

Agenda

Title of meeting:	NRW Board Public Meeting
Date of meeting:	Wednesday 16th July 2025
Time of meeting:	14:00 – 17:00

Time	Item
Preliminary Matters	
14:00 (5 mins)	<p>Item 1. Open Meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome • Declaration of Interests • Explain conduct of meeting <p>Sponsor and Presenter: Sir David Henshaw (Chair)</p> <p>Summary: To NOTE any declarations of interest</p>
14:05 (5 mins)	<p>Item 2. Review Minutes and Action Log</p> <p>2A. Review Minutes from Public 21st May Meeting 2B. Review Minutes from Public 22nd May Meeting</p> <p>Sponsor and Presenter: Sir David Henshaw (Chair)</p> <p>Summary: To APPROVE the minutes of the previous meeting</p>
Setting the Scene	
14:10 (10 mins)	<p>Item 3. Update from the Chair</p> <p>Sponsor and Presenter: Sir David Henshaw (Chair)</p> <p>Summary: To NOTE the Chair's update to the Board</p>
14:20 (20 mins)	<p>Item 4. Report from the Chief Executive</p> <p>Sponsor and Presenter: Ceri Davies, Interim Chief Executive</p>

Summary: To NOTE the current position and update the Board on key activities

Paper Ref: 25-07-B08

Governance, Risk and Assurance

14:40
(20 mins)

Item 5. Update Reports of Committees and Forums

Sponsors and Presenters: Committee Chairs

- Audit and Risk Assurance Committee – 9th July (Verbal)
- Evidence Advisory Committee – No Meeting (Verbal)
- Finance Committee – 19th June

Paper ref: 25-07-B09

- Flood Risk Management Committee – 25th June

Paper ref: 25-07-B10

- Land Estate Committee – No Meeting (Verbal)
- People and Customer Committee – 18th June

Paper ref: 25-07-B11

- Protected Areas Committee – 3rd July (Verbal)

- Wales Land Management Forum

Paper ref: 25-07-B12

- Wales Fisheries Forum (Verbal)
- Wales Water Management Forum – 10th July (Verbal)
- National Access Forum for Wales (Verbal)

Summary: To NOTE the updates from the Board Committees and NRW Forums, both within and outside and meetings held

Delivering Our Plan

15:00
(20 mins)

Item 6. Finance Performance Report

Sponsor: Rachael Cunningham, Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Services

Presenter: Rob Bell, Head of Finance

Summary: To APPROVE the latest financial position

Paper Ref: 25-07-B13

15:20
(15 mins)

Break

15:35 (40 mins)	Item 7. Business Plan Performance Dashboard Quarterly Update Sponsor: Ceri Davies, Interim Chief Executive Presenters: Executive Team Summary: To SCRUTINISE the Quarter Report Paper Ref: 25-07-B14
16:15 (10 mins)	Item 8. Wellbeing Health and Safety Quarter Report (Annual Report) Sponsor: Prys Davies, Executive Director of Corporate Strategy and Development Presenter: Chris Jones, Lead Specialist Advisor, Wellbeing Health and Safety Summary: To APPROVE the Annual Report Paper ref: 25-07-B15
16:25 (5 mins)	Item 9. AOB
16:30 (10 mins)	Item 10. How did we do in this meeting? Sponsor: Sir David Henshaw, Chair Summary: Review of the meeting
16:40	Close Meeting
16:40 (20 mins)	Public Q&A
17:00	Close Public Meeting

Unconfirmed Minutes

Title of meeting:	NRW Board Meeting
Location:	Carmarthen and Teams
Date of meeting:	21 May 2025
Members present:	<p>Sir David Henshaw Ceri Davies, Interim Chief Executive Dr Hushneara Begum Dr Rebecca Colley-Jones Dr Calvin Jones Lesley Jones Prof Rhys Jones Mark McKenna Adam Taylor</p>
Executive Team Members Present	<p>Prys Davies, Executive Director of Corporate Strategy and Development Sarah Jennings, Executive Director of Communications, Customer and Commercial Rachael Cunningham, Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Services Gareth O'Shea, Executive Director of Operations Dominic Driver, Acting Executive Director of Evidence, Policy and Permitting</p>
Attendees present:	<p>Phil Williams, Head of Governance and Board Secretary (All items) Meinir Wigley, Head of Communications and Digital Transformation (All items) Sarah Williams, Head of Corporate Strategy and PMO (All items)</p> <p>Ross Akers, Manager, Flood Risk Strategic Planning and Investment (All items) Rachel Chamberlain, Acting Head of Land Stewardship (All items) Ruth Jenkins, Head of Development Planning and Marine (All items) Mary Lewis, Acting Head of Land Stewardship (All items)</p>

	<p>Huwel Manley, Head of South West Wales Operations (All items)</p> <p>Eirian McDonald, Future Regulation Manager (All items)</p> <p>Rick Park, Coastal Adaptation Programme Lead (National Habitat Creation Manager) (All items)</p> <p>Nicola Rimmington, Lead Specialist Advisor, Marine and Coastal Physical Process and Coastal Management (All items)</p> <p>Fen Turner, Team Leader, Natural Resources & Well-being Strategy & Policy (All items)</p> <p>Clive Walmsley, Senior Specialist Advisor, Climate Change and Decarbonisation (All items)</p> <p>Andrew Wright, Senior Specialist Advisor Plant Health and Research Knowledge Transfer – Items 4 and 5</p> <p>Lynette Bowley, Team Leader, Campaigns and Projects – Item 8</p>
External Attendees:	<p>Rachel Gregg, Climate Change Committee</p> <p>Luke Jones, Climate Change Committee</p> <p>Elen Shepherd, Welsh Government</p> <p>Helen Nelson, Future Generations Commission</p>
Public Observers present:	Additional members of the public
Apologies:	<p>Dr. Pete Fox</p> <p>Kath Palmer</p> <p>Helen Pittaway</p>
Secretariat:	<p>Natalie Williams, Deputy Board Secretary and Board Secretariat Team Leader</p> <p>Rhiannon Spencer, Board Secretariat Team</p> <p>Deb Lee, Board Secretariat Team</p> <p>Sian Johnston, Board Secretariat Team</p>
Declarations of Interest	<p>Dr. Calvin Jones – Managing Director at Jones the Numbers LTD</p> <p>Prof. Steve Ormerod – Welsh Government’s Biodiversity Deep Dive Group panel member; Vice President of the RSPB; Representative at the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC); Chair of the Science Advisory Group.</p> <p>Dr Rebecca Colley-Jones – member on the Public Service Boards</p> <p>Mark McKenna – Live planning application with Down to Earth</p>

Item 1. Open Meeting

Sponsor and Presenter: Sir David Henshaw, Chair

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

Item 2. Introduction and Video to Wellbeing Objective 2

Sponsor: Sarah Jennings, Executive Director of Communications Customer and Commercial; Ruth Gregg, Climate Change Committee; Luke Jones, Climate

2. The Executive Director of Communications Customer and Commercial outlined the purpose of the session, to provide an overview of Wellbeing Objective 2 (WBO2). The NRW video on Nature and People Thriving Together was played.
3. Ruth Gregg, Senior Analyst, Land, Agriculture and Nature at the Climate Change Committee (CCC) and Luke Jones, Analyst, Devolved Administrations, CCC presented context on the advice from the new Fourth Carbon Budget Briefing. The release of the UK Progress Report to the UK Government was expected in June 2025 and work had commenced on the Climate Change Risk Assessment to be published in 2026.
4. Key messages from the Briefing were highlighted, these included, the recommended level, distribution and drivers of emission reductions in different carbon budget periods. The balanced pathway for land use in Wales up to 2050 was explained with the recommendation that around 90% of upland peatlands would be brought under re-wetting and restoration actions.
5. Areas not currently included in the Briefing were blue carbon, rewilding and natural regeneration due to evidence constraints, but a watching brief would be maintained. The sources of emissions and negative emissions through to 2050 were also outlined. The CCC approach was that agricultural emissions were offset by the land net carbon sink, to achieve this farmers and land managers needed support. The advice aligned to priorities in Welsh Government (WG) Policy.
6. In response to a query, the basis on the advice around a consumption based footprint was explained.
7. The Board welcomed the presentation. It was explained that in accounting for offshore carbon emissions, standard international carbon accounting rules had been applied, and that changing trends due to importing were monitored. Peatland was understood to be a constrained land area and the CCC modelling approach was in line with inventory approach. The ongoing international C-band discussions on carbon border adjustments were noted.
8. The Board queried if the carbon sequestration potential of different habitats had been considered. The land use sector uncertainties were recognised, and the emissions reduction modelling had used the change and forestry projections

provided by the UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology (UKCEH). However, it was noted that this did not include the impact of future climate change on emissions.

9. It was explained that the assumptions to 2050 did not include estimates of loss of habitat as the impacts were difficult to forecast and would be variable year on year. Principles had been embedded to ensure that new land actions were appropriate and managed to mitigate risks.
10. The Briefing had been welcomed by WG and would inform the new plan for Carbon Budget Three. Elen Shepherd (WG) noted the budgets and targets set were becoming increasingly difficult, and a just way of reaching net zero by 2050 needed to be found. The co-benefits and interplay of mitigation and adaptation would be considered, and incorporated in the Climate Change Risk Assessment. Helen Nelson, Future Generations Commissioner's Office, also noted the interplay with the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act. Options to maximise opportunities and benefits for communities through local small-scale energy actions should be balanced with larger scale energy actions.
11. NRW's latest modelled estimate was approximately 600,000 tonnes of net carbon sequestration from the Welsh Government Woodland Estate (WGWE). It would be important to consider how the annually suppressed carbon on the Estate fed into the WG target and ambition for a net zero public sector. Concerns were raised over modelling and it was assured that the internationally recognised Forest Research carbon accounting model, Carbine, was used, with caveats.
12. NRW had some levers on agriculture and a role in licensing and permitting low carbon planning development, however, prioritisation should be where there was maximum leverage.

Item 3. Overview of WBO2 and Progress

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

Presenters: Mary Lewis, Head of Natural Resources Management and Policy; Clive Walmsley, Senior Specialist Advisor, Climate Change and Decarbonisation; Ross Akers, Manager, Flood Risk Strategic Planning and Investment

13. An overview of WB02, the progress, and steps to take were presented and highlights on the five themes included: Nature-based solutions (NBS) being widely adopted; the risks of climate change being managed and adapted; climate emissions being reduced; sustained action on climate change being taken by people; communities and businesses; and NRW being an exemplar organisation for a carbon neutral public sector. Securing further investment and resource would be important but progress could be seen and was welcomed. The NRW Adaptation Plan and Net Zero Plan would be circulated separately.

ACTION: Board Secretariat to circulate the NRW Adaptation Plan and Net Zero Plan to the Board.

Item 4. Strategic Discussion 1: Prioritising our Effort for Greatest Impact in Delivering Nature Based Solutions to Address Climate Change

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

Presenters: Mary Lewis, Head of Natural Resources Management and Policy

14. The Executive Director of Communications, Customer and Commercial introduced the discussion. The Head of Natural Resources Management and Policy provided a presentation. The Board were reminded of the recent Protected Areas Committee (PrAC) site visit where NBS had been discussed. The Board were asked to consider how NRW could prioritise its effort to maximise impact from the NBS to address climate change and the role they could play.
15. The importance of having an overall strategic overview was highlighted. It was suggested that NRW needed to be more agile and adaptive, to understand the risks of action and inaction. NRW roles as suggested in the presentation could be used and adapted.
16. The Board queried NRW's advisory role with WG to ensure action was taken to adequately improve climate change. Concerns were raised that there could be a gap in the role of an environmental leader at a community level on the removal of staff from the Public Service Boards (PSBs) following the Case for Change (CfC). Individual members of the public and land owners could have a positive impact, and it was suggested to work with WG, local authorities and others to reduce regulation. NRW needed to change their mindset and adopt different ways of working.
17. The social justice element was discussed, and it was suggested to think about where the biggest impact would be for the people of Wales. It was noted that the most deprived communities were the ones most impacted by climate change. Therefore, there was a case for NBS to deliver for social benefits and there were opportunities such as water companies paying for NBS. There was also an opportunity to work with large developments, and NBS could be leveraged into agreements prior to them commencing.
18. The Board agreed that the private sector needed to be engaged, and an example was provided of the Industrial Decarbonisation team building trust with stakeholders. There was a need to be proactive and to share best practice both internally and externally. NRW could be bolder and work in a different way if the risks were identified and that everyone including WG were informed. The next round of Area Statements could help NRW to prioritise.

Item 5. Strategic Discussion 2: Our Role on the Land in our Care

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

Presenters: Rachel Chamberlain, Acting Head of Land Stewardship; Andrew Wright, Senior Specialist Advisor Plant Health and Research Knowledge Transfer

19. The Acting Head of Land Stewardship introduced the discussion. The Senior Specialist Advisor Plant Health and Research Knowledge Transfer provided a presentation. The NBS on the land in NRW's care was described. Creating new woodlands was explained and an example provided. The ancient woodland sites management principles were clarified.
20. A discussion took place, and it was agreed that reasons for decision making on the land in NRW's care could be made available for the Board. There needed to be evidence to show that steps being taken with NBS were delivering benefits, and it was queried how this evidence would be reviewed to ensure that it was going in the right direction. An adaptive management approach was needed.
21. Patience was needed with some of the NBS as it could take years for them to realise the benefits, however NRW did need to think about how they could tell the story of what was currently happening to ensure that it was going in the right direction.

Item 6. Strategic Discussion 3: Barriers and Opportunities for Delivering Against the Priorities for NBS Delivery

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

Presenters: Clive Walmsley, Senior Specialist Advisor, Climate Change and Decarbonisation

22. The Senior Specialist Advisor, Climate Change and Decarbonisation provided a presentation. The key barriers to mainstreaming delivery of NBS to address climate change were highlighted and included unrealistic expectations and a siloed approach to delivery. The key ways to mainstream delivery of NBS were shown and included a clear narrative on the case for NBS and engaging stakeholders and communities on their value.
23. The Board discussed the barriers to mainstreaming delivery of NBS. In response to a query on the Infrastructure Commission, it was noted that there was an acknowledgement of NBS, but it was not at the core of its work. NRW needed to encourage coordination and collaboration, and an example was provided of how this had worked on a flood NBS.
24. It would be beneficial to engage communities and get them involved so they could feel the benefit of NBS, as well as demonstrating what work was already ongoing.
25. It was queried how benefits from projects were logged and categorised, and whether the private sector should share more responsibility. Another suggestion was whether more national programmes could be implemented to weave in NBS.

26. It was important to remember that the principles were already in place and staff needed to be given the space and the confidence that the Board, Executive Team (ET) and Leadership Team (LT) were supportive. It was suggested that a different business model was needed where NRW was proactive by providing solutions to stakeholders. NRW needed to be radical and begin to work around the customer and communities, and a culture change was needed.

Item 7. Summary and Feedback

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

Presenters: Mary Lewis, Head of Natural Resources Management and Policy; Clive Walmsley, Senior Specialist Advisor, Climate Change and Decarbonisation

27. The Head of NRM and Policy provided a summary of the strategic session. The Board had discussed the ongoing work in relation to WBO2 and what more could be done. It was agreed that there was a need to think in a multiple benefit space, in relation to NBS, climate and pollution. The value of small scale engagement was noted, including the need to communicate the benefits more widely.
28. The Board's site visit was an example of how NRW already do multiple team working with various parts of the organisation. NRW also worked collaboratively with others outside of the organisation.
29. The next steps were outlined. NRW had been involved in a meeting with the European Network of Heads of Nature Conservation Agencies, where NBS had been discussed.

Item 8. Advocacy Approach for WBO2

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

Presenters: Meinir Wigley, Head of Communications and Digital Transformation; Lynette Bowley, Team Leader, Campaigns and Projects

30. The Executive Director of Communications, Customer and Commercial introduced the item. The advocacy approach would be taken to the People and Customer Committee (PCC) in June for further discussion. The Team Leader, Campaigns and Projects provided an overview of the advocate approach. The team had taken the chance to refine the approach, which would be phased, in line with the Wellbeing Objectives (WBOs) and the Corporate Plan. An example was shared of the type of advocacy NRW might look to explore, which would also align with the WBOs.
31. The Board discussed the advocacy approach and welcomed the focus on WBOs. It was queried whether this was the right advocacy campaign to focus on to support WBO2. The example provided of the approach relating to flood risk management would be a good place to begin the advocacy work. The messages used within the approach would differ depending on the audience, and the paper had been developed to meet the different segments of the approach.

32. It was suggested that the State of Natural Resources Report (SoNaRR) could also be included within the approach, and the perceptions of NRW could be used as proxy indicators.

33. Elen Shepherd, Welsh Government noted that the teams both within NRW and WG were collaborating, with a need for clarity on who's voice would be communicated to have the most impact.

34. The Board agreed the advocacy approach for WBO2.

DECISION: The Board agreed the advocacy approach for WBO2.

Item 9. How did we do in this meeting?

Sponsor: Sir David Henshaw, Chair

35. The Chair introduced the item. The Board discussed the effectiveness of the meeting and thanked those involved in the strategic session. The site visit was a positive way to show the work ongoing within NRW and the teams in South West Wales.

Item 10. AOB

36. There was no AOB discussed.

Meeting Closed

Unconfirmed Minutes

Title of meeting:	NRW Board Meeting
Location:	Carmarthen and Teams
Date of meeting:	22 May 2025
Members present:	<p>Prof Steve Ormerod, Deputy Chair Ceri Davies, Interim Chief Executive Dr Hushneara Begum Dr Rebecca Colley-Jones Lesley Jones Prof Rhys Jones Mark McKenna Helen Pittaway</p>
Executive Team Members Present	<p>Prys Davies, Executive Director of Corporate Strategy and Development Sarah Jennings, Executive Director of Communications, Customer and Commercial Rachael Cunningham, Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Services Gareth O'Shea, Executive Director of Operations Dominic Driver, Acting Executive Director of Evidence, Policy and Permitting</p>
Attendees present:	<p>Phil Williams, Head of Governance and Board Secretary (All items) Meinir Wigley, Head of Communications and Digital Transformation (All items)</p> <p>Rob Bell, Head of Finance – Item 6 Huwel Manley, Head of South West Wales Operations – Item 7 Phil Morgan, Land Management team leader – Item 7 Ellen Humphrey, Senior Officer, Forest Operations – Item 7 Jen Day, Officer 2, Environment Team – Item 7 Rhodri Morgan, Senior Officer, Industry & Waste Regulation – Item 7 Caroline Drayton, Operations Manager – Item 7</p>

NRW Observers present:	None
Public Observers present:	Additional members of the public
Apologies:	Sir David Henshaw, Chair Dr Pete Fox Dr Calvin Jones Kath Palmer Helen Pittaway
Secretariat:	Natalie Williams, Deputy Board Secretary and Board Secretariat Team Leader Rhiannon Spencer, Board Secretariat Team

Item 1. Open Meeting

Sponsor and Presenter: Prof Steve Ormerod, Deputy Chair

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

Item 2. Review Minutes and Action Log

Sponsor and Presenter: Prof Steve Ormerod, Deputy Chair

Item 2A. Review Minutes from the 20th March Meeting

2. The minutes from the public Board meeting on 20th March were reviewed and agreed.

Item 2B. Review Public Action Log

3. The Action Log was reviewed and the completed actions were agreed.

Item 3. Update from the Chair

Sponsor and Presenter: Prof Steve Ormerod, Deputy Chair

4. There were no recent updates from the Deputy Chair.

Item 4. Report from the Chief Executive

Sponsor and Presenter: Ceri Davies, Interim Chief Executive

5. The Interim Chief Executive provided an update on items in addition to the written Report. The publication of the Climate Change Committee Environmental Infrastructure Report on the scrutiny of NRW was noted. The 11 recommendations for NRW as a result of the Report were outlined, with one recommendation partially

shared with Welsh Government (WG). NRW had produced a statement in response to the Report which had been made available on the NRW website.

6. In relation to the environmental sanctions and incidents, NRW would be reviewing the actions to take with the relevant people regarding the fines involved. There would be restoration orders and penalties in relation to the civil sanctions.
7. The work carried out by the teams involved in the case with Dwr Cymru Welsh Water (DCWW) was acknowledged and the importance of NRW's regulatory role of NRW was highlighted as a result of the complexity and charges associated with the case.
8. In response to a query raised on the recent wild fires, it was highlighted that there was a combination of contributing factors involved, which had been environmental and social. The number of wild fires had reduced in the last ten years and it was confirmed that NRW had a duty to respond to the fires and support the fire and rescue teams. NRW were working to adapt the forests to make them more resilient, with a new framework contract being put in place.
9. The Board queried whether NRW had considered the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI). A number of teams had researched the use of AI, but policies would need to be created and implemented to ensure it was used appropriately. The teams were also in the process of reviewing the opportunities involved in using Microsoft Co-Pilot. The Acting Executive Director of Evidence, Policy and Permitting (EPP) had attended the Network Protection Agencies meeting where AI was discussed further and best practice would be shared. There was a small budget being allocated to the potential of AI, with the Evidence teams keen to use the tool to collate evidence into summaries. This had been discussed in the Evidence Advisory Committee (EAC).
10. The Trefil Quarry extension in Blaenau Gwent was discussed. The conflict between the different environmental priorities was being discussed within NRW and the local authorities, and there was a call for more frameworks in Wales for landuse. This area would feature in the Biodiversity Deep Dive, as the proposed designation for the National Park was located on a significant number of landscapes in which this sat.

Item 5. Update Reports of Committees and Forums

Sponsors and Presenters: Committee Chairs

11. The Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Services (F&CS) provided an update from the Finance Committee (FC) held on 1st May. FC had considered the Financial Performance Report and had noted the reason for the reported underspend. Other items discussed included overprogramming, and a lessons learnt exercise would be completed around budget management through the financial year and would be reviewed by FC. The Budget and Business Plan 2025-26 was discussed, with small changes since the March Board meeting; the costs within the Telemetry Replacement Project had been approved.

