

## Agenda

<b>Title of meeting:</b>	<b>NRW Board Public Meeting</b>
<b>Date of meeting:</b>	<b>Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> November 2024</b>
<b>Time of meeting:</b>	<b>11:15 – 14:00</b>
<b>Location:</b>	<b>Microsoft Teams</b>

<b>Time</b>	<b>Item</b>
<b>11:15</b>	<b>Item 1. Open Meeting</b>
<b>5 mins</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Welcome</li> <li>• Declaration of Interests</li> <li>• Explain conduct of meeting</li> </ul> <p>Sponsor and Presenter: Sir David Henshaw (Chair)</p> <p><b>Summary: To NOTE any declarations of interest</b></p>
<b>11:20</b>	<b>Item 2. Review Minutes and Action Log</b>
<b>5 mins</b>	<p><b>2A. Review Minutes from Public 25<sup>th</sup> September Meeting</b></p> <p><b>2B. Review Public Action Log</b></p> <p>Sponsor and Presenter: Sir David Henshaw (Chair)</p> <p><b>Summary: To APPROVE the minutes of the previous meeting and the Action Log</b></p>
<b>11:25</b>	<b>Item 3. Update from the Chair</b>
<b>10 mins</b>	<p>Sponsor and Presenter: Sir David Henshaw (Chair)</p> <p><b>Summary: To NOTE the Chair's update to the Board</b></p>

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<b>11:35</b>	<b>Item 4. Report from the Chief Executive</b>
<b>10 mins</b>	<p>Sponsor and Presenter: Ceri Davies, Acting Chief Executive</p> <p><b>Summary: To NOTE the current position and update the Board on key activities</b></p> <p><b>Paper Ref: 24-11-B08</b></p>

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<b>11:45</b>	<b>Item 5. Update Reports of Committees and Forums</b>
<b>20 mins</b>	<p>Sponsors and Presenters: Committee Chairs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Audit and Risk Assurance Committee – 7<sup>th</sup> October <b>Paper Ref: 24-11-B09</b></li> <li>• Evidence Advisory Committee – 22<sup>nd</sup> October <b>Paper Ref: 24-11-B10</b></li> <li>• Finance Committee</li> <li>• Flood Risk Management Committee – 3<sup>rd</sup> October <b>Paper Ref: 24-11-B11</b></li> <li>• Land Estate Committee – 9<sup>th</sup> October <b>Paper Ref: 24-11-B14</b></li> <li>• People and Customer Committee</li> <li>• Protected Areas Committee – 17<sup>th</sup> October <b>Paper Ref: 24-11-B12</b></li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wales Land Management Forum <b>Paper Ref: 24-11-B13</b></li> <li>• Wales Fisheries Forum</li> <li>• Wales Water Management Forum</li> <li>• National Access Forum for Wales</li> <li>• Enabling the Environmental Sector Group</li> </ul> <p><b>Summary: To NOTE the updates from the Board Committees and NRW Forums, both within and outside and meetings held</b></p>

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<b>12:05</b>	<b>Item 6. Finance Performance Report</b>
<b>20 mins</b>	<p>Sponsor: Rachael Cunningham, Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Services</p> <p>Presenter: Rob Bell, Head of Finance</p> <p><b>Summary: To APPROVE the latest financial position</b></p> <p><b>Paper Ref: 24-11-B17</b></p>

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12:25	<b>Lunch</b>
30 mins	
12:55	<b>Item 7. Wellbeing, Health and Safety Quarter 2 Report</b>
20 mins	<p>Sponsor: Prys Davies, Executive Director of Corporate Strategy and Development</p> <p>Presenter: Charlotte Morgan, Wellbeing Health and Safety Manager</p> <p><b>Summary: To APPROVE the Wellbeing, Health and Safety Report for Quarter 2</b></p> <p><b>Paper Ref: 24-11-B18</b></p>
13:15	<b>Item 8. Business Plan Performance Dashboard and Internal Performance Quarter 2 Report</b>
20 mins	<p>Sponsor and Presenter: Ceri Davies, Acting Chief Executive</p> <p>Attendees: Sarah Williams, Head of Corporate Strategy and PMO</p> <p><b>Summary: To APPROVE the Business Plan Performance Dashboard and Internal Performance Quarter 2 Report</b></p> <p><b>Paper ref: 24-11-B19</b></p>
13:35	<b>Item 9. AOB</b>
5 mins	
13:40	<b>Close Meeting</b>
13:40	<b>Public Q&amp;A</b>
20 mins	
14:00	<b>Close Public Meeting</b>

# Unconfirmed Minutes

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<b>Title of meeting:</b>	<b>NRW Board Meeting – Public Meeting</b>
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<b>Location:</b>	Microsoft Teams
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<b>Date of meeting:</b>	25 <sup>th</sup> September 2024
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<b>Board Members present:</b>	Sir David Henshaw, Chair Prof Steve Ormerod, Deputy Chair Clare Pillman, Chief Executive Geraint Davies Dr Pete Fox Prof Calvin Jones - virtual Lesley Jones - virtual Prof Rhys Jones Mark McKenna Kath Palmer Helen Pittaway Dr Rosie Plummer
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<b>Executive Team Members present:</b>	Ceri Davies, Executive Director of Evidence, Policy and Permitting Prys Davies, Executive Director of Corporate Strategy and Development Sarah Jennings, Executive Director of Communications, Customer and Commercial Gareth O’Shea, Executive Director of Operations Victoria Rose-Piper, Head of Business Support Services and Adfywio/Head of Business Transformation, deputising for Rachael Cunningham, Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Services
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<b>Attendees present:</b>	Phil Williams, Head of Governance and Board Secretary (All items) Mark Collins, Manager Business Finance Team 2, Item 6 Clive Walmsley, Senior Specialist Advisor, Climate Change and Decarbonisation, Item 7 Mary Lewis, Sustainable Places, Land & Sea Manager, Item 7 Jeremy Parr, Head of Flood and Incident Risk Management, Item 8 Sarah Williams, Head of Corporate Strategy and PMO, Item 9
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	Sue Ginley, Lead Specialist Advisor, Corporate Planning & Performance, Item 9
<b>NRW Observers present:</b>	Tamana Tomlinson, Team Leader & Executive Assistant to Chief Executive Meinir Wigley, Integrated Communications Team Leader Elsie Grace, Head of Sustainable Commercial Development
<b>Public Observers present:</b>	Polly Ernest Elizabeth Mullan Emma Wiik, Welsh Rivers Union Kim Waters, Welsh Rivers Union Additional members of the public  Eszter Horvath-Papp - NRW Sara Ridley, Specialist - NRW
<b>Apologies:</b>	Rachael Cunningham, Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Services
<b>Secretariat:</b>	Natalie Williams, Deputy Board Secretary and Board Secretariat Team Leader Deborah Lee, Board Secretariat Team
<b>Declarations of Interest:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sir David Henshaw, living in the area of interest of new national park</li> <li>• Clare Pillman, living in the area of interest of new national park</li> <li>• Dr Rosie Plummer - Member Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority - wide-ranging interactions including Withy hedge with NRW including National Park landscape designation and protections including SAC rivers, Marine zones, diverse grant recipient and collaborator</li> <li>• Prof Steve Ormerod – Chair of the Science Advisory Group and Board Member to the new Environmental Markets Board; Chair of the Fish-Eating Birds Advisory Group; Vice-President of the RSPB</li> <li>• Geraint Davies – Mentor with Farming Connect; Associate of Pwllpeiran Upland Research Centre</li> <li>• Prof Rhys Jones – part of a funded research project with Coventry University that will be examining the development and early implementation of the Sustainable Farming Scheme</li> </ul>

## **Item 1. Open Meeting**

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

## **Item 2. Review Minutes and Action Log**

### **Item 2A. Review Minutes from the 17<sup>th</sup> July Meeting**

2. The minutes from the public Board meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> July were reviewed and agreed.

### **Item 2B. Review Action Log**

3. The Action Log was reviewed and noted.

## **Item 3. Update from the Chair**

4. The Chair updated the Board on a good constructive meeting held with the new Deputy First Minister to discuss current issues and challenges. An outline of a meeting held with the Quad Water Group was also provided with discussions to maintain oversight ongoing.
5. Details of the next Board meeting would be made available on the NRW website in due course.

## **Item 4. Report from the Chief Executive**

6. The Chief Executive gave an update on items in addition to the written Report.
7. The First Minister, and the Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change and Rural Affairs had attended the opening of the Ammanford Flood Risk Management Project. Thanks were given to the Board members for also attending the event along with members of the community and colleagues involved with the delivery of the Project.
8. It had been welcomed that after the Welsh Government (WG) announcement of the new cabinet, that Huw Irranca-Davies would remain as the Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change and Rural Affairs. Approaches would be made to the new Ministers in areas that NRW worked closely with. The First Minister had announced priority areas for the Government: a healthier Wales; green jobs and growth; opportunity for every family; and connecting communities. The dates for the budget announcements were noted.
9. The Chief Executive noted the ongoing work on the new proposed National Park designation, and the announcement of the new Chair of Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water, Jane Hanson, as of the 1<sup>st</sup> January 2025; the Chair had written a letter of welcome.

10. The Executive Director of Evidence, Policy and Permitting updated the Board on the public consultation launch for the new proposed National Park designation. The next stage was the public consultation phase and Board members were encouraged to attend public sessions to engage. Discussions with the Local Authorities within the area of interest would continue and WG would be kept apprised of key issues and concerns. Meetings with the Deputy First Minister would also be arranged. It was noted that Prof. Steve Ormerod would function as Chair, and Ceri Davies, the Executive Director of Evidence, Policy and Permitting would act on behalf of the Chief Executive.
11. There had been a good, insightful site visit to the area of interest, the calibre of the team was commended and the work undertaken was highlighted.
12. The Board raised the need to be flexible and innovative in terms of the decarbonisation agenda and the need for a flexible approach to regulation. The Chief Executive outlined that as part of the next Board meeting there would be a strategic day on the Climate Change Wellbeing Objective. NRW were already being innovative, particularly in the marine environment around adaptive management, but flexibility in regulation would be for a future discussion with WG.
13. The Board welcomed the additional funding received for Land Management Agreements (LMAs) and it was clarified that this would be constrained to existing Agreements. It was noted that a five-year LMA in the Pembrokeshire National Park had delivered on biodiversity. The importance of relationships with land managers, especially in protected areas was noted. Good progress had been made but the way forward was critical. Tough decisions had been made over the last 12-18 months and the Board welcomed the possibility of opportunities to extend LMAs to others.

## **Item 5. Update Reports of Committees and Forums**

14. Kath Palmer, Chair of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC) gave an update on the meeting held on 5<sup>th</sup> September. It had been noted that the Internal Audit Work Plan was on track and ARAC had agreed some changes. Good Internal Audit Reports had been received. The Annual Report and Accounts (ARA) had been considered and Audit Wales had welcomed the partnership working. A Governance overview and action plan would be presented at the next ARAC meeting along with more detail on risk management. It was noted that there would be a review of the Strategic Risk Register at the next Board meeting and at the December ARAC meeting a high-level organisational risk register was expected to be discussed.
15. Prof Steve Ormerod, Chair of the Evidence Advisory Committee (EAC) noted the next meeting on 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2024 and advised that the State of Natural Resources Report (SoNaRR) and how better to disseminate with help from wider communities would be discussed.
16. Helen Pittaway, Chair of the Finance Committee (FC) updated the Board on the meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> September. Additional work to look more strategically across all flood projects had been requested. The charges consultation and the budget setting process for 2025/26 had been discussed, in addition to multi-year budgets. The

narrative around performance within the ARA was approved and six-monthly updates were provided by the Programme Management Office and the Contract Management Support Service. Changes to procurement and contract management legislation had been explained and an update provided on NRW2030 from a financial and budgeting perspective. Tŷ Cambria and Adfywio were also discussed and there was a standing invite for Board members to attend the next FC meeting on the 5<sup>th</sup> December 2024.

17. Dr Pete Fox, Chair of the Flood Risk Management Committee (FRMC), updated the Board on a meeting held by correspondence followed with a virtual meeting, to consider comments. The approach was recommended to use as an exception. Interest was shown of holding a more strategic Board discussion on the complicated coastal schemes where cost benefit would be marginal. It was suggested that these schemes were discussed in a future Board meeting. The implementation of the new Flood Risk Warning System had been welcomed.
18. The Board discussed the high discount rates placed on future benefits on new flood schemes, and it was proposed to consult with WG to use differential discount rates to not under invest in schemes which would provide a significant increase in benefits over longer time periods. He noted the Chief Executive's invitation to attend the National Infrastructure Commission (NIC) report launch and advised that NIC had been invited to attend the next FRMC meeting.
19. Geraint Davies, on behalf of the Chair of the Land Estate Committee (LEC), updated the Board on the meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> July. The paper was taken as read. The next LEC meeting would be held in Merthyr Tydfil on 9<sup>th</sup> October 2024 to include a Trydan Gwyrdd Cymru site visit.
20. Mark McKenna, Chair of the People and Customer Committee (PCC) updated the Board on the in-person meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> September that had welcomed Board member, Lesley Jones, as a new member. Discussions had taken place on the CfC and the Wellbeing, Health and Safety Quarter 1 Report was scrutinised with the new Learning Management System well-received. The positive Complaints and Commendations Annual Report had been welcomed. PCC had been presented with an informative update on NRW2030, and further regular updates were expected. The Communications Quarterly Report had also been well-received. Overall, a positive meeting despite the challenges currently faced.
21. Dr Rosie Plummer, Chair of the Protected Areas Committee (PrAC) updated the Board that there had not been a formal meeting since the last Board meeting, but that the Coedwig Dyfi Determination had been confirmed and the next formal meeting would be on the 17<sup>th</sup> of October.
22. Prof Rhys Jones, Chair of the Wales Land Management Forum (WLMF), updated the Board on the meeting held in June and the in-person meeting in September. This had included a discussion on how to work more beyond the meetings and Natur am Byth. The next meeting would be held in December, where the forestry Regional Advisory Committee (RAC) would attend in an annual joint meeting. Forestry would be the main focus of this meeting.



23. The sub-group on agricultural pollution had met jointly with the Wales Water Management Forum (WWMF) and Wales Fisheries Forum (WFF). In attendance was Dr Susannah Bolton, the independent chair, to oversee the statutory review of the Water Resources (Control of Agricultural Pollution) (Wales) Regulations 2021 and they discussed how the sub-group on pollution could feed into the review.
24. Prof Rhys Jones informed the Board that there was an ongoing review of the forums, and all Board members were invited to provide feedback.
25. Prof Steve Ormerod, Chair of the Wales Fisheries Forum (WFF) and the Wales Water Management Forum (WWMF) updated the Board on discussions between the WWMF and the WLMF on Diazinon. The WFF had not met since the last Board meeting.
26. Prof Steve Ormerod also reported on the Fish-eating Bird Advisory Group meeting, held on the 16<sup>th</sup> September, to discuss previous recommendations made by the independent Advisory Group and the ongoing pilot programme on licensing controls on the River Usk. A programme of tagging and looking at the survival of smolt and the circumstances of mortality and the interaction with climate change. Establishing where NRW had control and the beneficial options for fisheries management would be of importance.
27. Geraint Davies, Chair of the National Access Forum for Wales (NAFW), updated the Board and noted that the Forum had not met since the last Board meeting. An overview of the paper was provided, and highlights included the River Basin Management Plans and Dŵr Cymru's work on engaging visitors.

## **Item 6. Finance Performance Report**

Presenter: Mark Collins, Manager, Business Finance Team 2

28. The Manager, Business Finance Team, introduced the item and provided an overview. The Report showed the financial performance to the end of July 2024, and a summary of the risks and opportunities were highlighted. The increase of £0.1m to the overall budget was noted resulting in a total budget of £269m.
29. It was noted that on expenditure there was a slight underspend of £0.3m and there was a reduction to the previously reported Land Stewardship variances which were now aligned to the forecast. There was also a reduction in over-programming in the main programmes, with the Flood Programme seeing a slight surplus; however, the ring-fenced Nature and Climate Emergency (NaCE) Programme would increase as there was £1m of the Peatland Programme work that was unlikely to be delivered.
30. On income, it was noted that the position was ahead of forecast by £1.2m due to the commercial timber and charge income being ahead of expectations. The positive start to the year in both timber volume and price per tonne was noted. The latest timber forecast was due for sign-off by the Head of Sustainable Commercial Development.
31. The main risks were outlined, these included: pay, Tŷ Cambria, and the emerging pressure on electricity and maintenance costs within operations, primarily linked to flood assets and pumping stations, where a review was underway to determine the

shortfall and to consider mitigation measures. The opportunities to offset the risks were explained.

32. It was noted, that after a request, ideas on areas where additional capital funding could be utilised had been submitted to WG. WG were in discussion with the UK Government on additional Civil Service Pension Scheme costs and this could provide additional funding. It was recommended that there were no additional actions required.

33. The Board welcomed the update and approved the changes to the latest forecast from £268.9m to £269.0m.

**APPROVED: The changes to the latest forecast from £268.9m to £269.0m.**

## **Item 7. NRW's Net Zero Plan**

Presenters: Clive Walmsley, Senior Specialist Advisor, Climate Change and Decarbonisation; Mary Lewis, Sustainable Places, Land & Sea Manager

34. The Executive Director of Evidence, Policy and Permitting introduced the item. The Senior Specialist Advisor, Climate Change and Decarbonisation delivered the presentation to the Board which outlined the Net Zero Plan and explained that this had been a collaboration of work from many teams across NRW. It was highlighted that the Plan provided a clear strategy and set of actions to minimise emissions through to 2030. It prioritised decarbonisation actions based on feedback from the Executive Team (ET), Welsh Government Energy Services and that it aligned to other public sector bodies in Wales. It would be NRW's ambition to publish the Plan, to be shared with WG and partners, and focus on delivery of the prioritised actions dependent on staff resource and budget. The Board were asked to approve the Plan

35. The Board thanked the team for the presentation. They acknowledged that the presentation had addressed some of the concerns over ambition and goals for the Plan; however, it was felt that this could still be emphasised further. The Board requested that there was a concise communications and engagement plan to use with staff and externally, as a call to arms to influence change. There should be clarity amongst staff and stakeholders on what NRW were aiming to achieve, by when, and what they should do to deliver it. This should also include specific dates for when NRW were aiming to achieve Net Zero.

36. The relationship between the carbon emissions and procurement which had both increased was queried. The Board discussed how to drive change within the supply chain and procurement to realise big wins for the Net Zero target for NRW. It would be important to look at a range of issues such as how and which suppliers NRW worked with. NRW also needed to address how to correctly account for those things which were carbon intense or had a longer-term impact on decarbonisation or mitigate other climate impacts.

37. The Board discussed the use of the Welsh Government Woodland Estate (WGWE) when calculating the carbon footprint as an organisation and use of sequestration figures. The figures were dependant on many factors, including how and where trees

were stored after the sawmill, it was noted that how this effected carbon release in the future had not been fully captured. However, it was also explained that NRW were in a unique position to use the WGWE to sequester as much carbon as possible, but it should not use this as mitigation from doing everything else possible to reduce its carbon footprint.

38. The ongoing progress within NRW was highlighted such as the reduced carbon emissions on accommodation and travel. Also, that 50% of staff had undertaken a climate literacy course, which to complete they had to make a personal and a work commitment to reduce their carbon footprint.
39. The Board recognised and commended the work that had been undertaken in producing the Net Zero Plan and were informed that it would be submitted to WG as required. The Board advised that whilst they recognised the capture of sequestering of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions provided by the land we manage, they did not want this presented in a way that could arise to any complacency. The Board requested that by the November Board meeting, the team produced a concise and impactful communication and engagement plan that set out clearly for staff and stakeholders what NRW were committed to achieve, and the part they would play in achieving this ambition.

**ACTION: Secretariat to add to the strategic discussion session on WBO2, the consideration of the communication and engagement plan for our Net Zero ambition.**

**APPROVED: The Net Zero Plan and its prioritised actions, targets and scenarios, subject to their periodic review, to steer our future mitigation action through to 2030.**

**APPROVED: The development of a Delivery Plan, setting out the prioritised actions, owners and timeframes that will be reported through the Climate Emergency Group to ensure oversight and delivery.**

## **Item 8. Bereavement Charter**

Presenters: Lyndsey Rawlinson, Head of North East Wales Operations; Jeremy Parr, Head of Flood, and Incident Risk Management.

40. The Executive Director of Operations introduced the item and outlined the context of the paper. A review on bereaved families had been undertaken and a conference had taken place. NRW had been asked to sign up to the Charter which must be signed by individual organisations. ET had discussed this and recommended that the Board sign the Charter as it aligned with the organisational values and principles. It was noted that NRW were different to other responders as it rarely dealt directly with families. However, NRW should enter into the spirit of the agreement in acting with dignity when releasing information.
41. The Board welcomed the paper and approved NRW sign-up to the Charter for Families Bereaved by Public Tragedy.

## **APPROVED: NRW sign-up to the Charter for Families Bereaved by Public Tragedy**

### **Item 9. Business Plan Performance Dashboard and Internal Performance Quarter 1 Report**

Attendees: Sarah Williams, Head of Corporate Strategy and PMO; Sue Ginley, Lead Specialist Advisor, Corporate Planning & Performance; Bronia Bendall, Senior Specialist Advisor, Corporate Strategy and Development

42. The Chief Executive introduced the item and presented the Business Plan Performance Dashboard and Internal Performance Quarter 1 Reports. It was noted that this was the first of the new style reporting packs and all comments on style and format would be welcomed. It was clear that the recruitment controls, and the CfC, were having an impact on delivery across the organisation; however, team leaders were prioritising actions in the Business Plan.
43. Each ET lead presented their measures from the Business Plan and explained the Amber and Red statuses on their Wellbeing Objective (WBO).
44. WBO1 lead by the Executive Director of Evidence, Policy and Permitting explained the ongoing status of the Nature Networks Programme Evaluation, and the Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)'s notification/ renotification contributing to the 30 by 30 target. Following a query, it was clarified that the Green status indicated the status of planned yearly actions that NRW staff were committed to, which would build towards the ultimate goal, but it was not indicative of the status of the long-term goal. It would be the SoNaRR that would recognise the ongoing environmental circumstances. This highlighted the need to clarify wording within the table, and the team would reflect on this.
45. Updates were provided on WBO2 measures by the Executive Director of Communications, Customer, and Commercial. The National Peatland Action Programme, and Marine and Coastal habitats had an Amber status, and the reason was explained. The Red status of the telemetry system was highlighted, and the Board queried where the risk had been identified regarding the delays. How the risk within the business had been documented was explained. The risk had been escalated to ET for resolutions to be found. The Chair of ARAC highlighted that this was a good example to add to the Risk Register being created for ARAC in December. The Amber status on Marine Evidence and Licencing was explained and the Board were assured that this had been reported to WG. The Chair asked for NRW to be more proactive in this space and to write, advising WG of the levels of concern over this issue.
46. The Executive Director of Operations presented the WBO3 measures and outlined the reasons for the Amber status on; water companies' investment, catchment-scale water quality improvements and action on fly-tipping.
47. The Board provided a general observation that there needed to be an overarching narrative to provide the context that NRW were working in. This was also to reassure the public that NRW were not being complacent in our actions having an impact on the scale of the climate and nature emergency by marking our status' Green. The Board

were reminded that this was work in progress and there was more work required over multi-year planning and metrics which would clarify our ambition.

48. The Chief Executive presented the Internal Performance Report the 2 Red measures were identified as Near Miss reporting and Sgwrs (staff priority and development agreement), but both of these had a pathway to Green identified.

**APPROVED: The Business Plan Performance Dashboard and Internal Performance Quarter 1 Report**

## **Item 10 Items for Approval**

### **Item 10a. Wellbeing, Health and Safety Quarter 1 Report**

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

49. The Executive Director of Corporate Strategy & Development presented the Wellbeing, Health and Safety (WHS) Quarter 1 Report to the Board. It was noted that there was an additional Serious Incident Report (SIR), and the Report flagged the work on supporting managers with stress awareness.

50. The Board approved the Wellbeing, Health and Safety Quarter 1 Report.

**APPROVED: The Wellbeing, Health and Safety Quarter 1 Report**

### **Item 10b. Modern Slavery Statement**

Sponsor and Presenter: Sarah Jennings, Executive Director of Communications, Customer and Commercial

51. The Executive Director of Communications, Customer, and Commercial presented the NRW's Modern Slavery Statement for 2024-25. This was a standard declaration, procurement and supply chain challenges had been discussed earlier and the Board were assured that NRW were vigilant in this area.

52. The Board approved NRW's Modern Slavery Statement for 2024-25.

**APPROVED: The NRW's Modern Slavery Statement for 2024-25**

## **Item 11 Items for Information**

### **Item 11a. Natur a Ni Evaluation Report**

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

53. The Board noted the Natur a Ni Evaluation Report for their information.

54. The Board queried the impact of Nature a Ni on public debate on nature and working with others. It was noted that Nature a Ni had illustrated how difficult it had been to debate, and the reach was not as wide as had been hoped.

## **DECISION: The Board NOTED the Natur a Ni Evaluation Report**

### **Item 12. AOB**

55. No matters were raised under AOB.

### **Meeting Closed**

### **Public Q&A**

56. The Chair introduced the public Q&A session and outlined the difficulties of the Public Q&A. NRW were looking to improve public engagement to connect better with those we serve but also get across the breadth of the work at NRW. The Chair advised on the complexity of the decisions NRW made and the resources available. It was acknowledged that this was not satisfactory and limited and it would be reviewed.
57. There had been a question received from Emma Wiik and the Director of Operations provided a response, the Board Secretariat would provide this in writing to Emma Wiik as requested after the meeting.
58. The Chair addressed the Visitor Centre questions received from Elizabeth Mullan, Polly Ernest, and Elen Howells. The Chair advised that the consultation was now closed and thanked the public and partners for their valuable input. NRW were considering the feedback and were assessing whether any adjustments to the proposals were required before proceeding. The revised proposals would be presented to the NRW board for consideration and approval in the autumn.
59. The public were assured that their questions about specific aspects of the proposals had been shared with our Executive Team and Board members. However, NRW were not yet in a position to address all the details. Work was still ongoing, and the visitor centre review was part of a broader effort to navigate the financial challenges faced by NRW and the wider public sector.
60. The importance of nature and the national nature reserves and forests surrounding offices centres was emphasised. The Chair confirmed that NRW were not closing visitor centres and that play areas, car parking, and toilet provision would continue. The proposal in the consultation was clarified in that NRW proposed to no longer operate the loss making retail and catering facilities.
61. The public would be kept updated and NRW would communicate the outcomes of the Case for Change to the staff and then share further details about the services impacted with the public and stakeholders. There would be public meetings held at each of the sites to ensure everyone had the opportunity to stay informed and engaged.

### **Public Meeting Closed**

## Board Action Log – Public

Action No.	Meeting Category	Meeting Date	Item No	Para No	Paper Sponsor	Action	Owner	Due	Status	Notes/Updates
2	Public	27/01/2023	9	47	Prys Davies, Executive Director of CSD	ACTION: The Head of Governance and Board Secretary to develop the approach to Place-based Board public engagement sessions	Head of Governance & Board Secretary	31/10/2024	Completed	Options for Board public engagement being developed. The approach to be agreed with the Chair and the new Head of Governance and Board Secretary. 25th Sept meeting - The Board agreed that the current format was the best for the present time due to resources and would be reviewed further as part of the wider governance review. Action completed.
32	Public	17/07/2024	4	11	Clare Pillman CEO	ACTION: The Annual Regulation Report to be presented to the Board	Nadia De Longhi, Head of Regulation and Permitting	30/10/2024	Completed	On agenda for November Board meeting.
42	Public	25/09/2024	7	39	Ceri Davies Executive Director EPP	ACTION: Secretariat to add to the strategic discussion session on WBO2, the consideration of the communication and engagement plan for our Net Zero ambition.	Secretariat	14/10/2024	Completed	Note added to Board Forward Look for November meeting. Amendment, this will now take place at May 2025 Board meeting.

## NRW Board Paper

<b>Date of meeting:</b>	20 and 21 November 2024
<b>Title of Paper:</b>	Chief Executive's Report (Public Session)
<b>Paper Reference:</b>	24-11-B08
<b>Paper presented by:</b>	Ceri Davies, Acting Chief Executive
<b>Purpose</b>	Information and discussion
<b>Summary</b>	The paper provides the Board with an update on current issues.

## Introduction

1. At the start of October, Clare travelled to the Netherlands for the Environment Protection Agency (EPA) Network Plenary at The Hague. This meeting brings together the heads of the European environmental protection agencies and similar bodies, with a view to sharing experience and ideas, learning from each other and working together on strategic issues. On this occasion, the agenda ranged from societal transition and behaviour change to the challenges of artificial intelligence and misinformation. NRW gave a presentation about our State of Natural Resources Report (SoNaRR) and the Environment Agency (EA) presented on their Future Regulation Programme. While the changing political landscape is creating new challenges for many of our European colleagues, overall the tone was of optimism and collaboration.
2. One outcome from the meeting was a request that Wales should host the Plenary in October 2025. With support from Welsh Government (WG), we have agreed to this and will now be a member of the EPA Network Troika, the organising body, for several years. This allows us to assist in the planning for next year's meeting, while giving us some influence over agendas and areas of discussion.
3. NRW subsequently hosted a meeting of the CEOs and Directors of the five UK and Ireland environmental agencies. The Directors' meeting was led by Ceri Davies and the joint discussion with CEOs covered organisational change and business transformation, with a presentation on our NRW2030 project, and a session on European engagement.



4. The Case for Change proposals have continued to generate correspondence from concerned members of the public and community groups. Particular areas of concern include the proposed closure of the library at our Maes y Ffynnon office, the impact on our education services and specialist biodiversity expertise, and the proposal to end retail and catering services at our visitor centres. There has been considerable interest in how we will continue to manage the National Nature Reserves at these sites.
5. Following a petition to the Senedd's Petitions Committee regarding the visitor centres, a debate was held in the Senedd on 9 October. The debate was attended by the Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change and Rural Affairs, who reiterated that the proposals are part of a larger scheme of change and that our intention was never to "close" the visitor centres but to find partners to run the catering and retail services. He repeated also that our internal trade union consultation had only just closed and that the NRW Board would make a decision on the wider plans for restructuring the organisation.
6. Also in October, we attended the Senedd's Climate Change, Environment and Infrastructure (CCEI) Committee scrutiny session to give evidence. One session focused on *Halting and reversing the loss of nature by 2030*, while the second session covered topical issues, including some of the regulatory concerns raised in the *Byd ar Bedwar* television programme earlier in the summer. The committee asked questions about our incident attendance and enforcement approaches, as well as budgetary constraints and the Case for Change. My thanks to all those who represented NRW at these sessions, and who spoke with professionalism and clarity on the issues raised. The committee will use the evidence given to report back to the Senedd later this year.
7. New opportunities also await Steve Burton, our Head of People Management, who will retire from NRW in November. This year, Steve has been instrumental in delivering the Case for Change consultation and working with the trade unions to define the implementation process. External recruitment was undertaken to fill the role on an interim basis and ensure we continue to have strong leadership in this area throughout the implementation phase. Leona Robertson joined us on 4 November..

## Strategic Issues

### Water (Special Measures) Bill in Wales

8. The UK Government laid the Water (Special Measures) Bill in Parliament at the start of September. In Wales, the Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change and Rural Affairs agreed to extend the majority of the provisions of the Bill to cover Wales, and the Bill is therefore the subject of a Legislative Consent Memorandum (LCM) in the Senedd.

