Agenda

Title of meeting: NRW Board Meeting Day 2 - Public Session

Date of meeting: 23rd September 2021   Time of meeting: 9.00-12.50

Venue: **Plas Tan y Bwlch, Maentwrog, Gwynedd**

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Observers:

Time	Item
9.00 **(5 mins)**	**1. Open Meeting** • Welcome • Declaration of Interests • Explain conduct of meeting Sponsor and Presenter: Sir David Henshaw (Chair)
9.05 **(5 mins)**	**2. Review Minutes and Action Log** **2A. Review Minutes from Public 14th July meeting** **2B. Review Public Action Log** Sponsor and Presenter: Sir David Henshaw (Chair)
9.10 **(10 mins)**	**3. Update from the Chair** Sponsor and Presenter: Sir David Henshaw **Summary: The Chair to update the Board**
9.20 **(20 mins)**	**4. Chief Executive's Report** Sponsor and Presenter: Clare Pillman, Chief Executive **Summary: To update the Board on current key activities** **Presentation Only**
9.40 **(10 mins)**	**5. Update Report of Committees** Sponsors and presenters: Committee Chairs

Audit and Risk Assurance Committee
- Annual Report 2020/21

Paper ref: 21-09-B10

Evidence Advisory Committee – n/a

People and Remuneration Committee 16th September

Verbal update (no paper)

Protected Areas Committee – n/a

Summary: To update the Board on recent committee activities

9.50 **(20 mins)**	**6. Business Plan Performance Dashboard Quarter 1 Report** Sponsors: Clare Pillman, Chief Executive Presenters: Caroline Hawkins, Corporate Planning, Performance & Strategic Assessment Manager **Summary: To scrutinise the Quarter 1 Report** **Paper ref: 21-09-B12**
10.10 **(20 mins)**	**7. Wellbeing, Health and Safety Quarter 1 Report** Sponsor: Prys Davies, Executive Director of Corporate Strategy and Development Presenter: Charlotte Morgan, Wellbeing, Health and Safety Manager **Summary: For Board approval** **Paper ref: 21-09-B13**
10.30 **(15 mins)**	**Break**
10.45 **(20 mins)**	**8. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Project** Sponsor: Prys Davies, Executive Director of Corporate Strategy and Development Presenter: Lyn Williams, Specialist Advisor, People Management; Julia Allen, Lead Specialist Advisor, Human Resources **Summary: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Project: update and discussion on priorities** **Paper ref: 21-09-B14**
11.05 **(75 mins)**	**9. Marine and Coastal Delivery and Place Presentation** Sponsor: Gareth O'Shea, Executive Director of Operations; Ceri Davies, Executive Director of Evidence, Policy and Permitting Presenter: Rhian Jardine, Head of DPAS and Marine Andrea Winterton, Marine Services Manager; Pete Jordan, Development

Planning Advice Service Manager; Mary Lewis, Sustainable Places Land and Sea Manager

Summary: To provide an overview of the Marine and Coastal Delivery of the Business Plan Strategic Objectives

Paper ref: 21-09-B15

End of Public Board meeting

12.20 (30 mins)	**10. Public Q&A Session**
12.50	**Close Meeting**
12.50	**Lunch**

Unconfirmed Minutes

Title of meeting:	**NRW Board Meeting – Public Session**
	All Attendees via Teams

Date of meeting:	14th July 2021

Present Board Members:	Sir David Henshaw, (Chair)
	Clare Pillman, Chief Executive
	Prof Steve Ormerod, Deputy Chair
	Karen Balmer
	Catherine Brown
	Julia Cherrett
	Geraint Davies
	Howard Davies
	Dr Elizabeth Haywood
	Zoë Henderson
	Dr Rosie Plummer
	Prof Peter Rigby

Present Executive Team Members:	Prys Davies, Executive Director of Corporate Strategy and Development
	Ceri Davies, Executive Director of Evidence, Policy and Permitting
	Rachael Cunningham, Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Services
	Gareth O'Shea, Executive Director of Operations
	Sarah Jennings, Executive Director of Communications, Customer and Commercial (Items 1-11)

Additional Attendees Present:	Colette Fletcher, Head of Governance & Board Secretary (All items)
	Caroline Hawkins, Corporate Planning, Performance & Strategic Assessment Manager Item 6, 7
	Sarah Williams, Head of 2050 Vision and Corporate Strategy Item 6, 7
	Sue Ginley, Lead Specialist Advisor, Corporate Planning & Performance Item 6
	Lyn Williams, Welsh Language Policy Advisor Item 8
	Sian Williams, Head of North West Wales Operations Item 9
	Nadia De Longhi, Head of Regulation and Permitting Item 9
	Mark Squire, Sustainable Water Manager Item 9
	Anjali Wainwright, Lead Specialist Advisor, Risk Item 10
	Sian Williams, Head of North West Wales Operations Item 11
	Martin Cox, Head of North West Wales Operations Item 11
	Iwan Williams, Energy Island Programme Manager Item 11
	Dylan Williams, Operations Manager Item 11
	Elsie Grace, Manager, Business Development Item 12 to 14
	Dominic Driver, Head of Land Stewardship Item 12
	David Liddy, Specialist Advisor, Recreational Safety Item 12
	Peter Gough, Principal Advisor, Fisheries Item 13

| **Observers:** | Gareth Wardell |
| | 30 members of the public |

| **Declarations:** | None |

Apologies:	Dr Rosie Plummer – 1pm to 3pm
	Geraint Davies – morning session (part)
	Sarah Jennings, Executive Director of Communications, Customer and Commercial – Items 12 to 14

Secretariat:	Natalie Williams
	Jocelyn Benger
	Laura Rees

Item 1. Open Meeting

1. The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed everyone. No declarations of interest were made.

Item 2. Review Minutes and Action Log

2A. Review Minutes from Public 20th May meeting

2. The minutes from the public May meeting were reviewed and agreed.

2B. Review Public Action Log

3. The action log was reviewed. It was noted that the Head of Governance and Board Secretary had provided an update on the public and private actions prior to the meeting.

Item 3: Update from the Chair

4. The Chair welcomed the establishment of the new Climate Change Ministry. The Chief Executive and Chair had met with Julie James, Minister for Climate Change, and Lee Waters, Deputy Minister for Climate Change, on priorities for the NRW agenda.

Item 4: Chief Executive's Report

5. The Chief Executive provided an update on the new Welsh Government (WG). The introductory meeting with the new ministerial team had been very encouraging in terms of their engagement with the agenda and alignment of priorities. Both Ministers contributed to #TeamNRW Day, alongside Board members in order to celebrate the work of NRW staff and the work with partners. Thanks were offered to the Ministers for their attendance.

6. WG published their new Programme for Government on 15th June, which included ten Wellbeing Objectives and contained around 100 of the manifesto commitments; others were contained within the regular Ministerial portfolios. Ministerial focus would be on embedding the response to the Climate and Nature Emergencies across the board and the key areas of focus were highlighted.

7. Ministers were committed to sharing an early draft of the Remit Letter, which would be refined as other information emerged, including input from the Baseline Review. There

would be a UK Government spending round during this period, which would lead to greater clarity on shared priorities.

8. The Deputy Minister made an announcement around increasing tree planting and use of Welsh timber in Wales, which had emerged from a deep dive in which NRW had been involved. Future deep dives by WG were likely on renewable energy, nature conservation and biodiversity. The Executive Director of Communication, Customer and Commercial had agreed to chair a small working group on encouraging private investment in woodland creation. These developing areas of work should lead to a joined-up approach between WG, NRW and the third sector.

9. The Council General had announced WG legislative priorities for the next year. NRW would continue to be closely involved in the development of the new Agriculture Bill. The Consolidation Bill was also noted, which would focus on listed buildings and the historic environment and create legislation that would correspond with the Wellbeing Objectives. The Social Partnership and Public Procurement Bill was also highlighted as important in considering NRW's work with others and would be of particular relevance in projects such as Skyline.

10. Board members queried whether international examples of best practice were being considered in relation to the response to the Climate and Nature Emergencies. The Chief Executive highlighted the work that was ongoing with sister organisations across the UK to produce a joint paper for the Climate Change Conferences (COPs) in order to share best practice. Examples of links with international groups and sharing learning with others were described and the paper relating to international engagement and strategy would be shared with Board members.

ACTION: The Chief Executive to share the paper relating to international engagement and strategy with Board members.

11. The importance of the focus on climate and wellbeing was recognised, however, Board members were concerned that the nature and biodiversity issue was considered equally. The Chief Executive confirmed that the Climate and Nature Emergencies were key priorities for WG and were likely to be the subject of an early deep dive topic. It would also be critical to make the connection with the Agriculture Bill.

12. Difficulties in the supply of trees for the new National Forest were discussed. Board members were provided with assurance that NRW's contractor would be supplying the restocking requirements for NRW but the plan for the National Forest would be the subject of consideration.

Item 5: Update Reports of Committees

13. The report from the Finance Committee (FC) on 18th June was taken as read. The Chair of FC highlighted that the Annual Report and Accounts had been scrutinised. The emerging evidence from the Baseline Review would be considered at the next meeting on 16th July.

14. The Chair of the Flood Risk Management Committee (FRMC) provided a verbal update on the meeting held on 6th July. The Flood Recovery and Review Implementation Programme was discussed, which had highlighted ongoing recruitment challenges and skills shortages. The level of overprogramming in the Capital Programme was noted, and the risks were discussed, particularly in relation to construction supply issues.

15. The flood warning replacement system was noted as going well and the Programme Management Office (PMO) had approved four Natural Flood Management Schemes. The

internal audit on the Flood Recovery Programme would be starting in August. Reservoirs and the outcome of the Toddbrook Report were considered, most of the recommendations of which aligned with NRW's emphasis on safety over compliance. An expert user group had been set up in Wales and the draft Biennial Report on Reservoir Safety was reviewed. An initial horizon scanning exercise had been undertaken and further work on the strategic approach would take place.

16. Board members discussed the content of the FRMC update, particularly in relation to shortages in capacity and skills. The Chair of FRMC confirmed that the Flood Team had put themselves forward to be part of the pilot workforce planning scheme. Board members recognised the need for a national debate to raise public awareness of the limitations on addressing flood issues.

17. The Chair of the People and Remuneration Committee (PaRC) provided an update on the meeting held on 17th June and highlighted progress on workforce planning and the developments in management information. The current workforce numbers were monitored and tied into the People Strategy and Workforce Plan. Workforce resource management measures were noted. An update was provided on work on the Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) project. The Performance Management internal audit was noted as disappointing but good work was ongoing with the Three Lines of Defence to address this.

18. Board members raised questions relating to the two fatalities on the Welsh Government Woodland Estate (WGWE) and the approach to risk management, and how this compared with similar organisations. The Chair of PaRC confirmed that the police investigations were ongoing but no immediate changes had been required. The Executive Director of Corporate Strategy and Development confirmed that the Wellbeing, Health and Safety Risk would be discussed at the next PaRC meeting in September. The Chief Executive confirmed that regular contact and shared learning took place with sister organisations but acknowledged that further learning was always beneficial.

Item 6: Business Plan and Performance Dashboard End of Year Report 2020/21

Attendees: Caroline Hawkins, Corporate Planning, Performance & Strategic Assessment Manager, Sarah Williams, Head of 2050 Vision and Corporate Strategy, Sue Ginley, Lead Specialist Advisor, Corporate Planning & Performance

19. The Chief Executive presented an overview of the performance at the end of 2020/21. A review had been undertaken last summer due to the ongoing situation with the pandemic and changes were made to some of the performance indicators. The report was made against these agreed changes. The Red Amber Green (RAG) status was reported as two Red, 12 Amber and 21 Green.

20. Measures in response to strategic priorities were highlighted and the performance as noted in the paper was described. The impact of the pandemic was recognised and had affected the performance in some areas and those measures that were Red or Amber had been scrutinised. The measure relating to 'Response to 'high category' incidents within four hours' was noted as Amber.

21. The Chief Executive offered thanks to all involved in delivering against these targets in a difficult and challenging year.

22. Board members raised the issue of the monitoring of protected sites. This had been rated as Red and had subsequently been scrutinised by the Protected Areas Committee

(PrAC). Covid restrictions had been found to have affected progress on field work but it would be difficult to recognise if there were other influences, although it would be an important part of discussions in the Baseline Review.

23. Incident response times were discussed. Board members expressed disappointment at the Amber rating but recognised that it was linked in part to recruitment challenges. Discussion took place on the targets and ensuring that these were achievable and relevant through analysis of the evidence base, particularly in relation to the definition of a high category incident and the effective time to make the biggest difference. The detail of this measure would be the subject of a future Board discussion.

ACTION: Secretariat to add a discussion to the Board Forward Look on the Business Plan and Performance Dashboard measure 'Response time to high category incidents within four hours'.

24. The learning opportunities that had arisen from Covid around increased use of technology, agile working and working with others were highlighted. It was confirmed that these would feed into the Adfywio / Renewal Programme. The importance of working with others was recognised.

DECISION: The Business Plan and Performance Dashboard End of Year Report 2020/21 was approved.

Item 7: Business Plan 2022-23

Attendees: Caroline Hawkins, Corporate Planning, Performance & Strategic Assessment Manager, Sarah Williams, Head of 2050 Vision and Corporate Strategy, Sue Ginley, Lead Specialist Advisor, Corporate Planning & Performance

25. The Executive Director of Corporate Strategy and Development introduced the item. It was confirmed that this would be the final Business Plan under the current Corporate Strategy, and it would aim to align to the WG Remit Letter. The paper set out the learning from the current process, along with the timeline and approach. The strategic priorities had been reviewed and refined from five to four and would draw a greater focus on Nature Based Solutions and Biodiversity.

26. Board members appreciated the early engagement on the Business Plan. The approach to permitting, regulatory compliance and enforcement were highlighted as important areas for inclusion into the strategic priorities. The outcomes from previous Board discussions on this subject should be included. It would also be important for the new Business Plan to be flexible in order to incorporate new areas of focus from WG as these developed.

27. The importance of leading on societal shift in behaviour change and the role of social scientists and communications in this area were highlighted. The importance of learning from, and working with, others was emphasised. It was agreed that this would be a key area for development and should be the subject of a more detailed discussion at a future meeting.

ACTION: Secretariat to add a discussion to the Forward Look on the role of social science and communications in behaviour change.

Item 8. Welsh Language Annual Report

Presenter: Lyn Williams, Welsh Language Policy Advisor

28. The Executive Director of Corporate Strategy and Development introduced the item and thanked the Welsh Language Policy Advisor for her work. An overview of the report was

presented. Challenges around introducing bilingual ways of working to online and hybrid models were recognised and ways to facilitate this were being discussed. Compliance was noted as good overall but the strategic approach going forward would need to be considered. PaRC had considered the issue of erosion of Welsh place names. Social media activity had been developed alongside an action plan with Operations staff.

29. Board members understood the challenges around creating a bilingual offer and supported the ongoing work in this area. The strategic direction for the Welsh language would be discussed in depth at the November Board meeting.

DECISION: The Welsh Language Annual Report 2020/21 was approved.

Item 9. Strategic Discussion: Combined Storm Overflows (CSO) Water Quality Issues

Presenter: Sian Williams, Head of North West Wales Operations; Nadia De Longhi, Head of Regulation and Permitting; Mark Squire, Sustainable Water Manager

30. The paper was taken as read. The Executive Director of Operations provided an overview of the background to the issue, highlighting discussions at previous Board meetings and the Panorama programme. NRW had taken part in a summit on 18th June with Ofwat, the Environment Agency (EA), WG, Dŵr Cymru, and Hafren Dyfrdwy. Priorities had been assessed following this summit and were outlined in the paper.

31. The Head of North West Wales Operations gave a presentation which focused on the key discussion points. A Frequently Asked Questions paper had been developed and would be circulated after the discussion. Issues with the Victorian drainage infrastructure were highlighted, and the level of investment needed to make significant change to the drainage system was illustrated. Challenges around regulation were described and it was reported that the focus had been on sensitive bathing and shellfish locations. It was noted that 2500 sites had event and duration discharge monitors. Enforcement powers could be used, however, the focus had been on supporting companies to achieve permits and compliance.

32. Potential solutions to storm overflows were explored. The evidence to support interventions would need to be scrutinised and any change would need an assessment of resource levels. The cost of elimination was recognised as prohibitive. Education to reduce the impact of blockages on the system was an important factor, particularly in light of the increasing recreational use of rivers and the public interest in the ecological health of rivers. Engineering examples and the cost of these were shared.

33. The challenges of the regulation and monitoring of Special Area of Conservation (SAC) rivers were highlighted, particularly the difficulties of pinpointing the source of issues in a large catchment area such as the River Usk.

34. The areas of focus were shared, which included tackling unpermitted discharges, gathering data, greater environmental impact assessment and monitoring programme, increased public health assessment, and communication.

35. Board members considered the content of the report. It was confirmed that solids from storm discharges were screened and the size of the screen depended on the location of the discharge. Spill data was passed to NRW for consideration. Questions were raised around enforcement action and permitting. Board members were informed that an advice and guidance approach was being taken, working through a programme towards

compliance. Each case was considered on its merits and no permits had been refused to date as the focus had been on achieving compliance.

36. The elimination of agricultural pollution was recognised as critical, however, Board members noted that some farmers had experienced reputational harm on this issue. The need for more evidence of the damage caused by sewage and pollution was questioned. Board members were informed that agricultural pollution was monitored in the same way as other pollution events and the response would be the same regardless of the source. The aim would be to monitor longer term inputs rather than the current spot check model of monitoring, particularly in SAC rivers.

37. The issues around monitoring were discussed. Capacity issues and financial pressures were recognised and the challenges of combining new priorities with the current workload were highlighted. It would be important to work with others and ensure that water companies were challenged on this issue. Board members raised the need to consider the bacterial load and the public health risk. Diagnostics and prioritisation would be key to improving the identification of high-level problems and the contribution of micro-plastics, bacterial load, and untreated pharmaceuticals to water quality issues.

38. Board members were concerned to ensure that a robust approach was considered, particularly in view of the public feelings on this issue as highlighted in the Panorama programme. The strategic use of enforcement and taking examples of good practice in leadership on this issue, both nationally and internationally, were recommended. The role of publicity and communications was emphasised. This would be the opportunity to use the momentum to develop a plan to improve water quality and create a step change. The role of NRW as an influencer could be considered for incorporation into NRW's roles and responsibilities.

39. The complexity of the issues was recognised, and it was agreed that the team would consider the content of the discussion and return to the November Board meeting with a draft plan but provide an update on progress to the meeting in September.

ACTION: An Action Plan to be developed from the outcome of the strategic discussion on water quality. An update on progress towards this to be reported to the September Board meeting and a paper provided to the November Board.

Item 10. Risk Strategy Approval
Presenter: Anjali Wainwright, Lead Specialist Advisor, Risk

40. The Executive Director of Corporate Strategy and Development introduced the item and highlighted the one substantive change to the Risk Strategy which clarified the relationship between ARAC and the other Committees.

41. Board members considered the change and approved the changes to the Risk Strategy.

DECISON: The changes to the Risk Strategy were approved.

Item 11. Place Presentation
Presenter: Sian Williams, Head of North West Wales Operations; Martin Cox, Head of North West Wales Operations; Iwan Williams, Energy Island Programme Manager; Dylan Williams, Operations Manager

42. The Executive Director of Operations introduced the item and welcomed Martin Cox as the joint Head of North West Wales Operations.

43. The Heads of North West Wales Operations provided a presentation which gave an overview of the River Conwy and its surroundings from the source to the sea. The diversity of the habitat and the use for agriculture, hydropower, and recreation were described. The successful partnership work with the National Trust at the Migneint peatland area on peat drainage dams was presented. The integrated approach taken at Cwm Penmachno, working with partners and communities, had delivered a successful project. The diverse use of the Gwydir Forest was explained. The challenges around the increase in visitor numbers and pressure on the teams were highlighted, which included dealing with antisocial behaviour and personal attacks on social media.

44. The journey of the Conwy to the valley floor at Llanrwst was described and it was noted that 3% of Wales drained through the valley, creating challenge in managing the flood risk in this area. The work on the Migneint and Cwm Penmachno had proven that small projects could make a difference. The Shoreline Management Plan and challenges around this would require work with communities. Examples were provided of good partnership working, particularly with the Public Services Board (PSB) and funding to help connect people to the environment. Future opportunities and challenges were noted around restoring the natural process, connecting people with their environment, and landscape scale working with partners.

45. Board members thanked the team for an informative presentation. Links to the Gwynedd Wellbeing Plan and the need to deliver a healthy community were noted. The contribution of farmers to partnership working was highlighted. Board members were concerned that the community would need to be informed of the ongoing flood risk issue and that a conversation would be needed going forward. It was suggested that the areas where most of the water was generated could be targeted and the pilot project of the Severn River Partnership was described.

Item 12. SMNR Review of Motorsport

Presenters: David Liddy, Specialist Advisor, Recreational Safety, Elsie Grace, Manager, Business Development, Dominic Driver, Head of Land Stewardship

46. The Executive Director of Evidence, Policy and Permitting introduced the item and explained that the Review had been undertaken in the context of the Climate and Nature Emergencies and the Sustainable Management of Natural Resources (SMNR). The purpose and role of the Welsh Government Woodland Estate (WGWE) was explained, particularly in relation to its role in recreation in Wales alongside its importance in addressing the Climate and Nature Emergencies.

47. The Specialist Advisor, Recreational Safety presented the findings of the Review. There had been extensive stakeholder engagement and although some tensions were recognised, particularly around the level of CO_2 generated, the Review had concluded that motorsports could be compatible with SMNR.

48. Board members discussed the methodology of the Review and queried whether it would pass a legal test for delivering NRW's duties, and this was agreed. Questions were asked on the balance of stakeholder engagement and whether issues beyond CO_2, such as noise, biosecurity and potential fire risk, had been considered. The Review had recommended pursuing measures to reduce carbon emissions. It would be important to consider methods of reducing the environmental impact of all visitors and ensuring that the right protections were in place across the WGWE. It was agreed that a wider piece of work would be necessary in order to look at both the carbon positive programme and the management of the environmental impact of recreational activities. It was agreed that a scoping exercise would take place for consideration of this issue next year.

49. The social and economic benefit brought to Wales by motorsports was acknowledged, and the importance of working with stakeholders to bring about change was recognised. Board members agreed that rallying should continue within the WGWE, however, Board members requested that ambitious and demonstrable improvements were sought with commitments over and above existing plans. A progress report was requested in six months' time.

ACTION – A progress report on the Board recommendations following the SMNR Review of Motorsport to be provided to the March 2022 Board meeting.

DECISION: Permission for motorised rallying to continue in the WGWE subject to ongoing discussions with Motorsports UK and their Affiliated Clubs to improve sustainability and reduce the sport's carbon footprint while operating in the WGWE.

Item 13. Background to Proposed Fishing Byelaws
Presenter: Peter Gough, Principal Advisor, Fisheries

50. The Executive Director of Evidence, Policy and Permitting, introduced the item which would seek support for the recommendations from the Executive Team that a consultation should be launched on the proposed new fishing byelaws. The consultation would take three months and a proposal based on the outcome would return to the November Board meeting.

51. The Principal Advisor, Fisheries, provided an overview of the main points noted in the paper. Salmon, and some sea trout populations, were facing a range of threats including change to the marine environment and water quality challenges, and stocks were considered at risk across Wales. There was an urgent need to maximise their survival. The plans relating to the proposed byelaws were shared. Stakeholders had been involved in discussions and the majority in the Wye and Usk area were engaged and supportive. The Severn had limited stakeholder engagement but were supportive in general.

52. Board members were encouraged to hear about the level of stakeholder engagement. Questions were asked on whether there were any stricter measures that could be put in place and which could be enforced. The majority of anglers were reported to be concerned with the situation and would to act responsibly. Reassurance was provided that the focus would be on the minority who did not comply with the byelaws.

53. The importance of communication was highlighted, particularly around possible future consequences. It was recognised that there were new challenges arising all the time in the freshwater environment and mid-term reviews could be built into byelaws so that changes could be responded to rapidly.

54. Board members congratulated the Principal Advisor, Fisheries, on his OBE and wished him well in his retirement.

DECISION: The launch of the statutory consultation on salmon and sea trout rod fishing controls in the Usk, Wye and Severn (in Wales) was approved.

- Board meeting closed -

Item 14. Public Q&A Session

55. The Chair invited questions from the public.

56. Two questions had been received and a response provided in advance.

57. Gareth Wardell thanked staff for the speed of response to his question posed prior to the meeting regarding the Welsh Water treatment plant at Garnswllt. Mr Wardell noted that 336 spills of untreated sewage had occurred into the Afon Llwchwr during 2020 in a total of 309 days. Accepting the point made by Professor Ormerod that the quality as well as the volume of spills from CSOs was an important consideration, Mr Wardell asked what evidence NRW currently held which could demonstrate to the people who lived within the catchment of the Afon Llwchwr that the permit issued to Welsh Water fell below the threshold that required immediate action for enforcement. Mr Wardell emphasised the level of spills required prior to a prosecution and highlighted the relevance to the earlier discussion on Combined Storm Overflows. The Executive Director of Operations would respond outside the meeting.

ACTION: The Executive Director of Operations to respond to Gareth Wardell's question on CSO spills into the Afon Llwchwr outside the meeting.

