including training needs analysis. Detailed work was also taking place on mental health issues.
75. The Head of Organisational Development updated the Board on two SIRs that had been commissioned. It was reported that there had been no RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations) or Lost Time incidents in Q3, and also that Near Miss reporting had increased in Q3. NRW had been successful in retaining the Corporate Health Standard (CHS) Silver Award. The assessor had been complimentary of the work undertaken during the pandemic and the wellbeing of NRW staff. The Wellbeing team had focused on issues around the cost-of-living crisis and had run financial awareness sessions. The Learning and Development team had their busiest period in Q3, developing courses including training on dealing with hostile situations. The Wellbeing, Health and Safety Manager was working with the People Management team on the data on mental health referrals to understand the details. This was being covered by PCC.
76. The Board considered the content of the Report and queried what was needed to achieve the CHS Gold Award. The Head of Organisational Development explained the feedback received on this from the assessor, noting that NRW were already close to the Gold Award standard.

APPROVED: The Wellbeing, Health and Safety Quarter 3 Report

Item 12: Review of Board Committee Membership

Presenter: Colette Fletcher, Head of Governance and Board Secretary

77. The Head of Governance and Board Secretary introduced the item and took the paper as read. It was noted that some of the changes were immediate and other would be changes to follow. It was also noted that a new Chair of the EDI Forum would be selected following earlier discussions.

78. The Board approved the proposed Board Committee and Forum membership.

ACTION: A new EDI Forum Chair to be agreed

APPROVED: The Board Committee and Forum membership as detailed in the paper

Item 13: Terms of Reference

Presenter: Colette Fletcher, Head of Governance and Board Secretary

79. The Head of Governance and Board Secretary introduced the item and took the paper as read.

80. Board members recommended that the scope and purpose of Board Committees' Terms of Reference should include reference to the new Corporate Plan.

ACTION: The scope and purpose of the Board Committees' Terms of Reference to include reference to the new Corporate Plan

APPROVED: The revised Terms of Reference for the Protected Areas Committee, Land Estate Committee, and Finance Committee

Item 14: Board Forward Look

Presenter: Colette Fletcher, Head of Governance and Board Secretary

81. The Head of Governance and Board Secretary introduced the item and took the paper as read.

82. The Board reviewed and noted the Forward Look.

Item 15: AOB

83. The Chief Executive noted the recent WG announcement on the two freeports to be established in Milford Haven and Port Talbot, and Anglesey, which would be areas of growth and energy. NRW would need to respond, and the regulatory framework would need to develop alongside this.

84. The Executive Director of Operations updated the Board on his attendance at the recent session with the Secretary of State for Wales and the South Wales Industrial Cluster. The importance of this in the move towards decarbonisation was emphasised. NRW teams were involved, and the Board would be updated on the issues. Board members commented on the work to be done to achieve zero carbon by 2040, highlighting the holistic system that would be needed for this to be achieved.

85. The Chief Executive noted the appointment of the new CEO of the Environment Agency.

86. Prof Steve Ormerod highlighted the United Nations (UN) Water Conference and recommended that some of the lessons from this should come to a future Board. The UN thinking on water was increasingly around taking a holistic view which linked to everything from drinking water supply to waste water treatment to the protection of surface water. It would be important to understand what this would mean for NRW.

ACTION: Outcomes from the UN Water Conference to be added to the Board Forward Look for a future meeting

87. The Board reflected on the meeting. The new colleagues and voices were very welcome. The value in the space and time to enable rich conversations was highlighted. It was

recommended that time should be included within the Board Development Day Programme on how meetings were structured to enable those conversations to happen.

ACTION: An item to be included within the Board Development Day Programme to consider the structure of Board meetings to enable rich discussions

88. The Chair offered sincere thanks to Karen Balmer and Zoe Henderson for their incredible support and contribution during their time as Board members.

- End of Public Meeting –

Public Q&A

1. Questions were received from Kim Waters, Welsh Rivers Union. These included:

- a) *Each of the public board meeting is recorded but not available to the public after the event. Providing recorded access to public events is now standard practice if open transparency is actually valued by our institutions. Giving access to people and communities who aren't retired is very important.*
- b) *Can the CEO give a summary, status update of the catastrophic Dŵr Cymru sewer failure in the Taff ten days ago?*
 - *Cause*
 - *Impact*
 - *Future risks*
 - *Other site risks*
 - *Evidence of negligence with reports of earlier notifications*
- c) *PFAS awareness has come up the agenda with the recent work done by Watershed Investigations. Key vectors for PFAS are CSOs and the spread on land of "Sewage Cake" something that Dŵr Cymru confirmed to you last month have no idea where it is spread.*
- d) *Can NRW give a projection/assessment with current policies and process in place of the impact of PFAS entering the Welsh environment? Could you give focus to drinking water pumped out of rivers that have serious CSO loading? e.g. River Usk and Llandegffed Reservoir.*

2. The Chair responded to the first question and noted that the issue of recording would need further discussion and consideration by the Board.

3. The Executive Director of Operations responded to the second question, explaining that members of NRW were shared the same concerns when attending incidents such as this. There had been a failure in the main sewer which had resulted in a volume of sewage spilling into the river Taff. An immediate diversion of the sewer took place, although there was a problem with the initial repair. The company were investigating the reason for the pipe failure, as the cause was not yet known. Water quality samples were taken. It was anticipated that any impact would have been short term and no dead fish or invertebrates had been found. Work continued with Dŵr Cymru to ensure that future risks were minimised. A routine meeting with water company directors had taken place and they had indicated their measures at this site and the wider infrastructure, and the Asset Management Plan (AMP) investment at other sites. Risks at other sites were recognised. The impact of a recent incident at Magor, including impacts on the wider Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), were noted. It was not appropriate to comment at this time on the evidence of negligence as this would form part of the investigation.

4. Mr Waters welcomed the Board discussion earlier in the meeting on this issue and highlighted that the water companies should not use the excuse of dealing with a Victorian sewage system.
5. The Head of DPAS and Marine responded to the third and fourth questions from Mr Waters. Poly and perfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) were explained as a large group of synthetic fluorinated chemicals used in a wide range of manufactured products. Some of these uses had been subject to controls under legislation, but other uses were ongoing. NRW monitored for and reported PFAS for the Water Framework Directive Regulations (WFD). The PFAS, perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA), was also monitored. As PFAS bioaccumulate the WFD guided towards monitoring in biological samples, such as fish or shellfish. The limit on the scope of the monitoring was explained but it was noted that none of the samples had so far failed the WFD standard. Work was taking place to develop laboratory analysis methods for a greater range of PFAS and a review of all PFAS data held by NRW would take place to identify any additional evidence needs. The potential additions were described. Risk assessments had taken place and targeted monitoring for specific sites was being considered.
6. It was explained that NRW were part of a cross-government working group on PFAS and were in regular discussions with Welsh Government and other regulators such as the Drinking Water Inspectorate to share evidence and derive consistent policy. NRW also participated in the Chemical Investigations Programme 4 which would investigate sources and cycling of PFAS from wastewater sources and cycling in the environment such as spreading to land. It was highlighted that there was no legislative tool for controlling any PFAS applications to land or in any land/soil. It was explained that the chemical was so ubiquitous it would be picked up in most applications. It was recognised that the current regulatory controls over sludge applied to agricultural land were old and did not assess for complex chemicals. England and Scotland were currently reforming these regulatory controls NRW were in discussion with WG on this matter.
7. NRW would be requiring the water companies to ensure that their National Environment Programmes (NEP) prepared for future challenges, including PFAS. PFAS had come up as a Drinking Water Inspectorate (DWI) priority to protect public water supplies therefore NRW would be looking for water company Price Review 24 (PR24) investment to meet this DWI requirement.
8. The Chair thanked Mr Waters for his questions and confirmed that a written response would be provided.

ACTION: A written response to questions raised at the public Q&A session to be sent to Mr Kim Waters.

9. A question was received from Harriet Alvis - CEO, West Wales Rivers Trust, which was read to the Board by the Head of Governance and Board Secretary: *I was saddened to hear from a member of the Board that change in the agricultural community can only be achieved by fellow farmers driving those that are behind along. Of course, that is a part of any progress change and there are many farmers who are proactive and environmentally focused but I think that this statement just highlights the weakness of NRW in one of your key responsibilities – enforcement. We have plenty of data now in the form of SAGIS modelling, pollution report figures, WFD and others to show that for many of our rural catchments, particularly in West Wales that agriculture is the main contributor to water quality decline. DCWW are rightly starting to be held accountable for their part but the same does not appear to be the case for agriculture. Can the Board please tell me how often on average each farm can expect an NRW visit? Please do not include the Rivers for LIFE Project work in this as it is a short-term project that does not include any key*

regulatory assessments such as slurry store capacity and condition. Second question – what are NRW's plans to improve farm visit rates as well as enforcement of the basic regulations that are being breached on a regular basis.

10. The Executive Director of Operations provided an overview response to the question. The broader issues and the number of contributors on water quality were recognised. It was explained that whilst in incident mode, the response involved following the source. On average there were currently a low number of farm visits, around 1% in relation to Ground-water Regulations. However, there were several projects on the ground, such as the Four Rivers for LIFE Projects which included active visits and proactive work in these areas as part of these projects, working in partnership with landowners including farmers. The Control of Agricultural Pollution Regulations had now come into force and resources had recently been received by NRW in relation to this. Recruitment for a team of around 20 staff would be taking place, whose roles would focus on farm visits in a regulatory capacity.
11. The Chair confirmed that a more detailed written response would follow.

ACTION: A written response to questions raised at the public Q&A session to be sent to Harriet Alvis

12. Mr Waters commented on the presentation on the plight of the Atlantic Salmon and expressed anger at the situation, particularly around long-term knowledge of the issue, highlighting historic studies on the issues of pollution and poor farming practices. He expressed the view that the issues to be addressed were hard but mostly politics and policy rather than basic ecology. Mr Waters offered his assistance with insight, helping to inform, and in providing evidence of poor farming practice and Combined Storm Overflow (CSO) issues.
13. The Chair welcomed Mr Waters' offer of assistance in garnering public interest and anger at the potential loss of the salmon, and also encouraged Mr Waters to provide details on the polluting sites that he had described.

- End of Meeting –

Board Meetings

Action No.	Meeting Category	Meeting Date	Item No	Para No	Paper Sponsor	Action	Owner	Due	Status	Notes/Updates
16	Public	27/01/2023	7	32	Rachael Cunningham, Executive Director of FCS	ACTION: FRMC to consider the full costs of the Internal Drainage Districts in conjunction with the Head of Finance	Jeremy Parr, Head of Flood and Incident Risk Management; Rob Bell, Head of Finance	05/07/2023	Ongoing	To be considered by FRMC in July
18	Public	27/01/2023	9	47	Prys Davies, Executive Director of CSD	ACTION: The Head of Governance and Board Secretary to develop the approach to Place-based Board public engagement sessions	Colette Fletcher, Head of Governance & Board Secretary	27/04/2023	Ongoing	The action owner may change
34	Public	23/03/2023	4	15	Clare Pillman CEO	ACTION: Board members and the Minister to be provided with regular updates on enforcement actions	Nadia DeLonghi, Head of Regulation and Permitting; Martin Cox, Head of North Wales Operations	29/06/2023	Ongoing	See notes in action 35
35	Public	23/03/2023	4	18	Clare Pillman CEO	ACTION: A presentation on the work on minimising pollution to be presented at a future Board meeting	Nadia DeLonghi, Head of Regulation and Permitting; Martin Cox, Head of North Wales Operations	29/06/2023	Ongoing	Agreed to bring to July Board meeting. Noted that the format for this update is under discussion with Ceri Davies and Gareth O'Shea
36	Public	23/03/2023	8	58	Ceri Davies Executive Director EPP	ACTION: A discussion on the condition of the riparian habitat on the NRW Estate to be added to the Land Estate Committee Forward Look	Secretariat	31/03/2023	Completed	
37	Public	23/03/2023	8	60	Ceri Davies Executive Director EPP	ACTION: The Principal Advisor, Fisheries, to return to the July Board meeting with suggestions on a radical approach to the plight of the salmon.	Ben Wilson, Principal Advisor, Fisheries	29/06/2023	Ongoing	
38	Public	23/03/2023	8		Ceri Davies Executive Director EPP	ACTION: The presentation on the plight of the Atlantic Salmon to be presented to the Wales Land Management Forum	Bronwen Martin, WLMF Secretariat	14/04/2023	Completed	Added to WLMF Sub Group on Agricultural Pollution Forward Look
39	Public	23/03/2023	10	66	Prys Davies Executive Director CS&D	ACTION: The Head of Organisational Development to build a special EDI session into the Board Development Programme	Sarah Stacey, Head of Organisational Development	27/04/2023	Ongoing	
40	Public	23/03/2023	10	68	Prys Davies Executive Director CS&D	ACTION: Zoe Henderson to be invited to join the future EDI discussion session	Secretariat	29/06/2023	Ongoing	
41	Public	23/03/2023	12	77	Prys Davies Executive Director CS&D	ACTION: A new EDI Forum Chair to be agreed	Head of Governance and Board Secretary	27/04/2023	Ongoing	
42	Public	23/03/2023	13	80	Prys Davies Executive Director CS&D	ACTION: The scope and purpose of the Board Committees' Terms of Reference to include reference to the new Corporate Plan	Head of Governance and Board Secretary	27/04/2023	Ongoing	
43	Public	23/03/2023	15	86	Sir David Henshaw	ACTION: Outcomes from the UN Water Conference to be added to the Board Forward Look for a future meeting	Ruth Jenkins, Head of Natural Resource Management Policy	27/04/2023	Completed	
44	Public	23/03/2023	15	87	Sir David Henshaw	ACTION: An item to be included within the Board Development Day Programme to consider the structure of Board meetings to enable rich discussions	Sarah Stacey, Head of Organisational Development; Head of Governance and Board Secretary	27/04/2023	Completed	
45	Public	23/03/2023	Q&A	8	Sir David Henshaw	ACTION: A written response to questions raised at the public Q&A session to be sent to Mr Kim Waters.	Rhian Jardine, Head of DPAS and Marine	27/04/2023	Completed	
46	Public	23/03/2023	Q&A	11	Sir David Henshaw	ACTION: A written response to questions raised at the public Q&A session to be sent to Harriet Alvis.	Simon Neale and Nichola Salter	10/05/2023	Completed	

NRW Board Paper

Date of meeting:	Thursday, 18 th May 2023	
Title of Paper:	CEO Report – PUBLIC SESSION	
Paper Reference:	23-05-B04	
Paper sponsored by:	Clare Pillman, Chief Executive	
Paper prepared by:	Clare Pillman, Chief Executive	
Paper presented by:	Clare Pillman, Chief Executive	
Purpose of the paper	Information	
Approval/Consultation process:	Responsible: Who has developed the paper/process and who has had input?	Content provided by all directorates
	Accountable: Who is accountable for the ultimate approval? Who will be or is being asked to approve?	The paper is for information only
	Consulted: Who has been consulted to date? Where endorsement is required, is this in place? Will further consultation be required?	N/a
	Informed: Who has been informed or who needs to be further informed about the work?	N/a
Summary	The paper intends to raise awareness of the matters covered	

Introduction

1. The highlight of the last month was undoubtedly the signing off and soft launch of our new Corporate Plan. An all-staff webinar was held on 28 March, with follow-up webinars focusing on the three Wellbeing Objectives. Team leaders and managers are now being encouraged to discuss the content of the Corporate Plan with their teams, to bring the plan to life and identify goals and commitments at team level. Feedback will be gathered and used to create engaging local gatherings across Wales, for colleagues to share their thoughts and ideas and hear from more senior managers – including Executive Team (ET) and Board members wherever possible – about our next steps in delivering the plan. Plans are well-advanced for the formal launch in the Senedd on 6 June.

Senior staffing

2. Ian Mowatt is now in post as Head of Procurement and Contracts in Communications, Customer and Commercial. Vernon Lambert has been appointed permanently to the Procurement Manager Role. In Operations, we have completed the interviews for the new role of Head of Strategic projects. We will be in a position to announce the successful candidate by the time the Board meets in May. Interviews will also have taken place for the Head of Operations in South Central by then. I'm grateful for Rosie Plummer and Steve Ormerod's involvement in these campaigns. We were unsuccessful in the first round of recruitment to the Head of Operations for South West Wales so this is now going to external advert.

Engagement

3. As the weather improves, I have been out and about quite a lot, spending time with different teams and in different offices. Rosie Plummer and I had a great day out with Pete Stanley, Senior Specialist Advisor, and the Abandoned Metal Mines team in March. This visit to the Frongoch and Traverse mines was also attended by Andy Fraser and Clare Fernandes of Welsh Government (WG), and Lisa Pinney and colleagues from the Coal Authority.
4. Along with Geraint Davies and Pete Fox, I had the pleasure of attending the formal opening of the restored flood embankment at Llyn Tegid at the end of March. The event was attended by our Project team, contractors and members of the local community, Welsh Government and Mabon ap Gwynfor AS. The opening marks the conclusion of sixteen months of work on site that included the creation of a new footpath and landscaping, recreational and biodiversity habitat improvements, with three trees planted locally for every tree removed. Vtally, engineering works to 3km of raised embankments

have improved the safety of the reservoir and protect local homes from the risk of flooding.

5. At the end of March, I spoke at an event marking the end of the first year of the Creative Nature Programme between NRW and the Arts Council for Wales. Invitees included collaborators, contributors and stakeholders, as well as the eight artists taking part in the Future Wales Fellowship, one of the two outputs of the programme. The second output, a plan for Climate Justice and the Arts, will promote ethical values and support the creative sector in being more nature friendly and moving towards net zero. I am delighted that the partnership will be continuing for a further two years.
6. I met the new Welsh Language Commissioner, Efa Gruffudd Jones, early in April. I also met Andrew White of the National Lottery Heritage Fund to discuss ways of working more closely in partnership. A meeting with Philip Hygate, Chair of the National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs), was held in Llangollen and covered our priorities for designated landscapes, our project to map Wales' natural beauty and an update on actions from the Biodiversity Deep Dive.
7. Ceri Davies and I met with Nicole Paterson, the new Chief Executive of Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA). We continue to work closely with them on a range of matters, particularly flood forecasting and warning/informing activity, and regulatory matters.
8. I also met Cllr Andrew Morgan, Chair of the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA), and then, later in month Gareth and I attended a meeting of the WLGA Council, which includes all the Local Authority Leaders, to congratulate them on the progress on the Public Service Board (PSB) Wellbeing Plans and discuss the plan to refresh the Memorandum Of Understanding (MOU) that we have with the WLGA and its members.
9. I enjoyed two days in the Haverfordwest area, spending time at the office catching up with colleagues, and taking the opportunity to meet up with Tegryn Jones, Chief Executive of the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority. I also had a useful meeting with the Milford Haven Port Authority, starting with an introductory meeting with the new Chief Executive, Tom Sawyer.
10. At the end of April, I attended a celebration at the Senedd to mark the tenth anniversary of the Wales Coast Path, and the launch event for the Bannau Brycheiniog National Park Management Plan.

Natur a Ni (Nature and Us)

11. The final Citizen's Assembly was held online on 18 March and focused on building the shared vision. Alongside time for reflection and prioritising, there was a presentation by Jane Davidson, Welsh former Labour politician, on the work to examine potential pathways to net zero by 2035. The facilitators are now preparing a report that will answer

the questions asked of the Assembly and synthesise all the Assembly conversations into a vision statement.