9. Given our ongoing concerns about water company performance and behaviours, we welcome the Bill, which will strengthen NRW's regulatory powers in respect of water pollution caused by sewage discharges and ageing infrastructure, our ability to ensure that water companies are held to account where they pollute and our ongoing efforts to drive improvements in water company performance in Wales.
10. We welcome, in particular, the measures to issue automatic penalties, the option to issue fixed monetary penalties for minor to moderate water offences, and the lowering of the standard of proof to match the civil standard ("on the balance of probabilities"). In addition, the regulations would allow us to recover the costs of enforcement. In our view, these powers must be implemented together to ensure benefits are achieved.
11. The Bill is expected to gain Royal assent early in the new year and secondary legislation will need to follow before it can be implemented in full. We understand that the UK Government aims to have the measures in place in England in time for the next water industry Asset Management Period (from April 2025), to signal the start of a new and improved regulatory landscape for the water industry. We do not yet know the proposed timescales for implementation in Wales, but are mindful of the work that will be needed within NRW to ensure we can support and deliver the new regime.
12. Following our attendance at the CCEI Committee's evidence session, the Committee chair subsequently sought our written views on the LCM for the Bill, to assist the Committee in considering the matter further.
13. The UK Government has also announced an intention to undertake a more fundamental review of the water sector regulatory system. Given the range of pressures on the water environment, we are supportive of a broader review, taking a systems approach and reflecting on a wider range of water legislation. At the end of October we received notification of the scope of the review and advised that we will be invited to be part of it, we aim to ensure that any proposals benefit our natural resources. The review will be chaired by Sir Jon Cunliffe.

## Operational Issues

### Dowlais project

14. We are delighted to have completed the first river re-meandering project under our River Restoration Programme, at the Nant Dowlais this summer. The project represents the largest palaeochannel reconnection scheme in South Wales, and directly addresses a Water Framework Directive pressure.
15. The Nant Dowlais is a tributary of the River Ely near St Fagans, Cardiff that has been historically straightened for 750 metres of its length. The project aims to address absent salmon, trout and eel species by taking a nature-based approach to reinstate natural processes within the river channel. The re-meandered channel will

add approximately 200 metres in channel length to this section of the Nant Dowlais which will form pool and riffle sequences, to improve morphology and provide a diverse habitat for plants, invertebrates and fish. The work is funded by Welsh Government's Water Capital Fund.

### **Polder Fields**

16. Our Marine and Projects Delivery teams have worked to renew and extend polder fields at Rhymney Great Wharf this summer. The work will restore and extend valuable saltmarsh habitat that is under pressure from rising sea levels, to increase biodiversity and resilience within the Severn Estuary Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and support flood risk management.
17. We have installed over two kilometres of fencing, made of chestnut posts and brushwood bundles, to slow the receding tide and encourage sediment from the Severn Estuary to be deposited within the polder fields. As mud and sand builds up over time, it will turn into saltmarsh that will support local wildlife and help trap carbon. The work is funded by Welsh Government's Nature Networks programme.

### **Sandycroft Update**

18. In October 2023, Storm Babet caused flooding in the community of Sandycroft in Flintshire. Due to its location, the flat network of drainage and watercourses in the area and the influence of the tidal Dee, the area has a history of flooding problems affecting properties and business in the area. WG have now provided funding to progress work that will aim to maximise the efficiency of the existing main river systems along Sandycroft drain and Pentre drain.
19. Beginning in October, our work will clear blockages, accumulations of sediment and non-structural barriers that have been identified as affecting flow along the watercourses. Contractors will be working in both open channel and culverted sections of the watercourses using specialist equipment and machinery. The first phase is expected to be completed early in the new year, with the second phase following immediately afterwards. This will involve structural repairs, where needed, to the Pentre drain north culvert.
20. We are liaising with landowners, homeowners and businesses impacted by these works. We are also working with Flintshire County Council and Dŵr Cymru/Welsh Water (DCWW), who are Risk Management Authorities with responsibilities for assets such as ordinary watercourses, highway drains and gullies, and sewers, that are also associated with flooding in the area. In addition, our Warning and Informing team has been providing advice and guidance in establishing a local community flood action group. The group is seeking volunteer flood wardens and developing a local community flood plan. Community updates are being provided through newsletters and we are developing an online citizen space website to provide information about the work and help in answering questions from the community about our flood risk management work.

## Rhondda Hydraulic Modelling

21. Improved hydraulic modelling for the River Rhondda has been undertaken following Storm Dennis, which hit Wales in February 2020. The new modelling includes more local detail and information than that included in the current model used to inform the NRW Flood Map. The modelling incorporates updated hydrology, including hydrological assessment of the Storm Dennis flows, which has resulted in increased flows for given return periods. This new modelling will be used to update our flood map data in November.
22. The current flood map for the Rhondda (and some other locations across Wales) includes the flood risk benefits of some de-facto flood defences, such as highway walls and private boundary walls. Current NRW policy is that such defences and their flood risk benefits should not be included in the flood map, because the structures were not designed as flood defences (and therefore may not have structural capacity to support hydraulic loading) and may not be inspected or maintained as flood defences. They therefore cannot be guaranteed to perform as a flood defence; there are many examples of such structures failing when hydraulically loaded.
23. The consequence of not including these de-facto defences is that some communities, including hundreds of properties, will show an increased flood risk on the NRW Flood Map. Once the information is published, it may impact home insurance premiums and mortgage offers (though many insurance and mortgage providers use their own flood data to determine offers). We are developing a position statement ahead of the data update, and are liaising with other local stakeholders, such as Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council.

## LIFE Project Updates

24. LIFEDeeRiver has now delivered ten weir removals during the lifetime of the programme, with the recent completion of Erbistock weir removal being the largest to date. This project took eleven weeks to complete over the summer, was delivered four weeks ahead of schedule and came in around £200,000 under budget. We worked closely with Heneb to ensure that details of construction methods were suitably recorded. For the first time in 200 years, all fish species will have uninterrupted passage past this point, reducing losses and delays – directly feeding into ‘Nature is recovering’ under the Corporate Plan.
25. At the end of the ground nesting bird season this year, LIFEquake started the hydrological restoration of Crymlyn Bog SAC. The main chunk of this work is the removal of vegetation and blockages on a two kilometre section of the 250-year-old peat cut Glan y Wern Canal. By carrying out this work we will improve drainage and reduce current water levels within the bog which are artificially high due to a historic downstream industrial abstraction. As well as returning the site hydrology to more a

normal condition, the work will reduce nutrient enrichment to the habitat, which has led to the proliferation of invasive scrub.

26. A three-year work programme has now also started to control and remove approximately 40 hectares of scrub which is impacting on the fen, transition mire and quaking bog habitat. The third intervention to start this year is the mowing of approximately 40 hectares of the bog using a wetland harvester. This will reduce the dominance of phragmites, cladium mariscus and scrub and hopefully encourage a local farmer to sustainably graze the bog again with livestock.
27. The Four Rivers for LIFE project has worked with the National Trust to introduce large wood on over a kilometre of the Tarell, a tributary of the River Usk, to create fantastic new habitats and reconnect the river to its natural floodplain. The project has also completed two fish-pass projects opening up new spawning ground in the Clydach and Llanwrda Dulais rivers in the River Tywi catchment.

## Communications

### Corporate Communications

28. Work to manage the internal and external communications in relation to the Case for Change process and timelines has continued over this period. The future of the visitor centre offering continues to attract media and stakeholder attention as petitions have been scrutinised and protests have taken place on the sites. A significant amount of resource has been given to working with colleagues to manage messaging in our responses, and ensuring inaccurate reporting is corrected in media coverage. We also ensured communication around the pausing of the Acorn Antics campaign for 2024 was choreographed appropriately with stakeholders and considered wider messaging around Case for Change. We worked closely with the public affairs team to support messaging around our CCEI session appearances, and to support the Board member recruitment efforts.
29. The launch of the consultation on the proposed new National Park has attracted media and stakeholder attention. We will continue to monitor and manage engagement from interested groups as the consultation process and events continue.

### Communities are Resilient to Climate Change

30. Following the soft launch of the Flood Warning Information Services in July, our #BeFloodReady mini campaign week in October provided a platform to encourage people to take steps to prepare for winter flooding. Strong attendance from broadcasters at a media opportunity with our Hydrometry and Telemetry teams led to widespread coverage across ITV, BBC and Global Radio stations throughout the launch day; we also saw strong engagement on social media and support from the Met Office and WG. Professional incident response partners praised the campaign as a “good example of public engagement and balanced risk awareness and an

example for others to follow". A full evaluation of the campaign and impacts on sign-up will be done in due course.

31. As part of efforts to work more closely with broadcasters to inform how they communicate flood risk, the Communications and National Flood Risk Services teams delivered a briefing session to BBC and S4C weather presenters and journalists at the BBC's headquarters. The broadcasters committed to highlighting our services in their reporting, and our Communications team agreed to work more closely with them to refine messaging to viewers and listeners during the build up to flood events.
32. September also saw the culmination of preparations to officially mark the opening of the Ammanford Flood Risk Management Scheme. We worked closely with WG and our Projects Delivery team to coordinate the opening and the attendance of the Prif Weinidog and Deputy First Minister, ensuring the messages in speeches and media interviews balanced the role NRW plays in making communities more resilient to climate change, and the role everyone has to know their risk.
33. Flood Risk Management enforcement activity has also been in the spotlight over this period, as we highlighted how action taken in respect of unpermitted works has helped to reduce flood risk and limit the potential for detrimental impacts on the environment.

### **Pollution is Minimised**

34. Producers at *Y Byd ar Bedwar* have approached NRW seeking to work with us on a programme focused on waste, to include a positive focus on our regulatory role in tackling waste crime. Filming has taken place throughout October with the programme broadcast on 4 November.
35. While odour reports have reduced significantly, our partnership work to respond to issues at Withyhedge Landfill has continued over this period. We are represented on the Incident Management Group and work with partners to ensure communication plans are reviewed and community groups are updated as our regulatory response progresses.

### **Nature is recovering**

36. Our regular drumbeat of communication around our nature recovery and species restoration work continues to gather media coverage. The success of our captive breeding programme to rear thousands of pearl mussels was of particular interest to media, and we continue to build a strong bank of case studies for the Nature Networks Fund.
37. The report on salmon and sea trout stocks triggered the expected negative response from angling communities on social media. We plan to highlight the work we do to support salmon restoration on our rivers as part of our communications

during Nature COP16, as this can often get overlooked in the noise around salmon population numbers.

38. The progress of our LIFE projects and peatland restoration has attracted positive media interest over this period. LIFE Quake's work on Crymlyn Bog was highlighted by Iolo Williams and secured coverage across BBC Wales, and the success of the National Peatland Action Plan, and its contribution to WG peatland restoration targets, was also highlighted in communications around work being completed a year ahead of schedule.

## Forward Look

Monday 25 / Tuesday 26 November – Royal Welsh Winter Fair

Thursday 5 December – Finance Committee

Tuesday 10 December – People and Customer Committee

Wednesday 11 December – Board Update Call

Friday 13 December – Audit and Risk Assurance Committee

## NRW Board Paper

<b>Date of meeting:</b>	21 <sup>st</sup> November 2024
<b>Title of Paper:</b>	Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC) Update for Board
<b>Paper Reference:</b>	24-11-B09
<b>Paper sponsored by:</b>	Kath Palmer, Chair of ARAC
<b>Paper prepared by:</b>	Board Secretariat
<b>Paper presented by:</b>	Kath Palmer, Chair of ARAC
<b>Purpose of the paper</b>	Information
<b>Summary</b>	To provide an update to the Board in respect of 7 October 2024 ARAC meeting.

## Background

1. This update for the Board is in respect 7 October 2024 Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC) meeting.

## Update

### Audit Wales

2. Audit Wales provided an update on key matters of their audit of the Annual Report and Accounts (ARA) 2023-24.

### Annual Report and Accounts 2023-24

3. An update was provided on key matters for the ARA. ARAC welcomed the ARA and suggestions were made prior to submission to Board. ARAC were content for the Accounting Officer and the Chair of ARAC to sign the letter of representation. They were also content to give assurance to the Accounting Officer to sign the accounts, and to be taken to the Board for approval.



4. ARAC thanked everyone for their work, and the exceptional joint working between the Finance team and Audit Wales.

## NRW Board Paper

<b>Date of meeting:</b>	20 <sup>th</sup> November 2024
<b>Title of paper:</b>	Evidence Advisory Committee (EAC) Overview for Board
<b>Paper reference:</b>	24-11-B10
<b>Paper sponsored by:</b>	Steve Ormerod, EAC Chair
<b>Paper prepared by:</b>	Board Secretariat
<b>Paper presented by:</b>	Steve Ormerod, EAC Chair
<b>Purpose of the paper:</b>	To provide an update on the Evidence Advisory Committee (EAC) meeting on 22 <sup>nd</sup> October 2024

## Background

1. This summary provides an update on matters that in the opinion of the Evidence Advisory Committee (EAC) Chair should be brought to the attention of the whole Board following the last EAC meeting which was held on 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2024.
2. For further detail, all Board members can access the agendas, papers, and minutes of committees via the Diligent portal.

## Update

### Action Taken/Progress Made Since Previous Meetings

3. The Committee provided feedback on the meetings including suggestions for items, the format of the meetings and the inclusion of external presenters.

### NRW's Marine Evidence Programme

4. How NRW's Marine team identified and prioritised evidence needs was presented including the 2025-26 high priority needs, delivery mechanisms and a live example of tidal turbine licenses. The question 'how much evidence is enough?' was posed to the Committee.
5. The discussion highlighted the issues with monitoring Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), the balance between development pressures and restoration, the importance of having

clear advice, the precautionary principle and proportionality, and the collaborative approach to many of the projects.

#### Welsh Government's Draft Sustainable Investment Principles and What It Means for NRW

6. The sustainable investment principles were presented including the wider context, assessment of NRW's appetite for involvement in green finance, the challenges and opportunities of evidencing change, Wales's legislative background and NRW's potential role regarding green finance.
7. The Committee discussed the risks and opportunities of green finance and offered advice on NRW's potential regulatory role.

#### Evidence Strategy

8. EAC were presented with the Evidence Strategy and were asked for advice on how NRW could test its success. The members discussed if it was bold enough in its statements and how EAC linked into it.
9. Suggestions for its success included having a theory of change or implementation plan, key performance indicators (KPIs), specific actions and behavioural changes across the whole of the organisation, including areas that traditionally did not collect evidence.

#### State of Natural Resources Report (SoNaRR) 2025: Key evidence highlights for consideration in the interim report and how to deliver impact via the final report.

10. The structure and content of the SoNaRR 2025 was presented along with an overview of NRW Board engagement and examples of messages around key challenges.
11. EAC suggested some amendments including clarity on why the individual areas were important, the positive impacts of policy changes, the inclusion of wellbeing and the focus on pollutants.
12. The Committee also discussed the inclusion of positive messages in order to drive change. The Committee were provided with an overview of the communication messages for the Interim Report, and the aim would be for the Report to inspire people to change.

#### Evidence Committee Governance

13. The forward look was discussed and items were suggested for inclusion.

## NRW Board Paper

<b>Date of meeting:</b>	20 <sup>th</sup> November 2024
<b>Title of Paper:</b>	Flood Risk Management Board Report
<b>Paper Reference:</b>	24-11-B11
<b>Paper sponsored by:</b>	Prof Peter Fox, Chair of the Flood Risk Management Committee (FRMC)
<b>Paper prepared by:</b>	Board Secretariat
<b>Paper presented by:</b>	Prof Peter Fox, Chair of the Flood Risk Management Committee (FRMC)
<b>Purpose of the paper</b>	Information
<b>Summary</b>	To provide an update on the Flood Risk Management Committee (FRMC) meeting on 3 <sup>rd</sup> October 2024

## Background

1. This summary provides an update on matters that in the opinion of the Flood Risk Management Committee (FRMC) Chair should be brought to the attention of the whole Board following the last FRMC meeting which was held on 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2024.
2. For further detail, all Board members can access the agendas, papers, and minutes of committees via the Diligent portal.

## Update

### National infrastructure Commission Wales (NICW)

3. Representatives from the National Infrastructure Commission Wales (NICW) presented on the Building Resilience to Flooding in Wales by 2050 Report, including the vision for flood risk management in 2050 and the recommendations and future flooding framework for Wales.
4. FRMC welcomed the Report and the recommendations. The development of catchment management and integrated approaches including the challenges with traditional definitions for capital, long-term investment and competing interests was discussed, along with the recommendation of a Water Commissioner.

### How can we increase the impact of FRMC?

5. The strategic discussion included areas such as the opportunity to have a different approach to working with stakeholders, advocating for holistic and integrated approaches, improving an evidence base for nature-based solutions, and advocating for catchment management.
6. The challenges with developing the Committee were outlined and it was acknowledged that the role of FRMC would need to be within the capacity and remit of the Board members and where the Committee could best add value.
7. Linking the forward look to the NICW recommendations and considering how FRMC could maximise its contribution to the Corporate Plan were suggested, along with an evidence session on a catchment area.

### Flood Risk Management Update Report

8. An update report that highlighted key areas of work was presented to FRMC. This included the flood outlook, the NICW review of flooding and the new Flood Warning Information Service (FWIS) for Wales. Updates were also provided on the Ammanford Flood Alleviation Scheme, reservoir safety, the Flood Taskforce, Technical Advice Note (TAN)15 and the Case for Change.
9. The Committee discussed the TAN15, the areas of work for the Flood Task Force and the impacts of the Case for Change.

### Flood Risk Management Capital Programme Update

10. An overview of the Flood Capital Programme was provided including the budget, the progress against the Local Partnerships Review, and the risks and milestones of the Programme and Projects. The FWIS had gone live in July and would move from a project to business as usual in October.
11. The Chair noted his planned visit to Foryd Bay. The implications of the challenging increases in costs and maximising natural flood management was discussed.

### Any Other Business

12. A letter that had been received from the Dysynni Internal Drainage District members was discussed. The Head of Operations, North Wales would reply to the letter.
13. The Committee noted the Internal Audit Report that had been sent for information only.

## NRW Board Paper

<b>Date of meeting:</b>	21 November 2024
<b>Title of Paper:</b>	Land Estate Committee (LEC) Overview
<b>Paper Reference:</b>	24-11-B14
<b>Paper sponsored by:</b>	Prof. Calvin Jones, LEC Chair
<b>Paper presented by:</b>	Prof. Calvin Jones, LEC Chair
<b>Purpose of the paper</b>	For Information
<b>Summary</b>	To provide an overview of the 9 <sup>th</sup> October LEC meeting.

### Background

1. This summary provides an update on matters that in the opinion of the Land Estate Committee (LEC) Chair should be brought to the attention of the whole Board following the last EAC meeting which was held on 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2024.
2. For further detail, all Board members can access the agendas, papers, and minutes of committees via the Diligent portal.

### Peat: Impacts on the Land in Our Care

3. The paper summarising the changes in policy around peatland was highlighted along with NRW's position and the Planning team's advice that all planning applications for wind farms should avoid peat soil. The Committee welcomed the debate on the tension between renewable energy and peatland and recognised that both would be needed to tackle the Climate and Nature Emergencies. Trydan Gwyrdd Cymru, a holistic valuation framework, the importance of peatland and the creation of novel landscapes were discussed.

### Forward Look

4. The Committee discussed having a joint Flood Risk Management Committee (FRMC) and LEC meeting to discuss items in an integrated way as there was cross over.

## NRW Board Paper

<b>Date of meeting:</b>	21 <sup>st</sup> November 2024
<b>Title of Paper:</b>	Protected Areas Committee (PrAC) Update for Board
<b>Paper Reference:</b>	24-11-B12
<b>Paper sponsored by:</b>	Dr Rosie Plummer, Chair of PrAC
<b>Paper prepared by:</b>	Board Secretariat
<b>Paper presented by:</b>	Dr Rosie Plummer, Chair of PrAC
<b>Purpose of the paper</b>	Information
<b>Summary</b>	This summary provides an update on matters following PrAC meetings which were held on 28 June 2024 and 11 July 2024.

### Background

1. This summary provides an update on matters that in the opinion of the Protected Areas Committee (PrAC) Chair should be brought to the attention of the whole Board following the latest PrAC meetings, which were held on 28 June and 11 July 2024.
2. For further detail all Board members can access the agendas, papers, and minutes of committees via the Diligent portal.

### Safle Options

3. PrAC were provided with an update on Safle and a demonstration of the data system. PrAC acknowledged the critical importance of Safle, discussed how its future potential and the importance of securing resource to enable its development. Reassurance was provided that the Executive Director of Evidence, Policy and Permitting (EPP) had discussed the inclusion of Safle on the ICT heat map.

### Condition of Protected Sites – Land in Our Care (LIOC)

4. PrAC were presented with the Strategy for Nature on LIOC, the condition status of NRW managed and partner managed National Nature Reserves (NNR's) and the

condition status of SSSI on the Welsh Government Woodland Estate (WGWE). Concerns were raised regarding the evidence and extent of unknown condition of NNRs and woodland. PrAC discussed skills and funding to monitor the sites adequately.

## **Ongoing actions relating to Biodiversity from Internal Audit Reports**

5. PrAC were provided with an update on the ongoing actions relating to Biodiversity from Internal Audit (IA) Reports, which were progressing well. PrAC discussed the actions from the IA reports. The deadlines for these actions were tight and it was suggested that the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC) of the likelihood of not meeting the action deadlines.
6. PrAC recognised the pressure NRW were under and noted risks were being carried. This would be brought to the attention of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC) in their December meeting.

## **Designated Landscapes Update**

7. PrAC were provided with an update on the proposed National Park including the timeline, list of events for the consultation and the candidate area. PrAC discussed the training required for new Board members and noted that three PrAC members' terms as Board members would be ending in 2025. Attendance by other board members at a consultation event would support understanding for future decision-making.

## **Update on the Protected Sites Programme**

8. PrAC were presented with an update on the Ministerial Biodiversity Deep Dive and the key deliverables of the Business Plan 2024-25 commitment. PrAC discussed the update and OECMs. A further discussion on the priorities from the SSSI review would be brought to a future PrAC meeting.

## **Marine Conservation Zones**

9. PrAC noted the written update on the Marine Conservation Zones.

## **Protected Sites Land Management Agreements for 2024-25 Update**

10. PrAC noted the written update on the Protected Sites Land Management Agreements for 2024-25.

## **PrAC Governance**

11. PrAC discussed and agreed the Forward Look.



## NRW Board Paper

<b>Date of meeting:</b>	21 <sup>st</sup> November 2024
<b>Title of Paper:</b>	Wales Land Management Forum (WLMF) Update
<b>Paper Reference:</b>	24-11-B13
<b>Paper sponsored by:</b>	Professor Rhys Jones, WLMF Chair
<b>Paper prepared by:</b>	Bronwen Martin, Specialist Advisor: Agriculture
<b>Paper presented by:</b>	Professor Rhys Jones, WLMF Chair
<b>Purpose of the paper</b>	Information

## Wales Land Management Forum (WLMF)

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

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

## Update

### 9<sup>th</sup> September 2024 meeting

2. The most recent WLMF meeting was held on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> September 2024. This meeting was held in-person in Welsh Government Office, Aberystwyth. The agenda included a presentation on Natur am Byth from John Clark, NRW and a presentation on Designated Landscapes Programme from Keith Davies, NRW. All WLMF members also had the opportunity to ask about NRW Updates and also share updates from their own organisations.
3. The next WLMF meeting is scheduled for Monday 9<sup>th</sup> December and will likely have a 'forestry' theme.
4. Once the meeting minutes have been reviewed and formally agreed by members, they are published on the WLMF page on the NRW website.

## WLMF Sub Group on Agricultural Pollution

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

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

## Update

### 16<sup>th</sup> September 2024 meeting

6. The WLMF Sub Group meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> September had a 'sheep dip' theme. This was a joint meeting with members of the Wales Water Management Forum and Wales Fisheries Forum. The substantive agenda items included the following:
  - Gwaredu Scab / Welsh National Sheep Scab Eradication Programme - John Griffiths and Dr Neil Patton, Coleg Sir Gar joined the meeting to provide an update on the programme. The aims and objectives of the project awarded to Coleg Sir Gar by Welsh Government, are to improve animal health and welfare standards by supporting industry to eradicate Sheep Scab from Wales.
  - Reducing risks to water quality from waste sheep dip - Alwyn Roberts, Dwr Cymru Welsh Water joined the meeting to provide a presentation from a water company perspective. Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water have taken a proactive approach to this challenge by working with National Sheep Association (NSA) Cymru to establish a Sheep Industry Stakeholder Group to raise awareness of the risks associated with sheep dipping practices and disposal of the waste in drinking water catchments. Furthermore, they have commissioned Ricardo AEA Ltd environmental consultants to undertake research into the current disposal options and how future disposal pathways could be developed in Wales.
  - NRW Update: diazinon/sheep dip – Mark Charlesworth, NRW discussed the challenges and issues around diazinon from the perspective of the regulator.
  - The Water Resources (Control of Agricultural Pollution) (Wales) Regulations 2021: 4-year review – Andrew Chambers and Matt Walters, Welsh Government gave a verbal update on the 4-year review process and introduced the Independent Chair, Dr Susannah Bolton.

### 21<sup>st</sup> October 2024 Meeting

7. The most recent meeting was held on Monday 21<sup>st</sup> October 2024. This meeting included a presentation and update regarding the work and progress of the NRW Control of Agricultural Pollution Team. Dr Susannah Bolton also led a substantial group discussion around The Water Resources (Control of Agricultural Pollution) (Wales) Regulations 2021 4-year review process.

8. The next WLMF Sub Group meeting will be held on Monday 18<sup>th</sup> November 2024.
9. Once the meeting minutes have been reviewed and formally agreed by members, they are published on the WLMF Sub Group page on the NRW website.

## NRW Forum Review

10. You may be aware that NRW has initiated a review of forums and how we engage with our stakeholders. It is important to NRW that the experience of our valued forum/working group members form part of this review. A stakeholder survey was developed to inform the review and was launched on Citizen Space on 11<sup>th</sup> September 2024 and closed on 14<sup>th</sup> October 2024.
11. Members of the following forums and working groups were invited to participate in the survey:
  - Wales Land Management Forum (WLMF)
  - WLMF Sub Group on Agricultural Pollution
  - Forestry Regional Advisory Committee (RAC)
  - National Access Forum for Wales (NAFW)
  - Wales Water Management Forum (WWMF)
  - Wales Fisheries Forum (WFF)
  - Local Fishery Groups
  - Biodiversity & Ecosystem Resilience Forum (a.k.a. the WEL Forum)
  - Wales Better River Quality Taskforce
12. Internal discussions are ongoing regarding capacity and resources to evaluate the feedback. The survey included a caveat that we may not conduct the analysis until Autumn/Winter.

# NRW Board Paper

<b>Date of meeting:</b>	21 November 2024
<b>Title of Paper:</b>	Finance Performance Report
<b>Paper Reference:</b>	24-11-B17
<b>Paper sponsored by:</b>	Rachael Cunningham, Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Services
<b>Paper prepared by:</b>	Rob Bell, Head of Finance; Mark Collins, Business Finance Manager
<b>Paper presented by:</b>	Rob Bell, Head of Finance
<b>Purpose of the paper:</b>	Approval (change in forecast) / Discussion (Financial Performance)
<b>Summary</b>	<p>To approve:</p> <p>Change in the latest forecast from £269.0m to a forecasted £272.9m.</p> <p>To scrutinise:</p> <p>Financial performance to the end of September 2024.</p>

## Background

1. The Finance Performance report provides detail on progress across the different types of income, expenditure, and programmes. Annex 1 summarises the key messages in respect of:

- Change in budget forecast compared to the previous approved forecast (July).
- Performance to the end of September 2024.

## Risks and opportunities

2. We hold a risk in the Finance and Corporate Services Risk Register for 'in year spend'. This also links to the strategic risk "Failure to achieve financial stability". For this financial year, risks of overspend have been mitigated through actions taken by the Executive Team and additional funding from Welsh Government.

3. The wider implications are:

- (a) **Finance:** This report is about the financial performance of NRW. We hold a risk within the Finance and Corporate Services Directorate Risk Register.
- (b) **Wellbeing of Future Generations Act (WBFGA):** Every component of the budget contributes to one or many of our Wellbeing Objectives.

## Next Steps

- 4. Executive Team will continue to monitor the principal risks within the budget.
- 5. This report is produced every two months for the Board and Executive Team.

## Recommendation

- 6. Board to approve changes to the latest forecast, from £269.0m to £272.9m.
- 7. Board to scrutinise financial performance to the end of September 2024.

## Index of Annexes

Annex 1 – Financial Performance Report



**NRW Board– 21<sup>st</sup> November 2024**

**Financial Performance Report – September 2024**

# Content and Key Messages

## Update will cover:

1. Update on the latest forecast changes as at September 2024 compared to the opening budget.

2. Financial Performance as at September 2024.

3. Update on the plan to balance in year budgetary pressures.

4. Endorse change in forecast since the last revised forecast was agreed - from £269.0m to £272.9m.

5. An update on the potential risks & opportunities.

## Messages:

1. The overall forecast has increased by £3.9m, due to changes in charges (£0.4m), commercial (£2.7m) and Grant in Aid (£0.8m) income forecasts. The increase in charge income is mainly in relation to EPR applications. The commercial element reflects an increase in the timber income forecast of £2.1m, along with the recognition of developer income previously deferred for work within Brechfa forest (£0.3m) and Forest holiday lease income (£0.2m). The revised timber forecast will remove the reliance on an additional £2m Grant in Aid from WG, agreed at the start of the year. The GiA increase reflects the additional pay award support (£1.5m) along with additional WG grant income for National Forest (£0.4m) & Waste Reform (£0.8m). These are offset by the £2m WG timber income guarantee no longer being required, as mentioned above.

2. Expenditure at the end of September equates to £105m against a planned spend of £106.9m, an underspend to date of £1.9m (1.8%). This is mainly due to underspend on non staff costs (£0.6m) and capital projects (£0.9m). The non staff element is predominantly linked to Land Stewardship activities across Operations (£0.3m) and EPP (£0.1m) and Facilities & Fleet Management costs within Finance & Corporate Services (£0.2m). We do expect to use these budgets in full. In respect to capital, the Flood and Water Resources programmes are under spent by £0.5m and £0.1m respectively. It is expected that some Water Resources funding will be returned. The income position is ahead of profile by £0.4m (0.4%). Following the timber income reforecast, income received is £0.3m ahead of profile. Retainable wind energy is also ahead of profile by £0.3m, following revised prior year royalty calculations on the Cefn Croes wind farm.

