

Agenda

Title of meeting:	NRW Board Public Meeting
Date of meeting:	Wednesday 29th July 2026
Time of meeting:	9:00 – 12:00
Location:	Virtual

Time	Item
09:00 (30 mins)	Directors' Session
9:30 (5 mins)	Item 1. Open Meeting • Welcome • Declaration of Interests • Explain conduct of meeting Sponsor and Presenter: Neil Sachdev (Chair) Summary: To NOTE any declarations of interest
9:35 (5 mins)	Item 2. Review Minutes and Action and Decision Log 2A. Review Minutes from 20th May Public Board Meeting 2B. Review Public Action and Decision Log Sponsor and Presenter: Neil Sachdev (Chair) Summary: To APPROVE the minutes of the previous meeting and the action and decision log
9:40 (10 mins)	Item 3. Update from the Chair Sponsor and Presenter: Neil Sachdev (Chair) Summary: To NOTE the Chair's update to the Board

9:50
(20 mins)

Item 4. Report from the Chief Executive

Sponsor and Presenter: Ceri Davies, Chief Executive

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

Paper ref: 26-07-B01

10:10
(20 mins)

Item 5. Update Report of Committees

Sponsors and Presenters: Committee Chairs

Committee/Fora met since last Board:-

- Audit & Risk Assurance Committee – 4th June & 8th July (Annual Report & Accounts Meeting) – **Paper ref: 26-07-B03 & 26-07-B14**
- Finance Committee – 2nd July – **Paper ref: 26-07-B11**
- People Committee – 24th June – **Paper ref: 26-07-B04**
- Protected Areas Committee – 11th June – **Paper ref: 26-07-B02**
- Wales Land Management Forum – 6th June
- National Access Forum for Wales – 7th July
- Strategic Delivery Committee – 13th July - **Verbal**

Committees/Fora not due to meet until after Board:-

- Evidence Advisory Committee
- Flood Risk Management Committee
- Land Estate Committee
- Wales Water Management Forum
- Wales Fisheries Forum

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

10:30
(15 mins)

Item 6. Finance Performance Report

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

Presenter: Rob Bell, Head of Finance

Summary: To APPROVE the change in forecast and to SCRUTINISE the financial performance.

Paper Ref: 26-07-B06

10:45
(10 mins)

Item 7. Annual Modern Slavery Statement

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

Summary: To APPROVE the Annual Modern Slavery Statement 2026-27 and the Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Commitments: Five-Year Plan (2026-31).

Paper Ref: 26-07-B05

**10:55
(10 mins)**

Break

**11:05
(20 mins)**

Item 8. Wellbeing Health & Safety Annual Report

Sponsor: Louise White, Executive Director of People, Fleet & Facilities
Presenter: Charlotte Morgan, Wellbeing, Health & Safety Manager

Summary: To APPROVE the Wellbeing, Health & Safety and Learning & Development Annual Report for 2025-26.

Paper Ref: 26-07-B07

**11:25
(20 mins)**

Item 9. Business Plan Performance Dashboard Quarterly Update – Q1

Sponsor: Prys Davies, Executive Director Strategy, Policy and Evidence

Presenters: WBO Leads; Sarah Williams, Head of Corporate Strategy and PMO

Summary: To APPROVE the Business Plan 2026/27 Q1 Performance Report. To NOTE the Internal Performance Report and to NOTE the principal delivery risks and mitigations identified in the report.

Paper ref: 26-07-B08

**11:45
(10 mins)**

Item 10. How did we do in this meeting?

Sponsor: Neil Sachdev, Chair

Summary: Review of the meeting

**11:55
(5 mins)**

Item 11. AOB

12:00

Close Public Meeting

12:00

Lunch

(45 mins)

Unconfirmed Minutes

Title of meeting:	NRW Board Meeting (Public)
Location:	Llandarcy Office and Teams
Date of meeting:	20 th May 2026
Members present:	Neil Sachdev, Chair Ceri Davies, Chief Executive Sarah Albon Dr Hushneara Begum Rebecca Colley-Jones Dr Pete Fox Prof. Calvin Jones Lesley Jones Prof Rhys Jones Mark McKenna Helen Pittaway Adam Taylor
Executive Team Members Present	Prys Davies, Executive Director of Strategy, Policy and Evidence Sarah Jennings, Executive Director of Communications, Customer and Commercial Rachael Cunningham, Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Services Dominic Driver, Executive Director of National Operations Lyndsey Rawlinson, Executive Director of Place Operations
Attendees present:	Phil Williams, Head of Governance and Board Secretary (All items) Meinir Wigley, Head of Communications and Digital Transformation Mark Collins, Business Finance Team 2 Manager – item 6 Sarah Williams, Head of Corporate Strategy and Programme Management Office (PMO) – item 7 Sian Williams, Head of North West Wales – item 8 Mary Lewis, Head of Natural Resource Management Policy – item 8 Becky Favager, Head of Regulation & Permitting – item 8

	Huwel Manley, Head of South West Wales Operations – item 8 Rhian Jardine, Head of DPAS and Marine Services – item 8 Rhian Thomas, Sustainable Water & Nature Manager – item 8 Gareth Davies, Operations Manager, South West Wales – item 8 Matthew Lowe, Team Leader, Environment Team – item 8 Jonathan Jones, Team Leader, Environment Team – item 8
Observers present:	Ulfa Bennett Matthew Hywell Thomas
Apologies:	Mair Gwynant, Board Member Louise White, Executive Director of People and Facilities
Secretariat:	Rhiannon Spencer, Board Secretariat Team Leader and Deputy Board Secretary Sian Johnston, Board Secretariat Team Lauren Hughes, Board Secretariat Team Deb Lee, Board Secretariat Team
Declarations of Interest	Mark McKenna - Planning application on a Down to Earth site adjacent to/including a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)/RAMSAR (Wetlands of International Importance)/Special Area of Conservation (SAC) designated area

Item 1. Open Meeting

Sponsor and Presenter: Neil Sachdev, Chair

1. The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed everyone, including new Board member Sarah Albon. Declarations of interest and apologies were noted as above.

Item 2. Review Minutes

Item 2A. Review Minutes from 18th March Public Meeting

2. The minutes from the public Board meeting on 18th March were reviewed and agreed with minor amendments.
3. Lesley Jones raised a matter from the minutes relating to the Wales Fisheries Forum. She had recently visited a Hatchery, and it had been suggested on this visit to review the use of the Hatchery for Atlantic salmon. It was explained that in the

early years of NRW, an evidence review of introducing salmon from the hatcheries into the environment demonstrated that it could introduce greater vulnerabilities to the salmon population. The Board suggested that this be reviewed as the situation may have changed, as well as a cost benefit analysis. Assurance was provided that the original decision had not been influenced by cost.

Item 2B. Review Action Log

4. The Action Log was not reviewed.

Item 3. Update from the Chair

Sponsor and Presenter: Neil Sachdev, Chair

5. The Chair introduced the item and provided an update on matters since the last Board meeting. The new Board members had been assigned to committees; Sarah Albon would be a member of the Finance Committee (FC) and the People Committee (PC), and Mair Gwynant had been appointed as Chair of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC).
6. A site visit had taken place with the Marine team and the Chair emphasised that improved communications was needed on the excellent work that was being undertaken by colleagues across the organisation. The Chair and the Chief Executive had also met with the new Minister for Rural Resilience and Sustainability and provided an overview of the meeting, which had been a positive engagement. The Minister would be invited to a future Board meeting.

Item 4. Update from the Chief Executive

Sponsor and Presenter: Ceri Davies, Chief Executive

7. The Chief Executive introduced the item and highlighted key issues. The Forestry Commission England Board were planning a visit with NRW colleagues to discuss and learn on energy delivery. This would likely take place during the week of the Royal Welsh Agricultural Show (RWAS) and Board members would be invited to attend. NRW were also working with Forestry Commission England on Wellbeing, Health and Safety (WHS) and a group event was being organised to discuss this.
8. A new Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) had been signed with the Welsh Revenue Authority (WRA) to expand efforts against illegal waste activity. Consideration would also be given to closer collaboration with local authorities on this matter. A joint stand was being considered for the next 'Conversations with NRW' event with the public, to show how NRW and WRA worked together using both the criminal and tax system to tackle illegal waste dumping.
9. The challenges of illegal waste and fly tipping was discussed including the regulatory limitations and the need for stronger enforcement powers. The Board were informed that this had been raised with the Minister. The importance of support to those working in the sector and whether this could be improved was

highlighted. There was agreement that a discussion was needed at a future Board meeting regarding regulation.

ACTION: Secretariat to add Regulation to the Board Forward Look.

10. A meeting would be held shortly with the North Wales Ambition Board to understand what NRW could do in response to the provocation session from the Board Strategic Planning Day in April, and what actions could be undertaken to coordinate relationships. A similar approach was being undertaken with Swansea Council to build relationships for NRW to be included in early discussions when developments were taking place. Working with the Swansea Bay City Region Joint Committee would be a good example of how NRW could work in other areas across Wales, to ensure earlier involvement in development planning and environmental standards setting. The Board would be kept informed of this work.
11. Two meetings had been held with the Future Generations Commissioner (FGC) since the March Board meeting, one being a regular meeting and the other being focused on Wellbeing Objective (WBO) 4, which had been refreshed following their views and comments.
12. In response to a query regarding NRW's discussions with the FGC on looking to the future, it was explained that the use of the WBOs needed to be considered and how their use could be expanded. Clarification was provided that NRW needed to do more communications on bringing other bodies together to discuss the future and how others could contribute.
13. The Board were assured that some elements of the WBOs had been rewritten to mirror the language of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act, as well as following the FGC's input to WBO4. NRW had offered their assistance to support the FGC's work.
14. ET had been focused working with the Leadership team, supporting them in relation to leading both staff and for the environment. There would be a leadership event in the autumn to focus on the behaviours discussed during the Strategic Planning Day, resulting from the Stakeholder Perceptions Survey.
15. Work had progressed on nuclear since the March Board meeting. One of the key areas of focus was reducing complexity through the application process and improving pace for investors to be able to invest. The Welsh Government (WG) had established an Officers Group to replicate the DEFRA Group for key partners in Wales, recognising devolution but also progressing with work that could be done in the meantime.
16. Nuclear skills capacity was queried, and it was explained that NRW and the Environment Agency (EA) had a strong relationship and the EA provided resources paid for by NRW. Discussions were also ongoing with WG for investment to grow nuclear skills and it had also been raised with the new Minister.

17. In response to a query, the prospect of judicial review had been discussed when senior regulators for nuclear came together. All partners were aware of the different legislation and policy perspectives across Wales and England.
18. The Teifi Fyw Project was discussed, including learning from working in new ways. The Strategic Projects team were managing this, and their remit included being a centre of excellence for project management for the organisation. Learning from projects was embedded in their work, to take this forward for future projects.
19. The status of the proposed National Park with a new Government was queried, however this was yet to be discussed with the new Minister. Another area of work queried was the Marine Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) with a new Government in place. NRW would continue to discuss this with WG as it was a key area of concern for the new Government.
20. The new Chief Executive of Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water (DCWW) was focused on delivery, with a desire to progress work at pace. Working with WG and OfWat following the Independent Water Commission, NRW were focused on ensuring action taken by them would drive positive performance and behaviour change in DCWW.
21. The options on the Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal were discussed, and it was explained that the ongoing focus was on a longer term, more sustainable solution, looking at wider demands instead of only one part of the river. A meeting would be held in the coming week on this.

Item 5. Update Report of Committees

Sponsors and presenters: Committee Chairs

Evidence Advisory Committee (EAC) – 12th May

22. Prof. Rhys Jones, the Chair of EAC, noted that the Committee had held their May meeting in NRW's Swansea Laboratory, an informative tour of the Lab and its work had been provided. The committee restructure had been discussed and EAC had emphasised the importance of maintaining a link between the Board and the Committee. Evidence needs had been discussed and the issue of whether NRW had the capacity to analyse the data. NRW's relationships with universities had been raised, as this could help with the gap in capacity for generating and analysing data. A five year Social Science draft Plan had been presented; the focus of social science had changed since NRW had developed and it was suggested that investment was needed in this area.

Finance Committee (FC) – 6th May

23. Helen Pittaway, Chair of FC, provided an update on the recent FC meeting, where they had discussed the Financial Performance, approved the financial approval for Software Licenses, and received the twice yearly Programme Management Office

(PMO) and Contract Management Support Service (CMSS). The budget had changed slightly since the last time the Board had seen it, and FC endorsed these changes following approval by the Chief Executive and the Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Services (F&CS).

24. The Forward Look had also been discussed considering the new committee structure, and it had been agreed that all Capital projects would be brought to FC for monitoring. The Finance Strategy had also been received at the meeting, and this would be brought to the July Board meeting.

Flood Risk Management Committee (FRMC) – 29th April

25. Dr. Pete Fox, Chair of FRMC, highlighted the key issue discussed at the latest FRMC meeting, on discounting rates. As the benefits eroded over time, there was a challenge to be made to WG on discounting rates as future generations needed to be considered.

Land Estate Committee (LEC) – 7th May

26. Prof. Calvin Jones, Chair of LEC updated the Board on the recent LEC meeting. The regular Head of Land Stewardship and Head of Strategic Commercial Development reports were received. Other items discussed were the Timber Sales Plan and the Growth and Value Strategy. Two issues were raised during both items, one being that there were limitations for NRW whilst adhering to WG's aspirations and directions. The second being that holistic metrics were needed to ensure any value NRW provided was captured, and the Board agreed that these were needed. These could also help when lobbying for funding from WG.

Wales Land Management Forum – 9th March

27. Prof. Rhys Jones, the Chair of the Wales Land Management Forum, highlighted an issue not included in the Report. The membership of the Forum was being explored, to consider if the membership could be expanded to include organisations such as the RSPB. In response to a query, it was explained that there was a wide variety of views on the Forum relating to species in peril.

National Access Forum for Wales (NAFW) – 7th March

28. Lesley Jones, Chair of National Access Forum noted that there was no further update as the Board had received an update on the last NAFW meeting in the March Board meeting. However, she reflected again on the positive discussions that was had in the workshop, engaging with a wide range of organisations.

Item 6. Finance Performance Report

Presenters: Mark Collins, Business Finance Team 2 Manager

29. The Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Services (F&CS) introduced the item and noted that Rob Bell, Head of Finance was due to retire in September 2026.
30. The Business Finance Team 2 Manager provided an overview of the Finance Performance Report, key points included financial performance and summary of focus areas from this financial year. Overall, the budget had increased by £1.2m since January 2026 taking the final budget to £294.2m. The increase was related to £4.4m WG Grant in Aid (GiA) which was offset by reductions in commercial, charge balances, European and external income of £3.2m.
31. The performance against the last forecast was good and 99% of the proposed forecast was spent alongside 98% of the original budget. The Nature and Climate Emergency (NaCE) Programme was the only exception with an underspend of £1.5m. A review had been undertaken which would be presented to ET to explore the reasons behind the underspend.
32. Income was ahead of profile at the end of March, with the main variant being in relation to commercial income which included an increase in timber income, surrender-able wind energy and NRW Estate income. It was noted there had been an improvement on NRW's ability to forecast this year.
33. The team had finalised their reportable position which would be presented to FC in early June.
34. With regards to lessons learned and NRW's focus areas for this year, these included being nearer to the affordable structure, less risk averse on the overprogramming level, review the level set for Flood and NaCE capital Programmes and work on the delivery of Finance's Innovation Plan. The team would review last year's performance with each director to identify optimism bias and where general behaviours could be improved. The Board agreed they were content to approve the end of year Finance Performance Report.

DECISION: The Board approved the end of year Finance Performance Report.

35. The Executive Director of F&CS explained the profile was up and down in terms of expenditure however, reassured that NRW had spent and delivered on budgets in this financial year. The Board discussed consequences for missed targets and the introduction of mechanisms to ensure early flagging of potential underspends for leadership and management teams. The CEO highlighted that the Finance team provided a clear picture around issues in budgets and the teams were provided with detailed budget performance data.
36. It was noted that the Report was well received at Finance Committee because they had been well-sighted throughout the year and there had been continuous open dialogue with WG. For the upcoming financial year, the Board agreed that finances should be committed early in preparation for a new government.

37. The Executive Director of Communications, Customer and Commercial confirmed that a deep dive into timber market volatility and forecasting was underway with comparisons to practices in England and Scotland, and consideration of contractual provisions to manage supply chain.

Item 7. Business Plan Performance Dashboard Q4

Sponsor: Ceri Davies, Chief Executive

Presenters: WBO Leads; Sarah Williams, Head of Corporate Strategy and PMO

38. The CEO introduced the item. The Head of Corporate Strategy and PMO presented the Q4 Business Plan Performance Dashboard and highlighted strong overall results and positive news with regards to consistency with reporting and forecasting on the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). The Red, Amber and Green (RAG) status in the year-end Performance Report showed 18 Green, nine Amber and one Red indicator, with most objectives on track and clear reporting of areas needing improvement, particularly in Sustainable Farming Scheme (SFS) and pollution minimisation.
39. On the SFS KPI, significant recruitment had been undertaken however, there had been difficulty in finding candidates with both Welsh language and the technical skills for an Environment Officer. Welsh speaking was essential for such a rural role, and the team have been considering alternative recruitment and training strategies.
40. On the Internal Performance Report, there had been a 38% increase in Access to Information Requests which led to a shift from Green to Amber at year-end. The team continued to work on improving the content on the website to answer any reoccurring questions, and direct users to self-serve information.
41. The CEO confirmed that metrics around planning permission reporting would be built into future reports. It was noted that around 80% of responses were within the statutory deadline, however the Executive Director of National Operations (NatOps) confirmed his team were working to increase this.
42. The Board discussed the Wellbeing Objective 3 (WBO3): Pollution is minimised KPI. The Executive Director of Place confirmed that work was ongoing with the general trend focussed on NRW going out to more high-level, impactful pollution minimising events however, there was less work focussed on the preventative action. Further resource was due to fund a project manager to focus efforts on WBO3.
43. The Board discussed the recruitment of project managers to begin achieving the Pathway to Green however, questioned if these issues could have been pre-empted and recognised earlier. Board discussed whether lessons learned from those KPIs that were already Green could be utilised. The CEO confirmed that WBO leads explored multiple options to achieve their Pathway to Green however, recognised that a cultural shift was needed to encourage new ways of spending budgets through recruitment, temporary arrangements, education, and apprenticeships.

44. The Board welcomed the discussion and approved the Q4 Performance Dashboard.

DECISION: The Board approved the Q4 Performance Dashboard.

Item 8. Water Quality (WBO3)

Sponsor: Lyndsey Rawlinson, Executive Director of Place Operations; Sian Williams, Head of North West Wales; Mary Lewis, Head of Natural Resource Management Policy; Huwel Manley, Head of South West Wales Operations

Presenters: Becky Favager, Head of Regulation & Permitting; Rhian Jardine, Head of DPAS and Marine Services; Rhian Thomas, Sustainable Water and Nature Manager Gareth Davies, Operations Manager, South West Wales; Matthew Lowe, Team Leader, Environment Team; Jonathan Jones, Team Leader, Environment Team

45. The Executive Director of Place Operations introduced the deep-dive into WBO3 - Pollution is minimised, with a focus on water alongside a South West Wales place focused presentation, focused primarily on the impacts relating to water quality. Water was highlighted as central to the Corporate Plan, cross-cutting across all the WBOs.
46. The Head of Natural Resource Management reported that whilst water quality improvements had been made in the last 30-years, through legislation, regulation, and technological advances, significant challenges remained. Insufficient water quantity issues would exacerbate water quality issues. The increasing public, media and political scrutiny was understood. The improved trend, cited in the Water Framework Directive Regulations was noted.
47. The Head of Service for Water highlighted the number of incidents received per sector and explained the differences in how pollution incidents were reported compared to other incidents. The Board were assured that data was used to track trends and cumulative environmental impacts of pollution incidents. A strong emphasis was needed on prevention rather than reactive enforcement. Water company performance, particularly Dŵr Cymru, had declined, with increases in both the number and severity of pollution incidents. Enforcement action continued as required; however, the main priority was prevention. Alongside wider regulatory developments, and a £44.7m Ofwat penalty that, if enacted, could support future infrastructure investment. Although there would still be significant challenges in delivery, areas for improvement had been earmarked and work was ongoing for the next pricing review 2029 (PR29).
48. Opportunities from the Independent Water Commission Report and the WG Green Paper proposals were welcomed, particularly around regulatory reform, improved system planning and stronger enforcement. NRW would work closely with WG and the proposed Economic Regulator to support a more integrated, holistic, and strategic approach to water planning and a reset of the water sector.

49. Nutrient pollution remained a significant issue, contributing to condition failures, ecological decline, and development constraints, with approximately 16,000 planning applications currently on hold. NRW was progressing targeted regulatory actions and developing two South West Wales Catchment Nutrient Recovery Plans to support compliance and long-term environmental recovery.
50. The Head of South West Wales Operations gave an overview on the diverse landscape of the area, highlighting key regional challenges that included agricultural pressures, particularly in high density livestock areas such as the Cleddau, where farm compliance remained below 50%. Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) nutrient pollution issues were outlined and the importance of strengthening relationships with farmers and leveraging supply chain influence was highlighted.
51. One main issue was summarised, this was a major infrastructure failure of the Dŵr Cymru Marlas rising main, resulting in repeated sewage spills. An overground temporary fix was being implemented until funding became available in the next Asset Management Plan (AMP) period for a permanent underground solution. The Board raised concerns over other similar aging assets, investment constraints, and the capacity of water companies to respond effectively. It was assured that water companies were being encouraged to manage risks and horizon scan.
52. The Board welcomed the investment of £1.7m permanent funding from Grant in Aid (GiA) and £3.4m temporary funding from WG to support improvements in governance, compliance, data, and integrated catchment approaches. However, the Board emphasised that water quality was a national priority requiring sustained long-term funding, stronger legislative support and a whole-system approach linking land use, food production, biodiversity, and climate change. The outcomes NRW were looking to achieve, and the direction of travel were welcomed by the Board.
53. It was acknowledged that delivery of improvements was constrained by legislative restrictions, historical underinvestment by water companies and resource pressures. The need to shift further toward prevention, enhanced collaboration across sectors and improved data-led decision-making was reinforced. Whilst opportunities such as nutrient trading and market-based solutions existed, it was recognised that environmental recovery would take time due to agricultural historic nutrients in the soil taking time to drain.
54. The presentation was welcomed, the economic cost and social impacts of water quality issues were discussed, including the significant value of development currently paused. The Board reiterated concerns over water industry AMP settlement and ability to deliver with resources available. Funding received from the Heritage Lottery Fund for the Teifi Project was welcomed. There were complexities in comparing Integrated Catchment Management Plans across Wales and demonstrating support for stakeholders would be important.
55. The Board encouraged a focus on high-impact actions, strengthened partnerships and continued engagement with government, industry, and stakeholders to drive meaningful and lasting improvements; alongside the need for a balanced approach,

combining incentives and enforcement. Production and supply chain influence, particularly the role of supermarkets, was highlighted as a key lever for change. A recent agricultural stakeholder workshop was an initial step forward.

56. The Board discussed regulating farms as businesses but understood the uniqueness of some family-run farm communities; however, environmental standards had to be adhered to, and the supply chain could be more demanding. Nutrient trading best practice to help with sustainable development was suggested but this would take time.
57. Plaid Cymru had a national food strategy on their first 100-day plan, and NRW had offered support. The Chair suggested contacting The Grocer and that he could write to the Institute of Grocery Distribution (IGD). The team were working with WG on a Natural Resources Policy to ensure wider consideration on land use and with a new Government there would be new opportunities.
58. Water sector expectations had changed over the last 10-years, and global societal understanding was needed. It was suggested that having a commercial aspect representative on the Board could be beneficial. Pre-constraints needed to be understood, what more could be done with more resource, and done differently. It was cautioned to not spread activities too thinly but to concentrate on those that would make the most difference, effectively and a different way of working could be considered. The team welcomed the Board's engagement and feedback would be taken into consideration for plans to address the water quality issue.

Item 9. How did we do in this meeting?

Sponsor: Neil Sachdev, Chair

59. The Chair came back to this item during the end of the Private Board Meeting and Board agreed that the WBO3 Place Presentation was interesting, and it was agreed systemic change was needed with regards to livestock and the method of production.
60. The Board highlighted the positive impact of being available and visible to colleagues by visiting offices and meeting with colleagues.