12. Prof. Steve Ormerod of the Flood Risk Management Committee (FRMC) provided an update on the FRMC meeting held on 17th April. The Committee had discussed the flood skillset within the public sector and the need to ensure that there was a career progression structure in place. Also discussed was the Capital update and the outline business case (OBC) in Tenby, which would also be presented to FC. There was a focus on nature based solutions (NBS), which would be mainstreamed through the work of FRMC.
13. Lesley Jones, who chaired the recent Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC) meeting held on 16th May provided an update. The new Board members were welcomed to ARAC. The Committee discussed the presentation from Audit Wales and the finance update, including an early deep dive into the accounts with the Finance team. Also discussed were some of the challenges involved in the need to tackle both climate and nature emergencies early and the Internal Audit reports. ARAC had endorsed the format and context within the Annual Report and Accounts and it was confirmed that the laying of the Report would likely be in September or October 2025.
14. Prof. Steve Ormerod updated the Board on the Evidence Advisory Committee (EAC) meeting held on 7th May. NRW were now recruiting into the Head of Knowledge and Evidence position. The link between the State of Natural Resources Report (SoNaRR), Area Statements and the Natural Resources Policy was discussed. The teams were now exploring how AI could be used in a number of reports.
15. The Executive Director of Communications, Customer and Commercial (CCC) provided an overview of the Land Estate Committee (LEC) meeting held on 15th May. The Strategic Risk Register had been discussed, included the risks that were being carried on the land in NRW's care. Also discussed was the approach to the next Commercial Strategy. A lessons learned exercise had been completed on the recent storms, including what NRW had learnt from timber planting and what NRW's policy would be on woodland management to mitigate climate change impacts.
16. Adam Taylor provided an update on the recent Protected Areas Committee (PrAC) site visit to Milford Haven, where they discussed habitats and species, the protected areas work, nature networks funds, and marine conservation. The site visit included the Pembroke Coast River Restoration, and the interventions in place for flooding and drought restoration.
17. The next Fisheries Forum meeting was scheduled for 10th July. The Forum had previously discussed the report on fish tracking and significant designations, where it was confirmed that some fish species were at risk.
18. Lesley Jones provided an update on the National Access Forum for Wales and noted the positive value of stakeholders being included in the Forum.

Item 6. Finance Performance Report

Presenter: Rob Bell, Head of Finance

19. The Executive Director of F&CS introduced the item. The Head of Finance presented an overview of the latest financial position. It was confirmed that the detail within the Finance Report had been discussed with FC. The net underspend was highlighted, and was related to the ring-fenced funding resources. The key messages, risks and opportunities were highlighted. The overprogramming assumptions had been set accordingly and it was confirmed that the underspend had occurred in a number of directorates. The income and expenditure forecast was also highlighted, which included both the revenue and capital projects, and a lessons learned exercise had been done.
20. The Board welcomed the Report and noted the recent challenges in the last year. It was agreed that the Report reflected positively and the Board were keen to hear what lessons had been learned for the programmes involved.
21. The Board approved the change in the latest forecast from £294.6m to a forecasted £290.7m.

DECISION: The Board approved the change in the latest forecast from £294.6m to a forecasted £290.7m.

Item 7. Place Presentation

Presenter: Huwel Manley, Head of South West Wales Operations; Phil Morgan, Land Management team leader; Ellen Humphrey, Senior Officer, Forest Operations; Jen Day, Officer 2, Environment Team; Rhodri Morgan, Senior Officer, Industry & Waste Regulation; Caroline Drayton, Operations Manager

22. The Executive Director of Operations introduced the item.
23. The Officer 2, Environment Team provided a presentation on the designated sites in Carmarthenshire, which included the features of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) designated sites; landowners of designated sites; and the Gwernydd Penbre SSSI and its challenges.
24. The Board discussed the SSSI sites that had been presented and the work involved in maintaining those, such as the planning applications, volunteer work and site inspection, using the capacity available within the team.
25. The Land Management Team Leader presented the impact of Storm Darragh on the Welsh Government Woodland Estate (WGWE) in South West Wales. The initial response and its challenges were outlined. The next steps, summary and forward look were highlighted.
26. The Board discussed NRW's ability to restore the woodland, following the impact of Storm Darragh. It was suggested that the team could review and change the contract arrangements to offset the losses. Also discussed was what lessons had been learnt following the frequency of the storms and how they were being implemented. The restoration of the WGWE in South West Wales would take approximately five years to complete.

27. The Senior Office, Industry & Waste Regulation provided a presentation on the South West Wales Industry Regulation team. The update included: the environmental permitting regulations (EPR) and the Control of Major Accident Hazards (COMAH) Regulations 2015; the Port Talbot Steelworks; Swansea Bay; Milford Haven Waterway; Withyhedg Landfill challenges, successes and odour complaints.
28. The Board welcomed the presentation. It was confirmed that there had not been any accidents, incidents or near misses recently recorded on the Withyhedg landfill site. The Board discussed how the team would share their experiences with the other areas within NRW.
29. In response to a query, it was confirmed that the Communications team track the engagement on NRW social media sites, and it was not as negative as some may perceive. There was more work that could be done in a number of areas, however there was an opportunity to share the positive work that NRW had done. It was suggested that NRW could use external people, who also have had a positive experience with the organisation, to share their story publically.
30. The Board thanked the team for their work.

Item 8. AOB

31. There was no AOB discussed.

Item 9. How did we do in this meeting?

Sponsor and presenter: Sir David Henshaw, Chair

32. The Board welcomed the format of the meeting and agreed it had been an effective meeting. The Board thanked the teams involved in the items presented. It was suggested that Place presentations would become part of each in person Board meeting.

Meeting Closed

Public Q&A

33. The Chair introduced the public Q&A session.
34. There had been no questions received by the public.

Public Meeting Closed

NRW Board Paper

Date of meeting:	16 July 2025
Title of Paper:	Chief Executive's Report (Public Session)
Paper Reference:	25-07-B08
Paper presented by:	Ceri Davies, Interim Chief Executive
Purpose	Information and discussion
Summary	The paper provides the Board with an update on current issues.

Introduction

1. As we settle into the 2025/26 financial year, the pace of work at all levels of the organisation remains consistently brisk. Despite the challenges of the Case for Change over the last twelve months and ongoing vacancies in key teams, colleagues continue to demonstrate outstanding commitment, energy and teamwork in delivering our front-line services and all the essential functions of our organisation. The Executive Team (ET) and Leadership Team are now focused on embedding the Case for Change and ensuring that, as an organisation, we are fit for the future, agile in the way we work and appropriately resourced to deliver our Corporate Plan objectives. I am grateful to everyone for their continued focus and dedication.
2. The benign spell of weather has pushed us into a period of prolonged dry weather for all catchments within Wales, since late May. The rainfall for the preceding three months was less than two-thirds of its usual level and the ongoing lack of rainfall in May resulted in low river levels across Wales, groundwater levels at exceptionally low levels and reducing reservoir levels. Our incident teams have maintained a state of preparedness during this period due to the increased likelihood of wildfires and flash flooding. As at mid June, some areas in South Wales were deemed to be recovering, following increased rainfall during the month.
3. In late May, I had a meeting with the Independent Environmental Assessor for Wales (IEPAW), Lynda Warren. This covered a range of topics including the IEPAW's second Hedgerows Report and their ongoing investigations into Protected Sites and Special Protection Areas.

4. I also met with Sir Jon Cunliffe, who is leading the Independent Water Review, regarding the Commission's Interim Report, published in early June. The report sets out preliminary conclusions in five key areas, covering the need for consistent strategic direction for the water sector, a streamlined and more focused legislative framework and a stronger but more supervisory approach to water company regulation. It is a very thorough summary of the consultation, to which we contributed, and we are pleased to note the clear recognition of the differences between Wales and England. The Commission's Final Report is due in the summer, and we continue to meet with Sir Jon Cunliffe's senior review team to influence the outcomes for Wales in the final report.
5. In early June I attended the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organisation (NASCO) welcome reception, and joined delegates for an NRW-hosted field trip to Cardiff Bay and the River Taff. The event brought international delegates to South East Wales and allowed us to showcase the work we do to improve river conditions and support salmon conservation. My thanks go to colleagues who were involved in bringing the 42nd Annual Meeting to Wales, hosting the field trips and representing NRW with passion and professionalism. More information on the event is contained in the report below.
6. ET and I spent an insightful and productive afternoon with the National Trust executive team at their beautiful Tredegar House property in Newport. This session was an opportunity for us to strengthen our relationship, ensure alignment between our strategic plans and identify ways to work more closely and effectively together, to deliver more for Wales. I had a separate catch-up with Lhosa Daly, Director of National Trust Cymru, later in the month. Gareth O'Shea, Executive Director of Operations, and I took the opportunity when in Scotland during June to meet with Philip Long, CEO of National Trust Scotland, and have further follow-up planned on shared outcomes for land management and conservation.
7. I attended our Partnership Council meeting with Trade Union (TU) representatives in June. The agenda included updates on our budget, the Employment Rights Bill, work to embed the Case for Change and proposals to improve TU visibility at Board level. I also chaired our monthly Wellbeing, Health & Safety Committee. I'm pleased to report that ET enjoy a very positive working relationship with our TU partners. We enabled the first of what will become routine discussions between our TU leads and our Board via the People and Customer Committee (PCC). This session will allow the Chair of PCC to gain assurance over TU liaison matters.
8. I had a quarterly catch-up with Matthew Edwards at Audit Wales during June. As a relatively new Accounting Officer, I remain grateful for the support and guidance of Audit Wales as we finalise our Annual Report and Accounts for 2024/25.

In late June, Gareth O'Shea and I attended a 5 Agencies meeting with senior colleagues from the Environment Agency (EA), Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA), Northern Ireland Environment Agency and Irish Environmental

Protection Agency. The meeting was hosted in Edinburgh by SEPA, and included updates from the four organisations followed by discussion sessions on topics such as the opportunities of artificial intelligence, resources and skills development, and trends in case law, appeals and judicial reviews. NRW led a session on renewables and decarbonisation, and jointly led a discussion on landfill and financial provision. As always, the meeting provided a valuable forum for exchanging ideas and working together on shared challenges and opportunities.

We have continued to work closely with our Welsh Government (WG) colleagues on a range of matters. Our regular Sponsorship meetings focus on performance, business planning and delivery, and topical issues such as the Independent Water Review and the Anti Racist Wales Action Plan (ARWAP). This latter item is a developing area, building upon WG's updated plan, released last year with a stronger focus on delivery and renewed commitment to make Wales an anti-racist nation by 2030. There are specific goals and outcomes for public service organisations in Wales, including the introduction of clear anti-racism objectives, supported by training, for senior public sector leaders. We whole-heartedly support the aims of ARWAP and are committed to achieving the high standards set by WG in this respect. We are setting up a colleague network on anti-racism to help us ensure diversity in NRW, and Dominic Driver, Executive Director of Evidence, Policy and Permitting, will act as the ET champion. I have met with and secured ongoing support from the Director of Communities and Social Justice at WG.

9. ARWAP was on also the agenda for the Public Bodies Chief Executives' Meeting in June. This meeting is led by WG and allows senior leaders to connect regularly and work together on WG priorities – such as the Futures exercise, which looks at the role and development of One Welsh Public Service in the longer term (up to 2100).
10. We have formally responded to the report of the Senedd's Climate Change, Environment and Infrastructure (CCEI) Committee, following our annual scrutiny session in March. The report made a number of constructive recommendations ranging across our remit, which we have addressed individually and continue to focus on. We have thanked the Committee for their continued interest in and support for our work and greatly value their role in holding NRW to account.
11. Recruitment has continued, with vacancies being advertised both internally and externally for the majority of roles. Our Recruitment team have been working hard to advertise vacancies and support line managers through the recruitment process. At Leadership Team level, there have been a number of moves to cover departures and provide development opportunities for colleagues. Sarah Stacey, Head of People Development and Wellbeing, has left us and the role will be filled on an interim basis by Nadia De Longhi, currently Head of Regulation and Permitting. Similarly, Lyndsey Rawlinson, Head of North East Operations, will step across to the Head of Land Stewardship role, while Jon Goldsworthy – currently leading the Teifi Demonstrator project – will become Head of Strategic Projects when Christian Wilcox leaves us in July. My huge thanks go to both Sarah and Christian for their energy, contributions and leadership during their time with NRW.

12. We have also filled the Head of Knowledge and Evidence role with an external appointee, who will join us during July. Thank you to Steve King, who has been covering this role on an interim basis.
13. I was delighted to note the recognition of three former colleagues in the King's Birthday Honours list during June. Peter Stanley received an MBE (Member of the Order of the British Empire) for his outstanding services to geoscience and metal mines. Peter was informed of the honour before his death in June, and was extremely touched to be recognised in this way; his award will be presented to his wife on his behalf. Simon Bareham was awarded an MBE for services to the protection of air quality and biodiversity in Wales, while Alan Hubbuck received the British Empire Medal (BEM) for services to professional forestry. These honours are very well deserved.

Strategic Issues

Environment (Principles, Governance and Biodiversity Targets) (Wales) Bill

14. Made publicly available in early June, the new draft Bill covers environmental principles and governance in Wales and setting statutory biodiversity targets as part of delivering Wales' national and Global Biodiversity Framework commitments. It aims to strengthen Wales' environmental governance framework post Brexit and ensure environmental protection is integrated across policy.
15. The Bill further aims to restore public confidence in environmental accountability and ensure enforcement mechanisms are robust, transparent and devolved. There are three core components, the first of which places a statutory duty on Welsh Ministers and NRW to have special regard to recognised environmental principles (precaution, prevention, rectification at source, polluter pays) when making policy. The principles must be integrated into policy making process, with a focus on achieving high levels of environmental protection.
16. The second core component is the establishment of an independent governance body to oversee environmental compliance. This new oversight body will be established to address the post-EU governance gap and provide independent strategic oversight of the effectiveness, application and implementation of environmental law, including any failures by public authorities to comply with those laws. We welcome the introduction of the new body and will work with it to ensure no overlap in role.
17. The third component is the creation of a statutory biodiversity framework and biodiversity targets. The draft Bill amends Part 1 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 to introduce this new framework and Ministers will have a duty to set at least one target for each of the following priorities:
 - Reducing native species extinction risk
 - Effective management of ecosystems

- Reducing pollution
- Evidence relating to biodiversity including access to it and use and application.

The draft statutory targets will need to be presented within three years of Royal Assent.

18. Ministers will have additional duties to enhance planning and reporting under the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 regarding biodiversity action, monitoring and progress reporting (including setting indicators) and assessing policy or action impact. They will have a power to designate public authorities and require them to contribute to achieving the targets for which they are designated. Ministers will have a further duty to promote awareness of the importance of, and threats to, biodiversity.
19. NRW is actively supporting WG with their target development work both directly and with others through WG's independent Biodiversity Targets Advisory Panel. To date we have re-directed existing resource to work on this. We will, however, keep this under review with WG because as the operational implications of the Bill become increasingly clear, we may identify new permanent or time-limited resource needs.

State of Nature Resources Report (SoNaRR)

20. The third assessment of the sustainable management of natural resources in Wales (SoNaRR2025) is due to be published by 31 December 2025. The assessment covers four aims:
 - Stocks of natural resources are safeguarded and enhanced
 - Ecosystems are resilient to expected and unforeseen change
 - Wales has healthy places for people, protected from environmental risks
 - Contributing to a regenerative economy, achieving sustainable levels of production and consumption
21. We have collated and have reviewed most of the evidence for the report. We are drafting the assessments against the four aims for ecosystems and natural resources, and identifying the key messages at ecosystem and natural resource level, which will be used in our communications and all-Wales key messages and priorities.
22. The assessments will be accessed, via NRW website, in a single document. The underlying evidence will also be made available through an interactive report on our website, which we hope will address feedback on usability following the publication of SoNaRR2020. We have tested the new evidence format with users including WG.
23. We plan to share our emerging headlines and what it will look like with the Board during September, through a webinar, and will follow this up with a paper to the

Board in October, setting out our key findings and communication plan. We will ask the Board to sign off SoNaRR2025 at the end of November.

Operational Issues

Funding to Tackle Ecological Challenges in Gwent

24. The Nature Networks Fund has awarded a grant of £250,000 to Blaenau Gwent Council, working in partnership with NRW and Gwent Green Grid, to develop our understanding of where we need to build ecosystem resilience across Gwent and maximise the value of ecosystems and the services they provide for both people and nature. Over the next two years the project will work across Gwent to codesign networks of habitat in good ecological condition, linking protected sites and other biodiversity hotspots across our landscapes at the regional scale.
25. This project builds on the Gwent Levels Resilient Ecological Networks approach and follows the NRW Practitioners' Guide to Resilient Ecological Networks. It contributes to our collective efforts to take urgent action to halt and reverse the decline in biodiversity, using a nature-based solutions approach to climate change and pollution, and delivering health and wellbeing benefits equitably and inclusively in Gwent.

South East Rivers Project

26. The five-year WG Nature and Climate Emergency (NaCE) funded South East Rivers Project is now in its second year and implementing an integrated catchment management strategy to restore the Ebbw, Rhymney and Sirhowy river and floodplain ecosystems, in collaboration with stakeholders. The project is delivering nature-based interventions, including wetland creation at Llanrumney, improving riparian habitat quality at Ebbw and Rhymney, and Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS) mapping and management.
27. We are also developing a monitoring and evaluation framework to ensure evidence of the pressures impacting our catchments is used to prioritise and target nature-based solutions. This project contributes to building resilience against threats such as climate change and pollution, as well as developing our understanding of the value of our ecosystems and the services they provide across wellbeing.

Fly-Tipping Action Wales

28. Fly-Tipping Action Wales (FTAW) has secured ongoing programme funding which will now be baselined into our Grant in Aid settlement. The funding has been agreed by the Deputy First Minister based on our new work plan for 2025/26 and the recently produced independent programme report that demonstrated the excellent work of the programme over recent years.

29. Key deliverables are being added to the Regulatory Service Plan and Business Plan, which will both be used to monitor delivery under this new funding arrangement. The new FTAW work plan focuses on regional stakeholder working groups, national campaign work, increased enforcement support to our stakeholders and further developing our capabilities to take enforcement action against fly-tipping on the Welsh Government Woodland Estate (WGWE).

Ty Llwyd

30. Ty Llwyd is a former quarry used for disposal of industrial wastes in Caerphilly. Caerphilly County Borough Council (CCBC) are responsible for the site and have recently complied with an anti-pollution works notice issued by NRW, using funding from WG for improvement works that were implemented to reduce the risk of leachate breaking out.
31. A recent meeting between the Interim Environmental Protection Assessor Wales (IEPAW), CCBC and ourselves considered the potential for using the issues at Ty Llwyd as a case study, looking at the effectiveness of the current regulatory framework, identifying possible improvements, collaboration effectiveness between partners and identifying any inadequacies in existing legislation. Overall IEPAW recognised that partners have been working well together at this site. We are now waiting for the final version of the contaminated land assessment from CCBC, which will further inform next steps.

Cwmcarn Forest Drive

32. We are working in partnership with CCBC to explore third party interest in the operation of Cwmcarn Forest Drive and Visitor Centre. The Request for Proposal (RFP) was signed off on 10 June and we will go to market during June on Sell2Wales and work with our agent to secure a developer for the site.
33. The RFP has a draft lease from both NRW and CCBC. The process invites potential developers to submit a Business Plan, which is quite prescriptive in what we would like to see. The highest scoring section of this plan is their long-term aspiration for the site and how they plan to work in partnership with us, CCBC, the community and groups such as Risca Riders to further improve the offer at Cwmcarn Forest Drive.
34. The closing date for bidders is 29 August. Thereafter the top five scoring bids will be invited for a presentation and interview process about their business plan and any potential amendments to the draft leases. This process will be led by the Senior Leadership team at CCBC and Heads of Service within NRW. Developers will then have a further period to finesse their final bid. The process is expected to end in the first week of November.

Clydach Terrace Update

35. Clydach Terrace, Ynysybwl, lies on the natural floodplain in a constrained section of the Clydach valley and has historically suffered from severe flooding, most notably during Storm Dennis in February 2020 when flood waters from the Nant Clydach overtopped the highway wall which runs along the length of the terrace, resulting in the internal flooding of sixteen properties. The flooding was extremely hazardous with internal property flood depths above six feet in the lowest lying houses. Reports from residents following Storm Dennis also indicated that the street was very rapidly inundated (flows and rate of rise) with flood water and did not allow any time for them to respond in any way.
36. Due to the very small catchment, and its location in the upper part of the catchment, Ynysybwl does not have a bespoke flood warning service, and technically it would be very difficult to provide any reliable flood warning service to the area. Since 2023, we have been working on an Outline Business Case (OBC) to determine whether an engineered solution to the risk of flooding is viable. The OBC is nearing completion and a draft was sent to and discussed with WG officials in early April. There are only two options that can be taken forward: a flood wall or Compulsory Purchase Order. The wall would need to be over four metres in height, and would be challenging from an engineering perspective. Both options are economically very difficult.
37. The final OBC was formally sent to WG during June, and was shared with the residents shortly afterwards. We met with residents in May to update them on the likely outcomes of the OBC. A multi-agency meeting will be held on 10 July focusing on Clydach Terrace. There, we will discuss the latest Emergency Flood Response Plan that we have been working on, with Rhondda Cynon Taff Council, South Wales Police, South Wales Fire and Rescue Service.

Cosmeston Lakes Aqua Park

38. The aqua park that is usually sited at Cardiff Bay each summer has relocated to Cosmeston Lakes this summer, in response to poor water quality affecting operations at the Bay. The Vale of Glamorgan Council submitted a Notice of Intent to NRW for the proposed installation of an aqua park at Cosmeston Lakes Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), which we have granted assent for. We continue to receive correspondence and enquires about the park being moved to Cosmeston Lakes, with concerns relating to water quality, safety and the impact on wildlife / SSSI features.

Pollution Incident Work

39. From July this year, we are making an important change to the way we respond to low impact pollution incidents. This shift is designed to help us prioritise our resources where they are needed most by responding to incidents that cause the

greatest harm and investing more time in proactive, preventative and regulatory work that delivers long-term environmental benefits.

40. Evidence shows that around 95% of the incidents we respond to result in little or no environmental impact. However, they still consume a significant proportion of our time and resources, which limits our ability to carry out compliance and pollution prevention work that could stop pollution before it occurs.
41. We will continue to prioritise incidents that significantly impact the environment. However, we are now asking officers to adopt a more proportionate, risk-based approach, focusing our effort where our involvement will deliver the greatest benefit. For some low-level, low-impact incidents, this may mean they do not receive an immediate response or direct intervention. In these cases, we may instead choose to address the underlying issues through routine regulatory activity, enforcement, or pollution prevention work by seeking to address root causes of pollution rather than symptoms.

Kronospan Update

42. The North Industry Regulation team continues to receive incident reports and associated correspondence relating to odour and dust from the Kronospan site in Chirk. Wood processing and chemical odours have been reported, which have been linked to stack emissions coming down to ground level. Emissions from Kronospan's processes are monitored and must meet the emission limit values set in their permit. Some emissions are odorous and Kronospan has completed work to measure and understand the odour from the various processes. They are trialling a method to reduce odours which, if successful, could be applied more widely.
43. Following a cluster of dust incident reports, we completed an unannounced inspection and identified permit non-compliance regarding the control of dust on the log yard, resulting in a warning being issued. Kronospan are currently trialling different water suppression units that can be utilised during offloading of recycled timber and investigating further options for dust containment during the offloading process.
44. We have set up a dedicated website where both NRW and Kronospan can include updates and answers to commonly asked questions.