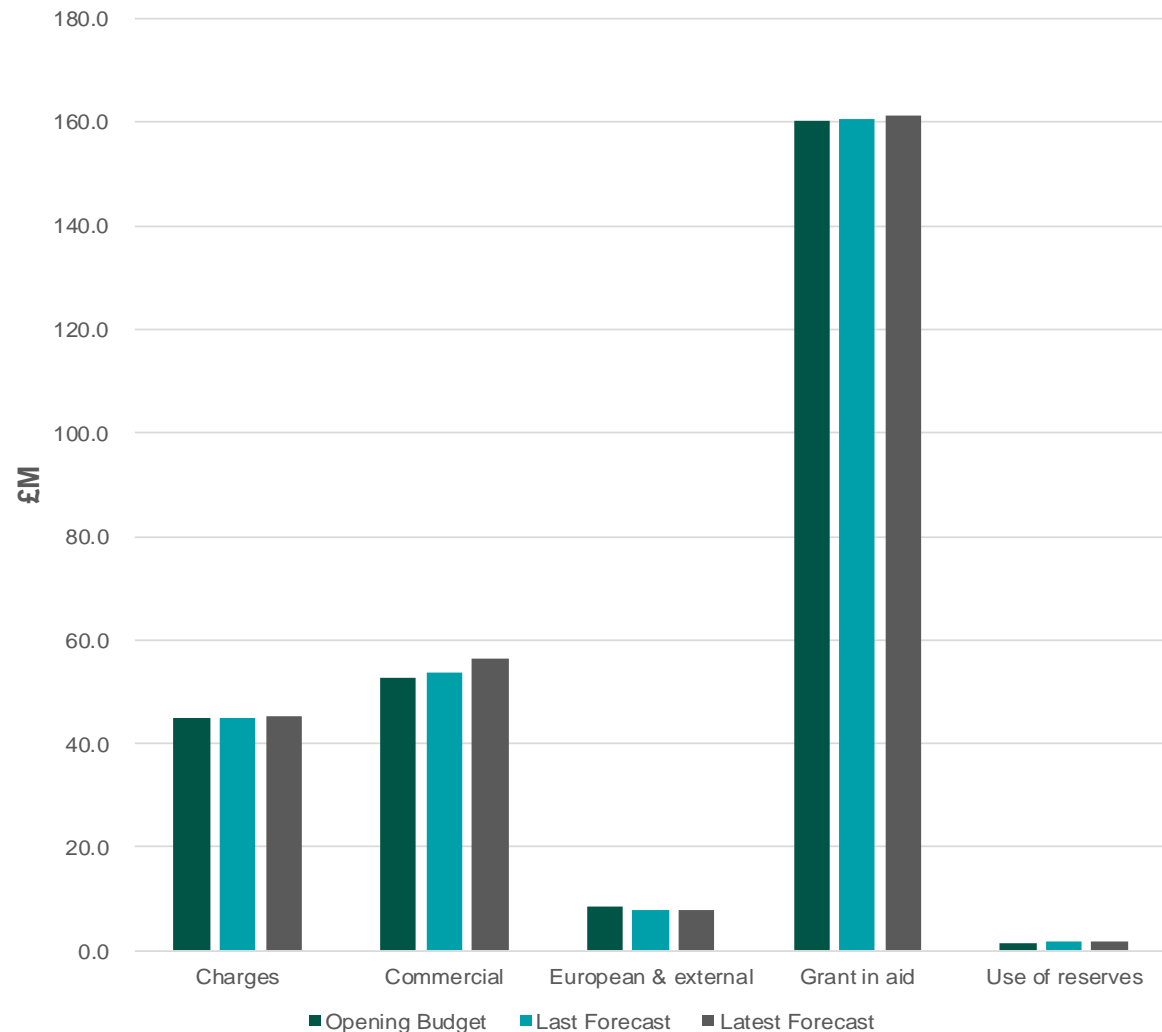
3. We set out the contingencies and over-programming further on in the report. There are several contingencies - pay award, general (for potential redundancies), precautionary (for corporate costs recharge being re-forecasted). We also hold over-programming allocations - central (prudently set at £1m, previous years set at £3m+) and in the main programmes (Flood, NaCE and NRW2030). These have reduced considerably since the start of the year and we currently only hold over programming within the NaCE programme which totals £0.3m. NRW2030 and Water Resources have surplus balances (£0.2m & £0.6m respectively) with Flood being in balance. We have taken into consideration the lessons learnt from the Local Partnerships review in managing over-programming within programmes - though we have acknowledged there is an increased risk of underspend as a result. The budget for Case for Change (CFC) project has been transferred to CSD (£0.5m) from the central contingency budget. The pay and central contingency budgets are being consolidated and now total £1.8m which will be primarily used to meet any additional CFC costs.

4. The main risks and opportunities to our budget this year currently are:  
 (Risk) - The previously identified risk around achievement of the salary budget savings target has been mitigated (see 5 below).  
 (Risk) - IR35, if liability is accepted, we are seeking an agreement to repay WG over a number of years as mitigation.  
 (Risk) - Ty Cambria exit strategy, the position is progressing, with new legal representation acting on our behalf. There are a number of options, but given the complexity, there is a risk that it may not be resolved until next financial year, potentially putting further pressure on our financial position.  
 (Risk) - Pressure on electricity and maintenance costs within Operations, primarily linked to flood assets and pumping stations. The current estimate suggests a pressure of £0.4m with limited options to fund the shortfall within the Flood Business Group. This is likely to be considered by PRG for being put forward for additional budgetary support.  
 (Risk / Opportunity) - Risks of overspend should now be fully mitigated. Given the further reduction in over programming and coupled with the Case for Change impact, there is probably a greater risk of under spend than over, within the key programmes.  
 (Opportunity) - WG are also in discussion with UK government about funding for the additional Civil Service Pension scheme costs this year, which we have absorbed into our budget (£1.3m). If that is successful, it's possible that could be allocated to us.  
 (Opportunity) - A paper will be considered by the Executive Team this financial year which could increase our timber income further.  
 (Opportunity) - We have submitted proposals to WG on the use of a £7m capital fund, but await their response as they are considering how to help fund any IR35 liability.

Whilst there are a number of significant variables that need to be managed - at this stage, we do not need to take any further actions other than we have indicated in this report (for e.g. recruitment control, liaison with WG over IR35 and determining the Ty Cambria exit strategy).

5. The opening staff budget deficit stood at £9.3m. Current projections show an expected deficit of £1.4m against the £9.3m target at year end, which we have funded from the NRW contingency budget. The pay and general contingency budgets are being consolidated and now stand at £1.8m. Following the additional WG funding (£1.5m) towards this years pay award, we now have a budget equivalent to 5%.

## Financial Performance – Income Forecast



### Charges

Following a review of charge income, it has increased by £0.4m, mainly due to more demand for applications than expected.

### Commercial

Commercial income has increased by £2.7m, predominately due to the revised timber income forecast (£2.1m), along with the recognition of developer income previously deferred for work within Brechfa Forest (£0.3m) and Forest Holiday lease income (£0.2m).

### European & Other External

European & external income has increased by £0.1m due to additional Natural Flood Management funding from WG (£0.5m), which is offset by a reduction in the LiFE project programme (£0.4m). This reduction will be deferred for use on the LiFE programme in future years.

### Grant in Aid / WG Grants

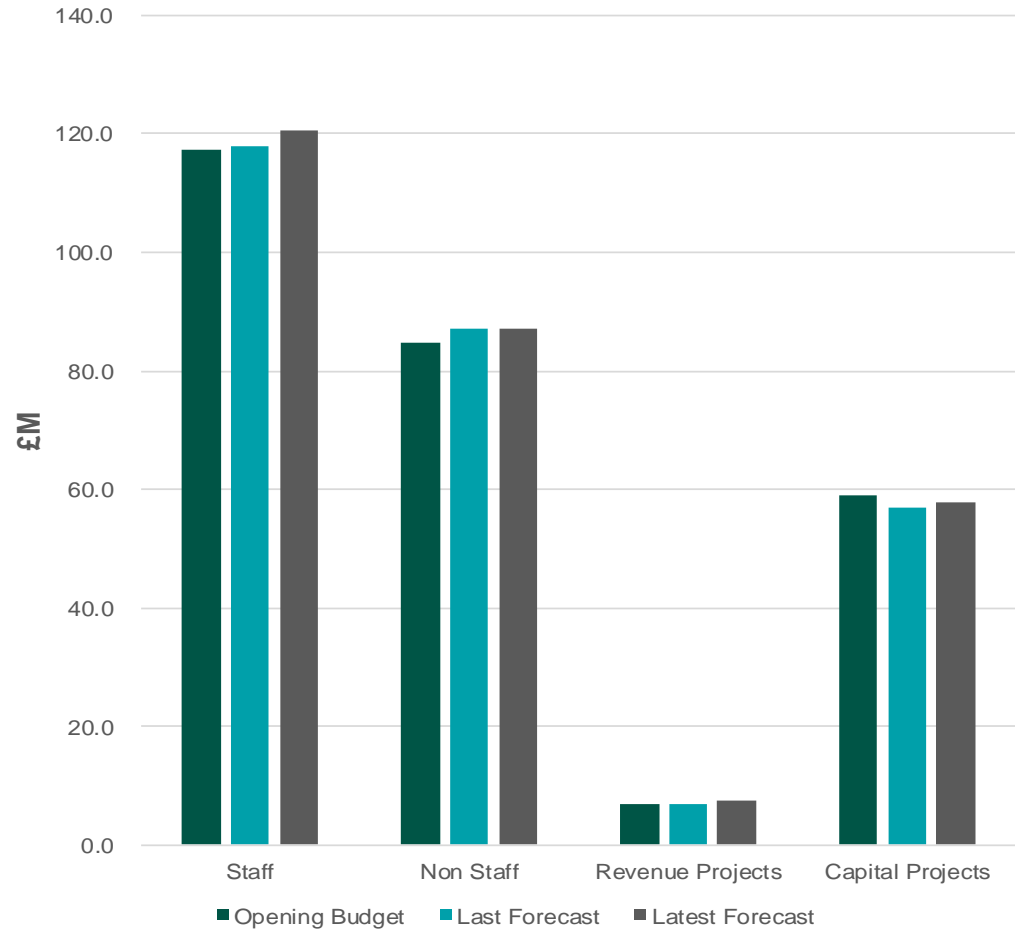
Overall, Grant in Aid has increased by £0.8m. Following the revised timber income forecast, we have removed the additional £2m WG support, which is offset by the contribution of £1.5m towards the pay award. We have also received additional funding for National Forest Enhancement (NaCE Programme) and Waste Reform grants of £0.4m & £0.8m respectively.

### Use of Reserves

The use of reserves have reduced by £0.1m. Following the review undertaken by Regulation Business Management Team of income performance the use of reserves has reduced by £0.4m. This is offset by additional capital charges to the abstraction SUC.



# Financial Performance – Expenditure Forecast



## Staff

Staff budgets have increased by £2.7m, primarily due to the additional contribution of £1.5m from WG towards the pay award, along with an allocation of £1.4m from the non staff contingency budget to fund the forecasted shortfall against the £9.3m trajectory savings target.

## Non Staff

Overall non staff budgets have reduced by £0.2m. We have received additional WG grant funding of £0.7m for Waste Reform along with £0.3m of developer funding for work within the Brechfa Forest. These have been offset by a £1.9m reduction within the NRW contingency budget; £1.4m to fund the forecasted shortfall against the £9.3m trajectory savings target (staff costs) and £0.5m for the Case for Change project (revenue projects).

## Revenue Projects

Revenue project budgets have increased by £0.7m, mainly due to additional NaCE Programme funding for National Forest Enhancement (£0.4m) and the setting up of the Case for Change project within CSD (£0.5m). These are offset by a reduction in the LiFE programme of £0.2m.

## Capital Projects

Capital project costs have increased by £0.6m, mainly due to additional WG grant funding for Waste Reform (£0.1m) and Natural Flood Management (£0.5m), along with an increase to the Water Resources Programme (£0.2m). These are offset by a reduction in the LiFE Programme (£0.2m), which will be available for use in future years.

## Financial Performance - Income

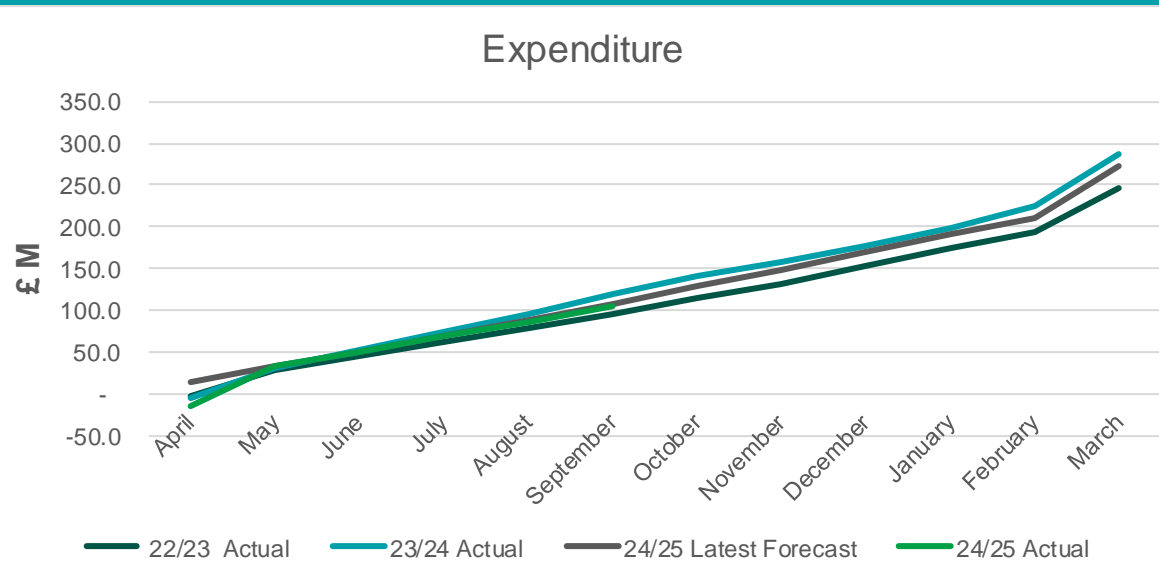
INCOME	Actual	Approved Forecast	Variance	Approved Forecast	Remaining Budget	Commentary
by Account Type	YTD £m	YTD £m	YTD £m	FY £m	FY %	
Charges	32.2	32.1	0.1	45.4	29%	Following a re-forecast by the Regulation Business Management Team the charge income forecast has increased by £0.4m, with most of the increase attributable to EPR application income. The increased income will reduce the use of reserves of the corresponding charge regimes, mostly decreasing the deficit positions. The Regulation Management Business Team maintain a long-term forecast of each charging regime, enabling them to plan income and expenditure over the long term. Following the update, charge income is just £0.1m ahead of profile.
Commercial	30.6	30.1	0.5	56.4	46%	An increase to the timber sales forecast from £31m to £33.1m was recently approved by the joint Land Stewardship Commercial Business Group. As the timber programme was based on expenditure of £33m underwritten by the Welsh Government, this reforecast means that we no longer require the additional Welsh Government funding. The revised forecast provides a small surplus of £0.1m which following discussion with Land Stewardship, will be used within Operations budgets. Following the re-forecast, timber income is £0.3m ahead of profile and the forecast will continue to be monitored by the Commercial Team. Retainable wind energy is also ahead of profile by £0.3m, following revised prior year royalty calculations on the Cefn Croes wind farm.
European & external	2.6	2.8	-0.2	7.9	68%	Income received is broadly in line with the forecasted position, with a slight under recovery on WG capital grants, outside
Grant in Aid	37.7	37.7	-0.0	161.4	77%	Income received in line with profile.
Use of Reserves	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.8	100%	The movement in reserves is the current estimate of the funds we will need to use from deferred and accrued income accounts to cover the gap between charge income and expenditure on the various regimes. This will be monitored and reviewed throughout the year in conjunction with the Regulatory Business Management Team.
<b>TOTAL: NRW</b>	<b>103.0</b>	<b>102.6</b>	<b>0.4</b>	<b>272.9</b>	<b>62%</b>	

## Financial Performance - Expenditure

EXPENDITURE	Actual	Approved Forecast	Variance	Approved Forecast	Remaining Budget	Commentary
by Account Type	YTD	YTD	YTD	FY	FY	
	£m	£m	£m	£m	%	
Staff	55.5	55.6	0.2	120.6	54%	<p>The position at the end of September shows an under spend of £0.2m linked to other staff costs, with the largest variance being training costs within the CSD Directorate.</p> <p>Due to the current recruitment controls we have generated a further £1.2m savings at the end of September on core funded posts, which has been used to offset the opening staff budget deficit. Current projections show an expected deficit of £1.4m against the £9.3m target at year end. In light of this we have allocated the shortfall from the contingencies budget and will continue to monitor the position for the remainder of the year.</p> <p>The vacancy rate now stands at 13% increasing by 2% from that reported in July.</p>
Non Staff	28.6	29.2	0.6	87.0	67%	<p>The current underspend of £0.6m is predominantly linked to Land Stewardship activities across Operations (£0.3m) and EPP (£0.1m) and Facilities &amp; Fleet Management costs within Finance &amp; Corporate Services (£0.2m). The expectation is to utilise the full year budget.</p> <p>Significant variances will be continually assessed, with profiles amended as appropriate.</p>
Revenue Projects	1.9	2.2	0.3	7.5	75%	<p>The current variance reflects under spend within the Water Resources and Reservoir Compliance programmes and Case for Change projects. All are anticipated to utilise the full year allocation.</p> <p>The NRW2030 programme has 90% of the full year budget to be utilised. The programme manager is to hold discussions with the various project leads to determine whether any budget will be returned.</p>
Capital Projects	19.0	19.9	0.9	57.7	67%	<p>The current variance is predominantly linked to the Flood and Water Resources programmes which are £0.5m and £0.1m under spent respectively. Over programming across the main programmes has reduced considerable from the opening position with Flood over-programming being removed, NRW 2030 and Water Resources are showing positive balances of £0.2m &amp; £0.6m respectively along with overprogramming of £0.3m within NaCE (this may increase slightly as we plan to return part of the Peatlands sub programme funding to WG). However, with over programming being far lower/removed within programmes, should any projects be delayed due to weather/contractor availability etc, we are likely to see an underspend at year end.</p>
<b>TOTAL: NRW</b>	<b>105.0</b>	<b>106.9</b>	<b>1.9</b>	<b>272.9</b>	<b>62%</b>	

## Financial Performance – Expenditure Trends

### EXPENDITURE TRENDS



#### Commentary:

Expenditure at the end of September was £105.0m, which is less than that incurred at the same point last financial year, where we incurred £120.5m.

The forecast for this year stands at £272.9m, £15.2m less than last financial year, primarily due to higher flood capital funding (£11m) and the payment to the EAPF pensions fund (£7m). With the level of over-programming reduced, there is a greater level of risk of under-spend in ring fenced programmes.

# Trajectory Financial Performance

Trajectory Financial Performance - as at the end of September					
Directorate	Expenditure variance	Turnover variance	Net variance	Core / Project Split	
	£000's	£000's	£000's	Core £000's	Projects £000's
Communications, Customer and Commercial	93	-38	55	23	32
Corporate Strategy and Development	36	-14	22	-29	51
Evidence, Policy and Permitting	409	-118	291	184	107
Finance and Corporate Services	148	-40	108	103	5
Operations	920	-212	707	338	369
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,606</b>	<b>-423</b>	<b>1,184</b>	<b>620</b>	<b>564</b>
Commentary					
<p>Recruitment controls continue to have a positive budgetary impact.</p> <p>Total core savings at the end of September were £3.7m. Based on current level of vacancies we should be able to realise circa £7.0m of savings for this financial year (including savings achieved to date) which is net of savings related to charge funded vacancies.</p> <p>A further £1.0m of savings is forecasted by keeping recruitment controls and the implementation of the Case for Change proposals. This leaves a balance of £1.4m against the £9.3m target, which we have funded from the NRW contingency budget. The pay and general contingency budgets have been consolidated and now total £1.8m - budget for the Case for Change.</p> <p>Following the additional WG funding (£1.5m) towards this years pay award, we now have a budget equivalent to 5%.</p> <p>As previously noted CSD element of the table is showing a negative saving as staff in the flexible resource pool staff not currently on assignment are costed to that directorate.</p>					

## Financial Performance – Revenue Projects

Revenue Projects by Programme	Actual YTD £m	Approved Forecast YTD £m	Variance YTD £m	Approved Forecast FY £m	Remaining Budget FY %	Commentary
External Funded	1.3	1.2	0.0	3.0	57%	Of the initial six projects, two have recently finished, with a further two having relatively small budgets, leaving Dee LIFE and Natur am Byth with respective budgets of £0.2m and £0.8m left to be utilised by the end of the year.
Internal Funded	0.3	0.4	0.2	1.5	81%	The current variance reflects underspend within the Water Resources Programme, Reservoir Compliance and Case for Change projects. All are anticipated to utilise the full year allocation.
NaCE	0.2	0.3	0.1	1.4	85%	Whilst the current costs are broadly in line to forecast, with 85% left to be utilised by the end of the financial year, the programme will be constantly monitored. Due to the ring fenced nature of the funding, any underspend will be returned to WG.
NRW 2030	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.9	90%	NRW 2030 budgets across core and revenue projects now stand at £1.4m. There has been a reduction to the Deloitte forecast as the whole contract is now considered to be no more than £1m across the revenue and capital programme. However, further discussions are being held with Deloitte to determine the likely revenue/capital split. Whilst spend at the end of September is in-line to budget, there is still 90% of the full year budget to be utilised. The programme manager is to hold discussions with the various project leads to determine whether any budget will be returned.
Grants	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.8	96%	Significantly smaller programme than last year with only two projects; Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and National Trails. All of which will be incurred by March 2025.
<b>TOTAL: NRW</b>	<b>1.9</b>	<b>2.2</b>	<b>0.3</b>	<b>7.5</b>	<b>75%</b>	

## Financial Performance – Capital Projects

Capital Projects	Actual	Approved Forecast	Variance	Approved Forecast	Remaining Budget	Commentary
by Programme	YTD	YTD	YTD	FY	FY	
	£m	£m	£m	£m	%	
NRW 2030	0.7	0.7	0.0	3.3	78%	The NRW 2030 capital over-programming has come down considerably from £0.5m in July to an under programme position of £0.2m. This is mainly due to the removal of the Web Development Project and Deloitte ICT Support Contract (£0.5m & £0.3m respectively). The holding code balance now stands at £2.3m and relates solely to the Tech Stabilisation Programme. This has now received assurance with the various projects being setup and funding allocated accordingly for the next reporting period. Similar to the revenue programme, the programme manager will be reviewing the likely outturn across all projects.
External Funded	2.1	2.1	0.0	7.2	71%	Expenditure at the end of September is in line with the forecasted budget. There is a risk with two of the LiFE projects that spend will be pushed into next year, however, due to the nature of the funding we do have the ability to defer the income to next year and facilitate this.
Flood Risk	7.1	7.6	0.5	18.3	61%	The current position shows an under spend of £0.5m primarily linked to the Telemetry, Flood Warning System & Stephenson's Street projects. Over programming has been removed, a significant reduction from that reported at the start of the year. 61% of the full year budget is still to be utilised, which is reasonable with 6 months of the financial year remaining. However, due to the over programming being removed, should any projects be delayed due to weather/contractor availability etc, we are likely to see an underspend at year end.
Internal Funded	0.7	1.0	0.2	3.6	80%	The current variance is predominantly linked to the Water Resources programme. The programme is currently showing an under programming of £0.5m against the full year allocation of £2m. Discussions are taking place in October/November to further look at the likely year end outturn across the programme, with a view to returning budget, should the need arise.
NaCE	7.8	7.9	0.1	22.5	65%	Expenditure to the end of September is in line with the forecast. We are still on track to spend the full allocation for most of the sub-programmes. Overall, overprogramming currently sits at £0.3m, however there are variances within the sub-programmes, with over programming within Nature Networks (£0.5m), Water Quality (£0.3m) & National Forest (£0.3m), offset by under programming within Peatlands (£0.8m). Peatlands are working hard to reduce this underspend, trying to fill posts from the flexible resource pool. Whilst they believe they will utilise part of the under spend, it is likely funding will be returned to WG. Overall, over-programming is being managed down on the other sub-programmes and expected to be on budget. The programme leads are due to discuss the various options with WG in November.
IFRS 16 Capital Leases Only (non-cash)	0.6	0.6	0.0	2.8	79%	The overall lease programme is still under consideration by the Head of Business Support Services and Adfywio. It is dependant on the outcome of the Ty Cambria exit strategy as dilapidations are a charge against this capital budget. A value for money assessment has been undertaken regarding whether to purchase or lease new fleet vehicles. With purchase being the better option, £0.8m will be transferred to specific capital codes in October.
<b>TOTAL: NRW</b>	<b>19.0</b>	<b>19.9</b>	<b>0.9</b>	<b>57.7</b>	<b>67%</b>	

# Contingency and over-programming budgets

RAG status



Balances (contingencies and programme under/overs)	/£m Jul-24	/£m Sep-24	/£m Movement	Confidence Level (RAG Status)	Comments
<b>In year pressure balancing targets</b>					
Staff Reduction Targets	-6.9	-3.7	3.2	Green	The movement reflects additional staff savings for August & September (£1.2m), along with the salary holding code adjustment agreed at August's Executive Team (£0.6m) and the transfer from general contingency (£1.4m) to fund the forecasted pay deficit against the original £9.3m target. The position will be reviewed on a monthly basis to ensure we are still on track to meet the target, but at this moment in time we do not expect any significant change. This does assume external recruitment controls remain in place.
Vacancy Management	-3.4	-2.5	0.8	Green	We are on target to manage the vacancy management target this year.
<b>Contingencies and provisions</b>					
Pay Award Provisions	4.2	6.1	1.9	Green	The pay provision now reflects the additional 1.3% contribution from Welsh Government (£1.5m) along with a smaller transfer from the other staff contingency budget, which now equates to an overall 5% allocation.
Other staff contingency	1.8	1.5	-0.3	Green	Consolidated central contingency budget for the Case for Change following adjustments for the pay award provision and staff reduction target.
Central contingencies	2.0	0.3	-1.7	Green	Balance on central contingencies that will be consolidated with the other staff budget to provide a budget for the Case for Change (£1.8m).
Central contingencies (corporate cost recharges)	0.5	0.7	0.2	Green	Corporate costs have increased following the additional WG grants award. This balance should be retained until the revised corporate cost recharge rates are agreed for 2024-25 with WG.
Staff Budget Undistributed (Directorates)	0.9	0.3	-0.6	Green	Budgets approved for new posts not yet created.
Staff budget allocation for increments	0.4	0.4	0.0	Green	To be distributed in January, though likely to be slightly lower than forecasted.
<b>Over-programming</b>					
Central Overprogramming	-1.0	-1.0	0.0	Green	As set out in the opening budget.
Overprogramming (Directorates)	0.0	0.1	0.1	Green	Minor balances across Directorates, low value risk.
NaCE (Directorates)	0.0	-0.3	-0.3	Green	Overprogramming across a number of sub programmes; Capital Nature Networks (£0.5m), Water Quality (£0.3m) and National Forest (£0.3m), with Peatlands under-programmed (£0.8m). The Peatlands programme are working hard to reduce the under-programming, including filling posts from the Flexible Resource Pool, however, it is looking likely that we will return some of the funding to WG. Overall, over-programming will continue to be managed down so the programme comes in line to the allocated funding.
NRW 2030 (Directorates)	-0.5	0.2	0.7	Green	Following a review of the programme the number of projects being undertaken has reduced resulting in a slight surplus £0.2m which the Programme Manager is reviewing with project managers.
Welsh Government Grants (Directorates)	-0.1	0.1	0.2	Green	The key change relates to a movement from over to under programming on the Electronic Waste Tracking project.
<b>Under-programming</b>					
Water Resources Capital (Directorates)	0.5	0.6	0.1	Yellow	The programme remains under-programmed. Discussions are taking place in October/November to further look at the likely year end outturn across the programme, with a view to returning budget, should the need arise.
Flood Risk Capital (Directorates)	0.2	0.0	-0.2	Green	Following a review of the capital programme, over-programming has been removed.
<b>Awaiting distribution</b>					
NRW 2030 (Directorates)	2.8	2.5	-0.3	Green	The holding code balance now stands at £2.3m and relates solely to the Tech Stabilisation Programme. This has now received assurance with the various projects being setup and funding allocated accordingly for the next reporting period.

**Note** - All contingencies/over programming are held centrally unless indicated otherwise.





## Board Paper

<b>Date of meeting:</b>	21 <sup>st</sup> November 2024
<b>Title of Paper:</b>	Wellbeing, Health and Safety (WH&S) Q2 update
<b>Paper Reference:</b>	24-11-B18
<b>Paper sponsored by:</b>	Prys Davies, Executive Director of Corporate Strategy and Development
<b>Paper prepared by:</b>	Charlotte Morgan, Wellbeing Health and Safety Manager
<b>Paper presented by:</b>	Charlotte Morgan, Wellbeing Health and Safety Manager
<b>Purpose of the paper</b>	Discussion
<b>Summary</b>	To discuss the Q2 2024/25 WH&S update.

## Background

1. This is the Q2 summary of our Wellbeing, Health & Safety (WH&S) performance for Natural Resources Wales (NRW). The report provides an overview of how NRW have managed WH&S through Q2 2024/2025.

## Summary

Headlines from Quarter 2 2024/25 include: -

2. Serious incident reviews (SIR). There were three SIRs commissioned in Q2 2024/2025. There are five outstanding SIRs which have been paused due to external factors including awaiting the coroner's report. Three SIRs were completed and awaiting actions to be closed. Eight SIRs has been closed.
3. Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) reportable and LTI's (Lost Time Injuries) – One RIDDOR for NRW in Q2. There were no LTIs in Q2.
4. Several wellbeing initiatives were delivered, staff near miss reporting increasing, our Employee Assistance Program provider - Viv-up, holding drop in sessions to introduce their offering and an increase in the number of staff engaging with the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) portal.

- Looking ahead, the WH&S team and Evidence will work with Corporate Planning colleagues as they engage with the Internal Audit team to consider the format and function of Management Information in the Internal Audit's forthcoming consultancy piece on Management Information. This will be evident in the forthcoming quarterly reports.

## Wider implications

- Finance:** It is recognised that the mismanagement of WH&S has significant financial implications. The WH&S Team, working together with the business are continuing to put new systems in place in order to manage our WH&S risks and therefore reduce any costs. As well as protecting our staff and those working on and using the estate NRW manage, there could be significant financial implications arising from failures to implement a robust WH&S system.

## Next Steps

- The WH&S Team will continue to support the business to ensure wellbeing, health and safety risks are being managed effectively by NRW. In looking ahead, NRW will need to maintain and also develop and improve further our own strong culture of wellbeing, health and safety monitoring and learning. This will continue to be the key element of our future strategy to move forward.
- There will be a review of the strategic risk level as there is a move to the new risk register.
- The WH&S Team will use the information gathered and lessons learnt in the development of our future strategy and action plan.

## Recommendation

- The Board asked to approve the Q2 2024-2025 WH&S Update.

## Index of Annexes

Annex 1 – WH&S Board paper – Q2 – 2024 -2025

## Approval / Consultation process

<p><b>Approval/consultation process</b></p> <p><b>Responsible:</b> Who has developed the</p>	<p>The paper was developed by the WH&amp;S Team.</p>
--	--

<p>paper/process and who has had input?</p>	
<p><b>Accountable:</b> Who is accountable for the ultimate approval? Who will be or is being asked to approve?</p>	<p>The Board are asked to approve the Q2 2024-2025 WH&amp;S Update.</p>
<p><b>Consulted:</b> Who has been consulted to date? Where endorsement is required, is this in place? Will further consultation be required?</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p><b>Informed:</b> Who has been informed or who needs to be further information about the work?</p>	<p>N/A</p>

24-11-B18-A1

# Wellbeing Health and Safety Q2 2024/25

## Highlights

In summary, Q2 2024/25 resulted in the commissioning of three serious incident reviews (SIR). These were in relation to a NRW road traffic collision, a colleague sustaining major injuries from a slip, trip, fall and a 3<sup>rd</sup> party contractor crossing a live windfarm cable array.

In Q2, eight SIRs were closed, a number have been closed as all actions have been completed, others have been closed due to updated information from the coroner.

There was one RIDDOR reportable incidents during Q2 2024/25 and there were no Lost time staff injuries (LTA).

Positives from this quarter includes several wellbeing initiatives were delivered, staff near miss reporting increasing, our Employee Assistance Program (EAP) provider - Viv-up, holding drop in sessions to introduce their offering and an increase in the number of staff engaging with the EAP portal.

There were a number of stress awareness sessions for team leaders and line managers to raise awareness and importance of managing work related and personal stress. Bi weekly meetings were held with the Mental Health First Aiders to support them during case for change.

## Serious Incident Reviews

During Q2, there were three Serious Incident Review commissioned, three Serious Incident Reviews were completed but awaiting the actions to be closed off and eight Serious Incident Reviews were closed, please see below for details.

