

Board Paper Q4 Performance

Date of meeting:	20th / 21st May 2026
Title of Paper:	Business Plan Performance Report: Quarter Four
Paper Reference:	26-05-B06
Paper sponsored by:	Prys Davies (Executive Director Strategy, Policy and Evidence)
Paper prepared by:	Sarah Williams (Head of Corporate Strategy and Programme Management Office) James Cornelius (Team Leader - Corporate Planning and Performance) Corporate Planning and Performance Team
Paper presented by:	Sarah Williams (Head of Corporate Strategy and Programme Management Office)
Purpose of the paper	Board is asked to approve the Business Plan Quarter Four Performance Report.
Summary	<p>Quarter four performance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Plan Commitments performance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Q4 Actual: 1 Red, 9 Amber, 18 Green. ○ Anticipated for Q4: 1 Red, 9 Amber, 18 Green ○ Last Quarter: 0 Red, 10 Amber, 18 Green ○ All Amber and the Red areas have agreed Pathways to Green in place that will be realised in 2026/27. • Internal performance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Q4 Actual: 0 Red, 2 Amber, 6 Green, 1 Grey ○ Last Quarter: 0 Red, 1 Amber, 7 Green, 1 Grey ○ Amber items areas have agreed Pathways to Green in place. • Service performance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Permitting service is reporting 1 Red, 4 Amber and 2 Green ○ Planning service is reporting all green.

Introduction

1. This paper reports on our quarterly performance for Q4.
2. It presents the Q4 2025/26 position, covering:

- The Annual Business Plan 25/26 and progress against 28 commitments and their associated key deliverables
 - A selection of internal performance measures
 - A selection of key service performance metrics
3. Performance is assessed against both the previous quarter and the position at year end. This paper concentrates on those commitments reporting Red or Amber.

Business Plan 2025/26 Quarter 4 Performance Report

4. This Quarter there is 1 Red, 9 Amber and 18 Green Commitments. The dashboard with the full set of commitments is included in **Annex 1**. Last quarter we anticipated we would have 1 Red, 9 Amber and 18 Green commitments. At a numerical level these figures are aligned, however there have been some small movement from green to amber and vice versa.
5. Table 1: Red / Amber Business Plan Commitments at Q4

Commitment	Q3 Actual	Q4 Actual
WBO1 Nature is Recovering		
C2: Synthesise evidence to identify priorities for notification and renotification of sites contributing to the 30:30 target	Amber	Amber
<p>Pathway to Green will not be realised until Q1 2026/27: Work over the year has been reprioritisation to respond to the Audit Wales SSSI report and other fixed-deadline commitments, slowing progress on the revised SSSI Handbook (OGN037). Good progress has been made on the underpinning evidence and programme development, including completion of the Sites of Special Scientific Interest: a review of the current series in Wales (NRW Evidence Report No. 878), and a comprehensive costing and resource analysis for the 2026/27 notification programme with projections through to 2030, now informing biodiversity funding decisions. A final draft of OGN037 (SSSI Notification, Renotification and Denotification) has been prepared with the OGN Expert Group and represents a significant improvement on legacy guidance; however, further consultation and legal quality assurance are required prior to publication, so this element remains Amber. Publication of OGN037 is now expected in June 2026, following on from a formal consultation in April, then final updates and legal QA.</p>		

C6 - Develop the capacity and capability within NRW to ensure the successful implementation of the Sustainable Farming Scheme, delivering multiple benefits and opportunities for nature and people	Green	Amber
<p>Pathway to Green will not be realised until Q1 2026/27: Good progress has been made in establishing the foundations for delivery of the Sustainable Farming Scheme (SFS), with programme planning, communications and governance arrangements in place with Welsh Government and stakeholders. NRW has contributed to the development of farmer-facing guidance for the Universal layer, supported specifications for the Optional layer and progressed the transfer of Habitat Wales Scheme agreements into Designated Site Management Plans, alongside completing the majority of technical specifications for habitat management actions. Capacity building has also progressed, including onboarding new SFS officers and advancing development of tools and guidance required for service delivery. However, progress has been constrained by challenges filling key environment officer roles, alongside the need for significant training and onboarding before full delivery can commence. The commitment remains Amber at year end, with the Pathway to Green dependent on completion of recruitment and training to scale up for delivery.</p>		
WBO2: Communities are Resilient to Climate Change		
Commitment	Q3 Actual	Q4 Actual
C11: Review the prioritisation approach for flood asset maintenance and management to ensure our investment is risk based	Amber	Amber
<p>Pathway to Green was not achieved in 25/26: Delivery of flood asset maintenance work using the Risk Based Revenue Allocation Model (RBRAM) has remained on track, with continued embedding of the approach improving the effectiveness of routine maintenance. Over 34,000 maintenance actions have been overseen this year, with more than 18,500 completed (54%), equating to over 51,000 hours of maintenance and ensuring over 90,000 properties continue to benefit from flood defences. However, delivery of the multi-year Assets Facing Change (AFC) work has been slower than planned. While analysis has progressed, including work to understand the impacts of long-term sea level rise on coastal defences and future investment requirements, not all planned elements have been completed this year due to technical complexity and competing priorities. These remaining elements will be taken forward through the coastal adaptation theme of the FRM Strategic Investment Plan. The RBRAM work represents the more immediate and significant operational benefit and is complete, while AFC remains part of longer-term strategic adaptation and is only partially delivered. As a result, the overall position remains Amber, with a clear pathway for outstanding work to be progressed in future years, subject to resources and funding.</p>		
C13: Improve the Flood Warning Service and Telemetry System to deliver efficiencies and maintain continuity of service to customers	Amber	Amber
<p>Pathway to Green for the telemetry replacement system will not be realised until Q1 2026/27. The system core is built and user training completed. However, the planned Go Live has been delayed to May 2026 due to data transfer performance issues affecting a small number of outstations, alongside slower than expected data preparation, dependencies on Digital, Data and Technology (DDaT) delivery, and ongoing resource constraints within the telemetry team, which remains below full capacity. Continuous</p>		

