

Agenda

Title of meeting:	NRW Board Public Meeting
Date of meeting:	Wednesday 25th September 2024
Time of meeting:	14:00 – 17:00
Location:	Microsoft Teams

Time	Item
14:00	Item 1. Open Meeting
5 mins	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Welcome• Declaration of Interests• Explain conduct of meeting <p>Sponsor and Presenter: Sir David Henshaw (Chair)</p> <p>Summary: To NOTE any declarations of interest</p>
14:05	Item 2. Review Minutes and Action Log
5 mins	<p>2A. Review Minutes from Public 17th July Meeting</p> <p>2B. Review Public Action Log</p> <p>Sponsor and Presenter: Sir David Henshaw (Chair)</p> <p>Summary: To APPROVE the minutes of the previous meeting and the Action Log</p>
14:10	Item 3. Update from the Chair
5 mins	<p>Sponsor and Presenter: Sir David Henshaw (Chair)</p> <p>Summary: To NOTE the Chair's update to the Board</p>
14:15	Item 4. Report from the Chief Executive
15 mins	<p>Sponsor and Presenter: Clare Pillman, Chief Executive</p>

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

Paper Ref: 24-09-B10

14:30

Item 5. Update Reports of Committees and Forums

20 mins

Sponsors and Presenters: Committee Chairs

- Audit and Risk Assurance Committee – 5th September
- Evidence Advisory Committee
- Finance Committee – 12th September
- Flood Risk Management Committee
Paper Ref: 24-09-B11
- Land Estate Committee – 18th July
Paper Ref: 24-09-B12
- People and Customer Committee – 11th September
- Protected Areas Committee

- Wales Land Management Forum
Paper Ref: 24-09-B13
- Wales Fisheries Forum
Paper Ref: 24-09-B14
- Wales Water Management Forum
- National Access Forum for Wales
Paper Ref: 24-09-B15
- Enabling the Environmental Sector Group

Summary: To NOTE the updates from the Board Committees and NRW Forums, both within and outside and meetings held

14:50

Item 6. Finance Performance Report

15 mins

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

Presenter: Mark Collins, Manager, Business Finance Team 2

Summary: To APPROVE the latest financial position

Paper Ref: 24-09-B17

15:05

Item 7. NRW's Net Zero Plan

30 mins

Sponsors: Ceri Davies, Executive Director of Evidence, Policy and Permitting; Sarah Jennings, Executive Director of Communications, Customer and Commercial

Presenters: Clive Walmsley, Senior Specialist Advisor, Climate Change and Decarbonisation; Mary Lewis, Sustainable Places, Land & Sea Manager

Summary: To APPROVE NRW's Net Zero Plan

Paper Ref: 24-09-B18

15:35

Break

15 mins

15:50

Item 8. Bereavement Charter

15 mins

Sponsor: Gareth O'Shea, Executive Director of Operations

Presenter: Lyndsey Rawlinson, Head of North East Wales Operations
Attendees: Jeremy Parr, Head of Flood and Incident Risk Management;
Sarah Asbrey, Head of Legal Services

Summary: To APPROVE NRW's sign-up to the charter for bereaved families

Paper ref: 24-09-B06

16:05

Item 9. Business Plan Performance Dashboard and Internal Performance Quarter 1 Report

20 mins

Sponsor and Presenter: Clare Pillman, Chief Executive

Attendees: Sarah Williams, Head of Corporate Strategy and PMO; Sue Ginley, Lead Specialist Advisor, Corporate Planning & Performance;
Bronia Bendall, Senior Specialist Advisor, Corporate Strategy and Development

Summary: To APPROVE the Business Plan Performance Dashboard and Internal Performance Quarter 1 Report

Paper ref: 24-09-B19

16:25

Item 10. Items for Approval

5 mins

a. Wellbeing, Health and Safety Quarter 1 Report

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

Summary: To APPROVE the Wellbeing, Health and Safety Report for Quarter 1

Paper Ref: 24-09-B20

b. Modern Slavery Statement

Sponsor: Sarah Jennings, Executive Director of Communications,
Customer and Commercial

Summary: To APPROVE NRW's Modern Slavery Statement

Paper Ref: 24-09-B21

16:30 **Item 11. Items for Information**

5 mins **a. Natur a Ni Evaluation Report**

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

Summary: To NOTE the Natur a Ni Evaluation Report

Paper Ref: 24-09-B22

16:35 **Item 12. AOB**

5 mins

16:40 **Close Meeting**

16:40 **Public Q&A**

20 mins

17:00 **Close Public Meeting**

Unconfirmed Minutes

Title of meeting:	NRW Board Meeting – Public Meeting
Location:	Microsoft Teams
Date of meeting:	17 th July 2024
Board Members present:	Prof Steve Ormerod, Deputy Chair Clare Pillman, Chief Executive Geraint Davies Dr Pete Fox Prof Calvin Jones Lesley Jones Prof Rhys Jones Kath Palmer Helen Pittaway Dr Rosie Plummer
Executive Team Members present:	Ceri Davies, Executive Director of Evidence, Policy and Permitting 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 Victoria Rose-Piper, Head of Business Support Services and Adfywio/Head of Business Transformation, deputising for Rachael Cunningham, Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Services
Attendees present:	Phil Williams, Head of Governance and Board Secretary (All items) Rob Bell, Head of Finance, Item 6 Sarah Williams, Head of Corporate Strategy and PMO, Item 7 Sue Ginley, Lead Specialist Advisor, Corporate Planning & Performance, Item 7
NRW Observers present:	None
Public Observers present:	Polly Ernest Elizabeth Mullan Maggie Young Kim Waters, Welsh Rivers Union

	Jim Ralph Additional members of the public
Apologies:	Sir David Henshaw Mark McKenna Rachael Cunningham, Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Services
Secretariat:	Natalie Williams, Deputy Board Secretary and Board Secretariat Team Leader Jocelyn Benger, Board Secretariat Team
Declarations of Interest:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr Rosie Plummer - Member Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority - wide-ranging interactions including Withy hedge with NRW including National Park landscape designation and protections including SAC rivers, Marine zones, diverse grant recipient and collaborator • Prof Steve Ormerod – Chair of the Science Advisory Group and Board Member to the new Environmental Markets Board; Chair of the Fish-Eating Birds Advisory Group; Vice-President of the RSPB • Geraint Davies – Mentor with Farming Connect; Associate of Pwllpeiran Upland Research Centre • Prof Rhys Jones – part of a funded research project with Coventry University that will be examining the development and early implementation of the Sustainable Farming Scheme • Prof Calvin Jones – Cardiff Business School hired by Welsh Government to look at financing models for potential tidal lagoons in Wales

Item 1. Open Meeting

1. The Deputy Chair opened the meeting, welcomed everyone, and explained the conduct of the meeting. Declarations of interest and apologies were noted as above.

Item 2. Review Minutes and Action Log

Item 2A. Review Minutes from the 23rd May Meeting

2. The minutes from the public Board meeting on 23rd May were reviewed and agreed with a minor amendment.

Item 2B. Review Action Log

3. The Action Log was reviewed and noted.

Item 3. Update from the Chair

4. The Deputy Chair highlighted the successful NRW event held at the Senedd on 5th June to mark World Environment Day. This had included a full day of engagement with Members of the Senedd and a very well received showcase on the Natur am Byth partnership project.

Item 4. Report from the Chief Executive

5. The Chief Executive gave an update on items in addition to the written Report.
6. The results of two major external audits had been received – the UK Woodland Assurance Scheme (UKWAS) and the Environmental Management System (EMS). The formal outcomes were awaited but these had both been positive. No major Corrective Action Requests (CARs) had been identified in the UKWAS audit. The minor CAR from the previous audit had been closed out and four new minor CARs raised, along with one new Observation; one existing Observation remained open. The full detail would be provided when the final paperwork was received from the Soil Association, who had successfully retendered as NRW's UKWAS auditors. The EMS audit on ISO 14001 had visited various NRW sites and found no major or minor non-conformities, and no opportunities for further improvement were identified.
7. An update was provided on water matters. The Ofwat determination was now out for consultation; this had been delayed due to the pre-election pause. This set out the proposals for water companies' bills and spend for the five-year Asset Management Period (AMP) from 2025. The proposed spend by Dŵr Cymru / Welsh Water (DCWW) was £5.5bn over the period, of which £1.3bn was for the Natural Environment Plan (NEP). It was highlighted that this was a significant increase over initial proposals. It was noted that Ofwat were prosecuting all England and Wales water companies on their performance on waste water treatment.
8. The new Welsh Government (WG) arms-length body for energy, Trydan Gwyrdd Cymru, had been launched. A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) would be developed on how NRW would work with Trydan going forward.
9. Board members noted the move to the new NRW Flood Warning and Information System (FWIS) for Wales and queried the approach to monitoring the service usage. The Executive Director of Evidence, Policy and Permitting (EPP) explained that the use of the FWIS was assessed and this was included as part of the debrief process following incidents. Information was also gathered by the team engaging with communities affected by incidents. The information had been used to inform the development of the new FWIS.
10. The new Wales Procurement Act was noted by Board members who queried the embedding of the Sustainable Management of Natural Resources (SMNR) and the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act within the new Procurement Act. The Executive Director of Communications, Customer and Commercial (CCC) explained that the new Act did go broader than social value. NRW's commitment to achieve the Corporate

Plan Wellbeing Objectives (WBOs) was highlighted, including working with partners through the procurement frameworks on steps that would be taken to support nature, climate and minimising pollution.

11. Board members queried the approach to quarterly enforcement reporting. It was recognised that there would be a necessary time delay for some reporting due to legal reasons, however a trend analysis would be welcomed. Board members discussed the key role of Regulation in the WBO on minimising pollution and requested further opportunities for Board discussion on this matter. The Executive Director of EPP explained that the current governance structures were being reviewed to ensure alignment to the Corporate Plan WBOs. The Chief Executive confirmed that the Annual Regulation Report would be brought to the Board in advance of publication on the website.

ACTION: The Annual Regulation Report to be presented to the Board

Item 5. Update Reports of Committees and Forums

12. Kath Palmer, Chair of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC) gave an update on the meeting held on 4th June, noting the content of the paper. The Annual Report and Accounts were scrutinised. A number of Internal Audit reports were received, and their outcomes were considered. ARAC oversight of key actions was described on the work on risk management and the alignment of the Strategic Risk Register to the Corporate Plan. The governance work on the review of the Board Committees and alignment of risks and assurance had been prioritised. Audit actions were reviewed, recognising the tight resources. The Board had received the ARAC Annual Report in the private meeting. The Internal Audit team were congratulated for their achievement in winning a UK award at the annual Audit and Risk Awards.
13. Prof Steve Ormerod, Chair of the Evidence Advisory Committee (EAC) noted that the next meeting would take place on 22nd October.
14. Helen Pittaway, Chair of the Finance Committee (FC) updated the Board on the meeting held on 13th June. The paper was taken as read. Finance performance was scrutinised, and an update received on the Budget and Business Plan 2024-25. FC endorsed approvals on three section 83 requests and proposed changes to funding mechanisms. Reservoir operating agreements were considered, and a Task and Finish Group would report back to FC on this in September. Feedback was provided on the draft Annual Report and Accounts and the agreed actions on the Flood Capital Review were considered. An update was provided on NRW2030, and a dashboard was agreed for FC to monitor progress.
15. Dr Pete Fox, Chair of the Flood Risk Management Committee (FRMC), updated the Board. The content of the paper was noted. The format for the July meeting had changed due to diary pressures and the meeting would now be taking place by correspondence. An update had been received on the Flood Risk Management Capital Programme; the Committee were pleased to note that the forecast was close to the actual spend. FRMC were asked to endorse a change paper for the Stephenson Street

Flood Scheme. Approval had previously been endorsed by FC and the increases in spend and reasons for this were noted. The Strategic Outline Case for the Pwllheli Flood Management Scheme was presented for endorsement; FRMC would be looking at the potential for a cost beneficial scheme.

16. Prof Calvin Jones, Chair of the Land Estate Committee (LEC), updated the Board. The next meeting would be held on 18th July. The UKWAS re-accreditation was noted and welcomed.
17. Helen Pittaway on behalf of the Chair of the People and Customer Committee (PCC) updated the Board on the meeting held on 6th June. The paper was taken as read. The Wellbeing, Health and Safety Annual Report had been scrutinised and the political stakeholder plan was discussed along with a number of other Committee reports as noted in the paper. The governance and reporting around NRW2030 was considered.
18. Dr Rosie Plummer, Chair of the Protected Areas Committee (PrAC) updated the Board on recent PrAC meetings. The formal meeting on 28th June had covered various issues including the follow-up to the deep dive at the May Board meeting on WBO1: Nature is Recovering. The all-Wales Tranquillity Report was received, along with an update on the Protected Sites Programme and prospective National Park work. The annual PrAC site visit took place on 11th June at Carn Owen, noted as a globally important lichen site and geological Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) with important links to Welsh cultural history and heritage. An update was provided on the SSSI notification meeting which took place on 11th July. The notification meeting heard public objections in relation to notification of a woodland site at Coedwig Dyfi of lichen and bryophyte interest. The issues raised by landowners were acknowledged. PrAC confirmed the notification of the site as a SSSI. A lessons learned exercise would take place for future meetings.
19. Board members discussed the SSSI notification meeting and considered the nature of the public objections. Issues raised included current concerns with the Sustainable Farming Scheme (SFS), financial concerns around Land Management Agreements not being supported, and cultural issues. It was highlighted that the outcomes of the SFS consultation for protected site owners were awaited. The important role of landowners in maintaining and nurturing protected sites was recognised and Board members acknowledged the landowners' pride and appreciation for the sites in their ownership. There were important points for NRW to take forward to encourage engagement and working together.
20. The prioritisation process on SSSI notification was queried. PrAC members confirmed that there was a legal responsibility on NRW to notify a site if it met certain criteria. The balance of considerations was described. It was explained that notification provided tools to protect sites in a different way, for example through the planning process.
21. Prof Rhys Jones, Chair of the Wales Land Management Forum (WLMF), updated the Board. Discussion at the recent meeting had focused on the river restoration programme, river basin management plans, the Water Framework Directive and the emphasis as part of that on unmodified channels and tension with other parts of the organisation. It was recognised that NRW was a complex organisation and discussions

took place on where those tensions developed with different parts of the organisation occasionally pulling in different directions.

22. Prof Steve Ormerod, Chair of the Wales Fisheries Forum (WFF) and the Wales Water Management Forum (WWMF) updated the Board. The WWMF had not met since the previous Board meeting. The WFF met on 27th June. A presentation was received on incidents, noting public expectations and work demands, and how these risked drawing staff away from strategic issues. An update was provided on the ongoing work of the Fish-Eating Birds Advisory Group, which included information on the potential reintroduction of eagles into Wales. The evidence on the potential natural dimension to predator action and work on supporting declining salmonid populations was described.
23. Geraint Davies, Chair of the National Access Forum for Wales (NAFW), updated the Board. The recent meeting in Aberystwyth had received an update on river basin management including land management. The update from Jan Newman from DCWW was welcomed. This described the health and welling hubs on the DCWW estate which supported linking people with nature. The membership of NAFW was considered and an application for membership from the Campaign for National Parks was agreed.

Item 6. Finance Performance Report

Presenter: Rob Bell, Head of Finance

24. The Head of Finance introduced the item and provided an overview of the paper, noting the Report showed the position at the end of May. This had been scrutinised by ET and FC. The key points were highlighted. Expenditure was on profile apart from the Land Stewardship budget which was behind profile. Income was on profile except for timber which was ahead of forecast due to a strong April performance, therefore a reforecast could take place. The Board were reminded about the timber income arrangement with WG. Areas of risk were described. An update had been provided to FC on the salary saving target of £9.3m, with £7.8m to be realised by the end of the year, leaving a £1.5m balance remaining to be funded through the contingency budget. The issues with the ongoing recruitment controls were recognised but it was recognised that these were necessary. The overprogramming targets and challenges for this year were described for the Nature and Climate Emergency (NaCE) and Flood Capital Programmes. The dilapidations, lease and cladding issues at Tŷ Cambria were noted. A response from the landlord was awaited.
25. Helen Pittaway as Chair of FC noted that it was early in the financial year but tight controls were in place. More clarity on trends was anticipated in September.
26. The Board approved the changes to the latest forecast, from £267.9m to £268.9m and noted the financial performance to the end of May 2024.

APPROVED: The changes to the latest forecast from £267.9m to £268.9m

Item 7. Business Plan Performance Dashboard and Internal Performance End of Year Report 2023-24

Sponsor and Presenter: Clare Pillman, Chief Executive

27. The Chief Executive presented the Business Plan Performance Dashboard and Internal Performance End of Year Report 2023-24, noting that a slightly revised set of indicators would be presented for the current financial year. The Business Plan Performance Dashboard Report noted the following RAG (Red Amber Green) status of the measures at the year-end: 1 Red, 6 Amber, 15 Green. As previously discussed, performance had been impacted by the recruitment freeze and non-staff budgets challenges. It was also noted that as the measures were Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) colleagues were likely to focus on these critical areas therefore there could also be subsequent impacts elsewhere. The heat map was shared on the RAG status movement through the year.
28. The issues around the Red measure were described. Staffing issues and the recent changes to procurement had resulted in the Red status at year end for the measure 'develop a low emission fleet and deliver a low emission and climate adapted built estate'. Moving forward, a five-year schedule would be produced to progress a low emissions fleet. The six Amber measures were noted. The freshwater monitoring review had slowed due to the impact of staffing issues, and a strategic statement had been shared with external stakeholders at WWMF. The measure to 'deliver programmes to review statutory water quality requirements' was Amber as signalled at Quarter 3 (Q3). The hard work by staff was recognised. The measure on 'priority actions undertaken on protected sites across Wales to improve condition of features' was highlighted as Green at year-end. The funding through the WG Nature Networks Capital Programme had supported more than 50% of the work on this indicator. The implementation of the Flood Review recommendations and actions was also highlighted. Thanks were extended to the Flood Risk Management team and FRMC on this large programme of work after the floods of 2020. This had been Amber through the year but was now Green. The programme had now closed and a Transition Report produced further to ongoing monitoring through the Business Groups.
29. The Internal Performance Year End Report 2023-24 was described. The measures were noted as: 0 Red, 2 Amber, 8 Green. The introduction of the new Learning Management System (LMS) and its benefits were highlighted. Absence reporting was now possible with the revised methodology in place. This was reported as Amber at 4% for March, noting that 3.5% was the target for Green status. Measures were being put in place to support managers and staff.
30. Board members discussed the content of the Report. The earlier discussion in the private meeting on the Case for Change and the impacts of the budget challenges on the indicators were noted. The benefits of the new LMS were discussed. The Executive Director of Corporate Strategy and Development (CS&D) explained the background to the LMS and the future opportunities around performance reporting and e-recruitment. PCC would be updated on this but the current main focus was on closing some of the health and safety risks on learning requirements.
31. Board members considered how the performance reporting could be perceived by external stakeholders and the public. It was highlighted that the content of the indicators was considered in detail by the Board Committees, ET and Business Groups. Work was taking place to develop future reporting that was more targeted in line with the Corporate Plan WBOs. It was noted that Natur a Ni was now at an end,

and the approach to moving forward together with external partners was considered. An evaluation piece on Natur a Ni would be brought to the Board. The ambition was to link the key strands into business as usual and NRW2030.

ACTION: Natur a Ni evaluation to be brought to the Board

32. The Board approved the Business Plan Performance Dashboard and Internal Performance End of Year Report 2023-24.

APPROVED: The Business Plan Performance Dashboard and Internal Performance End of Year Report 2023-24

Item 8. Wellbeing, Health and Safety Annual Report 2023-24

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

33. The Executive Director of CS&D presented the Wellbeing, Health and Safety (WHS) End of Year Report 2023-24 to the Board and highlighted the following matters. The five Serious Incident Reviews (SIRs) concerned three contractor and two staff incidents; regular reports and updates were provided to the WHS Forum. There were five RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations) incidents to report and six Lost Time Incidents (LTIs); this was a small increase on the previous year. Near Miss reporting had increased, which was a positive matter demonstrating a change in safety culture awareness. NRW had re-attained accreditation ISO 45001 and it was explained that the accreditation was associated with some of the investments in training and the LMS. Wellbeing initiatives through the year were highlighted. Planning work had started with other public bodies on testing WHS processes through informal investigations. Specific training on health and wellbeing was also taking place.

34. Board members welcomed the Report and praised the positive developments in WHS culture within the organisation. It was recognised that this was the key to stopping incidents occurring through learning from near misses. The robust approach taken with contractors and the positive work with the Forestry Industry Safety Accord (FISA) were highlighted. The new LMS and support of professional development were welcomed. It was noted that this would provide good assurance to the Board around health and safety training. It was suggested that updates could be provided for the whole Board as well as PCC.

35. The Chief Executive described the ongoing concerns on the continuing issues in Waterfall Country, explaining that a further fatality had occurred in similar place to previous fatalities. NRW continued to work with the National Trust and National Park partners, recognising the substantial challenge for all landowners with public access. Board members noted the latest fatality with concern. The challenges associated with behaviour influenced by social media were recognised and previous discussions on this issue at Board, PCC and NAFW were noted.

36. The Board approved the Wellbeing, Health and Safety Annual Report 2023-24.

APPROVED: The Wellbeing, Health and Safety Annual Report 2023-24

Item 9. AOB

37. No matters were raised under AOB.

Meeting Closed

Public Q&A

38. The Deputy Chair explained that NRW were working on reviewing how engagement with the public could be improved.

39. The questions received in advance on Visitor Centres were noted and the Deputy Chair read the following statement.

40. *We thank the Friends of Ynyslas for sharing their questions with us. Please rest assured that these have been shared with our Executive Team and Board members. Unfortunately we are not currently in the position to answer a lot of them because the prioritisation of NRW's work is ongoing, and the Visitor Centre Review is part of this wider effort, as we respond to the financial challenges that face NRW and the wider public sector. The National Nature Reserves and Forests around visitor centres are key sites for us. There is no question that we want to conserve and protect these sites so that nature can recover, and we are unequivocal that public access to these sites will be maintained.*

41. Members of the public were invited to contribute to the session. Representations were made on behalf of the Ynyslas Save our Centre Group, who emphasised concerns on safety and the impact on the community if the Visitor Centre were to close. Members of the public did not feel that their questions raised in correspondence had been answered sufficiently.

42. The Chief Executive provided a response, noting that Visitor Centres were part of a wider prioritisation process across NRW, which had implications for all staff in NRW. It was therefore important for discussions to take place with staff first, although it was understood that this would be difficult for those members of the public who cared deeply about the future of the Visitor Centres. NRW would engage with the public as soon as this was possible.

43. The Deputy Chair thanked everyone for their contributions.

Public Meeting Closed

Board Action Log – Public

Action No.	Meeting Category	Meeting Date	Item No	Para No	Paper Sponsor	Action	Owner	Due	Status	Notes/Updates
2	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	Head of Governance & Board Secretary	31/10/2024	Ongoing	Options for Board public engagement being developed. The approach to be agreed with the Chair and the new Head of Governance and Board Secretary.
32	Public	17/07/2024	4	11	Clare Pillman CEO	ACTION: The Annual Regulation Report to be presented to the Board	Nadia De Longhi, Head of Regulation and Permitting	30/10/2024	Ongoing	Added to the Board Forward Look for November
33	Public	17/07/2024	7	31	Clare Pillman CEO	ACTION: Natur a Ni evaluation to be brought to the Board	Russell De'Ath, Senior Specialist Advisor, Vision 2050	04/09/2024	Completed	Included at Item 10 on the September Board agenda

NRW Board Paper

Date of meeting:	25 September 2024
Title of Paper:	Chief Executive's Report (Public Session)
Paper Reference:	24-09-B10
Paper presented by:	Clare Pillman, Chief Executive
Purpose	Information and discussion
Summary	The paper provides the Board with an update on current issues.

Introduction

1. As always, the Royal Welsh Show has been a highlight of the summer months. During three days at the event, I met with partners and stakeholders from, amongst others, the National Farmers Union (NFU), Farmers Union of Wales (FUW), Country Land and Business Association (CLA), and Confor, and with Emma Palmer, the new CEO of Powys County Council. As always, the various presentations on our stand were well attended, including a celebration of our LIFE project achievements and the launch of our Upper Wye Restoration project. Our Shaun the Sheep model helped to draw in members of public. It was really good to see South-West colleagues receiving awards in this year's Woodlands Competition; such recognition is hard-earned, and well-deserved. My thanks go to everyone who worked so hard to organise and deliver our presence at the Show – it was another successful year, followed up by an equally busy week at the Eisteddfod in Rhondda Cynon Taf. Thanks also to Board members who take time to attend and support us at these events.
2. Towards the end of August, I spent several days with teams in mid Wales, visiting Waterfall Country, a live forestry harvesting operation in Coed y Rhaiadr, the newly designated inland bathing beach at The Warren near Hay on Wye, our new offices in Llandrindod Wells and a chicken farm. The visit to Waterfall Country was particularly helpful in enabling Gareth and me the opportunity to talk through the challenges we face in managing public safety there with the team and to discuss the important work to implement the recommendations of the Visitor Safety Review.

3. In late July, I met with Martin Nicholls of Abertawe Council regarding Kilvey Hill and the Skyline Project. I also met with Chris Llewellyn and Tim Peppin of the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA), with the full, six-monthly WLGA meeting following in early September. This month also included a meeting with Derek Walker, the Future Generations Commissioner, and a catch-up with Llyr Griffiths MS, who chairs the Senedd's Climate Change, Environment and Infrastructure Committee.
4. The Case for Change consultation continued through the summer and concluded on 13 September. I am grateful to my Executive and Leadership Team colleagues for being available in our offices and online during this period, around their holidays, to talk to team members and answer questions. We have continued with regular communication in the form of all-staff emails and briefing calls, alongside meetings at directorate and team level and regular updates to the information on our dedicated intranet page.
5. The consultation has generated a huge volume of queries and feedback from colleagues, and I am grateful to the Change Programme team, HR colleagues and our Trade Union representatives for their focus and efforts in handling the consultation response. To ensure a meaningful consultation takes place, the Case for Change will be reviewed again by the Board in early October, later than originally proposed, allowing extra time for discussion with the Trade Unions.
6. In addition, we have received feedback and concerns from many members of the public and local community groups regarding the proposed changes to our services. A significant focus has been on the proposal to end catering and retail services at our visitor centres; the Senedd Petitions Committee has considered a petition relating to Ynyslas Visitor Centre and it is likely that a Senedd debate will be requested due to the level of public interest. We have also received concerns relating to the proposed closure of our library and the possible loss of biodiversity and taxonomic expertise from our teams. Our Communications team continue to ensure that all correspondence receives a helpful and timely response.
7. We have maintained close contact with our Welsh Government (WG) Sponsorship and policy teams during this period. Following the outcome of the UK election, we took the opportunity to write to all new and returning Welsh MPs to highlight our Corporate Plan objectives and our Place-based approach to our work, and we wrote to all MSs and Welsh MPs at the start of our Case for Change consultation, to provide the context and expected timeline. The change of First Minister in August led to the Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change and Rural Affairs taking on the additional role of Deputy First Minister. A Cabinet shuffle in September may mean further change of oversight for some policy areas.

Strategic Issues

Padeswood Carbon Capture and Storage

8. The Padeswood Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) project is a landmark decarbonisation initiative in the UK, aiming to deliver the first net-zero carbon cement works. This project for reducing carbon emissions from cement production in Wales is targeting an impressive reduction of 800,000 tonnes of CO₂ annually. Padeswood accounts for about 60% of Wales' cement-related emissions.
9. The Decarbonisation and Standards team has been overseeing the permit application process to ensure it meets stringent regulatory requirements and aligns with our environmental objectives. The permit application is currently under review.
10. The project involves the integration of an advanced carbon capture plant with the existing cement manufacturing process, incorporating cutting-edge chemical engineering solutions. These include enhanced pollutant abatement, innovative CO₂ separation techniques using amine solvents, and the creation of a closed-loop system to minimise environmental impact. The associated Environmental Permitting Regulations process is particularly challenging due to the scale and novelty of the technology involved, requiring collaboration across various NRW departments to thoroughly assess the potential environmental impacts.
11. One of the major challenges lies in managing the risks associated with the amine chemicals used in CO₂ capture, which are relatively new as air emissions and require careful risk assessment. Our team is conducting thorough evaluations and implementing effective mitigation strategies to ensure that the project adheres to all environmental standards while balancing the complexities of design uncertainty and a tight government-led timeline.
12. The project represents a significant investment (£600 million) and is on par with some of the largest industrial developments Wales has seen in recent years. The success of the Padeswood CCS project will require innovative regulatory approaches and a careful balance of risk management, setting a precedent for future large-scale decarbonisation efforts in Wales.

Ofwat's Price Review (PR24)

13. Ofwat's Price Review process is important to us in determining the scale of water company investment in maintenance and environmental enhancements, which support delivery of the work for Nature and Minimising Pollution within our Corporate Plan.
14. In July, Ofwat published their Draft Determination for consultation until 28 August. Along with other stakeholders and the water companies, we have made a representation to Ofwat seeking to secure much-needed action for the environment, to reduce the harm that water company operations place on the environment and to

prevent delaying investment for future generations. In doing so, we recognise how far the water companies have come. We also welcome the work of teams across Wales in providing evidence of the need for action, and the support of the NRW Board in calling for a step-change in investment, action and improved environmental performance. Ofwat will publish its Final Determination on 19 December.

15. We are now scaling up for implementation and will turn our governance towards ensuring delivery of the plans, which water companies will deliver between 1 April 2025 and 31 March 2030. We recognise that monitoring of National Environment Programme (NEP) delivery will be critical and we will closely work with Ofwat on this.
16. We are currently working on an upfront funding mechanism with Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water (DCWW), with the assistance of Legal colleagues, with the aim of ensuring that Heads of Terms and financial agreements are in place by the end of December. This will allow NRW to secure additional resource for a state of readiness to process and determine approximately 1,700 water company permits during that period.
17. We will work with the water companies, WG and members of the PR24 Forum to reflect on the approach and identify lessons to learn for future price reviews. We will also communicate the benefits that the investment will bring for Wales' natural resources.

Workplace Recycling Regulations

18. WG are leading on an ambitious programme of transformational waste reforms as outlined in their Beyond Recycling and Net Zero Wales strategies. These reforms are changing the landscape of waste regulation in Wales. One example is the new Waste Separation Requirements (Wales) Regulations 2023 (the Workplace Recycling Regulations) that came into force on 6 April this year. These require all non-domestic premises, including businesses, charities and third sector organisations, to present specified recyclable materials for collection and the waste industry to collect those materials separately and keep them separate after collection. The aim is to increase high-quality recycling.
19. The new regulations are on a far greater scale than any other waste regulation within NRW, affecting tens of thousands of businesses and the waste industry. As part of our Waste Regulatory Reform Programme (WRRP), a new Workplace Recycling team made up of twelve higher education placements was established in September 2023. The placements have been appointed until March 2025 to undertake the new duties and were intended to provide succession planning within our waste regulation teams.
20. The initial regulatory focus is to ensure businesses are aware of the requirements of the new Workplace Recycling Regulations and provide support and advice to help them comply. An evidence-based approach has been adopted to identify priority,

high waste-producing sectors and a wide range of regulatory approaches have been used to target these various sectors and assess compliance.

21. Overall, the picture is positive and the majority of businesses are supportive, aware of the new regulations and are compliant, or have taken steps to comply. Where there has been negativity to the new requirements, this has mostly changed to a positive viewpoint following NRW engagement. The WRRP team has worked closely with WG and WRAP (the waste reduction and sustainability charity) to develop the legislation and associated guidance and resolve issues and queries, including providing a presentation recently at the Senedd at the request of the Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change and Rural Affairs. Work is now underway with WG on preparations for the second phase of the regulations, which will incorporate hospitals and other waste streams.

Review of the Control of Agricultural Pollution Regulations

22. In July, the Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change and Rural Affairs announced that Dr Susannah Bolton has been appointed as the independent external chair to oversee the statutory review of the Water Resources (Control of Agricultural Pollution) (Wales) Regulations 2021. The regulations were introduced in April 2021 and set out an all-Wales approach to reducing the detrimental impacts of pollution from agricultural activities on our environment and on the wellbeing of future generations. The effectiveness of the measures is required to be reviewed, and if necessary revised, at least every four years, and the approach is intended to be one of engagement and collaboration with stakeholders. The final report and recommendations should be available to WG ministers by the end of March 2025.

Water Special Measures Bill

23. The UK government has introduced the Water Special Measures Bill with the aim of addressing water quality issues and increasing the powers of the industry regulator. The proposed new measures are a response to perceived widespread failures by the water sector to address pollution caused by sewage discharges and ageing infrastructure, and reflect Labour's manifesto commitment to strengthen the regulation of water companies and support longer term work to clean up rivers, lakes and seas.
24. The Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change and Rural Affairs has agreed to extend all but one of the proposed new measures to Wales. WG have been working closely with Defra to develop the Bill and will continue to scrutinise the proposed measures and consider the potential impacts for Wales as the Bill progresses through Parliament. NRW has provided advice and evidence to WG officials, to support the process.
25. Following the laying of the Water Special Measures Bill, the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs is expected to announce plans for a year-long review leading to more fundamental reform of the water sector. Led by an

independent chair, this review is scheduled to commence in October, with the outcome and recommendations informing the development of the Water Industry Reform Bill. WG has indicated that Wales may wish to be part of this wider review, but this will depend on the scope and details of the review, which have yet to be announced.

Sustainable Farming Scheme

26. Following the announcement by the Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change and Rural Affairs of the new timeframe for the introduction of the Sustainable Farming Scheme (SFS), in July a further written statement was published alongside WG's response to the consultation feedback. The Cabinet Secretary reiterated that no decisions had been made about the design of the scheme, and that it would only be introduced when ready. The scheme launch in 2026 will be preceded by a preparatory phase in 2025, during which advice and support will be provided to farmers.
27. Schemes to support farmers over the next year will include the continuation of the Organic Support Payment and an extension to Farming Connect, which supports knowledge transfer and innovation in farming. A new Integrated Natural Resources Scheme (INRS) is intended to support farmer-focused partnerships delivering nature-based solutions across a landscape or catchment, or on a pan-Wales scale. Existing Habitat Wales Scheme Commons agreements can be extended for 2025 and the Habitat Wales Scheme remains available to eligible individual farmers. A voluntary data confirmation exercise will also be carried out to provide a more accurate picture of habitat, tree cover and woodland on farms, in preparation for the introduction of SFS.
28. After a Ministerial Roundtable discussion at the Royal Welsh Agricultural Show, the Cabinet Secretary confirmed that management of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) would be included in the universal baseline payment for the SFS. This decision was based on consultation feedback and the roundtable discussion, and recognised farmers' efforts in managing Wales' most important wildlife and geological sites. NRW attends the Ministerial Roundtable meetings, which reflect the collaborative, partnership approach being taken by the Cabinet Secretary.

Operational Issues

Land Management Agreements

29. NRW has recently received an additional £400k of Grant-in-Aid funding from WG for 2024/25 and a similar sum for 2025/26. This additional funding will allow us to extend up to 200 land management agreements with the owners and occupiers of protected sites, supporting them to effectively manage the special features of their sites and so contribute towards our Corporate Plan's Nature is Recovering Wellbeing Objective. Design of the process to allocate and monitor this funding is underway, with the intent to begin offering agreement extensions from September.

Severn Valley Water Management Scheme

30. The Severn Valley Water Management Scheme (SVWMS) is now entering a phase of public awareness and engagement. This period will be used to inform professional and community stakeholders and seek their thoughts and input regarding the proposed approaches to water management in the Upper Severn Catchment. The proposals are based on a blend of hard engineering and natural flood management interventions at a number of appropriate sites across the catchment area.
31. In September, the new SVWMS website and branding will be launched. This will be the platform for sharing information, news and updates. A series of face to face engagement events are planned in October, including events in Abermule, Llandyssil, Guilsfield, Welshpool, Newtown and Llanllwchaiarn. Key professional stakeholders include both Welsh farming unions. Through the SVWMS Strategic Leads Group, NRW is helping to shape these events alongside Powys County Council, the Environment Agency and Shropshire County Council, to ensure they provide opportunities for the right level of engagement and conversation to shape the further development of SVWMS.

Flood Warning Information Service

32. In July we went live with our new Flood Warning Information Service for Wales (FWISfW). This major £5m project has enabled us to exit the legacy Environment Agency-managed Flood Warning Service and put in place the foundation for a service tailored to the needs of customers in Wales. The new service has already delivered improvements to warning message content and process efficiencies that lesson the pressure on the duty officers during flood events, which allows them to focus on the big risks. It also addresses learning from the February 2020 floods. There is more work to do and investment needed to develop the service further, and we are planning for this.

Withyhedge Update

33. Despite the landfill not receiving waste since mid-May, we have continued to visit the site on a weekly basis. We have been monitoring progress on improvements to the gas collection and management system, and construction works on Cell 9 and the new surface water treatment lagoons. The operator has invested significantly onsite and has committed to further improvements in infrastructure and operating procedures.
34. As part of our regulatory visits, we have continued to undertake odour assessments in surrounding communities, and have detected no polluting offsite odours from the landfill since 12 June. Our assessment frequency has reduced in the past month, in response to a decline in odour reports received. In August, we received between zero and just a few reports daily.

35. It is recognised by partners in the Air Quality Group and multi-agency Incident Management Group that reports from residents can help inform the extent (spatially and severity) of odour issues, and that this will in part determine odour monitoring efforts. This is separate to air quality monitoring, which now includes the continuous static monitor located at Spittal School, approximately 1.5 kilometres from the site. The information gathered by the monitoring enables Public Health Wales (PHW) to make an informed judgment on any impacts to public health arising from activities on site, although there are other sources of air quality emissions (eg. agricultural manures) in the locality that can impact on the data gathered.
36. The new waste cell (Cell 9) has been constructed in three smaller sub-cell phases: 9A, 9B and 9C. Sub-cell 9A is complete and it is expected construction of sub-cell 9B will be finished shortly. Prior to waste acceptance, Construction Quality Assurance (CQA) validation reports must be submitted to NRW. We anticipate receiving the CQA for 9A imminently and have been advised the report for 9B will follow a couple of weeks later.
37. Upon receipt, NRW have four weeks to review the CQA and either confirm we are satisfied or request additional information. We shall be deemed satisfied if we do not respond within this timeframe. Under the relevant permit condition, once a CQA is accepted, commencement of waste acceptance may begin. However, we have been vocal and transparent about the other improvements we expect to have been completed before this process begins. The operators have indicated that subject to our approval of the CQA for sub-cell 9A, they would look to recommence waste acceptance at the site in late September. Ahead of this, we expect the operators to provide us with updated acceptance procedures for waste (including waste types), to prevent a recurrence of the issues experienced earlier this year.
38. The multi-agency Withyhedge Incident Management Group continues to meet every three or four weeks, with correspondence from these meetings being shared with external parties. Proactive communications in recent weeks have been reduced to enable NRW staff to focus on the ongoing enforcement action. We anticipate that the investigation work will be completed by mid-October with staff being taken offline to focus on this work.

Kronospan

39. The North Industry Regulation team continues to receive numerous incident reports and associated correspondence relating to odour and dust from the Kronospan site in Chirk. This autumn we will be working with the Communications team to set up a 'citizen space', a dedicated website where both NRW and Kronospan can include updates and answers to commonly asked questions. We are also encouraging Kronospan to take a more proactive role in dealing with these issues. We hope that these improvements will provide the public with more information and understanding of the site and help manage the number of complaints directed at NRW.

Wye Algal Bloom Project

40. The Wye & Usk Foundation has issued a report setting out progress with the Wye Algal Bloom Project, following research with Cardiff University, the Environment Agency and DCWW. The report notes that phosphate levels in the Wye are lower than historical levels and mostly within Special Area of Conservation (SAC) targets. Phosphates are considered unlikely to be the primary cause of algal blooms, which are regulated by three forms of phosphorus and two forms of nitrogen, plus factors such as grazing, invertebrates, sunlight levels, temperature and river flow. The report recommends natural flood management measures, tree planting along river banks and agreed standards for nutrients other than phosphates.
41. The general findings of the report align with NRW's understanding of and approach to river management. We recognise that phosphates are just one indicator of ecological condition, and that habitat structure and quality are crucial factors. Our approach to river management includes wider catchment resilience and measures aimed at reducing sediment inputs and water temperature, stabilising river flows and improving habitat for a wide range of riverine and terrestrial species. We will continue to work with the Foundation, the farming community and other stakeholders, using the new research to better target our work on the Wye.
42. In the meantime, phosphorus remains a serious risk factor for all types of aquatic ecosystems and a key driver of eutrophication. NRW follows UK Guidance in setting standards and monitoring, and will continue to use this technically robust and well-evidenced standard until a replacement is available.

Audit Wales Review of Affordable Housing Programme

43. Audit Wales has undertaken a review of WG's affordable housing programme to assess progress against the target of delivering 20,000 low-cost social homes for rent between 2021 and 2026. Their report recognises the impact of water quality issues on the programme, particularly following the introduction of revised water quality targets for phosphorus in SAC rivers in 2021. At that time, we identified that about 60% of SAC waterbodies failed to meet the revised targets, which led planning authorities to delay or refuse consents for new developments that would increase the discharge of wastewater into rivers.
44. We have since worked closely with WG, DCWW and planning authorities to support reductions in phosphorus discharges and ensure planning decisions can be made while protecting and improving water quality. While the report notes that only around 9,000 affordable homes have been built since 2021, the challenges with water quality are not highlighted as a significant factor.

Senedd Climate Change, Environment and Infrastructure Committee

45. The Senedd's Climate Change, Environment and Infrastructure Committee (CCEIC) is undertaking an inquiry into halting and reversing the loss of nature by 2030. As

part of the inquiry, NRW has been asked to submit written evidence and give oral evidence at the Committee meeting on 3 October. Two evidence sessions will take place at 9.30am and 10.40am, and will be streamed live on Senedd website.

46. Following the initial invitation, the Committee expressed an interest in holding a supplementary session with NRW representatives to explore the issues raised during the recent the episode of *Y Byd ar Bedwar*, and our latest performance reports on DCWW and Hafren Dyfrdwy. This session will run from 11.50am on 3 October and will also be live-streamed.

Internal Issues

New Learning Management System and Knowledge Hub

47. The new Learning Management System and Knowledge Hub were launched on 1 July and over 1,000 colleagues have attended overview training sessions to learn about the new offering. We launched the system with a wide range of e-learning courses, and more courses are being added. There is a comprehensive catalogue to support the Change Programme, including HR and Wellbeing drop-in sessions, e-learning courses and recordings of the update calls presented by our Executive Team. The feedback has been overwhelmingly positive about both the system and the way it has been implemented.
48. We will be launching the Perform module on 1 April next year, to help improve the way we manage our Sgwrs and career development process.

Future Leaders' Schemes

49. Our successful candidate representing NRW at the Future Generations Leadership Academy from September this year is Daniel Wood, Environmental Assessment Officer in the Environmental Assessment and Advice team, based in South Wales.
50. The successful NRW candidates for the Emerging Forestry Leaders Programme are Kate Boddington, Dylan Enoch and Jake Burton.

Communications

Corporate Communications

51. Supporting the Executive and Leadership Teams to develop content, guidance and communication materials to guide colleagues through the build-up and roll-out of the Case for Change consultation has been a key focus for the Communications, Digital and Translation teams over this period. This has been a significant area of work, ensuring colleagues were able to engage in the consultation and had timely access to relevant guidance and information.

52. We have also worked closely with colleagues and partners to manage NRW's reputation externally in the media, working within the limits of what can be shared during the consultation period. Significant efforts have been made to ensure colleagues working in local communities and dealing with public frustration around the proposed future of our recreational offer, know that there are support systems in place. This was also the focus of our internal communications following the spate of unrest across the UK, ensuring colleagues are aware of the channels of mental health and well-being support available to them.
53. Our presence at the Royal Welsh Agricultural Show in July and the Eisteddfod in early August provided a welcome platform to connect with partners and the public. Our exhibitions and timetable of talks provided a strong reinforcement of the breadth of the positive work we do in our communities, and the difference we make.
54. We waved a fond farewell to Catrin Hornung at the end of July. Over the summer Sarah Jennings covered her role supported by others in the Communications team, but we will be looking to put in place more formal interim arrangements shortly.

Pollution is Minimised

55. The focus and scrutiny of current affairs programmes (*Y Byd ar Bedwar*, *Dispatches*) on NRW's regulatory and enforcement performance presented reputational challenges during this period. While the pre-election restrictions influenced the extent to which we could respond, we invested time to ensure programme producers were properly briefed on our role, remit and enforcement process, helping to mitigate where possible the impacts on our reputation both externally and with colleagues.
56. The publication of the performance reports for Wales' water companies provided an opportunity to present ourselves as a strong regulator, with resulting media coverage highlighting the enforcement action we are taking and investigations that could lead to prosecution. This also applied to our response to community concerns about potential pollution impacts from Hafod Landfill and Kronospan. The communication of the successful outcomes of waste, fishing and agricultural pollution prosecutions during this period further helped to reinforce the impact of our regulatory compliance and enforcement work.
57. A significant amount of effort continues into managing communications around Withyhedge Landfill, working with partners to ensure handling plans are revised and announcements are aligned, and taking opportunities to update the local community on enforcement activity.
58. Attention has also been given to managing and responding to media queries about pollution incidents on beaches and in bathing waters over this period, with the

media taking significant interest in our investigations into elevated levels of bacteria found at The Warren in the Wye, Wales' first official river bathing site.

Nature is Recovering

59. The launch of the Upper Wye Restoration Project at the Royal Welsh Agricultural Show was a public demonstration of our commitment to leading the way and working with partners to restore the River Wye.
60. There was widespread media interest in the impacts of crayfish plague in the River Irfon with the communications team leveraging the knowledge of our expert colleagues to brief the media and carry out interviews. The publication of the results of our first aerial seal survey as part of our support of Marine Week also gained widespread interest in national and regional media and demonstrated how we use evidence to inform our work in protected areas.
61. Our duty to manage and protect nature at Newborough, and our work with partners and the community there, has been at the forefront of our communications around how we're managing the impact of the influx of visitors to the site over the summer. This is a sensitive issue and we have worked hard alongside the Isle of Anglesey County Council to manage messaging.
62. This period also provided the opportunity to reflect on the success of both the Sands of LIFE and Welsh Raised Bog LIFE projects and the contribution each has made to nature's recovery. Our work to support species restoration and recovery was also highlighted in the continued promotion of Nature Networks projects and the work of our local environment teams.

Communities are Resilient to Climate Change

63. July saw the successful soft launch of the Flood Warning Information Services. While the main external communication about the service will be rolled out over until the autumn, we have organised presentations at Local Resilience Forum tactical and communication group meetings to ensure members are aware of the updates and are able to share messages locally. An internal webinar for colleagues was also delivered.
64. Our flood risk management work piqued the interest of German media during this period. The country's recent experience of severe flooding has prompted a series on German radio focused on how other countries are managing coastal erosion and climate change impacts. Our Head of Flood Risk Management took part in an interview for the series highlighting how we work to manage flood risk in Wales.

Forward Look

Thursday 3 October – Flood Risk Management Committee

Wednesday 9 October – Land Estate Committee

Wednesday 16 October – Board Update Call

Thursday 17 October – Protected Areas Committee

Tuesday 22 October – Evidence Advisory Committee

Thursday 24 October – Date held for Board Development Day

Wednesday 20 / Thursday 21 November – November Board Meeting

Monday 25 / Tuesday 26 November – Royal Welsh Winter Fair

Thursday 5 December – Finance Committee

Tuesday 10 December – People and Customer Committee

Wednesday 11 December – Board Update Call

Friday 13 December – Audit and Risk Assurance Committee

NRW Board Paper

Date of meeting:	25 th September 2024
Title of Paper:	Flood Risk Management Committee (FRMC) Board Report
Paper Reference:	24-09-B11
Paper sponsored by:	Dr Peter Fox, Chair of the Flood Risk Management Committee
Paper prepared by:	NRW Board Secretariat
Paper presented by:	Dr Peter Fox, Chair of the Flood Risk Management Committee
Purpose of the paper	Information
Summary	To provide an update on the Flood Risk Management Committee for July.

Background

1. The papers were circulated for comment/endorsement via correspondence due to the significant time constraints on Board members for other areas of work. A summary of the papers and any comments received are outlined below.
2. For further detail, all Board members can access the papers of committees via the Diligent portal.

Flood Risk Management Update Report

3. An update Report that highlighted key areas of work was submitted to the Flood Risk Management Committee (FRMC) for information. This included the current three month Met Office Flood Outlook, the National Infrastructure Commission Wales (NICW) review of flooding, the new Flood Warning Information Service (FWIS), the Flood Risk Management Annual Report and Technical Advice Note 15 (TAN15).
4. The Chair thanked the team for the successful delivery of the FWIS project to the timeline and to budget. The group also discussed the importance of long term investment in the service, by NRW and Welsh Government, in order to keep pace with climate change (and more flooding) and user needs, and to continually improve and develop the service.

5. The work of the National Infrastructure Commission Wales (NICW) was highlighted including the key messages that had been discussed through the Project Advisory Group (PAG). Representatives of NICW would be invited to October's meeting to discuss their work.

Flood Risk Management Capital Programme Update

6. An update on the current position of NRW's Flood Capital Management (FRM) Capital Programme for 2024-25 and plans on future years within the medium-term plan was provided. This included a summary of the budget allocation and the current forecast position.
7. The risk, risk appetite and opportunities were highlighted along with the milestones and potential outcomes. Key project updates including Stephenson Street, Sandycroft, Porthmadog, the Flood Warning Information Service project and the Telemetry project were provided. A summary of the upcoming approvals and the FRM Capital Programme spreadsheet were also supplied.
8. A summary of the paper was provided, and the Chair requested a site visit to Foryd Bay and Pwllheli as these are key upcoming projects. It was highlighted that the Capital Programme budget was in line with the profile and the risks to overspend and underspend were discussed. FRMC noted the paper and thanked the team for their good judgement and careful management of the Capital Programme.

Stephenson Street Change Paper

9. The Stephenson Street Flood Scheme change paper was sent to FRMC for endorsement due to a revised whole life project cost of £25.2m. The paper outlined the governance arrangements and background of the Project. The reasons for the increase in costs and for seeking FRMC endorsement were outlined.
10. The increase would be funded by the FRM capital budget and would be profiled to be affordable over financial years with Strategic Planning and Investment and Finance.
11. It was noted that the Finance Committee had already approved the increase. FRMC were asked to provide comments and assurance on the proposal and take note of the changes set out to the Stephenson Street Flood Prevention Scheme.
12. FRMC endorsed the change paper and new project budget for the Stephenson Street Flood Scheme.

Pwllheli Strategic Outline Case

13. The Committee were presented with the Strategic Outline Case (SOC) for Pwllheli Flood Management Scheme. The SOC presented the initial assessment of the flood risks to the area and established a case for change. Endorsement was sought to progress the project to the next phase (Outline Business Case) where more in-depth

assessments would be conducted to identify and provide confidence in the viability of the preferred option for investment.

14. FRMC endorsed the Pwllheli SOC and the progression to the Outline Business Case (OBC), with the understanding this was development of the project options at this stage and not a commitment to a specific solution. The wide variance in the total potential costs over the life of the project were noted and it was confirmed that this would narrow during the development of the OBC.

NRW Board Paper

Date of meeting:	25 th September 2024
Title of Paper:	Land Estate Committee (LEC) Overview
Paper Reference:	24-09-B12
Paper sponsored by:	Prof. Calvin Jones, LEC Chair
Paper presented by:	Prof. Calvin Jones, LEC Chair
Purpose of the paper	For Information
Summary	To provide an overview of the 18 th July 2024 Land Estate Committee meeting.

Background

1. This update for the Board is in respect 18th July 2024 Land Estate Committee (LEC) meeting. The papers and minutes from these meetings are available for Board members to view on Diligent.

Discussion on Current Risks and Issues

2. LEC discussed the changes that had been made to help NRW to deliver the Corporate Plan and how staff could be supported when changes were being implemented, following the Case for Change consultation.

Land Stewardship and Commercial Business Group Risk and Assurance

3. A summary was provided of the Land Stewardship Business Group (LSBG) Risk Register and that due to concerns regarding the lack of movement in risks scores, a new dynamic process to risk management would be implemented.
4. An overview was provided on the Commercial risk registers, which were in the process of being reviewed. It had been noted that it could be beneficial to add the velocity of the risks to the risk registers and to have a more integrated approach in order to manage unintended consequences. LEC suggested that NRW could focus on the opportunities

as well as the risks; it could also be beneficial to report positive news to the Board, alongside the risks and issues.

LEC Responses for the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC) Queries

5. LEC discussed the queries raised at the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC) and suggested that a summary could be included to encapsulate the information on the reliability of the UK Woodland Assurance Scheme (UKWAS) as a way of assuring NRW's activity on the ground, in a national and local context.

AOB

6. The Committee would meet in person for the 9th October meeting.

NRW Board Paper

Date of meeting:	25 th September 2024
Title of Paper:	Wales Land Management Forum (WLMF) Update
Paper Reference:	24-09-B13
Paper sponsored by:	Professor Rhys Jones, WLMF Chair
Paper prepared by:	Bronwen Martin, Specialist Advisor: Agriculture
Paper presented by:	Professor Rhys Jones, WLMF Chair
Purpose of the paper	Information

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

24th June 2024 meeting

2. A WLMF meeting was held on 24th June 2024. The agenda included a presentation on River Restoration Programme from Suzanne Hearn and Rhodri Powell, NRW. The group were given an overview of the programme and a summary of some of the projects. River Restoration is the restoration of natural river forms and processes that create and sustain physical habitats and species, thereby supporting resilient freshwater ecosystems. It involves taking an approach that accounts for interactions between the river corridor and the wider catchment.
3. All WLMF members also had the opportunity to ask about NRW Updates and also share updates from their own organisations.

9th September 2024 meeting

4. The most recent WLMF meeting was held on Monday 9th September 2024. This meeting was held in-person in Welsh Government Office, Aberystwyth. The agenda

included a presentation on Natur am Byth from John Clark, NRW and a presentation on Designated Landscapes Programme from Keith Davies, NRW. All WLMF members also had the opportunity to ask about NRW Updates and also share updates from their own organisations.

5. The next WLMF meeting is scheduled for Monday 9th December.
6. 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

7. 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

8. The meeting scheduled for 15th July was cancelled.
9. The next WLMF Sub Group meeting will be held on 16th September and will have a 'sheep dip' theme. This will be a joint meeting with members of the Wales Water Management Forum and Wales Fisheries Forum.
10. 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 Forum Review

11. You may be aware that NRW has initiated a review of forums and how we engage with our stakeholders. It is important to NRW that the experience of our valued forum/working group members form part of this review. We are conducting a survey (on Citizen Space) for them to provide feedback.
12. Members of the following forums and working groups will be invited to participate in the survey:
 - Wales Land Management Forum (WLMF)
 - WLMF Sub Group on Agricultural Pollution
 - Forestry Regional Advisory Committee (RAC)
 - National Access Forum for Wales (NAFW)

- Wales Water Management Forum (WWMF)
- Wales Fisheries Forum (WFF)
- WFF Local Fishery Groups
- Biodiversity & Ecosystem Resilience Forum (a.k.a. the WEL Forum)
- Wales Better River Quality Taskforce

13. The survey is currently going through final stages of development and will be launched in due course.

NRW Board Paper

Date of meeting:	25 th September 2024
Title of Paper:	Wales Fisheries Forum (WFF) June 2024
Paper Reference:	24-09-B14
Paper sponsored by:	Prof Steve Ormerod, WFF Chair
Paper prepared by:	Ben Wilson, Principal Advisor Fisheries; Evidence, Policy and Permitting, Natural Resources Management Team
Paper presented by:	Prof Steve Ormerod, WFF Chair
Purpose of the paper	Information

Background

1. The Wales Fisheries Forum (WFF) meets three times a year and provides an opportunity for fisheries stakeholders and Non-Governmental Organisations to share evidence and opportunities for working together to achieve the sustainable management of Fisheries in Wales.
2. The remit of the group is:
 - a. To represent the range of stakeholders with an interest in the freshwater and diadromous fisheries resources of Wales and the work of Natural Resources Wales (NRW) and others to maintain, improve and develop migratory and freshwater fisheries in Wales.
 - b. To provide strategic advice to NRW, that reflects the views of fisheries interests. To inform NRW advice to Welsh Government (WG), including development of fisheries-related policy and strategy.
 - c. To review the performance of NRW's fisheries and associated work to ensure that anglers and fisheries interests have clarity that rod licence income and other funding is used to best effect to support delivery of NRW's statutory fisheries duty.
 - d. To consider the ecological, biological and economic impact of emerging and new issues affecting our fisheries.

- e. To help disseminate information from NRW and elsewhere to angling and fisheries interests.
- f. To provide clear feedback from angling and fisheries interests to NRW and to facilitate information provision to those interests.
- g. To identify opportunities for partnership working and new funding.
- h. To support horizon scanning for anticipated new developments, opportunities, and risks, and to raise awareness of wider issues relating to freshwater and migratory fisheries management, for example marine fisheries.

Update

- 3. The most recent meeting was held virtually on 27th June 2024.
- 4. The meeting comprised the following Items:
 - a. **Incidents update (hotline):** Presentation on how NRW processes and responds to fisheries and water incidents.
 - b. **Fish-Eating Birds Update :** Presentation and discussion – Dave Charlesworth, Lead Specialist Advisor on implementation of the recommendations from the independent Fish-Eating Birds Advisory Group.
 - c. **Eagle Reintroduction Wales:** Presentation from Sophie-Lee Williams (Durrell Trust) on proposals to introduce white tailed eagles to south Wales.
 - d. **Salmon and Sea trout Plan of Action (PoA):** Presentation from Ben Wilson on-going progress with the current plan of action outcomes as well as an update on plans to revise the PoA based on an assessment of the pressures.
 - i. Overall NRW is on track to deliver most actions in the current PoA delivery.
 - ii. We presented work on the Pressure assesment that will inform the future PoA actions (see below NASCO – North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization) .
 - e. **NASCO:** Feedback from NASCO annual meeting agenda and papers. From NRW (Ben Wilson) and from a Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) (Samuel Jones – Angling Trust).
 - i. Key news for NRW Board to note is the proposal to host the 2025 Annual Meeting on NASCO in Cardiff the week of June 2nd 2025. We welcome this opportunity to showcase issues that salmon face in Wales and how NRW and partners are addressing them. NRW are working with WG and DEFRA on hosting arrangements and we are coordinating related site visits with partners.