### Serious Incident Reviews Summary since Aug 2019

Key:	
Green	All actions completed with evidence uploaded
Amber	Actions to be completed
Yellow	SIR paused due to external investigation
Blue	SIRs in investigation status

SIRs Closed	19
SIRs Closed Q2 (inc. in number above)	8
SIRs completed with actions to be completed	8
SIRs paused due to external investigation	5
SIRs in investigation status	4
Details: Damage to 3 <sup>rd</sup> asset on NRW land Reference: ACCB1096 / A2 Incident date: 20/10/2022. Type of SIR: Property Damage Full Investigation: Closed	Closed

<p>Details: Fatal accident on NRW estate to member of the public. Sgwd Pannwr plunge pool, Brecon Beacon</p> <p>Reference: ACCB1092 / A11</p> <p>Incident date: 05/06/2021</p> <p>Type of SIR: Fatal incident.</p> <p>Full Investigation: Closed</p>	<p>Closed .</p>
<p>Details: Fatal accident on NRW estate to member of the public. Sgwd Gwladus waterfall in Pontneddfechan</p> <p>Reference: ACCB1092 / A9</p> <p>Incident date: 16/08/2021</p> <p>Type of SIR: Fatal incident.</p> <p>Full Investigation: Closed</p>	<p>Closed</p>
<p>Details: Fatal accident on NRW estate to member of the public. Waterfall Country</p> <p>Reference: ACCB1092/A16</p> <p>Incident date: 27/05/2022</p> <p>Type of SIR: Fatal Incident</p> <p>Full Investigation: Closed</p>	<p>Closed.</p>
<p>Details: Fatal accident on NRW estate to member of the public. Waterfalls Country</p> <p>Reference: ACCB1092/A13</p> <p>Incident date: 15/05/2022</p> <p>Type of SIR: Fatal incident.</p> <p>Full investigation: Closed</p>	<p>External commissioned report was presented to NRW and other stakeholders.</p> <p>The Land Stewardship Board meeting in October accepted the report and confirmed the commitment to work in partnership with the other stakeholders.</p> <p>NRW are continuing to work with Bannau Brycheiniog National Park Authority to coordinate our visitor safety work.</p>

	<p>NRW have recruited officers with the relevant experience of visitor management, to provide more of a focus on our work. Initially there will be focus towards pulling together a more detailed plan of work for Waterfall Country.</p> <p>NRW have recently finalised a bid via National Forest to improve management of Gwaun Hepste car park which is one of the key access points for the Waterfall Country area to improve arrangements for BBNPA and NRW to manage, engage with and educate visitors.</p> <p>Inquest was held around April 2023 and a conclusion of accidental death was recorded.</p>
<p>Details: Fall from height Pen Pych</p> <p>Reference: ACCB1097 / A2</p> <p>Incident date: 07/05/2021</p> <p>Type of SIR: Fatal incident.</p> <p>Full investigation: Closed</p>	<p>Inquest was held around November 2022 and a conclusion of accidental death was recorded.</p>
<p>Details: Major injury to contractor</p> <p>Reference: ACCB1095 / A3</p> <p>Incident date: 11/10/2022.</p> <p>Type of SIR: Major Injury - fracture</p> <p>Full investigation: Complete - Actions in progress</p>	<p>14 Actions – all closed</p>
<p>Details: Fatal MoP fatality at Bike Park Wales.</p> <p>Reference: ACCB1095/A2</p> <p>Incident date: 23/05/2022</p> <p>Type of SIR: Fatal Incident</p> <p>Full investigation: SIR opened and paused.</p>	<p>Closed – NRW have had no contact and are not a interested party. NRW are the land owner and not the operator of the site.</p>



<p>Details: Fatal accident on NRW estate to a sub-contractor working on a standing sales site. Coed Taff Forest.</p> <p>Reference: ACCB1092/A12</p> <p>Incident date: 12/10/2021</p> <p>Type of SIR: Fatal incident.</p> <p>Full investigation: SIR opened and paused.</p>	<p>The SIR has been paused due to further investigation by the police and Health and Safety Executive. Forest Operational team members were on site with the HSE and provided information. The Wellbeing, health &amp; safety manager attended site.</p>
<p>Details: Fatal accidents on River Cleddau. NRW has a fish pass asset in the vicinity of the incident and therefore is being recorded on AssessNET as a precautionary measure.</p> <p>Reference: ACCB1097/A4</p> <p>Incident date: 30/10/2021</p> <p>Type of SIR: Fatal incident.</p> <p>Full investigation: SIR opened and paused.</p>	<p>The SIR has been paused due to further investigation by the police and Health and Safety Executive. NRW received the MAIB report in December 2022.</p> <p>Charges have been brought by the police in relation to this incident but the case has not been concluded. NRW are not involved, however statements and information have been provided to the police.</p>
<p>Details: MoP fatality at Sqwd y Pannwr, Mannau Brycheiniog</p> <p>Reference: ACCB1092 / A14 &amp; A15.</p> <p>Incident date: 11/10/2022.</p> <p>Type of SIR: Fatal incident.</p> <p>Full investigation: SIR opened and paused.</p>	<p>External commissioned report was presented to NRW and other stakeholders.</p> <p>The Land Stewardship Board meeting in October accepted the report and confirmed the commitment to work in partnership with the other stakeholders.</p> <p>NRW are continuing to work with Bannau Brycheiniog National Park Authority to coordinate our visitor safety work.</p> <p>NRW have recruited officers with the relevant experience of visitor management, to provide more of a focus on our work. Initially there will be focus towards pulling together a more detailed plan of work for Waterfall Country.</p> <p>NRW have recently finalised a bid via National Forest to improve management of Gwaun Hepste car park which is one of the key access points for the Waterfall Country area to</p>

	<p>improve arrangements for BBNPA and NRW to manage, engage with and educate visitors.</p> <p>The Coroner's investigation has started. NRW have provided information to the coroner including the response to the reg 28 report. The inquest has not yet been heard.</p>									
<p>Details: MoP fatality in Waterfalls Country</p> <p>Reference: ACCB890/A9</p> <p>Incident date: 01/09/2023</p> <p>Type of SIR: Fatality</p> <p>Full investigation: SIR opened and paused.</p>	<p>External commissioned report was presented to NRW and other stakeholders.</p> <p>The Land Stewardship Board meeting in October accepted the report and confirmed the commitment to work in partnership with the other stakeholders.</p> <p>NRW are continuing to work with Bannau Brycheiniog National Park Authority to coordinate our visitor safety work.</p> <p>NRW have recruited officers with the relevant experience of visitor management, to provide more of a focus on our work. Initially there will be focus towards pulling together a more detailed plan of work for Waterfall Country.</p> <p>NRW have recently finalised a bid via National Forest to improve management of Gwaun Hepste car park which is one of the key access points for the Waterfall Country area to improve arrangements for BBNPA and NRW to manage, engage with and educate visitors.</p> <p>The Coroner's investigation has started. NRW have provided information to the coroner including the response to the reg 28 report. NRW have been identified as an interested party. The inquest has not yet been heard.</p>									
<p>Details: Timber Lorry Overturn</p> <p>Reference: ACCB1092 / A5</p> <p>Incident date: 16/08/2021</p> <p>Type of SIR: Fatal incident.</p> <p>Full investigation: Complete - Actions in progress</p>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td colspan="2" data-bbox="735 1637 1114 1704">Total Actions: 14</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2" data-bbox="735 1704 1114 1787">Of Which:</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="735 1787 1114 1921">Completed &amp; Closed:</td> <td data-bbox="1114 1787 1437 1921">12</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="735 1921 1114 2051">Open:</td> <td data-bbox="1114 1921 1437 2051">1</td> </tr> </table>		Total Actions: 14		Of Which:		Completed & Closed:	12	Open:	1
Total Actions: 14										
Of Which:										
Completed & Closed:	12									
Open:	1									

	Overdue:	0
<p>Details: Eye injury from projectile stone in Coed Y Brennin Forest</p> <p>Reference: ACCB890/A10</p> <p>Incident date: 11/09/2023</p> <p>Type of SIR: Injury</p> <p>Full investigation: Complete - Actions in progress</p>	Total Actions: 10	
	Of which:	
	Completed & Closed:	8
	Open:	2
	Overdue:	0
<p>Details: Contractor chainsaw operator trip whilst escaping falling tree</p> <p>Reference: ACCB1097/A5</p> <p>Incident date: 15/12/2023</p> <p>Type of SIR: Injury</p> <p>Full investigation: Complete – actions in progress</p>	Total Actions: 18	
	Of which:	
	Completed & Closed:	15
	Open:	3
	Overdue:	0
<p>Details: Contractor hit by wind blown tree being felled</p> <p>Reference: ACCB1097/A6</p> <p>Incident date: 01/02/2024</p> <p>Type of SIR: Injury</p> <p>Full investigation: Complete - Actions in progress</p>	Total Actions: 5	
	Of which:	
	Completed & Closed:	4
	Open:	1

	Overdue:	0
<p>Details: A contractor working on behalf of NRW was undertaking felling trees when he sustained a fracture.</p> <p>Reference: ACCB1094/A2</p> <p>Incident date: 01/02/2024</p> <p>Type of SIR: Injury</p> <p>Full investigation: Investigation in progress</p>	Total Actions: 7	
	Of which:	
	Completed & Closed:	4
	Open:	2
	Overdue:	1
<p>Details: Chainsaw kick back and cut chainsaw operators chainsaw trousers during flood embankment chainsaw work</p> <p>Reference: ACCB891/A5</p> <p>Incident date: 09/01/2024</p> <p>Type of SIR: Injury</p> <p>Full investigation: Complete – actions in progress</p>	Total Actions: 7	
	Of which:	
	Completed & Closed:	4
	Open:	3
	Overdue:	0
<p>Details: Unearthing of electric cable</p> <p>Reference: ACCB1092/A2</p> <p>Incident date: 09/01/2020</p> <p>Type of SIR: Near miss</p> <p>Full investigation: Complete – actions in progress</p>	Total Actions: 13	
	Of which:	
	Completed & Closed:	11
	Open:	2
	Overdue:	0

<p>Details: MOP fell out of a scooter which is paid for by NRW but managed by a 3<sup>rd</sup> party</p> <p>Reference: ACCB1096/A3</p> <p>Incident date: 13/04/2024</p> <p>Type of SIR: Injury</p> <p>Full investigation: Complete – actions in progress</p>	<p>Total Actions: 9</p> <p>Of which:</p>	
	<p>Completed &amp; Closed:</p>	<p>6</p>
	<p>Open:</p>	<p>3</p>
	<p>Overdue:</p>	<p>0</p>
<p>Details: 3rd party vehicle collision with NRW vehicle</p> <p>Reference: ACCB1092 / A18</p> <p>Incident date: 27/03/2024</p> <p>Type of SIR: Injury</p> <p>Full investigation: Investigation in progress</p>	<p>SIR is in investigation stage</p>	
<p>Details: NRW road traffic collision (Car roll)</p> <p>Reference: ACCB1096 / A4</p> <p>Incident date: 28/08/2024</p> <p>Type of SIR: Injury</p> <p>Full investigation: Investigation in progress</p>	<p>SIR is in investigation stage</p>	

<p>Details: Staff member slip, trip, fall onsite.</p> <p>Reference: ACCB1092/A19</p> <p>Incident date: 13/08/2024</p> <p>Type of SIR: Injury</p> <p>Full investigation: Investigation in progress</p>	SIR is in investigation stage
<p>Details: An excavator based harvester crossed a live cable array in a windfarm</p> <p>Reference: ACCB1097/A7</p> <p>Incident date: 25/09/2024</p> <p>Type of SIR: Near Miss</p> <p>Full investigation: Investigation in progress</p>	SIR is in investigation stage

## Recent incidents in NRW

### Incidents

	Q2 24/25	Q1 24/25	Q2 2023/24	23/24	22/23	21/22	20/21	19/20	18/19	17/18
<b>RIDDOR – staff</b>	1	0	2	5	3	7	3	6	2	8
<b>Lost time injuries – staff</b>	0	1	0	6	3	3	1	4	5	8

<b>Injuries, no lost time – staff</b>	16	20	13	65	43	51	19	121	53	59
<b>Near miss – staff</b>	54	33	24	186	175	156	109	183	163	201
<b>Serious incident reviews</b>	3	1	1	8	9	7	2	6	2	3
<b>Injuries - contractors</b>	2	2	0	9	8*	3*	5*	5	9	9
<b>Injuries – public</b>	8	12	11	46	38	38	18	53	53	95
<b>Near miss – contractors</b>	18	20	15	70	68	62	46	50	40	44
<b>Near miss – public</b>	6	30	6	31	33	30	23	33	20	39
<b>Property Damage</b>	10	11	10	48	53	36	35	32	43	48
<b>Hazards Reported</b>	10	19	41	89	199	166	65	83	103	78

There have been 54 staff near misses reported in Q2 24/25, this is in comparison to 33 reported in Q1 24/25 and 24 in Q2 23/24. Hazards have decreased in Q2 24/25 compared to Q1 24/25 (19) or Q2 23/24 (41). However when looking at near misses and hazards together, the figures are comparable. The differential could be down to increased awareness in the difference between a near miss and a hazard following the drop in session that were undertaken.

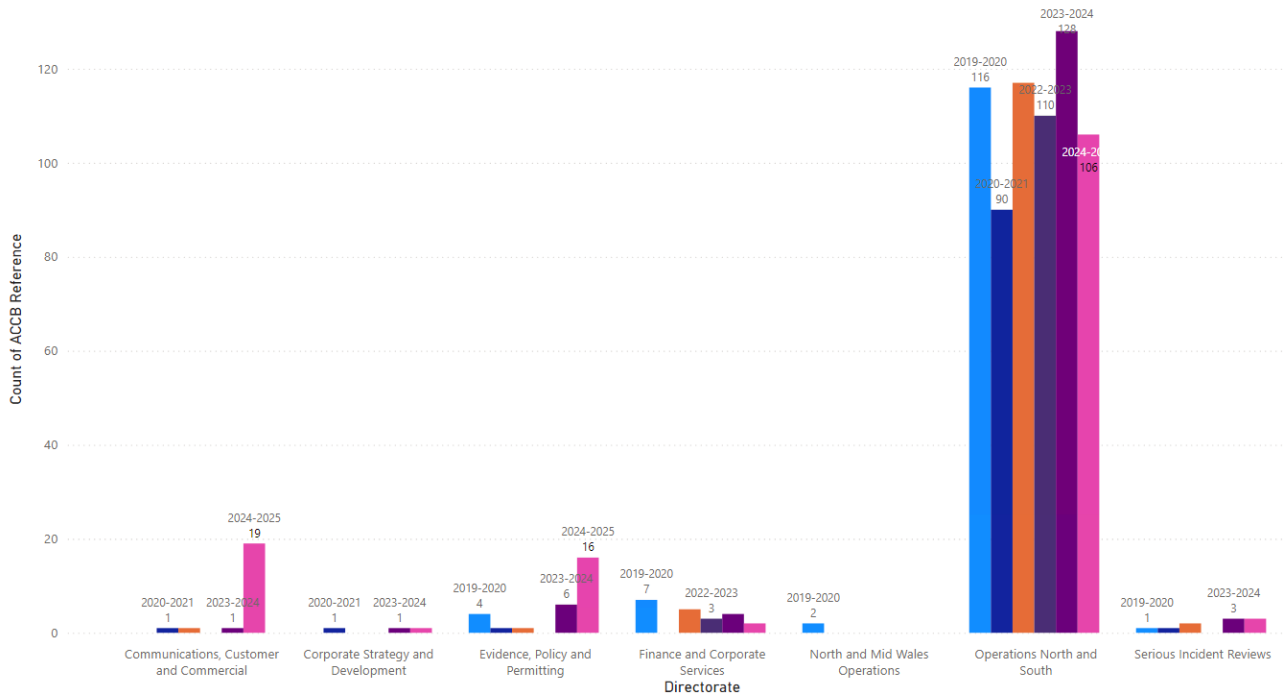
## NRW totals for Q2 2024/2025

NRW had 1 RIDDOR reportable incident to staff in Q2 2024/25. The RIDDOR was in relation to a slip / trip / fall whilst undertaking work activities.

# AssessNET incident data comparison (all NRW) Q2

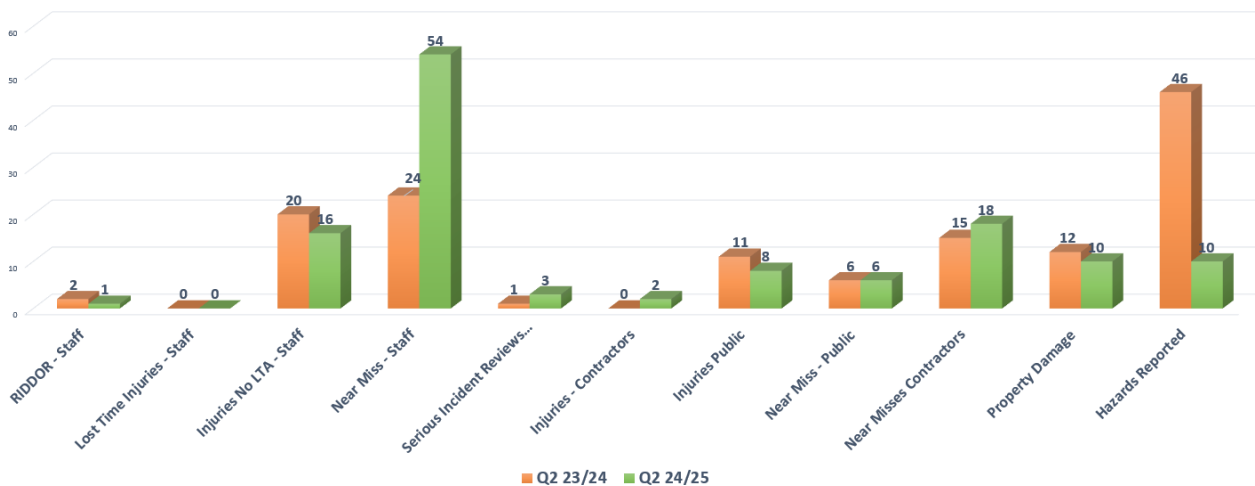
Incidents By Directorate

Financial Year ● 2019-2020 ● 2020-2021 ● 2021-2022 ● 2022-2023 ● 2023-2024 ● 2024-2025



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

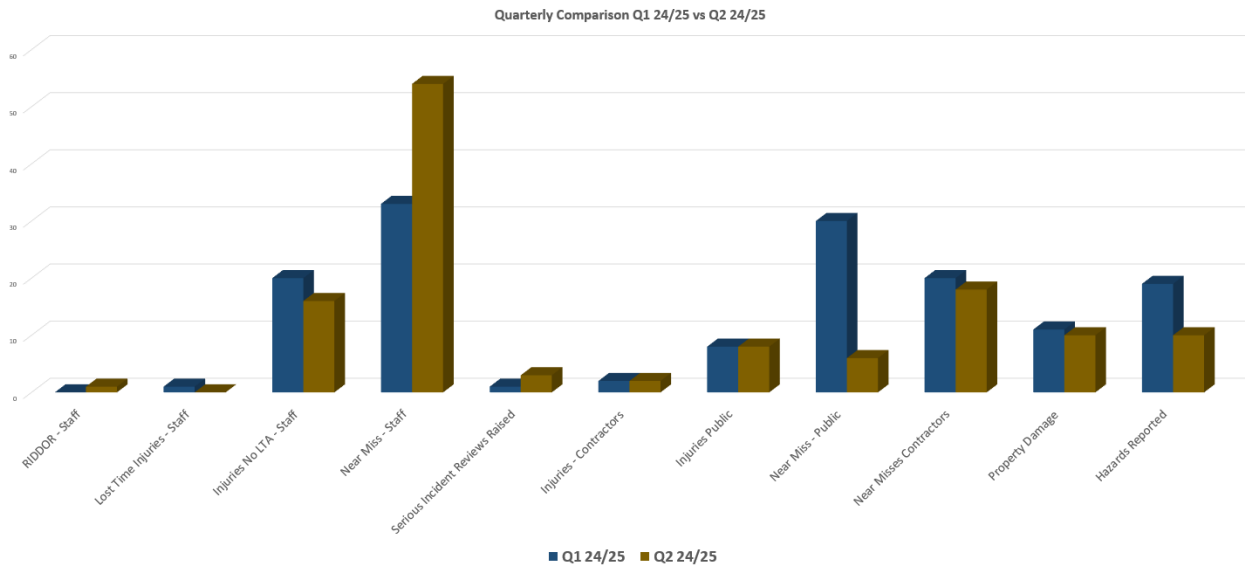
Quarterly Comparison - Q2 23-24 vs Q2 24-25



In Q2 2024/25 there was a higher number of staff near miss reports than in Q2 23/24. In contrast, there was a lower of hazard reports in Q2 24/25 than in Q2 23/24. This could be due to increased awareness in near miss reporting. In order to support the continuation of positive incident reporting (Near miss, hazards), near miss series of drop in sessions will continue in Q2 / Q3 for team leaders and managers. A recording of this session will also be available to all staff through the learning management system.



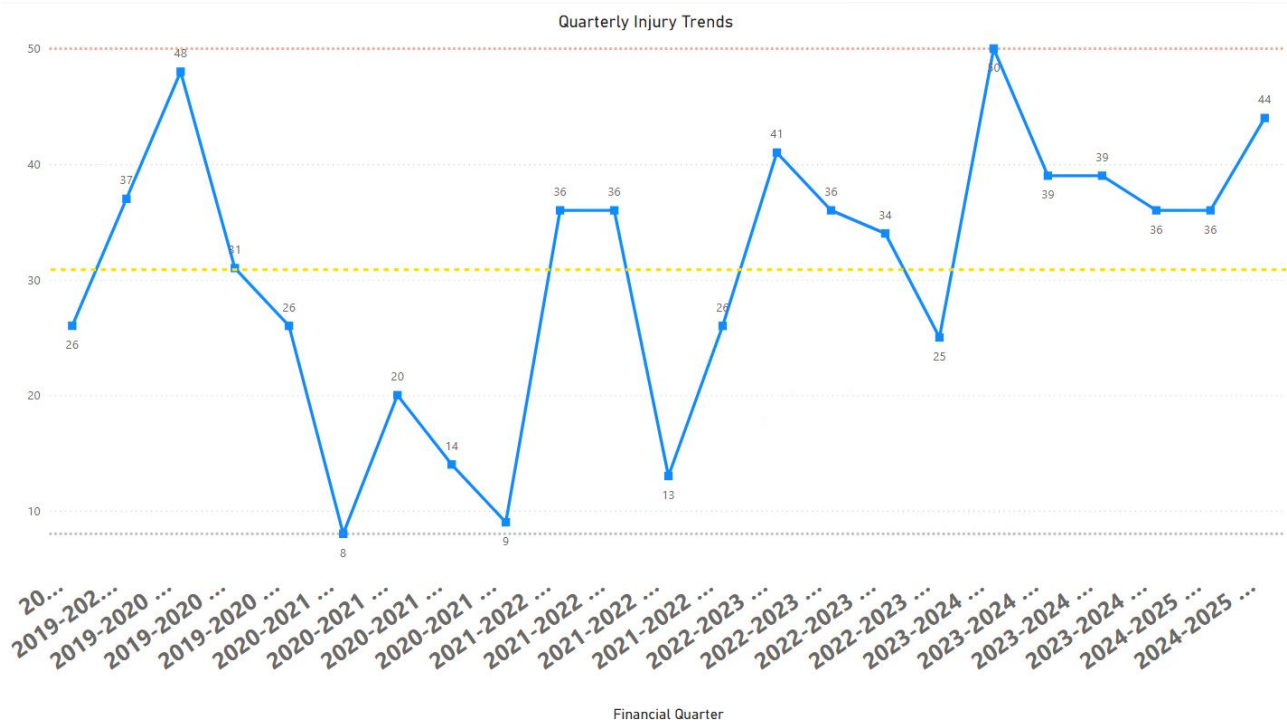
The trends show that driving at work is the most common cause of near miss reporting, followed by slips, trips, and falls. There will be communication to the business in management of these two areas.



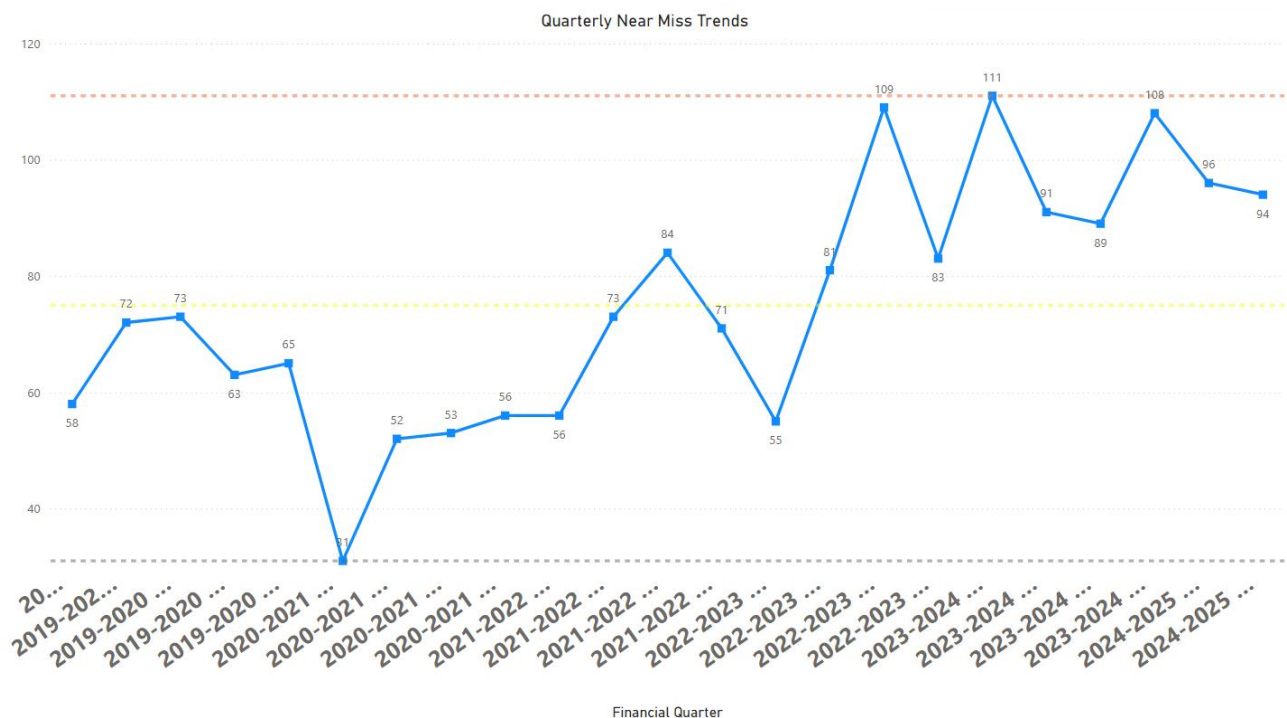
In Q2 2024/25 there was a higher number of staff near miss reports than in Q1 24/25. In contrast, there was a lower of hazard reports in Q2 24/25 than in Q1 24/25. This could be due to increased awareness in near miss reporting. In order to support the continuation of positive incident reporting (Near miss, hazards), near miss series of drop in sessions will continue in Q2 / Q3 for team leaders and managers.

## Quarterly trend analysis

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

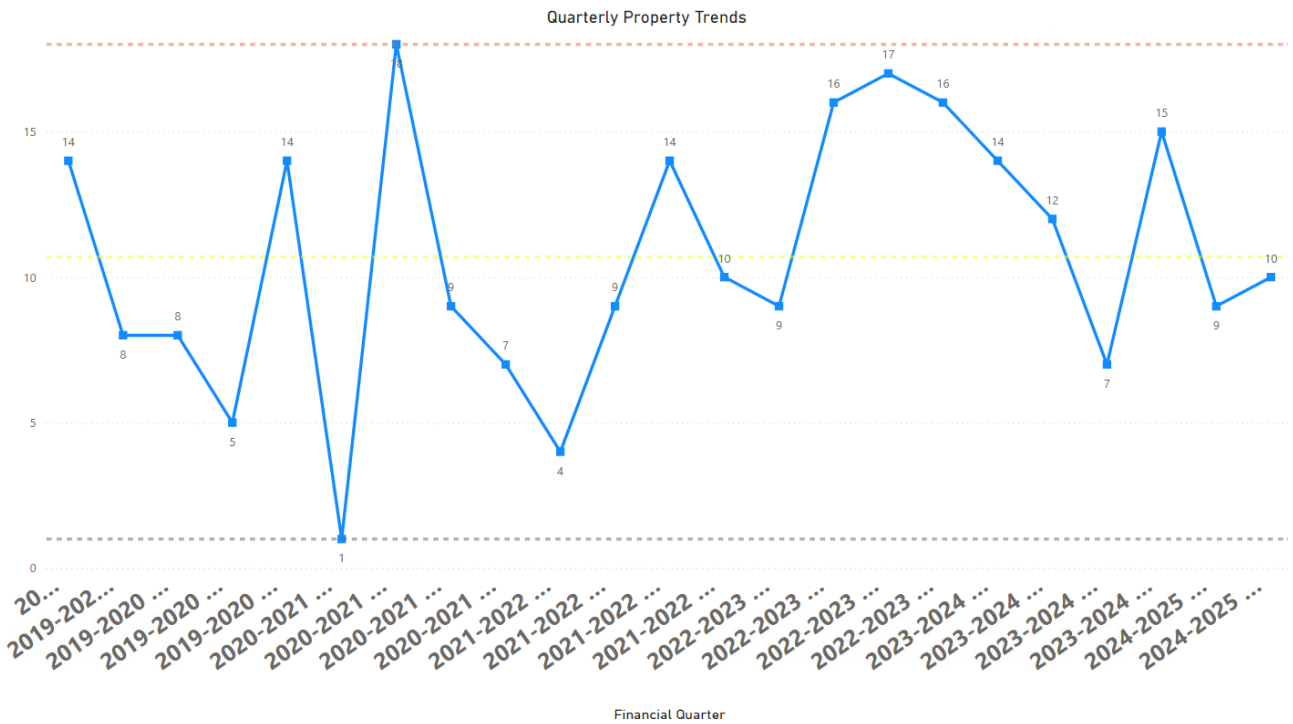


Total injury trends have seen a spike in Q2 24/25 of reported injuries.

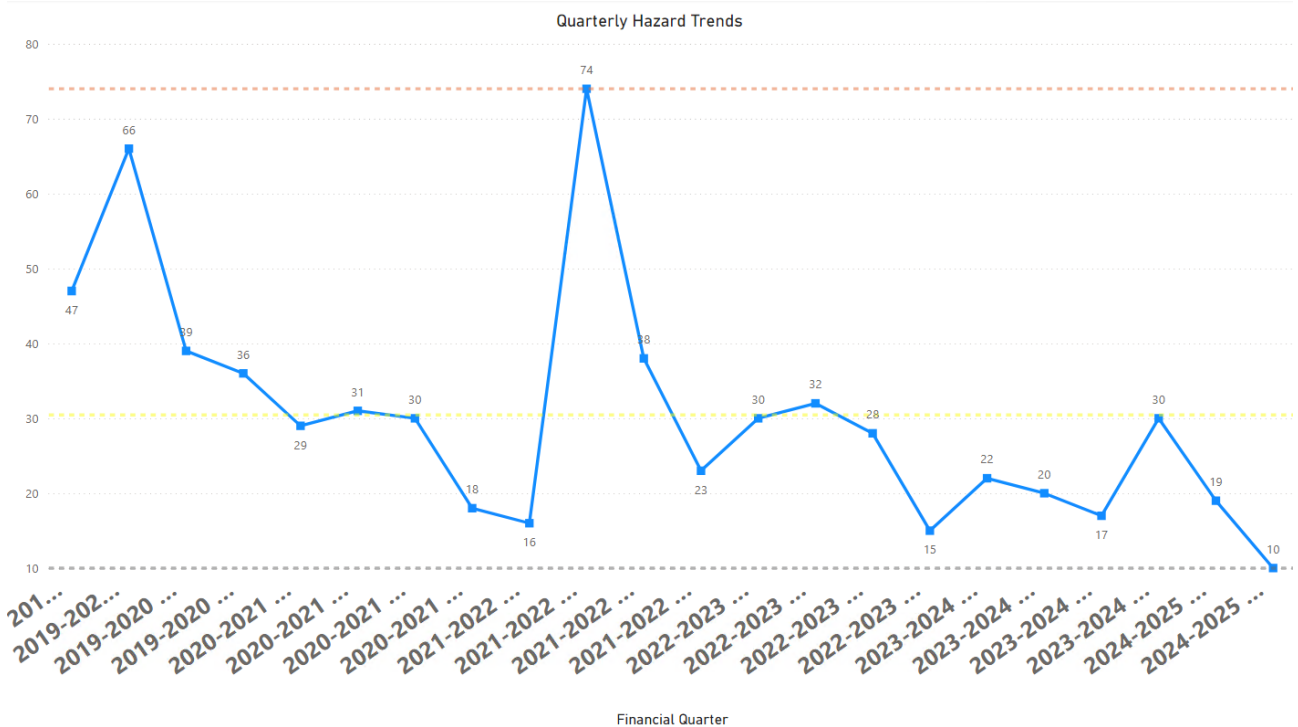


There has been a slight reduction in the number of all near misses reported (staff, Contractor and public). This could be due to the increased reported received in Q4 23/24 and Q1 24/25 regarding Cwm Carn Forest drive which have not been received during Q2 24/25. In order to support the continuation of positive incident reporting (Near miss,

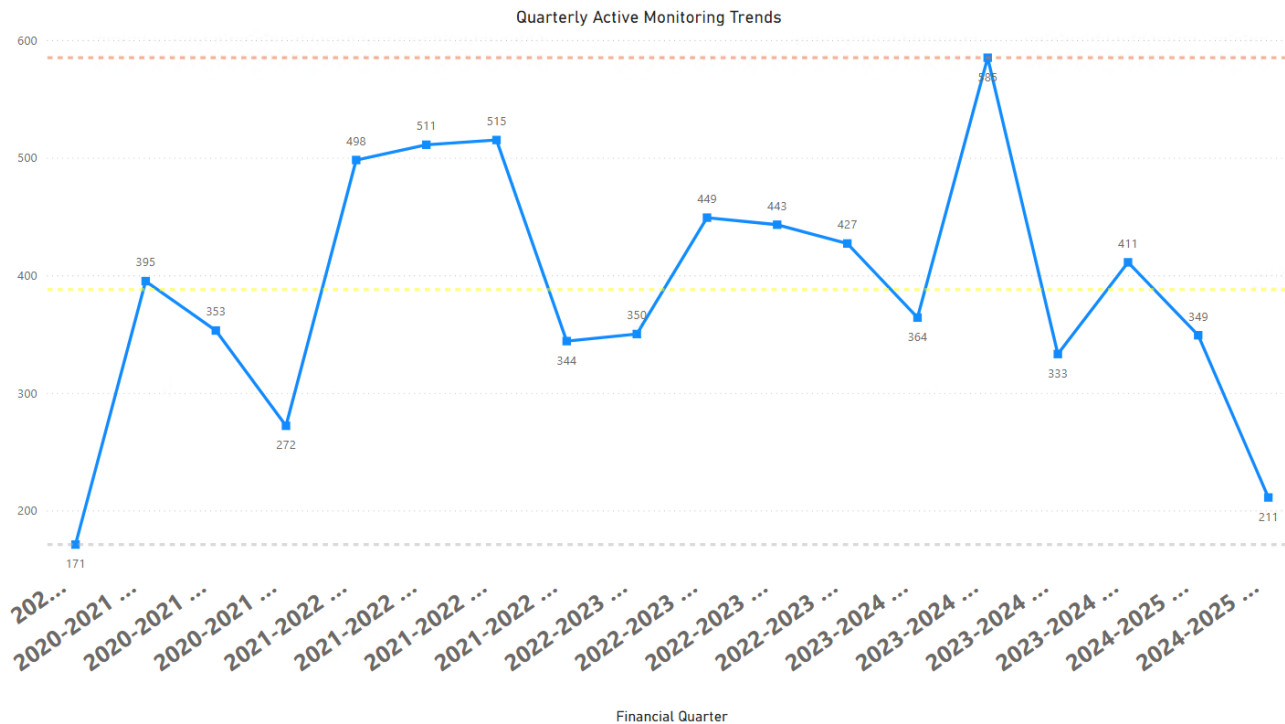
hazards), near miss series of drop in sessions will continue in Q2 / Q3 for team leaders and managers.