Item 10. AOB

61. There was no AOB.

Close Public Meeting

Public Board Meeting Action & Decision Logs

Action Log - Board Meetings										
Action No.	Meeting Category	Meeting Date	Item No	Para No	Paper Sponsor	Action	Owner	Due	Status	Notes/Updates
11	Public	18/03/2026	8	41	Rachael Cunningham, Executive Director of F&CS	ACTION: The Head of Corporate Strategy and Programme Management Office (PMO) to send the draft WBO4 to the FGC.	Head of Corporate Strategy and Programme Management Office	20/05/2026	Completed	Ceri, Rachael & Sarah met on 28/04/2026.
12	Public	20/05/2026	4	9	Ceri Davies, Chief Executive Officer	ACTION: Secretariat to add Regulation to the Board Forward Look.	Secretariat	20/05/2026	Completed	

Decision Log - Board Meetings						
Decision No.	Meeting Category	Meeting Date	Item No	Para No	Paper Sponsor	Decision
33	Public	20/05/2026	6	34	Rachael Cunningham, Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Services	DECISION: The Board approved the end of year Finance Performance Report.
34	Public	20/05/2026	7	45	Ceri Davies, Chief Executive Officer	DECISION: The Board approved the Q4 Performance Dashboard.

NRW Board Paper

Date of meeting:	29 July 2026
Title of Paper:	Chief Executive's Report (Public Session)
Paper Reference:	26-07-B01
Paper presented by:	Ceri Davies, Chief Executive
Purpose	Information and discussion
Summary	The paper provides the Board with an update on current issues.

Introduction

1. Since our last Board meeting, we have been building the foundations of a strong relationship with the new Welsh Government (WG). The Chair and I have had a positive initial meeting with Llyr Gruffydd MS, Minister for Rural Resilience and Sustainability, and we have worked closely with our Sponsorship team to understand his immediate priorities. The Minister was invited to join us at the Royal Welsh Agricultural Show (RWAS) this year for a panel discussion, while Adam Price MS, Minister for Enterprise, Connectivity and Energy, joined us on our stand for the launch of our new Growth and Value Strategy.
2. Following the election, we wrote to all Members of the Senedd to introduce NRW and our Wellbeing Objectives (WBOs), and to explain our Place-focused approach to operational work. Our Heads of Place will typically be the first point of contact for MSs, and they are already building those relationships – many more now since the expansion of the Senedd at this election. We were delighted to meet a good number of MSs at the *Y Farchnad* event in June, where we answered questions and took note of focus areas and early concerns. More on this below.
3. In more recent weeks, our operational and incident response teams have been working hard dealing with the impacts of the extremely hot and dry weather across Wales. These range from dealing with significant wildfires and the exacerbated impacts of pollution in our rivers during periods of low flow, to supporting the Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) and other emergency services in dealing with the tragic impacts of loss of life to members of the public undertaking activities on the land we manage. With the warm weather set to continue and little rain in the forecast, we continue to monitor our sites and to engage proactively with the public to encourage safe and responsible behaviour.

4. In late May, I had my regular meeting with James Jesic at Hafren Dyfrdwy. I also had a further meeting with Alwen Williams of Ambition North Wales, whom Board members will remember from our April discussion session about development in North East Wales. Lyndsey Rawlinson, Executive Director for Place Operations, and I met Ambition North Wales again in early July for a broader action-planning discussion about opportunities for a more focused and collaborative approach.
5. June started with plenty of collaboration with sister agencies, including a Statutory Nature Conservation Bodies (SNCB) meeting, held in North East Wales, and a Five Agencies meeting in London. The Chair and I were delighted to host the SNCB meeting and welcome our peers from Natural England, NatureScot, the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) and the Joint Nature Conservation Committee. Our agenda covered new approaches to nature recovery, the challenges and opportunities of delivering for both nature and economic growth, and a reflection on European and international perspectives. We also visited Brymbo Fossil Forest, a fascinating industrial heritage site underlain by ancient fossilised trees, for a tour with Nicola Sawford, CEO of Stori Brymbo.
6. The Five Agencies meeting takes place every six months and involves the Environment Agency (EA), Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA), NIEA and Ireland's Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). June's meeting was hosted by the EA and held at Camley Street Natural Park, a nature reserve with woodland, grassland and wetland habitats run by the London Wildlife Trust. I was joined by Lyndsey Rawlinson, Executive Director for Place Operations, for an agenda that ranged from waste crime to artificial intelligence and workforce planning. Our ability to link closely and align with our sister agencies is vital at a time of changing policy approaches and ever-increasing environmental pressures.
7. I also had meetings with Simon Bowen and Simon Roddy, Chair and CEO respectively of Great British Energy – Nuclear (GBE-N) regarding the new Wylfa nuclear plant, recently named Gwyndod Power Station. The UK Government sees its nuclear agenda as a national priority and there is a clear expectation for sector regulators to work in a more aligned, coordinated way, ensuring streamlined processes and proportionate regulation. Martin Cox, our Head of Operations for North West Wales, is leading on this increasingly busy area of work for NRW.
8. I attended a Partnership Council meeting early in June, alongside Louise White, Executive Director for People, Facilities and Fleet. This regular meeting is a valuable opportunity for me to meet our Trade Union (TU) representatives and discuss areas of concern, and I am always grateful for their constructive engagement, insights and helpful feedback. Our agenda included items on workforce planning, directorate changes, our accommodation strategy and a fleet / electric vehicle update. The TUs have since presented their pay claim for 2026/27, and while we await the pay remit from WG, we have ensured dates are in the diary for negotiations to begin as soon as those requirements are available to us.
9. We have also made progress with our Anti-Racism work. In June, the Executive Team (ET) and I held an initial meeting with black and ethnic minority colleagues to better understand their experience of working at NRW. This provided valuable insights and started what I hope will be an open and constructive conversation, from which we can all learn. We will develop our antiracism action plan with colleagues over the summer.

10. In July, we held another joint executive session with National Trust Cymru, which included site visits to the Migneint, Cwm Penmachno and Foel Marchyrau in Snowdonia, to review joint work on peatlands and river restoration. We also discussed the National Trust's approach to nature-friendly farming and woodland creation. It was another excellent opportunity to build relationships between our executive teams and learn from one another. Some key take-outs included developing a vision for our joint work on the commons and looking at other mechanisms to fund work on nature restoration, such as peatlands, involving private sector funding.
11. Also, during July, I have had my regular meetings with John Mercer of National Farmers Union Cymru; Ian Rickman of the Farmers Union of Wales; Gail Davies-Walsh of Afonydd Cymru; Derek Walker, Future Generations Commissioner; Roch Cheroux of Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water (DCWW); and Chris Walters of Ofwat. With Councillor Andrew Morgan and Paul Mee of Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council, our collaborative work on water and land management is progressing excellently despite the growing challenges presented by the impacts of climate change.
12. I attended the Public Bodies Chief Executives meeting, hosted by WG, in July. The agenda included a detailed discussion of the new Government and ways of working led by Judith Padgett, Director General Strategy, a presentation and workshop on business continuity in the event of a cyber-attack, and information on the re-establishment of the National School of Government. This UK Government body will offer a programme of training for senior civil servants, covering topical issues such as artificial intelligence and innovation alongside leadership, policy development, finance and programme delivery.
13. I also attended Biodiversity + Business Live summit in Edinburgh, co-hosted by NatureScot, JNCC and the UK Business & Biodiversity Forum. This event was designed to promote collaboration and collective leadership on biodiversity loss and focused on translating global insight into strategic actions for business. I was delighted to be part of a leaders panel discussion on business ambition for nature and the opportunities for joint action. I used my time in Edinburgh to meet up with Paul Lowe of Scottish Forestry, and Nicole Paterson of SEPA.
14. A highlight of our year is, of course, the Royal Welsh Agricultural Show (RWAS). I attended for three days and enjoyed a packed schedule of stand events and stakeholder meetings. A huge thank you to the colleagues who made our stand so welcoming and interesting this year and spent time talking to members of the public about our work. I am always so proud of our passion, professionalism and purpose at these times. The planning and effort that goes into our presence at the show is immense, so thanks too to our Events and Communications team and everyone involved in making our stand so engaging and informative. And I'm grateful also to Board members for attending and representing NRW at the show: the Chair and I simply would not be able to cover it all.

Strategic Updates

Swansea Lagoon Project

15. We attended an initial meeting with the project team regarding a proposed privately funded energy and industrial hub comprising near-term solar, battery storage and battery manufacturing, alongside a longer-term tidal lagoon proposal. Key NRW considerations include landfill constraints, permitting requirements and environmental impacts, particularly for the lagoon element, which remains a high-risk, long-term proposition. The project team has established a stakeholder roundtable to support project development and engagement, with NRW participating as a member of the Tidal Lagoon Roundtable, chaired by Torsten Bell MP.

LanzaTech Halts Development

16. LanzaTech has confirmed that it will not proceed with the DRAGON I Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) facility in Port Talbot and has also ceased development of its proposed ethanol production facility in Milford Haven. In its public statement, the company cited a combination of site economics, policy uncertainty and the high cost of green hydrogen as the key reasons for its decision.
17. The Port Talbot facility had become one of the highest-profile examples of how industrial decarbonisation could help offset the economic impacts associated with the closure of Tata Steel's blast furnaces. The project was expected to create more than 150 jobs and had been promoted as an important component of the area's future green economy.
18. The company has subsequently focused its DRAGON II development in Humberside, where existing industrial infrastructure and cluster advantages appear to have improved the investment case. LanzaTech said it had ceased development of ethanol production facilities using captured carbon dioxide and green hydrogen because the economics are currently unviable. This represents one of the clearest examples to date of a major developer publicly identifying hydrogen economics as a project-stopping issue.
19. Given the number of emerging industrial decarbonisation pathways that rely upon affordable hydrogen, this may have implications extending well beyond SAF production and could affect wider assumptions underpinning regional decarbonisation strategies. The project had benefited from approximately £25 million of UK Government support during development. Development funding is inherently designed to support innovation and carries a risk of failure. We will remain closely linked to WG and regional Local Authority groups to understand any implications for ongoing public investment in industrial decarbonisation and green growth programmes.

Advising PEDW on Catchment Nutrient Recovery Plans

20. We recently attended the Planning and Environment Decisions Wales (PEDW) exploratory session into nutrients and the Pembrokeshire Local Development Plan (LDP). We presented our proposals for Catchment Nutrient Recovery Plans (CNRPs) and addressed the inspectors' queries on the role of CNRPs and how they can contribute to taking an integrated approach to consideration of development proposals

that may lead to nutrient inputs (integrating recovery and mitigation elements of the Habitat Regulations).

21. Our plans were well-received along with a flexible approach to using either nutrient neutrality (the current approach) or an integrated approach, which balances mitigation and recovery actions towards a recovery target for the Special Area of Conservation (SAC). WG supports the latter approach and have written a position statement to PEDW along these lines. This is a positive indication that our approach will help to address both SAC condition issues and matters relating to restrictions on development.
22. The current timetable is to have phase 1 CNRP information available for October, with full plans by April 2027.

Operational Updates

Energy Projects in Mid Wales

23. Mid Wales is seeing a major increase in renewable energy projects and related grid infrastructure. Around half of the 70-plus onshore wind farm proposals currently in the Welsh planning system are in Mid Wales.
24. We raised objections to the Local Planning Authority (LPA) regarding the Lluest y Gwynt wind farm proposal due to concerns about damage to peatland, impacts on Eryri National Park and wider landscape effects. We are also reviewing the proposed Nant y Maen wind farm near Tregaron for PEDW. The proposal includes up to 27 turbines and battery storage on a site with protected habitats, deep peat and a red squirrel conservation area. It sits alongside three other proposed wind farms, bringing the total to 92 turbines in the area. Potentially significant environmental impacts will need careful assessment.
25. The Esgair Cwmowen wind farm and Nant Mithil energy park proposals are currently being examined. Some issues at Esgair Cwmowen have been resolved, but concerns remain around peat and breeding curlew. We previously raised objections with the LPA regarding Nant Mithil because of its potential impact on the landscape and setting of Bannau Brycheiniog National Park, as well as concerns relating to peat, protected sites and wildlife.
26. We continue to support other projects across the region, including Waun Maenllwyd, Carno wind farm and Green GEN Cymru's grid infrastructure proposals, providing advice on a range of environmental matters. Our focus is development being planned sustainably, with appropriate consideration given to peatland, biodiversity and landscape impacts.

Llŷr Floating Windfarm

27. In June, we issued the Marine Licence for the Llŷr floating windfarm on the Celtic Sea. The proposed windfarm comprises ten floating generators (on platforms), each with a maximum height of 300 metres above sea level. The application was highly complex and raised significant ecological and seascape impacts. In addition, concerns were

raised by the Ministry of Defence about the interaction between the cabling route and the Castlemartin Firing Range.

28. The determination is an example of joined-up collaboration across NRW teams and constructive iterative engagement with the developer and other consultees. Our approach provided a balance between the needs of development and environmental protection whilst taking an important step towards addressing climate change. Our Marine Licensing Team has received a commendation from the developer and WG Marine Division.

Tata Steel Permit Variations

29. Tata Steel Port Talbot continues to require close NRW coordination as the site progresses through major industrial transition and decommissioning activity. Current permit variation work is progressing through internal peer review and is focused on updating the permit to reflect the phased shutdown and removal of legacy iron and steelmaking infrastructure, including the blast furnaces and associated heavy end operations.
30. There continues to be significant political interest in Tata Steel. While a recent BBC news article stated that there are delays with permitting, our work remains on track. We are working closely with the UK Government and Tata to support delivery of £500 million investment, with alignment and oversight through the WG Industrial Decarbonisation Group.
31. Separately, Tata recently experienced a fire incident in the Pickle Line area, which temporarily resulted in the Hot Strip Mill being taken offline. Tata undertook assessment work and put mitigation measures in place, including alternative processing arrangements at Llanwern Steel Works where they had a mothballed line available as an alternative.

Recent Waste Site Fires

32. In April, there was an explosion in one of the MDF (medium density fibreboard) cyclones at the Kronospan site in Chirk. The incident resulted in a smoke / dust release, and North Wales FRS attended the site. We received a small number of incident reports from local residents. Officers attended but did not observe any significant off-site impacts and firewater was successfully contained on site, with no discharges to the environment. External partners were informed of the incident, and our investigation into this event and significant permit breaches towards the end of 2025 is continuing.
33. A fire occurred at a regulated facility operated by AMG Resources Ltd at Nevills Dock in Llanelli, due to a build-up of heat within machinery. It was confined to a small area and quickly extinguished. The site is currently classed by us as a 'Poor Performer', and a permit compliance inspection conducted the day before the fire incident identified non compliances associated with the permit. Follow-up inspections since the fire have further confirmed breaches of permit conditions, The operator has been issued with deadlines to implement improvements to both site infrastructure and operational practices to address the underlying causes and return the site to compliance. Enforcement action remains under consideration.

34. We are continuing to regulate AWD Group Ltd's Byass Works in Port Talbot following a fire in May. The site is permitted to accept plastic waste – typically, hard plastics from local authority sources such as household waste recycling centres and PVC waste, such as window and door frames. The site does not accept hazardous waste and there is no evidence to suggest hazardous waste was on site at the time of the fire incident. During a subsequent visit, it was apparent that a significant amount of clean-up and recovery work had already been completed. The operator has since accepted their first load of plastic waste and are scaling up, prioritising local authority collections. Additional security measures have been implemented aiming to prevent a recurrence of the incident. Ongoing enforcement investigations are underway by NRW and incident response partners. We continue to work with FRS to consider the evidence captured at the time of the incident.

Taff Programme Update

35. The Strategic Taff Catchment Approach aims to combine partnership working, co-production and evidence-led action with Wellbeing of Future Generations principles. It draws on adaptive approaches outlined in the State of Natural Resources Report (SoNaRR) 2025 and learning from programmes such as Thames Estuary 2100 and the Usk Partnership to deliver long-term, collaborative outcomes.
36. A key focus is the establishment of a multi-tiered, multi-organisational governance structure to ensure joint ownership across strategic leadership, technical planning, delivery and community engagement. The programme will produce a long-term Strategic Taff Catchment Plan, from which an adaptive flood risk management strategy will be developed. This will influence wider policy including local development plans, local flood risk management strategies, wellbeing plans and water sector investment cycles.
37. By coordinating action across land, water and communities, the approach aims to improve water quality, restore ecological networks, enhance climate resilience and deliver social and economic wellbeing. A number of opportunities have been identified through NRW Task and Finish Groups and will be developed further with the catchment partnership. There will be a strong emphasis on nature-based solutions, including woodland management, floodplain restoration and sustainable land use, alongside improvements to water quality and ecological resilience.
38. The Strategic Board comprises CEOs from Cardiff Council, Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council, Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council, Bannau Brycheiniog National Park and DCWW. Terms of reference have been agreed, with collective commitment to an integrated, collaborative approach. The programme has also engaged with Cwm Taff Morgannwg Public Services Board (PSB) and will present to Cardiff PSB and climate forums, strengthening community resilience and partnership working.
39. As part of the integrated approach, additional funding and resource has been secured through the Nature and Climate Emergency (NACE) programme, supporting the delivery of water quality improvements, physical habitat modifications and Water Framework Directive objectives, complementing and strengthening the wider programme.

Horseshoe Falls Fish Pass Construction

40. Following work to improve fish passage at Chester weir, the removal of Erbistock weir near Bangor on Dee, and the remains of a weir in Llangollen, the Dee LIFE programme is installing a fish bypass channel at Horseshoe Falls, near Llangollen. This is the next step in a major programme of improving fish passage and sediment movement in the Dee. Works are also planned at Manley Hall gauging station this summer before working on Bala gauging station weir in the final year of the project in 2027.

Bathing Water Quality – South Central

41. We have launched the South Central Bathing Waters Project, a multi-agency initiative focused on addressing poor bathing water quality at Ogmere-by-Sea and Watch House Bay. The project is taking a whole-catchment approach, recognising that water quality at the coast is influenced by a range of upstream factors, including urban drainage, agricultural runoff and misconnected wastewater systems.
42. Over the coming year, NRW officers will undertake targeted investigation and analysis across the catchment, including water quality monitoring, ecological assessments and identification of pollution sources. This will be complemented by on-the-ground engagement with communities and stakeholders to gather local intelligence and support behavioural and practical changes. Delivery is being coordinated in partnership with DCWW, Bridgend County Borough Council, Vale of Glamorgan Council and Shared Regulatory Services, with a strong emphasis on data sharing, alignment of priorities and collective action.
43. This work reflects NRW's commitment to integrated, Place-based delivery, recognising that improving bathing water quality requires sustained collaboration across organisations and active involvement of local communities.

Bathing Water Amendment Regulations 2025

44. There are two new designated bathing waters for the 2026 season, one inland river site at Llandeilo Swing Bridge on the River Tywi, and one coastal site at Fontygary Bay, in the Vale of Glamorgan.
45. Additionally, there are amended regulations for bathing waters (The Bathing Water (Amendment) (England and Wales) Regulations 2025). The amendments include the removal of automatic de-designation of bathing waters after five years of poor classification and the introduction of a feasibility assessment; more pre-designation considerations for proposed bathing waters (water quality, physical safety and conservation status); and allowing Ministers to set a national bathing season. In Wales, the new season is 1st May to 30th September. There are also some technical amendments to modernise the regulations with current ways of working, and changes to some rules around sampling.

Marlas Update

46. In early June, the Marlas sewage pumping station (SPS) and rising main were switched back on following completion of the installation of a temporary overland rising

main. Initially, there were no discharges from Marlas SPS. DCWW continued to monitor the River Kenfig and following a set period, removed the aeration pumps that had been placed in the river to increase dissolved oxygen levels. We have been undertaking further monitoring on the River Kenfig to inform our ongoing investigation.

47. We subsequently attended a public meeting arranged by A Peace for Nature (APFN). The meeting was well attended with over a hundred people present, good representation from local politicians and senior representatives from DCWW. The meeting focused on the response from DCWW and their risk management leading up to the Marlas incident, the remediation plan for the Kenfig and wider points on DCWW management.
48. We were asked specific questions regarding our enforcement response. Due to the ongoing investigation, we were unable to provide details; however, the overwhelming feeling from the audience (and politicians) was that if we were to take enforcement action, it would be better to see an enforcement undertaking rather than a fine being levied that would go to the treasury. There were concerns from the public regarding the historic lack of enforcement against DCWW, in response to which we offered a breakdown of recent prosecution cases and action taken over the last ten years.
49. Since the meeting we have seen further discharges from Marlas SPS, together with an increase in social media and press interest. We have worked with the Communications team on a statement to address the concerns. Operationally, DCWW have deployed further aeration units to mitigate falling dissolved oxygen levels, particularly in light of the warm weather and low flows. The incident is ongoing and we are considering options for enforcement.

Agriculture Stakeholder Workshop

50. In May, we held an Agriculture Stakeholder workshop at the Royal Welsh Showground to explore the barriers experienced by the farming community in complying with the Control of Agricultural Pollution (CoAP) Regulations. Our compliance work over the last two years has shown that over half of the farms visited are not compliant with the regulations. Although we are seeing a gradual improvement in compliance rates, there is still much to do.
51. The workshop was well received, and some key barriers were identified, including planning processes, finance, complexity and understanding of regulations, and confusion about the roles of NRW and Rural Payments Wales. We discussed ways of managing and addressing these issues. The outcomes from the workshop will be shared with the Wales Land Management Forum and with WG during July, and we will work with them and other stakeholders to implement the agreed initiatives.

National Peatlands Action Programme

52. The International Union for Conservation Nature (IUCN) UK Peatland Programme's conference took place in June. The event, jointly organised by NRW, welcomed over 400 delegates at the University of Swansea and on regional site visits, as well as online. The theme was *Peatlands Under Pressure* and the agenda focused on both the challenges of keeping carbon in our peatlands and the successes to date, highlighting

the growing opportunities to scale up nature-based solutions and strengthen the role of peatlands in addressing environmental change.

53. Our Senior Specialist Advisor on peatland, Dr Pete Jones, was the recipient of a prestigious award, the Lindsay Peatland Conservation Award, at this conference. This annual award recognises outstanding dedication and passion for peatlands, and Pete is a very worthy recipient following years of dedicated service to the peatlands of Wales.

Nature Thriving at Gower, Swansea

54. The Oxwich bird ringers, who have been carefully monitoring and studying birds at Oxwich Marsh National Nature Reserve (NNR) for over twenty years, have made an exciting and truly remarkable discovery. Juvenile bearded tits have been successfully netted on site. The finding represents the first confirmed breeding record at Gower in over fifty years, underlining the site's growing importance for wildlife. Currently, the only other known breeding population in Wales is at Newport Wetlands, making this finding even more significant. So far, five juvenile males have been recorded, providing strong evidence that bearded tits are now actively breeding at Oxwich once again.
55. The fen orchid is now thriving in large numbers at Whiteford NNR on the Gower, which has become the most important site in Wales for this exceptionally rare and beautiful plant. In 2012, fewer than ten individual flowers were recorded across the whole of Wales. Thanks to dedicated conservation efforts, including careful habitat management and licensed reintroduction from seed, the species has made a remarkable recovery.

Commercial Updates

Growth and Value Strategy

56. Our Growth and Value Strategy has been approved by ET. Many stakeholders and colleagues have contributed to the creation of our vision for the next five years. We launched the strategy at the Royal Welsh Show, alongside our Timber Sales and Marketing Plan. With the new government now in place at the Senedd, we are in an opportune position to demonstrate how we can support policy and ambition into becoming reality.

Timber Sales and Marketing

57. Our revised Timber Sales and Marketing Plan has been completed and aligns with the wider ambitions of WG's Timber Industrial Strategy. This five-year plan offers a timber supply commitment to the sector to establish confidence in the industry, for investment and future economic growth. It is at its heart a safety-first culture. Our timber sale programme and market offer are driven from the foundation of delivering NRW's Corporate Plan and the ambitions of Place teams across Wales.
58. Timber sales performance this year has started in a strong position, with a positive forward sold position and good uplift, and subsequent income, from the land in our care. We have recently awarded timber sales contracts from the April sale and

achieved good results in what is a volatile international marketplace. With the launch of the July open tender for timber sales, we will achieve 64% of the full year's programme to date, so therefore have confidence in our ability to deliver this year.

59. We have established regular engagement with our WG Sponsorship team on this matter and recently met Welsh Government's Finance Director to share knowledge and updates on market challenges and how we manage and monitor our timber sales income, to provide confidence and credible assurance of our work.

Visitor Centres

60. The re-mobilisation of our visitor centres progresses. The Cwm Carn Forest Drive and Caerphilly Council visitor centre has attained a preferred bidder status, and we are progressing to the final lease arrangements and terms between all parties.
61. The visitor centres at Coed y Brenin in Gwynedd and Bwlch Nant Yr Arian in Ceredigion have undergone an extensive marketing period seeking invitations for bids. We have received a range of positive bids for both sites and we have now shortlisted bidders and invited successful parties to a series of competitive dialogue discussions to secure the right partner for our visitor centre sites. This process will be supported by community representatives nominated by local community councils, to provide feedback and take part in some of the competitive dialogue with potential bidders over the summer.