- ii. The annual review of national Implementation Plans (IP), showed that NRW (along with the Environment Agency) are currently on track and delivering planned measures in our England and Wales IP.
- iii. Future NASCO reporting. Following a review of NASCO's timescales and strategic objectives, NRW will need to present a new IP, this time for Wales only, by June 2026. In the meantime, all jurisdictions need to present a Salmon Pressures Assessment in 2025, which will then inform their IP. As mentioned above NRW has already embarked on this.
- iv. NASCO Stocking Guidelines: NASCO presented revised stocking guidelines which support NRW's current policy not to undertake or allow mitigation or enhancement stocking specifically they state that:

The evidence generated from four decades of research into the impacts of stocking on Atlantic salmon populations has prompted the scientific consensus that: where integrity (i.e. evolutionary and ecological naturalness) of the wild stock is a management priority, stocking should not be considered as a remediation measure.

However they also conclude that:

.. there are some limited situations where stocking may be beneficial for wild salmon. Stocking may be beneficial where the wild Atlantic salmon population has been extirpated or is at immediate risk of extirpation.

We have suggested further work to clarify whether and how NRW would consider any hatchery initiatives to be safe or appropriate. This will be informed by IUCN translocation guidelines.

- f. **Climate Resilient Fisheries Strategy:** Presentation from Ben Wilson on the NRW decision to develop a new fisheries strategy for NRW.

This is a much needed update the existing 2014 "Agenda for Change" strategy and is necessary to demonstrate how NRW will meet its statutory duty to "maintain, improve and develop fisheries of salmon, trout, eels, lampreys, smelt and freshwater fish" within the context of the Climate and Nature Emergency's and in alignment the NRW Corporate Plan.

The proposed draft strategy presents a vision for Welsh Fisheries:

Wales has healthy and resilient freshwater, estuarine and marine ecosystems, support thriving and diverse fish populations with sustainably managed fisheries. These fisheries will allow more people from more backgrounds to connect to nature, providing powerful incentive to restore and maintain them for current and future generations to enjoy.

We are also proposing three new Strategic Objectives:

1. Welsh fish populations and fisheries are resilient to climate change.
2. Declining and vulnerable stocks are protected and where possible on the path to recovery.
3. More people are connected to nature through fishing.

We intend to consult on this strategy more widely in the autumn, and to use these strategic objectives to inform a prioritisation of NRW fisheries activities from 2025 onwards.

g. **River Basin Management Plans Working Together Consultation:**

Discussion Ruth Johnston Lead Specialist Advisor: Ensuring members were aware of upcoming consultation Closes 20th December.

<https://ymgyngghori.cyfoethnaturiol.cymru/evidence-policy-and-permitting-tystiolaeth-polisi-a-thrwyddedu/wt>

h. **WFF Update paper:** This paper gave updates on current fisheries issues around Wales. A copy of the update paper is available by emailing

Fisheries.Wales@cyfoethnaturiolcymru.gov.uk

- Rod licence sales update
- Fishing in Wales” update
- NASCO
- Fish-eating bird review update.
- Shad
- Recent News Items
 - Scheme to aid natural fish passage at Ammanford weir.
 - Can you help to spot pre-historic fish in our rivers?
 - Cleddau River benefits from two river habitat restoration projects
 - Completed scheme to give River Pelenna new lease of life.
 - Fencing will provide benefits in river catchment.
 - First balsam blitzers out tackling invasive species on the River Teifi
 - Project helps to deliver multiple benefits for nature and farming in Monmouthshire.
 - Invasive Species Week - GB Non-native Species Secretariat (NNS)
- Catch and Release!
- Water Thermometer: To fish or not fish for salmon and sea trout

9. Forward Look.

Suggested future WFF items will include:

- Salmon stock assessment review,
- Climate Resilient Fisheries Strategy
- Ranunculus

Date on next meeting: 28th November 2024

NRW Board Paper

Date of meeting:	25 th September 2024
Title of Paper:	National Access Forum for Wales (NAFW) Update
Paper Reference:	24-09-B15
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.

5. The Secretariat collates written contributions ahead of each meeting, this provides an opportunity for members, NRW and 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](#)

Update

6. The most recent NAFW meeting was held on 2nd July 2024. The meeting was held in-person but with some attendees joining online. All agenda items incorporate time for questions and discussion.
7. The Forum heard from Julia Mansbridge, NRW about River Basin Management Plans and the recently opened Working Together consultation. Forum members were encouraged to participate in the consultation.
8. Dŵr Cymru's representative on the Forum, Jen Newman, presented work about the role of visitor attractions for Dŵr Cymru and its vision for hubs for health and wellbeing and engaging visitors. Jen shared the developing policy and piloting around open water swimming and cold water dipping and finished by sharing work and future plans for the Elan Valley.
9. Written contributions were circulated in advance of the meeting and members were encouraged to review these and to contact contributors direct with further questions. Sarah Smith, Welsh Government, noted that the Cabinet Secretary had recently received briefings on access reform. Sarah confirmed that the Cabinet Secretary had not yet made any decisions on the access reform programme and his priorities going forward and that he had requested further briefings.
10. Carys Drew, NRW Secretary presented the NAFW Forward Look paper which had been circulated in advance. This is to involve members in planning future meeting items, topics and themes. Members were encouraged to contribute to developing this working document, providing ideas for topics and order of priority.
11. The Forum were made aware that NRW has issued a review of all Forums that NRW engage with and facilitate. They were advised that a survey would be sent to them to gather their views and were encouraged to respond to this.
12. The Campaign for National Parks made an application for membership to the Forum. Following a presentation from Gareth Ludkin, Senior Policy Officer, members considered whether the organisation had met the requirements in the Forum's Terms of Reference. There was consensus from members in the meeting to accept the application and the Campaign for National Parks have been advised that their application was successful and are now Forum members.
13. Meeting dates for 2024/25 are planned as follows: 5th November (online), 4th March 2025 (online).

NRW Board Paper

Date of meeting:	25 th September 2024
Title of Paper:	Finance Performance Report
Paper Reference:	24-09-B17
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:	Mark Collins, Business Finance Manager
Purpose of the paper:	Approval (change in forecast) / Discussion (Financial Performance)
Summary	<p>To approve:</p> <p>Change in the latest forecast from £268.9m to a forecasted £269.0m.</p> <p>To scrutinise:</p> <p>Financial performance to the end of July 2024.</p>

Background

1. The Finance Performance report provides detail on progress across the different types of income, expenditure, and programmes. Annex A summarises the key messages in respect of:
 - Change in budget forecast compared to the previous approved forecast (May).
 - Performance to the end of July 2024.

Risks and opportunities

2. We hold a risk in the Finance and Corporate Services Risk Register for ‘in year spend’. This also links to the strategic risk “Failure to achieve financial stability”. For this financial year, risks of overspend have been mitigated through actions taken by the Executive Team and additional funding from Welsh Government.

3. 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

- 4. Executive Team will continue to monitor the principal risks within the budget.
- 5. This report is produced every two months for the Board and Executive Team.

Recommendation

- 6. Board to approve changes to the latest forecast, from £268.9m to £269.0m.
- 7. Board to scrutinise financial performance to the end of July 2024.

Index of Annexes

Annex A – Financial Performance Report



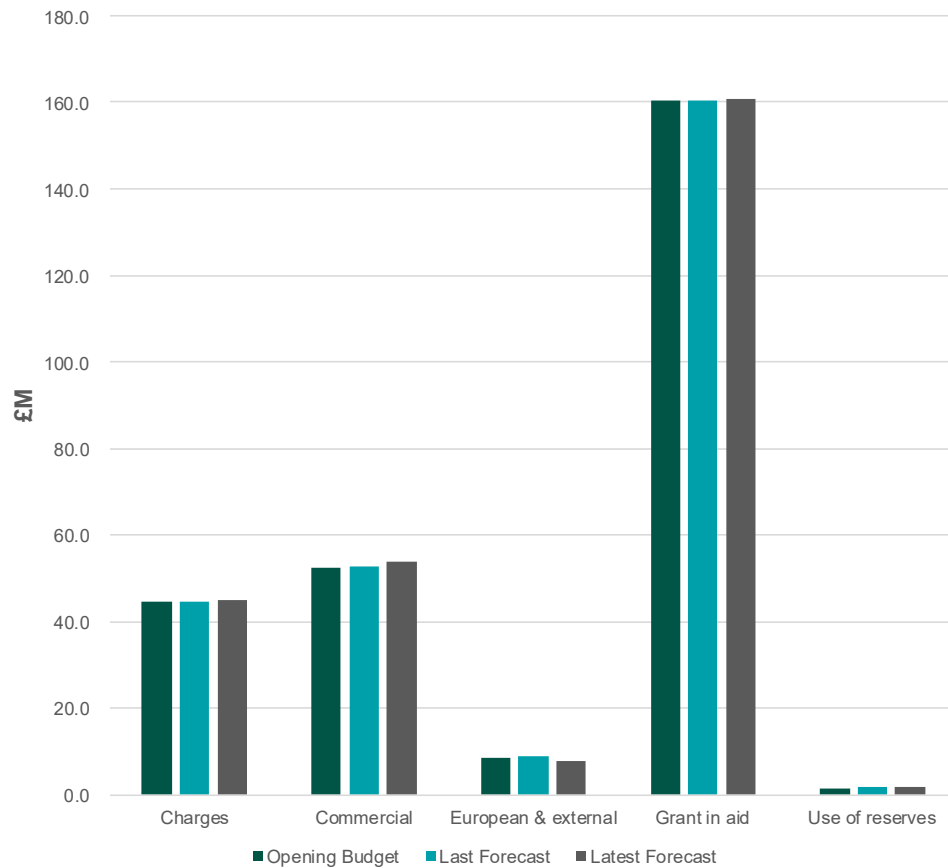
NRW Board – 26 September 2024

Financial Performance Report – July 2024

Content and Key Messages

Update will cover:	Messages:
1. Update on the latest forecast changes as at July 2024 compared to the opening budget.	1. The overall forecast has increased by £0.1m, mainly due to additional commercial income and Grant in Aid / Grants (£0.8m & £0.3m respectively) offset by a reduction in external funding (£1.2m). The increase in commercial income is for additional wind energy income & habitat management work at Pen Y Cymoedd. The increase in Grant in Aid / Grants was mainly due to additional funding allocated by WG for land management agreements (£0.4m). The external funding reduction is due to a change in the multi-year profile of projects within the LIFE programme. That income will be deferred for those LIFE projects to future years.
2. Financial Performance as at July 2024.	2. Expenditure at the end of July equates to £69.1m against a planned spend of £69.4m, an underspend to date of £0.3m. This is mainly due to underspend on non staff costs predominantly linked to Land Stewardship activities across Operations (£0.3m) and EPP (£0.1m), and ICT license costs within Finance & Corporate Services (£0.2m). These are offset by overspend within EPP in Evidence (£0.2m). The income position is ahead of profile by £1.2m due to commercial timber and charge income (£0.7m & £0.5m respectively) being ahead of expectation at this stage. Timber income has shown a positive start to the year with both volume and price per tonne greater than expected. An increase to the timber forecast would reduce the additional £2m support that is part of the agreement with WG. The latest timber forecast is being reviewed for sign off by the Head of Sustainable Commercial Development.
3. Update on the plan to balance in year budgetary pressures.	3. There is a page in the report where we set out the contingencies and over-programming we are holding. There are several contingencies - pay award, general (for potential redundancies), precautionary (for corporate costs recharge being re-forecasted). We also hold over-programming allocations - central (prudently set at £1m, previous years set at £3m+) and in the main programmes (Flood, NaCE and NRW2030). These have reduced considerably since the last report and we are only over-programmed by £1.3m across all the main programmes. We have taken into consideration the lessons learnt from the Local Partnerships review in managing over-programming within programmes - though we have acknowledged there is an increased risk of underspend as a result. The budget for Case For Change (CFC) will be transferred in August (£0.5m) from the central contingency budget of £2m. There is also £1m of grant received for the Peatlands project that is likely to be returned to Welsh Government as we will not be able to use it and it cannot be re-allocated as it's not been provided from our sponsoring department's budget.
4. Endorse change in forecast since the last revised forecast was agreed - from £268.9m to £269.0m.	4. The main risks and opportunities to our budget this year, currently are: (Risk) - achievement of the salary budget savings target (see point 5 below) (Risk) - Ty Cambria exit strategy, the position is progressing, with new legal representation acting on our behalf but we still await the Section 18 report from Cooke and Arkwright which will allow us to finalise the financial impact. (Risk) - emerging pressure on electricity and maintenance costs within Operations, primarily linked to flood assets and pumping stations. A review is currently underway to determine the budget shortfall and the mitigating actions. (Risk) - We still await the pay remit from WG which will allow us to have meaningful discussions with the Trade Unions about the level of pay award for this financial year. Until we have that clarity there will remain a risk whether we have sufficient budget cover. An update was taken to the People & Customer Committee (PCC). (Risk / Opportunity) - levels of over-programming, which have been much more prudently set. Risks of overspend should now be fully mitigated but there is a risk of underspend. (Opportunity) - WG are also in discussion with UK government about funding for the additional Civil Service Pension scheme costs this year, which we have absorbed into our budget. If that is successful, it's possible that could be allocated to us. (Opportunity) - we are in discussion with the Commercial team about a potential small increase in our retainable income budget this year following discussions with the operators of the Cefn Croes site on the unit price that was applied by them which we reported a significant reduction in March / April. Whilst there are a number of significant variables that need to be managed - at this stage, we do not need to take any further actions other than we have indicated in this report (for e.g. recruitment control and liaison with WG over the pay situation, determining the Ty Cambria exit strategy).
5. An update on the potential risks & opportunities.	5. The opening staff budget deficit stood at £9.3m. The current recruitment controls have generated "core" post savings at the end of July of £2.4m, however, current projections show an expected deficit of £1.7m against the £9.3m target at year end, which will need to be funded from the contingency budget (£1.5m) or other in year savings. Whilst we hold a contingencies budget, this is also a source of funding for redundancies. We do hold another contingency budget but this will be a limited source of funding.

Financial Performance – Income Forecast



Charges

Charge income forecast has increased by £0.1m in relation to EPR charges.

Commercial

Commercial income has increased by £0.8m. This is due to additional income for the Pen Y Cymoedd Habitat Management Plan (£0.3m) and additional Wind Energy income (£0.3m surrenderable, £0.1m retainable).

European & Other External

European and other external income has reduced by £1.2m due to a reduction in the LiFE project programme. The income will be deferred into future years for use on the LiFE programme.

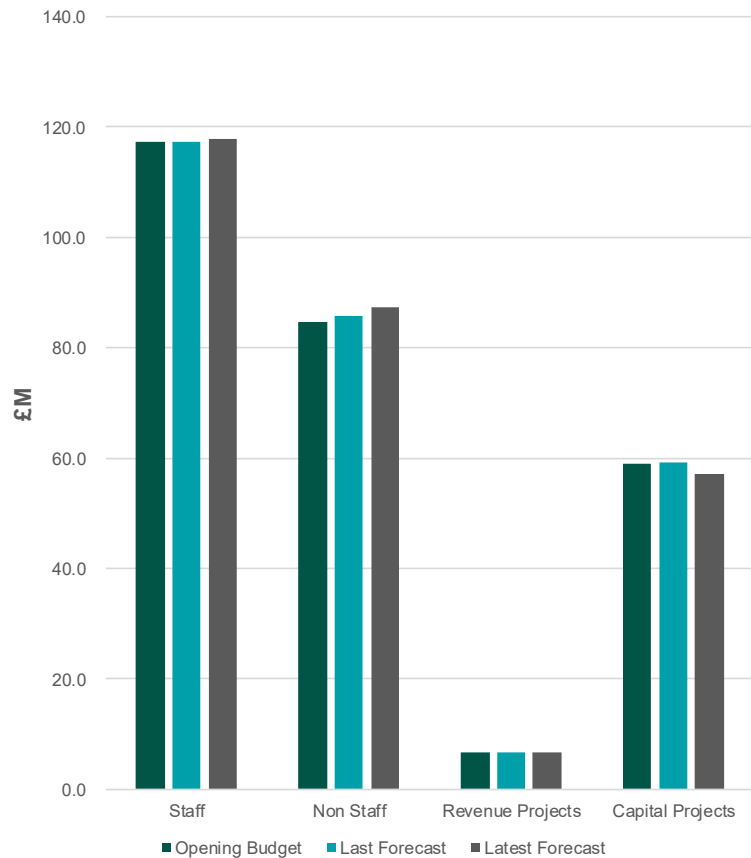
Grant in Aid

Grant in Aid / WG grants has increased by £0.3m, following an additional allocation by WG for Land Management Agreements (£0.4m), NaCE Programme (£0.1m) and a number of smaller WG Grants (£0.2m), which is offset by a reduction in Coal Tip Safety (£0.3m) & Invasive Non Native Species (INNS) (£0.1m) work.

Use of Reserves

The use of reserves remains static from the last reporting period. The increase in EPR income has reduced the draw on reserves, which is offset by an increase required for other charge funded posts.

Financial Performance – Expenditure Forecast



Staff

Staff budgets have increased by £0.5m, split between additional WG Grant funding (£0.1m), charge funded posts (£0.2m) and a movement from NRW contingencies (£0.2m).

Due to the continued recruitment control measures, staff budgets have reduced by a further £1.3m. However, the latest forecast shows a deficit £1.7m against the £9.3m target. The £1.7m would be funded from the contingency budget. Both these budgets are within the 'staff' category, so there is no net impact on the graph.

Non Staff

Overall, non staff budgets have increased by £1.5m. This is predominantly due to a number of changes within the Wind Energy surrenderable income payment to WG, which has increased by £1.8m. The main contributing factors are a significant reduction in the compensatory planting programme and the associated corporate costs, along with an increase in the surrenderable income forecast of £0.3m. Further changes relate to Land Management Agreements increasing by £0.4m, following the additional WG Grant in Aid funding and NRW contingency budget reducing by £0.2m following a number of staff budget changes.

Revenue Projects

Revenue projects have increased by £0.2m mainly due to additional income relating to Pen Y Cymoedd Habitat Management Plan (£0.3m) which is offset by a reduction in Natur Am Byth (£0.1m).

Capital Projects

Capital projects have reduced by £2.2m; £1m of which relates to a reduction in the compensatory planting land acquisition budget which is then offset by an increase to Wind Energy re-payment to WG.. LiFE projects have reduced by £1.3m, with the adjustment increasing NRW LiFE income in future years. WG Grants have reduced by £0.5m, linked to the Coal Tip Safety Work, with the NaCE and Natur Am Byth projects increasing by £0.1m and £0.4m respectively. The Flood Warning System a project and the Telemetry project have this month been transferred back from NRW 2030 programme to Flood and Water Resource Programmes, and the funding given to NRW 2030 for these projects has transferred back to these programmes with it; Flood £3.2m and Water Resources £0.5m.

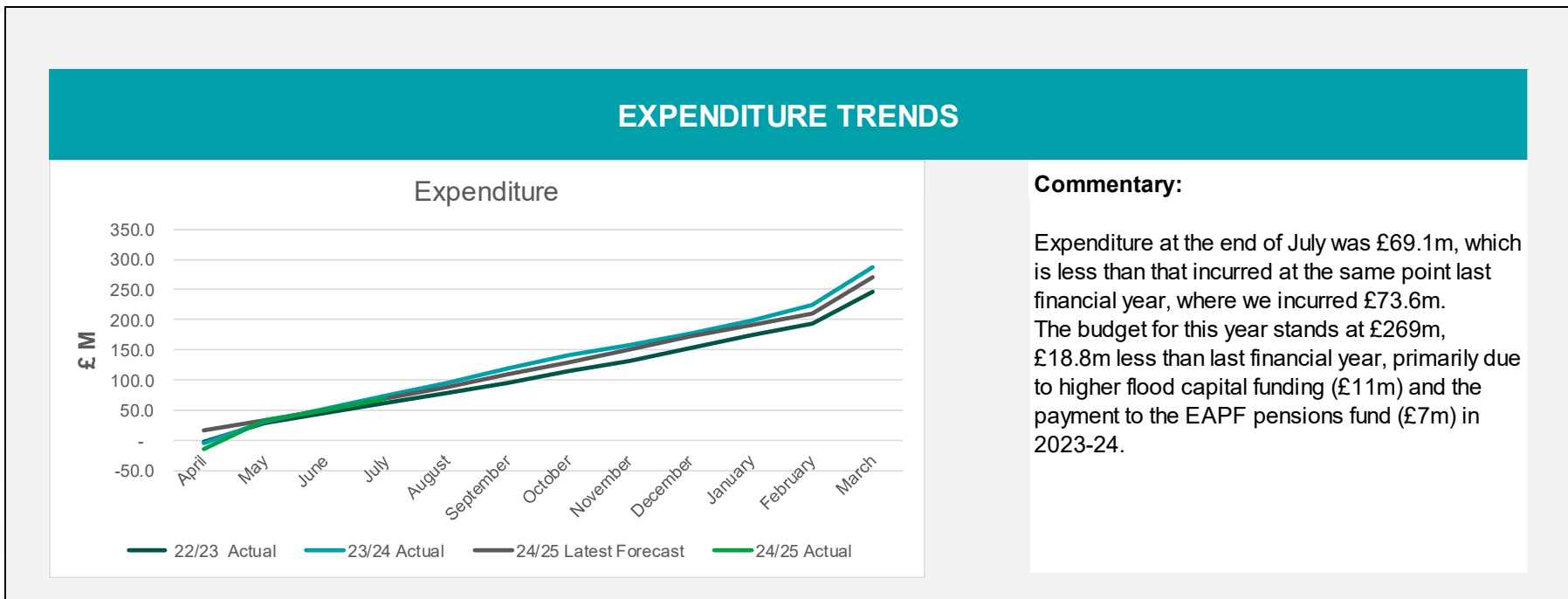
Financial Performance - Income

INCOME	Actual	Approved Forecast	Variance	Approved Forecast	Remaining Budget	Commentary
by Account Type	YTD £m	YTD £m	YTD £m	FY £m	FY %	
Charges	30.8	30.2	0.5	45.0	32%	Charges are £0.5m ahead of forecast with greater than expected EPR applications and rod licence purchases. Finance will re-assess the forecast with the regulation team. Any increase would be ring fenced within those specific regimes, the impact of which would be seen in the September figures.
Commercial	20.9	20.2	0.7	53.7	61%	Timber Sales are £0.7m ahead of forecast with timber dispatches higher than expected and an increase in the expected price per tonne. This is an indication that the full year forecast will need to be increased and a formal revised forecast is expected from the Commercial team. The impact of any increase to the timber forecast will be to reduce the additional £2m support which WG have put in place this year.
European & external	1.5	1.6	-0.1	7.7	81%	Income received in line with profile. Overall income to be applied this year has been reduced following a review of the projects within the various LiFE programmes, and will be used in future financial years.
Grant in Aid	20.1	20.1	-0.0	160.6	88%	Income received in line with profile.
Use of Reserves	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.9	100%	The movement in reserves is the current estimate of the funds we will need to draw down from deferred and accrued income accounts to cover the gap between charge income and expenditure on the various regimes. This will be monitored and reviewed throughout the year in conjunction with the Regulatory Business Management team.
TOTAL: NRW	73.3	72.1	1.2	269.0	73%	

Financial Performance - Expenditure

EXPENDITURE	Actual	Approved Forecast	Variance	Approved Forecast	Remaining Budget	Commentary
by Account Type	YTD	YTD	YTD	FY	FY	
	£m	£m	£m	£m	%	
Staff	37.2	37.1	-0.1	117.9	68%	The position at the end of July shows an over spend of £0.1m linked to other staff costs spread across directorates. Due to the current recruitment controls we have generated a further £1.3m of savings at the end of July on core funded posts, which has been used to offset the opening staff budget deficit of £9.3m. This will gradually reduce as we go through the year, however, current projections show an expected deficit of £1.7m against the £9.3m target at year end, which will need to be funded from other in year savings and contingencies. The vacancy rate currently stands at 11%.
Non Staff	20.0	20.4	0.4	87.3	77%	The current under spend of £0.4m is predominantly linked to under spend within Land Stewardship activities across Operations (£0.3m) and EPP (£0.1m), and ICT license costs within Finance & Corporate Services (£0.2m). These are offset by overspend within EPP in Evidence (£0.2m). Significant variances will be continually assessed, with profiles amended as appropriate. The Land Stewardship variance has reduced significantly from the last reporting period.
Revenue Projects	1.3	1.3	0.1	6.8	81%	Whilst there are relatively minor variances +/- across revenue projects, the two projects with the largest variances are Reservoir Compliance (Internal Funded) which is £0.1m behind target and Cardiff Opportunity (NRW2030) which is £0.1m ahead of target.
Capital Projects	10.6	10.6	-0.0	57.0	81%	The current capital variance is predominantly linked to two programmes. NRW2030 which is ahead of target (£0.4m) due to costs incurred on a project where there has been a delay in the project code being set up whilst awaiting IPAG assurance. The budget is currently held in a holding code pending transfer now that assurance has been received. Offsetting this is Flood Risk which is £0.3m behind target, mainly in relation to the Flood Warning System project, although we have successfully gone live - however, there are significant funds in the budget for the remainder of the year for continuous improvement.
TOTAL: NRW	69.1	69.4	0.3	269.0	74%	

Financial Performance – Expenditure Trends



Trajectory Financial Performance

Trajectory Financial Performance - as at the end of July					
Directorate	Expenditure variance	Turnover variance	Net variance	Core / Project Split	
	£000's	£000's	£000's	Core £000's	Projects £000's
Communications, Customer and Commercial	78	-38	40	16	24
Corporate Strategy and Development	-31	-14	-45	-57	12
Evidence, Policy and Permitting	369	-118	251	154	97
Finance and Corporate Services	153	-40	112	104	8
Operations	853	-212	640	537	103
TOTAL	1421	-423	-999	754	245
Commentary					
<p>Recruitment controls continue to have a positive budgetary impact.</p> <p>Total core savings at the end of July were £2.4m, however £0.6m relates to charge income vacancies, leaving an overall saving of £1.8m with a current projection of £7.6m (net of charge funded posts) for the financial year.</p> <p>£2m of the £7.6m is forecasted to come from keeping recruitment controls in place (future vacancies created) and the implementation of the Case for Change proposals (staff redeployed into charge or project funded posts or exits).</p> <p>That still leaves a balance of £1.7m to meet against the £9.3m target. Whilst we hold a contingencies budget of £1.5m (£2m currently less £0.5m to be transferred to the change programme) – this is also a source of funding for redundancies. But we have an additional pay budget equivalent to 1.5% of pay (about £1.8m) which is dependent on the outcome of the pay award which has a budget equivalent of 3.5%.</p> <p>As previously noted CSD is showing a negative saving as staff in the flexible resource pool staff not currently on assignment are costed to that directorate.</p>					

Financial Performance – Revenue Projects

Revenue Projects by Programme	Actual YTD £m	Approved Forecast YTD £m	Variance YTD £m	Approved Forecast FY £m	Remaining Budget FY %	Commentary
External Funded	0.7	0.7	0.0	2.6	73%	Whilst there are relatively minor variances +/- across Revenue Projects, the two projects with the largest variances are Reservoir Compliance (Internal Funded) which is £0.1m behind target and Cardiff Opportunity (NRW2030) which is £0.1m ahead of target.
Internal Funded	0.2	0.3	0.1	1.0	83%	
NaCE	0.2	0.3	0.0	1.5	84%	
Other	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100%	
NRW 2030	0.1	0.0	-0.1	0.9	90%	
Grants	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.8	93%	
TOTAL: NRW	1.3	1.3	0.1	6.8	81%	

Financial Performance – Capital Projects

Capital Projects by Programme	Actual YTD £m	Approved Forecast YTD £m	Variance YTD £m	Approved Forecast FY £m	Remaining Budget FY %	Commentary
NRW 2030	0.5	0.1	-0.4	3.3	86%	The Flood Warning System and Telemetry projects have now been categorised within the Flood Risk and Water Resources capital programmes rather than the NRW 2030 programme and the baseline funding allocated to these projects has transferred accordingly - £3.2m for Flood and £0.5m for Water Resources, reducing the capital programme for NRW 2030 from £7.0m to £3.3m. Within the capital programme, £2.8m is currently held in holding accounts for projects that were awaiting IPAG assurance before project codes were issued. This relates to two projects Tech Stabilisation (£2.3m) and Web Development (£0.5m). Since the end of the month we have had confirmation that Tech Stabilisation has had IPAG assurance and the project code issued. Currently the NRW 2030 is over-programmed by £0.5m. The programme is currently showing as being ahead of target due to costs incurred on the project which was waiting for the project code to be set up whilst awaiting IPAG assurance. The budget will now be transferred from the holding code.
External Funded	1.2	1.2	0.0	6.8	82%	Whilst there are some minor variances +/-, overall external funded projects are on track against the revised forecast.
Flood Risk	4.1	4.4	0.3	18.4	78%	The funding allocated to flood risk projects this month has increased by £3.2m (from £15.2m to £18.4m), due to the re-categorisation of Flood Warning System and Telemetry projects from NRW 2030 programme. The overprogramming balance of £2.4m in May is now eliminated and currently stands as a surplus of £0.2m. The largest of the forecast reductions are on Stephenson Street (£0.8m), Cwm Clydach Dam (£0.8m) and Cadoxton Brook (£0.5m). Currently the programme is showing an underspend against the year to date budget, the main variance is on the Flood Warning System where expenditure is currently showing as behind the planned profile by £0.2m.
Water Resources	0.2	0.2	0.0	1.6	88%	The funding allocated to Water Resources projects this month has increased by £0.5m (from £1.1m to £1.6m), due to the transfer of the Telemetry project from NRW 2030 programme. Overall the Water Resources programme is currently under-programmed by £0.3m, this is reduced by £0.5m in May. We will be discussing this with the Programme lead during September and if this funding is not required in the programme this year then it can be used to help the NRW contingency. There are projects that some of this balance maybe allocated to.
Internal Funded	0.1	0.2	0.1	1.6	94%	Whilst there are some minor variances +/-, overall internal funded projects are on track.
NaCE	4.5	4.4	-0.1	22.5	80%	The NaCE overprogramming is now showing as zero due to the forecasted underspend of £1.9m on the Peatlands programme, £1m of which has been transferred to Nature Networks (agreed with WG). The Peatlands programme is still forecasting an £900k underspend but it's likely we will need to return the budget back to WG as it is from a WG budget outside of our sponsoring department's control. Once that budget is adjusted it will show the true over-programme position, which is £1m. We have projects that we can increase in spend in the coming months should we need to, but most programmes are trying to work to budget to ensure no overspend. There is a risk to this approach but is in line with the approach being taken on the Flood Risk programme to ensure we don't get ourselves in a position whereby we can't slow the spend down.
IFRS 16 Capital Leases Only (non-cash)	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.8	100%	The overall lease programme is still under consideration by the Head of Business Support Services and Adfywio - it is dependant on the outcome of the Ty Cambria exit strategy as dilapidations are a charge against this capital budget. The other use will be for electric vehicles leases or purchases, whichever provides us with the better value for money.
TOTAL: NRW	10.6	10.6	0.0	57.0	81%	

Contingency and over-programming budgets

Balances (contingencies and programme under/overs)	/£m May-24	/£m Jul-24	/£m Movement	Confidence Level (RAG Status)	Comments
In year pressure balancing targets					
Staff Reduction Targets	-8.2	-6.9	1.4	Yellow	Reduced from £9.3m in the original budget, accounting for savings in April to July. £1.4m is the movement from the end of May.
Vacancy Management	-4.2	-3.4	0.8	Green	We are on target to manage the vacancy management target this year.
Contingencies and provisions					
Pay Award Provisions	4.2	4.2	0.0	Green	Provision equivalent to a level above CPI.
Other staff contingency	1.8	1.8	0.0	Green	Additional provision as identified in the opening budget.
Central Contingencies	2.2	2.0	-0.2	Yellow	The general contingency is reduced back to £2m in July, which is in line with our planning assumption, this follows a reduction of £0.2m for workforce recharges to projects.
Central Contingencies (corporate cost recharges)	0.9	0.5	-0.4	Green	Corporate costs have reduced on External funded projects (£90k), wind energy income by (£286k) and WG Grants (£14k). This balance should be retained until the revised corporate cost recharge rates are agreed for 2024-25.
Staff Budget Undistributed (Directorates)	0.9	0.9	0.1	Green	A paper has been approved by ET on 20 August which will clear the majority of this balance.
Staff budget allocation (under review)	0.4	0.4	0.0	Green	Budgets approved for new posts not yet created.
Over-programming					
Central Overprogramming	-1.0	-1.0	0.0	Green	As set out in the opening budget.
Overprogramming (Directorates)	-0.4	0.0	0.4	Green	Previous balances have been reviewed within their respective programmes and removed.
NaCE (Directorates)	-3.3	0.0	3.3	Green	Once the Peatlands programme budget has been adjusted for the £0.9m to be returned to WG, the over-programming will approximately be £1m.
NRW 2030 (Directorates)	0.0	-0.5	-0.5	Green	The programme has been developed since May which has resulted in an over-programming of £0.5m which is being assessed.
Welsh Government Grants	0.0	-0.1	-0.1	Green	Whilst the Waste Reform EPR Programme is showing an element of overprogramming, WG have confirmed an additional allocation, which will be input for the next reporting period.
Staff Budget Overprogramming (Directorates)	-0.1	0.0	0.1	Green	Funding has now been received from WG.
Under-programming					
Water Resources Capital (Directorates)	0.5	0.5	0.0	Yellow	The programme remains under-programmed, currently showing as £0.5m, however the true position is £0.3m due to two project not being included in the latest transfer of data from the project delivery system. These have now been incorporated. We will be discussing this with the Programme lead during September and if this funding is not required in the programme this year then it can be used to help the NRW contingency.
Flood Risk Capital (Directorates)	-2.4	0.2	2.6	Green	Following a review of the capital programme, overprogramming has been removed, currently showing a relatively small under programming of £161k. There are projects that can / will be introduced into the programme or budgets increased to mitigate the risk of underspend.
Awaiting distribution					
NRW 2030 (Directorates)	2.3	2.8	0.5	Green	A balance of £2.8m is currently held in holding accounts for project that were awaiting IPAG assurance before project codes are issued for these projects. This relates to two projects Tech Stabilisation £2.3m and Web Development £0.5m, since July we have had confirmation that Tech Stabilisation has had
Note					
All contingencies/over programming are held centrally unless indicated otherwise.					



NRW Board Paper

Date of meeting:	25 th September 2024
Title of Paper:	NRW's Net Zero Plan
Paper Reference:	24-09-B18
Paper sponsored by:	Ceri Davies, Executive Director of Evidence, Policy and Permitting
Paper prepared by:	Clive Walmsley, Senior Specialist Advisor, Climate Change and Decarbonisation and Gabrielle Torkington, Team Leader, Climate Change and Decarbonisation
Paper presented by:	Clive Walmsley, Senior Specialist Advisor – Climate Change and Decarbonisation
Purpose of the paper	Approval
Summary	NRW's Net Zero Plan sets out our ambition for reducing our organisational carbon footprint. It is a Welsh Government requirement (set out in Net Zero Wales) for all Welsh public sector bodies to publish such a Plan. Board should note the emission reduction targets and clear ownership and responsibility for prioritised actions to ensure delivery is embedded across the organisation. Board is requested to approve the Plan.

Background

1. Since the Welsh Government (WG) declaration of a Climate Emergency in 2019, our internal emission reduction work has been steered by NRW's *Carbon Positive Enabling Plan* and the 'Top 15 priorities' identified in discussion with the NRW Board in July 2019. WG published the second *Low Carbon Delivery Plan – Net Zero Wales* in October 2021, which included a policy requirement that '*all public sector organisations should ... develop and publish [Net Zero] plans by March 2023 to achieve a collective net zero [Welsh] public sector by 2030*'.
2. NRW's *Carbon Positive Enabling Plan* acted as our first Net Zero Plan from 2019 to 2023. This Net Zero Plan provides a more detailed target and scenario-based approach

to defining our action through to 2030. Welsh Government's Net Zero Strategic Plan, published in 2022, sets out its own net zero ambition and priority decarbonisation initiatives. We have adopted a similar approach to the WG Plan, presenting several emission pathways and scenarios for buildings, fleet, business travel, commuting and homeworking, which mirror their *do nothing, gaining momentum, accelerated change* scenarios. The use of this scenarios approach is essential given the uncertainty of future resources for decarbonisation, particularly in light of the proposals in the Case for Change for reduction in our strategic climate change capacity by 30%. Like WG, we have used the principles of the Science Based Targets Initiative (SBTi) <https://sciencebasedtargets.org/> for target setting for many emissions.

3. Our new Corporate Plan and our Service Plans recognise the wider challenges posed by climate change, and commit to reducing emissions, protecting and enhancing long-term stores of carbon, both within our own operations and through our wider influence. It is important to emphasise that this Plan only addresses the part of that work to reduce our own organisational carbon footprint. NRW's role in industrial decarbonisation was discussed at Board (in September 2023) and other aspects of our facilitation of decarbonisation across Wales, such as in land use and influencing the wider public sector will be addressed at the Wellbeing Objective 2 (WBO2) strategic session scheduled for November 2024. It is essential that we reduce our own carbon footprint if we are to be in a reputable position to advocate, advise and regulate others to do the same.
4. We have, as far as possible, aligned our organisational boundary for buildings, assets and land to the public sector service-approach set out in the WG *Net Zero Reporting Guide* for all Welsh public sector organisations, which evolved from the outputs of NRW's Carbon Positive Project. The emissions sources covered in this Plan are buildings, transport and plant, waste generated in operations, purchased goods and services, business travel, employee commuting, homeworking and land-based emissions (and sequestration). Emissions associated with fleet and equipment fuel (8%), homeworking (6%) and building-related emissions from heating and electricity use (4%) are the largest categories of our operational emissions.
5. In the financial year 2023-24, NRW's greenhouse gas emissions, i.e., our organisational carbon footprint, was calculated to be 30,536 tCO_{2e} - this excludes land-based emissions and sequestration. The total net quantity of carbon sequestered in habitats on the NRW estate has been estimated to be -390,924 tCO_{2e} (based on 2023/24 data). The operational carbon footprint in this Plan was calculated for our annual Welsh public sector Net Zero reporting submission, which has a baseline year 2019-20.
6. NRW's total operational emissions (excluding both supply chain and land use) were 6,962 tCO_{2e} in 2019-20; 3,120 tCO_{2e} in 2020-21; 4,666 tCO_{2e} in 2021-22, 5,044 tCO_{2e} in 2022-23 and 5,321 tCO_{2e} in 2023-24 (all emissions calculated using 2023-24 Net Zero reporting template). The impacts of Covid on operational emissions is clear with large decreases in emissions from most categories in 2020-21 compared to the 2019-20 baseline, most notably commute emissions. However, subsequently, emissions

have rebounded, reflecting post pandemic changes with waste, homeworking, equipment and business travel emissions increasing. Our organisational supply chain emissions have increased by 58% compared to the baseline year (2019/20), reflecting both an increase in spend, but also automation and improved collation of spend data that provides a better estimate of their emissions.

7. Despite a range of decarbonisation actions to date, the trends in our emissions data show that the long-term emissions reductions that we have reported through EMS over the last decade are predominantly driven by grid decarbonisation (outside of NRW's control), increased homeworking (as a consequence of the pandemic) along with NRW's proactive reductions through reducing our buildings portfolio. NRW has not yet purposefully achieved significant progress towards reducing the carbon intensity of its activities.
8. The aim of this Plan is to ensure we have a strategy to minimise our emissions through to 2030 and to contribute to the wider public sector decarbonisation ambition for 2030. The decarbonisation scenarios and actions detailed in it highlight the possible greenhouse gas emission reductions that could be realistically achieved through a wide range of actions, based on current knowledge and evidence. To increase this contribution further would require further innovation, technological improvements and significant upscaling of resource and action.
9. Our overarching carbon reduction target will reduce our emissions by a minimum of 35% by 2030 across all significant emission categories, compared to a baseline year (2019/20). Built estate and fleet emission reductions of 56% and 66% respectively could be achieved with an appropriate scale of investment and delivery of the planned actions. All of our targets will be subject to review to take account of progress, resourcing and changes in feasibility, for example taking account of technological change.
10. The role that behavioural change has to play in reducing our own organisational carbon footprint is important too. As part of our work to embed consideration of decarbonisation and climate change in everyone's work, NRW has developed bespoke climate change training that meets the Carbon Literacy Trust standard with Manchester Metropolitan University and Cynnal Cymru-Sustain Wales. Presently, it is not possible to quantify the contribution of changing behaviour in decision-making, but the pandemic illustrated how significant behavioural changes are possible.
11. The Net Zero Plan has been recently reviewed and endorsed by the Climate Emergency Group (July 2024) and Executive Team (ET) (August 2024). An internal audit of our Net Zero reporting and planning process was completed (January 2024) with a moderate assurance opinion. The three recommendations arising from the audit for governance, dissemination and mainstreaming delivery of the Plan have been incorporated into both the Net Zero Plan and the next steps outlined in this paper.
12. The Net Zero Plan is included in Annex 1 along with a qualitatively prioritised list of the emission reduction actions in Annex 2. The prioritisation of actions has been achieved

with the help of departments across NRW who are responsible for their delivery. It has also been aligned with the wider public sector approach to prioritising net zero actions with assistance from the Welsh Government Energy Service.

13. Whilst the actions have been prioritised, it is important to note that under each area (e.g., supply chain, built estate, etc.) most of the actions are interdependent and need to be taken forward together to deliver the decarbonisation impact. As a result, in practice prioritisation is more a matter of the scale and pace of change NRW has the appetite, drive and resource to achieve, rather than prioritising one action over another.

Risks, Risk Appetite and opportunities

14. Clearly there is a reputational risk in taking insufficient decarbonisation action within NRW, without which NRW would be unable to demonstrate a leadership role in environmental action in Wales. The need for a strategic approach to decarbonisation as set out in this Plan was included within NRW's Strategic Risk Register (SR05). Undertaking the decarbonisation actions in the Plan will deliver multiple benefits for the environment beyond addressing climate change, e.g., through pollution reduction.

Wider implications

- (a) **Well-being Objectives:** This Net Zero Plan is fundamental to NRW's attainment of the outcomes of WBO2, but also through multiple benefits of certain actions will also contribute to delivery of WBOs 1 and 3 - for example, through the biodiversity benefit of peatland restoration and resource/pollution reduction via improved waste management.
- (b) **Finance:** This Plan sets out the scale of our ambition and the extent of what is presently feasible. It is not a fully costed assessment of the actions required. Individual business cases and costing will be required for each of the emission areas or specific actions. However, cost estimates for a number of the targets have informed this Plan, e.g., for the built estate and fleet, with the targets based on the assumptions being made in business planning for those areas.
- (c) **Resource implications:** This Plan will require a change to ways of working, for example, in considering carbon in procurement across the organisation; additional resources, for example, in delivering low carbon heat in our offices; and for resources to be used in a different way, e.g., through a switch to leasing electric vehicles rather than fossil fuel powered vehicles. The development of this Plan and its targets has already initiated further conversations around specific priority actions and their resource implications, with plans to further refine them, e.g., rolling out renewables on operational assets. Given the long-term implications of this Plan for resources, including up front capital costs, some long-term revenue costs but also savings through reduced energy use, the delivery of this Plan will require further consideration of resourcing by the Climate Emergency Group and the Planning and Resources Group.

(d) Equality: N/a

(e) Data Protection: N/a

Next Steps

15. The Net Zero Plan will be published in full as an NRW Evidence Report with a shortened summary version produced for dissemination externally by December 2024.
16. A Delivery Plan with agreed targets, actions, owners and timeframes will be produced by the Climate Change & Decarbonisation team in consultation with the relevant teams and individuals to ensure clear ownership and responsibility for actions by March 2025.
17. A governance process whereby the Delivery Plan with agreed targets, actions, owners and timeframes will be managed by the Climate Change and Decarbonisation team and reported through the Climate Emergency Group will ensure oversight.
18. Following its approval, the Plan will be communicated across NRW through the intranet by the Climate Change and Decarbonisation and Comms teams in autumn 2024 to get wider ownership for the decarbonisation priority actions.
19. A revised land-based emissions and sequestration calculation, using the UK Water Industry Research (UKWIR) tool, utilising a revised Estate boundary and a range of habitat data resources, will provide an updated net carbon status calculation for WG public sector carbon reporting for our latest reporting year (2023/24).
20. In liaison with Corporate Strategy consider the implementation of the Plan through the Multi-year Planning approach.
21. A wide range of next steps for each type of emissions source are set out within the Plan and summarised in a table in the Executive Summary.

Recommendation

22. We recommend:

- a. Approval of the Net Zero Plan and its prioritised actions, targets and scenarios, subject to their periodic review, to steer our future mitigation action through to 2030.
- b. Approval of the development of a Delivery Plan, setting out the prioritised actions, owners and timeframes that will be reported through the Climate Emergency Group to ensure oversight and delivery.

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Annex 1 – NRW's Net Zero Plan

Annex 2 – NRW Prioritised Actions from the Net Zero Plan

Approval / Consultation process

<p>Responsible: Who has developed the paper/process and who has had input?</p>	<p>The Plan has been produced by the Climate Change and Decarbonisation team and the Senior Specialist Advisor with input from the Climate Emergency Group (CEG) and a range of staff responsible for the emission areas across the organisation. To ensure alignment with the wider Welsh Public Sector, the Welsh Government Energy Service has reviewed our Plan and prioritisation approach.</p>
<p>Accountable: Who is accountable for the ultimate approval? Who will be or is being asked to approve?</p>	<p>The draft Plan has been endorsed by the CEG and ET with approval being sought from the Board, given the Plan's organisation-wide impact.</p>
<p>Consulted: Who has been consulted to date? Where endorsement is required, is this in place? Will further consultation be required?</p>	<p>We have consulted and sought input from teams that will be responsible for the delivery of specific actions. As stated under next steps, we intend to communicate the Plan to all staff after approval. In addition, further consultation and joint working will be required with those teams who will have key roles in delivering the actions.</p>
<p>Informed: Who has been informed or who needs to be further information about the work?</p>	<p>The Plan will be communicated to all staff and will also be shared externally with other Welsh public sector organisations. We anticipate this Plan will prompt further discussions with WG around NRW's mitigation action over the coming years.</p>



Natural Resources Wales' Net Zero Plan 2024 - 2030

Report No:

Authors: Anna Jones, Mefty Haider, Sadie Waterhouse, Clive Walmsley, Gabrielle Torkington, Joanna Kowalska

About Natural Resources Wales

Natural Resources Wales' purpose is to pursue sustainable management of natural resources. This means looking after air, land, water, wildlife, plants and soil to improve Wales' well-being, and provide a better future for everyone.

Evidence at Natural Resources Wales

Natural Resources Wales is an evidence-based organisation. We seek to ensure that our strategy, decisions, operations and advice to Welsh Government and others are underpinned by sound and quality-assured evidence. We recognise that it is critically important to have a good understanding of our changing environment.

We will realise this vision by:

- Maintaining and developing the technical specialist skills of our staff;
- Securing our data and information;
- Having a well resourced proactive programme of evidence work;
- Continuing to review and add to our evidence to ensure it is fit for the challenges facing us; and
- Communicating our evidence in an open and transparent way.

This Evidence Report series serves as a record of work carried out or commissioned by Natural Resources Wales. It also helps us to share and promote use of our evidence by others and develop future collaborations. However, the views and recommendations presented in this report are not necessarily those of NRW and should, therefore, not be attributed to NRW.

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Tbc following approval

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Executive summary

This Net Zero Plan supersedes NRW's Carbon Positive Enabling Plan that was published in 2019 following the declaration of a Climate Emergency by the Welsh Government. It was in effect our first Net Zero Plan and set the strategic direction and priorities for decarbonisation in NRW between 2019 and 2023.

Our new Corporate Plan and our Business and Service Plans recognise the environmental challenges posed by climate change, and commit to reducing emissions, protecting and enhancing long-term stores of carbon both within our own operations and through our wider influence.

We have, as far as possible, aligned our organisational boundary for buildings, assets and land to the public sector service-approach set out in the WG Net Zero Reporting Guide that evolved out of NRW's Carbon Positive Project work. The emissions sources reported by NRW in this Plan are buildings, transport and plant, land-based emissions and sequestration (including agriculture), waste generated in operations, purchased goods and services, business travel, employee commuting and homeworking. All scope 1, and upstream scope 2 and 3 emissions sources are included but not our downstream scope 3 emissions, which are currently not accounted for in Welsh public sector Net Zero Reporting.

In developing NRW's Plan, we have sought to be consistent where appropriate with Welsh Government's Net Zero Strategic Plan (Welsh Government 2022), which sets out the ambitions for their own organisational decarbonisation. Similarly, to the WG Plan, we have used the principles of the Science Based Targets Initiative (SBTi) for target setting for many operational emissions. We have also developed several emission pathways and scenarios for 'do nothing', 'gaining momentum' and 'accelerated change' for most operational emissions in a similar manner.

In the financial year 2022-23, NRW's greenhouse gas emissions, i.e., our organisational carbon footprint, was calculated to be 22,962 tCO₂e. This excludes land-based emissions and sequestration. This total figure also excludes outside of scope emissions that amounted to an additional 552.3 tCO₂e. The total net quantity of carbon sequestered in habitats on the NRW estate was estimated to be -390,000 tCO₂e (based on 2015/16 data).

The carbon footprint in this plan for operational activity was calculated for our Welsh public sector Net Zero reporting submission, which is updated annually. NRW's total operational emissions (excluding both supply chain and land use) were 6,955 tCO₂e in 2019-20; 3,093 tCO₂e in 2020-21; 3,556 tCO₂e in 2021-22 and 3,655 tCO₂e in 2022-23. Emissions associated with fleet and equipment fuel (8%), homeworking (6%) and building-related emissions from heating and electricity use (4%) are the largest categories of our operational emissions.

Trends in NRW's operational emissions are evaluated based on the baseline year 2019-20 for Net Zero reporting. The impacts of Covid on operational emissions is clear with significant decreases in emissions from most categories in 2020-21 compared to the 2019-20 baseline, most notably the large reduction in commute emissions. Emissions from both waste and homeworking increased in 2020-21 and equipment and business travel emissions increased in

2022-23 reflecting post pandemic changes. Our organisational supply chain emissions increased by over 12% in 2022-23 compared to the previous financial year and by 22% compared to the baseline year (2019/20), reflecting both an increase in spend and improvements and automation of collation methods for spend data.

The trends in our data reflect the fact that we have made passive reductions in emissions through grid decarbonisation along with proactive reductions through reducing our buildings portfolio along with Covid-19 driving increased homeworking. Despite a range of decarbonisation actions, NRW has not yet purposefully achieved significant progress towards its' own carbon reduction goals. The aim of this plan is to ensure we have a plan to minimise our emissions through to 2030 and to contribute to the wider public sector decarbonisation ambition for 2030.

In relation to our target setting, NRW has chosen a hybrid approach, developing bespoke targets, where high quality internal data is available to support their development, but, where good internal data is not available, we have used generic SBTi targets. This Plan contains the strategic initiatives that will move us towards our emissions reduction ambitions and will be reviewed periodically.

The decarbonisation scenarios detailed in this plan highlight the possible greenhouse gas emission reductions that could be achieved through a range of actions, based on current knowledge and evidence.

The scenarios cover both operational and supply chain greenhouse gas emissions from the following areas:

- The built estate
- Fleet and plant/equipment
- Staff commute
- Homeworking
- Supply chain
- Operational assets, such as pumping stations
- Business travel

These scenarios are:

- 'do nothing' (business as usual),
- 'gaining momentum' and
- 'accelerated change'

The scenarios demonstrate different levels of decarbonisation action. They demonstrate the scale and pace of change that is required. To increase this contribution further would require further innovation, technological improvements and upscaling of action. Given resource limitations, we have also undertaken a prioritisation exercise within each of the thematic decarbonisation areas to help prioritise the delivery of actions during the period of the plan. However, this revealed the reality that for many areas, for example buildings and fleet, actions are interrelated and need to be implemented in an integrated manner either within a building or across the fleet rather than in isolation. Consequently, it is the scale and pace of action as set

out in the pathways rather than the number of actions taken at any one time that will determine resource needs and progress.

NRW recognises the important role behavioural change has to play in reducing our own organisational carbon footprint too. As part of our work to embed consideration of decarbonisation and climate change in everyone's work, NRW has worked with Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU) and Cynnal Cymru-Sustain Wales to develop a bespoke climate change training package that meets the Carbon Literacy Trust standard.

Further refining the effective collection and use of data will be an iterative process that will require clear roles and responsibilities across the organisation as to who is responsible for collection, collation and evaluation of data. An agile approach will be promoted to ensure that systems and ways-of-working that are proportionate are adopted.

Overleaf is a summary table of the key actions proposed in this plan to meet our planned emission reduction trajectories, which will be subject to review periodically, but provides a clear list of next steps.

Summary of key actions required by NRW to achieve the outcomes of the Net Zero Plan

Emissions Category	Proposed Decarbonisation Action	Lead NRW Delivery Function
Built Estate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asset rationalisation; • Effective energy management (energy procurement, energy data analysis, reviewing heating settings); • Energy efficiency measures e.g., insulation, heating controls; • Building mounted renewable energy systems; • Low carbon heating (heat pumps); • Behaviour change; • Ensuring buildings are resilient to current and future climate change. 	Renewal/FFM
Fleet & Plant	<p>Fleet</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No new ICE vehicles should be leased from 2023 onwards unless absolutely necessary. Any new ICE vehicles and all existing ICE vehicles should be operated using HVO, although this will increase the operational cost due to a higher fuel price; • All badged ICE vehicles (except 4x4s and HGVs) should be replaced with BEVs by 2029-30; • ICE 4x4s and HGVs should be operated using HVO and replaced with BEVs when feasible; • A review should be carried out on the use of existing ICE 4x4s to establish if current activities 	Fleet

	<p>are necessary, can be carried out remotely or by other means with lower carbon footprint;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An investigation should be undertaken to identify the causes of low utilisation (<6k annual miles) of some badged vehicles; • Identify steps to improve utilisation of existing badged BEVs by staff; • Integrate data capture system to monitor mileage and energy use by BEVs as soon as technically feasible; • Improve tracking data to determine peak mileage and typical patterns of use for individual vehicles. <p>Plant</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NRW should carry out an assessment of plant use and create a forward plan that assesses the feasibility of progressively transitioning fossil fuel-based plant with both electric and hydrogen technology. 	Facilities
Business Travel	<p>Grey Fleet</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A periodic review should be carried out to ensure NRW's Travel Decision Tree is fit for purpose and applied when travelling for business purposes. • Staff should be encouraged to use badged pool vehicles for business travels where possible if the private vehicle is not a ULEV (<75g/CO₂/km). • NRW should introduce a salary sacrifice scheme for staff to lease BEV's, which will have a positive impact in terms of emissions reduction from grey fleet and staff commute. <p>Hire Car Fleet</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In association with a periodic review of NRW's Travel Decision Tree an assessment to ensure that the most efficient vehicle types are being hired (suitable for the intended use) should be undertaken to assess BEV uptake. 	Fleet
Agile Working, Homeworking & Commuting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Optimise existing low carbon IT services and continue investing in digital infrastructure that enables productive remote working and connectivity across the organisation. 	ICT/CC&D/ HR/Renewal/ Facilities

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to conduct an annual 'staff travel' survey to reduce our reliance on generic benchmarks and identify tailored decarbonisation initiatives related to agile working. • Continue to align our planning/decision making to the Sustainable Travel Hierarchy and support its' uptake among staff to shift commuting habits to low carbon forms of travel. • Engage with staff to understand existing barriers to the use of active travel and public transport. • Provide an enabling environment for low carbon travel, including improvements to provision of bicycle storage, showers, electric vehicle (EV) chargers, and maintain enabling policies such as our cycle-to-work scheme. • Develop a staff calculator to explore the impact of householder heating fuel and commuting distance on emissions to inform staff decisions on these daily matters. 	
Supply chain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introducing a tiered system of carbon reporting & reduction requirements for all suppliers by 2025 • Developing a toolkit for staff to support contract managers to include the carbon reduction and reporting requirements relevant to their contract tier • Developing a supplier emissions questionnaire on organisational emissions • Integrating basic carbon questions into all of our tender and quotation templates for suppliers • Exploring the use of carbon calculators for high value, high emission contracts and frameworks to require suppliers to baseline and demonstrate contract or project level savings • Developing a system to centrally record contract level emissions data and combine this with allocated organisational emissions and spend based emissions data for lower value contracts to produce whole supply chain emissions estimates for NRW. 	Procurement/ PRG/CMSS/ PMO
Operational Assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure electricity supplies have Automatic Meter Readers (AMR) so that electricity data and invoices are accurate, and ensure all assets are on our main 100% renewable energy contract. • Review current progress in retrofitting renewable energy technologies to assets and revisit previous feasibility studies and update where necessary. 	Operations/ MEICA/H&T

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Install ground mounted renewable energy to self-supply energy to NRW assets, where suitable and feasible. • Further explore renewable energy generation on the NRW managed estate for self-supply where the location of assets allows. • Retrofit all NRW managed pumping stations with energy efficient pumps and renewable energy generation, where feasible. • Retrofit all smaller NRW managed assets (e.g. gauging stations) with microgeneration renewable energy, where feasible. • Ensure solar PV is considered when designing and developing all new assets. • Review progress with Hydrometry and Telemetry and develop a programme of further renewable energy retrofit across operational assets. 	
Land Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revise the net carbon status modelling assessment of the habitats on the Estate over the next year, taking account of the latest available estimates of carbon fluxes for each habitat, as well as the restoration of peatlands on the Estate. 	CC&D
Behaviour Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue the roll out of our bespoke climate change training to staff and to monitor through post course surveying its impact on behaviour and decision-making. 	CC&D/L&D
Waste	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete and implement a Circular Economy and Waste Minimisation policy by end of 2023. 	Waste

Policy Context and Background

Addressing climate change is a key priority of both the UK and Welsh Governments, as part of the international response to climate change driven by the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. The Paris Accord objective to limit global warming to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C remains the principal international policy driver. In the UK, the Climate Change Act (2008) sets out a framework to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to the impacts of climate change. The Act commits the UK to be net zero by 2050 across all four nations.

