

## Agenda

---

<b>Title of meeting:</b>	<b>NRW Board Public Meeting</b>
<b>Date of meeting:</b>	<b>Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> July 2024</b>
<b>Time of meeting:</b>	<b>14:00 – 16:15</b>
<b>Location:</b>	<b>Microsoft Teams</b>

---

<b>Time</b>	<b>Item</b>
<b>14:00</b>	<b>Item 1. Open Meeting</b>
<b>5 mins</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Welcome</li><li>• Declaration of Interests</li><li>• Explain conduct of meeting</li></ul> <p>Sponsor and Presenter: Prof Steve Ormerod (Deputy Chair)</p> <p><b>Summary: To NOTE any declarations of interest</b></p>
<b>14:05</b>	<b>Item 2. Review Minutes and Action Log</b>
<b>5 mins</b>	<p><b>2A. Review Minutes from Public 23<sup>rd</sup> May Meeting</b></p> <p><b>2B. Review Public Action Log</b></p> <p>Sponsor and Presenter: Prof Steve Ormerod (Deputy Chair)</p> <p><b>Summary: To APPROVE the minutes of the previous meeting and the Action Log</b></p>
<b>14:10</b>	<b>Item 3. Update from the Chair</b>
<b>5 mins</b>	<p>Sponsor and Presenter: Prof Steve Ormerod (Deputy Chair)</p> <p><b>Summary: To NOTE the Chair's update to the Board</b></p>
<b>14:15</b>	<b>Item 4. Report from the Chief Executive</b>
<b>15 mins</b>	<p>Sponsor and Presenter: Clare Pillman, Chief Executive</p> <p><b>Summary: To NOTE the current position and update the Board on key activities</b></p>

---

---

**Paper Ref: 24-07-B10**

---

**14:30**

### **Item 5. Update Reports of Committees and Forums**

**20 mins**

Sponsors and Presenters: Committee Chairs

- Audit and Risk Assurance Committee – 4<sup>th</sup> June  
**Paper Ref: 24-07-B11**
- Evidence Advisory Committee
- Finance Committee – 13<sup>th</sup> June  
**Paper Ref: 24-07-B12**
- Flood Risk Management Committee  
**Paper Ref: 24-07-B13**
- Land Estate Committee
- People and Customer Committee – 6<sup>th</sup> June  
**Paper Ref: 24-07-B14**
- Protected Areas Committee – 28<sup>th</sup> June
  
- Wales Land Management Forum
- Wales Fisheries Forum
- Wales Water Management Forum
- National Access Forum for Wales

**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: Rob Bell, Head of Finance

**Summary: To APPROVE the latest financial position**

**Paper Ref: 24-07-B15**

---

**15:05**

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

**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

---

---

**Summary: To APPROVE the Business Plan Performance Dashboard and Internal Performance End of Year Report 2023-24**

**Paper ref: 24-07-B16**

---

**15:25**

**Break**

**15 mins**

---

**15:40**

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

**10 mins**

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

**Summary: To APPROVE the Wellbeing, Health and Safety Annual Report 2023-24**

**Paper ref: 24-07-B17**

---

**15:50**

**Item 9. AOB**

**5 mins**

---

**15:55**

**Close Meeting**

---

**15:55**

**Public Q&A**

**20 mins**

---

**16:15**

**Close Public Meeting**

---

# Unconfirmed Minutes

---

<b>Title of meeting:</b>	<b>NRW Board Meeting – Public Meeting</b>
--------------------------	-------------------------------------------

---

<b>Location:</b>	Centre for Alternative Technology, Machynlleth, and Microsoft Teams
------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------

---

<b>Date of meeting:</b>	23 <sup>rd</sup> May 2024
-------------------------	---------------------------

---

<b>Board Members present:</b>	Sir David Henshaw, Chair Clare Pillman, Chief Executive Prof Steve Ormerod, Deputy Chair Geraint Davies Prof Calvin Jones Lesley Jones Prof Rhys Jones Mark McKenna Kath Palmer Helen Pittaway Dr Rosie Plummer
-------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

---

<b>Executive Team Members present:</b>	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 Rachael Cunningham, Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Services (Teams) 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
----------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

---

<b>Attendees present:</b>	Phil Williams, Head of Governance and Board Secretary (All items) Rob Bell, Head of Finance, Item 6 (Teams) Dominic Driver, Head of Land Stewardship, Item 7 Dawn Thompson, Estate Recreation Planning Team, Item 7
---------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

---

<b>NRW Observers present:</b>	Bhuvaneshwari MARRIPUDI, Board Apprentice Gavin Bown, Head of Operations Mid Wales
-------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

---

---

Meinir Wigley, Integrated Communications Team Leader  
Elsie Grace, Head of Sustainable Commercial  
Development

---

**Public Observers present:** Polly Ernest  
Elizabeth Mullan  
Rhys Llywelyn  
Jim Ralph  
Delyth Lloyd  
Matt Ward  
Sian Roberts  
Kim Waters, Welsh Rivers Union  
Additional members of the public

---

**Apologies:** Dr Pete Fox

---

**Secretariat:** Natalie Williams, Deputy Board Secretary and Board  
Secretariat Team Leader  
Jocelyn Benger, Board Secretariat Team

---

**Declarations of Interest:**

- Dr Rosie Plummer - Member Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority - wide-ranging interactions with NRW including National Park landscape designation and protections including SAC rivers, Marine zones, diverse grant recipient and collaborator; Plantlife Trustee; Director of Plantlife Biodiversity Enhancements Ltd
- 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
- Mark McKenna – Down to Earth expression of interest in the Caernws scheme

---

## Item 1. Open Meeting

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

2. The Chair read a statement on Withy hedge Landfill in Pembrokeshire, acknowledging local public concerns on the issues at the site. This is attached to these minutes at Annex A.
3. The Chair read a statement on Visitor Centres, acknowledging the level of public interest in the current situation. This addressed some of the correspondence received on the Visitor Centres and the items raised within the correspondence. This is attached to these minutes at Annex B.

## **Item 2. Review Minutes and Action Log**

### **Item 2A. Review Minutes from the 21<sup>st</sup> March Meeting**

4. The minutes from the public Board meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> March were reviewed and agreed.

### **Item 2B. Review Action Log**

5. The Action Log was reviewed and noted.

## **Item 3. Update from the Chair**

6. The Chair updated the Board on a busy few weeks, noting the number of current ongoing issues.
7. A meeting had taken place with the new Minister for Climate Change and Rural Affairs on the Teifi catchment work.

## **Item 4. Report from the Chief Executive**

8. The Chief Executive gave an update on items in addition to the written Report.
9. The announcement of a general election on 4<sup>th</sup> July was noted. NRW would be working closely with colleagues in Welsh Government (WG) going into the pre-election period particularly on the announcement on the Upper Wye Project and NRW Senedd event. NRW would receive advice to arms-length bodies on conduct during the pre-election period and this would be circulated to staff.
10. NRW teams had been working hard to support communities and emergency services during the recent period of very heavy rain.
11. The fire and pollution incident at the Synthite factory in Mold was raised. The Executive Director of Operations gave an update on the incident. The media coverage was noted. It was explained that this was a COMAH (Control of Major Accident Hazards) site which was jointly regulated by NRW and the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). Dead fish had been found in the River Alyn and concerns were raised over the presence of formaldehyde, therefore a Strategic Gold Command incident response group was set up and appropriate actions taken. Monitoring of the River Dee had taken place, and very low-level traces of formaldehyde were detected. NRW had worked with the water

company to ensure safe drinking water. NRW would be chairing the recovery group which would include lessons learned.

12. Board members noted the ongoing updates that were received and expressed their appreciation for being kept informed on live incidents.
13. The Minister for Climate Change and Rural Affairs had made statements on his priorities and on the Sustainable Farming Scheme (SFS). The announcement on the SFS described the preparatory phase for the SFS which would be undertaken in 2025, with the proposed transition period starting in 2026. The one-year delay in the start of the SFS would enable WG to undertake key commitments including: an evidence-based review to achieve carbon sequestration within the SFS; a data confirmation exercise with farmers on habitat and tree cover; to identify and develop further collaborative actions with a view to introducing these as soon as possible; setting up a Ministerial roundtable with key stakeholders to resolve issues of concern. NRW would have an involvement in many of these elements.
14. Prof Steve Ormerod and the Chief Executive attended a meeting of the Statutory Nature Conservation Bodies (SNCBs) and the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) in Edinburgh. Prof Steve Ormerod, as a member of JNCC, updated the Board on the meeting, which brought the parties together to consider and share knowledge and intelligence on the common issues faced across the environment. The substantive issue for discussion concerned the 30by30 commitment to have 30% of global land and sea effectively protected and managed for biodiversity by 2030. Intelligence was shared from across all countries with very helpful and productive discussions.
15. The Executive Director of Evidence, Policy and Permitting (EPP) updated the Board on her attendance at the European Environmental Protection Agencies meeting in Bratislava. This had provided an excellent opportunity to work with other countries, with an agenda that was very pertinent to NRW's discussions around a just transition on climate change. Financial matters were also discussed around how nature conservation and protection was funded, sharing good practice and how this work could be taken forward.
16. NRW would be represented at the European Nature Conservation Bodies meeting in Rome, leading presentations on transformative change for nature.
17. Board members noted the content of the Report and queried the opportunities for mainstreaming of lessons learned, in particular on decarbonisation developments, considering the HyNet example and other technical developments relating to renewables. The Chief Executive confirmed that there was good discipline in place for taking lessons learned forward, including around the types of technical teams that would be needed with the anticipated increase in renewables.

## **Item 5. Update Reports of Committees and Forums**

18. Kath Palmer, Chair of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC) gave an update on work since the meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> March. A deep dive on the Annual

Accounts was scheduled for 24<sup>th</sup> May and the next full meeting would take place on 4<sup>th</sup> June.

19. Prof Steve Ormerod, Chair of the Evidence Advisory Committee (EAC) gave an update on the meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> May in Cardiff. Matters discussed included: progress on the Interim State of Natural Resources Report (SoNaRR) 2025; the All Wales mapping work on landscapes across Wales; an update on evidence gathering processes on the potential new National Park; the Teifi demonstrator project and how the data and information would be accessible by members of the public; an update on the recommendations from the WG Biodiversity Deep Dive. Prof Rhys Jones, as a member of EAC, commented on the importance of thinking through the connections from SoNaRR into other activities, to emphasise the importance of the need for change by linking into areas such as the impact on people's wellbeing of climate change and biodiversity decline.
20. Helen Pittaway, Chair of the Finance Committee (FC) updated the Board on the meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> April. The paper was taken as read. The year-end financial performance and priorities for 2024/25 were considered. Detailed discussion took place on the items for financial approval around renewables, compensatory planting, and priorities for the Welsh Government Woodland Estate (WGWE). An update was received from the Programme Management Office (PMO). The Annual Business Plan metrics were also discussed. The next meeting was scheduled for 13<sup>th</sup> June to review the Annual Accounts.
21. Geraint Davies, deputising for the Chair of the Flood Risk Management Committee (FRMC), updated the Board on the meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> April. The paper was taken as read. The useful site visit to the Gwent Levels was highlighted. The Local Partnerships Report was considered and oversight by FC for the resulting project was approved. FRMC formally closed the Flood Recovery and Review Implementation Programme (FRRIP). Updates were received on Flood Risk Management (FRM) and the FRM Capital Programme. The team were praised for their efforts in working to ensure delivery during a difficult year with significant pressures.
22. Prof Calvin Jones, Chair of the Land Estate Committee (LEC), updated the Board on work since the meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> February. The Waterfall Country safety project continued to progress well in conjunction with the Visitor Safety Group. It was noted that there were still some issues on contractors and safety which were being managed through the Forestry Industry Safety Accord (FISA). The timber income was very close to forecast. This year's budget would enable the management of key risks, although it was recognised that this was not yet in a virtuous circle of investment in the WGWE. Discussions were ongoing with WG on a multi-year funding agreement. An update was provided on re-stocking, and it was confirmed that there was no risk of any further write-offs. The next meeting was scheduled for 18<sup>th</sup> July.
23. Mark McKenna, Chair of the People and Customer Committee (PCC) updated the Board on work since the meeting held on 1<sup>st</sup> March. The next meeting would take place on 6<sup>th</sup> June and would include the mix of strategic and approval items, plus an update on NRW2030 and the implications of the Business Plan.



24. Dr Rosie Plummer, Chair of the Protected Areas Committee (PrAC) updated the Board on work since the meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> February. A site visit was planned for 11<sup>th</sup> June, and the next formal meeting was scheduled for 28<sup>th</sup> June. There were a number of sites notified for protection which could need determination in public. The work on the proposed new National Park continued. PrAC would also be scrutinising the outcomes from the Board strategic discussion on the Corporate Plan Wellbeing Objective 1: Nature is recovering.
25. Prof Rhys Jones, Chair of the Wales Land Management Forum (WLMF), updated the Board. The paper was taken as read. Meetings of the sub-group on Agricultural Pollution had also taken place with discussions ongoing around the four-year review of the Control of Agricultural Pollution Regulations (Agri Regs). Concerns were raised about the need for more clarity on the terms of the review and the process. A presentation on NRW's Nutrient Review was provided to the Sub-Group, which included an update on the interactive mapping portal which would be introduced. A report was received on visits by officers in relation to the Agri Regs, and interesting patterns on compliance were noted. Dr Rosie Plummer, as an observer to the meeting, commented on the useful nature of the discussions and commended it to the rest of the Board.
26. Prof Steve Ormerod, Chair of the Wales Fisheries Forum (WFF) and Wales Water Management Forum (WWMF) updated the Board. The papers were taken as read. The work of the WFF was highlighted. The ongoing debate on the declining serious state of salmon and sewin and the outcomes of the work by the Fish-Eating Birds (FEB) Advisory Group were raised. The initial work on the Usk on salmon smolt appeared to show a greater risk of mortality with low water flow and drought conditions, showing a link between climate change, water quality, and the management of the landscape. The FEB Advisory Group would be reconvening in July. The Net Limitation Order on the Dee was highlighted. It was noted that the net fishery was unlikely to open again, and it was expected to move to formal closure on salmon conservation grounds. An item was received on the Sea Trout Symposium and the WFF were updated on NRW river restoration projects.
27. Geraint Davies, Chair of the National Access Forum for Wales (NAFW), updated the Board. The paper was taken as read. NAFW had met on 5<sup>th</sup> March and a group was created to feed into the SFS to ensure that members voices could be heard. An update was received on the Recreation Strategy.

## **Item 6. Finance Performance Report**

Presenter: Rob Bell, Head of Finance

28. The Head of Finance introduced the item and provided an overview of the paper, noting the Report showed the position at the end of March. This had been scrutinised by the Executive Team (ET) and the summary had been reviewed by FC. The draft net position was noted in the Report as an underspend of £0.4m. More detailed work had taken place since the publication of the Report and the position was now an underspend of £0.2m. FC would be updated on the details at the meeting in June. The areas of underspend and other variances were described and were detailed in the

Report. The underspend had been forecast and a discussion had taken place with FC in March on where this could be used, which included reassessed charge schemes and the use of more Grant in Aid towards externally funded schemes, which would enable some European funding to be deferred into future years, thereby helping with inflation pressures. The Head of Finance noted that it had been a difficult financial year with a number of unforeseen issues, such as pay increases and Flood Capital Programme challenges. The positive performance of programmes such as the Nature and Climate Emergency (NaCE) Programme was highlighted and the support from WG on the Flood Capital Programme was recognised.

29. The Board thanked the team, recognising the amount of work that had taken place.
30. Board members queried whether there were any lessons learned to be taken forward into the new financial year. The Head of Finance confirmed that the two main issues around pay and timber income were likely to be mitigated for the next financial year.
31. The controls on recruitment were noted, and Board members queried the level of savings achieved by this. The Head of Finance explained that the recruitment controls did not make the level of savings that were expected but it did help with the budget situation overall. Controls had been strengthened in January and it was recognised that the situation would have been worse without them in place.
32. The Board approved the changes to the latest forecast, from £272.8m to £283.8m and noted the financial performance to the end of March 2024.

**APPROVED: The change to the latest forecast from £272.8m to £283.8m**

## **Item 7. Recreation Strategy**

Presenters: Dominic Driver, Head of Land Stewardship; Dawn Thompson, Estate Recreation Planning Team

33. The Executive Director of EPP introduced the item. The background to the development of the Recreation Strategy was described; two years ago, NRW were dealing with recreational activity decisions, and the Board were clear at the time that a Recreation Strategy was needed with focus on the Sustainable Management of Natural Resources (SMNR). LEC had since provided oversight of the development of the Strategy.
34. Dawn Thompson, Estate Planning Recreation Team, provided the Board with an overview of the work on the Recreation Strategy. Engagement had taken place with staff and stakeholders, and there had been a real drive to help to shape a new future for outdoor recreation on the land in NRW's care. Valuable input had been provided by LEC, NAFW and Local Access Forums, which had helped to deliver a consensus Strategy around the expectations of stakeholders and to set the future direction for decision-making by NRW staff through the vision for NRW to 2050. It also allowed for short-term areas of focus through to 2030 to align with the Corporate Plan by defining how NRW could enable access to nature with a focus on delivering a sustainable future, and improving internal integration, processes and decision-making, and external

collaboration. A shift would be seen from NRW putting its own resources into creating recreation opportunities and towards managing activity and supporting others to deliver on the land to connect people with nature, while ensuring that the activity was supportive of the SMNR aims and NRW's Wellbeing Objectives.

35. Prof Calvin Jones, Chair of LEC, thanked the team for their work to develop the Strategy. LEC had overseen the development and were content with the outcome, noting that the Strategy delivered a useful framework for decision-making, while being clear about inclusivity, and protecting and enhancing SMNR.
36. The Head of Land Stewardship explained the next steps for implementing the Strategy through service plans on the land in NRW's care. Changes would be made where necessary to allocate resources differently, recognising that overall there needed to be a reduction in resources. Social justice would be considered around where the most value could be added, such as sites with the potential to reach those who would benefit the most. There would be decisions for the Board on strategic issues.
37. The Board welcomed the Recreation Strategy, and appreciated the balance of inclusivity, responsibility, and protection of the environment. The opportunities for using technology for interpretation and information were highlighted. Geraint Davies, as Chair of NAFW, highlighted the good work that had taken place with stakeholders. Board members praised the level of consultation that had been undertaken. It was recognised that the Strategy provided a useful framework to help with future decision-making.
38. The fit with the Board's strategic discussions around aims on partnering and working more with others was welcomed. It was queried whether partners were being actively sought. Dawn Thompson confirmed that this would be the next step, taking forward stakeholder analysis at a national and local level, including social prescribing and the involvement of Public Service Boards.
39. Board members queried how considerations around areas such as reputation, health and safety, and financing would feed into the framework when considering contentious decisions. The Head of Land Stewardship explained the 'centre out, Place and back again' model, which involved Place colleagues looking at what the Strategy would mean for their area with significant decisions brought to the Board for approval.
40. It was queried how the elements around social justice would link into the Business Plan and the metrics. The Head of Land Stewardship confirmed that the Business Plan would include a commitment on outcomes to be achieved, which would therefore be visible to the Board. Board members asked whether there was a baseline of those who accessed NRW's land and how the areas relating to social justice and urban nature would be defined. It was explained that a zoning framework was proposed to map the land in NRW's care for the areas for development with communities, and nature zones with high conservation value for protection.
41. The inclusion of the health benefits of outdoor recreation was welcomed. The approach to volunteering was considered and it was confirmed that this was likely to be part of a partnership element.

42. It was noted that the current version of the Strategy was aimed internally, and it was confirmed that an external document would also be produced which would provide opportunities for further engagement. Board members emphasised that the Strategy would need to move into delivery. It was confirmed that the Land Stewardship Business Group would lead on delivery with LEC oversight. Resource constraints were recognised but it would be important to capture the enthusiasm and take opportunities forward.

43. The Chair thanked the team and Forestry England who had supported Dawn Thompson's secondment to NRW.

44. The Board approved the Recreation Strategy.

**APPROVED: The Recreation Strategy**

## **Item 8. AOB**

45. No matters were raised under AOB.

## **Meeting Closed**

## **Public Q&A**

46. The Chair noted the questions received in advance on Withyhedger Landfill Site and Visitor Centres. Statements had been made at the start of meeting on these issues. No further questions on other matters had been received in advance.

## **Public Meeting Closed**

# Unconfirmed Minutes

## Annex A

---

**Title of meeting:** NRW Board Meeting – Public Meeting

---

**Date of meeting:** 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2024

---

### Withyhedge Statement

We understand the strength of feeling amongst people living and working in the communities surrounding Withyhedge Landfill, and we too want to see the issues resolved at the site as soon as possible.

The assessments we are carrying out to determine if site operator RML Ltd has complied with our most recent [Regulation 36 Enforcement Notice](#), are complex and will take some time to complete.

As part of this work, our officers are carrying out a full site landfill gas audit this week to examine the effectiveness of the landfill's gas management system following improvements made in light of the Enforcement Notices. This includes increased areas of capping and the installation of additional landfill gas wells. Outside of the requirements of the Enforcement Notice, the site operator is also carrying out work to complete the capping of cell 8 which is due to finish this week.

Odour assessments took place every day last week and over the weekend at various locations in and around communities surrounding Withyhedge Landfill, at varying times of the day and night. We know that odour continues to be detected and we will continue to carry out our assessments in the days and weeks to come to determine if any reduction in odour has been observed.

Only when the site has been fully assessed and reports from the site operator reviewed, will we be able to determine compliance with the enforcement notice and whether the action taken by the operator has reduced fugitive gas emissions. We will then be in a position to consider if any further enforcement action is required, looking at all options available to us under the regulations.

**ENDS**

# Unconfirmed Minutes

## Annex B

---

**Title of meeting:** NRW Board Meeting – Public Meeting

---

**Date of meeting:** 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2024

---

### Statement regarding Visitor Centres

Thank you to everyone who has contacted the Board Members, NRW Executive Team and NRW officers with regards to the current situation around Visitor Centres. I wanted to make a general statement with regards to their current position and address some of the questions that have been received at this public board. We have received lots of useful correspondence about the visitor centres which we have considered, and we are listening to the points you have raised. However, we know that because some letters have come into NRW via many different routes, there may have been a slight delay in our response back to some of you and for that we are sorry.

We have now allocated a dedicated person to manage this correspondence. We have had several questions for response by the Board and some of them are very detailed. We want to give you as full a reply as possible and so your questions and our responses will be shared in full with both the questioner and Board members.

We all know that public funding is exceptionally tight, and that we have an ongoing piece of work that is critically reviewing: what we can and must continue to do, what we stop, and what we slow or do differently to fulfil our [Corporate Plan](#) ambitions, with the environment at the heart of all our decision making.

We know that this is a significant piece of work and as we've been able to reduce our financial pressures, through things like tighter recruitment, we now have extended the timeline for this wider review.

This means that no final decision has yet been taken.

