

Meeting Notes

Title of meeting:	Wales Water Management Forum
Location:	Virtual via MS Teams
Date of meeting:	14/03/2024
Attendees present:	Natalie Hall (Chair) Ceri Jones (NRW) Ruth Johnston (NRW) Tony Harrington (DCWW), Richard Blackwell (WRW for United Utilities) Jill Howells (NRW) Inoka Manatunga (NRW) Elaine Harrison (Confor) Lia Murphy (Ofwat) Gail Davies-Walsh (WEL rep – Afonydd Cymru) Elizabeth Franks (HD) Dennis Matheson (TFA) James Dowling (WG) Laura Moss (DWI) Sharon Elwood (DCWW) Kate Snow (UU) Craig Smith (Coal Authority)
Apologies:	Steve Ormerod (Chair), Ruth Jenkins, Rachel Lewis-Davies, Gareth Parry, Adrian Jones, Phil Stone
Secretariat:	Ceri Jones

Item 1 Welcome, Introductions and apologies – Natalie Hall (NRW acting as Chair for Professor Steve Ormerod)

As Chair for this session, Natalie Hall (NRW) opened the meeting setting out logistics for holding the virtual Forum.

The session was split into a wider forum session on NRW's Water Quality Monitoring Review work and then focused on WWMF specific work.

Item 2 Wider Forum Session –

NRW Water Quality Monitoring Review (Luke Tyler, NRW)

Luke Tyler led the session which had been designed as an interactive session to gauge members suggestions. The water quality monitoring review is an internal NRW project which looking at the water quality monitoring which NRW is undertaking and the future direction of travel for this programme. The process of review and different types of monitoring was shared and was included in the supporting slide pack.

NRW water monitoring is a regulatory obligation, this includes meeting the requirements of the WFD Regulations. NRW conducts its monitoring programme to support these purposes. A similar approach for chemicals is going to be developed risk-based monitoring for emerging chemical pollutants. New forms of innovation and approaches which can be used as part of monitoring are being explored. Sharing of outputs of this review and incorporating feedback and conducting interviews and one to one meeting with key stakeholders are part of the process. In a years' time, it will be phased into implementation, where changes will be implemented into monitoring based on findings of the review.

LT welcomes everyone to consider the question of what is most important to everyone considering own interests and priorities.

Monitoring is conducted for different purposes with set resources. It is important to determine how the resources are being used and how effectively they are used and where the priorities lie.

LT poses these questions to the forum to consider:

- What is most important from the monitoring?
- What are the expectations?
- What should be the focus?

Next steps, LT to revisit the group and update on the project and developments. To discuss progress, findings and which options were progressed. Also, how the feedback from the responses of the group were used and how it shaped the approach.

Work is expected to be completed in 2024 and the Implementation Plan for this is expected to commence at the beginning of 2025.

ACTION: LT to share options that have been chosen for the water quality monitoring programme including how feedback from this session has been used to inform NRW's final approach

Item 3 WWMF only

Agree Meeting Notes and review actions from the last meeting (Natalie Hall, Chair, NRW)

The minutes from the previous session were agreed with the addition of Dennis Matheson's name as attendees, these will be translated and made available on the [WWMF webpage](#).

CJ ran through the action log that was created to support the work of WWMF (this sets out the forum actions rather than individual organisation work based actions). Going forward this will be used to support the sessions.

Actions were complete. There was one new action to arrange a follow up session following the Diazinon wider forum session which was held in January.

ACTION: CJ to follow up with WLMF secretariat next steps following the Diazinon session

Item 4 Members contributions and Update Paper - All

Hafren Dyfrdwy update on PR24 (Liz Franks, Hafren Dyfrdwy)

Following on from DCWWs PR24 update at the previous session LF provided an overview of what Hafren Dyfrdwy have submitted to Ofwat and what is proposed for the 2025/2030 plan. It has been a few months since submission of the plans and there should be a draft determination in a few months.

Hafren Dyfrdwy includes Wrexham and North Powys. The key points of the presentation can be found in the slides which have been shared with WWMF.

The current AMP priority is to continue to deliver the programme recognising that there is a limitation on resources. There continues to be a focus on improvement and delivery for the customers. With a growing population in Wales, the programme needs to make sure it serves the area it covers, recognising the challenges from climate change and the need to adapt processes accordingly to protect the environment. Also recognising the changing needs and circumstances of customers.

There is £250 million pounds to invest over the next five years. This is a significant step up from the PR19 investment. From the point of view of guaranteed future water supply there is a continued push on leakage which is a significant customer priority.

Headlines within water price control:

- Network resilience
- Reservoir safety
- Cyber security
- Biodiversity
- Net Zero – smart water meters and water efficiency

- Emissions
- Catchment management – improve resilience and reduce treatment cost.