- Public Meeting closed -

Board Meetings

Action No.	Meeting Category	Meeting Date	Item No	Para No	Paper Sponsor	Action	Owner	Due	Status	Notes/Updates
9	Public	26/11/2020	6	20	Prys Davies, Director of Corporate Strategy and Development	ACTION: Executive Director of Operations to discuss with Head of North East Wales Operations having a future discussion with the Board on the 4-hour limit on incidence response.	Gareth O'Shea, Executive Director of Operations South	20/12/2020	Ongoing	Added to the list of potential strategic discussion items, Place presentations, Evidence sessions and site visits. Suggest this is the strategic discussion item for the Sept Board meeting and we delay the theme wrap up on previous strategic discussions to accommodate. On Forward Look for November.
10	Public	26/11/2020	8	31	Gareth O'Shea, Executive Director of Operations South	ACTION: Head of South West Operations to provide a note to the Board on new innovations/ technologies/ ways of working used that have helped the operations teams during Covid.	Gareth O'Shea, Executive Director of Operations South	20/12/2020	Ongoing	Update requested 02/09/2021
13	Public	20/01/2021	7	29	Clare Pillman CEO	Secretariat to arrange a Board visit to the Gwent levels in the future.	Secretariat	31/11/2021		Covid dependant / face to face meetings not till after May. Has been added to the list of potential strategic discussion items, Place presentations, Evidence sessions and site visits. Suggest this is the site visit for the Nov Board meeting if held in Cardiff
24	Public	24/03/2021	4	10	Clare Pillman CEO	ACTION: Secretariat to canvass availability for a Board Development Day in July to focus on reflection and future challenges post-Covid.	Secretariat	31/10/2021	Ongoing	Board Development Day availability now being sought for a date in October - on hold until the new Board members in post.
68	Public	14/07/2021	4	10	Clare Pillman CEO	ACTION: The Chief Executive to share the paper relating to international engagement and strategy with Board members.	Clare Pillman CEO	17/08/2021	Completed	CF email sent 06/08/21
69	Public	14/07/2021	6	23	Clare Pillman CEO	ACTION: Secretariat to add a discussion to the Board Forward Look on the Business Plan and Performance Dashboard measure 'Response time to high category incidents within four hours'.	Secretariat	23/07/2021	Completed	
70	Public	14/07/2021	7	26	Prys Davies Executive Director CS&D	ACTION: Secretariat to add a discussion to the Forward Look on the role of social science and communications in behaviour change.	Secretariat	23/07/2021	Completed	
71	Public	14/07/2021	9	38	Ceri Davies Executive Director EPP	ACTION: An Action Plan to be developed from the outcome of the strategic discussion on water quality. An update on progress towards this to be reported to the September Board meeting and a paper provided to the November Board.	Sian Williams, Head of North West Wales / Nadia De Longhi, Head of Regulation and Permitting	01/09/2021	Ongoing	On the agenda for September and Forward Look for November
72	Public	14/07/2021	12	48	Ceri Davies Executive Director EPP	ACTION – A progress report on the Board recommendations following the SMNR Review of Motorsport to be provided to the March 2022 Board meeting.	Dominic Driver, Head of Land Stewardship	04/03/2022	Completed	Added to Forward Look for March 2022. Likely to be a paragraph in the CEO Report supported by a high level briefing paper - tbc nearer the time

73	Public	14/07/2021	14	55	Gareth O'Shea Executive Director Ops	ACTION: The Executive Director of Operations to respond to Gareth Wardell's question on CSO spills into the Afon Llwchwr outside the meeting.	Gareth O'Shea Executive Director Ops	17/08/2021	Completed	Email response by Kate Evans on 19/07/2021

Board Paper

	Paper Details
Paper title:	ARAC Annual Report 2020/21
Paper Reference:	21-09-B10
Paper sponsored by:	Catherine Brown, Chair of ARAC
Paper Presented by:	Catherine Brown, Chair of ARAC
Purpose of the paper	For approval
Recommendation	To approve the ARAC Annual Report 2020/21

Issue

1.   Following each ARAC meeting, the Chair of ARAC provides an update to the Board summarising the issues that the Committee has discussed.

2.   The ARAC terms of reference, agreed by the Board in 2020, state that "The ARAC will provide the Board with an Annual Report summarising the business it has conducted during the year and the conclusions it has drawn therefrom".

3.   This is the eighth annual report of the Committee and it covers the accounting and auditing cycle for 2020/21.

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Annex 1 - Audit and Risk Committee – Annual Report 2020/21

Annex 1: Audit and Risk Assurance Committee - Annual Report 2020/21

Purpose

1. This is the eighth annual report of NRW's Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC) covering the accounting and auditing cycle for 2020/21 (April 2020 to March 2021).

2. Following each ARAC meeting, the Chair of ARAC provides an update to the Board summarising the issues that in the opinion of the ARAC Chair should be brought to the attention of the whole Board. The Annual Report provides a consolidated statement of the main messages included in the in-year updates and presents ARAC's overall opinion on NRW's framework of assurance and control for the Board and the Accounting Officer.

3. ARAC endeavours to comply with best practice as set out in HM Treasury's Audit and Risk Assurance Committee Handbook and currently operates under Terms of Reference (ToR) that were last updated and approved by the Board in May 2020. The Committee's Terms of Reference have been updated for 2021 and were approved at the June ARAC meeting. They will be presented to the September Board for approval. The ToR state that the primary role of the Committee is to advise the Board and the Accounting Officer on matters of risk, financial stewardship and accountability, the framework of internal controls and governance.

4. The ToR also state that "ARAC will provide the Board with an Annual Report summarising the business it has conducted during the year and the conclusions it has drawn therefrom". This report therefore consists of three sections:
    a) Summary of business conducted in 2020/21.
    b) Summary of conclusions drawn and recommendations for 2020/21.
    c) Report on progress against recommendations from 2019/20.

5. The Board is invited to note and comment on the whole of the report and provide such guidance as it sees fit to the Executive and ARAC as to next steps.

Summary of business conducted in 2020/21

6. The Committee received reports and discussed recommendations on a wide range of issues relating to internal controls, risk management, governance, and internal and external audit.

7. In summary, ARAC has been concerned throughout the year by a lack of consistency of control and a weak understanding and implementation of key controls by management and remain of the view that the Board needs to be concerned. The Committee has also expressed concern about information flows within the business, i.e. when staff and front-line managers have raised concerns there is evidence to suggest that these were not adequately acknowledged and addressed.

8. However, the Committee also recognises that significant progress has been made this year across all areas of assurance and control as a result of the strong

work led by the Executive Team. Key pieces of work include the Baseline Review, which has sought to clarify NRW's core budget and activities, and the 3 Lines of Defence work, which has sought to identify and address the root causes behind systemic issues in NRW's assurance and control framework.

9. ARAC has welcomed the discussions at Board about how to prioritise risk and compliance controls across the business and the suggestion to introduce a quarterly report to Board and/or to review the existing suite of performance measures.

10. It is worth noting that the effects from the Covid-19 pandemic continue to be felt at the time of writing (June to September 2021) and NRW operations and capacity are still being affected. In line with Government guidance all staff continue to work from home where able to do so.

Internal Audit

11. The Committee received update reports on Internal Audit activity, together with copies of all completed audit reports. During the course of the Internal Audit year (1 July 2020 to 31 March 2021 – this year the internal audit year was truncated to align it with the financial year going forwards) these were:

Report Title	Opinion*
Grants	**Limited**
Welsh Purchasing Cards	**Limited**
Staff Performance Management	**Limited**
Follow-Up, Timber Sales Contracts	**Some Progress**
Follow-up, Conflicts of Interest	**Some Progress**
Cyber Security	**Moderate**
Information Asset Owners	**Moderate**
Budget Management	**Moderate**
Lone Working	**Moderate**
Waste Regulation and Enforcement	**Moderate**
Quality of Evidence Reports	**Moderate**
GPDR Compliance	**Moderate**
Serious Incident Reviews	**Moderate**
Internal Governance	**Moderate**
Risk Management	**Moderate**
Management of Colliery Spoil Tips	**Moderate**
Procurement under £25k	**Substantial**

IR35 Off Payroll, Working Process Review	**Management Letter**
Total	

*See Annex 2 for definitions of audit opinions. NRW adopted the model used by Government Internal Audit Agency, which is seen as best practice for public sector organisations.

12. For the second year in a row, the Annual Opinion for 2020/21 was limited overall assurance. Although the number of areas where significant control weaknesses were identified by audit had decreased when compared to the previous year, the audits have uncovered systemic issues throughout NRW's systems and procedures, and not enough progress had been made on previously identified issues.

13. Three audits received limited confidence judgements in 2020/21: Welsh Purchasing Card, Grants, and Staff Performance Management. The Welsh Purchasing Card and Staff Performance Management audits both found evidence of continuing cultural issues, with poor performance going unchallenged and a lack of compliance with the prescribed processes. The second line of defence was also found to be absent. The Grants audit highlighted that the grant programme remained significantly under-resourced and that implementation of the new structure had been slow. A common issue throughout the audit was the need to strengthen evidencing of decisions and audit trails for activities, which is a re-occurring theme for NRW.

14. Resource issues have continued to impact on the Internal Audit team during 2020/21 due to the departure of the Internal Audit Manager. A new internal Auditor was recruited in September 2020 to help strengthen the team and a new Head of Internal Audit has now been appointed (commencing on 1 July 2021), who will operate at the Leadership Team level.

15. Although previous concerns about core resourcing have been addressed, ARAC have some residual concerns about staffing and resourcing of the Internal Audit function and remain of the view that it is not the right time to remove any resource from the current co-sourced model.

16. Transitional arrangements have been put in place to facilitate the transfer of fraud, bribery and corruption investigations into the Internal Audit team and allow time for additional resource to be secured to ensure a sustainable team is in place amid continued investment in the Internal Audit function. ARAC have requested that these arrangements be kept under review in light of overall resourcing of the fraud investigation and internal audit functions.

17. One planned audit – 'Marine' was superseded and the following audits form part of the new Audit Plan for 2021/22:
- Alignment of Plans
- Corporate Dashboard
- Flood Asset Management
- Restocking
- Commercial Activities – Energy Delivery Key Stakeholders Management/Engagement

External Audit

18. The Auditor General for Wales is statutorily appointed to conduct the external audit of Natural Resources Wales and in this context, Audit Wales (AW) presented a plan at the April 2020 meeting for the auditing of the 2020-21 NRW financial statement and annual accounts. This document clarified the respective responsibilities of NRW and AW.

19. Progress updates were provided by AW at the April and June ARAC meetings. AW continue to advise that NRW's accounts and records are of a good standard and any potential qualification issues for 2020/21 are currently being monitored.

20. The Management Letter and recommendations stemming from the 2019-20 audit were received at the November 2020 ARAC meeting. Eleven recommendations were made, many of which related to timber sales/commercial activities. Themes included documenting decisions and applying NRW's processes and authorisation limits consistently.

Co-operation between Internal and External Audit

21. The Committee periodically reviews the effectiveness of the working relationship between Internal and External Audit. This was last reviewed in March 2019 and was found to be operating well.

22. Last year's report recommended that a further review be conducted before March 2021, but this was not completed due to resourcing issues. It is now recommended that a review take place before December 2021.

Financial Stewardship

23. The Committee has exercised oversight of the development of NRW's financial management and accounting arrangements, including the review and endorsement of NRW's Annual Report and Accounts (ARA). As of June 2021, it is the intention that the ARA be signed off at NRW's July 2021 Board meeting.

24. Regular reports were made to ARAC on any instances of special payments, suspected fraud or theft and any financial losses that were incurred. No fraud had been detected during the 2020/21 period but Internal Audit had been made aware of some compliance issues.

25. Following a review of NRW's approach to counter fraud, the Financial Governance Team will now have responsibility for the Counter Fraud strategy and the organisation's approach to assessing our risk to fraud and prevention in line with the Cabinet Office's Counter Fraud Standards.

26. The quinquennial Forest Valuation was provided on 31 March 2021 which resulted in an 88% increase in the valuation of the Welsh Government Woodland Estate.

Risk management

27. The Committee has a key role in challenging the effectiveness of NRW's risk identification and management. The way NRW identifies, manages and escalates risks has historically been recognised as weak and a key area for improvement. However, ARAC noted transformational change in risk management in 2020/21 facilitated by effective working between the Board and Executive Team.

28. PwC's assistance in providing external consultancy work to improve our risk management framework has now concluded. However, a calling-off contract has been put in place as a contingency plan in case of delays in recruiting a replacement for the Interim Head of Risk.

29. ARAC receive risk updates and review the Strategic Risk Register three times per year as well as being provided with an annual report on the deep dives of risks carried out by other sub-committees of the Board. During 2020/21 ARAC also reviewed the risks at Leadership Team Group and Business Board levels as a one-off exercise.

Special Areas of Scrutiny during 2020/21

30. The Committee's agenda for 2020/21 included a number of special areas of scrutiny, including:
   - The recently established Programme Management Office (PMO).
   - Consideration of NRW's long term timber contracts.
   - Arrangements for assurance on Wellbeing, Health & Safety, including Forest Safety.
   - Progress against the Governance & Risk Improvement Plan (GRIP).
   - Whistleblowing and prescribed persons report.
   - The proposed Pathway to Improved Governance and Compliance and updates on the associated Compliance Action Plan (now referred to as the 3 Lines of Defence project).
   - SIRO report.
   - Revised operating model for fraud and counter fraud.
   - Cyber Resilience in the Public Sector.

Annual Assessment of ARAC Effectiveness

31. An effectiveness survey was completed by regular and occasional attendees of the Committee prior to the September 2020 ARAC meeting, in line with the Committee's Terms of Reference and in accordance with HM Treasury's Handbook for ARACs. ARAC concluded its self-assessment in November 2020 facilitated by the National Audit Office checklist.

32. The Committee considered there was scope to improve training and induction arrangements for new committee members and a proposed training plan has been prepared in response. This year's Annual Effectiveness Review will begin in September. ARAC has also identified the need to provide training for new attendees on how to give effective presentations.

33. ARAC have agreed to reduce the number of meetings to four per year from 2022 (with the addition of an ARA meeting in July). The Committee have also agreed to continue to meet in a virtual capacity on a more permanent basis subject to training needs and the appointment of new Non-Executive Directors.

Reporting to and from the Board

34. ARAC takes seriously its responsibility to ensure effective communication between the Committee and the Board. The agenda of each Board meeting

includes a standing item to receive a report from ARAC providing an overview of the most recent meeting and identifying any issues of significance for the Board.

35. This ARAC annual report for 2020/21 completes the reporting process for the year.

Summary of conclusions drawn and recommendations for 2020/21

36. The following conclusions and recommendations have been drawn from the summary of business conducted in 2020/21:

Recommendation 1: ARAC to keep under review the transitional arrangements to facilitate the transfer of fraud, bribery and corruption investigations into the Internal Audit team in light of overall resourcing of the fraud investigation and internal audit functions.

Recommendation 2: NRW should review the effectiveness of the working relationship between Internal and External Audit by December 2021.

Report on progress against recommendations from 2019/20

37. A new internal Auditor was recruited in September 2020 to help strengthen the team and a new Head of Internal Audit has now been appointed (commencing on 1 July 2021) who will operate at Leadership Team level, which addresses Recommendation 1 from last year's report.

38. NRW and Welsh Government are currently revising the Framework Agreement that includes the calling-in requirements for Novel, Contentious or Repercussive (NCR) Issues, although this process has been delayed by the election and appointment of a new Minister. We have also reviewed and updated our training and guidance for staff to address Recommendation 2.

39. Unfortunately the review of the effectiveness of the working relationship between Internal and External Audit was not completed by the March deadline due to resourcing issues and therefore Recommendation 3 has not been completed. It is now recommended that a review take place before December 2021.

40. A training plan for new and existing ARAC members has been prepared based on the feedback from the last Annual Effectiveness Review. It includes a range of costed proposals that can be tailored for individual members to address Recommendation 4 from last year's report.

Priorities for ARAC's 2021/22 programme

- Supporting the induction of the new Head of Internal Audit and the maintenance of an appropriately resourced Internal Audit function to enable the delivery of a robust Audit Plan.
- Continued review of, and engagement with, the Internal Audit and 3 Lines of Defence programmes to improve the culture of control across the business.
- Continued challenge and support to ensure improvements in the robustness and timeliness of implementing key audit recommendations.
- Oversight of the roll-out of the new two-tier Internal Audit action process, i.e. separate deadlines for actions and embedding of actions.

- Continued challenge of the effectiveness and adequacy of the risk management arrangements and disciplines applied across NRW.
- Continued scrutiny of arrangements for implementing improved controls over the grants process, forestry operations and timber sales governance.
- Continued scrutiny of NRW's whistleblowing arrangements and Cyber Security, as recommended by HM Treasury's Handbook for ARACs.
- Review of any material instances of deviation from the Scheme of Delegation or agreed governance.

Acknowledgements

The Committee would like to extend its sincere thanks to the Director of Finance & Corporate Services, the Secretariat, the Internal Audit team, KPMG and to Audit Wales for the significant improvements that were evident in 2020/21 and for the invaluable support that they have given to the Committee, as well as to all those who have contributed to the spirit of openness and constructive challenge which the Committee continues to espouse in the conduct of its business.

Catherine Brown
Chair, Audit and Risk Assurance Committee
Natural Resources Wales
September 2021

Annex 2: Overall Internal Audit Opinion

Coverage	Core Definitions for Annual and Engagement Opinions	Optional RAG	Core Definitions for Annual and Engagement Opinions
Governance, risk management and control framework Assurance Opinion on mitigating controls over the risk to the delivery of objectives	**Substantial** The framework of governance, risk management and control is adequate and effective.	Green	• Adequacy and Effectiveness of the governance, risk management and control framework • Impact of any weakness on delivery of objectives • Extent of risk exposure • Materiality: by value to the entity, by value in the engagement context and by nature (e.g. irregularity and reputational risk) • We may also take account of Management responses to recommendations/ management actions
	Moderate Some improvements are required to enhance the adequacy and effectiveness of the framework of governance, risk management and control.	Yellow	
	Limited There are significant weaknesses in the framework of governance, risk management and control such that it could be or could become inadequate and ineffective.	Amber	
	Unsatisfactory There are fundamental weaknesses in the framework of governance, risk management and control such that it is inadequate and ineffective or is likely to fail.	Red	

Board Paper

	Paper Details
Paper title:	Performance Report Quarter 1 2021/22
Paper Reference:	21-09-B12
Paper sponsored by:	Clare Pillman, Chief Executive
Paper Presented by:	Executive Team
Purpose of the paper	Scrutiny
Recommendation	The Board is requested to scrutinise NRW performance for the first Quarter of 2021/ 22 and specifically consider: • Progress against each measure reported on the Business Plan Performance Dashboard • Actions NRW is taking • Predicted end of year out turn for each measure

Issue

1. This performance report is based on the measures that were signed off by the Board in May alongside the 2021/22 Business Plan. The Board is asked to scrutinise the report which is published on our website.

Background

2. The Business Plan Performance Dashboard report is one of the Board's principal ways of scrutinising our delivery.

3. The performance report (Annex 1) was developed as part of the process to prepare the 2021/22 Business Plan with the Board and the Executive Team, working closely with the Leadership Team.

4. The report consists of:

   • A **dashboard** providing an overview of performance against the 2021/22 measures set out by Strategic Priority as set out in the Business Plan.

- **Table of strategic priorities and topics** to help navigate the report.
- **Summary for each Topic** showing progress relating to the subheadings in the Business Plan
- **Details for each specific measure** with year-end position

5. This is the first report against our Business Plan Performance Dashboard for 2021/22: it relates to our Corporate Plan to 2022, which will now run to 2023.

Assessment

6. Our performance for Quarter 1 is summarised below:

	Quarter 1 (1 April – 30 June 2021)	Quarter 2 (1 July to 30 Sept 2021)	Quarter 3 (1 Oct – 31 Dec 2021)	Expected Year End (31st March 2022)
Red	3			0
Amber	10			4
Green	21			30
Total	**34**			**34**

7. The Board is requested to scrutinise the performance report, noting the following:

- Much of our work relies on partners who have quite rightly needed to redirect their work as a result of Covid-19.
- Although Covid-19 restrictions are gradually easing many of our staff still have caring and some home-schooling responsibilities; many staff are still working from home.
- Additional internal measures (on payment performance and Personal Development Plans for example) have been included in this report, with exacting targets. This is as an interim as we move towards a separate internal performance dashboard which will sit alongside our Quarterly reporting. The internal performance dashboard will be reported on from Q3 and will be based on a 'basket of measures' which are currently internally monitored by our Leadership Team. Measures on Health and Safety monitoring, Accident Near Misses, and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion were already part of the original Business Plan Dashboard.

8. Below we have briefly highlighted the findings from this report by Strategic Priority: details can be found in the report itself.

Responding to the climate emergency

- **Area of new woodland created on the NRW Estate** is rated **Green.** Our Quarter 1 milestone is to have sufficient sites in progress to be confident about achieving our year-end of 150 ha acquired / identified and 150 ha planted. We are currently investigating 29 sites totalling c.900 ha and have had offers accepted on

four sites totalling 130 ha. We will now progress the acquisitions, identify further suitable land, and plan for planting which will take place in Q4.

- **Actions undertaken to restore Welsh peatlands** is currently **Green.** We have recruited all project staff members and have identified priority restoration areas for 2021/22. We have established that the NRW Estate element will be 170 ha. We will now continue to develop projects that NRW are delivering directly and work with partners. We will also push forward the allocation of our Strategic Allocated Funding (SAF) grant to strategic partners.

- **Maintain flood risk assets in high risk systems at target condition** is rated **Amber.** Our target for this measure is 98%. We are currently at 97.5% for Q1, the same as for our Q4 performance last year. The number of assets Below Required Condition (BRC) has decreased by one during Q1 from 89 to 88. To reach the target, we need to have no more than 70 assets Below Required Condition. We have been implementing the action plan agreed by NRW Board (March 2020), following the 'Deep Dive' into this measure. We have already seen improvements as a result of this work.

Responding to the nature emergency

- **Priority actions undertaken on protected sites to improve condition of features** is currently **Green**. This measure fell to Red at the end of last year. We are keen to improve our performance. Having retained Welsh Government funded Fixed Term staff and developed better integrated work programmes we are in a better position for 2021/22 and will regularly monitor progress throughout the year. We will work with our Local Management Agreement customers to deliver further improvements; balancing customers' needs with a compliant process. Our milestone for Q1 is to have the work programme and actions agreed, which we have completed. There are 256 actions in the work programme for Wales and 20% of these are either underway or complete. We will now continue to deliver the actions in the programme aiming for at least 30% to be underway or complete by the end of Q2 and 80% by year end.

- **Delivering targeted action for declining species or those on the edge of extinction** is currently **Green.** We have completed the review of actions and progress of the Fresh Water Pearl Mussel (FWPM) Strategy**.** This has informed the development of an action plan for the next six years. We will now implement the habitat restoration and captive rearing actions identified in the FWPM Strategy. We will also continue to work on developing our priorities for other declining species and implement the next stage of the Natur am Byth National Lottery Heritage Fund bid for the next reporting period.

- **Number of UK Woodland Assurance Standard (UKWAS) Corrective Action Requests (CARs) and Observations (Obs) open and progress towards**

closing them is rated **Amber.** In 2020, we retained certification with 1 major CAR, 4 minor CARs and 7 Obs, fewer than in 2019 and we want fewer still. The 2020 major CAR is now closed. We believe we have sufficient evidence to close 1 minor CAR and 2 Obs. We will continue to gather more evidence to close the other 3 minor CARs and we are preparing staff and systems for the 2021 audit scheduled for August in South East and South West regions.

- **Progress of our work to reduce pollution from metal mines** is currently **Amber.** We have undertaken preliminary assessments for 33 mines against a target of 30 this Quarter. Final reports have been delivered for 6 of these and draft reports received for 21. We have completed the feasibility study / outline design for Wemyss Mill - Surface Water Diversion. Since developing our targets, we have needed to reschedule delivery of our three detailed designs with one detailed design completed, for Abbey Consoles main works this Quarter. Detailed design work for surface water management at Llanerchyaur Mine Adit is now programmed for Q2 and for the related Cae Conroi Dam Safety Works for Q4. In the meantime, construction on the ground continues and though we have rescheduled work across the year, delivery of the programme by year-end is still on track.

- **Deliver remaining water related investigations and develop updated River Basin Management Plans (RBMPs)** is currently rated **Red.** Our milestone for this measure is to complete 135 of the 447 outstanding investigations in Q1: we have so far have completed 73. We will now prioritise the investigations work and have a work plan in place to achieve the target by year end. We are evaluating the investigation targets for the remainder of 2021/22. Priority work areas such as SAC (Special Areas of Conservation) rivers are impacting on resource availability for WFD (Water Framework Directive) investigations. We are also looking at what additional investigations may be required in relation to SAC rivers. We are currently on track to achieve our activity to review and respond to the draft RBMP consultation stakeholder responses to inform Cycle 3 RBMPs in Q4 and we do expect to be Green at year-end.

Developing and using our evidence with partners to advocate for and deliver SMNR

- Our work to **Promote, advocate and encourage use of State of Natural Resources Report** is rated **Green**. Our milestone for Q1 is delivery of an engagement pack, engagement plan and approach to messaging that helps benefits realisation. In line with the State of Natural Resources Report 2020 (SoNaRR2020) engagement plan, we have provided briefing notes and standard presentations to staff to enable them to share the messages in SoNaRR2020 with colleagues and partners. We have produced videos to accompany the briefing notes which are available from our website. Presentations have been given at Welsh Government fora and at key stakeholder meetings. The response from

Welsh Government and stakeholders has generally been very positive. We will now share the videos with staff and continue to engage with our partners. All staff will be encouraged to discuss the findings of SoNaRR2020 with their partners and seek feedback

Developing NRW into an excellent organisation that serves the communities of Wales

- Our **Response to incidents (initial category 'High', within 4 hours)** currently sits at **Amber.** Our target for this measure is 95%. Performance for this quarter is 93%, up from 87% at the end of last Quarter. We will continue with the work that has seen our performance improve, targeting support to specific teams, where it can be most effective. Further interventions to streamline our process and the use and accessibility of the Wales Incident Recording System (WIRS) will also continue to be actioned. However, the improvement has been driven by support provided by temporary posts, for which the funding ends in March 2022. Due to this, most of these staff have now secured permanent roles elsewhere in NRW and it is hard to recruit backfill for such a short period. We anticipate performance will deteriorate as a result, and we anticipate we will be Amber at year-end.

- Our **Make payments on time** measure is currently **Red.** Our target for this measure is 95%. We have only achieved 79% due to lack of available staff (mainly abnormal sickness levels). We have been focusing on the clearance of the backlog of invoices received in the mailbox. We will temporarily increase the staffing levels which will take 4-6 weeks to have an impact. Our target for this measure is 95%. For the next reporting period we plan to be working at our 95% target and for every reporting period after that. We currently expect we will be Green at year-end.

- **Staff personal development plans in place** is rated **Amber.** Our target is to have 70% of last year's PDPs agreed and signed off and 60% new ones agreed**.** We have 78% of last year's PDP's completed on our MyNRW system and 58% of new PDPs agreed and in place on the system for the start of the year 2021/2022. We are issuing reminders to managers to input their staff's end of year PDPs onto the system. We will be running more refresher sessions on the performance management processes at the start of Q3 and Q4. We expect to be Green at year end.

- **Complete agreed (mandatory) eLearning** is currently **Red.** Our target for this measure is that 90% undergone required training. We have achieved 81% as of end of June 2021. The completion of mandatory eLearning has increased by 18% since the start of the reporting year in March 21. We will continue to provide monthly completion reports to Leadership Team; managers have been given access to reporting dashboards giving them access to the statistics for their teams

and the ability to send email reminders to people who have not completed the courses. The Training and Development team will remind all staff the reasons why these courses are essential to complete. We expect to be Green at year-end.