**ENDS**

## 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	01/09/2024	Ongoing	Options for Board public engagement being developed. The approach to be agreed with the Chair and the Head of Governance and Board Secretary.

## NRW Board Paper

<b>Date of meeting:</b>	17 July 2024
<b>Title of Paper:</b>	Chief Executive's Report (Public Session)
<b>Paper Reference:</b>	24-07-B10
<b>Paper presented by:</b>	Clare Pillman, Chief Executive
<b>Purpose</b>	Information and discussion
<b>Summary</b>	The paper provides the Board with an update on current issues.

## Introduction

- Over the last few months, a considerable amount of Executive Team time has been spent on the Change Programme, reviewing the outputs from the initial, intensive work by the Leadership Team and considering the wider impacts of the proposed changes. Our Planning & Resource Group (PRG) has also been working hard and meeting frequently to help review and finalise proposals ready for Board consideration. I'm grateful to everyone who has worked so diligently on the detail to ensure we are as confident as we can be about our ability to operate within our budget and continue delivering our objectives over the years ahead.
- At the same time, we have continued to keep everyone updated regarding the high-level process and likely timescales. There is an understandable interest among colleagues about possible cuts to resources and staffing, and we are committed to communicating as openly as we can while respecting the confidentiality of the decision-making and consultation process. I sent another all-staff email at the end of June, setting out more details about the work undertaken to date and the timescales for the next steps. I reiterated our aim of avoiding redundancies so far as possible by matching displaced colleagues to the many vacant roles across the organisation.
- The highlight of the last couple of months was undoubtedly our event on 5 June to celebrate World Environment Day at the Senedd. This was sponsored by Llyr Griffiths, Chair of the Climate Change Committee, and attended by the Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change and Rural Affairs, Huw Irranca-Davies, who took part in a panel discussion alongside Lord Deben. Lord Deben is a former chair of the



UK's independent Committee on Climate Change. The panel discussion focused on the pivotal role the public sector and environmental bodies play in helping Wales achieve its climate and biodiversity goals. After the Panel discussion, attendees were introduced to the work of Natur am Byth in all its glory. Partners in the project presented their work with passion and skill, making for a very special occasion.

4. We did less of our usual publicity around the day due to the pre-election restrictions. Nevertheless, the events were well attended by partners and the feedback has been extremely positive. My thanks go to all those involved in delivering the day and making it such a success.
5. Also in June, I met with Dr Nerys Llewelyn Jones, Interim Environmental Protection Assessor for Wales (IEPAW), and her two new deputies, Anna Heslop and Lynda Warren (a former NRW Board member). It was a useful discussion, covering our enforcement approach and prosecution policy, the IEPAW report on protected sites due later in the summer, and future governance arrangements following the recent Welsh Government (WG) consultation on *Securing and Sustainable Future*.
6. Gareth O'Shea and I had our regular meeting with Chris Llewellyn and Tim Peppin of the Welsh Local Government Association. We shared situation updates and key operational issues, and discussed the next steps for our Memorandum of Understanding. Liaison at regional level also remains strong, with regional meetings in June and July focusing on topics including phosphate pollution and the development of the Freeports.
7. I attended a site visit at Bryn Ifan on the Llyn Peninsula with CEO colleagues from other Welsh environmental Non-Governmental Organisations (eNGOs) in mid June. This was organised and hosted by the Wildlife Trusts Wales, and included a fascinating presentation about the Atlantic Rainforest Programme followed by a guided walk, and visit to Henbant Permaculture, a regenerative farm and market garden.
8. An earlier site visit, at the end of May, to the former Magnox site at Trawsfynydd provided an opportunity to hear about progress with decommissioning and redevelopment from Rob Fletcher, CEO of Nuclear Restoration Services. The Trawsfynydd site has been designated by the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority as the UK's "lead and learn" decommissioning site, with full decommissioning taking place over the next few decades – giving NRW a unique and valuable perspective on the permitting and regulatory aspects of the process.
9. In early July, I attended a formal luncheon with the Worshipful Company of Water Conservators in London. The occasion was the installation of a new Master Water Conservator, and to avoid any controversy in election week, I spoke to the company about our good work on metal mine water pollution and how NRW is managing the legacy of Wales' industrial past.

10. During July, I also met the trustees of Wales Environment Link. Some of our usual meetings and planned events have been postponed due to the restrictions of the pre-election period.
11. Catrin Hornung, our Head of Communications and Digital Transformation, will be moving on at the end of July to a new role at Mentera (formerly Menter a Busnes). Catrin has been with NRW, and the Environment Agency before, for almost twenty years so this is a significant change for her and a huge loss for NRW. We wish Catrin the very best for her future career and will miss her insightful guidance, expertise and leadership.
12. Congratulations to our Internal Audit team, who won the award for Outstanding Public Sector Team at the Chartered Institute of Internal Auditors' annual Audit & Risk Awards ceremony in London in June. The award is recognition of the consistently high standards of assurance our audit team provides and I know the Board will join with me in celebrating this significant achievement.

## Strategic Issues

### Flood Warning System Replacement Project

13. We are now in the final stages of system testing and training, and the new system is on track to go live in mid-July. While the exact go live date is weather and incident dependent, the planned date for switch over is 16 July.
14. This is a significant business critical capital investment project that will enable NRW to deliver a new multi-media Flood Warning Information Service (FWIS) for Wales (a statutory duty) and exit the current Environment Agency (EA) Managed Service. Whilst it is a system replacement project, we are also launching a suite of integrated digital solutions that will enable us to send messages to the public and response partners, register and manage customer accounts and provide a recorded message service for Floodline.
15. The original Scoping Project started in 2019 and was followed by the Delivery Project in 2020. It has been delivered within our ICT programme blending our normal Strategic Outline Case (SOC), Outline Business Case (OBC) and Full Business Case (FBC) gateway approach with an Agile approach to delivery. This has enabled tight control on time and cost with active use of a product backlog for post-go live continuous improvement.
16. Given its criticality to NRW, the project has provided regular reporting and assurance to the Executive Team, Flood Risk Management Committee and Finance Committee. We are pleased to confirm that the OBC and FBC approved capital costs for system build are on target to be met.

17. We have been working with our ICT strategic partner (BJSS, who built the system) and have developed an excellent partnership with them. The project is paving the way for NRW2030 in terms of the agile delivery approach for digital projects.
18. As well as a new system, the project will deliver a multi-disciplined Product team comprised of Flood, Digital, ICT and BJSS staff who will take forward a continuous improvement programme crucial for delivering actions from our Flood Warning Service Review and learning from the February Floods Review. This is the first dedicated digital Product team for NRW. User research conducted by the Team will be the foundation for service improvements, delivering on our Digital Strategy.
19. We have also taken the opportunity through this project to improve:
  - the process for issuing Alert and Warning messages for our duty officers, making it more efficient and reducing their workload during flooding incidents, a key learning point from the February 2020 floods.
  - clarity and consistency of our Alert and Warning messages so they provide more directive advice, related to impacts;
  - the relationship we have with customers by changing the Extended Direct Warnings registration channel to offer a fuller registration for customers, including communications to notify them of the change and action they need to take to update their registration.
20. As this project delivers a lifecycle system replacement and from a public perspective will be seamless, the public launch will be a soft one and we are not preparing a public communications campaign around the go live. The flood warning codes, thresholds we issue warnings at and target areas (properties) we send warnings to are not changing. However, we will conduct a communications campaign in the autumn when we expect to launch some continuous improvement deliverables around public registration and share our winter seasonal preparedness messages.

### **New Forestry Powers under the Forestry Act 1967**

21. New powers afforded to NRW under the 1967 Forestry Act have been implemented from 1 April. The powers to condition, amend, suspend and revoke licences apply to felling licences only, and enable us to add environmental conditions to all felling licence applications received on or after 1 April. These sit alongside restocking conditions and provide clarity to the licence holder on their responsibilities for ensuring that they mitigate damage to protected species and they reduce or stop damage to the wider environment. All conditions are in line with UK Forestry Standards (UKFS). We can enforce the environmental conditions and seek to vary, suspend and revoke the felling licence in certain circumstances where the licence holder is not complying with the environmental conditions.

22. NRW is also now able to amend licences in agreement with licence holders. This is a positive step forward for both NRW and stakeholders, reducing the need to reapply for a full felling licence. Considerable stakeholder engagement has been undertaken ahead of implementation, with both internal and external guidance produced. We have also updated and improved the online application form for felling licence applications. We have received a small number of applications since 1 April with generally positive feedback from applicants.
23. Discussion is ongoing between WG and a small number of sector representatives where limited concerns have been raised and we are giving due consideration to these concerns. We have committed to a full review of the implementation of the new powers in April 2025, with continuous feedback welcomed from applicants over the next twelve months.

## **Tranquillity & Place**

24. Tranquillity is associated with the degree to which places and ecosystems deliver a state of quiet, calm and peace. It is a highly valued landscape asset, contributing to our health, wellbeing and quality of life. As a natural resource, it is most often experienced in the rural landscape but can also be found in urban parks and open spaces. Wherever they are located, tranquil areas can attract visitors and tourists and therefore bring economic benefits – though the balance is a fine one, as changes in noise, visual intrusion and light pollution can all have marked effects on natural settings and tranquillity.
25. To inform our policies, practice and provision, we have been developing a nationally consistent Tranquillity & Place resource that identifies relatively tranquil resources at a strategic and local level. The resource comprises six mapped themes that will be combined into the full Tranquillity & Place resource. The themes include visually tranquil places, acoustic environments where natural sounds are prominent, relative dark skies, and relative abundance of nature, natural landscapes and green spaces. Work on several of these has already been completed, with the sound environment and the compilation of the full resource being the final steps.
26. These unique datasets can help our understanding and consideration of the individual themes and overall tranquillity in context. Tranquillity & Place can be used in our landscape evidence and in the implementation of policy, design of plans and completion of assessments. Our better knowledge of these tranquil resources ensures we can conserve and sustainably manage the aspects of tranquillity that matter to people and nature.

## **Operational Issues**

### **Withyhedge Landfill**

27. Since the May Board Update, a further Regulation 36 Notice has been served and the deadline passed, specifying steps to be taken in relation to Cell 8 to reduce gas emissions and the unpleasant odour affecting local residents.
28. Determining compliance with the previous Regulation 36 Enforcement Notices, served in February and April, is complex and requires review of reports submitted to NRW along with visual inspections of physical infrastructure. The result of work undertaken since February under these two notices means a significant increase in the area from which landfill gas is being extracted, and an increase in the volume of gas being contained. Our officers undertook an audit of the landfill gas collection and management system to assess the effectiveness of newly installed infrastructure and the capability of the system to manage the extra gas input. Some areas of improvement have been identified and will be formalised in an improvement plan once our assessments have been completed.
29. The work undertaken to cap all areas with waste at the site has removed significant potential sources of fugitive emissions. Based on incident reports now being received, it appears that occurrences of offsite odours have decreased, although high numbers of reports were received and strong offsite odour substantiated in the week of 10 June. Investigations are ongoing to identify the cause and ensure effective steps are taken by the operator.
30. Our priority has been ensuring that work to control fugitive emissions, and therefore odours, was undertaken by the operator, Resources Management Ltd (RML). Our focus is now moving towards seeking information and assurance from RML about how the site will be operated in the future without creating offsite odours. RML stopped accepting waste onto the site voluntarily on 14 May. Work continues in relation to gas management across the site, as well as progressing cell 9 to a Construction Quality Assurance sign-off to allow acceptance of waste later in the summer.
31. The air quality issue is separate to the odour assessment work carried out by our officers, which underpins our regulatory approach to the site. These issues are considered by the Air Quality Group (AQG) chaired by Pembrokeshire County Council, with NRW and Public Health Wales as members. The AQG oversees the collection of data for air quality monitoring to inform advice provided to the public. Data gathering has taken place before, during and will continue after the temporary cessation of waste importation. Data and information will be made available publicly at the earliest opportunity. Some information has been made publicly available on the Pembrokeshire County Council website.

### **No Mow May**

32. NRW has been supporting No Mow May for the third year, and this year has been the most successful yet. Fewer than ten of our assets were mowed in May, and feedback externally has been generally positive. We will commit time during the

next year to improve this further and explore ways of managing our assets differently to contribute positively to nature recovery.

### **Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) Delegation**

33. WG's Renewable Energy Deep Dive, completed in 2021, recommended streamlining the process for developing the Celtic Sea renewable energy projects, including delegating offshore renewables advisory powers in Welsh Waters (beyond twelve nautical miles) from JNCC to NRW. A review has now taken place examining the advantages and disadvantages from the perspectives of NRW, JNCC and other key stakeholders including WG and developers. Whilst there are benefits, resourcing the change is a challenge at present and it has been decided that the function will remain with JNCC for the foreseeable future.

### **Water Quality Programme**

34. NRW's River Basin Management Plans (RBMPs) set out what we know about our rivers, lakes, canals, ground waters, estuaries and coastal waters, what we need to do to improve them and how we will do this. On 29 May, to coincide with our next cycle of RBMPs, we launched a public consultation on working together, targeted at those interested in Wales' water resources. We are seeking views on how we ensure we engage the right people at the right time in the right way about plans for water in Wales. The consultation closes on 20 December this year.
35. In early June, Ceri Davies and Gareth O'Shea presented to the Dŵr Cymru/Welsh Water (DCWW) Board Committee on Quality & Safety, sharing our assessment of the company's annual environmental performance and our expectations for improvement. DCWW's Annual Performance meeting – also attended by Ofwat, the Environment Agency and WG – was held a week later. A similar meeting with Hafren Dyfrdwy is scheduled for July.
36. A report on Water Company Annual Environmental Performance will be published on the NRW website after the General Election in mid July. Ofwat's draft determination for Price Review 24 (PR24) is expected on 11 July, and we will update the Board on its contents at the meeting.

### **Quarterly Enforcement Update**

37. During the period from January to March, NRW opened 306 new enforcement cases. 63% of these cases were generated from compliance assessment activities at permitted sites, while a third were generated following our attendance at incidents. The majority of cases related to biodiversity, water, waste and industry.
38. In the same reporting period, we closed 144 cases. Most of these were closed with advice and guidance; 35 warnings were issued. Twelve prosecution cases resulted in the courts issuing over £90k in fines and awarding NRW costs of nearly £22k.

39. 162 cases remain open and under investigation. This is due to the nature of our investigative and enforcement work and the time it can take to investigate an incident, identify potential offenders, obtain legal opinion and update our systems on progress and enforcement outcomes.

## Internal Issues

### NRW2030

40. Work is ongoing to establish robust governance around the NRW2030 project by end of September. We will involve PRG closely over the summer to test and refine the NRW2030 Vision and input to the development of the governance arrangements.
41. Of the four key NRW2030 programmes, two – People and Adfywio – are already established and continue to deliver. People Transformation is on track to deliver a new Learning Management System in July. Adfywio work is focusing on finding an operational base in South Central, while the Maes y Ffynnon project will look at options and alternatives for the end of the lease in 2026. Following a series of workshops with fleet users regarding electric vehicle (EV) transition, a five-year transition plan is being drafted for the NRW fleet.
42. The Technology programme is progressing, with programme documentation being reviewed for assurance. Key projects include ICT Stabilisation, Cyber, Disaster Recovery, DDaT (Digital, Data and Technology), and Management of Non-ICT Managed Systems. ICT Stabilisation is already moving at pace, working in tandem with our tactical delivery partner, with some key deliverables such as Billing Engine work already achieved. To assist with pipeline of work requests throughout the organisation, an Enterprise Design Authority has been stood up. This will triage and prioritise work requiring ICT resource, while ensuring that all work requests are strategically aligned to deliver our Corporate Plan.

### New Learning Management System and Knowledge Hub

43. Two new platforms – the Learning Management System (LMS) and the Knowledge Hub – launched for colleagues on 1 July. These will complement each other, sharing essential training, personal development and work skills. There will be a phased approach to further implementation, including the 'Perform' module in the spring of 2025.
44. Learning & Development was a consistent theme in the Ein Llais / Our Voice survey and at our Corporate Plan gatherings last year. In response to this, the new LMS is simple to use, easy to navigate, mobile friendly and includes bite-sized learning, mandatory safety courses and an extended catalogue of personal development courses. It also provides robust reporting, so that managers can easily see any outstanding and completed training. The system enables colleagues to access

digital learning flexibly through a variety of channels and supports different types of learning, including elearning, webinars, videos and written articles.

45. The LMS will be available bilingually, with navigation and training available in Welsh or English. Additional course content will be translated as we embed the new system.
46. The Knowledge Hub has been developed on the foundations of our organisational values and principles, and is a way of sharing useful resources and tools to help with personal development. The framework is structured around our vision and values and each value will introduce three strengths, which will have their own resources to support our colleagues.

### **Procurement Act 2023**

47. Following the UK's exit from the European Union, the new Procurement Act 2023 will come in to force on 28 October this year. In Wales, public procurement is a devolved function and WG took the decision to adopt the Procurement Act 2023 but also to introduce its own Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Act 2023 (known as SPPP).
48. The new legislation will bring:
  - Greater transparency (more publishing of procurement information and data);
  - More flexibility with the design of the procurement process;
  - Greater emphasis on value for money;
  - Better contract management;
  - Greater focus on socially responsible procurement.
49. Our Procurement team and Contract Management Support Service (CMSS) are undertaking training on the new legislation, and a task and finish group has been established with members of Procurement, CMSS and Finance to ensure NRW is ready to implement the requirements of the legislation. The Procurement Team and CMSS are working closely with other public sector organisations to share knowledge and experience.
50. A presentation and discussion will be brought to Finance Committee in the near future.

## **Communications**

### **Corporate Communications**



51. Managing the steady stream of media requests and continued coverage that stemmed from the release of information under the Freedom of Information request for Ministerial correspondence and investigations related to Dauson Environmental Group, continues to take significant time and resource. Media queries relating the future of the visitor centres and the potential impact of financial pressures on NRW's plans and colleagues have also continued throughout this period.
52. The discussion on the draft Recreation Strategy at the May Board meeting has led to queries from trade publications on potential impacts to our recreation offer. We have also continued with internal staff engagement on our overall financial position.
53. While plans to widely promote the World Environment Day event at the Senedd were impacted by pre-election period restrictions, we supported the CEO office in preparing for the panel discussion and worked with the WG communications team and Lord Deben's office to develop and agree messaging around their attendance. This event was widely welcomed and feedback from our stakeholders has been extremely positive.
54. Plans are in hand for the Royal Welsh Agricultural Show and Eisteddfod. The theme for both events is Working With Our Communities, so that people and nature can thrive together. In addition to the stand activities that we hope will encourage families to visit the stand, we also have key stakeholder events. These include an update from our Control of Agricultural Pollution (CoAPR) Regulation team and a celebration of our LIFE projects, some of which are drawing to a close. Staff from NRW will also be present on partner stands including WG, National Forest and Forest Research.

## **Nature is Recovering**

55. NRW's decision to support No Mow May provided the opportunity to develop a proactive communications campaign highlighting our commitment to supporting nature's recovery, and to highlight the essential work that has to take place during this time. This helped to mitigate any potential negative commentary from people who may see NRW colleagues mowing flood embankments and other sites.
56. We promoted our trails and nature reserves, and the positive impact of walking and being in the outdoors during Mental Health Awareness week, the Bank Holiday weekends and National Walking Month in May. This led to an interview on the benefits of walking in the rain and being in nature with Welsh meteorologist Derek Brockway for BBC News.
57. Invasive Non-Native Species week, the Sands of Life Conference, World Peatland Day and Wales Nature Week provided platforms throughout this period to promote the wide range of nature restoration projects underway across Wales. Natur am Byth's "Nature in your Community" week also showcased the partnership work ongoing to support species recovery at a local level.

## Communities are Resilient to Climate Change

58. Ahead of the introduction of the new Flood Warning Information Service (FWIS) this summer, we have continued the drumbeat of communications with people signed up to the opt-out system to highlight the steps they need to take to sign up to the new service. This has led to an increase in sign-ups. We have also ensured attendance at forthcoming Local Resilience Forum tactical group meetings to ensure members are aware of the upcoming changes to the FWIS and are able to share messages locally.
59. We supported WG to promote the announcement of six new woodlands to join the National Forest for Wales, and shared warning and informing messages around potential flood impacts resulting from adverse weather conditions in May.

## Pollution is Minimised

60. Significant effort continues to be invested in managing the communications around our regulatory and enforcement activity at Wwithy hedge landfill. This period saw the introduction of a weekly newsletter to subscribers, which allows the multi-agency group to provide regular updates to the community. We also delivered a technical media briefing to aid journalists in their reporting of the issues at the site, supported the Head of South West Operations to prepare for and take part in the *BBC Wales Investigates* programme, and worked closely with the Legal team and Environment and Regulatory teams across the South West and South Central to ensure responses to media queries relating to Dawson Environment Group waste companies were consistent.
61. We worked with the Coal Authority to deliver a background briefing to the BBC to inform their reporting of the Welsh Affairs Select Committee session on the metal mine legacy. This ensured the BBC were properly informed and aware of NRW's responsibilities in the management of this issue, and led to balanced reporting.
62. The PCB (polychlorinated biphenyl) legacy also continues to draw media interest. We worked closely with colleagues across the business and updated partners on our responses to detailed queries from BBC Radio 4 / BBC Sounds for the forthcoming *Buried* series, which looks at the impact of PCBs on the environment across the UK.
63. The Communications team led on the communications around the Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change and Rural Affairs' first visit to NRW projects in the Tywi catchment since coming into the post. Resource was also given to planning and preparation for the launch of the Upper Wye Project during this time, which was subsequently impacted by the pre-election period.
64. The team has been managing the communications response to significant incidents during this period, managing the tactical media of the Synthite factory fire in North

Wales, and working with DCWW and Vale of Glamorgan County Council to ensure clarity in the reporting of the response and investigation into the suspected leak at Penybont Sewage Treatment Works, which led to pollution impacts on the River Ogmore.

65. We also continued to promote our work to monitor and improve water quality, promoting the start of the bathing water season and the launch of the consultation on River Basin Management Plans.

## Forward Look

Monday 22 - Wednesday 24 July – Royal Welsh Agricultural Show

Wednesday 7 August – Board Update Call

Thursday 5 September – Audit & Risk Assurance Committee

Wednesday 11 September – People & Customer Committee

Thursday 12 September – Finance Committee

Tuesday 17 September – Audit & Risk Assurance Committee

Wednesday 25 / Thursday 26 September – NRW Board Meeting

Thursday 3 October – Flood Risk Management Committee

Wednesday 9 October – Land Estate Committee

## NRW Board Paper

<b>Date of meeting:</b>	17 <sup>th</sup> July 2024
<b>Title of Paper:</b>	ARAC Update for Board
<b>Paper Reference:</b>	24-07-B11
<b>Paper sponsored by:</b>	Kath Palmer, Chair of ARAC
<b>Paper prepared by:</b>	Board Secretariat
<b>Paper presented by:</b>	Kath Palmer, Chair of ARAC
<b>Purpose of the paper</b>	Information
<b>Summary</b>	To provide an update to the Board in respect of 4 June 2024 ARAC meeting.