<p>improvement activity for the Flood Warning Information System for Wales (FWISfW) has also progressed more slowly than planned. While key developments such as enhancing data availability for wider platforms, process improvements for duty officers and platform upgrades are underway, progress has been constrained by resource limitations and delays to the Customer Relationship Management tool. As a result, both areas will carry forward into 2026/27 and full benefits of the new system are not yet being realised. It is important to note that the core flood warning message sending functionality remains fully operational, ensuring continuity of service to customers while further improvements are delivered.</p>		
<p>C14: Development of advice, guidance and tools on low carbon techniques and infrastructure, including Carbon Capture and Hydrogen, to improve the quality of applications submitted by industry and reduce the length of time to determine individual permit applications</p>	Amber	Amber
<p>Pathway to Green was not achieved in 25/26: We have continued to make strong progress in supporting the development of low carbon technologies, including delivery of key projects such as hydrogen production and carbon capture, with several schemes reaching Final Investment Decision and others progressing to determination supported through targeted use of the Targeted Operating Model (TOM). Work to influence policy and embed Environmental Management Systems (EMS) approaches has also advanced through engagement with Welsh Government, UK BAT processes and industry stakeholders. In addition, improvements in landfill emissions reporting and operational performance have been achieved through the LERP project, significantly enhancing data quality and reducing emissions impacts. Although all key deliverables are reporting Green, published guidance is limited and we are working with others to bridge the gaps. Further guidance is due to be published in Q1 2026/27 to assist developers and operators further.</p>		
<p>WBO3: Pollution is Minimised</p>		
<p>C18: Undertake farm inspections under Agriculture Pollution Regulations, in line with the enforcement sanctions policy to reduce pollution</p>	Amber	Red
<p>Pathway to Green was not achievable in 2025/26: Delivery of farm inspections under the Agriculture Pollution Regulations has improved during Q4, with 111 inspections completed in the quarter and 558 (70%) delivered over the 12-month period; however, performance remains below target. A critical factor continues to be the high level of non-compliance at first inspection, remaining at around 50%, which significantly increases the level of regulatory effort required, with non-compliant cases taking substantially longer to resolve through follow-up activity. In addition, delivery has been impacted by ongoing staff turnover, with multiple vacancies and new recruits requiring several months to reach competency in undertaking these complex inspections. Progress has been made in reviewing our approach to inspection prioritisation, enforcement approaches and stakeholder engagement, and a revised delivery approach and targets are being considered with Welsh Government as part of a future Service Level Agreement.</p>		
<p>C21: Provide challenge and advice to water companies to ensure their investment programmes reduce the risks and impacts of their operations on the environment</p>	Amber	Amber
<p>Pathway to Green was not achievable in 2025/26 with one deliverable not started and deferred to 2026/27: We have completed two deliverables - providing challenge and advice to water companies, including completion of advice on drought plans and early</p>		

<p>development of priorities and drivers for PR29 through the WWISER process, alongside continued work with water companies to improve tracking for AMP8. However, delivery of the Operator Self Monitoring (OSM) audit programme has been delayed due to capacity constraints within the Water Compliance Team. As a result, the audit programme has not been undertaken this year and has been rescheduled for delivery in 2026/27. While two of the three key deliverables have been successfully completed, the inability to deliver the OSM audits as planned means the overall commitment remains Amber at year end, with a clear plan in place to resume in 2026/27.</p>		
<p>C23: Embed changes to incident management approach and ways of working to enable a prioritised response to incidents focussing resource to those which cause the most harm</p>	Amber	Amber
<p>Pathway to Green has not been achieved and will require continued work to embed the changes to our approach across Business Groups: Clear progress has been made, with the approach and tracking mechanisms now established. The evidence is showing a sustained shift in behaviour over the past three years, including reduced attendance at low-triaged incidents. This is beginning to release capacity as planned. However, further work is needed to ensure rebalancing of resource is consistently realised across the organisation. While improvements in areas such as water and waste regulation are evident, ongoing work on Standard Operating Procedures, alignment and consistent application is required.</p>		
Commitment	Q3 Actual	Q4 Actual
<p>C24: Enhance our understanding of the drivers of pollution incidents across Wales to inform the actions needed to minimise pollution and ensure our incident response is targeted and effective in support of that aim</p>	Amber	Amber
<p>Pathway to Green for some deliverables will not be achieved until 2026/27: We have strengthened our understanding of the drivers of pollution incidents, with completion of detailed analysis and synthesis of data which we have reported and used to develop an incident performance dashboard, improving insight into incident types, locations, impacts and resource use, which is now informing prioritisation and targeted action across business areas. Progress has also been made in embedding a risk-based preventative approach within the Incident Management Strategy, supported by updated tools, guidance and engagement to align incident intelligence with compliance and enforcement activity. Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for priority issues have been completed and published; however, the more complex functional SOPs and the consistent embedding of handover from incident response into business-as-usual activity require further cross-business input, testing and agreement. Delivery of these elements has progressed, with a proportion of content drafted, but will continue into 2026/27. As a result, while key underpinning evidence, tools and approaches are now in place, full implementation remains Amber pending completion and embedding of functional SOPs and associated processes.</p>		
<p>C26: Strengthen ways of working with Local Authorities and third sector partners to maximise collective action on fly-tipping</p>	Amber	Amber