Two key Welsh Acts provide direction for decarbonisation and the climate emergency response in Wales. The Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act (2015) requires public bodies to ensure that sustainable development is the central organising principle and that the social, environment and economic impacts of short- and long-term decisions are accounted for. The Act sets out five ways of working to integrate wellbeing and sustainable development and seven Wellbeing Goals. The goals for 'a prosperous Wales' and 'a globally responsible Wales' help drive climate change action, including reference to transition to a 'low carbon society' and 'make a positive contribution to global well-being' respectively. The Environment (Wales) Act (2016) sets out the key principles of sustainable management of natural resources as well as placing a duty on Welsh Ministers to set decadal Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emission reduction targets and 5-yearly carbon budgets. Wales has a legally binding target to achieve net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 with the carbon budgets and decadal targets setting the trajectory to reach it. Net Zero Wales (Welsh Government, 2021a) sets out the policies and proposals for meeting carbon budget 2 (2021-2025) which requires a 37% average reduction in emissions. Carbon budget 3 (2026-2030) will require a 58% average reduction based on a 1990 baseline. The public sector chapter of Net Zero Wales identifies several policies for public sector organisations to contribute towards meeting carbon budget 2. This Net Zero Plan has been published to address the policy that states 'all public sector organisations should develop and publish plans by March 2023 to achieve a collective net zero public sector by 2030'. Another example is for all public sector organisations work towards Wales' target to have 'all new cars and light good vehicles in the public sector fleet as ultra-low emission vehicles by 2025 and where practicably possible, all heavy goods are ultra-low emission by 2030' (Welsh Government 2021a). Net Zero Wales also reinforces the ambition for the Welsh public sector to be collectively net zero by 2030, for which NRW has an important role to play.

To steer the Welsh public sector in delivering this ambition, the Net Zero Carbon Status Route Map sets out the strategic overview of the key priority areas for action and milestones needed for the public sector to reach net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 (Welsh Government 2021b). These key priority areas are buildings, mobility and transport, procurement, and land use, with decarbonisation milestones between 2021 and 2030. This route map, based on NRW's earlier work through the Carbon Positive project [Carbon Positive Summary report](#), has been used to frame NRW's Net Zero Plan and its approach to decarbonising the organisation.

Welsh Government's Net Zero Strategic Plan sets out its own net zero ambition for the organisation and outlines their priority decarbonisation initiatives (Welsh Government 2022). For operational emissions (buildings, fleet, business travel, commuting and homeworking) several emission pathways and scenarios are detailed which include do nothing, gaining momentum, accelerated change and an annual reduction to meet a 90% reduction by 2030 based on the principles of the Science Based Targets Initiative (SBTi). This SBTi target for operational emissions has been adopted by Welsh Government in its strategic plan. In developing NRW's Plan we have sought to be consistent with the WG Plan where appropriate.

This Net Zero Plan supersedes NRW's Carbon Positive Enabling Plan that was published in 2019 following the declaration of a Climate Emergency by the Welsh Government. It was effectively our first Net Zero Plan and set the strategic direction and priorities for decarbonisation in NRW between 2019 and 2022. This new plan builds upon this work in providing greater detail in terms of the priorities we need to address and the targets that we are able to set.

Alongside decarbonisation, reducing climate risks and impacts through adaptation action is the other half of our Climate Emergency response. Whilst this Net Zero Plan does not include actions related to climate risk and adaptation, NRW has produced a climate risk baseline assessment to consider how the risks in the UK's 3rd Climate Change Risk Assessment relate to NRW. We have now in parallel with the production of this report, produced an organisational adaptation plan setting our priorities to manage how climate risks impact on our own delivery of our work.

Natural Resources Wales – what we do

Our roles

NRW has a wide range of roles and responsibilities which we deliver in an integrated way to achieve our overall purpose of the sustainable management of natural resources in Wales. In summary, our main roles are:

- Adviser to Welsh Government, industry, farming, landowners, land managers, the wider public and voluntary sectors;
- Regulator including for industry and waste sites, energy, marine, forest and designated sites. Our statutory obligations are to permit, ensure compliance and take enforcement action to reduce the risk of environmental harm, protect people and the natural environment, support legitimate business and facilitate renewable energy generation. We issue about 4,500 permits and species licences in total each year;
- Designator for sites of special scientific interest, areas of outstanding natural beauty, national parks and for national nature reserves;
- Responder to environmental incidents: we receive over 8,500 reports of environmental incidents a year and target our response to those categorised as 'high';
- Statutory consultee for about 7,000 planning applications a year;
- Manager of 7% of Wales' land area, including the Welsh Government Woodland Estate, national nature reserves and our flood defences and assets. We have 500km of flood defences and about 4,000 assets. We also run recreation facilities (such as visitor centres and mountain biking trails) and a laboratory;
- Partner, educator, enabler supporting and facilitating other organisations' work and helping people enjoy, learn in, learn for and learn about the natural environment;
- Evidence gatherer monitoring the environment, influencing, commissioning and undertaking research, developing and sharing knowledge and holding public records;
- Employer of our own staff as well as contractors, and working with volunteers.

Our organisation

Our organisational structure is designed to deliver locally, whilst maintaining high standards in the services we provide across the whole of Wales. At a local level, we follow a place-based approach with seven place-based teams (including a marine team). These are led by our seven Heads of Place. This is underpinned by a central directorate for evidence, policy, and permitting led by our heads of business. Delivery is supported by our central finance & corporate services, corporate strategy & development, communications, customer and commercial directorates.

Each of the seven places has an area statement which highlights the opportunities and challenges in a particular geographical area to both enhance the local natural environment, provide opportunities for business and improve people's health and well-being. Working in partnership is key to making the most of these opportunities.



Figure 1. A summary of NRW's role as Wales' environment agency.

Our approach to decarbonisation

NRW is committed to taking action to address the climate emergency, declared by Welsh Government in 2019, and to help through collaboration the Welsh public sector to collectively reach net zero by 2030. Limiting further emissions must now be key in the delivery of all our operations, in all the advice we provide and for every pound we spend.

This is a challenge for all NRW staff to face, both individually and as teams in our day-to-day decisions, and collectively as an organisation through our long-term business planning and risk management processes.

Our new corporate plan and our business plans recognise the environmental challenges posed by climate change, and commit to reducing emissions, protecting and enhancing long-term stores of carbon both within our own operations and through our wider influence.

Progress to date

2013-2023

NRW has had an Environmental Management System (EMS), which has been accredited to the ISO14001 standard since 2014. The EMS provides a framework for managing the organisation's environmental impacts, including our direct carbon emissions, energy use, travel and waste.

2015-2019

Building on the work of the EMS, NRW's Carbon Positive Project was started in 2015 to progress our understanding and management of organisational greenhouse gas emissions. The project:

- Calculated NRW's first detailed organisational carbon footprint including direct, upstream and downstream emissions for 2016-2017 providing a crucial baseline (Jones 2018);
- Identified the purchase of goods and services and the processing and transport of sold timber as our main sources of emissions;
- Estimated land-based emissions, sequestration and carbon stocks on the NRW managed estate (Williams et al 2016 and Matthews et al 2017);
- Showed that more carbon is sequestered annually on the NRW estate than is emitted through our operations;
- Delivered decarbonisation projects including installation of solar panels and biomass boilers; integration of the first EVs into the NRW fleet and associated charging infrastructure at offices and visitor centres; peatland restoration;
- Developed an evidence base to inform delivery and prioritisation of decarbonisation projects including a strategic fleet review and building energy surveys (Hodgson et al 2021, Carroll et al 2017).
- Developed our Carbon Positive Enabling Plan, which set the strategic direction for decarbonisation in NRW between 2019 and 2022.

2020 – 2023

Our detailed emissions and sequestration calculations informed the development of Welsh Government's Net Zero Reporting Guide, which provides a methodology for annual public sector emissions accounting across Wales. Alongside other public sector bodies, we submitted our first organisational footprint using the Net Zero Reporting Guide and template to Welsh Government in 2021. Our annual submissions will enable future progress monitoring within NRW and form part of Welsh Government's public sector progress monitoring towards the 2030 ambition.

In 2021 a dedicated climate change team was formed within NRW for the first time, with a remit including provision of decarbonisation strategy, evidence, advice and support to the rest of the organisation. Key pieces of recent work delivered by the team include:

- The development and adoption of a set of principles for managing NRW's built estate in response to the climate emergency;
- Deliver and develop our annual carbon reporting process, including a plan of continuous improvement;
- Trialling approaches for asking suppliers to report and reduce emissions in contracts;

- Developing a tailored climate change training course that has been delivered to hundreds of our staff to date;
- Initiating a review to assess opportunities to integrate consideration of carbon in our governance and processes, to link the climate emergency as a corporate priority with key internal decision-making processes.

During 2022 and 2023 the team has developed three decarbonisation forward plans to 2030 for our fleet, built estate and supply chain. These are currently being finalised and approved and will sit under and deliver on this new overarching net zero plan.

Some of NRW's decarbonisation achievements to date include:

- 179,034 kWh of renewable electricity generated for self-supply, equating to 6.3% of our total usage in 2021-22;
- 100% of electricity purchased on a renewable tariff;
- 29 electric cars and 8 electric vans integrated into our fleet of vehicles by 2022, equating to 6.8% of our fleet;
- Requirement for contractors to use a carbon calculator and carbon optioneering modelling included in our framework agreement for flood defence and civil engineering projects (covering approximately 6% of our supply chain emissions);
- Restoration action undertaken on 1650 hectares of peatland nationally between 2020 and 2022 as part of the National Peatland Action Programme, including 640ha of peatland on the NRW managed estate.

Our operational and organisational boundaries for emissions reporting

NRW's emissions impact, both from our own operations and from activities occurring upstream and downstream of our organisation as a result of our operations are illustrated in Figure 2.

The operational boundary for Welsh public sector net zero emissions reporting in 2022 and therefore the emissions sources reported by NRW are: buildings, fleet and other mobile equipment, land-based emissions and sequestration (including agriculture), waste generated in operations, purchased goods and services, business travel, employee commuting and homeworking. i.e., all scope 1, and upstream scope 2 and 3 emissions sources identified in Figure 2. Our downstream scope 3 emissions (in red) are currently not accounted for in our Net Zero Reporting. The guide states that NRW may optionally report downstream emissions associated with transportation and distribution, processing of sold products and end-of-life of sold products given that they were significant in our original Carbon Positive Project calculations (pre-dating the Net Zero Reporting Guide). The inclusion of additional downstream emissions sources may be reconsidered in future.

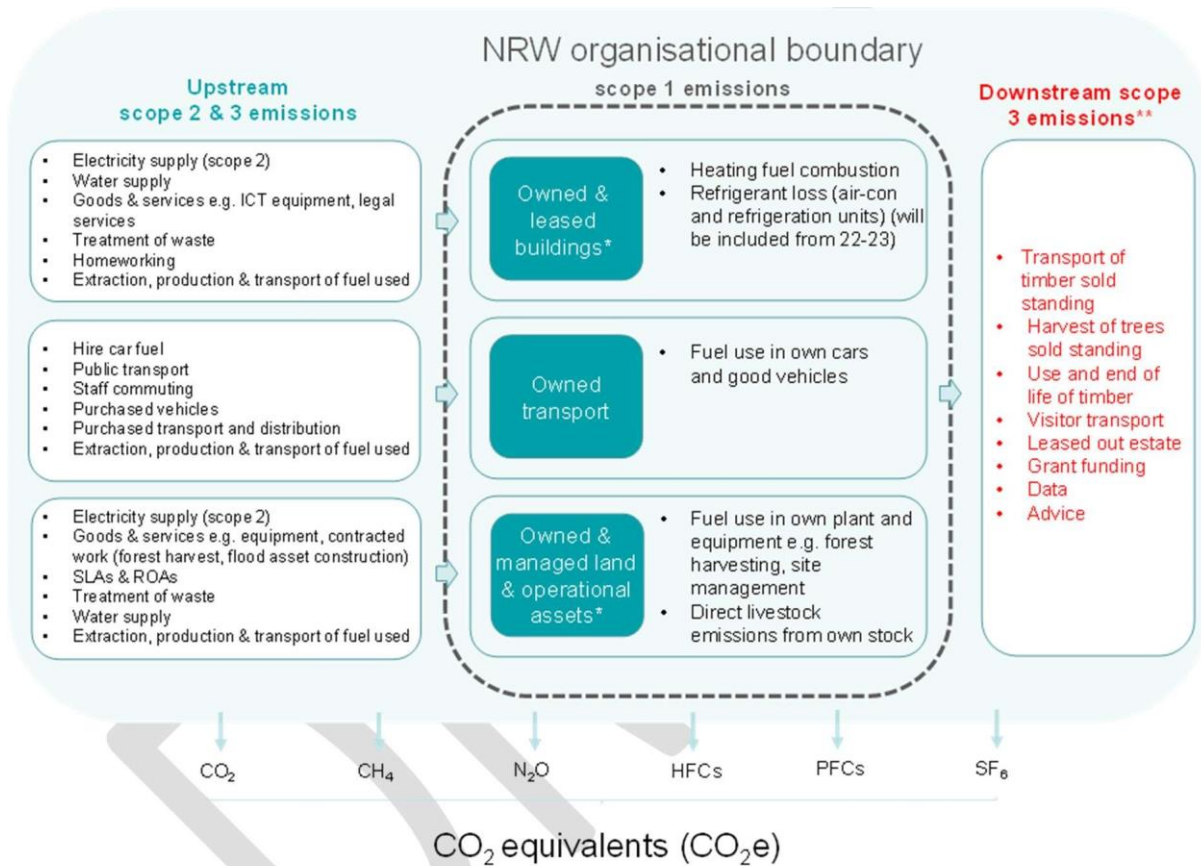


Figure 2. Schematic of NRW's emissions impact, showing our upstream and downstream emissions and illustrating the breadth of emissions covered within our organisational boundary and emissions reporting. Crucially, our downstream emissions (in red) are not included within our net zero reporting in line with the WG guidelines.

Organisational boundary

We have, as far as possible, aligned our organisational boundary for buildings, assets and land to the public sector service-approach set out in the Net Zero Reporting Guide. Figure 3 sets out which buildings land and assets are included within our organisational boundary.

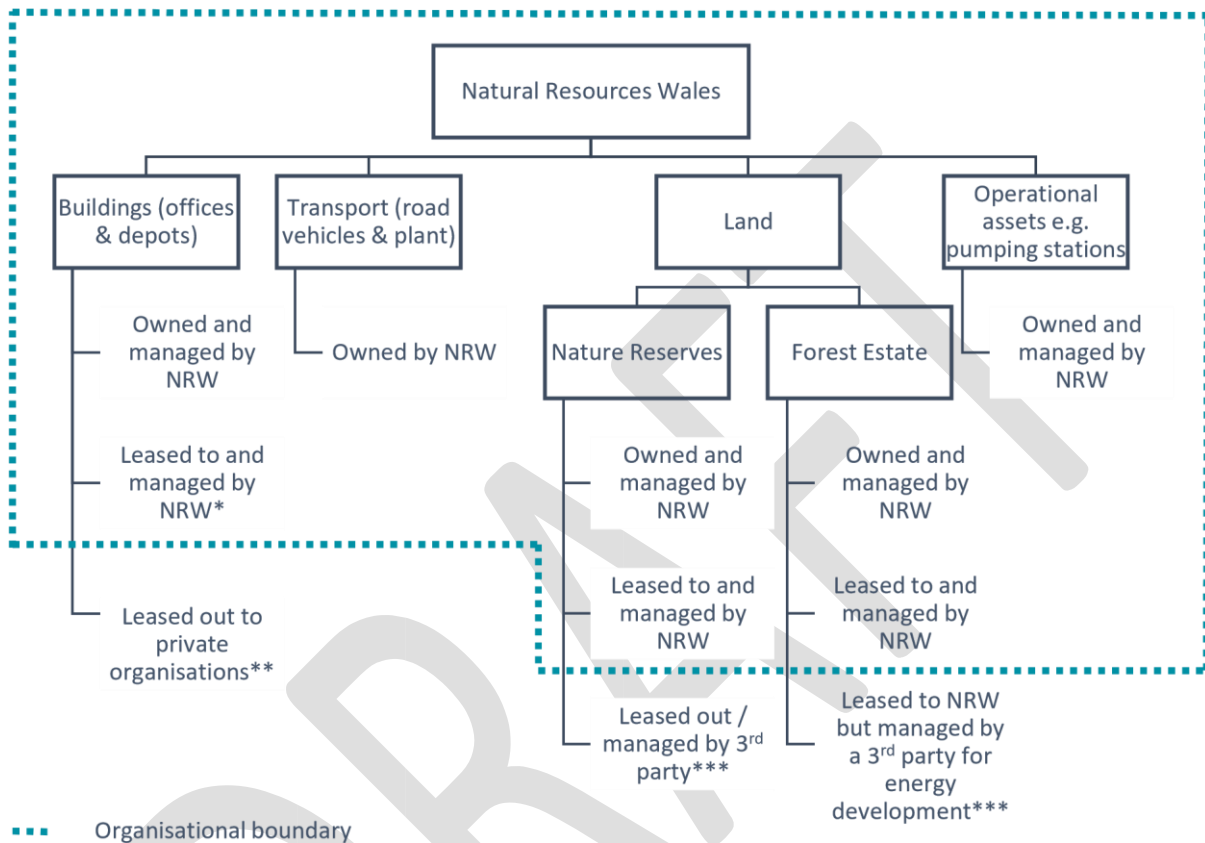


Figure 3. NRW's organisational boundary for emissions reporting.

* Excludes building space leased to NRW where the lessor pays the bills. Swansea Laboratory and space in the Aberystwyth Office are leased to us but are excluded from our organisational boundary because the bills are paid by Swansea University and Welsh Government respectively (as per page 29 of reporting guide). These emissions will be included within the organisational boundary of the organisation acting as the lessor.

** Buildings owned by NRW but leased to private organisations are excluded from our organisational boundary (as page 29 of the reporting guide). At the time of writing farm tenancies, Garwnant Visitor Centre and Hafod Office are all excluded for this reason.

*** The organisational boundary for land currently matches that defined for our original net carbon status calculation predating the Net Zero Reporting Guide. Parcels of land leased out by NRW and parcels managed by a 3rd party for NRW still need to be assessed against the public sector service approach outlined in the Net Zero Reporting Guide. This will be done as part of planned updates to our land-based emission and sequestration calculations. Any boundary changes are likely to be small proportion of the overall total land owned and managed by NRW.

Our carbon footprint

Operational and supply chain emissions

In the financial year 2022-23 NRW's greenhouse gas emissions, i.e., our organisational carbon footprint, was calculated to be 22,962 tCO_{2e}. This excludes land-based emissions and sequestration which are reported separately. This also excludes outside of scopes emissions which amounted to an additional 552.3 tCO_{2e} emitted in the financial year.

This carbon footprint was calculated for our net zero reporting submission to Welsh Government and is updated annually.

Figure 4 gives a breakdown of our 2022-23 carbon footprint by emissions category, highlighting emissions arising in our supply chain from the goods and services we purchase as the dominant emissions category (77%). Emissions associated with fleet and equipment fuel (8%), homeworking (6%) and building related emissions from heating and electricity use (4%) are the largest categories of our operational emissions.

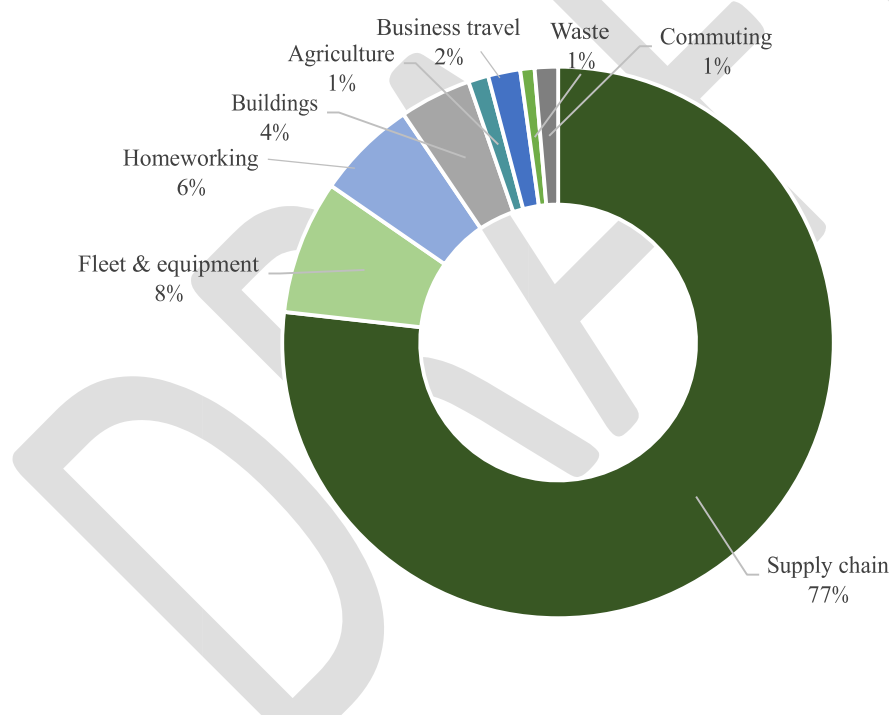


Figure 4. NRW's carbon footprint by emissions category in 2022-23.

The supply chain emissions category total given in Figure 4 comprises emissions across a wide range of purchase types. Figure 5 shows the contribution of individual NRW account codes to total supply chain emissions. These account codes are categories of purchase types used internally to group and record all spend.

In 2022-23, 66.16% of NRW's supply emissions arose from our top 10 account codes.

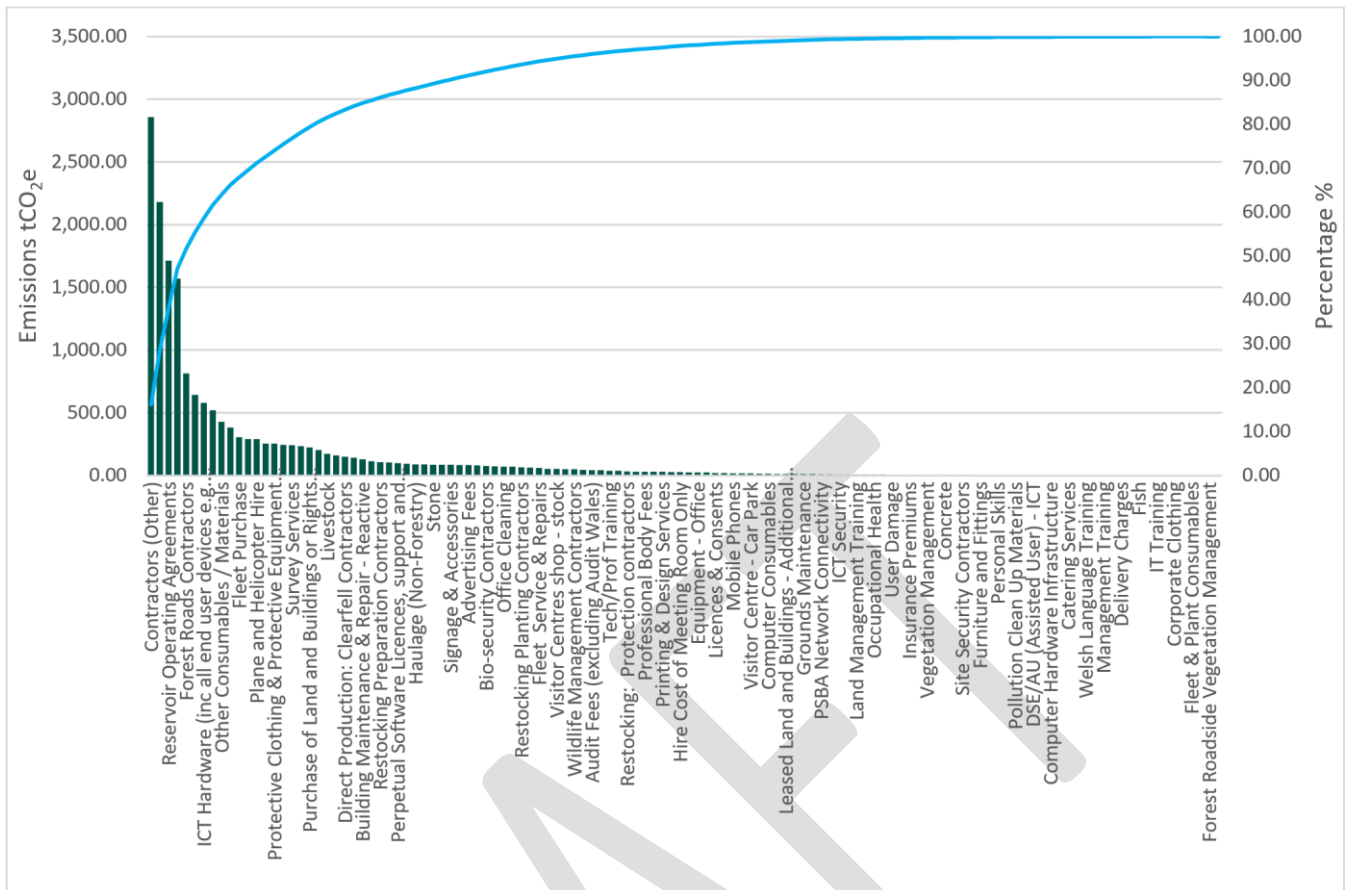


Figure 5. Breakdown of NRW's operational emissions by source. Bars show emissions in tCO_{2e} by source, in descending order. The line shows the cumulative total percentage of operation emissions.

The broad operational emissions categories in Figure 4 are comprised of emissions from multiple sources. Figure 6 shows the contribution of each of our operational emissions sources. NRW's top five sources of operational emissions are:

- 1) fleet vehicle diesel (1,577.1 tCO_{2e});
- 2) homeworking (1,353.9 tCO_{2e});
- 3) office and depot grid electricity use (405.7 tCO_{2e});
- 4) asset electricity use including pumping stations (250.9 tCO_{2e}); 5) grazing ponies (246.0 tCO_{2e})*.

* This is likely to be an overestimate due to the use of an emission factor for horses in the net zero reporting spreadsheet which needs revision.

In 2022-23, 89.4% of NRW's operational emissions arose from our top 10 emissions sources.

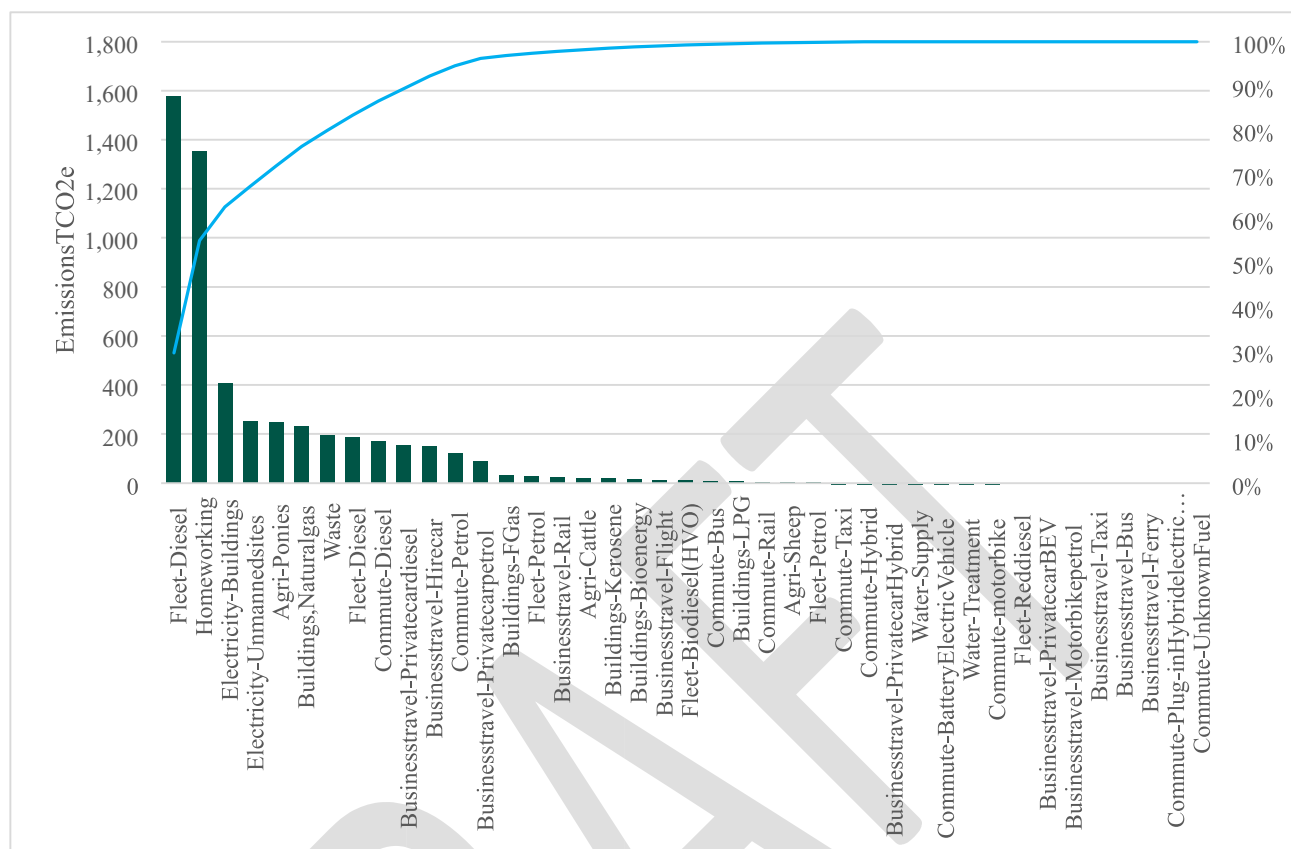


Figure 6. Breakdown of NRW's operational emissions by source. Bars show emissions in tCO₂e by source, in descending order. The line shows the cumulative total percentage of operational emissions.

Land based emissions and sequestration

NRW's land-based emission and sequestration have not been re-calculated since we undertook a detailed baseline assessment for 2015-16 as part of the Carbon Positive project. This baseline has been submitted for net zero reporting, but we are currently developing a process to update these figures on a periodic basis, although we do not intend to revise this data on an annual basis due to the limited changes from year to year.

In the financial year 2015-16, the total net quantity of carbon sequestered in habitats on the NRW estate was -390,924 tCO₂e. This is a GHG balance figure, where habitat emissions were subtracted from gross sequestration to give a net carbon sequestration figure for the estate. Emissions to the atmosphere are reported as a positive numbers and removals as negative.

Table 1. shows the balance between our organisational carbon footprint (operational and supply chain emissions) and our land-based emissions and sequestration over time. In 2022-23 we sequestered approximately -367,961 tCO₂e more than we emitted.

Table 1. NRW's organisational carbon footprint (operational and supply chain emissions) and our land-based emissions and sequestration over time.

	2015-16	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Operational emissions	18,637*	6,955**	3,093 **	5,125	5,336
Supply chain emissions	22,667 *	17,465	18,898	21,084***	17,627****
Land based emissions and sequestration (net)	-390,924****	-390,924	-390,924	-390,924	-390,924
Net total	-349,621	-366,504	-368,933	-364,715	-367,961

*2015-16 operational and supply chain emissions are not directly comparable with 2019-20 onwards because of operational boundary changes to emissions sources accounted for and changes in calculation methods. Our 2015-16 results were calculated as part of our Carbon Positive Project and our 2019-20 and subsequent results following the Welsh Government net zero reporting guide.

** Figures do not include homeworking and agricultural emissions which were not part of the net zero reporting requirements in 2019-20 and 2020-21.

*** 2021-22 supply chain figures are not directly comparable with 2019-20 and 2020-21 because of an improvement in spend data collection methods internally.

**** Our 2015-16 results were also submitted for net zero reporting between 2019 and 2022 and will be updated periodically.

**** Supply chain figures for 2022-23 not directly comparable with previous years data due WG updating emissions factors (EF's) from 2011 to 2019 values. If using 2011 EF's then 2022-23 emissions would be 23,295 tCO_{2e}.

Recent trends in our footprint

Operational emissions

Figure 7 below shows NRW's total emissions (submitted as part of our net zero reporting and excluding supply chain and land use) were 6,955 tCO_{2e} in 2019-20; 3,093 tCO_{2e} in 2020-21; 3,556 tCO_{2e} in 2021-22 and 3,655 tCO_{2e} in 2022-23. The graph demonstrates a decrease in emissions (excluding supply chain emissions) due to the impacts of Covid in 2020-21, a return to more typical working practices post Covid in 2021-22 and finally exceeding baseline emissions figures in 2022-23 period. These totals do not include homeworking emissions for 2019-20 and 2020-21 years as the WG guidelines did not require their inclusion at that time.

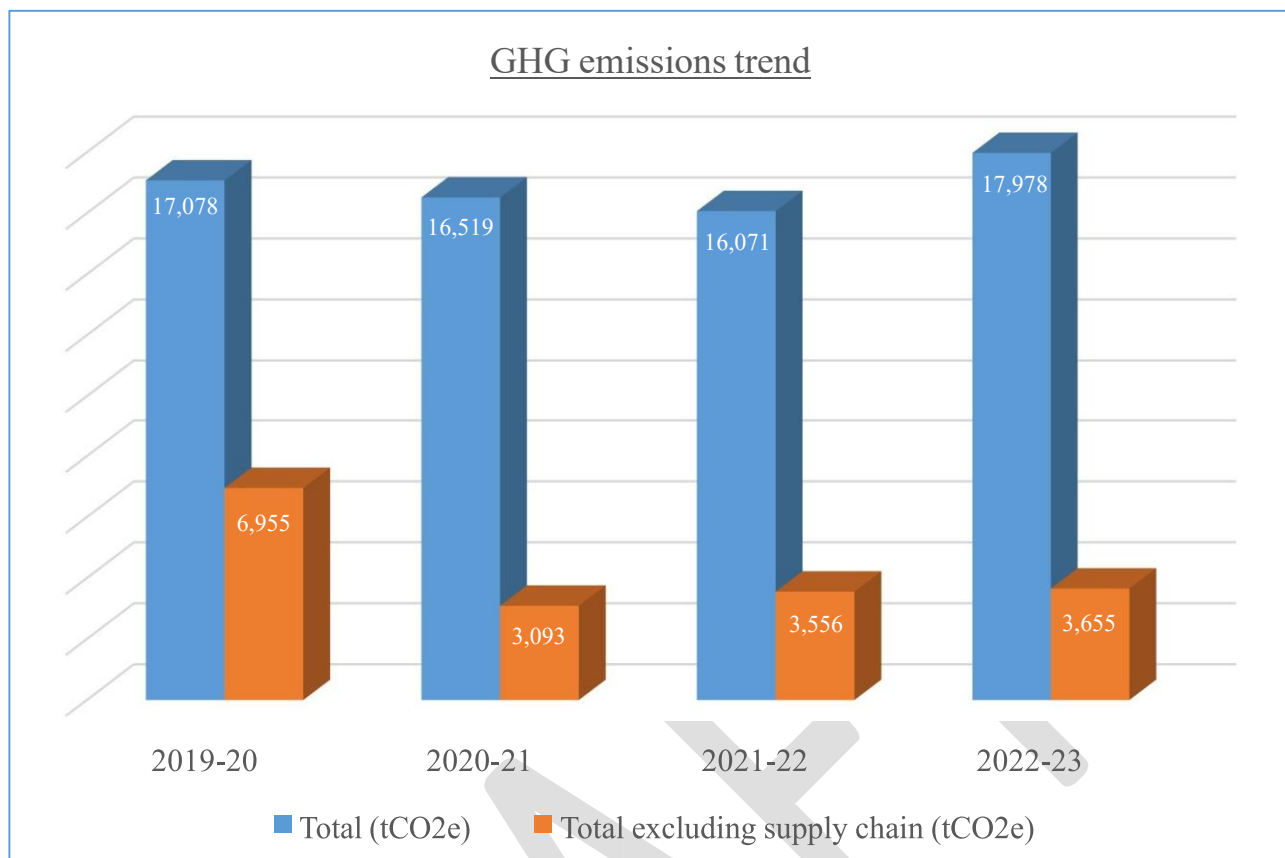


Figure 7: Graph showing NRW's GHG emissions based on Net Zero reporting to WG (using 2019 emission factors to calculate all supply chain emissions).

Figure 8 below shows NRW's operational emissions over time by emissions category, starting with our net zero reporting baseline year 2019-20. The impacts of Covid on operational emissions categories is clear with significant decreases in emissions from most categories in 2020-21 compared to the 2019-20 baseline, most notably the drop in commute emissions. Emissions from both waste and homeworking increased in 2020-21. It is not clear why there was an increase in emissions from waste but NRW's waste data collection and recording system is both outdated and unreliable, and is being reviewed. Emissions from homeworking increased significantly due to the shift towards remote working during Covid-19 lockdowns. Commute, fleet & equipment and business travel emissions all increased in 2022-23 from the previous financial year.

Homeworking emissions were previously calculated for 2019-20 and 2020-21 using our own methodology prior to inclusion in the net zero reporting approach in 2021-22. These data points have been included for information but were not part of the net zero reporting submission in these years and are not directly comparable to the 2021-22 data because of the methodology change. The homeworking emissions are not included in the NRW emissions totals given above for 2019-20 and 2020-21. The impact of Covid on working practices saw a significant increase in emissions arising from homeworking in 2020-21 from the pre-pandemic baseline, which continued to increase year on year. However, homeworking has led to a decrease in emissions from both commute and buildings, with

the combined effect being a net reduction in emissions. The slight increase in homeworking emissions in 2022-23 is thought to be due to an increase in staff numbers.

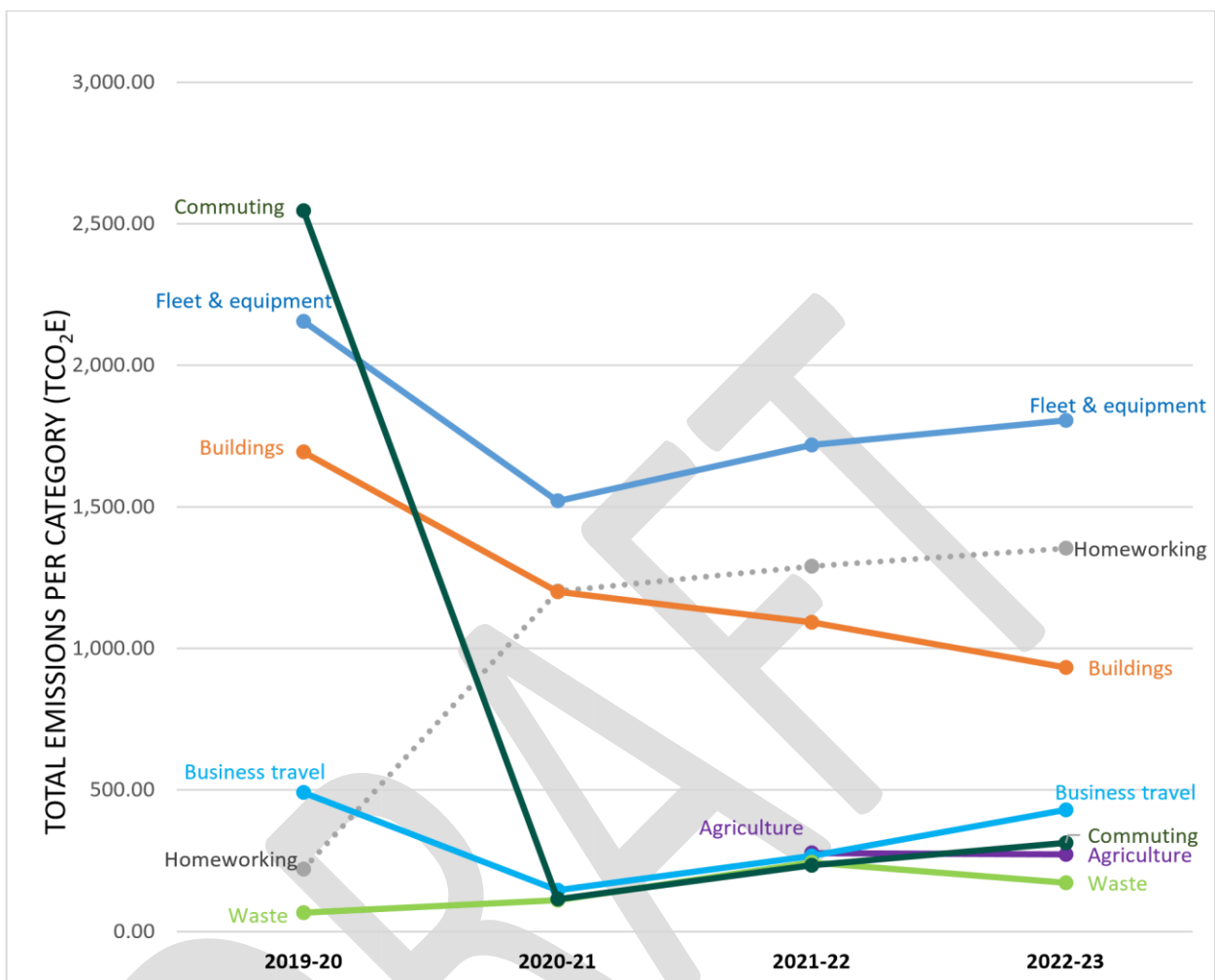


Figure 8: NRW's operations emissions over time by emissions category between our baseline year 2019-20 and 2022-23.

Supply chain emissions

Figure 9 below shows NRW's supply chain emissions over time starting with our net zero reporting baseline year 2019-20. Our organisational supply chain emissions increased by over 12% in 2022-23 compared to the previous financial year and by 22% compared to the baseline year, reflecting both an increase in spend and internal improvements and automation of spend data collation methods. Because our supply chain emissions estimates are currently based on spend-based emissions factors rather than product and service specific data or supplier provided data, results are determined by spend and will not reflect any improvements made over time. However, as set out in our Supply Chain Forward Plan, we are planning to increasingly collect non-spend emissions data from our supply chain.

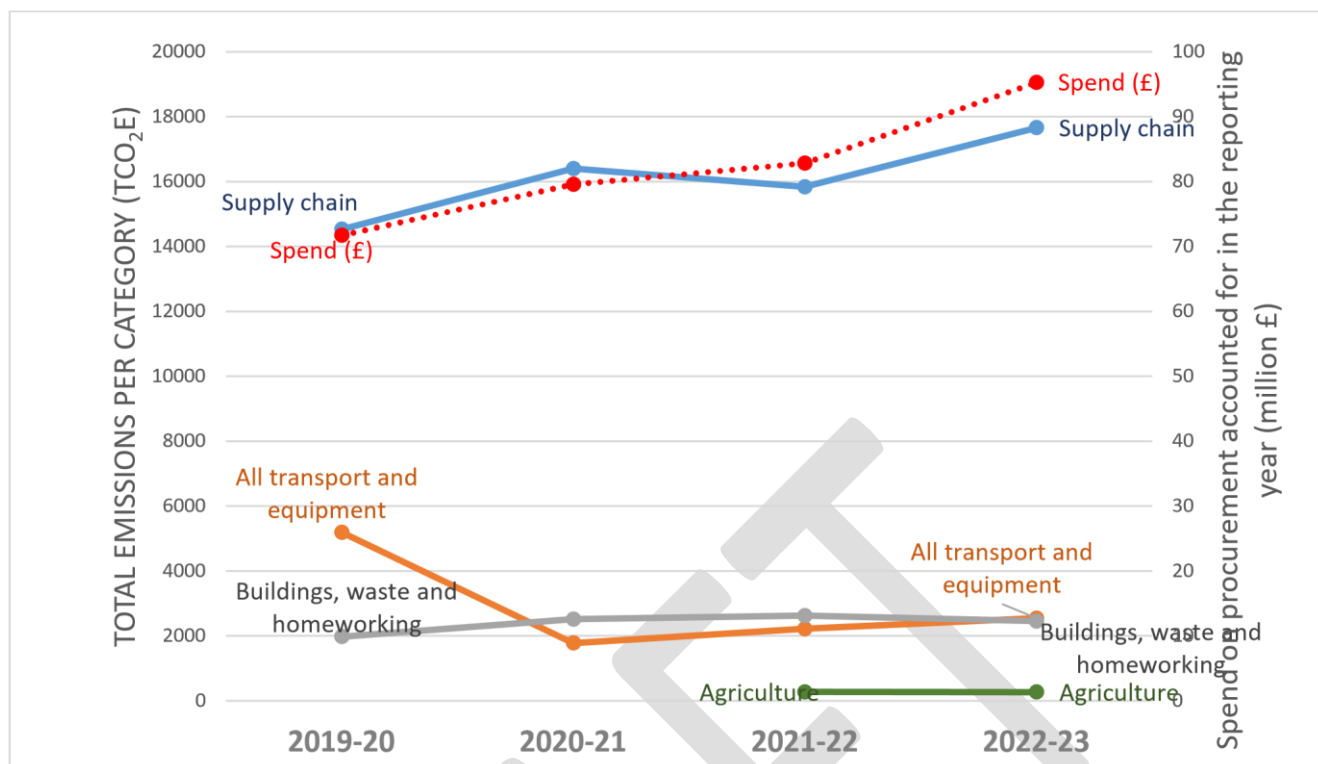


Figure 9. NRW's supply chain and grouped operational emissions over time between our net zero reporting baseline year 2019-20 and 2022-23. Total procurement spend accounted for in the reporting year is also provided on a secondary axis (see red dotted line). Supply chain emissions calculated using 2019 emission factors.

Our targets, commitments and ambitions

NRW is committed to minimising our greenhouse gas emissions as an organisation, thereby supporting the collective 2030 net zero ambition for the Welsh public sector. Net zero emissions are where the emissions are equal to removals within the target boundary and emissions are reduced in line with the 1.5°C global ambition and removals are used to neutralise residual emissions (World Resources Institute, 2023). NRW's net carbon status is the balance of our emissions and sequestration, as an organisation we emit substantially less carbon from our operations than is captured annually (our sequestration) by habitats on our estate. Our carbon status is calculated annually and acts as an important tool to view our decarbonisation progress.

In relation to our target setting, NRW has chosen a hybrid approach, developing bespoke targets, where high quality internal data is available to support their development, but, where good internal data is not available, we have used generic Science Based Targets Initiative (SBTi) targets. The SBTi provides a comprehensive definition of organisational net zero and has been designed for private sector companies, however, we are aligning ourselves to the SBTi definition firstly due to the absence of a specific international public sector organisational net zero standard and to accord with the WG approach. To continue

to drive down our emissions as an organisation in alignment with the SBTi, we will have to seek to reduce our emissions by at least 90% relative to the baseline year.

This Plan contains the strategic initiatives that will move us towards our emissions reduction ambitions and will be reviewed periodically. Further action planning and development work is required to deliver each initiative and turn strategic ambition into action. We have a series of absolute commitments which we will be accountable for and report progress against, along with a number of longer-term ambitions which will require organisational transformation to achieve.

Given resource limitations, we have also undertaken a prioritisation exercise within each of the thematic decarbonisation areas to help prioritise the delivery of actions during the period of the plan. However, this revealed the reality that for many areas, for example buildings and fleet, actions are interrelated and need to be implemented in an integrated manner either within a building or across the fleet rather than in isolation. Consequently, it is the scale and pace of action as set out in the pathways rather than the number of actions taken at any one time that will determine resource needs and progress.

Our targets for decarbonisation as an organisation have been split into four types:

- 1) an overarching carbon reduction target which sets out how as an organisation we will continue to reduce our emissions;
- 2) measurable carbon reduction targets for some of our operational emissions e.g., fleet and buildings;
- 3) SBTi targets for supply chain, travel, homeworking;
- 4) and habitat restoration figures for land use.

This approach has been taken to utilise all of our developing emissions data whilst ensuring that progress continues for those emissions sources where our carbon accounting approach is evolving to be quantifiable in the future. Our long-term ambition will be to reduce emissions by 90% by 2050, which aligns with the SBTi requirements for net zero. This will be based on the financial year 2019-20 net zero reporting baseline, aligning with SBTi requirements for a recent representative year. We have modelled the impact of measures across our operational emissions out to 2030. The modelling is not exhaustive and it is not to the detail of specific defined measures for specific assets, but it does provide likely pathways for decarbonisation at three levels: do nothing, gaining momentum, and accelerated change – these levels are consistent with those used by Welsh Government.

Our overarching carbon reduction target will reduce our operational emissions by a minimum of 35% by 2030 across all significant emission categories, compared to a baseline year (2019/20). Built estate and fleet emission reductions of 56% and 66% respectively can be achieved with an appropriate scale of investment and delivery of the planned actions. Other qualitative and quantitative targets are set out below.

Quantitative Targets

Based on Data in Forward Plans:

- A. Fleet; 66% reduction in emissions by 2030, subject to continued electric vehicle roll out and running four-wheel drive fleet on HVO (hydrogenated vegetable oil).
- B. Built Estate; 56% reduction in emissions by 2030, subject to continued, planned estate rationalisation.

Based on SBTi Linear Reduction:

- i. Procurement; 2.5% year on year emissions reduction for a 2°C pathway, however our ambition for accelerated change, subject to improved data accuracy is a 7% year on year reduction. This will result in a 51% reduction in emissions by 2030. These targets will be reviewed in 2025.
- ii. Business Travel; 4.2% year on year reduction, resulting in a 35% reduction in emissions by 2030, with review of the target in 2025.
- iii. Homeworking; 4.2% year on year reduction, resulting in a 35% reduction in emissions by 2030, with annual review of this target.
- iv. Operational assets; A target will not be set yet due to a paucity of data to provide a appropriate baseline. We will work with the Operational Assets teams to gather necessary data to set a realistic target by 2025.

Based on Operational Data

- on average of 640 ha per year of peatland will be restored on the NRW Estate.

Qualitative Targets

1. In 2023, we set out in our Supply Chain Forward Plan a process for carbon emissions assessment in tenders and contracts. We will use a carbon assessment calculator in all our construction contracts by 2025.
2. By 2025 we will have a clearer understanding of our scope 3 supply chain emissions and be able to set a measurable target in our revised Plan.
3. We will aim to replace our tier 1 proxy data with tier 3 supplier data by 2025.
4. Develop a sustainable procurement policy by the end of 2024.
5. Aligning with Welsh Governments' Beyond Recycling strategy to aim to achieve zero waste to landfill by 2025.
6. Develop a circular waste policy by the end of 2024.

Decarbonisation scenarios and pathways

The impact of actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions between now and 2030 have been modelled to provide scenarios for decarbonisation (Figure 11). These scenarios are do nothing (business as usual), gaining momentum and accelerated change and they demonstrate different levels of decarbonisation action as well as underlying external

assumptions such as electricity grid decarbonisation, shifts to active and sustainable travel, purchase of ULEVs by staff etc.

The scenarios cover both operational and supply chain greenhouse gas emissions from the following areas:

- The built estate
- Fleet and plant/equipment
- Staff commute
- Homeworking
- Supply chain
- Operational assets, such as pumping stations
- Business travel

Actual data from NRW's Net Zero Reporting submission to Welsh Government has been used for 2019-2022 and demonstrates the impact of Covid-19 on total greenhouse gas emissions (Figure 10).

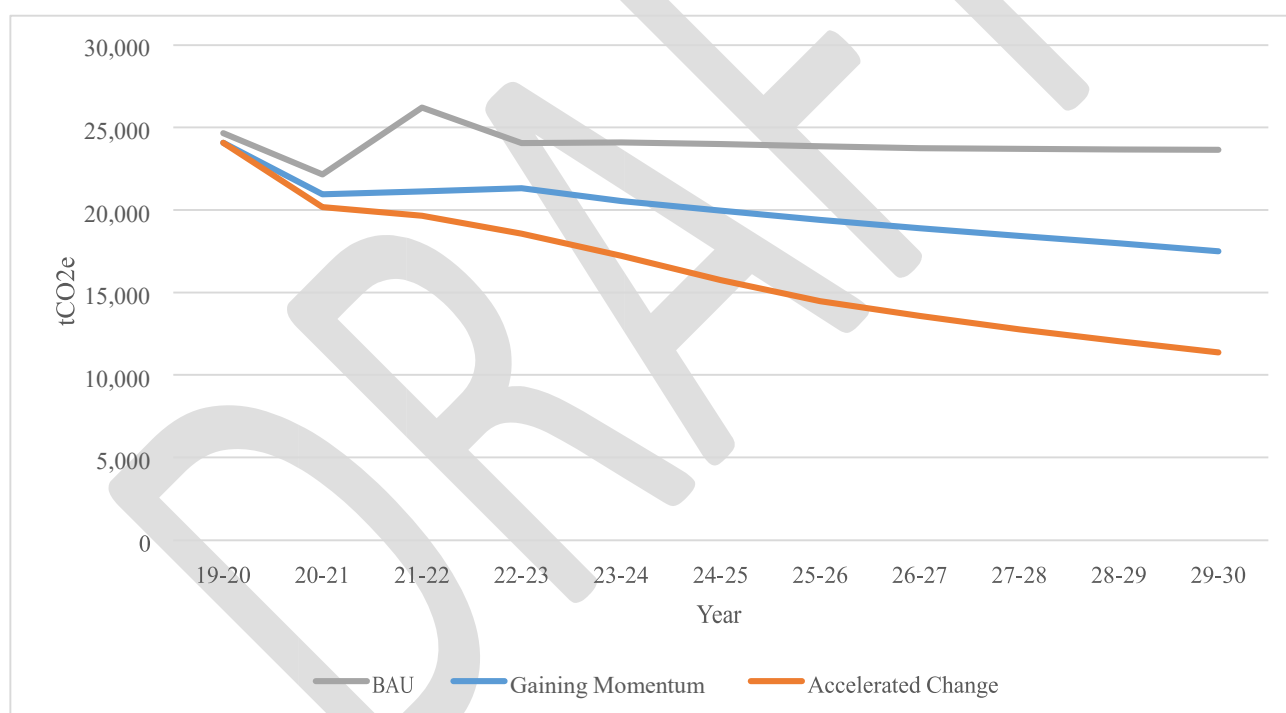


Figure 10: Decarbonisation scenarios to 2030.

Under the do nothing scenario NRW's total greenhouse gas emissions in 2030 are estimated to be 23,642 tCO₂e, a reduction of 4.1% compared to the 2019-2020 baseline. This assumes that there is little or no emission reduction effort or actions and that savings come from predicted electricity grid decarbonisation alone (as set out in the Green Book supplementary guidance: valuation of energy use and greenhouse gas emissions for appraisal (BEIS 2023)).

Greenhouse gas emissions in 2030 in the Gaining Momentum scenario are 17,510 tCO₂e, a 27% reduction compared to the baseline. This is based on the assumptions and actions detailed in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Overview of the assumptions used in the Gaining Momentum decarbonisation scenario.

Assumptions	
Built Estate	Emissions are reduced by 4.2% p.a through energy efficiency and renewable energy retrofit. This is the Science Based Targets Initiative (SBTi) minimum reduction (near term) for scopes 1&2 based on absolute contraction to meet the goal of limiting temperature rises to 1.5°C (SBTi 2021).
Fleet	NRW has a mixed fleet of EV's and diesel vehicles (mainly badged 4x4's, HGVs and large vans) operated on HVO by 2025.
Staff commute	Commuting distance is reduced in line with staff working from home 30% of the week.
Homeworking	Emissions associated with staff working from home 30% of the week.
Supply chain	An evidence-based reduction equivalent to the previous SBTi 2.5% linear annual reduction rate as outlined in the supply chain decarbonisation Forward Plan.
Plant and Equipment	100% conversion from red diesel to hydrogenated vegetable oil.
Operational Assets	Electricity related emissions decrease based on grid decarbonisation as set out in the Green Book supplementary guidance: valuation of energy use and greenhouse gas emissions for appraisal (BEIS 2023).
Business Travel	25% reduction in private car related business mileage with 50% of the remaining private car mileage by EV's.

The Accelerated Change Scenario is the most ambitious scenario which suggests that a 53% reduction in NRW's greenhouse gas emissions could be achievable by 2030 compared to a 2019-2020 baseline. Emissions in 2030 are estimated to be 11,371 tCO_{2e}. Table 3 details how this could be achieved and the assumptions made.

Table 3: Overview of the assumptions used in the Accelerated Change decarbonisation scenario.

Assumptions	
Built Estate	An 80% reduction in building related greenhouse gas emissions is achieved by 2030 through a programme of asset rationalisation, energy efficiency and renewable energy retrofits and grid decarbonisation (as set out in the Green Book supplementary guidance: valuation of energy use and greenhouse gas emissions for appraisal (BEIS 2023)). Fossil fuel heating is replaced by heat pumps.
Fleet	NRW has a 100% EV fleet by 2026.
Staff commute	Commuting distance is reduced in line with staff working from home 60% of the week.
Homeworking	Emissions associated with staff working from home 60% of the week.
Supply chain	An updated SBTi scenario assuming a 7% year on year reduction to 2030 (calculated for absolute emissions rather than physical intensity emissions as recommended by the SBTi, because no single physical intensity metric would be applicable to the whole NRW supply chain).
Plant and Equipment	100% conversion from red diesel to hydrogenated vegetable oil.
Operational Assets	Electricity related emissions decrease 4.2% p.a and grid decarbonisation as set out in the Green Book supplementary guidance: valuation of energy use and greenhouse gas emissions for appraisal (BEIS 2023). 4.2% p.a. is the Science Based Targets Initiative (SBTi) minimum reduction (near term) for scopes 1&2 based on absolute contraction to meet the goal of limiting temperature rises to 1.5°C (SBTi 2021).
Business Travel	Greater uptake of active and sustainable travel through incentives, encouragement from NRW and improved facilities in our offices and depots; increase in EV mileage from grey fleet due to an increased uptake of EVs by staff through the introduction of a salary sacrifice scheme.

The decarbonisation scenarios detailed above highlight the possible greenhouse gas emission reductions that could be achieved through a range of actions based on current knowledge and evidence. They demonstrate the scale and pace of change that is required. To increase this contribution further would require further innovation, technological improvements and upscaling of action.