Internal Updates

Fleet and Facilities Update

62. The Accommodation Transformation team is exploring options for the Maes y Ffynnon office and working with architects on a concept design fit-out to ensure user needs are met with the preferred option. Colleagues are being kept updated. Once the project board is assured the preferred option is fit for purpose, further information will be shared. We are committed to staying in the current building until after Christmas.
63. The first order has been issued for the Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure (EVCI) contract and work will begin at the Resolven office as a proof-of-design site. Further interim solutions are being evaluated in parallel with the permanent infrastructure being installed.

ISO14001 Certification Retained

64. Following a wide-ranging audit by the British Standards Institution (BSI) and visits to six of our depots, NRW has retained certification to the ISO14001:2015 environmental management standard. The audit report noted no major nonconformities and only one minor nonconformity relating to fuel labelling and transportation. The audit outcome confirms that "an effective management system is in place which supports the organisation to meet its objectives, strategy and intended outcomes, with evidence of an ongoing drive towards continuous improvement". This fantastic result reflects the hard work and commitment of many colleagues across all offices, who maintain our high environmental management standards on a daily basis.

UK Accreditation Service (UKAS) Surveillance Visit

65. Our annual UKAS surveillance visit has taken place, with a recommendation that our ISO17025:2017 accreditation status is maintained on closure of their findings. This standard is the premier international standard for testing and calibration laboratories and the benchmark used to ensure laboratory results are accurate, reliable and legally defensible.
66. The audit feedback included four recommendations, twelve findings requiring evidence and three requiring no evidence. Comments from the auditors noted “very capable staff who show a high level of competence” and “excellent investment in new state of the art instrumentation”, as well as extra resilience in the microbiology team, a high level of training of seasonal staff and continued excellent performance in proficiency schemes. Pleasingly, alongside high technical standards, they observed “good people with a happy culture on site”.

Silver Carbon Literate Accreditation

67. At the Carbon Literate Organisation Awards in Manchester in June, NRW was awarded silver Carbon Literate Organisation (CLO) accreditation. The CLO is the accrediting body for the rapidly-growing community of individuals and organisations taking meaningful climate action through Carbon Literacy training. Gaining accreditation offers awardees a visible badge that showcases their commitment to climate action and dedication towards creating and maintaining a low-carbon culture. A wide range of action is required to acquire Silver accreditation, including levels of training at different grades, promoting carbon literacy through social media, and developing case studies etc. Most of our Leadership and Management Teams are now carbon literate, including our CEO. In total, more than 1,200 colleagues have completed the training, with the majority going on to achieve certification.
68. We are going for gold accreditation. Many of the required criteria for this level of accreditation have already been met, though we have some way to go in ensuring at least 56% of staff are certified carbon literate. This isn't just about achieving the next level of accreditation: feedback shows that colleagues who complete the training feel more empowered and are much more likely to consider carbon impacts in their day-to-day decisions.

WLGA Planning Placements

69. We have recently appointed two graduate planning placements through the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) Pathways to Planning scheme. The scheme is designed to build capacity in the planning system throughout Wales, and administers all the promotion, recruitment and initial assessment processes. It has proved an effective way to reach graduates while contributing to wider resilience in the planning sector in Wales.
70. The two-year placements are funded through the infrastructure consenting budget. Through the scheme, the placements are also funded to undertake an environmental planning-related Master's degree whilst working with us. They will rotate between the Development Planning Advice Service (DPAS) in National Operations and the Planning Policy team in the Strategy, Policy and Evidence Directorate to give them

rounded experience of our end-to-end planning service. The scheme also places graduates with local planning authorities and PEDW. We have discussed with the scheme organisers the possibility of future placements rotating between these organisations.

CEO and Executive Recruitment

71. Our executive search agency Goodson Thomas have started recruitment for the Executive Director for National Operations and Executive Director for Place Operations roles. A candidate pack has been developed and a timeline agreed, with both roles going to an evaluation panel for ratification during July.
72. The Chair and CEO both met with Goodson Thomas in July to discuss the CEO and Directors roles respectively. It is anticipated that interviews for the CEO role will be completed before end of the year.

Communications

Corporate Communications

73. During this period, we have managed a range of complex reputational issues alongside the delivery of proactive campaigns and stakeholder engagement. Substantial resource has been focused on managing communications relating to pollution incidents affecting the Rivers Dee, Kenfig and Tawe, which have generated sustained media and stakeholder interest, requiring close collaboration with WG, Public Health Wales, local authorities and DCWW to ensure consistent and timely messaging. Activity has included proactive communications planning, stakeholder engagement, public meetings, Citizen Space updates and ongoing media handling.
74. We have actively challenged inaccuracies in reporting, including misattribution of causes and confusion between pollution incidents and natural phenomena such as algal blooms. We have also secured rights of reply where NRW was not initially represented, reinforcing our regulatory role and evidence base.
75. Significant effort has also been directed towards preparing for the BBC *Buried* series on legacy contamination, working across Communications, Legal and technical teams to ensure a coordinated, evidence-based response aligned with partners. The team has additionally supported communications on wildfires, industrial incidents such as the Port Talbot fire, and emerging issues including the Intensive Poultry Units judicial review and Ofwat's proposed enforcement package for DCWW.
76. Proactive storytelling has continued, including a Countryfile feature from Gethin Forest highlighting our land management and partnership work.

Internal Communication and Engagement

77. Internal communications have focused on supporting the launch of the fourth WBO and the *Ein Llais* staff survey, including development of a dedicated intranet hub showcasing related work and progress. Early engagement with the survey was

strong, with survey responses approaching 50% within the first two weeks. The deadline was extended into mid-July to encourage a good completion rate.

78. We have responded to colleague feedback on communications 'overload' by improving channel management, reducing reliance on the Manager's Monthly Guide and working with Corporate Services to introduce forward planning to better coordinate messaging. Positive engagement initiatives include the introduction of colleague commendations in the Managers' Monthly Update calls, which has been well received.

External Affairs and Public Affairs

79. Work has focused on strengthening stakeholder engagement and improving coordination in response to Perceptions Audit findings, which have been shared via an organisation-wide webinar. We have also commissioned a review of NRW-led and partner forums to identify duplication and increase streamlining and efficiency.
80. The PA Team have started using the Tractivity stakeholder management system, improving visibility and consistency of engagement activity. Multiple disconnected spreadsheets have now been replaced with Tractivity, meaning we can be more professional, knowledgeable and consistent when working with our stakeholders.
81. In June, NRW attended Y Farchnad at the Senedd, which provided a valuable opportunity to build relationships with Members of the Senedd (MSs) post-election, promote NRW's priorities and introduce key materials including our *Guide to Working with Us* and *Bold Steps for 2026 and Beyond*. Engagement was constructive and positive overall. Water quality emerged as a priority issue across constituencies and a significant driver of casework, and there is a clear expectation for more proactive and timely communication from NRW, particularly during incidents. MSs expressed strong interest in local engagement, including site visits and constituency-level discussions, though many are still establishing their offices so correspondence and engagement are expected to increase over the coming months.

Communities are Resilient to Climate Change

82. Recent activity includes the launch of the Water Efficiency campaign, a major multi-partner initiative promoting behaviour change and public understanding of water pressures. NRW supported campaign development and stakeholder engagement and will attend the Cardiff launch event. We have also aligned communications with international climate reporting and delivered targeted messaging during periods of heightened wildfire risk, working with partners and exploring further summer campaign activity.

Pollution is Minimised

83. Water quality has been the dominant focus. Following the pre-election period, we resumed proactive communications about the bathing water sampling season and public education on monitoring and standards. We have supported multi-agency activity such as the Clear Waters campaign and continued to promote enforcement outcomes to demonstrate accountability and reinvestment in environmental improvements. Preventative messaging has remained a priority, including raising

awareness of pollution reporting and clarifying differences between pollution and natural events.

Nature is Recovering

84. Communications have continued to highlight conservation and restoration activity, including protected sites and species such as the Afon Gwyrfai Special Area of Conservation. Additionally, we have supported major sector events including the IUCN Peatland Conference and River Restoration Conference, showcasing NRW's leadership. Further activity has included promotion of National Lottery Heritage Fund investment in the Afon Teifi project, Invasive Non-Native Species Week and No Mow May.

Summary of Complaints, Commendations and Correspondence

85. Since the last Board meeting, the Central Correspondence Team have dealt with 57 items of correspondence. 100% were answered within the service level of ten / fifteen working days, with 47% answered in five working days or less. The hot topics over this period have been Kronospan, Hafod Landfill, water pollution and sewage discharge (including the Afon Cynffig incident) and parking charges at Newborough.
86. There have been 71 new Access to Information requests since our last update (Environmental Information Regulations / Freedom of Information / Subject Access Requests). 76 completed responses sent out to requests received during the last period, with 91% of those within the twenty-working day service level set by legislation. The main themes for requests were water pollution, waste and landfill, and wildlife, land management and conservation.
87. Since our last update, we have received twelve commendations for the organisation and/or individual colleagues. We also opened 30 new Stage 1 complaints. 100% of these were responded to within the twenty working day service level; ten were upheld and twenty were not upheld. There were no new Stage 2 complaints, however, there is one ongoing from the previous period.
88. In addition, two Public Services Ombudsman decision notices were received during the period. Neither were upheld, with the decision being '*not to investigate*', evidencing that we are correctly implementing the guidance on complaint handling.
89. The Complaints and Correspondence teams have continued engaging with teams across NRW by introducing informal drop-in sessions at CP2. The purpose of these is to raise awareness and the profile of the teams, explain our work and see where we can help colleagues with correspondence. We are planning to expand these further through the organisation.

Forward Look

- Wednesday 9 September – Finance Committee
- Tuesday 22 September – September Board Meeting
- Friday 25 September – Audit and Risk Assurance Committee

- Tuesday 29 September – Protected Areas Committee
- Thursday 8 October – People Committee
- Thursday 15 October – Board Update Call

NRW Board Paper

Date of meeting:	29 th July 2026
Title of Paper:	ARAC Update for Board
Paper Reference:	26-07-B03
Paper sponsored by:	Mair Gwynant, Chair of ARAC
Paper prepared by:	Board Secretariat
Paper presented by:	Mair Gwynant, Chair of ARAC
Purpose of the paper	Information
Summary	To provide a verbal update to the Board in respect of 4 June 2026 ARAC meeting.

Background

1. This update for the Board is in respect of 4th June 2026 Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC) meeting.

Update

Audit Wales

2. Audit Wales provided an update on NRW's 2025-26 initial set of Annual Accounts, received in May. ARAC welcomed the assurance.

Annual Report and Accounts Update

3. ARAC were provided with an update on the Annual Report and Accounts (ARA). Key points of the Annual Accounts were provided, as a deep dive had taken place with ARAC members prior to the meeting. ARAC endorsed the audit enquiries letter for submission to Audit Wales.
4. ARAC were informed of the new format of the Annual Report 2025-26, and a drop-in session was suggested for ARAC to review this new format in detail prior to the 8th July ARAC meeting.

ARAC oversight of risk management framework and assurance

5. ARAC were provided with an update of risk management including the proposed simplification of the risk framework, the Organisational Risks and Issues Log, the PowerBI dashboard and the Executive Team's (ET) Deep Dive of Strategic Risk (SR) 02. The fully functional PowerBI dashboard would be presented to ARAC in their next meeting.
6. ARAC acknowledged that the ET SR deep dives provided assurance that the SRs were actively managed but noted that they would continue to have oversight and scrutiny of the deep dives. The approach to the Risk Management Strategy was outlined and ARAC endorsed this approach.

Internal Audit Quarterly Report

7. ARAC received the Internal Audit Quarterly Report and approved the additions of audits to the Internal Audit Plan.

Annual Senior Information Risk Owner (SIRO) Report

8. 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.

Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) Audit Wales Report

9. An update was provided on the response to the SSSI Audit Wales Report, with work on track to meet the recommendation deadlines. Although the work was ambitious, the actions were practical and realistic. ARAC would receive a quarterly tracker report of the actions going forward.

NRW Board Paper

Date of meeting:	29 th July 2026
Title of Paper:	ARAC Update for Board
Paper Reference:	26-07-B14
Paper sponsored by:	Mair Gwynant, Chair of ARAC
Paper prepared by:	Board Secretariat
Paper presented by:	Mair Gwynant, Chair of ARAC
Purpose of the paper	Information
Summary	To provide an update to the Board in respect of 8 July 2026 ARAC meeting.

Background

1. This update for the Board is in respect 8 July 2026 Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC) meeting.

Update

Audit Wales

2. Audit Wales provided an update on key matters of their audit of the Annual Report and Accounts (ARA) 2025-26.

Annual Report and Accounts 2025-26

3. An update was provided on key matters for the ARA. ARAC welcomed the new style of the ARA and suggestions were made which would be incorporated into next year's ARA. ARAC were content for the Accounting Officer and the Chair of ARAC to sign the letter of representation. They were also content to give assurance to the Accounting Officer to sign the accounts, and for the ARA to be taken to the Board for approval. ARAC thanked everyone for their work.

NRW Board Paper

Date of meeting:	29 th July 2026
Title of Paper:	Finance Committee Board Update
Paper Reference:	26-07-B11
Paper sponsored by:	Helen Pittaway, Board Member
Paper prepared by:	Board Secretariat
Paper presented by:	Helen Pittaway, Board Member
Purpose of the paper	Information
Summary	To provide an aid to the Chair to update Board on the Finance Committee (FC) – 2 nd July 2026

Background

1. This paper provides an update to the Board following the Finance Committee (FC) meeting on 2nd July 2026. The papers are available on Diligent and the minutes from this meeting can be made available to any Board member interested.

Financial Performance Update

2. The key elements from the Financial Performance update were presented including updated income and expenditure forecasts and the risks and opportunities for both. Contingencies, over-programming levels, and performance against the headcount ceiling was also provided.
3. Further to queries by FC, forecast tracking against the opening budget and how Managing our Money is used to formally control the forecast were explained. Ringfenced and temporary posts were discussed with the Committee supporting greater risk tolerance and the flexible resource pool was explained. Whether the increase in UK Government spending on defence would impact NRW's budget was also briefly discussed.

Budget Update

4. An update on the development of multi-year planning was provided including the steps to take, changes that should be in place by 2030 and metrics on how to get there. The work was rooted in the Wellbeing Objectives (WBOs) with five cross-cutting themes. The aim was to move towards a rolling budget with the annual business plan falling out of the multi-year plan.
5. The Committee discussed the themes, noting the crossover between them and suggested it was inward facing and did not cover the overall purpose of NRW and delivery against the climate, environment, and pollution emergencies. In response, the differences between the themes were explain and assurance was provided that the work would be fronted by the WBOs.
6. FC thought that the benefits of multi-year planning could be emphasised and that it be important to also focus on business-as-usual work and a place-based view. The importance of a holistic approach and making sure the themes were correct was acknowledged. It was also suggested that the tone could be more assertive. FC welcomed the work and looked forward to the next steps.

Financial Approvals

Salmon 4 tomorrow

7. Endorsement was sought to extend the Salmon 4 Tomorrow (S4T) Programme to the 31st of March 2029 and to increase the budget accordingly. This would extend the programme to include more projects as it had been highly successful.

FC were supportive of the work, however, did not feel that the paper gave enough information and assurance of the outcomes and impacts of improving fish passage, and the controls and criteria of individual projects. Assurance was provided that there was evidence of the benefits of improving fish passage that would be provided and that individual projects were subject to the criteria and controls laid out in the original business case for the Programme. Assurance was also requested that the additional funding would not be more impactful on salmon recovery if spend in other areas.

8. The extension to the Programme was approved subject to further information on outcomes and impacts of the S4T Programme, project criteria and controls, and the benefits of improving fish passage being provided.

Telemetry Replacement Project Change Paper

9. Context of the history of the Telemetry Replacement Project was provided along with a detailed verbal confidence assessment on why no more changes would be needed following the approval. The eight-year Project would be completed by September.

10. FC raised concerns that the Project had exposed gaps in NRW's digital change programmes and highlighted the importance of learning lessons from it. The organisation had improved its programme and project management with the introduction of the Programme Management Office (PMO) and Contract Management Support Service (CMSS).
11. The inclusion of tolerance in project development was discussed, and assurance was provided that it was taken into consideration for all projects. A lessons learnt exercise would follow the completion of the project.
12. FC approved the extension to both time and resource for the Telemetry Replacement Project

Annual Report & Accounts 2025-26

13. An overview of the Annual Report was presented along with improvements in the Report's formatting. The Performance section had been structured around the WBOs with a focus on outcomes.
14. The Committee provided feedback on minor amendments and commended the approach and the Report's tone. The need for balanced case studies that reflected both positive and challenging aspects was highlighted.
15. The Accounts 2025-26 reconciliation was highlighted including an explanation of the differences between the Annual Accounts and the end of year performance report, presented in May.

NRW Programmes Overview

16. An overview of NRW's Capital Programmes was presented including FC's role in their oversight, funding sources, maturity, over-programming practices, and diversity.
17. FC discussed the merits of a Red, Amber, and Green (RAG) ratings for each programme rather than the proposed deep dives. It was agreed that regular, concise reporting from the PMO and Finance teams would provide sufficient oversight and assurance.
18. Where the Committee could provide most value was also discussed. FC's value was in scrutinising financial management, risk and assurance, initial investment decisions, and troubleshooting issues.
19. The importance of clear escalation routes and avoidance of duplication between committees was discussed.

Forward Look

20. The Committee reviewed and agreed the forward look.

Any Other Business

21. The Committee noted the 2027 FC dates and the Procurement and Contracts Strategy that would be presented to Board in July alongside the and Growth and Value Strategy.

NRW Board Paper

Date of meeting:	29 th July 2026
Title of Paper:	People Committee (PC) Update
Paper Reference:	26-07-B04
Paper sponsored by:	Mark McKenna, Chair of PC
Paper prepared by:	Board Secretariat
Paper presented by:	Mark McKenna, Chair of PC
Purpose of the paper	Information
Summary	To provide an update to the Board in respect of 24 th June 2026 PC meeting.

Background

1. This update for the Board is in respect of the 24th June People Committee (PC) meeting. Board members can access all Committee papers and minutes via the Diligent portal. The PC Chair explained the new People focus to PC. It was envisaged that aspects relating to Customer and Communications would now be covered under the new Strategic Delivery Committee (SDC) remit.

Verbal Update on Current Risks and Issues

2. PC were provided with verbal updates on current aspects, risks and issues from a People perspective, these included, the

Ein Llais survey

The impact of the Supreme Court ruling on Gender

Rollout of Electric Vehicle (EV) and EV Charging Infrastructure (EVCI)

People Team restructure

Addressing Modern Slavery in our Supply Chain

3. PC were presented with the 2026 Modern Slavery Statement and the move to a more meaningful five-year Modern Slavery Plan, which aligned to the Procurement Strategy and the Corporate Plan. The opportunities were also highlighted. PC appreciated the transparency of tracking measures along with the engaged document and welcomed the clear and concise metrics. The importance of making the training for colleagues more emotive to connect and tell stories was noted, in addition with the aspiration of making the training mandatory.

PC endorsed the 5-year Modern Slavery Plan and the 2026 Modern Slavery Statement

Remuneration Report

4. The Remuneration Report, to form part of the Annual Report and Accounts (ARA) was explained and PC welcomed that the format would align to other reports in the ARA. PC made suggestions to the format and order of statistics provided.

PC endorsed the Remuneration Report as part of the Annual Report and Accounts 2025/26 requesting consideration of the feedback provided.

Annual Pay Policy Statement

5. The Annual Pay Policy Statement had taken a similar format to previous years but there were opportunities to communicate differently in future iterations. PC suggested promoting NRW as a good employer. PC noted some discrepancies in the Statement which would be amended prior to publication.

PC endorsed the Annual Pay Policy Statement requesting consideration of the feedback provided.

Wellbeing Health and Safety (WH&S) Annual Report

6. Key points from the WH&S Annual Report were provided, these included the increase in hazard and active monitoring reporting, the number of Serious Incident Reviews recorded, the WH&S Strategy, the retention of ISO45001 and the over 300 WH&S training courses undertaken by colleagues.
7. PC discussed the Report and future quarterly reports would include a section on tracking actions. PC also discussed how communications shared with external stakeholders on hazard warnings on the land in NRW's care had helped decrease serious incidents and that NRW took all reasonable steps to warn visitors of hazards.

PC endorsed the WH&S Annual Report and recommend that Board approve.

Waterfall Country Visitor Safety Project Update

8. PC were presented with an update on the Visitor Safety Project in the Waterfall Country further to the site visit undertaken in September 2025. Work completed since September 2025 was outlined as well as work planned for 2026-27.
9. An overview of the improved online and on-site visitor information and safety management was presented. The Team continued to collaborate with partners and emergency services for training exercises. PC welcomed the presentation and thanked colleagues for the considerable amount of work undertaken, noting the good example of collaborative working across the organisation.

Welsh Language Annual Report

10. PC were presented with the Welsh Language Annual Report and noted the high compliance with Welsh Language Standards and the increase of using Welsh language across the organisation. A cultural shift would be needed to ensure NRW became truly bilingual. PC discussed the potential reasons why the utilisation of Welsh services remained low, but through targeted promotion increases were being seen and the opportunities were available.
11. Discussions on promoting Welsh language on the E-Recruitment system were being held. PC queried how NRW compared with other regional public bodies and statistics would be requested from the Welsh Language Commissioner. The increase on the use of Welsh from the last financial year was welcomed and PC encouraged continuous improvement, suggesting senior management lead by example. The increase in the use of the Welsh language at Board meetings was appreciated.

PC approved the Welsh Language Annual Report

Approved Mileage Rates from tax year 2026

12. PC discussed the proposal further to UK Government announcement and a review by HMRC. It was understood that the increase to mileage rates, from the start of April, applied to all vehicles. The rate change would be presented to WG for approval.

PC endorsed in proceeding with adopting the revised rate; and agreed for them to be submitted to WG for Ministerial approval prior to implementation.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Draft Strategic Equality Plan

13. PC were presented with the Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) draft Strategic Equality Plan, noting this would be for the whole organisation to own. PC welcomed the focus on EDI and noted the importance of considering the different user groups.
14. PC suggested that disability was more diverse and should have additional categorisation and understanding or training for line managers. The Strategic Equality Plan was commended for its focus and clarity and offered suggestions to strengthen narrative and to provide greater clarity around how success would be measured. Resource was also discussed as well as the need to adopt a culture of trust and autonomy and that language around positive intent should be used more.
15. The EDI Forum was highlighted and Adam Taylor confirmed he was happy to join and noted his involvement with the NRW staff neurodiversity network.

Trade Union Engagement

16. PC encouraged an open discussion and welcomed continued engagement with the Trade Unions (TUs). Areas where the TUs were supporting members were outlined, these included, colleagues working out of hours, transition to EVs, workload and resource constraints. A review of the Social Partnership Agreement would be expedited. The TU Chair noted appreciation for the time the NRW Board Chair had taken to meet with the TUs.

Standard Committee Business

17. The Forward Look was reviewed. On reflecting how the meeting had gone, the PC Chair summarised that the balance between discussions and strategic focus was welcomed. The importance of meeting face-to-face provided the opportunity to meet members from the People team and gain a better understanding of the work they undertake.

NRW Board Paper

Date of meeting:	29 th July 2026
Title of Paper:	Protected Areas Committee (PrAC) Update for Board
Paper Reference:	26-07-B02
Paper sponsored by:	Adam Taylor, Chair of PrAC
Paper prepared by:	Board Secretariat
Paper presented by:	Adam Taylor, Chair of PrAC
Purpose of the paper	Information
Summary	This summary provides an update in respect of the PrAC meeting held on 11 th June 2026.

Background

1. This update for the Board is in respect of the 11th June 2026 Protected Areas Committee (PrAC) meeting. Board members can access all Committee meeting documentation via the Diligent portal.

Strategic Approach to 30by30

2. PrAC were provided with an update on the strategic approach to 30by30; the document would be circulated to both PrAC and Strategic Delivery Committee (SDC) members when finalised.
3. The process of developing the NRW's strategic approach for 30by30 was outlined, with a retention of the focus on the 30by30 target in response to recommendations and internal feedback, with the aim of making the Strategy actionable and aligned with the Corporate Plan. Each of the Strategic Objectives within the Area of Focus - Nature is being protected, were outlined.
4. PrAC discussed the 30by30 Programme, the level of added value and resources. Support from Digital, Data and Technology (DDaT) to support both new designations and condition assessments of existing sites was appreciated. Being realistic on the delivery would be important. The ongoing challenge of limited resources relative to the scale of the 30by30 ambition was understood, and the need for clear strategy, realistic targets and prioritisation emphasised. PrAC thanked the work of the team.