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



There has been a steady drop in the number of hazards reported during Q2 24/25. This could be due to the increase in staff reported near misses. In order to support the continuation of positive incident reporting (Near miss, hazards), near miss series of drop in sessions will continue in Q2 / Q3 for team leaders and managers.



Active Monitoring has seen a large decrease in reports in Q2 24/25. Work is being undertaken to look at trends of active monitoring so that team leaders, line managers have “themes” to monitor e.g. November – driving, December – slips, trips, falls.

## Wellbeing initiatives and developments

- Awareness session with our Employee Assistance Programme provider Vivup were provided to run through what the service includes, what happens when you first contact them, counselling support, and a live demo of the YourCare portal.
- To coincide with World Suicide prevention day a talk was arranged with Time to Change Wales. They provided one of their volunteers who went through their experience of suicide.
- Monthly menopause cafes continue to run. The cafes are open to all staff and are a good place for team leaders to attend to understand symptoms and issues to help support their staff.

## Awareness Sessions for Managers

During Q2 2024/25 a number of Stress awareness sessions for managers and staff were delivered. These sessions are designed to support team leaders, line managers and staff in the management of both work related and personal stress. A recording of the sessions has been made available on the Learning Management System so that team leaders and staff can access this at a convenient time.

## Mental Health First Aiders

In order to support the Mental Health First Aiders in NRW and the Case for Change project bi-weekly check ins were arranged to ensure that their own wellbeing was being supported. The MHFAs were asked if they wished to continue in this role during the Case for Change project as some were impacted.

## ISO 45001

As part of the ISO 45001:2018 standard, a series of surveillance visits will be carried out during Q3 2024/25. Those that will be involved have had the meeting invites.

## Internal Audit

In Q2 2024/25 the internal audit team commenced an audit on the Serious Incident Review process and procedure at NRW. The findings of the audit will be released in Q3.

## NNR Audits

No NNR audits took place in Q2 2024/25. NNR audits will resume in Q3. Site visits took place in Q2 to Bontuchel Fish Pass to assess the confined space working requirements of the site, to ensure our staff are working safely and are competent to carry out this work. This work was carried out in conjunction with Rescue 3 specialist contractor.

## Estate Standards

The WH&S team members attended the Estate Standards team meeting to discuss and improve working together for NRW. The meeting enabled a dialogue between the two teams to improve the way that we work, e.g. roles and responsibilities, active monitoring, providing advice and guidance to support the Operations Directorate.

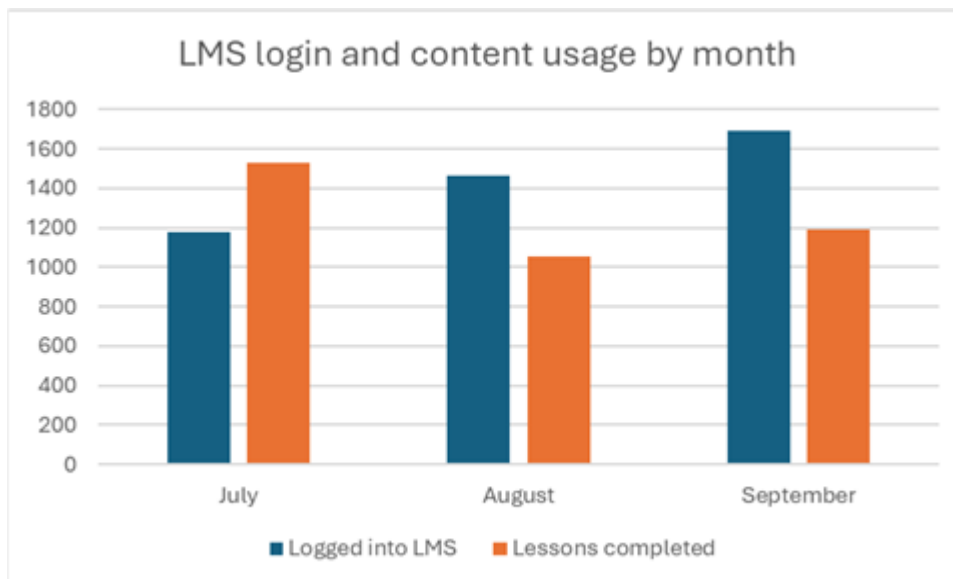
## Learning and Development (L&D)

### Learning Management System

A Learning Management System (LMS) was procured in April 2024 by the project team, with a phased launch planned from Q2 2024/25. The LMS was launched on the 1 July 2024 with all staff having access to the platform. This new platform provided instant access to our staff and managers to enable them to book, review and manage their training requirements.

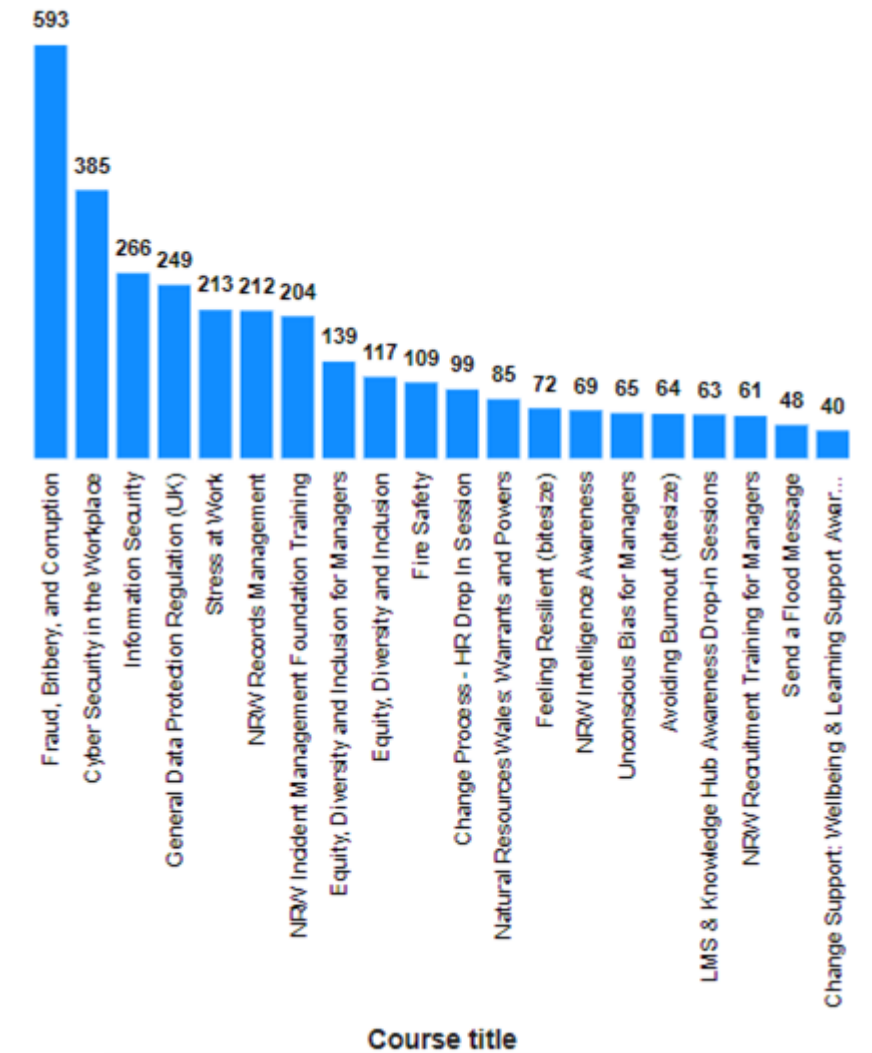
There are approximately 360 courses in the LMS the majority of which are e-learning, however there are also help videos, signposting etc. The LMS offers courses on health and safety, personal skills, equality, diversity and inclusion and wellbeing etc.

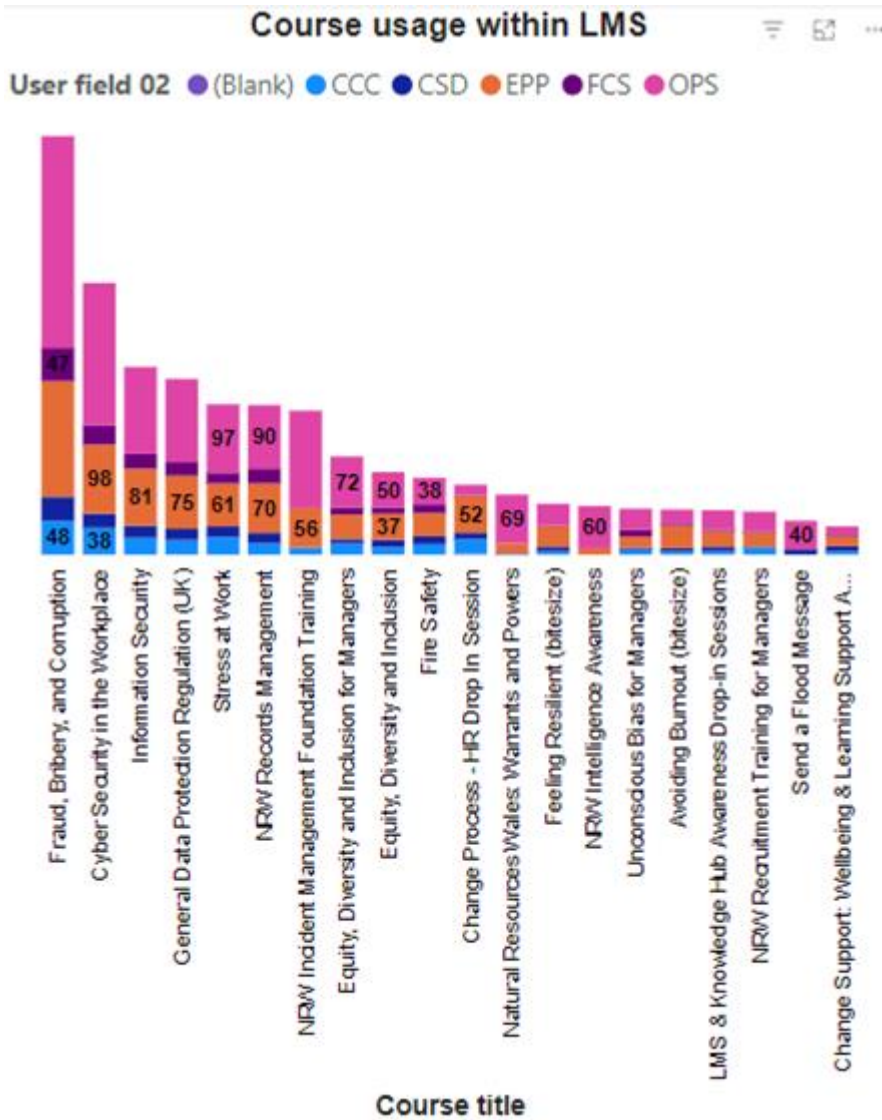
Staff accessing the LMS is increasing month on month. E-learning undertaking within the LMS dipped in August. It is too early to see any trends within this data.



## Top 20 course usage in LMS Q2

Course usage within LMS





Please note that stress at work is not mandatory but is the fifth most used resource within LMS this period.

## LMS drop in sessions

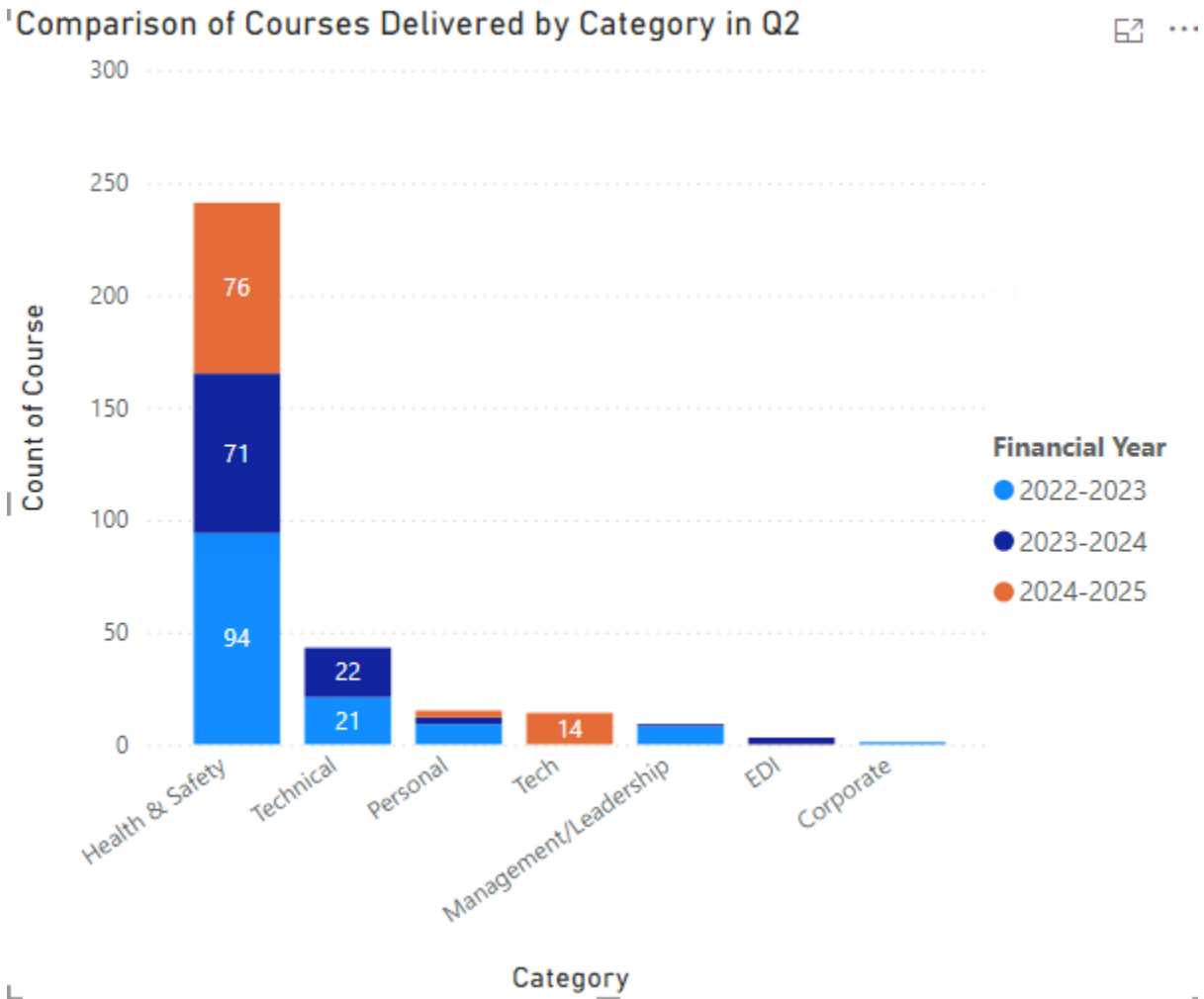
The People Development and Wellbeing Team hosted a number of awareness drop-in sessions in Q2, to introduce the LMS to the business and to highlight the importance of investing in your learning and development. The LMS will provide essential training that will aid staff to do their job and support them to explore more effective ways to approach how we work. In Q2 1110 staff attended the drop in sessions.



## Course Delivery:

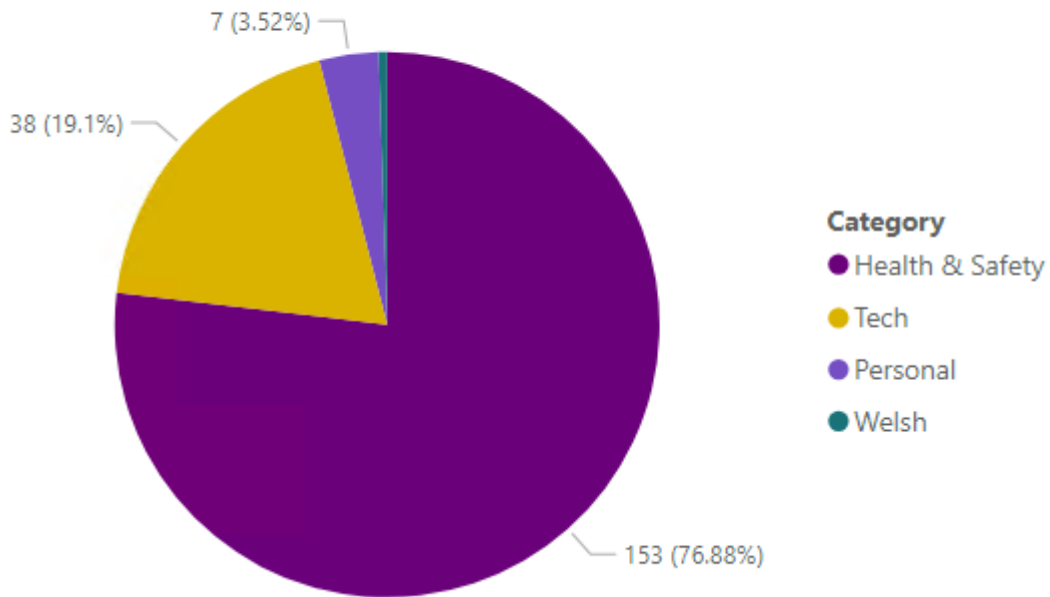
In Q2 2024/25, 93 courses were sourced and delivered, 82% of these courses were H&S.

The diagram below shows a comparison of courses delivered by category in Q2 for the last three years.



Focus for the L&D team remains on delivery of essential H&S courses, nearly 77% of the all courses delivered so far this year are for H&S.

Total Courses delivered to date 2024 - 2025



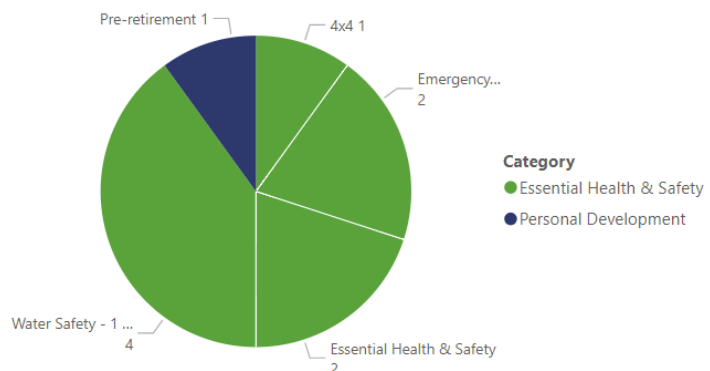
## Cancellations

There were 10 cancellations reported in Q2 2024/25, with 6 of these cancellations providing less than 14 days' notice. In August's Managers Monthly Guide, the business were informed that the L&D team would start recharging cancellations to the business from September 2024.

**10**  
Total number of cancellations

**14.30**  
Average Notice Period

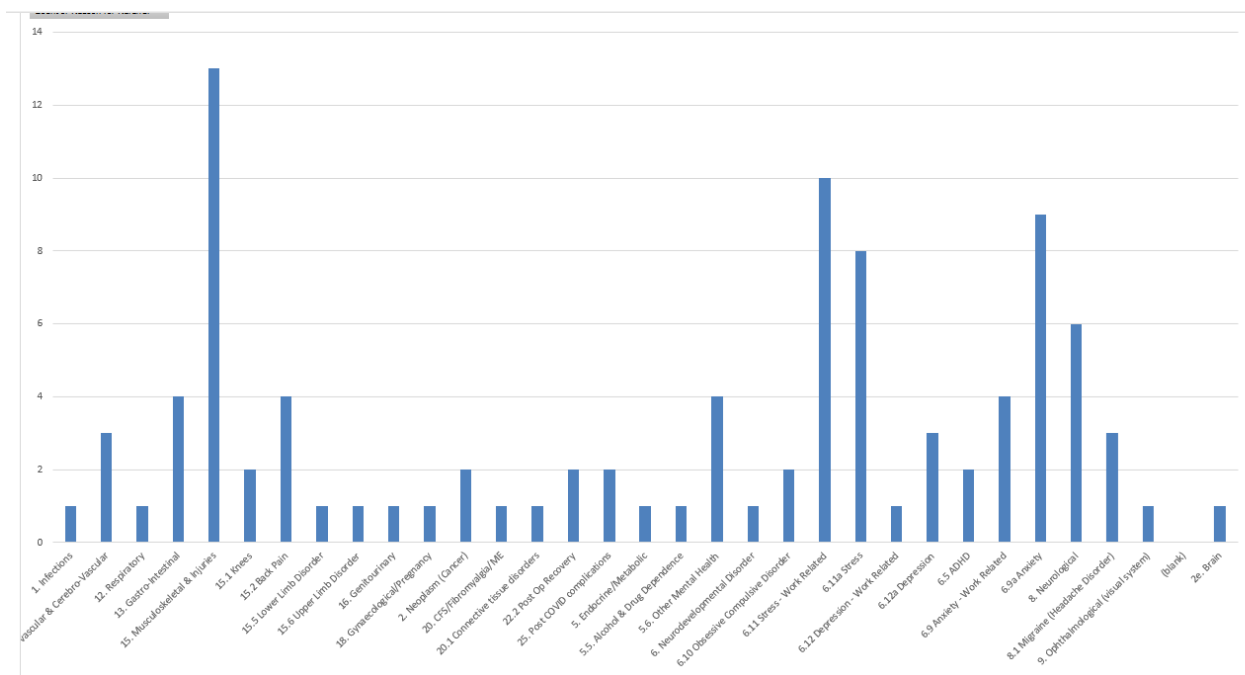
Cancellations per course



## NRW occupational health statistics

Q2 2024/25	Q2 2023/24
97 referrals	78 referrals

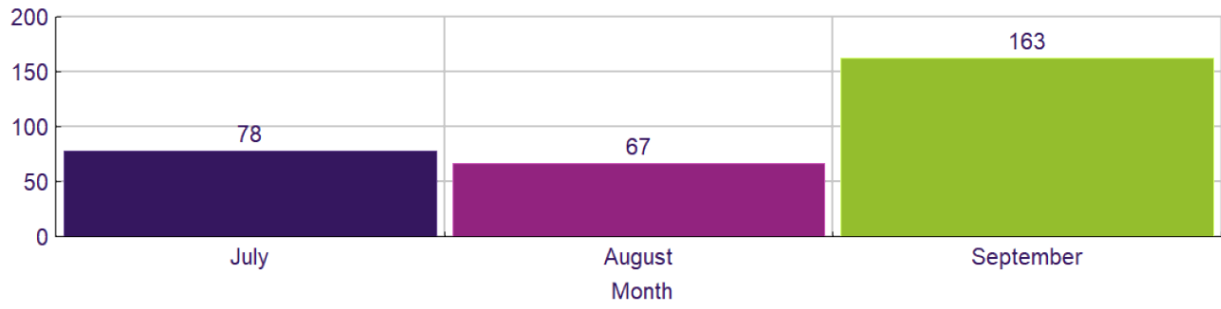
### Reason for referral



In Q2 2024/25, the main reasons for referral to occupational health was for musculoskeletal & injuries, work related stress, closely followed by anxiety and stress which is in line with the most common causes for referral across all sectors according to our occupational health provider.

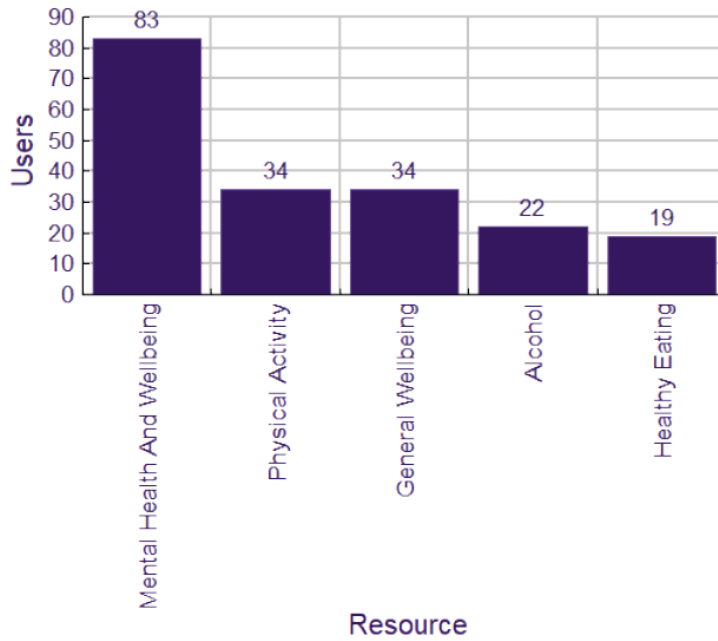
## NRW Employee Assistance Programme statistics

## Portal access by month



## Top resource usage

The graph below shows which resource categories are getting attention and driving the most page views within NRW alongside the five highest risk factors accessing our users.

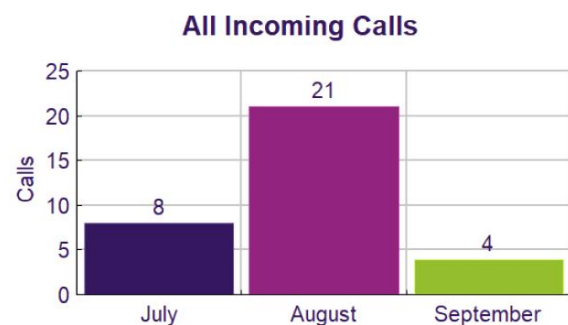
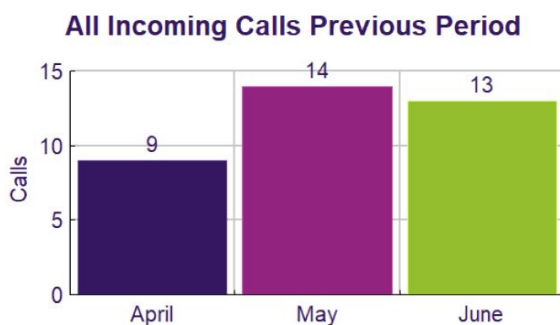


## Self help

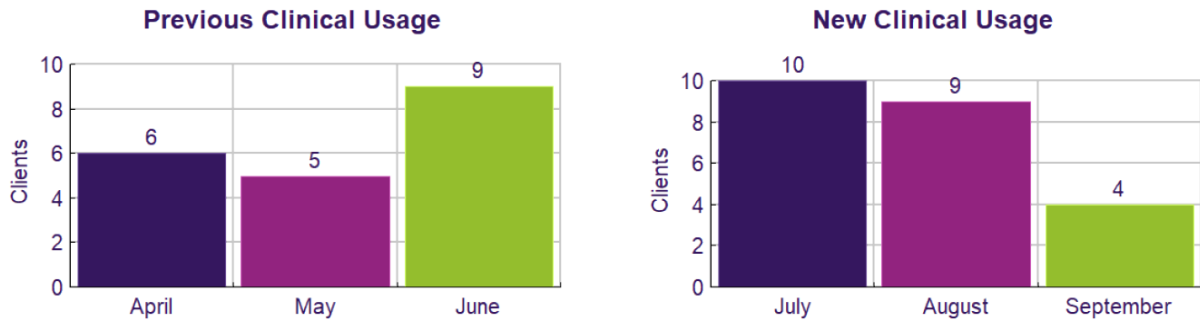
In Q2 2024/25, NRW staff utilised the Vivup portal to access face to face and virtual counselling and self help workbooks more than other offerings.

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

## Accessing 24/7 helpline

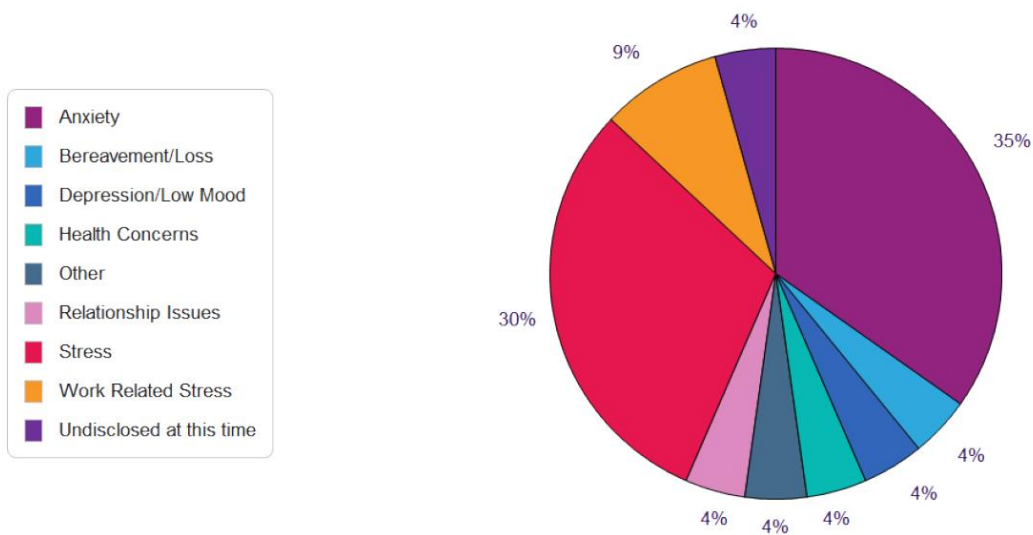


During this period 23 clients entered the counselling service via the 24/7 helpline.