12. We are preparing a plan to release the vision during Wales Nature Week at the end of July. The proposal is to hold a series of events during this week, in partnership with other organisations, public bodies, businesses, charities and artists, to publicise and share the vision; connect and inspire; increase participation and encourage all involved to contribute to realising the vision. The aim is for the events to be co-designed and hosted by different organisations where possible, to attract different audiences and to invite ownership and action towards the vision.
13. We are exploring options to develop communication tools to support this work with the artists and designers that have been involved in Nature and Us to date. We are also undertaking stakeholder mapping as part of the preparations for releasing the vision, before approaching partners and developing a comms and engagement plan. In parallel, we will prepare a formal NRW response to the vision, setting out what we will commit to do as an organisation; this statement will need to be signed-off by the Board in the autumn.

Royal Welsh Show and National Eisteddfod

14. The theme for our presence at the Royal Welsh Show (RWS) and National Eisteddfod for 2023 will be Nature's Recovery and the activities on our stands will reflect the new Corporate Plan priority and showcase the breadth of our work to protect and restore nature. The RWS stand will feature a mix of activities, events and opportunities to network. The Eisteddfod stand is smaller but will promote the same theme, with a focus on NRW's nature recovery projects close to the Eisteddfod location.
15. The first briefing for Board Members (of three) was issued mid-April and a further briefing will follow in mid-June, with a final event briefing the week before the Royal Welsh Show.

Communications & Digital

Brand Refresh

16. Alongside the work to launch the Corporate Plan, we also worked intensively to deliver a brand refresh for NRW, working with ICT to update systems with refreshed templates and email footers, and with creative partners to create brand guidelines and refreshed publicity materials.
17. Alongside this work, we continued proactively to promote our work across Wales, including the end of the Llyn Tegid flood risk management works, the publication of the

report into salmon populations and the completion of works to restore Llantysilio mountain after the 2018 wildfires.

18. We engaged with the agricultural community on how to stick to the rules on spreading slurry and manures in spring, as outlined in The Water Resources (Control of Agricultural Pollution (Wales) Regulations 2021.
19. We were busy during this period dealing with and responding to multiple media enquiries related to water quality – particularly in relation to the release of Enterprise Data Management (EDM) data, burst sewer pipe incidents and ongoing enquiries related to Polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs).
20. Ahead of the Easter break, we promoted the Countryside Code, responsible recreation and wildfire season messages and supported the return of the Ospreys and the launch of the live feed video which gains in popularity year-on-year.
21. Our work to preserve endangered freshwater pearl mussels has also gathered significant attention in the media with a range of broadcasters featuring the project over recent weeks, and we were pleased with the response to an in-depth piece for the BBC on flood forecasting.

Digital

22. The big focus for the Digital Team in March was on revising and updating content and application forms for several permits and licences, in preparation for proposed changes to the permitting charges, taking the opportunity to improve the user-journey where we can. The work is now on hold until WG has approved the schemes. We also published the new Corporate Plan, removing old content and improving the About Us structure to make content easier to find and navigate. The team has started doing regular 'show and tells' and 'weeknotes', an important part of agile working and working in the open (as per the digital standards for Wales). Recent topics have included the new content and publishing manual and latest woodland user research. We also held a session with teams at the WG, as part of continued efforts to work together to improve the user journeys between the NRW and WG websites.

Customer

Customer Satisfaction Index

23. In January we featured on the Institute of Customer Service's UK Customer Satisfaction Index for a second consecutive time, giving us the chance to compare benchmarking data from twelve months ago and public perceptions data from three points in the last year. We are pleased that we have seen both an increase in our own score and a better-

than-sector average score. The scores have also seen us move above comparable organisations and match the national average.

Customer Experience & Engagement Strategy

24. Our Customer Experience & Engagement Strategy sets NRW's principles for customer experience and engagement in all parts of the business. We are in the process of undertaking an internal review and refresh of the strategy, in line with the launch of our new Corporate Plan and other key NRW strategies and plans.
25. Since its initial publication, we have been developing and building our organisational knowledge and understanding of customer experience and engagement. With the clarity and strategic focus of the corporate plan setting out the ambition, the refreshed strategy will provide the framework to ensure that the whole organisation is consistently striving for excellence, resulting in a better experience for our partners, customers and stakeholders.

New Complaints & Commendations Policy

26. On 1 April we launched our new refreshed Complaints & Commendations Policy, which will make it easier and quicker for customers to provide feedback on a service they have received from us and ensure we learn from feedback, which can be both positive and negative. We are currently rolling out training to all staff who handle complaints, to ensure they are familiar with the new policy and are confident when responding to feedback.
27. At the end of the first quarter we will publish complaint performance information via the Public Service Ombudsman of Wales (PSoW) website. This will allow the Ombudsman and customers to compare our performance with other public sector organisations in Wales, and ensure we are complying with the PSoW's complaint handling policy.

Operational Issues

Tree Planting Work at Coed Abermarlais, Carmarthenshire

28. The first phase of planting at the Coed Abermarlais (Brownhills) commemorative woodland commenced in March. NRW, working alongside Tir Coed, organised a number of community planting days on site and a number of volunteers and local groups turned up on site which, despite the unseasonably wet weather, resulted in over 4,000 broadleaf trees being planted – including a one-acre orchard of locally grown traditional variety fruit trees associated with the Tywi Valley. Given the success of this initial phase of planting, further events will be organised next planting season.

29. In addition to the work undertaken by volunteers, contractors were also engaged to plant a further four hectares (ten acres) of the improved grassland areas of the holding. This was achieved by creating 10m wide broadleaved corridors alongside the existing hedgerows and replanting of historic hedgerows that had been previously grubbed out. The remaining improved grassland will be let for grazing / cropping later this month whilst we explore longer term options to manage the land sustainably.

Update on the Grassland Pilot Project

30. The Grassland Pilot Project is funded through the Nature Network, Nature & Climate Emergency programme. The Project is focused on improving the condition of marshy grassland / rhos pasture and has employed a full-time project officer, with the work split between Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire.

31. In Carmarthenshire, following the delivery of two external habitat survey contracts, we have been working on meeting multiple landowners identified as owning suitable habitat in the Llandeilo/Trapp area. These sites potentially form part of a marsh fritillary meta-population and link to already designated Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs). With off-site S16 Environment Act Land Management Agreements (LMAs) go-ahead expected by the beginning of the summer, the project officer is working on developing a number of draft S16 agreements, costing both habitat management and capital works delivery programmes in readiness for signing later in the summer. Discussions are also progressing well with potential graziers and contractors. One site to note is 70 acres of habitat land owned by Brecon Carreg, with a potential of developing it into a Local Nature Reserve.

32. In Pembrokeshire, due to offsite S16 agreements not being available at present, the project officer has worked closely with the local Environment Team to assist with delivery of actions on designated sites to maximise Nature Network fund spend. Work has included renegotiating S16 agreements, discussing management options with landowners, arranging and negotiating capital works delivery with various contractors and subsequent monitoring of completed works before processing for payment. As with Carmarthenshire, work has now started on identifying and negotiating draft offsite management agreements with landowners ready for summer signing once offsite S16s become available.

Land Acquisition

33. In the past month or so we have completed two land purchases using money from the compensatory planting pot:

- Coed y Cerrig NNR, near Abergavenny, which includes 5.27 hectares of land that we previously rented. This is designated a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) as an excellent example of alluvial

forest. The land supports Monmouthshire's entire population of nationally scarce marsh fern, as well as populations of other uncommon and locally rare species such as herb-Paris, alternate-leaved golden-saxifrage and broad-leaved cotton-grass. Visitors to the site are most likely to notice the impressive blooms of marsh marigold, visible from the accessible 500m boardwalk. In addition, a further 3.76 hectares of adjacent woodland has been purchased. This land has good ground flora that will improve with careful management and the potential to provide good foraging habitat for the adjacent SAC bat population.

- A 32.5ha block of land at Machen in Caerphilly where we plan to plant a mixture of conifer and broadleaf trees. There are areas of unimproved land that will be retained and managed as open grassland habitats and a network of hedgerows that will be managed to improve connectivity throughout the site.

Partnership Working

34. The International Waste Shipments Unit, part of Waste Once in Operations Team, regulate waste imports and exports for NRW. In November 2022, our officers travelled to Belfast to participate in the Shipment of Waste Enforcement Actions Project, which is co-funded by the European Commission LIFE fund and co-ordinated by the Implementation & Enforcement of European Law (IMPEL) Network, which aims to disrupt the illegal waste trade by increasing collaboration and skill sets amongst inspectors and law enforcement agencies.
35. The two-day visit covered safe systems of work for inspecting containers and a visit to Belfast Dock to physically inspect containers to demonstrate procedures and quality of waste types. Officers from Belgium, Netherlands, Republic of Ireland, Northern Ireland, England and Wales attended. They concluded that in a post-Covid pandemic world, ways of working have changed and the Inspector Exchange Conference in Belfast highlighted the need for and importance of greater cooperation and knowledge exchange, especially in relation to international waste shipments.

Project SIARC (Sharks Inspiring Action and Research with Communities)

36. After securing continued funding through the Heritage Nature Networks Fund (NNF), April will see the formal launch for Project SIARC, which will run for a further three years until the end of March 2026.
37. Project SIARC is jointly led by NRW and the Zoological Society of London (ZSL) with four main objectives. These are to address critical data gaps in the ecology of elasmobranchs (sharks, skates and rays); diversify opportunities for involvement in marine conservation in Wales; generate a greater appreciation of the underwater environment; and inspire the next generation to connect with the marine environment through learning.

38. Building on the success and techniques developed as part of Angel Shark Project: Wales, Project SIARC has a multi-disciplinary approach delivering seven work-packages with eight partners and thirteen collaborator organisations. Fisher partnerships are at the heart of the delivery programme, and the fisher engagement strategy will be used to inform sampling techniques, feedback mechanisms, project communications and engagement opportunities. Fishers will be training in elasmobranch identification and best practice handling with some also training in deploying BRUVS (baited remote underwater video systems).
39. Data gaps will be addressed with repeat angel shark satellite tagging surveys, deployment of BRUVS in key Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), identifying the physical and environmental drivers of elasmobranch distribution using ocean modelling, data processing, dissemination and archiving, continuation of Wales Elasmobranch Research Group and development of student projects analysing Project SIARC data.
40. The community engagement and inclusion work will build on existing elements of NNF relating to 'Equality, Diversity and Inclusion' and further training will be provided to the project team to increase their capacity to engage communities in a more inclusive way. A full-time 'Equality Diversity and Inclusion Officer' post will be seconded to NRW for the duration of the Project.
41. BRUVS footage will continue to be uploaded to the Instant Wild (IW) platform and app enabling citizen scientists to continue to interact with elasmobranchs filmed by the Project and complete the identification tutorial. Footage will remain on the website for at least five years and be maintained by the IW team at ZSL.
42. The school engagement programme will have lasting impact through school children being inspired about their local marine environment, with outputs being embedded in partner education programmes and materials freely available on Hwb website.
43. The NRW-ZSL partnership will continue to demonstrate the benefits of collaborative working between government and NGOs which has been designed to fill critical data gaps enabling science-led conservation to inform casework advice and management decisions across two SACs in Wales.

Strategic Issues

State of Natural Resources Report (SoNaRR) 2025

44. The SoNaRR Interim (draft) report will be published in December 2024 and SoNaRR2025 will be published in December 2025. According to the SoNaRR Vision, SoNaRR should be used as a "force for good" to help address the nature and climate emergencies. SoNaRR must fulfil the statutory purpose ensuring it is effective at influencing decisions.

45. We want SoNaRR to be easily used and updated. Following the publication of SoNaRR2020, we asked for feedback from colleagues and the stakeholders they work with. We also asked key WG staff how they use SoNaRR. We have used this to inform the development of the new report.
46. SoNaRR2025 will be an updated assessment of how Wales is achieving Sustainable Management of Natural Resources (SMNR). We are not planning to rewrite all the chapters: we will build on SoNaRR2016 and SoNaRR2020 as the foundation for future reports. We plan to keep the main structure around the four aims of SMNR and the eight broad ecosystems, and will make it easier to find the information relevant to air, water and soils. Using the key drivers of change, we will update the pressures, state, trends and outlook, and impacts. These will inform the revised opportunities for action at the national scale.
47. Staff from across Evidence, Policy and Permitting (EPP) are working to develop the method for the update. User experience research will help us focus on the structure and content of outputs, and we will start to review the evidence that will be needed for the update over the summer. We are actively working with WG to develop an outcome and indicator framework for SMNR, aligning SoNaRR with the national wellbeing goals and indicators.
48. We will bring a paper to the Board this Autumn on SoNaRR 2025.

Designated Landscapes Programme

49. The Designated Landscapes Programme team is now fully in place. The team includes a Principal Advisor, Programme Manager, two Landscape Specialists, a GIS Analyst, a Procurement Officer and a Communications and Engagement Officer. Stakeholder mapping has already taken place and a communications and engagement plan is being prepared.
50. The first bi-monthly programme update meeting with Lesley Griffiths, Minister for Rural Affairs, North Wales and Trefnydd, took place on 16 February. The Minister appeared to be very engaged with the programme and pleased with the progress made. The next ministerial update is scheduled for 20 April.
51. A fundamental building block of the process to assess a new National Park is the 'Area of Search', building on the initial scoping of the area under consideration. This includes an initial screening assessment to determine whether the area has sufficient nationally important and recognised natural beauty within the geographical context of Wales. The Area of Search provides the spatial framework for the evidence gathering process. A map illustrating the draft area of search has been created and presented at the Protected Areas Committee (PrAC), while a report detailing the work is in development and will be completed mid-April. It is emphasised that the Area of Search is not a draft boundary. Only when the evidence has been gathered, assessed and discussed can NRW

understand where a draft boundary might be drawn, and this will require extensive consultation and likely refinement.

52. Contracts to progress further stages of the designation assessment are scheduled to be let in June 2023. Preparatory procurement activity is underway to facilitate this work taking place on schedule.
53. An interrelated project to map natural beauty has been progressing in parallel with the designation process. This project will integrate SMNR considerations and inform all future designation work in Wales. An internal guidance meeting will take place on 13 April to ensure all internal stakeholders are informed and have an opportunity to co-ordinate activities and shape the product for maximum benefit to the citizens of Wales. An external stakeholder meeting of national organisations with an interest in landscape and the environment is planned for late April / early May; this will introduce the project and seek representatives for an External Technical Group.

Beavers in Wales

54. The Minister for Climate Change, Julie James, has asked NRW to work with WG officials to prioritise a review of available evidence to inform the development of a policy framework and position on beaver re-introductions in Wales. This work will also inform the position with regards to the potential future legal protection of beavers in Wales.
55. To support the development of a policy framework in Wales, NRW specialist and technical staff have been reviewing and considering the available evidence on beavers in the context of the Welsh environment and the Welsh environmental policy and legal framework. We have been using existing evidence reviews from England and Scotland to assess how they might apply to Wales and identifying any evidence gaps. The work on the evidence report has nearly concluded and we are in discussions with WG officials about the next steps.
56. The Wales Beaver Release public survey being undertaken by Exeter University has now closed. A significant response was received and the results are being analysed prior to production of a report which will be made available to WG and NRW in due course.

Regulation of Gamebird Release Consultation

57. On 27 March, we launched a twelve-week public consultation on a proposed new approach to regulating the release of gamebirds (common pheasant and red-legged partridge) in Wales. This is part of a project established to deliver on commitments made by Welsh Ministers to develop regulatory options following the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (Defra's) introduction of an interim licensing

approach in England. The approach in England was a response to a legal challenge by campaign group Wild Justice.

58. In summer 2022 we ran a call for evidence to inform our work and also commissioned two evidence reports from an external expert. Following a review of the available evidence, we have proposed that common pheasant and red-legged partridge should be added to Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as it applies to Wales. This would mean that releases of these species in Wales would need to be licensed by NRW.
59. We have proposed that releases that follow widely accepted industry good practice and are more than 500m from sensitive protected sites (European sites or SSSI) should be permitted under a general licence. The conditions of this licence will be based on the Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust's Guidelines for Sustainable Gamebird Releasing.
60. Releases that are within sensitive protected sites or their 500m 'buffers' or that do not comply with the terms and conditions of the proposed general licence (for instance because they propose release densities greater than those permitted) would require a specific licence from NRW. This would allow us to give individual attention to releases that have a higher risk of environmental impact.
61. We propose identifying any protected sites that are unlikely to be sensitive to gamebird releases (such as those designated for purely geological features). The general licence will be available for use within these sites and their buffers.
62. Whilst we propose recovering the costs of processing specific licence applications for releases, we propose waiving any charge where applicants need a specific licence purely because of their proximity to a protected site but are otherwise complying with the terms and conditions general licence.
63. Our approach had been developed as a proportionate way to enable us to manage the potential impacts of releases on protected sites and on habitats and species listed under section 7 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 as being of principal importance for the purpose of maintaining and enhancing biodiversity in relation to Wales.
64. There has been significant interest in our proposals from stakeholders and the media. As a result, there have been a large number of responses to the consultation as well as a mass email lobbying campaign. Whilst many stakeholders have chosen to refer to our proposals as a "ban" on gamebird release, we have been clear that this is not what is proposed.

Biodiversity Deep Dive

65. We have been working closely with WG following the launch of the Biodiversity Deep Dive Recommendations in October 2022. The focus has been in the co-production of

the Action Plan which includes wider stakeholder-working through various groups, such as the NRAP Implementation Group, Wales Coasts and Seas Partnership Cymru.

66. NRW is the lead on delivery of several of the recommendations. Initial scoping of the content and timescales for developing the Nature Networks Map has been completed. The Nature and Us programme is approaching the end of its second phase and progressing action focused on ensuring protected sites are a priority for NRW as business as usual, through the delivery of the new Corporate Plan.
67. Ceri Davies has accepted an invitation by the Minister to establish and lead the Monitoring and Evidence Task Group and Prof. Steve Ormerod (in his Cardiff University capacity) has likewise agreed to establish and lead the Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures and Nature Recovery Exemplar Areas Group. Planning for the first meeting of both groups is underway. The Chairs will report quarterly to the Core Deep Dive Group, which continues to be led by the Minister for Climate Change and meets quarterly. The group is overseeing the co-production of the Action Plan and is now shifting focus to its implementation. Reporting progress on the recommendations will take place on a six-monthly basis, with the Minister publishing the first six monthly report imminently.

Generic Design Assessment of Rolls-Royce Small Modular Reactor (SMR)

68. On 3 April, the Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR), the Environment Agency (EA) and NRW announced that the assessment of Rolls-Royce SMR Ltd's 470 MW Small Modular Reactor (SMR) design is progressing to the next stage. The process, known as Generic Design Assessment (GDA), allows the regulators to begin assessing the safety, security, safeguards and environmental aspects of new reactor designs before site-specific proposals are brought forward. Step 1 of the GDA began in April 2022 and this stage has now been successfully completed. April 2023 marks the start of Step 2, which is expected to take sixteen months.
69. The GDA focuses on the design of a generic nuclear power station and is not site-specific. The process is systematic and contains a number of steps, with the assessment getting increasingly detailed as the process develops. A Design Acceptance Confirmation will only be issued at the end of Step 3 of the GDA if the design meets the high safety, security, safeguards, environmental protection and waste management standards expected by our regulatory frameworks. These regulatory judgements do not guarantee the granting of a site licence or subsequent permissions issued under the conditions of a site licence for the construction of a power station based on the Rolls-Royce SMR design at a particular site in Great Britain.

