

Confirmed Minutes

Title of meeting:	NRW Board Meeting – Public Session Attendees in person at the National Botanic Garden of Wales, Carmarthenshire and via Microsoft Teams
Date of meeting:	26 th May 2022
Present Board Members:	Sir David Henshaw, (Chair) Clare Pillman, Chief Executive Prof Steve Ormerod, Deputy Chair (9:30-9:45 and 11:30 to meeting close) Karen Balmer Catherine Brown Julia Cherrett Geraint Davies Zoë Henderson Prof Calvin Jones Mark McKenna Dr Rosie Plummer Prof Peter Rigby
Present Executive Team Members:	Jacqui Kedward, Head of Internal Audit (deputising for Rachael Cunningham, Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Services) Ceri Davies, Executive Director of Evidence, Policy and Permitting (9:30-9:45 and 11:30 to meeting close) Prys Davies, Executive Director of Corporate Strategy and Development Sarah Jennings, Executive Director of Communications, Customer and Commercial Gareth O’Shea, Executive Director of Operations
Additional Attendees Present:	Clare Jones, Lead Specialist Advisor, Governance Item 6 (Teams) Victoria Painter, Governance and Risk Manager Item 6 (Teams) Miriam Jones-Walters, Specialist Advisor, Land Stewardship Item 7 Andrew Wright, Senior Specialist Advisor, Plant Health and Research Knowledge Transfer, Land Stewardship Item 7 (Teams) Ruth Jenkins, Head of Natural Resource Management Item 7 (Teams) Dominic Driver, Head of Land Stewardship Item 7 (Teams) Elsie Grace; Head of Sustainable Commercial Development Item 7 (Teams) Jeremy Parr, Head of Flood and Incident Risk Management Item 8 (in person) Charlotte Morgan, Wellbeing, Health and Safety Manager Item 9 (Teams)
NRW Observers:	Martyn P Evans, Head of Operations, South West Wales Kate Evans, Public Affairs & Private Secretary Ben Dickinson, Service Change and Configuration Manager Sarah Williams, Head of Corporate Strategy and Programme Management Office

Annie Payne, Assistant to Head of DPAS
Jack Tucker, Kickstart Administrative and PA Support
Item 8 (all via Teams)
Wyn Davies, Manager, Flood and Incident Risk Management
Mark Pugh, Principal Advisor, Flood Risk Analysis Group
Ross Akers, Manager, Flood Risk Strategic Planning and Investment
Andrew Wall, Manager, National Flood Risk Services
Keith Ivens, Operations Manager, Flood and Water Management
Tim England, Operations Manager, Flood and Water Management
Dafydd Sidgwick, Lead Specialist Advisor, Strategic Planning and Investment
Mike Evans, Head of Operations, South Wales Central
Lynette Bowley, Senior Specialist Advisor, Media

Public Observers: Kim Waters – Welsh Rivers Union
Steve Griffiths – BASC
David Bean – Countryside Alliance
Gareth Wardell
Nick Day
Susan Brown
Other members of the public

Declarations: Prof Steve Ormerod – Vice President of the RSPB, Cardiff University, Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC)
Dr Rosie Plummer – Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority Board Member, Plantlife Trustee
Geraint Davies – Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust, RSPB, Farmers Union of Wales, National Farmers Union Cymru, National Trust; Landowner with an interest in the Peatland Restoration Programme
Julia Cherrett – British Association for Shooting and Conservation
Karen Balmer – RSPB
Zoe Henderson – Countryside Alliance, Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust
Prof Calvin Jones – Skyline Management Committee Member, Cardiff University Employee
Sarah Jennings – Trustee of National Botanic Garden of Wales

Apologies: Paul Griffiths
Rachael Cunningham, Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Services
Colette Fletcher, Head of Governance & Board Secretary
Prof Steve Ormerod (9:45 to 11:30)
Ceri Davies (9:45 to 11:30)

Secretariat: Jocelyn Benger
Natalie Williams
Rhiannon Spencer

Item 1. Open Meeting

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

Item 2. Review Minutes and Action Log

2A. Review Minutes from Public 24th March meeting

2. The minutes from the public March meeting were reviewed and agreed with a minor amendment.

2B. Review Public Action Log

3. The action log was reviewed. Board members queried that there were no actions resulting from the Forestry Safety item at the March Board meeting. The Executive Director of Operations provided an update on ongoing work on this issue. A follow up meeting had taken place with other forestry bodies from across the UK, who were interested in NRW's approach and NRW had been invited to speak at a Health and Safety Executive (HSE) event. The development of actions that could be supported by the Board was welcomed and would be part of the next steps.