Hafod Landfill

45. We continue to closely monitor progress at Hafod Landfill, including carrying out unannounced inspections. Thanks to improvement work by the site operator, there has been a steady drop in odour complaints, though we recognise that some people are still being affected.
46. In recent months, we have updated both the Deputy First Minister and Wrexham County Borough Council (WCBC) on our regulatory work. We have also taken part

in the first Hafod Landfill Stakeholder Group meeting and attended the Homes and Environment Scrutiny Committee at WCBC in April.

47. We remain committed to holding the site operator to account and ensuring action is taken where needed. Further improvements are planned, including enhanced gas extraction and leachate management. Preliminary air quality data from monitoring units set up by WCBC and the site operator is being reviewed; early findings show that recognised odour annoyance thresholds have been exceeded at times, but more work is needed to understand the causes.

Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal

48. The Water Act 2003, enacted in January 2018, changed the way canals can draw water from rivers, though it did not stop abstraction. Navigation authorities that had been exempt from requiring abstraction licences were given two years to submit applications. Canal & Rivers Trust (CRT) submitted applications for the Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal, and abstraction licences were granted by NRW with conditions designed to protect the ecological integrity of the River Usk and the Severn Estuary Special Areas of Conservation (SAC). The licences include a table that sets the different volumes of water that can be abstracted according to the flow of the River Usk.
49. In January 2023, CRT appealed to Planning and Environment Decision Wales (PEDW) against two specific conditions in two of the licences, suspending them until a decision was reached. Following a hearing, the appeals were dismissed by PEDW in November last year, confirming that the conditions were necessary to protect the ecological integrity of the River Usk and the Severn Estuary SAC, and bringing them into force.
50. To maintain water levels in the canal during dry spells, in the absence of any viable current alternative, CRT use water abstracted under licence by Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water (DCWW) when flows allow. There will be times (at low flow) when DCWW are unable to permit this, but when they do, CRT will be charged for the water at the commercial rate. CRT have indicated this is likely to be unaffordable for them, and have written to the Deputy First Minister regarding the situation, advising that the future of the canal is in serious doubt.
51. In the light of significant interest from political representatives, local councillors, media and other stakeholders, we have sought to ensure understanding of the context for these changes and our role and remit in the issue. We are not involved in any potential commercial arrangements for providing alternative water supplies for the canal or in determining the associated cost, as these are matters for CRT and DCWW. However, we have worked hard with CRT and other key stakeholders, including DCWW, to facilitate an environmental solution throughout the period since the implications of the legislative changes were identified over a decade ago. Regulating water abstraction is complex and must be based on robust evidence; our priority has always been to protect the ecological integrity of the River Usk and the

Severn Estuary SACs and ensure that any abstraction is environmentally sustainable.

52. Whilst recognising our regulatory role, we remain committed to working collaboratively with CRT, engaging at senior level and with the technical group convened by them, to help inform any potential solutions to manage water abstraction in a way that supports the long-term health and resilience of the river.

Burry Inlet

53. On 15 June, the Burry Inlet Cockle Regulating Order came to an end. This order ran for a period of sixty years. It has been challenging at times due to levels of cockle mortality, which was eventually found on balance to be the result of parasite loading, managing the testing demands of the licensees, and enforcing against poachers. Even in the final days, our Enforcement team maintained regular surveillance and caught four poachers in a successful multi-agency enforcement operation led by our South West Wales team.
54. Last year, the fishery was awarded the Marine Stewardship Council's stewardship award and has consistently been accredited as a sustainable fishery. The cockle stocks are returning to normal population and age-class levels and the fishery is in a much-improved place. The Burry Inlet now becomes a Public Fishery, managed by WG, whom we have been working with closely as we hand over the role.

Nature Based Solutions and Regulation

55. Nature Based Solutions (NbS) can address environmental issues such as climate change, flooding, water quality and coastal management. Working with nature creates biodiversity, can store carbon and bring many public amenity benefits. To optimise these opportunities, we are encouraging integrated catchment planning and management, finding solutions to nature recovery, flooding and water quality by working with nature. We are also encouraging utilities planning and development to be part of a catchment approach.
56. To build confidence in NbS we need assurance that these solutions deliver benefits. For example, where constructed wetlands are used to deliver compliance against regulated environmental standards, a permit may be required to ensure water quality improvements or nutrient neutrality off-set required. This enables wider decisions in the catchment such as development to proceed with assurance.
57. We have developed pragmatic approaches and tools for regulating NbS. We are currently undertaking two trials with DCWW at Tremeirchion and Pontyfelin and expect to receive around fourteen applications for NbS treatment activities as part of delivery of the current Asset Management Programme (AMP8) and nutrient neutrality. We are working with Ceredigion County Council and DCWW to progress two of these applications (at Cenarth and Cilgerran wastewater treatment works) as

part of the Teifi Demonstrator programme, including finding solutions to third party ownership for the constructed wetland proposals.

Nature Networks – Marine Polders Project

58. We constructed sedimentation fields ('polders') at Rhymney Great Wharf in summer last year. The concept is to construct permeable fencing on intertidal flats that fill at high tide and slow the flow of sediment-laden water on the ebbing tide. Over time, more sediment settles out of the water column leading to further accretion and saltmarsh establishment. A feasibility study noted that without intervention, saltmarsh would be lost along the Rhymney frontage by 2070, but that there were opportunities to protect the habitat, of which re-instatement and extension of the polders was the preferred option.
59. The project involved replacing existing fencing that had not been maintained, and also creating new polders to the west. The aim is to protect and restore saltmarsh and mudflat by facilitating mud deposition and subsequent vegetation colonisation, thereby reversing the erosive trend in the region. The project is being considered a pilot study for the suitability of polders as a nature-based solution in higher energy environments similar to Severn Estuary; therefore, a secondary aim is to develop understanding of site evolution to inform future projects.
60. Construction took place over a three-month period and despite challenges around soft ground and narrow tidal windows, the project was completed successfully. Monthly maintenance checks have indicated that the scheme has survived the winter storms, with only minor repairs planned this summer.

Improving Marine Conservation Advice (IMCA) Project

61. The Nature Networks funded Improving Marine Conservation Advice (IMCA) project has developed new conservation objectives for six marine Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and six marine Special Protection Areas (SPAs) in Wales. The objectives were published during June as conservation advice packages under Regulation 37 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.
62. The conservation advice packages were underpinned by carrying out condition assessments on all the features of our Welsh-only (non cross-border) SACs and SPAs. The assessments tell us whether the habitats and species that are features of the site are in favourable or unfavourable condition. The assessments and conservation objectives are needed for a wide range of our work including all marine casework advice, the State of Natural Resources Report and other statutory reporting duties, all Marine Protected Area management advice and projects, nature restoration advice and management of nutrients in catchments discharging into these SACs.
63. Of the 85 feature-level condition assessments, 32 were favourable (38%), 47 were unfavourable (55%) and six were assessed as unknown condition (7%). A higher

proportion of bird features of SPAs was found to be in unfavourable condition (63%), which is largely attributable to highly pathogenic avian influenza.

64. The assessments have also identified marine features that are in unfavourable condition due to nutrient enrichment by dissolved inorganic nitrogen originating in the upstream catchments. We will use a phased plan to determine when we will provide further advice on the need for nutrient neutrality in certain areas together with the relevant tools and guidance.

Supporting Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS)

65. In May this year, our Permitting service issued a marine licence to Liverpool Bay CCS Limited for the HyNet carbon dioxide (CO₂) pipeline. The licenced pipeline will carry up to 4.5 million tonnes of CO₂ per year from its landfall in Flintshire to store it permanently in depleted gas fields in the Irish Sea. It is essential infrastructure that unlocks the ability to capture CO₂ from several industrial developments in north Wales and northwest England.
66. We are also determining an application for carbon capture plant at the Castle Cement Works in Padeswood and are now expecting two further applications for carbon capture on Deeside. These are part of the Northeast Wales Industrial Cluster that is the focus of Government investment grants, and are pilots to achieve Net Zero targets.
67. Determination of the permits is highly complex to ensure ecological and human health protection, as well as minimising navigation impacts from significant infrastructure installed on the seabed. This shows the professionalism and dedication of the staff in our Permitting service and Advisory teams, and that Wales can lead the way for industrial decarbonisation and innovation.

Water Regulation

68. We recently concluded enforcement proceedings against DCWW for permit compliance breaches at numerous assets which resulted in the company being fined £1.35 million (this is being appealed by DCWW). We are disappointed to have to take such action as this highlights the water industry failing to comply with their permitted obligations. We are also awaiting sentencing of DCWW in respect of permit breaches and environmental impact from asset failures in the Gwent levels. Both cases show our commitment and increasing activity on regulation of water companies.
69. From July, our new Water Compliance Unit will be operational. This will further enhance our ability to regulate across the water sector. The team will focus on increasing our regulatory activities including water company auditing, compliance with water company regulatory returns, and programming of inspections across Wales. The team will work working closely with local operational teams to provide expert advice and support in compliance and enforcement.

UK Analytical Services (UKAS) Annual Audit

70. The annual UKAS surveillance visit to our Swansea laboratory took place during June and their recommendation is that our ISO 17025:2017 accreditation status is renewed on closure of their findings. This ISO is an international standard that specifies the general requirements for the competence, impartiality and consistent operation of laboratories. It is the global benchmark for testing and calibration laboratories, ensuring they can consistently produce valid and reliable results.
71. The assessors made several complimentary and positive comments during the closing meeting, noting a “very positive experience, very hospitable staff who show a high level of competence”, “superb staff who clearly enjoy what they do and get on well with each other”, “good equipment that is well maintained” and “excellent performance in proficiency schemes, supported by a very good quality control performance”. Our training regime was considered to be “at a very high standard”.
72. There are eighteen findings in total, which the team are working on to close. The success is testament to the commitment of our laboratory staff to continuously improve the service they deliver.

North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organisation Meeting in Cardiff

73. The 42nd Annual Meeting of the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organisation (NASCO) was co-hosted by NRW, WG and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) in Cardiff during June. The meeting was a significant success, both in terms of international collaboration and in showcasing Wales’ commitment to the future of wild Atlantic salmon.
74. The event brought together international delegates from across the North Atlantic region to discuss the conservation and management of wild Atlantic salmon. The primary mission of NASCO is to conserve, restore, enhance and rationally manage salmon stocks through international cooperation. Alongside member states, attendance included non-governmental organisations supporting salmon conservation and, for the first time, indigenous peoples’ representatives and institutions in a step that allows indigenous peoples to participate as rights holders.
75. To compliment the formal conference sessions, we organised two field tours to demonstrate pressures and practical conservation efforts. A boat trip to the Cardiff Barrage was supported by Cardiff Bay Harbour Authority, allowing delegates to understand the history of Cardiff docks, the construction and operation of the barrage, fish passage and monitoring at the barrage and the potential for sustainable energy from the Severn Estuary. A full day tour to key sites on the River Usk provided an opportunity to see fish passage improvements and riparian habitat restoration, while the Wye and Usk Foundation demonstrated beneficial farm management practices on the River Crai.

76. Our contributions – through technical leadership, hosting and field engagement – were widely acknowledged and appreciated by our colleagues in WG, DEFRA, the NASCO secretariate and delegates.

Commercial Issues

Commercial Strategy

77. The new Consultation Toolbox is almost complete and we have three advocates from different areas of the business engaging colleagues on the next iteration of the document, which will focus on the value of land in our care. External consultation will begin at the Royal Welsh Show and carry on throughout the summer and early autumn. It will focus much more on value and off-setting risk for the organisation and will aim to incorporate some of our work on the mixed economy model.

WoodBUILD 2025

78. Dominic Driver, Executive Director for Evidence, Policy and Permitting, attended the WoodBUILD conference organised by Woodknowledge Wales, with several NRW colleagues. The event was held in Llandudno, and we were able to host a pre-conference visit to Gwydir Forest. Board member Calvin Jones was the conference ‘roving witness’.
79. The annual WoodBUILD events unite timber and construction stakeholders to collaborate and innovate for use of home-grown timber in construction. A key action emerging for us was to energise ‘designated supply contracts’, part of our Timber Sales and Marketing Plan, whereby we develop ways of directing the timber we grow on the land in our care for use in construction to optimise carbon storage. We have not yet achieved such an arrangement but there was significant positive interest from several timber construction companies that we resolved to build on.
80. During the conference we coincidentally announced the first expressions of interest exercise for a ‘progressive sales contract’, whereby we enter into a multi-year arrangement with a harvesting company which should enable them to invest in the kind of capability and capacity we need to sustainably manage our forests. This also generated positive interest.

Internal Issues

Simplified Approach to Access Requests

81. The Customer Hub have been closely involved in shaping and preparing for the new Access Request process (formerly known as the Permissions process), which is now live and enables people to apply to carry out certain events and activities on land managed by NRW. The team worked in partnership with colleagues across the organisation throughout the development phase, contributing to task and finish

groups, helping to refine the process and ensuring the approach would be practical, consistent and customer-focused.

82. With the process now in place, we are actively triaging the existing backlog and new applications and are committed to delivering a high-quality service. This is just the start; we're taking an iterative approach, continuing to gather feedback, refining how we work and developing performance measures to monitor and improve the service. We've also submitted a request for this process to be prioritised for a user-centred design project through NRW2030, to ensure we continue to improve both the customer and staff experience over the longer term.

Recruitment and e-Recruitment Project Update

83. Recruitment activity has significantly increased following the Case for Change, with over 430 vacancies advertised since 9 March. This is a sharp rise compared to previous years and includes roles aligned to key priorities such as phase one infrastructure and waste reform. The Recruitment and Resourcing team has responded at pace, balancing high volumes with the need for quality and compliance. Weekly collaboration with Directorate Workforce Planning leads helps ensure efforts are focused on the most critical roles.
84. Recruitment is being delivered entirely through manual processes at present. This is placing significant strain on internal teams and hiring managers, particularly as demand continues to rise. To help manage this, we've worked closely with Finance to tighten governance, and recruitment activity is now directly aligned with financial targets. Directorate Workforce Panels have also helped improve prioritisation and decision-making.
85. To build resilience and increase capacity, four temporary posts have been secured. The additional resource ensures the team is better placed to manage demand and support the transition to digital processes.
86. To broaden our reach and attract high-calibre, diverse talent, we have introduced automated job feeds. This means all live vacancies are pushed directly to key platforms including LinkedIn, Jobcentre Plus, Diversity Jobs and others, alongside professional job boards, helping us connect with a wider audience. In parallel, we're working with three external partners – Yolk Recruitment, Pertemps and Odgers Berndtson – to support cost-effective recruitment into senior and hard-to-fill posts.
87. A key milestone in modernising our resourcing function is the recent contract award to Kallidus to deliver a new e-recruitment system. This will replace manual processes with a digital solution that simplifies the experience for both candidates and hiring managers. The project is now in the build and testing phase, with implementation planned for September this year. As with any significant system change, risks around user adoption and continuity are being actively managed through early engagement, training and change support. The investment lays the

foundation for a more efficient, scalable and future-ready recruitment function that better meets the organisation's long-term needs.

Communications

Corporate Communications

88. Sharing news of the appointments of new Board members and key steps in the appointment of a new Chair has been a focus of internal communications over this period. We have also robustly responded to media enquiries resulting from the publication of the Senedd's Climate Change, Environment and Infrastructure (CCEI) Committee report on our annual scrutiny session, setting out the facts in relation to the changes to incident response, the IR35 process and visitor centres.
89. We responded proactively and positively to the introduction of the Environment Bill, setting out how we will support its implementation by contributing our evidence, expertise and operational insight.
90. We have worked closely with operational teams to manage relationships and alleviate community concerns around the impact of visitors at Newborough. Together with traditional media relations, our tactical use of social media channels to share first person, self-filmed video content of our colleagues has enabled us to creatively share information about how we work alongside the community to manage the issues on site.
91. As the Case for Change process concludes, we have continued to provide support to teams to communicate impacts to services internally and externally, notably the pause and re-start of the permissions process.
92. As we look towards the publication of the State of Natural Resources Report at the end of the year, we also gave our support to the publication of the Future Generations Report 2025.

Communities are Resilient to Climate Change

93. The impact of a sustained period of warm and dry weather on the environment continues to attract media interest. We have proactively promoted our work with partners to manage wildfires and have taken the opportunity to communicate the damage these incidents cause, what can be done to reduce the risk and the costs and time needed for recovery.
94. Working with the Water Resources team, WG and the water companies, we played a leading role in the delivery of a technical briefing for media representatives on dry weather impacts. This allowed us to outline roles and responsibilities, definitions of drought and water efficiency messages which will help inform future reporting of any changes in status.

95. World Green Roof Day offered a platform to highlight our innovative efforts to support the greening of urban spaces. As members of the Green Roof Organisation, we co-hosted and promoted our event on Wales' largest green roof in Swansea, showcasing how collaborative working can create healthier spaces and help mitigate climate impacts in our cities.

Pollution is Minimised

96. Proactively sharing our work to improve the quality of our waters was a key focus over this period. The longstanding commitment of our regulatory teams in securing permit compliance at DCWW was brought into focus in the culmination of our prosecution of the company for over 800 breaches of their sewage discharge permits. The proceedings resulted in a £1.35 million fine and widespread coverage in the media.
97. Interviews on BBC Wales and Newyddion in response to the Cunliffe Review on water industry regulation provided a further opportunity to underline our commitment to strong regulation. We have proactively promoted three successful enforcement actions – a prosecution for fly-tipping at Coed Moel Famau and two cases involving illegal fishing at Llangennech and Ystrad Mynach.
98. The start of the bathing water season offered a platform to share the work of our environment officers and the work they do to test waters at designated bathing sites to determine if they meet stringent environmental standards. We delivered content at the start of the season to inform the public on the difference between algal blooms and pollution.
99. We brought forward the communications planned to outline the changes to how we respond to low level pollution incidents in response to the publication of the CCEI Committee's report. Our engagement with colleagues, elected officials and stakeholders is intended to help us to set out the context for the changes and reiterate the importance of the public continuing to report incidents.
100. World Environment Day provided a useful opportunity to highlight how we help to minimise pollution. From our ICT greening schemes to our work to remove derelict boats from our marine environment, we showcased efforts across the organisation to help beat plastic pollution.

Nature is Recovering

101. The benefits of partnership working have been highlighted in a range of stories about our nature recovery efforts. The National Trust partnership focused on the conservation of the pearl-bordered fritillary butterfly highlights how our expert land management knowledge and expertise supports the future of this species. The launch of the new Natur am Byth website has provided a dedicated space to highlight project progress, and a space for all partners to promote successes. The

continued roll-out of Nature Networks funded projects and river restoration schemes are also helping to build a bank of case studies to inform our future campaigns.

Summary of Complaints, Commendations and Correspondence

102. As at mid June, we have received nine complaints and four Environmental Information Regulation (EIR) requests in relation to the Vale of Glamorgan Council's decision to approve the installation of an aquapark at Cosmeston Lakes Country Park. Correspondents have raised concerns about the potential impact on biodiversity and protected species due to the site's designation as an SSSI, and the perceived lack of public consultation. There is strong local opposition, with reference made to a petition signed by over 5,000 residents. Other issues raised include concerns about noise disturbance, water quality and safety, and the long-term environmental effects of the development. Some have suggested alternative approaches to generating income for the park that are more in keeping with its ecological value.
103. Following the recent change to our incident feedback policy – where operational teams no longer provide direct updates to the people who report incidents – we have seen a rise in queries and eight complaints from members of the public who want to understand what action has been taken. Customers have started to use EIR requests to seek the same information they previously received more informally. In effect, this means feedback is still being given, but now through formal information access routes. We have also received a letter from a Member of the Senedd on behalf of a constituent raising concerns about the lack of feedback following an incident report.
104. In line with other similar organisations across the UK, we now no longer provide individual feedback on our response to, or the outcome of, reports of potential incidents, regulatory breaches or criminal activity. This is so that we can focus our resources on delivering an efficient and cost-effective incident and regulatory service. We will continue to monitor the implementation of this new policy approach. For high volume incident reports, whilst we will not be giving feedback to each and every call, we will consider issuing newsletters and updating via Citizen Space.
105. Following our recent successful prosecution of DCWW, which resulted in a £1.35 million fine, we have received several EIR requests seeking detailed information about the case. These requests indicate a high level of public interest in the case and broader concerns about corporate accountability, cost transparency and environmental enforcement. We are processing these requests in line with our internal processes and in accordance with the relevant legislation.

Forward Look

- Monday 21 to Thursday 24 July – Royal Welsh Agricultural Show
- Wednesday 13 August – Board Update Call

- Wednesday 10 September – Finance Committee
- Tuesday 16 September – Audit and Risk Assurance Committee
- Wednesday 17 September – Board Update Call
- Wednesday 24 September – Flood Risk Management Committee
- Thursday 25 September – People and Customer Committee
- Wednesday 1 October – Protected Areas Committee
- Thursday 2 October – Joint Land Estate Committee / Flood Risk Management Committee
- Wednesday 8 and Thursday 9 October[remove star] – October Board Meeting

NRW Board Paper

Date of meeting:	16 th July 2025
Title of Paper:	Finance Committee Board Update
Paper Reference:	25-07-B09
Paper sponsored by:	Helen Pittaway, Board Member
Paper prepared by:	Board Secretariat
Paper presented by:	Helen Pittaway, Board Member
Purpose of the paper	Information
Summary	To provide an aid to the Chair to update Board on the Finance Committee (FC) – 19 th June 2025

Background

This paper provides an aid to the Chair to provide a verbal update to the Board following the FC meeting on 19th June 2025. The minutes from these meetings can be made available to any Board member interested.

Budget and Business Planning 2025-26 update

1. An update on 2025-26 budget setting was provided including minor changes since the last Board meeting along with the next steps for workforce planning and further changes not reflected in the Budget Packs v2. The key financial risks and opportunities for 2025-26 were summarised.
2. FC queried if assumptions for oil prices had been reviewed given the international political landscape. FC welcomed the next steps on workforce planning but challenged whether the organisation had been sufficiently sighted on head count and staff budgets before their release. The timeline for finalising and circulating budgets was discussed as well as the approach to recruitment.