## Background

1. This update for the Board is in respect 4 June 2024 Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC) meeting. The papers and minutes from these meetings are available for Board members to view on Diligent.

## Update

### Audit Wales

2. Audit Wales had provided the detailed Audit Plan for 2024 and key points were highlighted. Audit Wales were working towards completion of this year's audit for the 17<sup>th</sup> September ARAC meeting. They would keep the Head of Finance informed throughout the process.

### Finance Update

3. A Finance Update was provided which included the draft 2023-24 Annual Accounts and Remuneration Report, and Single Tender Actions, Losses and Special Payments. ARAC noted that they had held a deep dive into the accounts with the Finance team in

May which had raised a number of queries. The Counter Fraud Delivery Plan for 2024-25 was also presented to the Committee.

## Annual Report 2023-24

4. ARAC provided suggestions and scrutinised the draft content of the Annual Report. The team were commended on the Report so far and noted the ongoing progress. A draft would be produced for the July Board meeting.

## Risk Management

5. The Committee were provided with a quarterly risk management update report and the recent Board session on risk appetite was noted. The inclusion of assurance on the Strategic Risk Register was welcomed and the risks were discussed. ARAC requested updates to be provided at the next meeting including the draft strategic risks on the three wellbeing objectives, a rethink of strategic risk 7, and more completion on the other risk detail plus a programme of deep dives for the strategic risks. ARAC also requested to see the high level organisational risks for the next ARAC meeting.

## Corporate Governance Update

6. ARAC were informed of corporate governance developments and governance priorities for 2024-25. The Committee welcomed the update and the Code of Behaviour was requested to come to Board. A plan of governance work would be produced for the next ARAC.

## Annual Senior Information Risk Owner (SIRO) Assurance Report

7. The SIRO Report was welcomed by ARAC, and its usefulness acknowledged. The Report was discussed and the team were thanked for all the work on this area.

## Quarterly Assurance Update

8. ARAC were informed of the ongoing assurance work including the governance and assurance structure. There was an aspiration for assurance to provide clear governance routes for decisions with a more streamlined approach and also for this to be integrated with risk management.

## Internal Audit

9. ARAC were provided with an Internal Audit Quarterly Report, Head of Internal Audit's Annual Opinion, ARAC's Annual Report, Annual Whistleblowing Report and the Environmental Management System (EMS) Annual Review. The Head of Internal Audit's Annual Opinion was moderate and it was recognised that NRW were on a journey. ARAC welcomed the opinion and discussion took place around aspirations for the future.

10. Four Internal Audit Reports were received and noted. One offered an unsatisfactory opinion, one a moderate opinion, one a substantial opinion and one a limited opinion. Overdue actions were discussed and progress was queried.

### **ARAC Governance**

11. ARAC reviewed the Forward Look.

### **Closed Sessions**

12. ARAC members held separate closed sessions with Audit Wales and the Accounting Officer.

## NRW Board Paper

<b>Date of meeting:</b>	17 <sup>th</sup> July 2024
<b>Title of Paper:</b>	Finance Committee Board Update
<b>Paper Reference:</b>	24-07-B12
<b>Paper sponsored by:</b>	Helen Pittaway, Chair of Finance Committee
<b>Paper prepared by:</b>	Board Secretariat
<b>Paper presented by:</b>	Helen Pittaway, Chair of Finance Committee
<b>Purpose of the paper</b>	Information
<b>Summary</b>	To provide an update on the Finance Committee (FC) – 13 <sup>th</sup> June

## Background

This paper provides an update to the Board following the Finance Committee (FC) meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> June 2024. The papers and minutes from the meeting are available for Board members to view on Diligent.

### Financial Performance and Approvals

1. The interim Financial Performance Report was presented including the opening budget. Early indications that income and expenditure were generally in line with profile were outlined, along with the 2024-25 trajectory, salary savings, contingencies, over-programming and key risks and opportunities.
2. Additional information on the quantum of revenue and capital pressures for exiting Ty Cambria was requested and the issues with the project were discussed.
3. FC endorsed three section 83 requests and discussed the compensatory planting scheme including the benefits to biodiversity. Assurance was provided that tree felling was not in sensitive areas and that it was mainly in commercial areas of the land estate. The costs to NRW and income were discussed for all three proposals.

### Changes to Funding Mechanisms

4. Three new funding mechanisms including partnership agreements, direct grants, and co-operation agreements were summarised. FC were asked to endorse the changes to Managing our Money (MoM).
5. FC requested additional information on the counter party risks within the framework and the assurance process including the scrutiny of partners was explained.

### 2024-25 Budget and Business Plan Update

6. A verbal update was provided on the Commission, including the approach to the governance of the change process. It was suggested that there should be an extraordinary FC meeting in July as part of that process. The role of FC in the process was discussed, along with the level of detail the Board would need in order to make informed decisions.

### S20 Reservoir Operating Agreements

7. Background information and an outline of the issues of the section 20 (S.20) agreements between NRW and Dŵr Cymru/Welsh Water (DC/WW) were provided. This included the significant increases in charges to NRW, extraction charges not keeping pace with the increases and the outstanding invoices.
8. The historic charges and how those costs were formulated were discussed. It was queried how the costs compared to the situation in England and how the arbitration process would be conducted if it were needed. The arrangements for the cross border Dee catchment were noted.
9. FC discussed NRW's role in the s.20 agreements and endorsed the approach outlined in the paper to audit the outstanding invoices and to initiate a charging consultation.

### Draft Annual Report & Accounts 2023-24

10. The financial performance in the Annual Report and Accounts (ARA) 2023-24 and how it related to the information presented in the NRW Board Finance Report was explained. The performance element of the Annual Report 2023-24 was highlighted. FC were asked to review and endorse the draft Report and to provide feedback by 20<sup>th</sup> June.
11. FC raised concerns regarding the lack of acknowledgement of the challenges that NRW had faced during 2023-24. The tone of the report would be reviewed along with work to identify any gaps in the information.

### FRM Capital Review Recommendations Implementation Group Update

12. An update from the Flood Risk Management (FRM) Review Recommendations Implementation Group was presented. This included completed work, progress made against the recommendations, the next steps, and the desired outcomes.



13. FC queried how the team would implement and embed the current tools and processes effectively, and how the Executive Team were supporting and ensuring staff understood the importance of time, cost, and quality of spend.
14. The Committee discussed what success would look like for this particular implementation programme and how FC would receive the assurance that this Programme was being embedded.

#### NRW2030 Update

15. The NRW2030 Programme including the vision and budget; programme structure; an overview of the four Programmes and key projects; the aspiration for 2024-25; how success would be monitored and reported, and what would be needed to achieve success was presented.
16. The Committee discussed the differences between Business Transformation and NRW2030. The approach to financing current systems as part of the transition were under review. It was suggested that communication on the launch should be developed.

#### Any Other Business

17. FC noted the Quarter 4 Reports that had been supplied for information only, and the 2025 FC meeting dates.

## NRW Board Paper

<b>Date of meeting:</b>	17 <sup>th</sup> July 2024
<b>Title of Paper:</b>	Flood Risk Management Board Report
<b>Paper Reference:</b>	24-07-B13
<b>Paper sponsored by:</b>	Prof Peter Fox, Chair of the Flood Risk Management Committee (FRMC)
<b>Paper prepared by:</b>	Board Secretariat
<b>Paper presented by:</b>	Prof Peter Fox, Chair of the Flood Risk Management Committee (FRMC)
<b>Purpose of the paper</b>	Information
<b>Summary</b>	To provide an update on the Flood Risk Management Committee (FRMC) for July.

## Background

1. The Chair took the decision to send the papers for comment/endorsement via correspondence due to the significant time constraints on Board members for other areas of work. The following are a summary of the papers. Once comments are returned, the Chair and relevant staff will review and formally record the outcomes.
2. For further detail, all Board members can access the papers of committees via the Diligent portal.

## Update

### Flood Risk Management Update Report

3. An update report that highlighted key areas of work was submitted to 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, the Flood Risk Management Annual Report and Technical Advice Note 15 (TAN15).

### Flood Risk Management Capital Programme Update

4. An update on the current position of NRW's Flood Risk 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.
5. 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 System replacement Project and the Telemetry Project were provided. A summary of the upcoming approvals and the FRM Capital Programme spreadsheet were also supplied.

### Stephenson Street Change Paper

6. The Stephenson Street Flood Scheme change paper was sent to FRMC for endorsement due to a revised whole life project cost. 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.
7. 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.
8. 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.

### Pwllheli Strategic Outline Case

9. 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.

## NRW Board Paper

<b>Date of meeting:</b>	17 <sup>th</sup> July 2024
<b>Title of Paper:</b>	People and Customer Committee (PCC) Update
<b>Paper Reference:</b>	24-07-B14
<b>Paper sponsored by:</b>	Mark McKenna, Chair of PCC
<b>Paper prepared by:</b>	Board Secretariat
<b>Paper presented by:</b>	Mark McKenna, Chair of PCC
<b>Purpose of the paper</b>	Information
<b>Summary</b>	To provide an update to the Board in respect of 6 <sup>th</sup> June 2024 PCC meeting.

## Background

1. This written update for the Board is in respect of the 6<sup>th</sup> June 2024 People and Customer Committee (PCC) meeting. Board members are able to access all Committee papers and minutes via the Diligent portal.

## Verbal Update on Current Risks and Issues

2. PCC were provided with verbal updates on current risks and issues. The Executive Director of Corporate Strategy and Development updated PCC on items such as: the good ongoing relationship with trade unions; the ongoing recruitment controls; and the new Learning Management System (LMS).
3. The Executive Director of Communications, Customer and Commercial updated PCC on: the current risks and opportunities; the issues dominating the Communications Team; the success of the Senedd event on World Environment Day and expectations for future events; and the now operational Central Correspondence Unit.

## Wellbeing, Health & Safety Report – Annual Report

4. PCC welcomed and discussed the Wellbeing, Health & Safety (WH&S) Annual Report. The Committee offered suggestions for inclusions into the Report. Assurance was

provided on the robust contract management process. Board members would receive calendar invites for staff stress awareness sessions. PCC endorsed the Wellbeing, Health & Safety Annual Report in readiness for Board approval.

## Annual Political Stakeholder Plan including the Perceptions Audit Findings

5. PCC were presented with the outcomes of the Annual Perceptions Audit and noted the positive responses, albeit from a relatively small sample size and discussed how the audit could be progressed and utilised in the current political climate. The next survey would focus on developing understanding of NRW's role around nature and the State of Natural Resources Report 2025 (SoNaRR).

## Remuneration Report

6. PCC noted that feedback had already been provided by the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC). PCC endorsed the Remuneration Report.

## Annual Pay Policy Statement

7. PCC welcomed and endorsed the Annual Pay Policy Statement.

## Annual Modern Slavery Statement

8. PCC suggested to include in next year's Statement reference to the benefits realised since the Statement's inception. The Committee endorsed the Annual Modern Slavery Statement.

## Welsh Language Annual Report

9. PCC welcomed the detailed Report and the ambition to do more. A suggestion on terminology was offered and assurance was provided that the Welsh Language Commissioner held NRW as an exemplar. Board members would be invited to any future sessions on chairing meetings bilingually.
10. PCC approved the Welsh Language Annual Report for publication.

## NRW2030

11. The Committee were provided with an overview of the programmes and projects within the NRW2030 Programme Structure and welcomed the over-arching dashboard that would provide the Board with assurance. PCC discussed Electric Vehicle (EV) infrastructure roll out in general.

## Shaping a Resourcing Plan

12. The Committee welcomed the emphasis on diversity, the terminology and tone of the draft Resourcing Plan and provided feedback. The exciting opportunities that NRW could provide for a complete environmental experience were noted.

## Information Items

13. PCC welcomed the Communication Quarterly Report, the Service Improvement Update and the People Management Information.

# NRW Board Paper

<b>Date of meeting:</b>	17 July 2024
<b>Title of Paper:</b>	Finance Performance Report
<b>Paper Reference:</b>	24-07-B15
<b>Paper sponsored by:</b>	Rachael Cunningham, Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Services
<b>Paper prepared by:</b>	Rob Bell, Head of Finance; Mark Collins, Business Finance Manager
<b>Paper presented by:</b>	Rob Bell, Head of Finance
<b>Purpose of the paper:</b>	Approval (change in forecast) / Discussion (Financial Performance)
<b>Summary</b>	<p>To approve:</p> <p>Change in the latest forecast from £267.9m to a forecasted £268.9m.</p> <p>To scrutinise:</p> <p>Financial performance to the end of May 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 forecast compared to the original budget.
  - Performance to end of May 2024, compared to the original budget.

## 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 including controls on recruitment and the commissioning exercise currently in progress.

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 £267.9m to £268.9m.
- 7. Board to scrutinise financial performance to the end of May 2024.

## Index of Annexes

Annex A – Financial Performance Report





**NRW Board - 17 July 2024**

**Financial Performance Report – May 2024**

## Content and Key Messages

### Update will cover:

1. Update on the latest forecast changes as at May 2024 compared to the opening budget.

2. Financial Performance as at May 2024.

3. Update on the plan to balance in year budgetary pressures.

4. Endorse change in forecast since the original budget was agreed - from £267.9m to £268.9m.

5. An update on the potential risks & opportunities.

6. A summary (interim) report was presented to the Executive Team and Finance Committee on 11 and 13 June 2024 respectively.

### Messages:

1. The overall budget increased by £1m, mainly due to changes in commercial income (£0.4m), external funding (£0.3m), capital grant funding (£0.1m) and use of charge reserves (£0.3m). This has funded additional work within the Energy Delivery team in CCC and contingencies (commercial income), Coal Tip Safety and Afan Bike Trail work & help manage International Waste Shipments (external funding & capital grant), with charge reserves funding additional charge posts.

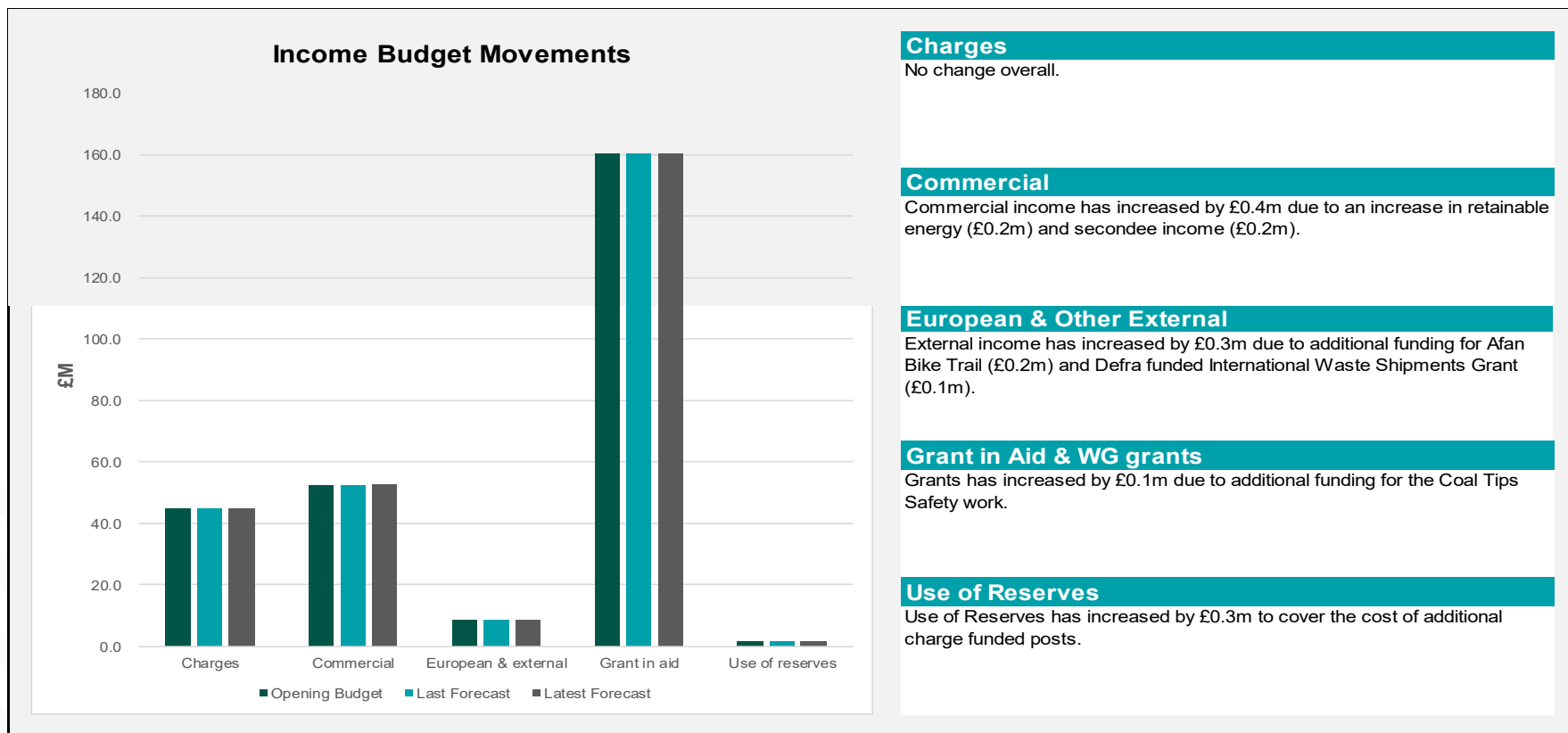
2. Expenditure at the end of May equates to £33.1m against a planned spend of £34m, an under spend to date of £0.9m. This is mainly due to under spend on non staff costs and capital projects. The non staff element is linked to an under spend on land stewardship activities within Operations (£0.8m), offset by overspend within EPP across Knowledge & Evidence (£0.2m) and Flood & Incident Management Teams (£0.2m). The capital position relates to under spend within the respective NaCE (£0.2m) & NRW 2030 (£0.3m) programmes. The income position is slightly ahead of profile mainly due to additional commercial timber income (£0.3m).

3. There is a page in the report where we set out what contingencies and over-programming we are holding. There are several contingencies - pay award, general (for potential redundancies), precautionary (for re-forecast of energy income and corporate costs in relation to whether WG fund Coal Authority directly in future to undertake metal mines remediation work). 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). We have taken into consideration the lessons learnt from the Local Partnerships review in managing over-programming within programmes.

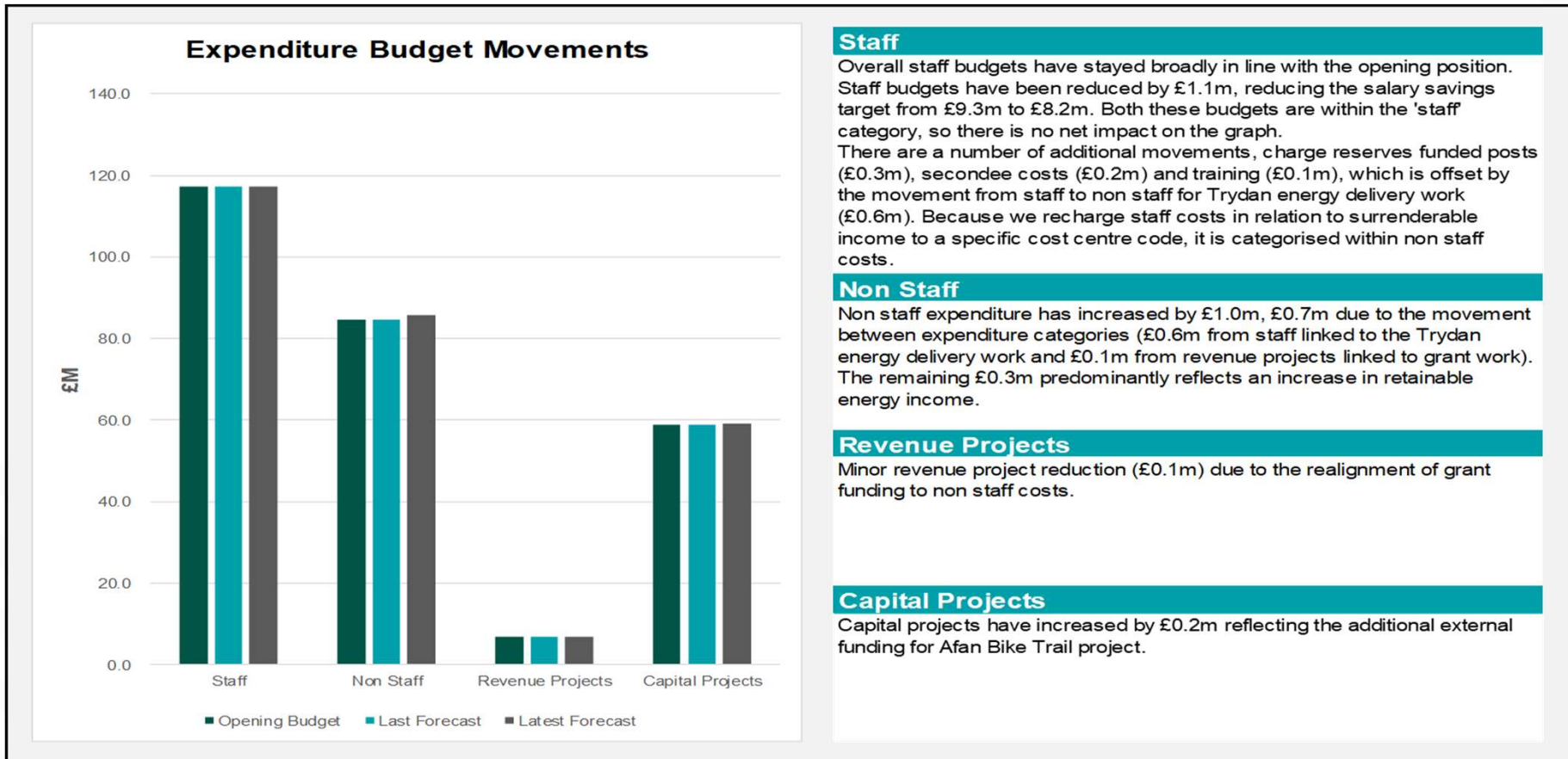
4. The main risks to spending within our budget is achieving our salary savings target, the lease dispute at Ty Cambria, the potential outcome from the IR35 situation and ongoing legal cases. There is mitigation in place for all these risks. The paper comments in more detail on the management of the salary budget, we are also in discussion with WG about agreeing a plan for any potential IR35 liability, that would see it spread over a number of years and a paper was recently considered by the Finance Committee in respect to Ty Cambria. No response has been received from the Landlord, with regards the proposed offer. We will therefore need to consider alternative options with Finance Committee. We have also set our over-programming assumption at a very prudent level, so there maybe more scope to take a little more risk with the budget. There is also a modest contingency budget.

5. The opening staff budget deficit stood at £9.3m. The current recruitment controls has generated "core" post savings at the end of May of £1.1m, reducing the deficit to £8.2m. This will reduce further as we go through the year, however, current projections show an expected deficit of £1.4m against the £9.3m target at year end, which will need to be funded from the contingency budget (£2.2m) or other in year savings. Whilst we hold a contingencies budget, this is also a source of funding for redundancies.

