

# Natural Resources Wales

## Board Meeting

### 26 February 2012

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<b>Paper Title</b>	<b>Communities Knowledge Group</b>
<b>Paper Reference:</b>	Paper A (02/13) [E]
<b>Paper Prepared By:</b>	Ruth Hall

<b>Purpose of Paper:</b>	<b>Discussion</b>
<b>Recommendation:</b>	To receive feedback from the Communities Knowledge Group

<b>Impact:</b> To note – all headings might not be applicable to the topic	<b>Impact on the Environment:</b>  <b>Impact on the Economy:</b>  <b>Impact on Community:</b>  <b>Impact on Knowledge:</b>
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**Issue**

1. Receive and discuss the update note, Annex A, from the Communities and Knowledge group.

**Summary**

2. To provide the Board with a summary of the discussion held by the Communities and Stakeholders knowledge group held by teleconference on January 9.

**Next Steps**

3. Not applicable

**Risks**

4. Not applicable

**Financial Implications**

5. Not applicable

**Communications**

6. Discussion on the update will be recorded in the minutes from the Board meeting dated February 26 and 27.

Annex A

**NRW Communities and Stakeholders Teleconference on 9<sup>th</sup> Jan 2013 at 10.30am**

Participants: Madeleine Havard, Hywel Davies, Nigel Reader, Ruth Hall

Summary of discussion

**1. What is our group going to contribute?**

We agreed the subgroup should:

- add net value – avoid being a drain on NRW's resources and not add to work
- work closely with the responsible lead Executive(s) so we don't 'wander off'
- have a strategic perspective and clear sense of direction
- understand the baseline and future objectives - where we are now, what is good practice, where we want to be in short and medium terms and what's new and different for NRW
- report to and take advice from the Board
- link as appropriate with the other Board sub-groups

On behalf of the Board, we can

- get ideas together to put on the table for the Board
- suggest how we, as a Board, can make a difference
- help to maximise contributions of all NRW non-executives to this area of work
- offer the Executive
  - practical guidance on process
  - feedback on external perspectives, how people are feeling and what they think
  - interpretation of issues through the eyes of our stakeholders
  - experiences and wisdom

**2. What do we need to progress?**

We recognise this area is crucial for the organisation and needing urgent action. Feedback report from the 3 Stakeholder events held in December would be useful.

**Action**

As a group, we obviously need to be working in a NRW context. However the legacy bodies have lots of experience of working with stakeholders and communities at national and local levels, as well as related systems and processes. It is not clear how bringing these particular strands together and fitting them for the NRW context is being addressed. Clive Thomas's advice would be helpful.

**Action**

This area of business is relevant for every EA non-executive director. Each has personal contacts and skills to be optimised, especially where stakeholder involvement is most intense, demanding or there is an urgent business need for action. We have contributed to a list of potential contacts and personal skills; this should be regarded as an important resource and used proactively, with arrangements to cover gaps.

### 3. What do we mean by Communities and Stakeholders?

We need a common understanding of the terms 'community' and 'stakeholder' and what we are trying to do in each context. Suggested working definitions are (i) a community is a group of people living in the same locality or neighbourhood (ii) a stakeholder is a group or individual with whom we have a 'trading' relationship based on a mutual area of commitment, where the commodity traded might be advice, guidance or other resources. NRW needs to map its important stakeholder relationships – we need stakeholders and we are a stakeholder in others' businesses. It would be helpful to know from Clive whether this is in hand; also to check who has executive lead for 'communities'.

#### Action

There will be different stakeholder engagement requirements at local, regional and national levels. Some of our stakeholders are very keen to be as involved as possible; others will need encouraging to the table. How individual non-executives contribute especially at the regional/local level in a managed and consistent way will need working out. Would it be useful to develop some high level principles for stakeholder engagement, as a unifying tool, indicator of commitment and potential monitoring device? The subgroup could make some suggestions for Board discussion. Board and executive views would be helpful.

#### Action

### 4. Are there any big issues to highlight?

Welsh Government's Sustainability programme is many-stranded, includes low carbon, climate change etc and has allocated resources. It offers massive opportunity and is relevant at the local/community level. We need to be clear who does what, between government and the NRW (and others). We should contribute to that debate as well as contributing to the programme. We need to link with the Enterprise sub-group on this.

#### Action

Local Authorities – is there a role for local Natural Resources forums, led by a local member? We will need local engagement arrangements in both Officer and Member contexts.

Links with academia, especially our own Universities in Wales, to ensure we stay at the cutting edge and participate in the current debates. Community and stakeholder action within/by NRW must be evidence-based. We picked up Morgan's point that much of knowledge we depend on resides outside the organisation – although we have expertise, we must stay connected to our wider knowledge-bases. We need to link with the Knowledge sub group on this theme.

#### Action

We have real risks if we fail to engage pretty quickly with some specific sectors, including key environmental groups, landowners and farmers. If they don't get the sense that things are moving and will be different to the past, they will revert to 'old ways' and it will be the 'same old story'.

### Next steps

- Seek steers from the Board and Executive as to whether we are on the right lines.
- Suggest a representative from each sub-group is involved in getting together guidelines for what these sub-groups should and should not be doing, in the interests of consistency and learning from each other.

- Obtain feedback on how we can agree what individual board members can contribute to community and stakeholder work, so we can progress this in a co-ordinated, consistent and sensible way.
- Seek advice from Clive Thomas
- Make arrangements for our next discussion after the 22<sup>nd</sup> January Board meeting.