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Wales

Summary of responses to the proposed Internal Drainage Districts' boundary changes consultation

July 2017

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1. Introduction

Internal Drainage Districts (IDDs) are typically found in low-lying land where boundaries are determined by physical, not political attributes, and are operated in accordance with the Land Drainage Act (1991). Natural Resources Wales (NRW), the Board who administer the IDD in Wales, is primarily responsible for managing water levels and reducing flood risk in IDDs through the management of drainage channels, ordinary watercourses, pumping stations and control structures. This is possible through the payment of drainage rates from landowners within each IDD. Drainage rates are set annually by the Board of each IDD. Rates vary depending upon the quality and area of land within each IDD. In addition to the drainage rates, an annual payment is made to the Board by the Local Authority where the IDD is situated. This is called a Special Levy and is also set annually by the Board.

The quality of land, or its use, may change over time and land parcels that once needed to be part of an IDD may no longer be suitable, and vice versa. Considering this, NRW has conducted a review of the current boundaries of 13 IDDs¹ within Wales with a view to revising those boundaries where appropriate. Assessment for suitability of the boundaries, and the proposed revisions developed, was based on four principal factors: flooding, land drainage, biodiversity and locally sourced evidence and knowledge.

The results from this review concluded that 3 IDDs had suitable boundaries, and changes were proposed to boundaries of 10 IDDs.

There are 14 IDDs in total within Wales, but it was decided early in the review to exclude Borth Bog IDD from the review due to ongoing studies into the management of Cors Fochno UNESCO biosphere reserve, SSSI and SAC which is located within this IDD.

2. Proposed Internal Drainage District Boundary Changes Consultation Methodology

On the 6th March 2017, NRW published documents on our website detailing proposed changes to the boundaries of 10 IDDs for consultation. Each of these documents were accompanied by maps showing the proposed changes. These describe where the IDD will either expand to incorporate more land, or reduce in size by excluding parcels of land.

A letter was sent to the 1068 ratepayers within the 10 IDDs where changes to the boundaries were proposed informing them of the consultation details, as well as emails to ratepayers with a known address. The Local Authorities and Farming Unions were also informed.

The public consultation ran for six weeks from 6th March 2017 until 17th April 2017 and included the following questions for consideration:

Consultation Question 1

Do you agree with the proposed changes to the IDD? (Yes / No).

If not, please explain what you think is missing.

Consultation Question 2

If you answered No to question 1, which factor is this based on:

- Flood risk
- Land drainage
- Biodiversity
- Local knowledge
- Other

Please explain your reason

Consultation Question 3

Are there any additional changes that you feel should be considered?

Yes / No

Consultation Question 4

If you answered Yes to question 3, please explain in detail and provide supporting information (maps, photos, etc.) where possible.

Consultation Question 5

Do you possess any information that might be of relevance to the proposed boundary changes?

Yes / No

Consultation Question 6

If you answered Yes to the question above, please explain in detail and provide supporting information (maps, photos, etc.) where possible.

The proposed IDD boundary changes consultation can be accessed via the following page:

<https://naturalresources.wales/guidance-and-advice/environmental-topics/consultations/our-own-consultations-closed/internal-drainage-districts-boundary-review-consultation/?lang=en>

This document provides a summary of the responses received through the consultation on the proposed IDD boundary changes and indicates how we have taken those responses into consideration for the final proposals.

3. Summary of responses

21 responses were received to our consultation on proposed changes to the boundaries of IDD's in Wales, supplied from 16 organisations and interested parties. Data protection legislation prevents us naming individuals who have not given permission for their details to be made public. A copy of the responses is available on request.

Responses to the questions in the consultation are summarised below:

Powysland IDD – summary of responses

3 responses received:

- 2 respondents agreed with the proposals.

- 1 respondent disagreed with the proposals, based upon flood risk, and supplied information to explain additional changes they suggested.

Llanfrothen IDD – summary of responses

2 responses received:

- 1 respondent agreed with the proposals.
- 1 respondent disagreed with the proposals, based upon flood risk, land drainage and biodiversity. They supplied information to explain their reasoning.
- Neither respondent suggested additional changes.

Afon Ganol IDD – summary of responses

1 response received:

- The respondent disagreed with the proposals, based upon flood risk, land drainage and local knowledge. They supplied information to explain their reasoning.
- The respondent did not suggest additional changes.

Afon Conwy IDD – summary of responses

2 responses received:

- 1 respondent agreed with the proposals.
- 1 respondent disagreed with the proposals, based upon flood risk and an ‘other’ factor. The respondent suggested additional changes, and supplied information to explain their reasoning.

Glaslyn Pencyflog IDD – summary of responses

2 responses received:

- Both respondents agreed with the proposals.
- Neither suggested additional changes.

Mawddach & Wnion IDD – summary of responses

2 responses received:

- Both respondents agreed with the proposals.
- Neither suggested additional changes.

Caldicot & Wentlooge IDD – summary of responses

4 responses received:

- All respondents agreed with the proposals.
- 2 respondents suggested additional changes, and supplied information to explain their reasoning.

Lower Wye IDD – summary of responses

2 responses received:

- Both respondents agreed with the proposals.
- Neither suggested additional changes.

Harlech & Maentwrog IDD – summary of responses

1 response received:

- Respondent agreed with the proposals.
- The respondent did not suggest additional changes.