## Financial Performance – Income Forecast



## Financial Performance – Expenditure Forecast



### Staff

Overall staff budgets have stayed broadly in line with the opening position. Staff budgets have been reduced by £1.1m, reducing the salary savings target from £9.3m to £8.2m. Both these budgets are within the 'staff' category, so there is no net impact on the graph.

There are a number of additional movements, charge reserves funded posts (£0.3m), secondee costs (£0.2m) and training (£0.1m), which is offset by the movement from staff to non staff for Trydan energy delivery work (£0.6m). Because we recharge staff costs in relation to surrenderable income to a specific cost centre code, it is categorised within non staff costs.

### Non Staff

Non staff expenditure has increased by £1.0m, £0.7m due to the movement between expenditure categories (£0.6m from staff linked to the Trydan energy delivery work and £0.1m from revenue projects linked to grant work). The remaining £0.3m predominantly reflects an increase in retainable energy income.

### Revenue Projects

Minor revenue project reduction (£0.1m) due to the realignment of grant funding to non staff costs.

### Capital Projects

Capital projects have increased by £0.2m reflecting the additional external funding for Afan Bike Trail project.

## Financial Performance - Income

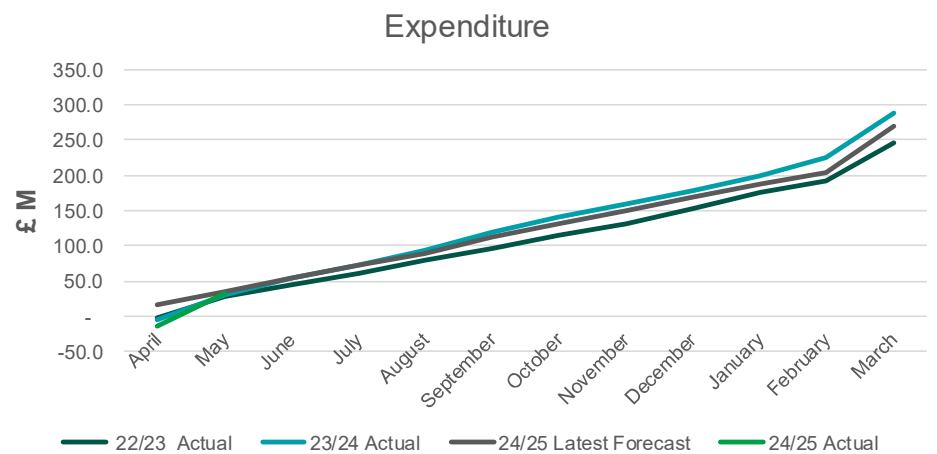
INCOME	Actual	Approved Forecast	Variance	Approved Forecast	Remaining Budget	Commentary
by Account Type	YTD £m	YTD £m	YTD £m	FY £m	FY %	
Charges	29.2	29.1	0.1	44.9	35%	Income raised in line with profile.
Commercial	10.9	10.6	0.3	53.0	80%	Timber sales are ahead of profile in May following a strong start to the year, however the commercial team feel that keeping the forecast at £31m would be prudent at present as historically there has been a slump in dispatches in the summer. The forecast will be reviewed once the outcome of the July esales is known. We will then in a better position to more accurately predict the timber sales for the year.
European & external	0.3	0.4	-0.1	8.9	96%	The current variance is linked to WG grants. No risks have been identified to the end of year outturn and these variances will be assessed over the next two months, with profiles amended as appropriate.
Grant in aid	20.1	20.1	0.0	160.3	87%	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 charge reserves to cover the gap between charge income and expenditure on charge regimes. This will be monitored and reviewed throughout the year in conjunction with the regulatory business management team.
<b>TOTAL: NRW</b>	<b>60.5</b>	<b>60.2</b>	<b>0.3</b>	<b>268.9</b>	<b>78%</b>	

## 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	18.8	18.8	0.1	117.4	84%	The current position at the end of May shows an underspend of £0.1m linked to other staff costs spread across the Directorates. Due to the current recruitment controls we have generated £1.1m of savings at the end of May on core funded posts, which has been used to offset the opening staff budget deficit of £9.3m. This now stands at £8.2m and will gradually reduce as we go through the year. However, current projections show an expected deficit of £1.4m against the £9.3m target at year end, which will need to be funded from other in year savings. The vacancy rate currently stands at 11%.
Non Staff	10.7	11.2	0.5	85.6	87%	The current under spend of £0.5m is predominantly linked to Land Stewardship activities within Operations (£0.8m), which is offset by overspend within EPP across Knowledge & Evidence (£0.2m) and Flood & Incident Management Teams (£0.2m). No risks have been identified to the end of year outturn and these variances will be assessed over the next two months, with profiles amended as appropriate.
Revenue Projects	0.7	0.5	-0.2	6.7	89%	Revenue projects are slightly ahead of profile linked to externally funded Natur Am Byth projects within Operations (£0.2m). The profiles will be revised in the following months, with limited risk to the full year budget. The NaCE Programme costs are in line with their respective budgets.
Capital Projects	2.9	3.4	0.5	59.2	95%	The current capital variance is predominantly linked to two key programmes; NaCE and NRW 2 is spread across a number of sub programmes and projects, with some revised profiles still awaiting input. These will be resolved by the next reporting period. NaCE overprogramming current stands at £3.3m, which will be managed down throughout the year as done in previous years. A revised flood programme will be considered by the Executive Team in July.
<b>TOTAL: NRW</b>	<b>33.1</b>	<b>34.0</b>	<b>0.9</b>	<b>268.9</b>	<b>88%</b>	

## Financial Performance – Expenditure Trends

### EXPENDITURE TRENDS



#### Commentary:

Expenditure at the end of May was £33.1m, which is higher than that incurred at the same point across the last two financial years, where we incurred £30.7m and £27.9m respectively. The budget for this year stands at £268.9m, £18.8m less than last financial year, primarily due to higher flood capital funding (£11m) and the payment to the EAPF pensions fund (£7m) in 2023-24.

## Trajectory Financial Performance

Trajectory Financial Performance as at the end of May					
Directorate	Expenditure variance	Turnover	Net variance	Core/project split	
				/£000	
	/£000	/£000	/£000	Core	Projects
CCC	208	-75	133	79	54
CSD	-34	-29	-63	-102	39
EPP	671	-235	436	233	203
FCS	334	-81	253	220	32
OPS	1,445	-425	1,020	630	390
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,624</b>	<b>-845</b>	<b>1,778</b>	<b>1,061</b>	<b>718</b>

- Recruitment controls are having a positive budgetary impact.
- Total core savings at the end of May were £1.1m with a current projection of £7.7m for the financial year. However, £2.2m relates to charge income vacancies, leaving an overall saving of £5.5m against the £9.3m target.
- We have reasonably estimated a further £2.4m by keeping recruitment controls, the movement of staff into either charge or project funded posts and colleague exits.
- That still leaves a balance of £1.4m to meet the £9.3m target. Whilst we hold a contingencies budget of £2.2m, this is also a source of funding for redundancies.
- CSD is showing a negative saving as FRP staff no longer on assignment, essentially staff in unbudgeted posts, fall under the Directorate.



## 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	0.5	0.3	-0.2	2.8	83%	Externally funded projects are currently showing an over spend of £0.2m, primarily linked to Natur am Byth. No risks have been identified to the end of year outturn and these variances will be assessed over the next two months, with profiles amended as appropriate.
Internal Funded	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.9	89%	Current position in line to profile with no risk identified of delivering to budget.
NaCE	0.2	0.1	0.0	1.5	90%	Current position in line to profile with no risk identified of delivering to budget.
NRW 2030	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.8	99%	Limited costs incurred to date, due to a number of projects commencing later in the year.
Grants	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.8	101%	Significantly smaller programme this year with only two projects; AONB (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) and National Trails. Due to the nature of the grants, the majority of funding will be utilised in March 2025.
<b>TOTAL: NRW</b>	<b>0.7</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>0.2</b>	<b>6.7</b>	<b>89%</b>	

## Financial Performance – Capital Projects

Capital Projects by Programme	Actual	Approved Forecast	Variance	Approved Forecast	Remaining Budget	Commentary
	YTD	YTD	YTD	FY	FY	
	£m	£m	£m	£m	%	
NRW 2030	0.5	0.8	0.3	7.1	93%	The NRW 2030 element is currently £0.3m behind profile, almost solely linked to the flood warning system project. There is £2.3m of the overall programme allocation still to be distributed of which £2m relates to technological stabilisation projects awaiting assurance from IPAG. Once provided the budget will be allocated to the relevant project codes.
External Funded	0.3	0.3	0.0	9.2	97%	All projects apart from Natur am Byth are in line with profile.
Flood Risk	0.7	0.7	0.1	15.2	96%	Spend to date is in line with profile. The overall flood GiA allocation is £22.5m which is split between the flood risk programme budget of £15.2m, NRW 2030 £5.5m, along with corporate and lease costs of £1.1m & £0.7m respectively. The current overprogramming level recorded is £2.4m, and the Head of Strategic Projects and Flood Risk Management are aware this is significantly higher than the approved rate of £0.1m (was £0.8m but reduced to £0.1m until the outcome on Cadoxton was resolved). The main projects contributing towards the level of overprogramming are Stephenson Street, Ammanford and Ritec. We now have a likely outcome for Cadoxton and WG have agreed we can accrue the majority of these costs into last financial year. We have submitted the evidence for the accrual to Audit Wales. A revised programme and proposal for a far lower level of over-programming will be considered by the Executive Team in July.
Internal Funded	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.5	100%	Limited spend to date. The funding primarily reflects the water resources and compensatory planting projects.
NaCE	1.4	1.6	0.2	22.4	94%	The overall NaCE programme now stands at £23.9m (excluding corporate costs charge). Overprogramming currently stands of £3.3m, with £0.8m on holding codes awaiting project to be created. The overprogramming will be managed down throughout the year, as done in previous years.
IFRS 16 Capital Leases Only (non-cash)	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.8	100%	The funding reflects the change in accounting treatment of leases. Costs will run in line with the allocated budget to year end.
<b>TOTAL: NRW</b>	<b>2.9</b>	<b>3.4</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>59.2</b>	<b>95%</b>	

## Contingency and over-programming budgets

Rag status



Balances (contingencies and programme under/overs)	/£m	Confidence Level (RAG Status)	Comments
<b>In year pressure balancing targets</b>			
Staff Reduction Targets	-8.2	Yellow	Reduced from £9.3m in the original budget, accounting for savings in April and May.
Vacancy Management	-4.2	Green	
<b>Contingencies and provisions</b>			
Pay Award Provisions	4.2	Green	Provision equivalent to a level just above CPI.
Other staff contingency	1.8	Green	Additional provision as identified in the opening budget.
Central Contingencies	2.2	Yellow	£2m contingency, plus increase in corporate costs recovered through grants etc, not yet allocated.
Central Contingencies (retainable energy income)	0.5	Green	Held until revised retainable energy income forecast approved.
Central Contingencies (overhead charges - tbc)	0.4	Green	Overhead charges predominantly linked to metal mines grant, that may be transferred to the Coal Authority (£0.25m).
Staff Budget Undistributed (Directorates)	0.9	Green	Budgets for posts not yet created, largely ringfenced.
Staff budget allocation (under review)	0.4	Yellow	Budgets for posts not yet created.
<b>Over-programming</b>			
Central Overprogramming	-1.0	Green	As set out in the opening budget.
Overprogramming (Directorates)	-0.4	Green	Primarily linked to fleet, facilities & land stewardship. These will be reviewed and reduced accordingly for the next reporting period.
NaCE (Directorates)	-3.3	Green	As per the review with Finance, EPP & Ops.
Flood Risk Capital (Directorates)	-2.4	Green	We are aware of the ET decision not to hold over programming until we know the outcome of the Cadoxton scheme. Flood and projects delivery are working together to review the individual project allocations during June and reduce the level of over programming. A paper will be considered by the Executive Team in July.
Staff Budget Overprogramming (Directorates)	-0.1	Green	Posts that have been created awaiting funding from WG.
<b>Awaiting distribution</b>			
NRW 2030 (Directorates)	2.3	Green	Awaiting distribution. Budget to be allocated to component projects to include technological stabilisation projects.
Water Resources Capital (Directorates)	0.5	Green	Proposals are currently being assessed for distribution and will be implemented for the next reporting period.

### Note

All contingencies/over programming are held centrally unless indicated otherwise



## NRW Board Paper

<b>Date of meeting:</b>	17 <sup>th</sup> July 2024
<b>Title of Paper:</b>	Business Plan Performance Dashboard Quarter 4 Report and Internal Performance Quarter 4 Report
<b>Paper Reference:</b>	24-07-B16
<b>Paper sponsored by:</b>	Clare Pillman, Chief Executive
<b>Paper prepared by:</b>	Sioni Davies, Advisor Corporate Planning & Performance
<b>Paper presented by:</b>	Clare Pillman, Chief Executive
<b>Purpose of the paper</b>	Approval of the Q4 Business Plan Performance Dashboard and the Q4 Internal Performance Report
<b>Summary</b>	<p>The Q4 Business Plan Performance Dashboard Report and the Internal Performance Report for the period to the end of March 2024 is presented here.</p> <p>During this period, there is one reported Red in the Business Plan Performance Dashboard (previously none in Q3) and the numbers of Amber measures are now six, (previously eight in Q3).</p>

## Issue

1. The fourth/ last quarter of the 2023/24 Business Plan performance reporting cycle is complete. This paper presents NRW Board the opportunity to scrutinise the final quarter's performance.

## Background

2. The **Business Plan Performance Dashboard** is one of the NRW Board's principal means of scrutinising delivery. It was developed in parallel with the 2023/24 Business Plan, working with the NRW Board, Executive Team and Leadership Team. This annual Business Plan relates to our Corporate Plan to March 2030.
3. We are developing a performance framework to sit alongside the new Corporate Plan: in the meantime, this Business Plan dashboard largely reflects measures carried forward from 2022/23, organised around our three new Well-being Objectives.
4. The Business Plan Dashboard Performance Report can be seen at Annex 1 and consists of a:

- **Dashboard** providing an overview of performance against the 2023/24 measures included in the annual Business Plan and aligned to the Well-being Objectives reflected in our Corporate Plan and 2023/24 annual Business Plan
  - **Details for each specific measure** with their final year-end position, set out by Well-being Objective.
5. Following the announcement in August 2023 of increasing pressures on the 2023/24 NRW budget, the Corporate Planning Team have been scrutinising submissions to track the potential impact of greater financial controls on the ability to deliver the measures in full (as Green status) by year-end.
  6. Expectations for year-end however suggested that resource issues *would* significantly impact on delivery which proved to be true. Six of the predicted eight measures are Amber at year end with one turning Red from a predicted Amber.
  7. The dashboard reflects a representative selection of measures aligned to the Well-being Objectives we are working towards, providing an overview of our work. Alongside these selected measures there is a vast amount of other work taking place. Under intensifying service demands, challenging funding and budget constraints, we have faced significant additional pressures this year. We have worked hard to alleviate these pressures on our budget, including through an external recruitment freeze and reduction of non-staff budgets. All this has had impacts across the organisation with some activity slowed, or not achieved, as a result.
  8. The Corporate Planning Team are currently reviewing processes and procedures for reporting on the 2024/25 Business Plan. This will be in line with the on-going development of the performance framework.
  9. The Corporate Planning Team has also spent a considerable amount of time robustly challenging returns, both on Red Amber Green (RAG) status and narrative content for Q4. This has resulted in one measure initially thought to be Amber in Q3, being reassessed as Red, as well as providing additional explanation or clarification for some measures, now reflected in the full report.
  10. The **Internal Performance Report** can be seen at Annex 2 and covers 11 internally focussed measures, with their current (Q4) RAG status. This is a subset of more detailed Management Information measures, collected on a monthly basis and shared with all Directorates.

## Assessment

11. The NRW Board is requested to scrutinise and approve the Business Plan Performance Dashboard Report, noting the key issues below. Further detail can be found in the Report itself (Annex 1):

	Quarter 1 (1 April – 30 June 2023)	Quarter 2 (1 July to 30 Sept 2023)	Quarter 3 (1 Oct – 31 Dec 2023)	Predicted Quarter 4 Year End (to 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2024)	Actual Year End (to 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2024)
Red	0	0	0	0	1
Amber	2	7	8	8	6
Green	20	15	14	14	15
<b>Total</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>22</b>

12. There is one Red measure in Q1, which is noted below:

### **Develop a low emission fleet and deliver a low emission and climate adapted built estate**

In Quarter 3, we predicted that we would be Amber at year end. Unfortunately, we have not been able to complete our milestone activity of delivering our Adfywio programme commitments for 2023/24 (and procure the build and operation of an integrated NRW-wide electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure). The early market engagement undertaken in Q3 identified that the supply chain was not readily willing to lease an infrastructure to us as a public sector body, given the revenue opportunities over the long term were not attractive enough. Therefore, in Q4 we had to change our approach to an ownership model, which contributed toward a Red position at the end of year. In addition, the capitalisation of leases and a greater understanding of the consequences in Q4, has impacted our ability to plan for an increased EV fleet through Grant in Aid (GiA). We have also experienced delays due to staff illness, retirement, a recruitment freeze and a need to change the approach to procurement which has unfortunately set us back by over nine months. Going forward, we plan to procure the build and operation of an integrated NRW-wide electric vehicle charging infrastructure in 2024/25. We will agree a five-year transition schedule to Ultra Low Emission Vehicles for our badged fleet in the first quarter of 2024/25.

13. There are six Amber measures in Q4, which are noted below:

### **Complete our freshwater quality monitoring review**

We are Amber at year end as predicted in Quarter 3 after being Green throughout Quarters 1, 2 and 3. We have completed the majority of our milestone activity which was to progress our water quality monitoring review and produce a framework for 'agile' monitoring. We have shared our strategic statement with a range of external stakeholders at a meeting hosted by the Wales Water Management Forum and two contract reports have been completed to inform the design of a 'sentinel' long term monitoring network. Good progress has been made towards producing a framework for agile monitoring after we reviewed a series of agile case studies. This project was given a six-month extension to take account of the uncertainty over project funding for 2024/25, which has now been resolved, and also the time pressures on key technical staff.

### **Area of new woodland created on the land in our care**

We have partially completed our milestone of 100ha of land acquired or identified for woodland creation and 100ha of woodland created in 2023/24. In 2023/24, we acquired 128ha and created 57.4ha. This is a further reduction from our previous forecast of 75ha. This is because our contracted tree supplier was unable to supply enough of the right trees and because the need to control the risk of over-supply of trees for restocking meant we could not go off contract for trees for creation. We have remained Amber throughout the year.

### **Maintain flood risk assets in high risk systems at target condition**

We are very close to our target of 98% with 97.2% at the end of March. We currently have 98 below required condition assets, and the target allows for no more than 70 out of the 3,477 assets in high risk flood risk management systems for which NRW is the maintainer. Asset inspections are carried out on a rolling basis and issues which cause an asset to become below required condition could be found at any time. This measure is a snapshot in time, and we continually update our data. During the last quarter, we have made fixes to 55 assets but also 74 other assets have become below their required condition due to issues found. There has continued to be periods of prolonged wet, stormy weather, causing new defects, and also impacting our ability to fix the existing defects. The wet winter has also meant that resources inevitably have had to be directed at reactive incident management, at the expense of other work such as asset work.

### **Deliver NRW input to Water Company Planning Programmes**

NRW have completed all action within our control however we have been unable to complete our final milestone which was for NRW to input into Water Company Planning Programmes (and provide advice to Ofwat on their Price Review 24 (PR24) draft determination) due to delays from Ofwat. NRW will continue to work with Ofwat to ensure compatibility with the new timeframe.

### **Deliver programmes to review statutory water quality requirements**

We have completed part of our milestone of programmes to review statutory water quality requirements delivered (and review progress of River Basin Management Plans (RBMP) national measures, opportunity catchments and investigations). We have completed our milestone activity in relation to storm overflows but have not completed our milestone to review progress with the RBMPs, making us Amber at year end as predicted in Quarter 3. Whilst the majority of our work has been reviewed, a number of significant programmes are still being evaluated for year end, for example the Capital Fund projects, and progress reports will be available later in April. A comprehensive review is then required across the programme to ensure we are on track with the RBMPs, this work will continue into May.

### **Decision on an appropriate enforcement response within three months**

We have not completed our target of 95% with explanatory narrative (and complete Tackling Waste Crime annual report). We will continue to review enforcement performance and implement improvements such as to the IT system for recording offences, however the impact of resource restrictions across NRW are increasingly impacting the 95% performance metric. Tackling Waste Crime is now published quarterly through report updates & newsletters instead of an annual report.



14. The other 15 measures are Green at the end of Q4. Some to note are:

**Priority actions undertaken on protected sites across Wales to improve condition of features**

We have remained Green throughout the year and have completed our measure of 80% planned actions to be completed/underway, making us Green at year end. 191 actions have been reported as complete, and 80 underway. We had planned 241 actions to be completed or underway during this financial year. Welsh Government Nature Networks Capital funding has supported 101 of the completed actions, i.e. >50% of actions delivered.

**Properties with reduced level of risk or sustained protection through capital work**

After being Amber in Q2 and Q3, we have now reached our target for Q4 making us Green at year end. Our target for this measure was 1,000 additional properties directly provided with reduced flood risk or sustained level of protection, we have exceeded the target with 1,047 properties delivered. We have successfully delivered a significant new scheme at Ammanford as well as delivering several capital maintenance works throughout the year. We have also developed several projects within our Medium-Term Plan that will be contributing to this milestone in future years.

**Implement Flood Review recommendations / actions**

We are ending the year Green after being Amber throughout Quarters 1-3. We have drafted, reviewed and approved all Work Area Closure Reports, Programme Transition Report and the Programme Closure Report. All remaining actions, risks and issues have been transferred over to existing governance groups for delivery and monitoring. These ongoing actions were planned with longer-term timescales. These will be monitored through the Business Groups and reported to our Executive Team twice a year to provide assurance of progress against the remaining actions.

15. The NRW Board is also requested to scrutinise and approve the Internal Performance Report, noting the key issues below. Further detail can be found in Annex 2.

	Quarter 1 (1 April – 30 June 2023)	Quarter 2 (1 July to 30 Sept 2023)	Quarter 3 (1 Oct – 31 Dec 2023)	Predicted Quarter 4 (to 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2024)	Actual Year End (to 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2024)
Red	2	0	1	0	0
Amber	0	1	3	1	2
Green	8	9	6	9	8
Unreported	1	1	1	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>11</b>

16. We have no Red items in Q4, one item is unreported as the current reporting system is being decommissioned with a new system being put in place (**mandatory E-learning**) and we have two Amber measures (**Sgwrs in place** and **Absence**). All other items are Green. Below we highlight our two Amber items:

**Sgwrs in place** (staff priorities and development agreement) remained Amber at the end of this quarter, at 87% (at least 90% would be considered Green). This has improved from 84% in the last report following on from reminders issued to complete this. There has been direct follow up with managers and team leaders where completion rates are particularly low.