Responding to the Covid-19 pandemic and the UK Leaving the European Union, taking opportunities for a green recovery

- **NRW's contribution following EU Exit** is rated **Green**. We are continuing to contribute to the development of new legislation following EU Exit, supporting Welsh Government and coordinating a comprehensive response from NRW. We are working with other agencies, staff across NRW and with the Interim Environmental Protection Assessor (Wales) on environmental governance and have briefed our Executive Team on the long-term impact, risks and opportunities related to the new oversight body and its effect on NRW's work. In particular, the increased risk of Judicial Review, strategic complaints work and advisory work. We will develop a business case for the management of permanent new and additional work following EU Exit. We expect to be **Amber** at year-end due to the temporary nature of the programme and new and additional permanent work that is not resourced long-term. This is currently the subject of a business case.

- **Implement Covid-19 Renewal programme** is currently **Green.** We have made significant progress in establishing a programme team, with identified leads for each of the 9 work streams. The individual workstreams have made progress in developing proof of concepts / trial approaches in areas such as hybrid working arrangements, developing new accommodation plans, training, ICT and development of shared office hubs. We will now complete our Renewal Programme Business Justification case and continue to implement the workstream trials. We are currently on track to be Green at year-end.

Recommendation

9. The Board is requested to scrutinise and agree the performance report for Quarter 1 to confirm its suitability for publication.

Key Risks

10. If the performance information provided does not accurately reflect progress towards delivery of the Business Plan, then the Board will be unable to fulfil their role to scrutinise NRW's delivery.

11. If we are further affected by Covid-19, the implications of EU Exit and extreme weather events, staff may be completely overstretched, and we will have reduced capacity to respond.

Next Steps

12. The performance report will be discussed with Welsh Government and submitted to the Minister. It will be published on the Natural Resources Wales website.

Financial Implications

13. 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.

Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

14. The relevant equality impact assessment covers our Well-being Statement, Business Plan 2020/21 and Corporate Plan up to 2022, and was updated in March 2021.

Index of Annexes

Annex 1 – Quarter 1 Business Plan Performance Dashboard

Annex 1: Business Plan Performance Dashboard

The green, amber or red status* of each of our Business Plan's dashboard measures.

Respond to the Climate Emergency

Current	Measure	Year end	Page
Amber	Climate emergency action across NRW	Green	6
Green	Verification of Glastir Woodland grant scheme applications	Green	8
Green	Area of new woodland created on the NRW Estate	Green	9
Green	Actions undertaken to restore Welsh peatlands	Green	11
Amber	Implement Flood Review recommendations	Amber	13
Amber	Maintain flood risk assets in high risk systems at target condition	Amber	14
Green	Properties with reduced or sustained protection through capital work	Green	15

Respond to the Nature Emergency

Current	Measure	Year end	Page
Amber	Biodiversity action across NRW	Green	18
Green	Priority actions undertaken on protected sites to improve condition of features	Green	20
Green	Actions undertaken on National Nature Reserves on NRW managed land to improve	Green	21
Green	Delivering targeted action for declining species or those on the edge of extinction	Green	22
Amber	Number of UKWAS Corrective Action Requests and Observations open and progress…	Green	24
Amber	Progress of our work to reduce pollution from metal mines	Green	25
Green	Support implementation of the Welsh National Marine Plan	Green	27
Green	Progress NRW actions in Wales Marine Protected Area network management actions plan	Green	28
Red	Deliver remaining water related investigations & develop new River Basin Management Plans	Green	30

*The key to green, amber or red performance assessment is on page 63 of this report

Developing and using our evidence with partners to advocate for and deliver SMNR

Current	Measure	Year end	Page
Green	Promote, advocate and encourage use of State of Natural Resources Report	Green	33
Green	Use of Area Statements within NRW to embed priorities and opportunities	Green	35

Developing NRW into an excellent organisation that serves the communities of Wales

Current	Measure	Year end	Page
Amber	Response to incidents (initial category 'High', within 4 hours)	Amber	38
Green	Performance of regulated sites and water quality discharges	Green	40
Green	Deliver NRW's combined health and educator training	Green	42
Red	Make payments on time	Green	44
Green	Develop and implement a People Strategy for NRW	Green	45
Amber	Staff personal development plans are in place	Green	46
Red	Complete agreed (mandatory) eLearning	Green	47
Green	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion action	Green	48
Green	Wellbeing, health and safety active monitoring undertaken	Green	50
Green	Number of near miss reports	Green	51
Green	Progress the Customer Experience Strategy	Green	53
Amber	Deliver our Stakeholder Engagement Plan	Green	54
Amber	Implement our Commercial Strategy	Green	56
Green	Timber volume offered to market / sold / dispatched	Green	57

Responding to the Covid-19 pandemic and the UK Leaving the European Union, taking opportunities for a green recovery

Current	Measure	Year end	Page
Green	NRW's contribution following EU Exit	Amber	60
Green	Implement Covid-19 Renewal programme	Green	62

Direct link to each Topic in this report *(links below / right)*

Respond to the Climate Emergency

Respond to the Nature Emergency

Developing and using our evidence…

Developing NRW into an excellent organisation…

Responding to the Covid-19 pandemic…

Each topic report *(linked above / left)* reflects a short summary of recent progress in relation to that topic and also states the Business Plan dashboard measures related to that topic.

Priority: Responding to the Climate Emergency

Responding to the climate emergency through coordinating action and delivery in relation to climate adaptation and mitigation, including natural resources impacts and opportunities to reduce Wales' carbon footprint and contribute to achieving a net zero Carbon Wales by 2030 *[note: external link]*.

Our NRW Business Plan sets out the following topics in relation to this priority:

- **Reducing Our Carbon Footprint**
- **Creating New Woodland**
- **Restoring Peatland**
- **Managing Flood Risk**

The following pages reflect recent progress on each of those topics, along with the latest performance position in relation to the Business Plan dashboard measure/s for each.

Topic: Reducing Our Carbon Footprint

Topic summary progress:

- Our work focuses on 4 areas:
    - procurement systems – how we make our purchases
    - NRW managed land
    - transport
    - and built estate – our offices and buildings

    We are working on a forward plan for NRW procurement systems and developing a pathway approach to 2030 for how we will decarbonise our transport and built estate.

- We continue to deliver NRW's Offshore Renewable Energy Programme, providing timely advice and developing positions, guidance and evidence, to support sustainable development of marine renewable energy.

Topic owner: Ruth Jenkins

Business Plan dashboard measure/s for this topic:

- **Climate emergency across NRW**

Measure: Climate emergency action across NRW

The measure reflects activity being undertaken on the Climate emergency across NRW: through the delivery of our climate change decarbonisation programme.

Latest position (to end of June 2021):

- Our **milestone for this measure is report and review previous carbon emissions to help identify and agree with our CCDCP (Climate Change and Decarbonisation Change Programme) the priority deliverables for our top ten priority areas.**
- We have partially completed this activity. We reviewed the 2020/21 emissions data, compared it to 2019/20 and presented our findings to our Climate Change and Decarbonisation Change Programme at its meeting on 29th June 2021, and presented our Annual Plan at the same meeting. Whilst the overall plan was agreed, there is some further work to do on confirming priorities.
- **This measure is amber.**

What we are doing next:

- We will now be undertaking a prioritisation exercise of the Annual Plan for its final agreement and reviewing data to be received during August and September 2021 from energy surveys and suggested low carbon pathways for our built estate and a low emission review of our fleet. Priorities for the annual plan also to be signed off which will bring this measure back to green.
- Our **milestone for this measure is to ensure the Renewal process has the evidence required to ensure organisational decarbonisation is embedded in the programme for the next reporting period**.
- We are currently on track to achieve our **year end milestone activity to produce outcome report on delivery of the top ten priority areas of the CCDCP** in quarter four. We currently expect we will be green at year end.

Measure owner: Ruth Jenkins

Q1	to Q2	to Q3	Expected year end
Amber			Green

See here for key used for Red / Amber / Green status

[To return to start of report - see Business Plan Performance Dashboard - pages 1 and 2]

Topic: Creating New Woodland

Topic summary progress:

- Excellent progress has been made with the internal recruitment of 11 staff to undertake the expanded contract verification work for Welsh Government's Glastir Woodland Grants.
- As of 7th June, Welsh Government Rural Payments Wales colleagues confirmed parallel ability to undertake accompanied site visits with a maximum of 4 people following NRW Covid-19 protocols, which has been welcomed by the forest industry.
- We have engaged with a Ministerial 'Deep Dive' on woodland creation and timber use and provided substantial evidence to the task and finish group.
- We continue to progress woodland creation on the Welsh Government Woodland Estate.

Topic owner: Ruth Jenkins

Business Plan dashboard measure/s for this topic:

- **Verification of Glastir Woodland grant scheme applications**
- **Area of new woodland created on the NRW Estate**

Measure: Verification of Glastir Woodland Grant scheme applications

This measure reflects NRW work to verify applications for Glastir Woodland Creation (GWC) and Glastir Woodland Restoration (GWR) Grant Schemes. This includes reflection of the number of plan applications and area (in hectares) verified for the relevant scheme rounds.

Latest position (to end of June 2021):

- Our **milestone for this measure is to provide the number of applications and area** for the relevant scheme rounds.
- For Round 9, we expect to receive 213 applications from Welsh Government (WG) totalling 1790 hectares. To date 124 have been received. Of these, we have completed 58 management plans and returned them to WG equating to a total of 240 hectares. A further 66 plans are in progress. This accounts for a further 465 hectares of potential new woodland.
- We are encouraging WG to pass the outstanding 89 applications for Round 9 on to us and expect to start receiving some of the 141 management plans that WG have received for their Round 10 window shortly.
- This measure is **green** as progress is on target.

What we are doing next:

- We will continue to verify GWC Round 9 applications and also the GWC Round 10 and GWR Round 9 applications as they come in.
- Our **milestone for this measure for the next reporting period is provide the number of applications and area** for the relevant scheme rounds.
- We are currently on track to achieve our **year end milestone activity to provide the number of applications and area** for the relevant scheme rounds in quarter four. We currently expect we will be green at year end.

Measure owner: Ruth Jenkins

Q1	to Q2	to Q3	Expected year end
Green			Green

See here for key used for Red / Amber / Green status

[To return to start of report - see Business Plan Performance Dashboard - pages 1 and 2]

Measure: Area of new woodland created on the NRW Estate

This measure reflects the area of new woodland created on the NRW Estate (hectares acquired / identified if already in ownership and hectares planted). It covers the contribution of NRW's land estate 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 June 2021):

- Our quarter 1 **milestone for this measure is to have sufficient sites in progress to be confident about achieving our year-end milestone of 150 ha acquired / identified and 150 ha planted.**
- We are currently investigating 29 sites totalling c.900 ha and have had offers accepted on four sites totalling 130 ha.
- **This measure is** Green.

What we are doing next:

- We will now progress the acquisitions, identify further suitable land and plan for planting which will take place in Quarter four. We had challenges securing land in 2020/21 and the market continues to be difficult. We will therefore continue to pursue a wide range of sites and types of acquisition and build a pipeline of sites for planting in future years.
- Our Quarter 2 **milestone is to have sufficient sites in progress and/or acquired / identified to be confident about achieving our year-end milestone.**
- We currently expect we will be Green at year end.

Measure owner: Dominic Driver

Q1	to Q2	to Q3	Expected year end
Green			Green

See here for key used for Red / Amber / Green status

[To return to start of report - see Business Plan Performance Dashboard - pages 1 and 2]

Topic: Restoring Peatland

Topic summary progress:

NRW is continuing to progress work on its peatland restoration programme. We are ensuring that peatlands are sustainably managed and safeguarded to recover their critical biodiversity resource, store carbon, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and play their role as a component of Natural Flood Risk Management.

Projects led by NRW in 21/22:

- 5 Year National Peatland Action Plan programme - delivering 600 ha of restoration activity annually and co-ordinating effort on peatland restoration in Wales.
- LIFE Welsh Raised Bogs - working to restore seven of the best examples of raised bogs in Wales.
- Pen y Cymoedd - restoration works as mitigation for the development of the Pen y Cymoedd windfarm (aims to restore 1500 hectares over 25 years).
- Progressing a new LIFE bid for a Quaking Bog restoration project
- Lowland peatland survey
- NRW is also a partner in a number of other regional projects
- We continue to progress conversion of degraded peatland on the NRW Estate to healthy wet bog where it will help combat climate change.

Topic owner: Ruth Jenkins

Business Plan dashboard measure/s for this topic:
- **Actions undertaken to restore Welsh peatlands**

Measure: Actions undertaken to restore Welsh peatlands

We are embarking on a national programme of peatland restoration across Wales. This measure reflects actions taken to restore Welsh peatlands, including on the NRW Estate. It includes an update on the number of hectares of peatland restoration activity undertaken on the NRW Estate and other land.

Latest position (to end of June 2021):

- Our **milestone for this measure is all new posts recruited to and all potential groundworks for peatland restoration activity for 2021-22 identified.**
- We have completed this activity. We have recruited all project staff members and have identified priority restoration areas for 21/22. We have established that the NRW Estate element will be 170 ha.
- This measure is green.

What we are doing next:

- We will now continue to develop projects that NRW are delivering directly and work with partners. We will also push forward the allocation of our Strategic Allocated Funding (SAF) grant to strategic partners.
- Our **milestone for this measure for the next reporting period is NRW National Peatland Action Programme grants allocated to all recipients**. We are dependent on the grant allocation to remain on track to achieve our year end milestone activity of 600 ha of peatland restoration activity undertaken.
- We are currently on track to achieve our **year end milestone activity of 600 ha of peatland restoration activity undertaken (including 170 ha on the NRW Estate)**.
- We currently expect we will be green at year end.

Measure owner: Ruth Jenkins

Q1	to Q2	to Q3	Expected year end
Green			Green

See here for key used for Red / Amber / Green status

[To return to start of report - see Business Plan Performance Dashboard - pages 1 and 2]

Topic: Managing Flood Risk

Topic summary progress:

- Our **Capital Programme** of £17m is progressing well, with significant projects under or nearing construction start (e.g. Ely Bridge, Llyn Tegid, Stephenson Street (Newport) and Ammanford), plus many other non-scheme projects, such as the Flood Warning System replacement project. The value of the capital programme this year is high (e.g. compared to £13m last year) and is a significant draw on many key staff's time.
- The **Flood Recovery and Review Implementation Programme** is well established. Many short term tasks are complete or ongoing, and the challenge is around the more complex and longer term tasks. Staff capacity is a significant issue, for this and all flood risk work. There are recruitment challenges in a competitive market with scarce specialist skills. **Skills development** is an area of focus, with much to do, and only so much can be done immediately.
- Our **Improvement Programme** contains 30 active projects across the range of our activities. Several are significant ICT projects which are delivering core customer-facing systems. We are working to ensure that the requirements for the ongoing operation and maintenance of these systems is recognised and fully funded. Other key projects including an assessment of our strategic hydrometric network needs have commenced.
- Our **Revenue Maintenance Programme** is delivering within the available budget. Our work on a new Risk-Based Revenue Allocation Model (ARBRAM) is progressing well, and this will enable us to make better risk-based decisions on maintenance work, as current budgets are not sufficient for all such work.
- There is a **high and continuing workload arising from recent flood events**. This includes large numbers of requests for information and for flood alleviation work from public and politicians, right across Wales.
- The independent review into the failure of the **reservoir spillway at Toddbrook** has reported, and we are active in considering the recommendations whilst also taking steps now to improve reservoir risk management in Wales.
- We continue to push for recognition of and action against the challenges ahead, particularly in regard to the need for significant **adaptation** in response to the **Climate Emergency.** Topic owner: Jeremy Parr

Business Plan dashboard measure/s for this topic:

- **Implement Flood Review recommendations**
- **Maintain flood risk assets in high risk systems at target condition**
- **Properties with reduced risk or sustained protection through capital work**

Measure: Implement Flood Review recommendations

This measure is the delivery status against the recommendations identified in our Review of the February 2020 floods. These were the most significant floods in Wales since the 1970s, and our review into our own performance identified areas for improvement and recommended actions. The Flood Recovery and Review Implementation Programme (FRRIP) was established to manage and track delivery of the recommendations.

Latest position (to end of June 2021):

- Progress (through to benefits realisation and closure of tasks) is being assessed at our FRRIP Board, and also through to our Flood Risk Management Committee. The latest progress report to the FRRIP Board shows **Amber** status.
- Good progress is being made but challenges remain. Some actions are straightforward, whilst others are complex, requiring delivery over a medium/long timeframe, and additional resource. All are progressing, but for several it is early stages and sustained effort is required. There are ongoing issues in staff capacity and recruitment. We estimated that we would need additional 60-70 FTEs (full time equivalent staff) to implement and sustain the actions. We have been recruiting to an additional 50 posts so far, fully utilising the available budget. 35 posts have been filled, but most internally and so far only a net external increase of 14 staff. There are also challenges due to scarce skills and a competitive recruitment market.
- Staff capacity is also affected by ongoing work following all flooding events, which places high demands on staff time.

What we are doing next:

- We continue to deliver where we can, with the resources we have, and at suitable pace. We are taking steps to build our capacity and skills to deliver, but lack of skills in the sector is a significant issue, not only for us.
- We will take all steps available towards Green at year end, but until full recruitment is achieved, Amber is forecast.

Measure owner: Jeremy Parr

Q1	to Q2	to Q3	Expected year end
Amber			Amber

See here for key used for Red / Amber / Green status

[To return to start of report - see Business Plan Performance Dashboard - pages 1 and 2]

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

NRW owns and/or maintains approximately 4,000 flood risk assets of which 3,500 are considered to be 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 June 2021):

- Our **target for this measure is 98% of flood risk assets** in high risk systems at target condition
- This measure is amber: we have not achieved this. We are at 97.5% for Q1, the same as for our Q4 performance last year. The number of assets Below Required Condition (BRC) has decreased by one during Q1 from 89 to 88. To reach the target, we need to have no more than 70 assets Below Required Condition.

What we are doing next:

- We have been implementing the action plan agreed by NRW Board (March 2020), following the 'Deep Dive' into this measure. We have already seen improvements as a result of this work and will continue to work closely with the Operational teams to improve performance in line with the action plan.
- Current projections are that if all planned work progresses well, then we will be close to the year-end target of 98% and we may achieve Green. However, we are reporting a projected year-end Amber position as there may be Covid-19 related or other delays, as well as ongoing inspections giving rise to more assets identified as below required condition

Measure owner: Mike Evans

Q1	to Q2	to Q3	Expected year end
Amber			Amber

See here for key used for Red / Amber / Green status

[To return to start of report - see Business Plan Performance Dashboard - pages 1 and 2]

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

This measure reflects the number 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 June 2021):

- Our Flood Risk Management Capital programme contains a wide array of work this year which will both reduce the risk of flooding to communities through enhancements to existing defences or by constructing new flood alleviation schemes. We will also sustain the level of protection to communities across Wales through our capital maintenance work which ensures existing flood alleviation schemes perform as required when severe weather incidents occur.
- So far this year, we have completed the main works at Cadoxton outfall (Vale of Glamorgan), and this benefits **12 homes and 80 businesses**. Preparatory work for other projects is progressing well, but as always subject to project risks, which are being managed. Our maintenance programme has also been progressing with a large number of refurbishment, repair and maintenance projects continuing on site.

What we are doing next:

- We expect to hit this year's target of reducing or sustaining the risk of flooding to over 800 properties. Our current forecast is to reduce the risk to **275 properties** through our improvement works and over **750 properties** benefitting from sustained flood protection through our maintenance work this year. We are reporting as Green as we are on track (but note target not yet met). Site work is scheduled to commence shortly near Ely Bridge (Cardiff), which will reduce the risk to **150 homes**. Other projects are under development, with some forecast to start construction this year but completing in future years. This includes Stephenson Street (Newport) and Ammanford (Carmarthenshire). These will reduce risk to over **1100 properties** in future years.

Measure owner: Jeremy Parr

Q1	to Q2	to Q3	Expected year end
Green			Green

See here for key used for Red / Amber / Green status

[To return to start of report - see Business Plan Performance Dashboard - pages 1 and 2]

Priority: Responding to the Nature Emergency

In 2018 NRW published its first nature strategy 'Vital Nature'. Since then we've been delivering our annual action programmes to improve the conservation status of protected sites. With partners we're delivering the Sands of Life dune project and a wide range of other projects. Through all our work we deliver direct and collaborative action to improve biodiversity and ecosystem resilience, protect habitats, species and natural resources, manage water, land and sea sustainably and minimise pollution.

Our NRW Business Plan sets out the following topics in relation to this priority:

- **Putting Nature at the Centre**
- **Protecting Habitats and Species – Terrestrial, Freshwater and Marine**
- **Managing Land Sustainably**
- **Managing the Sea Sustainably**
- **Managing Fresh Water Sustainably**

The following pages reflect recent progress on each of those topics, along with the latest performance position in relation to the Business Plan dashboard measure/s for each.

Topic: Putting Nature at the Centre

Topic summary progress:

On the 21st of June 2021, the Senedd took the historic step to declare a nature emergency for Wales, one of the very first parliaments in the world to do so. NRW is progressing the priorities of the **Vital Nature Strategy and Work Programme**, putting biodiversity and ecosystem resilience at the very centre of our work. Examples include:

- Working with **Welsh Government** to develop **Adfer Natur**, a 3-year costed programme to enhance biodiversity and build ecosystem resilience with protected sites at its core.
- Working with and supporting partners such **Wales Biodiversity Partnership**, **Public Service Boards, Wales Environment Link** and the **Local Nature Partnerships** to maximise opportunities for biodiversity.
- Contributing to updating the **Nature Recovery Action Plan** - the biodiversity strategy for Wales.
- Delivering the objectives within **Area Statements.**
- **Nature & Us / Natur a Ni -** a project to involve the people of Wales in a national conversation about the future of our natural environment – a shared vision for the natural environment in Wales for 2050.

Topic owner: Ruth Jenkins

Business Plan dashboard measure/s for this topic:

- **Biodiversity action across NRW**

Measure: Biodiversity action across NRW

This measure reflects how we in NRW are responding to the nature emergency and putting biodiversity at the core of our work. We are doing this by identifying the priorities NRW needs to focus on and establishing a programme to help manage and track Vital Nature delivery through our wide range of roles

Latest position (to end of June 2021):

- Our **milestone for this measure is to commence NRW's actions outlined in the Vital Nature Biodiversity work programme and roll out our NRW Biodiversity eLearning module for staff.**
- Actions within the Vital Nature Work Programme have commenced. Rollout of the biodiversity eLearning module began with the initial testing stage. Feedback from this stage has indicated that further refinement of the module is required before rollout. Unfortunately, this has caused a delay to our initial programme to share the module with all staff in Q1.
- **This measure is Amber**.

What we are doing next:

- We have now secured further financial resource to make the required changes and the eLearning module which will be rolled out in due course.
- Our **milestone for this measure for the next reporting period is working with WG produce a costed three year programme focused on resilient ecological networks with protected sites at their core**.
- We are currently on track to achieve our **year end milestone activity to provide a progress delivery report to BREG (our Biodiversity and Resilient Ecosystems Sub-group) on the 2021-22 Vital Nature Biodiversity work programme** in Quarter four.
- We currently expect we will be green at year end.

Measure owner: Ruth Jenkins

Q1	to Q2	to Q3	Expected year end
Amber			Green

See here for key used for Red / Amber / Green status

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Topic: Protecting Habitats and Species

Topic summary progress

Guided by our strategic steer 'Vital Nature' we will address the nature emergency. Highlights from the programme include:

- Supporting the delivery of the Nature Networks Fund £9.8M investment in action for protected sites, in collaboration with Welsh Government and the National Lottery Heritage Fund.
- Delivering positive management for habitats and species on protected sites through an enhanced management agreement programme and species and habitats restoration projects, (e.g. LIFE projects, Invasive Non Native Species Pilot Project) and action benefitting National Nature Reserves managed by other bodies and within Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- Development of advice to inform a Welsh Government funded prioritised programme of multi-year investment to build ecosystem resilience across ecological networks with protected sites at the core.
- Supporting 'Natur am Byth' species recovery project (development phase application was approved in June).
- Implementing biosecurity within NRW and sharing best practice and tools externally.

Topic owner: Martyn Evans

Business Plan dashboard measure/s for this topic:

- **Priority actions undertaken on protected sites to improve condition of features**
- **Actions undertaken on National Nature Reserves on NRW managed land to improve**
- **Delivering targeted action for declining species or those on the edge of extinction**

Measure: Priority actions undertaken on protected sites 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 to fully provide ecosystem service benefits and function as a core component of a resilient ecological network - enabling habitats and wildlife to thrive.

Latest position (to end of June 2021):
- Our **milestone for this measure is to have the work programme and actions agreed**
- We have completed this activity. There are 256 actions in the work programme for all Wales and 20% of these are either underway or complete.
- **This measure is green.**

What we are doing next:
- We will now continue to deliver the actions in the programme.
- Our **milestone for this measure for the next reporting period is 30% of actions completed or underway.**
- We are currently on track to achieve our **year end milestone activity of 80% of actions completed or underway** in Quarter four and are on track to be green at year end.

Measure owner: Martyn Evans

Q1	to Q2	to Q3	Expected year end
Green			Green

See here for key used for Red / Amber / Green status

[To return to start of report - see Business Plan Performance Dashboard - pages 1 and 2]

Measure: Actions undertaken on National Nature Reserves on NRW managed land to improve

This measure reflects how much we are doing to maintain or enhance the ecological condition of the 56 NNRs in our direct care. We report on the number of priority planned management actions and the number of NNRs receiving significant investment to improve condition via these actions.

Latest position (to end of June 2021):

- Our Quarter 1 **milestone for this measure is to have a sufficient % of the planned priority actions in progress and/or completed to be confident about achieving our year-end milestone of 80% of planned priority actions completed resulting in significant investment in at least 50 of the 56 NNRs in our direct care.**
- For 2021/22, we have planned 476 actions across the NNRs. 51 of the NNRs will receive significant investment. 146 of the actions were to commence in Q1. Of the 146, 142 (97%) are Green, 2 are Amber (due to lack of staff time) and 1 Red as resources have been reassigned to another action. 1 was unreported.
- **This measure is** green.

What we are doing next:

- Continue to deliver the planned NNR work programme in accordance with the agreed timetable and costs.
- Our **milestone for this measure for the next reporting period is to have a sufficient % of the planned priority actions in progress and/or completed to be confident about achieving our year-end milestone.**
- We currently expect we will be green at year end.