Review of Retained EU Law (REUL) and Implications of the REUL Bill

70. The Strategic Environmental Policy team continues to engage with WG on their assessment of legislation under review in the scope of the REUL Bill. The team coordinated a cross-functional review to identify pieces of REUL that intersect with NRW's remit and responsibilities. Our work includes the assessment of the impact of the REUL Bill on the operability of NRW's authorisations, in reference to permits, licenses, consents, registrations, authorisations and exemptions issued by NRW.
71. In the meantime, the Interim Environmental Protection Assessor for Wales (IEPAW) has published their first report on the REUL Bill. The IEPAW received eleven stakeholder responses from the Association of Environmental Clerks of Works, Association of Local Government Ecologists, Carmarthenshire Nature Partnership, Joint Nature Conservancy Council, Marine Conservation Society, NFU Cymru, UK Environmental Law Association, Wales Environment Link, Welsh Local Government Association, Woodland Trust and NRW.
72. The report reiterated the concerns of the Counsel General and Minister for the Constitution (Mick Antoniw MS) and those of NRW regarding the potential impact the Bill could have on the functioning of environmental law in Wales including the lack of planning, tight timetable, and risk of perverse policy outcomes.
73. The situation remains unclear as the REUL Bill has not received devolved consent and the Senedd is yet to issue a legislative consent memorandum. It is anticipated that to implement the Bill in its current form would have significant resource implications and place considerable pressure on devolved administrations, detracting resources and legislative space to deliver Welsh Government's priorities.
74. Proposed changes to the UK's existing legal framework could provide significant uncertainty, delays, and disruptions in legal proceedings. Departure from environmental retained case law could result in UK Courts re-testing precedents. It is anticipated that this may be further exacerbated by divergences in law between devolved administrations.
75. We continue to emphasise that the sunset clause, a provision that states EU law would be revoked on 31 December 2023, does not provide sufficient time for devolved administrations to adapt to legislative changes, amend our approaches and have consideration of consequential effects on the functioning of environmental law.
76. It is currently unclear what effect the REUL Bill may have on the ability of NRW to regulate and operate in relation to its statutory duties. We continue to monitor the development of the REUL Bill as it progresses through Westminster and work closely with WG and our sister agencies, to ensure NRW is prepared and able to manage risks arising from potential changes.

Forward Look

Monday 5 June – Audit & Risk Assurance Committee

Tuesday 6 June – Corporate Plan launch at the Senedd

Wednesday 7 June – People and Customer Committee

Wednesday 7 June – Corporate Plan gathering, Carmarthen (South West)

Thursday 8 June – Corporate Plan gathering, Newbridge (South East)

Wednesday 14 June – Extraordinary Board Meeting, followed by Board Update Call

Thursday 15 June – Finance Committee

Tuesday 20 June – Protected Areas Committee

Tuesday 20 June – Corporate Plan gathering, RWS Showground (Mid Wales)

Wednesday 21 June – Corporate Plan gathering, Wrexham (North East)

Thursday 22 June – Corporate Plan gathering, Cardiff (South Central)

Wednesday 28 June – Corporate Plan gathering, Caernarfon (North West)

Thursday 29 June – Corporate Plan gathering, Neath (South West)

NRW Board Paper

Date of meeting:	18 th May 2023
Title of Paper:	Finance Committee Board Update
Paper Reference:	23-05-B05
Paper sponsored by:	Helen Pittaway, Finance Committee Chair
Paper prepared by:	Board Secretariat
Paper presented by:	Helen Pittaway, Finance Committee Chair
Purpose of the paper	Information
Summary	To provide an update to the Finance Committee (FC) – 28 th April.

Background

1. This paper provides an update to the Board following the Finance Committee (FC) meeting on 28th April 2023. The minutes from these meetings can be made available to any Board member interested.

Update

Finance Update

2. FC were provided with an overview of the budget performance for Period 12 (March) and discussed the planned lessons learnt exercises.

2023-24 Budget Update presentation

3. The 2023-24 Opening Budget Version 2 was presented to FC and included the recommendations that would be presented to Board.

NRW Board Paper

Date of meeting:	18 th May 2023
Title of Paper:	Flood Risk Management Committee Board Update
Paper Reference:	23-05-B06
Paper sponsored by:	Prof. Peter Fox, Flood Risk Management Committee Chair
Paper prepared by:	Board Secretariat
Paper presented by:	Prof. Peter Fox, Flood Risk Management Committee Chair
Purpose of the paper	Information
Summary	To provide an update to the Flood Risk Management Committee (FRMC) – 18 th April.

Background

1. This paper provides an update to the Board following the Flood Risk Management Committee (FRMC) meeting on 18th April 2023. The minutes from these meetings can be made available to any Board member interested.

Update

Flood Risk Management Update Report

2. FRMC were presented with an update report that highlighted key areas of work including: the Flood Risk Management Plan; two Welsh Government (WG) commissioned Flood Reviews; the Flood specific measures in the new Corporate Plan; the work of the Flood and Coastal Erosion Committee; the Tan15 re-consultation; and the Reservoir Bi-annual and Section 18 reports. The anticipated Ministerial announcement on the Flood budget was also highlighted.

Ammanford Flood Alleviation Scheme Change Paper – Lessons Learnt

3. The Committee discussed the issues highlighted in the Ammanford lessons learnt exercise. They were content with the identified actions and offered advice and guidance.

Flood Risk Management Capital Programme

4. An overview of the Flood Capital Programme closing position for 2023 was provided including the projects that had been completed in 2022-23 and the end of year budget position. Updates were also provided on the progress of the Flood Warning System Project and the Telemetry Project.
5. The Committee discussed WG's aspiration to protect 45,000 homes from flood, and raising public awareness of flood matters.

Flood Recovery and Review Implementation Programme (FRRIP)

6. An update was provided on the FRRIP including: noting that the Red, Amber, Green (RAG) status had changed from Amber to Green; progress against the outstanding actions; and progress against the work area closure reports.
7. The greatest changes from the implemented actions were remarked upon including, improving the resilience of incident and cascade rotas, the suite of new guidance, and the new asset management system for Land Stewardship.

Strategic Risk SR09-Effective Incident management Annual Review

8. The Committee reviewed Strategic Risk 09 – Incident Management. The key changes and work against the actions and controls were summarised. The current score and target score were discussed and agreed.

Returning High Risk Flood Risk Management (FRM) assets to Favourable condition – briefing note

9. The paper outlined information on how NRW could bring high risk FRM assets back to favourable condition, which included planned and in progress work. The Committee were content with the Green RAG status of the end-of-year figures and were happy to devolve oversight to the Executive team.

NRW Board Paper

Date of meeting:	18 th May 2023
Title of Paper:	Wales Land Management Forum (WLMF) Update
Paper Reference:	23-05-B07
Paper sponsored by:	Zoe Henderson, WLMF Chair / Rhys Jones, WLMF Chair
Paper prepared by:	Bronwen Martin, Specialist Advisor: Wales Land Management
Paper presented by:	Zoe Henderson, WLMF Chair / Rhys Jones, WLMF Chair
Purpose of the paper	Information
Summary	To update the Board on the work of the WLMF

Wales Land Management Forum (WLMF)

1. The Wales Land Management Forum (WLMF) meetings take place four times per year, and they provide an opportunity for Natural Resources Wales (NRW) and other WLMF membership organisations to share information, identify common interests and work together in a collaborative way on strategic land management issues.

[Natural Resources Wales - Wales Land Management Forum \(WLMF\)](#)

Update

13th March 2023 meeting

2. The most recent WLMF meeting was held on 13th March 2023.
3. The group acknowledged that this was Zoe Henderson's final meeting as Wales Land Management Forum (WLMF) Chairperson and gave their heartfelt thanks. The group welcomed Professor Rhys Jones who will be the next WLMF Chairperson.
4. Liz Halliwell, Sarah Wood, and Kate Collins, NRW, joined the meeting to provide a brief verbal update regarding beavers.

5. Russell De'Ath, NRW, joined the meeting to share an update on 'Nature and Us' and the next steps.
6. All WLMF members had the opportunity to ask about NRW Updates and also share updates from their own organisations.
7. The next WLMF meeting will be held on Monday 5th June.
8. Once the meeting minutes have been reviewed and formally agreed by members, they are published on the WLMF page on the NRW website.

WLMF Sub Group on Agricultural Pollution

9. The primary purpose of the WLMF Sub Group is to identify opportunities to eliminate agricultural pollution in Wales whilst maintaining a thriving farming sector following five key themes (advice & guidance, voluntary approach, regulation, innovation, and investment), and working in collaboration with a range of agricultural and environmental stakeholders.

[Natural Resources Wales - Wales Land Management Forum \(WLMF\) Sub Group on Agricultural Pollution](#)

Update

27th March 2023 meeting

10. Bronwen Martin, NRW, provided an overview and update on the Small Business Research Initiative (SBRI) process. Exploring the SBRI opportunity links to the WLMF Sub Group's objectives, particularly 'develop and deliver innovative projects to help reduce agricultural pollution incidents in Wales'.
11. John Williams, ADAS, joined the meeting to provide a presentation regarding the Nutrient Loading Project. The WLMF Sub Group Progress Report (2018) identified the need to commission further analysis of the root causes of agricultural pollution (Recommendation 3.1). Welsh Government Soil Evidence & Policy Group commissioned ADAS to establish the distribution and size of the landbank (agricultural land) available for recycling nutrients / organic materials both at national and local scale. The project was divided into two Work Packages; Work Package 1: Constraints to nutrient recovery and recycling to agricultural land in Wales and Work Package 2: An assessment of the current landbank in Wales. Both reports have been published on the Welsh Government Soil Policy Evidence Programme website.
12. Professor Chris Collins, NRW, and Dr Liz Bagshaw, Cardiff University joined the meeting to provide a background to Citizen Science and a presentation on a recent project. Professor Chris Collins is the Head of Knowledge and Evidence within NRW. Liz discussed some of the work that Cardiff University has been facilitating to enable citizen scientists to monitor water quality in their catchments.

13. The WLMF Sub Group will be meeting in person on Friday 5th May 2023 which will be Zoe Henderson's final meeting as Chairperson.
14. Once the meeting minutes have been reviewed and formally agreed by members, they are published on the WLMF Sub Group page on the NRW website.

NRW Board Paper

Date of meeting:	Thursday, 18 th May 2023
Title of Paper:	Wales Water Management Forum Update (WWMF)
Paper Reference:	23-05-B09
Paper sponsored by:	Prof. Steve Ormerod, WWMF Chair
Paper prepared by:	Ceri Jones, Lead Specialist Advisor: Catchment Management
Paper presented by:	Prof. Steve Ormerod, WWMF Chair
Purpose of the paper	Information
Summary	Highlights from the Wales Water Management Forum held on the 16 th March 2023

Background

1. An update from the Wales Water Management Forum (WWMF) was last provided in January 2023. The WWMF meets twice a year and provides an opportunity for the forum's membership organisations to share evidence and opportunities for working together to achieve the sustainable management of water in Wales - from source to sea. As well as ongoing discussion of regulatory issues and performance – for example with respect to the Water Environment (Water Framework Directive (WFD) (England and Wales) Regulations 2017 – broader aspects of water quality, water governance and water resources in Wales and western England have been key themes.
2. WWMF also explores opportunities to develop, support and communicate shared messages and recommendations on the sustainable management of natural resources more generally alongside the Wales Land Management Forum (WLMF), Wales Fisheries Forum (WFF), National Access Forum for Wales (NAFW) and the Wales Marine Advisory and Action Group (WMAAG).

Update

3. The most recent meeting was held virtually on the 16th March 2023. The session included an open discussion on matters relevant to the forum, member updates and a discussion on the 'Update' paper prepared by NRW. Focal points for March included; Water Resources West, NRW/ WG Water Capital Programme and Inland Bathing Waters work. Progress with NRW's Corporate Plan was also provided, to which members had the opportunity to provide feedback and comments on at the last meeting.
4. Morag Taite, Advisor 2 Citizen Science (NRW) gave a presentation on NRW's approach to Citizen Science. The session was welcomed by WWMF.
5. A presentation on pharmaceuticals pollution in water was given by Thomaz Andrade of Welsh Government (WG). The wider issues of chemical pollution in water, including pharmaceuticals, will be returned to at the next meeting.
6. AOB promoted the current consultation on the Flood Risk Management Plans which will run until the 24th May 2023. Forum members were encouraged to respond to this.
7. Finally, the forum will be meeting for a field trip on the 3rd May at the Uwch Conwy project in North Wales. This will be beneficial to supplement the more formal sessions with a face-to-face site visit.
8. The next WWMF meeting is scheduled for the 26th October 2023. The forward look for this meeting includes:
 - a) Pharmaceuticals and chemicals – follow up
 - b) Groundwater trends
 - c) Plastics and the water environment
 - d) Review Terms of Reference (standard item every second year)
9. Meeting notes are made available on the NRW website page for WWMF.

NRW Board Paper

Date of meeting:	18 th May 2023
Title of Paper:	National Access Forum for Wales (NAFW) Update
Paper Reference:	23-05-B10
Paper sponsored by:	Geraint Davies, NAFW Chair
Paper prepared by:	Carys Drew, NAFW Secretariat (Specialist Advisor: PROW and Networks)
Paper presented by:	Geraint Davies, NAFW Chair
Purpose of the paper	Information

Background

1. The National Access Forum for Wales (NAFW) is a non-statutory forum which brings together stakeholders from public, private and third sector organisations with an interest and expertise in outdoor access and recreation in Wales.
2. The NAFW's key purposes are:
 - To help improve the quality and extent of access to the countryside and coast of Wales, and extend the opportunities for enjoyment and responsible outdoor recreation to all, with regard to environmental sustainability and education
 - To work together as a stakeholder network, fostering understanding, and sharing information and good practice; to support the realisation of benefits of outdoor recreation and access in Wales
 - To support NRW in its aim of more people participating in, and benefitting from, outdoor recreation more often
3. NRW provides the Chair (Geraint Davies) and Secretariat (Carys Drew), the Deputy Chair is nominated from the membership (Ruth Rourke, Institute of Public Rights of Way and Access Management). Dr Rosie Plummer, NRW Board also supports and attends meetings.

4. The NAFW meets three times a year. Forum meetings are open to observers and are held in public but are not public meetings. Where necessary, the Chair may establish working groups to consider particular issues and report to subsequent meetings, working group meetings will not be held in public. There are no active working groups at present.
5. The Secretariat collates written contributions ahead of each meeting, this provides an opportunity for members, NRW and Welsh Government (WG) to share detailed information. The written contributions for each meeting, together with agendas and summary meeting notes are published on the NRW website: [Natural Resources Wales / National Access Forum for Wales](https://www.naturalresources.wales/national-access-forum-for-wales)

Update

6. The most recent NAFW meeting was held online on 14th March 2023. All agenda items incorporate time for questions and discussion.
7. The Chair updated the Forum on his meeting with Lesley Griffiths MS, Minister for Rural Affairs and North Wales, and Trefnydd on the 8th February 2023. This had been a constructive conversation about the Forum and ways of working. A further opportunity is planned for the Chair and Minister to meet for a walking meeting (date to be confirmed), and the Minister has agreed to attend the next Forum meeting in July (awaiting confirmation of date from Welsh Government).
8. Eve Nicholson, Wales Coast Path (WCP) Marketing and Comms shared a presentation about a wide range of activities carried out with partners to promote the WCP in its 10th Anniversary year. Building on lessons from this work, she shared the strategic priorities for 2023-24 focussed on a collaborative approach for WCP and National Trails which provide a strong walking offer in Wales.
9. Joe Roberts, Lead Specialist Advisor: Recreation and Access shared work around art and culture and how it intersects with outdoor recreation. Since the signing of the Creative Nature Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in 2020, NRW has been working with the Arts Council of Wales and other partners in the cultural sector to explore how the arts can be used to reconnect people with nature and engage people in a conversation about the climate and nature emergencies.
10. Peter Rutherford, Access and Well-being Manager, in Eryri National Park, explained the background to new films that had been produced to promote accessible trails in the National Park and shared examples of these films with the Forum.
11. Rebecca Brough, Policy and Advocacy Manager (Wales), Ramblers Cymru shared information about the Paths to Wellbeing project. A WG funded project (through the Enabling Natural Resources and Well-being Scheme (ENRaW) running over the last 18 months which aims to bring into Wales a green infrastructure, place-based approach to

help communities to understand, get involved with and manage their own green spaces and to access the path network in a new way.

12. Members were invited to review the current Terms of Reference (last reviewed and endorsed in 2019) and to provide comment for consideration at the next meeting.
13. Written contributions were circulated in advance of the meeting and members had an opportunity to ask questions about these and to share further updates.
14. The record of the meeting is a summary note rather than a verbatim minute, this is circulated in draft, confirmed by email, and then published on the webpage.
15. The next Forum meeting will be held in person, in early July with date to be confirmed based on availability of Lesley Griffiths MS, Minister for Rural Affairs and North Wales, and Trefnydd.
16. Subsequent meetings will be held online on 7th November 2023 and 5th March 2024.

NRW Board Paper

Date of meeting:	18 May 2023
Title of Paper:	Finance Performance Report
Paper Reference:	23-05-B11
Paper sponsored by:	Rachael Cunningham, Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Services
Paper prepared by:	Rob Bell, Head of Finance; Mark Collins, Business Finance Manager
Paper presented by:	Rob Bell, Head of Finance
Purpose of the paper:	Approval (change in forecast) / Discussion (Financial Performance)
Summary	<p>To approve:</p> <p>A revision to the forecast, from £237.1m to £247.1m.</p> <p>To consider:</p> <p>Financial performance to the end of the financial year.</p>

Background

- The Finance Performance Report provides detail on the year end outturn across the different types of income, expenditure, and programmes. Annex A summarises the key messages in respect of:
 - Performance to end of the 2022-23, compared to the latest forecast.
 - Commentary by exception on how we are progressed against forecast for the different types of income and expenditure.
 - Forecast changes.

Changes to Forecast

- In the January report we highlighted that we were expecting additional funding for both the Nature and Capital Emergencies and Flood Capital programmes (£1.1m and £2m respectively). At the time, it was felt that the additional funding for the Flood Capital

programme was going to mitigate the overspend risk, albeit we felt that more funding was required at the time.

3. Welsh Government also provided us with the funds to make a payment to the Local Government Pension Scheme (£6.9m), which will help with next financial year's position.
4. As a result of those changes the forecast changed from £237.1m to £247.1m.

Position as at 31 March 2023

5. We are still finalising the year end position, so it's possible there might be some minor changes to what is reported here. The most significant is the calculation of our year end position for charge schemes, which will be finalised during May.
6. Income was £245.7m which is below forecast (£247.1m). Expenditure was £247.1m, which is the same as our forecast but 0.6% and £1.4m above the level of funding. Although expenditure is the same as forecast there are variances across the different budgets which are explained below.
7. Key messages regarding our income performance are:
 - In total, income was £245.7m against an overall forecast of £247.1m. A variance of £1.4m and 0.6%.
 - Timber income was £33.8m, which was ahead of our latest forecast of £33.5m but significantly less than our original budget (£40m). March was a positive month which saw dispatches of 57,520 tonnes at an average price of £53.80. The previous two months we were averaging 48,300 tonnes and an average of £52.10.
 - Overall, Commercial income (including timber income) was in line with forecast (£59.2m compared to £59.1m). Surrenderable windfarm income was £0.3m less than forecast whilst retainable income was £0.2m above forecast.
 - Charges income was slightly ahead of forecast (£0.1m).
 - Welsh Government grants were £0.7m behind forecast due to several Welsh Government funded initiatives and projects not spending to forecast although Welsh Government were kept informed of likely variances. We received the additional £6.9m to pay into the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) in March.
 - External funding was behind forecast (£1m) due to several projects not spending as forecasted. This is a timing issue, and that income is available over the lifetime of the projects.
8. Key messages regarding our expenditure performance are:
 - Staff – spend was £111.7m against a forecast of £111.9m. As anticipated, spend was in line with our revised forecast, a variance of £0.2m, 0.2%.