Pathway to Green for some deliverables will not be achieved until Q1/Q2 2026/27: Three Regional Partnership Groups have been established across Wales (SE, SW and North), although progress in the North has been temporarily paused due to staff turnover and ongoing recruitment. Work to enhance our evidence and evaluation capability has continued, including development of the Power BI dashboard and supporting tools, but delivery has been slower than planned due to staff sickness and vacancies, delaying finalisation into 2026/27. Progress on updating the fly-tipping protocol has also been impacted by resource constraints and delays in recruiting to key roles; however, agreement has now been reached to develop the protocol under the existing WLGA Memorandum of Understanding, providing a clear route forward. An expert group will be established to take this work forward in partnership with local authorities. While key elements are well developed, delivery across all areas has been constrained by capacity issues, and all remaining work will continue into 2026/27 with recruitment underway to support improved delivery.

Internal performance report

6. For Q4 there are **no Red, two Amber and six Green** items. Table 2 shows those commitments at Red or Amber at Q4 as well as Pathways to Green. More detail can be found in Annex 2.

7. Table 2: Red / Amber Internal performance reporting at Q4

Internal measure	Q3 Actual	Q4 Actual
Sgwrs in place (HR)	Amber	Amber
Pathway to Green has been discussed at Executive Team, recognising that 2026/27 will reflect a transition year into our full use of this new system. Executive Team's focus is on ensuring these conversations are happening.		
Access to Information requests	Green	Amber
Pathway to Green will see action taken around the staff resource, guidance and support we put towards dealing with these requests.		

Service Metrics

8. Please refer to **Annex 3** for the service metric summary

9. For the Permitting service, it has four Ambers and one Red (alongside two Greens) overall. Permitting Service performance in Q4 remained broadly stable, with strong delivery against statutory timescales for Marine, Species and Forestry permits and reduced backlogs in Water Quality, Water Resources and Installations/RSR. However, increased application volumes are placing pressure on Waste and Species, and Water Resources remains Red despite improving performance and expected gains in 2026/27. Work is underway to manage AMP8 risks and support continued recovery, while Installations/RSR is showing gradual improvement, reflecting ongoing delivery alongside capacity and demand pressures.

Risks, Risk Appetite and opportunities

10. We have summarised the key risk themes identified in the returns from Leadership Team Reporters:
11. People resource pressures remain the most significant risk and issue, with vacancies, turnover and onboarding/training requirements continuing to constrain delivery across several Amber and Red commitments (C2, C6, C13, C18, C21, C26). These pressures are particularly acute in specialist areas and are slowing progress and reducing delivery capacity.
12. Capacity issues are being compounded by competing priorities and reactive workload, with staff diverted to incident response, statutory work or complex casework impacting planned delivery (C2, C24). This is resulting in delays to key deliverables and continued Amber/Red performance in affected areas.
13. Delays are also being caused by factors outside teams' direct control and gaps in systems, lacking the right IT tools, or dealing with higher-than-expected demand and follow-up work (C6, C13, C18, C21). This is making some work take longer than planned and preventing progress to Green.

Next Steps

14. Leadership Team with the ET Well-being Objective Leads will continue to monitor the planned Pathways to Green.

Recommendations

15. The Board is asked to Approve Quarterly Report, Internal Performance report, Service Metrics and note Risks.

Index of Annexes

- Annex 1** – [Performance table and charts for Business Plan dashboard](#)
Annex 2 – [Internal Performance Report](#)
Annex 3 – [Service Metrics Detail](#)

Approval / Consultation process

• Responsible	Sarah Williams (Head of Corporate Strategy and PMO) and Prys Davies (Executive Director Strategy, Policy and Evidence)
• Accountable	NRW Board
• Consulted	Leadership Team (Commitment Owners) / Executive Team

• Informed	Leadership Team / Executive Team / NRW Board
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Annex 1 - Performance table and charts for Business Plan dashboard