**Absence** is back after being unreported during Q1-Q3 due to a change in the reporting methodology. We are Amber at the end of the quarter at 4.0% for March using the revised methodology (less than 3.5% is Green). 'Stress, anxiety and mental health' is the top reason for absence. Workshops are being run in 2024/25 across the organisation to support managers and team leaders in recognising stress in the workplace to best help their staff.

## 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 obviously 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.

## Recommendation

21. We request the NRW Board approve the Q4 Business Plan Performance Dashboard report and the Internal Performance Report.

## Index of Annexes

- Annex 1 – Business Plan Performance Dashboard Q4
- Annex 2 – Internal Performance Report Q4

## Approval / Consultation process

<p><b>Approval/consultation process</b></p> <p><b>Responsible:</b></p>	<p>Sue Ginley, Lead Specialist Advisor, Corporate Planning &amp; Performance</p> <p>Sarah Williams, Head of Corporate Strategy and PMO</p> <p>Prys Davies, Executive Director of Corporate Strategy and Development</p>
<p><b>Accountable:</b></p>	<p>NRW Board</p>
<p><b>Consulted:</b></p>	<p>Leadership Team (Measure Owners)</p> <p>Executive Team</p>
<p><b>Informed:</b></p>	<p>Leadership Team</p> <p>Planning &amp; Resources Group</p> <p>Executive Team</p> <p>NRW Board</p>

## Annex 1: Business Plan Performance Dashboard 2023/24

Shown in bold, the Green, Amber or Red status of each of our Business Plan's dashboard measures. Previous status positions and year-end status are shown.

	Measure (summary wording)	Previous (Q1)	Previous (to Q2)	Previous (to Q3)	Year-end (to Q4)
Nature is recovering	<a href="#">Protected site actions</a>	Green	Green	Green	Green
	<a href="#">Action for declining species</a>	Green	Green	Green	Green
	<a href="#">Wales MPA Network Management Action Plan</a>	Green	Green	Green	Green
	<a href="#">Restore Wales' habitats</a>	Green	Green	Amber	Green
	<a href="#">Case for new National Park</a>	Green	Green	Amber	Green
	<a href="#">Complete freshwater review</a>	Green	Green	Green	Amber
	<a href="#">Sharing Nature and Us</a>	Green	Green	Green	Green
Communities are resilient to climate change	<a href="#">Restore Welsh peatlands</a>	Green	Green	Green	Green
	<a href="#">New woodland created</a>	Amber	Amber	Amber	Amber
	<a href="#">Maintain flood risk assets; high risk locations</a>	Green	Green	Amber	Amber
	<a href="#">Produce a Flood Risk Management Plan</a>	Green	Amber	Green	Green
	<a href="#">Properties with reduced risk or sustained protection</a>	Green	Amber	Amber	Green
	<a href="#">Implement Flood Review</a>	Amber	Amber	Amber	Green
	<a href="#">Timber volume offered</a>	Green	Green	Green	Green
	<a href="#">Low emission fleet &amp; climate adapted built estate</a>	Green	Green	Amber	Red
Pollution is minimised	<a href="#">Compliance breaches effort</a>	Green	Green	Green	Green
	<a href="#">Progress on SAC Rivers</a>	Green	Green	Green	Green
	<a href="#">Input to Water Company Planning Programmes</a>	Green	Amber	Green	Amber
	<a href="#">Water quality requirements</a>	Green	Green	Green	Amber
	<a href="#">Reduce pollution; metal mines</a>	Green	Green	Green	Green
	<a href="#">Response to 'High' incidents</a>	Green	Amber	Green	Green
	<a href="#">Decision on an appropriate enforcement response</a>	Green	Amber	Amber	Amber

Key to status<sup>1</sup>: Green = achieved; Amber = close to; Red = missed

<sup>1</sup> Some measures in the dashboard use a more detailed key. Where we do this, the key is reflected on each measure page. For additional background detail on the green, amber or red key we use, please see: [Background: How we use green, amber and red measure ratings](#)

## Our Well-being Objectives

The headings used in this report reflect the Well-being Objectives we are working towards, as stated in [our new Corporate Plan to 2030](#) ('Nature and People Thriving Together'), [our Well-being statement](#) and our [2023/24 Business Plan](#).

Our well-being objectives are:

- [Nature is recovering](#)
- [Communities are resilient to climate change](#)
- [Pollution is minimised](#)

The following pages of this report reflect the latest position of each of our Business Plan Performance dashboard measures for 2023/24. These dashboard measures are largely carried forward from the 2022/23 Business Plan dashboard, while a new performance framework aligned to the new Corporate Plan is being developed<sup>2</sup>.

*[To return to start of report - see [Business Plan Performance Dashboard](#) - page 1]*

---

<sup>2</sup> For information on the in-year development of draft impact statements and strategic indicators, sitting within the new performance framework, and their relationship with our new Corporate Plan, please see: [Our Corporate Plan to 2030 - Our draft impacts and strategic indicators - Natural Resources Wales Citizen Space - Citizen Space \(cyfoethnaturiol.cymru\)](#)

## Nature is recovering

### What is needed to ensure nature's recovery?

*“This means taking urgent action to halt and reverse the decline in biodiversity, and to build the resilience of ecosystems so that nature can adapt to a changing climate and continue to provide the basis of all life – clean air, clean water, food and a stable climate. Wales needs to act now to avoid catastrophic ecosystem collapse.”*

[Our new Corporate Plan to 2030](#) expands further on what it will mean to ensure Nature's Recovery across Wales<sup>3</sup>, and in seven place-focussed areas of Wales<sup>4</sup>.

Executive Team lead: Ceri Davies

---

<sup>3</sup> In our new Corporate Plan to 2030 “Nature and People Thriving Together”, we have set out where NRW is best placed to make a difference within the resources we have and where this will change, with Wales' 2030 targets the first step to achieving international targets, goals and milestones in 2050

<sup>4</sup> Our Corporate Plan also states how we will tailor our [work to recover nature in seven place-focussed areas of Wales, including a marine area](#) - Recognising we have made commitments for these places through Public Services Boards and involving communities in the development of [Area Statements](#).

## Measure: Priority actions undertaken on protected sites across Wales to improve condition of features

Improving protected site condition is essential for maintaining biodiversity and building ecosystem resilience. This measure reflects how we are progressing with actions to improve protected sites across Wales to fully provide ecosystem service benefits and function as a core part of a resilient ecological network - enabling habitats and wildlife to thrive.

### Latest position (to end of March 2024):

- Our **final milestone for this measure is 80% of planned actions to be completed / underway.**
- We have completed this milestone activity. 191 actions have been reported as complete, and 80 underway. We had planned 241 actions to be completed or underway during this financial year. Welsh Government Nature Networks Capital funding has supported 101 of the completed actions, i.e. >50% of actions delivered.
- This measure is **Green**.

### What's next

- We will now conduct the annual planning activity based on resource availability with a target of establishing the annual plan by end of June.
- This measure is likely to continue to form part of our Business Plan dashboard reporting for 2024/25.

Measure owner: Huwel Manley

Q1	to Q2	to Q3	Year-end
Green	Green	Green	Green

Key: Green = achieved; Amber = close to (e.g. within one month); Red = missed  
 [To return to start of report - see [Business Plan Performance Dashboard](#) - page 1]

## Measure: Delivering targeted action for declining species or those on the edge of extinction

This measure reflects actions to address biodiversity loss and build ecosystems resilience - what we are doing as targeted actions for declining species or those on the edge of extinction in Wales. Unless we reverse biodiversity decline and build resilient ecosystems, our well-being and that of future generations will suffer.

### Latest position (to end of March 2024)

- Our **final milestone for this measure is progress specific projects illustrating our work in this area (and Natur am Byth monitoring and evaluation framework established, including a species recovery assessment tool)**. We have completed this milestone activity. We have continued the freshwater pearl mussel project with further habitat improvements at Cae Gwyn on the Afon Eden Special Area of Conservation (SAC). We have delivered Curlew conservation interventions (predator control and habitat improvements) in important Curlew areas at Fenns & Whixall Mosses National Nature Reserve (NNR), Berwyn Special Protection Area (SPA). We have initiated a Shore Dock reintroduction programme in Glamorgan and continued work to reinforce the red squirrel population in Clocaenog Forest. The Natur am Byth species recovery assessment tool has been accepted by the partnership, plus completion of the final review of the Impact Measurement Framework by external consultants.
- This measure is **Green**.

### What's next

- We will now plan for the placement of captive bred pearl mussels at Cae Gwyn on the Afon Eden SAC in Summer 2024. We will continue to support delivery of conservation work in the Important Curlew Areas (ICAs) for which NRW is the lead and focus on other species recovery projects. The 2024/25 Natur am Byth Business Plan commitment is directly linked to assessing the impact of this species recovery programme. We will develop an understanding of the intervention impact of the 11 Natur am Byth partnership programme projects to refine conservation delivery.
- This measure is likely to continue to form part of our Business Plan dashboard reporting for 2024/25.

Measure owner: Huwel Manley

Q1	to Q2	to Q3	Year-end
Green	Green	Green	Green

Key: Green = achieved; Amber = close to (e.g. within one month); Red = missed  
 [To return to start of report - see [Business Plan Performance Dashboard](#) - page 1]



## Measure: Deliver actions in the Wales Marine Protected Area (MPA) Network Management Action Plan

This measure reflects progress with [Marine Protected Areas network](#) management actions. The network is a key tool in developing greater resilience in the marine environment and is an integral consideration for all developments in the marine area, through Wales National Marine Plan policy (WNMP).

### Latest position (to end of March 2024)

- Our **final milestone for this measure is to deliver 100% actions (and sign off and report on final delivery)**.
- We have completed this milestone activity. The Climate Change profiles work has completed successfully and we are working on getting the two reports ready for dissemination and ready to go on to the NRW website.
- We are also preparing the outputs of the project for use in the new condition assessments (threats arising from climate change) and in the new conservation advice packages.
- As for the other NRW project funded through the grant scheme - the Assessing Welsh Fishing Activities Project: Forty three completed medium risk assessments will be delivered to Welsh Government (WG) before the end of March. They comprise of 11 king scallop, 4 drift net and 28 static net assessments.
- This measure is **Green**.

### What's next

- We will now send the reports arising from the Climate Change Profiles work to WG and the MPA Management Steering Group.
- We will also endeavour to support WG on any future work in this area. This measure is not likely to continue to form part of our Business Plan dashboard reporting for 2024/25 as although WG have extended the grant scheme for another year, it has been announced late and the funding will only be for nine months.

Measure owner: Rhian Jardine

Q1	to Q2	to Q3	Year-end
Green	Green	Green	Green

Key: **Green** = achieved; **Amber** = close to (e.g. within one month); **Red** = missed  
 [To return to start of report - see [Business Plan Performance Dashboard](#) - page 1]

## Measure: Management of and input to programmes to address and restore habitats across Wales

This measure reflects our progress with the management of programmes to address and restore habitats across Wales, including updates throughout the year on Nature Networks, LIFE restoration and development of new programmes.

### Latest position (to end of March 2024)

- Our final milestone for this measure is to deliver Nature Networks and LIFE Restoration programmes and plan the development of new programmes (and complete Nature Networks and LIFE programme of winter works).
- We have completed this milestone activity. We have delivered winter works programmes for both Nature Networks and LIFE programmes, which has included 300 actions on 130 Sites of Special Scientific Interest.
- This measure is **Green**.

### What's next

- We will now carry out detailed planning of the Nature Networks (NN) programme for 2024/25. We are also starting to plan for a possible extension of the programme beyond 2024/25. We are planning how we will evaluate the Nature Networks programme that has run from 2021-2024. Two LIFE projects will close by June 2024 - Sands of LIFE and Welsh LIFE Raised Bogs, with the final conference of SoLIFE in May 2024. We are planning the development of a possible lowland peatland project and a grassland programme.
- This measure is likely to continue to form part of our Business Plan dashboard reporting for 2024/25 as it plays a key part in delivering nature recovery.

Measure owner: Ruth Jenkins

Q1	to Q2	to Q3	Year-end
Green	Green	Amber	Green

Key: Green = achieved; Amber = close to (e.g. within one month); Red = missed  
 [To return to start of report - see [Business Plan Performance Dashboard](#) - page 1]

## Measure: Evaluation of the case for a new National Park in North East Wales

This measure reflects activity to develop and implement a programme to examine a proposed new National Park in North East Wales to cover the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley.

### Latest position (to end of March 2024)

- Our **final milestone for this measure is continuation of the designation procedure (and commencing the Natural Beauty and Open Air Recreation assessment)**.
- We have completed this milestone activity. The Natural Beauty and Open Air Recreation assessment has been scoped, procured and awarded in Q4. This work will continue into Q2 of the next financial year. The previous assessments (Forces for Change and Management Options) have been completed. We are currently reviewing these and sharing the findings with stakeholders for feedback.
- This measure is **Green**.

### What's next

- We will now contract manage and collaborate with the appointed supplier for the Natural Beauty and Open air recreation assessment. In addition, further impact analysis work, integration of SMNR and preparation for a public consultation in 2024 will continue.
- This measure is likely to continue to form part of our Business Plan dashboard reporting for 2024/25 as the assessment represents a critical milestone and is due to be delivered in Q2 August of 2024.

Measure owner: Rhian Jardine

Q1	to Q2	to Q3	Year-end
Green	Green	Amber	Green

Key: **Green** = achieved; **Amber** = close to (e.g. within one month); **Red** = missed  
 [To return to start of report - see [Business Plan Performance Dashboard](#) - page 1]

## Measure: Complete our freshwater quality monitoring review

This measure reflects activity to produce, and share, our water quality monitoring strategy with others; with additional updates in year in relation to long term, and short term 'agile' monitoring.

### Latest position (to end of March 2024)

- Our **final milestone for this measure is to progress our water quality monitoring review (and produce a framework for 'agile' monitoring)**.
- We have completed the majority of this milestone activity. We have shared our strategic statement with a range of external stakeholders at a meeting hosted by the Wales Water Management Forum. The Project Manager has presented information about the project to key internal stakeholder meetings. Two contract reports to inform the design of a 'sentinel' long term monitoring network have been completed. We have reviewed a series of agile case studies and have made good progress towards producing a framework for agile monitoring.
- The project board has approved a 6-month extension to the project to take account of the uncertainty over project funding for 2024/25 (now resolved) and the time pressures on key technical staff.
- This measure is **Amber**.

### What's next

- We will complete the framework for agile monitoring.
- We will let a contract for the detailed design of a long term 'sentinel' monitoring network – to be delivered by March 2025.
- We will continue to progress the project workstreams for chemicals, innovation, collaboration and freshwater habitats.
- We will move to the implementation phase of the project from January 2025.

Measure owner: Chris Collins

Q1	to Q2	to Q3	Year-end
Green	Green	Green	Amber

Key: Green = achieved; Amber = close to (e.g. within one month); Red = missed  
 [To return to start of report - see [Business Plan Performance Dashboard](#) - page 1]

## Measure: Sharing the vision for the natural environment to 2050 - Nature and Us

This measure reflects activity on [Nature and Us](#) / [Natur a Ni](#). Following on from the development of a shared vision for the natural environment in Wales to 2050, we are sharing and promoting the vision, and our organisation's response to it.

### Latest position (to end of March 2024)

- Our **final milestone for this measure is to publish the final programme evaluation report, commence benefits realisation and embed learning from the evaluation.**
- We have completed this milestone activity. The Nature and Us programme process evaluation was completed and has revealed valuable learning to take forward throughout the organisation. The report will be available both internally and externally, but only by request. Emergent benefits have been mapped and we are working with different teams to identify the best routes for benefits realisation post-programme.
- This measure is **Green**.

### What's next

- We will now prepare for programme closure and handover of further benefits realisation. We are sharing the learning from the evaluation report and programme resources to embed the Vision in our work.
- This measure is not likely to continue to form part of our Business Plan dashboard reporting for 2024/25 as the Nature and Us programme will be closed. Further benefits realisation will be handed over to relevant areas of the business.

Measure owner: Sarah Williams

Q1	to Q2	to Q3	Year-end
Green	Green	Green	Green

Key: Green = achieved; Amber = close to (e.g. within one month); Red = missed  
 [To return to start of report - see [Business Plan Performance Dashboard](#) - page 1]

## Communities are resilient to climate change

### What is needed to ensure resilience to climate change?

*“This means taking urgent action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and accelerate action to adapt to climate change, reducing the risks and impacts to all sectors of the economy whilst contributing to the Welsh Government ambition for a carbon neutral public sector by 2030, and a net zero Wales by 2050”*

[Our new Corporate Plan to 2030](#) expands further on what it will mean to ensure communities are resilient to climate change across Wales<sup>5</sup>, and in seven place-focussed areas of Wales<sup>6</sup>

Executive Team lead: Sarah Jennings

---

<sup>5</sup> In our new Corporate Plan to 2030 “Nature and People Thriving Together”, we have set out where NRW is best placed to make a difference within the resources we have and where this will change, with Wales’ 2030 targets the first step to achieving international targets, goals and milestones in 2050

<sup>6</sup> Our Corporate Plan also states how we will tailor our [work to make nature and communities resilient to climate change in seven place-focussed areas of Wales, including a marine area](#) - Recognising we have made commitments for these places through Public Services Boards and involving communities in the development of [Area Statements](#).

## Measure: Action undertaken to restore Welsh peatlands including peatland on the land in our care

We are continuing to progress a national programme of peatland restoration across Wales. This measure reflects key action taken to [restore Welsh peatlands](#), including on land in our care.

### Latest position (to end of March 2024)

- Our **final milestone for this measure is to deliver 450 ha of peatland restoration activity as part of the National Peatland Action Plan (including approximately 100 ha on the land in our care)**.
- We have completed this milestone activity and have exceeded 450 ha of peatland restoration activity (including approximately 98 ha on the land in our care).
- This measure is **Green**.

### What's next

- We will now continue to expand the National Peatland Action Programme (NPAP) staff resource, steadily increase the annual area of peatland under restoration management, provide expanded suite of peatland policy and technical support.
- This measure is likely to continue to form part of our Business Plan dashboard reporting for 2024/25 as the following 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'.

Measure owner: Huwel Manley

Q1	to Q2	to Q3	Year-end
Green	Green	Green	Green

Key: **Green** = achieved; **Amber** = close to (e.g. within one month); **Red** = missed  
 [To return to start of report - see [Business Plan Performance Dashboard](#) - page 1]

## Measure: Area of new woodland created on the land in our care

This measure reflects the area of new woodland created on land in our care (hectares acquired / identified if already in ownership and hectares where work is done to establish new woodland by planting and/or natural colonisation). It covers the contribution of land in our care to woodland creation and progress on the commitment to the Welsh Government Woodland Estate (WGWE) being bigger in 25 years than it was in 2018.

### Latest position (to end of March 2024)

- Our final milestone for this measure is **100 ha of land acquired / identified for woodland creation and 100 ha woodland created in 2023/24 (contributing to 350 ha total woodland created over the life of the programme)**.
- Partially completed. In 2023/24, we acquired 128 ha and created 57.4 ha (29.6 ha planting, 27.8 ha natural colonisation). This is a further reduction from our previous forecast of 75 ha (low contractor availability and slow approval). This is because our contracted tree supplier was unable to supply enough of the right trees and because the need to control the risk of over-supply of trees for restocking meant we could not go off contract for trees for creation.
- This measure is **Amber** for 2023/24 and Green for the programme, i.e.: we will plant enough to compensate for losses.

### What's next

- We have approval to acquire 610 ha of land in total, have acquired 504 ha to date and identified 92 ha of our land as potentially suitable. We have created 158 ha. In 2024/25, we will acquire the remaining 106 ha, giving enough land to create 575 ha at typical 75% woodland cover which will compensate for current or planned losses; get regulatory approval, and plant c60 ha of new woodland, 17 ha in April 2024. In 2025/26, we will accelerate planting, if resourced.
- This measure does not form part of the proposed Business Plan dashboard report for 2024/25 and will continue to be monitored at Business Group level, but now on the basis of planting season, not financial year.

Measure owner: Dominic Driver

Q1	to Q2	to Q3	Year-end
Amber	Amber	Amber	Amber

Key: Green = achieved; Amber = close to (e.g. within one month); Red = missed  
 [To return to start of report - see [Business Plan Performance Dashboard](#) - page 1]



## Measure: Maintain flood risk assets in high risk systems at target condition

NRW owns and/or maintains ~3,500 assets in high risk systems, forming part of the national flood defence infrastructure, providing benefit to thousands of properties in Wales. It is vitally important that these assets are maintained, as a poor condition asset anywhere within the system can impact that location – it is only as good as its weakest link.

### Latest position (to end of March 2024)

- Our **final target for this measure is 98% of flood risk assets in high risk systems at target condition**. We are at 97.2% at the end of March and therefore below the target. We currently have 98 below required condition assets, and the target allows for no more than 70 out of the 3,477 assets in high risk flood risk management systems for which NRW is the maintainer.
- Asset inspections are carried out on a rolling basis. Issues which cause an asset to become below required condition may be found at any time. This measure is a snapshot in time, and we continually update our data.
- During the last quarter, we have made fixes to 55 assets, but also 74 other assets have become below their required condition due to issues found. There has continued to be periods of prolonged wet, stormy weather, causing new defects and also impacting our ability to fix the existing defects. The wet winter has also meant that resources inevitably have had to be directed at reactive incident management, at the expense of other work such as asset work.
- Asset data improvements has reduced the baseline number of assets (down from 3,977 to 3,477), meaning that the headroom number of assets that can be below required condition has reduced in-year, from 80 to 70. This has also affected the percentage performance figures.

### What's next

- We will continue to plan and deliver fixes for the assets that are below required condition as quickly as resources, funds and the nature of the repairs needed allow; plus continue to respond to any asset fixes that are added in the future.

Measure owner: Jeremy Parr

Q1	to Q2	to Q3	Year-end
Green	Green	Amber	Amber

Key: Green = achieved ( $\geq 98\%$ ); Red = missed ( $\leq 70\%$ ), Amber = close to (i.e. between Red and Green)  
 [To return to start of report - see [Business Plan Performance Dashboard](#) - page 1]

## Measure: Produce Flood Risk Management Plan

This measure reflects our progress in producing an updated [Flood Risk Management Plan \(FRMP\)](#) and includes updates in relation to consultation around its publication, adoption and future monitoring. The updated plan will identify what is at risk of flooding, alongside objectives and measures we propose to manage the risk of flooding.

### Latest position (to end of March 2024)

- Our **final milestone for this measure is FRMP published, adopted and monitored.**
- We have completed this milestone activity. We published NRW's FRMP in November 2023 setting out our priorities and plans for the next six years, as well as highlighting the scale of flood risk in Wales and the challenges that need to be addressed to tackle the Climate Emergency in relation to flooding.
- The plan is available on our website - [Natural Resources Wales / Flood risk management plan 2023 to 2029](#).
- **This measure is** therefore Green at year end.