Financial Approvals

3. Approval was sought for the Outline Business Case (OBC) for the River Ritec in Tenby, the three frameworks for Peatland Procurement, Arboreal and Chainsaw and Data, Digital and Technology (DDaT), and for two contract variations.
4. The Committee discussed the potential of external funding sources for Tenby, as per the Deputy First Minister's challenge and requested that the Flood Risk Management Committee (FRMC) discuss how they could help influence Welsh Government's review of guidance for Business Cases. Assurance was sought that spend on all the frameworks would be monitored and used appropriately. The increase in flexibility and value for money for the DDaT framework was explained, as well as how this would work with the annual budget restraints. The Committee were also advised how Procurement and the Contract Management Support Service were working with the wider organisation to manage the framework. The operational need for the Arboreal and Chainsaw Framework was explained.
5. FC approved all six financial approvals. The Committee discussed publicising frameworks and how NRW could increase opportunities in the public sector for smaller companies and support staff in this.

2024-25 Annual Report & Accounts

6. The roles of the different Committees in the scrutiny of the 2024-25 Annual Report and Accounts were explained, as well as the variances between the Annual Accounts and the Financial Performance End of Year Report. The Committee were asked for their comments on the performance section of the 2024-25 Annual Report.
7. FC felt assured that they had been provided with a true reflection of the accounts throughout the year and thanked the team for their hard work. The Performance section tone was welcomed and FC felt that was balanced given the difficult year to report on due to the Case for Change.

NRW2030 Update

8. An update was presented including an overview of the four Programmes, the Highlight Report, and the 2025-26 high level portfolio milestones along with a summary of the work on the Customer Platform and the dedication of the staff working on it.
9. FC queried how much traction NRW2030 had across the whole organisation and welcomed the progression on work.

NRW Board Paper

Date of meeting:	16 th July 2025
Title of Paper:	Flood Risk Management Board Report
Paper Reference:	25-07-B10
Paper sponsored by:	Peter Fox, Chair of the Flood Risk Management Committee (FRMC)
Paper prepared by:	Board Secretariat
Paper presented by:	Peter Fox, Chair of the Flood Risk Management Committee (FRMC)
Purpose of the paper	Information
Summary	To provide an update on the Flood Risk Management Committee (FRMC) meeting on 25 th June 2025

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 25th June 2025.
2. For further detail, all Board members can access the agendas, papers, and minutes of committees via the Diligent portal.

Update

Flood Risk Management Update Report

3. Updates were provided on the National Infrastructure Commission for Wales (NICW): Building Resilience to Flooding in Wales by 2025 Report, skills and capacity shortage in the flood sector, and information was provided about a potential judicial review. The work that was commencing on strategic investment plans for four main areas: catchment approaches, adaptation, enabling more resilient communities and nature-based solutions was also outlined.
4. FRMC queried if the Flood and coastal Erosion Committee (FCEC) review of skills shortage would involve academic and practical pathways, and secondments. A

response to NICW's recent letter regarding their Report was discussed and the Committee suggested that Welsh Government's Futures Hub could support the strategic investment planning work. This work would be brought back to FRMC at a later date.

Flood Risk Management Capital Programme Update

5. The 2025-26 Flood Capital Programme was presented including an overview of what is included in the Programme, the latest forecast of £23.8m inclusive of over-programming, context behind the level of over-programming, the management of risk particularly the Fleet Replacement Programme and over or under spend. Individual project updates on Presteigne and Stephenson Street were provided along with a summary of larger projects' process stage, and expected properties protected.
6. The Committee requested that potentially contentious topics be reported to them. There were queries regarding whether NRW could contribute to projects that were not cost beneficial from a Flood perspective if led by other partners, external funding and how risk to life was taken into account in calculations. It was noted that the risk appetite aligned to discussions at the last Board meeting, and clarification on the RAG (Red, Amber, Green) status in the project variances tab was provided.

River Taff Master Plan

7. The River Taff Master Plan was presented including the background, NRW's ambition, the approach, an overview of Phase Two and the development of a Theory of Change that outlined the desired impacts.
8. FRMC queried whether the team were in consultation with the Upper Severn Catchment Partnership. When in discussions there should be clarity on what success looked like given climate change. It was suggested that Forest Resource Plans for the area should be reviewed in terms of flood resilience. How NRW handled partner challenges was queried and the Committee also asked how the work had developed from the Catchment Based Approach (CaBA) Partnerships. The Committee also queried how NRW would encourage local delivery partners to bid for contracts and ensure the process was accessible and easy for key partners to engage.

Forward Look

9. There would be a joint FRMC/Land Estate Committee meeting in October.

NRW Board Paper

Date of meeting:	18 th June 2025
Title of Paper:	People and Customer Committee (PCC) Update
Paper Reference:	25-07-B11
Paper sponsored by:	Mark McKenna, Chair of PCC
Paper prepared by:	Board Secretariat
Paper presented by:	Mark McKenna, Chair of PCC
Purpose of the paper	Information
Summary	To provide an update to the Board in respect of 18 th June 2025 PCC meeting.

Background

1. This update for the Board is in respect of the 18th June People and Customer Committee (PCC) virtual meeting. Board members can access all Committee papers and minutes via the Diligent portal.

Verbal Update on Current Risks and Issues

2. PCC were provided with verbal updates on current risks and issues, these included the merge between the Customer Hub and the Incident Communications Centre (ICC) teams; the Senedd May 2026 elections; the structure within the People function and the interim arrangements in place; recruitment and the early careers opportunities.

NRW Board and Trade Union Engagement

3. The Committee discussed the Social Partnership Agreements and how the engagement between the Board and trade unions (TUs) could be improved. It was suggested that a standing item could be included on the PCC agenda to continue engagement and collaboration.

Wellbeing Objective 4 (WBO4) – Headline Overview

4. PCC were presented with a headline overview of the new WBO4 and highlighted the four areas of focus and the draft steps to take. The Committee discussed the need for outcomes, challenging that the impacts were not Specific/Measurable/Achievable/Realistic/Time-Bound (SMART). Also discussed were the resources and capacity required to achieve the WBO.
5. ET had previously discussed the steps to take and had an action to complete them for the additional WBO. The Board were required to scrutinise the indicators for the Business Plan and resources would be required to provide support to the Head of Corporate Strategy and Programme Management (PMO) to continue the work at pace.

How Will Customer Work Going Forward

6. A presentation was provided on the aim to streamline processes for customers, using one team to triage and monitor customer queries. The ongoing work was explained and the Committee discussed when the work would be implemented. PCC had requested a mapping of the delivery work to monitor its progress.

Communications Strategic Plan

7. PCC were provided with an update on the Communications Strategic Plan and were assured that a comprehensive plan would be completed to include what would be achieved and how, allowing the team to consider any barriers to achieving the plan. The team were reviewing the public sector guidance on the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) before adopting its use to help formulate campaigns.

How Will Communications Work Going Forward

8. A presentation was provided that outlined how the new approach to communications would work both internally and externally. The External Affairs team were now part of the Communications and how this would strengthen the strategic engagement was described.
9. The Committee discussed the new approach and agreed that there should be a focus on campaigns that would have the biggest impact. Communications sub-groups would be formed to ensure that campaigns were well informed. Political Affairs would continue to be in the Corporate Strategy and Development (CS&D) directorate and the Public Affairs Manager would begin shortly.

Welsh Language Annual Report

10. PCC discussed the Welsh Language Annual Report and welcomed the bilingual Learning Management System (LMS). NRW were assisting contractors by providing tools to make it easier for them to use the Welsh language when delivering on NRW's behalf.

11. The issue of monitoring which language was being used by users on the LMS would be raised with the provider, Kallidus. It was suggested that training sessions could be arranged to help running bilingual meetings for non-Welsh speakers for the Board and ET.

Wellbeing Health and Safety Annual Report

12. Key points from the Report were provided and it was noted that the Digital Data and Technology (DDaT) team had recently approved the use of the upgraded app for near miss reporting on AssessNet. The legal compliance narrative was clarified and this would be improved by undertaking work, such as reviewing risk assessments with teams to ensure they continued to be suitable.

Remuneration Report

13. The Remuneration Report that formed part of the Annual Report and Accounts (ARA) was outlined. PCC discussed the Report and the percentage of respondents who had noted a disability. The voluntary redundancy figures were highlighted.

Annual Pay Policy Statement

14. PCC discussed the Pay Policy Statement. There had been great progression within the organisation and the paper reflected well in terms of fairness, equity and responsible use of public money. There had been constructive meetings held with TUs on how to improve NRW's means of discussing social partnerships.

Annual Modern Slavery Statement

15. There had been some enhancements within the Statement due to the Social Partnership and Procurement Act and a review would be completed. NRW were also working with other organisations in relation to the supply chain.

Resourcing and Recruiting

16. PCC were provided with an update on the ongoing work to advertise the remaining vacancies within the organisation. The team would be moving from a manual system to an e-recruitment process, which would change how recruitment was managed, as well as speeding up the process.
17. Work had begun on the review of employee proposition and the redeveloping of information on the website to share inclusive stories with potential candidates. It was suggested that PCC would receive regular updates as it was a key organisational risk.

NRW Board Paper

Date of meeting:	16 July 2025	
Title of Paper:	Wales Land Management Forum (WLMF) Update	
Paper Reference:	25-07-B12	
Paper sponsored by:	Professor Rhys Jones, WLMF Chair	
Paper prepared by:	Bronwen Martin, Specialist Advisor: Agriculture	
Paper presented by:	Professor Rhys Jones, WLMF Chair	
Purpose of the paper	Information	
Approval/Consultation process:	Responsible: Who has developed the paper/process and who has had input?	
	Accountable: Who is accountable for the ultimate approval? Who will be or is being asked to approve?	
	Consulted: Who has been consulted to date? Where endorsement is required, is this in place? Will further consultation be required?	
	Informed: Who has been informed or who needs to be further informed about the work?	
Summary	Summarise what considerations, decisions, and actions you are seeking from the committee.	

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

17th March 2025 meeting

2. The most recent WLMF meeting was held on Monday 17th March 2025. The meeting included the following presentations/discussions:
 - Interim State of Natural Resources Report 2025 – Julie Boswell, NRW joined the meeting to provide an update following the publication of the Interim State of Natural Resources Report 2025. This follows an initial presentation provided to the WLMF in March 2024.
 - Fly-tipping in Wales – Neil Harrison, NRW joined the meeting to provide a presentation on fly tipping in Wales, including some approaches to tackle it.
 - Knowledge Exchange Visit – Chris R. Thomas, NRW shared an update and overview of a recent knowledge exchange visit to Ireland. The focus of the visit was to see how sustainable farming can protect and enhance the natural environment, whilst improving farm productivity and profitability.
 - Member updates – A round table discussion for each Forum member to provide an update on key topics from their own organisation.
3. The next WLMF meeting will be held on 30th June 2025.
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 was 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.](#)

On 3rd March 2025, NRW sent a letter to WLMF Sub Group members communicating the decision to integrate the membership into the main Wales Land Management

Forum (WLMF). This change will be implemented after the final meeting of the group in April 2025.

Update

7th April 2025

6. The group had the opportunity to discuss the decision to integrate the WLMF Sub Group membership into the WLMF. Members were informed that they would automatically receive invites for future WLMF meetings (unless they wanted to 'opt out'). The Terms of Reference of the WLMF will be reviewed and updated to reflect the changes. The next WLMF meeting will be held on 30th June 2025.
7. The substantive item was focused on The Water Resources (Control of Agricultural Pollution) (Wales) Regulations 2021: 4-year review. The statutory review of the Control of Agricultural Pollution Regulations was published on 31st March 2025. This was an opportunity for Welsh Government to highlight some of the key points and recommendations.
8. Once these meeting minutes have been reviewed and formally agreed by members, they will be published on the WLMF Sub Group page on the NRW website.

NRW Board Paper

Date of meeting:	16 July 2025
Title of Paper:	Finance Performance Report
Paper Reference:	25-07-B13
Paper sponsored by:	Rachael Cunningham, Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Services
Paper prepared by:	Rob Bell, Head of Finance; Mark Collins, Business Finance Manager
Paper presented by:	Rob Bell, Head of Finance
Purpose of the paper:	Approval (change in forecast) / Discussion (Financial Performance)
Summary	<p>To approve:</p> <p>Change in the latest forecast from £297.6 to a forecasted £299.5m.</p> <p>To scrutinise:</p> <p>Financial performance to the end of May 2025.</p>

Background

1. The Finance Performance report provides detail on progress across the different types of income, expenditure, and programmes. Annex A summarises the key messages in respect of:
 - Change in budget forecast compared to the previous approved forecast (opening budget).
 - Performance to the end of May 2025.

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 £297.6m to £299.5m.
- 7. Board to scrutinise financial performance to the end of May 2025.

Index of Annexes

Annex A – Financial Performance Report



**Cyfoeth
Naturiol**
Cymru
**Natural
Resources**
Wales



NRW Board – July 25

Financial Performance Report – May 2025

Content and Key Messages

Update will cover:

1. Update on the latest forecast changes as at May 2025 compared to the opening budget from £297.6m to £299.5m.

2. Financial Performance as at May 2025.

3. Update on contingencies and under/over programming.

4. The main risks and opportunities to our budget this year are covered in a separate page.

5. Update on potential additional funding to be provided by Welsh Government

Messages:

1. The overall income forecast has increased by £1.9m, primary due to additional Grant in Aid funding for Water Enforcement work (£2.7m), which is offset by a reduction within the externally funded LiFE programme in this financial year (£1.2m).

2. Expenditure at the end of May equates to £32.1m against a planned spend of £34.7m, an underspend of £2.6m (7%). This is mainly due to an underspend on staff (£0.8m) and non staff costs (£1.7m) with capital and revenue projects broadly in line with profile. The staff under spend is primarily due to vacant posts, with the current vacancy rate at 12%. Following the completion of the Case for Change process and the additional funding received from Welsh Government, we are working to recruit to the revised structure. The non staff element is predominantly linked to Land Stewardship activities within the Operations Directorate (£1.7m). The overall income position is slightly ahead of profile (£1.0m), with £54.8m received against a forecast of £53.8m. The variance reflects IDD and WG grant income being received ahead of forecast, however we anticipate the full year position to remain unchanged.

3. There is further detail on contingencies and over-programming in the report. We have a central provision for additional staff costs, such as pay award, market forces and any potential corrections to the opening staff budgets, along with a general contingency to address any unexpected pressures. These combined total £8.2m. We also hold a central general over programming of £1m. In respect to our main programmes (Flood, NaCE and NRW2030), over/under programming within the main programmes is minimal apart from NaCE where it stands at £1.8m. Similar to previous years, this will be managed down as we move through the year to be in line with the overall allocation. Within the NRW2030 programme, there is £6m awaiting project setup and profile distribution.

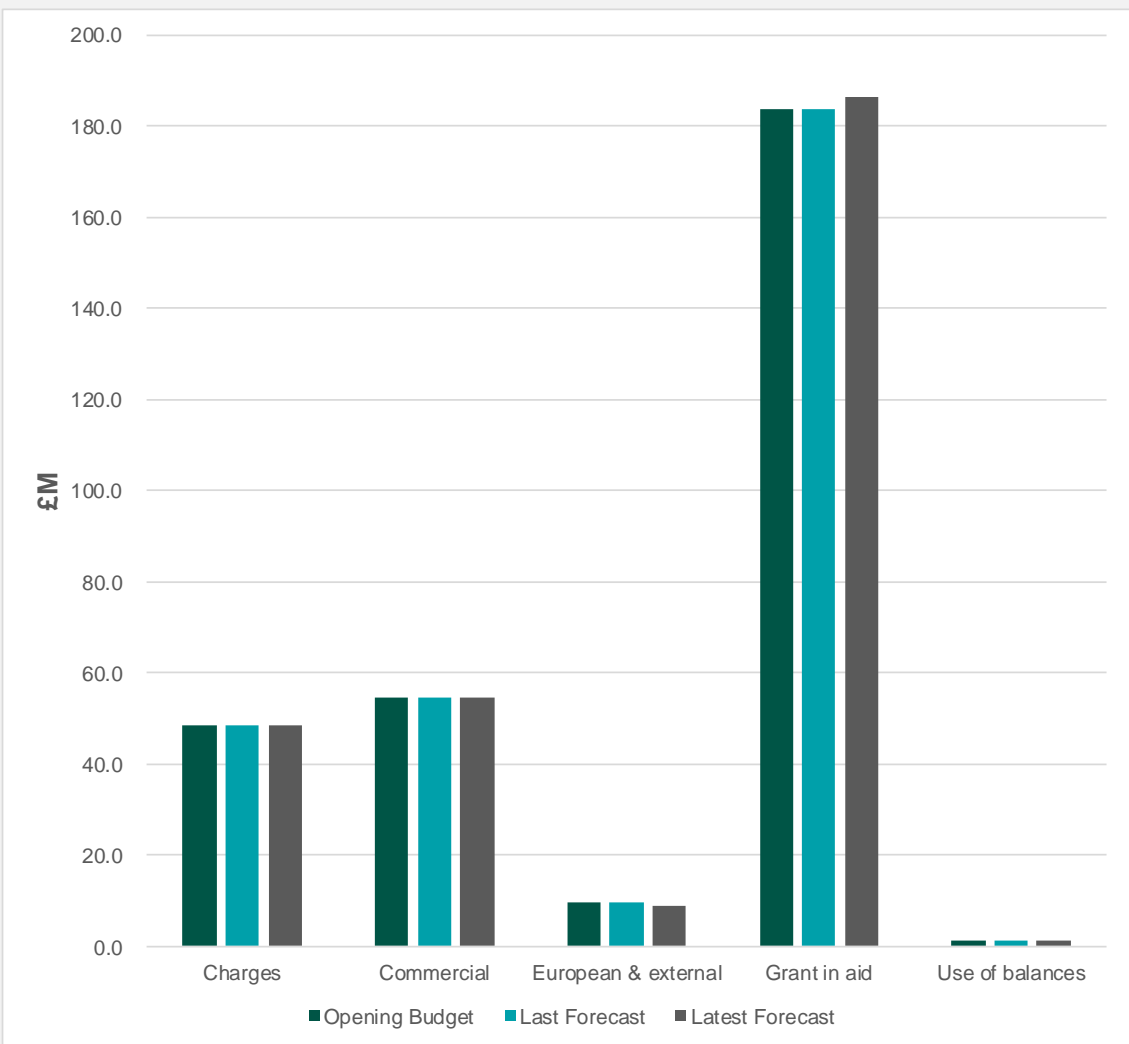
4. We updated the Finance Committee on the main risks and opportunities this financial year. The main concern (shown as an opportunity) will be our ability to fully utilise the additional funding provided by WG for 2025-26. Salary budgets have been issued, progress is being made with recruitment and headcount limits devolved to directorates with the ability to re-allocate subject to funding stream constraints. This together with other risks are disclosed on a separate page.

5. We are in discussion with WG about potential additional capital funding in 2025-26 to expediate the decarbonisation of our fleet and reduce our commitment to out of lease fleet for which we are incurring avoidable additional costs.

Risks & Opportunities

Type	Description	Expenditure Category	Value/£m
Risks			
US tariffs, geopolitical issues and exchange rate fluctuation	Potential increased costs, particularly within ICT hardware, licenses and oil/fuel.	Revenue & capital	TBD
Ongoing legal cases	No claim costs from case recently mediated although extra operational inspection costs will need to be factored into the programme. Other claims are being monitored for impact.	Revenue	TBD
Recruitment advertising	Due to the number of vacancies within the organisation the draw on the advertising budget will exceed the current level of funding.	Revenue	£0.25m
National Insurance increase	Following the increase to employers National Insurance contributions, WG provisionally agreed to provide budget cover, however, their allocation from central government is likely to be less than the amount required (15% less). We await further direction from WG.	Revenue	£0.3m
Waste site bond shortfall	We are likely to draw down the bond at one of the waste sites we monitor, however we cannot be sure at this stage that it will be sufficient to cover the costs of remediating the site.	Revenue	TBD
Retainable & surrenderable energy income	Additional measures put in place this year to highlight fluctuations in a more timely manner, however the volatility of the wholesale market and weather conditions will still be outside of our control, leading to fluctuations through the year. The retainable element will have a direct impact on NRW, with any shortfall needing to be met within our current budget allocation. Surrenderable will have a greater impact on WG. The latest income forecasts are showing a significant reduction in both forecasts. We are currently reviewing the expenditure plans to see if we can mitigate against the loss of income.	Revenue	TBD
Opportunities			
Salary under spend	Once the salary budgets have been issued, we will undertake a high level assessment of a range of possible outcomes.	Revenue & capital	Likely to be circa £5m
Variables			
Timber income	Susceptible to economic pressures but too early in the financial year to make an assessment.	Revenue	TBD

Financial Performance – Income Forecast



Charges

No change to income .

Commercial

Minor increase of £0.1m linked to ringfenced developer income.

European & Other External

Overall European & external income has reduced by £1m. The LiFE project programme reduced by £1.2m, which is offset by an increase in Natur Am Byth projects. The LiFE programme funding reduction will be utilised in future years.