Forward Look and Site Visit

5. PrAC reviewed, made suggestions for items at future PrAC meetings, and possible topics for the SDC, and also discussed potential site visits.

NRW Board Paper

Date of meeting:	29 July 2026
Title of Paper:	Finance Performance Report
Paper Reference:	26-07-B06
Paper sponsored by:	Rachael Cunningham, Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Services
Paper prepared by:	Rob Bell, Head of Finance; Mark Collins, Business Finance Manager
Paper presented by:	Rob Bell, Head of Finance
Purpose of the paper:	Approval (change in forecast) / Discussion (Financial Performance)
Summary	To approve: Change in the latest forecast from £320.6m to £322.4m. To scrutinise: Financial performance to the end of May 2026.

Background

1. The finance performance report provides detail on progress across the different types of income, expenditure and programmes. Annex A summarises the key messages in respect of:
 - Change in budget forecast compared to the opening position.
 - Performance to the end of May 2026.

Key Points

2. Income is slightly ahead of profile (£1.0m), primarily linked to commercial timber income (£0.5m) and retainable wind energy (£0.3m). The timber element is due to income received earlier than expected and has not resulted in a change to the overall forecast. Members will remember we have set the budget at a higher level this year (£35.6m) due to a higher volume of timber being provided to market.

3. Expenditure at the end of May equated to £36.2m, £1m (3%) below the planned expenditure profile. The £1m variance is primarily split across staff (£0.7m), non-staff (£0.6m) and capital projects (-£0.3m).
4. We have a central provision for additional staff costs, such as pay award and any potential amendments to the opening staff budgets along with a general contingency to address any unexpected pressures. These combined total £8.5m. We also hold a central over programming allocation of £2.6m, which has reduced from £3m in the original budget.
5. In respect to our main programmes (Flood, NaCE and DDaT), over programming is minimal apart from the Nature and Climate Emergency (NaCE). Following a review of last year's outturn, NaCE over programming has increased to £4m from £1.8m last financial year. Like previous years, this will reduce as we move through the year to be in line with the overall allocation. Since the production of the attached report the Flood Programme Management Team have identified more expenditure, and their over-programming should rise to circa £2m.
6. The main risks and opportunities are listed in the Income and Expenditure forecast pages of the report. The main cause of the underutilisation of budget last financial year was staff salaries and although we have begun this year with a staff underspend – ongoing recruitment shows that we should get to our affordable structure soon. The other area worth highlighting is our capital forecast which is £73.9m – we spent £62.4m last financial year.

Risks and opportunities

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

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

8. Executive Team will continue to monitor the principal risks within the budget.

This report is produced every two months for the Board and Executive Team.

Recommendation

9. Board to approve changes to the latest forecast, from £320.6m to £322.4m.

Board to scrutinise financial performance to the end of May 2026.

Index of Annexes

Annex A – Financial Performance Report



**Cyfoeth
Naturiol**
Cymru
**Natural
Resources**
Wales



NRW Finance Committee – July 26

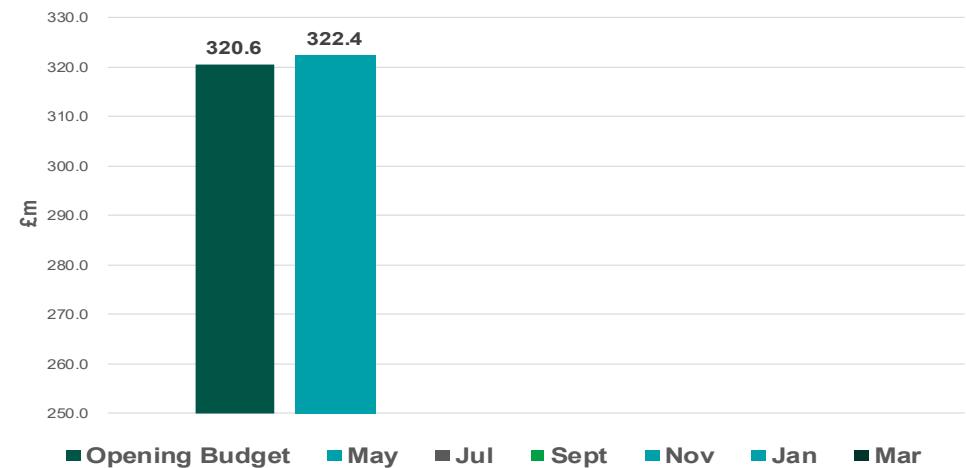
Financial Performance Report – May 26

Content and Key Messages

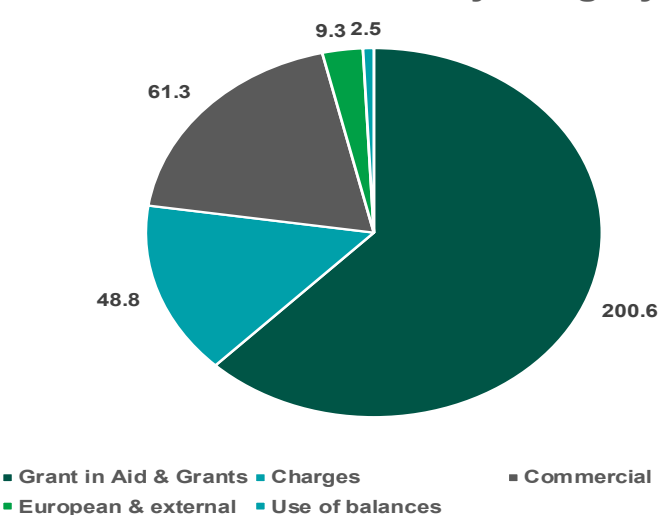
Update will cover:	Messages:
Update on the latest forecast changes as at May 2026 compared to the opening budget, an increase from £320.6m to £322.4m.	The £1.8m budget increase relates to additional funding across commercial, European & external and Welsh Government grant in aid and grant income of £0.5m, £0.7m & £0.5m respectively.
Financial Performance as at May 2026.	Income is slightly ahead of profile (£1.0m), primarily linked to commercial timber income (£0.5m) and retainable wind energy (£0.3m). The timber element is due to income received earlier than expected and will not result in a change to the overall forecast. Expenditure at the end of May equated to £36.2m, £1m (3%) below the planned expenditure profile. The £1m variance is primarily split across staff (£0.7m), non staff (£0.6m) and capital projects (-£0.3m). In next period's report we will include a summary of the directorate's review of budget performance of last financial year.
Update on contingencies and under/over programming.	There is further detail on contingencies and over-programming within the report. We have a central provision for additional staff costs, such as pay award, and any potential corrections to the opening staff budgets, along with a general contingency to address any unexpected pressures. These combined total £8.5m. We also hold a central over programming allocation of £2.6m, which has reduced from £3m in the original budget. In respect to our main programmes (Flood, NaCE and DDaT), over/under programming is minimal apart from NaCE which stands at £4m. Similar to previous years, this will be managed down as we move through the year to be in line with the overall allocation. Within the NaCE, DDaT, Fleet & Facilities programmes, there remains £2m, £1.5 and £3.8m awaiting project setup and profile distribution.
The main risks and opportunities to our budget this year	We have moved the risks and opportunities so they are reported on the same page as the income and expenditure forecasts for the year. The main areas to focus on are: staff and capital programme budgets, investment areas, timber income and our over-programming targets. The headcount page is also displayed more graphically and we will be making more changes before the next report.
	The individual pages within the report provide further detail on the points raised above.

Financial Performance – Income Forecast

Income movements through the year (£M)



Current income forecast by category (£M)



Income movements

Charges

Charge income has reduced by £0.3m, primarily linked to discretionary pre-application advice with the shortfall funded from charge balances.

Commercial

Overall commercial income has increased by £0.5m from the opening position, predominantly linked to additional wind energy income (surrenderable £0.2m and retainable £0.4m), which is offset by a reduction in the drawdown of the bond for Palleg waste site remediation in Mid Wales (£0.2m).

European & other external

European and other external income has increased by £0.7m. We received additional funding for the Teifi Fyw (£0.4m) and Natur Am Byth projects (£0.2m) along with Welsh Government Natural Flood Management funding of £0.3m. This is offset by a reduction of £0.2m across the LiFE project programme.

Grant in Aid and Welsh Government Grants

Grant in aid has increase by £0.5m linked to additional funding for Agri Regs (£0.2m) along with a number of minor changes within the Welsh Government grant programme (£0.3m).

Use of balances

Use of balances has increased by £0.3m to reflect the charge income reduction above.

Risk and opportunities

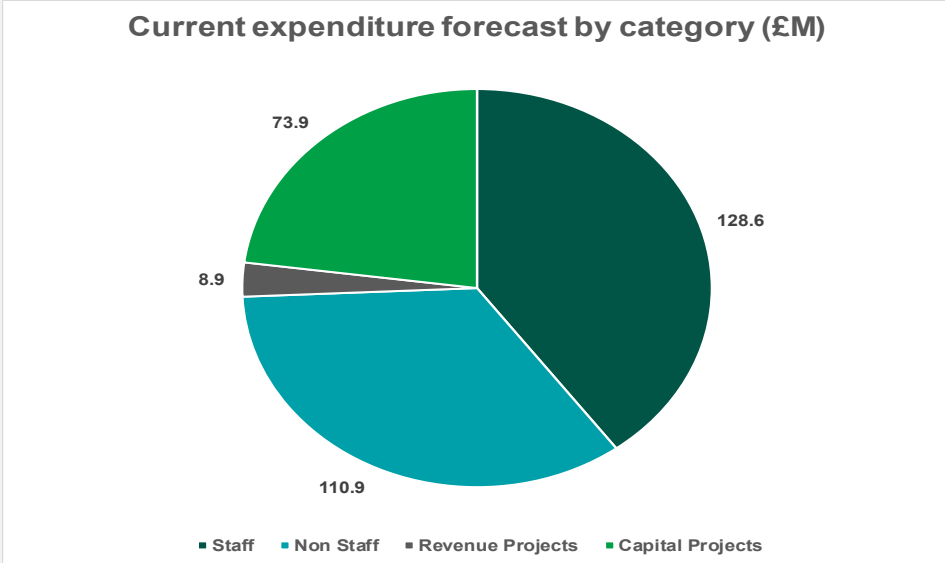
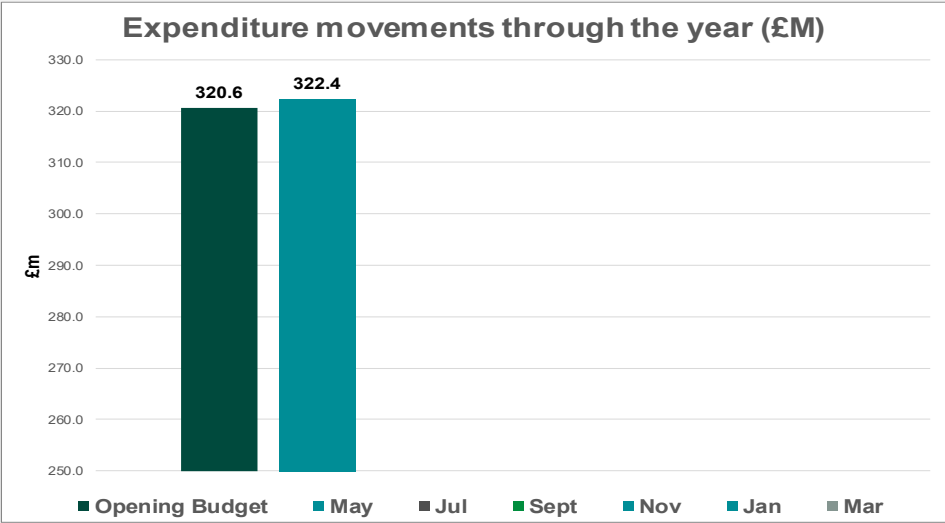
1. Timber (Commercial) Income

The budget has been set at £35.6m this financial year - more than £4m above the actual income received for each of the last two financial years. This is based on an increase in volume being brought to market.

2. Utilisation of our grant in aid and grant income provided by Welsh Government (Grant in Aid and Grants)

The budget is £200.6m, compared to £186.7m used last financial year. The waste programme has flagged a potential risk to spend. It is important that any budgets are returned to Welsh Government as early as possible in the financial year. There may also be a risk with regards the utilisation of the flood capital programme funding.

Financial Performance – Expenditure Forecast



Expenditure movements

Staff

Overall staff budgets have increased by £0.7m. The majority of which relates to the DDAT restructure, with the funding being transferred from non staff.

Non staff

Non staff budgets have reduced by £3.1m. The changes are predominantly linked to the movement of the capital contingency budget to capital projects (£2.8m) along with the staff budgets movement mentioned above (£0.6m), which is offset by the wind energy increases (retainable £0.4m, surrenderable £0.2m).

Revenue projects

Overall revenue project budgets have reduced by £0.7m from the opening position. Externally funded projects reduced by £0.5m primarily linked to the distribution of the LiFE programme to the specific capital projects along with the reallocation of the DDaT programme (£0.1m) to non staff.

Capital projects

Capital projects have increased by £4.9m from the opening position, primarily as a result of movements from non staff budgets; capital contingency transfer (£2.8m), fleet management system (£0.4m) and land stewardship road infrastructure (£0.4m), along with the allocation of the externally funded LiFE programme (£0.8m).

Risk and opportunities - Top 5

1. Flood Capital Programme (Capital Projects)

The Head of Flood Risk Management has highlighted a risk that they may not be able to use all the capital funding allocated this financial year. The most recent update indicates that the programme can be increased to £2m more than funding level, which is an over-programming of 9%, which is lower than we would like.

2. Capital contingency (Capital Projects)

We are currently holding £2.8m in a capital contingency. This is revenue funding and we have discussed with Welsh Government that we will convert this to capital. We have no concerns about using the funding but a decision is required following the conclusion of the current stage of the multi year planning work how that is utilised. We should be able to utilise additional funding, should it become available from Welsh Government.

3. Capital programmes (Capital Projects)

We have our largest ever capital budget this year spread across a number of programmes. A separate paper is being prepared for Finance Committee on this subject. Areas worth highlighting are NaCE (£27.4m) and Accommodation related projects (£5.1m).

4. Staff budgets

We are in a much better position this financial year - much closer to our affordable position - but needs to be closely monitored by Directorate Workforce Planning Groups. Underspend to date of £0.7m to be re-prioritised.

5. New investment areas (all categories)

Work is ongoing to distribute budgets for the £3m agreed by Executive Team into Water Quality, Biodiversity and Other, as well as DDAT Transformation and the additional timber income forecast. Any delays will lead to risk of underspend.

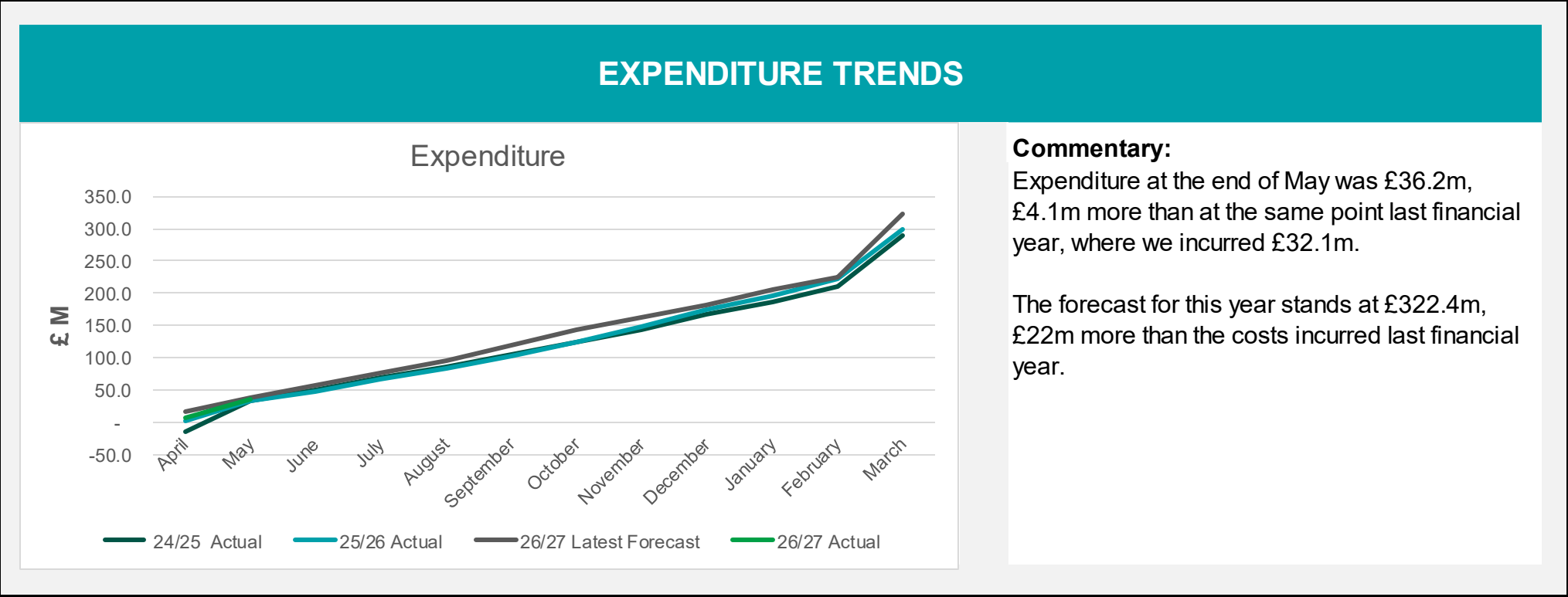
Financial Performance - Income

INCOME	Actual	Approved Forecast	Variance	Approved Forecast	Remaining Budget	Original Budget	Commentary
by Account Type	YTD £m	YTD £m	YTD £m	FY £m	FY %	FY £m	
Charges	25.6	25.5	0.1	48.8	47%	49.1	In line to profile. Finance are working with regulation to review the impact of last years outturn on this and future years' charge balances.
Commercial	10.4	9.5	0.9	61.3	83%	60.8	Timber sales at the end of May have outperformed expectations and are £0.5m ahead of forecast, however this is due to income received earlier than expected and will not result in a change to the overall forecast. Retainable wind energy is £0.3m ahead of forecast due to additional income from Cefn Croes. The full year forecast will be amended to reflect this change in income, and we will continue to engage with the operator to refine our income forecasts.
European & external	0.3	0.3	0.0	9.3	97%	8.6	In line to profile.
Grant in aid	43.2	43.2	0.0	200.6	78%	200.0	In line to profile.
Use of balances	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.5	100%	2.1	The full year budget is the estimated draw on charge balances to meet the planned expenditure. Last financial year we had a larger than expected surplus.
TOTAL	79.5	78.5	1.0	322.4	75%	320.6	

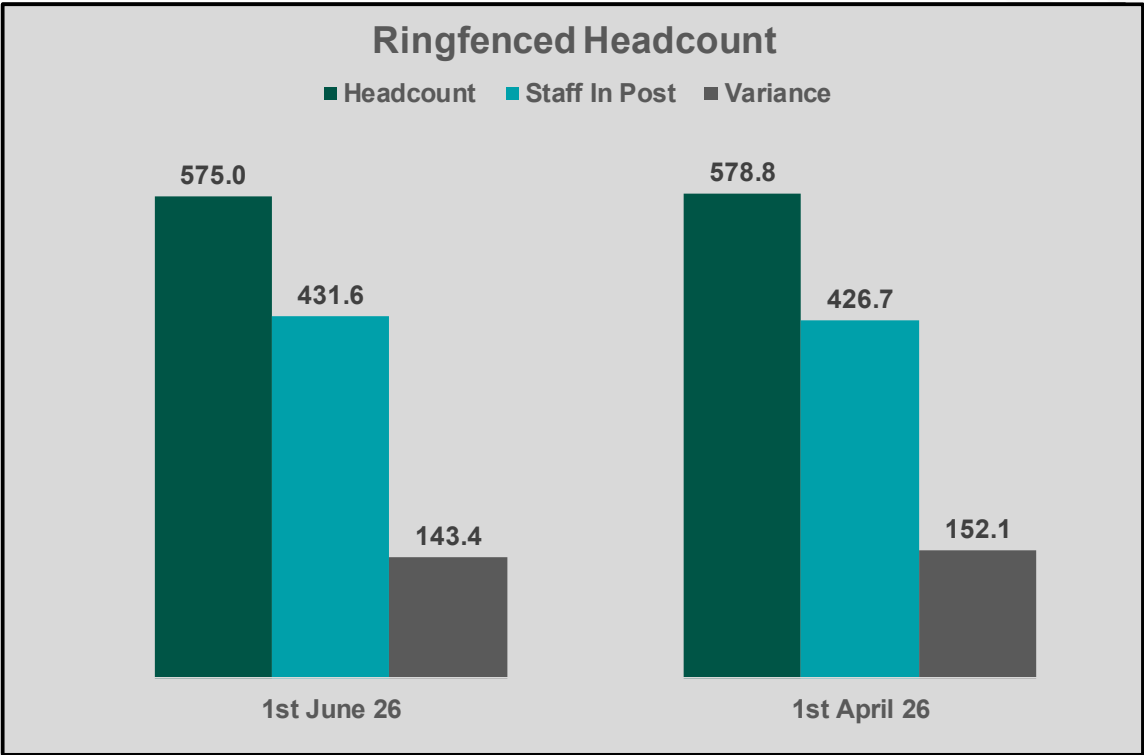
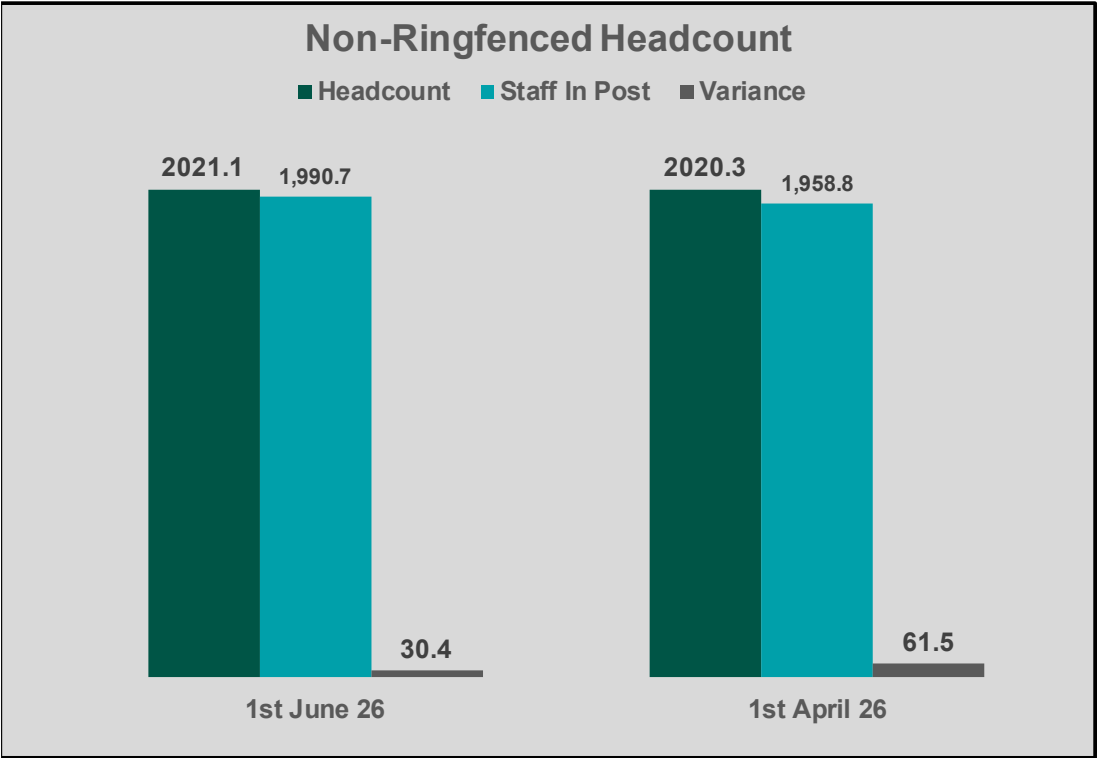
Financial Performance - Expenditure

EXPENDITURE	Actual	Approved Forecast	Variance	Approved Forecast	Remaining Budget	Original Budget	Commentary
by Account Type	YTD	YTD	YTD	FY	FY	FY	
	£m	£m	£m	£m	%	£m	
Staff	20.6	21.4	0.7	128.6	84%	127.9	An underspend of £0.7m on staff costs at the end of May, mainly due to vacant posts. However recruitment has been very positive and NRW's staffing level on non-ring fenced posts (responsible for over/underspends on staff costs) has increased to 98% which, depending on the profile of appointments, could reach 100% from current active recruitment. This would progressively increase staff costs over the coming months. It is the directorates responsibility to reallocate any savings. This is also one of the main reasons for carrying an increased level of over-programming centrally - if the salary savings cannot be used.
Non Staff	11.6	12.1	0.6	110.9	90%	114.0	A net underspend of £0.6m on non staff, mainly linked to land stewardship activities within the Operations Directorate. Management accountants are currently reviewing budgets with the business and will be adjusting profiles in June/July. Current projections are that we will still spend our full year budget. Central over programming has reduced from an opening position of £3m to £2.6m. We also hold a central contingency of £1.3m to fund unexpected pressures. This will be allocated as the need arises.
Revenue Projects	0.6	0.5	-0.0	8.9	94%	9.6	The revenue project programme is performing broadly to plan with current costs in line to budgets.
Capital Projects	3.4	3.1	-0.3	73.9	95%	69.0	The capital programme is also broadly in line with expectations, with delivery slightly ahead of plan at the end of May. Over/under programming within the main programmes is minimal apart from NaCE where is stands at £4m. This has been increased significantly from the £1.8m level last financial year, following a review of last years' programme under spend. This will be managed down as we move through the year to be in line with the overall allocation. The flood programme has minimal under programming of £0.2m but that is being re-assessed and likely to increase to circa £2m but is still less than we would like it to be. We have raised the possibility of returning some of the allocation to Welsh Government.
TOTAL	36.2	37.2	1.0	322.4	89%	320.6	

Financial Performance – Expenditure Trends



Financial Performance – Headcount Ceiling



Commentary

- 1. Staffing levels have increased steadily over the last two months with non ring fenced and ring fenced posts at 98% and 75% of their respective headcount ceilings.
- 2. The number of staff now stands at 2,422.3fte, an increase of 36.8fte from the April position.
- 3. The number of agency staff now employed is 41.
- 4. There are approximately 69(fte) active recruitments (as per Kallidus, the online recruitment system) from advertising to interview stage.
- 5. An additional 39.7(fte) posts are currently at the requisition stage of the recruitment process awaiting approval.