ACTION: Actions as a result of the ongoing work on Forestry Safety to be reported to the Board at future meetings.

4. Matters arising were considered and Board members requested an update on Fixed Term Appointees (FTAs). The Executive Director of Corporate Strategy and Development gave an update on the ongoing work in this area. A paper had been presented to the Executive Team (ET) on proposals to change the approach to FTAs, which would create a flexible talent pool, manage retention issues, and reduce reliance on FTA posts. External expertise would be brought in on the best way to manage the approach to ensure equity in the longer term. The next steps were described.

Item 3: Update from the Chair

5. An update was provided on ongoing discussions with the Minister, particularly on the water quality agenda. Work was progressing with the Chairs of Ofwat and the water companies to take this forward to a wider stakeholder group under the leadership of the Minister and First Minister, taking this beyond issues with Combined Storm Overflows (CSOs). The programme for actions regarding CSOs would be available within the next few weeks and was already being implemented. Ofwat and the water companies had agreed to bring forward capital spend as appropriate.
6. The recent Senedd event had been successful and the stakeholder meeting that had taken place on the previous evening had been very valuable. The move out of Covid restrictions and the importance of re-engaging with stakeholders was highlighted.
7. Meetings had taken place with Ministers on Green Recovery and NRW.

Item 4: Report from the Chief Executive

8. The paper was taken as read and the following items were highlighted.
9. The recent event at the Senedd had been very positive with good attendance.
10. Staff were experimenting with different ways of working and teams were getting together. The Board site visits had highlighted the importance of staff connecting in person. The Adfwyio programme was running, with offices starting to open up and the rules were being reviewed.
11. A programme of events was taking place which would facilitate re-engaging in person. Examples included the Royal Welsh Show, Eisteddfod, a number of stakeholder events, the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) meeting, and the International Environmental Protection Agencies (EPA) Conference in Paris.

12. This was the first meeting of the new financial year. The July Board meeting would consider the Annual Report and Accounts. The work to bring the budget in within 0.4% of target was highlighted. There had been good progress on the performance measures and details would be provided at next meeting.
13. NRW had been working closely with the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) to deliver a Memorandum of Understanding to build the relationships with local authorities. There had been Welsh Local Government elections during the last period and it would be important to engage with the new councils. The changes at council level were described. Leaders were being announced, which would feed through into the WLGA.
14. Board members discussed the content of the report. NRW's role in coordinating the Natur am Byth project was welcomed and a report on progress was requested for a future meeting. It was agreed that an update on Natur am Byth and the LIFE projects should be provided at a future meeting.

ACTION: Secretariat to add an update on the LIFE projects and Natur am Byth to the Forward Look for a future Board meeting.

15. Board members congratulated the team on the successful enforcement activity and recognised the combined effort involved in this. It was recommended that there should be a track of the full effort and costs involved in this work. The impact of successful enforcement activity was highlighted.
16. The importance of enforcement and the monitoring of this in the area of water quality was emphasised. It was noted that this had been raised in previous meetings and it was requested that the number of breaches in terms of water quality per quarter and the number of enforcement actions should be included within the regular reporting process. The public concerns on this issue were acknowledged and it was suggested that the report could have included further detail on the approach to the risks and dependencies and a waterfall diagram of the action plan, which would enable NRW to be more accountable and transparent. It was agreed that due to the importance of the water quality issue, it would be important to include this as a regular item at future meetings. The Chief Executive confirmed that it would be included as a reporting measure within the Performance Dashboard and provided an update on the work being undertaken internally on the organisation required on this issue and with Welsh Government (WG) on the broader context. An update on water quality would be provided to the next meeting on the governance, actions, and timetable.