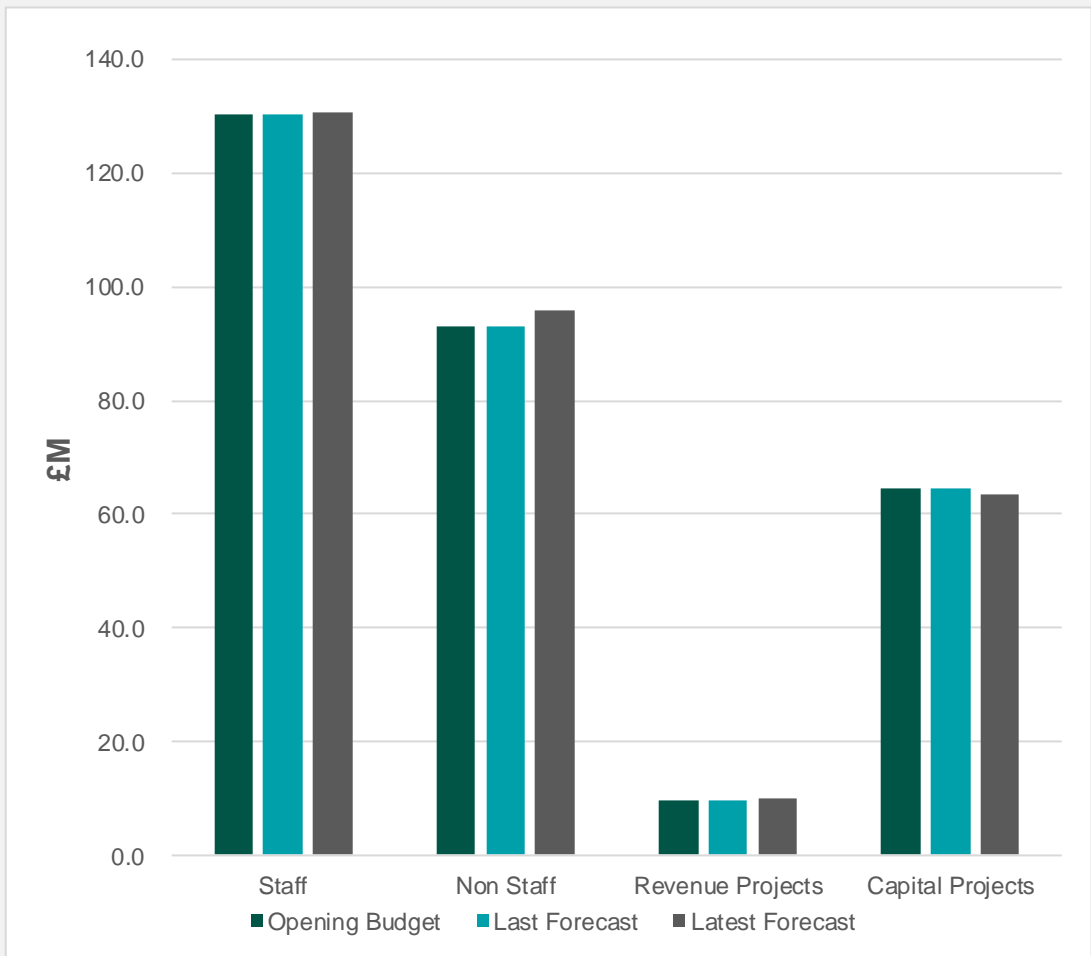
Grant in Aid

Grant in Aid has increased by £2.8m following additional baseline funding for water enforcement (£2.7m) and an additional WG grant for Improving Bird Data (£0.1m).

Use of balances

No change to income .

Financial Performance – Expenditure Forecast



Staff

Staff costs have increased by £0.3m reflecting minor movements within Infrastructure and Water Enforcement (additional GiA) staff budgets and Land Stewardship training budget transfer from non staff, all at £0.1m.

Non Staff

Non staff costs have increased by £2.5m, with the key change linked to the additional Water Enforcement GiA funding of £2.7m, along with a number of minor movements between expenditure categories.

Revenue Projects

Revenue Projects have increased by £0.4m following additional budget allocated to the Natur Am Byth programme (£0.1m) along with a number of movements between budget categories; Teifi demonstrator from non staff (£0.2m), NaCE grants from capital projects (£0.2m) and a NRM grant project moving to non staff (£0.1m).

Capital Projects

Capital Projects have reduced by £1.3m mainly due to the reduced LiFE project programme (£1.2m) along with minor movements between expenditure categories (£0.1m).

Financial Performance - Income

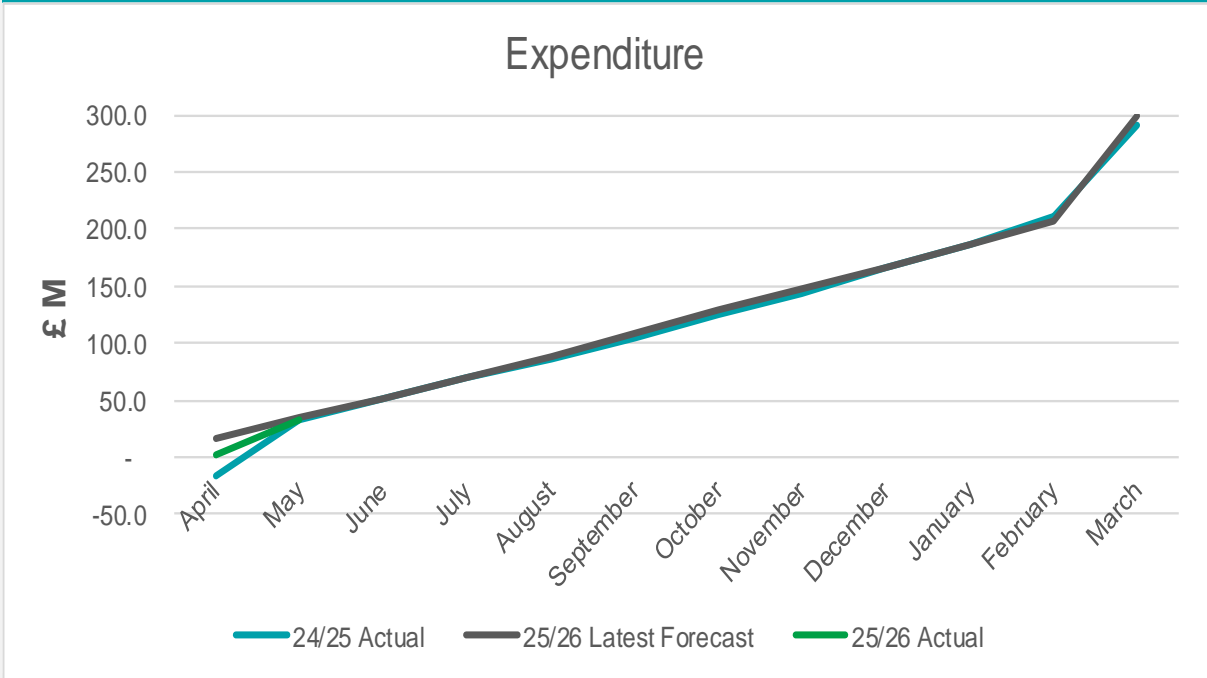
INCOME by Account Type	Actual YTD £m	Approved Forecast YTD £m	Variance YTD £m	Approved Forecast FY £m	Remaining Budget FY %	Commentary
Charges	23.3	22.7	0.6	48.4	52%	The current variance reflects IDD income received ahead of schedule, however we anticipate the full year position to remain unchanged. All other charge schemes are in line with budget. The latest position for the year, indicates a slight increase to charge income, which will be reflected in the June reports.
Commercial	9.4	9.3	0.1	54.6	83%	Whilst the current position is in line with forecast, the latest review indicates a significant drop in wind energy income across both surrenderable and retainable income streams. These changes are still under review and are not reflected within the current full year figures. A decrease in surrenderable income will have a direct impact on Welsh Government, with the retainable effecting NRW's overall funding position. Timber income is currently in line with profile and will be monitored closely through the year.
European & external	0.6	0.3	0.3	8.8	93%	The current variance reflects WG grant income received ahead of schedule.
Grant in Aid	21.5	21.5	0.0	186.6	88%	In line with profile
Use of balances	0.0	0.0	-0.0	1.1	100%	In line with profile
TOTAL: NRW	54.8	53.8	1.0	299.5	82%	

Financial Performance - Expenditure

EXPENDITURE	Actual	Approved Forecast	Variance	Approved Forecast	Remaining Budget	Commentary
by Account Type	YTD £m	YTD £m	YTD £m	FY £m	FY %	
Staff	18.9	19.8	0.8	130.6	86%	The May position shows an underspend of £0.8m on staff costs, primarily due to vacant posts (vacancy rate of 12%). Following the completion of the Case for Change process and the additional funding received from Welsh Government, the organisation is working to recruit to its' new structure. This is ongoing and as a result there are currently 370 budgeted vacancies (75 of which are going through interview/offer stage), resulting in the underspend seen at the end of May.
Non Staff	9.7	11.4	1.7	95.7	90%	The current underspend of £1.7m is almost solely linked to Land Stewardship activities with Operations Directorate. Land Stewardship costs incurred at this stage last financial were £0.3m higher with a similar full year budget. Finance are working with the business leads to input revised budget profiles where required, which will be in place for the next reporting period.
Revenue Projects	0.7	0.8	0.1	9.9	93%	Overall revenue projects are in line with the year to date profile.
Capital Projects	2.8	2.7	-0.1	63.3	96%	Overall capital projects are in line with the year to date profile. Over/under programming within the main programmes is minimal apart from NaCE where is stands at £1.8m. Similar to previous years, this will be managed down as we move through the year to be in line with the overall allocation.
TOTAL: NRW	32.1	34.7	2.6	299.5	89%	

Financial Performance – Expenditure Trends

EXPENDITURE TRENDS



Commentary:

Expenditure at the end of May was £32.1m, £1.0m less than at the same point last financial year, where we incurred £33.1m.

The forecast for this year stands at £299.5m, £9.1m more than the costs incurred last financial year.

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	0.3	0.4	0.1	3.1	90%	The current variance reflect a small under spend within Natur Am Byth. The key projects this year are Natur Am Byth (£1.3m) and Dee LiFE (£0.5m).
Internal Funded	0.2	0.2	0.0	1.8	89%	Current cost are in line to profile. The key projects this year are Teifi Demonstrator (£0.2m), embedding the Case for Change (£0.9m) and Water Resources funded projects.
NaCE	0.1	0.1	0.0	1.9	95%	Current cost are in line with profile. The NaCE programme budget stands at £21.4m, comprising £19.5m capital and £1.9m revenue, with various sub-programmes such as Water Quality, Peatlands and National Forest.
NRW 2030	0.1	0.1	0.0	2.3	97%	Current costs are in line with profile.
Grants	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.8	100%	Current costs are in line with profile. The budget comprising of two annually recurring projects, Areas Of Natural Beauty (AONB) (£0.4m) and National Trails (£0.4m) - with expenditure late in the financial year with no risk of significant underspend.
TOTAL: NRW	0.7	0.8	0.1	9.9	93%	

Financial Performance – Capital Projects

Capital Projects by Programme	Actual YTD £m	Approved Forecast YTD £m	Variance YTD £m	Approved Forecast FY £m	Remaining Budget FY %	Commentary
NRW 2030	0.2	0.2	0.0	6.0	96%	Current costs are in line with profile.
External Funded	0.8	0.8	0.0	13.9	94%	Current costs are in line with profile. The key projects this year with significant capital investment in excess of £1m are Natur Am Byth (£1.3m), LiFE programme (£5.1m), Wales Coast Path (£1.4m) and Reservoir Compliance (£2.6m).
Flood Risk	0.8	0.8	0.0	18.6	96%	Current costs are in line with profile. The programme current comprises almost 100 individual projects, with just £0.1m unallocated.
Internal Funded	0.2	0.1	-0.1	2.4	93%	The position at the end of May shows a slight over spend, with minor variances across a number of projects. The budget is predominantly made up of Land Stewardship and Water Resources funded projects.
NaCE	0.8	0.8	0.0	19.5	96%	Current costs are in line with profile. The NaCE programme comprises various sub-programmes such as Water Quality, Nature Networks, Peatlands and National Forest. Overprogramming currently stands at £1.8m (8%) and will be managed down in line with the overall allocation as we move through the year.
IFRS 16 Capital Leases Only (non-cash)	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.8	100%	The funding reflects the change in accounting treatment of leases and predominantly relates to fleet vehicles and building leases. Similar to last financial year, we will undertake a cost benefit analysis to determine whether to lease or purchase new fleet assets. Costs will run in line with the allocated budget to year end. We are in discussions with WG to increase the capital investment in fleet to reduce the number of "out of life" lease cars we have.
TOTAL: NRW	2.8	2.7	-0.1	63.3	96%	

Contingency and over-programming budgets

Rag status



Balances (contingencies and programme under/overs)	/£m Opening budget	/£m May-25	/£m Movement	Confidence Level (RAG Status)	Comments
Contingencies and provisions					
Pay Award Provisions	4.2	4.2	0.0		Budget held centrally at 3%. Welsh Government pay remit is 3.75%, however they will fund the difference should our pay award be greater than 3%.
Other staff contingency	1.1	2.1	1.0		Budget to be distributed for market forces and increments in June. Also contingency held for flexible resource pool and any corrections required to the opening budget.
Central Contingencies	1.5	1.9	0.4		Central contingencies held to fund unexpected pressures has increased by £0.4m predominantly due to the corporate charge associated with the additional funding for Water Enforcement.
Infrastructure (additional WG GiA funding)	0.8	0.6	-0.2		Unallocated funding from the initial £5m award. Possible this will be returned to WG, still being determined.
Staff Budget Undistributed (Directorates)	9.4	10.5	1.1		Budgets to be distributed to posts associated with new funding in June/July/when posts are setup. This has increased from the opening position by £1.1m, mainly due to additional funding linked to Water Enforcement posts.
Over-programming					
Central over programming	-1.0	-1.0	0.0		As per the opening budget. This will most likely be retained until Quarter 4.
Overprogramming (Directorates)	-0.3	-0.3	0.0		No change from the opening position. The balance is almost solely linked to the Land Stewardship programme.
NaCE (Directorates)	0.0	-1.8	-1.8		Overprogramming reflects almost 8% of the allocated budget and will be managed down as we move through the year, similar to previous years.
Water Resources Capital (Directorates)	0.2	-0.1	-0.3		The balance will be managed down as we move through the year.
Under-programming					
Flood Risk Capital (Directorates)	1.1	0.1	-1.0		Under programming reduced significantly from the opening position and now stands in line with the overall allocation, however, with no over programming this does increase the risk of a possible under spend.
Awaiting distribution					
NRW 2030 (Directorates)	6.0	6.0	0.0		Awaiting project setup and profile distribution.
Note	All contingencies/over programming are held centrally unless indicated otherwise.				



Board Paper

Date of meeting:	17 th July 2025
Title of Paper:	Annual Business Plan Performance Report: Quarter 4 and Internal Performance Report: Quarter 4
Paper Reference:	25-07-B14
Paper sponsored by:	Prys Davies (Executive Director of Corporate Strategy and Development)
Paper prepared by:	Sarah Williams (Head of Corporate Strategy and PMO) and Corporate Planning Team
Paper presented by:	CEO and Executive Team Well-being Objective Leads
Purpose of the paper	Approval
Summary	<p>The Quarter 4 reports for progress against the 2024/25 Annual Business Plan and Internal Performance Report.</p> <p>To approve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final year end performance positions for all Business Plan commitments and internal measures.

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 Well-being Objective (WBO) with responsibility for performance, assurance and risk for 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 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.
5. 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.
6. Across the three WBOs, the business plan identifies the steps to take (seven for WBO1: Nature; nine for WBO2: Climate, nine for WBO3: Pollution, and one cross-cutting) where we have identified 26 specific commitments to progress this year. This represents approaching 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. To demonstrate our progress against the priorities in the Term of Government Remit Letter we have completed a separate mapping demonstrating that the majority of priorities either flow into the 2024-25 Business Plan or are picked up in specific Business Group Service Plans.
7. Each of the 26 commitments for this year are accompanied by up to three key deliverables to demonstrate how progress will be made in this year.

Business Plan 2024/25 Quarter Four Year end Performance Report

8. The Business Plan 2024/25 Quarter Four Performance Report can be seen at Annex 1. 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.
9. **Actual progress** In quarter four across the 26 commitments is thirteen reported green which is an increase from eleven in Q3; twelve reported amber, a decrease from thirteen in Q3 and one reported red, as in Q3: there has been a shift of one commitment from Red to Amber (C15) .
10. Year-end predictions in Q3 were mostly accurate, with the exception of two. 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) predicted Amber at year end but is Green in Q4; 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) predicted Red but has shifted to Amber.

Internal performance report

11. Alongside the business plan quarterly reporting we also review management information related to internal performance.
12. The Internal Performance Report can be seen at Annex 2 and covers nine internally focussed measures, with their current (Q4) RAG status. This is a subset of more detailed management information, collected monthly and shared with all Executive Directors for scrutiny with their senior leadership teams.
13. For these measures the position are as follows: six Green, two Amber with no Reds and one TBC.

Risks, Risk Appetite and opportunities

14. 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

15. **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.
16. **Equality:** The relevant Equality Impact Assessment covers our Corporate Plan 2030, Well-being Statement and Business Plan 2024/25.

Next Steps

17. 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.
18. Feedback will be provided to reporters and LT and shared with staff via the intranet.

Recommendation

19. ET approve the Business Plan 2024/25 Quarter Four Performance Report and the Internal Performance Report ready to be submitted to the July Board meeting.

Index of Annexes

Annex 1 – [Business Plan 2024/25 Quarter Four Performance Report – Synthesis of progress against the well-being objectives](#)

Annex 2 – [Internal Performance Report: Quarter 4](#)

Approval / Consultation process

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

Annex 1: Business Plan 2024/25 Quarter Four End of Year Performance Report – Synthesis of Progress Against the Well-being Objectives

Background

1. Across the three Well-being Objectives (WBOs), the business plan identifies the steps to take where we have identified 26 specific commitments that we will progress this year (seven for WBO1: Nature; nine for WBO2: Climate, nine for WBO3: Pollution, and one cross-cutting). This represents approaching 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. 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 for their respective WBO and integrated scrutiny across the three WBOs to ensure a holistic view of progress. The '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, met again this quarter to consider performance and progress at the end of the year.

Overarching assessment of performance – emerging themes and risks

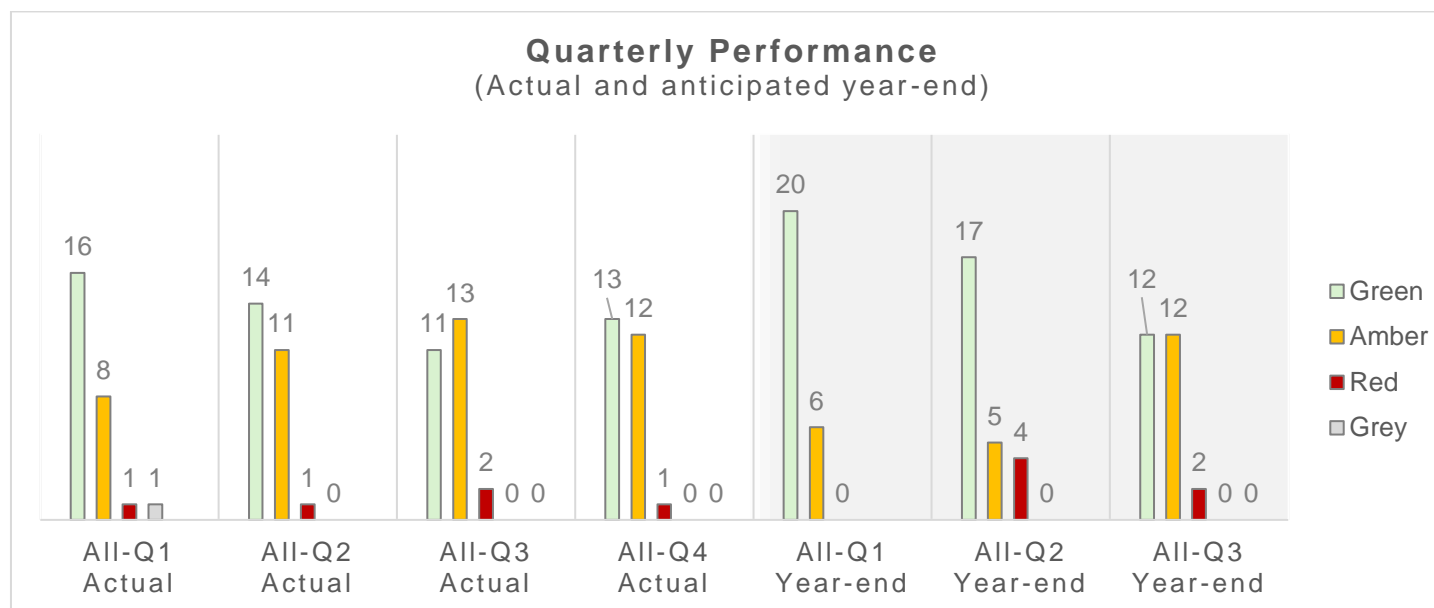
5. Across the three well-being objectives we have made good progress on all the annual commitments and key deliverables. Notable achievements include: raising awareness of the Interim Report for SoNaRR 2025 published in Quarter 3, which has become a popular download from our website; providing protection to 836 properties through our Flood Risk Management Capital programme with completion of the flood defence scheme at Stephenson Street in Newport, which was visited by the Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change and Rural Affairs; completion of the analysis of a public

consultation concerning the proposed new National Park in North East Wales, as well as progressing a range of further assessments; increasing awareness with over 1,500 organisations of new workplace recycling regulations during this quarter; and further work on the Sustainable Farming Scheme where all our site visits have been completed in the quarter, and mock management plans are now being sent to our Environment officers to help evaluate the process.

6. The recruitment freeze has impacted delivery with progress on many commitments and key deliverables slower than anticipated at the start of the year. Through the year, team leaders, managers and leadership team have prioritised, pausing some work to create capacity for other higher priority work, scaling back ambition, and managing expectations with our customers and partners. These pressures have impacted on delivery and are reflected in the performance metrics. Of the 26 commitments, thirteen reported green – an increase of two from Q3; twelve reported amber – a decrease of one from Q3 and one has reported red. This represents an overall improvement on both the actual and predicted end of Year results reported in Q3.
7. The pathway to green for these commitments is dependent on the release of the recruitment controls. It is likely that the earliest most of the currently red and amber commitments will return to green is Q3 in 2025/26. For this reason, these commitments and deliverables will be retained within the 2025/26 Annual Business Plan.
8. The Case for Change is now complete, with staff placed into posts and outstanding vacancies advertised externally on our website. However, it will take time in 25/26 for staff to settle into their new roles and for all teams to be at full capacity and capability.
9. For the first time this year we have prepared an overview of our progress against the priorities identified in the Term of Government Remit letter. This shows the close alignment between the priorities in the Term of Government Remit Letter, our Corporate Plan and the Annual Business Plan. We will produce this supplementary report each year to demonstrate progress and our commitment to transparency.

Performance Analysis

10. The graph below illustrates 'RAG' quarterly progress and year-end predicted positions across all 26 annual commitments; Table 1 reflects quarterly progress through the year for each annual commitment. While undoubtedly the case for change has impacted our performance during 2024/25, our end of year performance is better than predicted for year end at Q3. Once new roles have been embedded and teams have the capacity and capability they need, we expect to see improved performance in our key areas of work, with virtually all current commitments having reached Green status by Q3 2025/26. Detail for each Commitment can be found in 'Appendix 1 of Annex 1'.

Fig 1: Quarterly Performance and Anticipated Year End

Key: Green = achieved; Amber = partially achieved; Red = missed; Grey = N/A

11. Against actual progress in quarter four, of the 26 commitments, thirteen reported green – an increase of two from Q3; twelve reported amber – a decrease of one from Q3 and one has reported red – an overall improvement on both the actual and predicted end of Year results from Q3. This has involved various shifts in RAG status – from Amber to Green (C13) and Red to Amber (C15).

