



July 7th 2016

Paper Title:	State of Natural Resources Report (SoNaRR)
Paper Reference:	NRW B B 45.16
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Purpose of Paper:	Scrutiny – The aim of SoNaRR is to assess the extent to which the sustainable management of natural resources is being achieved.
Recommendation:	The Board is asked to consider the progress and future plans for the production of SoNaRR and to endorse the proposed way forward.

Impact:	<p>How do the proposals in this paper help NRW achieve the Well-Being of Future Generations Act principles in terms of:</p> <p>Looking at the <u>long term</u>: <u>Preventing issues from occurring:</u></p> <p>SoNaRR will be presenting a methodology for a risk-based approach, using evidence on natural resources to help Welsh Government (WG) and others assess the significance of the long-term risks to wellbeing, and therefore consider how to take preventative action to manage those risks.</p> <p>Taking an <u>integrated</u> approach:</p> <p>The information is presented alongside the Well-being goals</p>
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	<p>– this provides a common framing for all public bodies in Wales, and therefore should help identify why those risks are relevant to them.</p> <p>Involving a <u>diversity</u> of the population: Working in a <u>collaborative</u> way:</p> <p>This is proposed to be the beginning of a conversation on how we better present evidence to help sustainable management of natural resources. We will use the NNRP and Area Statements processes going forward to continue the conversation with a broad range of stakeholders, including identifying the potential role for citizen science.</p>
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Issue

1. To inform the Board of plans and progress to produce Wales’ first State of Natural Resources Report.

Background

2. At its March meeting, the Board received a paper outlining the plans to produce the first State of Natural Resources Report (SoNaRR) by September 2016. The recommendation to the Board was to sign off the content of the report during July. Since then we have further refined chapters 1 and 2 and have been compiling the evidence for chapters 3, 4 and 5 in parallel. We have also been working closely with Welsh Government (WG) to ensure that the document meets the requirements laid out in the Environment (Wales) Act, 2016.
3. We also discussed how to progress with SoNaRR with the Board Knowledge Sub-Group at their meeting on 21 April. The Board received a first working draft of the text on 27 May, when it was also sent to WG policy leads.
4. On 20 June, we ran a webinar with Board and Executive Team, to present an overview of the purpose and structure of SoNaRR to receive feedback on the drafts.

5. We have run successful internal and external webinars for our colleagues and stakeholders to ensure that they understand the purpose and structure of SoNaRR. These have been well received.
6. Welsh Government feedback on the 27 May draft included
 - The need to be explicit about gaps in data and knowledge
 - Be clear on how we arrived at the “key messages”
 - Ensure that all messages and findings are evidence based
 - Ensure consistency of terms – use of a glossary
 - Avoid stepping into policy discussions
 - Ensure the tone and style is consistent and accessible
 - Strengthen the links to health and wellbeing
7. Proposed Next Steps
 - Complete the final draft of all chapters by **15 July 2016**
 - Undertake an edit of the complete document **15-22 July 2016**
 - Final draft of content to Board members for endorsement **30 July 2016**
 - External review of whole document **30 July to August 15, 2016**
 - Final version to Board for awareness, prior to publication **30 August 2016**.
 - Publication at **end of September**

Assessment

8. Welsh Government has set out their “policy ask” for SoNaRR, which has framed our approach to the assessment of the extent to which the sustainable management of natural resources is being achieved. The structure of the document and the later chapters (chapters 5 & 6) have been agreed and signed off at the Joint WG and NRW Natural Resource Management Core Evidence Group. We have used this group to share early drafts of all chapters, to engage WG policy colleagues in our developing approach and minimise their risks for the development of the National Natural Resource Policy.
9. This is an evolving process. The first iteration of SoNaRR is the beginning of a conversation with stakeholders on the method for assessing the extent to which we are achieving sustainable management of natural resources. To do this, we have drawn on existing assessment techniques developed by the National Ecosystem Assessment (NEA) and particularly the Natural Capital Committee (NCC), but adapted them for the Wales legislative context. Over time, we will need to refine our

understanding of the relationships between the resilience of ecosystems and the benefits they provide, and be able to prioritise risks accordingly. The lack of clarity about the types of evidence we may need to undertake this task has meant that we have not been able to work as collaboratively as we would have liked. This has been accentuated by the pressing timescales and the novel nature of the assessment.

10. We therefore need to use the next four years to discuss and refine the method of assessment with stakeholders. This will help us identify opportunities for future collaboration and engagement around evidence gathering and information sharing. We see the development of Area Statements as further opportunity to build on this methodology, so that we better understand the evidence and data needed to drive implementation on the ground, and inform the next iteration of SoNaRR.
11. The production of SoNaRR is currently running behind schedule. This has largely been due to the difficulty of assessing and presenting our data and evidence in a new way, as well as the difficulties in agreeing a final format. We have plans in place in order to get us back on line for the September deadline.
12. We see the publication of the first SoNaRR as the opportunity for us to out our preferred approach to engaging with our stakeholders to further develop the method and evidence needed. We would like to present options for future engagement to a future Board meeting.
13. We always anticipated a tight timetable for production, and so have been receiving comments from the Board as we move forwards (circulating drafts, webinar). We will have very limited opportunity to make substantial changes to the document at the end of July; hence seeking endorsement of the content to date and the proposals at this meeting.

Recommendation(s)

14. It is proposed that the final draft report is circulated to the Board at the end of July for final comment. We will also ensure that a final version of the report is circulated to the Board before it is made public.

Key Risks

15. The timescales are short. With other priority work affecting delivery across KSP we are currently 6 weeks behind where we intended to be. We are addressing this by assessing the critical pathways and revising the timetable as appropriate. There is

still a residual risk of late delivery given the issues that might arise from independent review, translation and final production. We are mitigating this by sharing working drafts of all chapters with Welsh Government and by ensuring that they receive a final draft in August, so policy development work should not be delayed.

16. There is a risk that stakeholders will not understand the function and structure of the report. We have been mitigating this by engagement through our working group leads, and through webinars and direct contacts with our stakeholders. There is however still a risk that those we have not engaged with will not understand the function and structure of the report.

Financial Implications

17. Cost of design and publishing of the report is included in the budget for SoNaRR in 2016/17

Recommendation(s)

18. That the Board endorse the proposed way forward for production of SoNaRR.