DRAFT

Actions

Built estate

Overview of Greenhouse Gas Emissions

In 2022/2023 greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from NRW's buildings were 933 tCO_{2e}, 4.07% of NRW's overall GHG emissions. 70% of building related GHG emissions can be attributed to electricity use. Several buildings use electricity to provide heating and hot water. Other contributors to high electricity use include ICT and servers, building specific processes such as refrigeration for catering and laboratory use and air conditioning. Between 2015/2016 and 2019/2020 there was a 39% reduction in GHG emissions from buildings. However total energy use had not decreased in this time and the majority of GHG emission savings can be attributed to the reduction in the GHG emission intensity of the electricity grid (44% reduction over the same period). Offices are the biggest contributor to NRW's building GHG emissions (69%) particularly Maes y Ffynnon, Tŷ Cambria (previously at the time of 22/23 data collection), Rivers House, Maes Newydd/Llandarcy, Buckley and Llys Afon followed by visitors centres (12%).

The biggest contributors to a building's energy usage (Carbon Trust 2018) are:

- Heating and hot water: 38%
- ICT equipment and small power: 33%
- Lighting: 9%
- Cooling and humidification: 8%

Building energy benchmarking was carried out by Welsh Government Energy Service (WGES) in 2020 (Figure 10), which sought to assess the energy use and GHG emissions in buildings across the NRW portfolio and compare building energy and efficiency to relevant benchmarks and standards. The 20 buildings in Figure 10 represent 89% of NRW's building related GHG emissions in 2019/2020. Table 4 shows the top 10 buildings with the greatest tCO_{2e}/m² emissions intensity in 2019/20 due to poor energy management, electric, oil and LPG heating which has a greater emissions intensity, on-site processes/building use and catering. A number of these buildings are also shown in Figure 10 which indicates their importance in terms of their contribution and impact on GHG emissions from buildings.

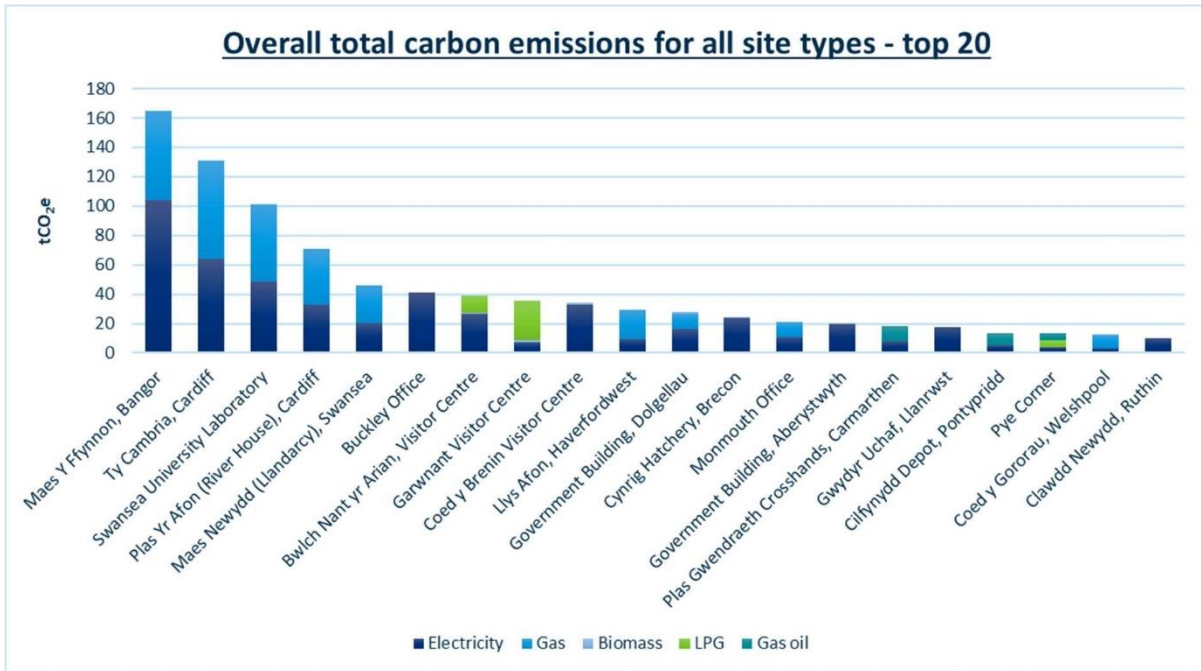


Figure 11: Buildings with the highest GHG emissions in 2019/2020

Table 4: Top 10 buildings ranked by GHG emissions per m²

Site	tCO ₂ e/m ²
Bwlch Nant yr Arian, Visitor Centre	0.150
Cynrig Hatchery, Brecon	0.080
Pye Corner	0.067
Hafod, Ystrad Meurig	0.064
Coed y Brenin Visitor Centre	0.056
Rhuddlan Depot	0.054
Garwnant Visitor Centre	0.051
Swansea University Laboratory	0.050
Skomer, Martins Haven	0.049
Maes Y Ffynnon, Bangor	0.049

Actions to Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions

To support our Net Zero Plan targets, there must be a radical shift in how energy is managed in buildings, a centralisation of energy management and energy contracts and an acceleration of improving building energy efficiency, deploying building renewable energy technologies and low carbon heating.

Reducing greenhouse gas emissions from NRW's buildings will require:

- Asset rationalisation;
- Effective energy management (energy procurement, energy data analysis, reviewing heating settings);
- Energy efficiency measures e.g. insulation, heating controls;
- Building mounted renewable energy systems;
- Low carbon heating (heat pumps);
- Behaviour change;
- Ensuring buildings are resilient to current and future climate change.

New buildings (constructed or leased) must align to net zero design standards and principles such as LETI's climate emergency design guide, PassivHaus and the forthcoming net zero carbon building standard.

The Built Estate Decarbonisation Forward Plan sets out how NRW can meet its climate emergency ambitions by reducing building related GHG emissions and aims to provide the strategic direction to achieve this. The plan demonstrates the potential emission and energy cost savings that could be realised for a range of decarbonisation pathways and scenarios. The most ambitious of these indicates that through a strategic programme of asset rationalisation and energy efficiency/renewable energy/low carbon heating retrofit and electricity grid decarbonisation a 71% reduction in building related GHG emissions compared to business as usual could be achieved by 2030 (Table 5). There are also potentially significant cumulative GHG emission and energy cost savings (based on conservative energy price estimates).

Table 5: Costs, GHG emission and energy cost savings for a programme of asset rationalisation and energy retrofit for the built estate compared to business as usual (BAU).

Scenario	Capital cost	Cumulative GHG emissions savings compared to BAU (tCO ₂ e)	Cumulative energy cost saving compared to BAU	629	GHG emissions in 2030 (tCO ₂ e/m ²)*
BAU	N/A	N/A	N/A	629	0.023
Rationalisation and retrofit	£4.3m	2224	£886k	183	0.010

*total floor area for BAU: 27,394 m². Total floor area for Rationalisation and Retrofit: 17,885 m²

The Adfywio/Renewal Programme seeks to support NRW to create a flexible workplace for the future to enable it to be an effective organisation to tackle the climate and nature emergencies. The programme has the following three drivers; reduced carbon, improved wellbeing of staff and financial savings. Decarbonising the built estate through asset rationalisation and energy efficiency/renewable energy retrofit is a crucial part of the

delivery of Adfywio. NRW's Accommodation Strategy developed as part of the Adfywio Programme has the following commitments to be achieved by 2030:

- Rationalise the Built Estate by 40%
- Provide Agile office space to enable Hybrid working.
- Reduce emissions from our built estate from a 2019/20 baseline of 1132 tCO₂e to approximately 500 tCO₂e in 2030.
- Where technically feasible we will maximise onsite renewable energy generation to minimise grid imports.
- Manage the grounds around our built estate to benefit nature and support adaptation to climate change. This will include habitat development and the introduction of sustainable drainage principals.
- Champion waste prevention and minimisation in the development and running of the built estate.
- Ensure our environmental management system continues to be certified to the ISO14001 environmental standard, ensuring best practice in preventing and minimising pollution and continually improving environmental performance.
- Minimise pollution incidents through best practice management of chemicals and fuels.
- Engage with staff to ensure the built estate enables staff to undertake their roles to their best ability while improving physical and mental Wellbeing.

The Accommodation Strategy will be delivered in line with the [Principles for Managing NRW's Built Estate in Response to the Climate Emergency](#). This is already being put into practice with the project at Resolven/Coed y Cymoedd Office which seeks to create an exemplar building and workplace with respect to decarbonisation, climate change adaptation and green infrastructure. It is hoped to reduce the energy and greenhouse gas emissions associated with the operation of the building through a fabric first approach and the use of air source heat pumps; potentially achieving the PassivHaus EnerPHit standard. The Strategy also contains several other principles and standards including; surveying properties with long term retention to establish the cost effectiveness of retrofitting to support decarbonisation and climate change adaptation, implementation of heating and lighting systems that provide maximum control, water efficiency improvements, continuing to source it's electricity supply from 100% renewable sources and transitioning to a non-fossil fuel built estate by the end of 2027/28 (within budget affordability).

Several ambitions listed in the Carbon Positive Project Enabling Plan are still relevant and will need to be incorporated into any strategic programme of energy and renewable energy retrofit to support the decarbonisation of NRW's buildings. These include:

- All staffed buildings have energy management strategies, which include a commitment to energy metering and monitoring and encourage staff behaviours that promote good energy management.
- All our buildings have energy audits and delivery plans to deliver the measures identified.
- All buildings to be retrofitted with solar PV, LED lighting and low carbon heating, where suitable and feasible.

- Any newly occupied buildings to have a high energy efficiency rating and support low carbon technologies (e.g. electric vehicle charging) or can be retrofitted to meet this ambition.
- Explore the potential for further homeworking to reduce office space to reduce energy demand.

Next Steps

- Ensure all low and no cost energy saving measures highlighted in the Built Estate Decarbonisation Forward Plan are implemented by 2024.
- Refine the most ambitious decarbonisation pathway and scenario to provide further evidence on the estimated costs and savings and to support the business case for a strategic programme of building decarbonisation retrofit.
- Deliver asset rationalisation, energy efficiency, building renewable energy and low carbon heating across the built estate between now and 2030 through existing programmes such as Adfywio and delivery of the Accommodation Strategy and collaboration with key stakeholders such as Facilities Management.

Fleet and plant

NRW's transport related emissions (Badged fleet)

In 2019-20, NRW's total baseline operational emissions (emissions from energy use, fuel use, waste, transport and procurement / supply chain) were 24,650 tCO_{2e}. During that period, we travelled 4.9 million miles using our badged fleet (both operational and pool vehicles) and emitted 1,673 tCO_{2e} of GHG, which represents 7% of total emissions. Figure 13 below provides a breakdown of annual mileage and emissions (kgCO_{2e}) incurred between 2019-20 (baseline) and 2022-23. In 2022-23, total mileage for badged fleet was 4,151,005 miles with emissions of 1,581 tCO_{2e}. That is approximately a 16% reduction in mileage and a 6% reduction in emissions compared to baseline data.

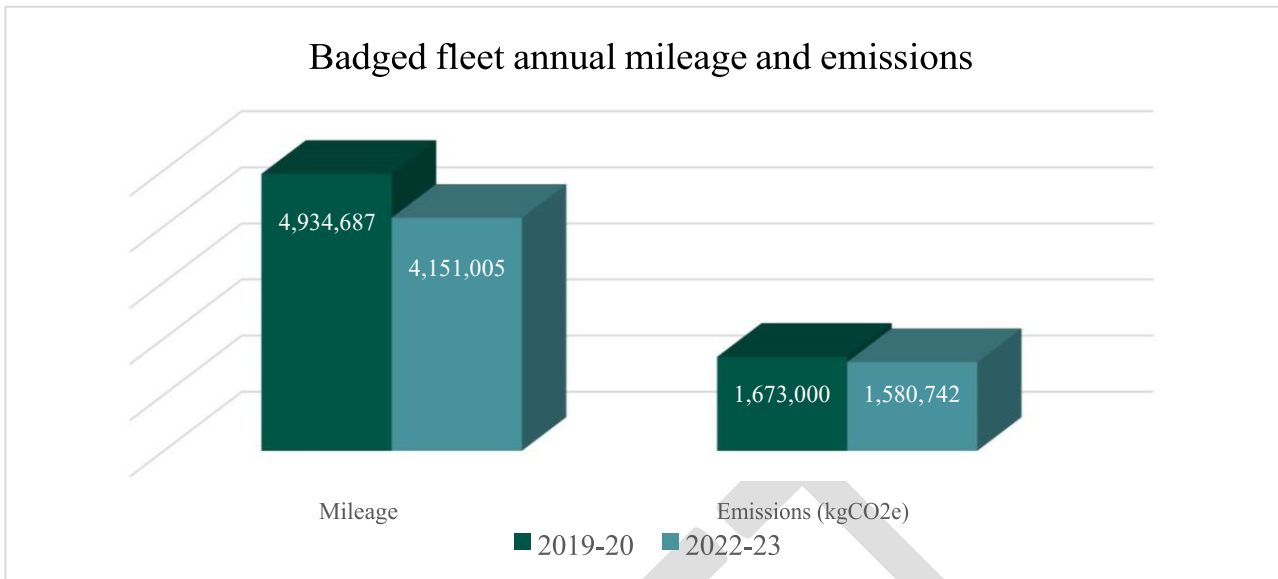


Figure 12 Annual mileage and emissions by badged fleet.

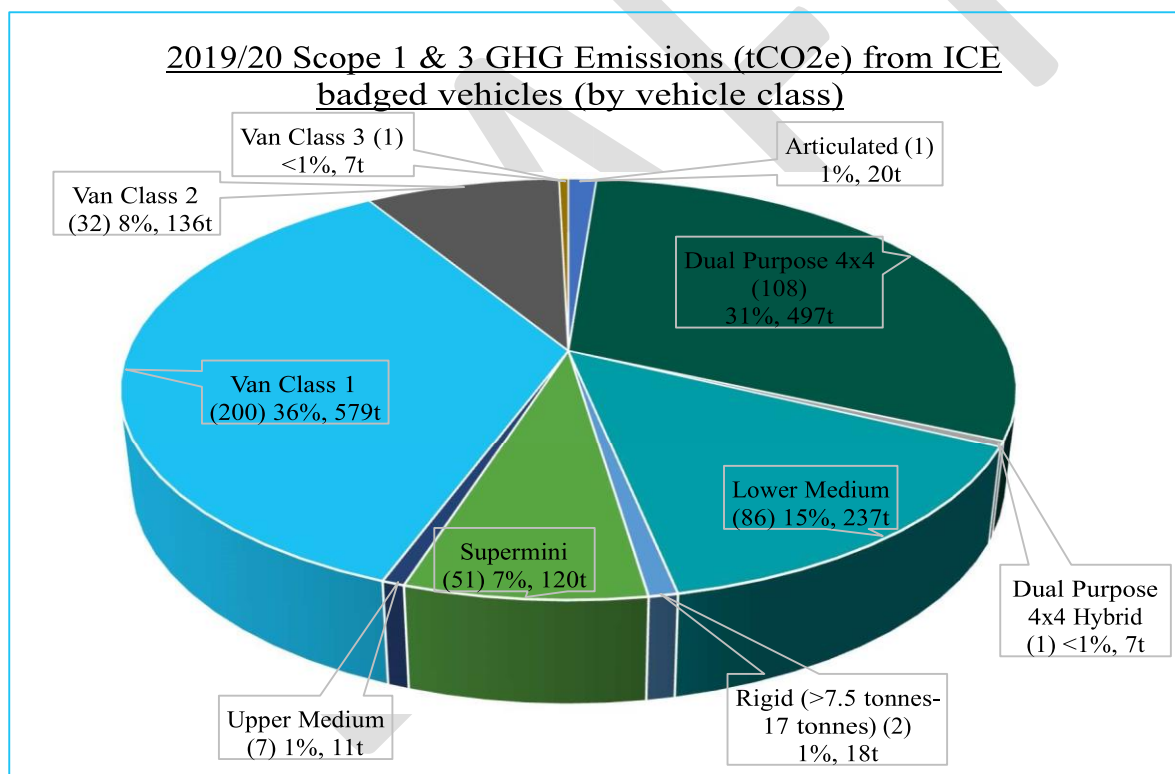


Figure 13. Pie chart showing the amount and percentage of vehicle emissions contributed by each vehicle class within the badged fleet using 2021 BEIS GHG conversion factors.

There has been a general trend in reduction of annual mileage since 2018. This is likely to be due to efforts to reduce travelling with much greater uptake of virtual meetings. However, since Covid-19 pandemic related travel restrictions during 2020-21 period, NRW

has become predominantly a hybrid or home-based organisation, which is likely to have an influence on how we travel.

Figure 14 shows the emissions contribution by different vehicle types within the badged fleet in 2019-20 baseline year. Van class 1 (36%) and 4x4 (31%) contributed 67% of the total badged fleet emissions combined. There were 200 van class 1 in the fleet, which travelled 1.9 million miles compared to 108 4x4s, which travelled 1.2 million miles. This makes the 4x4s the most inefficient and polluting vehicle types within the badged fleet.

Actions to Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Based on existing use data, it is entirely possible to replace all badged vehicles with battery electric vehicle (BEV) models including rigid truck and articulated lorries. This is supported by the Welsh Government Energy Service (WGES) report titled “ULEV Transition Fleet Review,” which states that an initial analysis would suggest that there are no vehicles on NRW badged fleet that could not transition to BEV by 2025. WGES analysis indicates the transition from a fossil fuel fleet to a BEV fleet should reduce energy use by up to 70% and deliver energy cost savings of up to £400,000 each year (depending on fossil fuel prices and off-peak electricity tariffs). This cost saving can help offset the higher purchase cost of the BEV fleet and the cost of the charging infrastructure.

The Fleet Forward Plan sets out how NRW can meet its Net Zero Plan ambitions by reducing transport related GHG emissions and aims to provide the strategic direction to achieve this. The plan demonstrates the potential emission savings that could be realised for a range of decarbonisation pathways and scenarios.

Badged fleet

Based on Fleet aspiration to replace 20% (circa 100 units per annum) of the badged fleet ‘year on year’, it should be feasible to replace all badged fleet (except 4x4s and HGVs) with BEVs by 2028 if not before (disregarding any supply issue).

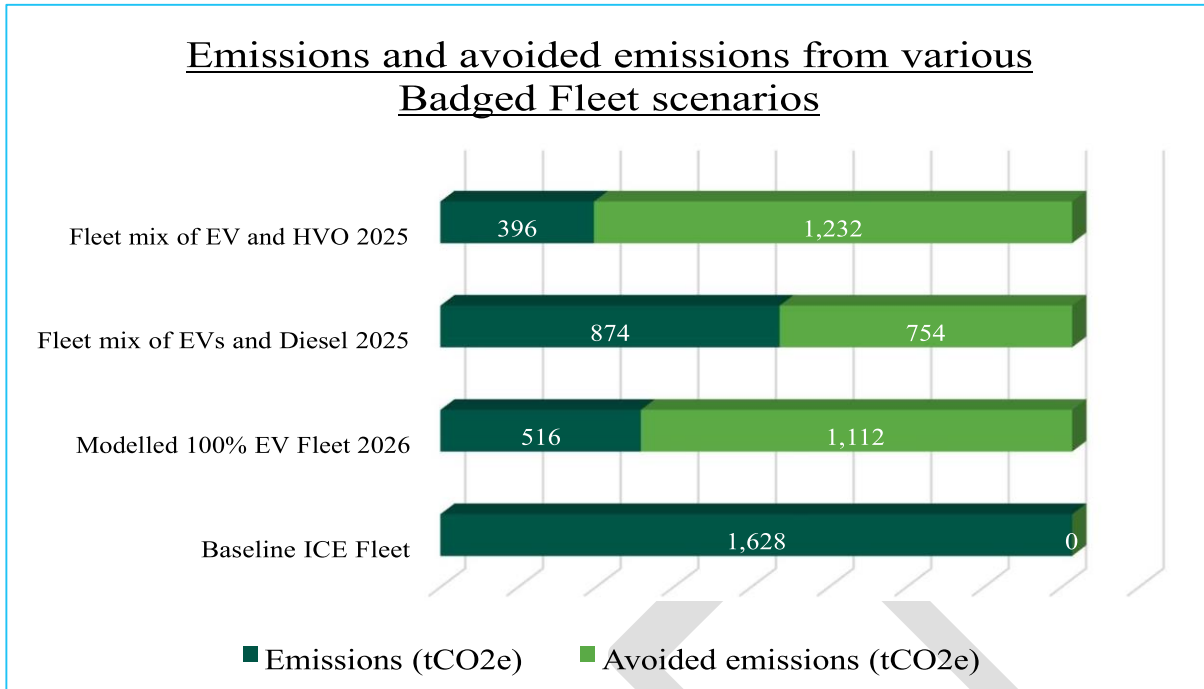


Figure 15 Potential emissions reduction and avoidance through various badged fleet scenarios.

Figure 15 above demonstrates the emissions reduction benefits against each different badged fleet scenario options. In brief:

- Annual baseline emissions from ICE badged fleet are 1,628 tCO_{2e}
- With a 100% electric badged fleet by 2028 or before, the annual emissions can be reduced from 1,628 tCO_{2e} to 516 tCO_{2e} and 1,112 tCO_{2e} avoided annually.
- The badged fleet can be partially electrified by 2028 (excluding 4x4s and HGVs). With mixed BEV and ICE fleet from 2028, the annual badged fleet emissions can potentially be reduced from baseline 1,628 tCO_{2e} to 874 tCO_{2e} and 754 tCO_{2e} avoided annually.
- With a mixed fleet of BEV and ICE vehicles (mainly 4x4's and HGVs), the annual emissions can be reduced to 396 tCO_{2e} with 1,232 tCO_{2e} avoided annually from 2028, if we operate the existing ICE 4x4's and HGVs with HVO fuel only. There will be additional cost due to higher price for HVO. However, this will provide the largest emissions reductions for the interim period.
- The rest of the fleet (4x4s and HGVs) can be fully electrified by 2029-30, when the EV market has technologically matured. With this approach, the annual badged fleet emissions can potentially be reduced from baseline 1,628 tCO_{2e} to 516 tCO_{2e} and 1,112 tCO_{2e} avoided annually (excluding further reduction from NG decarbonisation).
- With a 100% electric badged fleet, by 2030 the annual emissions should reduce further from 516 tCO_{2e} to as low as 168 tCO_{2e} (scope 2 & 3 only, 212 tCO_{2e} for Well-To-Tank) due to National Grid decarbonisation (avoiding 1,460 tCO_{2e} annually).

Next Steps

Badged fleet

To reduce emissions from NRW's Badged fleet as quickly as possible, the best and cost effective option is to replace existing ICE vehicles with suitable BEV models as soon as possible by adopting the following measures:

- No new ICE vehicles should be leased from 2023 onwards unless absolutely necessary. Any new ICE vehicles and all existing ICE vehicles should be operated using HVO, although this will increase the operational cost due to a higher fuel price;
- All badged ICE vehicles (except 4x4s and HGVs) should be replaced with BEVs by 2028;
- ICE 4x4s and HGVs should be operated using HVO and replaced with BEVs when feasible;
- A review should be carried out on the use of existing ICE 4x4s to establish if current activities are necessary, can be carried out remotely or by other means with lower carbon footprint;
- An investigation should be undertaken to identify the causes of low utilisation (<6k annual miles) of some badged vehicles;
- Identify steps to improve utilisation of existing badged BEVs by staff;
- Integrate data capture system to monitor mileage and energy use by BEVs as soon as technically feasible;
- Improve tracking data to determine peak mileage and typical patterns of use for individual vehicles.

Plant

NRW operates a large number (>200) of plant vehicles and attachments across its fleet. Fuel use for plant includes white diesel (forecourt diesel) petrol and HVO. In 2019-20, total combined fuel (gas oil, diesel and petrol) used by plant was 118,222 litres and emitted 399 tCO_{2e} of GHG, which represented 1.6% of NRW's total operational emissions that year. In 2022-23, plant used 96,029 litres of fuel (diesel, petrol and HVO) and emitted 225 tCO_{2e}, a 9% and 43% reduction respectively. The 225 tCO_{2e} emissions in 2022-23 from plant represented 1% of NRW's total emissions.

Actions to Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions

NRW has taken the initiative to replace the use of red diesel with HVO for plant and white diesel for vehicle use from April 2023. HVO has the potential to reduce GHG emissions by up to 93% when compared to fossil diesel. This is an interim step until both the electric and hydrogen technology for plant matures over the next decade.

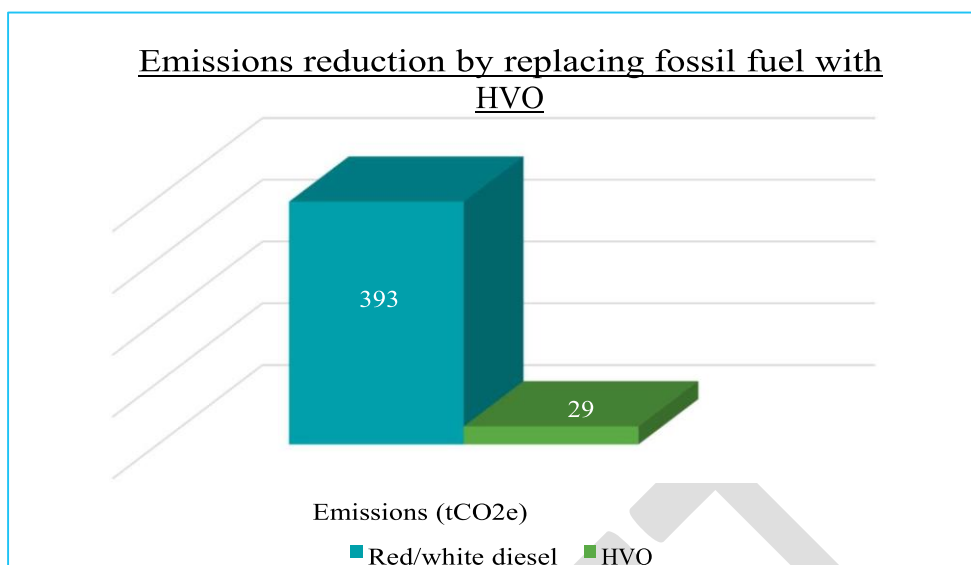


Figure 16: Potential emissions reduction (tCO_{2e}) by replacing fossil fuel (excluding petrol) with HVO.

Figure 16 above indicates by replacing all fossil diesel (both red and white diesel) with HVO, the annual emissions (2019 baseline) of 393 tCO_{2e} (excluding emissions from petrol use) can be reduced to 29 tCO_{2e}. The total annual emissions would be 35 tCO_{2e} (including the 6 tCO_{2e} emissions from petrol use) when compared to 2019-20 fuel use and emissions. This is a potential 91% reduction in emissions from plant and machinery. Although HVO is exceptional in terms of its emissions reduction properties, and potentially reducing maintenance cost (cleaner burning fuel) while prolonging machine life, it is comparatively more expensive than white diesel but the benefits outweigh the limited cost.

Next Steps

- NRW should carry out an assessment of plant use and create a forward plan that assesses the feasibility of progressively transitioning fossil fuel based plant with both electric and hydrogen technology.

Business travel

In this section business travel includes travelling for business purposes using both private vehicles (grey fleet, e.g., cars, motorcycle etc.), hire car and public transport. Business travel data for 2019-20 provides the baseline year.

Based on the Net Zero carbon reporting data, in 2022-23, NRW staff travelled 1,540,702 miles and emitted 430 tCO_{2e} GHG while travelling for business purposes. The 430 tCO_{2e} represents a 12% reduction in business travel related emissions compared to the baseline 2019-20 emissions of 491 tCO_{2e} and represents 2% of NRW's 2022-23 total annual emissions. Figure 17 shows the business travel emissions (tCO_{2e}) breakdown for 2019-20 to 2022-23.

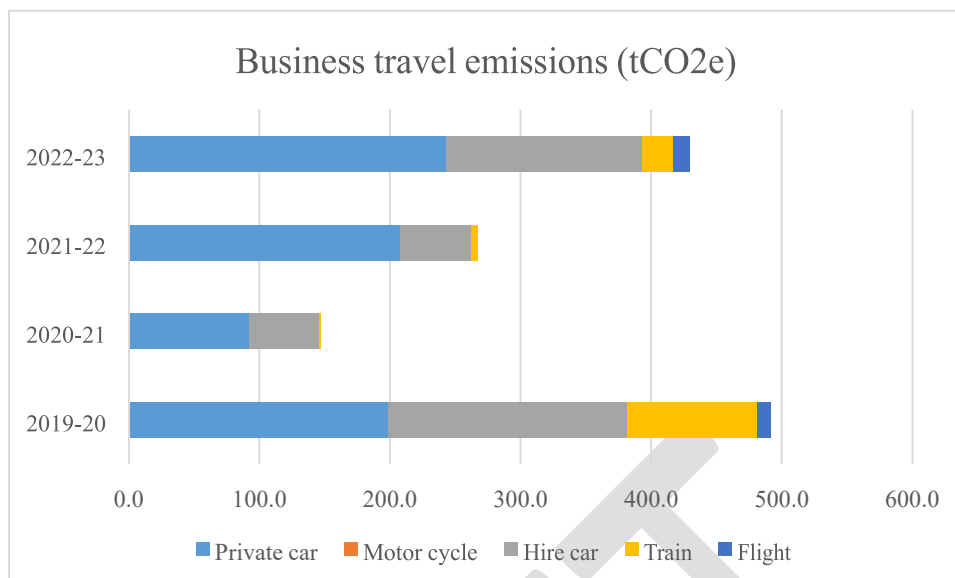


Figure 17: business travel emissions (tCO_{2e}) breakdown by type for 2019-20 to 2022-23.

Actions to Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Table 6 below shows the total annual business mileage (including badged fleet, air, bicycle and BEVs) from 2016-17 to 2022-23 period (based on NRW's Environmental Management System (EMS) reporting data). It is evident that there has been a general decline in business mileage year on year since 2016.

Table 6: Annual business travel mileage data based on our corporate environmental reporting data.

	Unit	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Total business travel	miles	8,158,327	7,269,097	7,535,717	7,317,260	3,465,488	4,484,125	4,151,005
Total business travel	tCO _{2e}	2,249	2,019	2,002	1,810	1,085	1,351	2,235

The general decline in business mileage can be attributed to a significant improvement in ICT infrastructure for remote working, which has led to remote meetings as the default option where possible. In addition, NRW has implemented a Travel Decision tree for journeys, which encourages only travelling when absolutely necessary; using public transport where possible, followed by use of badged pool fleet, hire car and only then private vehicles (grey fleet) as the least preferred option. In addition, since 2019-20, no domestic flights are allowed for business travel.

In March 2023, NRW conducted a staff travel survey to provide insights into staff business travel choices. The survey undertaken by Sustrans has led to the production of an Active and Sustainable Travel (A&ST) Plan for NRW. The A&ST Plan will aid us to identify opportunities and implement actions to promote greater use of active and sustainable travel (e.g. walking, cycling, use of public transport) among staff for both commute and business travel purposes.

Grey fleet

Grey Fleet is outside of NRW's direct influence but contributes towards NRW's annual GHG emissions. Baseline emissions from grey fleet in 2019-20 was 185 tCO_{2e}, 1% of NRW's total emissions. Post the Covid-19 pandemic, NRW has been transformed into an organisation that is now predominantly hybrid or home-based, which has led to emissions from grey fleet increasing from the baseline 185 tCO_{2e} to 243 tCO_{2e} in 2022-23 (1% of total emissions). The increase in grey fleet mileage is partly linked to staff working from home being less likely to travel to offices / depots to pick up pool badged vehicles. In addition, Covid-19 related anxieties and habits of travelling can dissuade staff from using badged pool vehicles.

NRW can influence emissions reduction from grey fleet by introducing a salary sacrifice scheme for staff to lease BEVs. Such a scheme will make it more financially affordable for staff to lease a BEV, while reducing emissions from grey fleet and improving air quality. There will also be a positive impact on commuting emissions and potential to reduce the badged pool fleet providing a cost saving along with improved resilience. While evidence from other organisations indicates that uptake may be limited, at least in the short-term, uptake of EVs has been increasing and bucking previous trends every year since 2019 and therefore, future uptake is challenging to predict. Tusker, a leading lease car provider and specialist in the UK stated that salary sacrifice introduction at a workplace tends to have 35% uptake by employees in the first year and increasing to up to 10% by year 3. Salary Sacrifice schemes have been successfully introduced by NHS Wales and Welsh Government.

Figure 18 below shows a potential scenario where the annual emissions from grey fleet could be reduced from a nominal "average diesel car" baseline of 193 tCO_{2e} to 158 tCO_{2e} by 2030 if 30% of grey fleet mileage is done by BEVs (includes projected WTT emissions reduction due to NG decarbonisation). Based on the NRW 2019-20 baseline emissions of 185 tCO_{2e} if 30% of the baseline mileage is done by BEVs, then emissions would reduce to 143 tCO_{2e}.

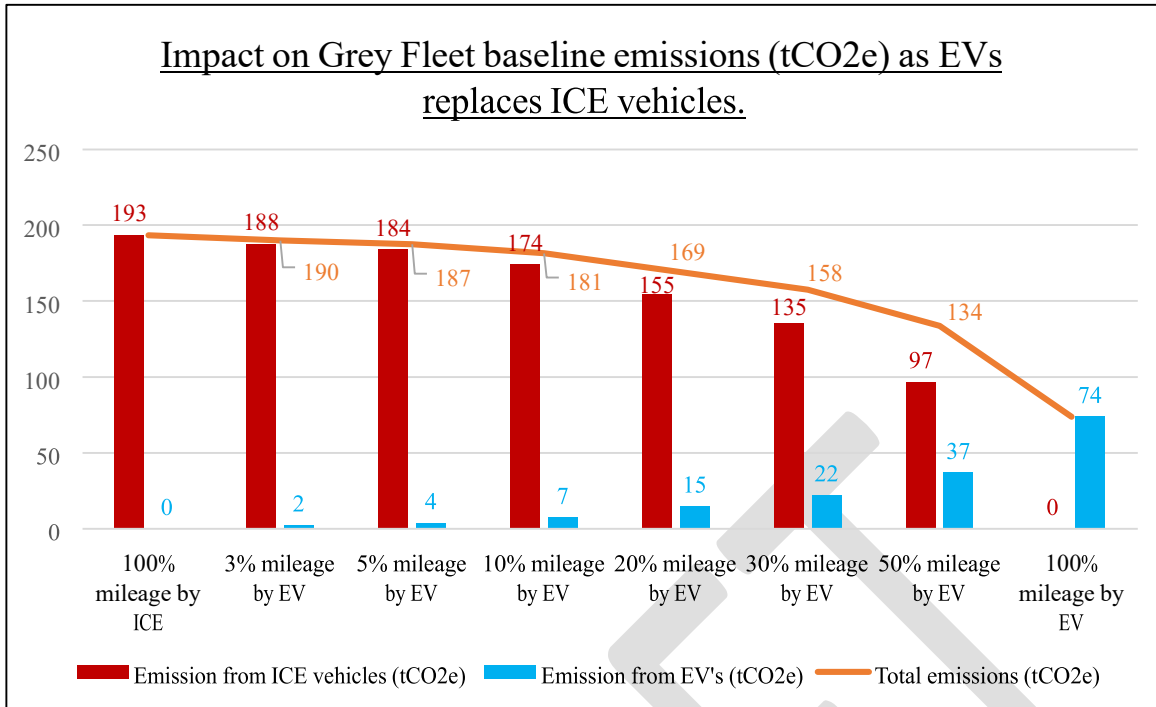


Figure 18. Impact of EV on grey fleet emissions as ICE vehicles are gradually replaced by EVs.

Hire car

Between now and 2028, NRW should encourage staff to use hire cars as a last resort and increase utilisation of existing badged vehicles. There should be regular reviews to ensure the Travel Decision tree is applied and the appropriate vehicle type hired as hire companies transition to BEVs. By 2028, in line with the WG Net Zero Plan it should be possible for all hire cars used to be BEVs.

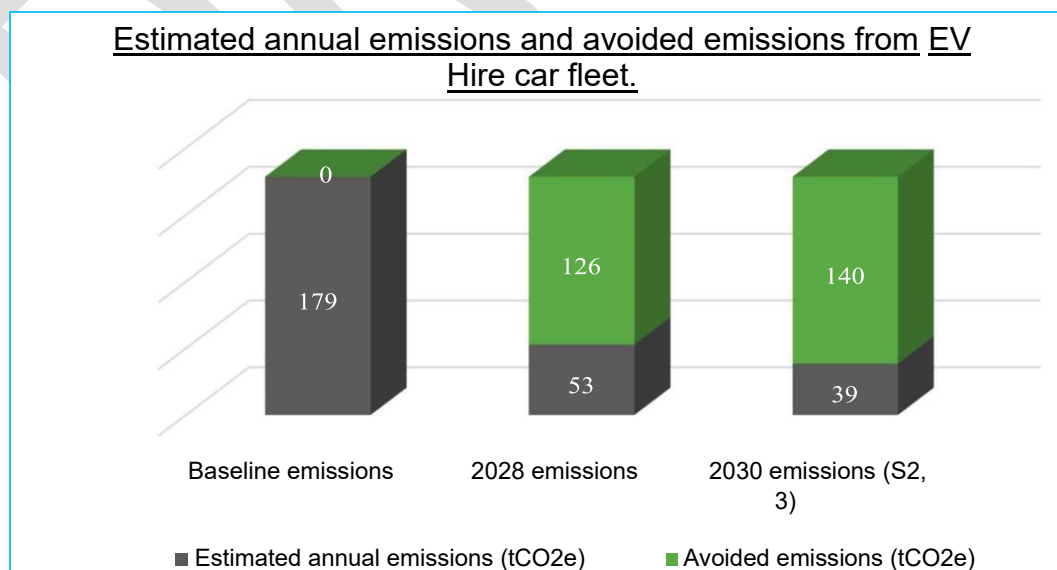


Figure 19 Graph showing estimated annual emissions compared to baseline year from 2019 to 2028. The values for 2030 includes projected NG decarbonisation impact on emissions.

Figure 19 above indicates by 2030, the annual emissions from hire car fleet could be as low as 39 tCO₂e assuming a similar mileage as 2019-20. That is potentially a 78% reduction from the baseline emissions.

Next Steps

Grey fleet

- A periodic review should be carried out to ensure NRW's Travel Decision Tree is fit for purpose and applied when travelling for business purposes.
- Staff should be encouraged to use badged pool vehicles for business travels where possible if the private vehicle is not a ULEV (<75g/CO₂/km).
- NRW should introduce a salary sacrifice scheme for staff to lease BEV's, which will have a positive impact in terms of emissions reduction from grey fleet and staff commute.

Hire car fleet

- In association with a periodic review of NRW's Travel Decision Tree an assessment to ensure that the most efficient vehicle types are being hired (suitable for the intended use) should be undertaken to assess BEV uptake.

Agile working, homeworking and commuting

Agile working refers to a more flexible, mobile way of working, optimising the use of workspaces and modern technology. Agile working provides an opportunity to reduce emissions as it encompasses the interaction between office space utilisation, working from home and commuting. Employee commuting and energy consumption in office spaces are major components of our baseline operational carbon footprint. However, COVID-19 has resulted in permanent shifts in working culture and a move to hybrid working patterns has occurred for many in our workforce. The changing dynamics of work has and will continue to impact the composition of our emissions. Reductions in commuting mileage and office energy consumption are likely to correspond with an increase in domestic energy consumption from homeworking, which will be seasonally affected. Welsh Government have set out an ambition for 30% of the Welsh workforce to be working at or near home in the next four years.

Internally, we have established a cross-disciplinary Adfywio/Renewal Programme and team to address the changes in working brought about by the pandemic. This Programme is addressing office rationalisation given the greatly reduced use of office space, while maintaining convenient, accessible, productive places for people to work. It is also developing agile working policies and practices that ensure work is delivered while providing flexibility for staff and reducing emissions.

The significant impact of agile working on NRW's emissions is illustrated through pre-pandemic and mid-pandemic modelled data for office and home heating and electricity emissions along with commuting in Figure 20.

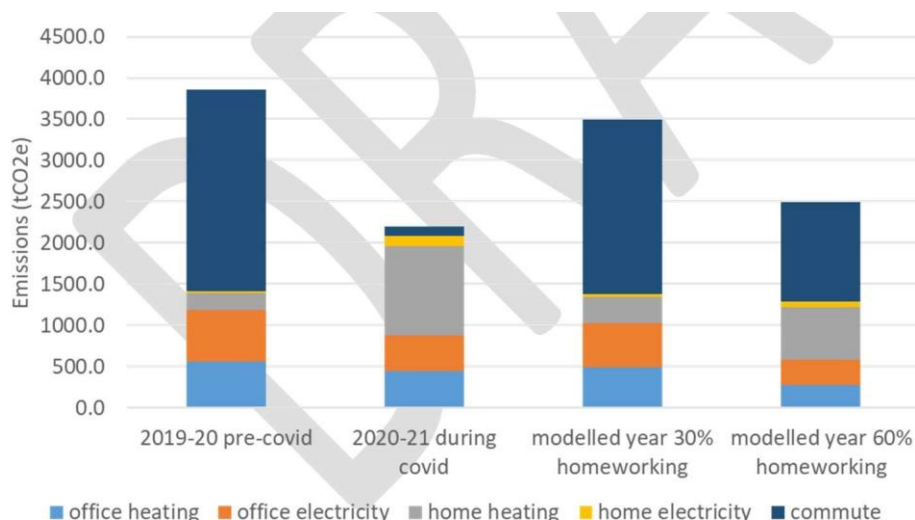


Figure 20. Modelled estimates for pre- and mid pandemic emissions for office and home heating/electric use and commuting.

Our modelling has shown that homeworking reduces total emissions, mainly through reduced commuting emissions, and should be promoted particularly during the summer months, and in rural areas to maximise the emissions benefit. Improved office energy management is also a requirement to maximise the emissions benefit by shutting down rooms during periods of low usage. Office space rationalisation and ways of working should focus on reducing commute distances given the need to reduce the gap between the NRW (30 mile) and Welsh national (19 mile) average daily commute distance.

Decarbonisation of our staff commute through the use of active travel and low emission vehicles is crucial to help reduce emissions associated with office working. We have developed a corporate position and linked policies facilitating our approach to “agile working”, informed by a review of staff working patterns and their carbon emissions impacts. This is providing strategic direction to inform investment decisions in the built estate and ICT.

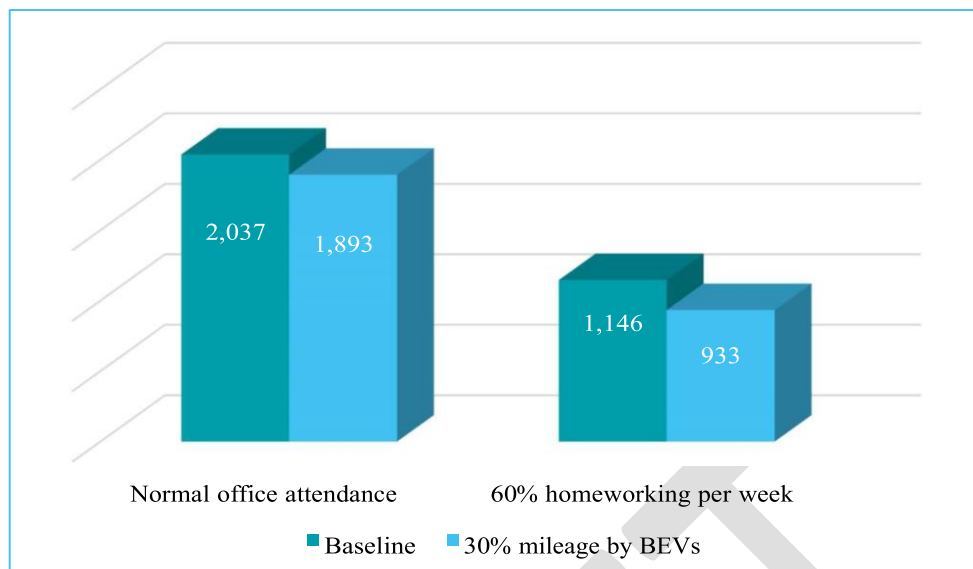


Figure 21: Graph showing modelled emissions reduction in both normal office attendance and staff WFH 60% of the time if 30% mileage done by BEVs.

The baseline 2019/20 emissions from staff commute were 2,037 tCO_{2e} (as per Net Zero reporting to WG). The graph in Figure 24 below shows the modelled emissions reduction from staff commute if 30% of baseline mileage is done by BEVs while WFH 60% of the time.

Figure 21 shows that modelling indicates that if 30% of commuting mileage is done by BEVs, it would reduce baseline annual emissions from 2,037 tCO_{2e} to 1,893 tCO_{2e} were staff to be attending the office as normal prior to the pandemic. However, if on average staff work from home 60% of the time per week, then the modelled annual emissions reduces from the baseline 2,037 tCO_{2e} to 1,146 tCO_{2e}. If then, 30% of the annual mileage is done by BEVs the emission reduces further to 933 tCO_{2e} per annum.

The annual staff commute emissions from 2022-23 was 313.5 tCO_{2e} as reported to WG via Net Zero Reporting requirements. This is a 85% reduction in emissions compared to the baseline 2,037 tCO_{2e} and is due to a majority of staff working from home most days of the week. Consequently, to reduce the emissions further from the current annual 313.5 tCO_{2e}, the most viable options are for staff to uptake BEVs or the greater use of active and sustainable travel. Uptake of BEVs can be influenced with a salary sacrifice scheme and the introduction of further incentives for staff to use active and sustainable travel should be explored.

Next steps

- We are optimising existing low carbon IT services and continue investing in digital infrastructure that enables productive remote working and connectivity across the organisation.
- We have, and will continue to, conduct an annual 'staff travel' survey to reduce our reliance on generic benchmarks and identify tailored decarbonisation initiatives related to agile working.

- Continue to align our planning/decision making to the Sustainable Travel Hierarchy and support its' uptake among staff to shift commuting habits to low carbon forms of travel.
- We will engage with staff to understand existing barriers to the use of active travel and public transport. Increasingly we will provide an enabling environment for low carbon travel, including improvements to provision of bicycle storage, showers, electric vehicle (EV) chargers, and maintain enabling policies such as our cycle-to work scheme.
- We will be developing a staff calculator to explore the impact of householder heating fuel and commuting distance on emissions to inform staff decisions on these daily matters.

Supply chain

Total supply chain emissions and hotspots

NRW's supply chain emissions were estimated to be 17,626 tCO₂e in 2022-23, accounting for 77% of the organisation's total carbon footprint.

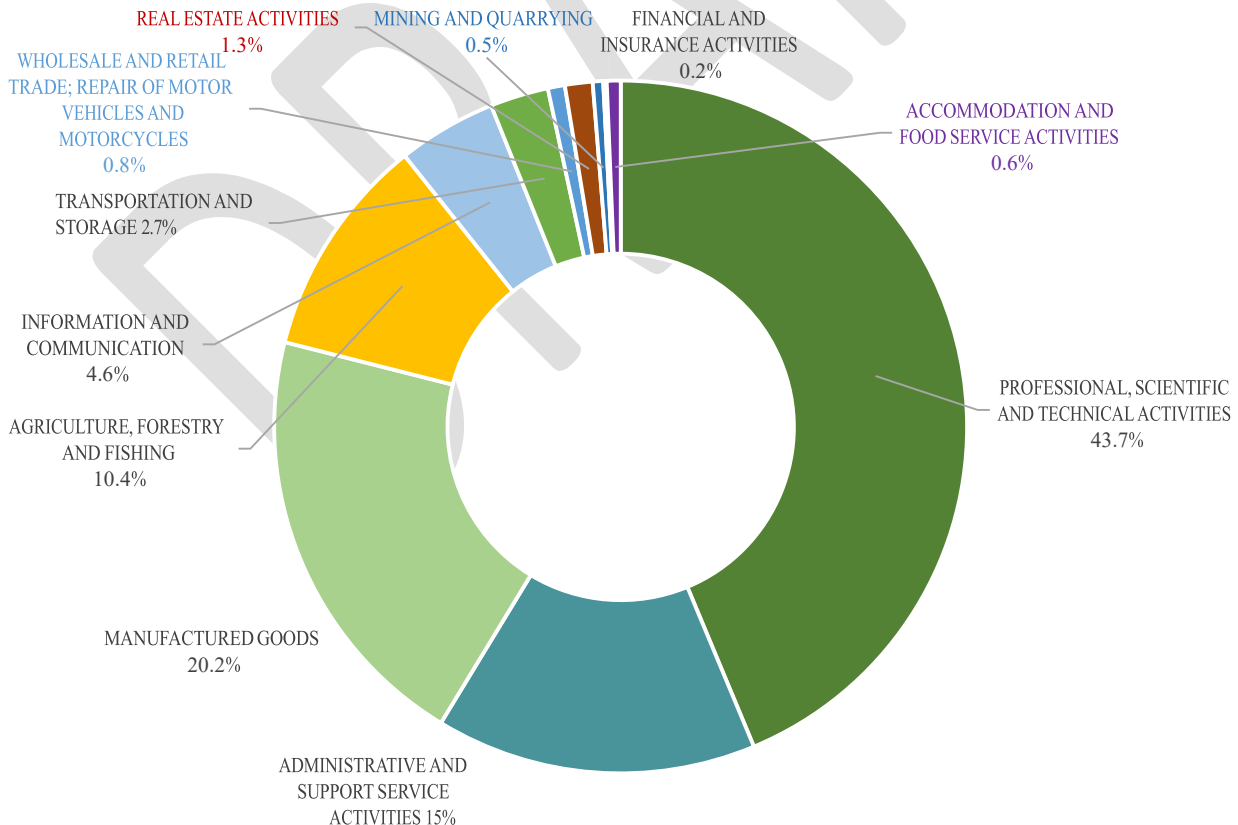


Figure 22. Breakdown of NRW supply chain emissions by Standard Industrial

Supply chain emissions include all upstream emissions from the extraction, production and transportation of goods and services used by the organisation. These emissions are out of the direct

control of the organisation and are dispersed across multiple purchase types, locations, organisations, and processes, making this the most challenging category of emissions for NRW to reduce.

The organisation spends approximately £100 million annually on goods and services accounted for within supply chain emissions calculations, excluding spend on staff, energy and travel.

Figure 22 sets out the breakdown of NRW supply chain emissions by standard industrial classification categories as used in Welsh public sector net zero emissions reporting.

Significant

Classification product categories used Welsh public sector net zero emissions reporting.

Note these are not NRW specific product categories and many NRW account codes are not easily matched to an SIC category e.g. those relating to land management activities.

Our supply chain emissions are currently estimated using spend data as a proxy for emissions – mapping NRW spend to average emissions factors per £ spent on categories of products and services. This approach introduces a high level of uncertainty to estimates but provides a quick approach to gaining an overview of whole supply chain emissions, and a crucial first step to guide further work. Estimates using this calculation method will not reflect individual supplier efficiencies nor improvements over time.

In the absence of more specific emissions data (i.e., supplier specific or product or service average data) we analysed our spend based emissions results by NRW account codes, cross-checking with top suppliers and account codes by spend, and across year to identify consistent emissions hotspots in our supply chain. Our working list of NRW hotspots is given in Table 7. The identification of hotspots in this way is somewhat subjective but provides an initial steer on priorities.

Table 7. Working list of NRW's supply chain emissions hotspots. Full details of how the hotspots list was created is included in "Decarbonising NRW's supply chain: Forward plan to 2030".

Categories	Specific areas, contracts or suppliers of interest
Service level agreements (SLAs)*	Environment Agency
Reservoir operating agreements (ROAs)*	Dwr Cymru Cyf - Welsh Water Ltd
Plants / Shrubs / Trees	-
Forestry related contractors	Harvesting felling, forest roads (current case study), restocking preparation,
ICT contractor and consultant services	-

ICT annual software licences, support and maintenance (included due to high spend)	-
Flood asset delivery	Construction & Consultancy frameworks (previously CEFA) (current case study)
Engineering contractors	-
Fleet purchase, hire and maintenance	-
Plant purchase and hire	Plant hire Framework - Low Loader & Lorry Hire & Sourcing of Aggregates
Plane and helicopter hire	-
Operational equipment purchase and maintenance	-
Other	Facilities Management hard services maintenance contract; Integral; Asset maintenance framework; MEICA preventative maintenance contract

*These are non-procurement agreements.

Other key points from the analysis of spend-based emissions are:

- That 10 NRW account codes contributed 62.7% of organisational emissions in 2021-22;
- A qualitative analysis of likely activities driving emissions from our top 10 account codes by spend value suggest that transport of materials, waste and employees; construction materials; components; construction plant and equipment are likely to be the main sources of emissions within these contract types;
- In 2020-21, 25% of NRW supply chain emissions were from contracts under £25,000 in value, 50% under £90,000 (including under £25,000), 75% under £225,000 and 90% under £1,000,000.

Supply chain decarbonisation work to date

Since 2019 we have been using the hotspots analysis alongside our procurement pipeline to identify upcoming contracts and frameworks as case studies for supply chain decarbonisation. We have used these case studies to trial approaches to asking suppliers to reduce and report emissions.

Case study 1: Forest Roads Framework

Key emissions sources: Plant fuel use, transport of materials and plant to site.

Approach:

- Scored questions in tender on managing organisational and contract emissions (15% weighting).
- Scored question in tender on EURO emissions categories of owned plant (15%).

- Scored question in tender on technical competence included ways of working on peat soils (35%).
- Requirement to report annual fuel emissions as a KPI for the life of the framework, with reductions demonstrated per unit of work delivered.

Case study 2: Construction and Consultancy Frameworks for civil engineering projects

Key emissions sources: Material and energy use in the construction and use of assets.

Approach:

- Scored question in tender on managing organisational emissions.
- Use of the EA's Carbon Planning Tools set out as mandatory on all projects within the Framework Agreement, to calculate and drive emissions savings against project baseline.
- Suite of documents on the use of the tools and reporting requirements developed for contractors and consultants.
- Quarterly progress report required to NRW project manager on each Framework project.
- Project managers trained in the use of the tools by EA.

This case study approach to supply chain decarbonisation was initially adopted to help target resources and to provide the organisational knowledge and experience necessary to expand carbon consideration into procurement procedures more widely. Building on the work to date and recognising the need to increase the scale and pace of our procurement decarbonisation efforts in a strategic and consistent way, we have developed a strategic plan "Decarbonising NRW's supply chain: Forward plan to 2030", setting out how NRW can commit to decarbonising its supply chain between 2023 and 2030 through a series of actions and milestones. This Forward Plan provides more detail on the decarbonisation approach for our supply chain, and specifically covers the period 2023-2030 but will also put in place the organisational framework and tools required for long term supply chain decarbonisation.

The forward plan consists of four main elements:

1. Targeting top emitting contracts and frameworks - Continuing the hotspots case study approach to target top emitting contracts and suppliers in a tailored way, to ensure maximum impact in these areas and to continue to provide learning to feed into the strategic approach.
2. Introducing levels of carbon requirements for suppliers - Introducing a tiered system of carbon reduction and reporting requirements for all contracts, referred to as carbon levels, determined by contract value and emissions intensity. This will provide a consistent approach for carbon consideration across NRW procurement. To be rolled out to all contracts and framework agreements by 2025.
3. Developing supporting tools and templates - Developing a procurement decarbonisation toolkit to support staff to incorporate carbon reduction and reporting requirements based on the carbon level relevant to their particular contract and purchase type.

4. Developing a supply chain emissions monitoring framework - Developing an emissions monitoring framework linked to the levels of supplier reporting requirements to improve the quality of NRW supply chain emissions monitoring over time.

The plan contains 31 actions to deliver these four elements, a proposed timeline and indicates which teams will need to be involved in the delivery of each.

Setting targets for supply chain decarbonisation

Because our supply chain emissions estimates are currently based on spend based emissions factors rather than product and service specific data or supplier specific data, quantitative progress monitoring is not currently possible. Our supply chain decarbonisation forward plan will support absolute emissions target setting and monitoring by 2025.

Few organisations have quantified and reported supply chain emissions reductions. The communications company BT have a 29% target for supply chain emission reduction by 2030 and achieved an 8% reduction in the first three years, equivalent to 2.67% annually. The NHS in Wales has also set itself a target for procurement emissions equivalent to reductions of 2.63% per year by 2030.

At the time of writing our supply chain decarbonisation forward plan, aligning with the Science Based Targets Initiative (SBTI) for scope 3 emissions would have meant an annual linear reduction rate of 2.5% between 2020 and 2035 to keep global temperatures well below 2 degrees higher than pre-industrial temperatures. This was updated as part of the SBTI Corporate Net-zero standard, which recommends setting scope 3 targets which are consistent with limiting warming to at least well-below 2°C for near-term targets (5-10 years) and 1.5°C for long-term targets (by 2050). For scope 3 emissions for near-term targets a 7% year on year reduction is now suggested and a minimum 97% overall reduction for long-term targets.

The decarbonisation scenarios set out in Figure 23 show the possible trajectory of NRW supply chain emissions to 2030 under three illustrative scenarios: 1) business-as-usual (the average emissions between 2019 and 2022 continued out to 2030), 2) an evidence based scenario equivalent to the previous SBTI 2.5% linear annual reduction rate as outlined in the supply chain decarbonisation forward plan, and 3) an updated SBTI scenario assuming a 7% year on year reduction to 2030 (calculated for absolute emissions rather than physical intensity emissions as recommended, because no single physical intensity metric would be applicable to the whole NRW supply chain). Scenario 2 would achieve an overall 25% reduction from the baseline by 2030 and scenario 3 would achieve an overall 51.6% reduction from the baseline by 2030.