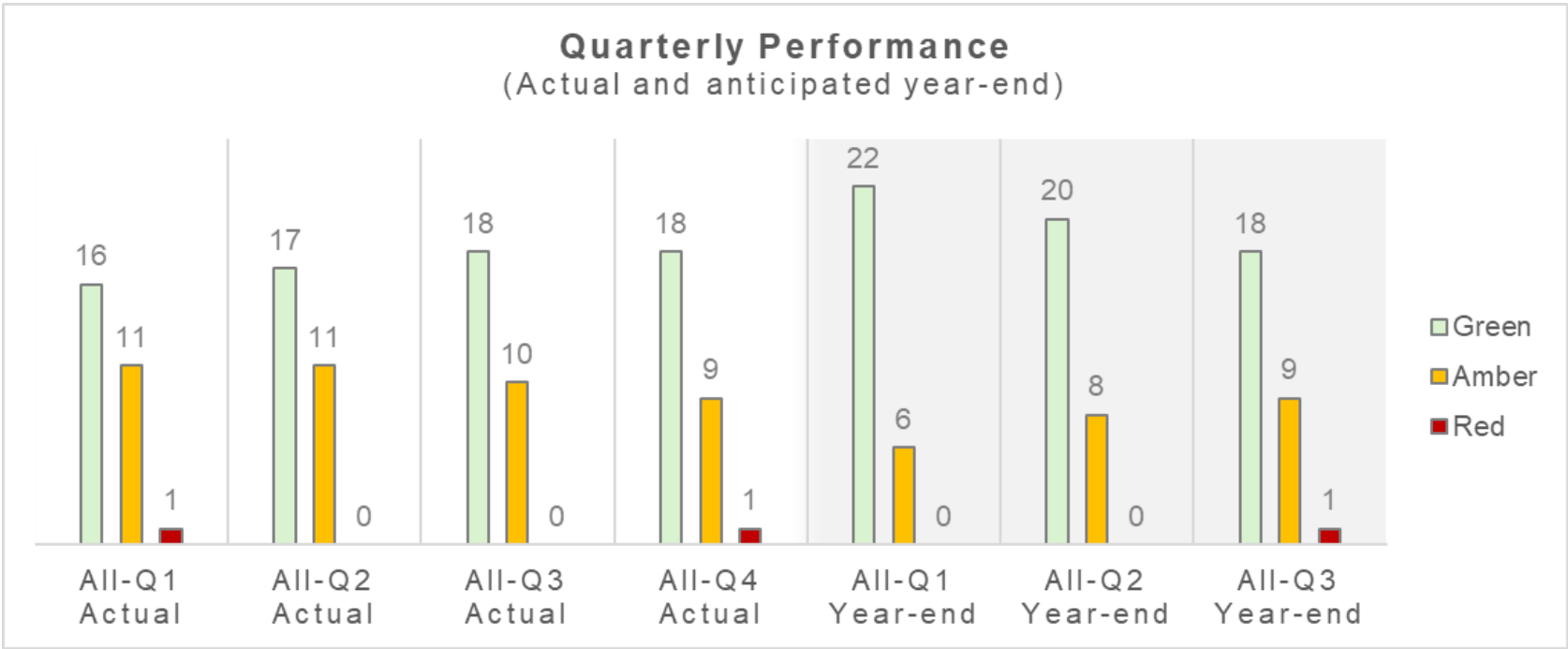
Table 1: Overall dashboard for 2025/26 Business Plan – Actual Reported Position

	2025/26 Business Plan commitment:	2025/26			
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
WBO1: Nature is recovering	C1: Implement priorities in the NRW Nature Networks programme to maintain and improve the effective management of protected sites	Red	Green	Green	Green
	C2: Synthesise evidence to identify priorities for notification and renotification of sites contributing to the 30:30 target	Amber	Amber	Amber	Amber
	C3: Review the Natur am Byth partnership programme's 4-year delivery plan to evaluate, and as appropriate, refine, action for species most at risk of extinction in the final two years of programme	Green	Green	Green	Green
	C4: Communicate and build understanding of the condition of the Marine Protected Area Network to inform targeted action and improvements	Amber	Green	Green	Green
	C5: Integrate nature recovery evidence into the proposed new National Park process and management of existing AONBs and National Parks to improve decision making for nature	Green	Green	Green	Green
	C6: Develop the capacity and capability within NRW to ensure the successful implementation of the Sustainable Farming Scheme, delivering multiple benefits and opportunities for nature and people	Amber	Amber	Green	Amber
	C7: Implementing No Mow May, piloting new approaches to working with nature on the land and assets that we manage, identifying prioritised recommendations	Green	Green	Green	Green
Cross cutting	C27: Advocate and support the use of the latest climate, nature and pollution evidence (including the interim SoNaRR Report 2025) in decision making amongst our public and third sector partners to facilitate a collaborative approach to delivery.	Green	Green	Green	Green
	C28: Increased awareness and understanding of opportunities to drive action for nature, climate and pollution minimisation via our suppliers and partners delivered through our Procurement and Contracts Strategy	Green	Green	Green	Green
WBO2: Communities are resilient to climate change	C8: Invest in capacity building to enable delivery in 2025-26 and future expansion of the National Peatland Action Programme	Green	Green	Green	Green
	C9: Strengthen capacity and evidence informing spatial prioritisation to enable effective future restoration within marine and coastal habitats	Green	Green	Green	Green
	C10: Develop an integrated catchment approach in the Taff using the 'Taff Catchment Strategic Flood Management Plan' to facilitate collaborative action to support communities at risk of flooding	Green	Green	Green	Green
	C11: Review the prioritisation approach for flood asset maintenance and management to ensure our investment is risk based	Amber	Amber	Amber	Amber
	C12: Deliver capital projects and sustain levels of protection for properties to reduce flood risk	Green	Green	Green	Green
	C13: Improve the Flood Warning Service and Telemetry System to deliver efficiencies and maintain continuity of service to customers	Amber	Amber	Amber	Amber
	C14: Development of advice, guidance and tools on low carbon techniques and infrastructure, including Carbon Capture and Hydrogen, to improve the quality of applications submitted by industry and reduce the length of time to determine individual permit applications	Amber	Amber	Amber	Amber
	C15: Enhance evidence, guidance and pre-application advice to improve the quality of submissions for planning permissions and permit/licence applications	Green	Green	Amber	Green
	C16: Prioritise actions with the greatest cost benefit on carbon dioxide equivalent (CO ₂ e)/ greenhouse gases (GHGs) to deliver our annual prioritisation within the Net Zero Plan	Green	Amber	Green	Green
C17: Implement prioritised actions in the NRW Net Zero Delivery Plan 2025-30 (relating to scope 3 emissions in our supply chain)	Green	Green	Green	Green	