ACTION: An update on water quality to be provided to the next Board meeting with a focus on the governance, actions, and timetable.

17. Board members noted the retirement of Bob Vaughan, Sustainable Land Manager, and asked that their thanks and best wishes were passed on. The importance of driving through agricultural change in relation to the environment was highlighted but it was recognised that his particular set of skills and knowledge would be difficult to replace. The Chief Executive recommended that a report on the approach to creating resilience within the team should be provided to the next meeting of the People and Remuneration Committee. It was noted that discussions were ongoing with WG on funding for the enforcement of the agricultural regulations.

Item 5: Update Reports of Committees

18. Catherine Brown as the Chair of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC) updated the Board on work since the last meeting held on 10th March. Work in supporting the team on the production of the final accounts was ongoing.
19. Prof Peter Rigby as the Chair of the Evidence Advisory Committee (EAC) provided an update on work since the meeting held on 18th January. The next meeting would take place on 7th June in person for the first time. Recruitment to the Committee had been taking place to increase the resilience and expertise, and EAC were very pleased to welcome Dr Tom Nisbet from Forest Research and Prof Melanie Austen from the University of Plymouth who would bring expertise in forest hydrology and marine respectively.
20. Sir David Henshaw as the Chair of the Finance Committee (FC) updated the Board on the meetings held on 14th April and 28th April. The main items were contained within the paper. The next meeting would pick up the value for money discussions and performance dashboard items that were raised in the private Board session.
21. Julia Cherrett deputising for the Chair of the Flood Risk Management Committee (FRMC) updated the Board on the meetings held on 7th April. The details were contained within the paper. It was highlighted that the Flood Recovery and Review Implementation Programme (FRRIP) was rated as Amber, with 32 of the 51 actions delivered for this year, although it was noted that those which had not been delivered were not part of the critical actions. Capital spend on reservoirs had not been discussed and this would be reviewed at the next meeting of FRMC. The Chief Executive updated the Board on a good staff engagement session, involving around 180 staff to update them on the progress on the actions on the FRRIP. It was noted that there had been good support for the rotas which had been one of the recommendations from the FRRIP.
22. Julia Cherrett as the Chair of the People and Remuneration Committee (PaRC) updated the Board on work since the last meeting held on 2nd March. The agenda for the next meeting on 24th June was being prepared and would include items on the following: Wellbeing, Health and Safety, including the Forestry Safety follow up; recruitment and vacancies; review of Adfwyio and Sgwrs; succession and workforce planning, picking up on the audit recommendations; pay awards; deep dive on absence levels. Discussion on FTAs would be included within the section on staff numbers. It was hoped that the new Head of Organisational Development would be in post and able to join the meeting.
23. Dr Rosie Plummer as the Chair of the Protected Areas Committee (PrAC) provided an update on work since the meeting held on 1st February. An update was provided on the Integrated Designated Landscapes Programme relating to the potential new national park. Pre-commencement work had been completed, including liaison with the relevant local authorities, and the funding confirmation had been received from WG on this. As the Board previously agreed that the process should continue, PrAC was now considering this on behalf of the Board for the potential national park. The next stage would be to commence the overall landscape designation process which would move to the evidence-gathering stage. An update on Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) was provided. Three new SSSIs had been confirmed without any objections. The next meeting of PrAC would focus on the Integrated Designated Landscapes Programme, the 30by30 target, 2021 performance on protected sites delivery and monitoring, the Peatland programme, and Marine Protected Areas networks.

24. It was noted that the Finance Update paper would be published and discussed in future as part of the public meeting. It was agreed that the finance performance for the year end as noted at the private session would be included as part of July's Board papers.

ACTION: Finance Report to be published with the July public Board papers.