Measure owner: Dominic Driver

Q1	to Q2	to Q3	Expected year end
Green			Green

See here for key used for Red / Amber / Green status

[To return to start of report - see Business Plan Performance Dashboard - pages 1 and 2]

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 June 2021):
- Our **milestone for this measure is to review actions and progress of the Fresh Water Pearl Mussel Strategy.**
- We have completed this activity. We have reviewed the actions and progress in the Fresh Water Pearl Mussel (FWPM) Strategy, and this has informed the development of an action plan for the next six years. This plan has gone through NRW's Programme Management Office process and received assurance.
- **This measure is green.**

What we are doing next:
- We will now implement habitat restoration and captive rearing actions identified in the FWPM Strategy. We will also continue to work on developing our priorities for other declining species.
- Our **milestone for this measure is to implement the next stage of Natur am Byth National Lottery Heritage Fund bid for the next reporting period**.
- We are currently on track to achieve our **year end milestone activity to report on development of priorities for Declining Species Programme** in Quarter four.
- We currently expect we will be green at year end.

Measure owner: Ruth Jenkins

Q1	to Q2	to Q3	Expected year end
Green			Green

See here for key used for Red / Amber / Green status

[To return to start of report - see Business Plan Performance Dashboard - pages 1 and 2]

Topic: Managing Land Sustainably

Topic summary progress (i.e. overview of work undertaken against this topic):

- Following the Senedd elections we have published our Green Infrastructure Assessment (GIA) Guide and shared with local planning authorities and Welsh Government. We have updated and published our advice to planning authorities for planning applications affecting phosphorous sensitive river Special Areas of Conversation. We have also published guidance for staff on assessing planning applications that are supported by Water Framework Directive assessments
- Beyond the Metal Mines Programme measures that are reported, we completed: (1) construction for Abbey Consols Adit Capture / Teifi Outfall and (2) construction of the Dispersed Alkaline Substrate Trail Research, development and innovation plant at Parys Mountain.
- We will host the 2021 International Mine Water Association (IMWA) conference in early July 2021 https://imwa2021.info/.
- For the Welsh Government Woodland Estate, we continue to progress actions to close any Corrective Action Requests or Observations arising from the annual UK Woodland Assurance Standard audit and to prepare for the next audit.

Topic owner: Sian Williams

Business Plan dashboard measure/s for this topic:

- **Number of UK Woodland Assurance Standard (UKWAS) Corrective Action Requests (CARs) and Observations (Obs) open and progress towards closing them.**
- **Progress of our work to reduce pollution from metal mines**

Measure: Number of UK Woodland Assurance Standard (UKWAS) Corrective Action Requests (CARs) and Observations (Obs) open and progress towards closing them.

Being certified via UKWAS shows we sustainably manage the Welsh Government Woodland Estate (WGWE) reaching Forest Stewardship Council® (FSC®) and Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC) international standards. Wales' state forests have been certified via UKWAS since 2001 and we aim to keep it that way.

Latest position (to end of June 2021):

- **Our quarterly milestone is to make sufficient progress to be confident of achieving our year end milestone of retaining certification and reducing the number of CARs and Obs at each annual audit.**
- In 2020, we retained certification with 1 major CAR, 4 minor CARs and 7 Obs, fewer than in 2019 and we want fewer still.
- Our auditors assess evidence of closure. The 2020 major CAR is closed. We believe we have sufficient evidence to close 1 minor CAR and 2 Obs. We need more evidence to close the other 3 minor CARs. Of the other Obs, 4 are showing progress with continuous monitoring and evidence for 1 is due in July.
- This measure is **Amber.**

What we are doing next:

- Continue to gather evidence to close the 3 minor CARs.
- Preparing staff and systems for the 2021 audit scheduled for August in South East and South West regions.
- We will report on the end of year milestone when we have received the 2021 audit report.
- We currently expect to be Green at year end.

Measure owner: Dominic Driver

Q1	to Q2	to Q3	Expected year end
Amber			Green

See here for key used for Red / Amber / Green status

[To return to start of report - see Business Plan Performance Dashboard - pages 1 and 2]

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 and ensuring the sites are safe.

Latest position (to end of June 2021):

- Our **milestone for this measure is to complete:**
- **30 preliminary assessments:** This is substantially complete: Assessments undertaken for 33 mines with final reports delivered for 6 of these and draft reports received for 21. All 33 reports will achieve 'Final' status in Q3
- **One outline design:** Completed: the feasibility study / outline design for Wemyss Mill - Surface Water Diversion
- **Three detailed designs:** We have rescheduled delivery: one detailed design completed, for Abbey Consoles main works this quarter. Detailed design for surface water management at Llanerchyaur Mine Adit is now programmed for Q2. Detailed design for related FRM-funded Cae Conroi Dam Safety Works is now programmed for Q4. In the mean time construction on the ground continues and the overall programme is on schedule.
- **This measure is Amber**. This is because we have rescheduled work across the year, delivery of the programme by year end is still on track.

What we are doing next:

- Progress projects and, based on Q1's progress, review potential to accelerate work currently programmed for 2022-23.
- Our **milestone for this measure is to complete a further one outline design** (now programmed for Q4**) and one detailed design** (on track) for the next reporting period. We are currently on track to achieve our **year end milestone activity to complete a further 16 preliminary assessments in quarter four**.
- In terms of expenditure, deliverables and outcomes, we currently expect we will be green at year end.

Measure owner: Sian Williams

Q1	to Q2	to Q3	Expected year end
Amber			Green

See here for key used for Red / Amber / Green status

[To return to start of report - see Business Plan Performance Dashboard - pages 1 and 2]

Topic: Managing the Sea Sustainably

Topic summary progress (i.e. overview of work undertaken against this topic):
- Our work on the topic Managing the Sea Sustainably is coordinated via NRW's Marine Programme.
- Progress is being made in all key work areas including delivering: implementation of the Welsh National Marine Plan; NRW's Offshore Renewable Energy Programme; NRW's Integrated Coastal Management Programme, with a focus on coastal squeeze; plan and project level marine casework advice; blue carbon work programme; work on practical marine and coastal restoration and ecosystem resilience; contributing to the Wales green / blue recovery programme; implementation of the Marine Area Statement; Marine Protected Area (MPA) condition improvement projects and MPA network management actions; technical support to WG in identifying new Marine Conservation Zones to complete the Welsh MPA network; marine monitoring and reporting; the prioritised marine evidence programme; management of the Dee and Burry Inlet cockle fisheries and the Dee Conservancy.

Topic owner: Rhian Jardine

Business Plan dashboard measure/s for this topic:
- **Support implementation of the Welsh National Marine Plan**
- **Progress NRW's actions in the Wales Marine Protected Area network management actions plan**

[To return to start of report - see Business Plan Performance Dashboard - pages 1 and 2]

Measure: Support implementation of the Welsh National Marine Plan

This measure reflects progress in relation to WNMP implementation including the need to support proportionate decisions that take full account of environmental, social and economic considerations under the new planning framework.

Latest position (to end of June 2021):

- Our **milestone for this measure is to commence development of priority products.**
- We have completed this activity. We have commenced (a) development of an Implementation Table capturing key existing NRW information, evidence and guidance against individual WNMP policies (b) established a Marine Spatial Approach Expert Group (MSAEG) to develop and streamline NRW's evidence and advice to Welsh Government's Spatial Approach to marine planning (c) further developed the Marine Advice Handbook, and (d) begun planning a stakeholder workshop to take forward the collaborative phase of the principles to support implementation of the enhancement and restoration element of the ENV_01 policy in the WNMP.
- **This measure is green.**

What we are doing next:

- We will now meet with internal policy leads / specialists to ensure Implementation Table captures relevant guidance and evidence to identify shared priorities to support implementation of WNMP policies. We will work with all the marine receptor groups to develop and streamline our contribution to WG's Spatial Approach ensuring NRW can efficiently provide high-quality advice that both supports marine plan implementation and services wider stakeholder evidence needs. We will continue to plan the stakeholder workshop with a view to holding it in Q3.
- Our **milestone for this measure is to progress development of priority products** for the next reporting period.
- We are currently on track to achieve our **year end milestone activity to sign-off priority products** in Quarter four.
- We currently expect we will be green at year end.

Measure owner: Rhian Jardine

Q1	to Q2	to Q3	Expected year end
Green			Green

See here for key used for Red / Amber / Green status

[To return to start of report - see Business Plan Performance Dashboard - pages 1 and 2]

Measure: Progress NRW's actions in the Wales Marine Protected Area network management actions plan

This measure reflects progress with Marine Protected Areas network management actions. The marine protected area 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.

Latest position (to end of June 2021):

- Our **milestone for this measure is to commence NRW's agreed annual actions in the Wales Marine Protected Area Network Management Action Plan.**
- We have completed this activity. We have worked with Welsh Government to agree the targets for the grant offer letters. There are a number of substantive ongoing actions for NRW that are all progressing well, and three new NRW projects this year, in relation to (1) grazing on saltmarsh (2) managing the MPA network for blue carbon benefits, and (3) management of bait collection. We have let one contract and drafted specifications for the other two new actions.
- **This measure is green.**

What we are doing next:

- We will now continue to work on all NRW actions to make sure that they can be completed on time. There are currently no obstacles foreseen to achieving this aim.
- Our **milestone for this measure is to review action progress and report to NRW's Marine Sub-group for the next reporting period**.
- We are currently on track to achieve our **year end milestone activity to sign off and report on final delivery** in Quarter four.
- We currently expect we will be green at year end.

Measure owner: Rhian Jardine

Q1	to Q2	to Q3	Expected year end
Green			Green

See here for key used for Red / Amber / Green status

[To return to start of report - see Business Plan Performance Dashboard - pages 1 and 2]

Topic: Managing Fresh Water sustainably

Topic summary progress (i.e. overview of work undertaken against this topic):

- We continue to deliver Cycle 2 investigations, National measures and the local measures alongside the development of the Cycle 3 River Basin Management Plans (RBMP) where we are identifying local measures for opportunity catchments to commit to in the final Plans
- Consultation on the draft RBMP closed end of June and we have commenced reviewing these. We will use these to help inform the final details for the updated RBMP which are expected to be published June 2022.

Topic owner: Sian Williams

Business Plan dashboard measure/s for this topic:

- **Deliver remaining water related investigations and develop new River Basin Management Plans**

[To return to start of report - see Business Plan Performance Dashboard - pages 1 and 2]

Measure: Deliver remaining water related investigations and develop updated River Basin Management Plans

This measure on water related investigations and River Basin Management Plans (RBMPs) reflects how we are progressing delivery of the current RBMPs, to protect and improve Wales' water environment, and set the strategic direction for the updated Plans (2021- 2027)

Latest position (to end of June 2021):
- Our **milestone for this measure is to complete 135 of the 447 outstanding investigations from Cycle 2.**
- We have not completed this activity. We have completed 73 investigations.
- **This measure is red.**

What we are doing next:
- We will now prioritise the investigations work and have a work plan in place to achieve the target by year end.
- We are evaluating the investigation targets for the remainder of 2021/22 based on the level of staff resource available, priority work areas such as SAC rivers are impacting on resource availability for WFD investigation delivery. We are also looking at what additional investigations may be required in relation to SAC rivers
- Our **milestone for this measure is to complete a further 270 investigations from Cycle 2 for the next reporting period**.
- We are currently on track to achieve our **year end milestone activity to review and respond to the draft RBMP consultation stakeholder responses to inform Cycle 3** in Quarter four and are expected to be green at year end.
- We currently expect we will be green at year end.

Measure owner: Sian Williams

Q1	to Q2	to Q3	Expected year end
Red			Green

See here for key used for Red / Amber / Green status

[To return to start of report - see Business Plan Performance Dashboard - pages 1 and 2]

Priority: Developing and using our Evidence with Partners to Advocate for and Deliver SMNR

Developing and using our evidence with partners and communities to advocate for and deliver the sustainable management of natural resources (SMNR) through state of natural resources reporting, area statements and joint working to improve the resilience, well-being and connection of nature and people: using evidence, sharing evidence and developing evidence.

Our NRW Business Plan sets out the following topics in relation to this priority:

- **Creating a Shared Vision for the natural environment for 2050**
- **Improving and Presenting Evidence about the Natural Environment**
- **Work with Partners and Communities using Area Statements**

The following pages reflect recent progress for two of these topics, along with the latest performance position in relation to the Business Plan dashboard measure/s for each.

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Topic: Improving and Presenting Evidence about the Natural Environment

Topic summary progress (i.e. overview of work undertaken against this topic):

- In late May, we published the results of our Baseline Evaluation of Protected Site Condition exercise. The exercise was carried out to understand the quality of the protected sites evidence base and to inform the development of a more comprehensive terrestrial monitoring strategy. Using currently available evidence, the range of species, habitat and earth science interests on protected sites were reviewed, and where sufficient information was available, indicative condition assessments were produced. We are now in the process of developing collaborative action plan to help us address the gaps in our evidence.

- This year, we are initiating a programme that will focus on evidence quality. Quality improvement reviews and actions are being initiated or progressed in three main areas; quality management for our monitoring activities and water quality data; governance and policies for quality assurance of our evidence reports and outputs; and a review of the data quality standards and assurance metrics across NRW data themes.

- We are initiating a review of freshwater monitoring to be completed by March 2023. The purpose of the review is to redefine our freshwater monitoring strategy and redesign monitoring programmes and networks to meet with current and future evidence needs, and to fit with available resources and funding.

Topic owner: Chris Collins

Business Plan dashboard measure/s for this topic:

- **Promote, advocate and encourage use of State of Natural Resources Report**

Measure: Promote, advocate and encourage use of State of Natural Resources Report

This measure reflects action to promote, advocate and encourage use of the State of Natural Resources Report (SoNaRR2020) evidence and key findings to realise the benefits of SMNR.

Latest position (to end of June 2021):

- Our **milestone for this measure is delivery of an engagement pack, engagement plan and approach to messaging that helps benefits realisation.**
- We have completed this activity. In line with the SoNaRR2020 engagement plan, we have provided briefing notes and standard presentations to staff to enable them to share the messages in SoNaRR2020 with colleagues and partners. We have produced videos to accompany the briefing notes which are available from our website. Presentations have been given at Welsh Government fora and at key stakeholder meetings. The response from Welsh Government and stakeholders has generally been very positive.
- **This measure is** green.

What we are doing next:

- We will now share the videos with staff and continue to engage with our partners. All staff will be encouraged to discuss the findings of SoNaRR2020 with their partners and seek feedback
- We are launching an evidence and policy programme to make the most of the challenges and opportunities presented by SoNaRR 2020
- Our **milestones for this measure for the next reporting period are to provide an update on stakeholder engagement and their feedback.**
- We are currently on track to achieve our **year end milestone activity of a summary of engagement, feedback and use of SoNaRR and the application in Area Statements** in Quarter four, we currently expect we will be green.

Measure owner: Chris Collins

Q1	to Q2	to Q3	Expected year end
Green			Green

See here for key used for Red / Amber / Green status

[To return to start of report - see Business Plan Performance Dashboard - pages 1 and 2]

Topic: Work with partners and communities using Area Statements

Topic summary progress (i.e. overview of work undertaken against this topic):

- Well-being planning is a key area of focus this year, updating Well-being assessments for Public Service Boards (PSBs) to incorporate the 4 aims in SoNaRR2020 and our evidence and learning from the area statement process.
- Gwent authorities have decided to create one PSB, and our area statement work is fully embedded in that process.
- We are working in partnership with the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty to engage local businesses, stakeholders and individuals in Pengwern near Llangollen to consider what they would like to see for their community over the next generation, particularly in relation to our changing climate.
- Our Mid Wales area piloted a project mapping web application and are sharing it with partners for them to use as a tool for joint working.
- Our North West area shared learning from a case study at Newborough, highlighting how behavioural insights had been applied.
- A collaborative 'Blue Recovery' agenda was developed with the Wales Marine Action and Advisory Group

Topic owner: Martyn Evans

Business Plan dashboard measure/s for this topic:

- **Use of Area Statements within NRW to embed priorities and opportunities**

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Measure: Use of Area Statements within NRW to embed priorities and opportunities

This measure reflects the use of Area Statements within NRW particularly in our Service and Place plans and through joint working to embed priorities and opportunities.

Latest position (to end of June 2021):

- Our **milestone for this measure is to report our progress internally identifying lessons learnt and areas for change, and establish projects as required.**
- We have progressed this activity - it is a rolling programme. We have adopted the main area statement themes in each of our Place Plans with our operational teams now focussing their delivery around one or more of these. For example, opportunity catchments in NE Wales and SW Wales are embedded in our environment teams work, both helping to deliver the sustainable land management themes in their Area Statements. The Marine team undertook an internal coastal 'deep dive' with land management colleagues to identify opportunities linked to the Sustainable Farming Scheme. Through our Natural Resources and Wellbeing Integration sub-group, opportunities for improving communication between our policy and people and places teams to gather learning and identifying areas for change is being progressed. **This measure is green**

What we are doing next:

- We will now continue to identify lessons learnt and areas for change, working across place-based and Wales-wide teams which will be used for example, to inform the evaluation of the Natural Resources Policy.
- Our **milestone for this measure is to update on programme and project progress and any action on areas for change for the next reporting period**.
- We are currently on track to achieve our **year end milestone activity to update on programme and project progress and any action on areas for change, identifying new work programmes/projects for 22/23** in Quarter four. We currently expect we will be green at year end.

Measure owner: Martyn Evans

Q1	to Q2	to Q3	Expected year end
Green			Green

See here for key used for Red / Amber / Green status

[To return to start of report - see Business Plan Performance Dashboard - pages 1 and 2]

Priority: Developing NRW into an excellent organisation that serves the communities of Wales

Developing NRW into an excellent organisation, through engagement and collaboration with stakeholders around the sustainable management of natural resources and focussing on new ways of working, to improve benefits to communities from the environment

Our NRW Business Plan sets out the following topics in relation to this priority:

- **Responding to and Managing Incidents**
- **Regulation – permitting, regulating, and where required enforcing compliance**
- **Benefitting Communities**
- **Developing Our Organisation**
- **Ensuring Everyone's Well-being, Health and Safety**
- **Understand and improve our Customers' Experiences**
- **Making the most of our Commercial Opportunities**

The following pages reflect recent progress on each of those topics, along with the latest performance position in relation to the Business Plan dashboard measure/s for each.

Topic: Responding to and Managing Incidents

Topic summary progress (i.e. overview of work undertaken against this topic):

- **Preparedness**: Development of the guidance materials and handbooks that support our response roles has continued (at pace), with our Operational Guidance Notes being completed and signed-off for a number of our Strategic (Duty Strategic Manager Handbook), Tactical (Duty Tactical Manager (DTM) Wales and DTM Area Handbooks) and Operational roles (Land Management Handbook).
- **Response**: In a challenging year, we have continued to respond to several incidents that have occurred recently e.g. Wildfires and Water Pollution, as well as managing the EU Exit and Covid-19 response. We have also started development of additional (topic specific) major and critical incident plans to help guide our response to those incidents that have the largest potential impact.
- **Review**: Incident Reviews have been carried out for a number of recent incidents with the recommendations resulting in actions and the embedding of learning from our experience.
- **Training**: Training of new rota volunteers has been taking place across the organisation, improving our skills and capabilities to deal with all types of incidents.
- **Exercising**: Teams across NRW have continued to take part in exercises both internally and with our multi-agency partners. The learning from these exercises has been factored into our ongoing training programme and is being fed into our Learning from Experience work.
- **Rota Resilience**: Additional rota volunteers have started to join rotas following completion of their training, helping to bolster the numbers of staff we have available to response to incidents.
- **Business Continuity**: Additional actions have been carried out (with others ongoing) to improve resilience and our ability to respond to incidents that could disrupt our ability to deliver our priority business activities. These actions have been driven by learning from the Coronavirus Pandemic and the sharing of information by our partners in relation recent Cyber-attacks and associated exercises.

Topic owner: Lyndsey Rawlinson

Business Plan dashboard measure/s for this topic:

- **Response to incidents (initial category 'High', within 4 hours)**

*To return to start of report - see *

Measure: Response to incidents (initial category '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. Response may include physical attendance at the site, but also includes other activities, such as contacting professional partners

Latest position (to end of June 2021):
- Our **target for this measure is 95%**
- We have not achieved this. **Performance for this quarter is 93%,** up from 87% at the end of last quarter (89% cumulative total for last year). **This measure is amber.**

What we are doing next:
- We will continue with the work that has seen our performance improve over recent quarters. We will continue to target support to specific teams, where it can be most effective. Further interventions to streamline our process and the use and accessibility of the Wales Incident Recording System (WIRS) will also continue to be actioned.
- Our performance has continued to improve each quarter and if this was to continue, we would be on track to meet our year end target of 95% in Quarter four. However, the improvement in performance has been driven by support in each of our operational areas provided from temporary posts, for which the funding ends in March 2022. Due to this temporary nature of the posts, most of these staff have now secured permanent roles elsewhere in NRW and it is hard to recruit backfill for such a short period. We anticipate performance will deteriorate as a result, and **we anticipate we will be amber at year end**.
- We are assessing whether these support roles can be extended or ideally made permanent, but there are funding constraints and competing demands that at the moment make this unlikely.

Measure owner: Lyndsey Rawlinson

Q1	to Q2	to Q3	Expected year end
Amber			Amber

See here for key used for Red / Amber / Green status
[To return to start of report - see Business Plan Performance Dashboard - pages 1 and 2]

Topic: Regulation – permitting, regulating, and where required enforcing compliance

Topic summary progress (i.e. overview of work undertaken against this topic):

- Progress for Q1 in relation to the Performance of regulated sites measure has been as expected. The measure is green with 100% of the sites with category 1 and category 2 compliance breaches receiving an appropriate regulatory response determination within 6 months.
- It should be noted that more compliance breaches have been found in this reporting quarter (October – December 2020) than the previous reporting quarter (July – September 2020) but the number of compliance breaches are still significantly below the number of compliance breaches reported in the pre-pandemic reporting quarter of (October – December 2019).

Topic owner: Nadia De Longhi

Business Plan dashboard measure/s for this topic:

- **Performance of regulated sites and water quality discharges**

Measure: Performance of regulated sites and water quality discharges

This measure reflects the number of category 1 and category 2 compliance breaches with appropriate regulatory response determined within 6 months. Poor performance at permitted sites has the potential for impacts on the environment, communities and the reputation of a sector. They are also resource intensive in terms of our regulatory effort and are considered to pose a greater risk of incidents, which can also then consume a large amount of our resources and impact communities.

Latest position (to end of June 2021):
- Our **target for this measure is 75% of category 1 and category 2 compliance breaches to have an appropriate regulatory response determined within 6 months.** There have been 18 category 1 and category 2 compliance breaches over the period (October – December 2020) and **100%** have had an appropriate response.
- **NB** – The 18 compliance breaches in Q1 of 2021-22 (October – December 2020) is an increase from the 12 compliance breaches recorded in Q4 of 2020-21 (July – September 2020) but is a significant reduction from the 43 compliance breaches recorded in Q1 of 2020-21 (October – December 2019).
- This measure is **Green**.

What we are doing next:
- Our **target for this measure is 75% for the next reporting period**.
- We are currently on track to meet our **yearend target of 75%** in quarter four and are likely to be green at year end.

Measure owner: Nadia De Longhi

Q1	to Q2	to Q3	Expected year end
Green			Green

See here for key used for Red / Amber / Green status

[To return to start of report - see Business Plan Performance Dashboard - pages 1 and 2]

Topic: Benefitting Communities

Topic summary progress:

- This work contributes to the wider organisational activity whereby we have taken time to reflect on the things we learnt during Covid-19 - seeing what could have been taken as a threat, adversely impacting how we achieve our ambition with communities, as an opportunity to adjust our approach. This is our way of maintaining our exposure and continuing to deliver both currently and for the rest of the year.
- The focussed work on grants sits within the wider context of organisational conversations about our role in providing outward funding. It links to emerging development of policy and approaches to support efficient ways of supporting and stimulating Wales' response to Covid-19 and the twin Nature and Climate emergencies. It sits within the landscape of Green Recovery and will help to define how NRW plays its part in delivering the aspiration of the new Programme for Government.
- It is hoped the Plant! Scheme will move forward with new arrangements supported by Welsh Government.

Topic owner: Ruth Jenkins

Business Plan dashboard measure/s for this topic:

- **Deliver NRW's combined health and educator training**

Measure: Deliver NRW's combined health and educator training

This measure on the development and delivery of NRW's combined health and educator training, resources and projects reflects our work to highlight the multiple health and attainment benefits the natural environment can provide.

Latest position (to end of June 2021):

- Our **milestone for this measure is to report our progress internally identifying lessons learnt and areas for change, and establish projects as required**.
- Activity was completed reflecting on lessons learnt during Covid-19, adjusting ways of working and developing implementation plans and projects which can be delivered successfully over the coming year. Examples include: The establishment of a Health and Education Thematic Group with our Place colleagues to aid integration and support policy into practice, completion of Health Impact Assessment phase 1, co-production of our position on Green Prescribing, educator training was moved on-line, resource development topics reprioritised and Wales Outdoor Learning Week successfully delivered. **This measure is green.**

What we are doing next:

- We will now continue to deliver against our implementation plan. Work in the next quarter will include: Kickstart Placement Scheme roll-out, launch of 2021 Acorn Antics Campaign, preparation of resources for COP26, participation on the Ministerial Play review and Social Prescribing group, Health Impact Assessment phase 2.
- Our **milestone for this measure is to update on programme and project progress and any action on areas for change for the next reporting period**.
- We are currently on track to achieve our **year end milestone activity to update on programme and project progress and any action on areas for change, identifying new work programmes/projects for 22/23** in quarter four. We currently expect we will be green at year end.

Measure owner: Ruth Jenkins

Q1	to Q2	to Q3	Expected year end
Green			Green

See here for key used for Red / Amber / Green status
To return to start of report - see Business Plan Performance Dashboard - pages 1 and 2]

Topic: Developing our Organisation

Topic summary progress:
- We are currently Red against making payments on time and completing mandatory eLearning.
- On the former, we are adding more resources to the team and this will take time for this to have an impact. With both eLearning and the payments, we are increasing the communications across NRW to ensure we meet the targets.
- Despite the initial issues, we believe the initiatives being implemented will address these.
- All other measures are either Green or Amber with the expectation of being green at the end of year.