### What's next

- We will continue to prioritise our work in line with the priorities set out within the plan and move forward the delivery of the specific actions it now includes. Our annual business planning processes will build on the measures outlined in the plan and monitoring will be undertaken on its delivery. Reporting will be included within our Flood Risk Management Annual Reports, available via our website - [Natural Resources Wales / Flooding reports, evidence and data](#)
- This measure is not likely to continue to form part of our Business Plan dashboard reporting for 2024/25 as this work is periodic in nature and the plan itself has been published, the associated business planning and monitoring work has been incorporated into our ongoing work programmes.

Measure owner: Jeremy Parr

Q1	to Q2	to Q3	Year-end
Green	Amber	Green	Green

Key: Green = achieved; Amber = close to (e.g. within one month); Red = missed  
 [To return to start of report - see [Business Plan Performance Dashboard](#) - page 1]

## Measure: Properties with reduced level of risk or sustained protection through capital work

This measure reflects the number of properties benefitting from a reduced level of flood risk (moving from a higher risk category to a lower through a new scheme or improvement works) or sustained level of flood risk (through capital maintenance work).

### Latest position (to end of March 2024)

- **Our target for this measure is 1,000 additional properties directly provided with reduced flood risk or sustained level of protection.**
- We have exceeded the target with 1,047 properties delivered. We have successfully delivered a significant new scheme at Ammanford as well as delivering several capital maintenance works throughout the year. We have also developed several projects within our Medium Term Plan that will be contributing to this milestone in future years.
- This measure is **Green**.

### What's next

- We will continue with our rolling programme of capital works, both new schemes and capital maintenance work, that deliver against this target. Construction at Stephenson Street (Newport) continues, which reduce levels of flood risk to over 800 properties within the next two years (the final construction end date is not certain at this time). We also continue to develop several key large scale projects across Wales as part of our Medium Term Plan.
- This measure is likely to continue to form part of our Business Plan dashboard reporting for 2024/25 as it is a key indicator of investment and delivery for the flood capital programme.

Measure owner: Jeremy Parr

Q1	to Q2	to Q3	Year-end
Green	Amber	Amber	Green

Key: **Green** = achieved; **Amber** = close to (e.g. within one month); **Red** = missed  
 [To return to start of report - see [Business Plan Performance Dashboard](#) - page 1]

## Measure: Implement Flood Review recommendations / actions

The February 2020 floods were the most significant floods in Wales since the 1970s, and our Review into our own performance identified areas for improvement and recommended actions. This measure reflects delivery tracking of the remaining improvements identified in [our Review](#).

### Latest position (to end of March 2024)

- Our **final milestone for this measure is programme transition and closure reports complete (draft, review and approve Programme Closure Report; track remaining actions through existing governance groups)**.
- We have completed this milestone activity. We have drafted, reviewed and approved all Work Area Closure Reports (last one approved in January), Programme Transition Report (approved March 2024,) and the Programme Closure Report (approved March 2024). All remaining actions (31 in total, with 12 being Flood and the others being Land Stewardship), risks and issues have been transferred over to existing governance groups for delivery and monitoring. These ongoing actions were planned with longer-term timescales. These will be monitored through the Business Groups and reported to our Executive Team twice a year to provide assurance of progress against the remaining actions.
- This measure is **Green**.

### What's next

- We have now closed the Flood Recovery & Review Implementation Programme. There will be a staff webinar on the 3 June to inform staff of the closure of this four-year programme and highlight both the achievements made as well as what work remains to be done via existing Business Groups.
- This measure is not likely to continue to form part of our Business Plan dashboard reporting for 2024/25 as the programme is closed and the remaining actions are transitioned into the business for delivery.

Measure owner: Jeremy Parr

Q1	to Q2	to Q3	Year-end
Amber	Amber	Amber	Green

Key: Green = achieved; Amber = close to (e.g. within one month); Red = missed  
 [To return to start of report - see [Business Plan Performance Dashboard](#) - page 1]

## Measure: Timber volume offered to market

This measure reflects a commitment set out in the [Timber Sales and Marketing Plan](#). We currently offer an available timber harvest of around two thirds of the total Welsh market, generating significant income and supporting the timber economy in Wales.

### Latest position (to end of March 2024)

- Our **final milestone for this measure is to achieve our year-end target of 721,500m<sup>3</sup> (offered to market)**.
- We have completed this milestone activity. We have offered 706,000m<sup>3</sup> of new contract volume of timber to the open market, 98% of the target achieved, which is comfortably within the margin for this measure.
- This measure is **Green**.

### What's next

- We will now conclude the annual sale programme for 2023/2024.
- This measure does not form part of the proposed Business Plan dashboard report for 2024/25 and will continue to be monitored at Business Group level, with the 2024/25 commitment being 732,000m<sup>3</sup>.

Measure owner: Dominic Driver

Q1	to Q2	to Q3	Year-end
Green	Green	Green	Green

Key: Green = achieved; Amber = close to (e.g. within one month); Red = missed  
 [To return to start of report - see [Business Plan Performance Dashboard](#) - page 1]

## Measure: Develop a low emission fleet and deliver a low emission and climate adapted built estate

This measure reflects activity forming part of our Adfywio/Renewal programme to develop a low emission fleet and deliver a low emission and climate adapted built estate.

### Latest position (to end of March 2024)

- Our **final milestone for this measure is delivering our Adfywio programme commitments for 2023/24 (and procure the build and operation of an integrated NRW-wide electric vehicle charging infrastructure).**
- We have not completed this milestone activity. The two remaining HVO tanks have now been installed. We have completed measures for Q1 and Q2, however measures for Q3 and Q4 were delayed due to staff illness, retirement, a recruitment freeze and a need to change the approach to procurement which set us back by over 9 months. The early market engagement undertaken in Q3 identified that the supply chain were not readily willing to lease an infrastructure to us as a public sector body, given the revenue opportunities over the long term were not attractive enough. Therefore, in Q4 we had to change our approach to an ownership model, which contributed toward a red position at the end of year. In addition, the capitalisation of leases and a greater understanding of the consequences in Q4, has impacted our ability to plan for an increased EV fleet through Grant in Aid (GiA). This measure is **Red**.

### What's next

- We will now procure the build and operation of an integrated NRW-wide electric vehicle charging infrastructure in 2024/25. We will agree a 5 year transition schedule to Ultra Low Emission Vehicles for our badged fleet in Q1 of 2024/25.
- This measure is likely to continue to form part of our Business Plan dashboard reporting for 2024/25 to **procure the build and operation of an integrated NRW-wide electric vehicle charging infrastructure.**

Measure owner: Victoria Rose-Piper

Q1	to Q2	to Q3	Year-end
Green	Green	Amber	Red

Key: Green = achieved; Amber = close to (e.g. within one month); Red = missed  
 [To return to start of report - see [Business Plan Performance Dashboard](#) - page 1]

## Pollution is minimised

### What is needed to ensure pollution is minimised?

*“This means taking action to minimise those things that harm human health, biodiversity and contribute to greenhouse gas emissions, while simultaneously driving down waste by ensuring the reuse and substitution of materials in key sectors of the Welsh economy.”*

[Our new Corporate Plan to 2030](#) expands further on what it will mean to ensure pollution is minimised across Wales<sup>7</sup>, and in seven place-focussed areas of Wales<sup>8</sup>

Executive Team lead: Gareth O’Shea

---

<sup>7</sup> In our new Corporate Plan to 2030 “Nature and People Thriving Together”, we have set out where NRW is best placed to make a difference within the resources we have and where this will change, with Wales’ 2030 targets the first step to achieving international targets, goals and milestones in 2050

<sup>8</sup> Our Corporate Plan also states how we will tailor our [work to minimise pollution in seven place-focussed areas of Wales, including a marine area](#) - Recognising we have made commitments for these places through Public Services Boards and involving communities in the development of [Area Statements](#).

## Measure: Category 1 and category 2 compliance breaches are subjected to further compliance effort (action or review)

This measure reflects the number of category 1 and category 2 compliance breaches and provides assurance that they have been subjected to follow up compliance effort (action or review) in the subsequent 6 months. Poor performance at permitted sites has the potential for a wide range of impacts. This measure also reflects additional updates each quarter, including in relation to service standards, compliance, water companies and storm overflows action.

### Latest position (to end of March 2024)

- Our **final milestone for this measure is 95% (and report on milestones from Regulatory Action Plan within Storm Overflow Roadmap).**
- We have completed this milestone activity.
- We are working to deliver the requirements from the Regulatory Action Plan within Storm Overflow Roadmap.
- All 22 compliance breaches (100%) were followed up within 6 months.
- This measure is **Green**.

### What's next

- This measure is likely to continue to form part of our Business Plan dashboard reporting for 2024/25 as category 1 and category 2 compliance breaches are subjected to further compliance effort (action or review). We will have expected delivery targets in place for a number of regimes and performance will be monitored quarterly.

Measure owner: Martin Cox

Q1	to Q2	to Q3	Year-end
Green	Green	Green	Green

Key: Green = achieved; Amber = close to (e.g. within one month); Red = missed  
 [To return to start of report - see [Business Plan Performance Dashboard](#) - page 1]



## Measure: NRW progress on key deliverables for Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) Rivers Project

This measure reflects NRW progress on key deliverables for [Special Areas of Conservation \(SAC\) Rivers Project](#).

### Latest position (to end of March 2024)

- Our year-end target is having delivered NRW’s 2023-24 commitments in the First Minister Action Plan for the SAC rivers (and review 100 Water Quality Discharge Permits)
- We have completed this milestone activity. Following concerns in Q3, we held meetings with DCWW to clarify our position. This enabled us to progress and accelerate this work which resulted in variations of more than 100 permits by the end of Q4.
- This measure is **Green**.

### What’s next

- We will now continue to work on varying the remaining permits as part of the commitment by NRW to the First Minister's Action Plan on Relieving Pressures on SAC River Catchments to Support Delivery of Affordable Housing as well as work on a transition plan to move towards delivering the SAC rivers work to Business as Usual
- This measure is likely to continue to form part of our Business Plan dashboard reporting for 2024/25 as the total number to review by the end of July 2024 is 171 permits.

Measure owner: Rhian Jardine

Q1	to Q2	to Q3	Year-end
Green	Green	Green	Green

Key: Green = achieved; Amber = close to (e.g. within one month); Red = missed  
 [To return to start of report - see [Business Plan Performance Dashboard](#) - page 1]

## Measure: Deliver NRW input to Water Company Planning Programmes

This measure reflects NRW input to Water Company Planning Programmes, including in relation to water resources management, regional plans affecting Wales, Price Review 2024 ([PR24](#)) and storm overflows action.

### Latest position (to end of March 2024)

- Our **final milestone for this measure is NRW inputted into Water Company Planning Programmes (and provide advice to Ofwat on their PR24 draft determination)**
- We have not completed this milestone activity. We have and continue to input to Ofwat's determination. This is delayed by Ofwat and will be delivered Q1, (June 2024). NRW have ongoing work to ensure compatibility with Ofwat's new timeframe.
- This measure is **Amber**.

### What's next

- We will now continue to input to Ofwat and WG request with an expectation for this to be Green at the end of Q1 2024/25. Beyond that, work will transfer to Asset Management Plan (AMP) delivery, Q3 onwards and advice on water company drought plans.
- This measure is likely to continue to form part of our Business Plan dashboard reporting for 2024/25 as Q1 completing input to Ofwat draft determination and Q4 transition to Asset Management Plan 8 delivery and responding to consultations on water company drought plans.

Measure owner: Sian Williams

Q1	to Q2	to Q3	Year-end
Green	Amber	Green	Amber

Key: **Green** = achieved; **Amber** = close to (e.g. within one month); **Red** = missed  
 [To return to start of report - see [Business Plan Performance Dashboard](#) - page 1]

## Measure: Deliver programmes to review statutory water quality requirements

This measure reflects activity to deliver programmes to review statutory requirements for water quality, identifying annual or periodic requirements. The measure includes updates on reviews associated with nutrients and urban waste water and the progress of River Basin Management Plans (RBMPs).

### Latest position (to end of March 2024)

- Our **final milestone for this measure is programmes to review statutory water quality requirements delivered (and review progress of RBMP national measures, opportunity catchments and investigations)**. We have completed our milestone activity in relation to storm overflows. We have not completed our milestone to review progress with the RBMPs.
- Whilst the majority of our work has been reviewed, a number of significant programmes are still being evaluated for year end, for example the Capital Fund projects, and progress reports will be available later in April. A comprehensive review is then required across the programme to ensure we are on track with the RBMPs, this work will continue into May.
- Within the programme, the National Programme of Measures are Green, Opportunity Catchments Amber and the Investigations Programme is Amber. This is due to staff resources and availability of an ICT system that can enable effective join up of planned actions with outcomes across multiple complex work programmes that we deliver. The overall pressure on the wider Water Programme also needs to be accounted for. This measure is **Amber**.

### What's next

- We will work with water companies to implement the storm overflow guidance, including developing our approach for transitional and coastal water bodies. We will continue to evaluate progress with the RBMPs and undertake an internal review of the progress reported for 2023/24. This will be used to set our priorities for 2024/25 and inform our approach to the Statutory RBMP Progress Report (to be published Summer-Winter 2025). We will also continue to find the best ICT solution to support the reporting of this work. This measure for the RBMPs is likely to continue to form part of our Business Plan dashboard reporting for 2024/25, we will continue to track and evaluate progress which will be used for a more comprehensive review in 2025.

Measure owner: Sian Williams

Q1	to Q2	to Q3	Year-end
Green	Green	Green	Amber

Key: Green = achieved; Amber = close to (e.g. within one month); Red = missed  
 [To return to start of report - see [Business Plan Performance Dashboard](#) - page 1]

## Measure: Progress of our work to reduce pollution from metal mines

This measure reflects progress with the assessment and remediation of high risk sites, in line with our [Metal Mine Strategy](#) - Delivering a safe local environment and improvements to local air and water quality, ensuring the sites are safe.

### Latest position (to end of March 2024)

- Our **final milestone for this measure is to complete a total of 36 enabling activities, two designs, two trials and construction of two assets**
- We have exceeded this milestone, delivering 66 outputs; more than the 42 targeted in 2023-24.
- In Q4, we delivered 17 outputs as follows: 15 enabling activities (4 for the Mynach Waterbodies, 2 for the Esgairffraith & Welsh Potosi project and 1 each at Parc Mine, Pengwern, Minera, the Upper Clarach Catchment, Cwm Newydion, Nantycreiau, Wye Upper Sett, the Aeroflow Sustainable Active Treatment trial and the procurement of a new laboratory analyser, the outline design for temporary erosion protection at Nantycreiau, the research, development and innovation trial at Parys Mountain, the detailed design for two flow gauging structures at Nantiago (part of Wye Upper Sett). In addition, we have progressed water quality monitoring at 12 sites, and the land access arrangements for the Abbey Consols project.
- This measure is **Green**.

### What's next

- We will now continue our work to remediate abandoned metal mines in Wales, to reduce mine-related hazards and the pollution of watercourses.
- This measure is likely to continue to form part of our Business Plan dashboard reporting for 2024/25 as our programme includes 26 projects in progress, including the construction of works on the site of Cwm Rheidol mine to reduce the risk of blow-out, pollution and flooding, as well as research, development and innovation projects, and site surveys and evaluations to inform the programme in future years.

Measure owner: Sian Williams

Q1	to Q2	to Q3	Year-end
Green	Green	Green	Green

Key: **Green** = achieved; **Amber** = close to (e.g. within one month); **Red** = missed  
 [To return to start of report - see [Business Plan Performance Dashboard](#) - page 1]

## Measure: Response to incidents initially categorised as ‘High’ within 4 hours

For incidents we initially class as High Level (using our Incident Categorisation Guidance criteria), we aim to respond within four hours of being notified. This is to ensure we prioritise our efforts on the high impact incidents, and we act within a suitable timeframe to minimise harm and impact. Responses may include physical attendance at the site, but also includes other activities, such as contacting professional partners.

### Latest position (to end of March 2024)

- Our **final target for this measure is 95%**.
- We have achieved this target. We have responded to **96%** of High-Level incidents within 4hrs.
- This measure is **Green**.

### What’s next

- We will continue to provide support, training, and guidance where needed to ensure we comply with our Wales Incident Recording System (WIRS) completion procedures, including responding to high incidents within 4 hours.
- We will now start to focus effort into ensuring our WIRS incidents are closed within 30 days. We recognise the importance of closing off the incidents on WIRS once they have been addressed to ensure our reporting on incidents both internally and externally is current and accurate.
- We will continue to push for the enhancements needed to WIRS functionality to make it easier for those inputting the information and to enhance the accuracy of reporting.
- This measure is likely to continue for 2024/25 and we plan to also include the ‘closure within 30 days measure’ too. We are currently undertaking a review of our pollution incident response service and this may change how we carry out this work and hence may change what we report on in future years.

Measure owner: Lyndsey Rawlinson

Q1	to Q2	to Q3	Year-end
Green	Amber	Green	Green

Key: Green = achieved ( $\geq 94.5\%$ ); Red = missed ( $\leq 66.5\%$ ), Amber = close to (i.e. between Red and Green)  
 [To return to start of report - see [Business Plan Performance Dashboard](#) - page 1]

## Measure: Decision on an appropriate enforcement response within 3 months

This measure reflects decisions on an appropriate enforcement response in relation to environmental crime being made within three months. This measure also reflects additional updates each quarter, including in relation to enforcement priorities and annual regulatory and waste crime reporting.

### Latest position (to end of March 2024)

- Our **final milestone for this measure is 95% with explanatory narrative (and complete Tackling Waste Crime annual report)**.
- We have not completed this milestone activity and achieved an amber year end performance. Tackling Waste Crime now publish quarterly report updates & newsletters instead of an annual report, and this has been completed.
- This measure is **Amber** overall.

### What's next

- We will continue to review enforcement performance across all operational teams and implement improvements where possible; however, the impact of resource restrictions across NRW are increasingly impacting the 95% performance metric, especially where posts with an enforcement function (GiA funded) are not recruited to. For the financial year 2024/25, the ongoing improvements to COLINS (NRW's IT system for recording offences) will allow for a more accurate and reflective assessment of the actual time to making a decision on environmental crime.

Measure owner: Nadia De Longhi

Q1	to Q2	to Q3	Year-end
Green	Amber	Amber	Amber

Key: Green = achieved; Amber = close to (e.g. within one month); Red = missed  
 [To return to start of report - see [Business Plan Performance Dashboard](#) - page 1]

## Background: How we use green, amber and red measure ratings

Each quarter through the year, for each measure, we reported both a current position (to that quarter's end), and an expected year end position.

At the end of each financial year, we report each year end measure performance position within our Annual Report and Accounts, with the final reported position for each measure reflected as green, amber or red. In that report, **Green** reflects achieved target or milestone, **Amber** reflects close to target or milestone, and **Red** reflects missed target or milestone.

This year, to assist readers of the Business Plan dashboard report, we have included how the green, amber or red status is determined for each measure in the dashboard as part of each measure page.

We use the same key for all measures in the Business Plan dashboard report, with a small number of numeric measures (two measures this year) reflecting a more specific key. On the occasions we use a more specific key, this is because the numeric detail provided is used directly in the assessment of the reported performance position.

*[To return to start of report - see [Business Plan Performance Dashboard](#) - page 1]*

## Annex 2 – Internal Performance Report

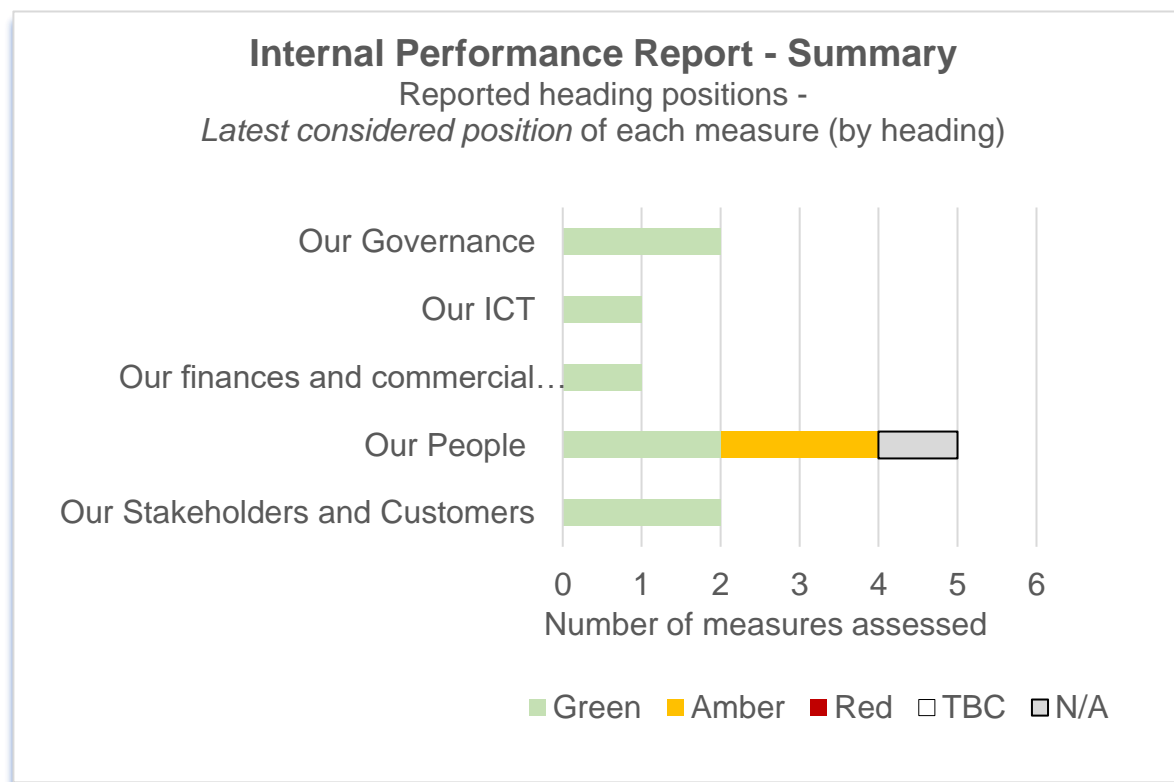
The following pages reflect a quarter end performance snapshot in relation to a number of key measures relating to the ‘health’ of our organisation.

### Summary

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

- Eight green
- Two amber
- None red
- One ‘N/A’

(see next page for detail)



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



## Measures to note

*Updates below reflect all measures red, amber, TBC or 'N/A' at the end of the quarter.*

### Our People:

- **Sgws in place** (staff priorities and development agreement) remained **Amber at the end of this quarter**, at 87% (at least 90% would be considered Green). This has improved from 84% in the last report following on from reminders issued to complete this. There has been direct follow up with managers and team leaders where completion rates are particularly low.
- **Absence** is **Amber at the end of the quarter** at 4.0% for March using the revised methodology (less than 3.5% is Green). 'Stress, anxiety and mental health' is the top reason for absence. Workshops are being run in 2024/25 across the organisation to support managers and team leaders in recognising stress in the workplace to best help their staff.
- **Mandatory E-Learning** (online training items all NRW staff are required to complete) is 'N/A' for the end of the quarter. The current reporting system is being decommissioned with a new learning management system being brought in during the Summer. This new system is expected to provide improved reporting capability and support compliance activity.