- 6. Communications, Customer and Commercial Directorate continues to be slightly over their ceiling but are now joined by People, Fleet and Facilities and National Ops, all of which have a number of posts in active recruitment.
 - 7. Staffing levels continue to increase, resulting from an excellent effort by the business to reach the headcount ceiling. Based on projections, the business could reach the headcount ceiling on non ring fenced posts from the current batch of active recruitment.
- The majority of ring fenced posts are temporary and as a result can be more difficult to recruit to. However, recruitment is going well and staffing levels continue to increase. Based on projections, staffing levels could reach 78% from current active recruitment.

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 %	Original Budget FY £m	Commentary
External Funded	0.3	0.2	-0.1	4.4	93%	4.8	The majority of project expenditure is in line to the respective forecast, with the exception of Natur Am Byth. The project partners will be providing detailed forecasts in June.
Internal Funded	0.0	0.1	0.1	1.4	97%	1.5	Slight underspend on the internally funded projects, mainly driven by vacancies and recruitment delays.
NaCE	0.1	0.1	0.0	1.4	92%	1.4	Costs at the end of May are in line with expectations. The programme is currently over programmed by £0.25m, which will be managed down through out the year.
Tech Transformation Programme (DDaT)	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.9	87%	1.1	Current costs are in line with profile. The Disaster Recovery project covers the majority of the allocation (£0.6m), with the residual balance awaiting project code setup.
Grants	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.8	100%	0.8	The funding consists of two programmes - Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and National Trails. The majority of spend will be incurred in the last quarter of the financial year.
TOTAL: NRW	0.6	0.5	0.0	8.9	94%	9.6	

Financial Performance – Capital Projects

Capital Projects by Programme	Actual YTD £m	Approved Forecast YTD £m	Variance YTD £m	Approved Forecast FY £m	Remaining Budget FY %	Original Budget FY £m	Commentary
Fleet & Facilities	0.1	0.1	0.0	7.5	98%	7.7	Current costs are in line with profile. The key projects relate to electric vehicle purchase and charging infrastructure (£2.4m), along with the accommodation transformation programme (£5.1m).
External Funded	0.4	0.4	0.0	10.8	96%	9.5	Costs at the end of May are in line with expectations. The key projects relate to the LiFE programme (£3.3m), Natur Am Byth (£1.2m) and Welsh Government grants (£6.3m). The majority of the Welsh Government grant funding are linked to Coal Tip Safety, Wales Coastal Path and Electronic Waste Tracking with Defra.
Flood Risk	0.9	0.8	-0.1	17.9	95%	17.9	The flood programme is slightly ahead of profile at the end of May. There is currently an overall under programming of £0.2m. We are unlikely to fully utilise the current allocation. The programme leads are in discussion with Welsh Government on the potential level of return.
Internal Funded	0.2	0.2	0.0	7.5	97%	3.7	Current costs are in line with profile. The programme is predominantly made up of land stewardship (£1m), compensatory planting (£1m), central capital contingency (£2.8m) and water resources (£2m). We are looking at options to allocate the contingency budget. The water resources element is under programmed by £0.3m, however any underspend will be returned to the respective charge balance.
NaCE	1.5	1.4	-0.1	26.0	94%	26.0	Costs at the end of May are in line with expectations. The programme is slightly ahead of profile which is expected at this stage of the financial year. Over-programming, which currently stands at £3.7m, has been increased significantly from the £1.8m level last financial year, following a review of the programme under spend. This will be managed down as we move through the year to be in line with the overall allocation. There is £1.3m currently sat on holding codes awaiting project set up.
Tech Transformation Programme (DDaT)	0.3	0.3	0.0	4.2	94%	4.2	Current costs are in line with profile. Of the £4.2m programme, £1.8m is awaiting project setup, the majority of which will be in place for the next reporting period. The programme also includes the customer platform sub programme.
TOTAL: NRW	3.4	3.1	-0.3	73.9	95%	69.0	

Contingencies and Over-Programming

Rag status



Balances (contingencies and programme under/overs)	Opening £m	May-26 £m	Movement £m	Confidence Level (RAG Status)	Comments
Contingencies and provisions					
Pay Award Provisions	3.9	3.9	0.0	Green	Budget held centrally at 3%.
Other staff contingency	0.8	0.5	-0.3	Green	Contingency held for flexible resource pool and any corrections required to the opening budget.
Central Contingencies	1.4	1.3	-0.1	Yellow	Central contingencies held to fund unexpected pressures, the principle of which is the review of personal use of vehicles.
Staff Budget Undistributed (Directorates)	3.0	1.3	-1.7	Green	Budgets to be distributed to posts associated with new funding in June/July when posts are setup. This has reduced considerably from the opening position and will continue to do so as we move through the year.
Capital Contingency	2.5	2.8	0.3	Green	This was initially revenue funding, but we have discussed with Welsh Government to convert to capital. We have no concerns about using the funding but a decision is required following the conclusion of the current stage of the multi year planning work how that is utilised.
Over-programming					
Central over programming (revenue)	-3.0	-2.6	0.4	Green	Minor budget returns over the first two months reducing the over programming to £2.6m.
Overprogramming (Directorates)	-0.3	-0.4	-0.1	Green	Primarily linked to Land Stewardship.
Under programming (Directorates) WG Grant	0.0	0.0	0.0	Green	
NaCE (Directorates)	0.0	-4.0	-4.0	Green	Following a review of last years outturn, over programming has increased to £4m from £1.8m last financial year. This will be managed down as we move through the year to be in line with the overall allocation.
Under-programming					
Flood Risk Capital (Directorates)	0.2	0.2	0.0	Yellow	The programme has minimal under programming of £0.2m but that is being re-assessed and likely to increase to circa £2m but is still less than we would like it to be. We have raised the possibility of returning some of the allocation to Welsh Government.
Water Resources Capital (Directorates)	0.0	0.3	0.3	Yellow	We are looking at options to allocate the £0.3m. Should this not be possible, any underspend will be returned to the respective charge balance.
Awaiting distribution					
DDaT Programme	2.4	2.0	0.4	Yellow	Mostly awaiting projects being assured and approved allowing codes to be set up.
Flood Capital Programme	12.0	0.0	12.0	Green	
NaCE Programme	25.1	1.5	23.6	Green	
Fleet & Facilities Capital Programme	3.8	3.8	0.0	Yellow	

Note

All contingencies/over programming are held centrally unless indicated otherwise.

New Funding Update

WG Grant or Externally Funded	Full Year Budget £000	Spend YTD £000	Full Year Forecast £000	Forecast Var to Budget £000	Risk to spend
Wales Infrastructure Fund	5,000	1,181	5,000	-	No risk highlighted at this stage.
Water Enforcement Funding	3,520	159	3,520	-	Medium risk of underspend based on current commitments. Consultant/project-led work remains biggest variable, followed by recruitment delays. Majority of new vacancies include 3-month lead in time, true risk will be highlighted by end of July.
Reservoir Safety	3,065	156	3,065	-	No risk highlighted at this stage.
Sustainable Farming Scheme	1,628	373	1,628	-	No risk highlighted at this stage.
Waste	5,237	423	4,737	500	This is a very early forecast, though the risk is clear based on i) prior year result ii) current indicative vacancies iii) waste capital status. We are actively performing mitigation measures such as re-prioritising spend and converting temporary posts to permanent to increase chances of recruitment where there is sufficient risk appetite; however, underspend against forecast to-date is c£156k which we are likely to see continue.

Progress redistributing the Wellbeing Objective investment budgets (£3m) & other budget 'pots'

Investment Area	Full Year Budget £000	Budget Allocated £000	Balance yet to be allocated £000	What is the plan for redistributing the remaining budget?
* WQ (GiA into WBO)	1,200	175	1,025	A detailed schedule has been provided. Staff budgets will be allocated as new post forms are received along with the remaining non staff budget.
* Biodiversity (GiA into WBO)	1,200	555	645	A detailed schedule has been provided. Staff budgets will be allocated as new post forms are received. Over a third of the budget is for the DDaT scheme, which is currently going through due process and will be allocated once these processes are complete.
* Other (GiA into WBO)	600	24	576	A detailed schedule has been provided. Staff budgets will be allocated as new post forms are received along with the remaining non staff budget.
DDaT staff (GiA)	963	585	378	Of the 21 posts in the plan, there are 7 posts that have not been added onto Kallidus as yet. There is a detailed plan including post status, grades, cost centres and activity language. When posts are created the budget is moved from the specific workorder set up to track the budget and moved to the post.
Land Stewardship (timber income >£33m)	2,669	2,195	474	Of the £2.7m additional budget, £0.8m was allocated to DDaT. The remaining £1.9m, £0.2m will be allocated to the Customer Platform and £1.2m to Land & Asset Managers. This will be allocated out in June. The roll out of the balance (£0.5m) will be dependent on factors such as the revised timber sales forecast and whether it reduces below the £35.7m.

* **TO NOTE:** prioritisation of the WBO investment budget was approved by the Exec Directors of Strategy, Policy & Evidence and Place Operations and included in the opening budget, as agreed by ET.



NRW Board Paper

Date of meeting:	29 th July 2026
Title of Paper:	NRW Modern Slavery Statement (MSS) and the Modern Slavery Prevention Plan (2026-2031)
Paper Reference:	26-07-B05
Paper sponsored by:	Sarah Jennings, Executive Director for Communications, Customer and Commercial (CCC)
Paper prepared by:	Vernon Lambert, Procurement Manager and Michelle Fildes, Procurement Strategy & Development Advisor
Paper presented by:	Sarah Jennings, Executive Director for Communications, Customer and Commercial (CCC)
Purpose of the paper	Approval and final sign-off by NRW Board
Summary	This paper is seeking approval of the Modern Slavery Statement that requires annual sign-off by the Chief Executive, prior to publication on NRW's website and the external Transparency in Supply Chains (TISC) register. This paper also includes the request for approval of the NRW Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention five-year plan.

Background

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

- To update the Modern Slavery Statement every year.
 - To publish the statement in a prominent place on the website within six months of the financial year end.
 - That the statement is approved by the Board.
 - That the statement is signed off by a Director.
5. Statements must describe the main actions the organisation has taken during the financial year to deal with modern slavery risks in the supply chains and business. The Home Office's statutory guidance recommends that statements cover the following:
- Organisation structure and supply chains.
 - Policies in relation to slavery and human trafficking.
 - Due diligence processes.
 - Risk assessment and management.
 - Key performance indicators to measure effectiveness of steps being taken.
 - Training on modern slavery and trafficking.
6. The updated Statement responds to the points above, as required by the legislation.
7. The Statement will contain a summary of our progress in this area of work and a statement of what we intend to achieve in the forthcoming year. The commitments for the next financial year are already identified in the five-year plan.
8. The latest version of the Modern Slavery Statement was published October 2025, and this update seeks to follow the same authorisation process as in previous years, ensuring consistency and the same level of visibility throughout. For 2027/28 financial year, it is anticipated that the approval process will be refined, reducing the time and effort in obtaining approval against the current approach. This is detailed in paragraph 35 of the attached Modern Slavery Statement for 2026/27.
9. Following the appointment of the Procurement Strategy & Development Advisor, the Procurement and Contracts function is now in a position to progress our approach and ambitions in relation to Modern Slavery. We have now created/ drafted a NRW Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention five-year Plan. It details NRW's commitment to strengthening its approach to identifying, preventing, and mitigating modern slavery and human trafficking risks across all areas of its work and supplements the requirement for sign off on the annual Modern Slavery Statements (MSS).
10. Procurement and Contracts have produced an action plan and tracker, which will be used from the 2026 financial year onwards. The tracker will systematically monitor progress against our commitments, enabling us to record outcomes, measure success, and capture the benefits achieved each financial year.

Risks, Risk Appetite and opportunities

11. Failure to produce a Modern Slavery Statement increases the risk that NRW might be inadvertently facilitating some form of modern slavery, human exploitation, or trafficking in its activities. To mitigate this, we have introduced a five-year Plan, providing additional assurance and future-proofing of our commitments by setting out a clear, longer-term approach to identifying, managing, and reducing these risks.

Wider implications

- (a) **Wellbeing Objectives (WBOs):** The Modern Slavery Statement contributes to the effective operation of the organisation in its delivery of the WBOs by ensuring that our employees are treated fairly and valued.
- (b) **Finance:** None associated directly with this report at this time.
- (c) **Resource implications:** Following the transfer of ownership from Governance to Procurement and Contracts, NRW Procurement made the decision that this workstream would be overseen by the Procurement Strategy & Development Advisor. Other departments will be accountable for progressing modern slavery and human exploitation risk themselves, but the Procurement Strategy & Development Advisor will be responsible for overseeing the progress being made against agreed commitments and actions.
- (d) **Equality:** A Modern Slavery Statement aims to protect the most vulnerable people in society, who are more likely to have one or more protected characteristics.
- (e) **Data Protection:** None associated with this submission.

Next Steps

12. If the Modern Slavery Statement is approved by the Board, the Statement will be signed by the Chief Executive and published in a prominent location on the NRW website and on the Transparency in Supply Chains (TISC) register (www.tiscreport.org) in Quarter 2 of the 2026/27 financial year.
13. The Statement is underpinned by the introduction of a five-year Strategic Plan, alongside a supporting action plan and performance tracker. These mechanisms have been established to ensure a structured and consistent approach to delivery, enabling NRW to monitor progress against commitments, evidence outcomes, and capture the benefits achieved on an annual basis.
14. Overall ownership will sit within Procurement & Contracts. Delivery will be supported through the implementation of the action plan and tracker, providing an ongoing framework for monitoring, reporting, and continuous improvement.
15. In addition to the monthly updates, a formal review of progress against the commitments of the Modern Slavery Statement will take place in Quarter 4 of the 2026/27 financial year. This review will align with the delivery milestones set out in

the five-year Plan, supporting NRW's delivery against the new Procurement and Contracts Strategy (2026-31) and specifically the Modern Slavery Prevention theme.

Recommendation

16. It is recommended that the Board approve the NRW's Modern Slavery Statement for 2026-27 and the NRW Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Commitments: Five-year Plan (2026-2031).

Index of Annexes

Annex 1 – Modern Slavery Statement 2026-27

Annex 2 – NRW Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Commitments: 5-year Plan (2026-2031)

Approval / Consultation process

Approval/consultation process Responsible: Who has developed the paper/process and who has had input?	Updated by Vernon Lambert, Procurement Manager and Michelle Fildes, Procurement Strategy & Development Advisor
Accountable: Who is accountable for the ultimate approval? Who will be or is being asked to approve?	NRW Board
Consulted: Who has been consulted to date? Where endorsement is required, is this in place? Will further consultation be required?	Ian Mowatt, Head of Procurement and Contracts and Sarah Jennings, Executive Director for CCC and endorsed by People Committee on 24 th June 2026.
Informed: Who has been informed or who needs to be further informed about the work?	Contract Management Support Service, Grants and Agreement, ODPM and Place Operations



Modern Slavery Statement

2026-27

Introduction

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

- dehumanised, treated as a commodity or bought and sold as 'property'
 - physically constrained or have restrictions placed on their freedom.
 - **'Servitude'** involves the obligation to provide services imposed by coercion.
 - **'Forced or compulsory labour'** involves work or service extracted from any person under the menace of a penalty and for which the person has not offered themselves voluntarily.
 - **'Human trafficking'** concerns arranging or facilitating the travel of another with a view to exploiting them.
6. This statement will be published on the Transparency in Supply Chains (TISC) register (www.tiscreport.org).

About Natural Resources Wales (NRW)

7. Natural Resources Wales is the largest Welsh Government Sponsored Body – employing circa 2,525 staff across Wales with a budget of circa £320 million for 2026/27.
8. We were set up as per the specifications in The Natural Resources Body for Wales (Establishment) Order 2012 and The Natural Resources Body for Wales (Functions) Order 2013. We receive a Remit Letter setting out what the Welsh Government wants us to achieve during that year and a Funding Letter setting out the budget available to us.
9. Our work is overseen by a Board that consists of the Chair and currently 11 further Non-Executive Directors who are appointed by the Welsh Government, plus the Chief Executive.
10. Around 60% of our income budget is derived from Grant in Aid from the Welsh Government, but we also generate income by charging for some of our services and several commercial activities including timber sales and tenancies.

Our Supply Chains

11. NRW's supply chains predominantly fall within the following categories:
- Digital, Data and Technology (DDaT)
 - Civil Engineering
 - Land Management
 - Forest Operations
 - Fleet
 - Facilities & Assets
 - Corporate & People Services
 - Marine & Environmental Consultancy Services
 - Laboratory Services
 - Flood Risk Consultancy
12. NRW has many of its own contracts and frameworks for specific categories of expenditure and these are used by our staff to deliver our objectives.

The Welsh Government Commercial Procurement (WGCP) department work in conjunction with the wider public sector, including local authorities and NHS Wales, to develop and deliver collaborative national framework agreements. NRW utilise a number of these agreements and we also utilise the Crown Commercial Service (CCS), Yorkshire Purchasing Organisation (YPO) and Eastern Shires Purchasing Organisation (ESPO) frameworks where appropriate. Decisions on whether to purchase from a suitable NRW contract or framework agreement are made by the Procurement Lead or Category Lead, in consultation with key stakeholders (internally and externally).

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

Our policies and working practices

14. We are committed to making sure that there is no modern slavery or human trafficking in our supply chain or in any part of our business. We continue to develop our policies and procedures to reflect our commitment to acting sustainably, ethically and with integrity in all our business relationships.
15. NRW mitigates the risk of modern slavery occurring in its workforce by ensuring that directly employed staff are recruited via robust HR recruitment policies. There is a Whistleblowing policy in place for members of staff to raise any concerns about wrongdoing as well as guidance for staff experiencing domestic abuse. We also have a Bullying and Harassment policy as well as a Resolution procedure through which staff can raise grievances. Staff employed on a temporary basis (as Agency workers / specialists) are, where possible, recruited through NRW's approved suppliers.

Progress against our commitments

16. 2025/26 saw considerable progress being made against our commitments. Against other key themes and initiatives Procurement and Contracts are leading on, we found capacity to review our Modern Slavery framework and have introduced and improved processes that will benefit NRW in the short, medium and long term. The details of the progress is detailed below.
17. To drive continuous improvement, we have conducted a formal review of our Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking initiatives. This has involved assessing the effectiveness of our actions over the past five years and strategically planning future commitments for Procurement and the Contract Management Support Service (CMSS). Procurement and CMSS have reviewed previous iterations of the Modern Slavery Statement formally, developing an action plan and KPIs for assessing future years success. We also identified other key contributors we should liaise with in future e.g. Grants, Commercial, CSD; Procurement and Contracts will provide support to other departments involved

with preventing Modern Slavery but it is their responsibility to have own policies and processes in place for the respective areas of work.

18. We have developed and regularly updated a newly created action plan, allowing NRW to track and monitor the effectiveness of our initiatives. This structured approach has allowed us to demonstrate measurable progress in terms of our commitment to tackling modern slavery and human trafficking.
19. We have undertaken e-learning training on Modern Slavery within the Procurement and Contracts function and this will be promoted to all staff via the LMS during the 2026/27 financial year.
20. To enhance staff understanding, we have formally reviewed and updated our Modern Slavery intranet page.
21. We have launched our new Procurement and Contracts strategy, embedding enhanced Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking management measures into the accompanying Procurement and Contract strategy action plan and tracker.
22. We have maintained our collaboration with other Welsh public sector bodies. Through this, we have shared our approaches and integrated any proportionate good practices promoted in Wales to strengthen our adherence to the Modern Slavery Act.
23. We have remained up to date with all available policies, tools, guidance, and training on Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking from the UK Government and Crown Commercial Services.

Our future commitments

24. This is NRW's seventh Modern Slavery Statement. Our work in this area has built upon and developed each year, and we have continued to review our progress and update the statement annually within each financial and operational year.
25. Procurement will publish the 2026/27 MSS, following NRW Board approval of the statement, five-year plan and the revised approach for future approvals
26. We will refresh and maintain NRW's modern slavery intranet pages
27. To drive continuous improvement we will maintain and update procurement documentation, guidance and templates using WG Code of Practice and Government Commercial Agency (GCA)
28. We will develop and promote modern slavery e-learning for all NRW staff and colleagues across NRW

29. To ensure continued commitment we will Identify high-risk categories based on characteristics such as labour intensity, pay / working conditions, geographic exposure, or subcontracting approaches and determine next steps
30. We will collaborate with colleagues in Grants and Agreements, sharing knowledge and processes for use in their area of work
31. We will continue to engage with operational staff to understand their approaches to identifying modern slavery and human trafficking risk when on site
32. We will engage with HR / People Management to assess NRW's approaches to mitigating modern slavery risks for its own employees
33. Review live contracts to identify high risk agreements for a deep-dive in 2027/28
34. Adhere with the Procurement Act in relation to the publishing of Payments Compliance Notices and the use of Fair Work clauses and Project Bank Accounts as per the Social Partnerships and Public Procurement Act

Governance and approvals

35. The Modern Slavery Statement will continue to be updated annually to report on progress against the commitments made in the previous year. It will be presented to the Board for sign-off via the People Committee Chair. Formal Board approval will be required where material changes are made to the five-year Modern Slavery Plan, with approval covering both the Statement and the revised Plan.

Signed

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Dated:

NRW Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Commitments: 5-year plan (2026-2031)

1. Executive Summary

Natural Resources Wales (NRW) is committed to strengthening its approach for identifying, preventing, and mitigating modern slavery and human trafficking risks across all areas of its work. This 5-year plan builds on and supplements the annual Modern Slavery Statements (MSS) that we publish in line with the [Modern Slavery Act \(S.54\)](#).

This five-year plan (2026–2031) sets out a clear and structured programme of actions that will enhance our due-diligence processes, improve organisational awareness, and embed consistent controls across procurement, contract management, grants, commercial activity, and operational practices.

Building on progress made through previous MSS, the plan provides a long-term framework that supports proportionate, realistic, and evidence-driven improvements. It also ensures that future annual Modern Slavery Statements are informed by an already-approved programme of work, enabling more timely delivery of actions and reducing delays caused by the annual approval cycle.

Through phased commitments over five years, the plan aims to develop stronger governance, deeper insight into areas of higher risk, improved supplier engagement, and greater assurance across NRW. The actions outlined will help ensure public money never supports unethical labour practices and that NRW continues to meet its legal and ethical responsibilities as a Welsh public body.

2. Introduction

This five-year plan (2026–2031) provides the structure needed to strengthen our organisation-wide controls, ensuring proportionality, statutory alignment, and continuous improvement.