Topic owner: Steve Burton

Business Plan dashboard measure/s for this topic:
- **Make payments on time**
- **Develop and implement a People Strategy for NRW**
- **Staff personal development plans are in place**
- **Complete agreed (mandatory) eLearning**
- **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion action**

Measure: Make payments on time

This measure on making our payments on time, reflects the importance of paying our suppliers within 30 days of receipt of invoice. Our financial reports are only updated once goods and services are receipted on MyNRW – our internal system for dealing with purchases and other administrative tasks.

Latest position (to end of June 2021):

- Our **target for this measure is 95%**.
- We have not achieved this. We have only achieved 79% due to staff unavailability (mainly abnormal sickness levels) across our Transactional Finance team. We have been focusing on the clearance of the backlog of invoices received in the mailbox. The team are currently actioning invoices that are three weeks old and we need to get that to under two.
- **This measure is** red.

What we are doing next:

- We will temporarily increase the staffing levels which will take 4-6 weeks to have an impact. We are putting a banner on the intranet to encourage staff to apply a substitute on the MyNRW system during the holiday period so that invoices do not get stuck in the system / workflow. We want to encourage staff to check their invoices for approval on a more timely basis and will be addressing any current invoices stuck in workflow via our Leadership Team. Transactional Finance Payments team members are currently helping to take high volumes of phone calls and payments to help the income team, as 3,620 Annual Billing invoices were sent to customers in May / June. Going forward we hope to train Income team members to help the Payments team in busy times. Payment team members have processed 644 more invoices in June than in May, so we are already making progress.
- Our **target for this measure is 95% for the next reporting period and every reporting period after that**. We currently expect we will be green at year end.

Measure owner: Rob Bell

Q1	to Q2	to Q3	Expected year end
Red			Green

See here for key used for Red / Amber / Green status

[To return to start of report - see Business Plan Performance Dashboard - pages 1 and 2]

Measure: Develop and implement a People Strategy for NRW

This measure reflects the development and implementation of our People Strategy.

Latest position (to end of June 2021):

- Our **milestone for this measure is to have high level outcomes, objectives and indicators developed and identified, along with appropriate governance to support the delivery of a People Strategy.**
- We have completed this activity. We have sought input from our People and Remuneration Committee and built this into our proposed People Strategy.
- **This measure is** green.

What we are doing next:

- We will now develop a timeline for the next milestone.
- Our **milestone for this measure is to consult staff, across a range of fora, on the goals and priorities identified in the draft People Strategy; Establish a People Board to oversee the implementation of our People Strategy.**
- We are currently on track to achieve our **year end milestone activity for priority actions underway and complete where appropriate, in line with the People Strategy action plan** in Quarter four.
- We currently expect we will be **green** at year end.

Measure owner: Su Turney

Q1	to Q2	to Q3	Expected year end
Green			Green

See here for key used for Red / Amber / Green status

[To return to start of report - see Business Plan Performance Dashboard - pages 1 and 2]

Measure: Staff personal development plans are in place

This measure reflects the status of staff personal development plans (PDPs) being in place which help managers manage and monitor staff performance.

Latest position (to end of June 2021):

- Our **milestone for this measure is 70% of last year's PDPs agreed and signed off and 60% new ones agreed and in place.**
- We have 78% of last year's PDP's completed on the MyNRW system. We have 58% of new PDP's agreed and in place on the MyNRW system for the start of the year 2021/2022.
- **This measure is** amber.

What we are doing next:

- We are issuing reminders to managers to input their staffs end of year PDP's onto the system.
- A report on completion/non-completion rates will be cascaded to all Managers.
- We will be running more refresher sessions on the performance management processes at the start of Q3 and Q4.
- All managers and staff will have a generic objective to increase accountability and governance for completing key business processes.
- Our **milestone for this measure is 95% of last year's PDPs agreed and signed off; 90% new ones agreed and in place.** We are currently on track to achieve our **year end milestone activity 95%, midyear reviews completed** in quarter four and expect to be Green at year end.

Measure owner: Steve Burton

Q1	to Q2	to Q3	Expected year end
Amber			Green

See here for key used for Red / Amber / Green status

[To return to start of report - see Business Plan Performance Dashboard - pages 1 and 2]

Measure: Complete agreed (mandatory) eLearning
This measure reflects compliance against our agreed mandatory eLearning courses (Anti Bribery & Corruption, Anti Fraud, Computer Security and Health and Wellbeing plus from September GDPR and Records Management).

Latest position (to end of June 2021):
- Our **target for this measure is that 90% undergone required training.**
- We have achieved 81% as of end of June 2021. The completion of mandatory eLearning has increased by 18% since the start of the reporting year in March 21.
- **This measure is** red.

What we are doing next:
- We will continue to provide monthly completion reports to Leadership Team, managers have been given access to reporting dashboards giving them access to the statistics for their teams and the ability to send email reminders to people who haven't completed the courses.
- The Training and Development team will remind all staff the reasons why these courses are essential to complete.
- Our **target for this measure is 90% undergone required training.**
- We are currently on track to achieve our **year end target which is 90% undergone required training** in Quarter four and are expected to be green at year end.

Measure owner: Steve Burton

Q1	to Q2	to Q3	Expected year end
Red			Green

See here for key used for Red / Amber / Green status

[To return to start of report - see Business Plan Performance Dashboard - pages 1 and 2]

Measure: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion action
This measure reflects development and implementation of our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Action Plan.

Latest position (to end of June 2021):
- Our **milestone for this measure is to complete desk based review of NRW's policies and processes regarding EDI. Complete internal and external EDI engagement and consultation.**
- We have completed Stage 1 of EDI Project 2021 in April 2021, working with Diverse Cymru who produced a summary report of their findings to develop an EDI Plan for the next 3 years.
- **This measure is** green.

What we are doing next:
- We will now consider the findings of the summary report with a series of weekly, facilitated Task & Finish group staff sessions and an engagement session with external stakeholders to help us meet the next milestone.
- Our **milestone for this measure is to use Q1 feedback to develop, through task and finish groups the changes required.** We are currently on track to achieve our **year end milestone activity which is to complete a sub plan for 2022-2023 based upon the review in Q3 and agree with the Board**
- We currently expect we will be green at year end.

Measure owner: Steve Burton

Q1	to Q2	to Q3	Expected year end
Green			Green

See here for key used for Red / Amber / Green status

[To return to start of report - see Business Plan Performance Dashboard - pages 1 and 2]

Topic: Ensuring Everyone's Well-being, Health and Safety

Topic summary progress:

- This measure reflects the number of near miss reports (includes reports from employees, visitors, contractors, etc) reported per quarter. The aim is to increase the number of near miss reporting.
- This measure reflects the number of active monitoring reports by all staff, recorded per quarter. The aim is to increase the number of active monitoring reports recorded by all staff.
- Ensure those who visit land we manage, or work for us, do so in a safe environment.
- Good progress is being made against both aspects – near misses and active monitoring.

Topic owner: Steve Burton

Business Plan dashboard measure/s for this topic:

- **Wellbeing, health and safety active monitoring undertaken**
- **Number of near miss reports**

[To return to start of report - see Business Plan Performance Dashboard - pages 1 and 2]

Measure: Wellbeing, health and safety active monitoring undertaken
This measure reflects the importance of Wellbeing, Health & Safety active monitoring undertaken on site.

Latest position (to end of June 2021):
- Our **target for this measure is to increase on Quarter 1 from previous year. (Q1: 20/21 = 177, Q1: 21/22 = 301)**
- This improvement is due to increased site work being undertaken and the Covid-19 restrictions being lifted.
- Now that the public areas of interest have re-opened and with more site work re-commencing due to lockdown restrictions being lifted, the number of active monitoring exercises will increase.

What we are doing next:
- The Wellbeing, Health and Safety team will be running awareness sessions to raise the importance of active monitoring and provide training sessions on how to access the corporate system to log actions. These training sessions will be aimed at team leaders /managers and employees.
- In our August's manager's monthly guide there will be an action for team leaders/managers to engage with their teams and promote the importance of reporting.
- Our **target for this measure is to increase on Quarter 2 from previous year.**
- We are currently on track to achieve our **year end target to increase on quarter 4 from previous year** in Quarter four and are expected to be green at year end.

Measure owner: Steve Burton

Q1	to Q2	to Q3	Expected year end
Green			Green

See here for key used for Red / Amber / Green status

[To return to start of report - see Business Plan Performance Dashboard - pages 1 and 2]

Measure: Number of near miss reports

This measure reflects the number of near miss reports (includes reports from employees, visitors, contractors, etc)

Latest position (to end of June 2021):
- Our **milestone for this measure is to increase on quarter 1 from previous year. (Q1: 20/21 = 30**, Q1: 21/22 = 49)
- Near miss reporting constitutes a mixture of employees, contractors and members of the public.
- This measure is green.

What we are doing next:
- We will continue to report the number of near misses next period.
- The Wellbeing, Health & Safety team will be running training sessions on the importance of reporting near misses and how to access the corporate system to log and report. These training sessions will be aimed at team leaders /managers and employees.
- In our August's manager's monthly guide there will be an action for team leaders/managers to engage with their teams and promote the reporting of near misses. We expect these activities will help increase the number of near miss reporting so that, overall, at the end of year we have still seen an overall increase.
- Our **milestone for this measure is to increase on quarter 2 from previous year.** We are currently on track to achieve our **year end milestone to increase on quarter 4 from previous year** and expected to be green at year end.

Measure owner: Steve Burton

Q1	to Q2	to Q3	Expected year end
Green			Green

See here for key used for Red / Amber / Green status

[To return to start of report - see Business Plan Performance Dashboard - pages 1 and 2]

Topic: Understand and Improve our Customers' Experiences

Topic summary progress:

- We have been raising awareness of the Customer Experience and Engagement Strategy through attending team meetings and NRW's Business Boards. We've provided our six monthly progress updated to our People and Remuneration Committee (PaRC) in June 2021. Bespoke presentation packs are being developed to meet the needs of each team.
- We have refreshed the Complaints and Commendations management information to be more qualitative, identifying themes, root causes and actions taken and to make it more relevant for our place based teams.
- We have held a stakeholder prioritisation session with ET and an escalation process now being developed.

Topic owner: Naomi Lawrence

Business Plan dashboard measure/s for this topic:

- **Progress the Customer Experience Strategy**
- **Deliver our Stakeholder Engagement Plan**

Measure: Progress the Customer Experience Strategy
This measure reflects the Progress of the Customer Experience Strategy

Latest position (to end of June 2021):
- Our **milestone for this measure is to Increase internal awareness of the strategy focussing on the 4 strategic objectives and customer experience principles.**
- We have engaged with many groups across NRW including our Executive Team, Leadership Team, Staff Engagement Forum, Trade Union Forum, Engagement Practitioners Group and we have held an NRW Webinar Wednesday session to raise awareness of the strategy. We have taken feedback to help tailor our approach as we start to share the strategy further into the organisation and we have begun to develop bespoke presentation packs to meet the needs of each team. We are also in discussion about how to include customer experience as part of the corporate induction.
- **This measure is** green.

What we are doing next:
- We will continue to work with teams to introduce the strategy and help them understand their role within it. We have begun the procurement process to select the agency we will work with to deliver the customer journey mapping exercise.
- Our **milestone for this measure for the next reporting period is to initiate a cross office end to end customer journey mapping exercise**.
- We are currently on track to achieve our **year end milestone activity which is to begin review of results of customer journey mapping exercise and agree next steps** in Quarter four.
- We currently expect we will be green at year end.

Measure owner: Naomi Lawrence

Q1	to Q2	to Q3	Expected year end
Green			Green

See here for key used for Red / Amber / Green status
[To return to start of report - see Business Plan Performance Dashboard - pages 1 and 2]

Measure: Deliver our Stakeholder Engagement Plan

This measure reflects the delivery of our stakeholder engagement plan.

Latest position (to end of June 2021):

- Our **milestone for this measure is to deliver workshops with relevant staff to identify priority stakeholders according to the business plan priorities, and work with our Customer and Communications teams to develop a corporate contact programme with high level key messages for relevant audiences.**
- We have not completed this activity. We have held one workshop with Executive Team in May 2021 and the next one which is a multi-directorate workshop to explore the guiding principles of our stakeholder relationship management is scheduled for August 2021. We have an external facilitator to support this.
- **This measure is** amber.

What we are doing next:

- We will now hold the workshop in August. Work is already underway to gather and consolidate the existing stakeholder information we hold across NRW, ready to upload into our Customer Relationship Management system.
- Our **milestone for this measure is to work with the Customer and Communications teams to evaluate existing information e.g. previous stakeholder analysis such as Area Statement Stakeholder Maps, and review for consistency and integration with a records management system.**
- We are currently on track to achieve our year end milestone to **undertake a perceptions audit** in Quarter four and expect to be green at year end.

Measure owner: Naomi Lawrence

Q1	to Q2	to Q3	Expected year end
Amber			Green

See here for key used for Red / Amber / Green status

[To return to start of report - see Business Plan Performance Dashboard - pages 1 and 2]

Topic: Making the most of commercial opportunities

Topic summary progress (i.e. overview of work undertaken against this topic):

- We have successfully launched our Sustainable Commercial Opportunities Group with representatives from across the business
- Identified and progressing 2 potential renewal hubs in South Wales as part of the renewal programme
- Continued to take a lead role in partnership with the Welsh Government on how to better deliver energy projects across the Welsh Government Estate
- Currently scoping a number of potential diversification opportunities on our estate including better utilisation for enabling businesses at Ceinws, Maesgwym.
- Talking to a number of new technology partners for future energy delivery approaches and exploring incubator opportunities.
- Reviewing how we can encourage and provide consistency for how we charge for filming on our land

Topic owner: Victoria Rose-Piper / Elsie Grace

Business Plan dashboard measure/s for this topic:

- **Implement our Commercial Strategy**
- **Timber volume offered to market / sold / dispatched**

[To return to start of report - see Business Plan Performance Dashboard - pages 1 and 2]

Measure: Implement our Commercial Strategy

This measure reflects how we are implementing our Commercial Strategy (which superseded the Enterprise plan) and sets out what we will focus on in the next five years and NRW's approach to commercial opportunities, including the development of the People, Planet, Prosperity measurement of commercial success and value.

Latest position (to end of June 2021)

- Our **milestone for this measure is for Open Source Read Only Commercial Development Action Plans to be available for review by NRW, establish our Sustainable Commercial Opportunities Group (SCOG) and hold our first Commercial Network meeting**
- We have not completed all aspects of this activity. The Commercial Development Actions Plan is now in completed form for sharing to the wider organisation (slightly redacted to remove commercially sensitive information). SCOG has now had three meetings discussing a range of opportunities including tidal lagoon energy creation, renewal hubs and tourism and recreation opportunities. Now that the format of SCOG is confirmed we are about to plan a wider communications push to increase internal awareness and encourage this as a starting point for commercial development within NRW. The first Commercial Network has been delayed in order to allow the new Head of Sustainable Commercial Development to lead the first group and we have delayed this till the end of September. Communications will be going out in August.
- **This measure is** amber.

What we are doing next:

- Our **milestone for this measure is PowerBI and reporting to our Commercial Business Board mechanisms and measures in place.** We are currently on track to achieve our **year end milestone is Annual Review prepared (for publishing April 2022) and Strategy Revision (published April 2022)** in Quarter four and are expecting to be green at year end.

Measure owner: Elsie Grace

Q1	to Q2	to Q3	Expected year end
Amber			Green

See here for key used for Red / Amber / Green status

[To return to start of report - see Business Plan Performance Dashboard - pages 1 and 2]

Measure: Timber volume offered to market/sold/dispatched

This measure reflects a commitment set out in the Timber Sales and Marketing Plan. NRW currently offers 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 June 2021):

- Our **target for this measure is 183,000m^3** obs (obs = over-bark, standing) for quarter one.
- We have achieved **183,000m^3 obs**
- **The measure is Green**

What we are doing next:

- We plan to offer a further 248,000m^3 obs in July 2021, which would take us to a cumulative total of 431,000m^3 obs to the end of quarter two.
- Our cumulative **target for this measure for the next reporting period is 385,000m^3** obs, so we are expecting to exceed this.
- We are currently on track to achieve our **year end target of 830,000m^3**. The anticipated overachievement in quarter two is expected to balance out over quarters three and four in meeting our target at year end.
- We currently expect this measure to be **green at year end**

Measure owner: Victoria Rose-Piper

Q1	to Q2	to Q3	Expected year end
Green			Green

See here for key used for Red / Amber / Green status

[To return to start of report - see Business Plan Performance Dashboard - pages 1 and 2]

Priority: Responding to the Covid-19 pandemic and the UK leaving the European Union, taking opportunities for a green recovery

Collaborating with partners in response to major change, including the Covid-19 pandemic and the UK leaving the European Union, providing advice and guidance and taking opportunities to maximise a green and blue recovery

Our NRW Business Plan sets out the following topics in relation to this priority:

- **Providing advice and guidance**
- **Delivering our Covid-19 Renewal Programme**

The following pages reflect recent progress on each of those topics, along with the latest performance position in relation to the Business Plan dashboard measure/s for each.

Topic: Providing advice and guidance

Topic summary progress (i.e. overview of work undertaken against this topic):

- This work falls into the wider context of maintaining relationships with other agencies and staff across NRW to provide a coherent view on the continuing impacts of EU exit and to advise Welsh Government via such liaison with colleagues across the UK. Internally, it's related to keeping senior leaders briefed about the long-term impact, risks and opportunities related to the new oversight body - in particular the increased risk of Judicial Review, strategic complaints work and increased liaison and advisory work related to environmental governance. It is part of our continuing commitment to transition this work into business as usual.

Topic owner: Ruth Jenkins

Business Plan dashboard measure/s for this topic:

- **NRW's contribution following EU Exit**

Measure: NRW's contribution following EU Exit

This measure reflects an update on NRW's contribution following EU Exit to environmental principles and governance, the new oversight body and new legislation (development of Agriculture and Fisheries Bills etc). NRW must respond effectively to developing issues and changes for advice and guidance to staff, customers and stakeholders.

Latest position (to end of June 2021):

- Our **milestone for this measure is to provide a progress update.**
- We are continuing to contribute to the development of new legislation following EU Exit, supporting Welsh Government and coordinating a comprehensive response from NRW. We are working with other agencies, staff across NRW and with the Interim Environmental Protection Assessor (Wales) on environmental governance and have briefed our Executive Team on the long-term impact, risks and opportunities related to the new oversight body and its effect on NRW's work. In particular, the increased risk of Judicial Review, strategic complaints work and advisory work.
- **This measure is green.**

What we are doing next:

- We will develop a business case for the management of permanent new and additional work following EU Exit. We will work with WG on new legislation and the new oversight body and with other agencies, NRW staff and interim process.
- Our **milestone for this measure for the next reporting period is provide a progress update**.
- We are currently on track for our **year end milestone to provide a progress update** in Quarter four.
- We will be amber at year end due to the temporary nature of the programme and new and additional permanent work that is not resourced long-term but is currently the subject of a business case. Our Executive Team have confirmed the need to resource this high profile, permanent new work. The business case will mitigate this risk if approved.

Measure owner: Ruth Jenkins

Q1	to Q2	to Q3	Expected year end
Green			Amber

See here for key used for Red / Amber / Green status

[To return to start of report - see Business Plan Performance Dashboard - pages 1 and 2]

Topic: Delivering our Covid-19 Renewal Programme

Topic summary progress:

- The Programme Team is well established with clear governance arrangements and a revised and well supported programme board.
- The Programme Definition Document has been submitted to our Portfolio Management Office which has been approved by NRW's internal Project Assurance Group
- The individual workstreams have made progress in developing and implementing their measures, whilst the programme management approach ensures they are integrated.
- The individual workstreams have developed proof of concept / trial approaches in areas such as hybrid working arrangements, developing new accommodation plans, training, ICT and development of shared office hubs.
- We have started an Accommodation Strategy refresh using our SE Area as a pilot
- We are commissioning a new desk booking system to support future hybrid and shared office working
- We have undertaken a detailed staff survey to better understand the scope for hybrid working needs
- We have implemented new ICT procedures for managing remote device efficiently
- We have implemented new tools within Teams to help support remote working, and are developing our approach to move all office telephony to Teams

Topic owner: Martin Parkinson

Business Plan dashboard measure/s for this topic:

- **Implement Covid-19 Renewal programme**

Measure: Implement Covid-19 Renewal programme

This measure reflects the broad range of work undertaken to deliver the Renewal programme.

Latest position (to end of June 2021):

- Our **milestone for this measure is Programme Team established and integrated delivery plan in place, including list of proof of concept trials to be initiated and a detailed benefits register.**
  - We have made significant progress in establishing a programme team, with identified leads for each of the 9 work streams.
  - The individual workstreams have made progress in developing proof of concepts / trial approaches in areas such as hybrid working arrangements, developing new accommodation plans, training, ICT and development of shared office hubs.
- **This measure is** Green.

What we are doing next:

- We will now complete the Renewal Programme Business Justification case and continue to implement the workstream trials
- Our **milestone for this measure for the next reporting period is delivery against programme plan, including implementation of planned trials initiatives and measurement of benefits delivered**
- We are currently on track to achieve our **year end milestone activity of delivery against programme plan, including implementation of planned trials initiatives and measurement of benefits delivered** in Quarter four, and be green at year end.

Measure owner: Martin Parkinson

Q1	to Q2	to Q3	Expected year end
Green			Green

See here for key used for Red / Amber / Green status

[To return to start of report - see Business Plan Performance Dashboard - pages 1 and 2]

Key: Green, amber or red ratings

The detail of how the green, amber or red measure status is determined for each measure in our Business Plan dashboard is shown below. We typically use a common approach for each measure type (e.g. milestones or numeric targets). We only depart from this common approach where necessary, for the specific measure being considered (e.g. using more specific tolerances for numeric targets to be a fair reflection of performance, and to ensure alignment with long-standing performance reporting approaches for these).

Each quarter we report both a current position to that quarter, and a year end expected position. The reported year end expected position is based on our measure leads' expert knowledge around the activity area. This typically includes reflection around action being undertaken, current or emerging issues and various categories of risk. The reported year end position is therefore clearly subject to significant uncertainty in many cases, with this also being dependent on the nature of the individual measure being considered.

Some measures have no pre-set green, amber or red categorisation in place. This is often the case for measures that are new/emerging work areas, or where a pre-set approach would not make sense. Ratings for these measures are therefore based on a common-sense reflection approach in year – i.e. a fair reflection of the position at that time

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Respond to the Climate Emergency

Page	Measure	Type	Red is…	Amber is…	Green is…
6	Climate emergency across NRW	Milestone	Activity reflected in milestone is not near completion	Activity reflected in milestone is near complete (e.g. expected to be completed a month later than planned)	Activity reflected in milestone is effectively complete
8	Verification of Glastir Woodland grant scheme applications	Numeric	No pre-set Red / Amber / Green rating approach in place, i.e. common-sense	No pre-set Red / Amber / Green rating approach in place, i.e. common-sense	No pre-set Red / Amber / Green rating approach in place, i.e. common-sense

			approach to Red rating applies, focused on fair reflection of position	approach to Amber rating applies, focused on fair reflection of position	approach to Green rating applies, focused on fair reflection of position
9	Area of new woodland created on the NRW Estate	Numeric	Figure / target not achieved.	Within 30% of figure / target	Figure / target effectively achieved.
11	Actions undertaken to restore Welsh peatlands	Milestone	Activity reflected in milestone is not near completion	Activity reflected in milestone is near complete (e.g. expected to be completed a month later than planned)	Activity reflected in milestone is effectively complete
13	Implement Flood Review recommendations	Text update	No pre-set Red / Amber / Green rating approach in place, i.e. common-sense approach to Red rating applies, focused on fair reflection of position	No pre-set Red / Amber / Green rating approach in place, i.e. common-sense approach to Amber rating applies, focused on fair reflection of position	No pre-set Red / Amber / Green rating approach in place, i.e. common-sense approach to Green rating applies, focused on fair reflection of position
14	Maintain flood risk assets in high risk systems at target condition	Numeric	Figure / target not achieved.	Within 30% of figure / target	98% (with no integer rounding)
15	Properties with reduced risk or sustained protection through capital work	Numeric	Figure / target not achieved.	Within 30% of figure / target	90% (with integer rounding, i.e. >=89.5% would be green)

Respond to the Nature Emergency

Page	Measure	Type	Red	Amber	Green
18	Biodiversity action across NRW	Milestone	Activity reflected in milestone is not near completion	Activity reflected in milestone is near complete (e.g. expected to be completed a month later than planned)	Activity reflected in milestone is effectively complete
20	Priority actions undertaken on protected sites to improve condition of features	Milestone	Figure / target not achieved.	Within 30% of figure / target	Figure / target effectively achieved.
21	Actions undertaken on National Nature Reserves on NRW managed land to improve	Milestone	Figure / target not achieved.	Within 30% of figure / target	Figure / target effectively achieved.
22	Delivering targeted action for declining species or those on the edge of extinction	Milestone	Activity reflected in milestone is not near completion	Activity reflected in milestone is near complete (e.g. expected to be completed a month later than planned)	Activity reflected in milestone is effectively complete
24	Number of UKWAS Corrective Action Requests and Observations open and progress closing them	Text update	No pre-set Red / Amber / Green rating approach in place, i.e. common-sense approach to Red rating applies, focused on fair reflection of position	No pre-set Red / Amber / Green rating approach in place, i.e. common-sense approach to Amber rating applies, focused on fair reflection of position	No pre-set Red / Amber / Green rating approach in place, i.e. common-sense approach to Green rating applies, focused on fair reflection of position

			Red	Amber	Green
25	Progress of our work to reduce pollution from metal mines	Milestone	Activity reflected in milestone is not near completion	Activity reflected in milestone is near complete (e.g. expected to be completed a month later than planned)	Activity reflected in milestone is effectively complete
27	Support implementation of the Welsh National Marine Plan	Milestone	Activity reflected in milestone is not near completion	Activity reflected in milestone is near complete (e.g. expected to be completed a month later than planned)	Activity reflected in milestone is effectively complete
28	Progress NRW's actions in the Wales Marine Protected Area network management actions plan	Milestone	Activity reflected in milestone is not near completion	Activity reflected in milestone is near complete (e.g. expected to be completed a month later than planned)	Activity reflected in milestone is effectively complete
30	Deliver remaining water related investigations and develop new River Basin Management Plans	Milestone	Activity reflected in milestone is not near completion	Activity reflected in milestone is near complete (e.g. expected to be completed a month later than planned)	Activity reflected in milestone is effectively complete

Developing and using our evidence with partners to advocate for and deliver SMNR

Page	Measure	Type	Red	Amber	Green
34	Promote, advocate and encourage use	Milestone	Activity reflected in milestone is not near completion	Activity reflected in milestone is near complete (e.g.	Activity reflected in milestone is effectively complete

			Red	Amber	Green
	of State of Natural Resources Report			expected to be completed a month later than planned)	
35	Use of Area Statements within NRW to embed priorities and opportunities	Milestone	Activity reflected in milestone is not near completion	Activity reflected in milestone is near complete (e.g. expected to be completed a month later than planned)	Activity reflected in milestone is effectively complete

Developing NRW into an excellent organisation that serves the communities of Wales

Page	Measure	Type	Red	Amber	Green
38	Response to incidents (initial category 'High', within 4 hours)	Numeric	Figure / target not achieved.	Within 30% of figure / target	95% (with integer rounding, i.e. >=94.5% would be green)
40	Performance of regulated sites and water quality discharges	Numeric	Figure / target not achieved.	Within 30% of figure / target	75% (with integer rounding, i.e. >=74.5% would be green)
42	Deliver NRW's combined health and educator training	Milestone	Activity reflected in milestone is not near completion	Activity reflected in milestone is near complete (e.g. expected to be completed a month later than planned)	Activity reflected in milestone is effectively complete
44	Make payments on time	Numeric	Figure / target not achieved.	Within 5% of figure / target	95% (with integer rounding, i.e. >=94.5% would be green)

45	Develop and implement a People Strategy for NRW	Milestone	Activity reflected in milestone is not near completion	Activity reflected in milestone is near complete (e.g. expected to be completed a month later than planned)	Activity reflected in milestone is effectively complete
46	Staff personal development plans are in place	Milestone	Activity reflected in milestone is not near completion	Activity reflected in milestone is near complete (e.g. expected to be completed a month later than planned)	Activity reflected in milestone is effectively complete
47	Complete agreed (mandatory) eLearning	Numeric	Figure / target not achieved.	Within 5% of figure / target	90% (with integer rounding, i.e. >=89.5% would be green)
48	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion action	Milestone	Activity reflected in milestone is not near completion	Activity reflected in milestone is near complete (e.g. expected to be completed a month later than planned)	Activity reflected in milestone is effectively complete
50	Wellbeing, health and safety active monitoring undertaken	Milestone	Activity reflected in milestone is not near completion	Activity reflected in milestone is near complete (e.g. expected to be completed a month later than planned)	Activity reflected in milestone is effectively complete
51	Number of near miss reports	Milestone	Activity reflected in milestone is not near completion	Activity reflected in milestone is near complete (e.g. expected to be	Activity reflected in milestone is effectively complete

Page	Measure	Type	Red	Amber	Green
			completed a month later than planned)		
53	Progress the Customer Experience Strategy	Milestone	Activity reflected in milestone is not near completion	Activity reflected in milestone is near complete (e.g. expected to be completed a month later than planned)	Activity reflected in milestone is effectively complete
54	Deliver our Stakeholder Engagement Plan	Milestone	Activity reflected in milestone is not near completion	Activity reflected in milestone is near complete (e.g. expected to be completed a month later than planned)	Activity reflected in milestone is effectively complete
56	Implement our Commercial Strategy	Milestone	Activity reflected in milestone is not near completion	Activity reflected in milestone is near complete (e.g. expected to be completed a month later than planned)	Activity reflected in milestone is effectively complete
57	Timber volume offered to market / sold / dispatched	Numeric	Figure / target not achieved.	Within 30% of figure / target	Figure / target effectively achieved.

