

Agenda

Title of meeting:	NRW Board Public Meeting
Date of meeting:	Thursday 21st March 2024
Time of meeting:	09:30 – 11:20
Location:	Microsoft Teams

Time	Item
09:30	Item 1. Open Meeting
5 mins	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Welcome• Declaration of Interests• Explain conduct of meeting <p>Sponsor and Presenter: Sir David Henshaw (Chair)</p> <p>Summary: To NOTE any declarations of interest</p>
09:35	Item 2. Review Minutes and Action Log
5 mins	<p>2A. Review Minutes from Public 2nd February Meeting</p> <p>2B. Review Public Action Log</p> <p>Sponsor and Presenter: Sir David Henshaw (Chair)</p> <p>Summary: To APPROVE the minutes of the previous meeting and the Action Log</p>
09:40	Item 3. Update from the Chair
5 mins	<p>Sponsor and Presenter: Sir David Henshaw (Chair)</p> <p>Summary: To NOTE the Chair's update to the Board</p>
09:45	Item 4. Report from the Chief Executive
15 mins	<p>Sponsor and Presenter: Clare Pillman, Chief Executive</p>

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

Paper Ref: 24-03-B02

10:00

Item 5. Update Reports of Committees and Forums

20 mins

Sponsors and Presenters: Committee Chairs

- Audit and Risk Assurance Committee – 7th March
- Evidence Advisory Committee – 16th January
- Finance Committee – 8th February and 5th March
Paper Ref: 24-03-B03
- Flood Risk Management Committee
- Land Estate Committee – 13th February
Paper Ref: 24-03-B04
- People and Customer Committee – 1st March
Paper Ref: 24-03-B05
- Protected Areas Committee – 22nd February
Paper Ref: 24-03-B06

- Wales Land Management Forum
Paper Ref: 24-03-B07
- Wales Fisheries Forum
- Wales Water Management Forum
- National Access Forum for Wales

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

10:20

Item 6. Finance Performance Report

15 mins

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

Presenter: Rob Bell, Head of Finance

Summary: To APPROVE the latest financial position

Paper Ref: 24-03-B09

10:35

Item 7. Business Plan Performance Dashboard Quarter 3 Report and Internal Performance Quarter 3 Report

20 mins

Sponsor and Presenter: Clare Pillman, Chief Executive

Attendees: Sarah Williams, Head of Corporate Strategy and Programme Management Office; Kirsten Hughes, Lead Specialist Advisor, Corporate

Planning and Performance; Sue Ginley, Lead Specialist Advisor,
Corporate Planning and Performance

**Summary: To APPROVE the Business Plan Performance Dashboard
Quarter 3 Report and Internal Performance Quarter 3 Report**

Paper ref: 24-03-B10

10:55 **Item 8. Items for Approval**

0 mins **a. Wellbeing, Health and Safety Quarter 3 Report**

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

**Summary: To APPROVE the Wellbeing, Health and Safety Report
for Quarter 3**

Paper Ref: 24-03-B11

10:55 **Item 9. AOB**

5 mins

11:00 **Close Meeting**

11:00 **Public Q&A**

20 mins

11:20 **Close Public Meeting**

Unconfirmed Minutes

Title of meeting:	NRW Board Meeting – Public Meeting
Location:	The Management Centre, Bangor, and Microsoft Teams
Date of meeting:	2 nd February 2024
Board Members present:	<p>Sir David Henshaw, Chair Clare Pillman, Chief Executive Prof Steve Ormerod, Deputy Chair Geraint Davies Prof Peter Fox Prof Calvin Jones Lesley Jones Prof Rhys Jones Mark McKenna Kath Palmer Helen Pittaway Dr Rosie Plummer</p>
Executive Team Members present:	<p>Ceri Davies, Executive Director of Evidence, Policy and Permitting Prys Davies, Executive Director of Corporate Strategy and Development Sarah Jennings, Executive Director of Communications, Customer and Commercial Gareth O’Shea, Executive Director of Operations Victoria Rose-Piper, Head of Business Transformation and Adfywio, deputising for Rachael Cunningham, Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Services</p>
Attendees present:	<p>Phil Williams, Head of Governance and Board Secretary (All items) Martin Cox, Head of North West Wales Operations (All items) Rob Bell, Head of Finance (Items 6 and 7) Clive Walmsley, Senior Specialist Advisor (Item 8) Climate Change and Decarbonisation Lucia Watts, Specialist Advisor – Climate Risk and Adaptation (Item 8) Mary Lewis, Sustainable Places, Land & Sea Manager (Item 8) Teams</p>

	<p>Harrhy James, Specialist Advisor – Climate Risk and Adaptation (Item 8) Teams</p> <p>Huwel Manley, Head of South West Wales Operations (Public Q&A) Teams</p>
NRW Observers:	<p>Bhuvaneswari Marrisudi, Board Apprentice</p> <p>Jacqui Kedward, Head of Internal Audit</p> <p>Tamana Tomlinson, Team Leader and Executive Assistant to the Chief Executive</p>
Public Observers:	<p>Jane Thomas</p> <p>Robert Meyer</p> <p>Kim Waters – Welsh Rivers Union</p> <p>Jenny Lampard</p> <p>Jim Ralph</p> <p>Additional members of the public</p>
Apologies:	<p>Rachael Cunningham, Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Services</p>
Secretariat:	<p>Natalie Williams, Deputy Board Secretary and Board Secretariat Team Leader</p> <p>Jocelyn Benger, Board Secretariat Team</p>
Declarations of Interest:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr Rosie Plummer - Member Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority - wide-ranging interactions with NRW including National Park landscape designation and protections including SAC rivers, Marine zones, diverse grant recipient and collaborator; Plantlife Trustee – wide ranging interactions including participant in the Natur am Byth project and recipient of Glaswelltiroedd Gwydn Nature Networks funding • Prof Steve Ormerod – New declaration: Chair of the Science Advisory Group and Board Member to the new Environmental Markets Board; Chair of the Fish-Eating Birds Advisory Group • Geraint Davies – Mentor with Farming Connect; Associate of Pwllpeiran Upland Research Centre • Sir David Henshaw – Resident in the area of search for the proposed new National Park • Clare Pillman – Resident in the area of search for the proposed new National Park

Item 1. Open Meeting

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

Item 2. Review Minutes and Action Log

Item 2A. Review Minutes from the 16th November Public Meeting

2. The minutes from the public Board meeting on 16th November were reviewed and agreed.

Item 2B. Review Action Log

3. The Action Log was reviewed and noted.

Item 3. Update from the Chair

4. The Chair informed the Board that a busy schedule of meetings with Ministers and officials was taking place. The difficult budgetary position for Welsh Government (WG) and NRW was noted.
5. Phil Williams, the new Head of Governance and Board Secretary, and Bhuvaneshwari Mairipudi, the new Board Apprentice, were welcomed.

Item 4. Report from the Chief Executive

6. The Chief Executive gave an update on items in addition to the written Report.
7. A large amount of work had taken place and continued on the budget challenge for this year and next.
8. It had been a period of intense activity for WG, the farmers' unions, and all concerned with farming, as the final consultation on the Sustainable Farming Scheme (SFS) opened. The Chief Executive met with the National Farmers' Union (NFU) Cymru Council and Meirionnydd Branch, the National Farmers' Union of Wales (NFUW), and attended the events hosted by WG and the farmers' unions. The level of interest, concern and engagement was recognised. NRW would respond to the SFS consultation.
9. The announcement by the Minister for Climate Change of the White Paper to establish environmental principles, governance and the framework for biodiversity targets for Wales was noted. NRW would be involved in the setting of the targets within the framework. The White Paper also established the framework for a permanent Environmental Protection Assessor for Wales.
10. The Executive Director of Operations provided an update on the recent named storms, Isha and Jocelyn. The scale of the challenge caused by the exceptional number of

named storms was noted. Some communities had been affected, although the flooding in Wales was not on the scale of previous storms. Staff had been on call since before Christmas, with rotas doubled over the Christmas period. Staff had been on heightened awareness for months and thanks were extended to all those staff on behalf of Board.

11. The Executive Director of Operations noted the growing number of odour complaints received from the public regarding the Withyhedge landfill site in Pembrokeshire. The concerns of the local community were acknowledged and recognised. A recent public meeting had been attended by NRW and assurance was provided that NRW were doing everything possible through the regulatory role and working with the operator to bring the site back into compliance. The Chair urged the operators to get back into compliance as soon as possible, highlighting that they were failing in their duty to the community.

Item 5. Update Reports of Committees and Forums

12. Kath Palmer, Chair of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC) gave an update to the Board on the meeting held on 15th December. The paper was taken as read and the following elements were highlighted: the positive Audit Wales Report on setting the Wellbeing Objectives (WBOs); four Internal Audit Reports were received; good progress was noted on this year's Internal Audit Plan.
13. Prof Steve Ormerod, Chair of the Evidence Advisory Committee (EAC) gave an update on the meeting held on 16th January. Items were received on NRW's response to help deliver under the Wales Biodiversity Targets. The Annual Evidence Conference was reviewed. This was noted as an important and useful event which helped NRW to interact with professional researchers. Matters were considered around water quality monitoring, with staff seeking the best ways to monitor waters most efficiently with a diminishing budget.
14. Helen Pittaway, Chair of the Finance Committee (FC) updated the Board on the meetings held on 7th December and 10th January. The paper was taken as read. Both meetings had considered financial approvals, and the budget and outlook for the next financial year. The meeting in December had also scrutinised the financial position for this financial year and the overspend lessons learning in the Flood Capital Programme. The initial draft of the Budget and Business Plan for the next financial year had been shared with Board at the previous day's meeting. The FC meetings in February and March included an open invitation to all Board members to attend.
15. Prof Pete Fox, Chair of the Flood Risk Management Committee (FRMC), updated the Board on the meeting held on 11th January. The paper was taken as read. An update on NRW's response to the storms had been received, and a note of thanks and appreciation from FRMC had been sent to all staff involved in the response. A progress report on capital schemes was provided; these schemes would offer increased flood protection to local residents. The overspend lessons learnt paper was discussed and work was taking place on implementing the learning. The Tidal Dyfi scheme was considered and recommended for further work. The Internal Drainage Districts budget proposals were scrutinised and endorsed.

16. Prof Calvin Jones, Chair of the Land Estate Committee (LEC), updated the Board. Work on the Recreation Strategy was progressing and would be presented to the Board in May. ARAC agreed to the extension of several actions as a result of Internal Audits in Land Stewardship; these had received a Moderate opinion. An update was provided on the UK Woodland Assurance Scheme (UKWAS). The potential impact of resource constraints on the outcomes of future UKWAS audits was noted. LEC had been informed of the latest volume of timber to market.
17. Mark McKenna, Chair of the People and Customer Committee (PCC) updated the Board on the meeting held on 12th December. The paper was taken as read. The meeting had been positive and included a presentation from the Institute of Customer Service. The Wellbeing, Health and Safety Quarter 2 Report was scrutinised, and the Committee noted that the culture was generally positive. Various updates were received, including further discussion on the complexities and challenges in Waterfall Country. The Communications Strategic Plan was scrutinised and its link into the Corporate Plan was welcomed.
18. Dr Rosie Plummer, Chair of the Protected Areas Committee (PrAC) updated the Board on work since the meeting held on 3rd October. As noted in the CEO Report, Gweld y Coed had been confirmed as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) without objection. It was highlighted that this represented months of work with landowners. The Board had received an update on the prospective new National Park search area and designation process.
19. Prof Rhys Jones, Chair of the Wales Land Management Forum (WLMF), updated the Board. The paper was taken as read. An introduction to the new Forestry Regional Advisory Committee (RAC) took place. Thanks were offered to all NRW staff involved in the meeting. The Special Area of Conservation (SAC) Rivers Agricultural Technical Group gave an update on the draft report. A joint meeting of the WLMF Sub Group on Agricultural Pollution had taken place with the Wales Fisheries Forum and Wales Water Management Forum to focus on the compliance report and sheep dip pollution. It was highlighted that bringing the Forums together had worked well and a follow-up workshop on sheep dip pollution was being arranged.
20. Prof Steve Ormerod, Chair of the Wales Fisheries Forum (WFF) and Wales Water Management Forum (WWMF) updated the Board, noting that the joint meeting with the WLMF had been much appreciated around this shared concern. The WFF had met on 27th November and update was received from the Fish-Eating Birds Advisory Group. A pilot project was taking place in the river Usk. The concerns over salmonids had dominated the meeting. The update paper on the recent meeting of the WWMF was taken as read.
21. Geraint Davies, Chair of the National Access Forum for Wales (NAFW), updated the Board. The paper was taken as read. The presentation on the Crossing Boundaries project on the Great Glamorgan Way was highlighted. The Minister for Climate Change had been due to attend and there was disappointment from Forum members when this was cancelled again, although it was hoped that this could be rearranged. A useful update was received on issues in Waterfall Country.

22. The Chair provided an update on the membership of Board Committees. It was confirmed that Lesley Jones had agreed to be a temporary member of ARAC for the meetings in March, June, and September 2024, although the Board were asked to agree that the Chair be delegated to attend the ARAC meeting in March due to Lesley Jones' prior commitments. The Board agreed to the proposals.

DECISION: Lesley Jones to be a temporary member of ARAC for the meetings in March, June, and September 2024, with the Chair delegated to attend the ARAC meeting in March 2024

Item 6. Finance Performance Report

Presenter: Rob Bell, Head of Finance

23. The Head of Finance introduced the item and provided an overview of the paper, noting the Report was the position at the end of November. This had been scrutinised by the Executive Team (ET) and FC. An overview of the Revenue position was provided. It was noted that this was tracking to profile, but this was masking some of the pressures on budgets. Proposals on balancing the budget through £2m of reductions across NRW had been put forward to WG in November; this included measures around increasing the charge to programmes and projects, and the change in accounting rules around leases. This was formally accepted by WG in January. Overprogramming had now been reduced to £0.5m.
24. An update was provided on the issue around salary savings and the need to make around £2m of savings, which were currently around £1.1m with recruitment controls in place. Additional pressures since the Report included: another reduction in timber income forecast; the cladding issue at Ty Cambria; the issue relating to the audit of the Welsh European Funding Office (WEFO) claim, although confirmation was awaited on this – provision had been made and a further report would be provided to ARAC in March. FC had been informed. Further budget reductions were being sought, which would be collated and brought to ET to consider all the impacts. An update was provided on Capital spend, which was progressing well. WG had been informed of the small pressure in the Flood Capital Programme. The Board were asked to approve the change to the forecast from £266.9m to £270.2m.
25. The Board discussed the content of the Report, noting that the latest changes would be reported to ET and FC. The pressures on the budget were recognised. Board members queried the causes of the reduction in charging income and whether there was a pattern or information available on the reasons behind this. The Board were informed that ET had considered this matter and asked the Head of Regulation and Permitting to conduct a piece of work on this after the year end to give a sense of any behaviour change and any potential impacts for consideration. It was confirmed that the Annual Regulatory Charge Review would be brought to the next FC meeting and Board Update Call in February.
26. The Board approved the change in the original budget from £266.9m to a forecasted £270.2m and noted the financial performance to the end of November 2023.

APPROVED: The change in the original budget from £266.9m to a forecasted £270.2m

Item 7. Internal Drainage Districts Budget

Presenter: Rob Bell, Head of Finance

27. The Head of Finance presented the proposals for the Internal Drainage Districts (IDDs) Precepts, Rates and Levies for 2024/25 for approval to the Board. A summary was provided of the details in the paper. FRMC had scrutinised and endorsed the proposals at the meeting on 11th January. For 2024/25, it was proposed to increase: Precepts by 3% to £327k; Special Levies to £1417k; Drainage Rates to £205k. This was an increase of 4% on Special Levies and Drainage Rates. Advisory Groups had been meeting across North and South Wales. NRW were aware of the points and concerns raised by stakeholders on the quality of work, however, these were outside the remit of the paper. The Board were requested to approve the proposals as detailed in the paper.
28. Prof Pete Fox as Chair of FRMC, commented on the discussions that took place at the recent FRMC meeting, noting that the management of IDD's was historical and continued to be a touchstone for debate with farmers.
29. Board members discussed the adequacy of the approach going forward, recognising the historic context. The wording in paragraph 7 of the annex to the paper was queried and the Head of Finance agreed to clarify this.

ACTION: The Head of Finance to clarify the wording used in paragraph 7 of the annex to the IDD paper

30. The Board approved the items as detailed in the paper.

APPROVED: The Internal Drainage District (IDD) special levies, drainage rates and precepts for 2024/25

APPROVED: The authorisation of its common seal to be affixed to the Approved Drainage Rates

APPROVED: Delegation of the Board's responsibility for approving annual statements for 2023/24 to Rachael Cunningham, Executive Director for Finance and Corporate Services

Item 8. NRW's Adaptation Plan

Presenters: Clive Walmsley, Senior Specialist Advisor, Climate Change and Decarbonisation; Lucia Watts, Specialist Advisor – Climate Risk and Adaptation

31. The Executive Director of Evidence, Policy and Permitting introduced the item. The specific actions under the Corporate Plan on communities' resilience to climate change were noted. The Adaptation Plan presented to the Board for approval looked at how NRW operated and planned its remit.

32. The Senior Specialist Advisor, Climate Change and Decarbonisation presented the background to the item, which had last come to the Board in 2020, noting that the scientific community could now attribute weather events to climate change. The frequency and magnitude of weather events was highlighted. It was emphasised that that adaptation was multi-faceted, and included personal, community and authority responsibilities. NRW needed to be resilient to minimise the risk on climate change issues. A strategic discussion on decarbonisation was planned for the Board meeting in September.
33. The Specialist Advisor, Climate Risk and Adaptation gave a presentation summarising the detail in the paper. NRW's responsibility for adaptation planning and the sources of evidence used within the Adaptation Plan were described. The UK Climate Change Risk Assessment 2021 was shared, and the risks and opportunities were described, noting the growing level of risk, which had seen an increase of 20% in four years. The Baseline Risk Assessment was described, which highlighted that all areas of NRW were at risk from climate change. The consultation process within NRW was explained. The results and findings had been incorporated into the Adaptation Plan. The priority themes within the Adaptation Plan 2023-27 and their links to the Corporate Plan were described, and examples were shared. Publication was planned for Spring 2024, followed by development and action of the Delivery Plan during 2024 with governance through the Business Groups. Future development and steps were described, with the ambition to develop a new Adaptation Plan every five years which would evolve in response to policy, evidence, and business need.
34. The Board welcomed the Adaptation Plan and appreciated the cross-organisational work and rich evidence base. Board members noted that although this was an operational document, it would be important for it to feed into strategic planning and ensure that it was incorporated into NRW's change programmes. It should be part of the cross-cutting themes for decision-making.
35. A specific point was raised on the wording on page 20. It was highlighted that the driver for changing the productivity of forestry was the Sustainable Management of Natural Resources (SMNR) rather than production targets.
36. The issues relating to climate change had been known for many years and there was now a critical need to take action. It was also important for NRW to set the standards, and the work on the Corporate Plan WBOs had enabled this to come forward. The Board's leadership role in this matter for the organisation and Wales was recognised. It was highlighted that NRW's links and interactions with the Public Service Boards (PSBs), other organisations, and stakeholders provided an avenue for advocacy and action. It was suggested that the Adaptation Plan could be used as an exemplar piece for local authorities.
37. The urgency of the issue was emphasised and the pace of action and delivery on adaptation needed to be a priority.
38. It was recognised that this was the first iteration of the Adaptation Plan but the approach to radical solutions and including a radical vision was recommended for future work. It was noted that the Plan would develop going forward.

39. The other areas of work within NRW that were also focusing on the approach to adaptation were noted. Each Corporate Plan WBO was led by an ET member, with a structure below to look at work across organisation. Advocacy and how NRW worked with its supply chain were highlighted.
40. Actions relating to the plan for net zero and carbon impact were raised. It was explained that these would be brought to the Board for a strategic discussion in September. Board members emphasised the need to ensure that these issues were aligned with the change programmes that were taking place.
41. The Chair thanked the team for their work. The Board approved the NRW Adaptation Plan for publication.

APPROVED: NRW's Adaptation Plan

Item 9. Items for Approval

Item 9a. Wellbeing, Health and Safety Quarter 2 Report

42. The Executive Director of Corporate Strategy and Development introduced the item and noted that this had been scrutinised by PCC at the meeting on 12th December.
43. Board members asked for assurance on the completion of mandatory Health and Safety training and were informed that this was rated as Green in terms of the dashboard Red Amber Green (RAG) status.
44. The Board approved the Wellbeing, Health and Safety Report for Quarter 2 Report.

APPROVED: The Wellbeing, Health and Safety Report for Quarter 2

Item 9b. Amendment to the Statutory and Legal Scheme (SaLS)

45. The Executive Director of Corporate Strategy and Development introduced the item and noted that this had been approved by correspondence by the Board.