Table 1: Overall dashboard for 2024/25 Business Plan – Actual Reported Position

	2024/25 Business Plan commitment:	2024/25			
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Year end
WBO1: Nature is recovering	C1: Evaluate the NRW Nature Networks Programme to inform future investment for protected sites	Amber	Amber	Amber	Amber
	C2: Synthesise evidence to identify priorities for notification and renofication of sites contributing to the 30:30 target	Amber	Amber	Red	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: Consolidate understanding of the condition of features of Welsh only marine SACs and SPAs to inform prioritisation	Green	Green	Green	Green
	C5: 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	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	Green	Green
	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
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
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	Amber	Amber
	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	Red	Amber	Amber
	C12: Review the prioritisation approach for flood asset maintenance and management to ensure our investment is risk based	Green	Amber	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	Amber	Green
	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
WBO3: Pollution is minimised	C15: Prioritise actions with the greatest cost benefit on carbon dioxide equivalent (CO ₂ e)/ greenhouse gases (GHGs) to deliver our annual prioritisation within the Net Zero Plan	Green	Amber	Red	Amber
	C16: Embed the use of carbon reduction tools and plans into high value contracts and frameworks to improve the quality of submissions.	Green	Amber	Amber	Green
	C17: Undertake farm inspections under Agriculture Pollution Regulations, in line with the enforcement sanctions policy to reduce pollution.	Green	Green	Amber	Amber
	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	Amber
	C21: Set the ambition for water quality improvements at a catchment scale to build collaboration and deliver prioritised action	Amber	Amber	Amber	Amber
	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	Amber	Amber
	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	Amber	Amber	Amber

Synthesis of progress against each well-being objective

Below is a synthesis of progress against the well-being objectives. A detailed summary of progress for each commitment can be found in Appendix 1 of this Annex.

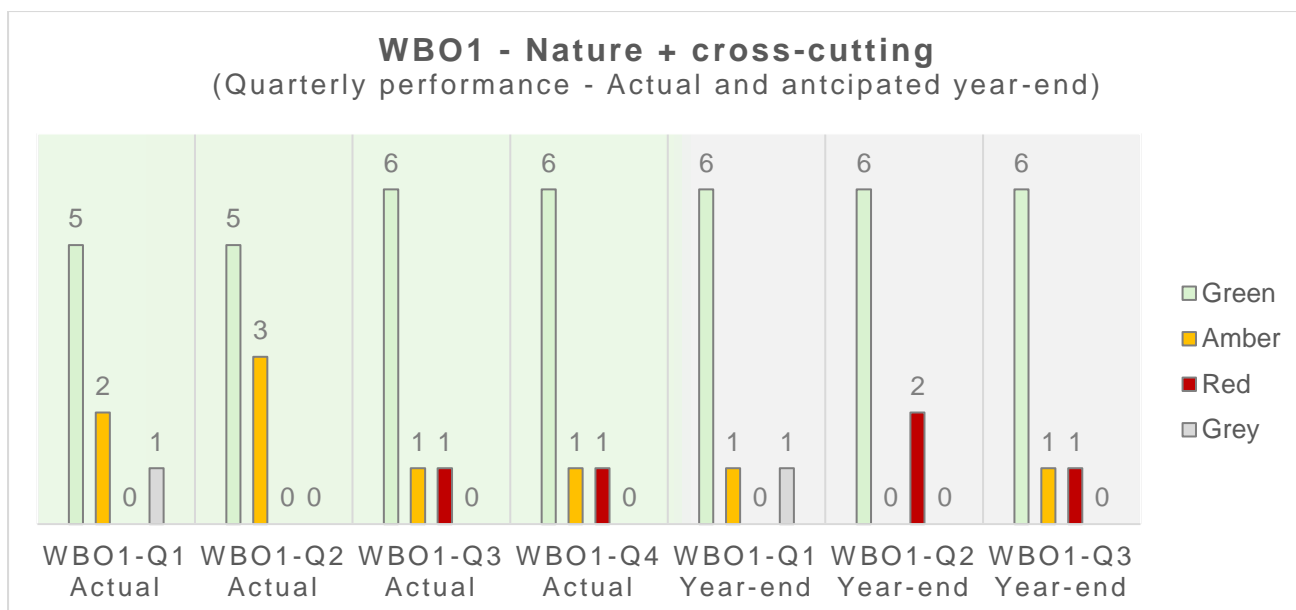
N.B. For reporting purposes only, we have now moved the cross cutting commitment (C26 - Develop an understanding of user needs, experience, and opportunities for common messaging and mainstreaming evidence into decision-making to inform the Interim Report for SoNaRR 2025) under WBO 1.

WBO 1: Nature is Recovering (and cross cutting commitment)

Table 2: WBO1 dashboard - Nature is recovering (and cross cutting commitment)

	2024/25 Business Plan commitment	2024/25			
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Year end
WBO1: Nature is recovering	C1: Evaluate the NRW Nature Networks Programme to inform future investment for protected sites	Amber	Amber	Amber	Amber
	C2: Synthesise evidence to identify priorities for notification and renotification of sites contributing to the 30:30 target	Amber	Amber	Red	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: Consolidate understanding of the condition of features of Welsh only marine SACs and SPAs to inform prioritisation	Green	Green	Green	Green
	C5: 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	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	Green	Green
	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
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 = partially achieved; Red = missed; Grey = N/A



1. Progress has continued to the end of the year. Five commitments have remained Green throughout the year, and a further commitment (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) became Green in Q3 and has remained so to year end.
2. Of the two remaining commitments under this WBO, one has remained Amber at Q4 (C1 - Evaluate the NRW Nature Networks Programme to inform future investment for protected sites), while the other has remained Red (C2 Synthesise evidence to identify priorities for notification and renotification of sites contributing to the 30:30 target): all are as previously predicted for year end at Q3.
3. 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.
4. C1- Evaluation of the NRW Nature Networks Programme has remained Amber in this last Quarter. Although evaluation work has continued it has not yet concluded. We have paused evaluation on parts of the programme to align with Welsh Government's evaluation of the wider Nature Networks Programme (NRW & NLHF (National Lottery Heritage Fund)) which is scheduled for 2025/26. Our NRW programme has delivered conservation activities on at least 207 separate SSSIs in 2024/25. The pathway to green is to scope NRW's own evaluation process by Q2 in 2025/26, with a schedule to Q4, and to address delivery capacity gaps by Q3: the deliverables will continue into the 2025/26 business plan.
5. C2 - Synthesis of evidence to identify priorities for notification and re-notification of sites contributing to the 30:30 target, moved to Red in Q3 and has remained so to the end of Q4. We have now completed the first draft of the SSSI Review Report, shared for internal review and following refinement will be shared with Biodiversity Deep Dive Core Group partners. Publication of our SSSI notification handbook and development of a costed programme for notifications has been paused.

However, these deliverables will continue into the 2025/26 business plan, including completing an initial review to inform a prioritised roadmap for SSSI notifications by Q2 2025/26.

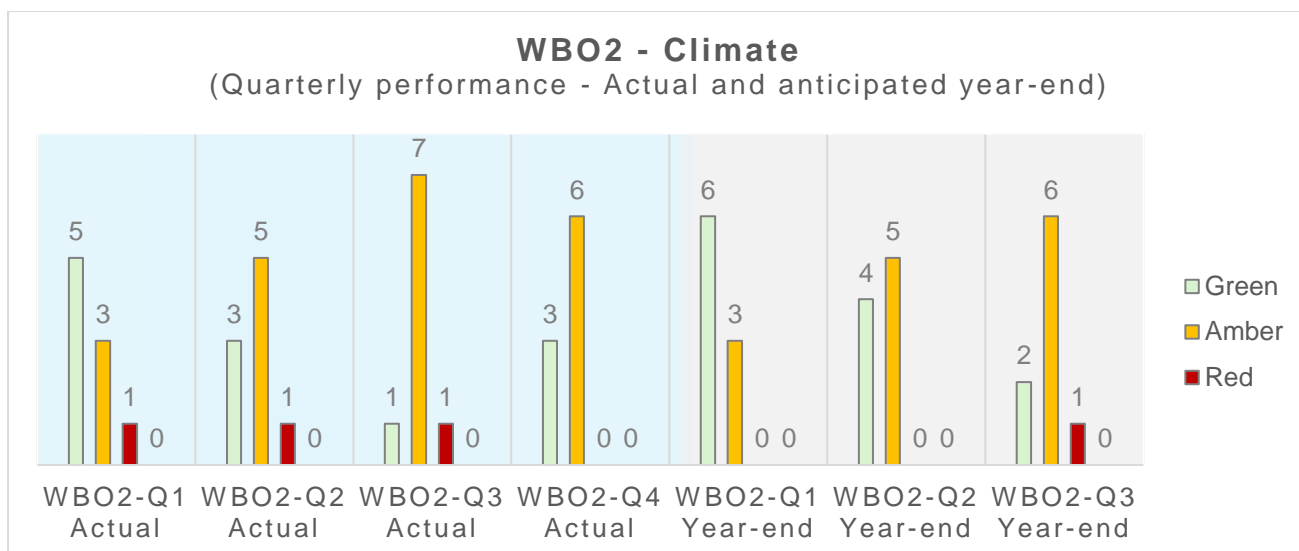
6. Six commitments reported green in Q4, with no change in actual or predicted year end from Q3. C5 - providing advice on the proposed designation of a new National Park is progressing well with analysis of the public consultation held in Q3 now complete. C6 - Providing evidence to inform the development of the Welsh Government Sustainable Farming Scheme and identify with Welsh Government what support services may be required is now progressing well following positive engagement with Welsh Government officials and agreement to revised key deliverables. This work will continue into 2025/26. C26 - the [\(Interim\) State of Natural Resources Report 2025 was published in December 2024](#). is now being widely publicised with good numbers of downloads of the document itself as well as views of our SoNaRR web pages.

WBO 2: Communities are resilient to climate change

Table 3: WBO2 dashboard - Communities are resilient to climate change:

	2024/25 Business Plan commitment	2024/25			
		Q1	Q2	Q3	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	Amber	Amber
	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	Red	Amber	Amber
	C12: Review the prioritisation approach for flood asset maintenance and management to ensure our investment is risk based	Green	Amber	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	Amber	Green
	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 (CO ₂ e)/ greenhouse gases (GHGs) to deliver our annual prioritisation within the Net Zero Plan	Green	Amber	Red	Amber
	C16: Embed the use of carbon reduction tools and plans into high value contracts and frameworks to improve the quality of submissions.	Green	Amber	Amber	Green

Key: Green = achieved; Amber = partially achieved; Red = missed.



7. Progress has been made during Q4, with slightly better overall performance than t predicted in Q3. Three commitments have reported as Green at year end (Cs 10,13 and 16), six as Amber (Cs 8,9,11,12 14 and 15), and no Reds. 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) and C16 (Embed the use of carbon reduction tools and plans into high value contracts and frameworks to improve the quality of submissions) have moved from Amber to Green, while 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) has shifted from Red to Amber.
8. While C10 (Capital flood works) has remained Green throughout the year, two other commitments have shifted from Amber to Green in Q4.
9. For 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) we've made strong progress this year, using pre-application insight and collaborative working to proactively support complex industrial decarbonisation proposals. A programme of data improvement with operators has led to a significant improvement in data used in the calculation of the National Air Emissions Inventory, with an increase in over 11 million m³ of landfill gas reported as being flared, which was previously assumed to be vented directly to atmosphere. Although we have reached Green, the wider permitting and policy landscape is shifting quickly, and ongoing effort will be needed to maintain this position in 2025/26.
10. For C16 (Embed the use of carbon reduction tools and plans into high value contracts and frameworks to improve the quality of submissions), we have achieved the deliverables we identified for 2024/25. We have successfully piloted our Well-being Impact approach in a procurement exercise, with the awarded supplier committed to a carbon measure as a contractual commitment. During the year we have also set a requirement for successful suppliers to use carbon

calculators for our MEICA (Mechanical, Electrical, instrumentation, Control and Automation) and Criminal Litigation Framework Agreements; issued guidance on establishing a Carbon Reduction Plan; and included the requirement for a carbon reduction plan to be completed by suppliers on our MEICA and Water Management consultancy framework agreements.

11. One commitment has shifted from Red to 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). The supply chain and project delivery elements of this commitment have met their targets while the climate literacy training element has achieved 43% rather than the 50% target for the percentage of staff trained: the case for change and completion rate of post course work to gain accreditation are both factors in this. In 2025-26, the Climate Literacy course will be promoted, with managers actively encouraging staff to attend, including all new starters.
12. Other commitments under this WBO were reported as Amber at Q3 and have remained so for Q4. These are C8 (Invest in capacity building to enable delivery in 2024-25 and future expansion of the National Peatland Action Programme), C9 (Strengthen capacity and evidence informing spatial prioritisation to enable effective future restoration within marine and coastal habitats), C11 (Improve the Flood Warning Service and Telemetry System to deliver efficiencies and maintain continuity of service to customers), C12 (Review the prioritisation approach for flood asset maintenance and management to ensure our investment is risk based) and 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).

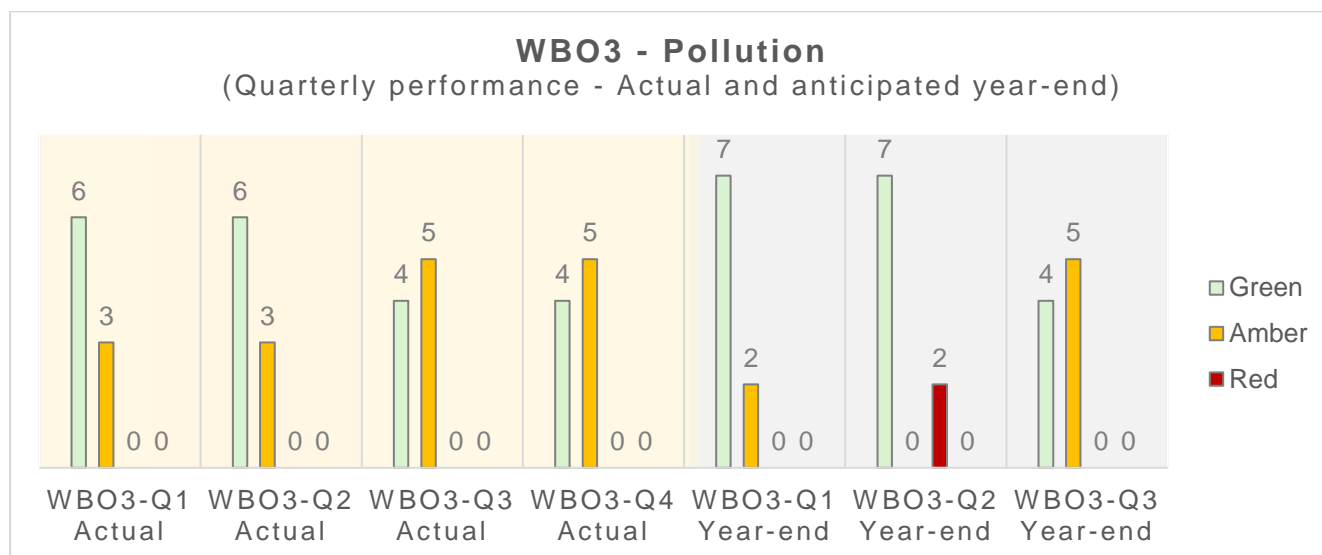
WBO 3: Pollution is minimised:

Table 4: WBO3 dashboard - Pollution is minimised.

	2024/25 Business Plan commitment	2024/25			
		Q1	Q2	Q3	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	Amber	Amber
	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	Amber
	C21: Set the ambition for water quality improvements at a catchment scale to build collaboration and deliver prioritised action	Amber	Amber	Amber	Amber
	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	Amber	Amber
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	Amber	Amber	Amber

Key: Green = achieved; Amber = partially achieved; Red = missed.



13. For this WBO, the RAG status for each of the commitments at year end is exactly the same as those reported in Q3– with four reported as Green (and have been consistently so throughout the year – Cs 18,19, 22 and 24) and five reported as Amber (Cs 17, 20, 21, 23, 25).

14. C17 Farm inspections under the Agriculture Pollution Regulations – despite excellent work by officers in-post, we have failed to achieve the required inspection numbers to meet the full year 80% target. This is largely as a result of vacancies within the team. While the inspection compliance rate has seen some marginal improvements over the past few months, overall farm non-compliance stands at 51%: the industry remains reluctant to accept the new requirements in many cases. Following recruitment to vacant posts, we are confident we can achieve the 100% target (821 visits) for 2025-26.

15. C20 - Provide challenge and advice to water companies to ensure their investment programmes reduce the risks and impacts of their operations on the environment remains Amber at year end. We had to reprioritise during the year, and a reduced resource availability meant that we made the decision not to carry out the Operator Monitoring Audit (OMA). This work will be continue into the 2025/26 business plan alongside the newly established water compliance team. We anticipate completing OMAs by the end of Q4 2025/26. However, the impact we have had during the year has been significant - achieving record investment for Wales through AMP8 (Asset Management Period 8 - Periodic Review 24), completion of drought planning work and significantly increasing our front line regulatory compliance effort when compared to previous years.

16. C21 – Set the ambition for water quality improvements at a catchment scale to build collaboration and deliver prioritised action remains Amber at the end of Q4. As of July 2024, all relevant (water company) permits had been varied to include phosphorus limits. Work is ongoing to assess the level of improvements created through this review. We have achieved our 30% target of outstanding investigations looking at causes of water body failure in Special Areas of Conservation (SAC). There are issues in the delivery of the Upper Wye Restoration Project caused by ongoing impacts from recruitment and case for change. We have not delivered as many farm visits/actions on the Upper Wye as planned and some work will now take place in 2025-26.
17. Other commitments reporting Amber are C23 (Enhance our understanding of the drivers of pollution incidents across Wales to inform the integration of preventative actions into incident response) where lack of capacity has hindered our ability to move as quickly as originally planned, and C25 (Strengthen ways of working with Local Authorities and third sector partners to maximise collective action on fly-tipping) where, for example, our work on a draft revised protocol had slowed, but work has now resumed and is scheduled for completion in Q1 in 2025/26.
18. Four commitments under this WBO have remained Green throughout the year. These are C18 (compliance on regulated sites) C19 (advice on workplace recycling) C22 (incident response) and C25 (investigations and enforcement action).
19. For C18 (Undertake compliance visits at prioritised regulated sites to reduce pollution) our main area of progress has been continuing to focus on permitted facilities where serious non-compliances have been identified, and Category 1 and 2 breaches have been issued. During July to September 2024, there were 32 Compliance Assessment Reports that identified either single or multiple Category 1 or 2 non-compliances. In line with the measure these require further compliance effort within 6 months. 48 out of 48 Category 1 and 2 breaches received further compliance effort within the required 6 months.
20. For C22 (Respond to prioritised pollution incidents to minimise environmental harm) we have maintained the level of service with the final figure for 2024-25 being 97%. A high-level report on incident performance was completed and shared with our Leadership Team in March. The report evaluated 2024 performance and identified areas for continuous improvement to refine incident management approaches post-April 2025. While we will continue to maintain the existing 4-hour response standard for high-priority incidents, our focus for 2025-26 will broaden to assess the overall effectiveness of our incident response. In particular, we aim to reduce the number of attended incidents that are ultimately unsubstantiated, ensuring resources are deployed in a more targeted and risk-based way.

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

Table 1: Wellbeing Objective 1 - Nature is Recovering ET Owner: Dominic Driver

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 (NN) 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.

C1: Position at year end:	Anticipated Year end	Year end Q4
<p>This commitment is Amber at the end of March.</p> <p>For KD1: The evaluation has continued but it has not been possible to complete it. Our analysis has shown that the NRW Nature Networks programme has delivered conservation activities on at least 223 SSSI across Wales. In 2024-25, we delivered conservation activities on at least 207 separate SSSI. We have paused evaluation on the programme other than for work delivered on SSSIs through Land Management Agreements (and Marine NN projects - reported elsewhere). WG intend to complete their evaluation of the wider Nature Networks Programme (NRW & NLHF) in 2025-26; the scope and timeline for that is to be confirmed and we will therefore define our own internal process whilst continuing to work with WG on the wider programme evaluation.</p> <p>For KD2: We have discussed priorities with WG prior to scoping the full programme evaluation and shared the evaluation work NRW has undertaken to date and its methodology. Having paused the NRW evaluation in 2024-25 to align with the WG wider programmes evaluation (now planned for 2025-26), we were not able to reach the prioritisation step in this deliverable. The pathway to green is to scope NRW’s own evaluation process by Q2 with a schedule to Q4, and to address delivery capacity gaps by Q3 through investment for delivering evaluation activity including Nature Networks data / GIS capability.</p>	Amber	Amber

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: Mary Lewis)

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: Position at end of year:	Anticipated Year end	Year end Q4
<p>This commitment is Red at the end of March.</p> <p>For KD1: We have now completed the first draft of the SSSI Review Report, shared for comment and review by the Task and Finish Group, whom we met with to discuss adaptations and additions that need to be made. Our next step is to refine the report before sharing with Biodiversity Deep Dive Core Group partners. Alongside, wider sharing a contextual communications piece will be drafted. The ongoing impact of the case for change with limited additional staff capacity available in Q4 meant we were not able to progress to the report being complete at year end, although good progress towards completion has been achieved.</p> <p>For KD2 and KD3: These key deliverables were paused owing to the impact on staff vacancies and availability as described in the Q3 report. We intend to restart these deliverables and complete in the next plan year.</p> <p>The pathway to green is to conclude KD1 by Q2 2025-26 to inform prioritisation of SSSI notifications to ensure a range of habitats and species are adequately represented for spatially targeting nature recovery action contributing to a resilient ecological network.</p>	Red	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 2025-26) (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: Position at year end:	Anticipated Year end	Year end Q4
<p>This commitment is Green at the end of March.</p> <p>For KD1: Our main area of progress has been an increase in the return of monitoring and evaluation data from each NGO partner within the partnership. This demonstrates the investment of training and support from the NRW hosted programme team and our specialist evaluation consultants.</p> <p>For KD2: This key deliverable was completed on target in Quarter 2. To maximise this work, NRW hosted a UK wide workshop in Q4 to explore use of the Species Recovery Curve methods across GB and Northern Ireland and address country and organisational divergence in approach. The event was well received, and a positive opportunity to platform work in Wales to partner nature conservation agencies, devolved governments, JNCC and NGOs. It highlighted the need for project level officers to receive more training to increase efficiency in undertaking project level species recovery assessment and increase confidence.</p> <p>For KD3: Completed in previous quarters.</p> <p>We will continue to implement programme management principles to manage risks and issues within the Natur am Byth programme. The programme board and partnership steering group will continue to execute their responsibility of supporting project staff and contractors to deliver conservation action. The impact measurement framework will continue to be used to monitor activity and ensure that place-based project outcomes are realised, contributing to the Wales wide outcomes upon which our external funding relies.</p>	Green	Green

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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: Position at year end:	Anticipated Year end Green	Year end Q4 Green
<p>This commitment is Green at the end of March.</p> <p>For KD1: All 12 conservation advice packages have been completed and endorsed by the project task and finish group they have been sent for final sign off. There will be some editing and proof reading of the advice packages to be carried out as well as accessibility checks, we are confident that all 12 new conservation advice packages will be published on our website in June. Underpinning these, we have completed all the condition assessments and they are with the project task and finish group for sign off. These will also need editing and accessibility checks, we are confident we will publish all reports on our website in June.</p> <p>For KD2: All contractor spend paid on time. Report writing phase longer than expected. Should be complete by late spring 2025. Resources for this three year project has reduced over time requiring an increase in timescale to complete. Investigation reports to be completed by end of spring 2025. Improving Marine Conservation Advice (IMCA) reports to be published in June 2025 as agreed.</p>		

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: Position at year end:	Anticipated Year end	Year end Q4
<p>This commitment is Green at the end of March.</p> <p>For KD1: Our main area of progress has been completion of an analysis report for the public consultation held in Q3, commencement and progression of multiple work streams including Health impact assessment, Welsh Language impact assessment, Equalities impact assessment and a Benefits for Nature Report. In addition, we have continued key stakeholder management activity, including meeting all 5 Local authorities affected. We have also commissioned Arup for two reports, the first to review planning in the context of a National Park, the second to assess economic impacts of designation.</p> <p>For KD2: Our main area of progress has been discussion with, and support for, Eryri and Pembrokeshire Coast National Parks and the Llyn and Gower National Landscapes on applying our Designated Landscapes Management Plan Guidance to their management plan guidance. To help inform discussion, a short summary note has been prepared and is being revised to reflect on the conversation with staff from each of the Designated Landscapes.</p> <p>For KD3: Our main area of progress has been to work to clarify the relationship between Designated Landscapes, as Category V Protected Areas under the IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature) classification system, and OECMS’s (Other Effective area-based Conservation Measures), defined by the CBD (Convention on Biological Diversity) as a geographically defined area other than a Protected Area. On this basis National Parks and National Landscapes cannot be considered as OECMS. This will inform the emerging WG 30by30 framework.</p> <p>Through Tirweddau Cymru and the new Nature Recovery 30by30 Programme Manager, the focus will now be collaborative working between designated landscapes, NRW and WG to develop a mechanism to identify and map which areas in Designated</p>	Green	Green

Landscapes can contribute and deliver on 30by30 linked to the Management Planning process and updated NRW Management Plan Guidance.