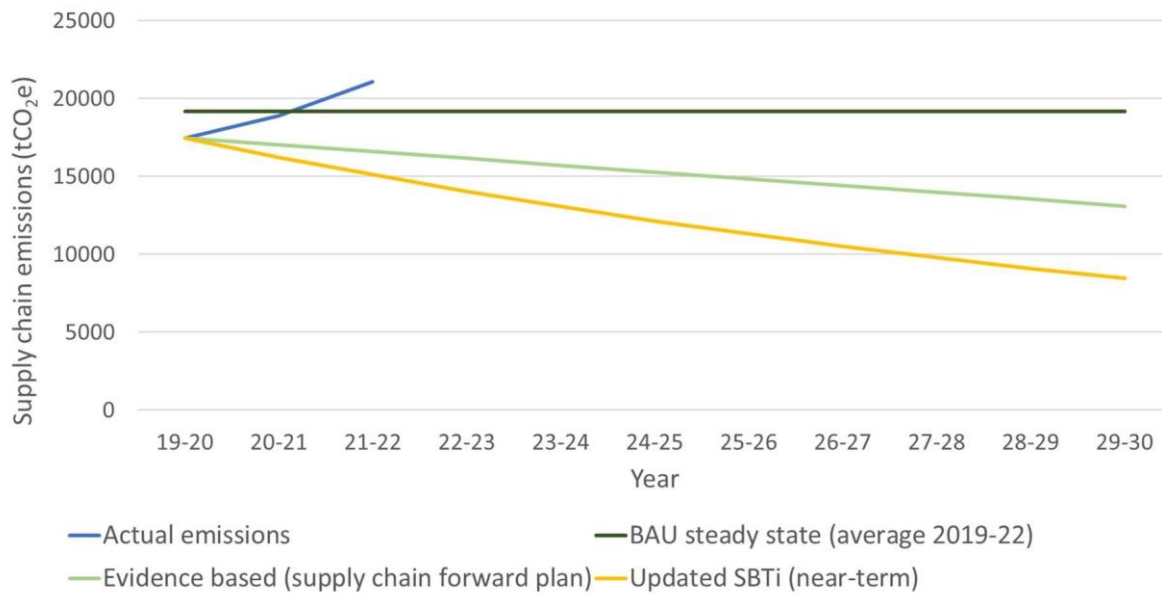


Figure 23. NRW supply chain decarbonisation scenarios out to 2030 and actual emissions calculated for 2019-22.

Next steps

- Finalising and resourcing our supply chain decarbonisation forward plan (which includes actions below)
- Introducing a tiered system of carbon reporting and reduction requirements for all suppliers by 2025
- Developing a toolkit for staff to support contract managers to include the carbon reduction and reporting requirements relevant to their contract tier
- Developing a supplier emissions questionnaire on organisational emissions
- Integrating basic carbon questions into all of our tender and quotation templates for suppliers
- Exploring the use of carbon calculators for high value, high emission contracts and frameworks to require suppliers to baseline and demonstrate contract or project level savings
- Developing a system to centrally record contract level emissions data and combine this with allocated organisational emissions and spend based emissions data for lower value contracts to produce whole supply chain emissions estimates

NRW Operational assets

Overview of Greenhouse Gas Emissions

NRW's Hydrometry and Telemetry (H&T) operational teams manage around 700 remote assets, including pumping stations, rain gauges and gauging stations, which require electricity to monitor river levels and flow, rainfall and groundwater. This electricity is usually provided via a grid connection or through on-site batteries. An overview of the majority of these assets can be found [here](#). The data from these operational assets is used for flood protection and flood warnings, water resource management and reducing the environmental damage from over abstraction, to inform water quality policies and many other NRW and external customer requirements. Operational assets accounted for approximately 1% of NRW's GHG emissions in 2021/2022. Table 8 gives a breakdown of the different assets and their associated electricity consumption and GHG emissions in 2021-2022. The majority of the c.700 assets operate using batteries, for which there is little or no energy consumption data available. Consequently, Table 8 only accounts for around 250 operational assets where energy usage is known.

Table 8: Energy usage and GHG emissions for NRW's operational assets.

Asset type	Electricity kWh	tCO ₂ e
CCTV	101,922	24
Flood Warning Site	19,192	4
Gauging Station	153,806	36
Pumping Station	539,602	125
Rain Gauge	64,550	15
River Level Station	21,146	5
Unknown	168,742	39
Weir	29,703	7
Total	1,098,662	254

Travel emissions are one of the largest sources of carbon from H&T assets, which is captured within the Fleet and Business Travel emissions. These assets require regular maintenance, which requires staff to travel to site. Although some maintenance can be carried out in a systematic way or remotely, the nature of the network does not allow this routinely.

Actions to Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Solar PV has been installed on a number of assets including 42 hydrometric sites in Southeast Wales and the Cilfrew gauging station. A detailed overview of this project can be found [here](#). Installing renewable energy reduces the GHG emissions as the reliance of grid electricity is lowered and can also reduce the number of visits required for maintenance at sites which rely on batteries. Bespoke solar PV cabinets or small pole mounted solar PV were installed at hydrometric sites. A roof mounted solar PV was installed at the Cilfrew

gauging station. The estimated annual GHG emission savings from these installations in 2018 was 948 kgCO_{2e} and increases to 1376 kgCO_{2e} if staff travel reductions are included.

There are 458 operational assets in South Wales and currently 135 of these have solar PV installed. These are typically flood warning sites with an equipment kiosk but there are a small number of solar only buildings. The solar PV on these assets recharges internal batteries. There are 57 sites where power is provided by an internal battery to a small data logger and a number of rain gauges which are manually read. The majority of operational assets in South Wales are grid connected or have power provided by other organisations.

There are approximately 220 operational assets in North Wales, circa 80 of which have solar PV installed which provides the main source of power. The majority of assets have batteries to provide back-up power in the event of solar PV or electricity grid failure. For example, at Garndolbenmaen a large array of solar panels with battery back-up are used to power a pump for the Eel Pass at the weir. Other assets which have recently been converted to solar PV and battery back-up include Fardon, Llansantffraid and Cyfronydd River Level Stations. Brynhyfryd Raingauge has also had solar PV recently installed. There are also approximately 100 standalone data loggers which are low power devices powered by internal batteries. Assets are also being rationalised and being combined into one per site where appropriate.

For NRW to meet its net zero ambitions operational assets will need to play their part. The following actions are suggested:

- Ensure electricity supplies have Automatic Meter Readers (AMR) so that electricity data and invoices are accurate, and ensure all assets are on our main 100% renewable energy contract.
- Review current progress in retrofitting renewable energy technologies to assets and revisit previous feasibility studies and update where necessary.
- Install ground mounted renewable energy to self-supply energy to NRW assets, where suitable and feasible.
- Further explore renewable energy generation on the NRW managed estate for self-supply where the location of assets allows.
- Retrofit all NRW managed pumping stations with energy efficient pumps and renewable energy generation, where feasible.
- Retrofit all smaller NRW managed assets (e.g., gauging stations) with microgeneration renewable energy, where feasible.
- Ensure solar PV is considered when designing and developing all new assets.

Next Steps

Review progress with Hydrometry and Telemetry and develop a programme of further renewable energy retrofit across operational assets.

Land use and management

NRW manages around 7% of Wales' land area covering some 143,300 ha. The vast majority of this is the Welsh Government Woodland Estate, leased to and managed by NRW. Timber production on the NRW Estate represents 60% of the Welsh harvested timber volume, and an important carbon store and source of wood products that have the potential to substitute for some other products with higher embedded carbon. NRW also manages most National Nature Reserves that protect a diverse range of habitats including woodlands, heathlands, grasslands, dunes and saltmarsh. Other parts of the Estate comprise flood defences and some areas of coastal inter-tidal habitat, such as the Dee Estuary. Finally, there are small parcels of land associated with our offices, depots, pumping and monitoring stations.

As part of the Carbon Positive project, we have undertaken detailed modelling into the carbon stores, sequestration and emissions from all the habitats on the Estate. This included a specific assessment of the carbon status of our forests by Forest Research that modelled each stand of trees based on criteria such as species composition, age and soil type [Matthews et al 2017]. This has provided us with a detailed baseline net carbon status of the forest estate, including projections into the future to 2040. Given peatlands store such large quantities of carbon per hectare, we also commissioned research from the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology to model the net carbon status of peatlands on the Estate [Williamson et al 2016]. This showed that while a small proportion of sites in favourable condition were likely to be sequestering carbon the majority of peatland is in a degraded condition so is emitting carbon. Indeed, the estimated emissions from peat on the Estate are greater than our operational emissions. Given that forests and peatlands represent over 85% of the Estate, we used the best available cited carbon flux data sources for all other habitats rather than more in-depth analysis.

The total net quantity of carbon sequestered in habitats on the NRW estate in the base year 2015/16 was estimated to be -390,924 tCO₂e. This is a GHG balance figure, where habitat emissions are subtracted from total sequestration to give a net carbon sequestration figure for the estate. Emissions to the atmosphere are reported here as positive numbers and sequestration (removals) as negative. The estate's sequestration is dominated by removals in woodland habitats (-418,156 tCO₂e in the base year) but coastal habitats contribute to removals on the estate (-6,661 tCO₂e) – see Figure 24. All other habitats are net emitters, apart from open water, rock exposure and waste for which no emissions or removals were assumed.

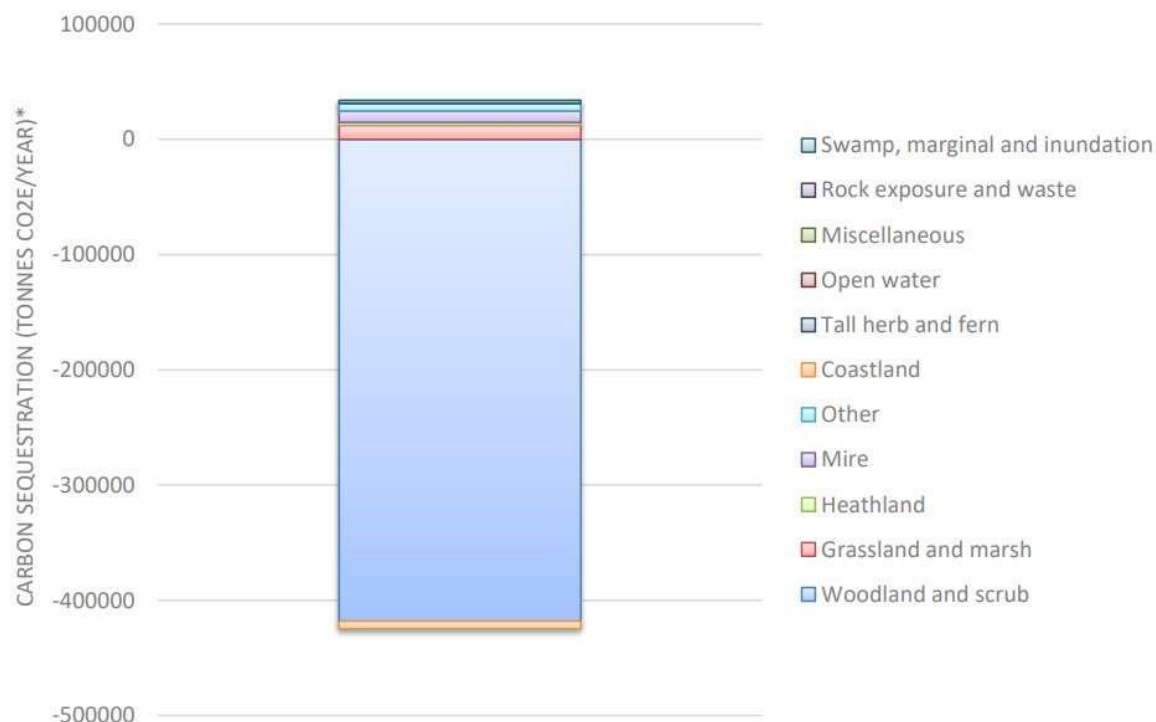


Figure 24. Carbon sequestration on the NRW estate by habitat type. (*Positive values indicate that the habitat type is a net source of emissions).

Grassland, marsh and mire habitats are the largest sources of emissions. Table 9 shows how many habitats on the estate were estimated to be net emitters. Results from the deep peat emissions mapping work by CEH indicate that while near natural blanket bog and raised bog habitats are net sequesters, current scientific evidence suggests that all other deep peat habitats are net emitters (Williamson et al., 2016). The majority of habitats on mineral soils were assumed to be in equilibrium with no net emissions or sequestration, therefore there were no removals to counterbalance or outweigh emissions from the habitat areas on deep peat.

Table 9. Carbon sequestration i.e. GHG balance of habitats on the NRW estate by underlying soil type.

Carbon sequestration removals (-) or emissions (+) in tonnes CO2e/year by underlying soil type			
Habitat category	Deep peat soils	Mineral soils (including organo-mineral)	All soils total
Woodland and scrub	-23,580	-394,576	-418,156
Grassland and marsh	12,124	0	12,124
Heathland	2,581	0	2,581
Mire	9,781	203	9,984
Other	6,614	0	6,614

Coastland	0	-6,661	-6,661
Tall herb and fern	194	0	194
Open water	0	0	0
Miscellaneous	50	0	50
Rock exposure and waste	0	0	0
Swamp, marginal and inundation	2,346	0	2,346
Totals	10,109	-401,034	-390,924

As well as assessing carbon sequestration and emissions from the habitats on the Estate, estimates were calculated for the carbon stored in the habitats and soils. Woodland and scrub habitats hold 80.9% of total stocks and mires (primarily bog and fen) a further 9.1% of the total. Total carbon stocks in habitats on the NRW estate were estimated to be 32,862,000 tCO_{2e} in the base year 2015/16. If released these stocks would give rise to 120,494,000 tCO_{2e}, which is equivalent to almost four years of total Welsh GHG emissions. This serves to illustrate the importance of ensuring that existing habitats are managed and protected to maintain these stores of carbon.

This baseline assessment of the carbon status of the NRW Estate provided further impetus for establishing a programme for restoration of peat on the Estate, which is now part of the National Peatland Action Programme (NPAP) that has restored over 1650 ha of peatland over its first 2 years (2020-2022), of which 640 ha has been on the NRW Estate.

Next Steps

While NRW manages a large Estate, there is very limited potential for land use change, such as woodland creation to increase carbon storage as most of the Estate is already woodland or managed for the existing habitats for wildlife or is otherwise unsuitable for land use change, e.g. its role in flood defence or intertidal in nature. Consequently, much of NRW's work that will contribute to land use change is outside of the Estate in partnership with others through for example the NPAP that NRW manages or our input to the development of the National Forest, which is beyond the scope of this report. Where there has been a permanent land use change, for example due to windfarms constructed on the WGWE, we are undertaking compensatory planting to counteract that loss of woodland cover through acquiring land and planting trees.

We will revise the net carbon status modelling assessment of the habitats on the Estate soon, taking account of the latest available estimates of carbon fluxes for each habitat, as well as the restoration of peatlands on the Estate.

We will also continue to consider impacts on the carbon status of our land resulting from management interventions across the Estate. The principal action to enhance the carbon status will remain the restoration of degraded peat by restoring the hydrological condition of bogs, which will be delivered through the National Peatland Action Programme.

Governance, Decision-making and Finance

Delivering decarbonisation within a large complex organisation such as NRW requires a clear governance framework and work programme that facilitates the effective delivery of the future actions set out in proceeding sections of this Plan. In response to the Welsh Government declaration of a Climate Emergency in 2019, we reviewed the governance of our climate change related work and established a strategic management group including a sub-group of our Leadership Team along with climate change thematic experts. This group has a central role in both steering our climate work programme but also enabling actions and decision-making to be mainstreamed across the organisation. Following the development of our new Corporate Plan to 2030 - Nature and People Thriving Together, we are currently reviewing our wider work programme governance to align with the three Corporate Plan Wellbeing Objectives that include a specific climate focussed objective - Well-being objective 2: Communities are resilient to climate change. We are intending to incorporate both operational GHG emissions data and a climate risk metric into our new corporate performance reporting system so that in evaluating our organisational performance, action on decarbonisation and climate risk are considered.

Currently, we are developing our approach to require all our programmes and projects to consider climate change and decarbonisation, and as detailed above we are working to incorporate consideration of carbon into our procurement and contract management processes. This wider work on embedding consideration of carbon and climate risk in our governance and processes to influence decision-making will be an on-going action over the next few years.

Most of the actions set out in this Plan require a combination of capital or revenue funding and/or staff resource for their delivery. While there is some potential to deliver them using existing resources, it is very clear that specific budgetary costs and staff resources will be required for delivery. For some elements we have already estimated or calculated costs, while other actions will require further evaluation. A key action following publication of this Plan will be the development of a costed delivery plan that identifies not only the financial resources but the teams responsible for delivery so that decarbonisation is mainstreamed across the organisation.

Behaviour change

The UK Climate Change Committee (CCC) identifies that nearly 60% of the changes in the Balanced Pathway to Net Zero (Climate Change Committee 2020) for the UK rely on societal or behavioural changes. The Welsh Government's Carbon Budget 2 also highlights the importance of behavioural change to reach Net Zero, with the development of a climate change Strategy for public engagement & action recognised as crucial to Wales-wide action.

NRW recognises the important role behavioural change has to play in reducing our own organisational carbon footprint too. As part of our work to embed consideration of decarbonisation and climate change in everyones work, NRW has worked with Manchester

Metropolitan University (MMU) and Cynnal Cymru-Sustain Wales to develop a bespoke climate change training package that meets the Carbon Literacy standard. A definition of Carbon Literacy is an awareness of the carbon costs and impacts of everyday activities and the ability and motivation to reduce emissions on an individual, community and organisational basis.

Some of the main aims of this training programme is to:

- raise climate change awareness in terms of both decarbonisation and adaptation to climate risk;
- help staff embed consideration of carbon into their own decision-making;
- develop an organisational culture for emission reduction;
- normalise the discussion of climate change within teams;
- empower staff to recognise and minimise embedded carbon in every action we take.

Following an initial trial of the training for 200 staff, we are making the one-day course available to all staff delivered by experienced external trainers from both MMU and Cynnal Cymru-Sustain Wales. While the training seeks to both inform and upskills staff in their understanding of climate change and carbon, it goes further requiring them to identify and submit work related actions to deliver decarbonisation within their role or team. There is already evidence that some attendees are seeking to make changes and consider how climate change can be addressed through their role or the processes that they are involved in delivering.

As part of the effort to both normalise consideration of carbon and drive behavioural change, NRW now provides badged fleet vehicle telematics data to team leaders and managers. The telematics data provides accurate mileage data incurred by each team as well as driving styles. Such information can aid teams to identify new ways of working to reduce business mileage, including identifying opportunities for further training to improve routes, time of driving (e.g. to avoid rush our traffic congestion) including driving style (e.g. engine idling, hard acceleration/deceleration, excessive engine revving etc.) to improve efficiencies and minimise emissions.

Next Steps

Continue the roll out of our bespoke climate change training to staff and to monitor through post course surveying its impact on behaviour and decision-making.

Waste

NRW's waste production arises through wide-ranging business activities including one-off large-scale projects, operational delivery work, purchasing of goods and services, running our offices, depots and Visitor Centres along any waste left by others.

Figure 25 shows the waste produced per year from 2016 to 2022. Over the last six years on average NRW produced 1,218 tonnes of waste per year. There is no discernible trend in our waste data to suggest production of waste is significantly increasing or decreasing.

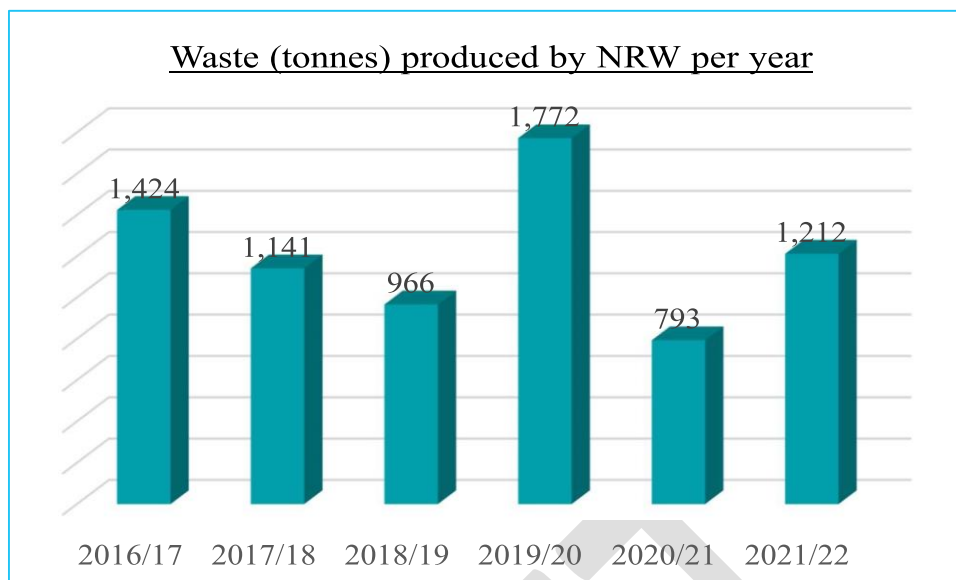


Figure 25: Amount of waste (tonnes) produced in NRW by year.

The amount of waste reported through the annual WG Net Zero reporting process is lower than the actual amount of waste generated by NRW because the reporting requirement currently does not include all waste types. Table 10 below shows the amount of waste sent to landfill, reported waste to WG and emissions from the reported waste between 2019 to 2023. The reduction in waste including associated emissions during 2020/21 is likely to be due to the pandemic when our buildings and sites were closed to both staff and the public.

Table 10. Details of waste sent to landfill, reported to WG and associated GHG emissions

	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Waste landfilled (tonnes)	550	220	497	351
Total waste reported to WG (tonnes)	1,151	711	1,131	841
Emissions (tCO ₂ e) from reported waste	67	111	245	193

Actions to Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions

NRW has created a waste minimisation project team to reduce the overall amount of waste we generate and reduce GHG emissions through delivering the following actions:

- In 2022/23, improve waste segregation and recycling rates to ensure organisation-wide compliance with the Welsh Governments Business and Public Sector Recycling Regulations. These Workplace Recycling Regulations will come into force in April 2024;
- In 2022/23, quantify end-of-life ICT equipment and investigate waste reduction and circular economy options to ensure items are reused and recycled. New laptops will be

more energy efficient compared to current Windows 10 laptops. Packaging for new product has been minimised to reduce waste and only recyclable paper-based packaging will be used. Old laptops will be made available to staff for purchase or redistributed for reuse and recycling by contractors;

- In 2022/23, quantify single use plastic use and investigate waste reduction and circular economy options at the Analytical Services laboratory. The usage of disposable plastic in the Lab has been assessed to identify potential areas where plastic use could be reduced. Recently, the laboratory has secured funding for a pipette washer that will prevent the disposal of single use plastic pipettes. This is anticipated to be installed early in 2024;

Next steps

- Align with Welsh Government's Beyond Recycling Strategy through aiming to achieve zero waste to landfill by 2025;
- Strategically assess waste impacts through NRW's Procurement Category Management approach and further embed circular economy principles into procurement activity i.e. stipulating no use of single use plastics in our tender documentation;
- Work with large scale infrastructure projects to influence waste reduction and embed circular economy principles;
- Develop NRW visitor centres into exemplars in waste minimisation by segregating waste at source and minimising the sale of single use packaged goods e.g. bottled water;
- Develop a Circular Economy and Waste Minimisation internal policy and raise internal awareness of the principles and how they directly contribute to SMNR.

Monitoring and reporting

Continuing to improve the collection and analysis of high-quality operational data through our net zero reporting is a key priority if we are to understand and reduce carbon emissions. The data will be essential to further develop and assess the impact of mitigation measures and the overall delivery of this Plan.

We will continue to report annually our organisational carbon footprint to Welsh Government using the Public Sector Net Zero Reporting Guide, including developing more efficient and accurate processes for monitoring using our plan for continuous data and reporting improvements that has come from the first three years of reporting. We will build upon our Environmental Management System (EMS), which already reports on most direct emissions and electricity emissions, as part of maintaining the organisation's ISO14001:2015 certification. For some emissions sources, such as staff commute and homeworking emissions, we are intending to undertake an annual staff travel survey to improve reporting and help monitor progress over time.

The organisation's supply chain emissions have been calculated using emissions factors for broad groups of goods and services that have enabled us to identify procurement hotspots and key contracts and frameworks. However, as set out in our Forward Plan for

decarbonising our supply chain, we will be seeking to gather supplier or service and product specific data where possible to track decarbonisation progress. Increasingly many larger contractors are beginning to gather data to meet customer expectations. However, this will not be possible for many contracts so monitoring progress to reduce supply chain emissions will also require the development of relevant metrics such as the proportion of NRW contracts containing carbon criteria or number of key suppliers with mitigation targets and plans.

Further refining the effective collection and use of data will be an iterative process that will require clear roles and responsibilities across the organisation as to who is responsible for collection, collation and evaluation of data. An agile approach will be promoted to ensure that systems and ways-of-working that are proportionate are adopted.

Working with the Welsh public sector and support to our customers and stakeholders

In establishing our strategic work on organisational decarbonisation through the Carbon Positive project, we sought to share the outputs, lessons learnt, resources and experience with others through publishing our reports and a suite of case studies as well as holding workshops across Wales. Since the completion of the Carbon Positive project, we have continued to seek to work collaboratively with the Welsh public sector on decarbonisation to support the collective public sector ambition to be carbon neutral by 2030. To this end, we have organised or contributed to workshops with various Public Service Boards (PSBs) in relation to the development of a common carbon reporting approach across the public sector and understand approaches to the delivery of decarbonisation actions. In particular our advice on how to consider carbon in terms of land use has been sought to develop proposals for peatland restoration and woodland creation. We also provide technical advice to a range of other organisations, for example, through the LG Climate Strategy Panel (LGCSP) to help facilitate the collective efforts of the Local Authorities in Wales to decarbonise. We have also sought to collaborate and learn from others. For example, we have benefited from the technical advice provided by the Welsh Government Energy Service (WGES) that has helped us to evaluate the feasible energy actions required on many of our buildings and to provide technical evidence making the case for electrification of our fleet. We intend to continue this collaborative approach in future, through continuing our interactions with a range of public partners including PSBs, WGES and LGCSP.

While this Plan is focussed on our action to decarbonise NRW as an organisation, it is important to recognise that much of our efforts on decarbonisation seek to contribute to the wider delivery of a net zero Wales by 2050. While not the subject of this Plan the following activities provide a sense of the range of action that is helping others to decarbonise across Wales:

- Production of around 60% of Welsh timber and through our Timber Marketing Plan seeking to encourage its greater use in Welsh buildings;

- Enabling development of windfarms on the WGWE and facilitating development of marine renewables through monitoring impacts and developing innovative regulatory approaches;
- Delivering the National Peatland Action Programme by restoring the hydrological status of peatlands to reduce their emissions;
- Facilitate the development of the National Forest and woodland creation across Wales;
- Develop our role to support industrial decarbonisation through our work as an industrial regulator;
- Supporting the development of the Climate Action Wales website that provides support for people across Wales to take decarbonisation measures.

Our position on net zero, offsetting and residual emissions

Based on the internationally recognised principle of taking account of both the emissions and removals (sequestration) that is within our operational control, we are technically already a net zero organisation by virtue of the woodland estate that we manage. However, as set out in this plan that doesn't mean we should in anyway avoid further action to reduce our emissions. The removals provided by the NRW forest estate and other habitats will be critical to balancing out the residual emissions of other organisations in the Welsh public sector if the ambition for a net zero Welsh public sector by 2030 is to be in any way possible. The more we can reduce our operational emissions and increase the net sequestration status of our estate by improving the condition of peatlands, the greater the contribution that NRW can contribute to the collective goal for the public sector as a whole.

In developing our Net Zero Plan, we have sought to apply the principles of the Science Based Targets Initiative which includes setting a target to cut emissions by more than 90% over the long-term – the evidence that we have gathered for this plan show that this won't be possible by 2030, but that this should be our long-term ambition. The credibility of voluntary offsetting schemes is questionable at best. Reducing your own emissions should always be the preferred option in terms of addressing climate change whether organisationally or personally. There remains a healthy debate as to the validity of offsetting, and whether it is in large part to assuage people's conscience or for organisational corporate social responsibility reasons. But, the key issue is that offsetting doesn't actually reduce net global emissions merely avoid increasing them through offsetting so in view of NRW's net zero status we would not look to offset any of our emissions but focus all our efforts on mitigation and supporting others to do so too.

Acknowledgements

We acknowledge the contributions from a range of staff across NRW who helped in developing and agreeing the targets and actions set out in the Plan.

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Emissions Category	Action	Lead Delivery Function
Built Estate	Asset Rationlisation	Renewal/FFM
Built Estate	Effective energy management (energy procurement, energy data analysis, reviewing heating settings);	Renewal/FFM
Built Estate	Energy efficiency measures e.g. insulation, heating controls;	Renewal/FFM
Built Estate	Building mounted renewable energy systems	Renewal/FFM
Built Estate	Low carbon heating (heat pumps_	Renewal/FFM
Built Estate	Behvaiuor change	Renewal/FFM
Built Estate	Ensuring buildings are resilient to current and future climate change	Renewal/FFM
Built Estate	Ensure all low and no cost energy saving measures highlighted in the Built Estate Decarbonisation Forward Plan are implemented by 2024.	Renewal/FFM
Built Estate	estimated costs and savings and to support the business case for a strategic programme of building decarbonisation retrofit.	Renewal/FFM/CCD
Built Estate	Deliver asset rationalisation, energy efficiency, building renewable energy and low carbon heating across the built estate between now and 2030 through existing programmes such as Adfywio and delivery of the Accommodation Strategy and collaboration with key stakeholders such as Facilities Management.	Renewal/FFM
Fleet & Plant	No new ICE vehicles should be leased from 2023 onwards unless absolutely necessary. Any new ICE vehicles and all existing ICE vehicles should be operated using HVO, although this will increase the operational cost due to a higher fuel price	Fleet
Fleet & Plant	All badged ICE vehicles (except 4x4s and HGVs) should be replaced with BEVs by 2029-30	Fleet
Fleet & Plant	ICE 4x4s and HGVs should be operated using HVO and replaced with BEVs when feasiabile	Fleet
Fleet & Plant	A review should be carried out on the use of existing ICE 4x4s to establish if current activities are necessary, can be carried out remotely or by other means with lower carbon footprint	Fleet
Fleet & Plant	An investigation should be undertaken to identify the causes of low utilisation (<6k annual miles) of some badged vehicles	Fleet
Fleet & Plant	Identify steps to improve utilisation of existing badged BEVs by staff	Fleet
Fleet & Plant	Integrate data capture system to monitor mileage and energy use by BEVs as soon as technically feasible.	Fleet
Fleet & Plant	Improve tracking data to determine peak mileage and typical patterns of use for individual vehicles.	Facilities
Fleet & Plant	NRW should carry out an assessment of plant use and create a forward plan that assesses the feasibility of progressively transitioning fossil fuel based plant with both electric and hydrogen technology.	Fleet
Business Travel	Grey Fleet: A periodic review should be carried out to ensure NRW's Travel Decision Tree is fit for purpose and applied when travelling for business purposes.	HR/Fleet
Business Travel	Grey Fleet: Staff should be encouraged to use badged pool vehicles for business travels where possible if the private vehicle is not a ULEV (<75g/CO2/km).	HR/Fleet
Business Travel	Grey Fleet: NRW should introduce a salary sacrifice scheme for staff to lease BEV's, which will have a positive impact in terms of emissions reduction from grey fleet and staff commute.	HR/Unions/Fleet
Business Travel	Hire Care Fleet: In association with a periodic review of NRW's Travel Decision Tree an assessment to ensure that the most efficient vehicle types are being hired (suitable for the intended use) should be undertaken to assess BEV uptake.	Fleet
Homeworking & Commuting	Optimise existing low carbon IT services and continue investing in digital infrastructure that enables productive remote working and connectivity across the organisation.	HR/Renewal/ Facilities

Agile Working, Homeworking & Commuting	Continue to conduct an annual 'staff travel' survey to reduce our reliance on generic benchmarks and identify tailored decarbonisation initiatives related to agile working.	ICT/CC&D/ HR/Renewal/ Facilities
Homeworking & Commuting	Continue to align our planning/decision making to the Sustainable Travel Hierarchy and support its' uptake among staff to shift commuting habits to low carbon forms of travel.	HR/Renewal/ Facilities
Agile Working, Homeworking & Commuting	Engage with staff to understand existing barriers to the use of active travel and public transport.	ICT/CC&D/ HR/Renewal/ Facilities
Agile Working, Homeworking & Commuting	Provide an enabling environment for low carbon travel, including improvements to provision of bicycle storage, showers, electric vehicle (EV) chargers, and maintain enabling policies such as our cycle-to-work scheme.	ICT/CC&D/ HR/Renewal/ Facilities
Homeworking & Commuting	Develop a staff calculator to explore the impact of householder heating fuel and commuting distance on emissions to inform staff decisions on these daily matters.	HR/Renewal/ Facilities
Supply Chain	Introducing a tiered system of carbon reporting & reduction requirements for all suppliers by 2025	PRG/CMSS/ PMO
Supply Chain	Developing a toolkit for staff to support contract managers to include the carbon reduction and reporting requirements relevant to their contract tier	Procurement/ PRG/CMSS/ PMO
Supply Chain	Developing a supplier emissions questionnaire on organisational emissions	Procurement/ PRG/CMSS/ PMO
Supply Chain	Integrating basic carbon questions into all of our tender and quotation templates for suppliers	Procurement/ PRG/CMSS/ PMO
Supply Chain	Exploring the use of carbon calculators for high value, high emission contracts and frameworks to require suppliers to baseline and demonstrate contract or project level savings	Procurement/ PRG/CMSS/ PMO
Supply Chain	Developing a system to centrally record contract level emissions data and combine this with allocated organisational emissions and spend based emissions data for lower value contracts to produce whole supply chain emissions estimates for NRW	Procurement/ PRG/CMSS/ PMO
Operational Assets	Ensure electricity supplies have Automatic Meter Readers (AMR) so that electricity data and invoices are accurate, and ensure all assets are on our main 100% renewable energy contract.	Operations/ MEICA/H&T
Operational Assets	Review current progress in retrofitting renewable energy technologies to assets and revisit previous feasibility studies and update where necessary.	Operations/ MEICA/H&T
Operational Assets	Install ground mounted renewable energy to self-supply energy to NRW assets, where suitable and feasible.	Operations/ MEICA/H&T
Operational Assets	Further explore renewable energy generation on the NRW managed estate for self-supply where the location of assets allows.	Operations/ MEICA/H&T
Operational Assets	Retrofit all NRW managed pumping stations with energy efficient pumps and renewable energy generation, where feasible.	Operations/ MEICA/H&T
Operational Assets	Ensure solar PV is considered when designing and developing all new assets.	Operations/ MEICA/H&T
Operational Assets	Review progress with Hydrometry and Telemetry and develop a programme of further renewable energy retrofit across operational assets.	Operations/ MEICA/H&T
Operational Assets	Retrofit all smaller NRW managed assets (e.g. gauging stations) with microgeneration renewable energy, where feasible.	Operations/ MEICA/H&T
Land Use	Revise the net carbon status modelling assessment of the habitats on the Estate over the next year, taking account of the latest available estimates of carbon fluxes for each habitat, as well as the restoration of the peatlands on the Estate	CC&D

Behaviour Change	Continue the roll out of our bespoke climate change training to staff and to monitor through post course surveying its impact on behaviour and decision making	CC&D/L&D
Waste	Complete and implement a Circular Economy & Waste Minimisation policy by end of 2023	Waste

Emissions Category	Action	Document/ Programme	Lead Delivery Function	What?	Timescale	Resource		External funding required? Y/N	Existing Technology? Y/N	Existing Budget?	Corporate Commitment?	Ease of delivery	Impact;		Formal Decision Required? Y/N	Priority Score	In Progress
						Internal (Staff Time)	External skills						Hi (3) Med (2) Low (1)	Low (1)			
Land Use	Revise the net carbon status modelling assessment of the habitats on the Estate over the next year, taking account of the latest available estimates of carbon fluxes for each habitat, as well as the restoration of the peatlands on the Estate	NZ Plan	CC&D	Key Actions	2024	3	3	N	Y (UKWIR)	3	3 (AUDIT REC)	2	3	N		17	Y
Behaviour Change	Continue the roll out of our bespoke climate change training to staff and to monitor through post course surveying its impact on behaviour and decision making	NZ Plan	CC&D/L&D	Key Actions	2025	3	3	N	N/A	3	3	2	3	N		17	Y
Waste	Complete and implement a Circular Economy & Waste Minimisation policy by end of 2024	NZ Plan/ Waste Annual Plan	Waste	Actions	2024	3	3	N	N/A	3	3	3	2	N		17	Ongoing
Waste	Aligning with Welsh Governments' Beyond Recycling strategy to aim to achieve zero waste to landfill by 2025.	NZ Plan/ WG Beyond Recycling Strategy	Waste	Commitment	2025	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

PRIORITY STATUS SCORES
High = 14-18
Medium = 7-13
Low = 0-6

Emissions Category	Action	Document/ Programme	Lead Delivery Function	What?	Timescale	Resource Internal (Staff Time)	External skills	External funding required? Y/N	Existing Technology? Y/N	Existing Budget?	Corporate Commitment?	Ease of delivery	Impact; Hi (3) Med (2) Low (1)	Formal Decision Required? Y/N	Priority Score	In Progress
Operational Assets	Ensure electricity supplies have Automatic Meter Readers (AMR) so that electricity data and invoices are accurate, and ensure all assets are on our main 100% renewable energy contract.	NZ Plan	Operations/ MEICA/H&T	Actions	2026	3	3	N	Y	2	3	2	3	N	16	Future
Operational Assets	Review current progress in retrofitting renewable energy technologies to assets and revisit previous feasibility studies and update where necessary.	NZ Plan	Operations/ MEICA/H&T	Actions	2025	1	3	N	Y	2	3	1	1	N	11	N
Operational Assets	Install ground mounted renewable energy to self-supply energy to NRW assets, where suitable and feasible.	NZ Plan	Operations/ MEICA/H&T	Actions	2026	1	3	N	Y	2	3	2	3	Y	14	N
Operational Assets	Further explore renewable energy generation on the NRW managed estate for self-supply where the location of assets allows.	NZ Plan	Operations/ MEICA/H&T	Actions	2028	1	1	N	Y	1	3	1	2	N	9	Ongoing
Operational Assets	Retrofit all NRW managed pumping stations with energy efficient pumps and renewable energy generation, where feasible.	NZ Plan	Operations/ MEICA/H&T	Actions	2026	3	3	N	Y	3	3	2	2	Y	16	N
Operational Assets	Review progress with Hydrometry and Telemetry and develop a programme of further renewable energy retrofit across operational assets.	NZ Plan	Operations/ MEICA/H&T	Actions	2025	2	3	N	Y	2	3	2	3	Y	15	Y
Operational Assets	Retrofit all smaller NRW managed assets (e.g. gauging stations) with microgeneration renewable energy, where feasible.	NZ Plan	Operations/ MEICA/H&T	Actions	2028	3	3	N	Y	3	3	2	2	Y	16	Future
Operational Assets	Ensure solar PV is considered when designing and developing all new assets.	NZ Plan	Operations/ MEICA/H&T	Commitment	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Operational Assets/CCD	A target will not be set yet due to a paucity of data to provide an appropriate baseline. We will work with the Operational Assets teams to gather necessary data to set a realistic target by 2025.	NZ Plan	Operations/ MEICA/H&T/ CD	Commitment	2025	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

PRIORITY STATUS SCORES
High = 14-18
Medium = 7-13
Low = 0-6

No existing baseline to establish emissions profile

No resource due to priority hydrometry and telemetry projects

Link to fleet EV transition and lack of suitable vehicles.

Link to increased vandalism of remote installations and poor signal/power connections requiring upgrade. Many sites leased.

Emissions Category	Action	Document/ Programme	Lead Delivery Function	What?	Timescale	Resource		External funding required? Y/N	Existing Technology? Y/N	Existing Budget?	Corporate Commitment?	Ease of delivery	Impact; Hi (3) Med (2) Low (1)	Formal Decision Required? Y/N	Priority Score	In Progress
						Internal (Staff Time)	External skills									
Supply Chain	In 2023, we set out in our Supply Chain Forward Plan a process for carbon emissions assessment in tenders and contracts. We will use a carbon assessment calculator in all our construction contracts by 2025.	NZ Plan	CMSS	Commitment	2025	3	3	N	N/A	3	3	3	3	N	18	Y
Supply Chain	By 2025 we will have a clearer understanding of our scope 3 supply chain emissions and be able to set a measurable target in our revised Plan.	NZ Plan	Procurement	Commitment	2025	2	2	N	N/A	2	3	2	2	N	13	Ongoing
Supply Chain	We will aim to replace our tier 1 proxy data with tier 3 supplier data by 2025.	NZ Plan	Procurement	Commitment	2025	2	2	N	N/A	2	3	1	3	N	13	Ongoing
Supply Chain	Develop a sustainable procurement policy by the end of 2024.	NZ Plan	Procurement	Actions	2024	2	3	N	N/A	3	3	3	3	N	17	Y
Supply Chain	Targeting top emitting contracts and frameworks - Continuing the hotspots case study approach to target top emitting contracts and suppliers in a tailored way, to ensure maximum impact in these areas and to continue to provide learning to feed into the strategic approach.	Decarbonising NRW's supply chain: Forward Plan to 2030	Procurement	Actions	2024	1	2	N	N/A	3	2	1	2	N	11	Planned
Supply Chain	Introducing levels of carbon requirements for suppliers - Introducing a tiered system of carbon reduction and reporting requirements for all contracts, referred to as carbon levels, determined by contract value and emissions intensity. This will provide a consistent approach for carbon consideration across NRW procurement. To be rolled out to all contracts and framework agreements by 2025.	Decarbonising NRW's supply chain: Forward Plan to 2030	Procurement	Actions	2025	3	3	N	N/A	3	3	3	3	N	18	Ongoing
Supply Chain	Developing supporting tools and templates - Developing a procurement decarbonisation toolkit to support staff to incorporate carbon reduction and reporting requirements based on the carbon level relevant to their particular contract and purchase type.	Decarbonising NRW's supply chain: Forward Plan to 2030	Procurement	Actions	2025	2	3	N	N/A	3	3	3	3	N	17	Y
Supply Chain	Developing a supply chain emissions monitoring framework - Developing an emissions monitoring framework linked to the levels of supplier reporting requirements to improve the quality of NRW supply chain emissions monitoring over time.	Decarbonising NRW's supply chain: Forward Plan to 2030	Procurement/ PRG/CMSS/ PMO	Actions	2026	1	2	N	N/A	2	3	1	3	N	12	N
Supply Chain	Resourcing our supply chain decarbonisation forward plan.	NZ Plan	Procurement/ PRG/CMSS/ PMO	Next Steps	2025	1	2	N	N/A	1	3	2	3	N	12	N
Supply Chain	Introducing a tiered system of carbon reporting and reduction requirements for all suppliers by 2025.	NZ Plan	Procurement	Next Steps	2025	1	2	N	N/A	1	3	1	3	N	11	Ongoing
Supply Chain	Developing a toolkit for staff to support contract managers to include the carbon reduction and reporting requirements relevant to their contract tier.	NZ Plan	Procurement	Next Steps	2025	3	3	Y (EA Tool)	Y	3	3	2	3	N	17	Planned
Supply Chain	Developing a supplier emissions questionnaire on organisational emissions.	NZ Plan	Procurement	Next Steps	2024	3	3	N	N/A	3	3	3	3	N	18	Y
Supply Chain	Integrating basic carbon questions into all of our tender and quotation templates for suppliers.	NZ Plan	Procurement	Next Steps	2024	3	3	N	N/A	3	3	3	3	N	18	Y
Supply Chain	Exploring the use of carbon calculators for high value, high emission contracts and frameworks to require suppliers to baseline and demonstrate contract or project level savings.	NZ Plan	Procurement/ PRG/CMSS/ PMO	Next Steps	2024	3	3	Y (Business Wales Tool & EA ERIC)	Y	3	3	3	3	N	18	Y
Supply Chain	Developing a system to centrally record contract level emissions data and combine this with allocated organisational emissions and spend based emissions data for lower value contracts to produce whole supply chain emissions estimates for identifying and reducing NRW's emissions.	NZ Plan	Procurement/ PRG/CMSS/ PMO	Next Steps	2025	1	1	N	N/A	1	3	1	3	N	10	N

PRIORITY STATUS SCORES
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Emissions Category	Action	Document/ Programme	Lead Delivery Function	What?	Timescale	Resource Internal (Staff Time)	External skills	External funding required? Y/N	Existing Technology? Y/N	Existing Budget?	Corporate Commitment?	Ease of delivery	Impact; Hi (3) Med (2) Low (1)	Formal Decision Required? Y/N	Priority Score	In Progress
Agile Working, Homeworking & Commuting	Optimise existing low carbon IT services and continue investing in digital infrastructure that enables productive remote working and connectivity across the organisation.	NZ Plan	ICT/CC&D/ HR/ Renewal/ Facilities	Key actions	2030	3	3	N	Y	3	3	2	3	Y	17	Ongoing
Agile Working, Homeworking & Commuting	Continue to conduct an annual 'staff travel' survey to reduce our reliance on generic benchmarks and identify tailored decarbonisation initiatives related to agile working.	NZ Plan	ICT/CC&D/ HR/ Renewal/ Facilities	Key actions	Annual	3	3	N	N/A	1	3	3	1	N	14	Y
Agile Working, Homeworking & Commuting	Improve bicycle storage, showers and electric vehicle (EV) chargers.	NZ Plan	ICT/CC&D/ HR/ Renewal/ Facilities	Key actions	2026	3	3	N	Y	3	3	3	2	N	17	Ongoing
Agile Working, Homeworking & Commuting	Maintain enabling policies such as our cycle-to-work scheme.	NZ Plan	ICT/CC&D/ HR/ Renewal/ Facilities	Actions	2030	3	3	N	N/A	3	3	3	1	N	16	Ongoing
Agile Working, Homeworking & Commuting	Engage with staff to understand existing barriers to the use of active travel and public transport.	NZ Plan	HR/ Renewal/ Facilities	Actions	2025	3	3	N	N/A	3	2	1	1	N	13	N
Agile Working, Homeworking & Commuting	Develop a staff calculator to explore the impact of householder heating fuel and commuting distance on emissions to inform staff decisions on these daily matters.	NZ Plan	ICT/CC&D/ HR/ Renewal/ Facilities	Actions	2025	1	3	N	N/A	2	2	1	1	N	10	Planned
Agile Working, Homeworking & Commuting	Continue to align our planning/decision making to the Sustainable Travel Hierarchy and support its' uptake among staff to shift commuting habits to low carbon forms of travel.	NZ Plan	ICT/CC&D/ HR/ Renewal/ Facilities	Commitment	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Agile Working, Homeworking & Commuting	Provide an enabling environment for low carbon travel, including improvements to provision of bicycle storage, showers, electric vehicle (EV) chargers, and maintain enabling policies such as our cycle-to-work scheme.	NZ Plan	ICT/CC&D/ HR/ Renewal/ Facilities	Commitment	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Agile Working, Homeworking & Commuting	4.2% year on year reduction, resulting in a 35% reduction in emissions by 2030, with annual review of this target.	Target	All staff	Target	2030	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

PRIORITY STATUS SCORES
High = 14-18
Medium = 7-13
Low = 0-6

Emissions Category	Action	Document/ Programme	Lead Delivery Function	What?	Timescale	Resource		External funding required? Y/N	Existing Technology? Y/N	Existing Budget?	Corporate Commitment?	Ease of delivery	Impact;			Formal Decision Required? Y/N	Priority Score	In Progress
						Internal (Staff Time)	External skills						Hi (3)	Med (2)	Low (1)			
Business Travel	Grey Fleet: A periodic review should be carried out to ensure NRW's Travel Decision Tree is fit for purpose and applied when travelling for business purposes.	NZ Plan/Fleet Forward	FFM	Actions	2030	2	2	N	N/A	3	3	3	3	N		16	Planned	
Business Travel	Grey Fleet: Staff should be encouraged to use badged pool vehicles for business travels where possible if the private vehicle is not a ULEV (<75g/CO2/km).	NZ Plan/Fleet Forward	HR	Actions	2026	2	2	N	N/A	3	3	3	3	N		16	Ongoing	
Business Travel	Grey Fleet: NRW should introduce a salary sacrifice scheme for staff to lease BEV's, which will have a positive impact in terms of emissions reduction from grey fleet and staff commute.	NZ Plan/Fleet Forward	HR/FFM/ Adwyfio	Actions	2028	1	3	N	Y	1	3	1	3	Y		12	Future	
Business Travel	Hire Care Fleet: In association with a periodic review of NRW's Travel Decision Tree an assessment to ensure that the most efficient vehicle types are being hired (suitable for the intended use) should be undertaken to assess BEV uptake.	NZ Plan/Fleet Forward	HR/FFM/ Adwyfio	Actions	2030	3	3	N	Y	3	2	1	3	N		15	N	
Business Travel	4.2% year on year reduction, resulting in a 35% reduction in emissions by 2030, with review of the target in 2025.	Target	All	Target	2025	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	

PRIORITY STATUS SCORES
High = 14-18
Medium = 7-13
Low = 0-6

Emissions Category	Action	Document/ Programme	Lead Delivery Function	What?	Timescale	Resource Internal (Staff Time)	External skills	External funding required? Y/N	Existing Technology? Y/N	Existing Budget?	Corporate Commitment?	Ease of delivery	Impact; Hi (3) Med (2) Low (1)	Formal Decision Required? Y/N	Priority Score	In Progress
Fleet & Plant	No new ICE vehicles should be leased from 2023 onwards unless absolutely necessary. Any new ICE vehicles and all existing ICE vehicles should be operated using HVO, although this will increase the operational cost due to a higher fuel price.	NZ Plan	FFM	Key actions	2024 onwards	3	3	N	Y	3	3	3	3	N	18	N
Fleet & Plant	All badged ICE vehicles (except 4x4s and HGVs) should be replaced with BEVs by 2029-30.	NZ Plan	FFM	Key actions	2026-2029	3	3	N	Y	3	3	3	3	N	18	Y
Fleet & Plant	An investigation should be undertaken to identify the causes of low utilisation (<6k annual miles) of some badged vehicles	NZ Plan/ Adwyfio	FFM	Actions	2024/25	3	3	N	N/A	3	3	3	3	N	18	Y
Fleet & Plant	Identify steps to improve utilisation of existing badged BEVs by staff	NZ Plan	FFM	Actions	2024	3	3	N	Y	3	2	2	3	N	16	Y
Fleet & Plant	Improve tracking data to determine peak mileage and typical patterns of use for individual vehicles.	NZ Plan/ Adwyfio	FFM	Actions	2026	3	3	N	Y	3	2	2	3	N	16	Y
Fleet & Plant	A review should be carried out on the use of existing ICE 4x4s to establish if current activities are necessary, can be carried out remotely or by other means with lower carbon footprint.	NZ Plan	FFM	Actions	2026	2	3	N	N/A	3	3	1	2	N	14	N
Fleet & Plant	ICE 4x4s and HGVs should be operated using HVO and replaced with BEVs when practical.	NZ Plan	FFM	Actions	2030	2	3	N	Y	3	2	1	2	N	13	Ongoing
Fleet & Plant	Integrate data capture system to monitor mileage and energy use by BEVs as soon as technically feasible.	NZ Plan	FFM	Actions	2026	1	2	N	Y	3	3	1	3	N	13	Planned
Fleet & Plant	NRW should carry out an assessment of plant use and create a forward plan that assesses the feasibility of progressively transitioning fossil fuel based plant with both electric and hydrogen technology.	NZ Plan	FFM	Commitment	2030	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Fleet & Plant	Fleet; 66% reduction in emissions by 2030, subject to continued electric vehicle roll out and running four-wheel drive fleet on HVO (hydrogenated vegetable oil)	NZ Plan	FFM	Target	2030	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

PRIORITY STATUS SCORES
High = 14-18
Medium = 7-13
Low = 0-6

Each action is linked and is critical path for others.

Fleet overall affordability?
Scale - size of fleet and speed of decarbonisation?

Emissions Category	Action	Document/ Programme	Lead Delivery Function	What?	Timescale	Resource Internal (Staff Time)	External skills	External funding required? Y/N	Existing Technology? Y/N	Existing Budget?	Corporate Commitment?	Ease of delivery	Impact; High (3) Med(2) Low (1)	Formal Decision Required? Y/N	Priority Score	In Progress
Built Estate	Asset Rationalisation.	NZ Plan/Accomo	Renewal/FFM	Key Actions	Ongoing	3	3	N	N/A	3	3	3	3	Y	18	Y
Built Estate	Energy efficiency measures e.g. heating controls (internal).	NZ Plan	Renewal/FFM	Key Actions	2025	3	3	Y	Y	3	3	3	2	N	17	Ongoing
Built Estate	Behaviour change training.	NZ Plan	FFM/CC	Key Actions	2024	3	3	N	N/A	3	3	3	3	Y	18	Ongoing
Built Estate	Ensure all low and no cost energy saving measures highlighted in the Built Estate Decarbonisation Forward Plan are implemented by 2024.	NZ Plan	Renewal/FFM	Actions	2024	3	3	N	Y	2	3	3	3	Y	17	N
Built Estate	Effective energy management (energy procurement, energy data analysis, reviewing heating settings).	NZ Plan	Renewal/FFM	Key Actions	2024	3	3	N	Y	2	3	2	1	Y	14	Future
Built Estate	Energy efficiency measures e.g. thermal fabric (external).	NZ Plan	Renewal/FFM	Key Actions	2025	2	3	Y	Y	1	3	3	2	N	14	Future
Built Estate	Building mounted renewable energy systems.	NZ Plan	Renewal/FFM	Key Actions	2030	2	3	Y	Y	1	3	3	2	Y	14	Ongoing
Built Estate	Low carbon heating (heat pumps).	NZ Plan	Renewal/FFM	Key Actions	2030	2	3	Y	Y	1	3	3	3	Y	15	N
Built Estate	Ensuring buildings are resilient to current and future climate change.	NZ Plan	Renewal/FFM/CC	Actions	2025	2	2	N	Y	3	2	2	2	Y	13	Planned
Built Estate	Deliver asset rationalisation, energy efficiency, building renewable energy and low carbon heating across the built estate between now and 2030 through existing programmes such as Adfywio and delivery of the Accommodation Strategy and collaboration with key stakeholders such as Facilities Management.	NZ Plan	Renewal/FFM	Actions	2030	3	2	N	Y	2	2	2	2	Y	13	Ongoing
Built Estate	Refine the most ambitious decarbonisation pathway and scenario to provide further evidence on the estimated costs and savings and to support the business case for a strategic programme of building decarbonisation retrofit.	NZ Plan	Renewal/FFM/CC	Actions	2030	2	1	Y	Y	1	1	1	2	Y	8	N
Built Estate	56% reduction in emissions by 2030.	NZ Plan	Renewal/FFM	Target	2030	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	56% reduction from baseline by 2030	N/A	N/A	N/A
Built Estate	Rationalise built estate by 40%.	Adfywio Programme	Renewal/FFM	Commitment	2030	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	40% reduction in built estate	N/A	N/A	N/A
Built Estate	Provide Agile office space to enable Hybrid working.	Adfywio Programme	Renewal/FFM	Commitment	2025	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	3	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Built Estate	Reduce emissions from our built estate from a 2019/20 baseline of 1132 tCO2e to approximately 50 tCO2e in 2030.	Adfywio Programme	Renewal/FFM	Target	2030	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Reduction from 1132t CO2e to 50t CO2e by 2030	N/A	N/A	N/A
Built Estate	Where technically feasible we will maximise onsite renewable energy generation to minimise grid imports.	Adfywio Programme	Renewal/FFM	Commitment	2025	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	1	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Built Estate	Manage the grounds around our built estate to benefit nature and support adaptation to climate change. This will include habitat development and the introduction of sustainable drainage principles.	Adfywio Programme	Renewal/FFM/Climate Change/Biodiversity	Commitment	2030	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	2	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Built Estate	Champion waste prevention and minimisation in the development and running of the built estate.	Adfywio Programme	FFM/Waste policy	Commitment	2024	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	3	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Built Estate	Ensure our environmental management system continues to be certified to the ISO14001 environmental standard, ensuring best practice in preventing and minimising pollution and continually improving environmental performance.	EMS	EMS/FFM	Commitment	Ongoing	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	3	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Built Estate	Minimise pollution incidents via best practice management of chemicals & fuels.	Adfywio Programme	FFM/EMS/Waste	Commitment	Ongoing	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	3	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Built Estate	Engage with staff to ensure the built estate enables staff to undertake their roles to their best ability while improving physical and mental wellbeing.	Adfywio Programme	Renewal/FFM	Commitment	Ongoing	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	3	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Built Estate	All staffed buildings have energy management strategies, which include a commitment to energy metering and monitoring and encourage staff behaviours that promote good energy management. All our buildings have energy audits and delivery plans to deliver the measures identified. All buildings to be retrofitted with solar PV, LED lighting and low carbon heating, where suitable and feasible. Any newly occupied buildings to have a high energy efficiency rating and support low carbon technologies (e.g. electric vehicle charging) or can be retrofitted to meet this ambition. Explore the potential for further homeworking to reduce office space to reduce energy demand.	Adfywio Programme	Renewal/FFM/CC	Commitment	2030	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	1	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Built Estate	An 80% reduction in building related greenhouse gas emissions is achieved by 2030 through a programme of asset rationalisation, energy efficiency and renewable energy retrofits and grid decarbonisation (as set out in the Green Book supplementary guidance: valuation of energy use and greenhouse gas emissions for appraisal (BEIS 2023)). Fossil fuel heating replaced by heat pumps.	Adfywio Programme	Renewal/FFM	Assumptions	2030	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	2	80% reduction in building emissions GHG	N/A	N/A	N/A

PRIORITY STATUS SCORES
High = 14-18
Medium = 7-13
Low = 0-6

Notes; Prioritise actions by site, i.e. those assets not at risk of disposal

Q. What are the highest priorities for reducing emissions on the NRW estate?

Q. What can we deliver with current resources?

NRW Board Paper

Date of meeting:	25 th September 2024
Title of Paper:	Charter for Bereaved Families
Paper Reference:	24-09-B06
Paper sponsored by:	Gareth O'Shea, Executive Director of Operations
Paper prepared by:	Gareth O'Shea, Executive Director of Operations; Jeremy Parr, Head of Flood and Incident Risk Management; Lyndsey Rawlinson, Head of North East Wales Operations; Sarah Asbrey, Head of Legal Services; Phil Williams, Head of Governance & Risk
Paper presented by:	Jeremy Parr, Head of Flood and Incident Risk Management & Lyndsey Rawlinson, Head of North East Wales Operations
Purpose of the paper	Endorsement
Summary	To invite the NRW Board to discuss whether NRW could and should agree to sign up to the 'Charter for Families Bereaved by Public Tragedy'.