Item 6: Proposed Changes to the Statutory and Legal Scheme (SaLS)

Presenters: Clare Jones, Lead Specialist Advisor, Governance; Victoria Painter, Governance and Risk Manager

25. The Lead Specialist Advisor, Governance gave a brief overview of the content of the paper.

26. The Board considered and agreed to the proposed changes to the SaLS for the Regulatory Business Board.

APPROVED: Changes to the SaLS for the Regulatory Business Board

Item 7: Forestry Strategy

Presenters: Ruth Jenkins, Head of Natural Resource Management Policy; Miriam Jones-Walters, Specialist Advisor, Land Stewardship; Andrew Wright, Senior Specialist Advisor, Plant Health and Research Knowledge Transfer, Land Stewardship; Dominic Driver, Head of Land Stewardship; Elsie Grace, Head of Sustainable Commercial Development

27. The Executive Director of Communications, Customer and Commercial, as joint sponsor of the item, provided an introduction and a brief outline of the planned approach to the discussions.

28. The Head of Land Stewardship explained that there were three items to be considered in light of the overarching themes of integration, pragmatism, and sensitive assertiveness. A pragmatic solution was being sought to NRW's statutory duty and therefore a forestry Regional Advisory Committee (RAC) was proposed. The site visit yesterday had been good and the discussions regarding the pragmatic approach to compensatory planting had been useful. The next steps arising from the strategic discussion in March, and building on that discussion, would be considered, with the focus on the Service Level Agreement (SLA) with WG, prior to moving into the Corporate Plan, and finally the Purpose and Role of the Welsh Government Woodland Estate (WGWE) document. The timeline for this approach would be around two years. The Chief Executive and Chair had been in discussions regarding the approach to governance to ensure that the Board had the correct oversight and input.

29. The Head of Natural Resource Management Policy gave an overview of the paper which proposed the establishment of a forestry RAC and set out the legal and statutory requirements for NRW to have a RAC. It was proposed that this committee would be added to the existing Wales Land Management Forum (WLMF) and established in a way that would integrate with the committee and represent the range of interests included in the Forestry Act. This would be Wales-wide and reflect the economic benefits of managing in a sustainable way. It was explained that one of the reasons for having to address this now was due to the WG Woodland Strategy Advisory Panel being disbanded and replaced by new forestry governance structures.

30. Board members discussed the proposal for a forestry RAC. It was agreed that the name 'Regional Advisory Committee' did not clearly illustrate the purpose. It was suggested that

'Wales Advisory Committee' could be more appropriate. The Head of Natural Resource Management Policy confirmed that the committee could have a different working title.

31. There would be a need to integrate the Terms of Reference of the WLMF and RAC and to ensure that it was easy to find on the website. It was recommended that this should not add to the secretariat burden but would need to be covered effectively. It was suggested that there may be a need to draw across the border for security of membership. The membership of the committee was discussed. It would be important to ensure a balance of membership to cover the range of interests.
32. Board members expressed concerns that new structures were being set up under the Forestry Act of 1967, which would not therefore include consideration of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act or the Environment Act. It was recommended that it was checked to ensure there were no clashes with this and that this was represented. It was noted that WG would need to look at the whole of the Forestry Act and the wider agricultural area within the next three to five years but as the legislative programme was very full, there was a need to take a pragmatic approach at this time.
33. Zoe Henderson, as Chair of the WLMF, confirmed her support for the proposal and recommended that updates should be regularly reported to the Board in line with the other Board sub-committee updates.
34. The Board agreed to the formation of a forestry RAC linked to the WLMF, subject to clarification of the membership and terms of reference, regular updates to the Board, and a revised name.

ACTION: Secretariat to add updates from the WLMF to the Board Sub-Committee Updates section of the Board agendas.

APPROVED: The formation of a forestry RAC linked to the existing WLMF in accordance with the requirements of the Forestry Act, subject to clarification of the membership and terms of reference, regular updates to the Board, and a revised name.