There are many opportunities for collaboration with fellow forum members.

ACTION: LF to share the presentation with Lia Murphy

River Basin Management Plan (Ceri Jones, NRW)

There had been an action at the last meeting to include a regular session at WWMF to focus on the River Basin Management Plan (RBMP) work – both the implementation of the current RBMPs together with the planning work for the next planned update in 2027. A paper was shared (Paper 2 – RBMP Progress Update) in advance of the meeting to enable members to come prepared with any discussion points and contributions. The purpose of this work is to improve how WWMF works both collaboratively and collectively for the RBMP programme.

ACTION: ALL - the paper includes next steps and questions for the forum's consideration. Members are asked to consider these and send any feedback to CJ

At the time of the meeting, NRW was completing its Internal corporate reporting which is looking at progress with the delivery of the current RBMPs, this work will be shared in the next WWMF paper and will also be used for the work of the new RBMP Task and Finish group which is being set up to support WWMF. Progress tracking does not include wholesale analysis of the detail within the RBMPs, this is undertaken for each update of the RBMPs which is completed every six years. This current review focuses on the direction of travel to get us to 2027 and will also support the thinking for the required updates for the 2027 RBMPs. Members were asked to share any good examples from their existing stakeholder networks to show progress that could be useful to use as a model for this work.

ACTION: All to share any good examples of progress reports that could inform the approach to the RBMP reporting review work

The paper outlined the timeline and approach for the 2025 progress review report which is required under the WFD Regulations, publishing this report is a legislative and post Brexit requirement. This will be shared with the forum so that the members expertise and knowledge can be fed into it. Previously, this has been driven by Europe with their guidelines and expectations, however this time, under the current legislation it is up to NRW to publish the review report in a format that NRW sees appropriate. The legislation does not indicate the level of detail required. It is important to highlight that there is a significant cross border element. NRW is working with the EA for the cross-border requirements.

The proposed timeline for the fourth cycle updated RBMPs was shared in the paper and the first consultation which is Working Together which will be starting in June 2024. The overall timeline and proposed approach for the fourth cycle NRW is currently in alignment with the EA and both organisations will endeavour to stay in alignment.

A draft of the 'Working Together Citizen Space' test link was shared with the forum to engage members and invite any thoughts and suggestions prior to this work going live in June for formal consultation.

Forward look and members contributions

Water Resources West shared a written update in support of WWMF. All members were invited to share any additional contributions. There was interest on the proposed new National Park and a suggestion to add this to the forward look for the session.

Item 5 Groundwater in Wales (Dave Jones, Kay Roberts, Ian Jones, NRW)

NRWs Groundwater Team provided an informative and engaging presentation on the groundwater work across Wales. This included:

- Groundwater in Wales
- NRW's role in managing and protecting groundwater
- Evidence that has been collected from monitoring networks
- Priorities for groundwater in the future

Slides were made available to WWMF members and included links to find more information on the background of the hydrology of Wales if members were interested in more detail.

In Wales less than 5% of the public water supply comes from groundwater whereas in SE England the figure is above 70%. It is an important source of water to rural properties who are away from the mains network and are especially vulnerable to pollution and climate change. Where groundwater has been affected by pollution it is very difficult and expensive to remediate.

Abstraction licence strategy also known as Catchment Abstraction Management strategies (CAMS), regulate the amount of water taken from the environment and ensures that not too much water is taken from the environment and ensures sustainable water levels of rivers and lakes which is critical for our natural environment. Resources Assessment Management (RAM) ledgers to determine the water availability status are in place for the CAMs areas to ensure that abstraction is not over licenced or over abstracted and that water is available for all.

In Wales, there are 38 ground water bodies. The monitoring network includes 130 points across Wales, located in a variety of geologies. The deepest borehole is 220m, but the average borehole depth is 50m. The majority of the boreholes have been drilled by NRW or predecessors. This work is linked in with the water quality monitoring review work that Luke Tyle had presented earlier to ensure that connection between surface waters and groundwater.

Good groundwater quality is important for the environment, nature, and people.

Focus for next few years:

- Review monitoring - ensuring NRW are looking for the right things in the right location
- Looking at shallow ground and surface water
- Ensuring NRW has the capability and capacity to monitor emerging contaminants
- Nutrient outputs
- Climate change

ACTION: Groundwater Team to feedback to Laura Moss who asked a question in relation to the State of Groundwater report in 2023 and if NRW has the 122 results for PFOA and PFOS for 2023

ACTION: Groundwater Team to feedback to Gail Davies Walsh's question 'Could NRW confirm how often and when the RAM ledgers were last reviewed in Wales? How are private abstraction licences audited? What proportion have been reviewed?'

Item 6 AOB and date of next meeting

Next meeting is confirmed as 7th of November 2024.