Background

1. The purpose of this paper is to invite the NRW Board to discuss whether NRW could and should agree to sign up to the 'Charter for Families Bereaved by Public Tragedy'.
2. In May 2024, we attended an event for senior executives across Wales, facilitated by the Assistant Chief Constable for South Wales Police and the Chief Fire Officer for North Wales, on behalf of the wider Wales' resilience network. All Category One responders under the Civil Contingencies Act were present, along with many Category Two responders and the third sector.
3. The essence of the event was to ask all the above bodies to 'sign up' to the Charter for Families Bereaved by Public Tragedy. Sign-up was needed at an organisational level, and it was not deemed appropriate to have tacet agreement at an individual Local Resilience Forums (LRF) level.

4. The Charter (Annex 1) is a result of years of painstaking work and learning from the Hillsborough disaster and is informed more widely by Grenfell and the Manchester Arena tragedies. The key note speech was given by Bishop James Jones who had led the inquiry into how families were treated during the Hillsborough disaster. He was supported by Mr Ken Sutton, who was also a key player in this and wider reviews.

Issues highlighted and suggested way forward

5. On a human, moral and ethical level, it is hard to disagree with the sentiments within the Charter. Further, the values within the Charter closely align with NRW's values and indeed are underpinned by the wider Nolan principles for people in public services.
6. However, there was challenge within the room, around how and when information is shared, and in doing so to live within the spirit of the Charter, it could lead to the sharing of information that may later be found to be inaccurate (although it was our truth at the time). It also brushes against the principles of sub-judice where investigations are involved. There was a feeling expressed by the legal people within the room that processes already existed for the truth to come out, as an example at Inquests.
7. There is a further complication that NRW is in a slightly different place to the police and some other emergency services, as we can find ourselves the subject of an investigation, and where this is the case, it is likely to affect what we can share. We need to be aware of the multiplicity of our roles, and how we could sensitively and appropriately balance and manage those roles. We are also not a front-line emergency responder with a significant role with bereavements in the same way as partner organisations, and do not want to portray ourselves as such; there is a risk that signing-up to the charter *could* give this impression.
8. In considering the above, the conclusion of Executive Team discussion was that NRW should sign up to the Charter. As mentioned above, we are bound by the Nolan Principles and guided by our own NRW Values. It is hard to envisage how we could not sign-up given these issues. Further, ET commented that the 'in principle commitment' to operate within the Charter forms part of the Wales Gold Training, and as trained and accredited incident responders, we are expected to operate in this way.
9. The Charter contains a set of high-level principles, which NRW would attempt to meet as best we could, based on the specific circumstances in existence at the time. It would be important for partners to understand we could only meet the Charter in line with our remit and responsibilities, which may differ to other partners. Managing expectations of partners would be important when signing up to this.
10. NRW's non-financial scheme of delegation does not cover the appropriate approval for such a Charter. Although it covers approval levels for non-legally binding documents and Memoranda of Understanding (MoU), this is not an agreement with a/other specific bodies, rather a general and public commitment to live up to this set of high-level principles as and when we navigate an incident. Due to the public facing commitment, the complexities of NRW's role and potential risk factors, it is considered appropriate

for the NRW Board to approve, or otherwise, any decision made to sign up to the Charter.

11. The NRW Board, therefore, are invited to discuss and endorse the Executive Team's recommendation of signing up to the Charter.

Risks, Risk Appetite and opportunities

12. The matter has the potential to affect NRW's risk profile. At a time where our resources are ever more stretched, there is a risk that this could create confusion around our role, and create expectations that we may not always be able to meet in the way that other signatories could, this could lead to a loss of public confidence in NRW and damage to our reputation/working relationships. This could be mitigated by being setting out any limitations to our ability to meet all of the principles all of the time. It also touches on SR03 incident management but it is believed that is progressing in the way suggested.
13. Whilst we believe that it does open NRW to some further risk as outlined above on incident response and investigation, the risks of not adopting are greater.
14. Conversely, the opportunity is that NRW are a public body that is supportive of helping bereaved families where it is appropriate for us to do so at a time of great stress. It would underline our commitment to the Nolan principles and NRW's values, and therefore could enhance our reputation.

Wider implications

- (a) **Well-being Objectives:** There are no direct impacts of the delivery of our WBOs.
- (b) **Finance:** There are no significant or foreseen financial implications of adopting this approach.
- (c) **Resource implications:** There are potentially some resource implications in terms of the role out and adoption of the Charter but these are not seen as considerable.
- (d) **Data Protection:** In adopting and complying with the principles of the Charter there is no reason why NRW cannot comply with data protection legislation.

Next Steps

15. If the below recommendation is approved, NRW will formally confirm agreement and sign-up to the Charter, outlining the exceptions noted above, by the October 2024 deadline.
16. If agreed, we would need to consider a communication\roll out plan for awareness across NRW.

17. Ownership of the Charter would be held by the Head of Flood and Incident Risk Management once approved, with the Head of Governance and Board Secretary supporting to ensure that our position is reviewed as needed/as appropriate.

Recommendation

18. That NRW sign-up to the Charter for Families Bereaved by Public Tragedy.


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Annex 1 – ‘Charter for Families Bereaved by Public Tragedy’

Approval / Consultation process

<p>Approval/consultation process</p> <p>Responsible: Who has developed the paper/process and who has had input?</p>	<p>Gareth O’Shea; Jeremy Parr; Lyndsey Rawlinson; Sarah Asbrey; Victoria Painter (on behalf of Phil Williams)</p>
<p>Accountable: Who is accountable for the ultimate approval? Who will be or is being asked to approve?</p>	<p>NRW Board</p>
<p>Consulted: Who has been consulted to date? Where endorsement is required, is this in place? Will further consultation be required?</p>	<p>Gareth O’Shea; Jeremy Parr; Lyndsey Rawlinson; Sarah Asbrey; Victoria Painter (on behalf of Phil Williams)</p>
<p>Informed: Who has been informed or who needs to be further information about the work?</p>	<p>As above</p>

ANNEX 1 – Charter for Families Bereaved by Public Tragedy



Charter

1. In the event of a public tragedy, support the activation of emergency plans and deployment of resources to rescue victims, to support the bereaved and to protect the vulnerable.
2. Place the public interest above our own reputations.
3. Approach forms of public scrutiny – including public inquiries and inquests – with candour, in an open, honest and transparent way, making full disclosure of relevant documents, material and facts. Our objective is to assist the search for the truth. We accept that we should learn from the findings of external scrutiny and from past mistakes.
4. Avoid seeking to defend the indefensible or to dismiss or disparage those who may have suffered where we have fallen short.
5. Ensure all members of staff treat members of the public and each other with mutual respect and with courtesy. Where we fall short, we should apologise straightforwardly and genuinely.
6. Recognise that we are accountable and open to challenge. We will ensure that processes are in place to allow the public to hold us to account for the work we do and for the way in which we do it. We do not knowingly mislead the public or the media.

NRW Board Paper

Date of meeting:	25 th September 2024
Title of Paper:	Annual Business Plan Performance Report: Quarter 1 and Internal Performance Report: Quarter 1
Paper Reference:	24-09-B19
Paper sponsored by:	Clare Pillman, Chief Executive
Paper prepared by:	Sarah Williams, Head of Corporate Strategy and PMO; Bronia Bendall, Senior Specialist Advisor, Corporate Planning and Performance
Paper presented by:	Clare Pillman, Chief Executive Ceri Davies, Executive Director of Evidence, Policy and Permitting Sarah Jennings, Executive Director of Communications, Customer and Commercial Gareth O'Shea, Executive Director of Operations
Purpose of the paper	Approval
Summary	NRW must operate systems which enable review of performance against objectives in a timely and effective manner. Presented here are the Quarter 1 Reports for the Annual Business Plan and Internal Performance Report

Background

Business Plan and performance

1. Each financial year, the Minister sends NRW a formal statement of its budgetary provision. In response to this, each year we have to prepare a business plan setting out the level of service to be achieved in key areas and the performance and output information to be collected to monitor progress.
2. The Welsh Government Framework document states that NRW must operate systems which enable review of performance against objectives in a timely and effective manner. Agreed monitoring information must be shared with the Welsh Government Partnership Team at agreed intervals to demonstrate progress, ensure targets are being achieved, and metrics are within acceptable levels.

3. At publication of the Corporate Plan, Executive Directors were identified as Leads for each Well-being Objective (WBO) with responsibility for performance, assurance and risk of their respective WBO and integrated scrutiny across the three WBOs to ensure a holistic view of progress. The Chief Executive is responsible for advising the Board on organisational performance. Scrutiny of performance is evidenced in the NRW Annual Report and Accounts.

2024-25 Business Plan

4. The refresh of our performance management framework defines our ambition as we design an outcome focussed approach to measure progress towards the Corporate Plan WBOs. We made good progress in 2023/24, defining and developing the framework of:
 - a) strategic and long-term ambition beyond 2030 through the impacts and strategic indicators.
 - b) operational, medium-term ambition to 2030 through multi-year metrics; and
 - c) operational, short-term ambition through annual commitments.Not all elements are yet in place as we continue to develop our approach. This year's Business Plan reflects a stepping stone as we test approaches and new ways of working.
5. The 2024/25 Business Plan sets out what we will do specifically in 2024/25 to deliver against the three WBOs to meet our vision. This year's Plan signals a difference in tone and approach, with clear alignment to the Corporate Plan vision, mission and well-being objectives.
6. We know we will not be able to realise the outcomes of each WBO or step to take straight away. In these early years, we need to lay the foundations by doing the preparatory work such as interrogating the evidence base or developing and testing different tools and approaches that will enable us to accelerate delivery in future years.
7. Across the three WBOs, the Business Plan identifies 26 steps to take (seven for WBO1: Nature; nine for WBO2: Climate, nine for WBO3: Pollution, and one cross-cutting) where we have identified specific commitments to progress this year. This represents 30% of the total steps to take in the Corporate Plan. Many of these annual commitments are aligned to priorities in the Term of Government Remit Letter and specific outputs defined in Welsh Government and other funding body grant award letters.
8. Each of the 26 steps to take identifies a commitment for this year and is accompanied by up to three key deliverables to demonstrate how progress will be made in this year.
9. The key deliverables are not as stretching nor as SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time-bound) as we would like, however they show how we are questioning the impact of what we do and how the deliverables will be used to improve our effectiveness and efficiency over time. We recognise this change of emphasis is significant and we will need to build the trust and confidence of colleagues in the approach over time.

Business Plan 2024/25 Quarter 1 Performance Report

10. The Business Plan 2024/25 Quarter 1 Performance Report can be seen in Annex 1. The Report covers progress made on the Corporate Plan WBOs through the 26 steps to take commitments and key deliverables.
11. A synthesis of progress against the WBOs is provided in the report alongside RAG (Red, Amber, Green) status of each commitment to show progress for this quarter and anticipated year-end position.
12. Good progress has been made in the first quarter. From the 26 commitments, 16 (61%) have reported Green (on target), eight (31%) Amber (close to being on target), one (4%) Red (target missed) and one (4%) 'does not apply' (see paragraph 17 in Annex 1, regarding Commitment 6 (C6): Sustainable Farming Scheme).
13. The anticipated year-end position is: 19 (73%) Green, six (23%) Amber and one (4%) 'does not apply' (C6: Sustainable Farming Scheme, will start to report in Q2 – see paragraph 17 in Annex 1).

Internal Performance Report

14. Alongside development of the Business Plan and quarterly reporting we are also reviewing Management Information and the Internal Performance Report. For this quarter it remains in the same format as last year. For subsequent quarters we will reflect progress made on the review.
15. The Internal Performance Report can be seen at Annex 2 and covers seven internally focussed measures, with their current (Q1) RAG status. This is a subset of more detailed Management Information measures, collected monthly and shared with all Directorates.
16. The performance position at the end of the quarter for the seven measures in the report is: four (57%) Green, one (14%) Amber and two (29%) Red.

Risks, Risk Appetite and opportunities

17. If the performance information provided does not accurately reflect progress towards delivery of the Business Plan, and the operation of NRW as an organisation, then the Executive Team and NRW Board will be unable to fulfil their role to scrutinise delivery.

Wider implications

18. **Finance:** There are no significant financial implications in providing the performance report itself, however part of our quarterly review considers allocation of our resources and finance and performance papers are therefore closely linked.
19. **Equality:** The relevant Equality Impact Assessment covers our Corporate Plan 2030, Well-being Statement and Business Plan 2023/24.

Next Steps

20. Following NRW Board approval, both Performance Reports will be discussed with Welsh Government and submitted to the Minister for Climate Change and Rural Affairs. They will be published on the Natural Resources Wales website.
21. Feedback will be provided to reporters and Leadership Team and shared with staff via the intranet.

Recommendation

22. We request the NRW Board approve the Business Plan 2024/25 Quarter 1 Performance Report and the Internal Performance Report.

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Annex 1 – Business Plan 2024/25 Quarter 1 Performance Report – Synthesis of progress against the well-being objectives

Annex 2 – Internal Performance Report: Quarter 1

Approval / Consultation process

<p>Approval/consultation process</p> <p>Responsible: Who has developed the paper/process and who has had input?</p>	<p>Sarah Williams (Head of Corporate Strategy and PMO)</p> <p>Bronia Bendall (Senior Specialist Advisor, Corporate Planning and Performance)</p> <p>Prys Davies (Executive Director of Corporate Strategy and Development)</p>
<p>Accountable: Who is accountable for the ultimate approval? Who will be or is being asked to approve?</p>	<p>NRW Board</p>
<p>Consulted: Who has been consulted to date? Where endorsement is required, is this in place? Will further consultation be required?</p>	<p>Leadership Team (Steps to Take Owners)</p> <p>Executive Team</p>
<p>Informed: Who has been informed or who needs to be further information about the work?</p>	<p>Leadership Team</p> <p>Planning & Resources Group</p> <p>Executive Team</p> <p>NRW Board</p>

Business Plan 2024/25 Quarter One Performance Report – Synthesis of progress against the well-being objectives

Background

1. Across the three Well-being Objectives (WBOs), the business plan identifies 26 steps to take (seven for WBO1: Nature; nine for WBO2: Climate, nine for WBO3: Pollution, and one cross-cutting) where we have identified specific commitments to progress this year. This represents 30% of the total steps to take in the corporate plan. Many of these are aligned to priorities in the Term of Government Remit Letter and specific outputs defined in Welsh Government and other funding body grant award letters.
2. Each of the 26 steps to take identifies a commitment for this year and is accompanied by up to three key deliverables to demonstrate how progress will be made in this year.
3. The annual commitments and key deliverables only reflect a small portion of the steps to take included in the corporate plan. We recognise that a breadth of other activity underpins our work on the three well-being objectives from environmental monitoring and reporting, responding to planning applications, issuing permits, undertaking compliance visits and where necessary taking enforcement action.

Overarching assessment of performance – emerging themes and risks

4. At publication of the Corporate Plan, Executive Directors were identified as Leads for each Well-being Objective (WBO) with responsibility for performance, assurance and risk of their respective WBO and integrated scrutiny across the three WBO to ensure a holistic view of progress.
5. The continuing recruitment freeze is having an impact on delivery across all parts of the organisation. Reduced capacity is leading team leaders, managers and leadership team to prioritise really hard, pausing some work to create capacity for other higher priority work, scaling back ambition, and managing expectations with our customers and partners about what to expect. The impact of this is reflected in reported progress against a number of the WBO annual commitments and we support all our colleagues in this decision making. Staff well-being is our primary focus and we continue to underline in our communications that we don't expect colleagues to take on more work to fill the gaps. We are encouraging colleagues to talk things through with their managers.

6. In many cases, managers are prioritising delivery of the commitments in this business plan over other activities in the business group service plans. Thus, the true impact of the recruitment freeze on delivery and performance is masked. The multi-year performance metrics will enable us to pick this up in future years.
7. The Planning and Resources Group (PRG) and its sub-groups have continued to meet to review recruitment controls and opportunities to deploy staff on a short-term basis to priority areas. Executive Team has considered a small number of cases for external recruitment on an exceptional basis.
8. There are a large number of vacancies across all parts of the organisation, including new posts associated with new funding from Welsh Government for peatland restoration and Trydan. These vacancies and the new posts with the appropriate role descriptions and grades, will be made available as “reasonable alternative employment” once we move to implement the change process. The vacancies will minimise the risk of redundancy. As colleagues start to move into different roles the pressure on capacity will start to ease and the draw down of funding from Welsh Government for Trydan and peatland restoration will start to increase.
9. Some of the commitments included in this years business plan are subject to additional funding from Welsh Government through annual grant award letters. Although the funding is secure this year the prospect of the Treasury spending review and the separate multi-year funding review being undertaken in Welsh Government, means there is an emerging risk to funding delivery of some of the steps to take in 2025/26. We are keeping this position under review led by the Director of Corporate Strategy and Development in discussion with the Sponsorship Team.

Performance Dashboard

10. Table 1 and Chart 1 illustrate the full WBO ‘RAG’ performance dashboard across 26 step to take, annual commitments. Good progress has been made in the first quarter. Of the 26 commitments, 16 (61%) have reported green (on target), eight (31%) amber (close to being on target), one (4%) red (target missed) and one (4%) ‘does not apply’ (see paragraph 17).

CHART 1: QUARTER 1 REPORTED POSITION

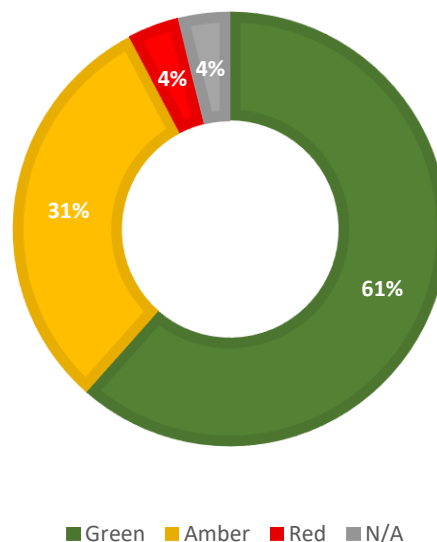
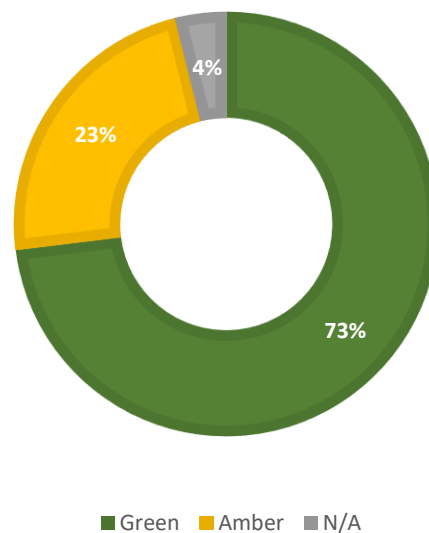


Table 1: Dashboard – ‘RAG’ progress of commitments in 2024/25 Business Plan

	2024/25 Business Plan commitment:	Q1	Anticipated year end
WBO1: Nature is recovering	C1: Nature Networks programme evaluation	Amber	Green
	C2: SSSIs notification/renotification contributing to 30:30	Amber	Amber
	C3: Impact of Natur am Byth place-based projects	Green	Green
	C4: Condition of Wales’ marine SACs and SPAs	Green	Green
	C5: Nature recovery and the new National Park	Green	Green
	C6: Inform Sustainable Farming Scheme development (NRW key deliverables TBC)	N/A for this quarter	N/A
	C7: Implementing No Mow May and new approaches	Green	Green
WBO2: Communities are resilient to climate change	C8: National Peatland Action Programme	Amber	Amber
	C9: Capacity and evidence for spatial prioritisation of restoration within marine and coastal habitats	Amber	Green
	C10: Capital projects (Flood)	Green	Green
	C11: Improvements to the flood warning service and telemetry system	Red	Amber
	C12: Flood asset maintenance and management prioritisation	Green	Green
	C13: Planning/permitting pre-application process - industrial decarb and reduction of landfill emissions	Green	Green
	C14: Planning/permitting guidance and pre-application advice - sustainable offshore and onshore renewable energy	Amber	Amber
	C15: Prioritisation of action within NRW’s Net Zero Plan	Green	Green
	C16: Embed carbon reduction tools and plans in NRW contracts and frameworks	Green	Green
WBO3: Pollution is minimised	C17: Farm inspections	Green	Green
	C18: Compliance visits at regulated sites	Green	Green
	C19: Workplace recycling regulations	Green	Green
	C20: Water companies’ investment	Amber	Amber
	C21: Catchment-scale water quality improvements	Amber	Amber
	C22: Priority pollution incidents response	Green	Green
	C23: Enhance understanding of the drivers of pollution incidents to inform preventative actions	Green	Green
	C24: Investigation of serious environmental crime and enforcement action	Green	Green
	C25: Collective action on fly-tipping	Amber	Green
CC	C26: Understanding of user needs, experience and common messaging opportunities through Interim SoNaRR 2025	Green	Green

Key: **Green** = achieved; **Amber** = close to; **Red** = missed

11. All the amber's and the one red (nine (35%) of the 26), state that the recruitment freeze and its impact on staff capacity are the primary factors impacting the pace of delivery over quarter one. In many cases mitigation measures have been identified and implemented by leadership team in the later part of the quarter. In some cases the pace of delivery should start to pick up in quarter two, but we recognise new vacancies may well emerge as colleagues choose to leave the organisation and this will have an effect.
12. The anticipated year end position is: 19 (73%) green, six (23%) amber and one (4%) 'does not apply' (C6: Sustainable Farming Scheme, will start to report in Q2 (see paragraph 17)). The reported 'red' commitment is anticipating amber by year end. Of the eight reporting amber in this quarter, six are anticipating remaining amber at year end with the other two confident of bringing the commitment back to green.

CHART 2: YEAR-END PREDICTED POSITION

Synthesis of progress against the well-being objectives

Below is a synthesis of progress against the wellbeing objectives. A detailed summary of progress for each commitment can be found in Appendix 1.

WBO 1: Nature is Recovering

Table 2: Dashboard for WBO1: Nature is recovering:

	2024/25 Business Plan commitment	Q1	Anticipated year end
WBO1: Nature is recovering	C1: Nature Networks programme evaluation	Amber	Green
	C2: SSSIs notification/renotification contributing to 30:30	Amber	Amber
	C3: Impact of Natur am Byth place-based projects	Green	Green
	C4: Condition of Wales' marine SACs and SPAs	Green	Green
	C5: Nature recovery and the new National Park	Green	Green
	C6: Inform Sustainable Farming Scheme development (NRW key deliverables TBC)	N/A	N/A
	C7: Implementing No Mow May and new approaches	Green	Green

13. Good progress has been made in the first quarter. Of the seven commitments, four (57%) have reported green (on target), two (29%) have reported amber (close to being on target) and one (14%) has reported 'does not apply' (see paragraph 17). One is reporting amber at year end, with the remainder reporting being on target.
14. Across the suite of seven commitments a broad range of activity has started to build the programmes of work to establish our contribution to the recovery of nature to 2030. Colleagues have been focused on the synthesis and analysis of data, establishment of evaluation frameworks, working with partner organisations to test approaches, build collaboration and influence Government.
15. Some of this work is in the early, development stage related to the Welsh Government Biodiversity Deep Dive initiative aligned to the landmark 30:30 International Commitment discussed at the Nature WBO deep dive in May, while other commitments reflect well established projects and initiatives where the external policy context and direction is well established.
16. Some of the commitments benefit from external funding – either through the Welsh Government Nature Networks Programme or the National Lottery Heritage Fund and are not subject to the same pressures as Grant in Aid. However, we recognise that there is a risk this funding may be subject to change as a result of the Public Spending Review in Westminster and the separate multi-year review of funding priorities in Welsh Government.
17. The appointment of the new Cabinet Secretary in March resulted in changes to the timetable for implementation of the Sustainable Farming Scheme. As a result, we deferred finalising the commitment (C6) and key deliverables until we were clearer on the direction of travel. We are reporting 'Does Not Apply' for Q1 for the commitment 'C6: inform sustainable farming scheme development'. We have now defined deliverables for the remainder of the year. Leadership and Executive team members have been heavily engaged with Welsh Government working groups to shape key elements of the sustainable farming scheme and NRW's potential role in delivery. We have been clear with officials that any new duties will require additional funding. To support the transition to the new sustainable farming scheme additional funding of £400k for 2024/25 (and a further £400k for 2025/6) has been provided by Welsh Government to fund land management agreements.
18. Although we have made some good progress on the deliverables under C2, related to the 30:30 commitment, the pace has been slower than we would like. Engagement with WG officials and stakeholders has taken longer as the new Ministerial team has settled in. The pace is now picking up and good engagement established.
19. No Mow May (across our flood defences) was a key initiative across our operations teams, reflecting the culmination of a significant amount of work embedding the new organisation wide approach into ways of working. A 95% reduction in scheduled mowing in May on our flood defences was achieved.

WBO 2: Communities are resilient to climate change**Table 3: Dashboard for WBO 2: Communities are resilient to climate change:**

	2024/25 Business Plan commitment	Q1	Anticipated year end
WBO2: Communities are resilient to climate change	C8: National Peatland Action Programme	Amber	Amber
	C9: Capacity and evidence for spatial prioritisation of restoration within marine and coastal habitats	Amber	Green
	C10: Capital projects (Flood)	Green	Green
	C11: Improvements to the flood warning service and telemetry system	Red	Amber
	C12: Flood asset maintenance and management prioritisation	Green	Green
	C13: Planning/permitting pre-application process - industrial decarb and reduction of landfill emissions	Green	Green
	C14: Planning/permitting guidance and pre-application advice - sustainable offshore and onshore renewable energy	Amber	Amber
	C15: Prioritisation of action within NRW's Net Zero Plan	Green	Green
	C16: Embed carbon reduction tools and plans in NRW contracts and frameworks	Green	Green

20. Good progress has been made in the first quarter. Of the nine commitments, five (55%) have reported green (on target), three (34%) have reported amber (close to being on target) and one (11%) has reported red (target missed). Three are reporting amber at year end, with the remainder reporting being on target.
21. The nine commitments prioritised in our business plan reflect our contribution and response to the Welsh Government's Net Zero Wales strategic direction. There are well established programmes for peatland restoration, woodland creation and improvements to our processes to enable onshore and offshore renewable energy development. Colleagues have been focussed on the synthesis and analysis of data, working with Welsh Government and engaging with industry and businesses to understand their industrial decarbonisation plans and using this insight to inform our approaches to provision of statutory planning advice and assessment of permit applications.
22. The National Peatland Programme has made good progress in quarter one, with a lot of activity taking place in preparation for the key period for restoration groundworks between September and March. However, the recruitment controls mean there is some risk to meeting the 700ha target by year end due to lack of capacity. Leadership Team have taken a number of steps to mitigate these risks deploying staff on a short-term basis from the Flexible Resource Pool and ensuring that all new roles, with associated role descriptions are ready as "reasonable alternative employment". Leadership Team are closely monitoring the position. The remaining two deliverables under this commitment are reporting good progress.
23. Three of the commitments relate to flood risk management. Of these, two report good progress in quarter one. However, the remaining commitment is reporting red which is driven by problems in the delivery of one of the four components of the new telemetry project. This was subject to a deep dive at ET on the 26 July and a plan is now in place to bring things back on track. It is important to note that the build and testing of the new flood warning information service, which is part of this commitment is reporting green and is on track to report green at year end.

24. In line with the Board Deep Dive into Industrial Decarbonisation in September 2023, there has been significant external liaison and engagement with priority industries and businesses to understand their plans for decarbonising their industrial processes. We have used this insight to inform the development of pre-application advice for several significant projects.

WBO 3: Pollution is minimised:

Table 4: Dashboard for WBO 3: Pollution is minimised

	2024/25 Business Plan commitment	Q1	Anticipated year end
WBO3: Pollution is minimised	C17: Farm inspections	Green	Green
	C18: Compliance visits at regulated sites	Green	Green
	C19: Workplace recycling regulations	Green	Green
	C20: Water companies' investment	Amber	Amber
	C21: Catchment-scale water quality improvements	Amber	Amber
	C22: Priority pollution incidents response	Green	Green
	C23: Understanding pollution incidents background	Green	Green
	C24: Investigation and enforcement action	Green	Green
	C25: Action on fly-tipping	Amber	Green

25. Good progress has been made in the first quarter. From the nine commitments, six (67%) have reported green (on target), and three (33%) have reported amber (close to being on target). Two are reporting amber at year end, with the remainder reporting being on target.

26. The nine commitments prioritised in our business plan reflect the contribution of a range of specialists across our organisation involved in issuing permits, undertaking compliance visits, responding to incidents and where necessary taking enforcement action. This year, we are playing our part implementing new legislation and regulations, synthesising evidence and data to inform our new approach to incident management and playing our part in PR24 and the assessment of water company investment plans.

27. It is important to note that many of the regulatory commitments included in the business plan are reporting green this quarter, reflecting the higher priority accorded these activities compared to others in the regulation service plan.

28. Commitments related to water quality are reporting amber. The establishment of the New Compliance Unit is on hold due to the pause in recruitment. Choices on what can be stopped or slowed down will need to be made to determine whether the planned Operator Monitoring Assessment Audits for Water Companies will complete by the end of the financial year. Although the review of permits for SAC rivers catchments has completed, work has slowed on the investigation of reasons for failure and identification of actions. Staff vacancies and recruitment pressures, as well as uncertainty over long term funding is affecting the scale and pace of work. Re-prioritisation of work is

underway to ensure delivery of outcomes on the ground, and changes to permits to ensure they are fit for purpose.

29. In line with the Board Deep Dive into Pollution in February 2024, good progress has been made to understand the drivers of environmental pollution incidents across Wales, through mapping existing data sources and evaluating the evidence. We are building our collective understanding of current incident management processes and have identified areas for improvement.

Cross-cutting

Table 5: Dashboard for Cross-cutting

	2024/25 Business Plan commitment	Q1	Anticipated year end
CC	C26: User needs, experience and common messaging opportunities through Interim SoNaRR 2025	Green	Green

30. Good progress has been made in the first quarter, with the drafting of the interim report on schedule and due to go Board in Q2. Engagement with stakeholders in key public bodies has taken place to increase understanding of how SoNaRR can support e.g. the One Health Agenda; National Statistics (ONS); support well-being and reporting cycles of the Future Generations Commissioners Office; and mainstream nature into economic planning with the Welsh Treasury. Initial conversations with the business community are underway via the UK Business and Biodiversity Forum.

Appendix 1: summary of progress for each commitment

Table 1: Wellbeing Objective 1 - Nature is Recovering

ET Owner: Ceri Davies

By 2030 the change we want to see: the decline in biodiversity is halted; effective regulation, habitat restoration and nature-based solutions contribute to increasingly resilient ecosystems enabling adaptation to change, benefiting people’s well-being.

Area of Focus: Nature being protected

Step to take: Improving the condition of features at protected terrestrial, marine and freshwater sites through using our advisory and regulatory tools, financial incentives and undertaking monitoring to evaluate effectiveness.

C1: Commitment for 2024-25: Evaluate the NRW Nature Networks Programme to inform future investment for protected sites. (Lead: Huwel Manley)

Key deliverables:

1. Increased understanding of the effectiveness and efficiency of activity delivered across the NRW Nature Networks programme through evaluation of 70% of current and previous activity by end of Q2 to establish the baseline.
2. Increased effectiveness of future NRW Nature Network’s activity through identification of priorities and development of approaches to delivery by end of Q3 (informed by outcomes of deliverable 1).

Next step for 2025-26: Prioritise actions which have the greatest impact on the condition of SSSI features.

C1: Latest position (to end of June):

We are not where we wanted to be on this at the end of June: we are Amber. We have had limited staff capacity to develop and undertake the evaluation. We have now secured additional capacity and will be able to pick up the pace of delivery, building on the work we have done to prepare and finalise the annual report, and put in place plans for future delivery. This commitment is anticipated to be Green at year end.

Q1	Anticipated Year end
Amber	Green

Step to take: Extending the protection and management of at least 30 per cent of land, freshwater and sea for nature through identifying opportunities to enlarge and better connect the series of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

C2: Commitment for 2024-25: Synthesise evidence to identify priorities for notification and renotification of sites contributing to the 30:30 target. (Lead: Ruth Jenkins)

Key deliverables:

1. Increased the understanding of the extent and connectivity of the current SSSI network through completing an assessment of all sites by end of Q3.
2. Increased advice to accelerate notifications and re-notifications through the publication of the SSSI Notification Handbook.
3. Increased the effectiveness of the allocation of investment for delivering an enhanced notification programme through the delivery of a costed programme based on evidence from KD1 and KD2.

Next step for 2025-26: Prioritise opportunities for notification of SSSIs and the use of other measures outside of the SSSI series.

C2: Latest position (to end of June):

We are not where we wanted to be on this at the end of June: we are Amber. We expected to have agreed the scope of the assessment with the Welsh Government and the Ministerial Biodiversity Deep Dive Core Group and key stakeholders by May. However, the change in Cabinet Secretary (which changed the timeline and pace of the Deep Dive Core Group) means the scope was not agreed in quarter one. We have now held the Deep Dive Core Group meeting and had further discussions with Welsh Government and external Stakeholders to agree the scope. There are staff vacancies which are slowing the pace of delivery, but leadership team are exploring all available options. This commitment is anticipated to be Amber at year end.

Q1	Anticipated Year end
Amber	Amber

Step to take: Protecting species at the greatest risk of extinction through using our advisory and regulatory tools, working in partnership and monitoring to evaluate effectiveness.

C3: Commitment for 2024-25: Develop an understanding of the intervention impact of 11 of the place based Natur am Byth partnership programme projects to refine conservation delivery. (Lead: Huwel Manley)

Key deliverables:

1. Increased understanding of the effectiveness of the 11 Natur am Byth place-based projects through testing the impact measurement framework and refining the product.
2. Increased the skills of all relevant programme staff through the delivery of Species Recovery Assessment training (to prepare for full scale review of species recovery targets in 25/26) (completed by Q2).
3. Increased understanding of the 67 Natur am Byth target species through the completion of the review of all ecological monitoring plans.

Next step for 2025-26: Within the Natur am Byth partnership programme, refine conservation interventions to those with the greatest impact on the 67 target species.

C3: Latest position (to end of June):

We are where we wanted to be on this at the end of June: we are Green. We have worked with an independent evaluation consultant to: review the Natur am Byth Impact Measurement Framework; provide clear guidance and training to over 20 partnership staff on methods for evaluating impact; agree evaluation methodology; and produce an evaluation report scrutinising the first 12 months of the programme delivery phase (June 2023 - June 2024). The central team have delivered a centralised system for monitoring and evaluation across all 11 place-based projects, including tools to measure impacts for target species, target communities and landowners. This commitment is anticipated to be Green at year end.

Q1	Anticipated Year end
Green	Green

Area of Focus: Nature being restored

Step to take: Accelerating improvements to the condition of the Marine Protected Area Network through robust monitoring and investigations, evidence, advice and working with others on project delivery.

C4: Commitment for 2024-25: Consolidate understanding of the condition of features of Welsh only marine SACs and SPAs to inform prioritisation. (Lead: Rhian Jardine)

Key deliverables:

1. Increased advice to support improvement of the management of marine SACs and SPAs through updating 12 out of 19 conservation advice packages.

- Increased understanding into declines in specific species and habitats through undertaking investigations under the Marine Nature Networks programme, setting out findings and recommendations in a series of reports.

Next step for 2025-26: Prioritise actions within Welsh only marine SACs and SPAs, targeting those with the potential to have the greatest impact on feature condition.

C4: Latest position (to end of June):

We are where we wanted to be on this at the end of June: we are Green. We have progressed investigations on maerl, horse mussel, sponge and herring declines using the substantial amount of data gathered in the last few years. This is helping us build our understanding of the reasons for decline. At this stage it seems unlikely (based on data gathered and analysed to date) we will pinpoint with certainty a cause for the declines but this may change in the later stages of our assessment. This commitment is anticipated to be Green at year end.

Q1	Anticipated Year end
Green	Green

Step to take: Accelerating action for nature’s recovery at a landscape scale through sharing our evidence and expertise with National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and other partners.

C5: Commitment for 2024-25: Integrate nature recovery evidence into the proposed new National Park process and management of existing AONBs and National Parks to improve decision making for nature. (Lead: Rhian Jardine)

Key deliverables:

- Increased our advice on nature recovery action through the designation of a new National Park via the public consultation on the proposed boundary and final designation recommendations.
- Increased the amount of advice on opportunities to integrate actions to address the nature and climate emergency into management plans of National Parks and AONBs through a refresh of the Designated Landscapes Management Plan Guidance.
- Increased knowledge of the effectiveness of prioritised action through supporting delivery of the initial recommendations of the 30:30 Designated Landscapes Expert Group for Wales.

Next step for 2025-26: Provide recommendations to Government on the designation of a new National Park including how a National Park can better deliver for nature recovery in the area and establish processes to track improvements.

C5: Latest position (to end of June):

We are where we wanted to be on this at the end of June: we are Green. The Wales Biodiversity Deep Dive identified designated landscapes management plans as providing strategic frameworks for the delivery of deep dive recommendations. Last year we commissioned the revisions to our designated landscape management plan guidance, to ensure that management plans include measures to respond and adapt to the climate and nature emergencies., We are making good progress updating our draft guidance reflecting the advice and feedback from designated landscapes authorities. This commitment is anticipated to be Green at year end.

Q1	Anticipated Year end
Green	Green

Area of Focus: Nature is respected and valued in decision-making by

Step to take: Delivering multiple benefits and opportunities for nature, people and the rural economy through supporting Welsh Government in the development and implementation of the Sustainable Farming Scheme, providing evidence and expertise.

C6: Commitment for 2024-25: Provide evidence and expertise to inform the development of the Welsh Government Sustainable Farming Scheme (SFS) and identify with Welsh Government what support services may be required. (Lead: Ruth Jenkins)

Key deliverables:

1. Following WG announcements on 14 May on delay to start of scheme, we will confirm deliverables in quarter one.

Next step for 2025-26: Develop the delivery model for NRW to support the Sustainable Farming Scheme.

C6: Latest position (to end of June):	Q1	Anticipated Year end
The appointment of the new Cabinet Secretary in March resulted in changes to the timetable for implementation of the Sustainable Framing Scheme. As a result, we deferred finalising the commitment and key deliverables until there was clarity on the direction of travel. We are reporting “Does Not Apply” for Q1.	N/A	N/A

Area of Focus: NRW as an exemplar nature positive organisation

Step to take: Ensuring nature’s protection and recovery is integrated into NRW's financial and business decisions through applying the lessons learnt from others on effective tools and frameworks.

C7: Commitment for 2024-25: Implementing No Mow May, piloting new approaches to working with nature on the land and assets that we manage, identifying prioritised recommendations. (Lead: David Letellier)

Key deliverable:

1. Decreased the amount of mowing on NRW flood risk management assets through, (a) 70% of assets not mown during No Mow May, (b) identification of alternative approaches to reduce mowing and work with nature, initiating pilots at key flood risk management assets (number to be determined).

Next step for 2025-26: Implementing revised programme.

C7: Latest position (to end of June):	Q1	Anticipated Year end
We are where we wanted to be on this at the end of June: we are Green. We have published an internal guidance note which sets a clear default position for a no mow May regime on our flood defences, including recognition that in some cases we may need to mow flood defence assets (typically, to continue to ensure their structural integrity). 185 assets were originally scheduled for grass cutting in May, a number we managed to reduce to just 10 assets mowed this year. This commitment is anticipated to be Green at year end.	Green	Green

Table 2: Wellbeing Objective 2: Communities are resilient to climate change

ET Owner: Sarah Jennings

By 2030 the change we want to see: sustained action on the causes, risks and impacts of climate change means nature and people are enabled and empowered to adapt, alleviating the effects on people's well-being.

Area of Focus: Nature based solutions being widely adopted

Step to take: Restoring peatland through the National Peatland Action Programme (NPAP) working with delivery partners, including on the land in our care using a range of advisory and regulatory tools, financial incentives and undertaking monitoring to evaluate effectiveness

C8: Commitment for 2024-25: Invest in capacity building to enable delivery in 2024-25 and future expansion of the National Peatland Action Programme. (Lead: Ruth Jenkins)

Key deliverables:

1. Increased the area of damaged peatland being restored across Wales by 15% (from a baseline of 600ha to roughly 700ha).
2. Increased the effectiveness of our input into the land use planning system, to reduce the negative effect of development on peatland through the production of an NRW policy position on Planning Policy Wales Edition 12 (to effect change in 2025/26).
3. Increased the development of shovel ready peatland restoration projects by increasing the funding available through our competitive development grant by 100%.

Next step for 2025-26: Expand area of peatland restoration and other enabling priorities in the National Peatland Programme.

C8: Latest position (to end of June):

We are not where we wanted to be on this at the end of June: we are Amber. One of our main goals this year was to recruit staff into the new teams. This has not been possible due to the current recruitment freeze. This has had repercussions on our ability to deliver for this financial year as well as our ability to invest in the capacity building for next year. The SRO is fully aware of this issue as are those on the Nature and Climate Emergency Capital Oversight Group. This issue is being dealt with through existing NRW governance routes. This commitment is anticipated to be Amber at year end.

Q1

Amber

Anticipated
Year end

Amber

Step to take: Stimulating restoration of marine and coastal habitats such as saltmarsh, sand dunes, sea grass and native oyster reef through working with delivery partners, using a range of advisory and regulatory tools, financial incentives and undertaking monitoring to evaluate effectiveness.

C9: Commitment for 2024-25: Strengthen capacity and evidence informing spatial prioritisation to enable effective future restoration within marine and coastal habitats. (Lead: Ruth Jenkins)

Key deliverables:

1. Increased the amount of advice to external partners by consulting on and publishing guidance on marine and coastal restoration projects (by end of Q1).
2. Increased the evidence base to support decision making on restoration project locations by refining opportunity maps for seagrass and native oyster (by end of Q4).

Next step for 2025-26: Work with others to enable effective restoration in the most suitable marine and coastal habitat locations.

C9: Latest position (to end of June):

We are not where we wanted to be on this at the end of June: we are Amber. We expected to have completed and consulted on the guidance but have been unable to do so because of a temporary staff capacity issue. Although the work has started, we have taken the decision to pause this work until staff capacity is restored and the work can be finalised. work. If the temporary capacity issue remains for longer than anticipated, we will need to take other steps to progress this commitment. This commitment is anticipated to be Green at year end.

Q1	Anticipated Year end
Amber	Green

Area of Focus: The risks of climate change being managed and adapted

Step to take: Reducing the risk to life from flooding to people and communities from main rivers, reservoirs and the sea, through the delivery of flood alleviation schemes.

C10: Commitment for 2024-25: Deliver capital projects and sustain levels of protection for properties to reduce flood risk. (Lead: Jeremy Parr)

Key deliverables:

1. Decreased the flood risk to 814 properties in Newport, through the completion of the work on the Stephenson Street Flood Alleviation Scheme.
2. Sustained flood protection to 800 properties through non-routine capital maintenance of existing assets/defences.

Next step for 2025-26: Deliver prioritised capital works to reduce flood risk in line with programme priorities.

C10: Latest position (to end of June):

We are where we wanted to be on this at the end of June: we are Green. We are confident of our year end position as our capital programme and the projects it is comprised of are progressing well. We remain on budget and the key outcomes we expect are on track for delivery. Following the delivery of our large flood alleviation schemes, we will update our flood models, flood maps, flood asset inventory and maintenance plans where appropriate with the latest information. This will help inform the public of their latest risk and support our work plans to manage these structures going forward. This commitment is anticipated to be Green at year end.

Q1	Anticipated Year end
Green	Green

Step to take: Reducing the risk to life from flooding through issuing flood warnings that meet the changing needs of communities and maintaining and improving the 24/7 Flood Warning Service

C11: Commitment for 2024-25: Improve the Flood Warning Service and Telemetry System to deliver efficiencies and maintain continuity of service to customers. (Lead: Jeremy Parr)

Key deliverables:

1. Sustained the operational flood warning service offered to 139,000 properties through the delivery of the new flood warning system (by end of Q2) (withdrawing from the Environment Agency managed service).
2. Sustained delivery to all customers of telemetry data through migrating to the new data portal (by end of Q3).

Next step for 2025-26: Evolve the Flood Warning Service, delivering enhancements, further efficiencies and improvements for customers.

C11: Latest position (to end of June):

We are not where we wanted to be on this at the end of June: we are Red. This Commitment has two deliverables. The Flood Warning System replacement project has progressed well: it is on track and Green. The second deliverable relates to the Telemetry Replacement Project where one of the four workstreams, is reporting Red. We are reporting that this makes the overall Commitment Red, but it needs to be recognised that there is no issue with the Flood Warning System replacement project. The Telemetry Replacement Project: We expected to be well underway with the rollout of new and/or upgraded field outstations so the new Telemetry System can go live and the project close by late spring 2025 (the current system is hosted on servers in Rivers House for which the office lease expires in June 2025). Due to performance issues with the communications supplier and the integration portal (now resolved) the field outstation rollout has been delayed. There is now a high risk that we will not be able to complete the field outstation rollout in time for the new system to go live prior to exiting from Rivers House. An Exception Report has been submitted to the Project Board, FRM BG and will be presented to ET on 26 July. This commitment is anticipated to be Amber at year end.

Q1	Anticipated Year end
Red	Amber

Step to take: Reducing the risk to life from flooding through managing our flood assets and infrastructure for current and future flood risk and planning for change through maintaining and adapting the flood assets and infrastructure we are accountable for.

C12: Commitment for 2024-25: Review the prioritisation approach for flood asset maintenance and management to ensure our investment is risk based. (Lead: Jeremy Parr)

Key deliverables:

1. Increased the effectiveness and efficiency of the allocation of routine flood maintenance revenue through the implementation of the new Risk-Based Revenue Allocation Model (RBRAM).
2. Increased the effectiveness and efficiency of the allocation of flood asset investment through the delivery of the Assets Facing Change (AFC) Project.

Next step for 2025-26: Develop the strategies and tools required to inform the long-term response to the need for flood asset adaptation.

C12: Latest position (to end of June):

We are where we wanted to be on this at the end of June: we are Green. Through the introduction of the new Risk Based Revenue Allocation Model, we have progressed our programme of works to adopt more effective risk-based decision making. There are further enhancements planned. The project is on track and a detailed action plan for the next steps has been prepared. This includes the monitoring of our routine maintenance programme. For the first time we will have new metrics and performance indicators to understand the success of the new ways of working, as well as understanding how well the programme is performing. This commitment is anticipated to be Green at year end.

Q1	Anticipated Year end
Green	Green

Area of Focus: Carbon emissions being reduced

Step to take: Stimulating adoption of alternative low carbon and carbon capture technologies in industry through providing specialist advice and guidance to inform planning permission and/or permit applications.

C13: Commitment for 2024-25: Develop understanding, using insight to enhance pre-application processes related to statutory planning and permitting applications to facilitate industrial decarbonisation and reduction of landfill greenhouse gas emissions. (Lead: Nadia De Longhi)

Key deliverables:

1. Increased understanding of the constraints to decarbonisation through engagement with all the highest carbon industries in Wales to inform advice and action.
2. Reduced the proportion of low carbon and carbon capture applications being rejected, through providing specialist pre-application advice to at least 10 projects (anticipating 6 submissions in 2024/25).
3. Decreased the amount of landfill gas released directly from landfill through delivery of the key priorities of the Landfill Emissions Reduction Project.

Next step for 2025-26: Implement changes to planning and permitting processes in relation to alternative low carbon and carbon capture technologies.

C13: Latest position (to end of June):

We are where we wanted to be on this at the end of June: we are Green. We have made good progress across the three key deliverables. We have engaged with key industrial stakeholders, multi-agency industry decarbonisation groups and Net Zero Industry Wales to build insights of the constraints to decarbonisation. We have provided pre-application advice to several significant projects including RWE’s Green Hydrogen proposals and LanzaTech’s Sustainable Aviation Fuel project. We have made substantial progress through the Landfill Emissions Reduction Project, including, improving data collection, increasing gas capture, targeted site audits, infrastructure improvements and regulatory compliance. The momentum gained from our cross-functional initiatives is expected to accelerate progress in the coming months. This commitment is anticipated to be Green at year end.

Q1	Anticipated Year end
Green	Green

Step to take: Supporting the development of sustainable offshore and onshore renewable energy through our evidence, advice and regulation, building a common understanding of the standards required in the statutory planning and permitting processes.

C14: Commitment for 2024-25: Enhance evidence, guidance and pre-application advice to improve the quality of submissions for planning permissions and permit/licence applications. (Lead: Nadia De Longhi)

Key deliverables:

1. Increased the production of marine renewables guidance and evidence products, commencing 40%.
2. Increased completion of actions (75%) from the marine license review, to improve service user experience.
3. Maintained service levels for determining marine renewables permit applications at 95%.

Next step for 2025-26: Implement improvements to the marine licence service, advice and regulatory work; continuing delivery of priority evidence and guidance needs.

C14: Latest position (to end of June):

We are not where we wanted to be on this at the end of June: we are Amber. We expected to have a greater proportion of advisory guidance produced to support marine renewable projects, but this has been delayed due to limited staff capacity. Both advisory and permitting teams have resourcing gaps that compromise our ability to deliver the service. This is at a time when applications are increasing in volume and complexity. We continue to deliver at a reduced pace, proportionate with the level of resource available. As vacancies are filled through the implement phase of the case for change, we will need support across relevant teams to train new staff to the required level. This commitment is anticipated to be Amber at year end. We will make progress on at least 50% of marine evidence needs. We expect to have made progress on a small number of guidance needs.

Q1	Anticipated Year end
Amber	Amber

Area of Focus: NRW being an exemplar organisation for a carbon positive public sector

Step to take: Strengthening our strategic approach to decarbonisation through developing and delivering an organisation wide net zero plan, building on the lessons learnt of partners.

C15: Commitment for 2024-25: Prioritise actions with the greatest cost benefit on carbon dioxide equivalent (CO2e)/ greenhouse gases (GHGs) to deliver our annual prioritisation within the Net Zero Plan. (Lead: Ruth Jenkins)

Key deliverables:

1. Increased understanding of whole life carbon estimates at both option and design stage of all capital construction projects through applying the Environment Agency ERIC Carbon Modelling Tool.
2. Increased understanding of the carbon footprint, at construction stage, of all capital construction projects above £1 million through applying the Environment Agency ERIC carbon calculator.
3. Increased number of staff achieving climate literacy accreditation from 30% to 50% of all NRW staff, through the delivery of the Climate Literacy Training Programme.

Next step for 2025-26: Expand delivery on priority actions within the Net Zero Plan.

C15: Latest position (to end of June):

Q1	Anticipated Year end
Amber	Amber

We are where we wanted to be on this at the end of June: we are Green. Carbon impact is now mandatory for NRW Capital Projects & Programme and all projects and programme delivery staff have been trained on interpretation of the ERIC Carbon Modelling Tool (CMT) and Carbon Calculator (CC). We are in discussions to include reference and weighting to carbon impact on option selection via the appraisal templates to ensure we consider the importance and factor in the impact. We will be monitoring and recording the number of Carbon Modelling Tool and Carbon Calculator requests made to the capital project design consultants and will review how the carbon reports affect the preferred option selection and how the results effect change to material choices or delivery methodologies. Preparations are on target for delivery the Climate Literacy Training programme in Q2. This commitment is anticipated to be Green at year end.

Green

Green

Step to take: Ensuring actions for climate are driven throughout our supply chains, grant programmes and land management agreements through inclusion in our procurement and funding frameworks.

C16: Commitment for 2024-25: Embed the use of carbon reduction tools and plans into high value contracts and frameworks to improve the quality of submissions. (Lead: Ian Mowatt)

Key deliverables:

1. Increased the percentage of awarded purchase agreements where carbon reduction has been offered as a 'Well-being Impact' benefit.
2. Increased the utilisation of carbon calculators on all relevant framework agreements renewing from February 2024 by 50% (from 0). Actions developed for informing future specifications to reduce carbon emissions in future years.
3. Increased the percentage of: (a) conformant Carbon Reduction Plans received for NRW procurement contracts and frameworks above £5 million as a result of specialist NRW support provided. (b) Carbon Reduction Plans received for NRW procurement contracts and frameworks above £5 million.

Next step for 2025-26: Review the potential to extend the use of carbon reduction tools and plans into other funding frameworks.

C16: Latest position (to end of June):

We are where we wanted to be on this at the end of June: we are Green. We have made good progress on the three deliverables, however due to recruitment delays we have slowed down the pace meaning we are making steady but not significant progress to the minimum targets. We have engaged with Cwmpas (Welsh Governments appointed consultants) on proposed metrics to be rolled out alongside the Social Partnerships and Public Procurement Act and on approaches to reporting the WGs Well-being Impacts. The approach and challenges of reducing scope 3 carbon emissions has been presented to the NRW Climate Emergency Group. We are piloting a new supplier support package with high value suppliers, to assist successful bidders with achieving a compliant carbon reduction plan. This commitment is anticipated to be Green at year end.

Q1

Green

Anticipated
Year end

Green

Table 3: Wellbeing Objective 3: Pollution is minimised

By 2030 the change we want to see: pollution is minimised through effective regulation and legislative reform, reducing harm to biodiversity and people’s well-being, and driving the sustainable management and use of natural resources.

Area of Focus: Effective use of regulatory tools and approaches

ET Owner: Gareth O’Shea

Step to take: Ensuring the sectors we regulate, including illegal non-permitted activities, take effective action to control and reduce pollution and increase resource efficiency through the provision of advice and guidance that effectively sets out the standards required to ensure compliance.

C17: Commitment for 2024-25: Undertake farm inspections under Agriculture Pollution Regulations, in line with the enforcement sanctions policy to reduce pollution. (Lead: Nadia De Longhi)

Key deliverables:

1. Maintained the level of service for the number of compliance inspections under the Agriculture Pollution Regulations through completing 80% of the scheduled 821 (sites which are identified as those with higher risk activities).
2. Increased effectiveness and efficiency of compliance inspections through delivery of annual review.

Next step for 2025-26: Improve efficiency and effectiveness of compliance inspections under the Agriculture Pollution Regulations.

C17: Latest position (to end of June)

We are where we wanted to be at the end of June: we are Green. We have carried out 157 inspections in Q1, 24% of the 657 (80% of 821) inspections we plan to undertake this year, therefore we are on track to achieving or exceeding the Business Plan Target. Because of this, we are confident in the Green stated position for year end. This commitment is anticipated to be Green at year end.

Q1	Anticipated Year end
Green	Green

C18: Commitment for 2024-25: Undertake compliance visits at prioritised regulated sites to reduce pollution. (Lead: Martin Cox)

Key deliverables:

1. Maintained the level of service for category 1 and category 2 compliance breaches subject to further compliance effort (action or review) within 6 months at 95%.
2. Increased effectiveness and efficiency of compliance visits through delivery of annual review.

Next step for 2025-26: Improve efficiency and effectiveness of compliance visits.

C18: Latest position (to end of June):

We are where we wanted to be at the end of June: we are Green. We have undertaken further compliance effort within 6 months following all Category 1 and 2 permit breaches at Installation, Waste, Water Quality and Water Resources operated facilities. We are carefully monitoring delivery and adjusting workplans to ensure the highest priority work is delivered. This allows us to understand the gap between what is currently being delivered and the Regulatory Service Plan standards based on fully resourced capacity. We are confident with our position for year end because Regulatory Teams will focus their effort on those poor performing sites where Category 1

Q1	Anticipated Year end
Green	Green

and 2 non-compliances are identified. There is a requirement to ensure that a protective, restorative and an enforcement response is in place for all non-compliances. This commitment is anticipated to be Green at year end.

Step to take: Minimising pollution and waste through working collaboratively with industry and others to identify how legislation and Welsh Government policy need to change.

C19: Commitment for 2024-25: Provide support and advice on the new Workplace Recycling Regulations, targeting key workplace sectors and waste service providers to increase stakeholder awareness and understanding. (Lead: Nadia De Longhi)

Key deliverables:

1. Maintained the efficiency of our support and advice on the Workplace Recycling Regulations through (a) responding to queries within 10 days (percentage attained) and (b) evaluating enquires received and adapting support and advice.
2. Increased the awareness of the Workplace Recycling Regulations within our priority sectors through providing sector specific information and guidance to 20% of the workplaces and events (5,400 of the 27,000).
3. Establish the percentage of workplaces and events within our priority sectors that are found to be compliant with the Workplace Recycling Regulations at NRW compliance assessment.

Next step for 2025-26: Improve processes relating to the Workplace Recycling Regulations taking on customer and stakeholder feedback.

C19: Latest position (to end of June):

We are where we expected to be at the end of June: we are Green. We received 87 enquiries relating to the Workplace Recycling Regulations between April and June. Of the 87 enquiries, 85 (98%) were responded to within 10 working days. Two enquiries took longer to respond to as they required complex technical advice from the wider department. The number of enquiries received has decreased significantly through the first quarter since the Regulations came into force. We have also undertaken a review of all enquiries received to date to identify common themes and gaps in the Code of Practice on the Separate Collection of Waste Materials for Recycling. This has been fed back to Welsh Government's Workplace Recycling Project Team for consideration in the next development phase of the Workplace Recycling law. Funding from Welsh Government has now been confirmed for this financial year. This commitment is anticipated to be Green at year end.

Q1

Green

Anticipated
Year end

Green

Step to take: Protecting the environment and improving environmental performance of water companies through effective challenge of their investment programmes to secure action to improve.

C20: Commitment for 2024-25: Provide challenge and advice to water companies to ensure their investment programmes reduce the risks and impacts of their operations on the environment. (Lead: Ruth Jenkins)

Key deliverables:

1. Influenced an increase in investment by water companies in water quality improvements through supporting Ofwat in the scrutiny of Water Company Business Plans.
2. Increased the effectiveness of the three-water company's drought plans through: (a) publishing drought plan guidance by end of Q2 and (b) making recommendations on their draft drought plans through the public consultation. (Publication of final drought plans used as effectiveness measure in 2025-26).
3. Improved the performance of water companies through delivery of an Operator Monitoring Audit for Dwr Cymru Welsh Water and Hafren Dyfrdwy and completion of site audits of Sewage Treatment Works (STW) based on environmental risk.