NOTED: The Board approval by correspondence of the new line added to the Statutory and Legal Scheme (SaLS) to identify a qualified person that can approve exemptions from the duty to disclose information requested under a Freedom of Information request, where that information may cause prejudice to the conduct of public affairs

Item 10. AOB

46. No matters were raised under AOB.

Meeting Closed

Public Q&A

47. The Chair explained that NRW were looking at how it engaged with the public, recognising that the Public Q&A session was not an ideal scenario.
48. Questions were received and responses provided on the following matters.
49. Colin Barnett – Withyhedge Landfill issues. As requested by Mr Barnett, his concerns had been shared with the Board. An update on this matter had been included within the CEO Report and noted earlier in the meeting. A visit by NRW staff had taken place and a community meeting had been held. The Executive Director of Operations reiterated that NRW were working with the operator to get the site back into compliance.
50. Robert Meyer – Tan Lan Embankment. Prof Pete Fox, as Chair of FRMC, responded. Mr Meyer was thanked for his questions, and it was confirmed that a detailed answer would follow. The concerns and anxieties were noted and shared by some of the smaller communities in Wales. Briefs had been received from Board member, Geraint Davies, and other colleagues. It was noted that the study was close to conclusion. The costs of continued public investment were highlighted, and it was explained that further investment was not likely to be forthcoming due to investment policy and priorities. Martin Cox, Head of North West Wales Operations, would continue to liaise on this matter.
51. The Head of North West Wales Operations confirmed that the impact on infrastructure had been included as part of the study, noting that consultation had taken place with Network Rail and stakeholders. Mr Meyer requested a copy of the business study and report. It was confirmed that this would be shared in due course.
52. Jane Thomas – Visitor Centres. Prof Calvin Jones, as Chair of LEC, responded. It was emphasised that the situation was not where NRW would want to be, but the organisation was facing significant shortfalls going forward and needed to make changes to achieve a balanced budget. Visitor Centres had gained a lot of public attention, but NRW were looking across the whole business for savings and trying to do this with a focus on the delivery of the Corporate Plan. This was more challenging and complicated, with the need to bring in information from across the whole organisation. The budget for 2024/25 was not yet finalised and the Board had not been asked to approve any decisions on visitor centres. Management information was being collated for a decision by the end of March. It was important to avoid conflating the level of services and the ability of the public to access land. Public access to the land would be maintained but what sort of services provided there was being considered. Where NRW could not continue to provide those services, it would be looking for others to take those on.
53. The Executive Director of Communications, Customer and Commercial confirmed that NRW would continue to protect the National Nature Reserves and the sites around the visitor centres and ensure that nature could thrive. NRW would continue to ensure

public access and wanted to continue to work with the community and providers going forward to ensure continuity.

54. Kim Williams – Visitor Centres. A wide range of questions were submitted which would be responded to by correspondence.
55. Kim Waters – water quality issues. These were submitted during the meeting via the chat facility and would be considered outside the meeting.
56. Jenny Lampard – Visitor Centres. Asked during the meeting via the chat facility, how the general public could support the maintenance and investment of visitor centres.
57. The Board reflected on the way in which the Board interacted with the public at the Board meeting. The Board asked that the list of public questions be added to Diligent for reference.

ACTION: The Secretariat to add public questions to Diligent for future meetings

Public Meeting Closed

Board Action Log – Public

Action No.	Meeting Category	Meeting Date	Item No	Para No	Paper Sponsor	Action	Owner	Due	Status	Notes/Updates
1	Public	27/01/2023	7	32	Rachael Cunningham, Executive Director of FCS	ACTION: FRMC to consider the full costs of the Internal Drainage Districts in conjunction with the Head of Finance	Jeremy Parr, Head of Flood and Incident Risk Management; Rob Bell, Head of Finance	18/04/2024	Ongoing	To be considered at FRMC April 2024. Delayed due to staff resources / priorities.
2	Public	27/01/2023	9	47	Prys Davies, Executive Director of CSD	ACTION: The Head of Governance and Board Secretary to develop the approach to Place-based Board public engagement sessions	Head of Governance & Board Secretary	01/05/2024	Ongoing	Options for Board public engagement being developed. The approach to be agreed with the Chair and the new Head of Governance and Board Secretary.
11	Public	02/02/2024	7	29	Rachael Cunningham Executive Director FCS	ACTION: The Head of Finance to clarify the wording used in paragraph 7 of the annex to the IDD paper	Rob Bell, Head of Finance	29/02/2024	Completed	Confirmed that the wording “in principle” should be removed.
12	Public	02/02/2024	Public Q&A	56	Sir David Henshaw	ACTION: The Secretariat to add Public questions to Diligent for future meetings	Secretariat	20/03/2024	Completed	

NRW Board Paper

Date of meeting:	21 st March 2024
Title of Paper:	Chief Executive's Report (Public Session)
Paper Reference:	24-03-B02
Paper presented by:	Clare Pillman, Chief Executive
Purpose	Information and discussion
Summary	The paper provides the Board with an update on current issues.

Introduction

1. Communication has been an important focus in recent weeks. Along with the rest of the Executive Team, I have been keeping colleagues across the organisation informed about our budget position and the ongoing process of prioritisation and forward planning. Understandably there are strong feelings and considerable worry in many teams as we look at options for reducing our costs and spending. In February, Prys Davies and I held a question and answer session on Teams, attended by close to 1,000 colleagues. While the questions covered many topics, there was clear concern about the impact of the recruitment freeze, the continuing demands on teams and the wellbeing of colleagues already under pressure as a result of financial and staffing restrictions.
2. I was pleased to be able to attend the Climate Emergency training at Cardiff University during February, alongside many leadership team colleagues. The one-day workshop, presented by Cannal Cymru, covered the broad context of climate change as well as the situation in Wales and within NRW, leading to consideration of what more we can do as individuals and teams to help reduce our carbon emissions. The course is very much about driving positive action, and our Climate Emergency team will be developing a process to evaluate the effectiveness of the training and value added after six to twelve months.
3. In the pilot phase (March and April 2023), 200 colleagues attended the Climate Emergency course and around 70 received a Carbon Literacy certificate from the Carbon Literacy Trust. In the current phase of delivery (since October last year), a further 574 colleagues have completed the course and 256 have submitted an

evidence form to gain the certificate. We continue to deliver the course and Board members are very welcome to join the scheduled sessions.

4. Also during February, I had meetings with Marian Spain of Natural England and Francesca Osowska of Nature Scot, and separately with Jane Richardson of Museum Wales. Gareth O'Shea and I met Welsh Local Government Association chief executive Chris Llewelyn and director Tim Peppin. I also held my regular meeting with the chief executives of the three National Parks, in which we discussed the Designated Landscapes Programme and progress against the Biodiversity Deep Dive recommendations.
5. I had an interesting visit to the Stephenson Street flood scheme, to see the work there, and returned during March to film a "walk and talk" interview with ITV Cymru Wales for their Sharp End programme, which will revisit areas badly affected by Storm Dennis in 2020. I have also visited Grosvenor Timberworks, near Chester, with forestry colleagues to learn about their operation and plans to create value and markets for sustainably grown UK timber products.

Strategic Issues

Joint Ministerial Statement on Farming in Wales

6. At the end of February, the First Minister and the Minister for Rural Affairs, North Wales and Trefnydd issued a joint statement on Farming in Wales. The statement stressed the important role farming and agriculture play in Welsh life, and recognised the significant economic challenges faced by the farming sector. It announced additional funding of £20m to help farmers comply with the requirements of the Water Resources (Control of Agricultural Pollution) Regulations, and an intention to appoint an independent external chairperson to oversee the first statutory review of the effectiveness of the Regulations.
7. The statement also sets out some potential next steps for the Sustainable Farming Scheme (SFS), the consultation for which closes in early March. The statement indicates that the incoming First Minister, who will take up post later in the month, will want to carefully review both the results of the consultation and the pace of implementation.
8. We have been supporting the development of this final SFS consultation by Welsh Government (WG) and support the overall vision set out in *Keeping Farmers Farming*. The proposals offer significant opportunity for policy delivery across agricultural holdings in Wales leading to more resilient agricultural businesses, fit for the future. There is welcome synergy between the Sustainable Land Management outcomes sought from the scheme and those of our Corporate Plan. As with all sectors, agriculture has an obligation to play its part in addressing the recovery of nature, improving our resilience to climate change and minimising pollution, and we are broadly reassured by the measures set out to support farmers to do so. We recognise that farming businesses are operating in a highly challenging context

beyond the SFS, with increasing pressures from new regulations, inflation, cost of inputs including energy, and animal health and welfare.

9. Our response to the consultation will be submitted to WG by the deadline of the 7 March.

Operational Issues

Flood Risk Management

10. Work on the flood risk management scheme in Ammanford was substantially complete in winter 2023. The £4.1m scheme will reduce flood risk to 223 properties, local infrastructure and services, and comprises a series of flood walls and earth embankments through the town and property level protection to some homes and businesses. A weir has been removed to help manage river levels and this will also benefit the river ecosystem, improving migratory fish passage and the Water Framework Directive status of the River Lougher. Community improvements include public realm works such as landscape improvements, benches, tree planting and hedgerows.
11. At Stephenson Street, the flood risk management scheme began in February 2023 and is being constructed with future climate change projections in mind, accounting for sea level rise over the next fifty years. The new defences, a combination of flood walls, gates and grass embankments, will reduce flood risk to homes and important industrial areas, keeping businesses open and supporting the wider local economy. The work includes bolstering parts of the existing flood embankment along the eastern riverbank and constructing new flood walls, raising a section of highway and installing a large flood gate.
12. 700m of sheet piles installed to a depth of 10m has been completed, helping to strengthen the embankment along the River Usk. The sheet piles form almost half of the new flood defence and were inserted using a hydraulic press, which has helped to significantly reduce the vibrations and noise disruption to local wildlife and industry. The majority of the reinforced concrete wall around the Felnex industrial estate has also been completed. Preparation work for the raised section of highway off East Bank Road has almost been completed; this will provide an alternative route for road users in the area, should the floodgate on Corporation Road be operated for maintenance purposes or prior to anticipated peak tidal flows. As part of the work, we have also completed improvement works to the nearby Wales Coast Path, to enhance the route visually and offer greater accessibility.
13. The total value of the Stephenson Street scheme is approximately £21m. The work is expected to reduce the flood risk to over 2,000 properties in the area.

Enabling Industrial Decarbonisation

14. We have recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Multi-Utility Service Transit (MUST) project, an ambitious infrastructure development aimed at enabling decarbonisation across industry in South Pembrokeshire. The project is a collaboration between energy companies Dragon LNG and RWE to construct a transit system across the Haven to transport residual heat, carbon dioxide, hydrogen and water between facilities.
15. Specifically, MUST plans to pipe residual heat from Pembroke Power Station to Dragon LNG for use in its regasification process, displacing natural gas usage. It will also transport captured carbon dioxide from Pembroke Power Station and a Shell blue hydrogen project to Dragon LNG for liquefaction and export. This is expected to enable the removal of up to five million tonnes per year of carbon dioxide. Additionally, the project will transit bulk hydrogen north and raw water south across the Haven, supporting further renewable energy and decarbonisation efforts in the region.
16. The MOU signifies our commitment to cooperating closely with the project through the planning and permitting processes. As the project requires various environmental permits and planning approvals, early engagement is vital. The MOU establishes a collaborative framework aimed at making the consenting process as efficient as possible and mitigating any unnecessary delays, while still ensuring full regulatory oversight to protect the environment.
17. Overall, we view the MUST project as an opportunity to pilot new ways of proactive collaboration with industry to enable impactful decarbonisation. The project exemplifies the benefits of regulators and developers working together from the outset to navigate climate solutions and optimise environmental outcomes. MUST provides a model for accelerating the deployment of industrial decarbonisation technologies to meet pressing carbon reduction goals.

Consenting Challenge Workshop

18. A Consenting Challenge Workshop held in February brought together stakeholders from across the public and private sectors to address the urgent need for innovative solutions to resource and streamline environmental consenting and planning processes in Wales. We were central to the discussions given our wide remit and extensive involvement in projects like the MUST project in South Pembrokeshire.
19. With the transition to net zero by 2050, an unprecedented scale of investment in renewables and decarbonisation projects is expected, which risks overwhelming existing resources and creating delays. Ambitious targets for 2030 are already driving substantial industrial development with an immediate demand for our permitting, regulation and advisory services. The workshop allowed participants to share perspectives on the challenges ahead and explore new frameworks for coordination and collaboration. There was agreement on the need for a clear action

plan to enable more efficient allocation of specialist resources across Wales through public-private partnerships.

20. The MUST project was presented as an initial model for pooling expertise. Next steps will involve developing a target operating model that can be scaled up across Wales, with strong governance and transparency. The aim is to design a solution that meets Wales' net zero ambitions while upholding regulatory standards.

Nuclear and Radiation Safety

21. In January, NRW staff met with the International Atomic Energy Agency's Integrated Regulatory Review Service (IRRS) along with colleagues from the Environment Agency, Office of Nuclear Regulation, Health & Safety Executive, Scottish Environment Protection Agency and Northern Ireland Environment Agency.
22. The IRRS helps host countries to strengthen and enhance the effectiveness of their regulatory infrastructure for nuclear, radiation, radioactive waste and transport safety. A significant amount of preparation including detailed documentary evidence was submitted well in advance of the interview sessions. All recommendations applicable to NRW were completed to the satisfaction of the IRRS.

Nuclear New Build Generic Design Assessment

23. The Generic Design Assessment (GDA) is a non-mandatory regulatory process overseen by the Office for Nuclear Regulation, Environment Agency and NRW to ensure that new nuclear power plants meet high standards of safety, security, environmental protection and waste management. The work requires continued engagement with nuclear reactor design companies and detailed technical assessment work and generally takes up to four years to conclude.
24. The level of work in this area is currently unprecedented and demanding with four companies submitting designs for different small modular nuclear reactors. These are plants that could be sited on locations not suitable for larger and more costly nuclear power stations.
25. In January, the UK government also published their Civil Nuclear Roadmap which is designed to provide information on the UK's nuclear programme. The roadmap includes the potential to build a new gigawatt reactor in England or Wales. Wylfa, on Anglesey, is being mooted as a leading contender for siting such a large plant.

Q3 Enforcement Update

26. During the period from October to December 2023, 167 new enforcement cases were opened. Most of these were generated from regulatory non-compliance at permitted sites; around one third arose from our attendance at incidents. In the same period, we closed 49 enforcement cases.

27. 29 cases resulted in prosecutions during this period, with 24 relating to fisheries and five relating to waste operations. The prosecutions resulted in court fines of £40,230 and we were able to recover a £25,101 in investigation and legal costs. A full summary of our enforcement activity has been circulated to Board members separately.

Communications

Corporate Communications

28. We continue to issue regular communications to staff about key decisions, our financial position and planning for in-year and future challenges. A handling plan has been prepared that will guide our internal and external communications around the recommendations going to and the decisions made by Board. We will develop the handling plan to steer our communications work around the implications of the Board decisions.

Pollution is Minimised

29. The Communications team continued to support our South West Environment and Operations teams with the widespread public and media interest in odour issues at Withyhedge landfill site in Pembrokeshire. Demonstrating our intention to be as transparent as possible with the local community, we delivered a virtual public meeting attended by over 60 people, in which we explained our regulatory activity and answered questions. We have also issued regular statements and social media posts with progress updates, supported colleagues taking part in media interviews and introduced a specific odour reporting form on our website to reduce pressures on the Incident Communications Centre.

30. We have worked closely with our counterparts at Pembrokeshire County Council and Public Health Wales to ensure a coordinated approach to messaging about Withyhedge. This open and regular dialogue has helped to ensure more balanced coverage of the issue and manage expectations within the local community. As a result, we have seen a decline in the number of complaints and requests for information.

Communities are Resilient to Climate Change

31. The Communications team worked closely with the Flood Risk Management (FRM) and Digital teams to launch the *Long Term Investment Requirement for Flood Defences in Wales* report. A technical media briefing and visit to the Stephenson Street flood scheme were organised to support the launch, where FRM colleagues shared messaging around the challenges of managing and funding climate change induced flood risk in Wales. This activity was very successful with coverage secured across a range of national and regional broadcast and print media.

Nature is Recovering

32. The Communications team continued to promote our work on the ground to support nature's recovery, including how NRW-managed National Nature Reserves are set to benefit from a £500k grant awarded to North Wales Wildlife Trust to improve the condition of the Anglesey Fens. Our commitment to making nature accessible to all was highlighted by our grant support to a project in Blaenau Gwent designed to provide communities with opportunities to restore and enhance nature in their local areas, particularly in Wales' most disadvantaged communities.
33. The traditional horse logging technique to manage woodland in Fforest Fawr has attracted attention from children's programmes and BBC Cymru Wales. World Wetlands Day was marked by the LIFE Welsh Raised Bogs team, who hosted a free guided tour of Cors Caron to highlight the crucial work that goes on to restore and support peatland habitats. And practical conservation work funded by the Nature Networks Fund remains a good source of stories, with several projects featuring recently on BBC's Country Focus, Galwad Cynnar and filming has taken place for ITV's Coast and Country.

Forward Look

Wednesday 10 April – Board Update Call

Tuesday 16 April – Board Development Day

Tuesday 14 May – Evidence & Advisory Committee

Wednesday 22 and Thursday 23 May – May Board Meeting

Tuesday 4 June – Audit & Risk Assurance Committee

Thursday 6 June – People & Customer Committee

Thursday 13 June – Finance Committee

Tuesday 18 June – Land Estate Committee

NRW Board Paper

Date of meeting:	21 st March 2024
Title of Paper:	Finance Committee Board Update
Paper Reference:	24-03-B03
Paper sponsored by:	Helen Pittaway, Finance Committee Chair
Paper prepared by:	Board Secretariat
Paper presented by:	Helen Pittaway, Finance Committee Chair
Purpose of the paper	Information
Summary	To provide an update to the Finance Committee (FC) – 8 th February 2024 and 5 th March 2024

Background

This paper provides an update to the Board following the Finance Committee (FC) meetings on 8th February and 5th March 2024. The paper and minutes from these meetings are available for Board members to view on Diligent.

8th February Update

2024-25 Budget and Business Plan

1. The approach to business planning and the current budget position for 2024-25 was presented to FC. There would be a series of sessions before the Board meeting in March to discuss them further. Suggestions on what information Board members would find useful in the sessions was provided.

Financial Performance Update and Approvals

2. The latest 2023-24 financial performance information was provided including a brief summary of the Capital Programme and the Revenue budget.
3. The Finance Committee approved two frameworks and endorsed three section 83 requests.

Annual Review of Charges

4. FC were presented with a summary of the proposed annual regulatory charge increases for 2024-25 that were outlined in the paper. The results from the consultation were outlined and it was noted that there had been a low response compared to the Strategic Review of Charges (SRoC).
5. The Committee discussed exploring streamlining the governance process for the annual percentage increase and endorsed the proposed increases in charges.

Internal Audit Reports for Information Only

6. Two Internal Audit Reports regarding accounts and asset management were provided for information.

5th March Update

Financial Performance Report

7. An overview of January's Financial Performance Report was provided. There had been changes in the 2023-24 budget since January which FC were also updated on. FC endorsed the changes in the budget and approved NRW's employer's pension contribution payment to the Environment Agency Pension Fund (EAPF).

2024-25 Budget and Business Plan Update

8. The draft Annual Business Plan for 2024-25 was presented along with an update of the development of the Wellbeing Objectives, and an overview of the risks and impacts from the prioritisation exercise. FC provided a steer on what further information should be provided as part of the Board sessions on the 2024-25 Budget and Business Plan.
9. The latest budget position for 2024-25 was also presented along with a paper on timber income.

NRW2030 Update

10. A summary of the NRW2030 Programme was provided including what information would be presented to FC during the 2024-25 financial year. The governance structure would be reviewed in order ensure that there was a holistic view across the whole of the Programme.

Update on the ICT partnership proposal

11. FC formally rescinded an earlier approval regarding an ICT partnership proposal.

Independent Review of the Flood Risk Management Capital Programme and Implementation of the Recommendations

12. A representative of Local Partnerships presented the recommendations from the Independent Review of the Flood Risk Management Capital Programme. FC discussed the implementation of the recommendations.

Contract Management Support Service (CMSS) 6-monthly Update presentation

13. FC were provided with the 6-monthly update on the Contract Management Support Service (CMSS) including the main focus areas for the CMSS during 2023-24, the closure of actions from an internal audit, and the next steps for the 2024-25 financial year.

Environment Agency Pension Fund (EAPF) Investment Strategy focussing on climate change, carbon commitment reduction and biodiversity – presentation

14. Representatives from the EAPF joined the meeting to provide a summary of the Fund's investment strategy that focussed on climate change, carbon commitment reduction and biodiversity.

Q3 Performance Report for Information Only

15. FC noted the Q3 Performance Report that had been provided for information only.

NRW Board Paper

Date of meeting:	21 st March 2024
Title of Paper:	Land Estate Committee (LEC) Overview
Paper Reference:	24-03-B04
Paper sponsored by:	Prof. Calvin Jones, LEC Chair
Paper presented by:	Prof. Calvin Jones, LEC Chair
Purpose of the paper	For Information
Summary	To provide an overview of the 13 th February Land Estate Committee meeting.

Heads of Business Report

1. The Land Estate Committee (LEC) were provided with an update on the following areas of Land Stewardship: Health and Safety; Functional Budget; Insurance Standard; Reservoirs; and Telecom's masts.
2. The Committee were also provided with an update on the current projects and timber sales figures, alongside the timber sales forecast for 2024/25. Also discussed were the visitor centres and Trydan.

Draft Recreation Strategy

3. LEC discussed the first draft and the key elements of the Recreation Strategy. The next steps were highlighted following the feedback received from the internal engagement sessions that took place with both staff and stakeholders. The first iteration of the Strategy had been set to deliver in 2030, in line with the Corporate Plan.
4. The Committee discussed the objectives within the strategy. It had been suggested that there was a need to review the resources and tools required for the objective regarding behaviour change.

Deep Dive on the Alternative Timber Sales Process and Timber Industrial Strategy

5. An update was provided on the Alternative Timber Sales (ATS) process and the Timber Industrial Strategy (TIS). Concerns were raised that the paper concentrated wholly on the barriers and issues with ATS development, and it was agreed that future papers should better reflect the objectives - to deliver 3P (People, Planet, Prosperity) and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources (SMNR) benefits.
6. NRW had been working with Welsh Government (WG) on the TIS, however there was a revised timetable due to issues that had arisen. The team would return to LEC with a further update on the TIS, and the Committee suggested that consideration was needed on what could be done in the absence of a strategy. LEC also discussed the Forestry Act 1967.

Update on Visitor Centres

7. LEC were presented with an update regarding the current position on NRW's visitor centres and the commercial implications involved. The Committee discussed the issues and opportunities and requested further information.