---

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

## Remaining measures

*The remaining measures, i.e., those not already highlighted as 'Measures to note' on the previous page, are reflected below.*

### Our 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 **Green at 94% at the end of the quarter** (at least 90% is considered green) compared to **Amber at the end of Quarter 3**.
- In relation to non-compliance (**environmental enforcement response** within NRW) our response **remains Green, with no enforcement notice issued to NRW this quarter**.

### Our ICT:

- **Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) reported incidents** remains **Green with no such investigations ongoing at the end of the quarter**, and one reported data breach during 2023/24.

### Our Finances and Commercial Opportunities:

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

### Our People:

- **Health and Safety Active Monitoring** (i.e., regular inspection and checking to ensure that wellbeing, health and safety standards are being implemented) is **Green at the end of the quarter** (compared to **Red at the end of quarter 3**) following on from the drop in sessions, with an increase compared with the same period last year.
- **Health & Safety Near Miss reporting** is **Green at the end of the quarter** (compared to **Amber at the end of quarter 3**) following on from the drop in sessions, with an increase in the number of near misses reported compared with the same period last year.

### Our Stakeholders and Customers:

- **Access to Information requests (ATIs)** responded to within 20 days remains **Green at the end of the quarter with one (of 90) responses outside of this timescale, and 98% of all such ATIs or EIR requests completed within 20 days during the year**.
- **Complaints** responded to within 20 days remains **Green at the end of the quarter, with no response made outside of this timescale and 99% of complaints responded to within service level during the year**.

## Annex 3: Business Plan Performance Dashboard 2023/24 Heatmap

We report on each of our Business Plan's dashboard measures quarterly throughout the year using Red, Amber or Green, which we have represented below as a more detailed heatmap. The heatmap also reflects the predicted Red, Amber or Green status for year-end as reported in quarters one, two and three.

	Measure	Quarterly heatmap assessment				Predicted year-end		
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Year-end	@Q1	@Q2	@Q3
Nature is recovering	Protected sites actions	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
	Action for declining species	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
	Wales MPA Network Management Action Plan	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
	Restore Wales' habitats	Green	Green	Amber	Green	Green	Green	Green
	Case for new National Park	Green	Green	Amber	Green	Green	Green	Green
	Complete freshwater review	Green	Green	Green	Amber	Green	Green	Amber
	Sharing Nature and Us	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
Communities are resilient to climate change	Restore Welsh peatlands	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
	New woodland created	Amber	Amber	Amber	Amber	Amber	Green	Amber
	Maintain flood risk assets; high-risk locations	Green	Green	Amber	Amber	Green	Green	Amber
	Produce a Flood Risk Management Plan	Green	Amber	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
	Properties with reduced risk or sustained protection	Green	Amber	Amber	Green	Green	Green	Green
	Implement Flood Review	Amber	Amber	Amber	Green	Green	Green	Green
	Timber volume offered	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
	Low emission fleet & climate adapted built estate	Green	Green	Amber	Red	Green	Amber	Amber
Pollution is minimised	Compliance breaches effort	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
	Progress on SAC Rivers	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Amber
	Input to Water Company Planning Programmes	Green	Amber	Green	Amber	Green	Green	Amber
	Water quality requirements	Green	Green	Green	Amber	Green	Green	Amber
	Reduce pollution; metal mines	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
	Response to 'High' incidents	Green	Amber	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
	Decision on an appropriate enforcement response	Green	Amber	Amber	Amber	Green	Green	Amber

### Keys used above:

Quarterly heatmap assessment:	Exceeded	Achieved	Close to	Partly delivered	Missed
Predicted year-end / year-end:	Achieved		Close to		Missed

## NRW Board Paper

<b>Date of meeting:</b>	17 <sup>th</sup> July 2024
<b>Title of Paper:</b>	Wellbeing, Health and Safety and Learning and Development Annual Report 2023-2024
<b>Paper Reference:</b>	24-07-B17
<b>Paper sponsored by:</b>	Prys Davies, Executive Director Corporate Strategy and Development
<b>Paper prepared by:</b>	Charlotte Morgan, Wellbeing, Health and Safety & Learning and Development Manager
<b>Paper presented by:</b>	Charlotte Morgan, Wellbeing, Health and Safety & Learning and Development Manager
<b>Purpose of the paper</b>	Approval
<b>Summary</b>	Board are asked to approve the Wellbeing, Health & Safety & Learning & Development Annual Report for 2023-2024

## Background

1. This is the annual summary of our Wellbeing, Health & Safety (WH&S) & Learning & Development (L&D) performance for Natural Resources Wales (NRW). The Report provides an overview of how NRW have managed WH&S throughout the year 2023-2024.
2. The Health, Safety and Wellbeing Report for the last financial year identified next steps and future work for action through the 2021-2024 NRW Wellbeing Health and Safety Strategy and Improvement Plan.
3. In 2023-2024 we made further significant steps to implement our Strategy. Headlines from 2023-2024 include:
  - a. Serious Incident Reviews. Five serious incidents and near misses were reviewed using the serious incident review procedure. These incidents involved forestry work activities undertaken by contractors and the use of work equipment by NRW staff which led to an injury.
  - b. Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) reportable lost time incidents (LTIs) and Injuries. Five RIDDOR reported incidents and six LTIs were reported for 2023-2024.

- c. There has been decrease in RIDDOR reportable incidents on last year. Near Miss reporting has increased in comparison to last financial year. Managers and team leaders have received training and supporting guidance on reporting and investigating incidents. The importance of managing health and safety risks and supporting staff have been delivered through engagement campaigns.
  - d. In December 2023, NRW re-attained registration to ISO 45001: 2018.
  - e. Pre-qualification questionnaires. A total of 59 pre-qualification questionnaires were assessed, for a number of different teams. This assessment is to ensure that the contractors, customers we work with have been suitably assessed.
  - f. Continued collaboration partnership with Health & Safety Executive, NRW and Forest Industry Safety Accord.
4. We delivered further improvements and developments such as:
- a. Several specific wellbeing initiatives throughout the year e.g., menopause cafes; Stress Awareness Month, wellbeing assessment days etc.
5. Reviewed and revised several WH&S policies and procedures in line with legislative changes. In total 297 WH&S related training courses were delivered to NRW staff.

## Wider implications

- (a) **Finance:** It is recognised that the mismanagement of WH&S has significant financial implications. We are working together with the business and continue 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. We will continue to support the business to ensure WH&S 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. We will use the information gathered and lessons learnt in the development of our future strategy and action plan.

## Recommendation

9. Board are asked to approve the Wellbeing, Health & Safety and Learning & Development Annual Report for 2023-2024.

## Index of Annexes

Provide any supporting information:

Annex 1 – WH&S Annual Report 2023-2024

## Approval / Consultation process

<p><b>Approval/consultation process</b></p> <p><b>Responsible:</b> Who has developed the paper/process and who has had input?</p>	<p>The paper was developed by Charlotte Morgan</p>
<p><b>Accountable:</b> Who is accountable for the ultimate approval? Who will be or is being asked to approve?</p>	<p>Board are asked to approve</p>
<p><b>Consulted:</b> Who has been consulted to date? Where endorsement is required, is this in place? Will further consultation be required?</p>	<p>People and Customer Committee</p>
<p><b>Informed:</b> Who has been informed or who needs to be further information about the work?</p>	<p>Not applicable.</p>



# Annex 1 – WH&S and L&D Annual Report 2023-2024

## Summary

This is the annual report to inform of NRW's Wellbeing, Health and Safety (WH&S) and Learning and Development developments in 2023/2024 including

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

## Overview

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

Good health and wellbeing is increasingly being acknowledged as a vital element in supporting and developing a workforce. Not only are there positive benefits to staff but there are also financial and reputational benefits to the organisation.

The WH&S Strategy clearly demonstrate that NRW values its staff and customers and wants them to be safe and thrive because of the positive culture and benefits of working to support the natural resources of Wales.

The key priorities that were identified to be taken forward in 2023/2024 were:

- We operate a robust, assured, operationally excellent occupational health and safety management system certified to the internationally recognised standard ISO 45001:2018.
- NRW is accredited to the Corporate Health Standard and working towards the Platinum award.
- All staff support a positive, proactive, sustainable safety culture
- Health and safety training requirements for all NRW staff are more clearly defined.
- All leaders and managers commit more fully to, and are accountable for, the management of wellbeing health and safety.

## Headlines from 2023/2024 include:

- RIDDOR Reportable LTI's and Injuries. Five RIDDOR reported incidents and six lost time incidents (LTIs) for 2023/2024, this is an increase on last year.
- Serious Incident Reviews (SIR) – We reviewed five serious incidents and near misses using the serious incident procedure. These incidents involved forestry work activities undertaken by contractors and the use of work equipment by NRW staff which led to an injury.
- We have continued to deliver training for managers and team leaders on reporting and investigating incidents. The importance of managing health and safety risks and supporting staff have been delivered through campaigns, with the WH&S forums and managers playing an important role in raising awareness of the need to report incidents.
- NRW retained registration to ISO 45001:2018 in December 2023.
- A total of 59 pre-qualification questionnaires were assessed, for a number of different teams. This assessment is required as part of health and safety legislation and ensures that our contractors and customers have been assessed prior to undertaking any work on NRW estate.
- 297 WH&S related training courses were undertaken by NRW staff.
- More detail on the headlines is provided below.

## National Wellbeing, Health & Safety Committee

The National Wellbeing, Health & Safety committee met three times in 2023/2024 to discuss issues raised, update on progress and provide guidance and recommendations, addressing wellbeing, health and safety matters at a strategic level. Topics have included:

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

In 2023/2024, all the WH&S forums continued with the action focussed approach developed previously, raising awareness of their existence and playing a role in delivery of the strategy and improvement plan items. They also focussed their attention on local initiatives and development of action plans on priority issues. The WH&S forums have seen an increase in engagement with employees to address WH&S issues that affect day-to-day working alongside discussions on best practice seen in the organisation. For example a member of staff delivered a talk on improvements made in the field of recreation.

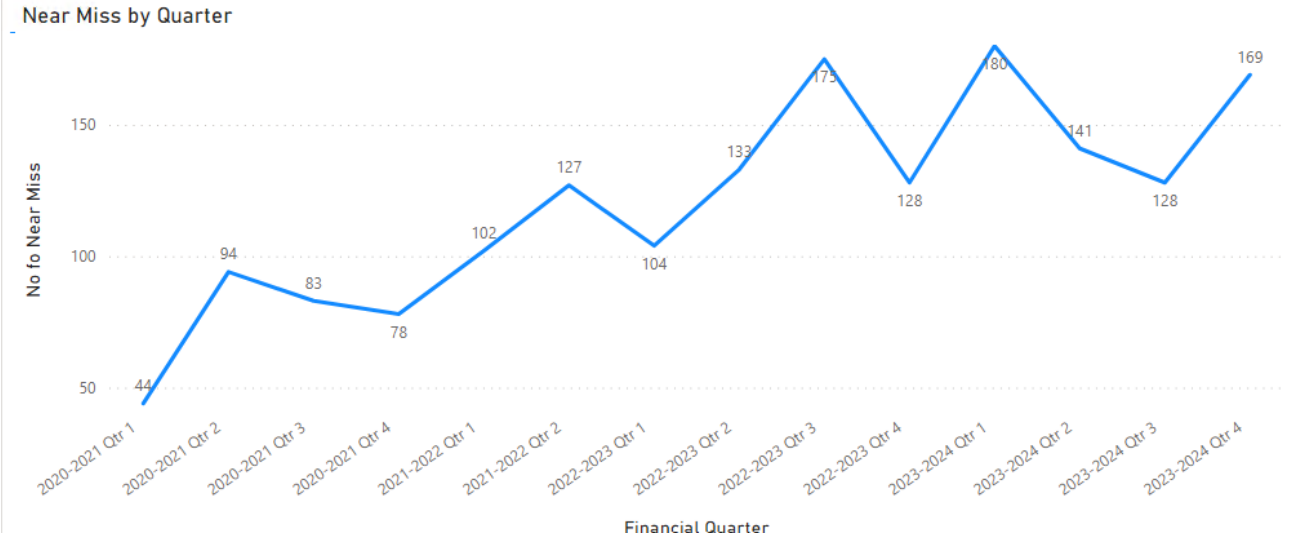
## Performance – health and safety

### Headline accident and near miss statistics

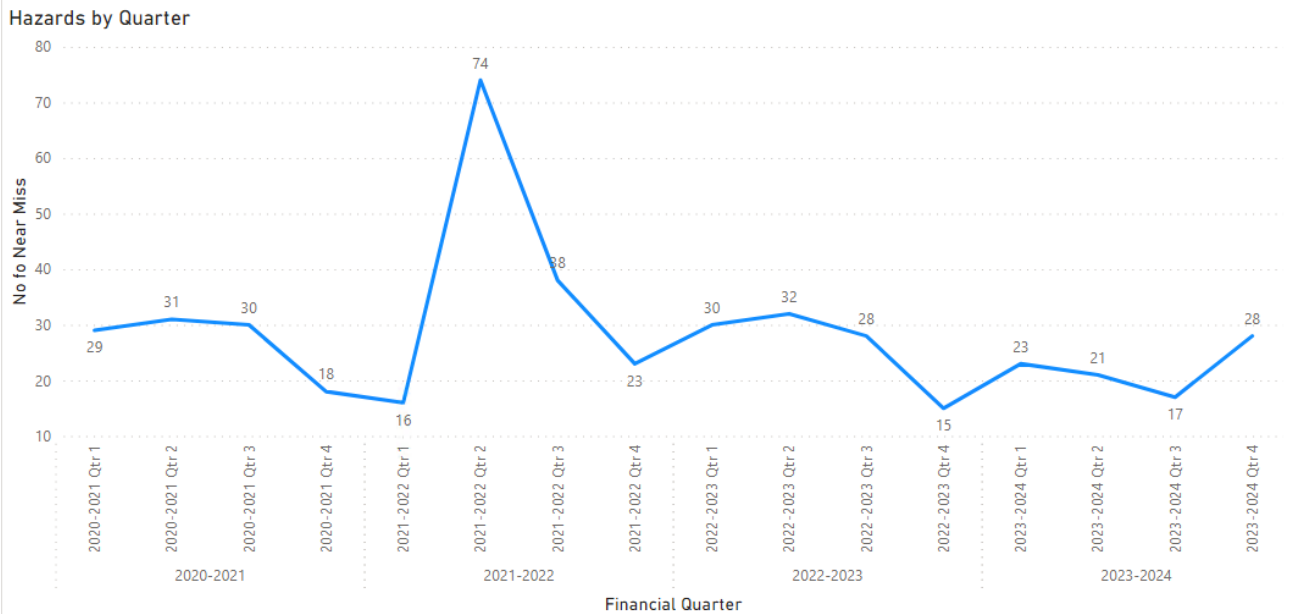
- RIDDOR reportable Lost Time Injuries (LTI)'s and Injuries with no lost time to staff have decreased this year.



- Near Miss reporting by staff has increased in comparison to the last financial year. This shows positive reporting by staff as they are highlighting the issues so that actions can be taken to prevent an accident taking place. This data allows for targeted communication to help prevent accidents taking place. For example in October 2023, a communique was cascaded regarding an increase in slips, trips and falls.



- Hazard reporting has also increased this financial year, which again highlights positive and proactive reporting.



- Near misses to contractors have remained fairly static, but injuries to contractors have increased.
- Members of the public injuries and near miss reports has also remained static.
- NRW has delivered WH&S training on near miss reporting for managers and team leaders.
- Team leaders and managers are actively encouraging staff to report near misses in their WH&S forum meetings through active monitoring and their line management duties.

It is also pleasing to note that there has been continued efforts by the local WH&S forums to improve the quantity and quality of incident reports and to ensure incidents are investigated and closed off by line managers.

	2023-2024	2022-2023	2021-2022	2020-2021	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017
<b>RIDDOR – staff</b>	5	3	7	3	6	2	8	9
<b>Lost time injuries – staff</b>	6	3	3	1	4	5	8	4
<b>Injuries, no lost time - staff</b>	65	43	51	19	121	53	59	68
<b>Near miss – staff</b>	186	175	156	109	183	163	201	232
<b>Serious incident reviews</b>	5	8	4	4	5	2	3	9
<b>Injuries - contractors</b>	9	8*	3*	5*	5	9	9	8
<b>Injuries – public</b>	46	38	38	18	53	53	95	70
<b>Near miss – contractors</b>	70	68	62	46	50	40	44	62
<b>Near miss – public</b>	31	33	30	23	33	20	39	27
<b>Property Damage</b>	48	53	36	35	32	43	48	63
<b>Hazards Reported</b>	89	199	166	65	83	103	78	6

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

- Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR) incident is a particular type of incident that is required to be reported to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE)

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

## RIDDOR Reports – NRW

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

- 16 May 2023 – Staff member sustained a shoulder injury whilst undertaking monitoring and inspection work.
- 28 September 2023 – Staff member sustained an eye injury during contractor supervision works.
- 26 October 2023 – Staff member sustained a back injury when slipping on a wet floor.
- 1 December 2023 – Staff member sustained a knee injury when undertaking a site survey.
- 5 December 2023 – Staff member sustained a head injury stepping into a lift.

## RIDDOR Reports - Contractors

There have been three RIDDOR Reportable incident to a contractor:

- 28<sup>th</sup> November 2023 – Contractor sustained a fractured wrist during felling operation
- 1<sup>st</sup> February 2024 - Contractor sustained a fractured ankle during felling operation
- 1<sup>st</sup> February 2024 - Contractor sustained a fractured vertebrae during felling operation

## Lost Time Incidents that are not RIDDOR reportable

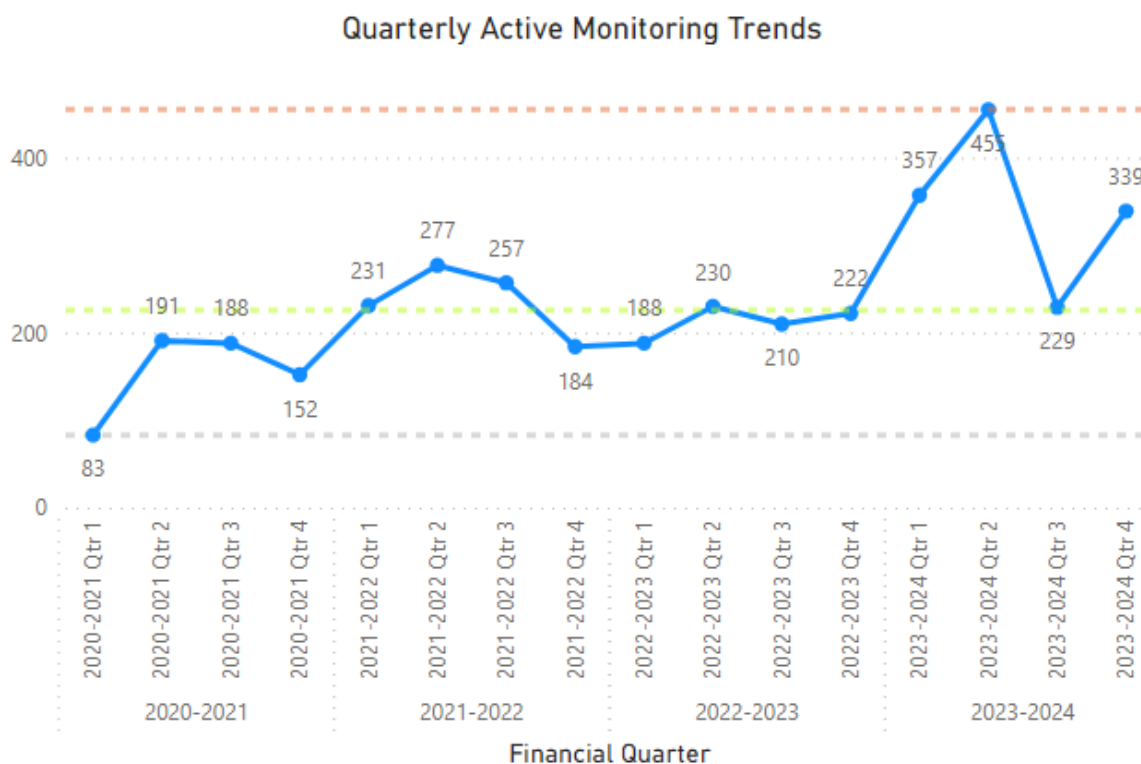
- 13<sup>th</sup> June 2023 – Staff member was bitten by a horsefly
- 15<sup>th</sup> June 2023 – Staff member lost footing and slipped, twisting ankle
- 10<sup>th</sup> November 2023 – Staff member was contaminated with sewage water
- 28<sup>th</sup> November 2023 – Staff member caught hand on billhook
- 21<sup>st</sup> February 2024 – Staff member tripped on non-NRW uneven floor causing injury
- 25<sup>th</sup> March 2024 – Staff member had an incorrect desk set up causing back pain.

## Near miss drop-in sessions

Due to the decline in proactive reporting of near misses and hazard reporting, WH&S team arranged a number of near miss drop-in sessions.

By reporting near misses and hazards, the likelihood of a serious accident is reduced and we are able to create targeted and proactive campaigns. These drop-in sessions looked at; what a near miss and hazard is, why it is important to report near misses and hazards and what NRW do with the data. These were well attended and a recording will be created for those that missed the training.

## Active monitoring



It is pleasing to note that the active monitoring process is well established in NRW which can be seen by the increase since 2020.

This data is provided at directorate and team level to allow targeted engagement pieces to be implemented by management.

Each Directorate has set an active monitoring target to achieve per month and it is pleasing to note that this is having an impact on the number of active monitoring reports being undertaken.

To further support the reporting of active monitoring, a QR code and portal access to recording active monitoring has been rolled out. This will allow staff members at every level to record active monitoring.

## Serious Incident Reviews

Five serious incident reviews were opened in 2023/2024 using our serious incident review process, with the WH&S Lead Specialist Advisors, with involvement from the team leaders, Heads of Place and the Trade Unions.



Details on the five serious incident reviews are set out below:

### Injury – Member of Staff – Coed-Y-Brenin

A member of staff stepped into a risk zone when a contractor was working and a projectile injured their eye. The SIR is still ongoing.

### Injury – 3<sup>rd</sup> party contractor – Millwood

A contractor was felling a diseased ash tree when it spilt and as he escaped it fractured his arm. The SIR is still ongoing.

### Injury – Contractor – Afan

A contractor working on behalf of NRW was undertaking felling trees when he sustained a fracture. The SIR is still ongoing.

### Injury – Contractor – Trefriw

A contractor working on behalf of NRW was undertaking felling trees when he sustained a fracture. The SIR is still ongoing.