Members will remember that we re-purposed salary savings resulting from vacancies to afford the increase in pay award from 2% to 4%.

- Non-Staff spend – was ahead of budget (£0.4m and 0.6%). We reported previously, that we were anticipating an overspend on our Land Stewardship programme and, if we could not fully mitigate this risk, then we would need to write to the Minister requesting budget cover. The Land Stewardship budget was overspent but we were able to mitigate most of it – please refer to Annex A which shows how that has been achieved.
- Projects - overall, spend was £63.3m against a forecast of £63.5m. A variance of £0.2m and 0.3% for capital and revenue projects. Included within that small variance were a few notable differences which we need to improve upon next financial year.
 - Flood Risk Capital Programme – we had increased funding from Welsh Government from £17m to £19m. Ideally we would have secured an additional £0.5m at the time. With asset sales and contributions, the total funding was £19.6m. The programme was over budget by £1.2m (6%) with spend of approximately £20.8m.

The programme contains several complex projects, all with risks, optimism bias and complications. We have a good track record of managing those risks and optimism in the forecasts, and we use the latest and best information supplied by project teams to manage the overall programme to budget. Our forecasts up until February indicated we would see our programme spend on budget if the typical project profiles were to materialise. Whilst this happened across some projects in our programme, several significant projects have delivered more work than anticipated in the last month. In particular, the Stephenson Street and Ammanford projects have started on site and are progressing very well – better than expected. The relatively good weather through the winter has meant that key schemes have progressed well, which has cumulated in more work than expected being delivered in March. We have also experienced fewer snags or delays on key projects. Whilst this is all good news in terms of delivery, this has led to the forecast overspend highlighted.

- Externally funded projects – we now have several high value projects in progress at the same time, resulting in an overall forecast this year of £7.1m. Expenditure was £6.1m and was behind plan (£1m, 14%), but funding can be carried forward to the next financial year. Externally funded projects were re-forecasted at the beginning of Quarter 4, but changes in circumstances and possibly optimism bias have contributed to the underspend in this financial year. For both externally and Welsh Government funded projects it is not possible to re-prioritise as the grants are for specific purposes.

- Welsh Government grant funded projects / initiatives – we are increasingly receiving more funding through this route. Last year it was £16m for Nature and Capital Emergencies (NaCE) programme and £5.2m for other projects and initiatives. We managed to utilise nearly all the NaCE funding but did not use £0.6m (12%) for the remainder of the projects / initiatives for various reasons. We had updated Welsh Government on the risks involved with some of these projects / initiatives in Quarter 4. Administering this funding as grants is very resource intensive and limits our capacity to re-prioritise when faced with underspends as the grants are for very specific purposes. Welsh Government have agreed to look at alternatives to the grant arrangements for 2024-25.

The following programmes were notable for their exceptional budgetary performance:

- NaCE Capital Programme – with the additional funding for Peatlands, our forecast rose to nearly £16m. We managed to utilise all the budget – with a very minor overspend which we have absorbed on our Peatland, Water Quality and Nature Networks programmes, and £27k under on our National Forest programme. This is a very impressive outturn for this relatively new programme.
- Compensatory Planting Programme – delivered to its revised forecast and delivered £2.6m of land acquisitions for replanting before the end of the financial year.

9. Therefore, the bottom line is:

- We have an overspend on the Flood Capital Programme of £1.2m. This has been discussed with Welsh Government and we will need budget cover for that spend. Welsh Government's Flood Capital budget covers both Local Authorities and ourselves. We have been advised by Welsh Government that the Local Authorities part of the budget has underspent by more than our overspend. So we are seeking clarity if our overspend will be covered by this.
- We did have an overspend within the Land Stewardship programme. We were able to mitigate most of this with underspends across other areas and a change in accounting treatment of vehicle lease payments. The net position is a £0.2m deficit when compared to our funding. We have spoken to Welsh Government and this will be managed through our new year end consolidation process.
- We will be assessing the position against our charge schemes in May.
- We will be undertaking a lessons learnt exercise for both Land Stewardship and Flood capital programmes.

- Also, we will be conducting a wider review of what we spent against the original budget in the last financial year to help inform budget requirements ahead of next financial year.

Risks and opportunities

10. We hold a risk in the Finance and Corporate Services Risk Register for 'in year spend'. This also links to SR01 (Insufficient Funding – Medium Term). With a larger budget this year, we felt there was a slightly increased risk to utilising the budget, but that has been mitigated and the risk now is of an overspend.
11. There are several provisions and contingent liabilities which we will be disclosing in our Annual Report and Accounts which may materialise into financial liabilities in the future. However, at present the outcome is sufficiently unknown and therefore there is no impact on this year's budget. This will include legal claims and the current ongoing discussions we are having with HMRC about off-payroll arrangements with our contractors.

Wider implications

12. The wider implications are:
 - (a) **Finance:** This report is about the financial performance of NRW. We hold a risk within the Finance and Corporate Services Directorate Risk Register.
 - (b) **Wellbeing of Future Generations Act (WBFGA):** Every component of the budget contributes to one or many of our Wellbeing Objectives.

Next Steps

13. This report will be presented to Executive Team, Leadership Team as well as the Board and Finance Committee.
14. This report is produced every two months for the Board.

Recommendation

15. Board to scrutinise financial performance to end of March 2023.
16. Board to approve change to bottom line forecast that has increased to £247.1m.

Index of Annexes

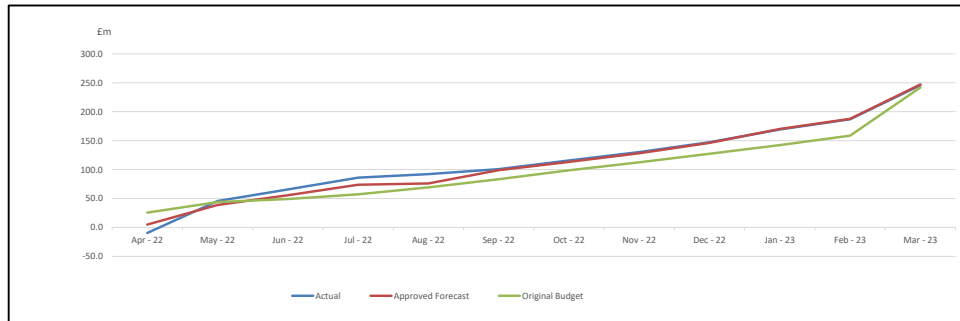
Annex A – Financial Performance Report

NRW Board & Executive Team Budget Performance Report as at March 2023

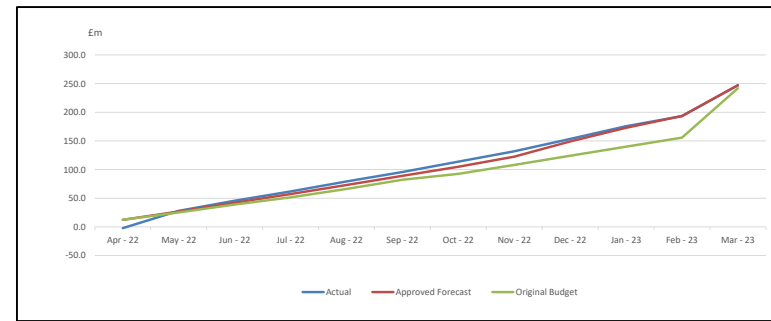
SECTION 1: NRW Financial Performance Summary

Section 1. Summary	Actual YTD £m	Approved Forecast YTD £m	Variance YTD £m	Var YTD %	Approved Forecast FY £m	Remaining Budget %	Original Budget FY £m	Commentary
Income	245.8	247.1	-1.4	-1%	247.1	1%	241.9	Overall income was £1.4m less than forecast (0.6% of full year forecast of £247.1m), linked to the following key areas: The various charging schemes recovered £0.1m more than forecast. There maybe further changes when we undertake a thorough assessment of charge related expenditure as part of the annual accounts, with any surplus/deficit being deferred into next financial year. Commercial income, including timber sales was £0.1m greater than forecast. Timber income was £0.3m more than forecast due to a very good March. The other main variance was surrenderable windfarm income being £0.3m less than forecast, which resulted in less income being surrendered to Welsh Government. European & External income was £0.9m less than forecast. The external funding element has been deferred into next financial year. This is due to there being less spend on these programmes than forecasted. The Grant in Aid element was £0.7m less than forecast, linked solely to Welsh Government grants. The Nature and Capital Emergencies Programme (NaCE) and all other GiA were in line to forecast and fully utilised.
Expenditure	247.1	247.1	0.1	0%	247.1	0%	241.9	Overall expenditure for the year is in line with the full year forecast of £247.1m. However, when broken down further there are variances within the key categories: Pay costs - £0.2m under spent (0.2% of the full year budget). Non staff - £0.4m over spent (0.6%). Predominantly linked to Land Stewardship (£1.7m over), which was offset by under spends within EPP (£0.4m), ICT (£0.4m) & Business Support Services (£0.5m). £0.4m of which is linked to a prepayment adjustment for lease costs within fleet. Revenue projects - £1.0m under spent (6%). £0.8m relates to WG & externally funded grants. The external grant funding is ring fenced and the under spend has resulted in less income being drawn down this year. Capital projects - £0.8m over spent (2%). Predominantly linked to flood (£1.5m over)*, which is offset by under spend within external & core funded projects (£0.2m & £0.4m respectively) & Land Stewardship (£0.2m). The underspend on external funded projects cannot be used to offset our flood capital position. The other underspends (land stewardship and core) have been incorporated into our calculation of the net core overspend of £0.2m. *Flood underspend reduced by a further £0.3m due to the attribution of asset sales.

Income



Expenditure



SECTION 1.2: Key messages on budget position

•Net flood capital position, inclusive of asset sales:

Flood Capital Position	/£M
Total flood expenditure	20.8
Total Grant in Aid	19.0
Total other funding (asset sales & contributions)	0.6
Net over spend	1.2

Welsh Government manage the Local Authority and NRW Flood capital spend within the same budget and we have been made aware of an underspend within Local Authorities that's greater than our overspend. We are awaiting confirmation from Welsh Government whether they will set them against each other.

•Net revenue position is an overspend of £0.2m.

•Externally funded projects have under spent by £1m (14%) on a programme of £7.1m.

•WG grants have under spent by £0.6m (12%) on a programme of £5.2m.

We will be conducting a lessons learnt exercise on both the land stewardship and flood capital overspends.

Other Highlights

•NaCE programme spent within £40k of £16m funding.

•Compensatory planting delivered within £16k of the £2.6m funding.

•Salaries £0.2m under on a budget of £112m. Successfully redistributed salary savings during the year to offset pressures of the pay award.

SECTION 2: NRW Financial Performance - by Account Type

Section 2.1: INCOME by Account Type	Actual YTD £m	Approved Forecast YTD £m	Variance YTD £m	Variance YTD %	Approved Forecast FY £m	Remaining Budget FY %	Original Budget FY £m	Commentary
Charges	39.5	39.4	0.1	0%	39.4	0%	39.0	Small variance of £0.1m due to greater than expected charges in March, most notably Water Quality and Installations. Any surplus funds will be transferred to charge balances for use in future years.
Commercial	59.2	59.1	0.1	0%	59.1	0%	59.1	Timber income was £0.3m more than forecast due to a very good March. The other main variance was surrenderable windfarm income being £0.3m less than forecast, which resulted in less income being surrendered to Welsh Government.
European & external	7.0	7.9	-0.9	-12%	7.9	12%	9.6	The external funding element has been deferred into next financial year. This is due to there being less spend on these programmes than forecasted. Progress was still positive across all our programmes with the under spend being spread across them all. There is some optimism bias we need to address in the forecasting.
Grant in aid	138.4	139.0	-0.7	0%	139.0	0%	133.9	Solely linked to Welsh Government grants and was spread across a number of them. We only claim for the work that we have undertaken. The NaCE Programme and all other GIA were in line to forecast and fully utilised.
Brought forward	1.7	1.7	0.0	0%	1.7	0%	0.3	
TOTAL: NRW	245.7	247.1	-1.4	-1%	247.1	1%	241.9	

Section 2.2:	Actual	Approved Forecast	Variance	Variance	Approved Forecast	Remaining Budget	Original Budget	Commentary
EXPENDITURE by Account Type	YTD £m	YTD £m	YTD £m	YTD %	FY £m	FY %	FY £m	
Staff	111.7	112.0	0.2	0%	112.0	0%	104.6	Vacancy rate remained at 10%, as it has been for the majority of the financial year. However overall savings were reduced by an overspend on project recharges due to the number of vacancies. The underspend on pay costs was £0.6m with overspend of (£0.4m) on other staff costs, evenly split across personal and protective equipment, professional fees, temporary contractors and overtime & allowances. This has resulted in overall underspend on staff costs of £0.2m as previously forecasted.
Non Staff	75.7	75.5	-0.2	0%	75.5	0%	68.4	Final overspend on Land Stewardship activities of (£1.7m) offset by underspends in this category in EPP of £0.4m, ICT £0.4m and £0.5m in Business Support Services, of which £0.4m relates to a prepayment adjustment within fleet for lease costs.
Revenue Projects	13.1	14.0	0.9	6%	14.0	6%	17.6	Predominantly relates to Welsh Government & externally funded grants (£0.8m under spent across the two areas). With the external grant funding being ring fenced, the under spend will be reflected in income with less being drawn down this year and deferred into next year. Progress was still positive across all our programmes with the under spend being spread across them all. There is some optimism bias we need to address in the forecasting.
Capital Projects	46.4	45.7	-0.8	-2%	45.7	-2%	51.3	Predominantly linked to Flood capital programme (£1.5m over)*, which is offset by under spend within external & core funded projects (£0.2m & £0.4m respectively) & Land Stewardship (£0.2m). The underspend on core and external funded projects cannot be used to offset our flood capital position. The other underspends (land stewardship and core) have been incorporated into our calculation of the net core overspend of £0.2m. *Flood underspend reduced by a further £0.3m due to the attribution of asset sales.
TOTAL: NRW	247.1	247.1	0.1	0%	247.1	0%	241.9	

Expenditure Performance further analysed:

Section 2.2.1 :	Actual	Approved Forecast	Variance	Variance	Approved Forecast	Remaining Budget	Original Budget	Commentary
EXPENDITURE - Staff by Detail Account	YTD £m	YTD £m	YTD £m	YTD %	FY £m	FY %	FY £m	
Trajectory	120.1	121.5	1.4	1%	121.5	1%	112.0	Vacancy rate remained at 10% but savings reduced due to the majority being related to project related posts and an over spend on other staff costs.
Workforce Recharges	-15.0	-15.8	-0.8	5%	-15.8	5%	-13.1	Overspend due to less project recharges because of the number of vacant posts.
Other Staff	6.7	6.3	-0.4	-6%	6.3	-6%	5.6	An overspend of (£0.4m) on other staff costs, evenly split across personal protective equipment, professional fees, temporary contractors and overtime & allowances.
TOTAL: NRW Staff	111.7	112.0	0.2	0%	112.0	0%	104.6	

Section 2.2.3 :	Actual	Approved Forecast	Variance	Variance	Approved Forecast	Remaining Budget	Original Budget	Commentary
EXPENDITURE - Revenue Projects by Programme	YTD £m	YTD £m	YTD £m	YTD %	FY £m	FY %	FY £m	
Revenue Project Programme - Accommodation Strategy	0.0	0.0	0.0	-3%	0.0	-3%	0.0	
Revenue Project Programme - External Funded	4.9	5.6	0.7	13%	5.6	13%	5.7	Variance linked to licensing issues across a number of LIFE projects, causing a delay in contractors being able to commence work. The funding element has been deferred into next financial year.
Revenue Project Programme - Flood Risk	0.0	0.0	0.0	0%	0.0	0%	0.1	
Revenue Project Programme - Grants & Partnership	1.3	1.2	-0.1	-9%	1.2	-9%	2.7	The variance predominantly relates to the Resilient Communities & Shared Outcomes Request programmes. This has been offset by a underspend within the central grants team in EPP.
Revenue Project Programme - NaCE	1.2	1.2	0.0	0%	1.2	0%	0.5	
Revenue Project Programme - WG Grants, Wind Farm Energy & other projects	4.5	4.7	0.3	6%	4.7	6%	0.9	Expenditure is slightly less than planned. In respect to the Welsh Government grant funded projects less grant has been drawn down from Welsh Government.
Revenue Project Programme - Land Stewardship	1.0	1.1	0.1	8%	1.1	8%	1.3	The year end under spend has been used to partially offset the non staff land stewardship overspend.
Revenue Project Programme - ICT D&I	0.0	0.0	0.0	0%	0.0	0%	0.0	
Revenue Project Programme - Internal funded	3.4	3.6	0.1	4%	3.6	4%	1.7	Relatively minor under spend has contributed to the overall balancing of the revenue position.
Revenue Project Programme - Business Transformation	0.0	0.0	0.0	0%	0.0	0%	0.1	
Revenue Project Programme - Water Resource Projects	0.4	0.3	0.0	-14%	0.3	-14%	0.4	The year end position shows a slight over spend compared to forecast, which will be drawn from Water Resources reserves.
Revenue Project Programme - Unallocated Balances	0.0	0.0	0.0	0%	0.0	0%	4.2	
TOTAL: NRW	16.7	17.8	1.1	6%	17.8	6%	17.6	