Responding to the Covid-19 pandemic and the UK Leaving the European Union, taking opportunities for a green recovery

Page	Measure	Type	Red	Amber	Green
60	NRW's contribution following EU Exit	Text update	No pre-set Red / Amber / Green rating approach in place, i.e. common-sense	No pre-set Red / Amber / Green rating approach in place, i.e. common-sense approach to	No pre-set Red / Amber / Green rating approach in place, i.e. common-sense

			approach to Red rating applies, focused on fair reflection of position	Amber rating applies, focused on fair reflection of position	approach to Green rating applies, focused on fair reflection of position
62	Implement Covid-19 Renewal programme	Milestone	Activity reflected in milestone is not near completion	Activity reflected in milestone is near complete (e.g. expected to be completed a month later than planned)	Activity reflected in milestone is effectively complete

Board Paper

Date of meeting	23rd September 2021
Title of paper	Wellbeing, Health and Safety (WH&S) Quarter 1 Update
Paper reference	21-09-B13
Paper sponsored by	Prys Davies, Director Corporate Strategy and Development
Paper prepared by	Charlotte Morgan, Wellbeing Health & Safety Manager (WH&S)
Purpose of paper	Information (no action required)

Background

1. This is the WH&S interim performance update to provide Board with a Quarter 1 2021/2022 update.

Recommendation

2. Board are asked to comment on the WH&S report.

Risks

3. Wellbeing, Health and Safety risks will continue to be managed by the organisation, co-ordinated and overseen by the WH&S team. In looking ahead, NRW will need to maintain and further develop our culture of wellbeing, health and safety monitoring and learning. This will continue to be a key element of our future strategy to move forward.

4. WH&S team will use the information gathered and lessons learnt as a result of our regular monitoring to inform the development of our future strategy and action plan.

Index of annexes

Annex 1 – WH&S Report Quarter 1

Board Report Q1- Engagement Pack – April to June 2021

Serious Incident Reviews (SIR)

SIR Update

Electric Vehicle Charging Points 2019/2020

Issues have been found with publicly available electric vehicle charging points on the NRW estate relating to installation by the contractor because they were not compliant with relevant electricity regulations. There were subsequent issues highlighted when the remedial repairs were carried out by contracted electrical engineers.

The final report has been distributed and actions assigned. There were ten actions in total with eight actions completed and two actions are active and being worked on with a final completion date of the 31st December 2021.

HGV Accident – Forestry civil engineering works 2020/2021

A civil engineering haulage contractor was transporting stone between sites when it overturned on a road. It is understood that this accident occurred because of low overhanging branches from trees on land adjacent to the road. Even though this was not on NRW land, further investigation identified learning that would be valuable to NRW.

The final report has been distributed and actions assigned. There were thirteen actions in total with seven completed and six are active and being worked on with a final completion date of 30th September 2021.

Mechanised harvester chainshot incident 2020/2021

A direct production harvesting contractor experienced a near miss when a fragment of the chain broke away and was ejected towards the cab. NRW are the Landowner and Forestry Works Manager. The report identified issues around the extent to which chainshot is covered in training, missing chainshot guard/protection device, and the restricted manoeuvrability of the harvester head in thinning coupes.

The final report has been distributed and actions assigned. There were nine actions in total and eight are completed with one is still active and being worked on with a final completion date of 31st August 2021.

Hung up tree left standing during chainsaw operation 2020/2021

Hung up trees were left standing during chainsaw operations on NRW land by a contractor. This is contrary to industry best practice guidance. The report identified issues around the planning of works, and the training/competence of those undertaking the supervision of the works.

The final report has been distributed and actions assigned. There were four actions in total with three completed and one is still active and being worked on with a final completion date of 30th September 2021.

Chainsaw ringbarking 2020/2021

Trees were identified during a site visit in 2020, which were potentially unstable following ringbarking that occurred approximately 5 years ago. There is greater liability for NRW where trees fall as a consequence of human intervention, i.e. creating deadwood either by stem injection or by ringbarking.

The report identified issues with regards to the procurement of contractors, chainsaw supervisor training, frequency of tree inspections, management agreements with third parties, and robustness and clarity of existing guidance.

The final report has been distributed and actions assigned. There were twenty actions in total with nineteen completed and one is active and being worked on with a final completion date of 30th September 2021.

Incidents on NRW Estate

Sadly, there have been two recent fatalities on the NRW estate:

- A male fell from a cliff edge at Pen Pych Woodlands on 7th May 2021
- A male drowned at Sgwd Pannwr plunge pool on 5th June 2021

Both of these are subject to a Coroner's inquest and investigation and once these have concluded more information around the circumstances may be available.

A Serious Incident Review has been opened and paused for the 2 fatalities and will be updated once the coroner's inquest has concluded. This could be late next year.

As both of these fatalities are currently being investigated by the Police and the Coroner a full investigation cannot be undertaken until these have been concluded. In both of the above cases the incidents happened on a natural feature on open access countryside with no indication that they related to our work. However, initial evidence gathering has been undertaken in conjunction with key staff to ascertain if any immediate actions were necessary. Wellbeing support was offered to staff.

Incidents

AssessNET Incident Data (all NRW)

NRW	Q1 2021-22	Q1 2020-21	FY 2020-21	FY 2019-20	FY 2018-19	FY 2017-18	FY 2016-17	FY 2015-16
RIDDOR	1	0	3	5	2	8	9	12
Injury Lost Time	1	1	1	8	7	10	13	14
Injury No Lost Time	32	8	37	98	115	164	153	159
Near Miss	51	30	165	226	242	301	364	477
Property Damage	4	2	31	32	41	46	62	64
Total	89	41	237	369	407	529	601	726
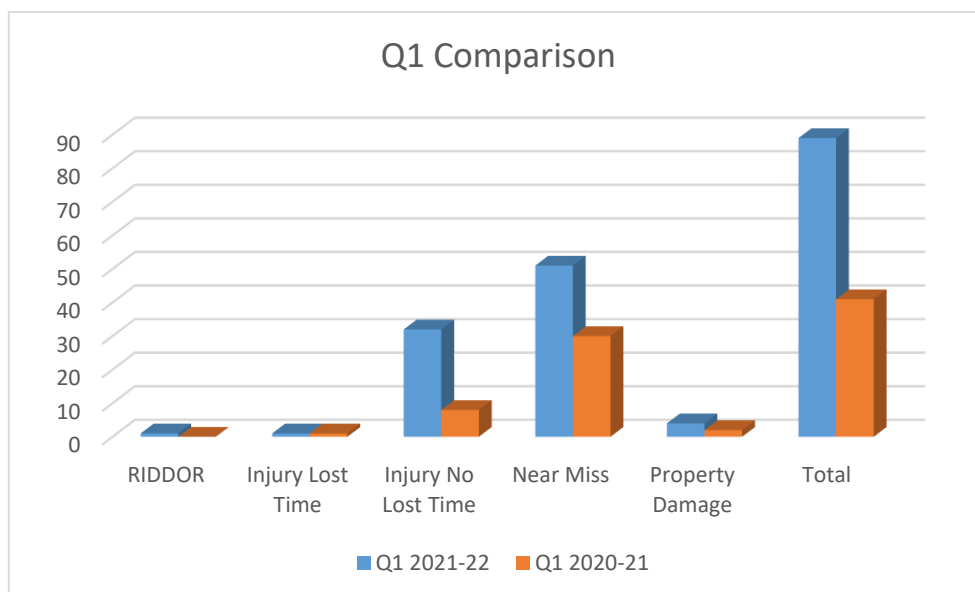
NRW Totals for Q1 2021/22.

A total of **89** incidents have been reported to date for Q1 2021/22– this constitutes a mixture of employee, contractor and member of public injuries and near misses. This compares to a total of **41** reported for the same period Q1 2020/21.

1 RIDDOR over 7-day injury (0 for same period last FY) – slip/trip/fall on uneven ground leading to over 7 day injury (knee).

1 Lost Time Injury (1 for same period last FY) – slip/trip/fall on kerb whilst carrying work equipment.

32 Injury with no lost time (8 for the same period last FY) - 11 of the 31 reported injuries are to members of the public on MTB with the majority of the remaining being slips/trips/falls. Note: 2 incidences of mild sunburn/dehydration working outdoors.

51 Near Miss (30 for the same period last FY) – significant number (10) relating to vehicles.

4 Property Damage (2 for the same period last FY) – 3 relating to vehicles.

Current incident themes:

- Mountain Bike injuries to members of the Public at our Visitor/Trail Centres
- Slips/Trips/Falls
- Incidents relating to driving at work and NRW vehicles.

ISO 45001: 2018

The contract for the certification for ISO 45001:2018 has been awarded to British Standards Institute (BSi). ISO 45001:2018 is an international standard for health and safety at work developed by national and international standards committees.

The BSi auditor undertook a gap analysis on the 2nd of October 2020 and an action plan was produced to address the areas of improvement. The next stage – Stage 1 - of the certification took place over 3 days in April 2021. Following this stage assessment, BSi recommended that NRW could proceed to the next step – Stage 2 - which will be the sampling/auditing of teams and their activities. This will take place in October, November and December 2021.

Policy update

A number of the WH&S policies and procedures were reviewed and updated. These included: -

- The Occupational health policy,
- Lone and remote working policy and procedure
- Personal Protective Equipment policy and procedure
- Procurement of contractors policy and procedure.

These will be endorsed by the Leadership Team Group and signed off by the members of the National WH&S committee.

Internal Audit Programme

The internal audit team notified the WH&S team that one internal audit review would take place in 2021/2022. This internal audit review was to focus on the Hand Arm Vibration (HAVs) process, which is due to commence in September 2021.

Wellbeing Health & Safety Pre-qualification questionnaires

The WH&S team have liaised with procurement and the timber sales team to ensure that contractors and customers who work on NRW land are adequately assessed at the pre-qualification stage, to ensure that they are competent and have made suitable arrangements in place to manage WH&S.

In total, the following have been assessed and approved -

4 Mobile plant hire contractor assessments – all failed the initial assessment and required further clarification.

2 Life Dee river restoration contractor assessments - all failed the initial assessment and required further clarification.

Change in Unlawful Killing and Suicide Thresholds

The burden of proof at Coroner's inquests has been reduced for unlawful killing and suicide from 'beyond reasonable doubt' to 'on the balance of probabilities' making the threshold lower.

Potential impact for employers and landowners/occupiers may be significant with double investigations happening, one based on criminal test and the other on civil test.

The Coroner's inquest usually precedes the conclusion of HSE investigations (and subsequent prosecutions) as well. Therefore, if the Coroner is increasingly ruling a verdict of 'unlawful killing' due to the lower standard/burden of proof required, it stands to reason that there may be an increase in prosecutions/civil cases as well.

WH&S webinars

The following WH&S webinars were delivered in Q1 with staff attending these to gain information on several subjects, such as Peoplesafe, ISO 45001 and the WH&S surgeries. These will continue into 2021/2022,

Coronavirus/Covid-19

As a result of the pandemic, there has been a need for additional WH&S advice, support and guidance for staff who are working from home and teams who were still undertaking key and essential works activities. Welsh Government (WG) implemented a plan based on alert levels. WG, in partnership with Business Wales, launched a scheme for public sector organisations to access lateral flow testing. NRW signed up to the scheme, as there are several teams that are unable to work in a safe manner due to Covid restrictions such as maintaining the 2m social distancing rule.

Lateral flow tests (LFTs) are used to identify people with COVID-19 who are not showing symptoms. Around 1 in 3 individuals with COVID-19 do not have any symptoms. If left undetected, they will continue to spread the virus. Testing those without symptoms is an important tool in the fight against coronavirus. Each positive case identified can help prevent many more infections. LFTs are easy to use and give results in 30 minutes. They are easy to interpret and can be used in a wide range of settings.

Teams have been identified to take part in the scheme and a working procedure has been developed. The teams taking part in the trial relate to where we have identified tasks that they are unable to carry out social distancing or other coronavirus controls and those tasks cannot be paused, and include electric fishing, marine monitoring and fisheries monitoring teams. Results will be monitored by NRW and WG to ascertain the usefulness of the testing. All alert level information can be found on the Coronavirus intranet page.

Wellbeing initiatives and developments

Corporate Health Standard

The focus for 2021/2022 is to ensure suitable and sufficient evidence and supporting information is continued to be gathered for the Gold level award assessment. The action plan was submitted to Public Health Wales for the gold level award assessment in March 2021.

However, all Corporate Health Standard (CHS) assessments are dependent on how Public Health Wales and their resources and processes due to Covid-19. Their focus is currently on organisations that have awards to revalidate before moving onto new award assessments. NRW's sliver award will expire in March 2022.

Wellbeing Initiatives

A plan for the forthcoming year has been developed to ensure communication and participation in a range of specific wellbeing initiatives throughout the year. These include:

- Menopause awareness
- World suicide awareness
- Male cancer awareness
- Breast cancer awareness
- Alcohol Awareness

All these initiatives will be communicated to encouraged staff of how to look after themselves and their colleagues at work and outside of work. These initiatives will be advertised to staff through our Intranet, Manager's Monthly updates, Yammer pages and through engagement at local WH&S Forums and team meetings.
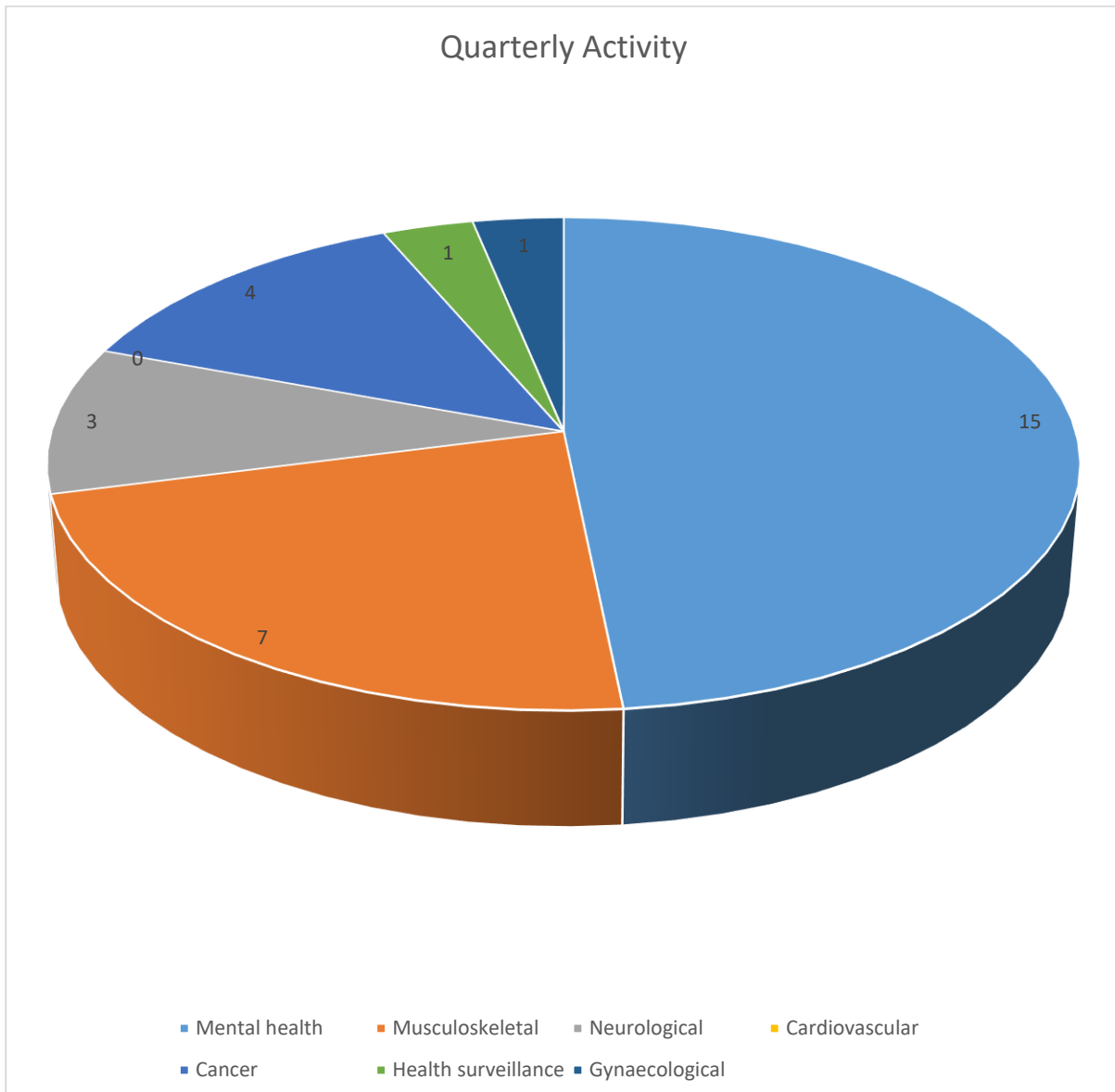
NRW Occupational Health Statistics

Quarter 1 – April to June 2021

Summary	Comparison from previous quarter
31 referrals/reviews	+3 (28)
20 HAV screening	-10 (30)
0 HAVs Tier 4 assessments	-2 (2)

66 Whole body vibration assessments	+66 (0)
2 post offer assessments	+2 (0)

Medical reason for referral

Quarterly Activity

Mental health is the main reason for referrals this quarter at 48% which is a 20% decrease from last quarter.

Mental health categories

Quarterly Activity
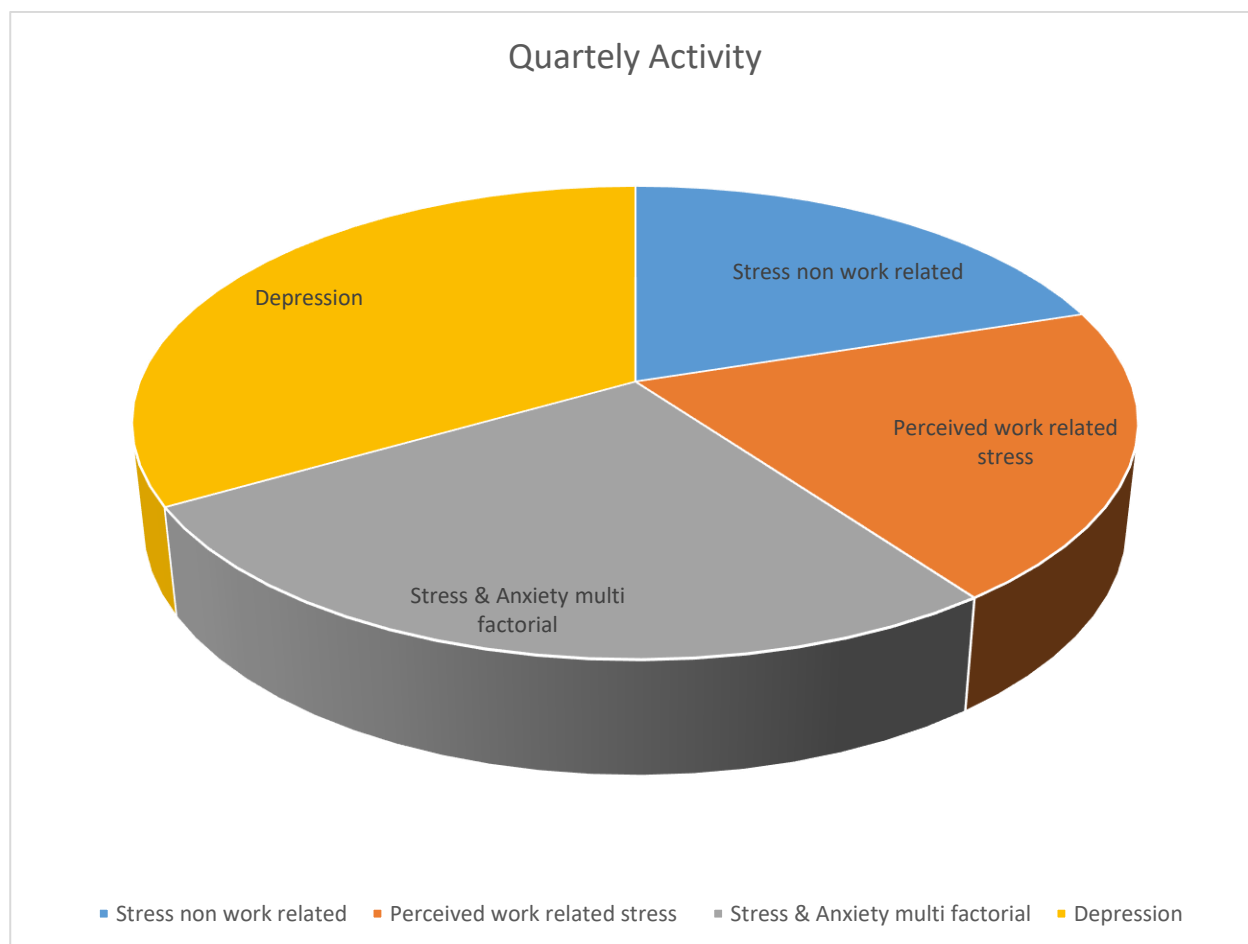
20% of the mental health referrals are perceived to be work related which is a 6% decrease from the last quarter.

Perceived work related stress is where it is identified that the employee perceives that their stress is solely work related, i.e. work is the stressor. Where there is both work related and personal related stress this is identified as multi factorial.

Employee Assistance Programme Q1 stats – April to June 2021

Summary

	Apr	May	June	Total
Virtual face to face counselling	11	14	8	33
Online counselling	0	0	2	2
Telephone – counsellor	19	10	13	42

Total		30	24	23	77

Contacts by type

	Apr	May	June	Total
Coronavirus	0	0	1	1
Initial Contact	4	2	1	7
Personal Reason (PR) - Alcohol	0	1	0	1
PR - Bereavement	4	5	2	11
PR - Family	7	10	3	20
PR - Health - Emotional	11	10	7	28
PR - Health - Physical	4	4	0	8
PR - Relationship	5	5	2	12
Work reason (WR) - Changes at work	1	1	0	2
WR – Disciplinary	1	0	0	1
WR – Grievance	1	0	0	1
WR – Relationships at work with colleagues	0	0	2	2
WR – Role ambiguity	0	0	1	1
WR – Stress – Relationships	0	0	1	1
WR – Work control	0	0	1	1
WR – Worklife balance	1	3	1	5
WR – Work control	0	0	1	1

WR - Work Overload	0	0	2	2
WR - Work Related Health - Emotional	0	1	2	3
Total number of contacts:	39	42	25	106

Board Paper

	Paper Details
Paper title:	NRW's Priorities for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
Paper Reference:	21-09-B14
Paper sponsored by:	Prys Davies, Executive Director of Corporate Strategy and Development
Paper Presented by:	Prys Davies, Executive Director of Corporate Strategy and Development
Purpose of the paper	Scrutiny and Discussion
Recommendation	That Board Members consider and discuss their priorities for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in NRW over the next three years. We would also welcome the views on what specific contributions you could make as Board members.

Issue

1. We are developing an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Plan for NRW, setting out the key priorities for the next three years (up to 2025). As part of developing that Plan, we are keen to secure the views of Board members on the key priorities for this Plan.