## Near Miss – Member of Staff – St Asaph

A member of staff was undertaking riverside embankment clearance when they sustained a serious near miss with the chainsaw. The SIR is still ongoing.

## Performance – Wellbeing and health

### Occupational health statistics

#### Summary of annual activity

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

Summary 2023/2024	Compared to 2022/2023
209 Referrals	163 Referrals (+46)
23 HAVs screening	32 HAVs screening (-9)
6 HAVs Tier 4 assessments	5 HAVs Tier 4 assessments (+1)
19 Conflict Resolution screening	27 Conflict Resolution screening (-8)

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

Year	Referrals	Long term sick absence	Mental health concerns	Clarifications on preexisting/new conditions	Musculoskeletal	Work related stress
2023/2024	209	21	56	11	31	21
2022/2023	163	N/A	58	N/A	N/A	21
2021/2022	134	N/A	49	N/A	N/A	13

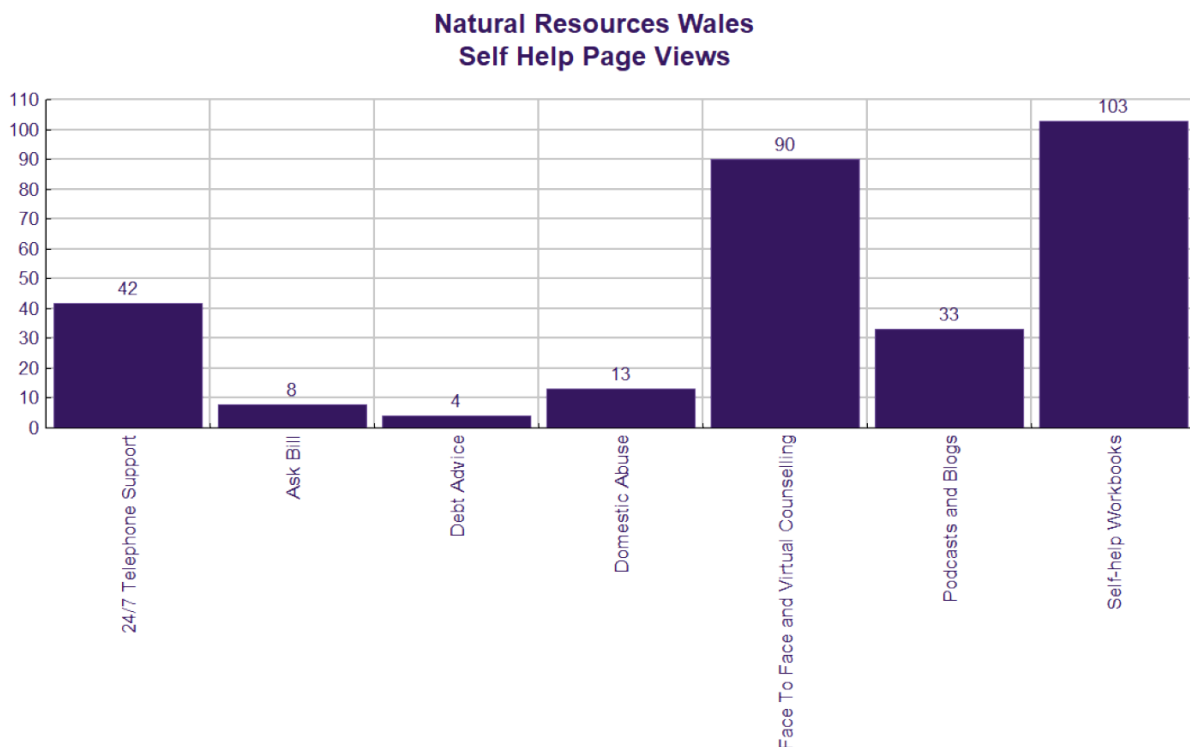
Please note that a new occupational health provider (Insight) was contracted October 2023. The quarterly reports that Insight provide NRW offer far more detailed data with an enhanced breakdown on the reasons for referrals. The N/A noted above is from the previous occupational health provider which did not supply NRW with this information.

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

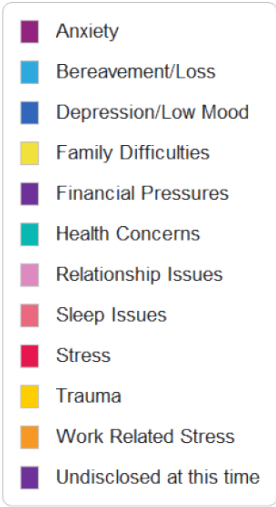
## Employee Assistance Programme

A new Employee Assistance Programme provider (Vivup) was contracted in September 2023. The previous provider would only provide data on a six monthly basis. Unfortunately due to staff illness at the previous provider, NRW received no data from April 2023 to September 2023. Therefore the stats below show data from 1 October 2023 – 31 March 2024:-

- 318 portal access
- 138 self-help downloads
- 293 self-help page views
- 107 incoming calls which resulted in 52 clients entering the counselling service via the 24/7 helpline.



### Natural Resources Wales Presenting Issue



It can be noted that 35% of NRW staff that rang the EAP were seeking advice for stress. 10% of staff sought advice for work related stress.

## Further developments in 2023/2024

### Corporate Health Standard

Healthy Working Wales (HWW) informed NRW in June 2023 that there will be a change of the focus of HWW, to create an enhanced digital offering for employers and so a less tailored approach.

The changes have come about due to a realignment in priorities agreed with the Welsh Government. As part of the changes, HWW, will no longer be able to deliver the HWW awards programme and so this is will now be coming to an end, after many successful years.

NRW are seeking to establish a peer group which will bring together like minded public sector organisations who are of a similar or aspiring standard. The aim of this group would be to informally audit each other in the noted corporate health standard areas. It would include organisations that strive to improve the health and wellbeing of their staff through not just short term initiatives but have a long term plan and focus. This collaboration project is at the planning stage with key stakeholders involved.

### Wellbeing initiatives

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



- Menopause café – monthly appointments have been sent out to all staff. We want to start conversations about the menopause and to increase awareness of the impact of the menopause on those experiencing it, friends, colleagues and families.
- Stress awareness month April 2023 – drop-in sessions were arranged for managers.
- Mental health awareness week May 2023
- Sun awareness week – May 2023
- Loneliness awareness week – June 2023 – re-circulated the loneliness webinar that was held January 2023
- Healthy eating week – June 2023
- World drowning prevention day June 2023 – National Water Safety forum arranged a webinar for anyone interested to attend.
- Talk to us campaign.
- Grassroots suicide prevention – promoted the stay alive app – people can use if they are having suicidal thoughts or if they are concerned about someone else who may be considering suicide.
- Wellbeing days took place October-February 2023 where staff were offered the opportunity to book a confidential health assessment with a qualified practitioner from New Leaf Health. The assessment included – cholesterol testing, body fat % and fat mass, urine testing and a complete lifestyle review to establish key points that individuals are interested in making changes to. The exact number of staff who attended the sessions will be available following a review meeting in June 2024.
- Time to talk day – some of our mental health first aiders arranged virtual coffee break sessions.

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

## Occupational health

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

## Stress awareness sessions

Drop-in sessions for team leaders and line managers were developed to focus on stress awareness. These sessions covered how and why team leaders and line managers need to proactively manage stress in the workplace and the support systems that are available for them. The sessions also cover personal stress and what managers can do to ensure the wellbeing of their staff.

## Learning and Development (L&D)

### Training Policy

The L&D training policy was approved by ET in June 2023 and launched to the business with manager briefing sessions held in August and September. The policy set out the

roles and responsibilities of staff at all levels of the organisation, the scope of the training covered, budgets and recharges.

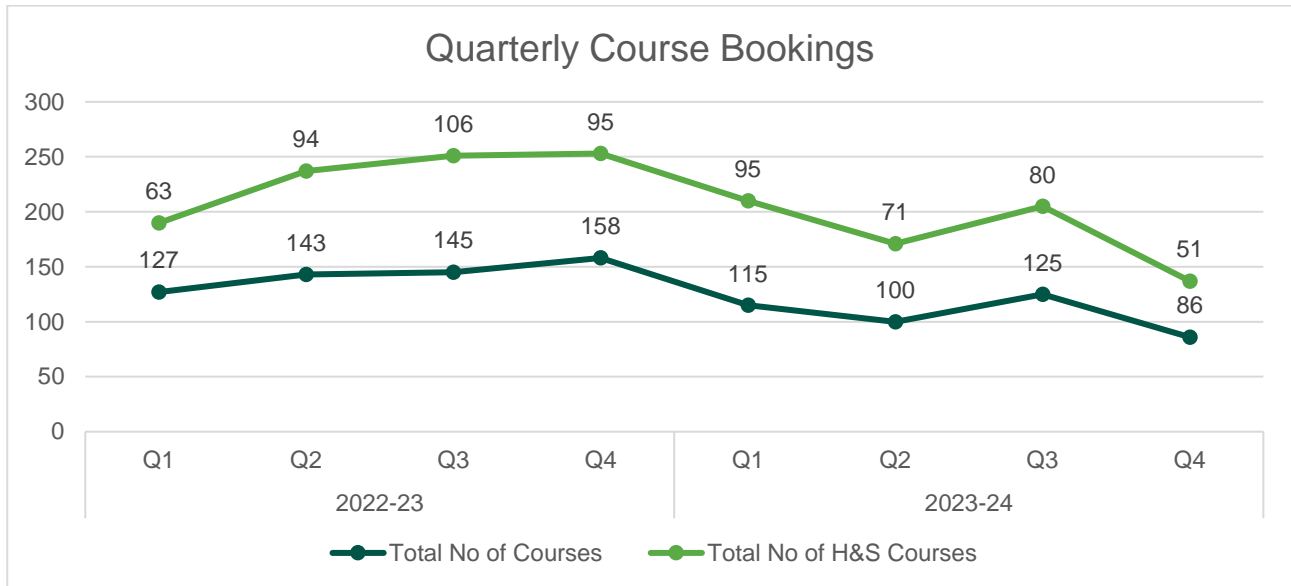
## Course Delivery

The L&D Team organised a total of 426 courses in 2023/2024 of which 297 courses were categorised as WH&S. These courses are predominantly delivered face to face, with only 17 courses delivered virtually this year. WH&S categories covers a range of courses including: Water Safety, First Aid, Hostile Situations, IOSH Managing/Working Safely, 4x4 Driver, Working at Height, Chainsaw courses (Operator and Supervisor), Forest Works Manger, Forklift Trucks, Electricity for Foresters, Safe use of Powered Pole Pruner, Woodchippers and Pesticides.

The table below shows the number of courses organised by the L&D team each month with the percentage of courses booked classed as WH&S. Overall 70% of the courses delivered for NRW employees in 2023-34 were for WH&S courses, this is an 8% increase from last year.

	2023-24	Total No of Courses	Total No of H&S Courses	H&S as % of Total Courses	Virtual Delivery
<b>Q1</b>	Apr-23	36	29	83%	3
	May-23	40	33		3
	Jun-23	39	33		3
<b>Q2</b>	Jul-23	30	22	71%	0
	Aug-23	28	19		1
	Sep-23	42	30		2
<b>Q3</b>	Oct-23	61	40	64%	4
	Nov-23	44	26		1
	Dec-23	20	14		1
<b>Q4</b>	Jan-24	27	11	59%	1
	Feb-24	26	19		1
	Mar-24	33	21		3
<b>Total</b>		<b>426</b>	<b>297</b>		<b>17</b>

The graph below shows the comparison of the WH&S course bookings by quarter for the last 2 years. Following the training needs analysis and gap analysis work, it has highlighted a back log of training which is required in 2024/2025. Additional funding for the L&D budget has been secured to facilitate the extra training.



## Budgets and Procurement

70% of the courses delivered during 2023-2024 were for WH&S, costing just under £400,000, which is over half of the allocated L&D budget.

In 2023/2024 the L&D Team continued to work with the business to prepare for the UKWAS Audit, any training identified by the Institute of Foresters as well as working with Team Leaders in Forest Ops on Forest Research courses.

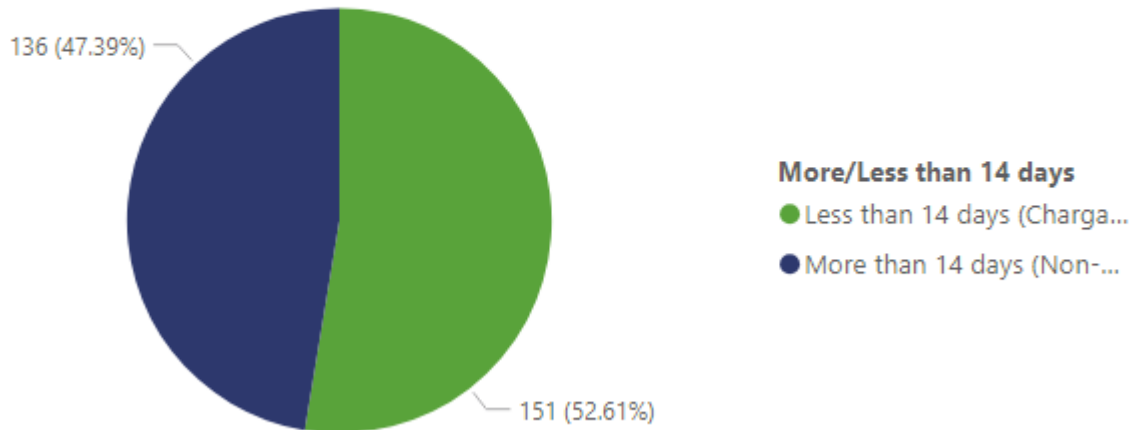
## Cancellations

During 2023/2024, individual cancellation reports were produced for each Leadership Team (LT) member. These reports gave information on the cancellations within their area and provided the cost and reasons for the cancellations.

The training policy explains that the cost of cancellations with less than 14 days notice will be recharged to the Directorate on a quarterly basis and those costs reinvested in training. The recharge was not enforced in 2023/2024 as part of the transition period, however these will start in 2024/2025.

As a result of the development and launch of the training policy, the number of cancellations fell. The number of cancellations in 2023/2024 that fell within the 14 day chargeable period was 151, this is 53% of the total cancellations received, with a cost of £15,000. The graph below illustrates the number of cancellations by notice period.

## Number of cancellations by notice period



## Training Needs Analysis

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

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

The Training Frameworks include: -

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

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

The progress throughout 2023/2024 has been significant, with the training needs analysis activity for all high-risk work activities being completed and signed off via the business boards

## Engagement with stakeholders

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

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

A stakeholder meeting took place between HSE, FISA and NRW to further promote a leadership approach to health and safety in this key high risk area and this approach has been supported and welcomed by the HSE. NRW are committed to actively work with the rest of the forestry sector in Wales to improve health and safety management in this area.

### Timber Customer Liaison Day

Members of the WH&S team attended NRW's annual timber customer liaison day, to deliver a presentation. This covered health and safety statistics and performance, information about recent developments within the industry and also providing information about incident investigation, NRW's Forestry Leadership paper endorsed by the HSE, and evidencing competence.

## Progress against wellbeing, health and safety actions / initiatives

### Lone & remote working system

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

In March 2024, PeopleSafe launched a new platform providing extra functionality.

At the end of the financial year, March 2024, there were 964 users with an average use of 78%.

### Policy/procedure update

The following policies and procedures were developed and/or revised in 2023/2024:

- Risk assessment procedure
- DSE policy and procedure.
- Public safety
- Boat work procedure
- Occupational health policy and procedure

- Colour vision testing
- Provision of eye tests and glasses

## Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) – Vivup

From the 1 September we had a new EAP provider called Vivup.

- 24/7 confidential telephone support, offering unlimited in the moment support
- Your Care – a leading health management platform that delivers effective, evidence based interventions to help people live happier healthier lives.
- An online wellbeing hub featuring a range of support resources such as blogs, articles and podcast.
- A personalised portal offering further help and information to enable staff to find everything in one place.
- 6 sessions per issue with the option of telephone, face to face, or virtual contracted counselling.
- 24/7 online debt advice provided in partnership with Angel Advance to get people back on track and make their finances more manageable.
- Domestic abuse app and resources offered via their partner Bright Sky for anyone who may be in an abusive relationship or concerned about someone they know.
- 19 self-help CBT workbooks providing advice and guidance on a number of topics including anxiety, bereavement, depression, post-traumatic stress and more.
- Regular health and wellbeing articles, webinars.

## Contractor Management

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

In total, the following have been assessed and approved –

**3** - Meica works. All approved at initial assessment.

**13** - tree planting works. 5 approved at initial assessment and the others required further clarification and then approved.

**1** - pillar restoration. All approved at initial assessment.

**2** - culvert inspection. All approved at initial assessment.

**1** - river restoration. All approved at initial assessment.

**7** - minor works. 6 approved at initial assessment and the others required further clarification and then approved

**2** - survey work. All approved at initial assessment

**1** - livestock management. All approved at initial assessment.

**1** - harbour master (audit work). All approved at initial assessment.

1 - boat skipper. All approved at initial assessment.

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

1 - pest control. All failed the initial assessment, which required further clarification and then approved.

1 - rope access work. All failed the initial assessment, which required further clarification and then approved.

1 - Dee conservancy contract. All failed the initial assessment, which required further clarification and then approved.

1 - UKWAS auditing contract. All failed the initial assessment, which required further clarification and then approved.

3 - direct production. All failed the initial assessment, which required further clarification and then approved.

7 - Roadside sales. All failed the initial assessment, which required further clarification and then approved.

5 - Standing sales. All failed the initial assessment, which required further clarification and then approved.

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

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

## Risk assessment management

Employers in each workplace have a legal duty to ensure the health and safety of workers in every aspect related to their work. The purpose of carrying out a risk assessment is to enable the employer to take the measures necessary for the health and safety protection of workers. As part of being compliant with ISO 45001:2018, all NRW teams will need to have work activity specific risk assessments. In 2023/2024 there has been further progress in this area, and the WH&S team have been working with teams across NRW to assist the development of the risk assessments in AssessNET. Where teams already have specific risk assessments, but in another format, there has been support to the business in updating these onto AssessNet.

## Risk register

The strategic risk register was revised, reviewed and amended in 2023/2024. There is one strategic risk register with a particular focus on WH&S, that of health and safety of

staff/contractors/visitors. Work has been undertaken by the WH&S Manager and Executive Director of Operations to ensure that the risk register is effective and fit for purpose. The risk also has a risk appetite statement included. There is a monthly review of the risk register to update and record any completed actions. This is an ongoing project with mitigating actions being updated as and when necessary.

## Public Safety Work

### Visitor Safety Group (VSG)

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

### National Nature Reserves (NNR) Audits

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

Audits took place for:

- Cwm Clydach
- Craig Y Cilau
- Craig Cerrig Gleisiad
- Cors Erddreiniog
- Cors Bodeilio
- Coed Tycanol
- Corsydd Llangloffan
- Morfa Harlech
- Morfa Dyffryn
- With further site inspections and visits to discuss particular public safety issues taking place at:
  - Coed Y Bleiddiau
  - Graig Fawr
  - Maes Hiraddug
  - Coed Dogarrog
  - Rhuddlan Gauging station

### Public Safety across NRW

We continue to protect our landscapes, encourage public access where appropriate and achieve levels of risk that are acceptable to society. We do this by having a Public Safety Policy and associated Operational Guidance Note (OGN168) in place, ensuring we have staff who are competent in carrying out Public Safety Risk Assessment (PSRA) and inspection, and review reported member of the public incidents according to our incident management policy. We follow current best practice, as published by the Visitor Safety Group (VSG) guiding principles which are endorsed by the HSE. There is a work



programme in place to ensure all our assets that the public can interact with are risk assessed and inspected according to OGN168. We continue to ensure staff are competent in PSRA and inspection and train relevant staff in this process.

In total 7 Visitor Safety Principles and Risk assessment courses have been attended by 68 members of staff. This is now in the annual training calendar and is scheduled to run again in September 2024. Training is delivered by an external provider which covers the VSG principles, zoning, control measures and recommendations.

In order for NRW to manage the flood risk aspect in relation to public safety, 4 courses were run in 2023-2024 with 51 staff attending. More courses are planned for this forthcoming year.

The public safety risk assessments for flood management assets are stored on the AMX system which was purchased to replace the legacy flood asset application. By December 2024, forestry assets and recreational assets will also be stored on an online application.

	2023-2024	2022-2023	2021-2022	2020-2021	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017
<b>Injuries – public</b>	46	38	38	18	53	53	95	70
<b>Near miss – public</b>	31	33	30	23	33	20	39	27

Injury and near miss statistics have dropped slightly compared with earlier years but remain at a consistent level, and our research shows this is consistent with what we would expect with the number of public visiting our sites.

The majority of our sites are unstaffed outside of working hours and this will be reflected in the quantity and quality of the data we receive. Our colleagues work closely with our partners, emergency services and reviewing social media to ascertain information about incidents that happen on our land that NRW may not be aware of, to enable NRW to assess the risks to the public appropriately. However there are occasions where we are unaware of near miss and injuries on our land.

Moving forward, to further enhance our PSRA programme, we will be appointing staff to nominated roles as detailed in OGN168. These roles will be; senior public risk assessor, public safety risk assessor and peer review assessors. The aim of these roles is to strengthen our public safety and provide a more consistent approach across Wales to assessing the effectiveness of public safety control measures in place.

## Internal advice and guidance

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

## Internal Audit

During 2023/2024 an internal audit was undertaken on the L&D function. The audit report was published in Q4 with a Moderate assurance rating given. The report recommended a replacement for our current e-Learning platform which was due to be replaced as the contract could no longer be extended. A project team was established to work on a replacement e-learning system and this was agreed by ET in March 2024 with implementation expected in 2024-25.

## ISO 45001:2018 Management Standard

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

The re-certification process began in August 2023 and finished early December 2023 with 12 audit days involving various teams across Wales. NRW were successfully awarded re-certification to ISO 45001:2018 standard. There were 2 minor non-conformities noted, these included a procedure for laboratory work and fire warden training.

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

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

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

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

## Next Steps and Future Work for NRW in 2024/2025

There has been significant progress in 2023/2024 with delivery of key wellbeing, health and safety improvements. However, further progress needs to be made and we will do this by focussing on priority work areas in 2024/2025: -

### Leadership

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

## Health and Wellbeing

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

## External Engagement

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

## Learning & Development

Continue to assist with key training requirements, the implementation of the learning management system, training needs analysis, the gap analysis work to ensure legal compliance and promote the importance of undertaking WH&S training. Determine and develop competency frameworks for the higher risk activities, e.g., chainsaw, manual handling and forest works manager. Implementation and roll out of additional training as identified by the training needs analysis and gap analysis using the funding secured.

## System development

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

## Performance monitoring & audit

Fully participate in relevant WH&S topics within internal audit programme for 2024/2025.

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

## Legal compliance

Launch a new wellbeing, health and safety strategy in 2025/2026 to strive for legal compliance.

## Staff engagement

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