Section 2.2.4 :	Actual		Approved Forecast		Variance		Variance		Approved Forecast		Remaining Budget		Original Budget		Commentary
	YTD	YTD	YTD	YTD	YTD	YTD	YTD	YTD	YTD	YTD	YTD	YTD	YTD	YTD	
EXPENDITURE - Capital Projects by Programme	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	%	£m	%	£m	£m	%	£m	£m	£m	
Capital Project Programme - Options Fees	2.6	2.6	0.0	-1%	2.6	-1%	2.6	-1%	2.6	-1%	3.0				
Capital Project Programme - WG Funded	0.1	0.1	0.0	11%	0.1	11%	0.1	11%	0.1	11%	0.0				
Capital Project Programme - Land Stewardship	2.3	2.5	0.2	9%	2.5	9%	2.5	9%	2.5	9%	3.1				The under spend is predominantly linked to reservoir compliance and has been used to partially offset the over spend on land stewardship non staff costs.
Capital Project Programme - IDD	0.0	0.1	0.0	41%	0.1	41%	0.1	41%	0.1	41%	0.1				Under spend within the Caldicott & Wentlooge IDD, which will be carried forward for future years work.
Capital Project Programme - External Funded	1.2	1.5	0.2	15%	1.5	15%	1.5	15%	1.5	15%	2.2				Variance linked to licensing issues across a number of LIFE projects, causing a delay in contractors being able to commence work. The funding element has been deferred into next financial year.
Capital Project Programme - Flood Risk	17.6	16.1	-1.5	-9%	16.1	-9%	16.1	-9%	16.1	-9%	18.7				We received an additional £2m of funding from Welsh Government, which took the full year forecast to £19.3m, inclusive of overheads. Our forecasts up until February indicated that the programme would spend to budget if the typical spend profiles were to materialise. Whilst this happened across some projects within the programme, several significant projects have delivered more work than anticipated in the last month, particularly Stephenson Street and Ammanford. We have also experienced fewer snags or delays on key projects. Whilst this is all good news in terms of delivery, this has led to the forecast overspend highlighted. We have managed to reduce the underspend by a further £0.3m due to the attribution of asset sales, so the net overspend is £1.2m. We are aware of an under spend in Local Authority led projects which is funded from the same Welsh Government programme budget so we are seeking clarification that our over spend will be netted of that under spend.
Capital Project Programme - WG Grants	1.0	1.1	0.1	9%	1.1	9%	1.1	9%	1.1	9%	0.9				Expenditure is slightly less than planned across a few projects which means we have drawn down less grant funding from Welsh Government.
Capital Project Programme - NaCE	13.3	13.3	0.0	0%	13.3	0%	13.3	0%	13.3	0%	14.1				
Capital Project Programme - Business Transformation	0.1	0.1	0.0	-2%	0.1	-2%	0.1	-2%	0.1	-2%	0.0				
Capital Project Programme - ICT D&I	6.9	6.8	-0.1	-1%	6.8	-1%	6.8	-1%	6.8	-1%	6.3				
Capital Project Programme - Internal Funded	0.8	0.8	0.0	-2%	0.8	-2%	0.8	-2%	0.8	-2%	0.6				
Capital Project Programme - Water Resources Project	0.5	0.6	0.1	20%	0.6	20%	0.6	20%	0.6	20%	1.6				The under spend is spread across a number of Water Resources projects and has been used to offset the overall NRW core overspend.
Capital Project Programme - Unallocated Balances	0.0	0.1	0.1	100%	0.1	100%	0.1	100%	0.1	100%	0.6				The £0.1m funding has been utilised within the financial year to purchase key laboratory equipment at Swansea Lab. Costs are within the internally funded section.
TOTAL: NRW	46.4	45.7	-0.8	-2%	45.7	-2%	45.7	-2%	45.7	-2%	51.3				

SECTION 3: NRW Financial Performance - by Directorate

Section 3.1:	Actual		Approved Forecast		Variance		Variance		Approved Forecast		Remaining Budget		Original Budget		Commentary
	YTD	YTD	YTD	YTD	YTD	YTD	YTD	YTD	YTD	YTD	YTD	YTD	YTD		
INCOME by Directorate	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	%	£m	%	£m	£m	%	£m	£m	£m	
Communications, Customer and Commercial	18.3	18.6	-0.2	-1%	18.6	-1%	18.6	-1%	18.6	1%	19.8				The variance is largely due to surrenderable income being less than forecasted, this has had an impact on the income we returned to WG.
Corporate Strategy & Development	0.2	0.2	0.0	-4%	0.2	-4%	0.2	-4%	0.2	4%	0.0				In line with the full year forecast.
Evidence Policy & Permitting	17.0	17.6	-0.6	-4%	17.6	-4%	17.6	-4%	17.6	4%	16.4				The full year variance is linked to WG Grants & externally funded projects, where expenditure was less than anticipated, resulting in reduced income. This was offset by additional charge income over and above the forecasted figure.
Finance & Corporate Services	159.0	159.1	-0.1	0%	159.1	0%	159.1	0%	159.1	0%	153.1				
Operations	51.2	51.6	-0.4	-1%	51.6	-1%	51.6	-1%	51.6	1%	52.5				The key variances were linked to externally funded projects, where expenditure incurred was less than anticipated, resulting in reduced income (£0.8m less than budgeted). This was offset by slightly higher than anticipated timber income (£0.2m). Charge income was in line with the full year forecast.
TOTAL: NRW	245.8	247.1	-1.4	-1%	247.1	-1%	247.1	-1%	247.1	1%	241.9				

Section 3.2:	Actual	Approved Forecast	Variance	Variance	Approved Forecast	Remaining Budget	Original Budget	Commentary
EXPENDITURE by Directorate	YTD £m	YTD £m	YTD £m	YTD %	FY £m	FY %	FY £m	
Communications, Customer and Commercial	17.3	17.7	0.4	2%	17.7	2%	14.5	The year variance is predominantly linked to under spend within staff and non staff costs (£0.25m & £0.17m respectively). We also processed the Wind Energy payment of £8.7m to WG in March in line with expectations.
Corporate Strategy & Development	11.2	11.3	0.1	1%	11.3	1%	9.1	Overall expenditure was in line with the full year budget, with only a slight underspend within staff costs (£0.1m), due to vacant posts.
Evidence Policy & Permitting	67.9	67.9	0.0	0%	67.9	0%	60.0	Whilst the year end position was inline with the full year budget, there were a number of variances within the key categories: staff costs £0.7m over spent (2.5%), non staff costs £1m underspent (5%), revenue projects £0.6m underspent (9%) and capital projects £0.9m over spent (8%). Whilst the staff over spend looks considerable, we were aware of the position and built it into the overall staff cost evaluation across NRW. Overall staff costs across the business were slightly behind the full year budget and helped offset part of the Land Stewardship over spend. The non staff under spend is predominantly linked to Land Stewardship (£0.4m) and NRM (£0.4m). The Land Stewardship element will be used to reduce the over spend on Land Stewardship activities within Operations. Whilst other variances contributed to netting of the staff cost position within EPP. The revenue project under spend relates to external funding, WG Grants & charge funded projects. The WG Grants & European elements will have an equal & opposite impact on income, with no net variance. On the capital project side the over spend is almost solely due to the flood programme. Overall, across NRW the programme was overspent by £1.2m. We are aware of an under spend in Local Authority led projects which is funded from the same Welsh Government programme budget so we are seeking clarification that our overspend will be netted of that underspend.
Finance & Corporate Services	37.1	38.4	1.2	3%	38.4	3%	33.3	The full year variance shows an under spend of £1.2m, predominantly linked to staff and non staff costs (£0.3m & £0.9m under spent respectively). Revenue & capital projects were in line with their respective budgets. The non staff variances were split between ICT (£0.4m) & Business Support Services (£0.5m), £0.4m of which is linked to a prepayment adjustment for lease costs within fleet and helped reduce the core overspend across NRW.
Operations	113.6	111.9	-1.7	-1%	111.9	-1%	125.1	Overall, the Directorate was £1.7m overspent, with variances across a number of areas: staff costs (£0.3m under spent), non staff costs (£2.5m over), revenue & capital projects (£0.4m & £0.1m under spent respectively). The non staff element almost solely relates to an over spend within land stewardship activities (£2.1m over). This is reduced to £1.7m once we take into account the Land Stewardship under-programming which was held within EPP. There are also additional costs relating to the serious pollution incident in SW Ops (£0.2m), but these will be offset by additional income from the insurance settlement. The revenue project underspend is linked to externally funded LIFE projects in South West Operations. Less income side was drawn down as a result but is still available over the life time of the projects. The capital project element mainly relates to an over spend within the Flood programme (£0.5m), offset by under spend within Land Stewardship (£0.2m) & NaCE (£0.1m) programmes. Overall, across NRW the Flood programme over spent by £1.2m, with NaCE coming in line with the allocated funding.
TOTAL: NRW	247.1	247.1	0.1	0%	247.1	0%	241.9	

Expenditure Performance further analysed:

Section 3.2.1 :	Actual	Approved Forecast	Variance	Variance	Approved Forecast	Remaining Budget	Original Budget
EXPENDITURE by Leadership Team	YTD £m	YTD £m	YTD £m	YTD %	FY £m	FY %	FY £m
Head of Finance	5.2	5.2	0.0	-1%	5.2	-1%	1.5
Head of Legal Services	2.0	2.0	-0.1	-3%	2.0	-3%	1.9
Head of Sustainable Commercial Development	12.0	12.2	0.2	2%	12.2	2%	9.4
Head of ICT	17.4	17.9	0.5	3%	17.9	3%	17.6
Head of People Management	2.5	2.3	-0.2	-7%	2.3	-7%	2.0
Head of Business Support Services and Adfywio	13.2	13.8	0.7	5%	13.8	5%	13.4
Head of Communications and Digital Transformation	2.3	2.3	0.0	0%	2.3	0%	2.2
Head of People Development and Wellbeing	3.0	3.1	0.2	5%	3.1	5%	2.1
Head of Governance and Board Secretary	1.8	1.8	0.0	1%	1.8	1%	1.9
Head of Natural Resource Management Policy	34.7	34.9	0.2	1%	34.9	1%	38.6
Head of Regulation & Permitting	10.2	9.9	-0.2	-2%	9.9	-2%	8.7
Head of Knowledge & Evidence	5.7	5.8	0.2	3%	5.8	3%	5.8
Head of Flood & Incident Response Management	8.7	7.7	-1.1	-14%	7.7	-14%	-3.1
Head of Land Stewardship	6.2	6.7	0.5	8%	6.7	8%	7.4
Head of Operations - North East Wales	12.0	12.1	0.1	1%	12.1	1%	11.5
Head of Operations - Mid Wales	15.3	15.1	-0.2	-1%	15.1	-1%	15.4
Head of Operations - North West Wales	13.0	11.4	-1.6	-14%	11.4	-14%	10.7
Head of Operations - South Central Wales	31.7	31.7	0.0	0%	31.7	0%	18.3
Head of Operations - South East Wales	11.9	11.5	-0.5	-4%	11.5	-4%	9.5
Head of Operations - South West Wales	22.2	22.5	0.3	1%	22.5	1%	24.7
Head of Operations - Development, Planning & Marine Services	6.8	6.9	0.2	2%	6.9	2%	6.4
Director Of Finance & Corporate Services	0.2	0.2	0.1	24%	0.2	24%	0.2
Director Of Operations	0.6	0.7	0.1	20%	0.7	20%	28.6
Director Of Evidence Policy & Permitting	2.3	2.8	0.4	16%	2.8	16%	2.5
Director Of Corporate Strategy & Development	0.2	0.3	0.0	9%	0.3	9%	0.2
Director Customer Communications & Commercial	0.2	0.2	0.0	-14%	0.2	-14%	0.2
Head of Customer	1.5	1.5	0.1	4%	1.5	4%	1.3
Head of Internal Audit and EMS	0.6	0.6	0.0	5%	0.6	5%	0.5
Head of Corporate Strategy & Programme Management Office	1.6	1.7	0.1	7%	1.7	7%	1.0
Head of Business Transformation	0.6	0.6	0.0	-3%	0.6	-3%	0.0
Head of Procurement and Contracts	1.3	1.5	0.2	11%	1.5	11%	1.4
TOTAL: NRW	247.1	247.1	0.1	0%	247.1	0%	241.9

Section 3.2.2 :	Actual	Approved Forecast	Variance	Variance	Approved Forecast	Remaining Budget	Original Budget	Commentary
EXPENDITURE - Staff Trajectory	YTD	YTD	YTD	YTD	FY	FY	FY	
by Directorate	£m	£m	£m	%	£m	%	£m	
Communications, Customer and Commercial	6.0	6.4	0.4	6%	6.4	6%	6.2	A vacancy rate above 10% for the majority of the financial year resulting in and underspend of £0.4m.
Corporate Strategy & Development	7.2	7.3	0.0	1%	7.3	1%	6.5	An average vacancy rate of 4% over the financial year resulting in a neutral position at year end.
Evidence Policy & Permitting	33.0	32.5	-0.5	-2%	32.5	-2%	31.3	Overspend of £0.5m due to funding temporary posts. Offset by underspend within non staff costs.
Finance & Corporate Services	10.2	10.5	0.4	3%	10.5	3%	5.9	Final underspend of £0.4m for the Directorate with an average vacancy rate of 8% throughout 2022/23.
Operations	63.7	64.8	1.1	2%	64.8	2%	62.2	An average vacancy rate of 10% results in an underspend of £1.1m
TOTAL: NRW	120.1	121.5	1.4	1%	121.5	1%	112.0	

SECTION 4: NRW Changes to Full Year Forecast

Section 4.1: INCOME	Opening Budget	January Approved Forecast	March Approved Forecast	Change In Forecast
by Funding Type	£m	£m	£m	£m
Charges	39.0	39.8	39.4	-0.4
Commercial	59.1	59.0	59.1	0.1
European & external	9.6	8.5	7.9	-0.6
Grant in aid	133.9	128.4	139.0	10.6
Net movement in use of reserves	0.3	1.4	1.7	0.3
TOTAL: NRW	241.9	237.1	247.1	10.1

Section 4.2: EXPENDITURE	Opening Budget	January Approved Forecast	March Approved Forecast	Change In Forecast
by Directorate	£m	£m	£m	£m
Communications, Customer and Commercial	14.5	16.9	17.7	0.9
Corporate Strategy & Development	9.1	11.2	11.3	0.0
Evidence Policy & Permitting	60.0	65.3	67.9	2.6
Finance & Corporate Services	33.3	30.5	38.4	7.9
Operations	125.1	113.2	111.9	-1.3
TOTAL: NRW	241.9	237.1	247.1	10.1

Section 4.3:

- 1) Income changes (charges) - decrease in EPR (£0.3m) and Water Resources (£0.1m) forecasts, actioned in February.
- 2) Income changes (commercial) - decrease in timber income forecast (£0.5m), offset by increases in rechargeable works (£0.3m) and other commercial income (£0.3m).
- 3) Income changes (European & external income) - decrease in forecast on LIFE funded projects (£0.1m), actioned in February. The remaining £0.5m was due to a change in categorisation of an account code between WG grants and external income.
- 4) Income changes (Grant in Aid) - Increases in Flood capital Grant in Aid (£2.0m) and Welsh Government Grant funded Peatlands programme (£1.1m). Also, an increase in Grant in Aid forecast for payment to LGPS (£6.9m) and DCF (£0.1m). The remaining £0.5m was due to a change in categorisation of an account code between WG grants and external income.
- 5) Income changes (net movement in use of reserves) - decrease in EPR charges in year, resulting in an increase in the amount of deferred income used (£0.3m).
- 6) Expenditure changes (CCC) - increase due to one compensatory planting land acquisition not going ahead which meant an increase to the amount being repaid to Welsh Government (£0.9m).
- 7) Expenditure changes (EPP) - there were various changes actioned in February. Increases in Grant in Aid funding for flood programme (£2.0m), Peatlands Welsh Government grants (£1.1m) and further Flood capital funded from a contribution towards Llyn Tegid (£0.3m). There was also an increase in the non staff budget of £1m to help the Land Stewardship position. Other notable changes offsetting those increases were a decrease in Welsh Government grant funded projects (£0.4m), compensatory planting (£0.8m) and other changes totalling £0.6m.
- 8) Expenditure changes (FCS) - increases for the payment to the LGPS (£6.9m), ICT capital projects (£0.3m) and Fleet (£0.2m). The remaining £0.5m was a reduction in over-programming.
- 9) Expenditure changes (Ops) - decrease across Flood capital projects (£0.7m), Land Stewardship projects (£0.3m), staff costs (£0.2m) and external funded projects (£0.1m).

NRW Board Paper

Date of meeting:	18 May 2023
Title of Paper:	UK Board Apprenticeship Programme
Paper Reference:	23-05-B16
Paper sponsored by:	Sir David Henshaw, Chair / Clare Pillman, Chief Executive
Paper prepared by:	Colette Fletcher, Head of Governance & Board Secretary
Paper presented by:	Natalie Williams, Team Leader of the Secretariat & Deputy Board Secretary
Purpose of the paper	Approval
Approval/consultation process Responsible: Who has developed the paper/process and who has had input?	The Secretariat team have liaised with UK Government to develop the paper and have discussed with the Chair and CEO.
Accountable: Who is accountable for the ultimate approval? Who will be or is being asked to approve?	The Board is being asked to approve the recommendation that NRW join the UK Board Apprenticeship Programme.
Consulted: Who has been consulted to date? Where endorsement is required, is this in place? Will further consultation be required?	The Chair and CEO have been consulted. No further endorsement or consultation would be required.
Informed: Who has been informed or who needs to	The Executive Team have been informed of the opportunity to join the programme.

be further information about the work?	
Summary	<p>The Board is asked to approve the recommendation that NRW join the UK Board Apprenticeship Programme and specifically to agree:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Which Board member should act as mentor, and: 2. To submit a formal expression of interest by 30 June 2023.

Background

1. On 2 September 2022 the UK Government launched the UK Board Apprenticeship Programme, which aims to develop aspiring board members and boost diversity in public boardrooms.
2. The full details of the programme are provided in Annex 1. The first cohort of apprentices started with their host organisations in January 2023 and will finish in December 2023. The second cohort of apprentices would start in January 2024 and finish in December 2024.
3. NRW has been invited to become a host organisation for the second cohort of the programme. This would potentially help us to build a pipeline of prospective future Board members and to improve diversity of our Board.
4. The apprentices attend as observers of the Board and have no role in decision-making and hold no accountability. It is a similar arrangement to our current observer from Chwarae Teg, but there is a more structured learning and support element for the apprentices that runs alongside their experience with the host Board.
5. The Board is asked to consider whether it would like to participate in this programme. If we do wish to participate, we would be required to do the following:
 - a. Identify an existing Board member who could act as a mentor and buddy for the apprentice.
 - b. Set aside sufficient funding to cover travel and subsistence to enable the apprentice to attend Board meetings and other events.
 - c. Provide an NRW laptop and account to enable the apprentice to access the necessary information.
 - d. Submit a formal expression of interest to UK Government by 30 June 2023.
6. A few important points to note:
 - a. NRW would have no role or say in the recruitment and appointment of the apprentice. We would be allocated an apprentice by UK Government and there

would be no opportunity to conduct our own interviews or to meet with candidates prior to appointment. UK Government have been clear that this approach is not negotiable.

- b. NRW would be responsible for conducting any due diligence checks that we considered necessary for the apprentice.
- c. We have already been approached by a potential apprentice who would like to participate in the programme alongside us, although there is no guarantee that they would be allocated to us by UK Government.

Risks, risk appetite and opportunities

- 7. Not being able to interview or select our own candidate increases the risk that an unsuitable person would be allocated as NRW's apprentice. The largest risk is around the confidentiality and sensitivity of some of the information that Board members are privy to, however this risk could be partly mitigated by undertaking due diligence checks on our apprentice and by the confidentiality clause that is currently included in the terms and conditions for NRW Board observers. The Board may also want to consider only inviting the apprentice to observe the meetings held in public, rather than the private meetings, but this would likely significantly affect the value of the programme to the apprentice.
- 8. The last six months has seen significant turnover in Board members, with further changes anticipated in the next six months. There is already a large amount of induction and on-boarding underway for the newest members, and there is a risk that welcoming an apprentice would place further strain on existing resource and affect the dynamics of the newly formed Board. However, the apprentice would not be expected to start with NRW until January 2024, by which time many of the newer Board members would have been in post for almost a year.
- 9. The programme provides a good opportunity for NRW to build a potential pipeline of new Board members and to increase the diversity of the Board within a structured nationwide programme that would allow us to learn from other host organisations.