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. Increased clarity on the delivery of the SFS Universal Actions against NRW's three well-being objectives, in collaboration with Welsh Government, by end of Q2.
2. Increased knowledge and understanding of the requirements within the Universal Actions through completion of a pilot of Management Plans for SSSI by Q4.
3. Increased understanding of NRW support services requirements in relation to delivering the SFS and minimising risks, through the delivery of a plan in collaboration with Welsh Government, by end of Q4.

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

C6: Position at year end:	Anticipated Year end	Year end Q4
<p>This commitment is Green at the end of March.</p> <p>For KD1: NRW has kept pace with the various refinements happening across the universal actions and has helped shaped these so as to minimise regulatory risks. We have completed work to minimise the impact on licencing and consenting through changes in universal actions and helped provide a steer towards optional actions and longer term evolution of the scheme. We have provided advice on the development of the SFS Universal code, and supported Welsh Government in engagement with Stakeholders and Officials Groups</p> <p>For KD2: All site visits have been completed in the quarter, and we have collected enough baseline information to inform the WG SFS business case. Mock management plans are now being sent to Environment officers to help evaluate the process. A final report is in preparation and expected to be finished in April, which will inform next steps.</p> <p>For KD3: We have scoped out support service requirements as far as we can, given the position of the scheme. Transitional funding arrangements for Operational Readiness are being negotiated. Cost assumptions on service delivery have now been submitted to Welsh Government to inform their SFS Business Case.</p> <p>There are still many moving parts but we have a good understanding of the expectations on service delivery.</p>	Green	Green

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: Position at year end:	Anticipated Year end	Year end Q4
<p>This commitment is Green at the end of March.</p> <p>For KD1: Our mowing regime during May was reduced by more than 70% and guidance is now in place to risk assess future mowing in May so as mowing only takes place by exception, for example where required to maintain statutory compliance at our reservoir sites.</p> <p>A project to look at pilot sites to transition to mowing regimes which support species rich habitats has been accepted into the FRM Improvements Programme.</p>	Green	Green

Cross Cutting

Step(s) 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 Services 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: Steve King)

- 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 Q4).
 - 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.

C26: Position at year end:	Anticipated Year end	Year end Q4
This commitment is Green at the end of March.	Green	Green
For KD1: No further progress in Q4. Deliverable completed in Q3 by publishing the SoNaRR Interim Report		
For KD2: Our main area of progress has been publicising the Interim Report with the Chair's blog and press release on 13th January. There were a total of 747 views of the Interim Report web page between 19th December and 31st March. 455 of these were in January following the press release. The Interim report was downloaded 95 times between publication and 31st March 2025, the 7th most popular download from our website during Q4. In total, from April 2024 to March 2025 there were 3522 views of SoNaRR main web pages, including previous reports. There was increased interest following the publication of the 2024 Interim Report. National and Regional Organisations and news sites published articles about the Interim report, including Water magazine, Pembrokeshire Coastal Forum, Office for Future Generations Commissioner for Wales, South Wales Argus and NationCymru		
For KD3: Our main area of progress over the year, we have engaged with stakeholders in key public bodies to understand how SoNaRR can support OneHealth Agenda (PHW, Food Standards Agency, NHS Wales); 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. We had conversations with the business community via the UK Business and Biodiversity Forum and strengthened the relevance of SoNaRR for Green Finance with Welsh Government colleagues. We initiated the CASRI (Collaborative Action coordinating and enhancing systemic, actionable and transversal Sustainability Research and Innovation)		

project with grant support from the EU to better shape evidence needs with respect to sustainable management of natural resources and SoNaRR.



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: Mary Lewis)

Key deliverables:

- 1. Increase the area of damaged peatland undergoing restoration activity across Wales by 15%, rising from a previous annual target of 600 hectares to roughly 700 hectares in 2024/25.
- 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: Position at year end:	Anticipated Year end	Year end Q4
<p>For KD1: Restoration efforts have been underway across Wales on land managed by NRW, as well as land managed by our trusted partners and private landowners. We have made good progress on our top priority sites for the land in our care particularly at Cefn Croes and Hafod Elwy. Additionally, we have supported direct delivery projects with land owners and managers across Wales through various funding mechanisms, including Section 16 Land Management Agreements, Strategic Allocated Funding, and Competitive Development and Direct Delivery Grants.</p> <p>The deadline for spending on these projects was the end of the financial year.</p> <p>During 2024–25, working with our partners we successfully delivered over 700 hectares of peatland restoration activity. This included essential preparatory activity such as scrub removal, rewetting to restore water levels and addressing erosion issues. Notably, 240 hectares of this restoration activity took place on the land in our care.</p> <p>For KD2: NRW policy position agreed and reactive advice provided to Development Planning Advisory Service (DPAS) including representation at Planning and Environment Decisions Wales (PEDW inquiries) when resources allowed. Application and</p>	Amber	Amber

interpretation of policy in planning requires clarification before NRW Guidance Note and Operational Guidance Notes can be produced.

For KD3: In December 2024, NPAP launched its new annual Competitive Grant for the next three years, making up to £700,000 available per year, more than doubling the amount previously available. We led a webinar for potential applicants in February with a deadline of 18th March to receive applications. We have received fifteen applications to the value of £620,000. It's positive to see more private landowners engaging in the process. The applications are now being assessed and the successful applicants will be informed in the coming weeks.

All successful projects will be shared on NRW's website. Offering this open competitive Peatland Restoration Grant is one way NPAP is supporting partners across Wales to achieve increasingly ambitious peatland restoration goals for the benefit of future generations.

The pathway to green includes: (1) now that we have peatland planning casework officers appointed, complete guidance in 2025-26 and scale up planning casework advice (2) continue to roll out direct and grant aided peatland recovery projects.

Step to take: Stimulating restoration of marine and coastal habitats such as saltmarsh, sand dunes, seagrass 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: Mary Lewis)

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: Position at year end:	Anticipated Year end	Year end Q4
<p>This commitment is Amber at the end of March.</p> <p>For KD1: The guidance is now fully drafted and we are ready to proceed with a wider consultation with external partners which will be ongoing in Q1. A meeting is being arranged with Seagrass Network Cymru to begin this process. We will update the guidance based on feedback received with an aim to publish by end of Q2. We have not been able to finalise and publish the guidance within this financial year due to reduced staff capacity, however substantial progress has been made and guidance will be finalised/ published later in 2025.</p> <p>For KD2: We have made some progress with updating and refining the opportunity maps for seagrass and native oyster. The maps are currently being reviewed and will be published later this year. We have not yet been able to progress the more detailed opportunity mapping that we have agreed to take forward with, and resourced by, The Crown Estate. The intention is that this work will refine the current opportunity maps by identifying those areas that are less suitable for restoration (for example where there are practical or physical constraints). However, a specification for the work has been developed and will be released for tender via The Crown Estate contract framework in April 2025. We anticipate this work will be complete by end Q4 of next year. The pathway to green for this commitment is to continue progressing this work during 2025-26 until complete, recognising that a substantial amount of work has already taken place to achieve the deliverables. Work has been redistributed from lost resources so this task will require more time for completion.</p>	Amber	Amber

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: Position at year end:	Anticipated Year end	Year end Q4
<p>This commitment is Green at the end of March.</p> <p>For KD1: Works to reduce the flood risk in this community have been substantially completed and the deliverable has been met. The construction of new embankments, flood walls and associated infrastructure are now reducing the risk of flooding in this area. The Deputy First Minister visited the site in March whilst making an announcement about flood risk funding for 2025-26. Completion works including landscaping will continue into 2025-26.</p> <p>For KD2: Maintenance works delivered through our FRM Capital Programme have ensured that flood assets continue to sustain levels of protection in locations including: Porth, Llandovery, Peterstone, Llangennech, West Pill, Windmill, Machen, Worthenbury, Fynnon y Ddol, Ferryside, Bretton Drain, Ponthir, Wepre Brook, Pendine, and Newport. These works have benefitted 836 properties in total.</p> <p>This commitment has been achieved.</p>	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: Position at year end:	Anticipated Year end	Year end Q4
<p>This commitment is Amber at the end of March.</p> <p>For KD1: The new Flood Warning Information Services for Wales (FWISfW) was implemented to schedule in July 2024 (Q2) and is in successful operational use. There are issues on some aspects relating to firmly establishing resilient ongoing support for its maintenance, and on some planned improvements that were scheduled post initial launch. We are working on these issues and have pathways to implementation, but it requires some concerted shifts and actions to happen for these issues to be fully addressed to manage the status to Green. Hence the status is Amber.</p> <p>For KD2: The overall progress on the Telemetry replacement project is good on 3 of the 4 workstreams. There is however an ongoing fundamental issue with the workstream on the main system build: the new system has not yet passed User Acceptance Testing as it has a number of bugs in it. We are in discussions with the supplier as to them fixing these bugs, and it is taking longer than anticipated. There is confidence that the underlying system is good, but there bugs need fixing. It has been escalated with the supplier to drive to a solution. Delays mean the project duration is being extended. The impacts of this are manageable from a service perspective, but it does mean extra cost. As the issues are not yet resolved, the status is Amber.</p>	Amber	Amber

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)

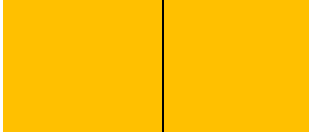
Key deliverables:

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: Position at year end:	Anticipated Year end	Year end Q4
<p>This commitment is Amber at the end of March.</p> <p>For KD1: The new RBRAM model continues to be embedded with good success. 51,764 hours of maintenance effort have been recorded against 20,587 completed actions. Data collected is improving the accuracy of plans for future years. 7,103 properties have benefitted from 100% of the maintenance needs being undertaken on assets they benefit from, 79,633 properties have benefitted from at least 60% of the maintenance work being delivered. 2,803 properties sit behind flood defences where none of the maintenance needs have been delivered.</p> <p>For KD2: Resource challenges (staff sickness absence; need for prioritisation on response/recovery on Flood Events and Flood Review work; focussing on KD1 as a higher priority) have delayed this project's initiation, therefore delivery of this work has been unable to progress this year. We have not commenced the analysis work as previously planned for due to resource challenges and unexpected staff absence.</p> <p>We have made great progress in embedding the new RBRAM process into our maintenance programme. This this is the bigger of the two deliverables under this Commitment and substantially delivers against the overall commitment to improve the prioritisation of our asset maintenance work. We have unfortunately been unable to progress the Assets Facing Change work</p>	Amber	Amber

however due to resource issues. We will now plan to start this strategic piece of work, whose development will span several financial years, during the next Financial Year. Overall, Amber rating is justified because of the good progress with RBRAM.



Area of Focus: Carbon emissions being reduced

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 (LERP).

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

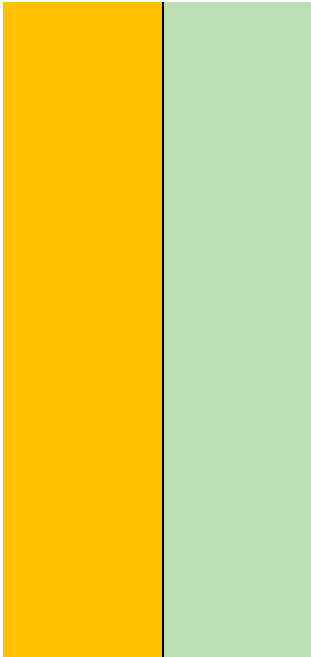
C13: Position at year end:	Anticipated Year end	Year end Q4
This commitment is Green at the end of March.	Amber	Green
For KD1: We’ve made strong progress this year, using pre-application insight and collaborative working to proactively support complex industrial decarbonisation proposals. Notably, we are ahead of schedule in our determination of Wales’s first carbon capture permit for Padeswood Cement, reflecting early and effective engagement. The team has also supported pre-application discussions across multiple projects including HyNet, Pembroke Power Station, and hydrogen production developments. While the regulatory and policy landscape continues to evolve rapidly, we’ve positioned ourselves well by staying closely connected with emerging technologies, strengthening internal expertise, and refining our advice to developers early in the process.		
For KD2: We’ve delivered specialist pre-application advice to 10 industrial decarbonisation and carbon capture projects this year, helping to shape high-quality submissions and reduce the risk of rejection. The input into the following projects: Padeswood		

Cement, Parc Adfer, Connahs Quay, Protium Magor project, RWE Green Hydrogen, Dragon LNG, Protium Baglan 2, ENI CO2 pipe, Hyline H pipe, Impala H production.

For KD3: The LERP project has improved the annual reporting of Landfill Gas destruction through a programme of data improvement with the operators. This has led to a significant improvement in the quality of data used in the calculation of the National Air Emissions Inventory, with an increase in over 11 Million M3 of landfill gas reported as being flared which was previously assumed to be vented directly to atmosphere.

The programme of detailed site audits at landfill sites has resulted in significant improvements in operations on site, leading to a reduction in the amount of LF gas which is vented directly to atmosphere, which both reduces the climate impact, and has resulted in a significant reduction in odour complaints. One site has reported an increase in capture of LF gas of over 3 million M3, a 46% improvement on the previous year. Work will continue with these sites to improve operations as much as possible. The project is also looking at assessing the future risks associated with infrastructure on sites, with particular emphasis on flares and engines to ensure the sites are able to minimise emissions over the coming years.

Although we have reached Green, the wider permitting and policy landscape is shifting quickly, and ongoing effort will be needed to maintain this position. The pathway to green has relied heavily on prioritisation, targeted engagement, and strong collaboration across teams —elements we will need to sustain as demand increases and projects move from concept to submission. Filling the longstanding vacancies in Installations Permitting is crucial - although it will take a while for officers to be fully competent also.



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: Position at year end:	Anticipated Year end	Year end Q4
<p>This commitment is Amber at the end of March.</p> <p>For KD1: Evidence work has been progressed in the area of tidal stream monitoring through work with developers and the Crown Estate. We are supporting work with Plymouth and Bangor Universities (PhD on habitat restoration as compensation and diadromous fish tracking studies). Other priorities have been addressed by other organisations, e.g. JNCC and Defra. Good progress has been made with 42% of our priorities and more limited progress on 25% of the current evidence priorities. We have made limited progress with the production of guidance materials. Approximately 10% of guidance needs identified have been delivered in the year, by prioritising specialist staff time to deliver guidance on highest risk areas. Approximately 33% of priority evidence needs have not been progressed this year, including collision risk parameters and studies of potential impacts of tidal lagoons. This is mainly due to a lack of staff resource.</p>	Amber	Amber

For KD2: Our main area of progress has been working alongside a partner, concluded the 12 Week Customer Platform (Marine alpha) project. This is a crucial early stage in technology development focused on testing key assumptions into the feasibility of using Microsoft Power Platform technology to develop digital Marine Licensing capabilities. We are at 45% completion of the End to End review deliverables with work having commenced on other areas in line with progress milestones for the 3 year programme. We have delivered numerous digital enhancements to our Webpages including, Band 1 Application reforms and enhanced the Marine Licensing website landing page. We have refreshed, consolidated and rationalised numerous operational guidance documents into a newly structured Marine Licensing Handbook. This is expected to be launched in the coming months, and we have worked to ensure that it is user-needs focussed and contains the required content to provide a robust and consistent licensing service.

We have incorporated Marine Regulation into NRW's Marine Services Technical Competency Framework. In April 2025, this will be hosted on NRW's new Learning Management System, for use by staff. This will allow staff, and their managers, to assess skills and competencies, and identify training needs, and develop career paths. We are contributing and influencing numerous reform areas, including: Marine Licensing Exemptions, Infrastructure Wales Act, Offshore Wind Environmental Improvement Package and Marine Recovery Fund and Welsh National Marine Plan – Strategic Resource Areas. We have been working extensively with Welsh Government officials to provide comprehensive financial and time-recording evidence to aid understanding of the overall deficit NRW are experiencing in delivering the Marine Licensing Service to help inform a new fees model.

We have not: Concluded the Band 1 Process Review (we are now working to implement process changes in Autumn to coincide with WG's exemption reform). Formally commenced the Band 2 and Band 3 process review. Commenced the Consultation Review to identify how Marine Licence team consult, and whether improvements can be made to streamline the process. Concluded "future resource needs" / horizon scanning work.

For KD3: >95% of applications are determined within service levels, although the permit queue stands at 8 weeks. Discharge of Condition applications to facilitate offshore renewable development post licence are progressing. We continue to determine Mona offshore wind farm transmission asset application and input into Mona deemed marine licence generations asset, being determined by the Secretary of State. Marine Licensing Team (MLT) have accepted Llyr Floating Offshore Windfarm and progressing through determination in a timely manner also.

The pathway to green for this commitment is via recruitment to vacant posts and continuation of delivery of End to End review products to improve effectiveness.

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: Mary Lewis)

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: Position at year end:	Anticipated Year end	Year end Q4
This commitment is Amber at the end of March.	Red	Amber
For KD1: The Projects and Programme Delivery Team have included the delivery of a carbon impact assessment in 100% of design scopes which have been issued this quarter. The assessment is consistently delivered by all of our framework designers via the EA's Carbon Modelling Tool. It is applied to the shortlisted options at Outline design stage and to the preferred design at detailed design stage to inform the option selection process and ensure that carbon impact is a priority factor in decision making.		

For KD2: No capital projects >£1m have reached Construction phase in the last quarter.

For KD3: 300 climate literacy training places were offered in 2024-25, 107 staff completed the training, and so far 65 have gained certification. Overall, 43% staff have completed the training from January 23 to March 2024. We have not been able to achieve the 50% target due to a focus on the Case for Change and consequently low demand and update of courses. As a result, an in-year financial decision was taken to reduce the number of courses offered, which meant the start-of-year target was always going to be unattainable.

The overall commitment is amber. The supply chain and project delivery elements have met their targets while the climate literacy training element has achieved 43% rather than the 50% target for staff trained. This is reflected in the overall commitment being amber. In 2025-26, as agreed by the Climate Emergency Group, the Climate Literacy course will be promoted, with managers actively encouraged for staff to attend, with it promoted to all new starters too. Despite an anticipated increase in staff numbers, we should be able to reach over 50% trained by year end.

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: Position at year end:	Anticipated Year end	Year end Q4
This commitment is Green at the end of March.	Green	Green
For KD1: We successfully delivered on our ambition of piloting our Well-being Impact approach into a procurement exercise, and the awarded supplier committed to a carbon measure as a contractual commitment. The framework being the Community Woodland Framework Agreement.		
For KD2: As previously reported in Q2, we have set a requirement for successful suppliers to use carbon calculators on the following framework agreements: Mechanical, Electrical, Instrumentation, Control and Automation (MEICA) and Criminal		

Litigation Framework; we issued the guidance document on the establishment of a Carbon Reduction Plan, using a carbon calculator to baseline the starting position - agreed prior to award of contract.

For KD3: As reported during Q1, we managed to include the requirement for a Carbon Reduction Plan to be completed by suppliers on the MEICA framework and the Water Management Consultancy Framework.

We have delivered against the three deliverables we identified during the start of 2024-25 Financial Year as such there is no requirement for a pathway to green. This was achieved even though we did not have dedicated resource to support sustainable procurement. However, we have now appointed to the role of Procurement Strategy & Development Advisor, which will help progress our carbon reduction ambitions going forward.