	2025/26 Business Plan commitment:	2025/26			
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
WBO3: Pollution is minimised	C18: Undertake farm inspections under Agriculture Pollution Regulations, in line with the enforcement sanctions policy to reduce pollution	Amber	Amber	Amber	Red
	C19: Undertake compliance visits at prioritised regulated sites to reduce pollution	Green	Green	Green	Green
	C20: Implement targeted regulatory activities for key business sectors and waste service providers to improve compliance with the Workplace Recycling Regulations	Green	Green	Green	Green
	C21: Provide challenge and advice to water companies to ensure their investment programmes reduce the risks and impacts of their operations on the environment	Amber	Amber	Amber	Amber
	C22: Set the ambition for water quality improvements at a catchment scale to build collaboration and deliver prioritised action	Amber	Amber	Green	Green
	C23: Embed changes to incident management approach and ways of working to enable a prioritised response to incidents focussing resource to those which cause the most harm	Amber	Amber	Amber	Amber
	C24: Enhance our understanding of the drivers of pollution incidents across Wales to inform the actions needed to minimise pollution and ensure our incident response is targeted and effective in support of that aim	Amber	Amber	Amber	Amber
	C25: Undertake investigation and enforcement action to minimise environmental harm	Green	Green	Green	Green
	C26: Strengthen ways of working with Local Authorities and third sector partners to maximise collective action on fly-tipping	Green	Green	Amber	Amber

Key: Green = achieved; Amber = partially achieved; Red = missed

Chart 1: Actual reported position for each quarter (along with anticipated year end position from each quarter)



Annex 2 – Internal Performance Report

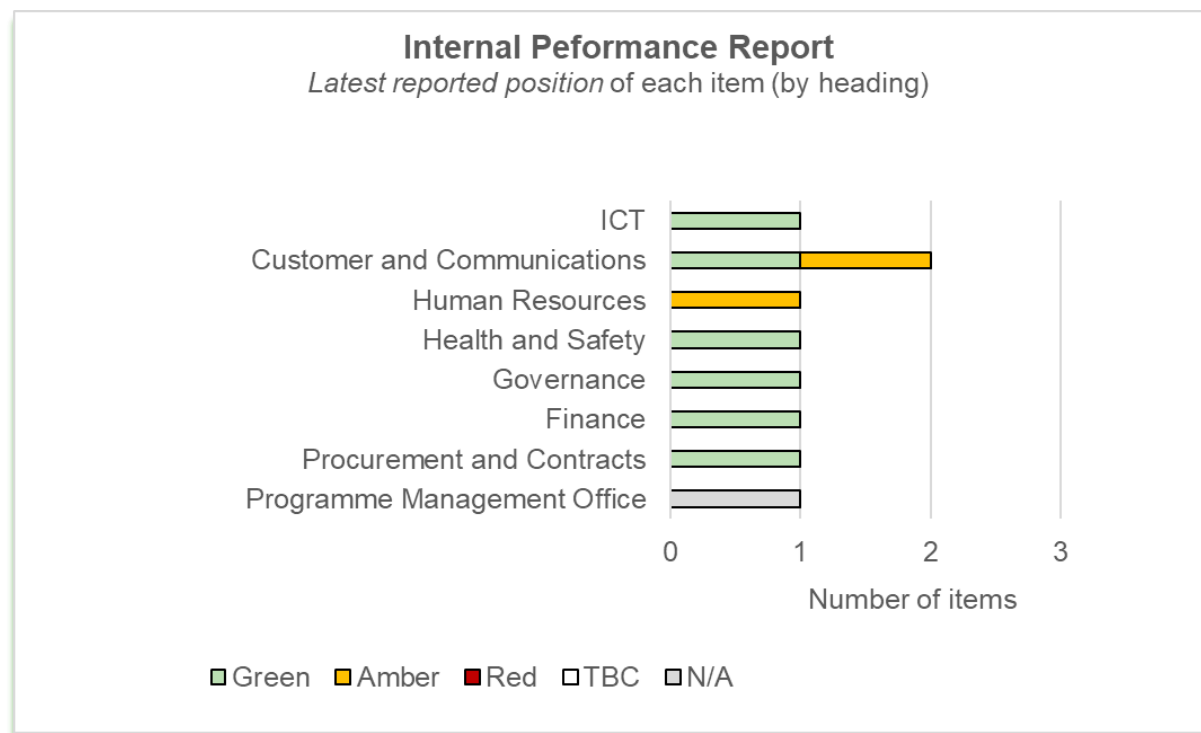
The following pages provide the performance snapshot at the end of quarter four in relation to key measures relating to the ‘health’ of our organisation.