AOB

8. The LEC meeting in June would be held via Teams. The Committee would meet in person for 9th October meeting.

NRW Board Paper

Date of meeting:	21 st March 2024
Title of Paper:	People and Customer Committee (PCC) Update
Paper Reference:	24-03-B05
Paper sponsored by:	Mark McKenna, Chair of PCC
Paper prepared by:	Board Secretariat
Paper presented by:	Mark McKenna, Chair of PCC
Purpose of the paper	Information
Summary	To provide an update to the Board in respect of 1 st March 2024 PCC meeting.

Background

1. This written update for the Board is in respect of the 1st March 2024 People and Customer Committee (PCC) meeting. Board members are able to access all Committee papers and minutes via the Diligent portal.

Verbal Update on Current Risks and Issues

2. PCC were provided with verbal updates on current risks and issues. The Executive Director of Corporate Strategy and Development updated PCC on: the budget position; recruitment and vacancies; the e-Learning Management System; ongoing work with the Trade Unions/ social partnerships and the review of policies.
3. The Executive Director of Communications, Customer and Commercial updated PCC on: the Chief Executive's regular, consistent staff communications; the imminent Communications Handling Plan; the value of the virtual all-staff meeting; the new telephony system and the refresh of brand. Support for front-line staff was discussed. The Sustainable Farming Scheme (SFS) and the First Minister leadership election were also noted.

Wellbeing, Health & Safety Report – Quarter 3

4. PCC scrutinised the Quarter 3 Wellbeing, Health & Safety (H&S) Report. The detailed Report was welcomed and highlights included: Serious Incident Reviews; the reduction in hazard reporting and increase in near-miss reporting. The Committee were advised on the positive feedback received from the training sessions on importance of hazard and near-miss reporting, and that cancellations for training courses had decreased.
5. The importance of tracking mental health near-miss reporting was recognised. The inclusion of mental health in Health & Safety risk assessments and briefings would be considered. The Wellbeing sessions had been well-received and the opportunity for partnership working was noted.

People Transformation Programme

6. An update was provided on the annual progress of the People Transformation Programme. The priorities for 2024-25 and the key outcomes to be delivered by 2025 were highlighted. PCC noted the three internal audit reports and were assured on the tracking mechanism for the recommendations.
7. PCC considered the process for how the impacts would be evaluated. The overlap and integration with NRW2030 was recognised and considered, further work would take place. The complex nature and variety of roles within NRW were acknowledged and existing memberships of professional bodies could be used in personal development training.

Stakeholder Programme Update

8. Context was provided on the Stakeholder Programme Update. Stakeholder internal audit actions and the positives were highlighted. An explanation was given on the steps to maintain and increase momentum on the Programme, working with NRW2030, on the five workstreams.
9. PCC offered feedback and the context provided was welcomed. It was understood that time was needed to deliver. The Committee supported and understood the differences in stakeholder engagement by different NRW teams. Clarity around corporate priorities on the different programmes would continue to be developed.

Ways of Resourcing

10. Context on the ongoing work on the approach to the resourcing strategy was provided. The challenges were noted and assurance was given that legal input and guidance would be incorporated.
11. The Committee provided observations and welcomed the paper and were assured that the resourcing strategy would link with Strategic Workforce Planning and Diversity and Inclusion.

Emerging Thinking of 2024/25 Business Plan Implications for People and Customer

12. PCC were presented with the 2024/25 Business Plan implications for People and Customer. The implications, risks and issues were shared and discussed. The opportunities to improve the customer experience and the possibility to streamline processes were considered.
13. The Committee supported and welcomed the information, recognising both the opportunities and the challenges. The pressures going forward were recognised and clear communications would be essential. PCC noted the dynamic nature of the political landscape. The timeline and the ongoing process were outlined and the complexities of messaging was understood.

Diversity and Inclusion – Strategic Equality Objectives and Annual Report and Pay Gap 2024/25

14. The Committee discussed the Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) Report and the Gender Pay Gap 2024/25 in detail. The progress made and the steps still to take were outlined, prioritising future work to become a more inclusive and diverse organisation.
15. PCC welcomed the content of the Report and considered the update on the consultation responses. Taking best practice from other organisations was suggested to better attune with under-represented groups. The five Strategic Equality Objectives were outlined to the Committee for re-affirmation.
16. PCC approved the D&I Annual Report and the Gender Pay Gap 2024/25 for publication. PCC approved the reaffirmation of the five Strategic Equality Objectives.

Information Items

17. PCC welcomed the Communication Quarterly Report, made suggestions for future People Management Information and noted the People Policies update.

NRW Board Paper

Date of meeting:	21 st March 2024
Title of Paper:	Protected Areas Committee (PrAC) Update for Board
Paper Reference:	24-03-B06
Paper sponsored by:	Dr Rosie Plummer, Chair of PrAC
Paper prepared by:	Board Secretariat
Paper presented by:	Dr Rosie Plummer, Chair of PrAC
Purpose of the paper	Information
Summary	This summary provides an update on matters following the last PrAC meeting which was held on 22 February 2024.

Background

1. This summary provides an update on matters that in the opinion of the Protected Areas Committee (PrAC) Chair should be brought to the attention of the whole Board following the last PrAC meeting, which was held on 22 February 2024.
2. For further detail all Board members can access the agendas, papers, and minutes of committees via the Diligent portal.

Global Biodiversity Framework Targets and Legislative Update

3. Presentations were received from the Strategic Environmental Policy team on the White Paper on Environmental Principles, Governance and Biodiversity Targets and the Senior Specialist Advisor, Ecosystem Resilience and Biodiversity on the Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) Targets.
4. PrAC discussed the White Paper and the consultation. Internal comments were being sought for the consultation response by NRW for the deadline of 30 April 2024. Concern was expressed on the extent to which the UK was behind with meeting GBF Targets.

Sustainable Farming Scheme (SFS) Risks and Opportunities for Protected Sites

5. PrAC were updated on the Sustainable Farming Scheme (SFS) and the opportunities and risks it presented. The implications of the current proposals for protected sites in particular was agreed to be a key risk area for report to the Board.

Update on the Protected Sites Programme

6. PrAC were updated on the Protected Sites Programme. The challenges within the budget and the need to prioritise work was recognised. The team were reviewing ways to prioritise the work, such as the extent of existing issues and the urgency of developing a matrix approach. PrAC understood the additional resource required and considered the extent to which this could come through additional sources of funding.

River Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) Water Quality Report

7. PrAC received a presentation on the River SAC Water Quality Report. PrAC discussed the presentation and noted the importance of understanding the implications. An analysis had been completed of the chemical and biological data at 4000 locations, which concluded that there had been improvements in urban river environments, but degradation in the rural river environments.
8. The team explained the risk based monitoring system used to manage criticism. Some of the monitoring carried out by NRW required sophisticated lab analysis. The role for citizen science in adding to information was acknowledged.
9. Multi-partner working and high public interest, with formation of action groups such as 'Friends of the Cleddau', added opportunities and complexity to this space.

Update on the Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) Notifications

10. PrAC were updated on the SSSI notifications underway, planned or completed. A summary of the lessons learnt from the Cae Glas, Wern notification meeting in June 2023 was presented to the Committee. The improvements were discussed and ongoing work to address these ahead of the next potential public notification meeting in June were noted.
11. There was a wider consultation within NRW, that included the Legal team regarding the refined proposal of the SSSI notification of NRW land protocol. The process had been approved by the Technical Sites group and was successfully used on a small area of NRW's forest estate land included in a recent notification. There had been discussions with the Land Stewardship team regarding the need to push further internally. PrAC supported this approach going forward.

Designated Landscape Programme: Update

12. The Committee received a written update on this item.

Internal Audit Report: NRW Designated Sites Management (SSSI & National Nature Reserves (NNR))

13. It was agreed to bring this item back to a future meeting for the Head of Internal Audit to present to the Committee and to allow time for discussion.

Forward Look

14. PrAC discussed the Forward Look. The Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience Manager and Prof Steve Ormerod would consider and recommend where the PrAC site visit should take place.

NRW Board Paper

Date of meeting:	21 st March 2024
Title of Paper:	Wales Land Management Forum (WLMF) Update
Paper Reference:	24-03-B07
Paper sponsored by:	Professor Rhys Jones, WLMF Chair
Paper prepared by:	Bronwen Martin, Specialist Advisor: Wales Land Management
Paper presented by:	Professor Rhys Jones, WLMF Chair
Purpose of the paper	Information
Summary	For information

Wales Land Management Forum (WLMF)

1. The Wales Land Management Forum (WLMF) meetings take place four times per year, and they provide an opportunity for Natural Resources Wales (NRW) and other WLMF membership organisations to share information, identify common interests and work together in a collaborative way on strategic land management issues.

[Natural Resources Wales - Wales Land Management Forum \(WLMF\)](#)

Update

11th December 2023 meeting

2. The most recent WLMF meeting was held on 11th December 2023.
3. John Browne, NRW provided an introduction and overview of the new Forestry Regional Advisory Committee (RAC). The purpose of the Forestry RAC is to provide advice to NRW in respect of certain specific forestry functions in accordance with the statutory requirement under section 37 of the Forestry Act (1967) Act.
4. All WLMF members had the opportunity to ask about NRW Updates and also share updates from their own organisations.
5. The group discussed the forward look for future meetings.

6. The next WLMF meeting will be held on 11th March 2024 and is anticipated to include an update regarding the ongoing work around ammonia emissions and protected sites and a presentation on the process and progress of updating the State of Natural Resources Report (SoNaRR).
7. Once the meeting minutes have been reviewed and formally agreed by members, they are published on the WLMF page on the NRW website.

WLMF Sub Group on Agricultural Pollution

8. The primary purpose of the WLMF Sub Group is to identify opportunities to eliminate agricultural pollution in Wales whilst maintaining a thriving farming sector following five key themes (advice & guidance, voluntary approach, regulation, innovation, and investment), and working in collaboration with a range of agricultural and environmental stakeholders.

[Natural Resources Wales - Wales Land Management Forum \(WLMF\) Sub Group on Agricultural Pollution](#)

Update

29th January 2024 meeting

9. A joint meeting was held on 29th January 2024 for members of the Wales Land Management Forum (WLMF) Sub Group on Agricultural Pollution, Wales Fisheries Forum and the Wales Water Management Forum. This meeting included two common topics of interest and members of all three fora were invited to hear the updates and contribute to the discussions.
10. Hilary Foster, NRW, joined the meeting to provide a brief overview of the NRW Assessment of Water Quality in Protected Rivers in Wales. Hilary introduced the Special Area of Conservation (SAC) Rivers in Wales, provided a background to Water Quality Targets in the SAC Rivers, gave an overview of the results from the compliance assessments and summarised some general recommendations.
11. Thomaz Andrade, NRW, joined the meeting to provide a presentation on the diazinon investigations. Thomaz gave an overview of the situation including a background of the chemical status and chemical failures, a summary of sampling results, a brief discussion around the root cause analysis and highlighted some next steps/measures.

26th February 2024 meeting

12. The WLMF Sub Group held on Monday 26th February 2024 included the following agenda topics/discussions:
 - A presentation and discussion from Welsh Government around the four-year review process of The Water Resources (Control of Agricultural Pollution) (Wales) Regulations 2021.

- A presentation from Jon Goldsworthy, NRW regarding the Teifi Demonstrator Project.
- An overview and discussion concerning the SAC Rivers Agricultural Technical Group Report and subsequent recommendations.

13. The next WLMF Sub Group meeting will be held on 22nd April 2024.

14. Once the meeting minutes have been reviewed and formally agreed by members, they are published on the WLMF Sub Group page on the NRW website.

NRW Board Paper

Date of meeting:	21 March 2024
Title of Paper:	Finance Performance Report
Paper Reference:	24-03-B09
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	<p>To note that the Finance Committee have approved:</p> <p>Change in the latest forecast from £270.2m to a forecasted £272.8m.</p> <p>Payment into the EAPF pension fund of £6.894m.</p> <p>To scrutinise:</p> <p>Financial performance to the end of January 2024.</p>

Background

1. There is a separate paper for approvals.

Financial Performance to 31 January 2024

2. The Finance Performance Report provides detail on progress across the different types of income, expenditure, and programmes. Annex A summarises the key messages in respect of:
 - Change in forecast compared to the previous approved forecast and original budget.
 - Performance to end of January 2024, compared to the previous approved forecast and original budget.

- Risks to us being able to spend within our funding levels due to the impact of pay pressures and the level of timber income and the measures we have taken to mitigate that risk.
 - Update on additional funding provided by Welsh Government since after the reporting period (January).
 - Commentary by exception on how we are progressing against the latest forecast for the different types of income and expenditure.
3. The Finance Committee have scrutinised this financial report and approved the change in forecast and payment to the pension fund (funded by WG).

Risks and opportunities

4. 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.
5. 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

6. Executive Team will continue to monitor the principal risks within the budget.
7. We encourage budget and project managers to notify Finance of any changes to forecast which can be returned centrally.
8. We will continue to undertake our normal finance processes and review risks within the budget throughout the year. Programmes such as Business Transformation, Flood and Nature and Capital Emergencies are re-forecasted every month.
9. This report is produced every two months for the Board and Executive Team.

Recommendation

10. Board to approve changes to the latest forecast, from £270.2m to £272.8m.
11. Board to scrutinise financial performance to the end of January 2024.

Index of Annexes

Annex A – Financial Performance Report



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



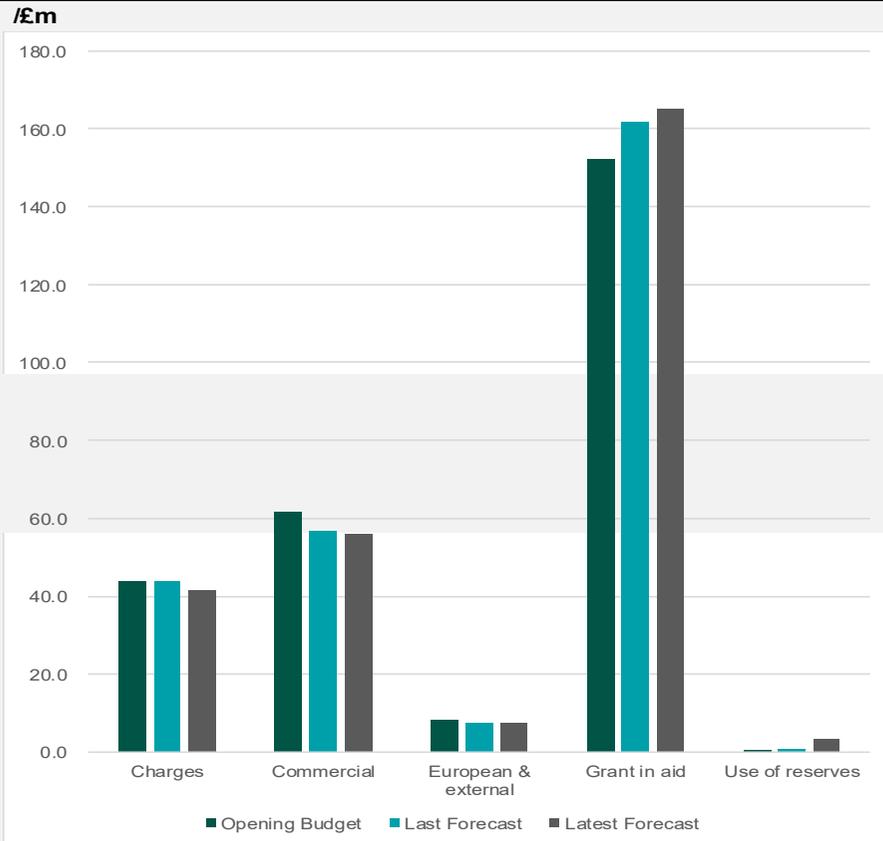
**NRW Board
21st March 2024
January 24 Finance Report**

Content and Key Messages



Update will cover:	Messages:
1. Update on the latest forecast changes as at January 2024 compared to the opening budget.	1. Budget changes are predominantly linked to additional GiA allocation relating to the change in accounting standards for leases (£3.2m) and Peatlands work within the NaCE programme (£0.3m), which is offset by a reduction in commercial income linked to timber income and surrenderable wind energy, which have reduced by £0.5m & £0.4m respectively.
2. Financial Performance as at January 2024.	2. Expenditure at the end of January equates to £199m against a planned spend of £200m with £74m (27%) remaining to be utilised by the end of the financial year. We anticipate to spend in line with the revised full year budget allocation of £273m and utilise the additional funding provided by Welsh Government in February, which is not included in this forecast. Overprogramming across the various capital programmes has reduced considerably following the confirmation of additional WG capital funding.
3. Update on the plan to balance in year budgetary pressures.	3. Actions have been taken and agreed with the Executive Team to balance the budget given our estimated revenue budget deficit of £2.1m at the beginning of January.
4. To note, Finance Committee have endorsed the change in forecast since the last report from £270.2m to £272.8m - mostly as a result of an increase in Grant in Aid offset by a decrease in charges and commercial income.	4. We were notified of additional revenue Grant in Aid (£2m) from WG in early February which has been prioritised to resolving our salaries budget deficit, providing for an over-spend in our other staff costs, placing some budget back into Forest Operations and balancing our over-programming. We now have limited over-programming commitment remaining in our revenue budget.
5. To note, Finance Committee have approved further changes to forecast not yet incorporated into the figures above: additional Grant in Aid and funding provided by WG to pay into the Environment Agency Pension Fund (EAPF).	5. WG has also allocated a further £3.1m capital Grant in Aid – which has been prioritised to Flood, Reservoirs and NaCE. There is the possibility of further funding (£1.18m for LiFE) and expect confirmation soon. We now have limited over-programming commitment remaining in our capital budget.
6. To note, Finance Committee have approved the payment to the EAPF.	6. WG have provided us with £7m to pay into the EAPF. There is no net benefit to NRW, as WG had already assumed in our budget settlement for next financial year a credit of £7m.
	7. At the beginning of March, the Head of Sustainable Commercial Development forecasted an upturn in the timber income forecast of £1.2m. We have discussed options with the Finance Committee about how this can be utilised.
	8. The revised forecast for regulatory and permitting has been approved and incorporated. This has led to a reduction in income but an increase in the use of balances.

Financial Performance – Income Forecast



Charges

Charge income has reduced by £2.4m to reflect the latest position in respect to permitting and applications - as discussed with ET and Finance Committee in January and February. This is being met by increasing the burden on the charge regime reserves by £2.4m.

Commercial

Commercial income has reduced by £0.9m linked to timber income and surrenderable wind energy, which have reduced by £0.5m & £0.4m respectively. The change in surrenderable income is balanced by reductions in compensatory planting budget and in the payment to WG, after our costs have been deducted. The reduction in timber income was one of the reasons for seeking further budget reductions in January.

European & Other External

External income has reduced by £0.2m in line with predicted expenditure.

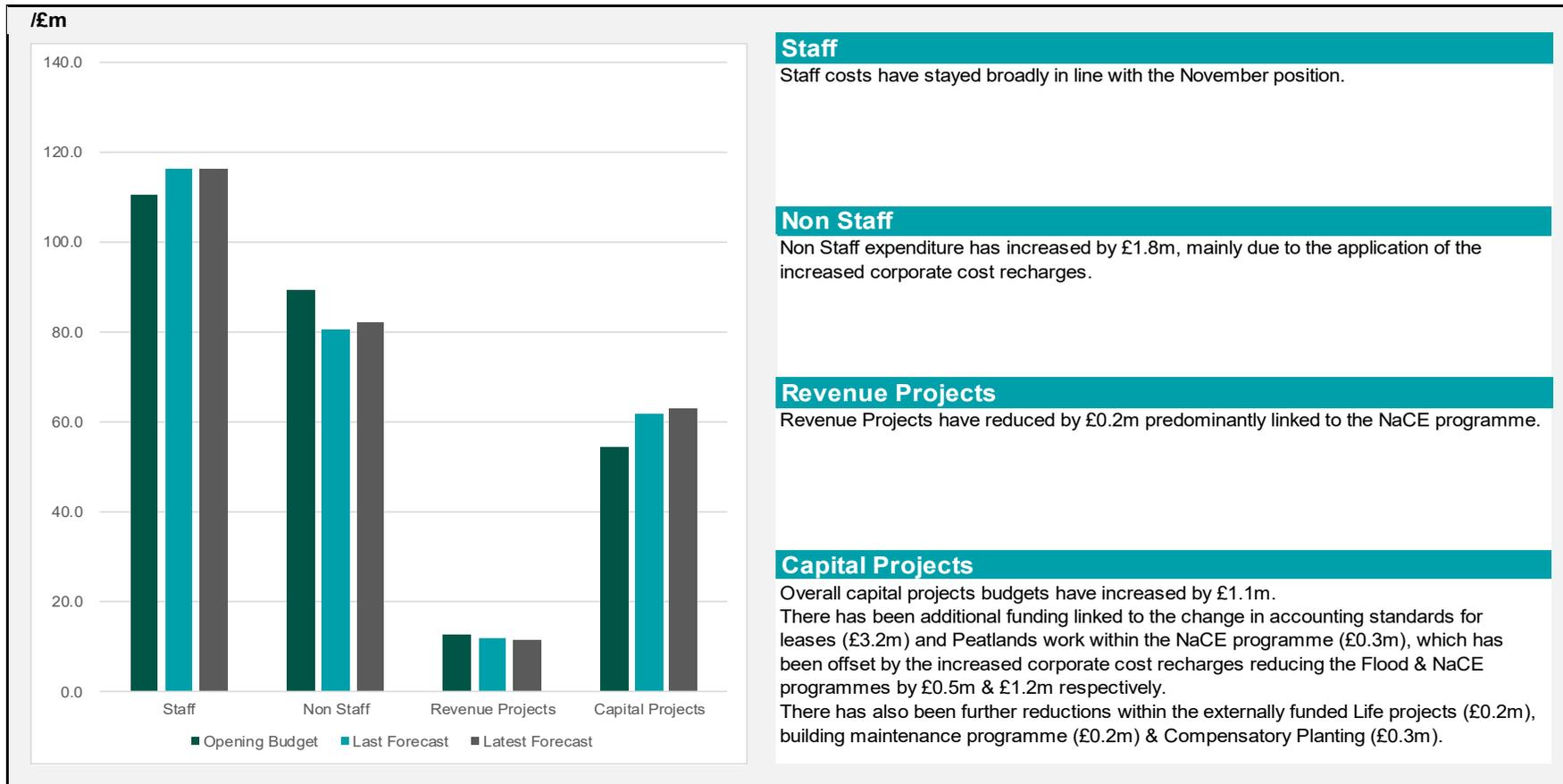
Grant in Aid

Overall increase of £3.5m linked to the change in accounting standards for leases (£3.2m) and Peatlands work within the NaCE programme (£0.3m).