Over recent years, capacity limitations and the annual approval cycle have made it challenging to deliver longer-term improvements. This plan addresses these challenges by establishing a clear, Board-endorsed framework that informs and supports the development of each annual MSS, with Committee / Board approval being light-touch, unless the 5-year plan changes significantly in-year.

The actions in this plan align fully with the Procurement & Contracts Strategy 2026–2031, ensuring a joined-up approach to ethical employment, supplier due diligence, and responsible use of public funds.

Modern slavery and human trafficking prevention is overseen by Procurement, but everyone has a vital role to play in identifying and reporting unethical practices. People Management, CMSS, Grants and Agreements,

Commercial and other operational teams will be critical in delivering the actions in this plan and it will require close working over the next five years to achieve the outcomes of the plan.

3. Background

An exercise that included a review of Modern Slavery Statements and key improvements achieved over the past five years was carried out by Procurement in Q3 of 2025/26 financial year. This gave Procurement an appreciation of what has been focused on and delivered against over that time. NRW has improved its governance around ethical employment and modern slavery by:

- The introduction of a modern slavery intranet page for colleagues, with links to external guidance.
- The publication of the Bullying and Harassment and the Raising of Serious Concerns in the Public Interest policies.
- Embedding modern slavery considerations into procurement documentation and tendering processes.
- Establishing the Contract Management Support Service (CMSS) to strengthen contract oversight.
- Strengthening prompt payment expectations and preparing for Payments Compliance Notices.
- The launch of the Learning Management System (LMS) module on modern slavery for Procurement and Contracts staff.

Due to the nature of our core work, NRW isn't that susceptible to global supply chain vulnerabilities but we do need to be vigilant against sector-specific risks in categories such as Forest Operations, Digital, Data and Technology, Facilities, Civil Engineering and where we procure PPE and workwear that rely on overseas supply chains.

The review exercise provided a solid foundation for this five-year plan. While much of the progress to date has been achieved within procurement, this plan widens the focus to further mitigate risks through supplier performance assessments, incorporating appropriate controls into grants and agreements, and sharing good practice with NRW Commercial in their work with customers across the Welsh Government Woodland Estate.

4. Our Strategic Context

Modern slavery prevention is one of the **five strategic themes** of NRW's Procurement & Contracts strategy (2026–2031).

NRW commits to a zero-tolerance approach and risk-based due diligence across procurement contracts, grants, agreements, and commercial operations.

These commitments are supported by the wider strategic themes of the Procurement and Contracts strategy that include **Sustainability and Biodiversity, Fair Work & EDI, Value for Money, and Governance, Compliance & Innovation**, creating an organisation-wide assurance framework.

Against our strategic themes and in accordance with policies and legislation that include [the Procurement Act](#), [the Welsh Governance Code of Practice for Ethical Employment](#) and [the Social Partnerships and Public](#)

[Procurement Act](#), Procurement and Contracts will monitor its compliance, whilst ensuring we remain committed to the delivery of our [Corporate Plan](#) and the Well-being Objectives that support it.

5. Our Principles (2026–2031)

Our approach is shaped by four practical principles:

4.1 Proportionality

We will focus efforts where risk is greatest, avoiding unnecessary burdens on low-risk areas and optimising our resource and capacity appropriately.

4.2 Realistic and Deliverable actions

We have ensured our long-term actions build on NRW's existing strengths in category management, contract management and supporting guidance, while expanding the span of control to further strengthen our mitigation approach.

4.3 Challenging where it matters

We will introduce targeted checks and incremental improvements that are meaningful, visible, and aligned with legislation and good practice, continuing to learn from others, whilst sharing our knowledge and experience with them.

4.4 Evidence-friendly

We will generate practical, achievable evidence that strengthens our MSS each year, built on learning and insights that act as a platform for positive action and progress.

6. Overview of the Five-Year Commitments (At a Glance)

Year	Focus	Key Actions
2026/27	Consolidation & Baseline	Maintain and refresh intranet, confirm high risk categories, maintain procurement and contracts templates, promote training and support others, publish Payments Compliance Notices, and ensure adherence to legislation on the use of Project Bank Accounts.
2027/28	Stakeholder Reviews	Conduct a desk-based category review, produce a Fair Work guidance note, embed risk mitigation measures into grants and agreements, engage with NRW Commercial and work with suppliers to mitigate risks.
2028/29	Keep the risk in the spotlight	Review the impact of the inclusion of modern slavery and human trafficking prevention in grants and agreements, promote and raise awareness within NRW and introduce relevant modern slavery and human trafficking prevention measures into commercial activity.
2029/30	Learning & Visible Improvements	Produce an internal summary report, refresh intranet pages, refine templates and undertake a formal benchmarking exercise with other public sector bodies.
2030/31	Consolidation & Maturity	Undertake five-year review, assess maturity and develop another five-year plan.

7. Detailed Commitments by Year

The level of detail for the each of the annual commitments will increase as we make progress in-year.

SHORT-TERM (12 Months)

YEAR 1: 2026/27 – Consolidation & Baseline

Proposed Commitments

- Produce and publish the 2026/27 MSS, following NRW Board approval of the statement and five-year plan – **Procurement**
- Refresh and maintain NRW's modern slavery intranet pages - **Procurement**
- Maintain and update procurement documentation, guidance and templates using WG Code of Practice and Government Commercial Agency (GCA) – **Procurement and CMSS**
- Roll out modern slavery e-learning for all Procurement & Contracts staff and promote to colleagues across NRW - **Procurement**
- Identify high-risk categories based on characteristics such as labour intensity, pay / working conditions, geographic exposure, or subcontracting approaches and determine next steps - **Procurement**
- Share knowledge and processes with Grants and Agreements for use in their area of work - **Procurement / Grants and Agreements**
- Engage with operational staff to understand their approaches to identifying modern slavery and human trafficking risk when on site - **Procurement / Operations**
- Engage with HR / People Management Engagement to assess NRW's approaches to mitigating modern slavery risks for its own employees - **Procurement / People Management**
- Review live contracts to identify high risk agreements for a deep-dive in 2027/28 - **CMSS**
- Adhere with the Procurement Act in relation to the publishing of Payments Compliance Notices and the use of Fair Work clauses and Project Bank Accounts as per the Social Partnerships and Public Procurement Act - **CMSS / Finance**

Outputs / Evidence

- Updated intranet page.
- MSS published on NRW website and the Transparency In Supply Chains (TISC) portal.
- Guidance tools and templates updated.
- Documented high-risk category list.
- Percentage of staff trained.
- Actions agreed with Grants and Agreements for 2027/28.
- Meetings had with Ops and HR to discuss modern slavery and/or human trafficking risks for NRW.
- Published transparency notices relating to prompt payments.

Year 1: 2026/27 – Consolidation & Baseline outcome expectations

By the end of Year 1, NRW will have a clear and consistent baseline in place, with updated tools, guidance, and training embedded across Procurement and Contracts and increasingly visible across the wider organisation. High-risk areas will be clearly identified and understood, and relationships will be established with key internal stakeholders to support future action. Evidence will demonstrate that the fundamentals are working effectively policies are aligned, staff are informed, and transparency requirements are being met giving confidence that NRW has a strong, credible platform from which to build

MEDIUM-TERM (2-3 Years)

YEAR 2: 2027/28 – Stakeholder Engagement

Proposed Commitments

- Produce and publish the 2027/28 MSS - **Procurement**
- Conduct a risk review (desktop only) of the agreed high risk categories - **Procurement**
- Develop a NRW Fair Work policy covering initiatives, policies and legislative requirements that support good practice and modern slavery prevention - **Procurement**
- Implement new steps and processes to reduce the risk of modern slavery and human trafficking through grants and agreements - **Grants and Agreements**
- Agree roles and responsibilities in terms of contract management and supplier performance reviews / KPIs - **CMSS / Contract and/or Framework Managers**
- Undertake a deep-dive exercise of live contracts and suppliers in high-risk categories - **CMSS**
- Request a short modern slavery self-assessment from suppliers in these categories using the GCA supplier tool - **CMSS / Contract and/or Framework Managers**
- Engage with NRW Commercial to assess their approach to mitigating modern slavery risks when generating income - **Procurement / Commercial**

Outputs / Evidence

- MSS published on NRW website and the TISC portal.
- Completed assessments.
- Identification of themes or improvement areas.
- Evidence of supplier communications.

Year 2: 2027/28 – Stakeholder Engagement outcome expectations

By the end of Year 2, NRW will have moved from initial baseline activity into targeted, risk-based action. There will be clear evidence of engagement with suppliers, internal teams, and commercial and grant functions, supported by improved understanding of risk within high-priority categories. Early insights and themes will be emerging from reviews and supplier interactions, and practical steps will have been introduced to mitigate risks. Overall, NRW will be able to demonstrate that it is not only identifying risks but actively influencing behaviours and strengthening controls across its areas of responsibility.

YEAR 3: 2028/29 – Keep the risk in the spotlight

Commitments

- Produce and publish the 2028/29 MSS - **Procurement**
- Review the impact of the inclusion of modern slavery and human trafficking prevention in grants and agreement mechanisms and ways of working - **Grants and Agreements**
- Promote / raise awareness of modern slavery and human trafficking prevention within NRW - **Procurement / CMSS / Grants**
- Introduce relevant modern slavery and human trafficking prevention measures into commercial activity - **Commercial**

Outputs / Evidence

- MSS published on NRW website and the TISC portal.
- Survey responses from other public sector bodies.
- Regular reporting on positive outcomes and improvements.
- Briefing notes, managers monthly updates etc...
- Action / meeting notes from engagement with Commercial.

Year 3: 2028/29 – Keeping the Risk in the Spotlight outcome expectations

By the end of Year 3, modern slavery prevention will be more visible, understood, and routinely considered in decision-making across NRW. Evidence will show that awareness has increased, controls introduced in earlier years are being applied consistently, and learning is being shared both internally and externally. Regular reporting will highlight tangible improvements, and modern slavery considerations will be integrated into commercial activity as well as procurement and grants. This will demonstrate a shift from implementation to active management of risk across the organisation.

LONG-TERM (4-5 Years)

YEAR 4: 2029/30 – Internal learning & visible improvement

Commitments

- Produce and publish the 2029/30 MSS - **Procurement**
- Refresh intranet content and consider other media approaches - **Procurement**
- Refine existing documentation across P&C - **Procurement / CMSS / Grants and Agreements**
- Undertake a formal benchmarking exercise with other public sector bodies on their approaches to tackling modern slavery and human trafficking risk within their organisations - **Procurement / CMSS**
- Produce an internal modern slavery annual modern slavery and human trafficking report - **Procurement**

Outputs / Evidence

- MSS published on NRW website and the TISC portal.
- Intranet pages refreshed and other communication methods implemented.
- Updated templates and guidance.
- Benchmarking insights report produced.
- Report produced and circulated.

Year 4: 2029/30 – Internal Learning & Visible Improvement outcome expectations

By the end of Year 4, NRW will be able to clearly demonstrate measurable improvement, informed by internal learning and external benchmarking. Updated tools, guidance, and communication approaches will reflect lessons learned, and comparisons with other public sector bodies will provide assurance that NRW is aligned with or exceeding good practice. Reporting will show a more mature and evidence-led approach, with visible improvements in how risks are identified, managed, and reduced. This year will mark a transition from developing processes to refining and optimising them.

YEAR 5: 2030/31 – Consolidation & Maturity

Commitments

- Produce and publish the 2030/31 MSS, following NRW Board approval - **Procurement**
- Conduct a five-year review of modern slavery controls - **Procurement / CMSS / Grants and Agreements**
- Undertake a maturity assessment - **Procurement / CMSS / Grants and Agreements**
- Investigate and agree on new improvement approaches for P&C and wider NRW business areas - **Procurement / CMSS / Grants and Agreements**
- Maintain publication of Payments Compliance Notices - **CMSS / Finance**

Outputs / Evidence

- MSS published on NRW website and the TISC.
- Five-year review summary.
- Two implemented improvements.
- Continued compliance with transparency duties.

Year 5: 2030/31 – Consolidation & Maturity outcome expectations

By the end of Year 5, NRW will be able to evidence a mature, embedded approach to modern slavery risk management across procurement, contracts, grants, and commercial activity. The five-year review and maturity assessment will demonstrate sustained progress, clear governance, and a strong culture of awareness and accountability. Continuous improvement will be evident, with new actions identified and implemented based on insight and experience. Overall, NRW will be able to provide assurance that modern slavery risks are being proactively managed, with robust systems and behaviours in place to support long-term prevention.

8. Monitoring and Reporting

The following KPIs and performance measures will be used to evidence progress against NRW's modern slavery risk mitigation actions between 2026 and 2031.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

- Percentage of Procurement & Contracts staff who have completed modern slavery e-learning.
- Percentage of NRW staff who have completed modern slavery e-learning.
- Percentage of categories assessed for modern slavery risk each year.
- Percentage of live contracts in high-risk categories that receive a deep-dive review.
- Percentage of high-risk suppliers completing a modern slavery self-assessment.
- Number of grants and agreements where modern slavery controls have been embedded.
- Number of commercial income activities reviewed for modern slavery risk.
- Number of improvements or actions implemented following supplier engagement or contract reviews.

Evidence and Monitoring Methods

- Annual reporting from CMSS on contract reviews and supplier assessments.
- Training records collected through the Learning Management System.
- Records of Payments Compliance Notices published and dates.
- Meeting notes, action logs, and insights gathered from engagement activities.
- Audit trail of grants and agreements updated with modern slavery controls.
- Documented updates to intranet pages, templates and guidance documents.
- Year-end summary of progress against commitments for inclusion in the Modern Slavery Statement and close collaboration with Operations, People Management and Commercial to manage our own internal risk exposure.

This evidence will inform NRW's annual Modern Slavery Statement and ensure continuous improvement across the organisation.

9. Raising awareness and training

While LMS training provides a consistent foundation of awareness, NRW will strengthen its approach by introducing more practical, scenario-based learning for operational staff. This will include real-world case studies relevant to high risk categories and/or sectors such as agriculture, forestry, and facilities management, alongside useful information that can be used to identify risks in this area. The aim is to ensure staff not only understand modern slavery in principle, but feel confident in recognising warning signs in their day-to-day roles and know exactly how to respond.

10. Conclusion

This plan provides a clear, credible and practical pathway to strengthening NRW's modern slavery controls and embeds risk management across all relevant functions.

This approach ensures that modern slavery risk management is embedded across procurement, contracts, grants and agreements, with strengthened oversight and contributions from colleagues across the organisation.

This plan provides a clear, credible and deliverable pathway for strengthening NRW's approach to modern slavery and human trafficking prevention over the next five years. Crucially, it is designed not just around commitments, but around demonstrable outcome ensuring that each year builds progressively towards a more mature, consistent, and embedded approach across the organisation.

By 2031, NRW will be able to evidence that modern slavery risk management is not a standalone activity, but an integral part of how it operates, reflected in procurement, contract management, grants, commercial activity and day-to-day decision-making.

The plan ensures that governance is stronger, risk is better understood and actively managed, and that staff, suppliers, and partners are all contributing to a culture of vigilance and accountability.

Through a focus on proportional, realistic, and evidence-based actions, NRW will be able to provide clear assurance to the Board, stakeholders, and the public that it is delivering on its commitments not only meeting statutory requirements, but demonstrating continuous improvement and meaningful impact in preventing modern slavery within its sphere of influence.

NRW Board Paper

Date of meeting:	29 th July 2026
Title of Paper:	Wellbeing, Health and Safety and Learning and Development Annual Report 2025-2026.
Paper Reference:	26-07-B07
Paper sponsored by:	Lousie White, Executive Director of People, Facilities & Fleet
Paper prepared by:	Charlotte Morgan, Wellbeing, Health and Safety & Learning and Development Manager
Paper presented by:	Charlotte Morgan, Wellbeing, Health and Safety & Learning and Development Manager
Purpose of the paper	Approval
Summary	Board are asked to approve the Wellbeing, Health & Safety & Learning & Development Annual Report for 2025-2026.

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 2025-26
2. In 2025-26 we made further significant steps to implement our Strategy. Headlines from 2025-26 include:
 - a. Increased engagement in Hazard reporting.
 - b. Serious incident reviews. Seven 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. RIDDOR reportable LTIs and Injuries. Five RIDDOR reported incidents and five lost time incidents (LTIs) were reported for 2025-26.
 - c. The WH&S Strategy 2026-2030 was approved by Executive Team (ET) and Board.

- d. In December 2025, NRW re-attained registration to ISO 45001: 2018.
- e. Pre-qualification questionnaires. A total of 92 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.
- g. We delivered further improvements and developments such as:
 - i. Several specific wellbeing initiatives throughout the year e.g., menopause cafes; Stress Awareness Month, wellbeing assessment days etc.
- h. Reviewed and revised several WH&S policies and procedures in line with legislative changes.
- i. In total 316 WH&S related training courses were delivered to NRW staff.
- j. To ensure clarity, the impact statement in the strategic risk register reviewed. The definitions of impact and likelihood were revised to ensure that there was evidence and clear criteria underpinning any chance to the risk dial.

Wider implications

- (a) **Finance:** It is recognised that the mis-management of WH&S has significant financial implications. We are working together with the business continuing to put new systems in place in order to manage our WH&S risks and therefore reduce any costs. As well as protecting our staff and those working on and using the estate NRW manage, there could be significant financial implications arising from failures to implement a robust WH&S system.

Next Steps

- 3. We will continue to support the business to ensure wellbeing, health and safety risks are being managed effectively by NRW. In looking ahead, NRW will need to maintain and also develop and improve further our own strong culture of wellbeing, health and safety monitoring and learning. This will continue to be the key element of our future strategy to move forward.
- 4. There will be a review of the strategic risk level as there is a move to the new risk register.
- 5. We will use the information gathered and lessons learnt in the development of our future strategy and action plan.

Recommendation

6. Board are asked to approve the Wellbeing, Health & Safety & Learning & Development Annual Report for 2025-26

Index of Annexes

Provide any supporting information:

Annex 1 - WH&S Annual Report 2025-26

Approval / Consultation process

Approval/consultation process Responsible: Who has developed the paper/process and who has had input?	The paper was developed by Charlotte Morgan.
Accountable: Who is accountable for the ultimate approval? Who will be or is being asked to approve?	Board are asked to approve.
Consulted: Who has been consulted to date? Where endorsement is required, is this in place? Will further consultation be required?	Corporate Services Business Group Executive Team People Committee
Informed: Who has been informed or who needs to be further information about the work?	As above.

Annex 1 – WH&S and L&D Annual Report 2025-2026

Summary

This is the annual report to inform of NRW's Wellbeing, Health and Safety (WH&S) and Learning and Development developments in 2025/2026 including:

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

Overview

The NRW Wellbeing, Health and Safety Strategy and Improvement Plan for 2021 – 2024 were approved in September 2021. In order to align the WH&S strategy with the People strategy there was an agreement for a 12-month extension.

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.

Headlines from 2025/2026 include:

- RIDDOR Reportable LTI's and Injuries. Five RIDDOR reported incidents and five lost time incidents (LTIs) for 2025/26.
- Increased engagement in Hazard reporting.
- Continued positive progress in Active monitoring reporting for 2025/26.
- Serious Incident Reviews (SIR) – We reviewed seven 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.
- The WH&S strategy 2026-2030 was approved by Executive Team (ET) and Board.
- 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 2025.

- A total of 92 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.
- 316 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 four times in 2025/26 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 (SIR), with monitoring of actions
- Consideration of Internal and external audit findings and recommendations
- Feedback from Regional Forums and Trade Union representatives

The introduction of the SIR report has resulted in positive discussions surrounding causal and contributory factors as well as the lessons learnt. These discussions have focussed committee members on target areas within their directorates.

In 2025/26, 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. The WH&S forum reps regularly bring discussion points, areas of concern and best practise to the meetings and this has resulted in enhanced engagement. To reflect the Directorate changes, it was agreed at the National WH&S Committee that there will continue to be three WH&S forums.

Performance – health and safety

- 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.

Accident and near miss statistics

Total numbers can be found [Appendix 1](#)

RIDDOR / LTIs

- There were 5 RIDDOR reportable incidents in 2025/26. The RIDDORs consisted of:
 - a fall from a low height resulting in a knee injury
 - a slip resulting in a back injury
 - a slip resulting in an ankle injury
 - a slip resulting in a knee injury
 - a slip resulting in an ankle injury
- There were 5 staff LTIs that were not RIDDOR reportable in 2025/26. The LTIs consisted of:
 - a manual handling repetitive injury
 - an anaphylactic shock
 - a slip resulting to a twisted ankle
 - a broken ankle
 - a slip resulting in a bump to the head

Injuries

- Staff injuries have seen a small increase in comparison to previous years (with the exception of 2023-2024).



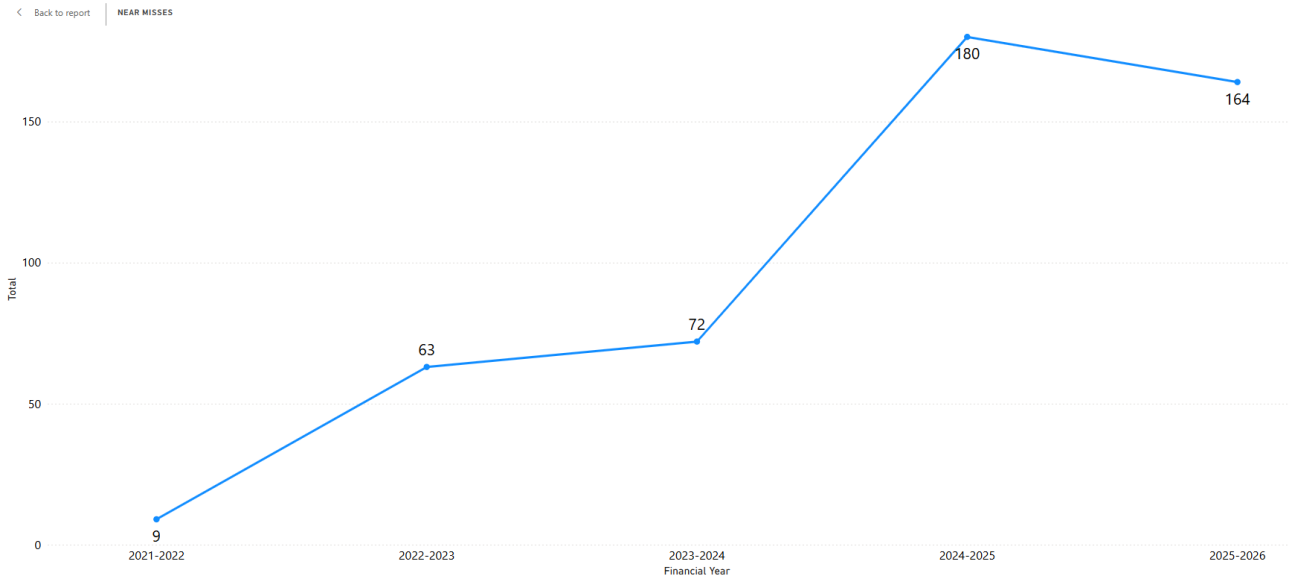
This upward shift is likely linked to the organisation's heightened emphasis on accurate and consistent reporting, rather than a genuine rise in incidents. When reporting becomes a targeted focus, it's common to see numbers increase as under-reporting decreases and staff become more confident in logging injuries (Reports by Directorate can be found in [Appendix 2](#)).

- Statistics consistently show that within NRW, slips, trips and falls remain the leading cause of injury throughout the year ([Appendix 3](#)). The outdoor nature of our work—often carried out on uneven, wet or unstable ground—plays a significant role in this trend.

To address this risk, targeted toolbox talks (TBT) have been shared on slips, trips and falls at regular intervals. These sessions reinforce good practice, highlight seasonal hazards, and remind teams of the behaviours that prevent incidents. In addition, a dedicated toolbox talk on checking the condition of PPE, ensuring staff understand how to identify wear, damage or deterioration before it leads to an avoidable injury was shared.

Near Miss Reporting

- Near-miss reporting involving staff has shown a slight decrease compared with 2024–25, but when viewed over a longer period, there has been a substantial overall increase since 2021–22.