35. The Specialist Advisor, Land Stewardship provided an overview of the proposed Section 83 approval for endorsement by the Board. In 2020 Section 83 approval was granted by WG for NRW to acquire 350ha of land for compensatory planting for woodland permanently lost to renewable energy developments. Six sites had been acquired, and demonstrated that NRW could carry out the work and deliver on a range of SMNR benefits while working and engaging with stakeholders. That approval was nearing completion and it was estimated that 260ha would be lost in the near future, hence the proposed Section 83 approval in order to mitigate this loss. It was highlighted that this was a small proportion of the land that came to market in Wales.
36. The Board thanked the team for the site visit to the Brownhill woodland creation site yesterday, which had been very useful and informative.
37. Board members raised some of the difficulties that arose from the language used, which implied that the approach referred simply to 'more trees'. It was suggested that this was a whole land management approach and queried whether the narrative on the next set of land acquisition could be changed to reflect this and emphasise the work on land to address climate resilience, biodiversity improvements and recreational benefits. However, it would be important to ensure that the purpose did not become over-broad and dilute.
38. It was highlighted that there was a lot of ambition for a small area and it was queried whether more should be done. It was recognised that there was a balance between public concerns and the nature emergency, and rather than change the language, it would be

important to be transparent, accountable and to demonstrate that concerns had been heard and a response provided.

39. The approach to the land at the end of the lease was queried. The Head of Sustainable Commercial Development confirmed that developers would be expected to remove the infrastructure and reinstate the land. However, it was possible for developers to look for extensions to their lease which would then become a commercial discussion.
40. The Board noted the concerns raised by members of the public prior to the meeting on the type of land purchased for woodland creation.
41. Concerns were raised by Board members regarding the removal of land from farming for these types of compensatory planting schemes. It was emphasised that working together with farmers to develop schemes on existing farms would be a preferred way forward. It was suggested that there should not be a move beyond compensatory planting but there should be support for communities to deliver on this, which would therefore help to protect the Welsh language, heritage, and culture.
42. Board members discussed the approach to land use and highlighted that a clear vision for the diversity of land use would need to be developed and that this could help with public understanding. The decision-making process on the approach to land management was discussed. It was recognised that this was part of a broader piece rather than the compensatory planting which was the focus of the paper. It was recognised that the governance around this issue was an important next step and would be considered as part of the next section of the item.
43. The Board agreed to the endorsement of the Section 83 agreement requesting to purchase a further 260ha by the end of 2025/26 for the replacement of land lost to windfarm activities based on purchases of similar, local, like for like land wherever possible. Further discussion would continue to develop the governance around this.

DECISION: Endorsement of the Section 83 agreement requesting to purchase a further 260ha by the end of 2025/26.

44. The Senior Specialist Advisor, Plant Health and Research Knowledge Transfer, Land Stewardship provided an overview of the paper which followed on from the strategic discussion at the March Board meeting on the WGWE. The issues raised included changes in environmental pressures, and oversight and governance. A multi-year approach was being developed which would include a new SLA commissioned by WG relating to the WGWE. The scope of the SLA would be multi-year, covering the period of the Senedd, and be dynamic and flexible, including an annual review. It was proposed to broaden the SLA to cover the NRW Estate as a whole and include a link to commercial activities and timber income. A set of indicators would be needed to review the trends, and the compensatory planting approach could also be considered for embedding. There would not be the capacity to do the whole review in one go, and so it was proposed that the focus should be on the SLA to establish the funding and achieve a long-term budget commitment, with options for the service to be included within this. This would then feed into the new Corporate Plan, and then Purpose and Role document in 2023-24.
45. Board members discussed the content of the report. Concerns were expressed about the timescale pressure for the SLA and the woodland cover issues that had been discussed. There would be benefits from a holistic look at land cover and National Nature Reserves (NNRs) but there were concerns that the SLA could result in tying matters into place before these issues had been addressed. There were also concerns about agreeing an

SLA prior to the new Corporate Plan, which had the potential to be transformative. There was a risk that the SLA would not deliver on the climate and nature emergencies.

46. The Chair and Chief Executive confirmed that discussions had taken place on the creation of a Board sub-committee which would consider all the NRW managed land including NNRs. It would be important to consider and establish the membership and start moving forward on this. There would be a need to be pragmatic regarding the development of the SLA, which was an important part of the Baseline discussions with WG and an item of political focus.

47. The Board supported the proposal to develop a new Board sub-committee and recognised its importance in doing some of the heavy lifting in the approach to land use. It would be important to think about things differently and take an assertive approach to tackling the climate and nature emergencies while working to support communities in a collaborative and positive way. It was agreed that work on the SLA should continue.