Summary

The performance position* (at the end of quarter four, March 2026) for the measures covered by this report is:

- Six green
- Two amber
- No red
- One grey

(see next page for detail)



* Key: Green - achieved; Amber – partially achieved; Red – missed; Grey – N/A (Not applicable)

Amber or Red

Customer and Communications:

- **Access to Information requests** responded to within 20 days is Amber at the end of the quarter at 89%. We have seen a 38% increase in Access to Information requests this year as well as an increase in their complexity. We are taking action in relation to the staff resource, guidance and support we put towards dealing with these requests.

Human Resources:

- **Sgwrn in place** (staff priorities and development agreement) remains Amber at the end of the year, at 68%. This has previously been discussed at Executive Team. Collective action was taken by staff and managers across our organisation to address this, which improved the position from 39% (Red) at the end of quarter two.

* Key: Green - achieved; Amber – partially achieved; Red – missed; Grey – N/A (Not applicable)

Green

ICT:

- **Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) reported incidents** is Green at the end of the quarter with no investigations ongoing and none requiring ICO reporting during the quarter.

Customer and Communications:

- **Access to Information requests** responded to within 20 days is Amber at the end of the quarter at 89%.
- **Complaints** responded to within service level is Green at the end of the quarter at 98%.

Health and Safety:

- **Health & Safety Near Miss reporting** is now Green with 47 near miss reports for March, which is an increase from March last year. In quarter two this item was Red.

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 95% at the end of the quarter.

Finance:

- **Payments performance** to our suppliers remains Green at the end of the quarter at 98%.

Procurement and Contracts:

- **Retrospective orders** Green at the end of the year with 5% of purchase orders being retrospective.

Programme Management Office:

- **Programmes and Projects Management** is Grey, as this item does not report a performance status as it is focussed on risk to delivery.

* Key: Green - achieved; Amber – partially achieved; Red – missed; Grey – N/A (Not applicable)

Annex 3 – Service Metrics Detail

2025/26 Quarter 4 – Year End

Performance of NRW Services

This section sets out the metrics demonstrating the performance of:

- Development Planning Advice Service (DPAS)
- Permitting Service
- Regulatory Enforcement Service

Development Planning Advice Service¹

Key messages

The land use planning system is a key strategic delivery mechanism for managing the environment and natural resources sustainably. We are a specialist or statutory consultee in the development management process. This means that applicants, and authorities determining planning applications, should consult us on proposed schemes, which meet one or more of the

¹ data relates to quarter four 2025/26

criteria for where we are identified as a specialist or statutory consultee. When consulted we are required to provide a substantive response within prescribed statutory timescales.

In Quarter **four** we delivered:

- 100% of all formal consultations relating to Developments of National Significance (DNS) and Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIP) were responded to within the required timescales. These included major renewable energy developments.
- 100% of Town and Country Planning Act (TCPA) “major” statutory pre-application consultations from developers were responded to within the required timescales.
- 98% of TCPA “major” planning consultations from Planning Authorities were responded to within the required timescales. These included large housing developments.
- 99% of TCPA “minor” planning consultations from Planning Authorities were responded to within the required timescales.

Performance demonstrates continued compliance with statutory requirements during the quarter.

	Default statutory timeframes to respond, unless extension agreed with customer	Quarter 3 2025/26				Quarter 2 2025/26				Quarter 1 2025/26			
		Numbers received during the quarter	Numbers responded to in the quarter	Number late (outside of default/agreed extension)	% compliance	Numbers received during the quarter	Numbers responded to in the quarter	Number late (outside of default/agreed extension)	% compliance	Numbers received during the quarter	Numbers responded to in the quarter	Number late (outside of default/agreed extension)	% compliance
Town & Country Planning Act (TCPA) Minor Applications	21	1642	1660	11	99%	1431	1426	16	99%	1414	1390	20	99%
Town & Country Planning Act (TCPA) "Major" Statutory Pre-applications	28	84	88	0	100%	80	72	0	100%	72	80	6	92%
Town & Country Planning Act (TCPA) Major	21	382	367	6	98%	302	307	4	99%	347	356	6	98%
Wales Infrastructure Consent (WIC): Statutory request for Pre-application service	29	0	0	0	100%	Reporting starts Quarter 3							

Development of National significance (DNS)/ Wales Infrastructure Consent Formal (WIC) Statutory pre-application	42	9	10	0	100%	8	5	0	100%	9	13	0	100%
Development of National significance (DNS)/ Wales Infrastructure Consent (WIC)	35	13	14	0	100%	22	15	0	100%	21	23	0	100%
Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIP)	42	7	4	0	100%	12	7	0	100%	7	4	0	100%
Local Development Plan	vari es	12	13	0	100%	12	13	0	100%	9	12	0	100%

The number of consultations received within a quarter may differ from the number of consultations responded to, as consultations can span reporting periods.