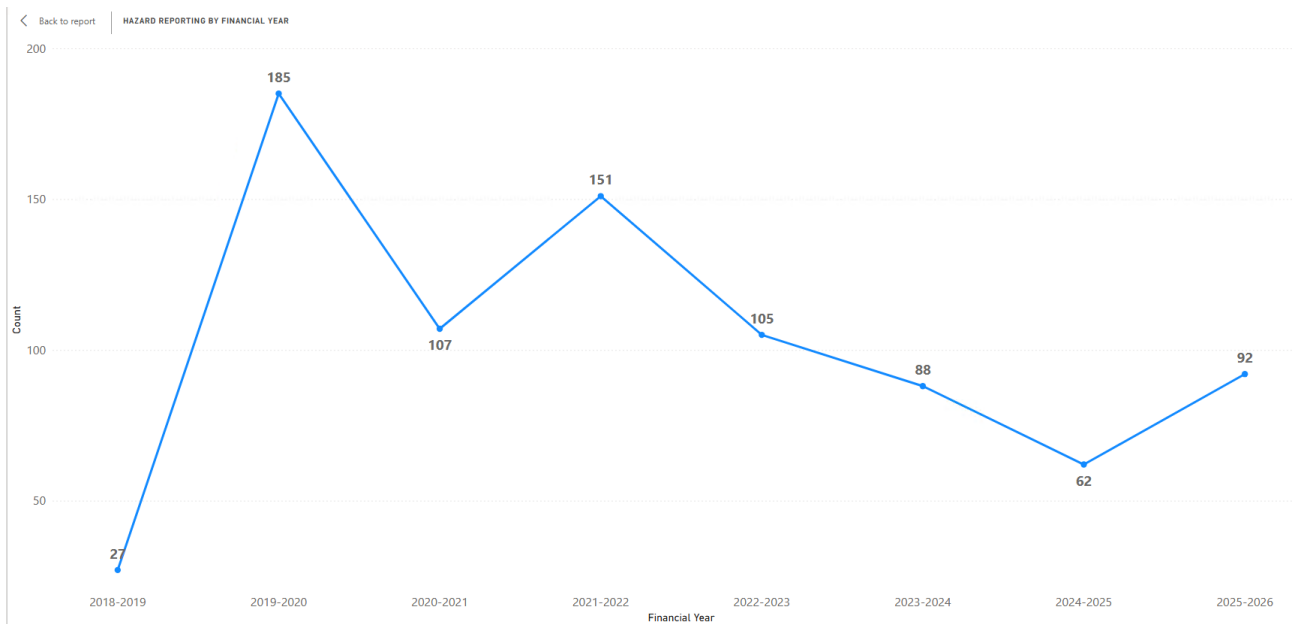


This pattern suggests that although reporting dipped slightly in the most recent year, NRW has made significant progress in strengthening its reporting culture over the past several years. A breakdown by Directorate can be found in [Appendix 4](#).

- Statistics show that the leading cause of near misses have been identified as driving at work ([Appendix 5](#)). This is closely followed by Electric Vehicle (EV) issues – this category was added during Q3 to allow for easy identification and analysis of EV related issues. To address the risk of driving at work, a targeted TBT was cascaded to remind colleagues of the measure that they can take when driving for work. In addition a TBT on lone and/or remote working was shared.
- Near misses by contractors has increased overall since 2024-25 ([Appendix 6](#)). This upward trend indicates a positive shift in the working relationship and safety culture between NRW officers and contractors. Increased reporting typically reflects greater trust, clearer expectations and improved communication around safety responsibilities.

Hazard Reporting

- Hazard reporting has increased during this financial year, largely due to the improved accessibility of AssessNET through the mobile app.

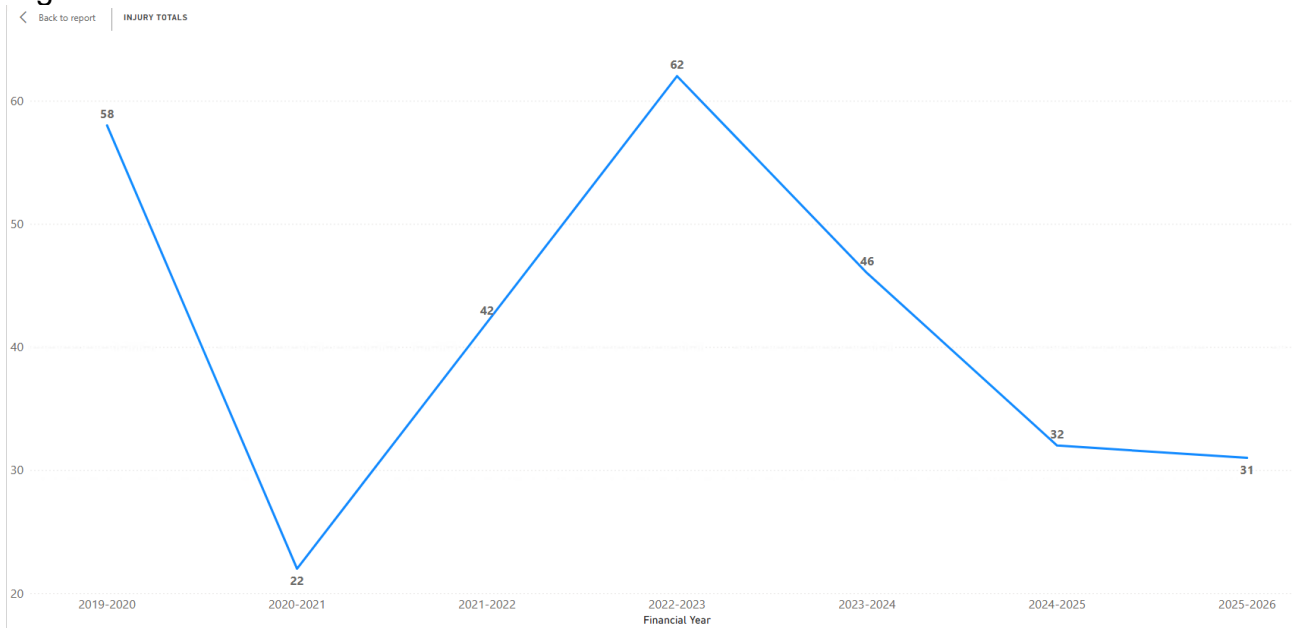


The easier reporting process has enabled staff to log hazards more quickly and consistently, contributing to a stronger overall reporting culture.

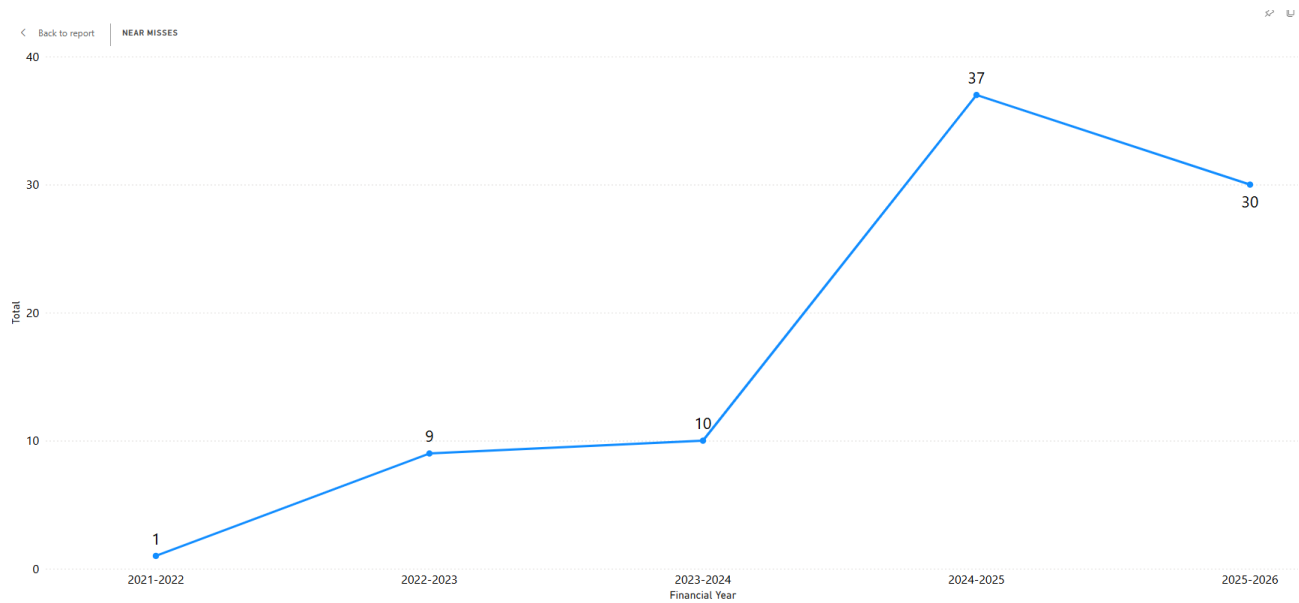
- Statistics show that access / egress issues are the most common classification of hazards. On analysis of this data, there is no clear type of access / egress issue to target. The second most common cause of hazard type is slip / trip / falls. To address this hazard, targeted TBT have been shared on slips, trips and falls at regular intervals.

Members of the Public (MoP)

- Reported MoP Injuries have been on a downward trend since 2022-23 with a very slight increase in 2025-26.



- MoP near miss reports have seen a decrease in reporting during financial year 2025-26.



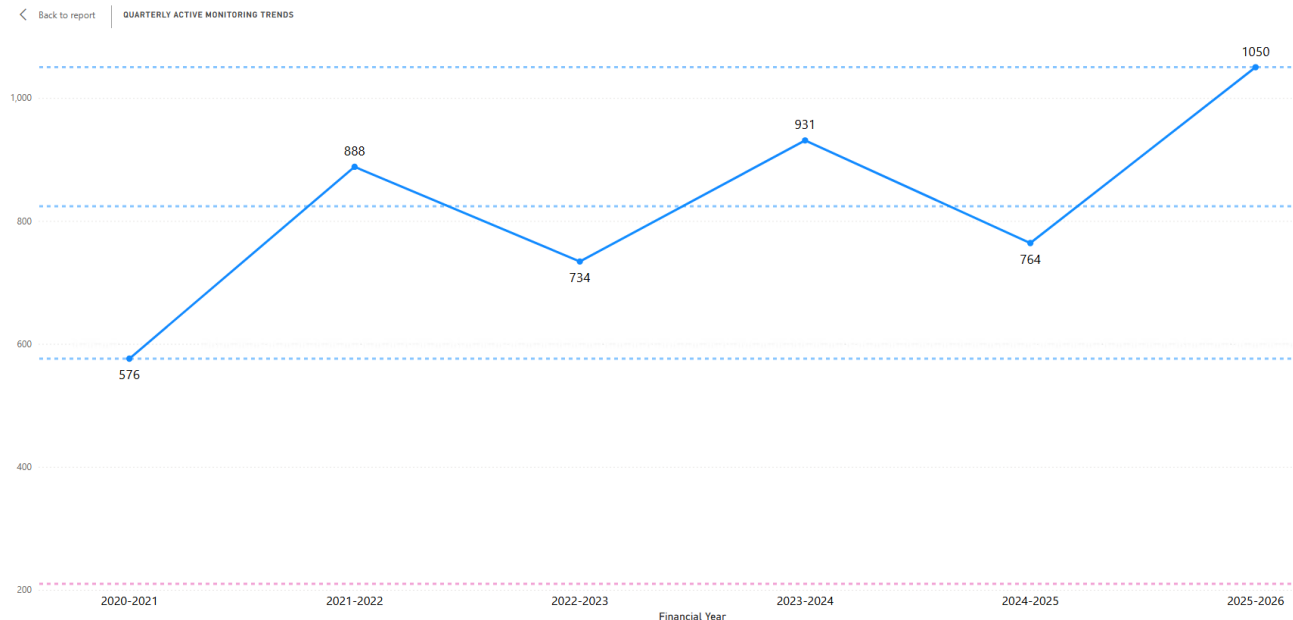
Fatalities

MOP and Contractor fatalities reported to NRW are below. The reported fatalities could have taken place on NRW estate or were reported to NRW as we were seen at the time of report to have a vested interest.

	2025-2026	2024-2025	2023-2024	2022-2023	2021-2022	2020-2021	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017
NRW Staff	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Contractors	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0
MOP	3	5	2	5	8	0	0	1	2	4

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.



Breakdown by directorate can be found in [Appendix 8](#).

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.

To further support an allow analysis of this rich data, NRW will in 2026/27 look to procure software that will assist and analyse the reports.

Proactive actions taken during 2025-26

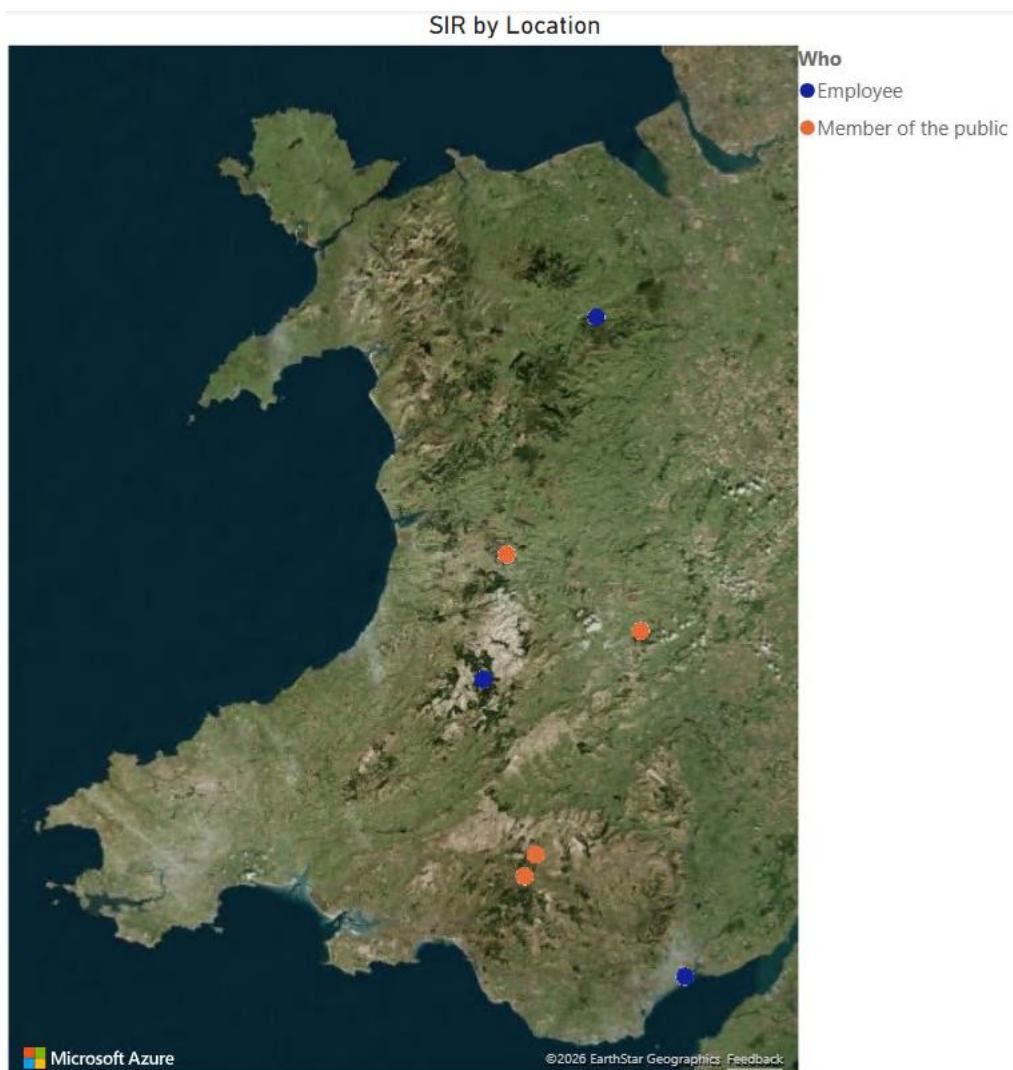
- NRW has delivered targeted WH&S training for managers and team leaders, with a specific focus on improving near miss reporting. As a result of this training, leaders are now actively encouraging staff to report near misses through regular WH&S forum discussions, ongoing monitoring, and their day-to-day line management responsibilities.
This increased engagement in the process is reflected in a noticeable rise in near miss reporting, demonstrating stronger safety awareness and a more proactive reporting culture across teams.
- It is also encouraging to note the continued efforts of local WH&S forums to improve both the quantity and quality of incident reports. These forums have played a key role in ensuring that incidents are properly investigated and closed off by line managers,

strengthening accountability and supporting a more proactive safety culture across the organisation.

- A further 900 licences have been procured to enable field employees to access AssessNET while undertaking work activities on site. Expanding access to the system supported timely incident and near miss reporting and has strengthened overall engagement with WH&S reporting processes.

Serious Incident Reviews

Seven serious incident reviews were opened in 2025-26 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 seven serious incident reviews are set out below:

Near Miss – Member of Staff – Car Jack

When changing a vehicle tyre due to a puncture on a forest road, the car fell off the jack.

Incident – Member of Staff – Peterstone Excavator

An excavator became bogged on the embankment of a reservoir.

Fatality – MOP – Motorbike 1 Permissions

A MOP was a motorbike as part of an organised group on the NRW estate.

Fatality – MOP – Motorbike 2

A MOP was riding a motorbike on green lane and information provided suggests that they collided with a branch, however NRW have never formally notified of this incident.

Injury – MOP – Waterfalls 9

A MOP fell from a closed footpath causing multiple injuries.

Fatality – MOP – Waterfalls 10

A MOP walked into the waterfall and drowned.

Injury – Member of Staff – Corwen Forest

Member of staff slipped and fell, sustaining a serious back injury whilst inspecting forest block.

Engagement with stakeholders

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

NRW have continued to engage with the HSE through attendance at bi-annual Arboriculture and Forestry Advisory Group (AFAG) meetings. The HSE's policy lead for forestry, attended NRW's chainsaw task and finish group to help set the scene by providing chainsaw related accident statistics along with an important reminder of what the HSE look for in terms of operator competence.

Joint Confor/FISA/NRW Safety Day

Members of the WH&S team attended a jointly organised safety day, where the team delivered a presentation on incident statistics and co-presented a session on incident investigation. Attendees were asked to complete "concern cards" so that NRW had an idea of the concerns and issues. This was then used to facilitate group discussions about near misses and ways in which to improve safety standards in the forest industry.

Timber Customer Liaison Day

Members of the WH&S attended and delivered a presentation for NRW's annual timber customer liaison day. This covered health and safety statistics, learning and performance, an update on the timber sales pre-qualification process, a recap on the success of the joint Confor/FISA/NRW safety day, and FISA engagement.

Forestry & Land Scotland and Forestry England

Members of the WH&S team continue to meet periodically with peers from Forestry and Land Scotland, and Forestry England, to discuss common WH&S related issues.

Dee Conservancy

Dee Conservancy is the formal name given to a defined harbour area for which Natural Resources Wales (NRW) is the conservancy, harbour and local lighthouse authority. This harbour area includes the River Dee and its estuary, extending from Wilcox Point downstream of the weir at Chester, seawards to an imaginary line linking the Point of Ayr on the Welsh coast to Hilbre Point on the Wirral peninsular.

The Port Marine and Facilities Safety Code 2025 published by the Department of Transport (DfT) requires harbour authorities to publish a safety plan for marine operations. The Dee Conservancy Marine Safety Management System (DCMSMS) has been developed to meet this Code.

A formal review of the DCMSMS was carried out by the Duty Holder in conjunction with the Designated Person and the Dee Conservancy Harbour Master (DCHM) on 3rd November 2025. The Duty Holder accepts the findings of the formal review, which are communicated in Designated Person's Report.

With the retirement of Gareth O'Shea, Dominic Driver has been appointed to the role of Duty Holder in the interim.

Contractor Management

A total of 92 pre-qualification questionnaires were assessed, for a number of different teams. This ensures 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.

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.

Performance – Wellbeing and health

Occupational health statistics

Summary of annual activity

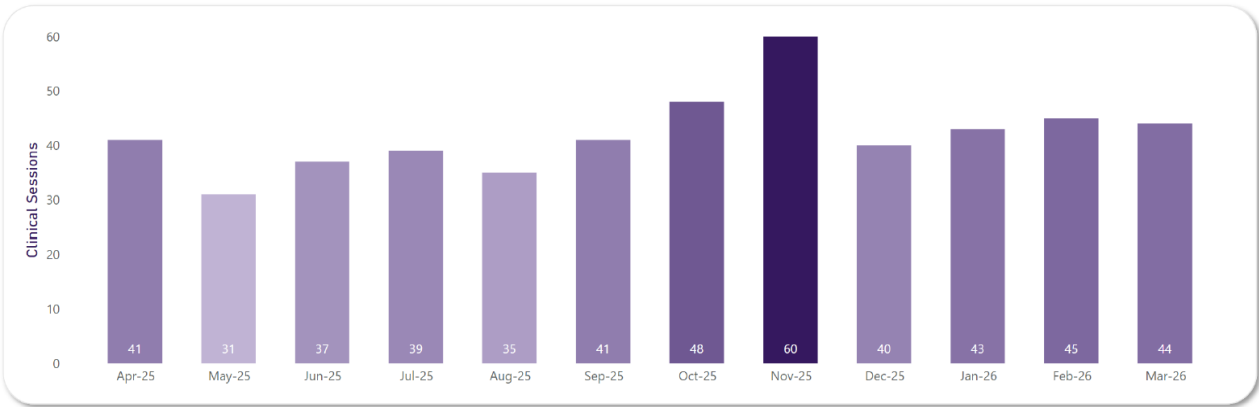
Occupational Health continued to play a key role in supporting staff health during the year, with 300 referrals recorded, an increase of around 11% compared with 270 referrals in the previous year. The most common reasons for referral were work-related stress and musculoskeletal issues, highlighting ongoing priorities for early intervention and effective workplace support. Beyond occupational health, within NRW, there is wellbeing support noted in wellbeing health and safety update in managers monthly. This is a standing item which details what is available for all employees to support their mental health. Managers have been provided with drop sessions and 1-2-1 sessions to support the implementation and review of team and individual stress risk assessments.

Due to the external occupational health provider upgrading their portal and systems this has resulted in graphical data and visual trend analysis not being included in this report.

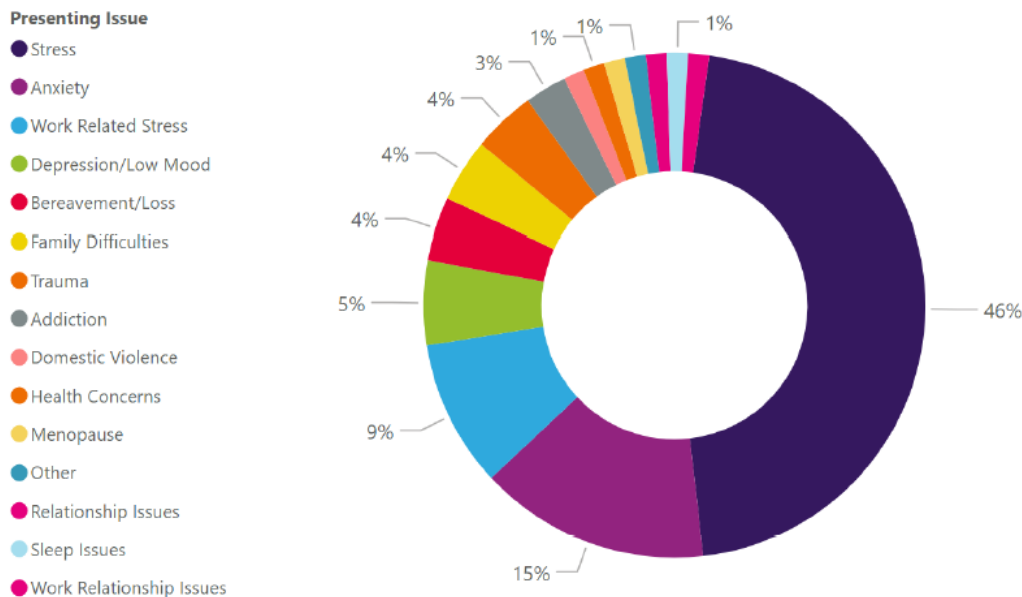
Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)

The EAP continued to play an important role in providing early intervention and confidential support to staff throughout the year. Usage levels remained steady across a wide range of personal and work-related concerns, particularly those linked to mental wellbeing, stress and anxiety. Access to counselling, advice and self-help resources has enabled staff to seek support at an early stage, helping to reduce escalation and complementing wider Occupational Health and wellbeing support across the organisation.

The graph below details the number of clinical sessions conducted during the year.



The graph below captures the core concerns brought forward by colleagues during clinical assessment.



Further developments in 2025-26

Corporate Health Standard

In 2025-26, NRW with the support of Public Health Wales and likeminded public sector organisations e.g. Welsh Water, Betsi Cadwaladr Health Board established a mentoring group. In the summer of 2025, Public Health Wales procured the services of RCS Wales to assist in the Peer Mentoring program. This project will gather evidence and research during the discovering phase to review the peer mentoring element.