ACTION: The Chair and Chief Executive to develop the governance on the new Board sub-committee on the approach to NRW managed land.

Item 8: Strategic Discussion on Flood Risk Management

Presenter: Jeremy Parr, Head of Flood and Incident Risk Management

48. The Executive Director of EPP introduced the item which had pulled together the themes resulting from the strategic discussion at FRMC. More detailed discussions would follow at FRMC but this was a key point with the developing Corporate Plan, SLA discussions and looking at strategies and policies with WG. WG representatives would be joining the next FRMC meeting to continue the discussions.

49. Julia Cherrett, deputising for the Chair of FRMC, welcomed the addition of the new members of FRMC and the challenge that they had brought on exploring new ideas. The strategic discussion at the recent FRMC meeting had concluded that there were no easy answers and there was a lot still to explore, including partnership working.

50. The Head of Flood and Incident Risk Management gave a presentation to set the context for the discussion. The numbers of properties at risk from flooding in Wales were shared and this was likely to increase by 34% by 2120. This was expected to include big increases due coastal flooding. The context was set within the climate and nature emergencies and delivering on these. It was important to note that there was no single solution to flooding. There would need to be a focus on the integrated catchment planning and community resilience agenda. Examples of Natural Flood Management interventions were shared and it was highlighted that the maps illustrating this could be viewed on the NRW website. The focus of this discussion would be about the continuum, and what could be done going forward, particularly if more WG funding became available.

51. Board members discussed the item and considered the options presented in the paper. It was noted that with the additional funding there could be scope to do more on resilience. There was an important opportunity with the new Corporate Plan to think differently and consider what the level of ambition should be. It was recognised that for legislative and practical reasons the work that was being done should continue, however, it was also important to consider what could be improved upon or done differently. There was an opportunity to develop a good evidence base and proof of concept for the work going forward and look to create transformational change.

52. FRMC members noted that it was challenging for the committee to influence the upcoming programme of works and narrate the decision-making process. This had been discussed at the last FRMC meeting and work was in progress on this issue.
53. Following the reports from the Storm Dennis flooding, it was suggested that the momentum of communication with the Welsh public should be kept going and developed further. The opportunities for opening up the conversations could follow from the work on the Taff catchment, which was noted as a live and challenging example. The review by Prof Elwen Evans of the Section 19 Reports and NRW's Flood Review and the review of flood infrastructure by the Infrastructure Commissioner would also help to inform the discussions both within NRW and with others.
54. It was highlighted that there were potential benefits from Natural Flood Management Schemes for dealing with the issues of water quality as well as quantity. This would involve a mix of land uses and therefore the incentives and levers would need to be considered. The importance of working with partners to achieve an integrated approach to water quality and quantity issues was discussed. It was recognised that these were difficult and emotive issues, and there was a need to step into the space of difficult conversations. Work was being done through the WLGA around conversations on adaptation.
55. The options in the paper were discussed. It was suggested that an option somewhere between c) and d) would be the way forward as it would be important to continue with work while reviewing alternatives and working in an integrated rather than siloed way. Value for money and what this might look like would need to be considered. Conversations would need to continue with WG. A pragmatic approach would be needed and there could be a need to acknowledge that it would not be possible to continue with everything that had been done previously.
56. Possible approaches to the issues were explored. It was suggested that stronger building and planning regulations would be important, particularly on developments in areas susceptible to flooding. However, the current challenges around Technical Advice Note 15 (TAN15) were noted. Innovation and examples of best practice at both national and international level could be considered. There was the potential for communications around the new Corporate Plan, Forestry and Flood to be developed and taken forward as one big Welsh conversation on these themes. Resource challenges were noted, and prioritisation would be necessary.
57. A framework for a national conversation could be developed with a commission established to enable this to happen across Wales. NRW's strategic oversight role would be important in providing advice to WG in pushing the need for a national conversation forward. It would be important to include the figures for public consideration and long-term investment requirements and scenarios. There would also be a need to consider the existing tools for deliberative democracy and decision-making that included an evidence base presented in an accessible way to facilitate a discussion about values and priorities.
58. Thanks were offered to the Flood Risk Management team.