Natural Resources Wales (NRW) is required to produce an Annual Report on planning performance to Welsh Ministers by 1 July each year. To mirror this annual reporting cycle, and to allow sufficient time for data validation and assurance (given the scale of the dataset), it has been agreed that in-year performance is reported to Sponsorship one quarter in arrears.

Reported figures reflect the number of consultations received, recognising that multiple consultations may relate to a single planning application.

Planning casework is managed jointly by Development Planning and Marine Casework teams.

Performance should be considered in the context of agreed extensions to statutory timescales, which are used where necessary to support proportionate, high-quality advice and decision-making.

Performance is assessed using the following RAG thresholds: Green: 98% and above. Amber: 94% – 97%. Red: below 94%.

Permitting Service

Key messages

In quarter four we:

- **Maintained high performance** for Marine, Species and Forestry permit applications compared to statutory timescales/ agreed level of service.
- **Reduced Queues** (delays in allocation to a Permitting Officer) in Water Quality and Water Resources regimes and sustained lower queue times in the Installations/RSR regimes.
- **Experienced increased pressures** in the Waste and Species regimes due to an upturn in application numbers relative to staff resources. Use of Agency staff and recruitment in the Species Team will help relieve pressures in 2026/27. Staff balancing to workload is under observation in the Waste Team.
- **Water Resources Permitting recovery** – determination timeliness improved again in quarter 4. This was expected as the team completed programmed licence renewals work where deadlines are not critical to operational needs. Queue reductions will likely result in improved KPI performance in 2026/27. We are developing plans to address emerging risks to service delivery associated with water company AMP8 engineering works. These will involve a combination of process improvements and staff/consultancy resource.
- **Installations/RSR Permitting recovery** – delays on allocation are being sustained around 9 months leading to gradual increased levels of KPI performance. These improvements are being established through a combination of developing new staff to full competence and using two external consultants to deliver specific permitting outcomes.

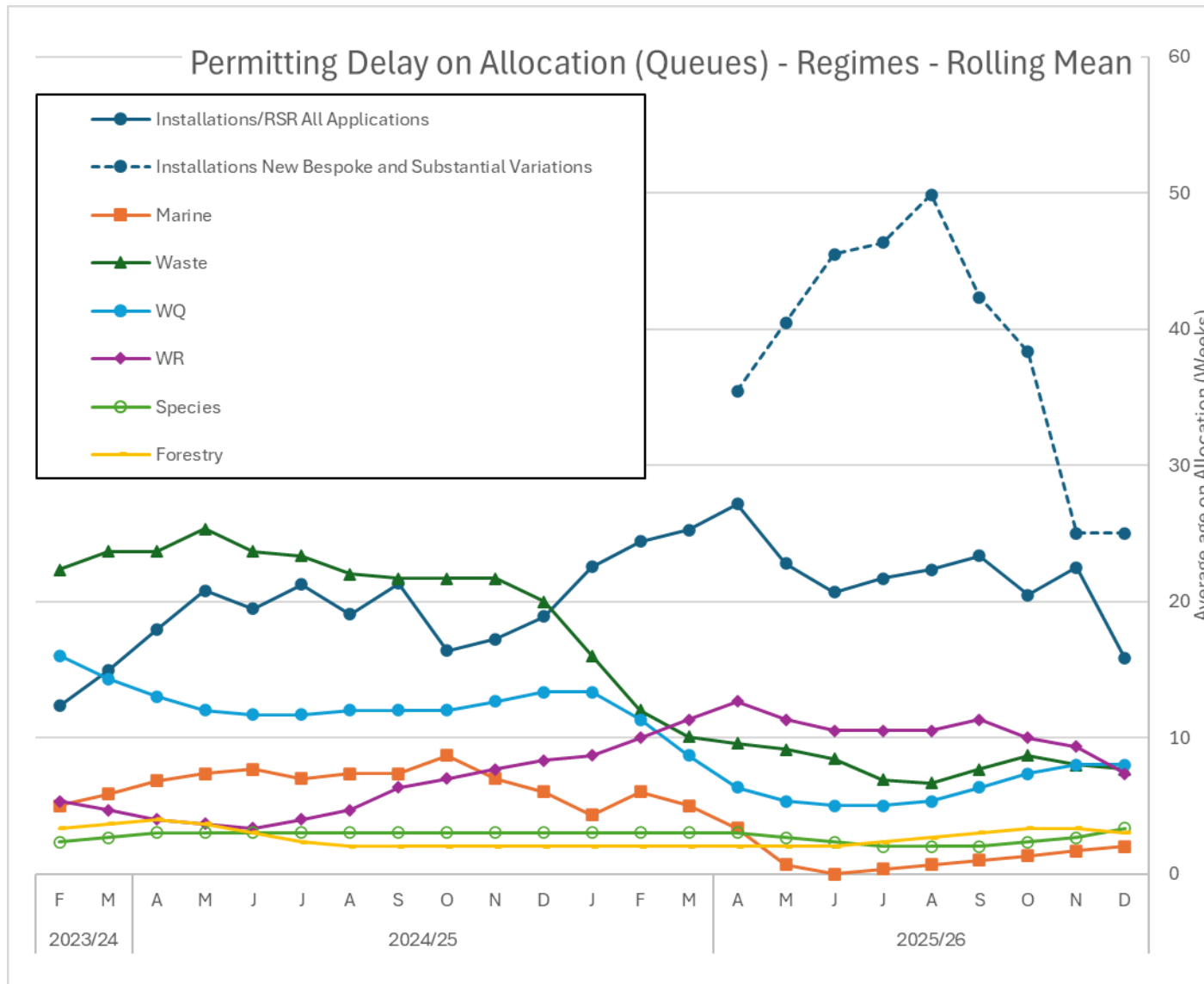
Ongoing improvements in service delivery throughout 2026/27 are somewhat dependent the volume and timing of new applications associated with industrial growth, decarbonisation and nuclear new build.