Wider implications

- (a) **Well-being Objectives:** Improving the pipeline to the Board and its diversity should contribute to the effective operation of the organisation in its delivery of the Well-being Objectives.
- (b) **Finance:** A small amount of funding would be required to cover travel and subsistence and ICT equipment for the apprentice. We believe we can cover this within our existing budget.
- (c) **Resource implications:** We would need to identify a mentor/buddy for the apprentice from the existing Board members, who would be required to provide support for the 12-month period of the placement.
- (d) **Equality:** This proposal is expected to improve the equality, diversity, and inclusion of the NRW Board.

- (e) **Data Protection:** There are implications for data protection of providing access to an external apprentice, but we believe these can be mitigated.

Next Steps

- 10. If the Board approves this proposal, the Team Leader of the Secretariat & Deputy Board Secretary will prepare an official expression of interest to submit to UK Government by 30 June 2023.
- 11. We would need to agree which Board member would act as a mentor/buddy.

Recommendation

- 12. Our recommendation is that the Board approve the proposal to sign up to the UK Government Apprenticeship Programme.

Index of Annexes

Annex 1 – Presentation on the UK Government Apprenticeship Programme.

UK Boardroom Apprentice Programme

(learning, development
and placement)



What is it about

The **UK Boardroom Apprentice Programme** is sponsored and funded by DLUHC.

Senior project sponsor: Sue Gray

Project manager: Kerry Broomfield (DLUHC and previous head of public appointments DLUHC & BEIS)

The **Boardroom Apprentice Programme** is a twelve-month board learning, development and placement programme.

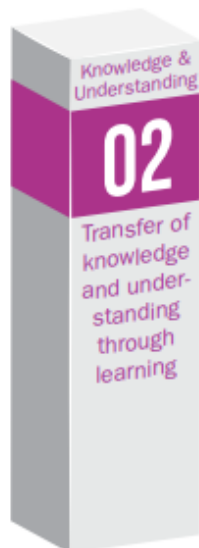
Its **vision** is to move the board member role from aspiration to reality.

Aim is :

- ❖ To create a diverse pool of capable board ready Board Members (to provide tools, skills, knowledge and confidence to apply post programme)
- ❖ To provide a sustainable pool of capable board ready Board Members
- ❖ To enable practical boardroom experience for aspiring Board Members
- ❖ To provide the transfer of knowledge, skills and experience to aspiring Board Members
- ❖ To increase the knowledge and awareness of the role of Board Members
- ❖ To increase general awareness of public appointments



The programme is built on three key pillars



Boardroom Apprentice Role:

- Attend all 8 learning days
- Attend all Board Meetings
- Attend some committee meetings
- Attend other events/activities requested of the Host Board
- No role in decision making
- No legal responsibility or accountability
- Sign a Memorandum of understanding

Host Board Role:

- Host board are from Public or Third sectors
- 12 month placement January to December
- Providing hands on placement, a safe seat at the table to learn
- Board member will take on the role of a Board Buddy (mentor and support)

Host Board considerations:

- Meet frequently (at least 4 times a year)
- Good governance in place
- Board meeting discussion to consider joining the programme

Achievements to date

- ▶ Established in 2017 in NI
- ▶ Circa 1000 applications NI, 200 UK year 1
- ▶ 277 people have begun their NI Boardroom Apprentice journey + 42 UK year 1
- ▶ 80+ Host Boards NI, UK year 1 41 host boards
- ▶ Follow up tracker shows 51% of first NI three cohorts are actively involved on a Board since completing the programme
- ▶ UK Boardroom Apprentice Programme announced 2022, programme running January – December 2023
- ▶ Expecting year 2 planning to start soon, recruiting host boards to commence Spring 23

What Host Boards say

FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

The main feedback on future development was to continue to grow the programme to engage more apprentices and more Boards, particularly government departments, and to continue to increase the number of confident, experienced and skilled apprentices moving forward to be appointed to Boards.

Recruitment and Selection Boardroom Apprentices

board
room
apprentice

- ▶ Online application form
- ▶ We do not ask for CV's or details on their background
- ▶ There is no interview
- ▶ Selection is undertaken by former Boardroom Apprentices and Boardroom Apprentice Leads
- ▶ Values based recruitment exercise
- ▶ Applications are open to all ages (16+), all backgrounds and all abilities
- ▶ Accessible to all, eligibility no prior boardroom role

Eligibility

- Have not held a board position on a public-sector body
- Have no /little experience on a third sector board/committee

Motivation

- Have a passion about our society and want to give something back and make a difference

Values

- Applicants will need to show that they share our values and how they will apply them as a Boardroom Apprentice:

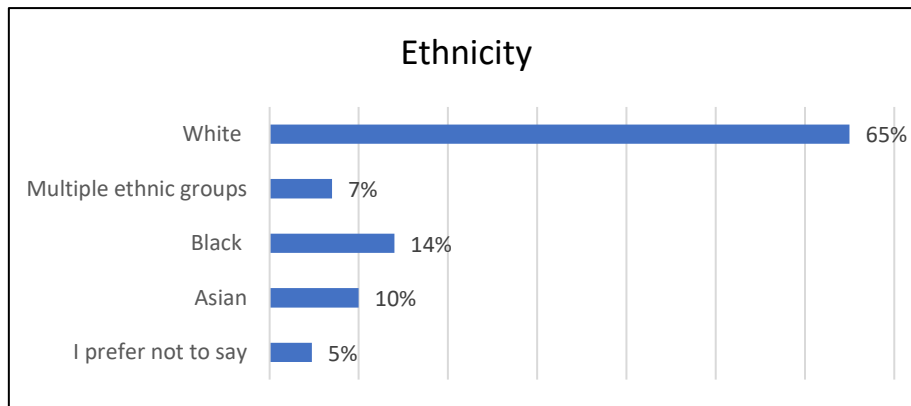
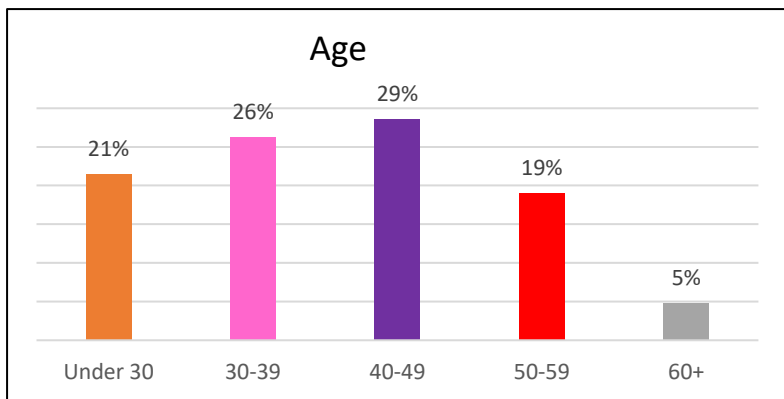
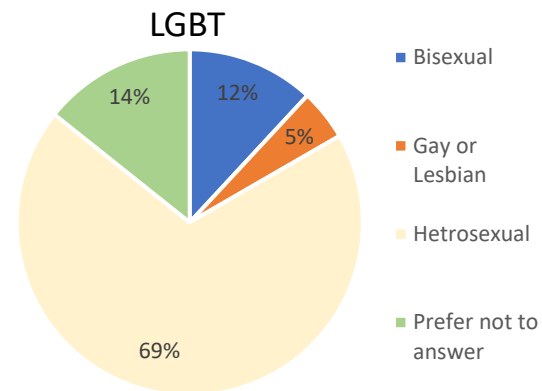
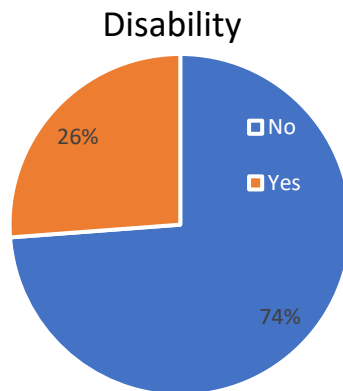
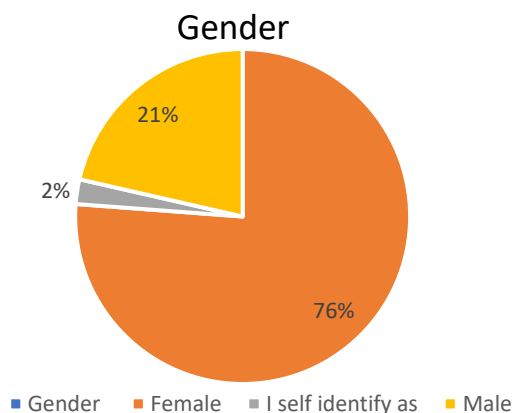
Integrity | Responsibility | Honesty | Commitment | Passion | Motivation



41 Year 1 Host Boards

Approx. 83% board meetings outside of London

DCMS	DEFRA	DLUHC	Third Sector	Dept	Body name
UK Anti-Doping (Croydon/Loughborough)	Rural Payments Agency (Reading)	Planning Inspectorate (Bristol)	Theatre Royal Wakefield (West Yorkshire)	MoJ	Independent Monitoring Authority (Swansea)
National Citizen Service (virtual)	Veterinary Medicines Directorate (Surrey)	Architects Registration Board (London)	Chartered Institute for Fundraising (Surrey)	BEIS	Coal Authority (Nottinghamshire)
British Tourist Authority (London)	Animal and Plant Health Agency (Surrey)	Ebbsfleet Development Corporation (Kent)	The Community Foundation for Staffordshire (Stafford)	HO	Gangmaster and Labour Abuse Authority (Nottingham)
Visit England Advisory Board (London)	Consumer Council for Water (Birmingham)	DLUHC Non ministerial Departmental Board (UK)	British Association of Physicians of Indian Origin (Bedford /Virtual)	HO	Disclosure and Barring Service (Liverpool/Darlington)
Theatres Trust (London)	Forestry Commission (UK)	Regulator of Social Housing (London)	Home-start East Sussex (Newhaven)	DWP	Nest Corporation (London)
	Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board (Warwickshire)		Council for British Archaeology (York)	DfT	Port of Tyne (Tyne)
	Joint Nature Conservation Committee (Peterborough)	CABINET OFFICE	Inspire North (Leeds)	DfE	Departmental Board (London/virtual)
	Sea Fish Industry Authority (UK)	UK Statistics Authority - National Statistics Executive Group (virtual)	Heart of England Mencap (S Warwickshire/Worcestershire)	Public	Wales Office (London, Cardiff)
	OFWAT (London/Birmingham)		Heywood foundation (virtual)	DfE	Social Work England (Sheffield)
	Natural England (England wide)		South Kilburn Trust (London)		
	Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (Lowestoft/ London)				



Region





Department for Levelling Up,
Housing & Communities

Welcome Event December 2022

What an incredible launch. The buzz in the room was amazing. We could have continued answering questions all afternoon. So many great people in the room - both apprentices and host boards.

Commend on how fantastic the welcome event and whole set up/of the programme was; I had the opportunity of meeting and talking at length with my host board which was brill. I am excited about the whole process and grateful to be part of it too. BA

Thank you so much for a really interesting and inspiring event last Friday. It was great to meet Shamoon in person, and we really enjoyed learning more about the Boardroom Apprenticeship Programme, are delighted to be involved and we are all looking forward to getting started in the New Year. ARB

A fantastic programme, were delighted EDC that we can be a host

An exciting programme. Board buddy

Wonderful insight and words of wisdom

Privileged to be involved in the launch of this fantastic scheme. Coal Authority

The launch event was brilliant. Previous apprentices were really inspiring. It was a great having them involved with the day. BA



**Any questions
?**

NRW Board Paper

Date of meeting:	18/05/2023
Title of Paper:	Proposed changes to the Statutory and Legal Scheme (SaLS)
Paper Reference:	23-05-B13
Paper sponsored by:	Clare Pillman, Chief Executive Officer
Paper prepared by:	Clare Jones, Lead Specialist Advisor, Governance
Paper presented by:	Clare Jones, Lead Specialist Advisor, Governance
Purpose of the paper	Approval
Approval/consultation process	Clare Jones, Lead Specialist Advisor, Governance Sarah Asbrey, Head of Legal Services
Responsible: Who has developed the paper/process and who has had input?	Colette Fletcher, Head of Governance and Board Secretary Clare Pillman, Chief Executive Officer
Accountable: Who is accountable for the ultimate approval? Who will be or is being asked to approve?	NRW Board
Consulted: Who has been consulted to date? Where endorsement is required, is this in place? Will further consultation be required?	Regulatory Business Board Sarah Asbrey, Head of Legal Services Colette Fletcher, Head of Governance & Board Secretary Clare Pillman, Chief Executive Officer

Informed: Who has been informed or who needs to be further information about the work?	Once a decision has been made on whether to approve the new additions or not, the Business Board will be informed.
Summary	NRW Board is requested to consider and approve the proposed changes to the Statutory and Legal Scheme (SaLS) from the Regulatory Business Board

Background

1. All NRW business boards were recently asked to undertake an annual review of the Statutory and Legal Scheme (SaLS) content that they are responsible for maintaining. This paper presents for approval the proposed changes to the SaLS from the Regulatory Business Board.
2. Our procedures state that any new lines or sections in the SaLS, or changes to the delegated authority affecting the CEO herself or Executive Team members, must be presented to the Board for approval.
3. This paper seeks approval from the Board for a change to SaLS to incorporate the additional requested lines to the delegated authority. The proposals were approved by Head of Governance and Board Secretary, Head of Legal Services, and the Chief Executive Officer in April 2023.
4. The Regulatory Business Board is proposing the addition of two new lines:
 1. Ref.5.16 – to address an identified gap in the development consent process; and
 2. Ref.18.221 – to address an identified gap in the Restocking Notice appeals process.
5. There is a consequential effect on numbering following the addition of Ref.5.16. These revisions are not included in the annex, as we will take approval of the additions to include approval of the consequential numbering changes.
6. Annex 1 presents the proposed new Regulatory Business Board entries to the Board for approval.

Risks, risk appetite and opportunities

7. SaLS is an important part of our governance framework and if we do not keep it current there is a risk that it will no longer be fit for purpose. There would also be a risk if staff did not have clarity about their authorisation and delegation levels.

Wider implications

- (a) **Finance:** There are no additional financial implications or considerations

- (b) **Resource implications:** There are no additional resource implications or considerations.
- (c) **Equality:** The governance requirements affect all members of staff equally. No adverse effects are anticipated for any particular protected groups or characteristics.
- (d) **Data Protection:** There are no additional data protection implications or considerations.

Next Steps

- 8. Following approval of the proposed additional entries and amendments, the Regulatory Business Board will be advised and the new lines will be incorporated into the SaLS master document.

Recommendation

- 9. NRW Board is asked to consider and approve the proposed additional entries and amendments for inclusion within the SaLS master document.

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NRW SaLS 2023 – Regulatory Business Board (REGBB) additions for Board approval

							Delegated Level		
	REF	Category	Sub-Category	Function	Applicable Board(s)	Section of legislation	Job Grade	Job Description	Link to MoM
Proposed new line	5.16	Consultation	Planning Response	Decision under s150 of the Planning Act 2008 on whether to consent to the inclusion of a provision in an order granting development consent the effect of which (will be?) to remove the requirement for a prescribed consent to be granted.	REGBB	Planning Act (2008) Regulation 150	11	Head of Regulation and Permitting	No
Proposed new line	18.221	Regulatory activities	Permitting, licences and assents (excluding Fisheries) / m.) Forestry Regulations	Approve responses to Welsh Government relating to appeals against a Restocking Notice	REGBB	Section 17b The Forestry Act 1967	Grade 9	Operations Manager (Grade 9)	No

NRW Board Paper

Date of meeting:	18 th May 2023
Title of Paper:	Wellbeing, Health & Safety & Learning & Development Annual Report 2022-2023
Paper Reference:	23-05-B12
Paper sponsored by:	Prys Davies, Executive Director Corporate Strategy and Development
Paper prepared by:	Charlotte Morgan, Wellbeing, Health and Safety & Learning & Development Manager
Paper presented by:	Charlotte Morgan, Wellbeing, Health and Safety & Learning & Development Manager
Purpose of the paper	Approval
Approval/consultation process	
Responsible:	Charlotte Morgan, Wellbeing, Health and Safety & Learning & Development Manager
Accountable:	Executive Team and Board
Summary	Approval

Issue

1. This is the annual summary of our Wellbeing, Health & Safety (WH&S) & Learning & Development (L&D) performance for Natural Resources Wales (NRW). The Report provides an overview of how NRW have managed WH&S throughout the year 2022-2023.

Background

2. The new NRW WH&S Strategy and Improvement Plan 2021-2024 was approved by Board in September 2021. The WH&S Programme was launched to drive the

improvements to enable NRW to pursue its ambition with respect to the wellbeing, health and safety of its employees.

3. The Health, Safety and Wellbeing Report for the last financial year identified next steps and future work for action through the 2021-2024 NRW Wellbeing Health and Safety Strategy and Improvement Plan.
4. In 2022/2023 we made further significant steps to implement our Strategy. Headlines from 2022/2023 include:
 - Serious Incident Reviews. The WH&S Team reviewed eight serious incidents and near misses using the Serious Incident Review procedure. These incidents involved forestry work activities and sadly, fatal accidents on the NRW Estate.
 - RIDDOR reportable Lost Time Incidents (LTIs) and Injuries. Three RIDDOR reported incidents and three LTIs were reported for 2022/2023. There has been decrease in RIDDOR reportable incidents on last year. Near Miss reporting has increased in comparison to last financial year. Managers and team leaders have received training and supporting guidance on reporting and investigating incidents. The importance of managing health and safety risks and supporting staff have been delivered through engagement campaigns.
 - In December 2022, NRW re-attained registration to ISO 45001: 2018.
 - Corporate Health Standard. In February 2022, NRW successfully re-attained the silver award level.
 - Pre-qualification questionnaires. A total of 65 of pre-qualification questionnaires were assessed, for a number of different teams. This assessment is to ensure that the contractors, and customers we work with have been suitably assessed.
 - Established a collaborative partnership with the Health & Safety Executive, NRW and Forestry Commission.
 - The Learning & Development (L&D) Team transferred management to the Wellbeing, Health & Safety Manager in April 2022.
5. We delivered further improvements and developments such as:
 - Several specific wellbeing initiatives throughout the year e.g., Stress Awareness Month, financial support, etc.
 - Strengthened the working relationship with the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and Forest Industry Safety Accord (FISA) with focus on key WH&S areas such as chainsaw competency.
 - In total 358 WH&S related training courses were delivered to NRW staff.
 - Approval of key WH&S policies/procedures to ensure we have robust processes in place e.g., personal protective equipment, menopause in the workplace and working outdoors

Recommendation

6. Board are asked to approve the Wellbeing, Health & Safety & Learning & Development Annual Report for 2022/2023.

Next Steps

7. NRW will continue to focus on ensuring wellbeing, health and safety risks are being managed effectively. In looking ahead, NRW will need to maintain and also develop and improve further our own strong culture of wellbeing, health and safety monitoring and learning. This will continue to be the key element of our future strategy to move forward.
8. We will use the information gathered and lessons learnt in the development of our future Strategy and Action Plan.

Financial Implications

9. It is recognised that the mis-management of WH&S has significant financial implications. NRW are continuing to put new systems in place in order to manage our WH&S risks and therefore reduce any costs. As well as protecting our staff and those working on and using the estate NRW manage, there could be significant financial implications arising from failures to implement a robust WH&S system.

Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

10. Not undertaken for this report.

Index of Annex

- Annex 1 – Wellbeing, Health, and Safety and Learning & Development Annual Report – 2022/2023.