Background

2. In March 2020, the Board agreed to sign-up to cross-public sector Shared Equality Objectives and also that we should develop a more specific plan for NRW, tailored to our particular organisational priorities and values. We established a steering group, involving a number of Board members, to help guide our work and have undertaken a number of pieces of work to inform our priorities going forward.

3. The first phase of this work, which ran from January to April 2021, resulted in the development of a baseline report and action plan that was developed with input from consultants, Diverse Cymru. The report was based on a desktop review, an online survey and focus groups, involving staff as well as external stakeholders.

4. With input from the steering group, we progressed to a second phase of work that involved the establishment of a Task and Finish (T&F) Group, comprising a cross section of staff from across the organisation, to review the findings from the first phase

and identify the key priorities that NRW should focus on in relation to the EDI agenda over the short to medium term. Over the course of July and August, we ran five workshops with our staff group. These workshops enabled us to work on the staff Vision for EDI in NRW, reviewed the findings of the first phase of work, including any specific gaps; and then focussed on developing a collective view as to what NRW should focus on next in relation to the EDI agenda. The key themes identified by the T&F Group are set out in paragraph 7 below.

5. In parallel, we sought additional feedback from stakeholders regarding our approach to EDI. The responses covered a range of issues including: welcome and supporting the work around EDI; how NRW is seen to work with more traditional players and how one of the challenges for the wider environment sector is to engage and involve more widely and how this could be key to opening up more doors; the importance of looking at this agenda through a socio-economic lens; how some of the EDI issues that we are trying to address are closely linked to matters relating to customer service and involvement.

Summary

6. There are a number of different plans and activities which are relevant to an assessment of our priorities in relation to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion issues. These have been developed and informed by wider, societal discussions around issues such as race and Black Lives Matter, transgender issues and LGBT rights; against a backdrop of an increasingly divisive public discourse, debates and disagreements about the limits of freedom of expression, and social and economic changes resulting from Covid and Brexit. Wider discussions, particularly within the organisation, are underway around broadening community engagement and involvement in our work, particularly more vulnerable and deprived communities.

[A] NRW EDI Task and Finish Group

7. The NRW Task and Finish Group, which met over the course of July and August, identified a number of key priorities and actions for NRW for the next three years. We have grouped these under the following six themes, with some of the additional detail provided under each heading:

[i] *Collecting and measuring the right data and analysis for better decision making*

o   Review how we gather and monitor workforce/applicant/'exiters' data. Sell the benefits of and improve quality of data gathering processes (including data declaration rates) and analysis to support better decision-making.

o   Consider rationale for positive action based on accurate data for a more representative workforce

o   Consider data held for possible new employee multi-passport e.g. carers/disability/reasonable adjustments/mental health needs/long term conditions/faith issues/gender identity or expression

[ii] *Raising the EDI Bar*

o Actions to support a more inclusive climate at NRW: Only when there is a shared belief in place that all employees are respected, valued and allowed to be themselves will our organisation be seen to have a truly inclusive climate and be truly effective.

o Proactively celebrate and support the diversity we have in NRW through our active Networks – support, empower and celebrate

[iii] *Increase and improve Diversity and Inclusion*

Create a more inclusive workplace for all:

o The importance of diversity of thought: Focus on how we measure that at interview stage as a predictor of good performance in the role e.g. Situational testing – solving scenarios. There are many different ways of looking at diversity – not only protected groups. Show that we give more recognition to divergent and convergent types of thought.

o Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people, and people from lower socio-economic groups, are under-represented at NRW. Addressing these gaps should be urgently addressed with targeted recruitment and aspirational positive action targets for 4% of the workforce by 2024. BAME people are currently faced with a distinct lack of role models in the workplace.

[iv] *Accessible spaces and language for staff and service users*

o Develop, agree and promote fair access to information, services and premises (including in particular our recreational sites) and monitor for effective implementation

o NRW becoming a truly bilingual organisation in all our workplace settings

o Review policies, job descriptions and website / intranet for simpler more inclusive language

[v] *Ensure the basics are in place*

o Review of recruitment processes and all People policies for inclusive ways of working e.g. Diversity, Inclusion Belonging new policy

o Staff EDI shared learning – face to face for impact (not e-learning) – beyond awareness raising into accountable action

o Develop an Engagement Framework for how our communities are enabled to shape services

o Staff Engagement Group empowering staff voices to progress key issues and shape decisions

o Skill up staff in how to work with change and manage conflict for more inclusive ways of working (with staff and customers)

[vi] *Identifying and Modelling Inclusive Behaviours*

o Identify and challenge inappropriate behaviours with access to coaching support; enable trained group of active bystanders and provide 'active bystander' for senior leaders and Board members; specify what 'good' looks like for NRW

o Inclusive leaders must visibly model inclusive behaviour, and importantly, this role-modelling must be authentic. This means believing that being inclusive is the right thing to do, for the organisation and individuals - avoid treating inclusion as a tick-box exercise

o Positive employee and leader behaviours need to be coupled with inclusive, fair and flexible people management practices that motivate all employees and allow them to develop skills and contribute to organisational goals.

[B] Wales Public Body Equality Partnership - Shared Objectives 2020-24

8. In 2019/20, NRW participated in the Welsh Public Body Equality Partnership to help develop shared long-term equality objectives for 2020-24. The context for this work is the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which requires listed bodies to review their existing equality objectives at least every four years. In line with recommendations from the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) and the Welsh Government, the duty represents an opportunity for public sector bodies in Wales to work together to recognise and collectively impact against the challenges set out in the Equality and Human Rights Commission   'Is Wales Fairer report, 2018'.

9. The NRW Board agreed the shared objectives developed by the Partnership in March 2020 at the same time as requesting that we develop a plan more specifically tailored to our organisation. The shared Intent of the Partnership is 'a Fairer Society and a More Equal Wales' and the five long-term objectives are as follows:

- Increase workforce diversity and inclusion
- Eliminate pay gaps
- Engage with the community (e.g. to help address inequality caused by poverty)
- Ensure equality is embedded into the procurement / commissioning process and is managed throughout delivery
- Ensure service delivery reflects individual need (e.g. the needs and rights of people who share protected characteristics are at the forefront of the design and delivery of all public services in Wales).

10. We are committed to actions that help us deliver on these shared objectives.

[C] Race Equality Plan for Wales

11. The Welsh Government has undertaken a consultation this summer on An Anti-Racist Wales – its draft Race Equality Plan for Wales. Whilst this detailed Plan does not contain particular recommendations in relation to the environmental sector in Wales, significant focus is placed on leadership and representation within public sector bodies. The Plan places a strong emphasis on senior leadership being representative and inclusive, people in public bodies being anti-racist, with zero tolerance of any form of discrimination or inequality, and public bodies being safe and inclusive environments for ethnic minority people.

12. Specific proposed outcomes/actions of particular interest to Board members include:

- All leaders of public bodies are held personally accountable for delivering a representative workforce and inclusive and psychologically safe workplaces, with appropriate incentives to ensure that they take action.
- All public sector bodies in Wales which did not have representative workforces will have set targets for more diverse recruitment
- Chairs of all bodies to ensure every Board member (including themselves) has a diversity and inclusion objective, to include anti-racism as part of their performance management system.
- Boards to have a discussion about diversity and inclusion objectives and Chairs' objectives to be discussed by relevant stakeholder groups and agreed by Ministers.
- CEOs of all public bodies to identify one inclusion and diversity objective, with a focus on anti-racism.
- A suite of training to be procured in relation to the Diversity and Inclusion Strategy to include anti-racism training for… Boards of public bodies in Wales.
- All public bodies will have a Board-level equality, diversity and inclusion champion.

[D] Other issues

13. Recognising the challenges that the environment sector faces more generally, we have started discussions with Environmental Non-Governmental Organisations (eNGOs), including the RSPB, regarding collaborative approaches to support broader engagement with communities across Wales. We will want to reflect this in any Plan for the next three years.

14. There are other developments underway in terms of public policy. This includes a consultation, currently underway, on a Welsh Government LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer questioning people) Plan.

15. Over the summer, there has also been some press coverage of a report looking at a number of Welsh cultural organisations and their engagement with people from black and ethnic minority backgrounds – and suggesting that some of their Welsh language policies were excluding people from those backgrounds. We will be developing our Welsh Language Strategy later in 2021-22.

Assessment

16. The range of issues covered by EDI is broad and diverse and is intertwined with our purpose and values as an organisation. Our work on the EDI project has tried, with mixed results, to involve staff from across the organisation as well as with external stakeholders, to help both understand where we are as an organisation as well as our priorities going forward. We have a good 'baseline' understanding of where we are as an organisation and many of the suggestions from the internal T&F Group reflect and build on that.

17. At the start of both phases of the internal project, we emphasised the importance of looking at the EDI agenda in a broad sense that encompassed all the people and communities of Wales. In the second phase, we discussed with the T&F Group the benefits of being a truly diverse and inclusive organisation and how that would enable us to deliver on our core purpose – the sustainable management of our natural

resources. The T&F Group reinforced this aspect in their conclusions – that adopting the right inclusive behaviours, and in particular, being open to diversity of thought, were critical for us to develop as an organisation. This interweaves closely with work that we have underway in relation to our Customer Strategy, our nascent People Strategy and the activities that we have underway to further embed our values, and how we develop and deliver policies on the ground, from broad policy pieces such as Area Statements to individual initiatives and interventions in Place.

18. The next step is to use the outputs from the work of the EDI T&F Group and, reflecting other development and commitments such as the Shared Equality Objectives and the draft Race Equality Plan, and develop a prioritised plan around this agenda for the next three years. The Steering Group has suggested that the outputs from the EDI T&F Group provide a good basis for a focussed plan. We would be interested in hearing the views of all Board members on this issue to inform our thinking, prior to returning to the Board with a draft plan for your consideration.

Recommendation

19. That Board members consider and discuss their priorities for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in NRW over the next three years. We would also welcome the views on what specific contributions you could make as Board members.

Key Risks

20. There is a risk that if we do not become a more diverse and inclusive organisation, we will limit our reach and effectiveness in terms of delivering on our purpose – the sustainable management of our natural resources. This has been an important theme of our work over the last nine months and will need to be drawn out in the Plan.

21. There is a risk of reputational damage if we do not have credible or prioritised plans in place, or sufficient senior engagement with this agenda. Putting an NRW specific Plan in place which has clear actions relating to senior leaders (Board and Staff) will address this risk.

22. There is a risk that if we do not effectively integrate our objectives in relation to EDI into wider initiatives (e.g. our Customer Strategy; how we work in Place; our wider People policies), then we will not secure the cultural and behavioural changes required.

23. There is a risk that if we do not have appropriate resources in place, we will fail to implement a sufficiently ambitious Plan. The resourcing in this area, and the priorities for the Plan, will be considered in the next phase.

Next Steps

24. This discussion will inform the development of the Action Plan which will be considered by ET and in due course the Board later this year.

Financial implications

25. None at this stage. Any financial implications will be considered in more detail as part of developing the Action Plan. There is currently a small staff resource in place supporting this work.

Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

26. This will be developed as part of the process of developing the Plan.

NRW Board paper

	Paper Details
Paper title:	Marine and Coastal Delivery of Business Plan Strategic Priorities
Paper Reference:	21-09-B15
Paper sponsored by:	Ceri Davies, Executive Director of Evidence Policy and Permitting and Gareth O'Shea, Executive Director of Operations
Paper Presented by:	Rhian Jardine, Head of DPAS and Marine Services and Mary Lewis, Sustainable Places – Land and Sea Manager
Purpose of the paper	Discussion and advice on key issues and opportunities in relation to NRW's marine delivery

Issue/Opportunity

1. This paper reports back on key issues and opportunities in relation to NRW's marine delivery discussed previously with the Board in September 2019. Priority areas are presented according to delivery of NRW's Business Plan priorities.

2. In the marine area, the different ownership, with one major sea bed owner (the Crown Estate) but no "sea owners" in the way we have land owners to work with on land, means that all our work requires a collaborative, partnership approach with multiple users and decision-makers. The complexities and costs of working at sea, compounded by a resource constrained environment, also mean it is essential to be innovative and problem-solving in addressing challenges around sustainable management of marine natural resources. This approach is illustrated throughout the paper.

Background

3. The marine environment makes up 43% of the territory of Wales, out to the 12 nautical mile territorial boundary (see Annex 1). Welsh Government (WG) also have jurisdiction for planning, fisheries and nature conservation in the offshore area beyond 12 nautical miles, and NRW also has some specific regulatory functions in this offshore area.

4. The purpose of NRW and our main statutory functions apply equally to NRW in the marine environment as they do on land. The broad range of NRW's functions in relation to the marine environment span, for example: advice, evidence, regulation, incident response and direct management. Further details are provided in Annex 2. We implement and govern our marine work in NRW though a single integrated Marine Programme including our various strategic roles and the work of the Operations Marine Service.

5. There is a unique policy and legislative framework governing the planning and management of the marine environment. The relationship between marine, terrestrial and all-Wales planning and management regimes is illustrated in Annex 3.

6. The marine environment has been impacted over centuries by human activity. SoNaRR II (State of Natural Resources Report) presents a mixed picture for wildlife around our coasts and seas with the impacts of climate change, pollution and non-native species all exerting pressure, and coastal areas (where 60% of the population of Wales lives of works) impacted by sea level rise, coastal erosion and flooding. Despite the current challenges this presents, Welsh seas remain a highly diverse and dynamic environment. A 2021 ONS Report values the UK's marine natural capital assets at £211 billion. In Wales, marine and coastal natural resources provide multiple sustainable benefits to society such as healthy food, renewable energy, building materials, sub-sea telecommunication, tourism and recreation resource, mental health and wellbeing, carbon sequestration, natural flood protection. These benefits can help address critical issues such as the climate and nature emergencies and supporting wellbeing.

7. The marine environment and NRW's role in facilitating sustainable management of marine natural resources, has a pivotal role to play in delivering NRW's Business Plan priorities. The assessment below identifies the key delivery areas and identifies key issues and opportunities, and illustrates the collaborative, innovative and problem-solving approach NRW has been taking, since the previous report to the Board, across the breadth of our marine programme.

Assessment: Marine delivery of Business Plan priorities

Responding to the climate emergency

Marine renewable energy

8. The combination of regulatory and advisory functions places NRW at the forefront of supporting sustainable marine renewable energy (MRE) development in Wales. In

2019, we established NRW's Offshore Renewable Energy Programme (OREP) as a direct response to:

- The increasing scale of MRE development and growing political, public and policy interest in Wales, and
- Meetings with the First Minister in 2019 to explore NRW's role in helping to facilitate sustainable MRE development to support carbon reduction targets

9. The overall aim of OREP is to reduce the environmental and consenting risks of MRE development. We are also working carefully to address the perceived conflict between the twin climate and biodiversity emergencies (See Box 1). We have put in place 15 FTA staff within Permitting, Operations and EPP advice to deliver the programme, creating a cross-NRW collaborative and integrated approach to NRW's advice, evidence, policy, guidance and regulation covering all MRE sectors: wave energy, tidal stream, fixed and floating offshore wind, and tidal range. To date the programme has:

- Improved case management, efficiency and provision of pre-application and statutory advice and invested significantly in crucial expertise
- Developed key position statements and guidance creating consistency and greater certainty in approach (See Box 2 for an example)
- Addressed critical evidence needs thereby reducing uncertainty, e.g. monitoring methods for diadromous fish and assessing noise impacts on marine mammals
- Improved engagement with key stakeholders and Wales and UK wide strategic initiatives

> **Box 1: Offshore Renewable Energy: Tackling the twin emergencies and supporting a green recovery**
>
> Welsh Government has committed to delivering 70% of electricity consumption from renewable energy sources by 2030. Reducing carbon emissions and increasing resilience to the impacts of climate change has been identified as a priority action for a green recovery in response to COVID. At the same time, Welsh Government has, through the Environment (Wales) Act and its Nature Recovery Planning, recognised the need for urgent action to increase the resilience of our ecosystems in order to reverse the decline in habitats and species. NRW is therefore responding to the twin aims of supporting the deployment of renewable energy to ensure that low carbon ambitions can be met, whilst at the same time ensuring that significant effects on the environment are avoided through careful application of environmental assessment processes and legislation.

> **Box 2: Adaptive management: novel approaches to managing uncertainty**
>
> As part of the OREP we have developed a novel approach to consenting marine energy projects using adaptive management where uncertainty remains on the true impacts to mobile marine species due to the need to use modelled data as the sector is in its infancy. This is an example of being enabling as an advisor and regulator to ensure our response to the biodiversity and climate emergencies can be balanced

10. This programme is only resourced until March 2023, but this area presents a significant risk to NRW as the scale of development is set to increase substantially into the medium-term future with new sectors developing such as floating wind, and the refocus on tidal lagoons highlighted in the Programme for Government. Currently there are 15 major and complex MRE schemes with NRW in different stages, with others pending, and we are advising on 5 important MRE planning

processes at a Wales and UK level. See Annex 4. Many schemes are in pre-application stages with the peak pressure on NRW yet to come.

Blue Carbon

11. The marine environment has another very significant role to play in helping mitigate climate change through storing and sequestering carbon. Following discussions with the Board in 2019, we commissioned research to quantify the blue carbon potential of the Welsh marine and coastal environment (see summary in Annex 5). The work received significant media attention and has been effective at raising the profile of the substantial wider benefits gained from our seas.

12. We have prioritised a forward work programme to embed consideration of blue carbon in all aspects of our advice, and to further develop the evidence on how and where we can enhance the sequestration of blue carbon in marine and coastal areas.

Nature based solutions and adaptation in the coastal zone

13. The coastal interface is an area where multiple planning and regulatory regimes meet, and where the impacts of climate change are felt acutely due to sea-level rise and associated (a) loss of habitats due to coastal squeeze, and (b) increased risks of coastal flooding. There are opportunities to develop nature-based solutions at the coast that reduce habitat loss, coastal erosion and flooding, or extend the life of existing defences. Raising awareness of the range of options for managing the coast and working pro-actively with communities in planning for coastal change is critical.

14. We have put in place an Integrated Coastal Management Programme (ICMP) to bring together different work streams in NRW, including flood risk management, biodiversity, planning, regulation and access, to address the particular challenge of climate change at the coast. The ICMP work programme is delivering a wide range of action, including, for example a joined-up approach to guidance assessing and addressing coastal squeeze, taking account of recent WG policy development in this area.

Responding to the nature emergency

Marine planning

15. The most significant development in our ability to sustainably manage the marine environment is the introduction of a strategic marine planning regime through the publication of WG's Welsh National Marine Plan (WNMP). Implementation of the WNMP supports all the different Business Plan priorities and also ties in directly to delivery of SMNR and wellbeing goals.

16. The policies in the plan are a statutory consideration for public bodies including NRW in decision-making and advice, and in particular provide the policy framework for NRW's marine casework advice and NRW's marine licence decisions.

Implementation of the WNMP is a Business Plan priority. We have made substantial implementation progress recently, e.g. in developing marine licensing procedural guidance, advisory positions, training staff, and a marine casework handbook to support application of advisory principles and plan policy to marine casework advise.

17. Looking forward, NRW is now taking a lead role in providing the evidence to support WG in the development of more spatially prescriptive planning, by identifying the spatial environmental considerations for different sectors. We also continue to develop guidance for developers on how to implement WNMP plan policy to build environmental restoration and enhancement into development design, in line with this theme in the Marine Area Statement.

Marine protected areas

18. At the heart of responding to the nature emergency from a marine and coastal perspective is effectively managing and improving the condition of the extensive network of marine protected areas (MPAs) in Wales. (See map in Annex 6 and Box 3). This is another Business plan priority. Priority areas of current delivery include:

- Providing advice and evidence to support WG's project to complete the MPA network through the designation of Marine Conservation Zones (see Box 4). This is now reaching a wider public engagement phase and hence we are working closely with WG to manage the risks around stakeholder engagement and understanding.
- Delivering actions against the Wales MPA Network Management Action Plan
- Delivering NRW's MPA Condition Improvement Project
- Developing a new approach to reporting on the condition of all MPA features and sites.

19. The MPA condition reporting project follows on from the publication, in 2018, of a full suite of MPA feature *indicative* condition assessment reports. These found that 46% of MPA features are in favourable condition and 45% are unfavourable, with varying degrees of confidence (see Annex 7 for further details on the innovative approach taken and results). The new condition reporting approach will be completed this year, we then plan to use this to support a full

> **Box 3: MPAs in Wales – a wealth of biodiversity**
>
> The network of MPAs is Wales includes **139** sites covering **69%** of Welsh territorial seas- testament to the wealth of biodiversity in Welsh seas. The network includes, for example:
> - One of only two SACs designated for bottlenose dolphins in the UK, including the single largest bottlenose dolphin population in the UK
> - The northernmost limit of shore dock, Abermenai Point to Aberffraw SAC containing 30-50 plants, of a total UK population of less than 650.
> - Skomer, Skokholm and the Seas off Pembrokeshire SPA supports 57% of the global population of Manx shearwaters with more supported in other sites around Wales.

> **Box 4: An ecologically coherent network of MPAs**
>
> The network of MPAs is Wales is made up of multiple types of designation, together designed to align with OSPAR Commission guidance on ecological coherence. Ecological coherence is created through applying a range of criteria, for example: that 10% of each broadscale habitat is protected within the MPA series, and features of conservation importance are replicated in at least three MPAs.

revision of NRW's conservation objective advice for MPAs to ensure we are giving the best advice and assessments to support decision-making on activities in and near MPAs. This further work is also crucial to reduce the risk of unclear, inconsistent or, in the absence of more specific conservation objectives, unnecessarily precautionary advice. This will be a priority in the forward marine programme.

20. The continual growth in development at the coast and sea means that a significant proportion of place advisory capacity is dedicated to reactive casework advice with more limited capacity for proactive MPA management improvement projects. We are reliant on annual grants and programmes which hamper the ability to take forward multi-year projects and plan longer-term, both of which are fundamental in the marine environment where change takes time to be seen, interventions are expensive, and projects require time-consuming multi-partner delivery.

Restoration and resilience

21. Seas and coasts wide there is a need to act to deliver restoration and improve ecosystem resilience to help address the nature emergency. This is reflected in our Business Plan. A priority focus continues to be managing pressures to improve the condition of the MPA network as a key tool for building the overall resilience of marine ecosystems.

22. Active restoration in the marine area is still in its infancy and presents substantial practical challenges, not least in relation to local community engagement to ensure schemes can be delivered effectively. Nevertheless, there is a growing focus on active restoration globally, including most recently a commitment within the Programme for Government for a targeted programme of restoration of saltmarsh and seagrass habitats (also key blue carbon stores). NRW are already leading on an European Maritime and Fisheries Fund-funded project actively restoring native oyster habitat in Milford Haven with an emphasis on learning how to scale up such projects. Natur am Byth includes an ambitious marine element focussing on restoration of sea grass, oysters, pink sea fan and crawfish. We have also published opportunity maps indicating potential areas for restoration of a range of marine and coastal habitats. Most recently, we have agreed to develop a prioritised, integrated forward work programme for active restoration that reflects the wider practical, evidence, advice and regulatory implications for NRW of this developing area.

Connections between land and sea

23. The recent issues in relation to the condition of Welsh SAC (Special Areas of Conservation) rivers and the operation of storm overflows also highlights the need to consider catchment impacts in their totality and address issues holistically across land and sea, both in terms of managing the source, and understand the effect. All catchment impacts flow downstream to the sea where water quality is the single most significant factor effecting the condition of MPA features.

Developing and using our evidence with partners to advocate for and deliver the sustainable management of natural resources

The Marine Area Statement

24. The marine area statement is a key opportunity for NRW to actively engage with partners and stakeholders deliver key priorities for SMNR in the marine area. The three Marine Area Statement themes, which are fully integrated into our marine programme, are:
    - Building the resilience of marine ecosystems
    - Supporting implementation of marine planning, including renewable energy policies
    - Nature based solutions and adaptation in the coastal zone

25. In January we delivered a highly successful online collaborative event to progress working with partners on marine area statement delivery. Covid-related lack of resources and opportunity for engagement, and reduced grant giving ability, has affected the pace and opportunities for greater collaborative delivery. Nevertheless, we are working proactively with partners on a number of area statement priorities, for example, in developing the MPA Condition Improvement Programme. We supported a number of successful partnership projects through our grants processes in 2020/21, for example the 'Coastal Communities Adapting Together' project delivered by Pembrokeshire Coastal Forum.

Marine monitoring programme

26. It is fundamentally important that we understand the state of our marine and coastal environment if we are to make sound decisions concerning management. NRW's integrated marine monitoring programme delivers primarily on Habitats Directive and Water Framework Directive monitoring but also on Environmental Qualities Standards Directive and the UK Marine Strategy.

27. Over the past few years, the country nature conservation bodies, JNCC and other UK partners have reviewed risk-based priority monitoring options for most UK marine habitat and species groups. A business case has been developed in support of all the preferred monitoring options and submitted to DEFRA. A decision on the options is pending the outcome of the next major spending review. The preferred Welsh option for the inshore benthic monitoring has been agreed with Welsh Government and totals at just over £3 million (including existing staff and resources). Excluding staff that would come to about £2 million.

28. In the absence of a decision from DEFRA or agreement to take this option forward, the resources for marine monitoring has decreased over the last 9 years. In order to deliver an adequate MPA monitoring programme, the resource requirements would need to return to 2012/13 levels, and FTA staff would need to be baselined. This would enable the marine monitoring programme not only to more adequately fulfil reporting requirements but would also provide support to our key advisory needs such as marine renewable energy and would more effectively inform MPA management.

Marine evidence programme

29. Marine have been one of the first functions to develop a functional evidence programme, as intended through the creation of the new evidence delivery model as part of organisation design. We are now in the third year of delivery, focusing currently on evidence to support advice on marine renewables energy, restoration and resilience and coastal and MPA management. Twenty-five marine evidence reports were published in 2020 and 18 are due for publication in 2021 spanning topics from grey seal pup production to impacts of climate change in the Welsh marine environment.

30. Through the Assessing Welsh Fishing Activity project, we have also provided WG with 60 individual assessments of different fishing gear interactions with protected site features, with 30 more due this year; all of which will inform sustainable fisheries management.

31. We also promote the evidence needs to academia and other external delivery bodies. A key issue is the annual budget cycle precluding the necessary longer-term evidence projects.

Developing NRW into an excellent organisation that serves the communities of Wales

Technical Competency Framework

32. We have recently developed a shared Technical Competency Framework for marine staff in EPP and Operations which is being implemented as part of the performance development planning process for staff this year. Already we are seeing the benefits in investing time and consideration into developing staff and their competencies and identifying and addressing common development needs. The approach is being shared for development of further competency frameworks across NRW.