	Permit Determination²				
Regime	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	2025/26 – (number of decisions made in brackets)
Waste	77%	74%	71%	76%	76% (134)
Installations/RSR	60%	79%	29%	85%	67% (71)
Water Quality	84%	100%	50%	83%	72% (407)
Water Resources	57%	33%	68%	55%	50% (162)
Marine	100%	100%	100%	97%	99% (146)
Species	96%	95%	94%	87%	92% (1598)
Forestry	94%	98%	92%	91%	95% (448)

² We have statutory timescales for many of the permit types, where these don't exist we have agreed service levels. This information is in the public domain. "95% of applications are determined within statutory timescales or agreed service levels"

Overall (numerical mean)	84%	88%	84%	85%	87% (2966)
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Red = 0-60%; Amber = 61-94% ; Green = 95-100%



Regulatory Enforcement Service

Key messages:

NRW regulate a range of activities and apply a suite of enforcement responses for non-compliant or illegal activities to protect the environment, prevent pollution and ensure those we regulate prioritise environmental responsibilities. We undertake enforcement, to ensure that offences are dealt with consistently in a firm, fair and proportionate manner, with a focus on preventing and deterring further harm to the environment. We adopt a risk-based approach to enforcement, acting where there is evidence of an environmental offence and where there is public interest.

Key Messages Year to date (2025):

- Up to 5 January 2026, our enforcement activity in 2025 resulted in 1,394 enforcement cases, covering 2,161 separate breaches.
- While our enforcement effort this year is in line with previous years, the reduction between 2024 and 2025 is attributed to a change in the way we record advice and guidance issued in our inspections programme under the Water Resources (Control of Agricultural Pollution) Regulations 2021.
- We use the full range of enforcement and sanctioning tools available to us, in combination, to achieve the best outcomes. The choice of tool used is dependent on the severity and nature of the offence, the willingness of the offender to comply with regulatory requirements, the evidential threshold and public interest factors. While serious breaches may warrant prosecution, our primary objective is to protect the environment by driving long-term compliance with environmental regulations.
- As of 5 January 2026, NRW has almost 359 cases remaining open and under investigation. This is due to the nature of our investigative and enforcement work, given the time it can take to investigate an incident, identify potential offenders, obtain legal opinion, and update our systems on progress and enforcement outcomes. In addition, a number of cases are being investigated post-conviction under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002.

Year	Total Cases	Total Offences	Offenders	Companies	Individuals
2021	871	1,277	922	336	586
2022	891	1,244	944	315	629
2023	871	1,371	873	330	543
2024	1,365	2,435	1,268	632	636
2025 (YTD)	1,394	2,161	1,297	604	693
Total	5,392	8,488	5,304	2,217	3,087

Enforcement output	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025 ***
Under investigation	42	77	194	281	399
No further action	99	60	72	32	103
Advice & guidance *	386	314	448	1,403	788
Warning letters *	525	509	435	480	508
Notices	85	82	48	64	93
Fixed Penalty Notice	1	3	3		3

Enforcement output	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025 ***
Permit revocation	2	2			3
Civil Sanctions **	17	6	1	7	17
Formal caution	40	34	26	36	35
Insufficient evidence		5	1	3	2
Prosecutions					
• Cases	33	62	87	81	64
• Charges	77	147	139	118	102
• Unsuccessful	3	16	13	7	
• Total fines	£342,594	£603,856	£716,820	£151,782	£464,525
• Costs awarded	£178,901	£144,450	£113,892	£95,542	£150,046

*This refers to advice and guidance or warning letters issued as an enforcement action. It therefore does not include informal advice, or advice, guidance or warnings that we issue during a compliance and monitoring activity

**NRW has a limited range of civil sanctions available currently