Use of Reserves

Due to the reduction in charge income we have had to utilise reserves, which puts further pressure on the various charge regimes for future years.

Financial Performance – Expenditure Forecast



Financial Performance - Income



INCOME	Actual	Approved Forecast	Variance	Approved Forecast	Remaining Budget	Commentary
by Account Type	YTD	YTD	YTD	FY	FY	
	£m	£m	£m	£m	%	
Charges	31.4	31.4	0.0	41.3	24%	Forecast has reduced by £2.4m following consideration by the Executive Team in January. Reductions in the income forecast have been reflected against charge funded balances, which will utilise surpluses under some charge regimes, but take others further into deficit. Year to date income is in-line with the revised forecast and we expected this to be the case at the end of the financial year. A further review will be undertaken after the end of the year where the effect of vacancies on spend will be better understood, which will inform options to be considered by Executive Team ahead of producing the 2025/26 charge proposals.
Commercial	44.4	44.1	0.4	55.9	21%	Timber sales are current ahead of profile following strong January performance. However, the Commercial Team feel that that keeping the current forecast of £30.6m at the present time is prudent and will be reviewed again in early March.
European & external	4.5	4.3	0.2	7.2	37%	Income received is in line with expectations. Any reduction or increase will likely have an equal and opposite effect on expenditure.
Grant in aid	112.9	112.7	0.2	165.2	32%	Income received slightly ahead of plan, linked to the Wales Coastal Path project.
Use of Reserves	0.0	-0.0	0.0	3.3	100%	The full year forecast for use of charge balances has increased due to the revision in forecast of charge scheme income noted above. The actual use of reserves adjustment will be calculated in early May.
TOTAL: NRW	193.2	192.4	0.8	272.8	29%	

Financial Performance - Expenditure

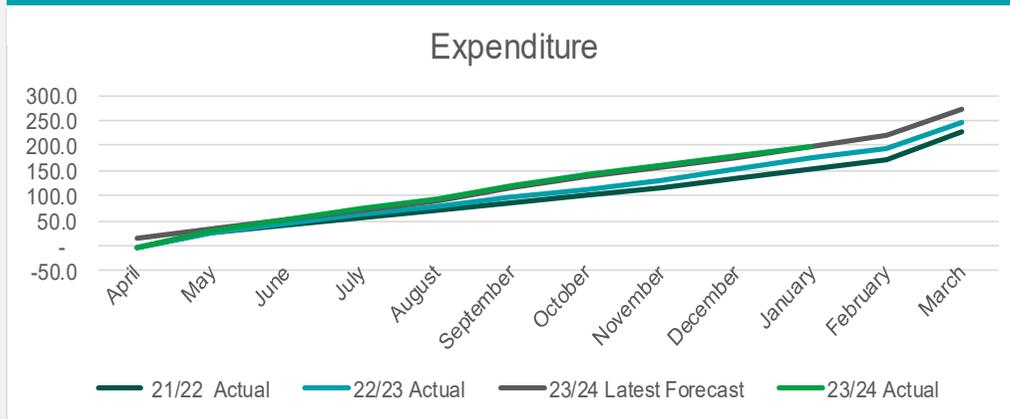


EXPENDITURE by Account Type	Actual YTD £m	Approved Forecast YTD £m	Variance YTD £m	Approved Forecast FY £m	Remaining Budget FY %	Commentary
Staff	93.8	93.5	-0.3	116.2	19%	The vacancy rate has remained at 9% from November, although staff numbers have increased slightly in the month of January, despite the recruitment freeze. As a result and as noted in our November report, the recruitment freeze is unlikely to deliver all the targeted savings with an expected deficit of around £0.8m. The current overspend of £0.3m is within other staff costs, mainly on people support costs. However, with the notification of additional revenue Grant in Aid from WG in early February, we have been able to cover both shortfalls.
Non Staff	54.8	54.5	-0.2	82.1	33%	The position on non staff costs has changed from an underspend of £0.9m in November to an overspend in January of £0.2m. This is mainly due to budget profiling within EPP and an overspend in Business Transformation within F&CS, which will be corrected by the end of the financial year. However, overspend on these Directorates is offset by an underspend within Operations linked to Land Stewardship activities, a trend which has continued from November. Following the January budget reduction exercise and the additional funding provided by Welsh Government, we expect costs across all Directorates to be in line with the full year allocation at year end. Following the processing of those adjustments, we expect our revenue over-programming to be fully negated.
Revenue Projects	6.6	6.6	0.0	11.6	43%	There are minor variances over numerous projects. The risk in the revenue programme is currently low.
Capital Projects	43.6	45.0	1.4	62.9	31%	The current expenditure position is linked to an under spend within the NaCE and Land Stewardship programmes of £1.8m and £0.3m, which is offset by over spends within flood (£0.5m) and Business Transformation (£0.3m). Additional overheads have been factored into almost all programmes except WG Grants, which forms only a small element of the overall capital position and will be adjusted in February. The Flood over-programming has been managed downwards to £0.6m. Previously, we had planned to remove the over programming through the utilisation of underspend within other GiA funded capital programmes (Reservoir Compliance £0.15m and Coal Tips of £0.5m), however, following the notification of additional funding from WG we are now able to remove the deficit and bring forward work planned for next financial year, predominantly linked to Stephenson Street. Business Transformation overprogramming has now been reduced down to £0.7m. This is predominantly related to ICT workstream who will continue to review the position and are confident the balance will be zero by the end of the Financial year. NaCE overprogramming is currently £1.6m, representing 7% of the funding available, however, given the current underspend and the need to work within the overall funding allocation, this will reduce considerably in February. The additional £0.4m allocation confirmed by WG on 14 February will be reflected in February's figures.
TOTAL: NRW	198.8	199.7	0.9	272.8	27%	

Financial Performance – Expenditure Trends



EXPENDITURE TRENDS



Commentary:

As expected, we continue to see an increase in expenditure this financial year compared to the same point in previous years. Spend at the end of January is £198.8m, which is £23m more than that incurred at the same point last financial year. The full year forecast for this year is currently £272.8m, which is £26m more than the costs incurred last financial year. .

Financial Performance – Revenue Projects



Revenue Projects	Actual	Approved	Variance	Approved	Remaining	Commentary
by Programme	YTD £m	YTD £m	YTD £m	FY £m	FY %	
External Funded	3.6	3.4	-0.2	5.3	32%	Overall revenue projects are on target. The majority of programmes have now been reviewed to assess the ability to absorb the increase in staff and corporate costs, with the system being adjusted to reflect these changes. The remaining elements will be adjusted in February.
Internal Funded	1.5	1.4	-0.1	2.2	32%	
NaCE	0.7	1.0	0.2	1.4	46%	
Other	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	69%	
Business Transformation	0.3	0.3	0.0	0.9	71%	
Grants	0.5	0.5	0.0	1.8	71%	
TOTAL: NRW	6.6	6.6	0.0	11.6	43%	

Financial Performance – Capital Projects

Capital Projects by Programme	Actual	Approved	Variance	Approved	Remaining	Commentary
	YTD	Forecast	YTD	Forecast	Budget	
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	%
Business Transformation	5.4	5.1	-0.4	8.4	35%	Business Transformation capital overprogramming has reduced to £0.7m. This is predominantly related to ICT workstream who will continue to review the position with Business Transformation Team, working to reduce to zero by the end of the Financial year.
External Funded	2.4	2.8	0.4	4.4	44%	Externally funded projects are on track to come in on budget at year end. Possibility of additional funding from WG is being discussed, that could alleviate pressure in future years (but not yet agreed).
Flood Risk	20.1	19.6	-0.5	23.5	14%	The Flood overprogramming has reduced to £0.6m. Previously, we had planned to remove the over programming through the utilisation of underspend within other GiA funded capital programmes (Reservoir Compliance £0.15m and Coal Tips of £0.5m), however, following the notification of additional funding from WG we are now able to remove the deficit and bring work planned for next financial year, predominantly linked to Stephenson Street.
Internal Funded	2.0	2.1	0.0	2.6	22%	Current expenditure position in line with the year to date budget, which is expected to continue to year end.
NaCE	12.7	14.6	1.8	20.9	39%	Additional funding has been received for the Peatlands element of the NaCE programme, which has been offset by the increased corporate cost charge. Overprogramming is currently £1.6m, representing 7% of the funding available. Given the current underspend and the need to work within the overall funding allocation, this will reduce considerably in February. Some equipment purchases have been delayed into next financial which will also help manage the current over-programming. The additional £0.4m allocation confirmed by WG on 14th February will be reflected in February's figures and will help bring some elements back into this years programme.
IFRS 16 Capital Leases Only (non-cash)	0.9	0.9	0.0	3.2	72%	The funding reflects the change in accounting treatment of leases. Costs will run inline with the allocated budget to year end.
TOTAL: NRW	43.6	45.0	1.4	62.9	31%	

Contingency and over-programming budgets



Balances (contingencies and programme under/overs)	Previous (November)	Current (January)	Movement	Predicted balance (end Feb)	Comments
	£m	£m	£m	£m	
In Year Pressure balancing targets					
Non staff reduction targets	-2.1	0.0	-2.1	0.0	The budget reduction exercise that was undertaken in December is now reflected within the reports.
Increased overhead charge distribution	-1.6	0.2	-1.8	0.0	Welsh Government have agreed the additional corporate charges, with the majority of programmes now reflecting the revised charge of 13.5%. This has resulted in an additional saving of £0.2m above the predicted value which will be used to balance the revenue budget.
Staff					
Pay Award Provision and staff reduction	3.9	3.7	0.2	-0.1	Once the pay award budgets have been distributed, the overall net pressure will be £1.0m, which is offset by expected salary savings in February and March of £0.2m, leaving a net pressure of £0.8m which is being funded by additional revenue Grant in Aid.
Programmes - under/over programming					
NaCE	-2.0	-1.7	-0.3	0.0	NaCE overprogramming across the revenue & capital programmes has reduced by £0.3m from November. Given the current underspend position and the need to work within the overall funding allocation, this will reduce considerably in February. Some equipment purchases have also been pushed into next financial which will also help manage the current overprogramming. Once the additional GiA capital funding has been distributed the over programming will reduce to zero.
Flood Risk Capital	-2.3	-0.6	-1.7	0.0	Flood overprogramming has reduced by £1.7m from the November position. Previously, we had planned to remove the over programming through the utilisation of underspend within other GiA funded capital programmes (Reservoir Compliance £0.15m and Coal Tips of £0.5m), however, following the notification of additional funding from WG we are now able to remove the deficit and bring forward work planned for next financial year. With the additional GiA capital funding, the over programming will be removed.
Business Transformation	-2.1	-1.3	-0.8	0.0	The Business Transformation overprogramming now stands at £1.3m across the various project and non staff budgets. This overprogramming has reduced considerably since November, with a plan to come inline to the full year allocation by year end.
Water Resources Capital	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.0	The under programming has reduced by £0.1m, due to reallocation to projects.
Welsh Government Grants	-0.1	-0.1	0.0	-0.1	Small balances on various grants, mainly Wales Coastal Path.
Other					
Central Overprogramming	-0.5	-2.0	1.5	0.0	The central overprogramming has increased by £1.5m following the external funding audit (£0.9m), forecasted reduction in timber income (£0.5m) and further revenue pressures (£0.3m), which has been offset by deferring a contribution to next financial year. However, following the January budget reduction exercise along with additional savings across WG grant corporate cost charge, WR capital & commercial income, the central overprogramming and additional funding from WG this will be removed. These changes will be reflected within the February accounts.
Directorate Overprogramming	-0.1	0.0	-0.1	0.0	The overprogramming within core facilities programmes has reduced.



NRW Board Paper

Date of meeting:	21 st March 2024
Title of Paper:	Business Plan Performance Dashboard Quarter 3 Report and Internal Performance Quarter 3 Report
Paper Reference:	24-03-B10
Paper sponsored by:	Clare Pillman, CEO
Paper prepared by:	Sioni Davies, Advisor Corporate Planning & Performance
Paper presented by:	Clare Pillman, CEO
Purpose of the paper	Approval of the Q3 Business Plan Performance Dashboard and the Q3 Internal Performance report
Summary	<p>The Q3 Business Plan Performance Dashboard Report and the Internal Performance Report for the period to the end of December 23 is presented here.</p> <p>During this period, there are no reported Reds on the Business Plan Performance Dashboard, but the number of Ambers has gone up from seven in Q2 to eight in Q3.</p> <p>Tighter controls were introduced on recruitment and non-staff budgets to manage the in-year budget pressures in August 23, and we have been monitoring the impact of these controls on delivery of our business plan. Measure owners have given further consideration of this impact on their ability to deliver. Of the eight measures that reported Amber in Q3, only two measure reporters cite resource issues as a factor that has impinged on delivery.</p> <p>Expectations for year-end, however, suggest that resource issues <i>will</i> significantly impact on delivery, with six of the eight measures predicted as Amber at year-end citing resourcing as a factor. These Business Plan performance measures are a small subset of NRW activities, and it is important to recognise that the current resource controls are resulting in significant pressure across all parts of the organisation. If all our activities were included in this report, we would expect to see more Amber and Red year-end predictions.</p> <p>The Corporate Planning Team have offered considerable additional support for this reporting round, with webinars for measure owners ahead of submission, and robust challenge</p>

	post-submission to help ensure the Q3 report contains sufficient detail and realistic expectations for year-end.
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Issue

1. The third quarter of the 23/24 Business Plan performance reporting cycle is complete. This paper presents NRW Board the opportunity to scrutinise the third quarter's performance.

Background

2. The **Business Plan Performance Dashboard** is one of the NRW Board's principal means of scrutinising delivery. It was developed in parallel with the 23/24 Business Plan, working with the NRW Board, Executive Team and Leadership Team. This annual Business Plan relates to our Corporate Plan to March 2030.
3. We are developing a performance framework to sit alongside the new Corporate Plan: in the meantime, this Business Plan dashboard largely reflects measures carried forward from 22/23, organised around our three new Well-being Objectives.
4. The Business Plan Dashboard Performance Report can be seen at Annex 1 and consists of a:
 - **Dashboard** providing an overview of performance against the 23/24 measures included in the annual business plan and aligned to the Well-being Objectives reflected in our Corporate Plan and 23/24 annual Business Plan
 - **Details for each specific measure** with their current (Q3) position and expected year-end position, set out by Well-being Objective.
5. Following the announcement in August 23 of increasing pressures on the 23/24 NRW budget, the Corporate Planning Team have been scrutinising submissions to track the potential impact of greater financial controls on the ability to deliver the measures in full (as Green status) by year-end. Of the eight measures that reported Amber in Q3, only two measure reporters cite resource issues as a factor that impinged on delivery, as follows:
 - Maintain flood risk assets in high risk systems at target condition, and
 - Develop a low emission fleet and deliver a low emission and climate adapted built estate.
6. Expectations for year-end however suggest that resource issues *will* significantly impact on delivery, with six of the eight measures predicted as Amber at year-end citing resourcing as a factor.
7. Our Business Plan performance measures are a small subset of a much bigger and wider set of NRW activities. They are the activities that have been selected to give an overview of the work of NRW; but alongside them there is a vast amount of other work ongoing. From discussions with our leaders and managers we know that the current

resource issues are resulting in significant pressure across our organisation, and therefore if all our activities were included in this report, we would expect to see more Amber and Red year-end predictions.

8. The Corporate Planning Team provided considerable additional support for Q3 reporting, including two additional webinars and a drop-in session for both reporters and measure owners. These were to remind contributors of the reporting process, emphasising the importance of realistic reporting (avoiding optimism bias for year-end results) and to ensure that any impacts of the recent recruitment freeze and/or reduction in resources were explained and recorded clearly in measure reports. The webinars, in particular, were very well attended, and the requested information was reflected in many of the returns.
9. The Corporate Planning Team has also spent a considerable amount of time robustly challenging returns, both on RAG status and narrative content, both for Q3 and expected year-end as part of their quality assurance role. This has resulted in some measures initially returned as Green being reassessed as Amber, as well as providing additional explanation or clarification for some measures, now reflected in the full report.
10. The **Internal Performance Report** can be seen at Annex 2 and covers 11 internally focussed measures, as in 2022/23, with their current (Q3) position and expected year-end position. This is a subset of more detailed Management information measures, collected on a monthly basis and shared with all Directorates.

Assessment

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

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

12. There are eight Amber measures in Q3, which are noted below:

Management of and input to programmes to address and restore habitats across Wales

Our milestone for this quarter is to have completed 10kms of riparian fencing, and through LIFE Dee River to have delivered the Chirk weir fish pass. However, due to issues over gaining access to who owns the land, we have not been able to progress

this work as rapidly as hoped and have only completed 7kms of riparian fencing. Landowners are being contacted and the fencing will be completed in Q4. The Chirk weir fish pass has also been delayed due to having the plans approved by the National Fish Pass Approval Panel (NFPAP), this is required as a Larinier fish pass is classed as a technical fishpass. We cannot apply for planning or a Flood Risk Activity Permit until we have the final design approved by NFPAP. Planning pre-app is now in and we anticipate that this fish pass will be delivered in Q2 of 24/25. We are currently on track to be Green at year-end, delivering our year-end target of Nature Networks and LIFE Restoration programmes and planning the development of new programmes.

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

We have not fully completed the milestone for this quarter (completion of a forces for change assessment, a management options assessment and a round of stakeholder engagement). The forces for change assessment has been received but will not be signed off until mid-January (Q4), and the management options assessment has been commissioned and some preliminary work has been undertaken. The engagement events were completed in November. We are currently on track to achieve our year-end target of continuation of the designation procedure and commencing the Natural Beauty and Open Air Recreation assessment and are confident we will report Green at year-end.

Area of new woodland created on the land in our care

Our milestone for this quarter is to have made sufficient progress towards the end of year measure (of an additional 100ha of land acquired/ identified for woodland creation and 100ha of woodland created in 2023/24) to be confident it will be achieved. We have however already achieved the year's target for land acquired, with 105ha acquired so far and a further 23ha probable before year-end. Unfortunately, we are not on track to create 100ha of woodland as we have not been able to accelerate the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process at some sites, including time for local consultation to enable us to plant UK Forestry Standard compliant woodland. This means that we expect to meet 75% of the target of 100ha planted this year. We expect to be Amber at year-end.

Maintain flood risk assets in high risk systems at target condition

At the end of December-23, 97.9% of flood risk assets in high risk systems were at target condition. The target is 98% and we were just 1 asset (out of 3,979 measured), below target. Regarding our year-end target of 98% of flood risk assets in high risk systems at target condition, our current expectation is Amber, due to the anticipated impacts on assets and resource pressures from the storms in the quarter. There have been six named storms, particularly Babet, Ciaran (end October/ early November time) and Gerrit, Henk (end December /early January) and periods of prolonged wet weather. These conditions have created new defects at assets and have made it difficult to get out on-site to fix assets. Alongside this our staff resources, have been directed to responding to and recovering from incidents.

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

Our milestone for this quarter is 176 additional properties provided with a sustained or increased level of protection. We have not achieved this, with 155 properties in receipt of sustained or increased levels of protection, due to a small number of projects now

reprofiled to next financial year for delivery reasons. We are slightly behind our profile to achieve our year-end target of 1,000 additional properties directly provided with reduced risk / sustained level of protection, but we are confident that we will be Green at year-end. The expected construction finish at Ammanford in Q4 will ensure we exceed our target, and we have high confidence that this will happen.

Implement Flood Review recommendations / actions

We have partly completed our milestone for this quarter (to review and approve the Transition Report) as the report has been drafted and is currently being reviewed ready for submission to the Flood Recovery and Review Implementation Programme (FRRIP) Board in February 2024 (Q4). Upon approval by the FRRIP Board and Executive Team, it is anticipated that the programme can then move towards closure in March 2024. We expect to be Green at year-end, with programme transition and closure reports complete.

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

Due to resource issues within the team, we have not completed our milestone for this quarter (to agree a five-year transition schedule to Ultra Low Emission Vehicles for our badged fleet and complete the replacement of bulk fuel storage tanks for Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil - HVO). We have drafted a five-year transition schedule and engaged with fleet users in workshops to refine. Ten of the twelve planned HVO bulk fuel tanks have been installed (with the remaining two to be installed in January – Q4). Due to resourcing issues within the team, we expect to be Amber at year-end as we have not been able to procure the build and operation of an integrated NRW-wide electric vehicle charging infrastructure. The fleet strategy has been delayed to Q4 24/25, but an interim fleet purchasing policy has been adopted.

Decision on an appropriate enforcement response within three months

Our milestones for this quarter are that 95% of decisions in relation to environmental crime being made within three months, and to publish the Annual Regulatory Report. Only 90% of decisions have been within three months this quarter. We will continue to review enforcement performance, however the impact of resource restrictions across NRW will increasingly impact achievement of this target. The Annual Regulatory Report has been published on time. We currently expect to be Amber at year-end as we are not currently on track to achieve our year-end target of 95% with explanatory narrative.