Annex 1 – WH&S Annual Report 2022-2023

Summary

This is the annual report to inform of NRW's Wellbeing, Health and Safety (WH&S) developments in 2022/2023 including

- Improvements to our safety management systems
- Performance
- Actions/initiatives that have been put in place.

Overview

The new NRW Wellbeing, Health and Safety Strategy and Improvement Plan for 2021 – 2024 were approved in September 2021. These documents describe the strategic direction for wellbeing, health and safety over the next three years. They detail how NRW intends to organise itself to maintain legal compliance as a minimum and promote a positive, sustainable wellbeing, health and safety culture to continually improve performance.

Good health and wellbeing is increasingly being acknowledged as a vital element in supporting and developing a workforce. Not only are there positive benefits to staff but there are also financial and reputational benefits to the organisation. NRW recognises that an important aspect is the promotion and maintenance of the physical and psychological health, wellbeing and safety of its entire organisation. In order to deliver NRW WH&S objectives, it is vitally important that NRW has a highly motivated, empowered, engaged and healthy workforce.

The new WH&S Strategy clearly demonstrate that NRW values its staff and customers and wants them to be safe and thrive because of the positive culture and benefits of working to support the natural resources of Wales. Put simply, it's about NRW being a great place to work and a great organisation to do business with.

The key priorities that were identified to be taken forward in 2022/2023 were:

- Health and safety training requirements for all NRW staff are more clearly defined.
- All leaders and managers commit more fully to, and are accountable for, the management of wellbeing health and safety.

- Occupational health and safety risks are managed and controlled in a sensible, proportionate, and enabling manner.
- Improved wellbeing, health and safety promotion, communication, and consultation mechanisms.
- Revised risk assessment process within NRW.
- NRW successfully retaining registration to ISO 45001.
- NRW successfully retained the Corporate Health Standard Silver award.

Headlines from 2022/2023 include:

- Serious Incident Reviews (SIR) – We reviewed eight serious incidents and near misses using the serious incident procedure. These incidents involved forestry work activities, a major injury to a contractor, damage to a third-party asset, and fatal incidents to members of the public accessing NRW estate.
- RIDDOR Reportable LTI's and Injuries. Three RIDDOR reported incidents and three lost time incidents (LTIs) for 2022/2023, this is a reduction on last year.
- We have continued to deliver training for managers and team leaders on reporting and investigating incidents. The importance of managing health and safety risks and supporting staff have been delivered through campaigns and engagement activities co-ordinated by the WH&S team in partnership with the business teams.
- NRW retained registration to ISO 45001:2018 in December 2022.
- Corporate Health Standard. NRW were re-assessed in February 2023 for the silver award.
- Pre-qualification Questionnaires. A total of 65 pre-qualification questionnaires were assessed, for a number of different teams. This assessment is required as part of health and safety legislation and ensures that our contractors and customers have been assessed prior to undertaking any work on NRW estate.
- 358 WH&S related training courses were delivered to NRW staff.

National Wellbeing, Health & Safety Committee

The National Wellbeing, Health & Safety committee met three times in 2022/2023 to discuss issues raised, update on progress and provide guidance and recommendations, addressing wellbeing, health and safety matters at a strategic level. Topics have included:

- Review of the Strategic Risk Register, particularly the WHS risk
- Incident reporting and analysis of data
- Discussion and review of current Serious Incident Reviews, with monitoring of actions
- Consideration of internal and external audit findings and recommendations
- Feedback from Regional Forums and Trade Union representatives

In 2022/2023, all the WH&S forums continued with the action focussed approach developed previously, raising awareness of their existence and playing a role in delivery of the strategy and improvement plan items. They also focussed their attention on local initiatives and development of action plans on priority issues.

Performance – health and safety

Headline accident and near miss statistics

- RIDDOR reportable LTI's and Injuries with no lost time reports to staff have decreased this year, with Near Miss reporting by staff increasing in comparison to the last financial year.
- Near misses reported by employees have increased and this shows positive reporting to highlight the issues and address these before an accident take place.
- Hazard reporting has also increased which highlights again positive proactive reporting and understanding by employees.
- Near misses relating to contractors have remained fairly static, but injuries to contractors have increased. Members of the public injuries and near misses reporting has also remained static.
- NRW has delivered WH&S training for managers and team leaders on reporting and investigating incidents.
- The importance of managing health and safety risks and supporting staff have been delivered through campaigns.
- It is also pleasing to note that there has been continued efforts by the local WH&S forums to improve the quantity and quality of incident reports and to ensure incidents are investigated and closed off by line managers.

	2022/2023	2021/2022	2020/2021	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017
RIDDOR – staff	3	7	3	6	2	8	9
Lost time injuries – staff	3	3	1	4	5	8	4
Injuries, no lost time - staff	43	51	19	121	53	59	68
Near miss – staff	175	156	109	183	163	201	232
Serious incident reviews	8	4	4	5	2	3	9
Injuries - contractors	8*	3*	5*	5	9	9	8
Injuries – public	38	38	18	53	53	95	70

Near miss – contractors	68	62	46	50	40	44	62
Near miss – public	33	30	23	33	20	39	27
Property Damage	53	36	35	32	43	48	63
Hazards Reported	199	166	65	83	103	78	6

* Includes 1 RIDDOR Reportable injury to a contractor. This will have been reported to HSE by the contractor but has been included in our statistics to ensure a suitable investigation/review takes place.

- Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR) incident is a particular type of incident that is required to be reported to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE)
- A lost time injury (LTI) is where a member of staff is injured during the course of their work and they have subsequently had time off or been on light duties as a result of their injuries (reportable under RIDDOR if over 7 days). Lost Time starts the first day after the person was injured. The LTI figure does not include LTI's that became RIDDOR reportable.
- An injury with no lost time (Non-LTI) is where a member of staff is injured during the course of their work but only needed minor 1st aid treatment and subsequently have not had any time off work.
- A Near Miss is an unplanned or uncontrolled event that does not cause injury, ill health or damage, but could do so.
- Member of public injuries relate predominantly to mountain bike accidents on our purpose-built trails, and slips, trips and falls on walking trails. Trails are risk assessed and routinely inspected periodically and are also inspected following an accident.
- Public near misses are predominately public incursions on to live harvesting sites or illegal off-road motorcyclists abusing contractors/members of the public.

RIDDOR – NRW

We have had three RIDDOR reportable incidents in this reporting period that relate to employees:

- 27th April 2022 – Dangerous occurrence relating to fault on diving equipment breathing apparatus. Fault reported to HSE and cylinder suppliers.
- 6th February 2023 – Staff member sustained eye injury during scrub clearance work.
- 14th March 2023 – Staff member sustained eye injury during forest site visit.

RIDDOR - contractor

There has been one RIDDOR Reportable incident to a contractor:

- 1st April 2022 – arm fracture to contractor checking livestock on Cors Fochno.

Lost Time Incidents that are not RIDDOR reportable

- 12th September 2022 – Staff member slipped on wet grass causing pain/bruising to lower back.
- 8th March 2023 – Staff member suffered whiplash following road traffic collision.
- 22nd March 2023 – Staff member hit head on cabinet causing mild concussion.

Serious Incident Reviews

Eight serious incident reviews were opened in 2022/2023 using our serious incident review process, with the WH&S Lead Specialist Advisors in conjunction with the Trade Unions undertaking the investigations. Sadly, there were four fatal accidents to members of the public and these continue to be investigated by the Police and the Coroner. A full investigation cannot be undertaken until these have been concluded. Details on the eight serious incident reviews are set out below:

Injury - 3rd party contractor – Great Barnetts Wood

An ash tree on the boundary of NRW woodland estate fell into adjacent land where a groundsman was working on private land and was almost struck by the tree.

Injury - Member of the public - NRW Estate - Newborough

A member of the public was walking on NRW estate, and was hit by the car park barrier. A Serious Incident Review was undertaken and actions assigned.

Fatal accident – Member of the public – Bike Park Wales

Sadly, there was a fatal accident at Bike Park Wales.

The Serious Incident Review has been paused pending the outcome of a statutory investigation and Coroners inquest. There is a legal agreement with Bike Park Wales and they are in control of the works on site. This investigation is on-going with the external agencies.

Major injury - Member of the public – Sgwd Clun Gwyn, Waterfalls country, Ystradfellte

Sadly, there was a major injury to the member of the public at Sgwd Clun Gwyn. This was a fall from height. The Serious Incident Review has been paused pending the outcome of a multi-agency review of the site.

Fatal accident – Member of the public – Sgwd Clun Gwyn Isaf, Four Falls trail, Ystradfellte

Sadly, there was a fatal accident at Sgwd Clun Gwyn, this was a fall from height on the public right of way. The Serious Incident Review has been paused pending the outcome of the statutory investigation and Coroners inquest. Additional signage on the public right of way to warn of the serious hazards were installed and also National Parks have closed the right of way under their powers as the highway authority. A multi-agency review of the site has been commissioned.

Major injury – Contractor – Hensol Woodland

A sub-contractor was at Hensol undertaking tree felling work for NRW and sustained a fracture to the leg. A Serious Incident Review has commenced, this is currently on-going.

Property damage – third party - Maescoed Mawr

A standing sales contractor damaged a third-party asset whilst undertaking forestry works. A Serious Incident Review has been commissioned and a draft report completed.

Fatal accident – two members of the public - Sgwd y Pannwr, Bannau Brycheiniog

Sadly, there were two fatal accidents involving members of the public on NRW estate.

These fatal accidents are currently being investigated by the Police and the Coroner, therefore a full investigation cannot be undertaken until these have been concluded.

Performance – Wellbeing and health

Occupational health statistics

Summary of annual activity

Our occupational health data for the reported year indicates that 36.5% of our management referrals are related to mental health issues (an 8.5% decrease on last year). 26.5% of those mental health related referrals were confirmed as perceived work-related stress and multifactorial stress/anxiety. Perceived work-related stressors were reported to be organisational change, unmanageable workloads, workplace conflict, job evaluation.

Summary 2022/2023	Compared to 2021/2022
163 Referrals	+29 (134)

32 Hand Arm Vibration (HAVs) screening	-31 (63)
5 HAVs Tier 4 assessments	-1 (6)
27 Conflict Resolution screening	+1 (26)
8 Night worker assessments	+5 (3)

Further detail for the reporting year is provided in the table below.

Year	Referrals	Mental Health	Personal Anxiety/stress and Depression	Workplace Stress/Anxiety /Depression	Multi-faceted stress	Mental health other
2018/2019	157	71	29	24	5	5
2019/2020	142	75	26	31	4	5
2020/2021	95	46	24	12	8	2
2021/2022	134	49	20	13	13	3
2022/2023	163	58	35	21	2	0

The directorate forums have also showed intent and commitment to reducing mental health issues and absence, through support to our corporate initiatives.

Employee Assistance Programme

Between 2022/2023 there have been a total of 270 contacts of which 152 have been calls to the 24/7 counselling line; 15 were individual counselling sessions, 55 video face to face contracted counselling sessions, 38 were contacts to the information teams and 10 were online contacts. In addition, there were 2 Covid specific calls which were received in November 2022 and March 2023.

89 new cases/clients presented of which the majority 57% identified as female when asked. Of the 89 new cases/clients, 86 (97%) came to Care first using the self-referral route which demonstrates both a good knowledge and trust in the service provision

Care first conducted a service satisfaction survey the most up-to-date being the time period below which covers this reporting period

The Lifestyle usage has been excellent with 131 unique page views of which 79% were views to the “at home” information and 21% were to the “at work” pages

The weekly webinars continue at 3 per week delivered on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. They remain well attended and well-reviewed.

Work issues

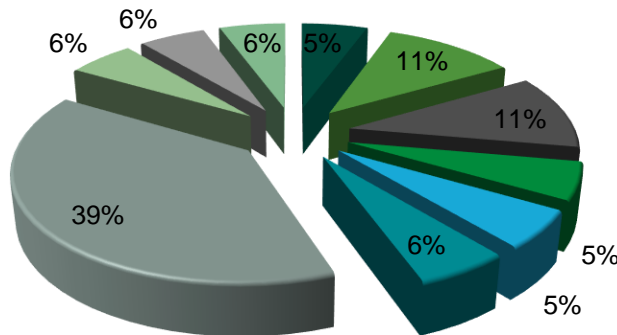
18 work related issues have been presented the trends being:-

- 39% emotional health directly to the workplace

- 17% were about issues of perceived bullying and harassment by colleagues and managers

Within the HSE standards we saw:-

- Stress- Demands 6%
- Stress-Support 6%
- Stress-Role 6%

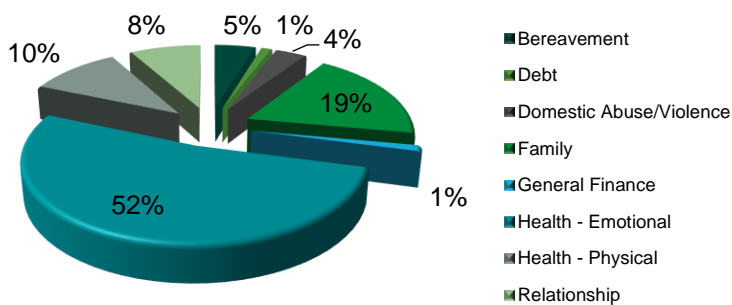


- Bullying & Harassment by Colleagues
- Changes at work
- Performance - General
- Work Related Health - Emotional
- Bullying & Harassment by Managers
- Grievance
- Relationships at work with manager
- Stress - Demands

Personal issues

86 personal issues were presented with the main trends being:-

- Health at 62% of which 52% were emotional health issues and 10% related to physical health
- Family concerns accounted for 19% of the personal issues presented
- 6% related to aspects of personal relationships.

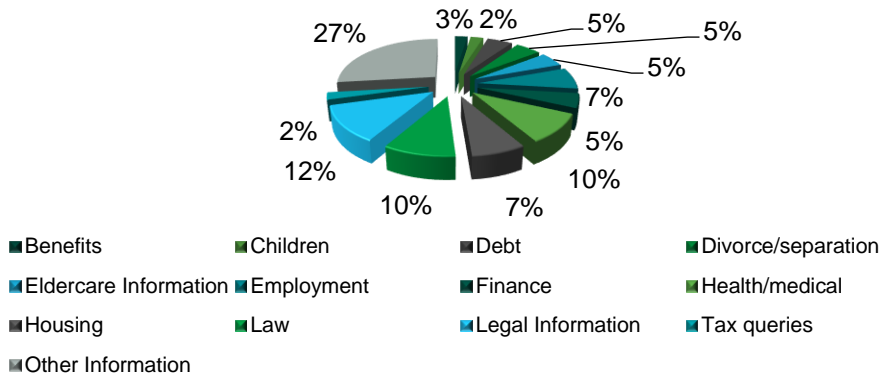


Specialist issues

There were 41 specialist issues presented to the employee assistance programme information teams the trends being:-

- 22% about first line legal issues
- 10% health medical concerns

There were also 27% specific calls relating to information and consumer issues



Further developments in 2022/2023

Corporate Health Standard

The focus for 2022/2023 was to prepare, gather evidence and supporting information to continue to attain the Corporate Health Standard silver award. The formal Gold level application for assessment was submitted in March 2021. However, due to the pandemic, Public Health Wales (PHW) have been unable to assess for the CHS for the past 12 months, as their resources have been required in other areas due to Covid-19. The Healthy Working Wales Team are working on the development of a new delivery model, which includes a revamped awards scheme that will take account of any work done now or in the past towards the existing awards programme. Therefore, NRW could only be assessed at our current CHS level which was silver. The assessment took place in February 2023 and NRW successfully retained the silver level and the auditor commented that NRW were ready for the next step, which is the Gold level award.

Wellbeing initiatives

We organised participation in many specific wellbeing initiatives throughout the year. These included:

- Stress awareness month
- National walking month
- Skin cancer awareness month

- Sun awareness week
- Talk to us campaign
- National arthritis week
- Menopause awareness
- Dry January
- Time to talk day
- Sexual abuse and sexual violence awareness week
- National no smoking day

All these initiatives reminded and encouraged staff of how to look after themselves and their colleagues at work and outside of work. These initiatives have been brought to the attention of staff through our Intranet, Manager's Monthly updates, Yammer pages and through engagement at local WH&S Forums and team meetings.

We continue to advertise the webinars provided by Care first which cover a variety of topics.

Occupational health

Awareness sessions for line managers were arranged, where our Occupational Health provider explained in detail the referral process and what line managers could expect from the referral report.

Financial Wellbeing

In order to support staff in the cost-of-living crisis, a number of support services were established.

NRW teamed up with the Cambrian Credit Union to offer staff an easy way of building a nest egg or borrowing extra funds if required. With the new payroll savings scheme, staff set the amount of money they want to put aside on a regular basis and this will be paid direct from their salary into their Cambrian Credit Union Savings account. A number of sessions were arranged and delivered on financial wellbeing.

A new intranet page was developed to solely focus on financial wellbeing with the aim to provide hints, tips and signposting for staff.

Arthritis awareness session

An arthritis awareness session was arranged by Versus Arthritis which covered what arthritis and musculoskeletal conditions they support and how staff can access help and support to coincide with National Arthritis week 7-12 October 2022.

Menopause

In June 2022, NRW signed the menopause workplace pledge. By signing this we have committed to recognising that the menopause can be an issue in the workplace and more support might be needed, talking openly, positively and respectfully about the menopause. To actively support and inform staff affected by the menopause.

NRW are one of a small number of Welsh public sector organisations who have signed the pledge to commit to the wellbeing of women during the menopause.

World menopause day 18 October 2022, a member of staff held a mindfulness-based approach towards living well through the menopause. Drop-in sessions for staff and managers were also arranged.

Menopause cafes are also held on a monthly basis with appointments being sent out to all staff. Their purpose is to increase awareness of the impact of the menopause on those experiencing it, your friends, colleagues and families, so that we can make conscious choices about this third stage of life.

The cafes are accessible, respectful and confidential space; open to all regardless of gender or age; with no intention of leading people to any conclusion, product or course of action. It is not an awareness session, training session or formal planned session. It's also a good place for male team leaders to go to, to understand symptoms and issues etc to help support their staff.

Lunch and learn sessions

A number of lunch and learn sessions were arranged over the past 12 months to focus on certain wellbeing aspects. These included arthritis awareness, financial wellbeing; menopause awareness day, suicide awareness. Staff feedback indicated that these sessions are helpful, informative and support staff in their wellbeing.