## Presenting issues

Natural Resources Wales  
Presenting Issue



The top reasons for counselling sessions for NRW staff in Q2 2024/25 were anxiety, stress, work related stress.

The top reasons for counselling for all organisations as provided by the Employee Assistance Provider were; Stress, anxiety and depression/low mood.

## Board Paper

<b>Date of meeting:</b>	21 <sup>st</sup> November 2024
<b>Title of Paper:</b>	Annual Business Plan Performance Report: Quarter 2 and Internal Performance Report: Quarter 2
<b>Paper Reference:</b>	24-11-B19
<b>Paper sponsored by:</b>	Ceri Davies, Acting Chief Executive
<b>Paper prepared by:</b>	Sarah Williams (Head of Corporate Strategy and Programme Management Office (PMO))
<b>Paper presented by:</b>	Ceri Davies (Acting Chief Executive) Dom Driver (Acting Executive Director of Evidence, Policy and Permitting) Sarah Jennings (Executive Director of Communications, Customer and Commercial)
<b>Purpose of the paper</b>	Approval
<b>Summary</b>	NRW must operate systems which enable review of performance against objectives in a timely and effective manner. Presented here are the Quarter 2 reports for the Annual Business Plan and Internal Performance Report.

## Background

### Business Plan and performance

1. Each financial year, the Minister sends NRW a formal statement of its budgetary provision. In response to this, each year we have to prepare a business plan setting out the level of service to be achieved in key areas and the performance and output information to be collected to monitor progress.
2. The Welsh Government Framework document states that NRW must operate systems which enable review of performance against objectives in a timely and effective manner. Agreed monitoring information must be shared with the Welsh Government Partnership Team at agreed intervals to demonstrate progress, ensure targets are being achieved, and metrics are within acceptable levels.
3. At publication of the Corporate Plan, Executive Directors were identified as Leads for each Wellbeing Objective (WBO) with responsibility for performance, assurance and risk of their respective WBO and integrated scrutiny across the three WBOs to ensure a holistic view of progress. The Chief Executive is responsible for advising the Board on organisational performance. Scrutiny of performance is evidenced in the NRW Annual Report and Accounts.

### 2024-25 Business Plan

4. The refresh of our performance management framework defines our ambition as we design an outcome focussed approach to measure progress towards the corporate plan well-being objectives. We made good progress in 2023/24, defining and developing the framework of:
  - a) strategic and long-term ambition beyond 2030 through the impacts and strategic indicators.
  - b) operational, medium-term ambition to 2030 through multi-year metrics; and
  - c) operational, short-term ambition through annual commitments.Not all elements are yet in place as we continue to develop our approach. This year's business plan reflects a stepping stone as we test approaches and new ways of working.
5. The 2024/25 Business Plan sets out what we will do specifically in 2024/25 to deliver against the three well-being objectives to meet our vision. This year's plan signals a difference in tone and approach, with clear alignment to the corporate plan vision, mission and well-being objectives.
6. We know we will not be able to realise the outcomes of each well-being objective or step to take straight away. In these early years, we need to lay the foundations by doing the preparatory work such as interrogating the evidence base or developing and testing different tools and approaches that will enable us to accelerate delivery in future years.
7. Across the three WBOs, the business plan identifies 26 steps to take (seven for WBO1: Nature; nine for WBO2: Climate, nine for WBO3: Pollution, and one cross-cutting) where we have identified specific commitments to progress this year. This represents 30% of the total steps to take in the corporate plan. Many of these annual commitments are aligned to priorities in the Term of Government Remit Letter and specific outputs defined in Welsh Government and other funding body grant award letters.
8. Each of the 26 steps to take identifies a commitment for this year and is accompanied by up to three key deliverables to demonstrate how progress will be made in this year.
9. The key deliverables are not as stretching nor as SMART (Specific/Measurable/Achievable/Relevant/Time-bound) as we would like, however they show how we are questioning the impact of what we do and how the deliverables will be used to improve our effectiveness and efficiency over time. We recognise this change of emphasis is significant and we will need to build the trust and confidence of colleagues in the approach over time.

## Business Plan 2024/25 Quarter Two Performance Report

10. The Business Plan 2024/25 Quarter Two Performance Report can be seen in Annex 1. The report covers progress made on the Corporate Plan WBOs through the 26 step to take commitments and key deliverables.
11. A synthesis of progress against the WBOs is provided in the report alongside RAG (Red, Amber, Green) status of each commitment to show progress for this quarter and anticipated year-end position.
12. Against **actual progress** in quarter two, of the 26 commitments, fourteen (54%) reported green (on target) which is a reduction of two from Q1; eleven (42%) reported



amber (close to being on target), an increase of three from Q1 and one (4%) has reported red (target missed), which is associated with the same commitment from Q1.

13. For **year-end prediction**, we are seeing more commitments reporting red. Four (15%) are now reporting red where they reported amber in Q1, meaning that they are predicting missing their end of year target and will have to roll over action into 2025-26. We have an additional commitment reporting amber for year end in Q2 but with the four shifting to red there are fewer ambers at five (19%) compared to six (23%) in Q1. Seventeen (65%) are now reporting green, down from nineteen (73%) in Q1.
14. As part of our evolution of internal scrutiny, we are increasing our work on integrating performance and risk. Across the 26 commitments, we have mapped forty-two stated risks related to the delivery of the commitment to our existing Strategic, Business Group, Place, and Strategic Projects/ Programmes and other risk registers. As we further develop internal scrutiny we will continue to evolve and increase understanding of the relationship between performance and risk in order to direct resource where it is needed most and to those actions that will have the biggest impact on the delivery of our WBOs outcomes.

## Internal performance report

15. Alongside development of the business plan and quarterly reporting we are also reviewing management information and the internal performance report. For this quarter it remains in the same format as last year. For subsequent quarters we will reflect progress made on the review.
16. The Internal Performance Report can be seen at Annex 2 and covers seven internally focussed measures, with their current (Q2) RAG status. This is a subset of more detailed Management information measures, collected monthly and shared with all Directorates.
17. The performance position at the end of the quarter for the seven measures in the report is: six green, one amber and none red.

## Risks, Risk Appetite and opportunities

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

## Wider implications

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

## Next Steps

21. Following NRW Board approval, both Performance Reports will be discussed with Welsh Government and submitted to the Minister for Climate Change and Rural Affairs. They will be published on the Natural Resources Wales website.
22. Feedback will be provided to reporters and Leadership Team and shared with staff via the intranet.

## Recommendation

23. We request the NRW Board approve the Business Plan 2024/25 Quarter One Performance Report and the Internal Performance Report.

## Index of Annexes

Annex 1 – Business Plan 2024/25 Quarter Two Performance Report – Synthesis of progress against the well-being objectives

Annex 2 – Internal Performance Report: Quarter 2

## Approval / Consultation process

<p><b>Approval/consultation process</b></p> <p><b>Responsible: Who has developed the paper/process and who has had input?</b></p>	<p>Sarah Williams (Head of Corporate Strategy and PMO)</p> <p>Bronia Bendall (Senior Specialist Advisor, Corporate Planning and Performance)</p> <p>Prys Davies (Executive Director of Corporate Strategy and Development)</p>
<p><b>Accountable: Who is accountable for the ultimate approval? Who will be or is being asked to approve?</b></p>	<p>NRW Board</p>
<p><b>Consulted: Who has been consulted to date? Where endorsement is required, is this in place? Will further consultation be required?</b></p>	<p>Leadership Team (Steps to Take Owners)</p> <p>Executive Team</p>
<p><b>Informed: Who has been informed or who needs to be further information about the work?</b></p>	<p>Leadership Team</p> <p>Planning &amp; Resources Group</p> <p>Executive Team</p> <p>NRW Board</p>

# Business Plan 2024/25 Quarter Two Performance Report – Synthesis of progress against the well-being objectives

## Background

1. Across the three Well-being Objectives (WBOs), the business plan identifies 26 steps to take (seven for WBO1: Nature; nine for WBO2: Climate, nine for WBO3: Pollution, and one cross-cutting) where we have identified specific commitments to progress this year. This represents 30% of the total steps to take in the corporate plan. Many of these are aligned to priorities in the Term of Government Remit Letter and specific outputs defined in Welsh Government and other funding body grant award letters.
2. Each of the 26 steps to take identifies a commitment for this year and is accompanied by up to three key deliverables to demonstrate how progress will be made in this year.
3. The annual commitments and key deliverables only reflect a small portion of the steps to take included in the corporate plan. We recognise that a breadth of other activity underpins our work on the three well-being objectives from environmental monitoring and reporting, responding to planning applications, issuing permits, undertaking compliance visits and where necessary taking enforcement action.
4. At publication of the Corporate Plan, Executive Directors were identified as Leads for each Well-being Objective (WBO) with responsibility for performance, assurance and risk of their respective WBO and integrated scrutiny across the three WBO to ensure a holistic view of progress.
5. In quarter two, we have enhanced internal scrutiny through the introduction of a new 'WBO performance group', chaired by the Head of Corporate Strategy and PMO with the three ET WBO leads and the relevant Leadership Team step to take leads. The purpose of the group is to provide a holistic view and synthesis of progress across the totality of the well-being objectives against agreed parameters set out in the Annual Business Plan (and in future, the multi-year metrics); seek support to unblock issues and/or mitigate risks; for ET WBO leads to provide a steer on relative priorities for resources.
6. As part of our evolution of internal scrutiny, we are increasing our work on integrating performance and risk. Across the 26 commitments, we have mapped forty-two stated risks related to the delivery of the commitment to our existing Strategic, Business Group, Place, and Strategic Projects/ Programmes or other risk registers. As we develop the WBO Performance Group we will continue to evolve and increase understanding of the relationship between performance and risk in order to direct resource where it is needed most and to those actions that will have the biggest impact on the delivery of our WBOs outcomes.

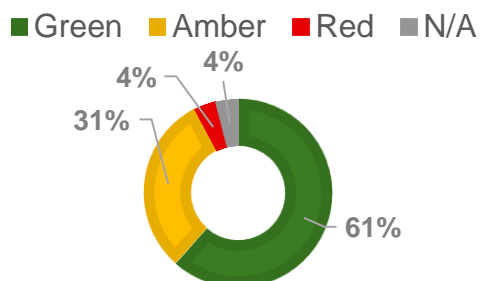
## Overarching assessment of performance – emerging themes and risks

7. As noted in the quarter one (Q1) report, the recruitment freeze is continuing to have an impact on delivery across all parts of the organisation. Reduced capacity is leading team leaders, managers and leadership team to continue to prioritise really hard, pausing some work to create capacity for other higher priority work, scaling back ambition, and managing expectations with our customers and partners about what to expect. The impact of this is reflected in reported progress and, in quarter two, we are seeing an increase, from quarter one, in the number of WBO annual commitments reporting 'amber' and 'red' for actual progress and predicted year-end position.
8. We support all our colleagues in this decision making. Staff well-being is our primary focus and we continue to underline in our communications that we don't expect colleagues to take on more work to fill the gaps. We are encouraging colleagues to talk things through with their managers.
9. In many cases, managers are prioritising delivery of the commitments in this business plan over other activities in the business group service plans. Thus, the true impact of the recruitment freeze on delivery and performance is masked. The multi-year performance metrics will enable us to pick this up in future years.
10. The Planning and Resources Group (PRG) and its sub-groups have continued to meet to review recruitment controls and opportunities to deploy staff on a short-term basis to priority areas. Executive Team has considered a small number of cases for external recruitment on an exceptional basis.
11. There are a large number of vacancies across all parts of the organisation, including new posts associated with new funding from Welsh Government for peatland restoration and Trydan. These vacancies and the new posts with the appropriate role descriptions and grades, will be made available as "reasonable alternative employment" once we move to implement the change process. The vacancies will minimise the risk of redundancy. As colleagues start to move into different roles the pressure on capacity will start to ease and the draw down of funding from Welsh Government for Trydan and peatland restoration will start to increase.
12. Some of the commitments included in this years business plan are subject to additional funding from Welsh Government through annual grant award letters. Although the funding is secure this year the prospect of the Treasury spending review and the separate multi-year funding review being undertaken in Welsh Government, means there is an emerging risk to funding delivery of some of the steps to take in 2025/26. We are keeping this position under review led by the Director of Corporate Strategy and Development in discussion with the Sponsorship Team.

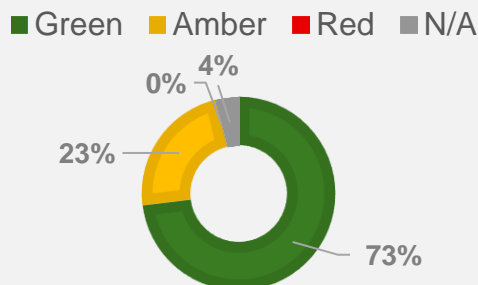
## Performance Analysis

13. Graphs 1-4 and Table 1, illustrate the 'RAG' quarter one and quarter two progress and respective year-end predicted positions across all 26 step to take, annual commitments.

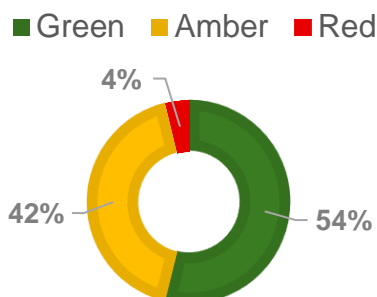
**GRAPH 1: QUARTER 1 REPORTED POSITION**



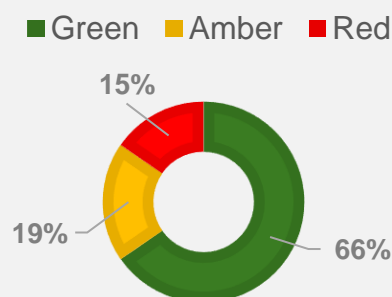
**GRAPH 2: Q1 YEAR-END PREDICTED POSITION**



**GRAPH 3: QUARTER 2 REPORTED POSITION**



**GRAPH 4: Q2 YEAR-END PREDICTED POSITION**



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

14. Against actual progress in quarter two, of the 26 commitments, fourteen (54%) reported green (on target) which is a reduction of two from Q1; eleven (42%) reported amber (close to being on target), an increase of three from Q1 and one (4%) has reported red (target missed), which is the same commitment as Q1.

15. For year-end prediction, we are seeing more commitments reporting red. Four (15%) are now reporting red where they reported amber in Q1, meaning that they are predicting missing their end of year target and will have to roll over action into 2025-26. We have an additional commitment reporting amber for year end in Q2 but with the four shifting to red there are fewer ambers at five (19%) compared to six (23%) in Q1. Seventeen (65%) are now reporting green, down from nineteen (73%) in Q1.

16. All of the amber's and reds state that the recruitment freeze and its impact on staff capacity are a prime factor impacting the pace of delivery. In many cases mitigation measures have been identified and implemented by leadership team in the later part of the quarter. However, their room for manoeuvre will be limited as we move into quarter three and the case for change moves into implementation in early November. This means that any new vacancies that emerge will be used as reasonable alternative employment to minimise the risk of redundancy; as we move through the matching and Expression of Interest stages there is likely to be a period of churn as colleagues move role. This will inevitably impact on delivery as the pathway to green in many instances is dependent on resourcing. It is likely that the pathway to green will not be realised until the first quarter of 2025/26.

Table 1: Dashboard – ‘RAG’ progress of commitments in 2024/25 Business Plan

	2024/25 Business Plan commitment:	Quarter 1		Quarter 2	
		Actual	Year-end	Actual	Year-end
WBO1: Nature is recovering	C1: Evaluate the NRW Nature Networks Programme to inform future investment for protected sites	Amber	Green	Amber	Green
	C2: Synthesise evidence to identify priorities for notification and renotification of sites contributing to the 30:30 target	Amber	Amber	Amber	Red
	C3: Develop an understanding of the intervention impact of 11 of the place-based Natur am Byth partnership programme projects to refine conservation delivery	Green	Green	Green	Green
	C4: Accelerating improvements to the condition of the Marine Protected Area Network through robust monitoring and investigations, evidence, advice and working with others on project delivery	Green	Green	Green	Green
	C5: Accelerating action for nature’s recovery at a landscape scale through sharing our evidence and expertise with National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and other partners	Green	Green	Green	Green
	C6: Delivering multiple benefits and opportunities for nature, people and the rural economy through supporting Welsh Government in the development and implementation of the Sustainable Farming Scheme, providing evidence and expertise	N/A		Amber	Red
	C7: Implementing No Mow May, piloting new approaches to working with nature on the land and assets that we manage, identifying prioritised recommendations	Green	Green	Green	Green
WBO2: Communities are resilient to climate change	C8: Invest in capacity building to enable delivery in 2024-25 and future expansion of the National Peatland Action Programme	Amber	Amber	Amber	Amber
	C9: Strengthen capacity and evidence informing spatial prioritisation to enable effective future restoration within marine and coastal habitats	Amber	Green	Green	Green
	C10: Deliver capital projects and sustain levels of protection for properties to reduce flood risk	Green	Green	Green	Green
	C11: Improve the Flood Warning Service and Telemetry System to deliver efficiencies and maintain continuity of service to customers	Red	Amber	Red	Amber
	C12: Review the prioritisation approach for flood asset maintenance and management to ensure our investment is risk based	Green	Green	Amber	Amber
	C13: Develop understanding, using insight to enhance pre-application processes related to statutory planning and permitting applications to facilitate industrial decarbonisation and reduction of landfill greenhouse gas emissions	Green	Green	Green	Amber
	C14: Enhance evidence, guidance and pre-application advice to improve the quality of submissions for planning permissions and permit/licence applications (Re; low carbon and carbon capture technologies)	Amber	Amber	Amber	Amber
	C15: Prioritise actions with the greatest cost benefit on carbon dioxide equivalent (CO2e)/ greenhouse gases (GHGs) to deliver our annual prioritisation within the Net Zero Plan	Green	Green	Amber	Green
C16: Embed the use of carbon reduction tools and plans into high value contracts and frameworks to improve the quality of submissions.	Green	Green	Amber	Green	
WBO3: Pollution is minimised	C17: Undertake farm inspections under Agriculture Pollution Regulations, in line with the enforcement sanctions policy to reduce pollution.	Green	Green	Green	Green
	C18: Undertake compliance visits at prioritised regulated sites to reduce pollution	Green	Green	Green	Green
	C19: Provide support and advice on the new Workplace Recycling Regulations, targeting key workplace sectors and waste service providers to increase stakeholder awareness and understanding.	Green	Green	Green	Green
	C20: Provide challenge and advice to water companies to ensure their investment programmes reduce the risks and impacts of their operations on the environment.	Amber	Amber	Amber	Red
	C21: Set the ambition for water quality improvements at a catchment scale to build collaboration and deliver prioritised action	Amber	Amber	Amber	Red
	C22: Respond to prioritised pollution incidents to minimise environmental harm.	Green	Green	Green	Green
	C23: Enhance our understanding of the drivers of pollution incidents across Wales to inform the integration of preventative actions into incident response.	Green	Green	Green	Green
	C24: Undertake investigation and enforcement action to minimise environmental harm	Green	Green	Green	Green
	C25: Strengthen ways of working with Local Authorities and third sector partners to maximise collective action on fly-tipping	Amber	Green	Amber	Green
CC	C26: Develop an understanding of user needs, experience, and opportunities for common messaging and mainstreaming evidence into decision-making to inform the Interim Report for SoNaRR 2025	Green	Green	Green	Green

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

## Synthesis of progress against the well-being objectives

Below is a synthesis of progress against the wellbeing objectives. A detailed summary of progress for each commitment can be found in Appendix 1.

**N.B.** For reporting purposes only, we have now moved the cross cutting commitment (C26) under WBO 1.

### WBO 1: Nature is Recovering (plus the cross cutting commitment)

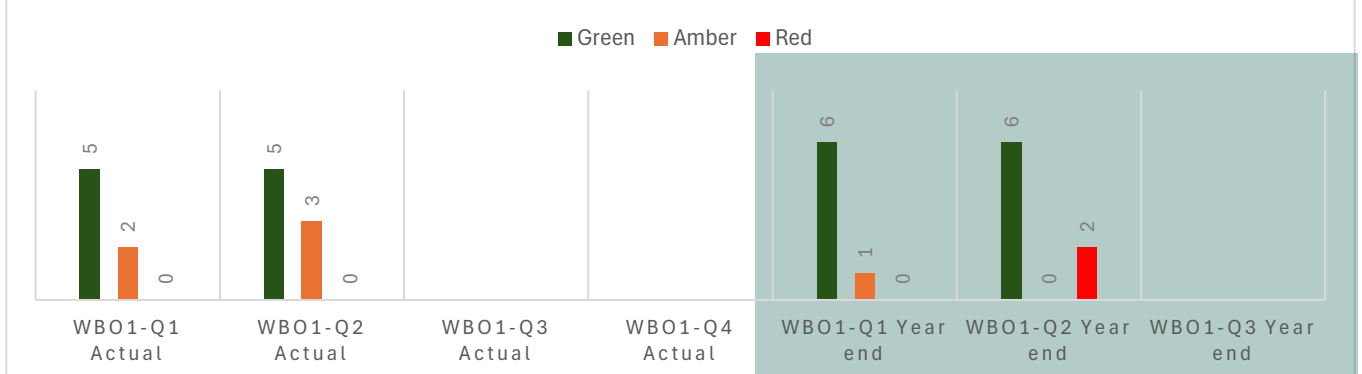
**Table 2: Dashboard for WBO1: Nature is recovering:**

2024/25 Business Plan commitment		Quarter 1		Quarter 2	
		Actual	Year-end	Actual	Year-end
WBO1: Nature is recovering	C1: Evaluate the NRW Nature Networks Programme to inform future investment for protected sites	Amber	Green	Amber	Green
	C2: Synthesise evidence to identify priorities for notification and renotification of sites contributing to the 30:30 target	Amber	Amber	Amber	Red
	C3: Develop an understanding of the intervention impact of 11 of the place-based Natur am Byth partnership programme projects to refine conservation delivery	Green	Green	Green	Green
	C4: Accelerating improvements to the condition of the Marine Protected Area Network through robust monitoring and investigations, evidence, advice and working with others on project delivery	Green	Green	Green	Green
	C5: Accelerating action for nature’s recovery at a landscape scale through sharing our evidence and expertise with National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and other partners	Green	Green	Green	Green
	C6: Delivering multiple benefits and opportunities for nature, people and the rural economy through supporting Welsh Government in the development and implementation of the Sustainable Farming Scheme, providing evidence and expertise	N/A	N/A	Amber	Red
	C7: Implementing No Mow May, piloting new approaches to working with nature on the land and assets that we manage, identifying prioritised recommendations	Green	Green	Green	Green

**Table 3: Dashboard for Cross-cutting**

2024/25 Business Plan commitment		Quarter 1		Quarter 2	
		Actual	Year-end	Actual	Year-end
CC	C26: Develop an understanding of user needs, experience, and opportunities for common messaging and mainstreaming evidence into decision-making to inform the Interim Report for SoNaRR 2025	Green	Green	Green	Green

**Graph 5: WBO 1-Nature + Cross Cutting**  
(Quarterly performance - Actual and Year-end prediction)



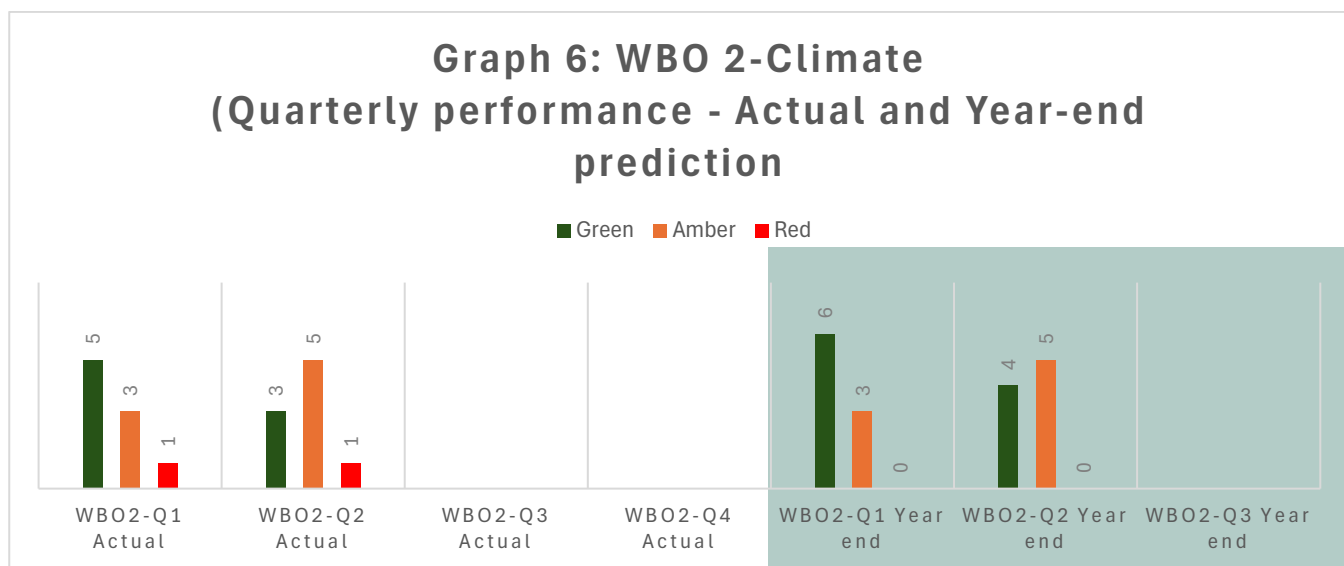
17. Through quarter two, overall 'actual' progress remains good. Of the eight commitments, the same five commitments that reported green in Q1 remain green in Q2. Three commitments are reporting amber for actual progress, with C1 and C2 remaining at amber for quarter two. C6 has now defined key deliverables for the remainder of the year following discussions with Welsh Government, however this is reporting amber on actual progress.
18. Year-end predication in Q2 has changed from the one commitment predicting amber in quarter one, to two now predicating red. The other six remain on target.
19. In this WBO, twelve identified risks have been mapped to current Risk Registers (Strategic; Natural Resources Management Business Group (NRMBG); Evidence Business Group; Marine and the Nature Networks Risk Register).
20. Some of the commitments benefit from external funding – either through the Welsh Government Nature Networks Programme or the National Lottery Heritage Fund and are not subject to the same pressures as Grant in Aid. However, we recognise that there is a risk this funding may be subject to change as a result of the Public Spending Review in Westminster and the separate multi-year review of funding priorities in Welsh Government.
21. C1 remains amber for this quarter with staff being diverted to NRW's role in advising on the Nature Networks Fund NLHF (National Lottery Heritage Fund) applications. This resource is back in place for Q3 and will work with Welsh Government on the steer on overall programme evaluation. This will enable us to finalise the project level evaluation methodology, and build the requirements into the project monitoring.
22. C2 remains amber on actual progress but is now predicting red at year-end (previously amber in Q1). Staff vacancies and competing priorities, including supporting the current SSSI notification process and other Biodiversity Deep Dive priority actions, are slowing the pace of delivery. Vacancies will need to be filled and we will need to make space/slow down other priority work e.g. Other Biodiversity Deep Dive actions to accelerate this commitment. The use of an external contractor is being considered. Reducing or slowing the number of new SSSI notifications would further support delivery of the review work (a slow down now, to then speed up in future).
23. C6 has now confirmed the commitment and key deliverables for the remainder of the year. This commitment is reporting amber for actual progress in Q2 and is predicting red at year-end. The anticipated volume of work that remains to be commissioned for scheme delivery and current delays on the scheme design (in order to understand the implications of changes and how they deliver for the outcomes) will leave a short timescale for design and development of any services required from NRW. Progress is heavily dependent on final design and delivery models as well as clarity on funding.



**WBO 2: Communities are resilient to climate change**

**Table 4: Dashboard for WBO 2: Communities are resilient to climate change:**

2024/25 Business Plan commitment		Quarter 1		Quarter 2	
		Actual	Year-end	Actual	Year-end
WBO2: Communities are resilient to climate change	C8: Invest in capacity building to enable delivery in 2024-25 and future expansion of the National Peatland Action Programme	Amber	Amber	Amber	Amber
	C9: Strengthen capacity and evidence informing spatial prioritisation to enable effective future restoration within marine and coastal habitats	Amber	Green	Green	Green
	C10: Deliver capital projects and sustain levels of protection for properties to reduce flood risk	Green	Green	Green	Green
	C11: Improve the Flood Warning Service and Telemetry System to deliver efficiencies and maintain continuity of service to customers	Red	Amber	Red	Amber
	C12: Review the prioritisation approach for flood asset maintenance and management to ensure our investment is risk based	Green	Green	Amber	Amber
	C13: Develop understanding, using insight to enhance pre-application processes related to statutory planning and permitting applications to facilitate industrial decarbonisation and reduction of landfill greenhouse gas emissions	Green	Green	Green	Amber
	C14: Enhance evidence, guidance and pre-application advice to improve the quality of submissions for planning permissions and permit/licence applications (Re; low carbon and carbon capture technologies)	Amber	Amber	Amber	Amber
	C15: Prioritise actions with the greatest cost benefit on carbon dioxide equivalent (CO2e)/ greenhouse gases (GHGs) to deliver our annual prioritisation within the Net Zero Plan	Green	Green	Amber	Green
	C16: Embed the use of carbon reduction tools and plans into high value contracts and frameworks to improve the quality of submissions.	Green	Green	Amber	Green



24. Through quarter two, overall ‘actual’ progress has slowed. Of the nine commitments, three commitments (down from five in Q1) are now reporting green in Q1, one of which has come back from amber in Q1. Five commitments are now reporting amber for actual progress: C12, C15 and C16 are changed from green in Q1 to amber and two remaining amber from Q1. C11 remains at red for actual progress.

25. Year-end predication in Q2 has changed, with five now reporting amber, up from three in Q1. The other four remain on target.

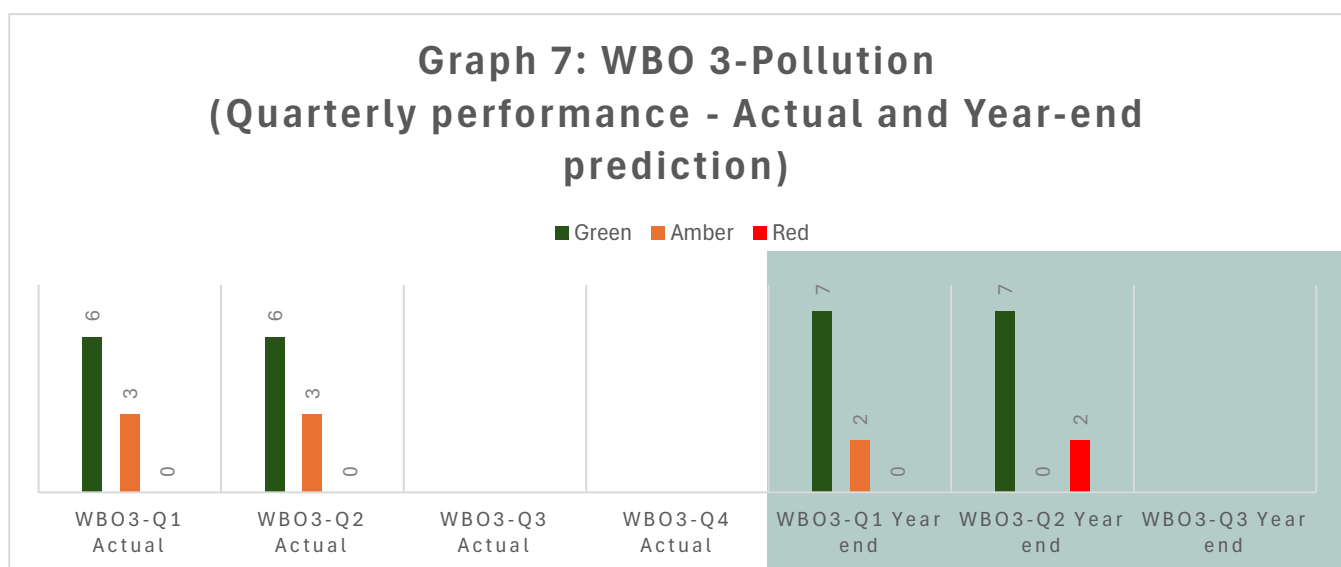
26. In this WBO, fourteen identified risks have been mapped to current Risk Registers (Strategic; Flood Risk Management Business Group; Flood Risk Management Capital Programme; Marine; Marine Programme and Procurement and Contracts).