13. The other 14 measures are Green at the end of Q3. Some to note, which are relating to Well-being Objective 3 (Pollution) are:

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

We have completed our milestone for this quarter which was to explore provision of a database of SAC rivers' projects contributing to reducing nutrient loading. We have shared options of databases with Welsh Government and put forward a recommendation. We are not on track to achieve our year-end target of having delivered NRW's 23/24 commitments in the First Minister Action Plan for the SAC rivers. Dŵr Cymru/Welsh Water (DCWW) has challenged our approach to permit variations and this has delayed the review of 100 Water Quality Discharge Permits. We have considered

options to accelerate the process but are limited due to lack of capacity with the contractors and our own staff. We currently expect to be Amber at year-end.

Deliver NRW input to Water Company Planning Programmes

We have completed our milestone for this quarter, providing advice to RAPID (Regulator's Alliance for Progressing Infrastructure Development) on gated process for strategic resource schemes that are within or affecting Wales. RAPID agreed an extended timeline of March 2024 for two of the priority actions related to Gate 3a (Interconnector development) and Gate 3b (Proof of concept) for these schemes. We will provide our advice to RAPID on Gate 3 in Q1 24/25. We have delivered as much as we can but have been held up by the discussions happening between other partners (Welsh Government, Ofwat, DCWW) and have been unable to complete this quarter. We are not currently on track to achieve our year-end target of inputting into Water Company Planning Programmes and providing advice to Ofwat on their PR24 draft determination. We currently expect to be Amber at year-end as this task will slip into Q1 24/25.

Deliver programmes to review statutory water quality requirements

We have completed our milestone for this quarter which was to agree a vision for the fourth cycle (C4) of River Basin Management Plans with stakeholders and finalise Storm Overflow Classification Guidance. We issued new guidance in October to water companies in relation to the regulation of storm overflows and the approach to permitting unpermitted overflows in Wales. We have also shared our thinking for the RBMP C4 approach with the Wales Water Management Forum in December. However, due to lack of resources and problems with reporting systems and, we are not currently on track to achieve our year-end target of programmes to review statutory water quality requirements delivered (and review progress of RBMP national measures, opportunity catchments and investigations). We currently expect to be Amber at year-end.

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

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

15. We have one Red item (Health and Safety Active Monitoring) in Q3 and three Amber items (Declarations of Interest, Health & Safety Near Miss and Sgwr's in place). Below we highlight the Red item. All other items are Green, except for the Absence item which has remained unreported as the report methodology has changed. It is however

anticipated that this item will re-commence regular reporting in the next quarter. For further details, please refer to Annex 2.

Health and Safety Active Monitoring (i.e., regular inspection and checking to ensure that wellbeing, health and safety standards are being implemented) is Red at the end of the quarter (compared to Green at the end of Q2), with a reduction compared with the same period last year. Drop-in sessions for those involved have been picking up on this. Green is still expected at year-end.

Risks, Risk Appetite and opportunities

16. If the performance information provided does not accurately reflect progress towards delivery of the Business Plan, and the operation of NRW as an organisation, then the Executive Team and NRW Board will be unable to fulfil their role to scrutinise delivery.

Wider implications

17. **Finance:** There are no significant financial implications in providing the performance report itself, however part of our quarterly review obviously considers allocation of our resources and finance and performance papers are therefore closely linked.
18. **Equality:** The relevant Equality Impact Assessment covers our Corporate Plan 2030, Well-being Statement and Business Plan 2023/24.

Next Steps

19. Following NRW Board approval, both Performance Reports will be discussed with Welsh Government and submitted to the Minister for Climate Change. They will be published on the Natural Resources Wales website.

Recommendation

20. We request the NRW Board approve the Q3 Business Plan Performance Dashboard report and the Internal Performance Report.

Index of Annexes

Annex 1 – Business Plan Performance Dashboard Q3

Annex 2 – Internal Performance Report Q3

Approval / Consultation process

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

Annex 1: Business Plan Performance Dashboard 2023/24

Shown in bold, the Green, Amber or Red status of each of our Business Plan's dashboard measures. Previous status and future (expected) status are also shown.

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

Key to status¹: Green = achieved; Amber = close to; Red = missed

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

Our Well-being Objectives

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

Our well-being objectives are:

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

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

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Nature is recovering

What is needed to ensure nature's recovery?

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

[Our new Corporate Plan to 2030](#) expands further on what it will mean to ensure Nature's Recovery across Wales², and in seven place-focussed areas of Wales³.

Executive Team lead: Ceri Davies

² In our new Corporate Plan to 2030 “Nature and People Thriving Together”, we have set out where NRW is best placed to make a difference within the resources we have and where this will change, with Wales' 2030 targets the first step to achieving international targets, goals and milestones in 2050

³ Our Corporate Plan also states how we will tailor our [work to recover nature in seven place-focussed areas of Wales, including a marine area](#) - Recognising we have made commitments for these places through Public Services Boards and involving communities in the development of [Area Statements](#).

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

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

Latest position (to end of December 2023):

- Our **milestone for this quarter is for 50% of actions to be completed / underway**. We have completed this activity. We have logged the 2023-24 planned actions in our database Safle in Q1. We had planned 241 actions to be completed or underway during this financial year. By the end of December 2023, 112 actions were reported as underway and 90 complete. This equates to 84 % of actions in the 2023-24 plan and therefore exceeds the Q3 milestone of 50%. This measure is **Green**.

What's next

- We will continue to work with stakeholders and on our own estate to deliver action through the mechanisms available to NRW, principally land management agreements, direct management, LIFE projects and funded by Nature Networks capital funding.
- We will achieve our **year-end target of 80% of planned actions to be completed / underway** and have met the Q4 target. This is comprised of two elements, actions in the plan 'underway' and actions 'completed'. The pause in completion of management agreements in negotiation (because of financial pressures in 2023/24 and expected pressures in 2024/25) will not affect the overall achievement of this year's target of underway and complete actions, however as it is a rolling programme (and because negotiations have necessarily had to be paused), it will push completion of 'underway' agreements into future years and may affect our ability to pick up and commence negotiations on a number of new agreements within 2024/25.
- We currently expect we will be Green.

Measure owner: Huwel Manley

Q1	to Q2	to Q3	Expected year-end
Green	Green	Green	Green

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

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

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

Latest position (to end of December 2023)

- Our **milestone for this quarter is to develop work programme for recommendations from the Fish-eating Birds review**. We have completed this activity. We have gone through the recommended actions to work out how the project will take them forward and we have assigned them a timescale. The initial focus has been establishing the governance via the Project Board, setting up working groups and commencing internal and external communications. The next step is to run a catchment based licensing trial on the River Usk, with an application expected in mid-January 2024.
- This measure is **Green**.

What's next

- We will now commission an independent evaluation consultant to work with the Natur am Byth partnership for the duration of the 4-year delivery phase. These outputs are vital to completing our year-end targets. Our milestone for Q4 is to complete all Natur am Byth recruitment for NGO hosted partnership officers and managers across the 11 place-based species recovery and engagement projects.
- We are currently on track to achieve our **year-end target to progress specific projects illustrating our work in this area (and Natur am Byth monitoring and evaluation framework established, including a species recovery assessment tool)**, and are on track to be Green at year end.

Measure owner: Huwel Manley

Q1	to Q2	to Q3	Expected year-end
Green	Green	Green	Green

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

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

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

Latest position (to end of December 2023)

- Our **milestone for this quarter is review action progress and report to Wales MPA Network Management Steering Group**. We have completed the review of action, progress of action and have forwarded it on to Welsh Government for dissemination to the stakeholder group. The NRW climate change profiles project is going well, we have received the draft report for the climate change profiles and we do not anticipate any problem completing this action by the end of March 2024. Other NRW actions in the action plan are also progressing well.
- This measure is **Green**.

What's next

- We will now complete the Climate Change profiles and deliver against other actions within the action plan.
- We are currently on track to achieve our **year-end target to deliver 100% actions (and sign off and report on final delivery)** and are on track to be Green at year end.

Measure owner: Rhian Jardine

Q1	to Q2	to Q3	Expected year-end
Green	Green	Green	Green

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

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

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

Latest position (to end of December 2023)

- Our milestone for this quarter is through **Four rivers for LIFE (4R4L) to complete 10 kms of riparian fencing, and through LIFE Dee River to deliver Chirk weir fish pass.**
- We have completed 7kms of riparian fencing via the 4 Rivers for LIFE project. However, issues over title (i.e., who owns the land) have meant that we have not progressed this work as rapidly as hoped. Landowners are being contacted and it will be completed in Q4.
- The Chirk weir fish pass has also been delayed due to a delay in having the plans approved through the fish pass. It has taken extra time to get approval from the National Fish Pass Approval Panel (NFPAP), this is required as a Larinier fish pass is classed as a technical fishpass. We cannot apply for planning or a Flood Risk Activity Permit until we have the final design approved by NFPAP. Planning pre-app is now in and we have agreement from the Panel that the form and function of the fish pass are fine, with some minor tweaks to be approved by area. This fish pass will now be delivered in Q2 of 2024/25.
- This measure is **Amber**.

What's next

- We will now work on a simpler licencing system in order to enable 4 Rivers for LIFE and other river restoration projects to deliver riparian fencing more rapidly. The Dee LIFE project has 5 major weir/fish pass works to deliver in 2024 and 2025. We are on track to deliver 3 in 2024 - Chirk, Horseshoe falls, Erbistock, and 2 in 2025 - Manley hall, Brynkinalt.
- We are currently on track to achieve our **year-end target to continue to deliver Nature Networks and LIFE Restoration programmes and plan the development of new programmes (and complete Nature Networks and LIFE programme of winter works)** and are to be Green at year end.

Measure owner: Ruth Jenkins

Q1	to Q2	to Q3	Expected year-end
Green	Green	Amber	Green

Key: Green = achieved; Amber = close to (e.g. within one month); Red = missed
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Measure: Evaluation of the case for a new National Park in North East Wales

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

Latest position (to end of December 2023)

- Our **milestone for this quarter is completion of a forces for change assessment, a management options assessment and a round of stakeholder engagement**. We have completed the majority of this activity. The 'Forces for change' draft report has been received but will not be signed off until mid-January (Q4). The 'Management options' work has been commissioned and started on time due to it being awarded to the same contractor (LUC) so some preliminary work has already taken place in parallel, rather than starting sequentially as was originally planned. The engagement events were completed on the 24th November and the period for submitting feedback on the events closed on the 27th November.
- This measure is **Amber**.

What's next

- We will now prepare a report summarising and responding to the issues raised during the engagement. We will sign off the forces for change work and complete the 'Management options' assessment in Q4. We will also procure the next stage of assessment, (Natural Beauty and Open Air recreation assessments) to start in April 2024.
- We are currently on track to achieve our **year-end target of continuation of the designation procedure (and commencing the Natural Beauty and Open Air Recreation assessment)**, and are to be Green at year end.

Measure owner: Rhian Jardine

Q1	to Q2	to Q3	Expected year-end
Green	Green	Amber	Green

Key: Green = achieved; Amber = close to (e.g. within one month); Red = missed
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Measure: Complete our freshwater quality monitoring review

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

Latest position (to end of December 2023)

- Our **milestone for this quarter is to complete case studies to inform a framework for short term intensive 'agile' monitoring**. We have completed five case studies to explore “good” and “poor” practices in the design, implementation and analysis aspects of agile water quality monitoring programmes. Three further case studies are in progress. The case studies will be used to draw up a framework to inform our future 'short-term' agile monitoring. We have also received final reports from consultants to inform the design of a 'sentinel' long-term monitoring network. This measure is **Green**.

What's next

- We will now draw together the findings from the case studies to produce a framework for agile monitoring to inform its effectiveness and efficiency in terms of delivering the evidence we need and making best use of resources allocated to this work.
- Our end of year target is **to progress our water quality monitoring review (and produce a framework for 'agile' monitoring)**. We are currently on track to produce a framework for agile monitoring. Overall progress with the water quality monitoring review has been delayed due to uncertainty over project funding for next year. This has prevented us letting the phase 2 contract to undertake detailed statistical design of the new 'sentinel' monitoring network. In addition, the pause on recruitment is drawing staff time on to other work at the expense of this project. It now appears likely that we will secure the required funding for next year and we will aim to progress the phase 2 'sentinel' design project Q1 to Q3 2024-25, subject to funding.
- We expect to be Amber at year end as a result of the delay with the sentinel network phase 2 design contract.

Measure owner: Chris Collins

Q1	to Q2	to Q3	Expected year-end
Green	Green	Green	Amber

Key: Green = achieved; Amber = close to (e.g. within one month); Red = missed
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Measure: Sharing the vision for the natural environment to 2050 - Nature and Us

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

Latest position (to end of December 2023)

- Our **milestone for this quarter is to publish the organisational response to the vision for the natural environment to 2050 and commence programme evaluation**. We have completed this activity. NRW's response to the vision was published on 4 December and sent to 48 public sector organisations in Wales. It is [available on NRW's website](#). We launched the new Nature and Us website in November providing a permanent home for the vision and the creative outputs from the national conversation. We shared the vision across social media platforms to the people in Wales.
- This measure is **Green**.

What's next

- We will now finalise the programme evaluation to inform the benefits realisation proposal, as part of the programme closure and handover. We continue working with external relations to engage external stakeholders with the vision and encourage their response.
- We are currently on track to achieve our **year-end target to publish final report programme evaluation, commence benefits realisation and embed learning from the evaluation**.
- We currently expect we will be Green at year end.

Measure owner: Sarah Williams

Q1	to Q2	to Q3	Expected year-end
Green	Green	Green	Green

Key: Green = achieved; Amber = close to (e.g. within one month); Red = missed
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Communities are resilient to climate change

What is needed to ensure resilience to climate change?

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

[Our new Corporate Plan to 2030](#) expands further on what it will mean to ensure communities are resilient to climate change across Wales⁴, and in seven place-focussed areas of Wales⁵

Executive Team lead: Sarah Jennings

⁴ In our new Corporate Plan to 2030 “Nature and People Thriving Together”, we have set out where NRW is best placed to make a difference within the resources we have and where this will change, with Wales’ 2030 targets the first step to achieving international targets, goals and milestones in 2050

⁵ Our Corporate Plan also states how we will tailor our [work to make nature and communities resilient to climate change in seven place-focussed areas of Wales, including a marine area](#) - Recognising we have made commitments for these places through Public Services Boards and involving communities in the development of [Area Statements](#).

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

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

Latest position (to end of December 2023)

- Our **milestone for this quarter is to commence National Peatland Action Programme groundworks**. We have completed this activity. Working with partners and contractors, peatland restoration groundworks have commenced across Wales. On the land in our care, we are undertaking peatland restoration works on the following sites Hafod Elwy, Figyn Blaen Brefi, Crugnant, Nant Gwinau and Llyn Du. Landowners and partners are also utilising our funding mechanisms, grants and land management agreements, to undertake groundworks. Groundworks will cease from the end of March through to September to avoid disturbing nesting birds.
- This measure is **Green**.

What's next

- We will now continue to deliver groundworks along with our partners to reach the end of year target. We will also be recruiting more staff over the coming months to enable us to upscale peatland restoration activity in Wales.
- We are currently on track to achieve our **year-end target to deliver 450 ha of peatland restoration activity as part of the National Peatland Action Plan (including approximately 100 ha on the land in our care)** and are to be Green at year end.

Measure owner: Huwel Manley

Q1	to Q2	to Q3	Expected year-end
Green	Green	Green	Green

Key: Green = achieved; Amber = close to (e.g. within one month); Red = missed
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Measure: Area of new woodland created on the land in our care

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

Latest position (to end of December 2023)

- Our **milestone for this quarter is to have made sufficient progress towards the end of year measure to be confident it will be achieved**. We are Amber because we have not been able to accelerate the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process for some sites, including time for local consultation, to enable us to plant UK Forestry Standard compliant woodland. This means that we expect to meet 75% of the target of 100ha planted this year. We have already achieved the year's target for land acquired with 105ha acquired so far and a further 23ha probable.
- This measure is **Amber**.

What's next

- We will now plant trees on land with regulatory permission for planting, complete the EIA process to enable us to plant as much of the recently acquired land as we can, plan future planting, and complete acquisitions.
- We are currently on track to achieve our **year-end target of an additional 100 ha of land acquired / identified for woodland creation. We will not meet the target of 100 ha woodland created in 2023/24, however the target of 350ha total woodland created over the life of the programme** remains secure, the newly acquired land will be planted over the next few years.
- We currently expect we will be Amber at year end.

Measure owner: Dominic Driver

Q1	to Q2	to Q3	Expected year-end
Amber	Amber	Amber	Amber

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

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

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

Latest position (to end of December 2023)

- Our target for this measure is **98% of flood risk assets in high risk systems at target condition**. We are at 97.9% at the end of December and are just 1 asset (out of 3,979 measured), below target. We currently have 81 below required condition assets across Wales; having 80 or fewer achieves the target. Asset inspections are carried out on a rolling basis. Issues which cause an asset to become ‘below required condition’ may be found at any time. This measure is a snapshot in time, we continually update our data.
- During the last quarter we have made fixes to 15 assets, 20 different assets have become below their required condition due to issues found. There have been six named storms, particularly Babet, Ciaran (end October / early November time) and Gerrit, Henk (end December /early January) and periods of prolonged wet weather. These conditions have created new defects at assets and have made it difficult to get out on-site to fix assets. Alongside this our staff resources, have been directed to responding to and recovering from incidents.

What's next

- We will continue to plan for and deliver fixes for the remaining assets that are below required condition, plus develop plans for fixes to any assets that have been added within the last month.
- Regarding our **year-end target of 98% of flood risk assets in high risk systems at target condition**, our current expectation is Amber, due to anticipated impacts of storms on assets and resource pressures.

Measure owner: Jeremy Parr

Q1	to Q2	to Q3	Expected year-end
Green	Green	Amber	Amber

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

Measure: Produce Flood Risk Management Plan

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

Latest position (to end of December 2023)

- Our **milestone for this quarter is FRMP to be adopted and delivery monitored**.
- We have completed this activity. We have published the FRMP on our website and it is being utilised for planning and delivering our strategic and operational flood work. It is also available to external parties, to see our planned work, and our assessment of flood risk across Wales.
- This measure is **Green**.

What's next

- We will now continue utilise the FRMP for our work planning and delivery. We will monitor delivery of the measures and targets in the plan.
- We are currently on track to achieve our **year-end target of FRMP published, adopted and monitored**.
- We currently expect we will be Green at year end.

Measure owner: Jeremy Parr

Q1	to Q2	to Q3	Expected year-end
Green	Amber	Green	Green

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

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

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

Latest position (to end of December 2023)

- Our **milestone for this quarter is 176 additional properties provided with a sustained or increased level of protection.** We have not quite achieved this, with performance at 155 properties, due to a small number of projects now profiled to next financial year for delivery reasons. We have completed all the small-scale maintenance projects contributing to this target.
- This measure is **Amber**.

What's next

- We are slightly behind our profile to achieve our **year-end target of 1,000 additional properties directly provided with reduced risk / sustained level of protection**, but we are still confident that we will be green at year end. The expected construction finish at Ammanford in Q4 will ensure that we exceed our target and we have high confidence that this will happen.
- We currently expect we will be Green at year end.

Measure owner: Jeremy Parr

Q1	to Q2	to Q3	Expected year-end
Green	Amber	Amber	Green

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

Measure: Implement Flood Review recommendations / actions

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

Latest position (to end of December 2023)

- Our **milestone for this quarter is review and approve Transition Report**. We have not completed this activity. We have drafted the transition report and it is currently being reviewed ready for submission to the Flood Recovery and Review Implementation Programme (FRRIP) Board in February 2024 (Q4). We have completed the drafting of the last remaining closure report which was needed to then complete the Transition Report.
- This measure is **Amber**, as we are slightly behind where we planned to be.

What's next

- We will submit the transition report to the FRRIP Board for approval in February 2024. If this is approved by the FRRIP Board and Executive Team, the programme can then move towards closure in March 2024 (Q4).
- We are behind where we planned to be but have a clear pathway to achieve our **year-end target of programme transition and closure reports complete (draft, review and approve Programme Closure Report; track remaining actions through existing governance groups)**. However, delivery of the target is dependent on gaining the necessary approval to proceed to closure.
- We currently expect we will be Green at year end, but this is dependent on gaining approvals and in a timely manner.

Measure owner: Jeremy Parr

Q1	to Q2	to Q3	Expected year-end
Amber	Amber	Amber	Green

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

Measure: Timber volume offered to market

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

Latest position (to end of December 2023)

- Our **milestone for this quarter is to have made sufficient progress to be confident of reaching the year-end milestone**. We have completed this activity. We have achieved good progress and are at 76.4% by Q3.
- This measure is **Green**.

What's next

- We will now continue with the committed and planned programme of sale.
- We are currently on track to achieve our **year-end target of 721,500m³ (offered to market)**, and are forecasted to be Green at year end.

Measure owner: Dominic Driver

Q1	to Q2	to Q3	Expected year-end
Green	Green	Green	Green

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

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

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

Latest position (to end of December 2023)

- Our **milestone for this quarter is to agree a five-year transition schedule to Ultra Low Emission Vehicles for our badged fleet. Complete the replacement of bulk fuel storage tanks for HVO (Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil)**. Due to resource issues within the team, we have not completed this activity. We have drafted a five-year transition schedule and engaged with fleet users in workshops to refine. Ten of the twelve planned HVO bulk fuel tanks have been installed.
- This measure is **Amber**.

What's next

- We will now engage with the remaining fleet users in January to finalise the draft transition schedule. The two remaining HVO tanks will be installed in January (Q4).
- We will not achieve our **year-end target of delivering our Adfywio programme commitments for 2023/24**, we have not been able to **procure the build and operation of an integrated NRW-wide electric vehicle charging infrastructure**. The fleet strategy has been delayed to Q4 24/25, but an interim fleet purchasing policy has been adopted. The Electric Vehicle infrastructure will be procured in Q1 of 24/25.
- We currently expect we will be Amber at year end.