Wellbeing initiatives

Throughout the year, NRW promoted staff wellbeing through a range of national and organisational campaigns, including Foster Care Fortnight, Mental Health Awareness Week, Loneliness Awareness Week, Cervical Screening Awareness, International Stress Awareness Week, World Suicide Prevention Day and Stress Awareness Month. NRW also became a Fostering Friendly Employer and launched the Heat Scheme, reinforcing our commitment to practical support that improves staff health, wellbeing and work–life balance. These initiatives reminded and encouraged staff to look after themselves and their colleagues, both in and outside of work, and were communicated through the Intranet, Manager’s Monthly Updates, Yammer, and engagement at local WH&S Forums and team meetings.

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.

At the end of the financial year, March 2026, there were 924 users with an average use of 74%. In 2026/27, the lone and or remote working policy and procedure will be launched and communicated to colleagues. This will be supported with a series of training sessions via the Learning Management System (LMS). The aim of this is to further engage colleagues and managers to understand the importance and benefits of the use of the Peoplesafe system.

Policy/procedure update

During the year, NRW focused on strengthening the policy and procedural framework to better support staff through difficult and complex life events. This included introducing new Bereavement and Death in Service, Cancer in the Workplace, Critical Illness and Wellbeing Hour procedures, alongside a revision of the Lone Working Policy. Together, these changes help ensure our approach is consistent, compassionate and reflective of our commitment to employee wellbeing.

Staff Alert System (SAS) – Previously Hostile Sites

In Q4, resources were made available to research, develop and launch a new system to replace NRW's hostile sites database. This new system will provide a more secure, modern, and fully DDaT supported platform with improved GDPR compliance and postcode/address lookup. It is built to support colleagues across the organisation – whether they are working at a desk or out in the field. It will be accessible on NRW mobiles, tablets and laptops and is available in either English or Welsh.

The SAS also provides timely, accurate information about potential health and safety risks, helping colleagues make informed decisions before visiting a site.

The expected launch date is early August 2026.

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 2025/26 further work has been progressed to ensure that teams across NRW have suitable and sufficient risk assessments in place. There is a plan for 2026/27 for this to continue with a focus in the Place and Service Directorate. The WH&S team have worked with the business to assist and support and development of the risk assessments in AssessNET.

Risk register

The strategic risk register was revised, reviewed and amended in 2025/26. 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.

To ensure clarity, the impact statement in the strategic risk register reviewed. The definitions of impact and likelihood were revised to ensure that there was evidence and clear criteria underpinning any chance to the risk dial.

Public Safety Work

Visitor Safety Group (VSG)

NRW continue to sit as a board member of the group promoting public safety best practice in the UK and Ireland and continue to play an active role in the group.

National Nature Reserves (NNR) Audits

There is a rolling combined audit plan of the National Nature Reserves (NNR) which is set by Internal audit which carried out with our colleagues from Conservation Management and Environmental Management and WH&S. This provides 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:

- Bryn Mwcog and Cors Bodeilio
- Allt Y Benglog
- Coed Cymerau
- Redhouse Barn and Newport Wetlands

With further site inspections and visits to discuss particular public safety issues taking place at:

- Willow Farm fish trap
- Bala Sluice
- Coed Dolgarrog
- Rhiwbach Mine

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.

VSG are currently trialling an e-learning package for awareness of managing public safety. This is due to be rolled out to member organisations in 2026-27 and NRW will have access to the training package.

Internal advice and guidance

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

Internal Audit

During 2025-26 an internal audit was undertaken on NRW's working in and near water processes. The audit report was published in Q4 with a moderate assurance rating given.

ISO 45001:2018 Management Standard

In December 2025, NRW received formal confirmation of recertification to ISO 45001:2018.

The re-certification process began in August 2025 and finished in December 2025 with 12 audit days involving various teams across Wales. NRW were successfully awarded re-certification to ISO 45001:2018 standard. There were three minor non-conformities noted.

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.

Learning and Development (L&D)

Learning Management System (LMS)

The system has continued with a focus on mandatory eLearning with compliance increasing from 77% in April 2025 to 90% in March 2026. Feedback from the business on both course content and access and use of the LMS continues to be extremely positive.

The Training Needs Analysis (TNA) data containing the WH&S training requirements for all posts has been consolidated into one spreadsheet. The information is then being cross referenced against our historic WH&S training records held centrally in L&D. The gap analysis work is ongoing and time consuming with resources secured in September 2025.

Course Delivery

The L&D Team organised a total of 467 courses in 2025/2026 of which 316 courses were categorised as WH&S. These courses are predominantly delivered face to face, with 23 courses delivered virtually this year. WH&S categories cover 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 L&D continue to manage a number of contracts and frameworks. The team work with Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) from across the business to establish requirements, develop specifications, manage the tender and the contract once in place. Framework contracts have been put in place maximising the four-year term wherever possible.

Training Needs Analysis

In order to maintain certification to ISO 45001:2018, but more importantly be legally compliant to WH&S legislation, the development of Training Frameworks were further progressed in 2025/2026.

The Training Needs Analysis (TNA) has been consolidated into one spreadsheet by the WH&S Team. This spreadsheet has been linked to the data supporting the organogram and is being used to produce a power bi report. Access to this report will be opened up to managers, enabling them to see which courses have been identified for their teams. A process is being developed to capture any changes.

Next Steps and Future Work for NRW in 2025/2026

There has been significant progress in 2025/26 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 2026/27: -

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

To launch the new WH&S Strategy 2026-2030 and to monitor and evaluate the measurement of performance.

External and Internal Engagement

Continue the engagement with both internal and external stakeholders and work together to improve our WH&S performance. This will include drop in sessions for managers and colleagues on various WH&S topics as well as quarterly meetings with WH&S peers in similar organisations e.g. Forestry Scotland, Forestry England and the Environment agency.

Learning & Development

Continue to assist with key training requirements, the further development of the learning management system with the training needs analysis being transferred, with further 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. 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 2026/2027.

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

Staff engagement

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

Appendices

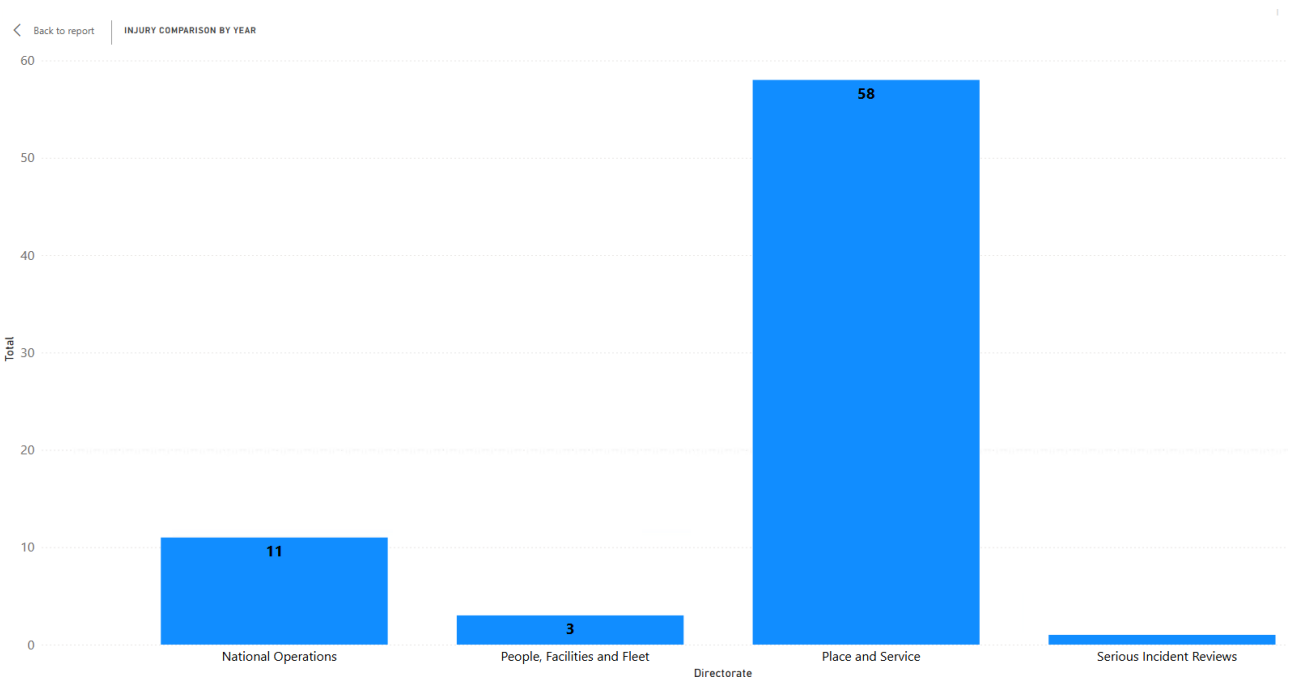
Appendix 1

	2025-2026	2024-2025	2023-2024	2022-2023	2021-2022	2020-2021	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017
RIDDOR – staff	5	2	5	3	7	3	6	2	8	9
Lost time injuries – staff	5	5	6	3	3	1	4	5	8	4
Injuries, no lost time - staff	53	52	65	43	51	19	121	53	59	68
Near miss – staff	162	178	186	175	156	109	183	163	201	232
Serious incident reviews	7	8	5	8	4	4	5	2	3	9
Injuries - contractors	4	5	9	8*	3*	5*	5	9	9	8
Injuries – public	35	26	46	38	38	18	53	53	95	70
Near miss – contractors	53	67	70	68	62	46	50	40	44	62
Near miss – public	30	37	31	33	30	23	33	20	39	27
Property Damage	46	47	48	53	36	35	32	43	48	63
Hazards Reported	92	66	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.

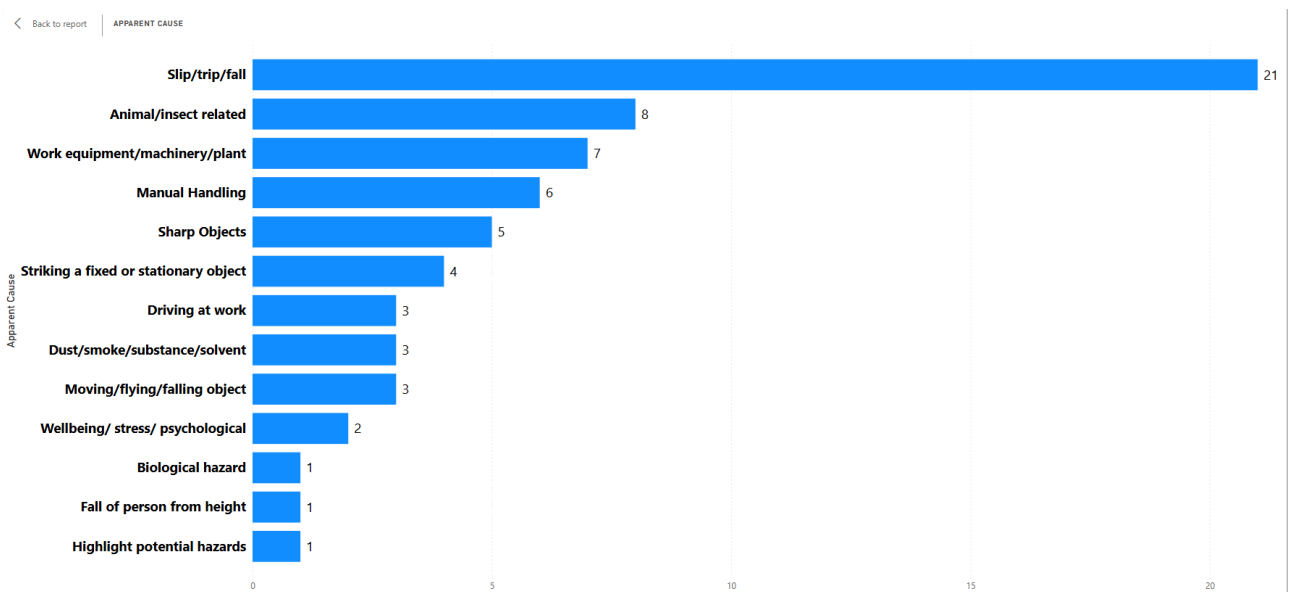
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Appendix 2 – Injuries by Directorate



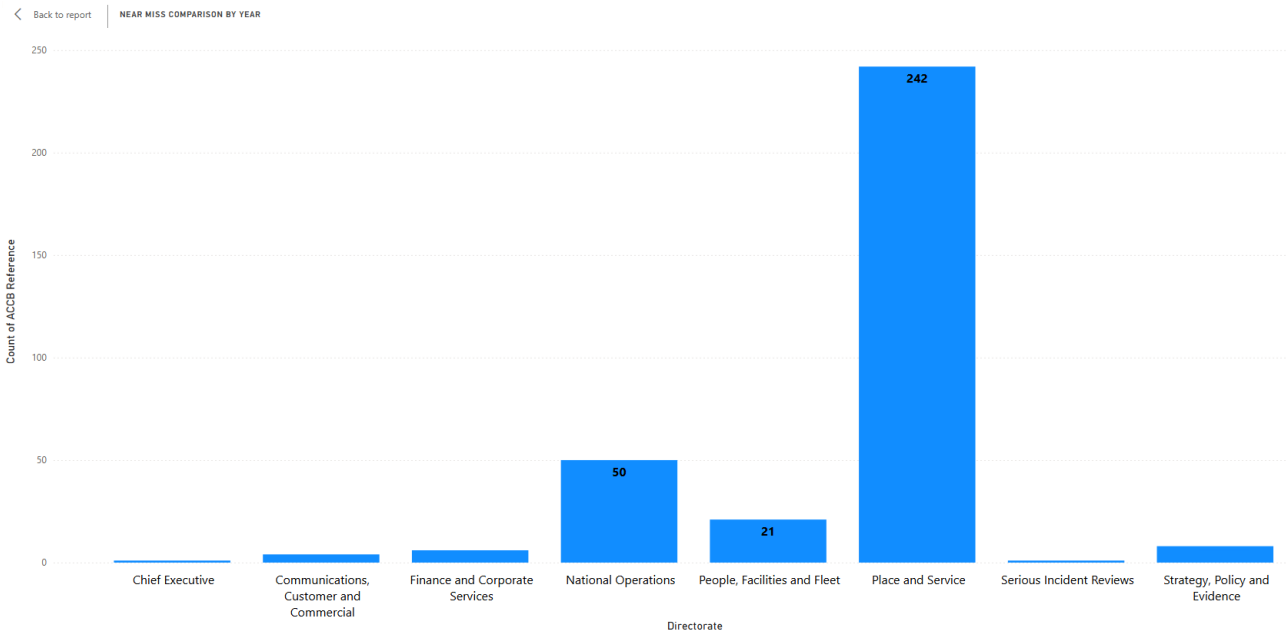
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Appendix 3 – Cause of Injuries



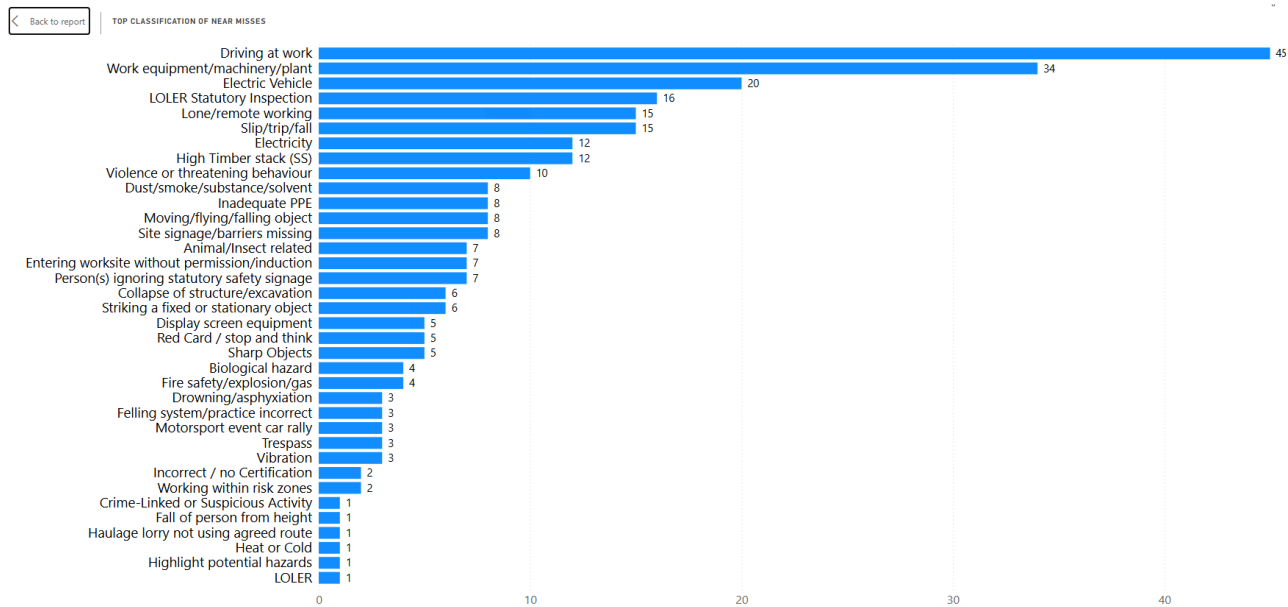
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Appendix 4 – Near miss reported by staff by Directorate



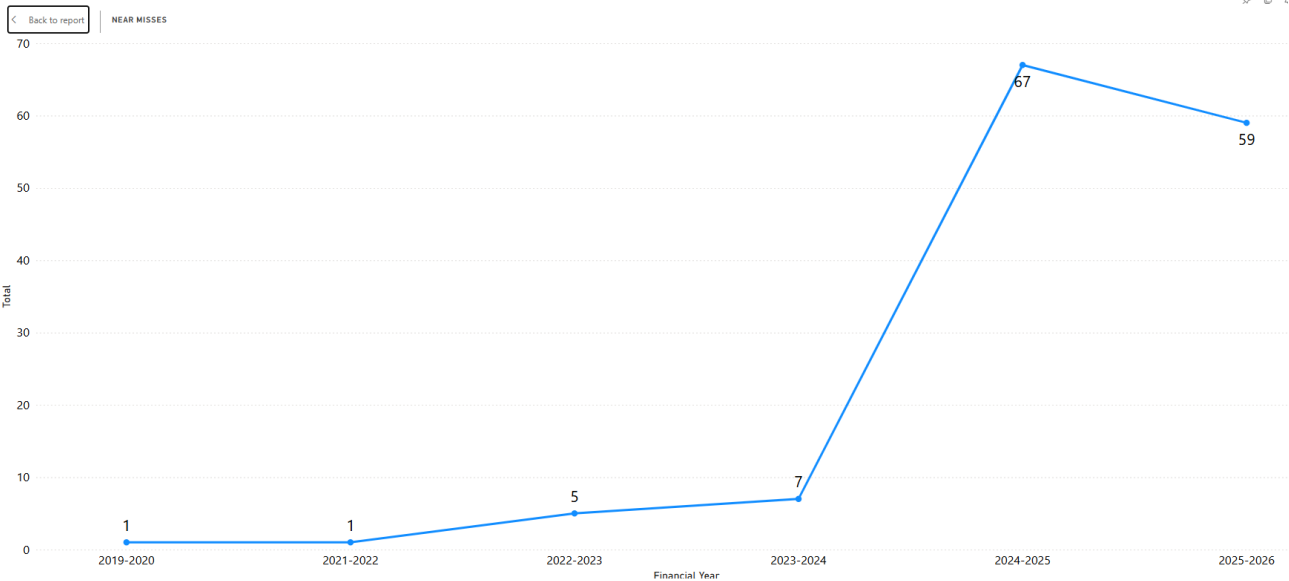
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Appendix 5 – Near miss by category



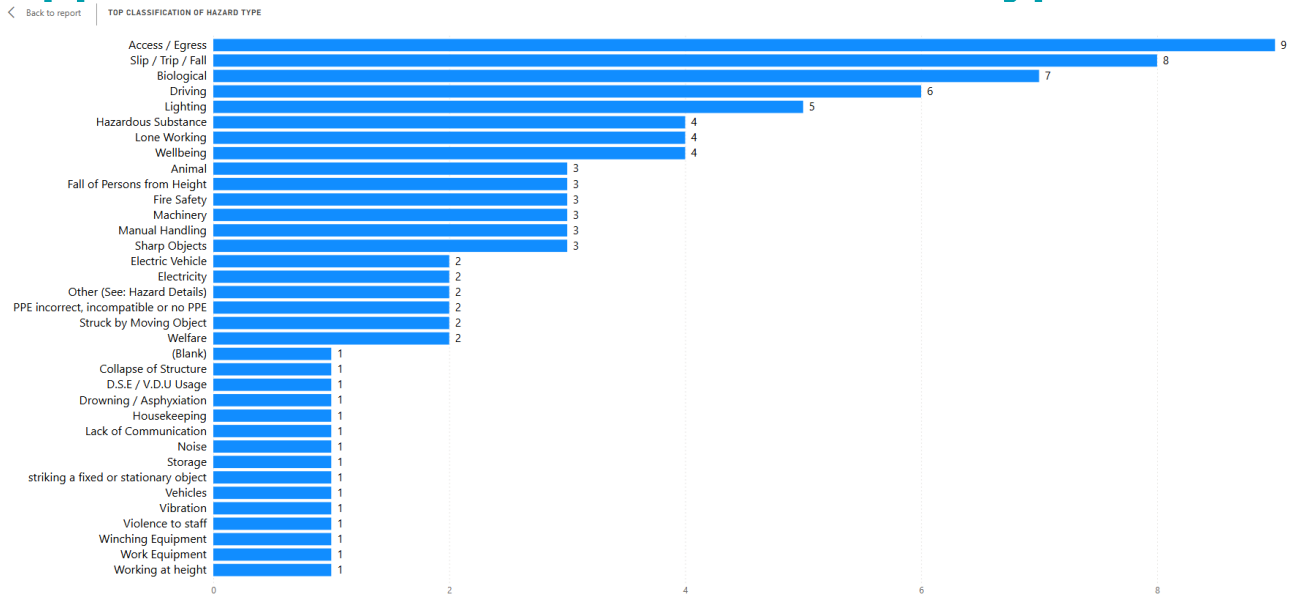
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Appendix 6 – Near Miss by Contractors



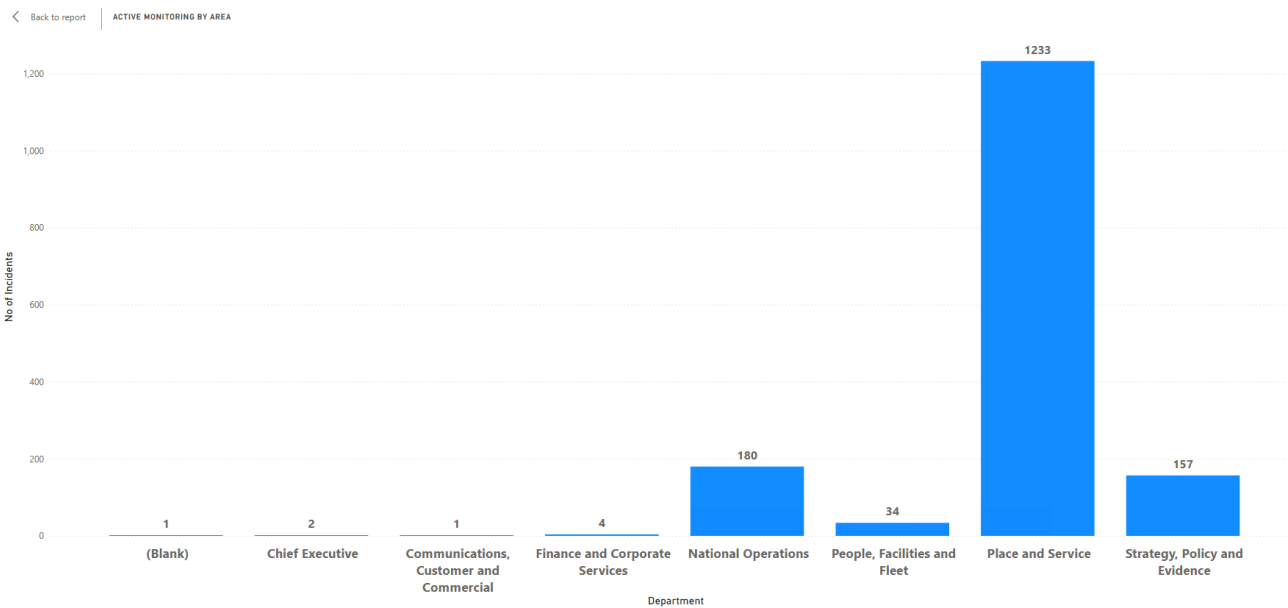
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Appendix 7 – Classification of Hazard Type



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Appendix 8 – Active Monitoring by Directorate



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