Item 9: Wellbeing, Health and Safety Annual Report 2021-22

Presenter: Charlotte Morgan, Wellbeing, Health and Safety Manager

59. The Executive Director of Corporate Strategy and Development introduced the Wellbeing, Health and Safety (WHS) Annual Report 2021-22. The Annual Report evidenced the progress that had been made in a number of areas, including securing the ISO 45001 accreditation, to support the WHS agenda, including ensuring that there was strategic senior leadership across the organisation. This strategic leadership included Board

engagement on WHS, such as the recent discussion on forestry safety and the engagement with wider sectoral interests. The aim was to continue that focus over the coming year.

60. The WHS Manager highlighted key areas within the report. The positive attitude and professionalism of the team had helped to achieve the ISO 45001 registration to the management of occupational health and safety standard. There had been an increase in incident reporting following the lifting of Covid restrictions and a positive increase in Near Miss reporting. A positive working relationship and collaborative partnership had been established with the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and Forestry Commission.
61. Board members discussed the content of the report. It was suggested that the role of the mental health champions should be included along with information on their impact. The WHS Manager confirmed that there were over 90 staff mental health champions who met on a monthly basis and initiatives were put in place following the content of these discussions.
62. The improvements in incident and Near Miss reporting were welcomed. The role of the online portal AssessNET in capturing data trends and lessons learnt from incident and Near Miss reporting was recognised. An active monitoring report on these was included in the information produced. This would be discussed at the next WHS Forums and a breakdown would be considered at the next meeting of PaRC.
63. The serious incidents relating to contractors were discussed. It was queried whether the procurement processes were sufficient to ensure the competency of contractors. The WHS Manager confirmed that there was a procedure and policy in place to ensure that all contractors had to pass a WHS pre-qualification questionnaire assessment which included assessment of the monitoring of their sub-contractors. It was confirmed that support and guidance were offered to contractors as necessary, but they would not be included on the framework if they failed the assessment.
64. The importance of the WHS of the public on the NRW Estate was discussed, particularly in relation to mountain-biking. The WHS Manager confirmed that NRW were involved in the Public Safety Risk Assessment Arena which looked at the Visitor Safety Group principles and there was a process in place to ensure that public safety signage was appropriately assessed.
65. It was queried whether the wellbeing improvements and positive impact offered by the NRW Estate could be included in the WHS Report in addition to the physiological issues. It was confirmed that a number of studies had taken place on the wellbeing benefits of the Estate and it would be important to include these in future reporting.

ACTION: The WHS Manager to add information on the impact of the NRW Estate on wellbeing to the list of items for inclusion on future WHS Reports.

P.s [subsequent discussions on this action agreed this was a suggestion and for ongoing consideration.]

66. The staff survey was discussed. This would be sent out to staff in the autumn. It was noted that it could be difficult to compare the results for pre and post pandemic responses due to a change in the approach to the survey.
67. The Board approved the WHS Annual Report 2021-22 and thanks were offered to the WHS Manager and her team.

APPROVED: The Wellbeing, Health and Safety Annual Report 2021-22

Item 10. Board Forward Look

Presenter: Natalie Williams, Team Leader, Board Secretariat

68. The Forward Look for the July meeting was noted. It was proposed that the meeting would take place over one day. There would then be a separate session on the Corporate Plan.

Item 11: AOB

69. The Chair thanked all those involved in the lunchtime site visit which had been very informative.
70. The Chair informed the Board that Prof Calvin Jones had agreed to chair the newly created Board sub-committee on the approach to land use.
71. The changes to the SaLS for the Corporate Services Business Board had been agreed by correspondence.

APPROVED: Changes to the SaLS for the Corporate Services Business Board

72. The Board approved NRW's Modern Slavery Statement 2022-23.

APPROVED: NRW's Modern Slavery Statement 2022-23

- Board meeting closed -

Item 12. Public Q&A Session

73. The Chair welcomed members of the public and explained the conduct of the session. The Chair invited questions from the public.
74. Members of the public asked questions of the Board and responses were provided.

- Public Meeting closed -