Measure owner: Victoria Rose-Piper

Q1	to Q2	to Q3	Expected year-end
Green	Green	Amber	Amber

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

Pollution is minimised

What is needed to ensure pollution is minimised?

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

[Our new Corporate Plan to 2030](#) expands further on what it will mean to ensure pollution is minimised across Wales⁶, and in seven place-focussed areas of Wales⁷

Executive Team lead: Gareth O’Shea

⁶ In our new Corporate Plan to 2030 “Nature and People Thriving Together”, we have set out where NRW is best placed to make a difference within the resources we have and where this will change, with Wales’ 2030 targets the first step to achieving international targets, goals and milestones in 2050

⁷ Our Corporate Plan also states how we will tailor our [work to minimise pollution in seven place-focussed areas of Wales, including a marine area](#) - Recognising we have made commitments for these places through Public Services Boards and involving communities in the development of [Area Statements](#).

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

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

Latest position (to end of December 2023)

- Our milestone for this quarter is **95% category 1 and category 2 compliance breaches are subjected to further compliance effort (action or review) within 6 months, and to update on compliance performance based on our Regulation Business Board metrics**. We have completed these activities. All 16 compliance breaches (100%) were followed up. We have developed a Regulatory Business Board reporting tool via Power BI to monitor compliance.
- This measure is **Green**.

What's next

- We will now continue to focus regulatory effort in follow up of Category 1 and 2 compliance breaches within 6 months. Our teams remain under substantial pressure dealing with incidents and illegal activity while carrying vacancies and supporting new starters. We are prioritising compliance visits at the highest risk sites. Where significant breaches are identified, it is crucial that we follow these up in a timely manner.
- We are currently on track to achieve our **year-end target of 95% (and report on milestones from our Regulatory Action Plan within the Storm Overflow Roadmap)** and are predicted to be Green at year end.

Measure owner: Martin Cox

Q1	to Q2	to Q3	Expected year-end
Green	Green	Green	Green

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

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

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

Latest position (to end of December 2023)

- Our **milestone for this quarter is to explore provision of a database of SAC rivers projects contributing to reducing nutrient loading**. We have completed this activity. We have shared options of databases with Welsh Government and put forward a recommendation. This measure is **Green**.

What's next

- We will now continue to work on the agreed actions in the First Minister's Action Plan and to complete the products identified within the SAC rivers project.
- We are not currently on track to achieve our **year-end target of having delivered NRW's 2023/24 commitments in the First Minister Action Plan for the SAC rivers (and review 100 Water Quality Discharge Permits)** and are likely to be Amber at year end. There have been significant delays to issuing more variations of permits due to operator challenge from DCWW about our approach. Issuing permits have also been held up by monitoring data not being readily available and timeframe for delivery of improvements. We have considered options to accelerate the issuing of permits in order to meet the target set for the last quarter but are limited due to lack of capacity with the contractors and our own staff to increase the resource that can be allocated to this work. Now that we have written to the water company to outline our position, the rate at which we will issue the permits will accelerate in Q4. We currently expect we will be Amber at year end.

Measure owner: Rhian Jardine

Q1	to Q2	to Q3	Expected year-end
Green	Green	Green	Amber

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

Measure: Deliver NRW input to Water Company Planning Programmes

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

Latest position (to end of December 2023)

- Our **milestone for this quarter is to provide advice to RAPID (Regulator’s Alliance for Progressing Infrastructure Development) on gated process for strategic resource schemes that are within or affecting Wales.**
- We have completed this activity for the advice to RAPID required by the end of December 2023. We advised RAPID on the adequacy of the stakeholder engagement held and planned by the water companies leading on the strategic resource schemes that are within or affecting Wales. RAPID agreed an extended timeline of March 2024 for 2 of the priority actions related to Gate 3a (Interconnector development) and Gate 3b (Proof of concept) for these schemes and therefore, we will now provide our advice to RAPID on Gate 3 in Q1 2024/25.
- This measure is **Green**.

What’s next

- We will now continue to advise the water companies and RAPID on the strategic resource schemes within or affecting Wales ahead of the water company submissions to RAPID for Gate 3a and 3b at the end of March 2024.
- We are not currently on track to achieve our **year-end target of NRW inputted into Water Company Planning Programmes (and provide advice to Ofwat on their PR24 draft determination)**. We have delivered as much as we can but have been held up by the discussions happening between other partners (WG, Ofwat, DCWW) and have been unable to complete this quarter. We currently expect to be Amber at year end as this task will slip into Q1 2024/25.

Measure owner: Sian Williams

Q1	to Q2	to Q3	Expected year-end
Green	Amber	Green	Amber

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

Measure: Deliver programmes to review statutory water quality requirements

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

Latest position (to end of December 2023)

- Our **milestone for this quarter is to agree vision for fourth cycle (C4) of River Basin Management Plans with stakeholders and finalise Storm Overflow Classification Guidance**. We have completed this activity. On 26 October, we issued new guidance to water companies in relation to the regulation of storm overflows and the approach to permitting unpermitted overflows in Wales.
- We have shared our thinking for the C4 RBMP approach with the Wales Water Management Forum in December. We will be using their feedback to help shape the fourth cycle approach, this will be presented in the first statutory consultation, Working Together, which is currently planned to be published Summer 2024, (subject to National Elections).
- This measure is **Green**.

What's next

- We will now work with water companies on the implementation of the storm overflow guidance and to develop our approach for transitional and coastal water bodies. We are reviewing our RBMP actions and putting steps in place to get to a better place. However, due to lack of resources and problems with reporting systems, we are likely to be Amber at year end. This is a concern and will be considered a priority work area for us at the end of this year and beginning of next..
- We are not on track (likely Q1 2024) to achieve our **year-end target of programmes to review statutory water quality requirements delivered (and review progress of RBMP national measures, opportunity catchments and investigations)**.

Measure owner: Sian Williams

Q1	to Q2	to Q3	Expected year-end
Green	Green	Green	Amber

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

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

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

Latest position (to end of December 2023)

- Our **milestone for this quarter is to provide a progress update towards the target showing the number of enabling activities, designs, trials, and the construction of assets, in progress and completed.** We have completed this activity, delivering 49 outputs. More than the 42 outputs targeted in 2023-24. We have delivered 15 outputs as follows: 14 enabling activities (3 at Pengwern, 2 each at Nant-y-Mwyn, Wye Upper Sett and Van Mine, and 1 each at Parc Mine, Cwmystwyth, Minera, Havan and Esgair Mwyn). The research, development and innovation trial at Parys Mountain. In addition, we have mobilised site to commence construction of blow-out prevention measures at Cwm Rheidol mine.
- This measure is **Green**.

What's next

- We will now continue working across 25 projects, enabling development and delivery of solutions to reduce pollution and hazards from metal mines; protect and enhance the environment, and engage with stakeholders to conserve and celebrate mining heritage. In Q4, we will progress additional enabling activities and designs.
- We have exceeded our **year-end target to complete a total of 36 enabling activities (42 Completed), two designs (3), two trials (2) and construction of two assets (2)** and are to be Green at year end.

Measure owner: Sian Williams

Q1	to Q2	to Q3	Expected year-end
Green	Green	Green	Green

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

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

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

Latest position (to end of December 2023)

- Our **target for this quarter is responding to 95% of these incidents in four hours**. We have achieved this. We have responded to 96% of High-Level incidents within 4hrs.
- This measure is **Green**.

What’s next

- We were disappointed with the Q2 performance dip and identified the need for targeted support from our Senior Incident Officers to help officers complete Wales Incident Recording System (WIRS) information accurately and to rectify issues resulting from functionality issues we still have in WIRS. This support played a crucial role in restoring compliance. We are committed to ongoing support, training, and guidance to ensure teams understand how to complete WIRS correctly. Additionally, we will advocate for improvements to the WIRS system functionality to facilitate accurate reporting from the start.
- Our **target for the end of the next quarter remains at 95%** and we currently expect we will be Green at year end.

Measure owner: Lyndsey Rawlinson

Q1	to Q2	to Q3	Expected year-end
Green	Amber	Green	Green

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

Measure: Decision on an appropriate enforcement response within 3 months

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

Latest position (to end of December 2023)

- Our **milestone for this quarter is 95% of decisions in relation to environmental crime being made within three months, and to publish Annual Regulatory Report**. We achieved 90% of decisions being made within three months and published the Annual Regulatory Report.
- This measure is **Amber**.

What's next

- We will now continue to review enforcement performance however the impact of resource restrictions across NRW will increasingly impact this target, especially where posts with an enforcement function (GiA funded) are not recruited to. For financial year 2024/25, the ongoing improvements to COLINS (NRW's IT system for recording offences) will allow for a more accurate and reflective assessment of the actual time to making a decision on environmental crime.
- We are not currently on track to achieve our **year-end target of 95% with explanatory narrative (and complete Tackling Waste Crime annual report)**.
- Tackling Waste Crime now publish a quarterly report instead of annually.
- We currently expect we will be Amber at year end.

Measure owner: Nadia De Longhi

Q1	to Q2	to Q3	Expected year-end
Green	Amber	Amber	Amber

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Annex 2 – Internal Performance Report

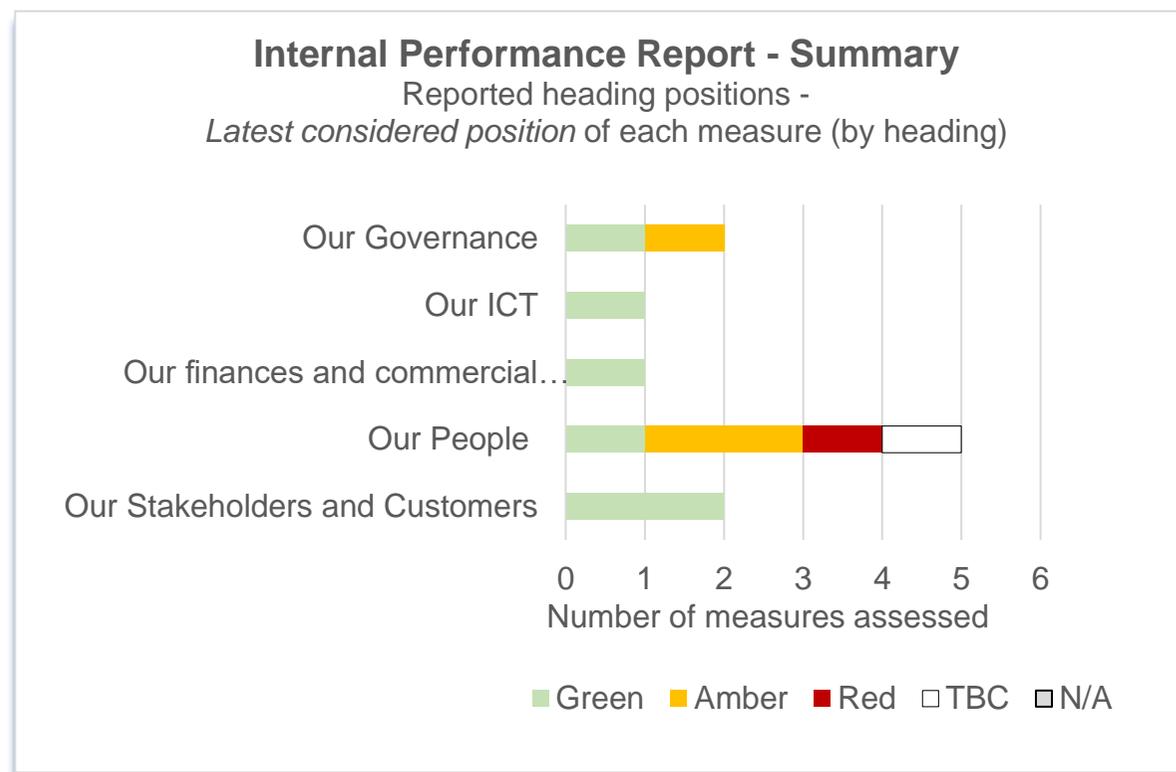
The following pages reflect a quarter end performance snapshot in relation to a number of key measures relating to the ‘health’ of our organisation.

Summary

The performance position* (at the end of the quarter, i. e. December 2023) for the eleven measures covered by this report is:

- Six green
- Three amber
- One red
- One TBC

(see next page for detail)



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

Measures to note

Updates below reflect all measures red, amber or TBC at the end of the quarter.

Our Governance:

- **Declarations of Interest** (where people working for us declare when their official and/or private interests may be perceived to conflict with NRW's work) is Amber at 88% at the end of the quarter (at least 90% is considered green) compared to Green at the end of Quarter 2. Reminders have been issued for declarations outstanding, and a further reminder will be issued where appropriate. Green is still expected at year end.

Our People:

- **Health and Safety Active Monitoring** (i.e., regular inspection and checking to ensure that wellbeing, health and safety standards are being implemented) is Red at the end of the quarter (compared to Green at the end of quarter 2), with a reduction compared with the same period last year. Drop in sessions for those involved have been picking up on this. Green is still expected at year end.
- **Health & Safety Near Miss** reporting is Amber at the end of the quarter (compared to Green at the end of quarter 2), with the same number of near misses reported compared with the same period last year. The drop in sessions have also been addressing this. Green is still expected at year end.
- **Sgwrs in place** (staff priorities and development agreement) remains Amber at the end of this quarter, at 84% (at least 90% would be considered Green). This measure has improved from 62% in the last report following on from reminders issued to complete this. A further increase is anticipated as part of direct follow up where needed. Green is now expected at year end (previously Amber).
- **Absence** remains unreported due to a change in the report methodology; however, it is anticipated that this item will recommence regular reporting in the next quarter.

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

Remaining measures

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

Our Governance:

- In relation to non-compliance (**environmental enforcement response** within NRW) our response remains Green, with no enforcement notice issued to NRW this quarter. Our ambition for Green is to have zero. Any response would be reviewed internally and by our external auditors (e.g., for ISO14001 and UKWAS). Green is still expected at year end.

Our ICT:

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

Our Finances and Commercial Opportunities:

- **Payments performance** to our suppliers remains Green at the end of the quarter at 96%. Green is still expected at year end.

Our People:

- **Mandatory E-Learning** (online training items all NRW staff are required to complete) remains Green at the end of the quarter at 92% (at least 89.5% is considered green). Green is still expected at year end.

Our Stakeholders and Customers:

- **Access to Information requests (ATIs) responded to within 20 days** remains Green at the end of the quarter with four responses outside of this timescale, and 98% of all such ATIs or EIR requests completed within 20 days during the year to date. Green is still expected at year end.
- **Complaints** responded to within 20 days remains Green at the end of the quarter, with no response made outside of this timescale, and all stage 1 complaints completed within 20 days this quarter. Green is still expected at year end.

NRW Board Paper

Date of meeting:	21 st March 2024
Title of Paper:	Wellbeing, Health and Safety (WH&S) Quarter 3 Report
Paper Reference:	24-03-B11
Paper sponsored by:	Prys Davies, Executive Director of Corporate Strategy and Development
Paper prepared by:	Charlotte Morgan, Wellbeing Health and Safety Manager
Paper presented by:	Charlotte Morgan, Wellbeing Health and Safety Manager
Purpose of the paper	Approval
Summary	To approve the Q3 2023/24 WH&S Report

Background

1. This is the Quarter 3 summary of our Wellbeing, Health & Safety (WH&S) performance for Natural Resources Wales. The Report provides an overview of how NRW have managed WH&S through Quarter 3 2023/2024.

Summary

Headlines from Quarter 3 2023/24 include: -

2. Serious incident reviews (SIR). There was one SIR commissioned in Q3 2023/2024. This was in relation to a contractor injury on a forestry standing sales. One SIR was closed in Q3 2023/24. This was the Bike Park Wales injury.
3. Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) reportable and Lost Time Injuries (LTIs) – two RIDDOR for NRW in Q3. These were both in relation to Slip/trip/falls whilst undertaking work activities. There were two LTIs in Q3. Near miss reporting has increased this quarter.
4. Several wellbeing initiatives. These included the advertisement of prebooking for the wellbeing days, our new occupational health provider running sessions for managers on referrals, and the promotion of the Health and Safety Executive's new stress at work online learning.

Wider implications

5. **Finance:** It is recognised that the mismanagement of WH&S has significant financial implications. The WH&S team working together with the business are 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

6. The WH&S team 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.
7. There will be a review of the strategic risk level as there is a move to the new risk register.
8. The WH&S team will use the information gathered and lessons learnt in the development of our future strategy and action plan.

Recommendation

9. The Board is asked to approve the Q3 2023-2024 WH&S Report.

Index of Annexes

Provide any supporting information:

Annex 1 – WH&S Board paper – Q3 – 2023 -2024

Approval / Consultation process

Approval/consultation process	
Responsible:	Paper was developed by the WH&S Team.
Accountable:	The Board is asked to approve the Q3 2023-2024 WH&S Report
Consulted:	People and Customer Committee

	Executive Team
Informed:	N/A



Wellbeing Health and Safety Q3 2023/2024

Highlights

In summary, Q3 23/24 resulted in the commissioning of one serious incident review. This was in relation to a contractor injury on a forestry standing sales site. There are 9 outstanding SIRs which have been paused due to external factors including awaiting the coroner's report.

Positives from this quarter includes several wellbeing initiatives were delivered, active monitoring reporting and injury trends stabilising. Further to this, training cancellations with more than 14 days' notice has seen a 56% decrease since Q1.

Occupational health referrals have identified that mental health is the primary referral reason (20% of referrals down from 40% in Q2).

Areas that need focus, include the RIDDOR trend and the decrease in reporting of near misses and hazards.

Embedding a positive culture of near miss and hazard reporting has a direct relation to a reduction in incidents and work-related stress. To further embed this, near miss and hazard reporting drop-in sessions will be delivered for all team leaders and line managers.

Serious Incident Reviews

There was one Serious Incident Review commissioned in Q3 and one Serious Incident Review closed during Q3 – details are below.

Serious Incident Reviews Summary

Key:	
Green	All actions completed with evidence uploaded
Amber	Actions to be completed or SIR paused due to external investigation

SIRs Closed	13
<p>11.</p> <p>Details: Fatal accident on NRW estate to member of the public. Sgwd Pannwr plunge pool, Brecon Beacon.</p> <p>Reference: ACCB1092 / A11</p> <p>Incident date: 05/06/2021</p> <p>Type of SIR: Fatal incident.</p> <p>Full investigation: SIR opened and paused.</p>	<p>External commissioned report was presented to NRW and other stakeholders.</p> <p>The Land Stewardship Board meeting in October accepted the report and confirmed the commitment to work in partnership with the other stakeholders.</p>
<p>12.</p> <p>Details: Fatal accident on NRW estate to member of the public. Sgwd Gwladus waterfall in Pontneddfechan, Glynneath.</p> <p>Reference: ACCB1092 / A9</p> <p>Incident date: 16/08/2021</p> <p>Type of SIR: Fatal incident.</p> <p>Full investigation: SIR opened and paused.</p>	<p>External commissioned report was presented to NRW and other stakeholders.</p> <p>The Land Stewardship Board meeting in October accepted the report and confirmed the commitment to work in partnership with the other stakeholders.</p>

<p>14.</p> <p>Details: Fatal accident on NRW estate to a sub-contractor working on a standing sales site. Coed Taff Forest.</p> <p>Reference: ACCB1092/A12</p> <p>Incident date: 12/10/2021</p> <p>Type of SIR: Fatal incident.</p> <p>Full investigation: SIR opened and paused.</p>	<p>The SIR has been paused due to further investigation by the police and Health and Safety Executive. Forest Operational team members were on site with the HSE and provided information. The Wellbeing, health & safety manager attended site.</p>											
<p>15.</p> <p>Details: Fatal accidents on River Cleddau. NRW has a fish pass asset in the vicinity of the incident and therefore is being recorded on AssessNET as a precautionary measure.</p> <p>Reference: ACCB1097/A4</p> <p>Incident date: 30/10/2021</p> <p>Type of SIR: Fatal incident.</p> <p>Full investigation: SIR opened and paused.</p>	<p>The SIR has been paused due to further investigation by the police and Health and Safety Executive. NRW received the MAIB report in December 2022.</p>											
<p>20.</p> <p>Details: Damage to 3rd asset on NRW land</p> <p>Reference: ACCB1096 / A2</p> <p>Incident date: 20/10/2022.</p> <p>Type of SIR: Property Damage</p> <p>Full investigation: SIR in progress</p>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td colspan="2">Total Actions: 4</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2">Of which:</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Completed & Closed:</td> <td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Open:</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Overdue:</td> <td>0</td> </tr> </table>		Total Actions: 4		Of which:		Completed & Closed:	3	Open:	1	Overdue:	0
Total Actions: 4												
Of which:												
Completed & Closed:	3											
Open:	1											
Overdue:	0											
<p>21.</p> <p>Details: Major injury to contractor</p> <p>Reference: ACCB1095 / A3</p>	<p>SIR has commenced and is near completion.</p>											

<p>Incident date: 11/10/2022.</p> <p>Type of SIR: Major Injury - fracture</p> <p>Full investigation: SIR in progress</p>	
<p>22.</p> <p>Details: MoP fatality at Sqwd y Pannwr, Mannau Brycheiniog</p> <p>Reference: ACCB1092 / A14 & A15.</p> <p>Incident date: 11/10/2022.</p> <p>Type of SIR: Fatal incident.</p> <p>Full investigation: SIR in progress</p>	<p>External commissioned report was presented to NRW and other stakeholders.</p> <p>The Land Stewardship Board meeting in October accepted the report and confirmed the commitment to work in partnership with the other stakeholders.</p>
<p>23.</p> <p>Details: MoP major injury at Bike Park Wales</p> <p>Reference: ACCB1095/A4</p> <p>Incident date: 09/07/2023</p> <p>Type of SIR: Major Injury</p> <p>Full investigation: SIR in progress</p>	<p>SIR has been closed</p> <p>Bike Park Wales are in control of the site and no further actions required for NRW</p>
<p>24.</p> <p>Details: Eye injury from projectile stone in Coed Y Brennin Forest</p> <p>Type of SIR:</p> <p>Reference: ACCB890/A10</p> <p>Incident date: 11/09/2023</p> <p>Type of SIR: Injury</p> <p>Full investigation: SIR in progress</p>	<p>SIR paused pending employee return</p> <p>SIR has commenced and in the reporting writing stage.</p>