WH&S Learning and Development (L&D) Training

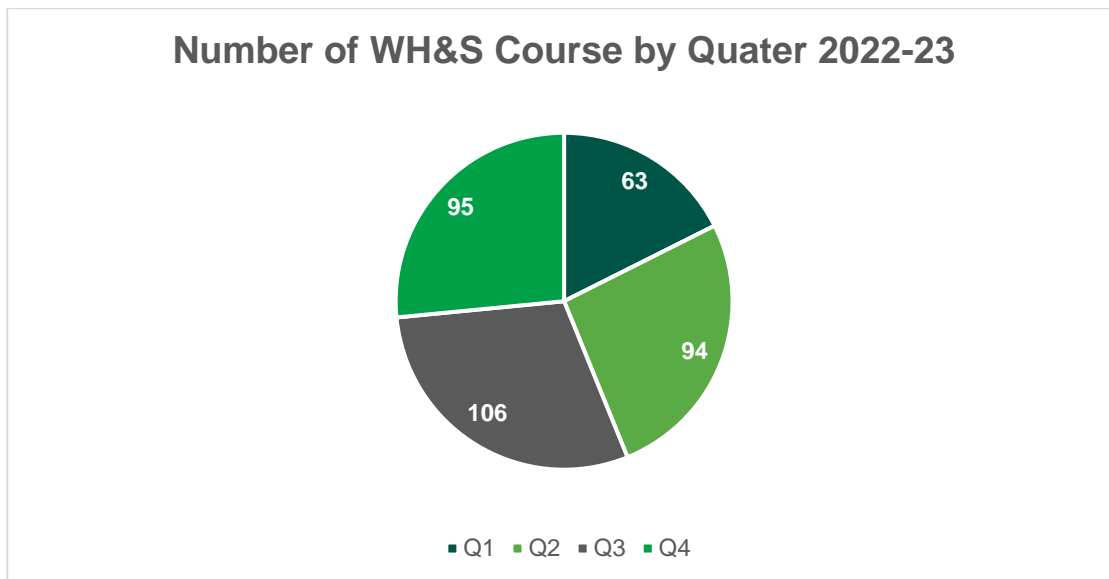
358 of the courses organised by the L&D Team in 2022-23 were categorised as WH&S courses. WH&S covers a range of courses including: Water Safety, First Aid, Hostile Situations, IOSH Managing/Working Safely, 4x4 Driver, Working at Height, Chainsaw courses (Operator and Supervisor), Forest Works Manger, Forklift Trucks, Electricity for Foresters, Safe use of Powered Pole Pruner, Woodchippers and Pesticides.

The table below shows the number of courses organised by the L&D team each month and the percentage of courses booked that were classed as WH&S. Overall 62% of the courses delivered for NRW employees were for WH&S courses, and of those courses 85% were delivered face to face.

		Total No of Course	Total No of H&S courses	H&S as % of total courses	No Face to Face	Virtual
Q1	Apr-22	31	19	61%	19	-
	May-22	53	23	43%	23	-
	Jun-22	43	21	49%	19	2
Q2	Jul-22	50	37	74%	35	2
	Aug-22	38	32	84%	32	-
	Sep-22	55	25	45%	23	3
	Oct-22	52	40	77%	38	2

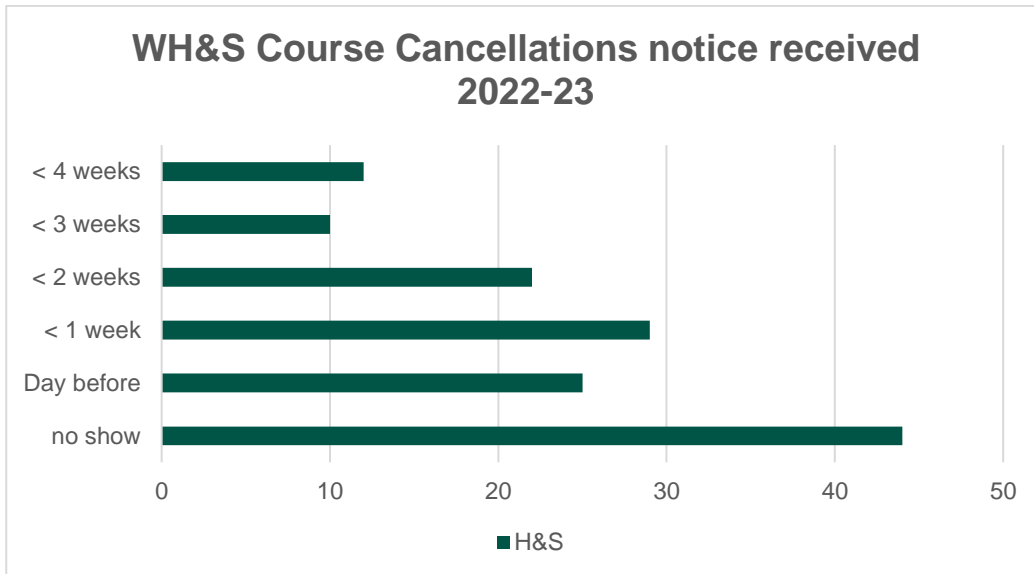
Q3	Nov-22	67	53	79%	44	8
	Dec-22	26	13	50%	11	2
Q4	Jan-23	34	22	65%	17	5
	Feb-23	43	30	75%	27	3
	Mar-23	81	43	53%	39	4
Totals		573	358		327	31

Two thirds of the courses delivered during 2022-23 were for WH&S costing just over £429,000. The highest number of WH&S courses were delivered in Q3 at 73% with the lowest number in Q1 at 50%.



This year the L&D Team has worked with the business to prepare for the UKWAS Audit in November 2022 and the Flood Recovery and Review Implementation Programme (FRRIP) to ensure our staff are trained in time for winter preparedness. A new Hostile Situation course has also been procured, development and tailored specifically for NRW staff. All training courses that are procured from external providers follow the procurement process with contracts and frameworks put in place for First Aid Training, 4x4 Driver Training, Water Safety, Working at Height and Forest Works Manager.

The cancellation data for the last 12 months show 142 cancellations were made for WH&S courses during the year. 70% of these cancellations gave less than a week's notice making it extremely difficult to find replacement delegates at such short notice. The cost of cancellations with less than four weeks' notice is estimated to have been just under £22,000 for the last financial year for WH&S alone.



Training Needs Analysis

In 2021, NRW was awarded registration to ISO 45001:2018. However, a major nonconformity was raised in relation to training and the lack of document control. In order to address the major nonconformity a corrective action plan was submitted to the certification body for approval. This action plan detailed how NRW were going to address the issues with training.

A further surveillance visit was carried out by BSi in November 2022, where the training needs analysis and gap analysis work was assessed to determine the progress that had been made.

In order to maintain certification to ISO 45001:2018, but more importantly be legally compliant to H&S legislation, the development of Training Frameworks commenced.

The Training Frameworks include: -

- a training needs analysis for every role across NRW, initially focussing on those in high-risk activities
- a training and certification gap analysis of centrally held records for the individual in that role

The process of the Training Framework involves collaborating with teams across NRW to ensure each and every role is identified, their training needs captured and agreed with Team Leaders, Managers, checked by W,H&S and finally the relevant Business Sub Board/Group and/or Executive Team to ensure a governance process has been followed.

The progress throughout 2022/2023 has been significant, with the training needs analysis activity for all high-risk work activities being completed and signed off via the governance route. This work is ongoing into 2023/2024.

Engagement with stakeholders

The Health & Safety Executive (HSE) and Forest Industry Safety Accord (FISA)

We have continued to engage with the HSE regarding a number of forestry safety matters. Staff across NRW continue to support FISA by attending and inputting to its various working groups. The Head of Land Stewardship attends and represents NRW at FISA steering group.

HSE Forestry Site Inspections

During 2022/2023, the HSE completed a series of planned site inspections on both standing sales and direct production harvesting work sites. NRW representation accompanied HSE on site during the inspections.

The inspections focussed primarily on Forestry Works Manager and Chainsaw Operator competence. The HSE have also used these inspections to revisit previous topics which have been focal points for inspection, including risk assessments and provision of welfare facilities.

NRW met with the HSE inspectors for feedback in early December, with contract management of standing sales sites by NRW being noted as positive with further progress needed on site specific risk assessments and welfare provision.

Timber Customer Liaison Day

Members of the WH&S team attended NRW's annual timber customer liaison day, to deliver a presentation. This covered health and safety statistics and performance, information about recent developments within the industry and also providing information about NRW's trial of the FISA chainsaw competency system, inviting customer and contractor participation.

Progress against wellbeing, health and safety actions / initiatives

Lone & remote working system

Peoplesafe is NRW's lone and remote working system, which was launched in July 2018. The system brings together mobile phones and GPS Spot trackers on one platform, offering a solution that can be used by lone and remote workers in areas of poor or no phone signal.

In April 2022, a new contract with the supplier was procured to maintain the PeopleSafe lone and remote working system in NRW

At the end of the financial year, March 2022, there were 1,083 (1066 last year) users registered to use the system.

Audit Programme

No internal audits were undertaken in 2022/2023.

Policy/procedure update

The following policies and procedures were developed and/or revised in 2022/2023:

- Menopause in the workplace
- Zoonoses – Lyme Disease
- Hand Arm Vibration
- Water Safety at Work
- Working Outdoors
- Smoking
- Procurement of contractors
- Personal Protective Equipment
- Face fit testing
- Reasonable adjustments

Adfywio

Wellbeing Health and Safety features in the Adfywio programme. The programme looks to help and support NRW to become an agile, resilient and more efficient organisation. The Adfywio programme takes the opportunity to look at how we work after the pandemic and looks to the future to provide a new and revitalised workplace for staff.

Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) – Care First

Our EAP provider Care First continued to provide weekly webinars and newsletters to all their clients covering a variety of topics such as mental health; grief awareness; critical incident support; keeping active; alcohol awareness; financial wellbeing; long covid; Care First Lifestyle; sleep hygiene; tips to improve posture; achieving a good work life balance; stress awareness, Care firsts computerised CBT course; mens mental health awareness; sexual and domestic abuse awareness; migraine awareness; world suicide prevention day etc.

Contractor Management

A number of teams have worked together to ensure that contractors and customers who work on NRW land are adequately assessed at the pre-qualification stage, to ensure that they are competent and have made suitable arrangements in place to manage WH&S.

In total, the following have been assessed and approved -

4 - 4x4 training providers. All failed the initial assessment, which required further clarification and then approved.

1 – survey work. All failed the initial assessment, which required further clarification and then approved.

1 – photo services landscape. All failed the initial assessment, which required further clarification and then approved.

9 – fencing frameworks. All failed the initial assessment, which required further clarification and then approved.

11 – vegetation management. All failed the initial assessment, which required further clarification and then approved.

1 – standing sales. All failed the initial assessment, which required further clarification and then approved.

1 - air quality management. All failed the initial assessment, which required further clarification and then approved.

13 - forestry road civils framework. 5 approved at initial assessment and the others required further clarification and then approved.

8 - contract site specific works. All failed the initial assessment, which required further clarification and then approved.

6 - ash dieback contracts. All failed the initial assessment, which required further clarification and then approved.

8 - ground preparation contracts. All failed the initial assessment, which required further clarification and then approved.

2 - fleet managed services. All failed the initial assessment, which required further clarification and then approved.

Where potential contractors/customers/suppliers fail the initial assessment, further guidance is provided in that area to allow them to re-submit further supporting evidence. The guidance is reviewed and updated to improve the process for NRW's contractors and customers.

Undertaking this action ensures that NRW is fulfilling its legal obligations, and also provides NRW with assurance that our customers and contractors have robust systems and procedures in place to manage Health and Safety when working for NRW.

Risk assessment management

Employers in each workplace have a legal duty to ensure the health and safety of workers in every aspect related to their work. The purpose of carrying out a risk assessment is to enable the employer to take the measures necessary for the health and safety protection of workers. As part of being compliant with ISO 45001:2018, all NRW teams will need to have work activity specific risk assessments. In 2022/2023 there has been good progress in this area, and the WH&S team have been working with teams across NRW to assist the development of the risk assessments in AssessNET. Where teams already have specific

risk assessments, but in another format, there has been support to the business in updating these onto AssessNet.

Training sessions

Risk assessment training awareness sessions were delivered during 2022/2023.

In total, the following have been delivered: -

4 Risk assessments sessions delivered, and 76 staff attended.

Risk register

The strategic risk register was revised, reviewed and amended in 2022/2023. There are ten strategic risks in total, one with a particular focus on WH&S, that of health and safety of staff/contractors/visitors. Work has been undertaken by the WH&S Manager and Executive Director of Operations to ensure that the risk register is effective and fit for purpose. There is a monthly review of the risk register to update and record any completed actions. This is an ongoing project with mitigating actions being updated as and when necessary.

Active monitoring

The following shows the number of active monitoring that has taken place.

Q1 2022/2023	Q2 2022/2023	Q3 2022/2023	Q4 2022/2023
167	230	229	217

There is only 2 full years active monitoring data available, so it is early in the trend analysis at present. This year the active monitoring data remains similar for each quarter. There will be a change in the way NRW undertake active monitoring from the 1st of April 2023. As a starting point, templates have been developed for undertaking active monitoring e.g., operational team and non-operational teams. The active monitoring reports will be stored on AssessNET, which will record the active monitoring that is undertaken. The new process will involve using AssessNET to access the templates. This new approach will make it easier for trend analysis and will also highlight positive behaviours. Each Directorate has also set a target for the number of active monitoring that will take place.

Public Safety Work

Visitor Safety Group (VSG)

NRW have recently renewed their membership of VSG and continue to sit as a board member of the group promoting public safety best practice in the UK and Ireland. NRW

staff have presented on several webinars arranged nationally by VSG on topics relating to recovery and renewal of access to public spaces during the current pandemic.

National Nature Reserves (NNR) Audits

The combined audits of our National Nature Reserves (NNR) with our colleagues from Conservation Management and Environmental Management giving our NNR staff reassurance on how they are managing their reserves with respect to public safety, conservation management and environmental management (ISO 14001).

Audits took place for Coed Rheidol and Cors Caron with further site safety inspections at waterfall country following member of the public incidents.

Public Safety across NRW

A review of all the public safety policies and guidance within NRW was undertaken in 2022/2023, in order to highlight any failings. A NRW wide public safety policy has been developed, with the supporting operational guidance. This will ensure that NRW fulfils its public safety duties and responsibilities.

Internal advice and guidance

NRW teams gained Health and safety advice and guidance on estate standards, public safety, forestry, facilities, marine teams, and enforcement teams.

NRW agreed to take on a project to make all of the defibrillators we have in our offices and depots publicly available where possible. This work was completed in 2022/2023 and have been registered on the Welsh Ambulance Trust website and will be available for local communities to use in an emergency.

ISO 45001:2018 Management Standard

On the 23rd of December 2021, NRW received formal confirmation of registration to ISO 45001:2018.

The re-certification process began in October 2022 and finished early December 2022 with 12 audit days involving various teams across Wales. NRW were successfully awarded re-certification to ISO 45001:2018 standard. There were 3 minor non-conformities noted, these included working at height, management of noise at work and a premises risk assessment.

The current minor non-conformities were assessed and closed off, apart from the training and learning & development non-conformity.

The ISO 45001:2018 standard is designed to prevent work-related injury and ill-health and to provide safe and healthy workplaces by providing a framework where we can manage and continuously improve our approach to health and safety.

Achieving this standard will help NRW ensure the long-term wellbeing, health, and safety of everyone – staff, visitors, contractors and customers.

NRW should be proud of the achievement, many organisations fail to attain the standard, as it is a difficult standard to achieve and maintain.

Construction Design Management (CDM) project board

Over the last 12 months, a project board was established to review and develop a NRW process for managing WH&S risks in relation to CDM. The main aim was to standardise NRW's approach to management of health and safety risks in maintenance and construction activities by NRW's Integrated Engineering and Integrated Workforce teams.

This project looked at current documentation, local procedures that had been established in some teams and the use of existing technology. A site pack was developed which was piloted within the teams and meetings set up to discuss amendments and best practice. The site pack was finalised and approved via the project board with implementation from the 1 April 2023. There will be further reviews of the site pack and associated documentation to ascertain any issues. This is an ongoing project into 2023/2024.

Next Steps and Future Work for NRW in 2022/2023

There has been significant progress in 2022/2023 with delivery of key wellbeing, health and safety improvements. However, further progress needs to be made and we will do this by focussing on priority work areas in 2023/2024: -

Leadership

Continuing to improve visible leadership from the Board, Executive Team, Leadership Team, Management Team and Team Leaders, especially about the ownership and management of risk.

Health and Wellbeing

Continue to implement the actions in the current WH&S strategy and monitor and evaluate the measurement of performance.

External Engagement

Continue the engagement with both internal and external stakeholders and work together to improve our WH&S performance.

Learning & Development

Continue to assist with key training requirements, the training needs analysis, the gap analysis work to ensure legal compliance and promote the importance of undertaking WH&S training. Determine and develop competency frameworks for the higher risk

activities, e.g., chainsaw, water safety. Implement the learning management system and seek engagement from the internal customers.

System development

Monitor and review the WH&S systems to ensure they are suitable and sufficient.

Performance monitoring & audit

Fully participate in relevant WH&S topics within internal audit programme for 2023/2024.

Enable use of strategic risk register through clear ownership of risk areas and routine assessment of risks.

Legal compliance

Launch a new wellbeing, health and safety strategy to strive for legal compliance.

Staff engagement

WH&S National Committee and Forums continue to actively engage with staff in developing and promoting a safe working environment and culture.

Board Forward Look – July						
	Item	Private/ Public	Scope	Purpose	Time	Sponsor
1	Open meeting	Public and Private	Standing Item		5	Chair
2	Review Minutes	Public and Private	Standing Item		10	Chair
3	Chair's Update	Public and Private	Standing Item		10	Chair
4	CEO Update	Public and Private	Standing Item		30	Clare Pillman
5	Committee Updates	Public and Private	Standing Item		20	Chairs of Committees
6	Financial Approvals	Private	Approval	Approval of the latest financial items	20	Rachael Cunningham
7	Revised Opening Budget	Private	Approval	Approval of the revised opening budget	20	Rachael Cunningham
8	Annual Report and Accounts	Private	Approval	To approve the Annual Report and Accounts	15	Rachael Cunningham and Prys Davies
9	Draft Internal Audit Opinion	Private	Discussion	Board to agree the Draft Internal Audit Opinion and a further update to Board on the wider piece about Internal Audit	45	Rachael Cunningham
10	Business Plan 2023-24	Private	Approval	Standing Item	60	Prys Davies
11	Feral Wild Boar Strategy	Private	Approval	To approve the feral wild boar strategy	45	Ceri Davies
12	Gamebird Release Consultation	Private	Approval	To approve the approach to the Gamebird Release Consultation	30	Ceri Davies
13	Global Risk*	Private	Discussion	To discuss the outcomes from the World Economic Forum in Davos and the Global Risk implications for NRW	30	Prys Davies

Board Forward Look – July						
	Item	Private/ Public	Scope	Purpose	Time	Sponsor
14	Local Public Service Board (PSB) Wellbeing Plans – Reflections*	Private	Discussion	Summary reflections on local wellbeing planning in Wales, opportunities and risks to NRW	45	Ceri Davies
15	Business Plan Performance Dashboard – end of year Report	Public	Scrutiny	To scrutinise end of year Report	20	Clare Pillman
16	Finance Report	Public	Approval/ Discussion	To review and update financial performance	15	Rachael Cunningham
17	Incident Review and Minimising Pollution	Public	Approval and discussion	For Board 1. To agree the approach to incident management: innovative approach, trends, data and evidence, 2. Wider pollution piece with evidence chart	1 hr	Ceri Davies and Gareth O'Shea
18	Update on Atlantic Salmon actions*	Public	Discussion	To discuss ideas to support the Atlantic Salmon population	30	Ceri Davies
19	Outcomes from the UN Water Conference*	Public	Discussion	To discuss the outcomes from the UN Water Conference	30	Ceri Davies
20	Welsh Language Annual Report	Public	Approval	To approve the Welsh Language Annual Report	15	Prys Davies
21	AOB	Public and Private	Discussion	If raised	5	Chair
22	Interactive Q&A Session with Public*	Public	Standing Item	To provide an opportunity for the public to speak to the Board	30	Chair

* Approach to this item to be reviewed subject to Board approval of the recommendations from the Board Development Day