Next step for 2025-26: Track and monitor performance of water companies to reduce the risks and impacts of their operations on the environment and ensure compliance.

C20: Latest position (to end of June):

We are not where we wanted to be on this at the end of June: we are Amber. We have issued final National Environmental Programme spreadsheets to the five water companies with activities in Wales. As water companies in Wales developed their business plans for the forthcoming investment period, 2025-2030, we have pushed for record levels of action and investment. Whilst the work is affected by long-term sickness absence, we will provide a response to Ofwat's consultation on their Draft Determinations (DDs) for the water sector published on 11th July. We formally consulted on the draft water company drought plan guidance in Q1. We sent pre-consultation letters to Dwr Cymru, Hafren Dyfrdwy and Albion Eco in April providing our initial advice on the development of the draft drought plans. The establishment of the New Compliance Unit is on hold due to the pause in recruitment. We continue to actively manage the risk and are liaising with the Water Programme Board. Choices on what can be stopped or slowed down will need to be made to determine whether we can complete the planned Operator Monitoring Assessment Audits for Water Companies by the end of the financial year. This commitment is anticipated to be Amber at year end. We expect that we will have influenced a step change in water company investment and will have provided guidance for water Company Drought Plans.

Q1	Anticipated Year end
Amber	Amber

Step to take: Minimising pollution in highly protected and designated waters through identifying the actions required of a range of sectors.

C21: Commitment for 2024-25: Set the ambition for water quality improvements at a catchment scale to build collaboration and deliver prioritised action. (Lead: Ruth Jenkins)

Key deliverables:

1. Decreased the load of Phosphorus to highly protected river sites in line with modelled expectations by completing the review of all 171-water company permits.
2. Increased our knowledge and understanding of the causes of water body failure in Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) through the completion of 30% of outstanding investigations.
3. Increased the water quality in highly protected and designated waters by completing actions committed to as part of NRW's partnership projects (LIFE Programme, Nature and Climate Emergency Funds (NaCE)), with a minimum of 30 actions across 10 opportunity catchments in SACs.

Next step for 2025-26: Deliver prioritised collaborative action at a catchment scale.

C21: Latest position (to end of June):

Q1	Anticipated Year end

We are not where we wanted to be on this at the end of June: we are Amber. We have completed our review of the 171 wastewater treatment works' permits for discharges into SAC river catchments, working constructively with Dwr Cymru Welsh Water. We have worked to ensure integration of our work to investigate and understand the reasons for failure of SAC site conditions and for other water body failures, for which their status is less than good, and in doing so to schedule the actions that need to be taken by us and others. With WG Capital Funding we have continued to deliver work to address water quality and the wider water environment in waterbodies across Wales. The Water Quality Capital Programme is currently on 'green' progress status. The NaCE programme has made considerable progress undertaking interventions work aimed at increasing water quality in highly protected and designated waterbodies. Staff vacancies and recruitment pressures, as well as uncertainty over long term funding is affecting the scale and pace of work. We have been re-prioritising our work to ensure we deliver outcomes on the ground, and making changes to permits to ensure they are fit for purpose. This commitment is anticipated to be Amber at year end. We will achieve our review of permits for SAC rivers, using our evidence to develop enhanced understanding of the work needed from a range of sectors.

Amber

Amber

Area of Focus: Incident response being risk-based

Step to take: Minimising harm from environmental pollution incidents through preparing for, and responding to priority incidents as a Category 1 responder.

C22: Commitment for 2024-25: Respond to prioritised pollution incidents to minimise environmental harm. (Lead: Lyndsey Rawlinson)

Key deliverables:

1. Maintained the level of service for the response to incidents initially categorised as 'High' within 4 hours at 95%
2. Increased effectiveness and efficiency of service through delivery of an annual review.

Next step for 2025-26: Implement improvements to service.

C22: Latest position (to end of June):

We are where we wanted to be at the end of June: we are Green. We have met the 95% target to respond to High Level incidents within 4hrs this quarter. We have started the annual review, identifying key areas of focus (Triage, Assessment within Service and Feedback) and identifying the necessary steps to gather further information and evidence to assess current service provision and identify opportunities for improvement. All workstreams have commenced and resource from the incident management team and operational staff have been secured in support. This commitment is anticipated to be Green at year end.

Q1

Green

Anticipated
Year end

Green

Step to take: Minimising the harm from specific sectors and within specific geographic areas through using evidence to take action to improve compliance

C23: Commitment for 2024-25: Enhance our understanding of the drivers of pollution incidents across Wales to inform the integration of preventative actions into incident response. (Lead: Lyndsey Rawlinson)

Key deliverables:

1. Increased our knowledge and identified opportunities for improvements to processes, capabilities, and competencies through a review of current approaches and tools across 15 pollution areas.
2. Increased our knowledge of pollution incidents (incident numbers, types, locations, impacts and resource allocation) by producing a detailed analysis report (by end of Q2) and informing focus areas, strategies and actions by end of Q4.

3. Increased opportunities to integrate preventative action into the Incident Management Strategy through (a) development of an options paper and (b) decisions at NRW business groups on priorities.

Next step for 2025-26: Agree and implement the new incident management strategy.

C23: Latest position (to end of June):

We are where we wanted to be at the end of June: we are Green. We have undertaken a process mapping exercise to identify the WIRS (Wales Incident Recording System) incident stages across the 'Wellbeing Objective 3' incident subset. We have set up collaborative work areas to identify and support the evaluation of evidence to build understanding of current processes (and their variation) with the aim of identifying key areas for improvement. We have supported workshops focussed upon tackling waste crime incidents to inform the stages moving forward. This commitment is anticipated to be Green at year end.

Q1	Anticipated Year end
Green	Green

Step to take: Minimising the harm from serious environmental crime through investigating incidents and taking strong and decisive action.

C24: Commitment for 2024-25: Undertake investigation and enforcement action to minimise environmental harm. (Lead: Martin Cox)

Key deliverables:

1. Maintained the level of service on the decision on an appropriate enforcement response within 3 months at 95%
2. Increased effectiveness and efficiency of service through delivery of the Annual Regulatory Report and Tackling Waste Crime quarterly report.

Next step for 2025-26: Implement improvements to service.

C24: Latest position (to end of June):

We are where we expected to be at the end of June: we are Green. We have made a decision on an appropriate enforcement response within 3 months for 98% of cases against a level of service of 95%. We have continued to monitor the level of service of this deliverable. The Tackling Waste Crime quarterly report is retrospective to the quarter. Our Q4 2023/24 report was shared on time in Q1 2024/25. The Annual Regulatory Report is on track for Q1 and on course to be published in Q2 (September) as planned. We are confident in the Green stated position for year-end as we are not anticipating a reduction in our enforcement effort during the financial year. This commitment is anticipated to be Green at year end.

Q1	Anticipated Year end
Green	Green

Step to take: Minimising the harm from illegal waste through taking action with local authorities and third sector partners to prevent fly tipping

C25: Commitment for 2024-25: Strengthen ways of working with Local Authorities and third sector partners to maximise collective action on fly-tipping. (Lead: Nadia De Longhi)

Key deliverables:

1. Improved ways of working on fly-tipping between NRW and partner agencies by publishing an updated Fly-tipping Protocol (by end of Q1) and trialling 1 local agreement (by end of Q3).
2. Increased the utilisation of Fly Tipping Action Wales surveillance equipment (from 4 to 5 Local Authorities) and the Mallard Service by Local Authorities (from 8 to 10), to encourage more enforcement outcomes.

Next step for 2025-26: Improve processes, tools and actions to prevent fly-tipping.

C25: Latest position (to end of June):

We are not where we wanted to be on this at the end of June: we are Amber. We expected to have finished the draft version of the protocol and published it by end of Q1. This work area is being led by the team leader for Fly-tipping Action Wales. Due to an experienced Senior Officer leaving the team and the ongoing recruitment freeze this has impacted workloads, meaning it has not been possible to allocate sufficient time to finalise the draft document. However, we are confident that we can get Deliverable 1 back on track by end Q2 and progress on Deliverable 2 has been very good. We have been reviewing work plan commitments to WG in light of current team resources & budgets to identify areas we can pause or stop. The protocol area of work is now being prioritised but there have been other areas of high priority work (support to staff and programme reporting) that have taken precedence. Once the draft document is complete, we will need support from NRW (Waste Sub-Group) and Welsh Government to review the draft and help us to agree a way to publish it. This commitment is anticipated to be Green at year end.

Q1

Amber

Anticipated
Year end

Green

Table 4: Cross Cutting

Step to take: Identifying opportunities to optimise the collective action and impact of the public sector through using SoNaRR and Area Statements to work with the public service boards, public health and local authorities.

... Involving different communities and sectors in our work, through applying behavioural insights to inform our approaches.

... Ensuring a diverse range of people are taking action for nature through sharing the vision and outcomes from Nature and Us to expand our networks and increase involvement

C26: Commitment for 2024-25: Develop an understanding of user needs, experience, and opportunities for common messaging and mainstreaming evidence into decision-making to inform the Interim Report for SoNaRR 2025. (Lead: Chris Collins)

Key deliverables:

1. Increased the knowledge amongst sector bodies and wider stakeholders of how to optimise collective action on nature, climate and pollution by publishing the Interim Report for SoNaRR 2025 (by end of Q3).
2. Increased our knowledge of user interaction with the Interim Report for SoNaRR 2025 by establishing an online monitoring tool and undertaking analysis.
3. Increased our understanding of user needs and support requirements for SoNaRR 2025 by undertaking interviews with 10 public sector bodies and wider stakeholders.

Next step for 2025-26: Integrate learning into the final SoNaRR 2025 report to enhance user experience, usage and impact.

Latest position (to end of June):

We are where we expected to be at the end of June: we are Green. Drafting of the interim report is on schedule and due to go Board in Q2. Engagement with stakeholders in key public bodies has taken place to increase understanding of how SoNaRR can support e.g. the OneHealth Agenda; National Statistics (ONS); support well-being and reporting cycles of the Future Generations Commissioners Office; and mainstream nature into economic planning with the Welsh Treasury. Initial conversations with the business community are underway via the UK Business and Biodiversity Forum. This commitment is anticipated to be Green at year end.

Q1

Green

Anticipated
Year end

Green

Annex 2 – Internal Performance Report

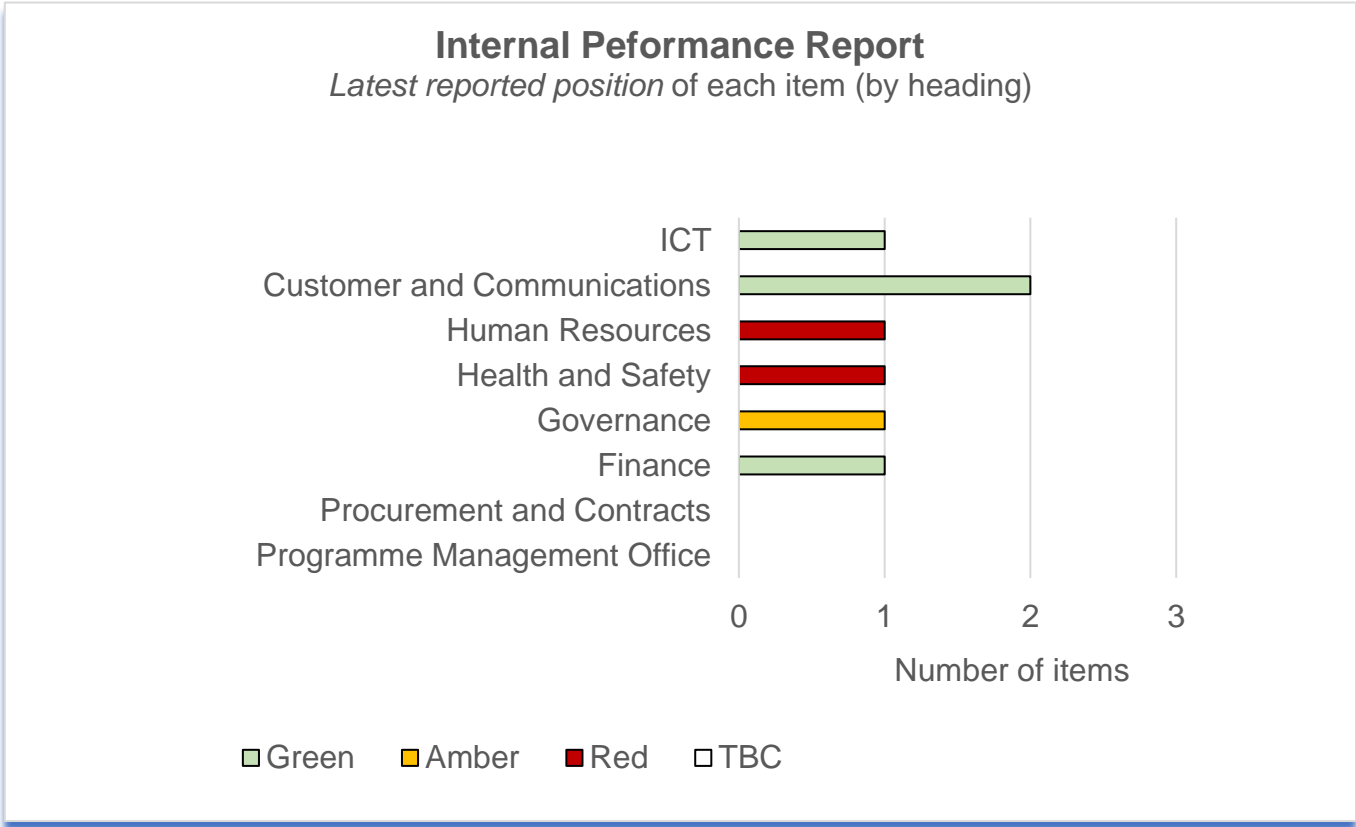
The following pages reflect a quarter end performance snapshot in relation to a number of key measures relating to the ‘health’ of our organisation.

Summary

The performance position* (at the end of the quarter, i. e. June 2024) for the measures covered by this report is:

- Four green
- One amber
- Two red

(see next page for detail)



* Key: Green - achieved; Amber - close; Red - missed.

Measures to note

Updates below reflect all measures red, amber or TBC at the end of the quarter

Health and Safety:

- **Health & Safety Near Miss** reporting is **Red at the end of the quarter** (compared to Green at the end of 2023/24), with fewer near misses reported for June compared with the same period last year. Drop in sessions for managers will remind people of the importance of reporting near misses. **Green is anticipated at year end.**

Human Resources:

- **Sgwrs in place** (staff priorities and development agreement) is **Red at the end of this quarter**, at 47% (at least 90% would be considered Green). Internal reminders are being issued around needing to complete these. **Green is anticipated at year end.**

Governance:

- **Declarations of Interest** (where people working for us declare when their official and/or private interests may be perceived to conflict with NRW's work) is **Amber at 89% at the end of the quarter** (at least 90% is considered green). Reminders have been issued to complete these. **Green is anticipated at year end.**

Measure(s) around **Procurement and Contracts** and **Programme Management Office** will be added into this report during 2024/25.

* Key: Green - achieved; Amber - close; Red - missed.

Remaining measures

The remaining measures, i.e., green items, are reflected below.

Our ICT:

- **Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) reported incidents** is Green at the end of the quarter with no such investigations ongoing.

Customer and Communications:

- **Access to Information requests** responded to within 20 days is Green for the quarter at 94%.
- **Complaints** responded to within service level is Green for the quarter at 98%.

Finance:

- **Payments performance to our suppliers** remains Green at the end of the quarter at 97%. Green is anticipated at year end.

NRW Board Paper

Date of meeting:	25 th September 2024
Title of Paper:	Wellbeing, Health, and Safety (WH&S) Quarter 1 Update
Paper Reference:	24-09-B20
Paper sponsored by:	Prys Davies, Executive Director of Corporate Strategy and Development
Paper prepared by:	Charlotte Morgan, Wellbeing Health, and Safety Manager
Paper presented by:	Charlotte Morgan, Wellbeing Health, and Safety Manager
Purpose of the paper	Discussion
Summary	To discuss the Q1 2024/25 WH&S update.

Background

1. This is the Quarter 1 summary of our Wellbeing, Health & Safety (WH&S) performance for Natural Resources Wales (NRW). The report provides an overview of how NRW have managed WH&S through Quarter 1 2024/2025.

Summary

Headlines from Quarter 1 2024/25 include: -

2. Serious incident reviews (SIR). There was one SIR commissioned in Q1 2024/2025. This was in relation to a staff member involved in a roadside collision. There are ten outstanding SIRs which have been paused due to external factors including awaiting the coroner's report. Three SIRs were completed and awaiting actions to be closed. One SIR has been closed.
3. RIDDOR reportable and LTIs (Lost Time Injuries) – Zero RIDDOR for NRW in Q1. There was one LTI in Q1. Near miss reporting has increased this quarter.
4. Several wellbeing initiatives. Menopause cafes set up for 2024 and stress awareness month was promoted in April.

Wider implications

5. **Finance:** It is recognised that the mismanagement of WH&S has significant financial implications. The WH&S Team, working together with the business 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.

Next Steps

6. The WH&S Team will continue to support the business to ensure wellbeing, health and safety risks are being managed effectively by NRW. 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.
7. There will be a review of the strategic risk level as there is a move to the new risk register.
8. The WH&S Team will use the information gathered and lessons learnt in the development of our future strategy and action plan.

Recommendation

9. The Board are asked to approve the Q1 2024-2025 WH&S Update.

Index of Annexes

Provide any supporting information:

Annex 1 – WH&S Report Q1 – 2024-2025

Approval / Consultation process

<p>Approval/consultation process</p> <p>Responsible: Who has developed the paper/process and who has had input?</p>	<p>The paper was developed by the WH&S Team.</p>
<p>Accountable: Who is accountable for the ultimate</p>	<p>Board are asked to approve the Q1 2024-2025 WH&S Update.</p>

approval? Who will be or is being asked to approve?	The People and Customer Committee endorsed the Q1 Report on 11 th September 2024.
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 information about the work?	N/A

Wellbeing Health and Safety Q1 2024/25

Highlights

In summary, Q1 2024/25 resulted in the commissioning of one serious incident review (SIR). This was in relation to a staff member involved in a roadside collision. There are ten outstanding SIRs which have been paused due to external factors including awaiting the coroner's report.

There were no RIDDOR reportable incidents during Q1 2024/25 and there was one Lost time staff injury (LTA).

Positives from this quarter includes several wellbeing initiatives were delivered, active monitoring reporting has increased compared to last year and training cancellations have reduced.

There were a number of stress awareness sessions for team leaders and line managers to raise awareness and importance of managing work related and personal stress.

In order to ensure our staff are safe whilst working in and near water, a water safety training day was held in Q1 2024/25 with relevant stakeholders providing their expert input.

Serious Incident Reviews

There was one Serious Incident Review commissioned in Q1, three Serious Incident Reviews completed but awaiting the actions to be closed during Q1 – details are below and one Serious Incident Review closed in Q1

Serious Incident Reviews Summary since Aug 2019

Key:	
Green	All actions completed with evidence uploaded
Amber	Actions to be completed
Yellow	SIR paused due to external investigation
Blue	SIRs in investigation status

SIRs Closed	12
SIRs Closed Q1 (inc. in number above)	1
SIRs completed with actions to be completed	8
SIRs paused due to external investigation	10
SIRs in investigation status	3
Details: MoP major injury at Bike Park Wales Reference: ACCB1095/A4 Incident date: 09/07/2023 Type of SIR: Major Injury Full investigation: SIR Closed	SIR has been closed Bike Park Wales are in control of the site and no further actions required for NRW

<p>Details: Fatal accident on NRW estate to member of the public. Sgwd Pannwr plunge pool, Brecon Beacon.</p> <p>Reference: ACCB1092 / A11</p> <p>Incident date: 05/06/2021</p> <p>Type of SIR: Fatal incident.</p> <p>Full investigation: SIR opened and paused.</p>	<p>External commissioned report was presented to NRW and other stakeholders.</p> <p>The Land Stewardship Board meeting in October accepted the report and confirmed the commitment to work in partnership with the other stakeholders.</p> <p>NRW are continuing to work with Bannau Brycheiniog National Park Authority to coordinate our visitor safety work.</p> <p>NRW have recruited officers with the relevant experience of visitor management, to provide more of a focus on our work. Initially there will be focus towards pulling together a more detailed plan of work for Waterfall Country.</p> <p>NRW have recently finalised a bid via National Forest to improve management of Gwaun Hepste car park which is one of the key access points for the Waterfall Country area to improve arrangements for BBNPA and NRW to manage, engage with and educate visitors.</p>
<p>Details: Fatal accident on NRW estate to member of the public. Sgwd Gwladus waterfall in Pontneddfechan, Glynneath.</p> <p>Reference: ACCB1092 / A9</p> <p>Incident date: 16/08/2021</p> <p>Type of SIR: Fatal incident.</p> <p>Full investigation: SIR opened and paused.</p>	<p>External commissioned report was presented to NRW and other stakeholders.</p> <p>The Land Stewardship Board meeting in October accepted the report and confirmed the commitment to work in partnership with the other stakeholders.</p> <p>NRW are continuing to work with Bannau Brycheiniog National Park Authority to coordinate our visitor safety work.</p> <p>NRW have recruited officers with the relevant experience of visitor management, to provide more of a focus on our work. Initially there will be focus towards pulling together a more detailed plan of work for Waterfall Country.</p> <p>NRW have recently finalised a bid via National Forest to improve management of Gwaun Hepste car park which is one of the key access points for the Waterfall Country area to improve arrangements for BBNPA and NRW to manage, engage with and educate visitors.</p>

<p>Details: Fatal accident on NRW estate to a sub-contractor working on a standing sales site. Coed Taff Forest.</p> <p>Reference: ACCB1092/A12</p> <p>Incident date: 12/10/2021</p> <p>Type of SIR: Fatal incident.</p> <p>Full investigation: SIR opened and paused.</p>	<p>The SIR has been paused due to further investigation by the police and Health and Safety Executive. Forest Operational team members were on site with the HSE and provided information. The Wellbeing, health & safety manager attended site.</p>
<p>Details: Fatal accidents on River Cleddau. NRW has a fish pass asset in the vicinity of the incident and therefore is being recorded on AssessNET as a precautionary measure.</p> <p>Reference: ACCB1097/A4</p> <p>Incident date: 30/10/2021</p> <p>Type of SIR: Fatal incident.</p> <p>Full investigation: SIR opened and paused.</p>	<p>The SIR has been paused due to further investigation by the police and Health and Safety Executive. NRW received the MAIB report in December 2022.</p>
<p>Details: Fatal accident on NRW estate to member of the public. Waterfall Country</p> <p>Reference: ACCB1092/A16</p> <p>Incident date: 27/05/2022</p> <p>Type of SIR: Fatal Incident</p> <p>Full investigation: SIR opened and paused.</p>	<p>External commissioned report was presented to NRW and other stakeholders.</p> <p>The Land Stewardship Board meeting in October accepted the report and confirmed the commitment to work in partnership with the other stakeholders.</p> <p>NRW are continuing to work with Bannau Brycheiniog National Park Authority to coordinate our visitor safety work.</p> <p>NRW have recruited officers with the relevant experience of visitor management, to provide more of a focus on our work. Initially there will be focus towards pulling together a more detailed plan of work for Waterfall Country.</p> <p>NRW have recently finalised a bid via National Forest to improve management of Gwaun Hepste car park which is one of the key access points for the Waterfall Country area to</p>

	improve arrangements for BBNPA and NRW to manage, engage with and educate visitors. .
<p>Details: Fatal MoP fatality at Bike Park Wales.</p> <p>Reference: ACCB1095/A2</p> <p>Incident date: 23/05/2022</p> <p>Type of SIR: Fatal Incident</p> <p>Full investigation: SIR opened and paused.</p>	The SIR has been paused awaiting coroners report.
<p>Details: Fatal accident on NRW estate to member of the public. Waterfalls Country</p> <p>Reference: ACCB1095/A13</p> <p>Incident date: 15/05/2022</p> <p>Type of SIR: Fatal incident.</p> <p>Full investigation: SIR opened and paused.</p>	<p>External commissioned report was presented to NRW and other stakeholders.</p> <p>The Land Stewardship Board meeting in October accepted the report and confirmed the commitment to work in partnership with the other stakeholders.</p> <p>NRW are continuing to work with Bannau Brycheiniog National Park Authority to coordinate our visitor safety work.</p> <p>NRW have recruited officers with the relevant experience of visitor management, to provide more of a focus on our work. Initially there will be focus towards pulling together a more detailed plan of work for Waterfall Country.</p> <p>NRW have recently finalised a bid via National Forest to improve management of Gwaun Hepste car park which is one of the key access points for the Waterfall Country area to improve arrangements for BBNPA and NRW to manage, engage with and educate visitors.</p>
<p>Details: MoP fatality at Sqwd y Pannwr, Mannau Brycheiniog</p> <p>Reference: ACCB1092 / A14 & A15.</p> <p>Incident date: 11/10/2022.</p> <p>Type of SIR: Fatal incident.</p>	<p>External commissioned report was presented to NRW and other stakeholders.</p> <p>The Land Stewardship Board meeting in October accepted the report and confirmed the commitment to work in partnership with the other stakeholders.</p>

<p>Full investigation: SIR opened and paused.</p>	<p>NRW are continuing to work with Bannau Brycheiniog National Park Authority to coordinate our visitor safety work.</p> <p>NRW have recruited officers with the relevant experience of visitor management, to provide more of a focus on our work. Initially there will be focus towards pulling together a more detailed plan of work for Waterfall Country.</p> <p>NRW have recently finalised a bid via National Forest to improve management of Gwaun Hepste car park which is one of the key access points for the Waterfall Country area to improve arrangements for BBNPA and NRW to manage, engage with and educate visitors</p>			
<p>Details: MoP fatality in Waterfalls Country</p> <p>Reference: ACCB890/A9</p> <p>Incident date: 01/09/2023</p> <p>Type of SIR: Fatality</p> <p>Full investigation: SIR opened and paused.</p>	<p>External commissioned report was presented to NRW and other stakeholders.</p> <p>The Land Stewardship Board meeting in October accepted the report and confirmed the commitment to work in partnership with the other stakeholders.</p> <p>NRW are continuing to work with Bannau Brycheiniog National Park Authority to coordinate our visitor safety work.</p> <p>NRW have recruited officers with the relevant experience of visitor management, to provide more of a focus on our work. Initially there will be focus towards pulling together a more detailed plan of work for Waterfall Country.</p> <p>NRW have recently finalised a bid via National Forest to improve management of Gwaun Hepste car park which is one of the key access points for the Waterfall Country area to improve arrangements for BBNPA and NRW to manage, engage with and educate visitors</p>			
<p>Details: Timber Lorry Overturn</p> <p>Reference: ACCB1092 / A5</p> <p>Incident date: 16/08/2021</p>	<p>Total Actions: 4</p> <p>Of which:</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Completed & Closed:</td> <td>12</td> </tr> </table>		Completed & Closed:	12
Completed & Closed:	12			

Type of SIR: Fatal incident. Full investigation: Complete - Actions in progress	Open:	1
	Overdue:	0
Details: Damage to 3 rd asset on NRW land Reference: ACCB1096 / A2 Incident date: 20/10/2022. Type of SIR: Property Damage Full investigation: Complete - Actions in progress	Total Actions: 4	
	Of which:	
	Completed & Closed:	3
	Open:	1
	Overdue:	0
Details: Major injury to contractor Reference: ACCB1095 / A3 Incident date: 11/10/2022. Type of SIR: Major Injury - fracture Full investigation: Complete - Actions in progress	Total Actions: 14	
	Of Which:	
	Completed & Closed:	9
	Open:	5
	Overdue:	0
Details: Eye injury from projectile stone in Coed Y Brennin Forest Type of SIR: Reference: ACCB890/A10 Incident date: 11/09/2023 Type of SIR: Injury Full investigation: Complete - Actions in progress	Total Actions: 10	
	Of which:	
	Completed & Closed:	5
	Open:	5
	Overdue:	0

<p>Details: Contractor chainsaw operator trip whilst escaping falling tree</p> <p>Reference: ACCB1097/A5</p> <p>Incident date: 15/12/2023</p> <p>Type of SIR: Injury</p> <p>Full investigation: Complete – actions in progress</p>	<p>Total Actions: 18</p> <p>Of which:</p>	
	Completed & Closed:	10
	Open:	8
	Overdue:	1
<p>Details: Contractor hit by wind blown tree being felled</p> <p>Reference: ACCB1097/A6</p> <p>Incident date: 01/02/2024</p> <p>Type of SIR: Injury</p> <p>Full investigation: Complete - Actions in progress</p>	<p>Total Actions: 5</p> <p>Of which:</p>	
	Completed & Closed:	2
	Open:	3
	Overdue:	0
<p>Details: Chainsaw kick back and cut chainsaw operators chainsaw trousers during flood embankment chainsaw work</p> <p>Reference: ACCB891/A5</p> <p>Incident date: 09/01/2024</p> <p>Type of SIR: Injury</p> <p>Full investigation: Complete – actions in progress</p>	<p>Total Actions:</p> <p>Of which: 7</p>	
	Completed & Closed:	3
	Open:	4
	Overdue:	0

<p>Details: Unearthing of electric cable</p> <p>Reference: ACCB1092/A2</p> <p>Incident date: 09/01/2020</p> <p>Type of SIR: Near miss</p> <p>Full investigation: Complete – actions in progress</p>	<p>Total Actions:</p> <p>Of which: 7</p>	
	<p>Completed & Closed:</p>	<p>11</p>
	<p>Open:</p>	<p>2</p>
	<p>Overdue:</p>	<p>0</p>
<p>Details: MOP fell out of a scooter which is paid for by NRW but managed by a 3rd party</p> <p>Reference: ACCB940/A33</p> <p>Incident date: 09/01/2024</p> <p>Type of SIR: Injury</p> <p>Full investigation: Investigation in progress</p>	<p>SIR is in investigation stage</p>	
<p>Details: A contractor working on behalf of NRW was undertaking felling trees when he sustained a fracture.</p> <p>Reference: ACCB1094/A2</p> <p>Incident date: 01/02/2024</p> <p>Type of SIR: Injury</p> <p>Full investigation: Investigation in progress</p>	<p>SIR in investigation stage.</p> <p>It has been through the governance process and is awaiting final sign off and SIR lessons learnt to be written.</p>	

<p>Details: Car collision</p> <p>Reference: 3rd party vehicle collision with NRW vehicle</p> <p>Incident date: 27/03/2024</p> <p>Type of SIR: Injury</p> <p>Full investigation: Investigation in progress</p>	<p>SIR is in investigation stage</p>
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Recent incidents in NRW

Incidents

	Q1 2024/25	Q1 23/24	23/24	22/23	21/22	20/21	19/20	18/19	17/18
RIDDOR – staff	0	1	5	3	7	3	6	2	8
Lost time injuries – staff	1	1	6	3	3	1	4	5	8
Injuries, no lost time – staff	20	20	65	43	51	19	121	53	59
Near miss – staff	33	60	186	175	156	109	183	163	201
Serious incident reviews	1	0	8	9	7	2	6	2	3
Injuries - contractors	2	2	9	8*	3*	5*	5	9	9
Injuries – public	12	13	46	38	38	18	53	53	95

Near miss – contractors	20	19	70	68	62	46	50	40	44
Near miss – public	30	6	31	33	30	23	33	20	39
Property Damage	11	11	48	53	36	35	32	43	48
Hazards Reported	19	41	89	199	166	65	83	103	78

There has been 30 public near misses reported for Q1 2024/25. This is a significant increase compared to Q1 2023/24 where the total number of public near misses was 6. This can be attributed to an increase in reports coming from the Cwmcarn forest drive. There has been focus on near miss reporting from the third party that manage the drive in Cwmcarn, where cyclists are travelling the wrong way and these reports are being passed to NRW. There was a site visit by the WH&S team to Cwmcarn Forest Drive to support the local operations team. NRW are engaging an external contractor to carry out a survey on the site to review options.

NRW totals for Q1 2024/2025

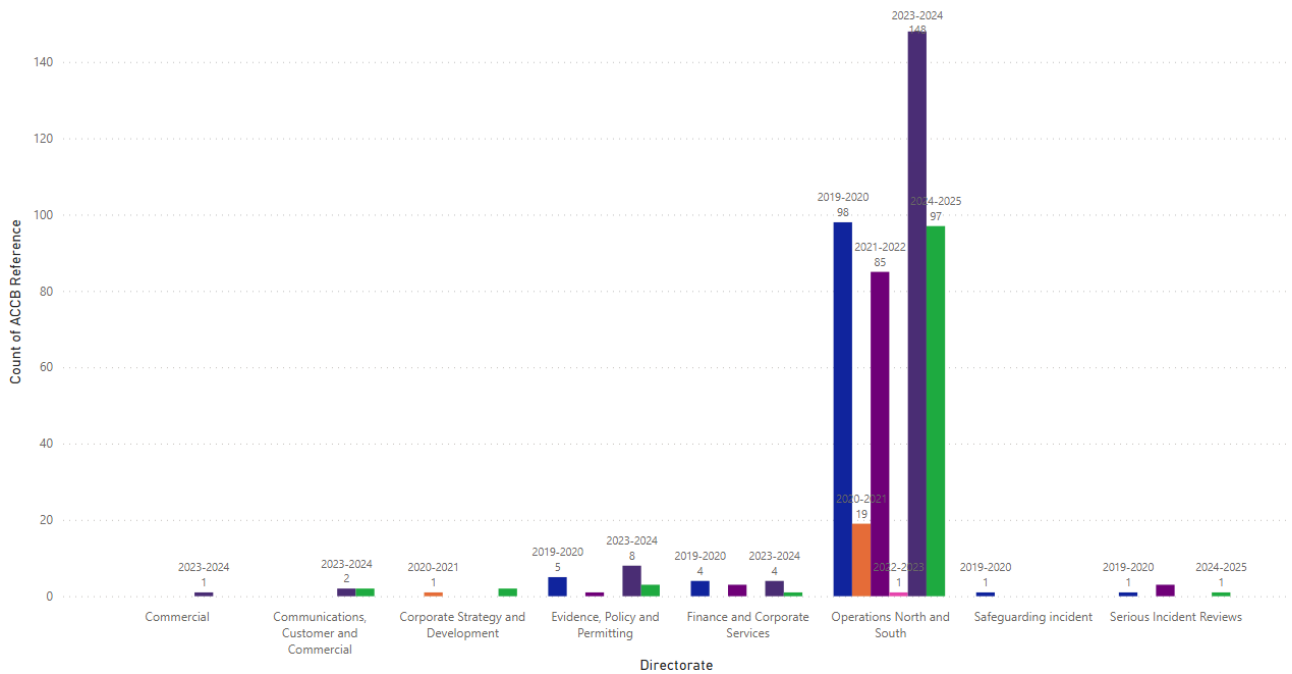
NRW had 0 RIDDOR reportable incidents to staff in Q1 2024/25

NRW had 1 lost time injury to staff in Q1 2024/25. The lost time injury was in relation to a slip / trip / fall whilst undertaking work activities.

AssessNET incident data comparison (all NRW) Q1

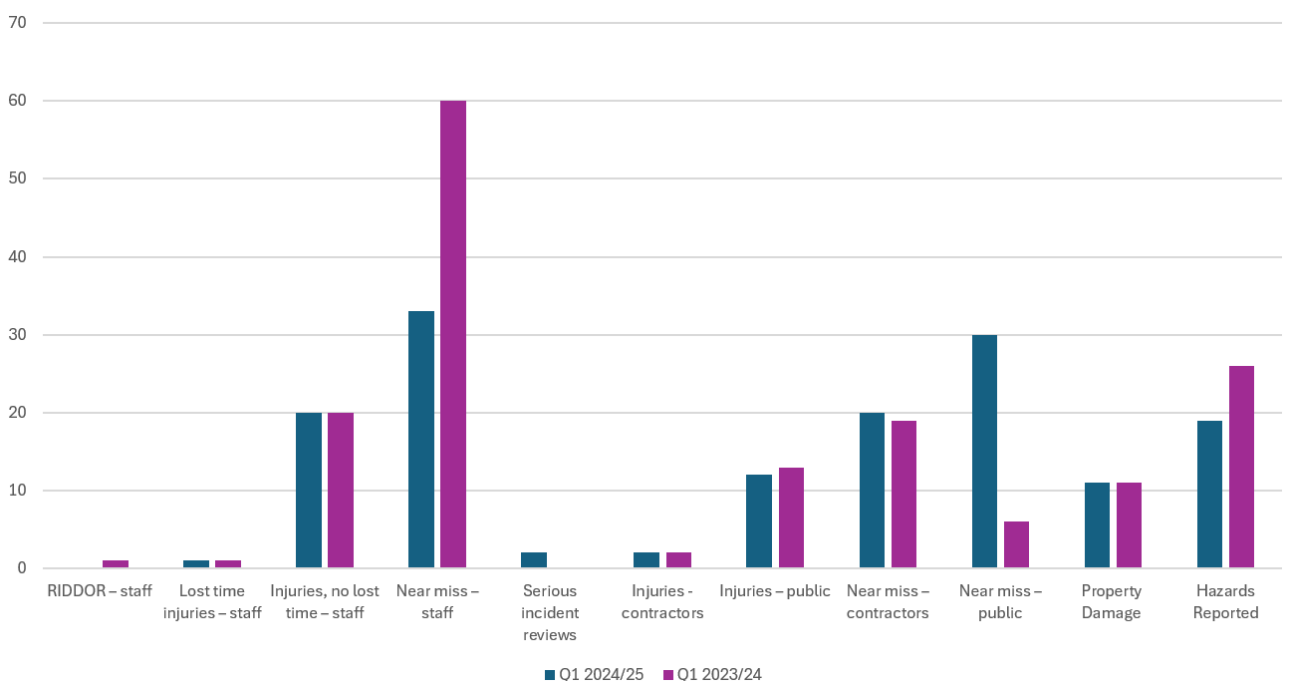
Incidents By Directorate

Financial Year ● 2019-2020 ● 2020-2021 ● 2021-2022 ● 2022-2023 ● 2023-2024 ● 2024-2025



Data analysis is still be developed to understand what the data is telling NRW. Once further investigation into the data has taken place, this will provide beneficial insight.

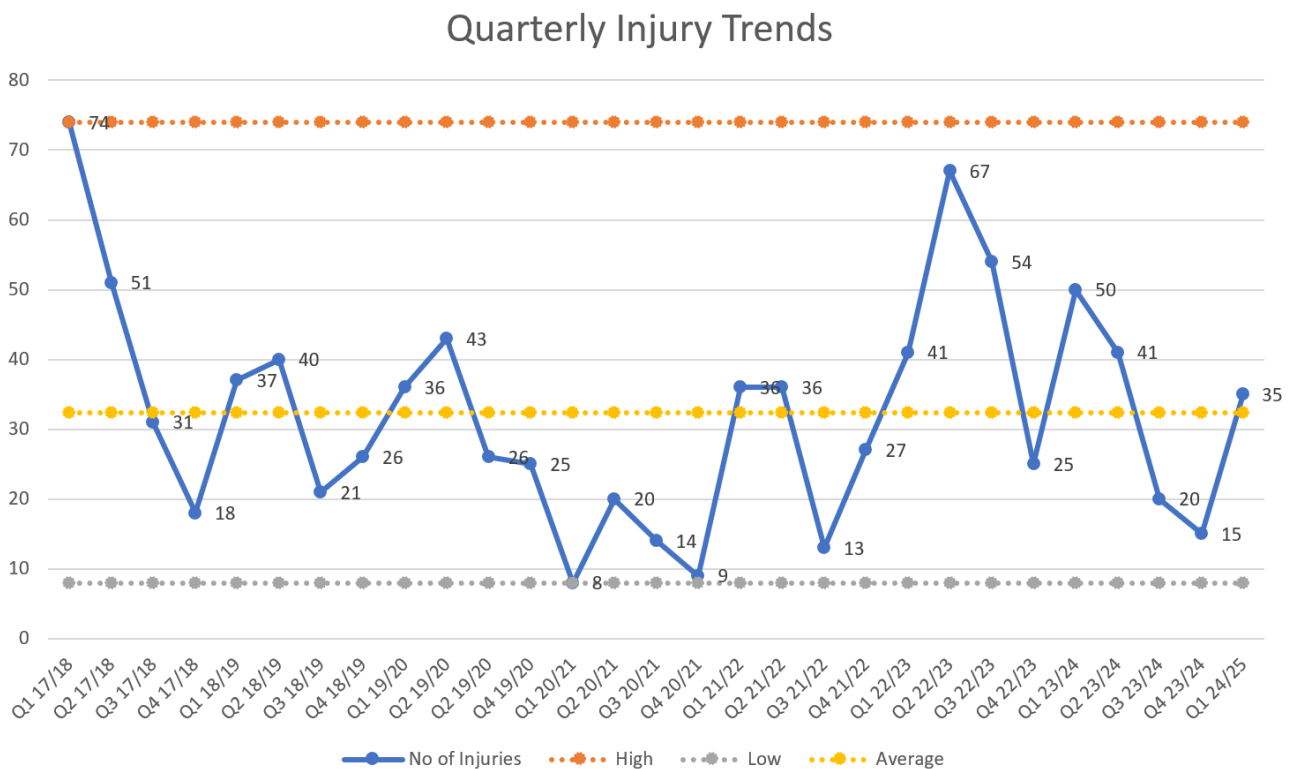
Further analysis of the injury data shows that slips trips and falls are the highest cause of injuries in Q1. In order to address this trend, a slips, trips and falls toolbox talk was delivered during Q1 due to these statistics.



In Q1 2024/25 there was a lower number of staff near miss reports than in Q1 2023/24. There were more public near miss reports in Q1 2024/25, than in Q1 2023/24 which has been discussed earlier in the report. Hazard report has decreased in Q1 2024/25 compared to Q1 2023/24. In order to ensure the importance of positive incident reporting (Near miss, hazards) the near miss series of drop in sessions will continue in Q2 / Q3 for team leaders and managers.

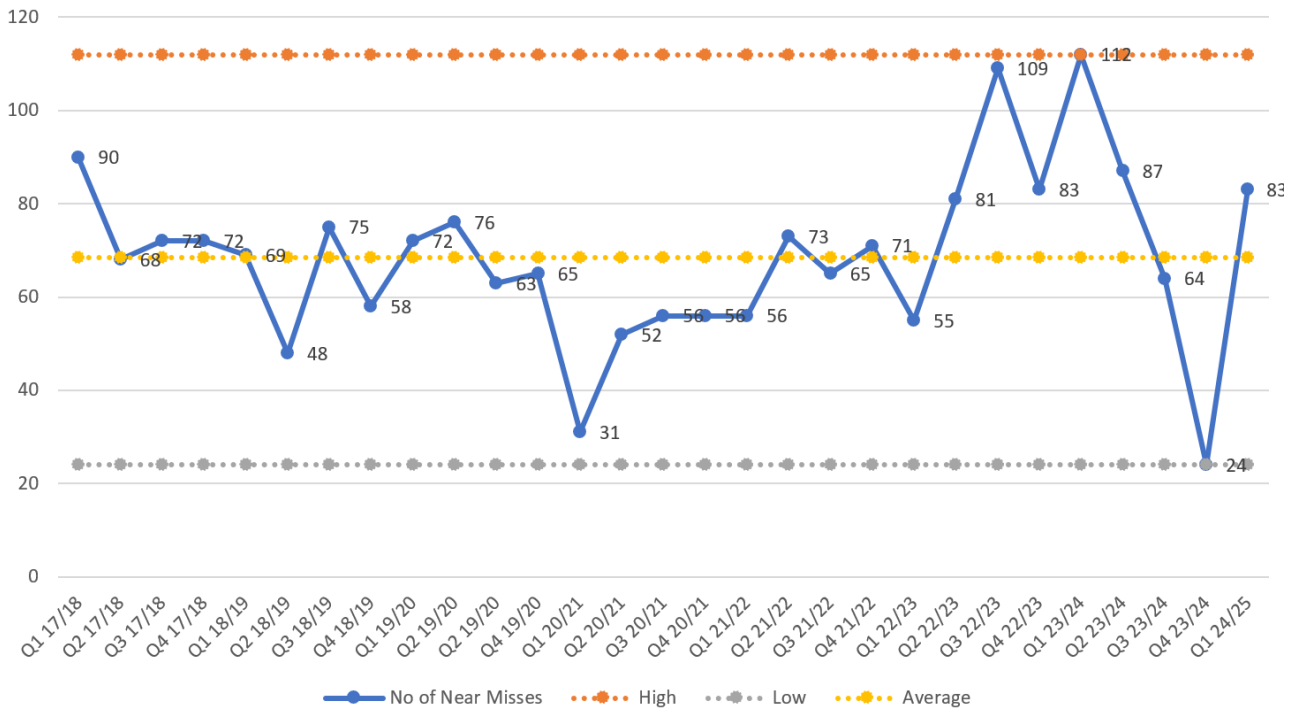
Quarterly trend analysis

The following quarterly trend graphs include a high, average and low line. This provides an idea of where NRW are against their highest number of reports in each graph as well as against their average reports and lowest. By looking at these graphs as a visual, it is possible to ascertain where NRW are and if the trend is decreasing or increasing.



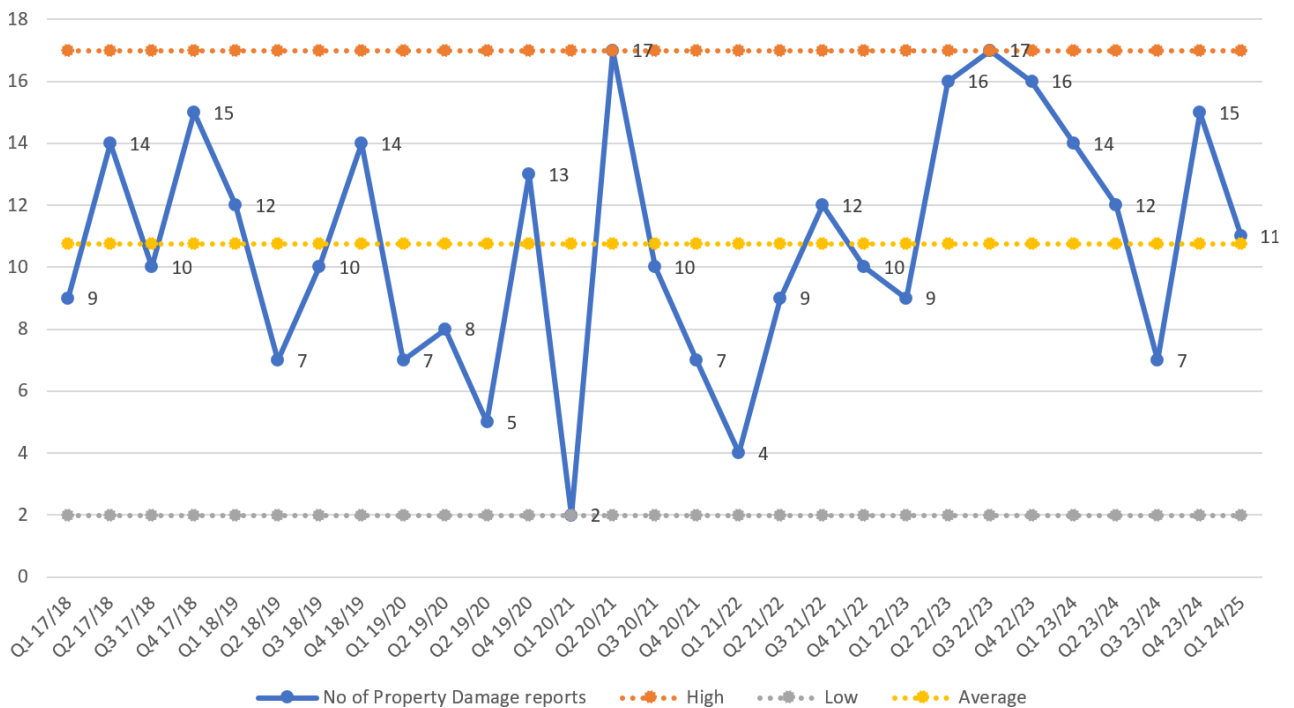
Total injury trends are continuing to stabilise and are comparable to previous years. There were less injuries in Q1 2024/25 compared to Q1 in previous years (with the exception of 2020/21 which was due to COVID restrictions).

Quarterly Near Miss Trends



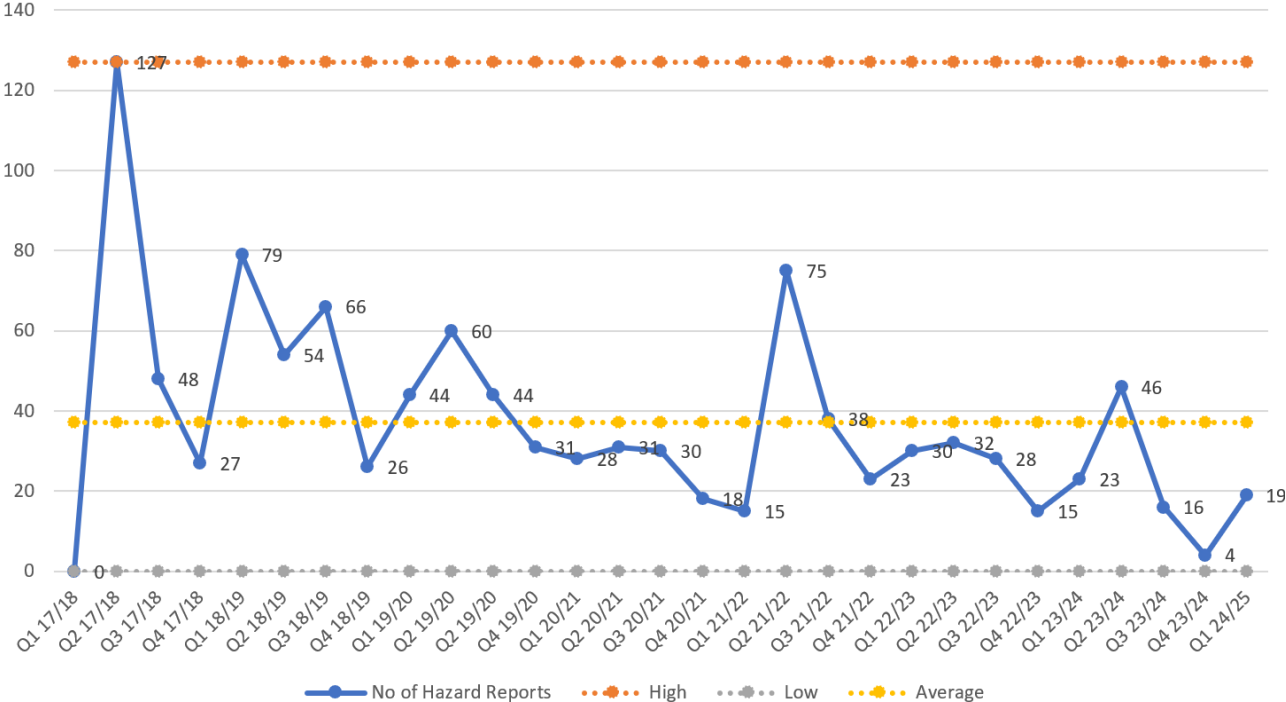
Following the near miss drop sessions last quarter, there has been a significant increase in the number of near miss reports Q1 2024/25 compared to Q4 2023/24. In order to support the continuation of this reporting, there will be further drop in sessions planned for Q2 and Q3.

Quarterly Property Damage Trends



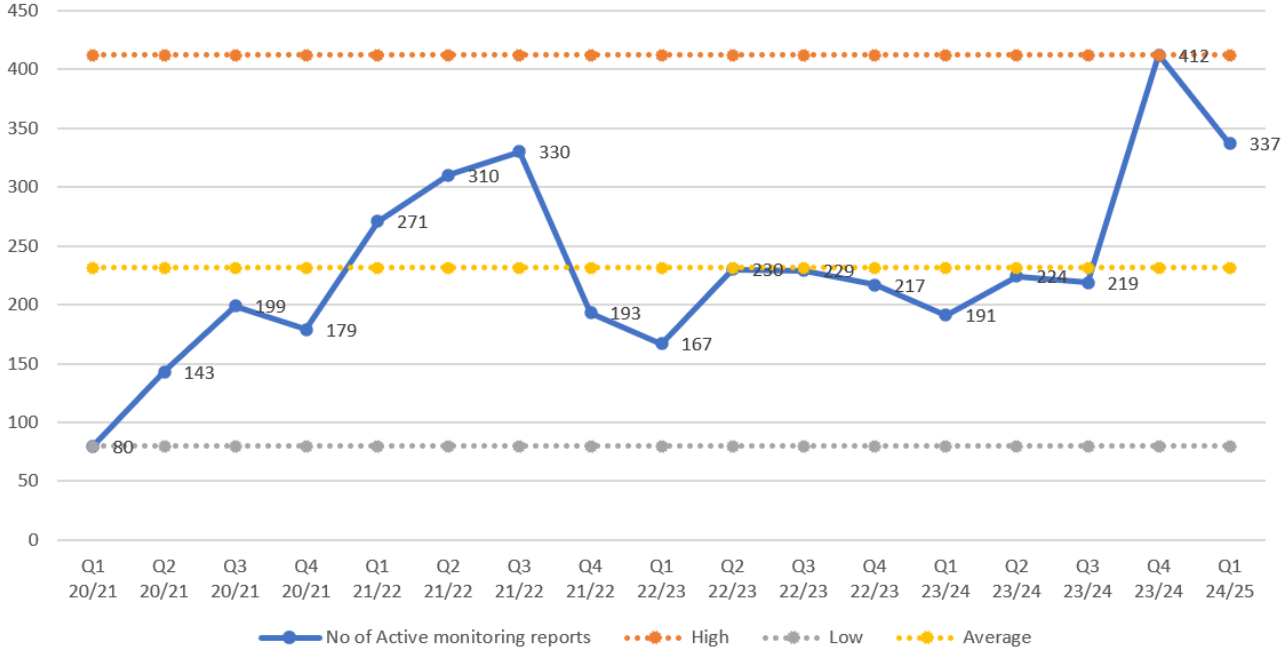
Property damage is seeing a downward trend towards pre COVID levels.

Quarterly Hazard Trends



Following the near miss drop sessions last quarter, there has been a significant increase in the number of hazard reports Q1 2024/25 compared to Q4 2023/24. In order to support the continuation of this reporting, there will be further drop in sessions planned for Q2 and Q3.

Quarterly Active Monitoring Trends



Active monitoring has seen an increase in the last two quarters (Q4 2023/24 and Q1 2024/25) compared to previous quarters.

Wellbeing initiatives and developments

- Menopause cafes were set up for 2024, with appointments sent out to all staff. The cafes are open to all staff and are a good place for team leaders to attend to understand symptoms and issues to help support their staff.
- Stress awareness month was promoted during April and staff were encouraged to pick one action each for their physical, mental and emotional wellbeing to carry out every day.
- During May which was mental health awareness month. The theme for this year was moving for our mental health and to coincide with national walking month all staff were invited to take part in a #TeamNRW walk.
- For June, Welsh Womens Aid Live Fear Free helpline was promoted. This helpline is funded by Welsh Government and is a confidential freephone support for anyone experiencing domestic abuse, sexual violence or any other form of violence against women in Wales. A Wednesday Webinar commemorating the WWA helpline was also held.

Awareness Sessions for Managers

During Q1 2024/25 a number of Stress awareness sessions for managers were delivered. These sessions are designed to support team leaders and line managers in the management of both work related and personal stress.

Water Safety Training

In Q1 2024/25 the Wellbeing Health and Safety team, our Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) provider, Workplace Worksafe, our North Wales Water Safety training provider and representatives from the operations teams met in North Wales to discuss water safety and PPE. The aim of the meeting was to ensure that the correct PPE for staff working in and near water is available and to trial and test new PPE.

ISO 45001

As part of the ISO 45001:2018 standard, a series of surveillance visits will be carried out during Q3 2024/25. Those that will be involved will have the meeting invites in due course .

Internal Audit

In Q2 2024/25 the internal audit team will undertake an audit on the Serious Incident Review process and procedure at NRW.

NNR Audits

No NNR audits took place in Q1 2024/25. A programme of joint NNR audits for 2024/25 is currently being finalised by the Conservation Management Team.

Health and Safety Executive Inspections

The Health and Safety Executive notified NRW in Q1 2024/25 that it is their intention to visit chemical stores as part of their routine inspection schedule for this year. These planned inspections will look at Plant Protection Products (PPP) work being undertaken.

Learning and Development (L&D)

- **Budgets 2024/25**

The annual budget was approved in Q1 2024/25 with an increase in the L&D budget is to help reduce the backlog of training courses created as a result of covid and exacerbated by subsequent budget restrictions.