27. C8 remains at amber for actual progress and for predicted year-end. The continued recruitment controls are impacting our ability to meet the 700ha target for this financial year and to build capacity for next year. This will mean a slow start to scaled up delivery in Q1 of 2025-26. Leadership Team and the Nature and Climate Emergency Capital Oversight Group are aware and a number of steps to mitigate these risks have been taken, including, extending existing posts. The remaining two deliverables under this commitment are reporting good progress.
28. C10, C11 and C12 relate to flood risk management. Of these, C10, remains on target, however C11 remains at red for actual progress (amber for year-end) and C12 is now reporting amber for actual and year-end prediction in Q2, up from green.
29. C11 remains at red for actual progress in Q2. The issue remains with the Telemetry Replacement Project in regard to the outstation rollout and system build workstreams. It is important to highlight that the Flood Warning Replacement Project is nearing closure and is at green. The issue in the telemetry project was subject to a deep dive at ET in July to bring things back on track. Delivery of the mitigation options will be required to ensure delivery and completion of the project in May 2025. This would include de-prioritisation of other Hydrology & Telemetry (H&T) work with associated impacts on service delivery. Scenarios are being developed by the H&T teams and will be considered by ET in November.
30. C12 is now reporting amber for actual progress and year-end prediction. This is changed from green in Q1. This is related to delayed delivery of the Assets Facing Change (AFC) Project due to resource challenges. Re-prioritisation of other works, would be required to mitigate the delayed start. Implementation of the Risk-Based Revenue Allocation Model (RBRAM) work is on track and is currently Green.
31. C13 is reporting green for actual progress however is predicting amber at year end. This is changed from Q1 and is due to an anticipated slow down in Q3 because of the increasing demands with stretched resources within the team to engage early and influence development options and permitting processes. The funding issue has been raised with WG sponsorship. An agreement with Net Zero Industry Wales that enables us to access funds or human resource is also being explored.
32. C14 remains at amber for actual progress and year-end prediction. There has been limited progress with guidance production due to staff vacancies. There is also a need to slow some of the Year 2 commitments in the End-to-End review of Marine Licensing commitments (to be agreed through appropriate stakeholder discussions and the Marine Service Level Steering Group). Recruitment to the vacant guidance role is required to increase progress.
33. C15 is reporting amber for actual progress in this quarter. There has been good progress with the ERIC Carbon Modelling Tool however, delivery of the climate literacy training was unsubscribed over the summer. Q3 sessions are now fully subscribed and the commitment is predicted to return to green.
34. C16 is reporting amber for actual progress in this quarter. Good progress has been made on the use of carbon calculators and the increased amount of carbon reduction plans. However, progress has slowed on the 'Well-being Impact' benefit deliverable due to the recruitment freeze. In order to make progress this year, a pilot will now be run using an up and coming procurement requirement that allows for carbon to be a social value (Well-being Impact).

## WBO 3: Pollution is minimised:

Table 5: Dashboard for WBO 3: Pollution is minimised

2024/25 Business Plan commitment		Quarter 1		Quarter 2	
		Actual	Year-end	Actual	Year-end
WBO3: Pollution is minimised	C17: Undertake farm inspections under Agriculture Pollution Regulations, in line with the enforcement sanctions policy to reduce pollution.	Green	Green	Green	Green
	C18: Undertake compliance visits at prioritised regulated sites to reduce pollution	Green	Green	Green	Green
	C19: Provide support and advice on the new Workplace Recycling Regulations, targeting key workplace sectors and waste service providers to increase stakeholder awareness and understanding.	Green	Green	Green	Green
	C20: Provide challenge and advice to water companies to ensure their investment programmes reduce the risks and impacts of their operations on the environment.	Amber	Amber	Amber	Red
	C21: Set the ambition for water quality improvements at a catchment scale to build collaboration and deliver prioritised action	Amber	Amber	Amber	Red
	C22: Respond to prioritised pollution incidents to minimise environmental harm.	Green	Green	Green	Green
	C23: Enhance our understanding of the drivers of pollution incidents across Wales to inform the integration of preventative actions into incident response.	Green	Green	Green	Green
	C24: Undertake investigation and enforcement action to minimise environmental harm	Green	Green	Green	Green
	C25: Strengthen ways of working with Local Authorities and third sector partners to maximise collective action on fly-tipping	Amber	Green	Amber	Green



35. Through quarter two, overall 'actual' progress has remained good. Of the nine commitments, the same six remain green and the same three remain amber from quarter 1.

36. Year-end predication in Q2 has changed, with two now reporting amber, up from two ambers on in Q1. The remaining seven remain on target.

37. In this WBO, twelve identified risks have been mapped to current Risk Registers (Regulation Business Group; Incident Management Business Group; Waste Regulatory Programme Reform; Sustainable Land and Water Sub Group).
38. It is important to note that many of the regulatory commitments included in the business plan are reporting green this quarter, reflecting the higher priority accorded these activities compared to others in the regulation service plan.
39. C20 remains amber in Q2 and is now predicting red for year-end. It is important to note that substantial work has been carried out on our response to the Ofwat Draft Determination which will have significant impact on water company delivery to 2030. Good progress has also been made with the publication of the drought plan guidance for water companies. The reason for reporting red is due to the delay in the establishment of the New Compliance Unit because of the pause in recruitment and NRW taking on new work in readiness for the Water Special Measures Bill. Options for what could be stopped or slowed have been explored to enable progress of the Operator Monitoring Audits (OMA) for Dwr Cymru Welsh Water and Hafren Dyfrdwy. The Sustainable Land and Water Sub Group are supporting a review of priorities in order to be able to deliver the OMA this year.
40. C21 remains amber in Q2 and is now predicting red for year-end. Although good progress has been made on the review of water company permits, work has been prioritised to investigate water quality failures of designated SAC waters over work to investigate failures of Water Framework Directive (WFD) standards. Competing demands, staff vacancies as well as uncertainty over long term funding is affecting the scale and pace of work. Due to staff vacancies the number of farm visits/agreed interventions on the Upper Wye has also not been as high as expected and a portion of the INNS and barrier removal work will; now take place in 2025/26.
41. In line with the Board Deep Dive into Pollution in February 2024, good progress has been made to understand the drivers of environmental pollution incidents across Wales, through mapping existing data sources and evaluating the evidence. We are building our collective understanding of current incident management processes and have identified areas for improvement.

**Appendix 1: Summary of progress for each commitment**

**Table 1: Wellbeing Objective 1 - Nature is Recovering** ET Owner: Ceri Davies

**By 2030 the change we want to see:** the decline in biodiversity is halted; effective regulation, habitat restoration and nature-based solutions contribute to increasingly resilient ecosystems enabling adaptation to change, benefiting people’s well-being.

**Area of Focus: Nature being protected**

**Step to take:** Improving the condition of features at protected terrestrial, marine and freshwater sites through using our advisory and regulatory tools, financial incentives and undertaking monitoring to evaluate effectiveness.

**C1: Commitment for 2024-25:** Evaluate the NRW Nature Networks Programme to inform future investment for protected sites. (Lead: Huwel Manley)

**Key deliverables:**

1. Increased understanding of the effectiveness and efficiency of activity delivered across the NRW Nature Networks programme through evaluation of 70% of current and previous activity by end of Q2 to establish the baseline.
2. Increased effectiveness of future NRW Nature Network’s activity through identification of priorities and development of approaches to delivery by end of Q3 (informed by outcomes of deliverable 1).

**Next step for 2025-26:** Prioritise actions which have the greatest impact on the condition of SSSI features.

<b>C1: Latest position (to end of September):</b>	Q2	Anticipated Year end
<p>We are not where we wanted to be on this at the end of September: we are Amber.</p> <p>For KD1: We have commenced evaluating the capital works delivered on SSSI April 2021-March 2024, we have not met the 70% target. Further data collection on a structured random sample of 48 SSSIs has been undertaken, (to complete Q4). Staff capacity brought in to support programme evaluation was diverted in Q2 to concentrate on servicing NRW’s role in advising on Nature Networks Heritage Fund applications, this is now available in Q3 to work with WG on scoping the wider Nature Networks programme evaluation. There’s uncertainty around WG’s intentions evaluating the Nature Networks Programme, meetings are scheduled with WG to progress this.</p> <p>For KD2: The marine elements of Nature Networks are already developing suite of Phase 2 and new projects for funding/support in 2025 onwards. Terrestrial Nature Networks are holding a planning meeting in Q3 to review.</p> <p>This commitment is anticipated to be Green at the end of the financial year. The pathway to Green is further planning and evaluation work in Q3 and Q4 for terrestrial and the work by Marine on their forward plan. The steer on overall programme evaluation from WG anticipated Oct/Nov Q3, will help finalise project level evaluation methodology and enable any additional requirements to be built into what’s already being undertaken to complete by March 25 and inform the future funding round.</p>	<b>Amber</b>	<b>Green</b>

**Step to take:** Extending the protection and management of at least 30 per cent of land, freshwater and sea for nature through identifying opportunities to enlarge and better connect the series of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

**C2: Commitment for 2024-25:** Synthesise evidence to identify priorities for notification and renotification of sites contributing to the 30:30 target. (Lead: Ruth Jenkins)

**Key deliverables:**

1. Increased the understanding of the extent and connectivity of the current SSSI network through completing an assessment of all sites by end of Q3.
2. Increased advice to accelerate notifications and re-notifications through the publication of the SSSI Notification Handbook.
3. Increased the effectiveness of the allocation of investment for delivering an enhanced notification programme through the delivery of a costed programme based on evidence from KD1 and KD2.

**Next step for 2025-26:** Prioritise opportunities for notification of SSSIs and the use of other measures outside of the SSSI series.

**C2: Latest position (to end of September):**

We are not where we wanted to be on this at the end of September: we are Amber.

For KD1: We have been developing the scope of the work needed to complete a review the SSSI series. We have been in discussions with WG and external parties to finalise the proposal. We have not finalised the scope of the work needed to undertake the review and increase the understanding of the extent and connectivity of the current SSSI series.

For KD2: We have been seeking, and receiving approval, from the Protected Sites Technical Group on the approach for carrying out the revision of the guidance for undertaking SSSI notifications. The Expert Group call, required through the OGN001 process, is currently active. We anticipate having the task and finish group established by the end of October.

For KD3: Our main area of progress has been to review of past notifications. This is enabling us to understand the base and range of time and costs, not only by the area of a SSSI notification, but also by the number of owner/ occupiers involved. This KD is reliant on KD1 and KD2. There are staff vacancies and competing priorities which are slowing the pace of delivery.

This commitment is anticipated to be Red at the end of the financial year. This commitment was Amber at the end of Q1 and is now Red at the end of Q2. The primary reason for this is due to the staff vacancies which we have been unable to fill because of the pause on recruitment which is now known to remain vacant until at least Q4 if not later. This along with competing priorities, including supporting the current SSSI notification process and other Biodiversity Deep Dive priority actions which are slowing the pace of delivery. The Case for Change outcomes may change the pace of delivery of this work depending on the final proposals and the speed of implementation, but this now looks likely to be later than expected. The pathway to Green for this work requires the vacancies to be filled and making space, slowing down, in other priority work e.g. Other Biodiversity Deep Dive actions, to move this forward. The use of an external contractor is being considered. Reducing or slowing the number of new SSSI notifications would further support delivery of the review work (a slow down to then speed up).

Q2	Anticipated Year end
Amber	Red

**Step to take:** Protecting species at the greatest risk of extinction through using our advisory and regulatory tools, working in partnership and monitoring to evaluate effectiveness.

**C3: Commitment for 2024-25:** Develop an understanding of the intervention impact of 11 of the place based Natur am Byth partnership programme projects to refine conservation delivery. (Lead: Huwel Manley)

**Key deliverables:**

1. Increased understanding of the effectiveness of the 11 Natur am Byth place-based projects through testing the impact measurement framework and refining the product.

2. Increased the skills of all relevant programme staff through the delivery of Species Recovery Assessment training (to prepare for full scale review of species recovery targets in 25/26) (completed by Q2).
3. Increased understanding of the 67 Natur am Byth target species through the completion of the review of all ecological monitoring plans.

**Next step for 2025-26:** Within the Natur am Byth partnership programme, refine conservation interventions to those with the greatest impact on the 67 target species.

**C3: Latest position (to end of September):**

We are where we wanted to be on this at the end of September: we are Green.

For KD1: Our main area of progress has been creating a monitoring and evaluation toolkit to support Natur am Byth partnership staff measure the impact of their activities with local communities, volunteers and target audiences (people). Training has been provided to all Natur am Byth staff on undertaking evaluation of nature connectedness, wellbeing and skills development.

For KD2: Our main area of progress has been partnership staff working with our independent evaluation contractor to undertake further review of baseline scores for some target species. Confidence in baseline assessment scores for all 67 species is vital to the programme mid-term species recovery evaluation that is scheduled for autumn 2025.

For KD3: Our main area of progress has been Natur am Byth partnership staff putting their ecological monitoring plans into action.

This commitment is anticipated to be Green at the end of the financial year. The pathway to Green for this is continuing to use the Natur am Byth Impact Measurement Framework to support the 30+ partnership staff and contractors capture their progress against agreed targets. Key to this is gathering metrics against the 'measurable benefits' outlined for all projects within the programme and capturing community impact from engagement activities.

Q2	Anticipated Year end
Green	Green

## Area of Focus: Nature being restored

**Step to take:** Accelerating improvements to the condition of the Marine Protected Area Network through robust monitoring and investigations, evidence, advice and working with others on project delivery.

**C4: Commitment for 2024-25:** Consolidate understanding of the condition of features of Welsh only marine SACs and SPAs to inform prioritisation. (Lead: Rhian Jardine)

**Key deliverables:**

1. Increased advice to support improvement of the management of marine SACs and SPAs through updating 12 out of 19 conservation advice packages.
2. Increased understanding into declines in specific species and habitats through undertaking investigations under the Marine Nature Networks programme, setting out findings and recommendations in a series of reports.

**Next step for 2025-26:** Prioritise actions within Welsh only marine SACs and SPAs, targeting those with the potential to have the greatest impact on feature condition.

**C4: Latest position (to end of September):**

We are where we wanted to be on this at the end of September: we are Green.

For KD1: Our main area of progress has been to continue to write and review the new conservation packages. Seven packages are now in final draft format including the package for one of our largest sites. We are anticipating all new conservation advice packages to be in final draft format by the end of January 2025.

For KD2: Our main area of progress has been finalising data collection and moving on to reporting.

Q2	Anticipated Year end
Green	Green

This commitment is anticipated to be Green at the end of the financial year. The pathway to Green for this is continue progressing these projects at the existing resource level.

**Step to take:** Accelerating action for nature's recovery at a landscape scale through sharing our evidence and expertise with National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and other partners.

**C5: Commitment for 2024-25:** Integrate nature recovery evidence into the proposed new National Park process and management of existing AONBs and National Parks to improve decision making for nature. (Lead: Rhian Jardine)

**Key deliverables:**

1. Increased our advice on nature recovery action through the designation of a new National Park via the public consultation on the proposed boundary and final designation recommendations.
2. Increased the amount of advice on opportunities to integrate actions to address the nature and climate emergency into management plans of National Parks and AONBs through a refresh of the Designated Landscapes Management Plan Guidance.
3. Increased knowledge of the effectiveness of prioritised action through supporting delivery of the initial recommendations of the 30:30 Designated Landscapes Expert Group for Wales.

**Next step for 2025-26:** Provide recommendations to Government on the designation of a new National Park including how a National Park can better deliver for nature recovery in the area and establish processes to track improvements.

**C5: Latest position (to end of September):**

We are where we wanted to be on this at the end of September: we are Green.

For KD1: We have completed the Evaluation Areas assessment and the Candidate Area for a new National Park. These are critical components of evidence. In Q3 we will be consulting on the Candidate Area along with its evidence.

For KD2: Management Plan guidance has been written to help inform work on the emerging Management Plans helping ensure focus on nature recovery and climate.

For KD3: We have worked with Tirweddau Cymru to realign strategic posts to help coordinate delivery of 30x30 including baseline data on nature in Designated Landscapes to inform development of Action Plans for Nature Recovery linked to NRM Management Plan Guidance.

We have not progressed worked on Benefits of Nature Report to inform the National Park Designation project. We requested Gillespies to pause work to focus on completing the Evaluation Report and Candidate Area boundary to be consulted in Autumn and taken forward Q3.

This commitment is anticipated to be Green at the end of the financial year.

Q2	Anticipated Year end
Green	Green

## Area of Focus: Nature is respected and valued in decision making by

**Step to take:** Delivering multiple benefits and opportunities for nature, people and the rural economy through supporting Welsh Government in the development and implementation of the Sustainable Farming Scheme, providing evidence and expertise.

**C6: Commitment for 2024-25:** Provide evidence and expertise to inform the development of the Welsh Government Sustainable Farming Scheme (SFS) and identify with Welsh Government what support services may be required. (Lead: Ruth Jenkins)



**Key deliverables:**

1. By end Q2 we will have worked with WG to embed the delivery of the SFS Universal Actions against NRW's three well-being objectives.
2. By end Q3 we will have worked with WG to develop a plan to have appropriate and proportionate mechanisms in place for licensing, consenting and permitting in relation the SFS Universal Actions.
3. By end Q4 we will have worked with WG to understand and have developed a plan in relation to NRW support services (including evidence requirements) in relation to delivering the SFS and minimising risks identified within NRW.

**Next step for 2025-26:** Develop the delivery model for NRW to support the Sustainable Farming Scheme.

**C6: Latest position (to end of September):**

We are not where we wanted to be on this at the end of September: we are Amber.

For KD1: We provided NRW technical advice to support WG in relation to the development of the Universal Scheme Actions, which is due to launch in 2026. We continue to advise and work with WG on the development and preparedness for implementation including woodland management and SSSI elements of the scheme working through our internal and WG governance to deliver against the revised timeline.

For KD2: We have reviewed each of the proposed Universal Actions to establish where NRW will need to deliver a consenting or permitting service. Our focus has been on reducing the need for individual permissions whilst ensuring regulatory outcomes are met. We have not completed these analyses as we require WG to finalise the Universal Actions before this work can be concluded which is expected in Q3.

For KD3: We worked with WG on understanding NRW's role in supporting the delivery of the SFS and its relationship to our statutory duties. This commitment is anticipated to be Red at the end of the financial year. We are anticipating the volume of work that remains to be commissioned for scheme delivery. The case for change as it stands will have an impact. Delays on the scheme design due to further important collaboration with others and the implications of these changes and how they deliver for the outcomes will leave a short timescale for design and development of implementation including scaling up any services required. The pathway to Green for this is heavily dependent on final design and delivery models as well as clarity on funding.

Q2

Amber

Anticipated  
Year end

Red

**Area of Focus: NRW as an exemplar nature positive organisation**

**Step to take:** Ensuring nature's protection and recovery is integrated into NRW's financial and business decisions through applying the lessons learnt from others on effective tools and frameworks.

**C7: Commitment for 2024-25:** Implementing No Mow May, piloting new approaches to working with nature on the land and assets that we manage, identifying prioritised recommendations. (Lead: David Letellier)

**Key deliverable:**

1. Decreased the amount of mowing on NRW flood risk management assets through, (a) 70% of assets not mown during No Mow May, (b) identification of alternative approaches to reduce mowing and work with nature, initiating pilots at key flood risk management assets (number to be determined).

**Next step for 2025-26:** Implementing revised programme.

**C7: Latest position (to end of September):**

Q2

Anticipated  
Year end

We are where we wanted to be on this at the end of September: we are Green.

For KD1: After the practical reduction in mowing regimes in May 2024 (Q1), we have now been reviewing this with a view to making the necessary changes to the Operational Guidance Note (OGN) should there be any.

This commitment is anticipated to be Green at the end of the financial year. We will continue to finesse the OGN in readiness for next May and continue to explore new ways of working internally and externally.

Green

Green

## Table 2: Wellbeing Objective 2: Communities are resilient to climate change

ET Owner: Sarah Jennings

**By 2030 the change we want to see:** sustained action on the causes, risks and impacts of climate change means nature and people are enabled and empowered to adapt, alleviating the effects on people's well-being.

### Area of Focus: Nature based solutions being widely adopted

**Step to take:** Restoring peatland through the National Peatland Action Programme (NPAP) working with delivery partners, including on the land in our care using a range of advisory and regulatory tools, financial incentives and undertaking monitoring to evaluate effectiveness

**C8: Commitment for 2024-25:** Invest in capacity building to enable delivery in 2024-25 and future expansion of the National Peatland Action Programme. (Lead: Ruth Jenkins)

#### Key deliverables:

1. Increased the area of damaged peatland being restored across Wales by 15% (from a baseline of 600ha to roughly 700ha).
2. Increased the effectiveness of our input into the land use planning system, to reduce the negative effect of development on peatland through the production of an NRW policy position on Planning Policy Wales Edition 12 (to effect change in 2025/26).
3. Increased the development of shovel ready peatland restoration projects by increasing the funding available through our competitive development grant by 100%.

**Next step for 2025-26:** Expand area of peatland restoration and other enabling priorities in the National Peatland Programme.

#### C8: Latest position (to end of September):

We are not where we wanted to be on this at the end of September: we are Amber.

For KD1: Restoration efforts are underway on land managed by NRW, as well as land managed by our trusted partners and private landowners. We are making progress on our top priority sites (Cefn Croes and Hafod Elwy). We are supporting direct delivery projects with landowners through various funding mechanisms, including Section 16 Land Management Agreements, Strategic Allocated Funding, and Competitive Development and Direct Delivery Grants. We have not been able to bring additional staff to support the team.

For KD2: We have been developing our position on how we will respond to development planning applications involving peat soils and peatland habitats. We have not yet fully operationalised our position.

For KD3: We have allocated the competitive development grant and doubled the funding available to £200K. Once the shovel ready restoration plan is in place, options to progress to restoration action include our follow-on competitive Delivery Grant (£50K-£250K). Who has been awarded this grant will be available on NRW's website once all applicants have accepted their offers.

Q2

Amber

Anticipated  
Year end

Amber

This commitment is anticipated to be Amber at the end of the financial year. One of our primary goals for this year was to recruit staff for the new teams, but a combination of the case for change and the recruitment freeze has prevented this. This has impacted our ability to deliver and to invest in capacity building. This issue is being addressed through existing NRW governance channels. We have now extended existing staff in post. The pathway to Green will be realised once we start recruiting for roles in the upscaled structure.

**Step to take:** Stimulating restoration of marine and coastal habitats such as saltmarsh, sand dunes, sea grass and native oyster reef through working with delivery partners, using a range of advisory and regulatory tools, financial incentives and undertaking monitoring to evaluate effectiveness.

**C9: Commitment for 2024-25:** Strengthen capacity and evidence informing spatial prioritisation to enable effective future restoration within marine and coastal habitats. (Lead: Ruth Jenkins)

**Key deliverables:**

1. Increased the amount of advice to external partners by consulting on and publishing guidance on marine and coastal restoration projects (by end of Q1).
2. Increased the evidence base to support decision making on restoration project locations by refining opportunity maps for seagrass and native oyster (by end Q4).

**Next step for 2025-26:** Work with others to enable effective restoration in the most suitable marine and coastal habitat locations.

**C9: Latest position (to end of September):**

We are where we wanted to be on this at the end of September: we are Green.

For KD1: We have developed a piece of guidance aimed at supporting partners developing marine and coastal restoration projects. Due to a lack of staff (including sickness), we have not finalised the guidance or been able to begin consultation of the guidance in Q2 ahead of publication, however the key member of staff is now back at work and will be progressing this deliverable as a priority.

For KD2: Refined maps have been developed for seagrass and oysters. We have not yet let a contract to further refine maps due to staff issues, however the work is picking up pace again now.

This commitment is anticipated to be Green at the end of the financial year. The pathway to Green for this is to reprogramme the timings of delivery of aspects of this work. Significant progress has already been made (drafting guidance; developing initial maps and drafting a specification) and it is expected that we will achieve the deliverables by the end of Q4.

Q2	Anticipated Year end
Green	Green

## Area of Focus: The risks of climate change being managed and adapted

**Step to take:** Reducing the risk to life from flooding to people and communities from main rivers, reservoirs and the sea, through the delivery of flood alleviation schemes.

**C10: Commitment for 2024-25:** Deliver capital projects and sustain levels of protection for properties to reduce flood risk. (Lead: Jeremy Parr)

**Key deliverables:**

1. Decreased the flood risk to 814 properties in Newport, through the completion of the work on the Stephenson Street Flood Alleviation Scheme.
2. Sustained flood protection to 800 properties through non-routine capital maintenance of existing assets/defences.

**Next step for 2025-26:** Deliver prioritised capital works to reduce flood risk in line with programme priorities.

**C10: Latest position (to end of September):**

We are where we wanted to be on this at the end of September: we are Green.

For KD1: The project is progressing well and remains on track to reduce flood risk to properties in Newport by January 2025. In the last month, a significant project risk has been addressed with works around a DCWW asset progressing and completing. The project is now approaching its final stages although a significant amount of reinstatement and landscaping works are planned to continue into 2025. For KD2: Maintenance works delivered through our Capital Programme have ensured that flood assets continue to sustain levels of protection in locations including; Porth, Llandovery, Peterstone, Llangennech, West Pill and Windmill. These works have benefitted 317 properties to date. Our current programme indicate we will benefit 825 properties through capital maintenance works by end of the year.

This commitment is anticipated to be Green at the end of the financial year. The pathway to Green for this commitment is for the projects highlighted to continue to programme and not realise any risks which delay delivery of outcomes.

Q2	Anticipated Year end
Green	Green

**Step to take:** Reducing the risk to life from flooding through issuing flood warnings that meet the changing needs of communities and maintaining and improving the 24/7 Flood Warning Service

**C11: Commitment for 2024-25:** Improve the Flood Warning Service and Telemetry System to deliver efficiencies and maintain continuity of service to customers. (Lead: Jeremy Parr)

**Key deliverables:**

1. Sustained the operational flood warning service offered to 139,000 properties through the delivery of the new flood warning system (by end of Q2) (withdrawing from the Environment Agency managed service).
2. Sustained delivery to all customers of telemetry data through migrating to the new data portal (by end of Q3).

**Next step for 2025-26:** Evolve the Flood Warning Service, delivering enhancements, further efficiencies and improvements for customers.

**C11: Latest position (to end of September):**

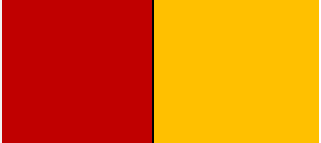
We are not where we wanted to be on this at the end of September: we are Red.

For KD1: Our new Flood Warning Information Service for Wales (FWISfW) went live on 17 July. It has since been used to successfully issue Flood Alerts and Flood Warnings for river and coastal flooding.

For KD2: The Telemetry Replacement Project continues to make progress. There are 4 workstreams. 2 of the workstreams (Live data and communications platform) are making good progress and on track to deliver for the planned project completion at the end of May 2025. The Outstation Rollout workstream is at Red status due to the capacity within the Hydrometry & Telemetry (H&T) teams to deliver the rollout programme within the timeframe of the project. The project must complete by 30 June 2025 to ensure the new system is ready before NRW vacates Rivers House. The Telemetry System workstream (main system build) is currently Amber due to delays in the configuration work and factory acceptance testing which emerged during August and are now starting to impact user acceptance testing. Our supplier EMR have brought in additional resource to support the project manager but they have lost specialist technical resource from their company. We are working closely with them to get the workstream back on track. H&T teams have been trying to recruit into the 2 FTA roles and have been unsuccessful in securing appointments (one admin support level role has been recruited to try to provide backfill support capacity to one of the teams). The Project Board have decided to stop further work on recruitment and move to implementing other mitigations detailed in the Exception Report which will mainly focus on prioritising the work over other work, and accepting the

Q2	Anticipated Year end
Red	Amber

resulting impacts on other H&T service delivery, which of course itself carries organisational risk. This commitment is anticipated to be Amber at the end of the financial year due to the Telemetry Replacement Project - Outstation Rollout and Telemetry System Build workstreams. The deliver mitigation options to ensure delivery of the outstation rollout workstream and completion of the project in May 2025, scenarios are being developed and will be considered through the required governance routes.



**Step to take:** Reducing the risk to life from flooding through managing our flood assets and infrastructure for current and future flood risk and planning for change through maintaining and adapting the flood assets and infrastructure we are accountable for.

**C12: Commitment for 2024-25:** Review the prioritisation approach for flood asset maintenance and management to ensure our investment is risk based. (Lead: Jeremy Parr)

**Key deliverables:**

1. Increased the effectiveness and efficiency of the allocation of routine flood maintenance revenue through the implementation of the new Risk-Based Revenue Allocation Model (RBRAM).
2. Increased the effectiveness and efficiency of the allocation of flood asset investment through the delivery of the Assets Facing Change (AFC) Project.

**Next step for 2025-26:** Develop the strategies and tools required to inform the long-term response to the need for flood asset adaptation.

**C12: Latest position (to end of September):**

We are not where we wanted to be on this at the end of September: we are Amber. For KD1: The new allocation model continues to be embedded. To date, 23,070 hours of maintenance effort have been recorded against 6,742 completed actions. The data is helping to improve the assumptions built into the RBRAM methodology which will improve the accuracy of plans in future years. Analysis shows that only 1,473 properties have benefitted from 100% of the maintenance needs being undertaken on assets they benefit from this year, although 60,170 properties have benefitted from at least 60% of the maintenance work being undertaken. 3,953 properties sit behind flood defences where none of the maintenance needs have been delivered. It's important to note that this data is only indicative as the data being utilised is still improving as the new ways of working get embedded. For KD2: Work continues on the initiation of this project work however resource challenges has delayed progress. Refinement of the project scope and the plan for this initial phase of works is ongoing with proposals aiming to be assured by relevant business stakeholders by the end of October. We have not commenced the analysis work by this stage in the year as previously planned due to resource challenges and unexpected staff absence. It's anticipated that planned works can still be delivered by the end of this financial year, with some re-prioritisation of other works, but there are uncertainties with that, so it is Amber. This commitment is anticipated to be Amber at the end of the financial year. The pathway to Green is for the Assets Facing Change work to initiate, with a business assured scope agreed, by the end of October. This will allow analysis work to take place over the coming months and deliver the required outcomes by year end. This area of works is likely to take place through multiple years and therefore this year's ambition relates to the initial analysis work being undertaken. This is classed Amber because the work has been delayed and yet to start. Implementation of the RBRAM work is on track and is currently Green.

Q2	Anticipated Year end
Amber	Amber

**Step to take:** Stimulating adoption of alternative low carbon and carbon capture technologies in industry through providing specialist advice and guidance to inform planning permission and/or permit applications.

**C13: Commitment for 2024-25:** Develop understanding, using insight to enhance pre-application processes related to statutory planning and permitting applications to facilitate industrial decarbonisation and reduction of landfill greenhouse gas emissions. (Lead: Nadia De Longhi)

**Key deliverables:**

1. Increased understanding of the constraints to decarbonisation through engagement with all the highest carbon industries in Wales to inform advice and action.
2. Reduced the proportion of low carbon and carbon capture applications being rejected, through providing specialist pre-application advice to at least 10 projects (anticipating 6 submissions in 2024/25).
3. Decreased the amount of landfill gas released directly from landfill through delivery of the key priorities of the Landfill Emissions Reduction Project.

**Next step for 2025-26:** Implement changes to planning and permitting processes in relation to alternative low carbon and carbon capture technologies.

**C13: Latest position (to end of September):**

We are not where we wanted to be on this at the end of September: we are Amber.

For KD1: We have been actively engaging with key industrial players, specifically Tata Steel and Uniper, to address constraints in the permission-giving process for their decarbonization projects. This engagement has revealed a complex, multi-faceted area of work with challenges that extend beyond NRW's control. To navigate these challenges, we recognise the need for further collaboration with grant-giving authorities. Our aim in this engagement is twofold: To ensure that final investment decision timescales are manageable for project developers; To align regulatory processes with funding cycles and government decarbonisation targets.