Direct management of local activities

33. NRW has some unique direct activity management responsibilities, including managing the Burry Inlet and Dee Estuary cockle fisheries and the Dee Conservancy Harbour Authority function (conservancy, harbour and local lighthouse authority). We have made considerable progress with these functions recently, to improve our service, through reviewing and updating the management plans for the cockle fisheries and whilst the Dee Harbour Revision Order remains stalled, we have progressed by other means our ability to take enforcement action. Direct management also includes a substantive allocation of operational time for marine incident preparedness and incident response.

Responding to the Covid-19 pandemic and the UK leaving the European Union, taking opportunities for a green and blue recovery

Blue recovery

34. It is clear that coastal communities in Wales have been disproportionately impacted by Covid and exiting the EU, given their reliance on key sectors such as tourism and fisheries. Many of these communities are also facing the longer-term impacts of climate induced coastal change. Nevertheless, proposals submitted to the Green Recovery Task and Finish Group during 2020 included just 11 marine projects in a total of 170, perhaps reflecting the limited capacity and awareness of some of the opportunities presented by our seas.

35. We have worked collaboratively through the Wales Marine Action and Advisory Group (a WG lead strategic stakeholder group) to develop a collective 'Blue Recovery' proposal. The proposal highlights the particular opportunities presented by our seas – in terms of clean energy, Blue Carbon, healthy sea food, resilient seas – and the need to better invest in existing frameworks (such as the MPA network and the Welsh National Marine Plan) to realise these benefits. This is coupled with enabling actions focussed on building capacity in local communities to engage in planning for and managing their local marine environments.

EU-exit

36. Responding to exiting the EU is a long-term process. Fisheries is the most evident marine issue, and we have supported and advised WG on the development of the UK Joint Fisheries Statement and will continue to advise on the development of Welsh fisheries regulation and legislation. In addition to fisheries, there are a wide variety of other activities post EU-exit that have implications for the sea, including, for example, the Sustainable Farming Scheme, where a very successful recent coastal deep-dive has highlighted a range of coastal habitat management and downstream water quality issues to seek to integrate into the scheme.

Approach

37. The above delivery is brought together in one integrated marine programme for NRW across our advisory, regulatory, evidence and operational delivery. This is supported by a governance framework and close working between multiple teams, team leaders and managers. The approach is considered to be good practice in NRW.

Conclusion and recommendation

38. The above sets out our key priority delivery areas across NRW's wide-ranging marine and coastal remit, highlights key areas of progress, aligned to NRW's Business Plan priorities, and illustrates numerous innovative and collaborative approaches to the challenge of sustainable management of marine natural resources.

39. The marine environment is under great pressure globally and in Wales. It also provides many of the benefits and solutions to the challenges our society faces. We need to see the marine environment as an *integral* part of our response to the twin emergencies *together with*, not in addition to, all the work we seek to do on Welsh land and with Welsh communities.

Recommendations

40. the Board is asked to:
    a. Note the pressures and expectations on the marine and coastal environment in responding to the twin emergencies, and the connectivity between land and sea in creating pressures which we have a shared responsibility to address
    b. Advise on key marine and coastal issues and opportunities in the context of NRW's corporate priorities
    c. Advise on further areas for strategic and holistic collaboration across land and sea
    d. Provide support in raising key issues and promoting key opportunities to WG
    e. Endorse the need to maintain, develop and embed key programmes including the Offshore Renewable Energy Programme, Restoration, Blue Carbon and MPA Management including water quality impacts including, but not limited to, nutrients in rivers.

Key Risks

41. Key risks to the delivery of NRW's prioritised marine programme in support of NRW Business Plan priorities include:
    - Operational, environmental and reputational risks of reliance on short-term FTA capacity (30% of current capacity) to deliver priority marine programme work hampering staff retention, creating inefficiency, loss of key skills and experience and lack of security in delivery, meaning that NRW fails to deliver against key priorities such as support for sustainable marine renewable energy and MPA management
    - Operational, reputational and environmental risk of the loss of the Offshore Renewable Energy Programme, and longer-term financial risk due to escalating risk of judicial review of our decisions if programme capacity ceases
    - Operational risk of an inadequate marine monitoring programme that does not support reporting and advisory needs, due to inability to secure long-term adequate baselined resourcing
    - Reputational damage and diversion of significant amounts of staff time if there is an adverse stakeholder reaction to new Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ) proposals and / or further MPA management scrutiny by the Assembly.

Financial Implications

42. Across the priority work areas there are multiple significant new and growing resource pressures. These are fed into the NRW corporate and budget planning cycles, funding bids to WG and other sources, and are being articulated in the current baseline exercise. Overall, there is insufficient resource to deliver the prioritised programme of work and to move from reactive to proactive work in some areas.

43. Key financial issues include:

- The need to resource the Offshore Renewable Energy Programme longer-term, and other emerging resourcing priorities such as the need to renew conservation objective advice for MPAs and put in place a sustainable marine monitoring programme
- The **30%** reliance on short-term FTA capacity to delivery priority marine programme work
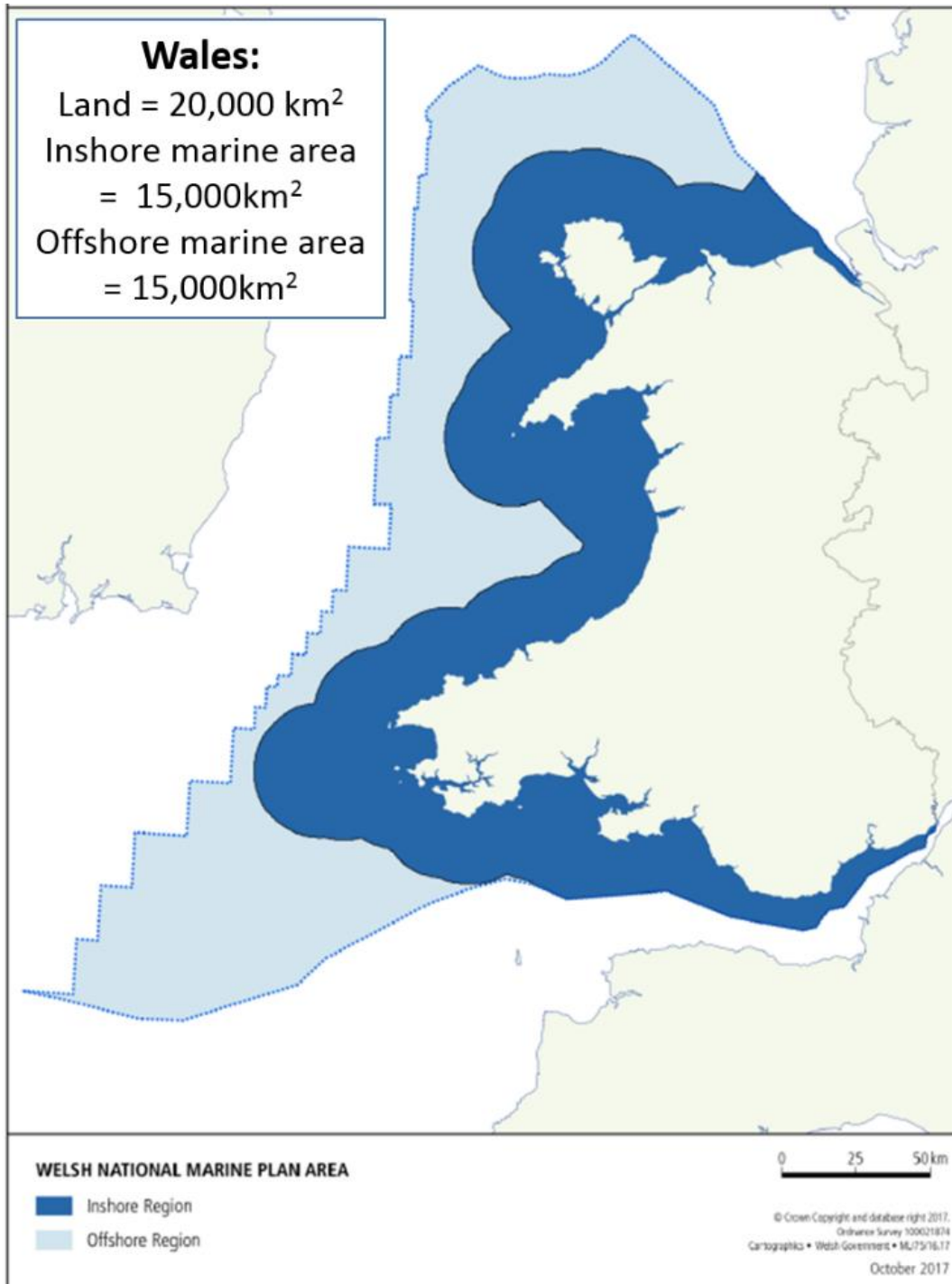
Index of Annexes

Annex 1: Welsh Inshore and Offshore Marine Area

The inshore region in the map equates to the Welsh territorial waters, out to 12 nautical miles.

The offshore region represents the Welsh offshore zone out to the mid-line with neighbouring administrations. In this area, Welsh Government has jurisdiction for nature conservation, fisheries management, marine planning and some regulatory functions, with some of those regulatory functions being carried out by NRW.

Wales:
Land = 20,000 km²
Inshore marine area
= 15,000km²
Offshore marine area
= 15,000km²

WELSH NATIONAL MARINE PLAN AREA

Inshore Region

Offshore Region

0   25   50km

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Ordnance Survey 100021874
Cartographics • Welsh Government • ML/75/16.17

October 2017

Annex 2: NRW's Marine Remit

NRW has an extensive statutory marine remit covering territorial seas to 12 nm. Elements of marine work are embedded within all of NRW's functional areas, the most significant ones being advice, evidence and regulation. Further details are provided in the table below.

Within these broad functions, NRW also has a significant number of specific statutory functions that <u>only</u> apply in the marine environment. a few examples include: regulatory body for marine licensing (the broad equivalent of planning permission at sea); advice on designation and management of European marine sites and Marine Conservation Zones; delivery of key elements of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive; and advice on dispersant use in marine pollution incidences.

Key: Dark grey shaded activities have a direct statutory basis;
      Light grey shaded activities are *in support* of delivery of statutory functions.

Categories of Activity	Examples of specific statutory functions (Note: this column is illustrative only, it is not an exhaustive list)
1. Technical and statutory advice to Welsh and UK Government, and EU on all marine legislation, plans, programme, strategies and assessments as they relate to Wales	• e.g. Statutory nature conservation advisor to Govt out to 12 nautical miles
2. Technical advice to others (not Govt) on marine plans, programme, strategies and assessments	• e.g. Advice to management authorities on conservation objectives and operations/activities for European marine sites and Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs)
3. Statutory consultee for planning, permits and nationally significant infrastructure projects; cradle to grave service	As activity. Includes consultee on some marine-specific authorisations.
4. Environmental planning - internal and external	• Production of River Basin Management Plans
5. Internal advice and guidance on 1-4 above.	
6. Marine licence determination and compliance	As activity
7. Other licences/permits (e.g. Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), protected species licence, Environmental Permitting Regulations etc.)	• European Protected Species licence (numerous marine EPS) • Radioactive materials/ship breaking out to 12nm • Regulating land-based discharges and pollution incidents out to 3nm
8. Direct fisheries management	• Regulating authority for Dee Estuary and Burry Inlet cockle fishery regulating order • Regulation of migratory fisheries out to 6nm

Categories of Activity	Examples of specific statutory functions (Note: this column is illustrative only, it is not an exhaustive list)
9. Harbour, navigation and lighthouse authority	• Dee conservancy function
10. Designation of, consents and assent for SSSI	As activity
11. Sample, measure, monitor and survey	• Water Framework Directive (WFD) monitoring • Bathing Waters monitoring
12. Data interpretation, assessment and modelling	
13. Statutory reporting – both NRW's, and in support of Government	• Marine input to SoNaRR • Habitats Directive Article 17 reporting in support of Govt duty • WFD • Marine Strategy Framework Directive reporting in support of Govt duty
14. Develop the evidence base to support Government and NRW programme delivery, alone and in partnership	
15. Data management	
16. Coastal flood risk planning and management	• Provision/maintenance of some sea defences
17. Respond to and advise on marine pollution incidences, and forward plan response	• Statutory advisor on the use of chemical dispersants in marine pollution incidents
18. Marine Conservation Zone direct management	
19. Work in partnership with stakeholders; develop relationships and partnerships; enabling others	
20. External funding and grants	

Annex 3: The relationship between planning and management regimes across Wales
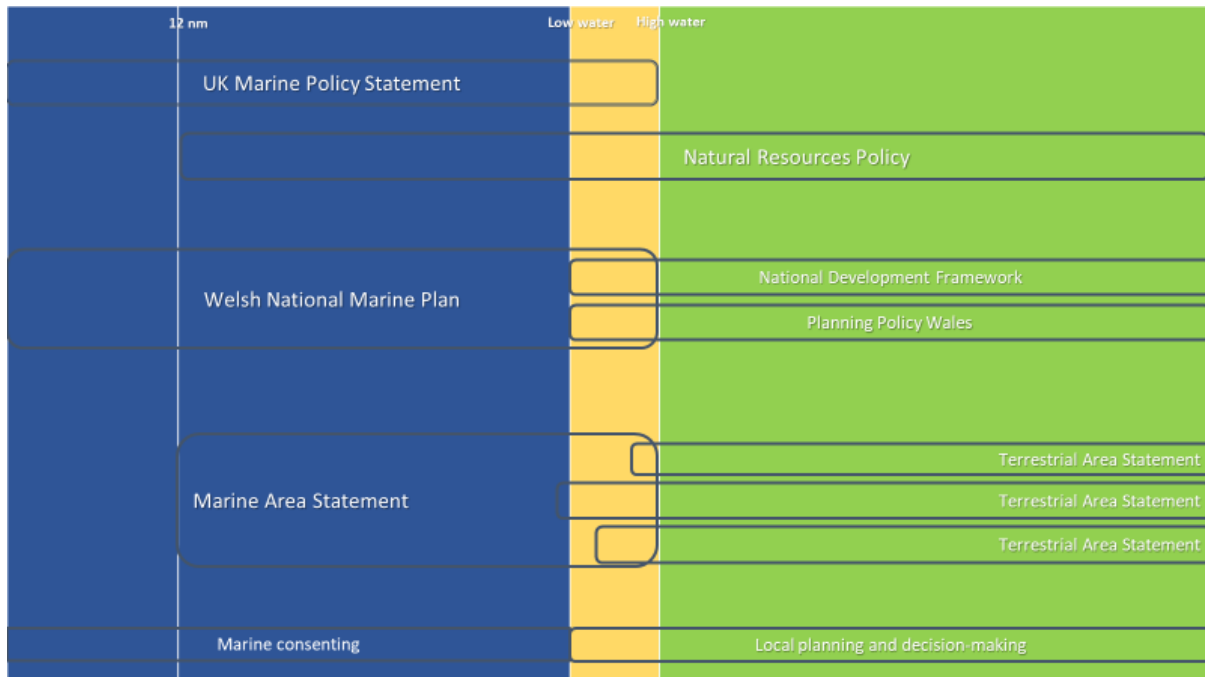
The Natural Resources Policy extends across Wales out to 12nm and informs the content of the Welsh National Marine Plan. The NRP confirms the marine plan as a key mechanism to deliver the national priorities in the NRP in the marine area.

Similarly, on land the NRP informs the National Development Framework and Planning Policy Wales. The terrestrial planning framework extends to low water, whilst the marine planning framework extends to high water. This overlap in planning regimes encourages integrated planning and decision-making, as does the coverage of the NRP across the terrestrial and marine area.

Area Statements must facilitate the implementation of the NRP in the local context. For the marine area, a single marine area statement can support implementation of SMNR through the marine planning process.
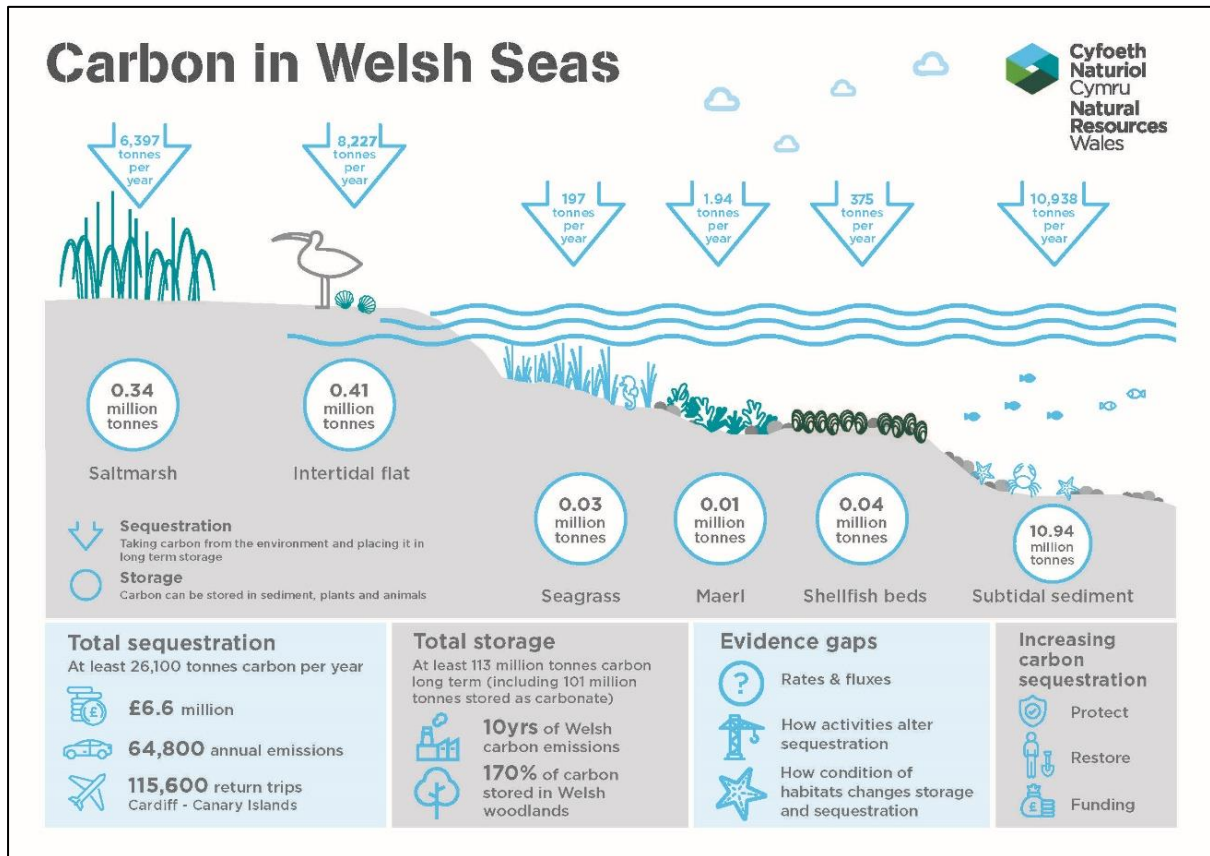
Six terrestrial Area Statements share a coastal boundary with the marine Area Statement. This offers an additional mechanism for engaging with stakeholders on more local coastal and marine issues. Through working collaboratively to develop a suite of Area Statements, NRW can avoid duplication of effort and enable activity at the appropriate scale/ operational location to address issues.

Planning decisions on land are driven by Local Development Plans informed by the NDF/PPW. One role for terrestrial Area Statements is to provide additional information to inform the development of local planning and decision-making. At sea, where the WNMP guides all decision-making, the development of a marine area statement is an important opportunity to provide further evidence to support implementation of marine plan policies through regulatory processes that govern decision-making for the marine area.
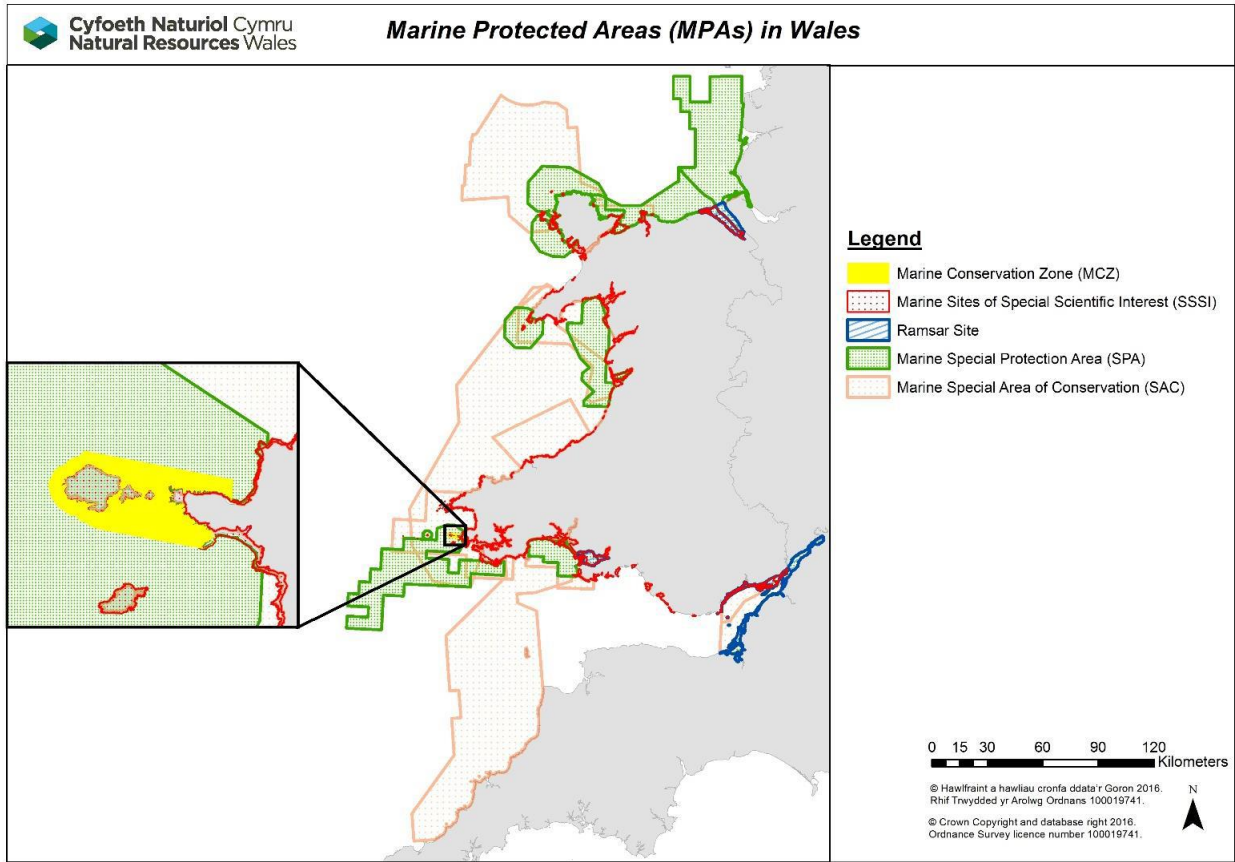
Annex 4: Current plans and projects in Welsh waters for all marine renewable energy sectors

Sector	Project/Plan	Location	Scale (MW)
Floating Offshore Wind (FLOW)	Project Erebus	Celtic Sea	96 (Phased)
	Project Valorous	Celtic Sea	~300
	Falck Renewables (1 x Welsh Waters & 1 x English Waters)	Celtic Sea	TBC
	RWE renewables	Irish Sea	TBC
	Pembrokeshire Demonstration Zone	SW Pembrokeshire	TBC
Fixed Offshore Wind	BP/EnBW Round 4 projects x 2 (1 x Welsh Waters & 1 x English Waters)	Irish Sea	2 x 1500
	RWE Awel-y-Mor (Gynt-y-Mor extension)	Irish Sea	550
Tidal Range	Swansea Bay Tidal Lagoon (N.B. Now deemed withdrawn as of 1st July)	Swansea Bay	320
	Dragon Energy Island	Swansea Bay	~350
	Port of Mostyn lagoon	Dee Estuary	128
	Mersey Tidal lagoon	Mersey Estuary	TBC
Tidal stream	Nova innovation	Bardsey Sound	0.5 (Phased)
	TIGER project	Ramsey Sound	TBC
	Minesto array	Holyhead Deep	10 (Phased)
	Morlais tidal demonstration zone	Anglesey	240 (Phased)
Wave energy	Bombora mWave	SW Pembrokeshire	1.5
	Marine Energy Test Area Phase 1 & 2	SW Pembrokeshire	N/A
Energy Plans & programmes	UK Offshore Energy Plan	All Wales/UK	N/A
	WG Marine Energy Programme	All Wales	N/A
	Tidal Lagoon Challenge	All Wales	N/A
	The Crown Estate Round 4 plan	UK	N/A
	The Crown Estate strategic plan for FLOW	All Wales	N/A

Not in contact with NRW at present	Consented (discharge of conditions)	Under determination	Pre-application (NRW advisory only)	Pre-application (MLT only)	Pre-application (Advisory and MLT)

Annex 5: Summary of blue carbon in Welsh seas

Annex 6: Map of Marine Protected Areas in Wales

Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) in Wales

Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru
Natural Resources Wales

Legend
- Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ)
- Marine Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
- Ramsar Site
- Marine Special Protection Area (SPA)
- Marine Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

0 15 30   60   90   120
Kilometers

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Rhif Trwydded yr Arolwg Ordnans 100019741.

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Annex 7: Indicative site-level feature condition assessments – SAC & SPA including integral confidence ratings (2018): approach and results

Producing full condition reports for marine protected sites and features is challenging due to availability of data and the time required to assessment multiple attributes. To address this challenge an innovative new approach was developed to provide a full suite of indicative site condition report for all marine SACs and SPAs. The approach used readily available evidence* and expert judgement in an intensive collective workshop process including site and feature specialist across NRW. The outputs provided an *indication* of the feature condition at site level, along with a confidence rating associated with the assessment. The reports actively inform NRW's management advice, SoNaRR and multiple other processes.

(*including long-term monitoring/surveillance datasets, sampling programmes, bathymetric data and datasets collected for Environmental Impact Assessments).

Indicative site-level feature condition assessments	Number	Percentage
Favourable / High confidence	40	31%
Favourable / Medium confidence	12	9%
Favourable / Low confidence	8	6%
Unfavourable / High confidence	33	26%
Unfavourable / Medium confidence	15	12%
Unfavourable / Low confidence	9	7%
Unknown	11	9%
Total	**128**	**100%**