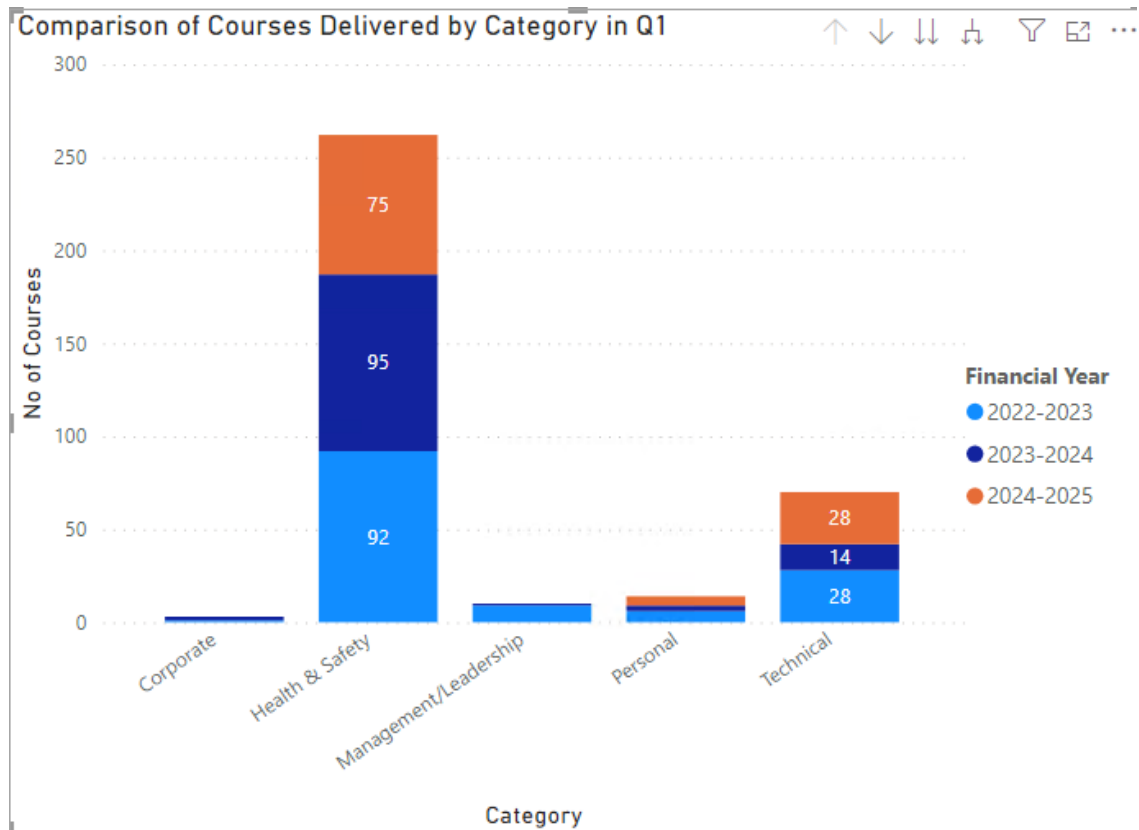
- **Learning Management System**

A Learning Management System (LMS) was procured in April 2024 by the project team, with a phased launch planned from Q2 2024/25. The LMS will ensure training records can be accurately recorded and ensure our compliance with the ISO 45001 registration.

The LMS will be used to host our mandatory eLearning from 1st July 2024 and ongoing work will allow the upload of face to face courses along with training history. The new platform will provide instant access to our staff and managers to enable them to book, review and manage their training requirements.

- **Course Delivery:**

In Q1 2024/25, 108 courses were sourced and delivered, 69% of these courses were H&S.



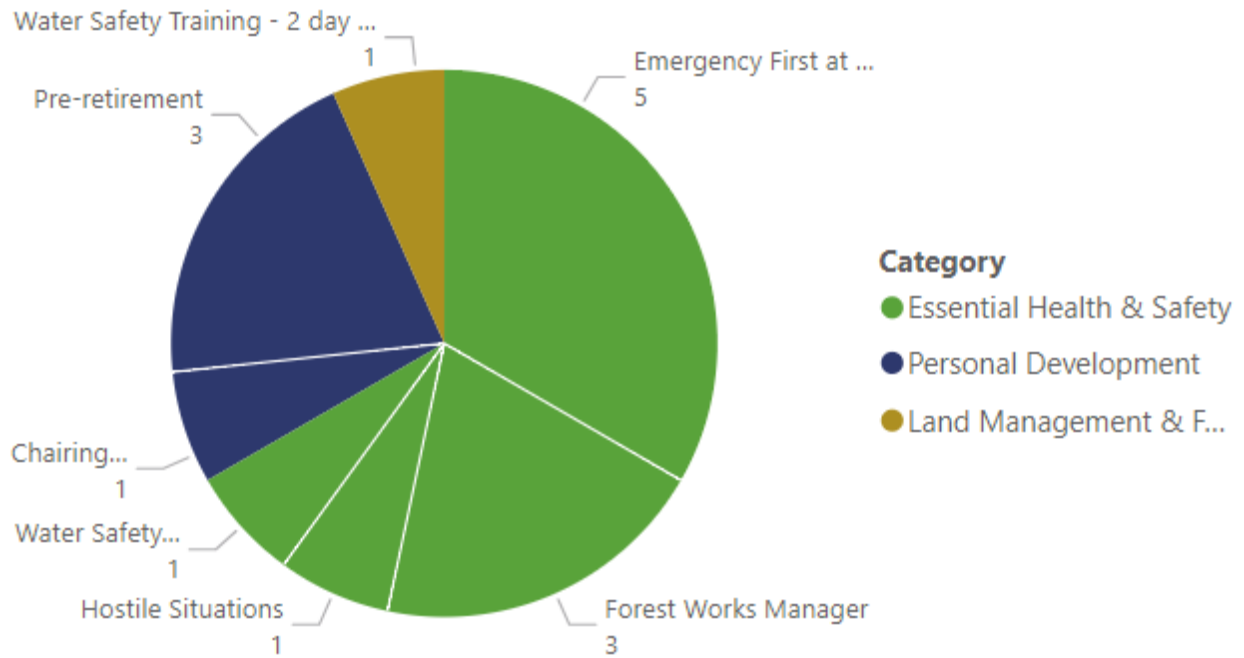
N.B. The personal skills courses are for the pre-retirement and financial courses offered to all at no cost to NRW.

Due to two of our established training providers ceasing trading in Q1 2024/25, there has been a reduction in the land management training provision. A new Land Management Framework is already in progress and has been advertised via Sell to Wales with scoring and evaluation taking place in Q2 2024/25.

- **Cancellations:**

There were 26 cancellations reported in Q1 2024/25, with 15 of these cancellations providing less than 14 days' notice. This is comparatively better than Q1 2023/24 where we had 129 cancellations in the same period. The top two reasons for cancellations with less than 14 days are child care/caring responsibilities and medical appointments. Following recommendation from the internal audit, the L&D team are developing a recharging policy that will be launched to the business in Q2 2024/25.

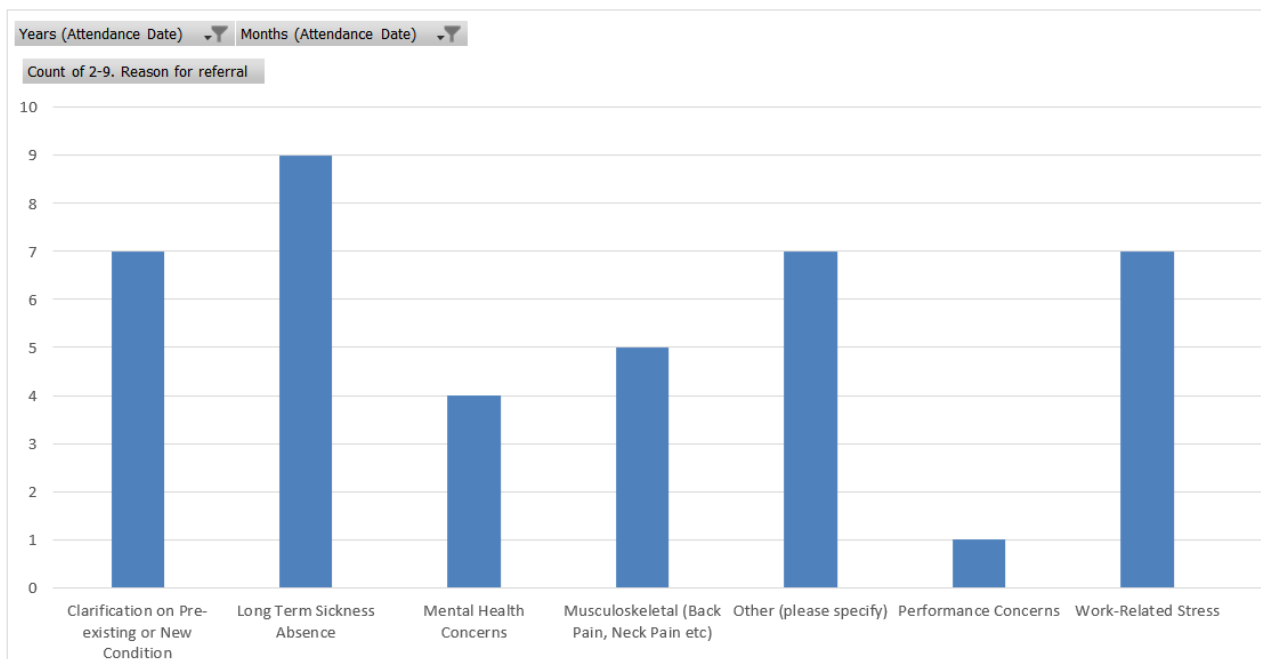
Cancellations per course



NRW occupational health statistics

Q1 2024/25	Q1 2023/24
40 referrals	36 referrals

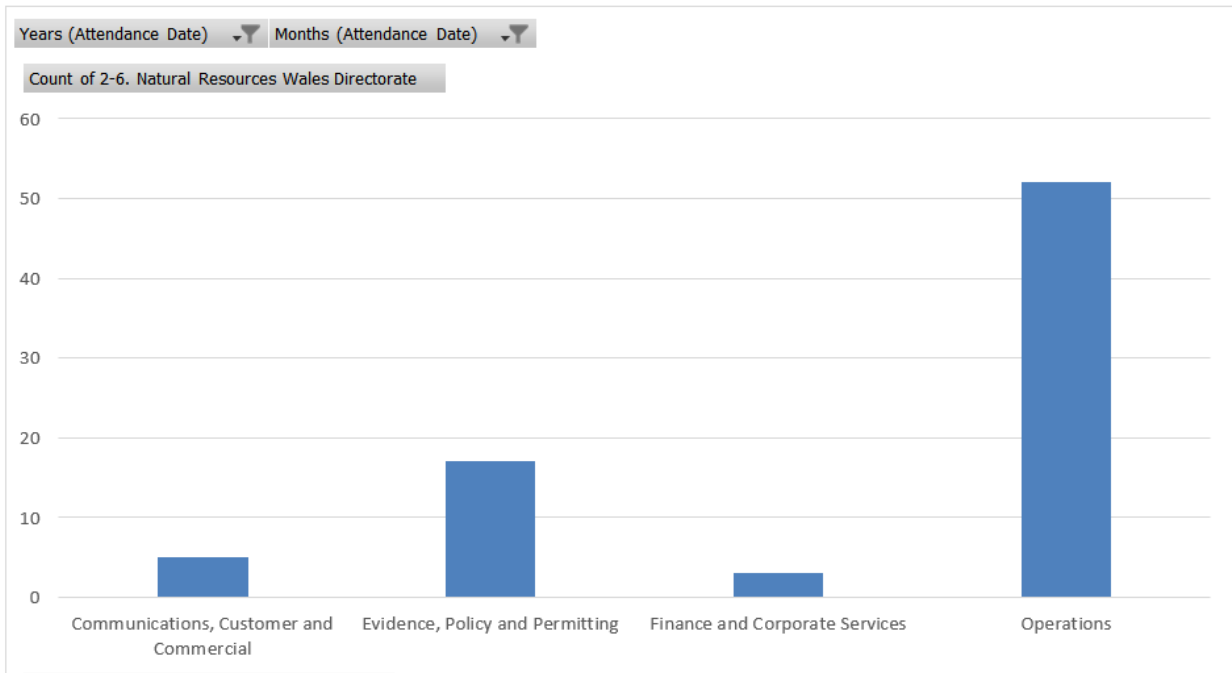
Reason for referral



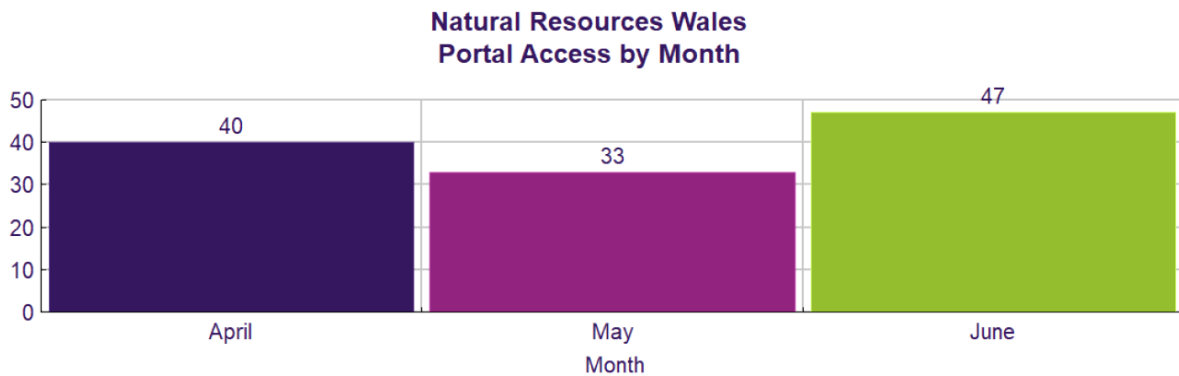
In Q1 2024/25, the main reasons for referral to occupational health was for long term sickness absence closely followed by work related stress, musculoskeletal which in line with the most common causes for referral across all sectors according to our occupational health provider.

WH&S are working with the occupational health provider to ascertain all reasons for referral and to exclude the "Other" option.

Appointments by Directorate

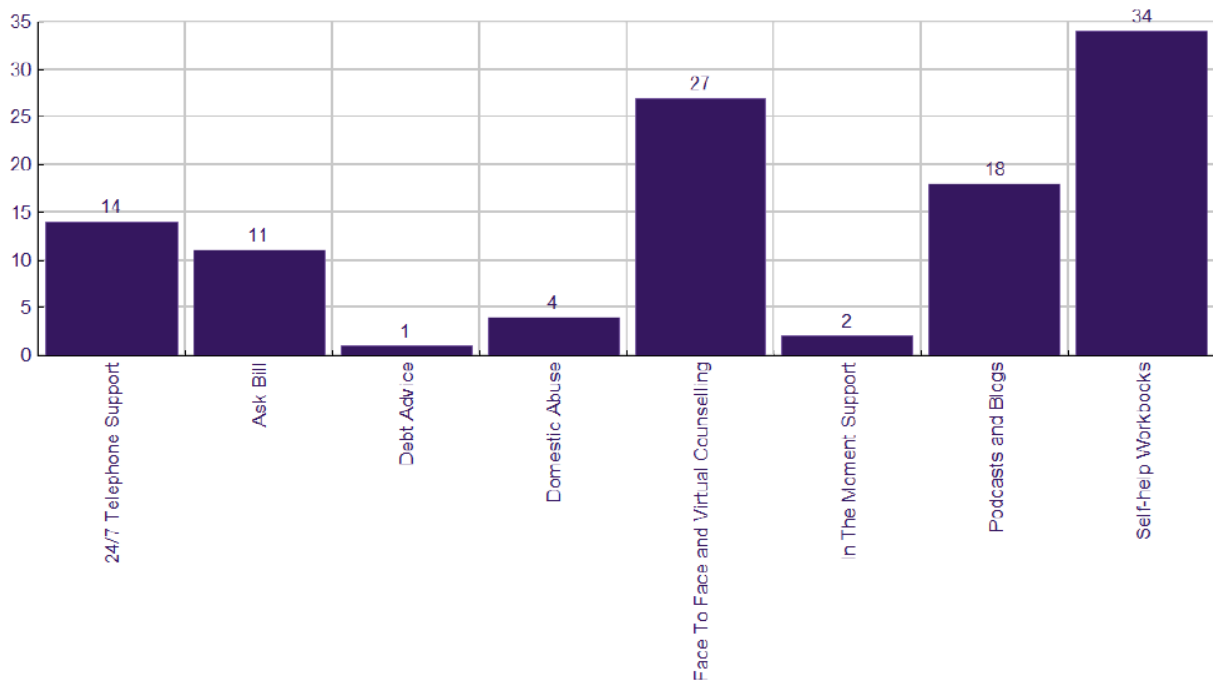


NRW Employee Assistance Programme statistics



During Q1 2024/25, there was consistent access to the Vivup portal.

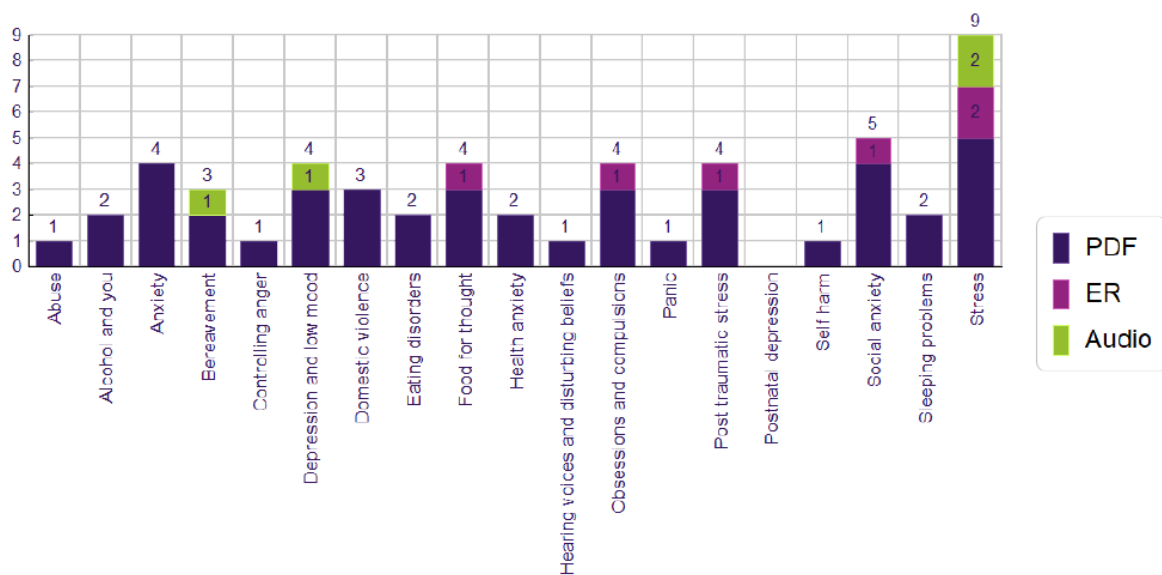
Natural Resources Wales Self Help Page Views



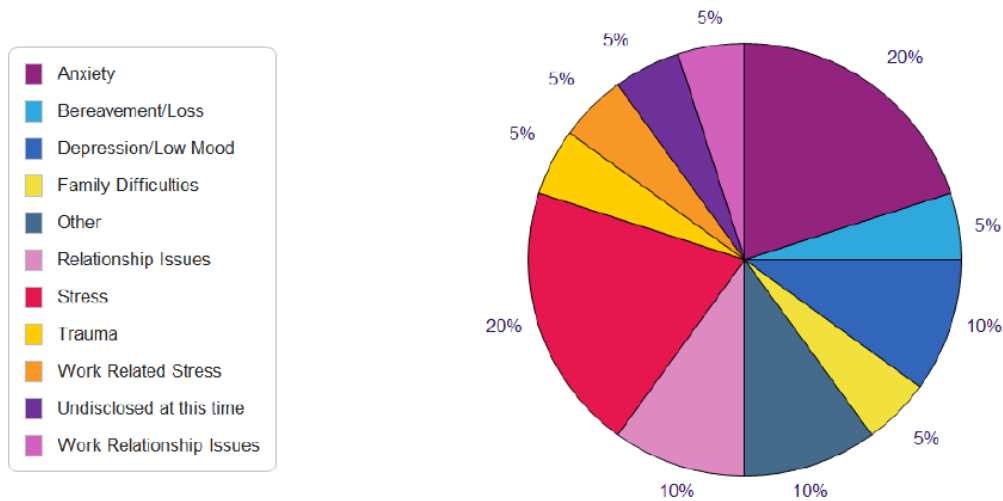
In Q1 2024/25, NRW staff utilised the Vivup portal to access face to face and virtual counselling and self help workbooks more than other offerings.

Vivup offers access to Cognitive Behavioural Therapy self help downloadable workbooks and audio material for NRW Staff who may not feel comfortable discussing their issues or concerns with another person.

Natural Resources Wales Self Help Downloads



Natural Resources Wales Presenting Issue



The top reasons for counselling sessions for NRW staff in Q1 2024/25 were stress, anxiety, depression/low mood and relationship issues. The top reasons for counselling for all organisations as provided by the Employee Assistance Provider were; Stress, anxiety and depression/low mood.

NRW Board Paper

Date of meeting:	25 th September 2024
Title of Paper:	NRW Modern Slavery Statement
Paper Reference:	24-09-B21
Paper sponsored by:	Sarah Jennings, Executive Director for Communications, Customer and Commercial (CCC)
Paper prepared by:	Vernon Lambert, Procurement Manager
Paper presented by:	Vernon Lambert, Procurement Manager
Purpose of the paper	Endorsement
Summary	This paper is seeking approval of the updated NRW Modern Slavery Statement that requires annual sign-off by the Chief Executive, prior to publication on NRW's website.

Background

1. Certain organisations must publish an annual statement setting out the steps they take to prevent modern slavery in their business and their supply chains in line with the Modern Slavery Act (2015). The NRW Modern Slavery Statement details our approach to modern slavery, launched in 2020 and has been updated annually since.
2. The requirement to publish a Modern Slavery Statement is set out in Section 54 (Transparency in Supply Chains) of the Modern Slavery Act 2015. According to the UK Government website, a commercial organisation is required to publish an annual statement if all the criteria below apply:
 - a. it is a 'body corporate' or a partnership, wherever incorporated or formed
 - b. it carries on a business, or part of a business, in the UK
 - c. it supplies goods or services
 - d. it has an annual turnover of £36 million or more
3. This is NRW's fifth iteration of the annual Modern Slavery Statement.
4. The requirements of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 are:

- To update the Modern Slavery Statement every year.
 - To publish the Statement in a prominent place on the website within six months of the financial year end.
 - That the Statement is approved by the Board.
 - That the Statement is signed off by a Director.
5. Statements must describe the main actions the organisation has taken during the financial year to deal with modern slavery risks in the supply chains and business. The Home Office's statutory guidance recommends that statements cover the following:
- Organisation structure and supply chains.
 - Policies in relation to slavery and human trafficking.
 - Due diligence processes.
 - Risk assessment and management.
 - Key performance indicators to measure effectiveness of steps being taken.
 - Training on modern slavery and trafficking.
6. The draft Statement attached to this report responds to all the points above, as required by the legislation.
7. It contains a summary of our progress in this area of work and a statement of what we intend to achieve over the coming year.
8. The latest version of the Modern Slavery Statement was published November 2024 and this update seeks to follow the same authorisation process as in previous years, ensuring consistency and the same level of visibility throughout.
9. It should be noted that the ambitions for 2024-25 are generally the same as 2023-24 due them still being relevant and other priorities requiring the focus of a capacity challenged Procurement & Contracts function needing to be delivered on.

The only notable change to the statement for 2024-25 is that NRW Procurement will assess modern slavery risk at a category management level. This means that against the various categories and areas of expenditure we procure goods, services and works from, we will determine the risk associated with each industry and where feasible, we will seek to mitigate our expose in the contracts and frameworks we set up or utilise.

Risks, Risk Appetite and opportunities

10. Failure to produce a Modern Slavery Statement increases the risk that NRW might be inadvertently facilitating some form of modern slavery and/or human exploitation and trafficking in our activities.

Wider implications

- (a) Wellbeing Objectives (WBOs): The Modern Slavery Statements contributes to the effective operation of the organisation in its delivery of the WBOs by ensuring that our employees are treated fairly and valued.
- (b) Finance: None associated directly with this report at this time.
- (c) Resource implications: As Procurement and Contracts have only just inherited this policy and procedure from Governance, the longer term resource impacts are unknown at this time. The more recent impact is that Procurement has revised a Team Leader’s responsibilities to oversee this area of work and the management and monitoring of associated with it each year.
- (d) Equality: A Modern Slavery Statement aims to protect the most vulnerable people in society, who are more likely to have one or more protected characteristics.
- (e) Data Protection: None associated with this submission.

Next Steps

- 11. If approved by the NRW Board, the Statement will then be signed by the Chief Executive and published in a prominent place on the NRW website and the Transparency in Supply Chains (TISC) register (www.tiscreport.org) for October 2024. Ownership will sit within Procurement & Contracts and a formal review of the Statement, and the progress of the actions, will take place early in 2025.

Recommendation

- 12. It is recommended that the Board approve NRW’s Modern Slavery Statement for 2024-25.

Index of Annexes

Annex 1 – The Modern Slavery Statement

Approval / Consultation process

<p>Approval/consultation process</p> <p>Responsible: Who has developed the paper/process and who has had input?</p>	<p>Updated by Vernon Lambert, Procurement Manager</p>
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<p>Accountable: Who is accountable for the ultimate approval? Who will be or is being asked to approve?</p>	<p>NRW Board</p>
<p>Consulted: Who has been consulted to date? Where endorsement is required, is this in place? Will further consultation be required?</p>	<p>Produced in consultation with Ian Mowatt, Head of Procurement and Contracts, Steve Burton, Head of People Management and Sarah Jennings, Executive Director for Communications, Customer and Commercial.</p> <p>Endorsed by the NRW People and Customer Committee on 6th June 2024.</p>
<p>Informed: Who has been informed or who needs to be further information about the work?</p>	<p>Alison Subacchi, Senior Procurement Specialist, Karl Pugh, Procurement Team Leader, Melanie Rees, Procurement Advisor, and Rob Bell, Head of Finance.</p>

Modern Slavery Statement

2024-25

Introduction

1. This Statement is designed to satisfy the requirements of Part 6 Section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act (2015) and forms part of our commitment to the Welsh Government's *'Code of Practice for Ethical Employment in Supply Chains'* and the UK Woodland Assurance Standard (UKWAS).
2. As the largest Welsh Government Sponsored Body, we hold ourselves to the highest standards of ethical conduct in all our activities and are committed to continuous improvement. NRW does not engage in, or condone, the practices of human trafficking, slavery or enforced labour.
3. Through our Corporate Plan and legislation such as the Modern Slavery Act, the Well-being of Future Generations Act and the Social Partnerships and Public Procurement Act, our ambition is to see nature and people thriving together and our values are at the heart of who we are as an organisation. We are proud to serve the people of Wales by being:
 - **Connected:** we value our deep-rooted attachment to the land and water, nature and communities of Wales and build meaningful partnerships
 - **Bold:** we use our voice, take action to make a difference and lead by example
 - **Caring:** we listen to understand, care for each other and the communities we serve, and the environment we all depend on
 - **Resourceful:** we explore new ways of doing things, innovate to accelerate change and use our resources effectively.
4. We are committed to improving our business practices to combat modern slavery and human trafficking and to ensure that we are not complicit in any human rights violations. We are committed to zero tolerance of slavery, human trafficking, and child labour practices.
5. For the purposes of this statement, we have adopted the following definitions:
 - 'Slavery' is where ownership is exercised over a person. Someone is in slavery if they are:
 - forced to work through mental or physical threat
 - owned or controlled by an 'employer', usually through mental or physical abuse or the threat of abuse
 - dehumanised, treated as a commodity or bought and sold as 'property'
 - physically constrained or have restrictions placed on their freedom.
 - 'Servitude' involves the obligation to provide services imposed by coercion.

- 'Forced or compulsory labour' involves work or service extracted from any person under the menace of a penalty and for which the person has not offered themselves voluntarily.
 - 'Human trafficking' concerns arranging or facilitating the travel of another with a view to exploiting them.
6. This statement will be published on the Transparency in Supply Chains (TISC) register (www.tiscreport.org).

About Natural Resources Wales (NRW)

7. Natural Resources Wales is the largest Welsh Government Sponsored Body – employing circa 2,400 staff across Wales with a budget of circa £265 million for 2024/25.
8. We were set up as per the specifications in The Natural Resources Body for Wales (Establishment) Order 2012 and The Natural Resources Body for Wales (Functions) Order 2013. We receive a Remit Letter setting out what the Welsh Government wants us to achieve during that year and a Funding Letter setting out the budget available to us.
9. Our work is overseen by a Board that consists of the Chair and currently 10 further Non-Executive Directors who are appointed by the Welsh Government, plus the Chief Executive.
10. Around half of our income budget is derived from Grant in Aid from the Welsh Government, but we also generate income by charging for some of our services and several commercial activities including timber sales and tenancies.

Our Supply Chains

11. NRW's supply chains predominantly fall within the following categories:
- Civil Engineering and Consultancy
 - Fleet Management
 - Facilities and Assets
 - ICT
 - Corporate Services
 - People Services
 - Land Management
 - Hydrometry & Telemetry
 - Forest Operations
 - Laboratory Services
12. NRW has many of its own contracts and frameworks for specific categories of expenditure and these are used by our staff to deliver our objectives. The Welsh Government Commercial Delivery (WGCD) department work in conjunction with the wider public sector including local authorities and NHS Wales to develop and deliver collaborative national framework agreements. NRW utilise a number of these agreements and we also utilise the Crown Commercial Service

(CCS), Yorkshire Purchasing Organisation (YPO) and Eastern Shires Purchasing Organisation (ESPO) frameworks where appropriate. Decisions on whether to purchase from a suitable NRW contract or framework agreement are made by the Procurement Lead or Category Lead.

13. We are an accredited member of the Real Living Wage Foundation and therefore honour the Real Living Wage commitments to our employees (including Agency workers) , full time, or part time.

Our policies and working practices

14. We are committed to making sure that there is no modern slavery or human trafficking in our supply chain or in any part of our business. We continue to develop our policies and procedures to reflect our commitment to acting sustainably, ethically and with integrity in all our business relationships.

15. NRW mitigates the risk of modern slavery occurring in its workforce by ensuring that directly employed staff are recruited via robust HR recruitment policies. There is a Raising a Serious Concern in the Public Interest (Whistleblowing) policy in place for members of staff to raise any concerns about wrongdoing as well as guidance for staff experiencing domestic abuse. We also have a Bullying and Harassment as well as a Resolution procedure through which staff can raise grievances. Staff employed on a temporary basis (as Agency workers / specialists) are, where possible, recruited through NRW's approved suppliers.

Progress against our commitments

16. Our operational teams continue to be vigilant to this issue. Via their partnership work and proactive engagement with outside specialist agencies, we have developed a greater understanding of potential areas of our operation where instances of modern slavery are more likely.

17. We have set up an intranet page to raise awareness of Modern Slavery internally. This page includes information on how to spot potential signs of Modern slavery, informs staff how to raise concerns and provides various signposts to more in-depth sources of advice.

18. We have established a Contract Management Support Service for the organisation. Although newly established, this team will embed good Contract Management practice, supporting staff to manage contracts to ensure outcomes are achieved by equipping them with the necessary tools and guidance. These new ways of working and improved contract management will also ensure greater monitoring and transparency against the agreements we put in place.

19. We have continued to make prompt payment to our suppliers to reduce the risk of unethical practices filtering through our supply chain.

20. Within our tendering processes, Modern Slavery and Ethical Employment have become embedded as key considerations, forming part of our selection criteria.

Our future commitments

21. This is NRW's fifth Modern Slavery Statement. Our work in this area is built upon and developed each year, and we continue to review our progress and statement annually at the end of each financial and operational year.
22. We recognise that combating modern slavery and human trafficking requires a coordinated, collaborative, and long-term approach.
23. We have completed a review of our procurement documentation and ensured that ethical employment practices are considered as part of the procurement process; this will be further enhanced to ensure we consider ethical procurement at a category management level.
24. We will develop a procurement and contracts strategy and will complement the aims of the Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Bill, once it becomes law, further embedding fair pay and equal treatment of employees and the employees of our supply chains within NRW's ways of working.
25. We will liaise with other Welsh public sector bodies to share approaches and adapt any good practice that is commonplace in Wales when adhering to the Modern Slavery Act.
26. We will continue to review our internal processes and monitor the effectiveness of our actions against modern slavery and human trafficking. We will attempt to increase transparency in our supply chains with the aim of reducing the risk of modern slavery and unethical practices.
27. Over the 2024-25 operational year we will continue to provoke discussion and raise awareness across the organisation about the Modern Slavery Act (2015) and what risks this could pose to us as an organisation.
28. We will ensure we remain up to date on external supply chain risks and issues that impact on our service delivery, through close networking with the Welsh Government and other key stakeholders.
29. This statement will be reviewed annually and has been approved by the Board.

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Dated:

NRW Board Paper

Date of meeting:	Wednesday 25 th September 2024
Title of Paper:	Nature and Us Evaluation Report
Paper Reference:	24-09-B22
Paper sponsored by:	Prys Davies, Executive Director of Corporate Strategy and Development
Paper prepared by:	Russell De'ath, Senior Specialist Advisor, Vision 2050
Paper presented by:	Russell De'ath, Senior Specialist Advisor, Vision 2050
Purpose of the paper	For Information Only
Summary	To note the evaluation report findings and next steps

Background

1. The Nature and Us Programme engaged the people of Wales in a national conversation about their vision for the natural environment of Wales. Through a citizens' assembly process, it developed a shared vision for the year 2050 considering the changes we need to make leading up to 2030 and 2050, as individuals and as a country. The vision helped to inspire the new Corporate Plan, and stands as a shared beacon of hope for collaborative working across the public sector and beyond.
2. In October 2023, Andrew Darnton and Associates was commissioned to undertake a process evaluation of the Nature and Us programme. The objectives for the evaluation were to provide an assessment of the extent to which Nature and Us has met its programme objectives, and to undertake an evaluation of programme processes, with learnings summarised to inform future working. The evaluation also explored the impact of the programme on NRW ways of working with other organisations in Wales. The full evaluation report is available on request.

3. This report summarises the conclusions and recommendations from the evaluation and sets out next steps going forwards. Board has previously seen the final vision from the Nature and Us programme itself, so the paper does not go into any details around the content of the vision

Headline Findings

4. Nature and Us has enabled the organisation to put the public's voice at the centre of its plans. The evaluation concludes that the impact of Nature and Us is clear throughout the third Corporate Plan, and is apparent in the step change from the two previous Plans.
5. The evaluation established that Nature and Us was regarded by NRW senior management as an innovation project, and an experiment in 'messy' and whole systems ways of working. As such, it was in part an exercise in understanding organisational change and provides a solid evidence base for further work in this space.
6. The methods adopted, whilst not always easy to deliver, were appropriate to the purpose; they generated extensive learnings about how NRW will need to operate in future if it is to deliver on its wider remit. Nature and Us has been described in this evaluation as a 'beacon project' which will be looked back on as an early step in the process of transformational change.
7. Nature and Us can be seen as an early exemplar of what a 'Team Wales' approach to tackling the nature emergency might comprise. This can be characterised as cross-silo working across government bodies pursuing shared goals with multiple benefits.

NRW Response

8. Briefings on the Evaluation findings have been held with Clare Pillman and the Nature and Us Programme Board. Reflections from those conversations pointed towards a key opportunity to utilise the evaluation insights to inform the NRW2030 programme (which brings together the current transformation programmes). The Programme Team has also shared the findings of the evaluation with colleagues from People Development and Well-being Team, and the Governance and Board Secretariat.
9. With that in mind, a workshop was held with the Planning and Resources Group on 6th September which built on Nature and Us and the learnings from the evaluation (along with the existing Transformation Programmes objectives and benefits) to help develop a vision and narrative for the NRW2030 programme.

10. The full evaluation report (which is available on request) will serve as an evidence resource for other transformation and improvement processes across NRW, as well as a resource to help strategic discussions at the Board (such as the Deep Dives).

Risks, Risk Appetite and opportunities

11. Nature and Us was a significant investment in both application of new ways of working and our organisational values of being Bold, Connected, Caring and Resourceful. There is a risk that if we do not build on the learnings from the evaluation we are not able to achieve the benefits of the programme.
12. Furthermore, the ambition set out through the Nature and Us programme and the Corporate Plan is “to sharpen our focus on social and environmental justice, on equity and inclusion, making sure delivering for rural and urban communities across Wales is at the heart of everything we do”. In light of this evaluation, and within the context of the case for change proposals, there is an opportunity to redefine the narrative around how we will meet that ambition.

Wider implications

- a) **Well-being Objectives:** considering *how* we work is integral to the achievement of our well-being objectives. The learnings from Nature and Us Evaluation can contribute to the ongoing challenges of working differently.
- b) **Finance:** There are no direct financial implications or commitments set out in the evaluation report. The contractor was not commissioned to look at costs associated with the recommendations.
- c) **Resource implications:** The visioning workshop with the Planning and Resources Group will feed into the development of a framework for resource prioritisation for NRW 2030.

Index of Annexes

Annex 1 – A case study assessing Phase One of the programme against the WCVA’s 10 Principles of Public Engagement

Annex 2 – A case study assessing the Nature and Us Citizens Assembly against Involve UK’s Draft Standards for Citizens’ Assemblies (2020)

Approval / Consultation process

<p>Approval/consultation process</p> <p>Responsible: Who has developed the paper/process and who has had input?</p>	<p>Russell De'ath (Senior Specialist Adviser) with input and sign off from Sarah Williams (Head of Corporate Strategy and Programme Management)</p>
<p>Accountable: Who is accountable for the ultimate approval? Who will be or is being asked to approve?</p>	<p>n/a</p>
<p>Consulted: Who has been consulted to date? Where endorsement is required, is this in place? Will further consultation be required?</p>	<p>Paper endorsed by ET with amendments</p>
<p>Informed: Who has been informed or who needs to be further information about the work?</p>	<p>n/a</p>



Natur a Ni

Nature and Us

A case study assessing Phase One of the programme against the WCVA's 10 Principles of Public Engagement

1. Design your engagement to make a difference



Engagement offers a genuine opportunity to inform or influence decisions

What was done

- The survey led directly (via Phase 2, and a Citizens' Assembly) to the Vision which is at the heart of NRW's Corporate Plan up to 2030.
- The draft vision agreed by the Citizens' Assembly was finalised with hardly any changes to the wording and the final say by the assembly participants.
- By end 2023, the Nature and Us vision had already informed work by other organisations, incl. WG's Biodiversity Deep Dive synthesis report and the FGC's strategic plan Cymru Can. It has also led to strengthening relationships with Public Health Wales, supporting their Biodiversity Action Plan and the intended refresh of their MoU with NRW.

Learnings and assessment

- It's important to capture workings and how people were involved e.g. in decision making or when public views affected direction of the work. This record can help to communicate what difference people made. It is also critical to enable process learning at a later date, when the individual steps can otherwise easily be forgotten.
- Despite best efforts, people weren't always clear on how their contribution was used in Nature and Us, and what had become of the programme after their input, or how the vision will be used. We cannot underestimate the need for ongoing, clear communication about what happens to the information people share with us, and how it will lead to change.

2. Invite people to get involved, if they choose to



...in an inclusive and welcoming way which does not put them under obligation

What was done

- A dedicated online platform was setup and offered different options to get involved (survey, online events, download a campaign toolkit, share views in a creative format).
- An ad campaign across social media and GDN was designed and delivered over the 10 weeks that the campaign was live to invite people to take part. Posters and postcards were also displayed at NRW visitor centres and distributed by staff.
- The invitation to participate in the survey or online webinars, or to write a postcard, was open to everyone. Stakeholder workshops and in-depth focus groups were available for organisations and people who would like to be more involved.
- Participants could opt to be recontacted in future and could withdraw their permission at any time.

Learnings and assessment

- The largely online format of Nature and Us will have excluded some groups from taking part.
- The paid-for advertising ran on social media channels, such as Google and Facebook. It has been remarked that young people in particular do not use Facebook anymore. Tiktok content may have been better for these audiences.
- Offline advertising e.g. via radio or newspapers may might have resulted in a more varied response. Postcards and creative formats did not prove to be effective formats to receive views (only 1 or 2 responses respectively).
- The format of the campaign and subject turned out to be more attractive to older, white people with a pre-existing subject interest. Different incentives and formats would be needed to attract more diverse groups.

3. Plan and deliver your engagement in a timely and appropriate way



The engagement process... uses the most suitable method(s) for those involved

What was done

- Nature and Us was launched with a PR campaign supported by online advertising. It took the form of an online portal, which was live for 10 weeks in the Spring of 2022.
- The survey sought responses to a set of questions about the future of people and nature in Wales. Open-ended questions were included for people share their views without prompts.
- When it was found that the methods in Phase 1 had mostly attracted those already interested in protecting nature, the resulting bias in the data was corrected for through targeted discussion groups and roadshow events in in Phase 2.

Learnings and assessment

- The methods chosen ultimately proved suitable to the task of developing a long-term vision for people and nature in Wales. However, the Vision did not result directly from the Phase One survey dataset, as had been initially intended. Nor did the engagement methods in Phase 1 prove effective in engaging a representative cross-section of the Welsh public.
- Nature and Us was positioned as a national conversation. Notwithstanding challenges to planning engagement due to COVID restrictions, there is a fundamental question whether the market research activities in Phases 1 – promoted by a PR campaign – are the most appropriate way to foster genuine conversation. Instead, they seemed better suited to driving interested audiences to respond to a time-limited research exercise.

4. Work with relevant partner organisations



...to ensure that people's time, and organisations' resources, are used efficiently

What was done

- A 'Team Wales' approach to the campaign was called for by Welsh Government, and this was adopted, with input to the campaign coming from a range of stakeholder organisations via the programme's Advisory Group
- The invitation to participate in the survey was spread through many organisations' networks, including via NRW's (3k) stakeholder mailing list, as well as through NRW staff's own personal networks. This represents a substantial time contribution from everyone who shared the invitation.
- The final approach to environment sector NGOs was left very late (up to two weeks before the campaign launch), such that many were reluctant to promote the campaign and survey on behalf of NRW.

Learnings and assessment

- Partnership working cannot be bought, or brought about at short notice. It needs to build on solid foundations, which arise from close working relationships that develop over time.
- Long lead times are essential if asks are to be made of others; these should also take the form of mutual invitations to collaborate, rather than direct requests for specific forms of support (e.g. access to an organisation's members). That said, preparations for Nature and Us were repeatedly hampered by Covid-19, which especially limited NGOs' capacity for co-working.
- Nature and Us was not the only conversation about nature which sought the input of the public and of stakeholder organisations. Some people have reported a sense of not knowing which conversation they should best contribute to. This suggests that there is duplication of messaging to the public which may be resulting in duplication of labour on everyone's behalf.

5. Provide jargon free, appropriate, and understandable information



People have easy access to relevant information that is tailored to meet their needs (inc Cymraeg Clir)

What was done

- All the Phase 1 materials including the survey were available in Welsh and English. Translation into other languages was offered.
- The survey content was tested extensively with key audiences during development (eg. young people; NRW's neurodiversity staff network; NRW staff and Programme Board; WG colleagues) to ensure the language was both clear and correct.
- A webinar was developed and hosted on the online platform at different days and times, as an alternative way to get involved and to ensure that everyone taking part had access to clear and correct information.

Learnings and assessment

- For the national conversation to lead to a vision which is fundamentally sound, there is a need for participants' responses to be based on accurate information (which is often not the case in public debate). There is a fine line to be trodden between informing people and leading them to hold particular views.
- Conversations on subjects such as climate change and natural resource management involve constructing arguments based on complex and technical information. Nature and Us showed how much time and attention needs to be paid to reformatting this material in ways which everyone can understand, if all audience groups are to have an equal chance to participate.

6. Make it easy for people to take part



Any barriers are identified and addressed

What was done

- Taken as a whole, the Nature and Us process was inclusive. It started with the online survey, to which anyone could respond. Although this resulted in a self-selecting sample, this bias was corrected for in Phase 2.
- To support organisations in encouraging their members to complete the survey, supplementary resources were produced. These included a stakeholder toolkit for partner organisations, and a teachers' resource pack, for schools.
- 200 organisations registered on the website, and the toolkit was downloaded 350 times. However, it is not known how many survey responses came from this route.

Learnings and assessment

- Despite the toolkit resources being provided, school children and stakeholder audiences were underrepresented in the survey responses. In the case of schools, it was claimed that the survey format was off-putting and unwieldy for use in a whole class setting. The opportunity to complete postcards with children at school visits was not used.
- The timing of the campaign was challenging for schools only recently having returned from lockdown, and also having to adapt to the new Curriculum for Wales. This again highlights the importance of timing to effective engagement.
- The survey interface did not capture organisational responses, and identifying which organisations that had accessed the toolkit had also used it was challenging and required follow-up emails. If such metrics are required, mechanisms to capture them should be built in upfront.

8. Ensure the right resources and time are in place for your engagement to be effective



*Enough time is allowed for both planning and meaningful engagement...
of community participants and staff*

What was done

- The short lead times in the immediate run-up to the survey appear to be its main shortcoming. This was particularly the case in securing meaningful collaboration with environmental NGOs when it came to promoting the campaign and survey.
- The survey itself had been a long time in preparation. Considerable time was given to survey design and testing, and to the development of toolkits for schools and stakeholder organisations, which they could use to guide their staff and students through the survey.

Learnings and assessment

- A lack of time did not seem to be a barrier to members of the public taking part in the Phase 1 survey. Indeed a substantial response was achieved (with over 50k website visits and 3k survey responses in the 10 weeks of the campaign).
- Few survey responses from some specific groups (young people, some counties, ethnic minority groups) suggests that such audiences were effectively excluded from the conversation. This could be said to be because the relationships with these groups were missing. Building deep relationships takes a long time: much longer than the timeframe of a single project, even for a lengthy programme such as Nature and Us.
- While relations with some organisations flourished and deepened through Nature and Us, relations with environmental NGOs in particular appeared to stall during the programme, arguably because it was left too late to engage them at the start of Phase 1.

10. Learn and share to improve your engagement



The engagement process is monitored; lessons learnt from the evaluation are shared

What was done

- In addition to the [Findings Report](#) on the survey, an [Involvement Report](#) was published which documented the campaign process including the survey. The Involvement Report includes a set of learnings for Nature and Us, and NRW. Both reports were published within two months of the end of the campaign.
- Further learnings have been gathered through the programme evaluation, which used the Revaluation approach to gather views from participants on the value of the Nature and Us process. Public participants, NRW staff and stakeholder organisations were included in the evaluation, and the information they contributed was shared directly back to them.
- This case study is a supplementary outcome from that evaluation, assessing Nature and Us activities against best practice guidance, in this case, on public engagement.

Learnings and assessment

- The experience of participants was monitored throughout Nature and Us, although in Phase 1 the engagement was focused on making the online platform work, rather than starting with the needs of participants. It was only in the appraisal of Phase 1, and the design of the subsequent activities, that best practice on public engagement was explicitly built into the design of the programme. Had this been done sooner, specific audience groups may have been more represented in Phase 1 and would not have to be pursued separately in Phase 2.
- Engaging under-represented and minority audience groups ultimately requires the building of trust and deep relationships over time. However the pattern of responses to Phase 1 of Nature and Us also suggests that engaging the mass public in a conversation about the nature emergency is an ongoing task, and one that may require starting from where they are at – not from where NRW would like them to be.



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Nature and Us

A case study assessing the Nature and Us Citizens Assembly against Involve UK's Draft Standards for Citizens' Assemblies (2020)

www.naturani.cymru
www.natureandus.wales



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Nature and Us Citizens' Assembly



The Nature and Us programme to produce a shared Vision for Wales in 2050 culminated in a Citizens' Assembly (CA), in which 40+ members of the public took part in 13 hours of deliberation across three weekends in early 2023. Sessions were held online and face to face (in Swansea and Wrexham), in Welsh and English.

The first two sessions included the presentation and deliberation on expert evidence on Wales and the natural environment; the third developed the Vision through a series of consensus building exercises.

The Citizens' Assembly was designed and run by the National Centre for Social Research (Natcen) on behalf of NRW. Recruitment was handled by the Sortition Foundation, following a sortition process to ensure representativeness. 15,000 letters were sent out to randomised addresses across Wales, ultimately resulting in 52 assembly members being recruited.

In this case study, the Nature and Us Citizens' Assembly is looked at through the lens of Involve UK's Draft Standards for Citizens' Assemblies (2020), to assess where best practice was followed and to identify valuable learnings.

[Involve UK's Draft Standards for Citizens' Assemblies \(2020\)](#)

"Essential features" are detailed against each of the 10 Standards below:

1. Clear Purpose
2. Sufficient Time
3. Representative
4. Inclusive
5. Independent
6. Open
7. Generative Learning
8. Structured Deliberation
9. Collective Decision Making
10. Evaluated

1. Clear Purpose



What was done

- Clear questions for the Citizens' Assembly to consider were set at the outset. They were developed iteratively by the assembly's external advisory panel over three sessions. The final question as set out at the start of the assembly was:
What does the future look like when society and nature thrive together?
- The purpose of the Citizens' Assembly was made clear to members at the start of the first session. NRW defined the scope of the Assembly and stated their ambition: to create a shared Vision.
- Participants were clear that the final output from the Assembly was the Vision. Creating the Vision was the focus of the third and final session. Following completion of the sessions and creation of the draft vision by Natcen, all members were recontacted and invited back to a series of follow-up workshops to review and finalise the draft text of the final Vision (19 of the 40 members attended at least one of these four sessions).

Learnings and assessment

- Setting a clear question is perhaps the most important principle to observe in designing a Citizens' Assembly: so that Assembly members can work towards a specific outcome in the time available. The Nature and Us Assembly was exemplary in this regard.
- In making the drafting of a Vision the central task, NRW could easily demonstrate to members that their work had been done, and was being fully acted upon. However participants might have been less clear how the Vision would go on to make the changes that they were asking for.
- According to the Involve UK guidance, a CA should "*only consider questions which fall directly within the competency of the body commissioning it.*" The asks made by members in the final Vision (in order to bring about a Wales where people and nature thrive together) are beyond NRW's sole remit. However, NRW had been clear on this throughout the process. It's Corporate Plan also states 'we cannot do this on our own'. Work is ongoing to encourage stakeholder organisations to respond to the public's asks as set out in the Vision.

2. Sufficient Time



What was done

- The Nature and Us Citizens' Assembly (CA) comprised 13 hours of deliberation, not “at least 30”, as best practice requires. The Assembly ran across 2½ days, not “4 days”.
- Time was short throughout the Nature and Us CA and the whole process took 5 months – from starting the commissioning (end October 2022) to completion of the Assembly (end of March 2023).
- The three sessions lasted no more than 5 hours each (including an hour for breaks). The format involved multiple short inputs from experts (c. 15 mins) followed by short periods of discussion in break out groups (c. 20 mins). This format limited the time available for learning and deliberation.
- The post-Assembly feedback shows that some participants would have liked more time for discussion within their breakout rooms (more detail in Natcen's process report).

Learnings and assessment

- On the central question of duration, Nature and Us does not meet Involve UK's Draft Standards. These set “essential” and “desirable” standards for a CA, with “at least 30 hours' deliberation” being “essential”. Involve describes the essential conditions as “the fundamental things that make a citizens' assembly a citizens' assembly”. It follows that the Nature and Us CA was technically not one.
- According to Involve UK: “a citizens' assembly is a specific democratic tool to be used in specific circumstances. Their power comes from their robust process, which gives a representative group of the public time and support to engage with a topic in depth. But this process makes them time and resource-intensive compared to many other methods of engagement...” This is a relevant assessment for the Nature and Us Assembly.
- It appears that the length of the Nature and Us CA was determined by both the available budget, and the need to complete the process in time to generate a Vision to inform NRW's new Corporate Plan, in March 2023. Something was sacrificed in the robustness of the process in order to produce the outputs in time.
- Had the opportunity for a CA been identified sooner in the Nature and Us process then this limitation could have been avoided.

3. Representative



What was done

- Involve UK's "essential" requirements are that 40 or more assembly members are recruited. 52 Participants were recruited for the Nature and Us citizens' assembly. 45 Participated in the first session, which fell to 40 by the third session.
- In their report, Natcen comment that the "40 people who completed the assembly is a robust number for this method". However they state that the sample "is not large enough to report generalisable findings about attitudes held by the wider Welsh population".
- The recruitment was undertaken using a sortition method, based on a random selection of addresses, from which registrants were then sampled at random, within stratified criteria. Involve UK's guidance describe sortition as being "internationally recognised as the gold standard recruitment methodology for citizens' assemblies".
- The recruitment of members also happened within a tight timeframe – the 15,000 initial invitations went out at the start of January, with a deadline for responses by 16th January. The first Assembly session was held on 11th February.

Learnings and assessment

- While 40 participants is stated by Involve as the minimum number required, their guidance goes on to say "Citizens' assemblies typically have between 50 and 200 members". Involve also comment that "assemblies covering larger populations (e.g. national) require more members than those covering smaller populations (e.g. local)". Nature and Us was described as a national conversation and such might have benefitted from a larger number of participants if it wished to be considered in line with best practice standards on representativeness.
- Having a small sample was challenging in relation to recruiting minority groups. Some minority groups were upweighted in the final sample to avoid these having a singular voice in the room, with the result that 5 of the 40+ members in each session were from non-white groups. This approach is in line with best practice but the small sample size means that these groups were overrepresented, and the final selection was not representative of the actual Welsh population.

4. Inclusive



What was done

- Involve UK's guidance suggests that members are reimbursed for all reasonable expenses, and that “a gift of at least £50 per day is given to assembly members” and at least £75 per day is desirable. Nature and Us participants were remunerated with £260 for their 13 hours over three days of deliberation (ie. £20/hour, or £85,- per day), which is more than this guidance suggests.
- Two of the three sessions were held online, which presumably lessened access barriers for some participants, although it will have brought different barriers for others. Support to work online was offered, both in advice and in providing a tablet if needed.
- All sessions were made available equally in English and Welsh. However, this did not provide a perfect experience for all. The Natcen report on the post-assembly survey mentions one member requesting that more of the plenary discussion was in Welsh as a first language, and at the same time one English speaking member complained of being sidelined by Welsh speakers in one of the breakout groups.

Learnings and assessment

- On top of the reimbursement of time, participants' travel expenses were covered. One participant however reported not attending the face to face session (in Swansea) to avoid the carbon impact of driving. Bus services to the train station were provided but according to them were inadequate. This highlights that despite efforts to make travel and access as easy as possible, public transport links can still be discouraging participation. An interesting point, especially considering the 5th theme (transport) included in the final Vision resulting from the Assembly.
- While online sessions may have removed barriers to participation for some, good internet access would have been required, which may have deterred some in disadvantaged communities or more rural areas from applying.

5. Independent



What was done

- Independent and impartial facilitation was provided at all times (in plenary sessions and in breakout groups). The quality of facilitation was praised by participants both after the Assembly and in the final programme evaluation.
- An external Advisory Panel for the Citizens' Assembly was brought together by NRW and managed by Natcen. It comprised 17 members from a range of backgrounds (government, academia, charities and representative organisations) with relevant expertise in climate, nature and involvement.
- The Panel was first convened in November and met three times before Christmas. Its remit included setting the core questions for the Assembly, assembling evidence and calling witnesses, and designing formats for the activities.

Learnings and assessment

- The use of an agency specialising in deliberative public engagement ensured that facilitation was impartial. Meanwhile the evidence presented to the Assembly was selected carefully by the members of the Advisory Panel who themselves reflected diverse viewpoints. The evidence given was much appreciated by the participants.
- However, as with every phase of the Assembly, the work of the Advisory Panel felt rushed. It was reported in the final programme evaluation that the Advisory Panel members would have liked more time in the run-up to the Assembly, though some also reported they could not commit more time to engage with the process beyond the 3 meetings.

7. Generative Learning



What was done

- The Involve Standards specify that Assembly members hear balanced, accurate and comprehensive information and evidence, from diverse witnesses with a range of views. They also state that they should be able to determine their own questions for witnesses and have sufficient time to question them.
- It is not clear that such time was made available to Members in the Nature and Us Assembly. However, the Advisory Panel was brought together by Natcen for three codesign workshops to develop the approach. The first session focused on developing the core questions, and the second on bringing together the evidence list and witnesses. The third attended to the detailed design for each of the three Assembly sessions. This thorough approach ensured the right information would be provided to members in the right way, such that their deliberations would be well considered and unbiased.
- Any questions by Assembly members during the sessions were collated by Natcen to be answered in detail following the events.

Learnings and assessment

- The compressed timeframe of the Assembly resulted in short inputs of evidence (e.g. 15 minutes for the RSPB to cover the state of nature in Wales) and limited (if any) opportunity for interaction with witnesses. The time available for members to deliberate after these inputs was also limited.
- The Nature and Us team put considerable effort to respond in writing to any questions from Assembly members that couldn't be addressed in the sessions themselves. Input from subject experts in NRW was also sought for this. Feedback from members shows this effort and the detailed responses were valued.
- Natcen's report on the follow-up workshops states that members felt better informed about the challenges facing nature, and more motivated to take action to protect nature in Wales.

8. Structured Deliberation



What was done

- The Citizens' Assembly was clearly structured around the three fundamental stages of learning, deliberation, and decision-making. There was a clear development from information provision in the first session, to reflection in the second, before collaborative working to write the Vision in the final session.
- Citizens' Assembly members were short of time for deliberation throughout the Assembly. However, the time available for deliberation did increase from session to session, as the inputs of evidence became less.
- The Assembly benefitted from professional facilitation throughout, with 6 facilitators running the process, supported by two bi-lingual translators. The quality of facilitation was picked out for praise by members in the programme evaluation.
- A visual notetaker was working throughout the sessions, such that a single picture was created to capture the main points visually at the end of each session. These visual notes then featured into the published version of the Vision, in August 2023.

Learnings and assessment

- The Advisory Panel had a key role in ensuring the flow of information provision, to reflection to visioning across the three sessions.
- It is not clear what difference was made to the quality of deliberation by two of the three sessions being held online. Opportunities for members to get to know one another and to engage in less formal deliberation in the margins of the Assembly are likely to have been more constrained in an online setting.
- The sense of learning and progress was aided by the use of real time note taking. Predominantly this was done through the Miro virtual whiteboard, where members could see their thoughts being captured, processed and evolving into outcomes.

9. Collective decision-making



What was done

- The third assembly session centred on co-creating the Vision. It started with recapping points from the previous two sessions. The central activity involved members writing down their vision for 2050, then collaborating with others using a consensus-finding method (1-2-4-8-All), until a single version had emerged for all participants. The process was both transparent and consensual, and clearly built on early steps in the conversation (including the Nine Statements from the original survey).
- The text for the Vision was drafted by Natcen following the assembly sessions, fact-checked by experts and then the final text agreed by Assembly members at follow-up workshops. This final Vision went forward for publication with no further editing.

Learnings and assessment

- The outcome from the Nature and Us process is clear: the Vision for Wales in 2050. This Vision was produced by Assembly members in the final part of the third session of the Assembly.
- Involve UK's standards advise that a defined decision and/or set of recommendations is reached as an integral part of the process. Final decisions or recommendations are to be agreed collectively by assembly members.
- These standards were clearly met in the Nature and Us Citizens Assembly which resulted in a Vision for people and nature in Wales in 2050.