For KD2: Pre-application discussions have been initiated or planned with several companies regarding innovative energy and carbon capture projects: Uniper: New power station with carbon capture; Hybont: Hydrogen production; Dolphyn: Marine hydrogen production; RWE: Changes to Milford Haven CO2 ambitions; Lanzatech: Modified plans for ethanol production from CO2. We have provided information to the UK government's Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) to support investment decisions.

In total, we have engaged in 5 pre-application discussions during Q2, covering a range of decarbonisation and alternative energy production projects. These discussions demonstrate the increasing diversity and complexity of projects requiring our expertise and input.

For KD3: We have continued to deliver against the programme of Landfill Gas Audits at a number of landfill sites. These have in some cases worked alongside our other compliance efforts to deliver significant improvements at some high profile sites. Further audits are planned for the rest of the year, and we expect the project to continue to be successful despite current vacancies with the team.

This commitment is anticipated to be Amber at the end of the financial year. Ensuring that NRW has the resources available to provide the technical expertise, to engage early and influence development options and permitting processes is a challenge. We have raised the issue of lack of additional funding with WG sponsorship, who are engaging with DESNZ, to support continuation of NRW focus in this area. We also have an agreement with Net Zero Industry Wales that enables us to access funds or human resource providing we can deliver decisions to a fixed timescale. Resources to complete some parts may be an issue for Q3.

Q2	Anticipated Year end
Amber	Amber

**Step to take:** Supporting the development of sustainable offshore and onshore renewable energy through our evidence, advice and regulation, building a common understanding of the standards required in the statutory planning and permitting processes.

**C14: Commitment for 2024-25:** Enhance evidence, guidance and pre-application advice to improve the quality of submissions for planning permissions and permit/licence applications. (Lead: Nadia De Longhi)

**Key deliverables:**

1. Increased the production of marine renewables guidance and evidence products, commencing 40%.
2. Increased completion of actions (75%) from the marine license review, to improve service user experience.
3. Maintained service levels for determining marine renewables permit applications at 95%.

**Next step for 2025-26:** Implement improvements to the marine licence service, advice and regulatory work; continuing delivery of priority evidence and guidance needs.

**C14: Latest position (to end of September):**

We are not where we wanted to be on this at the end of September: we are Amber.

For KD1: We have progressed approximately 45% of the high priority offshore renewable evidence needs. Examples include a PhD about to start on habitat creation as mitigation for fish, work with developers on tidal energy, collaboration on a Defra project on noise abatement and a contribution to a project on migratory fish movements. Due to staff vacancies, we have made limited progress with guidance production. Individual receptor specialists have made progress on a small number of key pieces of guidance of highest priority. These include Marine Mammal Management Units advice (in final draft) and Coastal Physical Process Guidance (complete). We have set the anticipated RAG status for March to Amber as we hope to fill the vacant posts.

For KD2: We have developed operational guidance and supporting substantial legislative reform in the marine function. We have progressed the Marine Licensing Handbook and are in advanced stages of the new Marine Conservation Zone operational guidance. We are progressing work to ensure that the Wales National Marine Plan is fully embedded into Marine Licensing decisions. We continue to engage with Defra, DESNZ and the Devolved Administrations on the Offshore Wind Environmental Improvement Package (OWEIP) which aims to facilitate strategic compensation for offshore wind developments, including the development of a Marine Recovery Fund (MRF). We have not yet begun work on our marine licence templates review, progressed with the Band 2 and Band 3 process review, nor progress with the marine licensing consultation review.

For KD3: This quarter, the Marine Licensing Team met 86% of service level agreed determination times for all licence types. For marine renewable applications, the team achieved 100% determination within service level agreements.

This commitment is anticipated to be Amber at the end of the financial year. For the End to End review of Marine Licensing commitments, we are anticipating slowing some of our Year 2 commitments, these will be agreed through stakeholder discussions and the Marine Service Level Steering Group. The items that are progressed this year, should realise some efficiencies, however, it's not expected to significantly offset the resource pressures in the Team. The pathway to Green for this is to recruit to the vacant guidance role over the coming months. However, there will be subsequent delays in developing the necessary guidance.

Q2	Anticipated Year end
Amber	Amber

**Area of Focus: NRW being an exemplar organisation for a carbon positive public sector**

**Step to take:** Strengthening our strategic approach to decarbonisation through developing and delivering an organisation wide net zero plan, building on the lessons learnt of partners.

**C15: Commitment for 2024-25:** Prioritise actions with the greatest cost benefit on carbon dioxide equivalent (CO2e)/ greenhouse gases (GHGs) to deliver our annual prioritisation within the Net Zero Plan. (Lead: Ruth Jenkins)

**Key deliverables:**

1. Increased understanding of whole life carbon estimates at both option and design stage of all capital construction projects through applying the Environment Agency ERIC Carbon Modelling Tool (CMT).
2. Increased understanding of the carbon footprint, at construction stage, of all capital construction projects above £1 million through applying the Environment Agency ERIC carbon calculator.
3. Increased number of staff achieving climate literacy accreditation from 30% to 50% of all NRW staff, through the delivery of the Climate Literacy Training Programme.

**Next step for 2025-26:** Expand delivery on priority actions within the Net Zero Plan.

**C15: Latest position (to end of September):**

We are not where we wanted to be on this at the end of September: we are Amber.

For KD1: 100% of all design scopes issued during Q2 by the Projects & Programme Delivery Team have requested completion and analysis of the ERIC Carbon Modelling Tool. Four design scopes were issued during the quarter and three of these included a request for the CMT. This equates to 75% compliance. The omitted request was an oversight and a new contract scope template has been developed to ensure that all Project Managers and Project Executives are prompted to include the CMT request.

For KD2: No projects have progressed into construction with a value >£1m.

For KD3: The FY 2024-25 tranche of climate literacy training has been procured with our suppliers. First sessions were undersubscribed and had to be cancelled. October sessions are fully subscribed.

This commitment is anticipated to be Green at the end of the financial year. The pathway to Green is full use of the Climate modelling tool in all projects and catching up on staff training through the rest of this year with an indication that training courses are now fully subscribed.

Q2	Anticipated Year end
Amber	Green

**Step to take:** Ensuring actions for climate are driven throughout our supply chains, grant programmes and land management agreements through inclusion in our procurement and funding frameworks.

**C16: Commitment for 2024-25:** Embed the use of carbon reduction tools and plans (CRP) into high value contracts and frameworks to improve the quality of submissions. (Lead: Ian Mowatt)

**Key deliverables:**

1. Increased the percentage of awarded purchase agreements where carbon reduction has been offered as a 'Well-being Impact' benefit.
2. Increased the utilisation of carbon calculators on all relevant framework agreements renewing from February 2024 by 50% (from 0). Actions developed for informing future specifications to reduce carbon emissions in future years.
3. Increased the percentage of: (a) conformant Carbon Reduction Plans received for NRW procurement contracts and frameworks above £5 million as a result of specialist NRW support provided. (b) Carbon Reduction Plans received for NRW procurement contracts and frameworks above £5 million.

**Next step for 2025-26:** Review the potential to extend the use of carbon reduction tools and plans into other funding frameworks.

**C16: Latest position (to end of September):**

Q2	Anticipated Year end



We are not where we wanted to be on this at the end of September: we are Amber.

For KD1: The role that would address this requirement (Procurement Team Leader - Strategy & Development) is held up by the recruitment freeze. As an interim measure to achieve the objective, we will be the running a pilot, using a procurement requirement that allows for carbon to be a Social Value (Well-being Impact) benefit. We have not been able to fill the vacant post that would specialise and oversee the work in this area and the Case for Change work itself has impacted on capacity and focus within the team.

For KD2: We have set a requirement for successful suppliers to use carbon calculators on the following framework agreements, MEICA and Criminal Litigation Framework and we then issued the guidance document on the establishment of a CRP, using a carbon calculator to baseline the starting position - agreed prior to award of contract.

For KD3: Minimum target achieved by way of the MEICA framework and the Water Management Consultancy Framework being awarded but we will look for opportunities to request Carbon Reduction Plans on relevant agreements >£5m. The Climate Change Team will provide support to the successful bidders as required.

This commitment is anticipated to be Green at the end of the financial year. The impacts of the Case for Change initiative and the recruitment freeze is causing concern. The pathway to Green for this is getting resource into the team and/or being able to identify at least one relevant requirement to which we can seek to request carbon benefits as part of a social value (well-being impact) benefit.

Amber

Green

### Table 3: Wellbeing Objective 3: Pollution is minimised

ET Owner: Gareth O'Shea

**By 2030 the change we want to see:** pollution is minimised through effective regulation and legislative reform, reducing harm to biodiversity and people's well-being, and driving the sustainable management and use of natural resources.

#### Area of Focus: Effective use of regulatory tools and approaches

**Step to take:** Ensuring the sectors we regulate, including illegal non-permitted activities, take effective action to control and reduce pollution and increase resource efficiency through the provision of advice and guidance that effectively sets out the standards required to ensure compliance.

**C17: Commitment for 2024-25:** Undertake farm inspections under Agriculture Pollution Regulations, in line with the enforcement sanctions policy to reduce pollution. (Lead: Nadia De Longhi)

#### Key deliverables:

1. Maintained the level of service for the number of compliance inspections under the Agriculture Pollution Regulations through completing 80% of the scheduled 821 (sites which are identified as those with higher risk activities).
2. Increased effectiveness and efficiency of compliance inspections through delivery of annual review.

**Next step for 2025-26:** Improve efficiency and effectiveness of compliance inspections under the Agriculture Pollution Regulations.

#### C17: Latest position (to end of September)

We are where we wanted to be on this at the end of September: we are Green.

For KD1: We delivered 194 Control of Agricultural Pollution Regulations inspections within Q2, well within our inspection target and on track to meet our annual target by end of March.

Q2

Green

Anticipated  
Year end

Green

For KD2: The inspection teams are now on their third quarter of the first full year of delivery. We continue to review our procedures and practices to learn lessons and improve our effectiveness and consistency in delivery. Additional regulatory requirements this August have required some additional focus and challenges and will likely initiate further enforcement actions in the short to medium term. This commitment is anticipated to be Green at the end of the financial year. We continue to review our regulatory and enforcement approach and remain confident that our approach is fully compliant with organisational enforcement and sanctions policy.

**C18: Commitment for 2024-25:** Undertake compliance visits at prioritised regulated sites to reduce pollution. (Lead: Martin Cox)

**Key deliverables:**

1. Maintained the level of service for category 1 and category 2 compliance breaches subject to further compliance effort (action or review) within 6 months at 95%.
2. Increased effectiveness and efficiency of compliance visits through delivery of annual review.

**Next step for 2025-26:** Improve efficiency and effectiveness of compliance visits.

**C18: Latest position (to end of September):**

We are where we wanted to be on this at the end of September: we are Green.

For KD1: We have continued to focus on permitted facilities where serious non-compliances have been identified and Category 1 and 2 breaches have been issued. We have undertaken further compliance effort within 6 months following all Category 1 and 2 permit breaches at Installation, Waste, Water Quality and Water Resources operated facilities.

For KD2: We are carefully monitoring delivery and adjusting workplans to ensure the highest priority work is delivered. This allows us to understand the gap between what is currently being delivered and the Regulatory Service Plan standards based on fully resourced capacity. Annual Compliance Reports have been produced for Industry and Waste and the recommendations will be implemented via Sub-Groups. The 2023 Annual Regulatory Report has been drafted with the aim that it will be published on our website in October.

This commitment is anticipated to be Green at the end of the financial year. Regulatory teams continue to focus on those poor performing sites ensuring a protective, restorative and enforcement response is determined for each Category 1 and 2 non-compliance identified.

Q2	Anticipated Year end
Green	Green

**Step to take:** Minimising pollution and waste through working collaboratively with industry and others to identify how legislation and Welsh Government policy need to change.

**C19: Commitment for 2024-25:** Provide support and advice on the new Workplace Recycling Regulations, targeting key workplace sectors and waste service providers to increase stakeholder awareness and understanding. (Lead: Nadia De Longhi)

**Key deliverables:**

1. Maintained the efficiency of our support and advice on the Workplace Recycling Regulations through (a) responding to queries within 10 days (percentage attained) and (b) evaluating enquires received and adapting support and advice.
2. Increased the awareness of the Workplace Recycling Regulations within our priority sectors through providing sector specific information and guidance to 20% of the workplaces and events (5,400 of the 27,000).

3. Establish the percentage of workplaces and events within our priority sectors that are found to be compliant with the Workplace Recycling Regulations at NRW compliance assessment.

**Next step for 2025-26:** Improve processes relating to the Workplace Recycling Regulations taking on customer and stakeholder feedback.

**C19: Latest position (to end of September):**

We are where we wanted to be on this at the end of September: we are Green.

For KD1: We have been managing enquiries received via the Workplace Recycling inbox efficiently. We received 15 enquiries relating to the Workplace Recycling Regulations during Q2. All 15 enquiries (100%) were responded to within 10 working days. As expected, enquiries are continuing to decrease as the Regulations become embedded.

For KD2: We have been increasing the awareness of the Workplace Recycling Regulations with a total of 9,362 workplaces and events during Q2. This has primarily targeted the accommodation sector with 454 businesses reached, as well as 258 businesses within the food services sector. We also raised awareness among the agricultural sector by publishing an article in Farmers Weekly Magazine with 8,500 readers.

For KD3: We have completed 172 assessments during Q2, with 124 (72%) found to be compliant and 48 (28%) found to be non-compliant. The majority of compliance assessments undertaken were within the food services sector including pubs, restaurants and takeaways, with a total of 98 assessments carried out. We also assessed compliance at 7 large events and venues, including agricultural shows, festivals and concert venues. We worked with event organisers to offer advice and guidance in the event planning stages to help improve compliance. This commitment is anticipated to be Green at the end of the financial year.

Q2	Anticipated Year end
Green	Green

**Step to take:** Protecting the environment and improving environmental performance of water companies through effective challenge of their investment programmes to secure action to improve.

**C20: Commitment for 2024-25:** Provide challenge and advice to water companies to ensure their investment programmes reduce the risks and impacts of their operations on the environment. (Lead: Ruth Jenkins)

**Key deliverables:**

1. Influenced an increase in investment by water companies in water quality improvements through supporting Ofwat in the scrutiny of Water Company Business Plans.
2. Increased the effectiveness of the three-water company's drought plans through: (a) publishing drought plan guidance by end of Q2 and (b) making recommendations on their draft drought plans through the public consultation. (Publication of final drought plans used as effectiveness measure in 2025-26).
3. Improved the performance of water companies through delivery of an Operator Monitoring Audit for Dwr Cymru Welsh Water and Hafren Dyfrdwy and completion of site audits of Sewage Treatment Works (STW) based on environmental risk.

**Next step for 2025-26:** Track and monitor performance of water companies to reduce the risks and impacts of their operations on the environment and ensure compliance.

**C20: Latest position (to end of September):**

Q2	Anticipated Year end

We are not where we wanted to be on this at the end of September: we are Amber.

For KD1: We have been responding to the Ofwat Draft Determination to inform their final decisions on the scale and pace of water company investment.

For KD2: In July, we published the drought plan guidance for water companies on how to develop their next round of drought plans incorporating feedback from the public consultation over the summer.

For KD3: We have developed the new Compliance Unit exploring options, which will be recruited in line with the process of the Case for Change. This deliverable is anticipated to be Red for the end of the financial year. Recruitment issues and new urgent work are the main reason for this.

This commitment is anticipated to be Red at the end of the financial year. We are anticipating slowing recruitment to the new Compliance Unit due to the ongoing freeze in recruitment in light of the Case for Change, as well as NRW taking on new work in readiness for the new Water Special Measures Bill. The pathway to Green for this is make an exception to allow recruitment to the new Compliance Unit.

Amber

Red

**Step to take:** Minimising pollution in highly protected and designated waters through identifying the actions required of a range of sectors.

**C21: Commitment for 2024-25:** Set the ambition for water quality improvements at a catchment scale to build collaboration and deliver prioritised action. (Lead: Ruth Jenkins)

**Key deliverables:**

1. Increased our knowledge and understanding of the causes of water body failure in Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) through the completion of 30% of outstanding investigations.
2. Increased the water quality in highly protected and designated waters by completing actions committed to as part of NRW's partnership projects (LIFE Programme, Nature and Climate Emergency Funds (NaCE)), with a minimum of 30 actions across 10 opportunity catchments in SACs.

**Next step for 2025-26:** Deliver prioritised collaborative action at a catchment scale.

**C21: Latest position (to end of September):**

We are not where we wanted to be on this at the end of September: we are Amber.

For KD1: We have completed the review of the 171 wastewater treatment works' permits for discharges into SAC river catchments and the initial permit variations by the end of July 2024 (as per our original commitment within the SAC rivers action plan, to review environmental permits for larger wastewater treatment works to regulate discharges containing phosphorus). This work is leading to changes that will significantly reduce the amount of phosphorus that can be discharged to the river environment.

For KD2: We have 39 SAC investigations nearing completion (26% of the total). We have not delivered as many of outstanding investigations of water body failures in SAC as planned.

For KD3: The overall water quality capital programme is at Green progress status. The NaCE programme has made considerable progress undertaking interventions work aimed at improving water quality in highly protected and designated waterbodies. Some projects are on Amber due to staff resource issues, but overall there has been significant delivery.

This commitment is anticipated to be Red at the end of the financial year. We have not delivered as many farm visits/agreed interventions on the Upper Wye as hoped and a portion of the INNS work and barrier removal work will now take place in 2025/26. We have not delivered the level of investigations intended and ongoing resources for investigations will be challenging in and beyond Q3 and 4. The

Q2

Anticipated  
Year end

Amber

Red

pathway to Green for this is early confirmation of extension of associated resource used for delivery, (contracts expire March 20 and there are some vacant posts), the impact on delivery on the Upper Wye Restoration project will cause delays over the remainder of the project timespan. The NaCE programme has made considerable progress undertaking interventions work aimed at improving water quality in highly protected and designated waterbodies. Slowing down of some projects has meant that we have picked up work elsewhere in the programme e.g. by bringing online the Nant Dowlais construction.

### Area of Focus: Incident response being risk-based

**Step to take:** Minimising harm from environmental pollution incidents through preparing for, and responding to priority incidents as a Category 1 responder.

**C22: Commitment for 2024-25:** Respond to prioritised pollution incidents to minimise environmental harm. (Lead: Lyndsey Rawlinson)

#### Key deliverables:

1. Maintained the level of service for the response to incidents initially categorised as 'High' within 4 hours at 95%
2. Increased effectiveness and efficiency of service through delivery of an annual review.

**Next step for 2025-26:** Implement improvements to service.

#### C22: Latest position (to end of September):

We are where we wanted to be on this at the end of September: we are Green.

For KD1: We have maintained a response to High level incidents and are currently at 93% for this target. While we have responded to all high level incidents in 4 hours, we have not been able to demonstrate this through reporting this quarter. We suspect too many incidents being initially categorised as high as well as workloads, resourcing issues are the main causes of why we have dropped in our performance. We are also seeing a significant increase in incidents being recorded from the previous years high of 10,845. We have recorded 7,934 incidents in FY 2024/25, which is higher than for the same time last year. Our work reviewing our pollution incident service will help us to address some of these issues.

For KD2: Our main area of progress has been in the development of a shift in our current position of asking customers if they require feedback to incidents. The reason behind this is to free up more resource on incident and other non incident work that will deliver benefits to minimising pollution. We will still provide targeted communications in our incident response and where appropriate seek and provide information to customers. We have a draft communications approach prepared and are looking have this approved in Q3. We estimate the instigation of this approach will save approximately 2-3 FTE's per annum.

This commitment is anticipated to be Green at the end of the financial year. The pathway to Green for this to continue key work packages in support of the WBO3 work being undertaken in relation to incident response and ensure that we continue to engage in key service areas and operational expertise to deliver the work packages in identifying the key changes we need to make to deliver more effective

Q2	Anticipated Year end
Green	Green

approaches in our incident response. We will look to communicate and embed those changes in Q4. Ensuring ongoing input and support from Business Groups and Service Leads under Regulation and Water is key to ensuring delivery.

**Step to take:** Minimising the harm from specific sectors and within specific geographic areas through using evidence to take action to improve compliance

**C23: Commitment for 2024-25:** Enhance our understanding of the drivers of pollution incidents across Wales to inform the integration of preventative actions into incident response. (Lead: Lyndsey Rawlinson)

**Key deliverables:**

1. Increased our knowledge and identified opportunities for improvements to processes, capabilities, and competencies through a review of current approaches and tools across 15 pollution areas.
2. Increased our knowledge of pollution incidents (incident numbers, types, locations, impacts and resource allocation) by producing a detailed analysis report (by end of Q2) and informing focus areas, strategies and actions by end of Q4.
3. Increased opportunities to integrate preventative action into the Incident Management Strategy through (a) development of an options paper and (b) decisions at NRW business groups on priorities.

**Next step for 2025-26:** Agree and implement the new incident management strategy.

**C23: Latest position (to end of September):**

We are where we wanted to be on this at the end of September: we are Green.

For KD1: Decision paper to Incident Management Business Group (IMBG) on stopping asking if people who report incidents want feedback. Development of communication plan to drive the decision into practice.

For KD2: Analysis of incident types to understand how current response guidance can change. Working with service leads we are looking to develop clear functional operational guidance in Q3 and embed in operational teams in Q4.

For KD3: IMBG decision on feedback and associated development of policy. This approach has served to benchmark the development of communications internally and externally.

This commitment is anticipated to be Green at the end of the financial year. The pathway to Green for this is develop and to set out clear functional guidance for operational teams and develop a series of area and functional engagement sessions in Q4 to deliver the changes in approach that will be driven by the guidance.

Q2	Anticipated Year end
Green	Green

**Step to take:** Minimising the harm from serious environmental crime through investigating incidents and taking strong and decisive action.

**C24: Commitment for 2024-25:** Undertake investigation and enforcement action to minimise environmental harm. (Lead: Martin Cox)

**Key deliverables:**

1. Maintained the level of service on the decision on an appropriate enforcement response within 3 months at 95%
2. Increased effectiveness and efficiency of service through delivery of the Annual Regulatory Report and Tackling Waste Crime quarterly report.

**Next step for 2025-26:** Implement improvements to service.

**C24: Latest position (to end of September):**

Q2	Anticipated Year end

<p>We are where we wanted to be on this at the end of September: we are Green.                  For KD1: This deliverable continues to be Green for Q2 (at 98.3%).                  For KD2: Our main area of progress has been completing the Tackling Waste Crime Q1 report and circulating this in Q2 as planned. The Q2 report is scheduled for Q3 2024/25.                  This commitment is anticipated to be Green at the end of the financial year. The pathway to Green for this is to maintain the current level of enforcement effort and closely monitor performance.</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p>Green</p>
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**Step to take:** Minimising the harm from illegal waste through taking action with local authorities and third sector partners to prevent fly tipping

**C25: Commitment for 2024-25:** Strengthen ways of working with Local Authorities and third sector partners to maximise collective action on fly-tipping. (Lead: Nadia De Longhi)

**Key deliverables:**

1. Improved ways of working on fly-tipping between NRW and partner agencies by publishing an updated Fly-tipping Protocol (by end of Q1) and trialling 1 local agreement (by end of Q3).
2. Increased the utilisation of Fly Tipping Action Wales (FtAW) surveillance equipment (from 4 to 5 Local Authorities) and the Mallard Service by Local Authorities (from 8 to 10), to encourage more enforcement outcomes.

**Next step for 2025-26:** Improve processes, tools and actions to prevent fly-tipping.

<b>C25: Latest position (to end of September):</b>	Q2	Anticipated Year end
<p>We are not where we wanted to be on this at the end of September: we are Amber.                  For KD1: We have been reviewing the additional survey responses gathered from stakeholders following the re-issuing of protocol survey on the NRW consultation hub and worked to finalise the draft document so that it is in a position to take to NRW Waste Sub Group and later WG &amp; WLGA for comment. We have not finalised the draft document yet because FtAW have had to prioritise work related to an independent review that WG have asked us to carry out of the programme - this has meant pausing work on the protocol during September to collate the information required for the supplier carrying out the review. Being one senior officer down in the team continues to impact on our ability to focus time on progressing the protocol work area but due to the importance of this area of work it is being prioritised over other work areas so we are confident of deliverable being Green at year end.                  For KD2: Our main area of progress has been further loans of our surveillance equipment to Local Authorities (LAs). Survey issued to LAs asking what they want included in face to face enforcement training being provided by the Mallard enforcement support membership and x2 face to face training sessions have been arranged - x1 in North Wales (March 2025) and x1 in South Wales (January 2025) - various online training courses also available free of charge to LAs via this membership.                  This commitment is anticipated to be Green at the end of the financial year. The pathway to Green for this is to continue to prioritise work on protocol in Q3 &amp; trial local agreement during Q4 on Gwent Levels. Recruiting to vacant G6 (subject to recruitment freeze constraints) would speed up work on protocol and local agreements.</p>	<p>Amber</p>	<p>Green</p>

**Table 4: Cross Cutting**

**Step to take:** Identifying opportunities to optimise the collective action and impact of the public sector through using SoNaRR and Area Statements to work with the public service boards, public health and local authorities.

... Involving different communities and sectors in our work, through applying behavioural insights to inform our approaches.

... Ensuring a diverse range of people are taking action for nature through sharing the vision and outcomes from Nature and Us to expand our networks and increase involvement

**C26: Commitment for 2024-25:** Develop an understanding of user needs, experience, and opportunities for common messaging and mainstreaming evidence into decision-making to inform the Interim Report for SoNaRR 2025. (Lead: Chris Collins)

**Key deliverables:**

1. Increased the knowledge amongst sector bodies and wider stakeholders of how to optimise collective action on nature, climate and pollution by publishing the Interim Report for SoNaRR 2025 (by end of Q3).
2. Increased our knowledge of user interaction with the Interim Report for SoNaRR 2025 by establishing an online monitoring tool and undertaking analysis.
3. Increased our understanding of user needs and support requirements for SoNaRR 2025 by undertaking interviews with 10 public sector bodies and wider stakeholders.

**Next step for 2025-26:** Integrate learning into the final SoNaRR 2025 report to enhance user experience, usage and impact.

**Latest position (to end of September):**

We are where we wanted to be on this at the end of September: we are Green.

For KD1: We have been drafting the content of the SoNaRR Interim report.

For KD2: The tool required for logging use of the interim report is in place. This cannot be progressed until after publication.

For KD3: In Q1, we said: engagement with stakeholders in key public bodies has taken place to increase understanding of how SoNaRR can support e.g. the One Health Agenda; National Statistics (ONS); support well-being and reporting cycles of the Future Generations Commissioners Office; and mainstream nature into economic planning with the Welsh Treasury. Initial conversations with the business community are underway via the UK Business and Biodiversity Forum. In Q2, we have had further conversations with Public Health Wales. This commitment is anticipated to be Green at the end of the financial year.

Q2	Anticipated Year end
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Green	Green
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## Annex 2 – Internal Performance Report

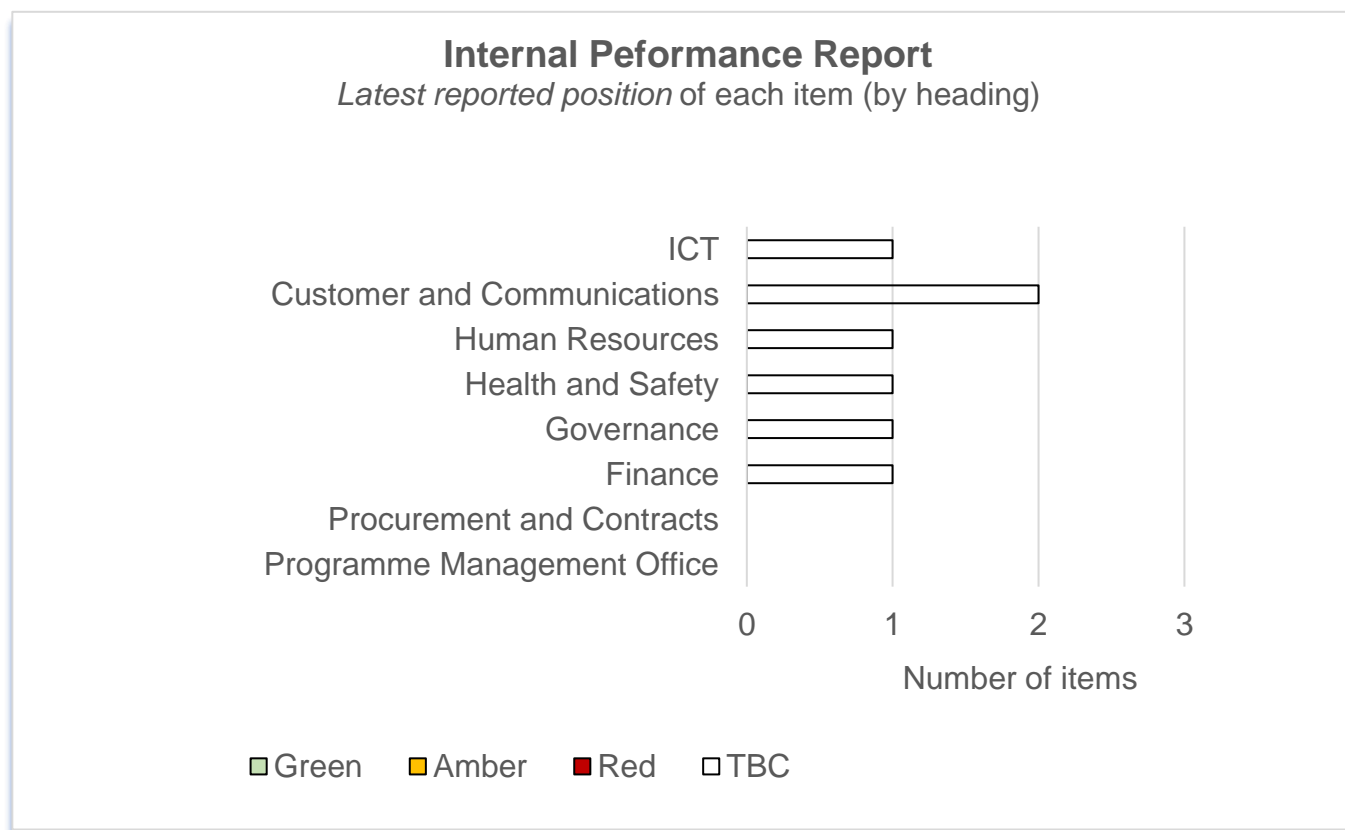
The following pages reflect a quarter end performance snapshot in relation to a number of key measures relating to the ‘health’ of our organisation.

### Summary

The performance position\* (at the end of the quarter two, September 2024) for the measures covered by this report is:

- Six green
- One amber
- None red

(see next page for detail)



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

## Measures to note

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

### Human Resources:

- **Sgwr's in place** (staff priorities and development agreement) is Amber at the end of this quarter, at 55% (at least 90% would be considered Green). Internal reminders are being issued around needing to complete these. Green is anticipated at year end.

Measure(s) around **Procurement and Contracts** and **Programme Management Office** will be added into this report during 2024/25.

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

## Remaining measures

*The remaining measures, i.e., green items, are reflected below.*

### Customer and Communications:

- **Access to Information requests** responded to within 20 days is Green for the quarter at 91%.
- **Complaints** responded to within service level is Green for the quarter at 94%.

### ICT:

- **Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) reported incidents** is Green at the end of the quarter with no such investigations ongoing and one incident reported to the ICO in the quarter. ICO response was no further action, as all correct action taken.

### Health and Safety:

- **Health & Safety Near Miss** reporting is Green at the end of the quarter, with 31 near misses reported for September compared with 27 for September last year. **Amber is anticipated at year end.**

### Governance:

- **Declarations of Interest** (where people working for us declare when their official and/or private interests may be perceived to conflict with NRW's work) is Green at 94% at the end of the quarter (at least 90% is considered green). Reminders have been issued to complete these. Green is anticipated at year end

### Finance:

- **Payments performance** to our suppliers remains Green at the end of the quarter at 97%. Green is anticipated at year end.

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