Arduwy IDD – summary of responses

2 responses received:

- 1 respondent agreed with the proposals.
- 1 respondent disagreed with the proposal, based upon flood risk and land drainage. They supplied information to explain their reasoning.
- Neither respondent suggested additional changes.

4. Overview of key issues raised and our response

For each IDD in turn, we provide a summary below of the key issues raised during the consultation and present action we have taken to finalise the proposed changes to the IDD boundaries:

Powysland IDD

The two proposed changes were not challenged, so will be included in our final proposed boundary changes. A suggestion was submitted by a consultee to increase storage and reduce flow rates in the upper catchment affecting this IDD. We will not increase the size of the IDD by extending the boundary to include these upland areas, as IDDs are set up to specifically manage the water levels in low-lying areas. The IDD maintenance and asset management works can only be carried out within the IDD boundary, so this type of work cannot be carried out within the IDD's remit. The recommendations and information provided will be included and used in other NRW work areas which are reducing flood risk by working in upper areas of river catchments, including the Severn, to increase water storage and reduce storm runoff rates.

Llanfrothen IDD

A consultee disagreed with our proposal to include additional land in this IDD. Information submitted by the consultee detailed how the land we proposed to include within the IDD only floods when the Glaslyn river has very high flows and breaks its banks, and that this land therefore actually helps to reduce flood risk to parts of the IDD where houses and roads are situated in addition to farmland. They described how the land does not benefit from the ditch system within the IDD, is not connected to it, or reliant on the IDD ditches for water level management. The consultee highlighted that additional drainage maintenance on this land could be detrimental to sensitive ecosystems, and significantly degrade areas that are designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), particularly the alluvial wet woodland.

These comments were appraised by NRW staff and the Llanfrothen IDD Advisory Group. Both agreed with the consultee and as a result we will no longer propose to include this land in the IDD.

All consultees agreed to remove the small parcel of land from this IDD proposed in the consultation, so this will be included in our final proposals for this IDD's boundary changes.

Afon Ganol IDD

The consultee provided reasoning why they disagreed with our proposal to remove land from this IDD. The consultee reported flooding issues around the culverted watercourse beneath the road near the College / Golf Course boundary. With the proposed boundary change they suggested a duplication of efforts could be required with the IDD continuing to address issues one side of the road and the Council on the other side. They suggested

that maintenance works needed to address this flooding would be best coordinated by the IDD.

We have considered this information and agree with the consultee. Therefore, we will not propose to remove this land from the IDD so that the land can be efficiently managed. This will result in no changes proposed to this IDD boundary.

Afon Conwy IDD

A consultee recommended we remove an isolated land parcel from the IDD in addition to those proposed in the consultation as the land floods during large rainfall events. This has been considered, and the suggestion to remove this additional area of land has been rejected as it still receives benefits from the IDD operation by being protected from all but the large flood events.

The land parcels proposed to be removed will be taken forward to the final proposals.

Glaslyn Pencyflog IDD

The proposal to remove the small isolated area of the IDD was agreed by those that responded so will be taken forward to the final proposals to alter the IDD boundary.

Mawddach & Wnion IDD

The proposal to remove multiple isolated areas of the IDD was agreed by those that responded so will be taken forward to the final proposals to alter the IDD boundary.

Caldicot & Wentlooge IDD

The proposal to exclude a small part of the IDD was agreed by all respondents so will be taken forward to the final change proposals.

Two additional areas were recommended to be included in the IDD, each by different consultees. In one of these areas, the consultee suggested the need for the IDD to carry out water level management work due to the flood risk. We investigated this suggestion and agreed with the consultee's comments, therefore we will extend the IDD to include this land in our proposed boundary changes. The second additional area that was suggested by a consultee to be included in this IDD was also due to flood risk. Upon investigation, it was found that this area would not benefit from being included in the IDD as it is already defended from flooding.

Lower Wye IDD

The proposal to remove three small isolated areas of the IDD was agreed by those that responded so will be taken forward to the final proposals.

Harlech & Maentwrog IDD

The proposal to remove multiple areas of the IDD was agreed by those that responded so will be taken forward to the final proposals.

Ardudwy IDD

We have considered the information supplied by a consultee who disagreed with our proposal to remove a parcel of land from the IDD. They detailed how they want the land to remain in the IDD so that the drainage and flood risk can be managed. We agree with their submission and will not propose to remove this parcel of land in our final proposals.

We received agreement from consultees to remove the other proposed land parcel from the IDD, so this proposal will be taken forward to the final proposals.

5. Next Steps

We will make modifications needed to the IDD boundaries proposed in the Public Consultation based on the responses we received as detailed above. These final proposals will then be submitted as a formal Scheme for the alteration of IDD boundaries to the Cabinet Secretary for Environment and Rural Affairs under Section 3(1) of the Land Drainage Act 1991. Once submitted, we will publicise the Scheme, advise people where it can be inspected and send copies to every local authority affected. There will then be a month for people to make representations to the Cabinet Secretary. After that it is for the Cabinet Secretary to consider the Scheme and any representations received. The Cabinet Secretary then, if minded to, makes an Order confirming the Scheme in accordance with the Land Drainage Act. NRW can then administer the boundary changes through adjusting the drainage rates and Special Levies accordingly.

Those who wish to follow up their responses to the Public Consultation, or points made within this document, in more detail are welcome to contact us.

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