<p>25.</p> <p>Details: Contractor chainsaw operator trip whilst escaping falling tree</p> <p>Reference: ACCB988/A12</p> <p>Incident date: 15/12/2023</p> <p>Type of SIR: Injury</p> <p>Full investigation: SIR in progress</p>	<p>SIR has commenced and is in the investigation stage.</p>
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Recent incidents in NRW

Incidents

	Q3 2023/24	Q2 2023/24	Q1 2023/24	22/23	21/22	20/21	19/20	18/19	17/18
RIDDOR – staff	2	2	1	3	7	3	6	2	8
Lost time injuries – staff	2	0	1	3	3	1	4	5	8
Injuries, no lost time – staff	9	13	20	43	51	19	121	53	59
Near miss – staff	45	24	60	175	156	109	183	163	201
Serious incident reviews	1	1	0	8	4	4	5	2	3
Injuries - contractors	1	0	2	8*	3*	5*	5	9	9
Injuries – public	5	11	13	38	38	18	53	53	95
Near miss – contractors	16	15	19	68	62	46	50	40	44
Near miss – public	2	6	6	33	30	23	33	20	39
Property Damage	7	10	11	53	36	35	32	43	48

Hazards Reported	16	41	26	199	166	65	83	103	78
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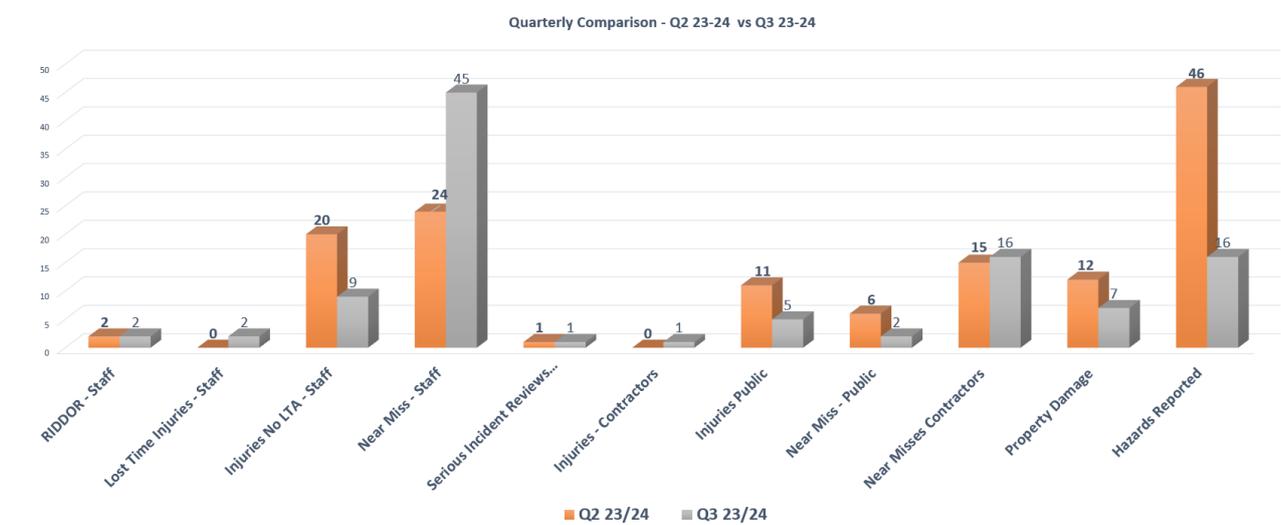
There is one key areas of focus to look at with regards the above table. RIDDORS still show an interesting trend of a high reporting year followed by a low reporting year. If this trend continues, then 2023/2024 will be a high RIDDOR year. As it stands, there have been 5 RIDDORS this year already, showing that the trend is continuing. Positive reporting (near miss / hazards) can reduce the likelihood of injuries / RIDDOR's. In order to ensure the importance of positive incident reporting (Near miss, hazards) a series of drop-in sessions will take place in Q4 23/24 for team leaders and managers.

NRW totals for Q3 2023/2024

NRW had 2 RIDDOR reportable incidents to staff in Q3 2023/2024. Both RIDDORs were in relation to a slip/ trip / fall whilst undertaking work duties.

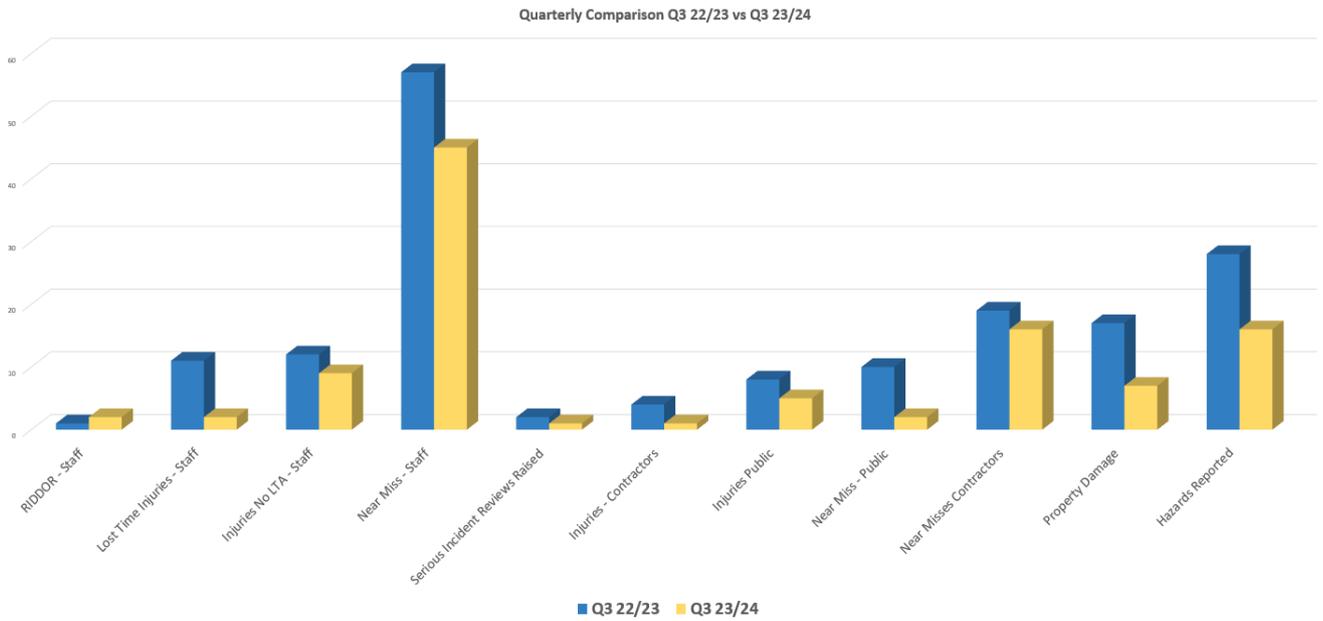
NRW had 2 lost time injuries to staff in Q3 2023/2024. The first lost time injury was in relation to a slip / trip / fall. The second lost time injury was related to a cut injury.

AssessNET incident data comparison (all NRW) Q3



Data analysis is still be developed to understand what the data is telling NRW. Once further investigation into the data has taken place, this will provide beneficial insight.

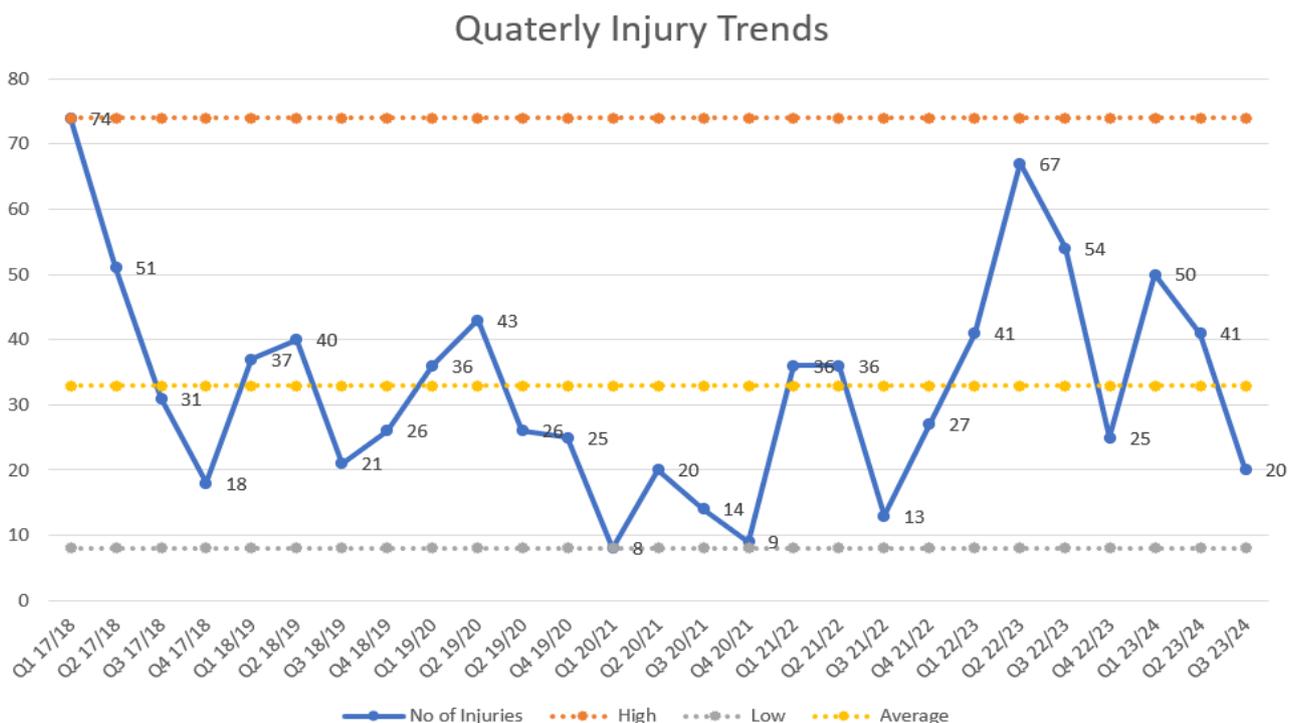
Q3 has seen a reduction in staff injuries that did not result in lost time alongside an increase in staff near misses. However, there has been a reduction in the number of hazards reported. Whilst Q3 is expected to see a decrease in reporting due to the holiday season, the weather reducing the number of external activities undertake, the sharp reduction in hazards was not expected (reflected in the below graph). In order to ensure the importance of positive incident reporting (Near miss, hazards) a series of drop-in sessions will take place in Q4 23/24 for team leaders and managers.



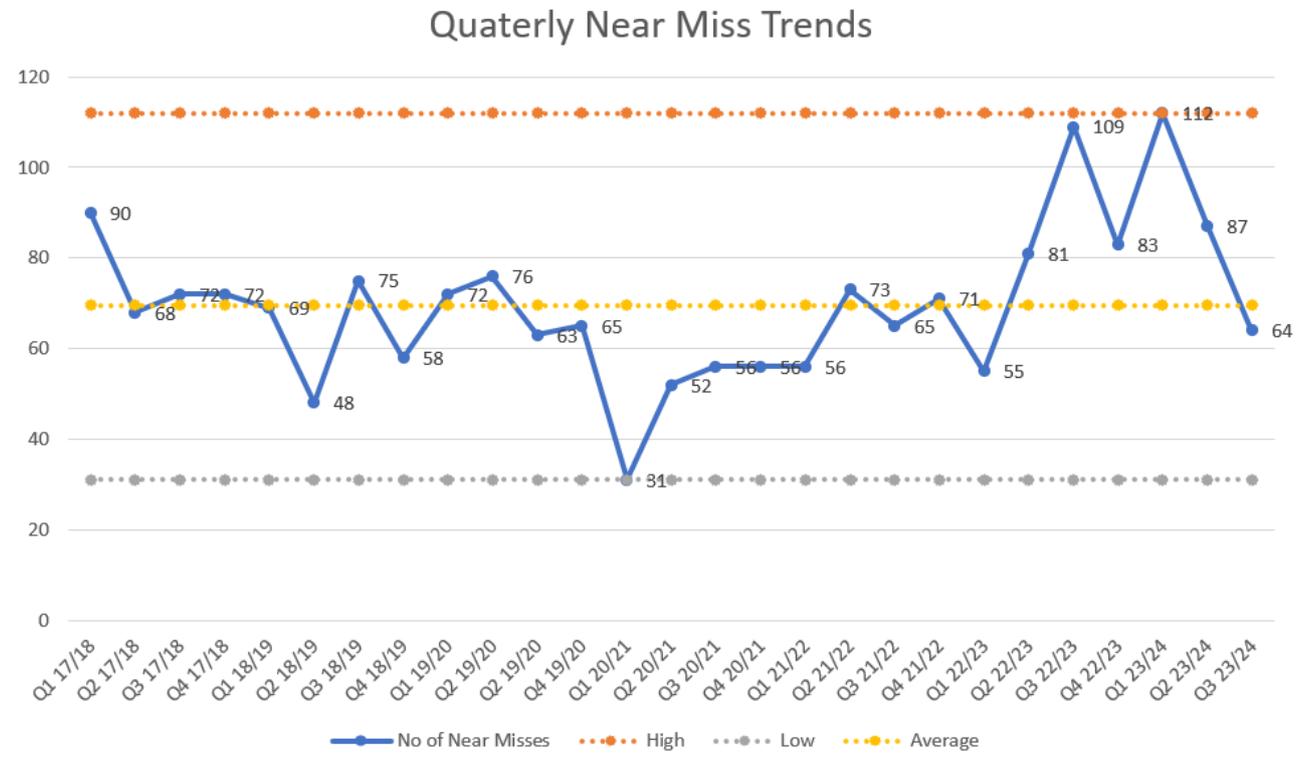
In Q3 23/24, there were a lower number of injuries than the same quarter last year. There were also a lower number of reports overall so our data is showing a decrease in reporting. In order to ensure the importance of positive incident reporting (Near miss, hazards) a series of drop in sessions will take place in Q4 23/24 for team leaders and managers.

NRW quarterly trend analysis

The following Quarterly trend graphs include a high, average and low line. This provides an idea of where NRW are against their highest number of reports in each graph as well as against their average reports and lowest. By looking at these graphs as a visual, it is possible to ascertain where NRW are and if the trend is decreasing or increasing.

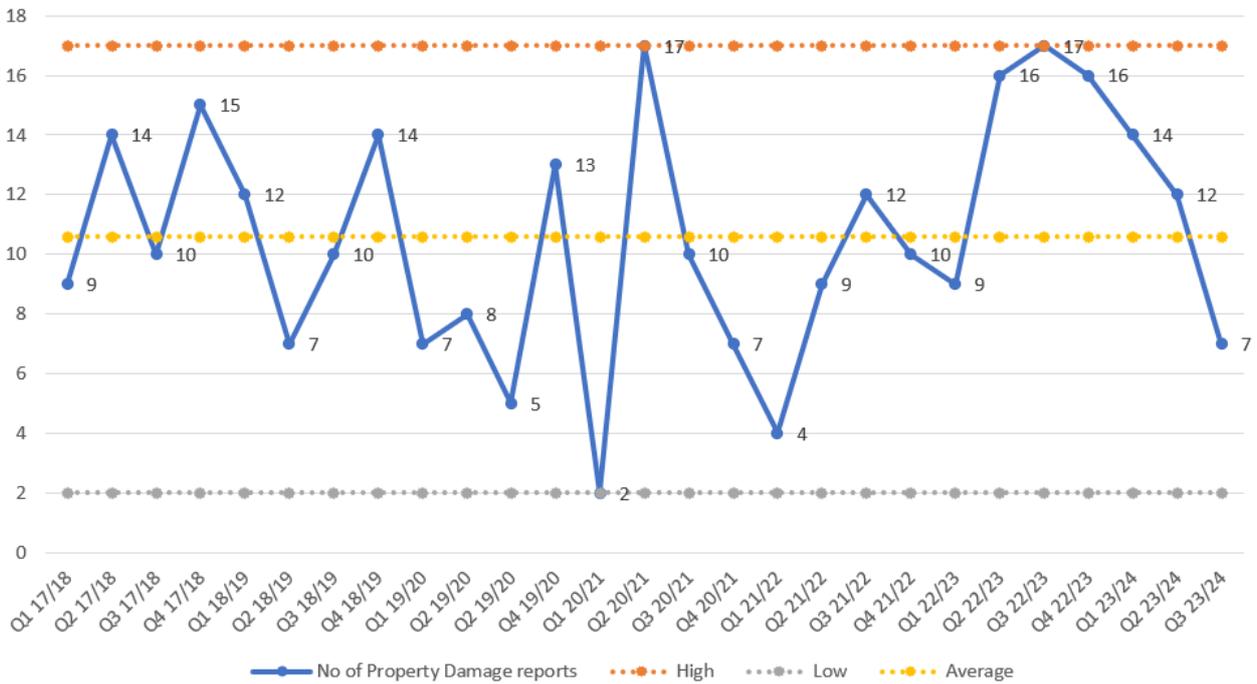


Total injury trends are continuing to stabilise and are comparable to previous years. Q3 is typically trending as the lowest quarter for Injuries. 2020/21 was an abnormally low year due to COVID, with Q1 22/23 being an abnormally high year due to all COVID restrictions being lifted.



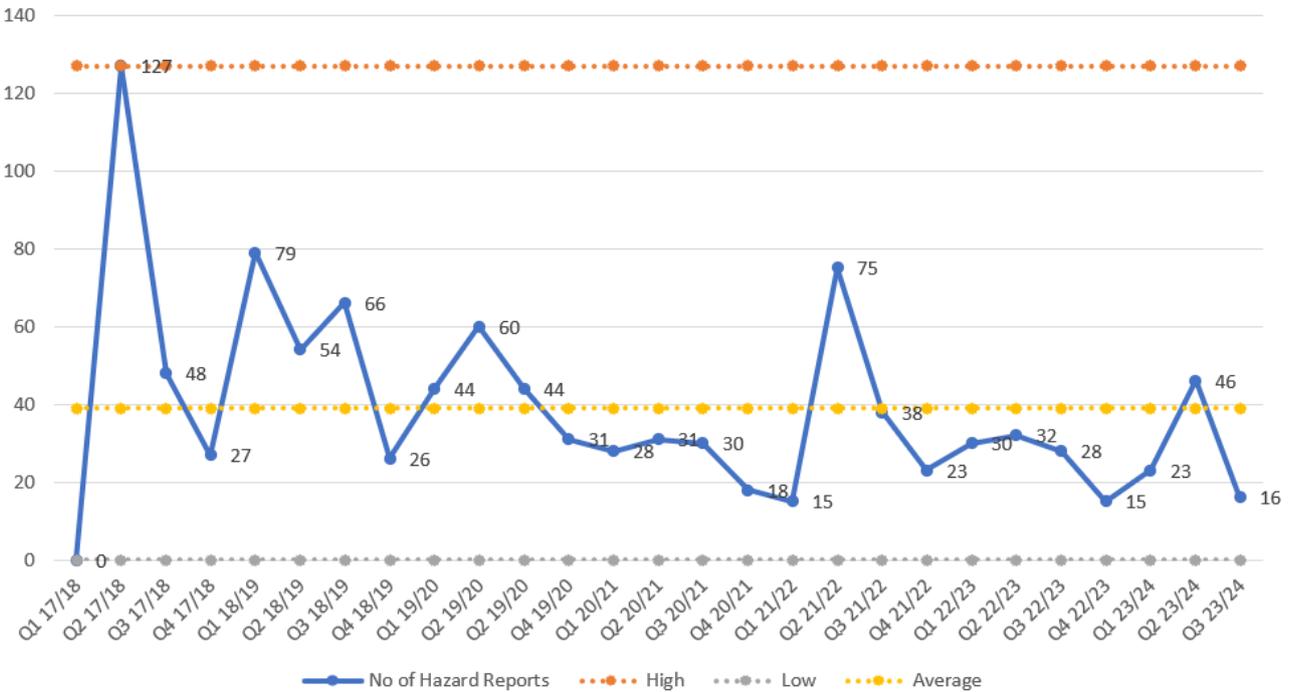
Near misses have dropped by 27% from 87 reports in Q2 to 64 reports in Q3. The planned drop in sessions will support the team leader and managers in positive engagement in reporting.

Quarterly Property Damage Trends



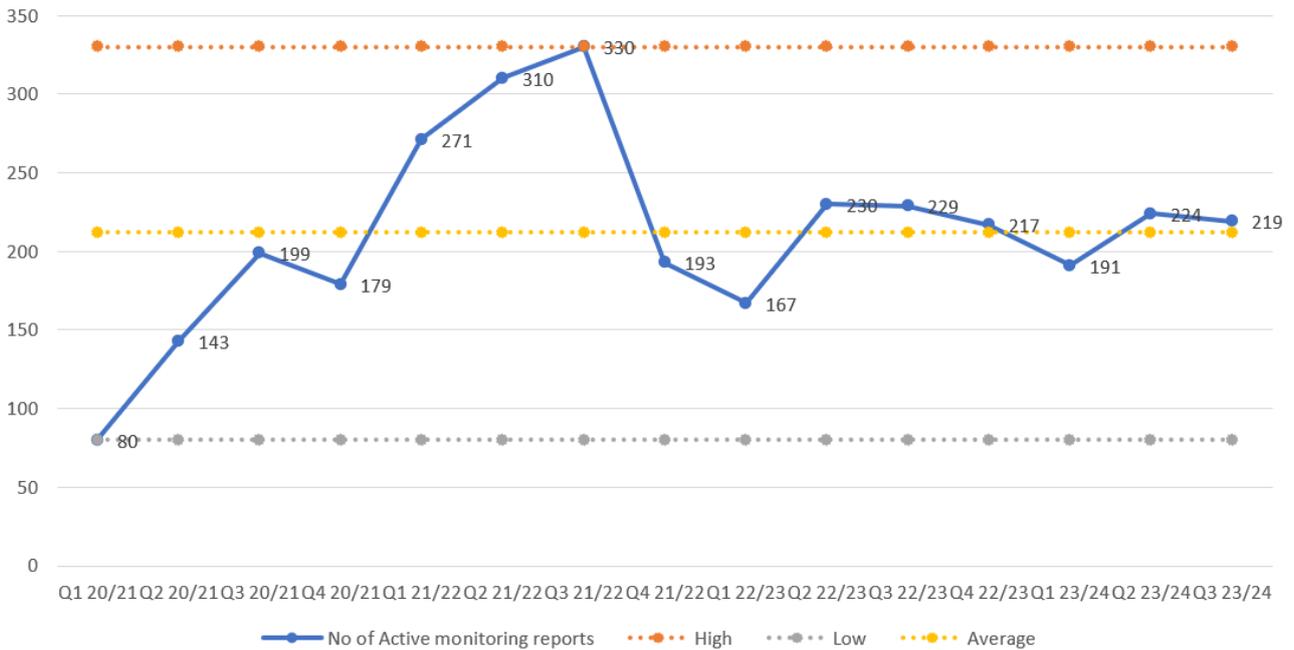
Property damage is seeing a downward trend towards pre COVID levels.

Quarterly Hazard Trends



Hazard reporting was on the increase, however, this quarter has seen a decrease in reporting, and is now below the average number of reports. The planned drop in sessions will support the team leader and managers in positive engagement in reporting.

Quarterly Active Monitoring Trends



Active monitoring has stabilised with the current number of reports sitting just above the average number of reports.

Wellbeing initiatives and developments

- Wellbeing days were advertised for pre-booking in December – February. New Leaf Health will be carrying out a confidential health assessment which includes – cholesterol testing; blood pressure; body fat and fat mass; urine testing.
- Insight, our new occupational health provider arranged sessions for managers on how to do a referral session using their portal.
- Our new EAP provider Vivup provided NRW with hints and tips about anxiety which were shared. These included; what it is, ways for staff to look after themselves and how NRW support staff.
- The Health and Safety Executive’s new stress at work online learning was promoted. This is a free interactive tool that guides staff through six short modules to help them understand what the law requires of employers and what staff need to do to be compliant.

ISO 45001

As part of the ISO 45001:2018 standard, a series of surveillance visits were carried out to ensure compliance to the standard. There were 12 days of auditing days which started at the end of August and finished in December. There were two minor non-conformities raised, in relation to procedural documentation in laboratory work and fire warden training. These will be assessed for closure in February.

Internal Audit

In November, an internal audit commenced in relation to training and development. The audit scope was to assess the processes and controls to ensure that the competency and training needs of staff in terms of occupational health and safety.

NNR Audits

Collaborative audits were carried out on the following National Nature Reserves in Q3, which covered conservation, health and safety and environmental management. These audits are designed in a collaborative way with other teams to reduce the impact on operational staff involved in the audit process. The site that were audited were:

- Coed Tycanol NNR
- Corsydd Llangloffan NNR

Procurement and Contract Management

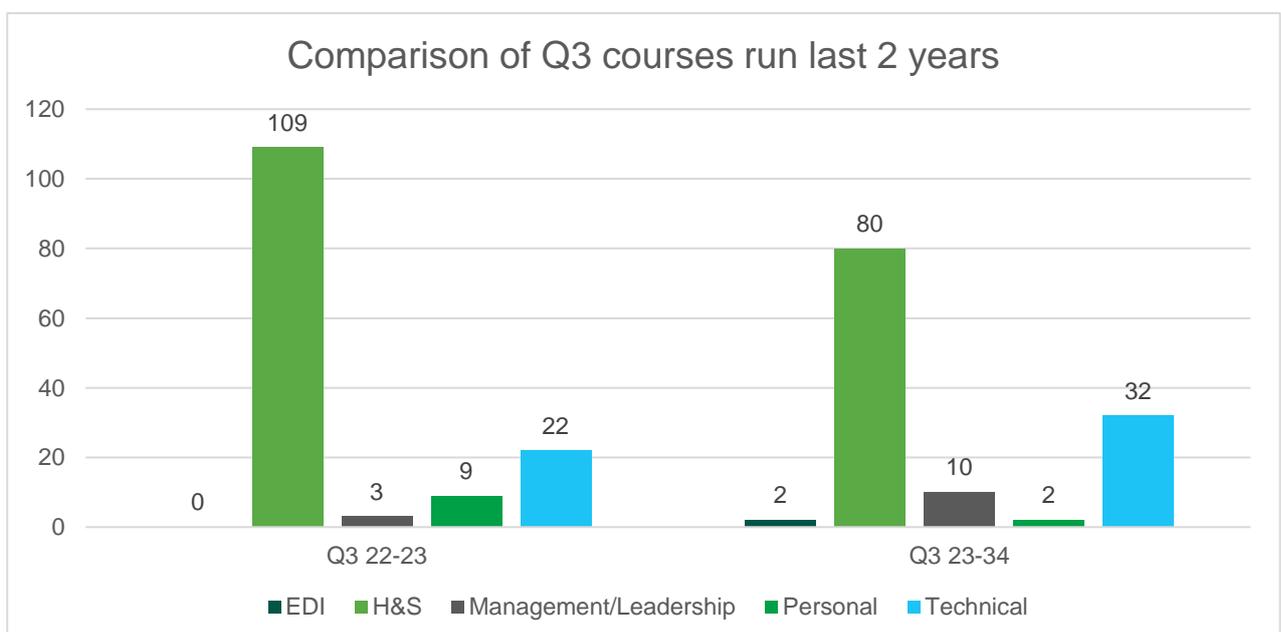
After a reported incident involving one of NRW contractors, NRW concluded to terminate the framework agreements and contract orders with the contractor. This decision was taken after careful consideration and input from different teams within the business e.g. legal, WH&S, contract management etc.

Learning and Development (L&D)

- **Training Requests**

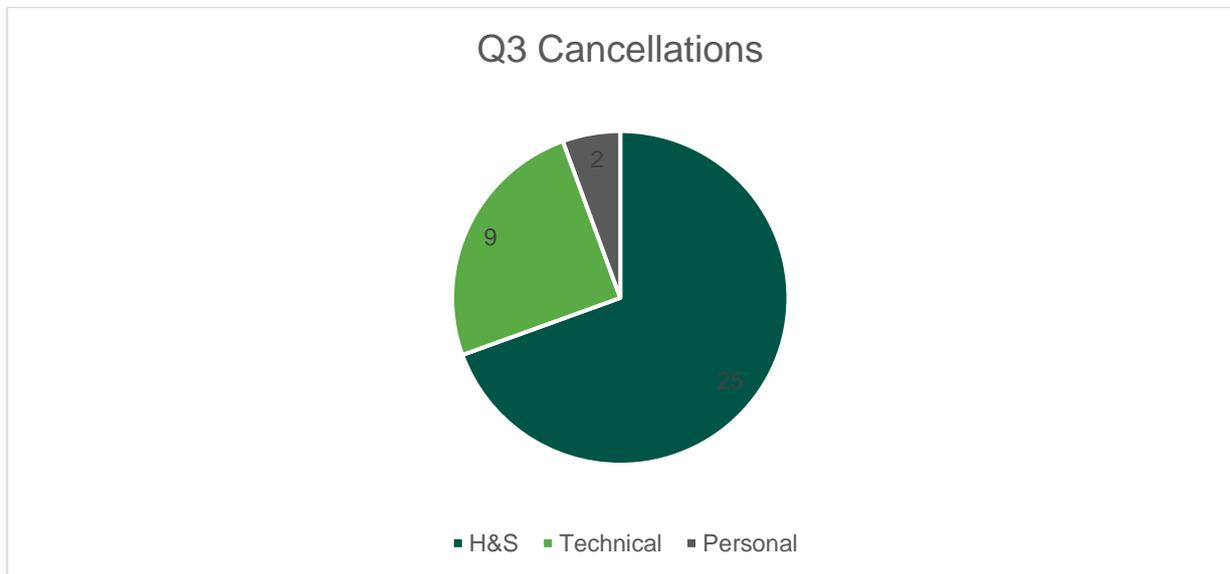
In Q3, L&D received 320 new training requests through the tracker, 74% of the new requests are for essential H&S courses.

- **Courses**



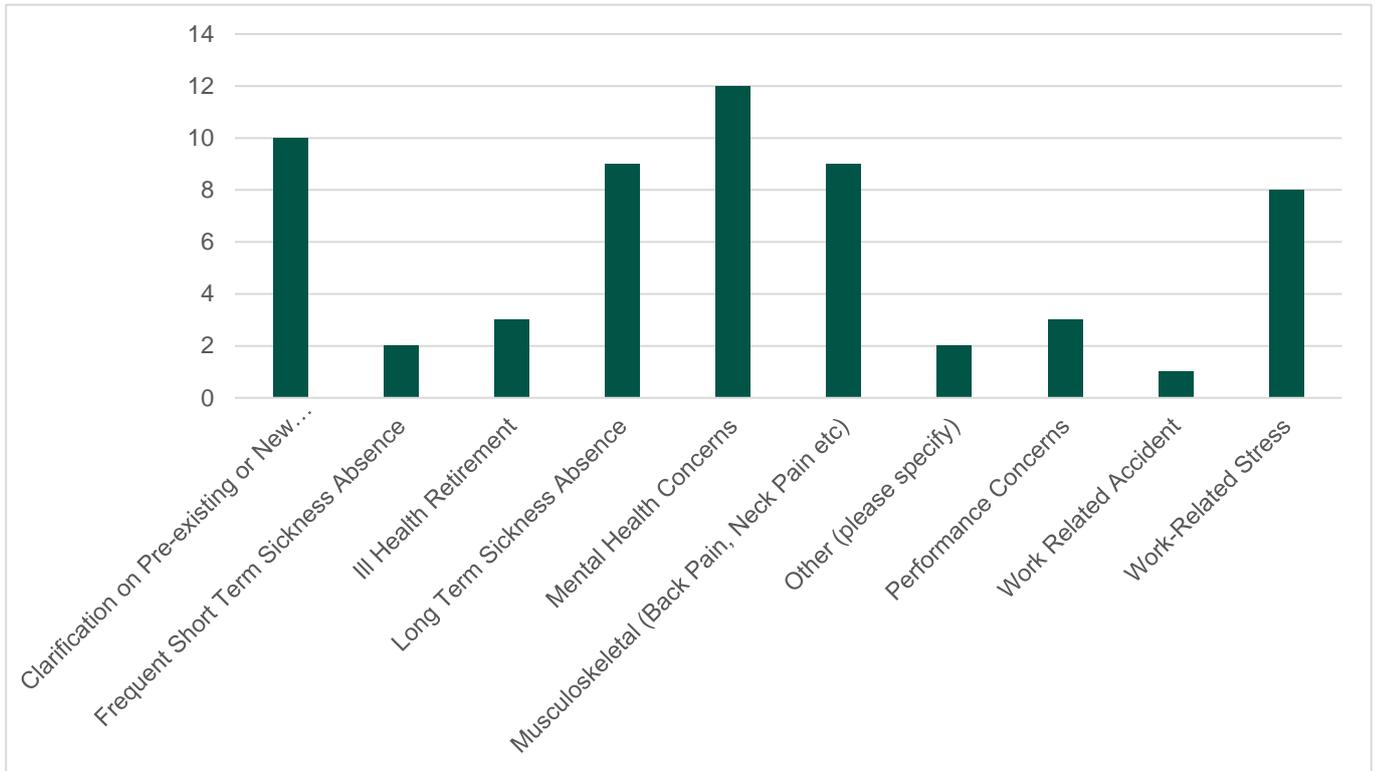
In Q3, L&D sourced and provided 126 courses, which is more than the previous two quarters. 80 of these were H&S courses and 32 Technical courses. 1002 colleagues attended courses in Q3.

- **Cancellations**



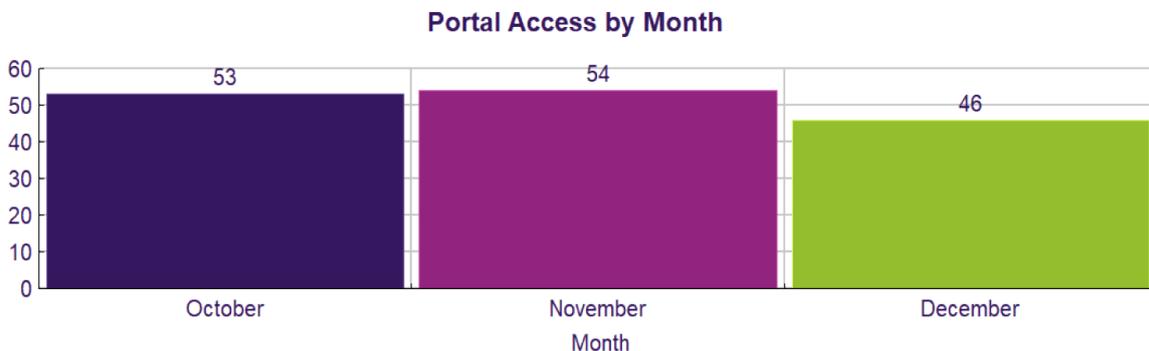
There were 64 cancellations in Q3 with 28 providing more than 14 days notice, this is a 56% decrease in training cancellations since Q1. However, there were 36 cancellations with less than 14 days' notice which costed a total of £3,440. The most common reason given for cancellations is workload followed by sickness. 69% of the cancellations in Q3 were for H&S courses.

NRW occupational health statistics

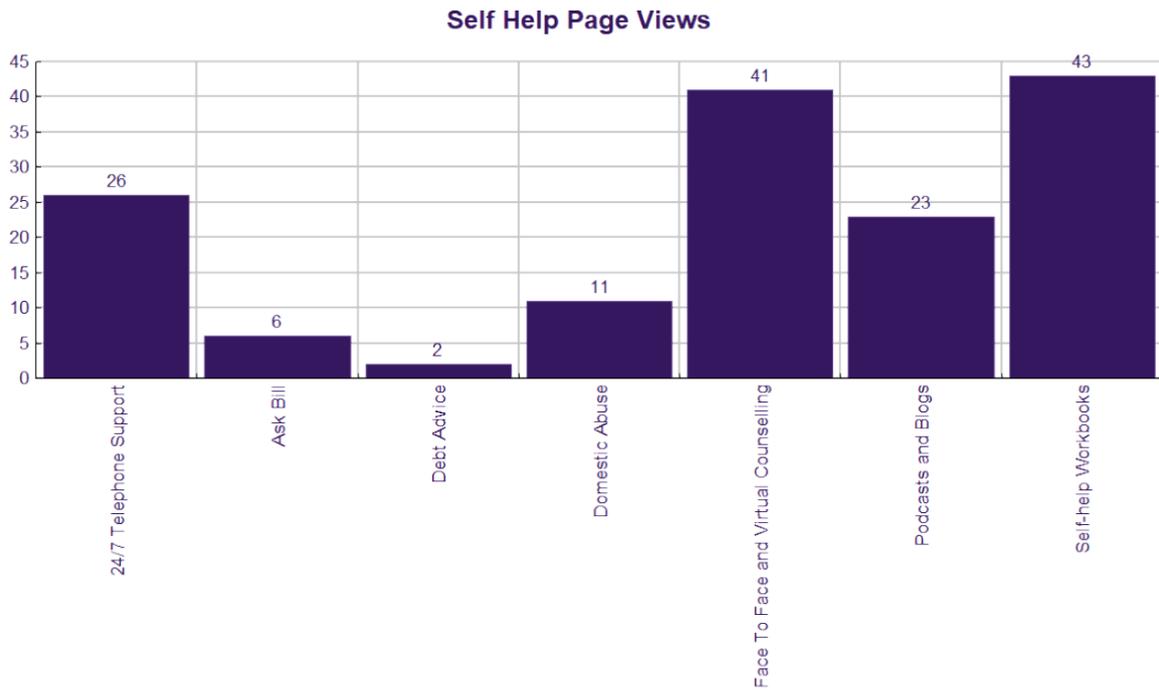


In Q3, the main reasons for referral to occupational health was mental health concerns and musculoskeletal issues, which in line with the most common causes for referral across all sectors according to our occupational health provider.

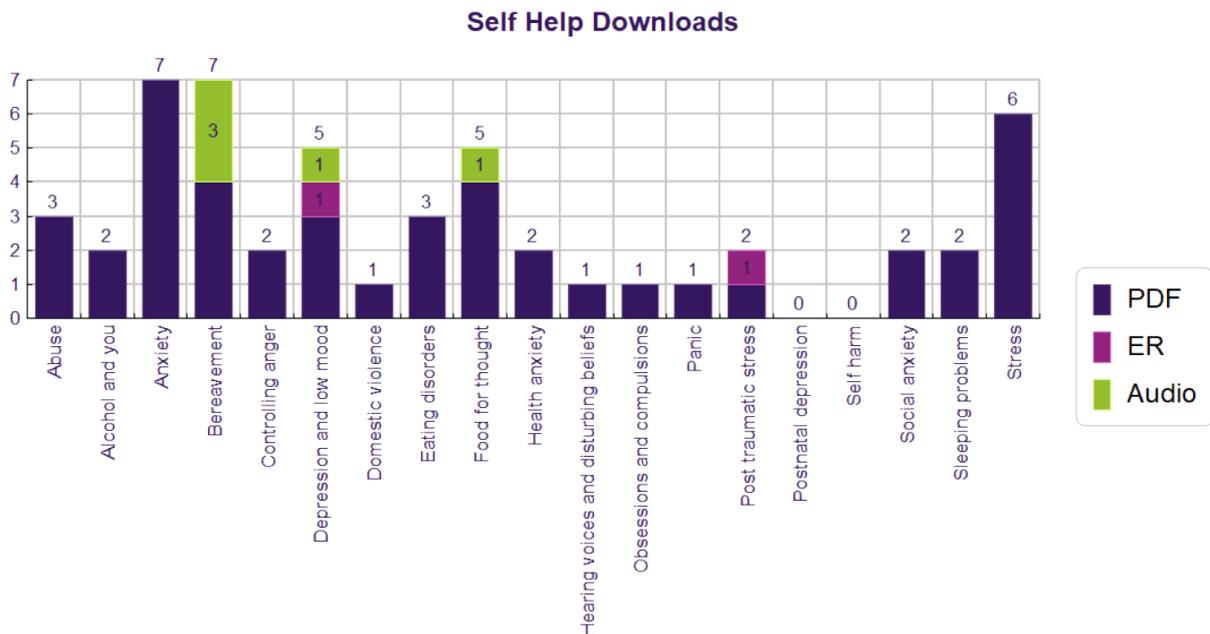
NRW Employee Assistance Programme statistics



During Q3, there was consistent access to the Vivup portal.

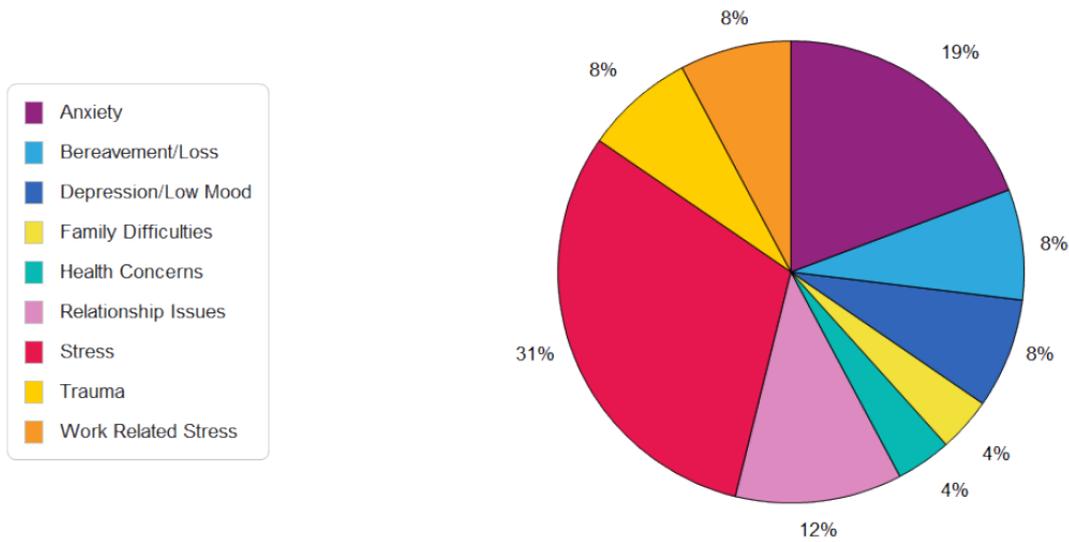


In Q3, NRW staff utilised the Vivup portal to access Face to face and virtual counselling and self help workbooks more than other offerings.



Vivup offers access to Cognitive Behavioural Therapy self help downloadable workbooks and audio material for NRW Staff who may not feel comfortable discussing their issues or concerns with another person.

Natural Resources Wales Presenting Issue



The top reasons for counselling sessions for NRW staff were stress, anxiety and relationship issues. The top reasons for counselling for all organisations as provided by the Occupational Health Provider were; Stress, anxiety and depression/low mood.