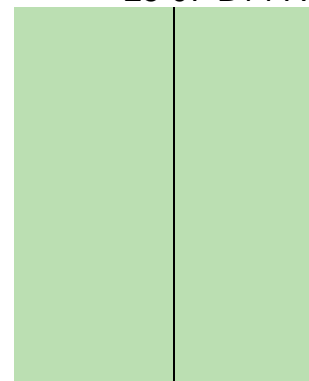


Table 3: Wellbeing Objective 3: Pollution is minimised

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 minimise 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: Position at year end:	Anticipated Year end	Year end Q4
<p>This commitment is Amber at the end of March.</p> <p>For KD1: While we have continued to maintain a steady quarterly inspection rate, we failed to achieve the required inspection numbers to meet the full year 80% target. 635 visits have been delivered, 22 short of the 80% annual target of 657 (77%). 127 inspections were delivered in Q4. The main cause for not meeting the target is the four officer vacancies across the two teams and no ability to backfill due to the recruitment freeze. The officers in post have delivered excellent work and we remain confident once we have a full team that we can work towards delivering the full 100% target, 821 farms, during 2025/26.</p> <p>For KD2: Implementing these new regulatory requirements across an industry which continues to challenge the basic need for such regulatory controls continues to be a challenge. This year’s four yearly review has provided a further opportunity for farming Unions to challenge further. While the inspection compliance rate has seen some marginal improvements over the past few months, overall farm non-compliance stands at 51%. The level of resource required to progress and move those farms into compliance is more than expected and hence having an impact on the quantity of inspections which can be delivered. There are many factors which have impacted delivery, vacant posts and recruitment freeze is the main issue, whilst the implementation of these new regulatory requirements are still embedding, Some requirements only came into force in August 2024 while others come in from early May 2025. The industry remains reluctant to accept these requirements, hence the level of non-compliance we see. That is absorbing resource and our approach to securing compliance will combine with using our regulatory tools along with influencing the agricultural community through other regulators and accreditation bodies, with enforcement responses used when necessary.</p> <p>We currently have four vacant officer posts across the two teams, recruitment has now started to progress and while we would not expect those new officers to be fully competent in their roles until late summer/ early autumn, we remain confident we can achieve the 100% target (821 visit) for 2025-26.</p>	Amber	Amber

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: Position at year end:	Anticipated Year end Green	Year end Q4 Green
<p>This commitment is Green at the end of March.</p> <p>For KD1: This deliverable is Green at the end of March. Our main area of progress has been continuing to focus on permitted facilities where serious non-compliances have been identified and Category 1 and 2 breaches have been issued. During July to September 2024, there were 32 Compliance Assessment Reports that identified either single or multiple Category 1 or 2 non-compliances. In line with the measure these require further compliance effort within 6 months. 48 out of 48 Category 1 and 2 breaches received further compliance effort within the required 6 months.</p> <p>For KD2: We are confident of our position as teams have focussed their efforts on poor performing activities where Category 1 and 2 non-compliances are identified. There is a requirement to ensure a protective, restorative and an enforcement response is in place for these and all non-compliances identified. Annual compliance reports were produced for Industry and Waste and these are being progressed for 2024 with an earlier timescale. The annual regulatory report for 2024 is also being progressed on a shorter timescale.</p> <p>Regulatory teams are continually assessing priorities and where required prioritising resources to critical activities and to mitigating impacts.</p>		

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.

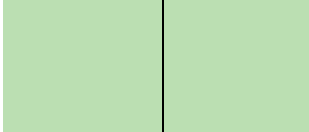
C19: Commitment for 2024-25: Provide support and advice on the new Workplace Recycling Regulations, targeting key workplace sectors and waste service providers to increase stakeholder awareness and understanding. (Lead: Nadia De Longhi)

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: Position at year end:	Anticipated Year end	Year end Q4
<p>This commitment is Green at the end of March.</p> <p>For KD1: Our main area of progress has been managing enquiries and reported incidents. We received only 1 enquiry during Q4 which continue to decrease as the Regulations become embedded. Of the 118 enquiries received in total this year, 92% were responded to within 10 working days. During Q4 we investigated a further 10 reported incidents concerning non-compliance with the Regulations, with a total of 24 investigated and responded to during the year.</p> <p>For KD2: Our main area of progress has been increasing awareness with a further 1,528 organisations during Q4. This included presenting to a series of Ministerial Programme Boards as requested by WG, speaking at a CIWM conference, and sharing our resource pack with 1,000 schools via the Eco-Schools newsletter. This brings the total number of businesses contacted this year to 30,375.</p> <p>For KD3: Our main area of progress has been completing 136 assessments during Q4, with 63 (46%) compliant and 73 (54%) non-compliant. This targeted the education sector by assessing the largest secondary schools per county and retail sector including supermarkets, large retail chains and wholesalers. In total, we have undertaken 522 assessments this year, with an overall percentage of 60% compliant and 40% non-compliant.</p>	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: Mary Lewis)

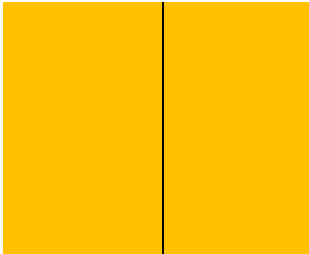
Key deliverables:

- 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 (OMA) for Dŵr 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: Position at year end:	Anticipated Year end	Year end Q4
<p>This commitment is Amber at the end of March.</p> <p>For KD1: Our main area of progress has been Ofwat's Final Determination accepting the entire National Environment Programme as justifying funding and delivery, working with Ofwat and Environment Agency (EA) to improve our monitoring framework for delivery in AMP8.</p> <p>For KD2: We submitted our representations to the Welsh Government on the draft drought plan consultations for Dwr Cymru, Hafren Dyfrdwy and Albion Eco in March. We set out our proposed recommendations and improvements for the final drought plans and the accompanying environmental assessments, including the Habitats Regulations Assessment, to protect the environment and maintain secure water supplies during a drought.</p> <p>For KD3: We have focused on high priority new work, such as preparations for the new Water Special Measures Bill; influencing water company action through the Price Review; progressing actions within the Combined Sewer Overflow Roadmap. On 2nd October 2024, NRW and EA jointly released a 2 month targeted consultation on the Water Industry Environmental Performance Assessment (EPA) for 2026 – 2030 data.</p> <p>We have not undertaken the OMA due to lack of resource: we focused on Pr24 and WG priorities. The programme for OMA audits and operator self-monitoring inspections will fall under the remit of the operational Compliance Unit. Delays due to case for change on populating the team mean that audits will be carried out in 2025-26. Timescales of when these can be programmed are dependent on filling posts and the migration of key staff into the team.</p>	Amber	Amber

This measure is Amber at year end, therefore pathway to green by end of year is not possible. We had to reprioritise during the year to meet higher priorities and a reduced resource availability and made the decision not to carry out OMA reviews this year. This work will recommence in 2025-26 when we have the water compliance team in place. Recruitment will take place during Q1, and we anticipate completing OMAs by the end of Q4 2025-26. The impact we have had during the year has been significant, however, in achieving record investment for Wales through AMP8 (PR24), completion of drought planning work and significantly increasing our front line regulatory compliance effort when compared to previous years.



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 (WQ) improvements at a catchment scale to build collaboration and deliver prioritised action. (Lead: Mary Lewis)

Key deliverables:

- 1. Decreased the load of Phosphorus to highly protected river sites in line with modelled expectations by completing the review of all 171-water company permits.
- 2. 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.
- 3. 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: Position at year end:	Anticipated Year end	Year end Q4
<p>This commitment is Amber at the end of March.</p> <p>For KD1: As of July 2024, all relevant permits had been varied to include phosphorus limits. Work is ongoing to assess the level of improvements created through the review. The action is complete.</p> <p>For KD2: Our main area of progress has been to achieve the 30% target achieved by reprioritising SAC river investigation against other WFD investigation. Going forward, we will review how we prioritise our limited resources for investigating failure across all rivers to the right standard in the most efficient way.</p> <p>For KD3: Our main area of progress has been that the overall WQ capital programme is Green status. The NaCE programme is carrying out work to improve WQ in highly protected and designated waterbodies. One key project relevant to KD3 is on Amber progress status and one project has moved to Red.</p> <p>There are issues in the delivery of the Upper Wye Restoration Project caused by ongoing impacts from recruitment and case for change. We have not delivered as many farm visits/actions on the Upper Wye as hoped and some work will now take place in 2025-26. The project is significantly underspent in 2024-25 and it may be months until the project team is fully recruited. In 2025-26, we aim to fill all posts within the project team as early as possible to bring this project back into Green status. The pathway to green for this commitment is continuing with business as usual work relating to work areas such as River Basin Management Plans, Teifi Demonstrator Project, SAC rivers project etc. We need to better join up delivery of planned actions and have a post approved for this financial year to help with the coordination. Welsh Government have confirmed £16 million to further the delivery of action to address the Nature and climate emergencies. The Teifi Demonstrator Project will enable testing of approaches.</p>	Amber	Amber

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: Position at year end:	Anticipated Year end	Year end Q4
<p>This commitment is Green at the end of March.</p> <p>For KD1: We have maintained level of service with the final figure for 2024-25 being 97%. We will continue to monitor and work with teams to ensure progress is maintained in 2025-26.</p> <p>For KD2: A high-level report on incident performance was completed and shared with the Leadership Team in March. The report evaluated 2024 performance and identified areas for continuous improvement to refine incident management approaches post-April 2025. This will help us to measure success in the future. Also, following the recent internal audit there are a number of actions to address to further improve the service.</p> <p>While we will continue to maintain the existing 4-hour response standard for high-priority incidents, our focus for 2025-26 will broaden to assess the overall effectiveness of our incident response. In particular, we aim to reduce the number of attended incidents that are ultimately unsubstantiated, ensuring resources are deployed in a more targeted and risk-based way. We also propose measuring: the closure of incident reports within WIRS in 30 days, which will help drive more efficient system use and timely resolution. These performance measures will be used to support the ongoing development of our Incident Management Strategy and Service Plan, and to address actions identified in the recent audit. Insights from these measures will help us continuously adapt and refine our operational approach in support of WBO3 delivery and wider incident response.</p>	Green	Green

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)

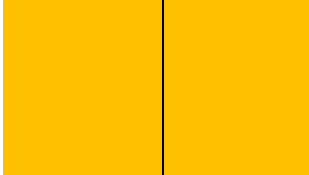
Key deliverables:

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: Position at year end:	Anticipated Year end	Year end Q4
<p>This commitment is Amber to the end of March.</p> <p>For KD1: We have delivered a range of communications to internal and external audiences, including a web blog to explain our incident management service work, assessing what further external communications are needed. We have finalised an Operational Incident Decision tool and refined our Standard Operating Procedures to guide a more effective prioritisation of responding to incidents in air, land, and water. We held internal awareness and training sessions for staff during March. Workshops originally planned in early April will be delivered in May 2025 to help refine our decision tool and procedures. We will continue to brief our Executive Team and the Board on this new approach.</p> <p>For KD2: Our main area of progress has been insight into data needs from key service areas to inform analytical outputs. At the end of Q3, we identified the need to secure key technical capability to enhance (or change) the existing tool in order to extract and present data in an effective manner. In Q4, we secured staff to undertake the required tool build. This work is currently underway.</p> <p>For KD3: Capacity has hindered our ability to move as far as anticipated in differentiating more clearly between WIRS reports that need an incident management response and those that require solely a regulatory or enforcement response. This dovetails with wider incident management policy and procedure work. We have been working closely with our colleagues in Regulation for example and this illustrates where cross functional working can streamline and simplify our approaches.</p> <p>To ensure this commitment turns Green in 2025-26, we are prioritising completion of two key elements: the development of the Power BI-based analytical tool (KD2) and the finalisation of options for embedding preventative action (KD3). Technical capability</p>	Amber	Amber

has now been secured to progress the analytical work, with development underway and user needs identified across our Regulation, Water, and Incident Management teams. In parallel, we are working closely to co-develop the governance framework needed to embed the shift in how WIRS reports are triaged and responded to. This pathway will not only complete the outstanding actions by Q2 but also support the longer-term delivery of an integrated, intelligence-led Incident Management Strategy.



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: Position at year end:	Anticipated Year end	Year end Q4
This commitment is Green at the end of March. For KD1: RAG status has remained Green again and is at 100% for Q4.	Green	Green
For KD2: Our main area of progress has been completing the Tackling Waste Crime Q3 report and circulating this as planned in Q4. The Q4 report is scheduled for Q1 2025-26. (The Annual Regulatory Report was already published in Q3).		

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.

C25: Position at year end:	Anticipated Year end	Year end Q4
<p>This commitment is Amber at the end of March.</p> <p>For KD1: Our main area of progress has been resuming work on the draft version of the revised protocol. We have adjusted the project plan for this piece of work to deliver the draft document by end Q1 2025 and it has been factored into the FtAW teams new work plan for funding secured for 2025-26. Recruitment is now underway to recruit a Senior Officer to the team, freeing up staff to work on protocol again.</p> <p>For KD2: Our main area of progress has been securing Mallard Support Services for the financial year 2025-26 for all LA's in Wales. Another feedback survey has been run with LA's to assess use of the system during 2024-25. We have delivered 2 face to face enforcement training courses. Purchased 10 new covert surveillance cameras for use by LA's.</p> <p>The pathway to green for this commitment is underway as our G6 role is out for recruitment and expected to be filled by end April - enabling work to resume on the draft protocol in Q1 2025.</p>	Amber	Amber

Annex 2 – Internal Performance Report

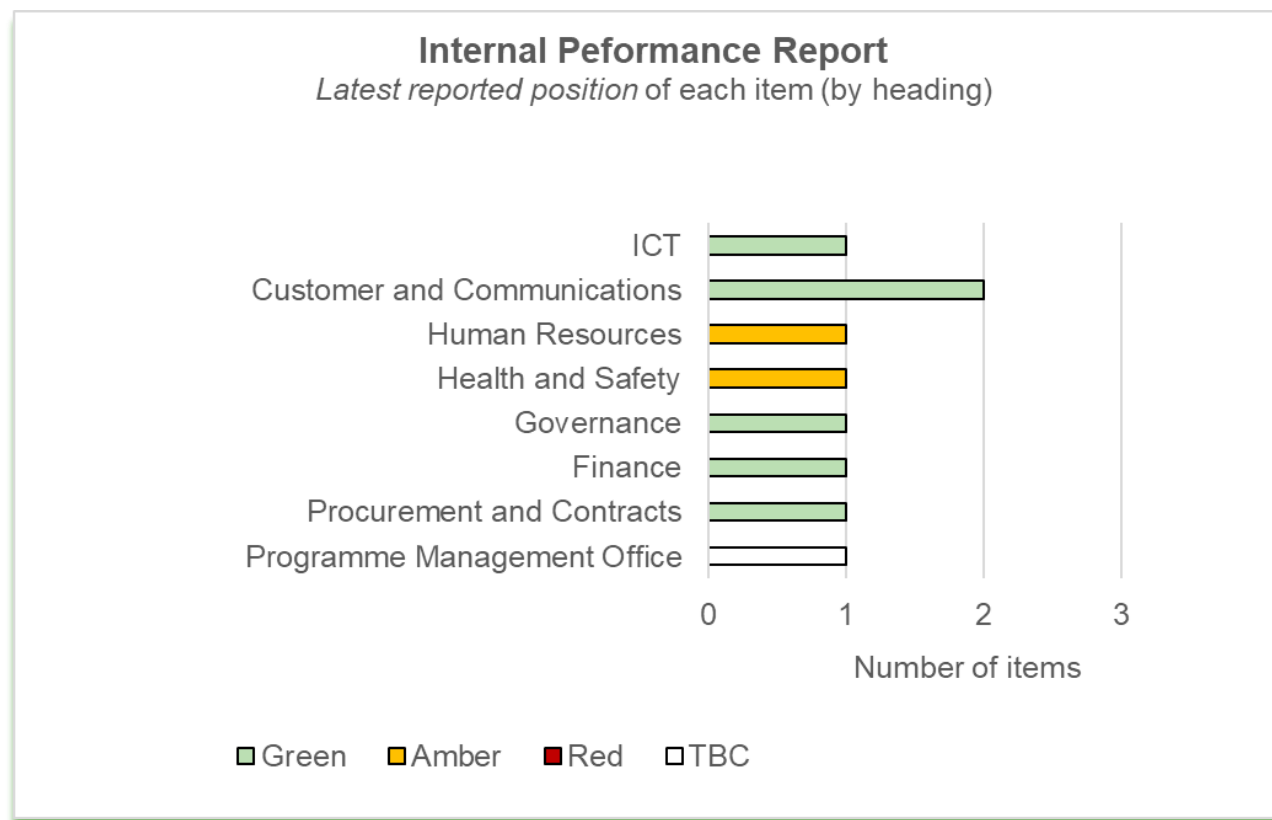
The following pages reflect a quarter end performance snapshot in relation to a number of key measures relating to the ‘health’ of our organisation.

Summary

The performance position*
(at the end of quarter four, March 2025)
for the measures covered by this report
is:

- Six green
- Two amber
- No red
- One TBC

(see next page for detail)



* Key: Green - achieved; Amber – partially achieved; Red – missed

Measures to note

Updates below reflect all measures red or amber at the end of the year

Human Resources:

- **Sgwrs in place** (staff priorities and development agreement) remains Amber at the end of the year, at 83% (at least 90% would be considered Green). A new on-line system called “Perform” has been brought in for the start of the new financial year, with an extensive package of support and briefings to colleagues to understand how to use the system. Positive feedback being received on the ease of use of the system.

Health and Safety:

- **Health & Safety Near Miss reporting** is Amber with 25 near miss reports for March, which is down on the level of last March. Overall, for the year, the number of near miss reports has increased

Programme Management Office:

- **Programmes and Projects Management** is TBC.

* Key: Green - achieved; Amber – partially achieved; 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 at the end of the year at 97%.
- **Complaints** responded to within service level is Green at the end of the year at 100%.

Procurement and Contracts:

- **Retrospective orders** Green at the end of the year with 8% of purchase orders being retrospective.

ICT:

- **Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) reported incidents** is Green at the end of the year with no investigations ongoing, and one incident reported to the ICO in Q2 where following our investigation we found no loss of data. No further action from the ICO.

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 95% at the end of the year (at least 90% is considered green).

Finance:

- **Payments performance** to our suppliers remains Green at the end of the year at 98%.

* Key: Green - achieved; Amber – partially achieved; Red – missed

Board Paper

Date of meeting:	16 th July 2025
Title of Paper:	Wellbeing, health and safety and learning and development annual report 2024-2025.
Paper Reference:	25-07-B15
Paper sponsored by:	Prys Davies, Executive Director Corporate Strategy and Development
Paper prepared by:	Charlotte Morgan, Wellbeing, Health and safety & Learning and Development Manager
Paper presented by:	Charlotte Morgan, Wellbeing, Health and safety & Learning and Development Manager
Purpose of the paper	Approval
Summary	ET are asked to approve the Wellbeing, Health & Safety & Learning & Development annual report for 2024-2025.

Background

1. This is the annual summary of our Wellbeing, Health & Safety (WH&S) & Learning & Development (L&D) performance for Natural Resources Wales (NRW). The report provides an overview of how NRW have managed WH&S throughout the year 2024-2025.
2. In 2024-2025 we made further significant steps to implement our Strategy. Headlines from 2024-2025 include:
 - a. Serious incident reviews. Eight serious incidents and near misses were reviewed using the serious incident review procedure. These incidents involved forestry work activities undertaken by contractors and the use of work equipment by NRW staff which led to an injury. The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) reportable lost time incidents (LTIs) and Injuries. Two RIDDOR reported incidents and five LTIs were reported for 2024-2025.
 - b. There has been a decrease in RIDDOR reportable incidents on last year. Near Miss reporting has increased in comparison to last financial year. Managers and team leaders have received training and supporting guidance on reporting and

investigating incidents. The importance of managing health and safety risks and supporting staff have been delivered through engagement campaigns.

- c. In January 2025, NRW re-attained registration to ISO 45001: 2018.
 - d. Pre-qualification questionnaires. A total of 25 pre-qualification questionnaires were assessed, for a number of different teams. This assessment is to ensure that the contractors, customers we work with have been suitably assessed.
 - e. Continued collaboration partnership with Health & Safety Executive, NRW and Forest Industry Safety Accord.
3. We delivered further improvements and developments such as:
- a. Several specific wellbeing initiatives throughout the year e.g., menopause cafes; Stress Awareness Month, wellbeing assessment days etc.
4. Reviewed and revised several WH&S policies and procedures in line with legislative changes. In total 249 WH&S related training courses were delivered to NRW staff.

Wider implications

- (a) **Finance:** It is recognised that the mis-management of WH&S has significant financial implications. We are 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

5. We 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.
6. There will be a review of the strategic risk level as there is a move to the new risk register.
7. We will use the information gathered and lessons learnt in the development of our future strategy and action plan.

Recommendation

8. Board are asked to approve on the Wellbeing, Health & Safety & Learning & Development annual report for 2024-2025.

Index of Annexes

Provide any supporting information:

[Annex 1 - WH&S Annual Report 2024-2025](#)

Approval / Consultation process

Approval/consultation process Responsible: Who has developed the paper/process and who has had input?	The paper was developed by Charlotte Morgan
Accountable: Who is accountable for the ultimate approval? Who will be or is being asked to approve?	ET are asked to approve.
Consulted: Who has been consulted to date? Where endorsement is required, is this in place? Will further consultation be required?	Not applicable.
Informed: Who has been informed or who needs to be further information about the work?	Not applicable.

Annex 1 – WH&S and L&D Annual Report 2024-2025

Summary

This is the annual report to inform of NRW's Wellbeing, Health and Safety (WH&S) and Learning and Development developments in 2024/2025 including:

- Improvements to our safety management systems
- Performance
- Actions/initiatives that have been put in place.

Overview

The NRW Wellbeing, Health and Safety Strategy and Improvement Plan for 2021 – 2024 were approved in September 2021. In order to align the WH&S strategy with the People strategy there was an agreement for a 12-month extension.

Good health and wellbeing is increasingly being acknowledged as a vital element in supporting and developing a workforce. Not only are there positive benefits to staff but there are also financial and reputational benefits to the organisation.

The WH&S Strategy clearly demonstrate that NRW values its staff and customers and wants them to be safe and thrive because of the positive culture and benefits of working to support the natural resources of Wales.

The key priorities that were identified to be taken forward in 2024/2025 were:

- We operate a robust, assured, operationally excellent occupational health and safety management system certified to the internationally recognised standard ISO 45001:2018.
- All staff support a positive, proactive, sustainable safety culture.
- Health and safety training needs analysis for all NRW staff are clearly defined.
- All leaders and managers commit more fully to, and are accountable for, the management of wellbeing health and safety.

Headlines from 2024/2025 include:

- RIDDOR Reportable LTI's and Injuries. Two RIDDOR reported incidents and five lost time incidents (LTIs) for 2024/2025, this is a decrease on last year.
- Serious Incident Reviews (SIR) – We reviewed eight serious incidents and near misses using the serious incident procedure. These incidents involved forestry work activities undertaken by contractors and the use of work equipment by NRW staff which led to an injury.
- We have continued to deliver training for managers and team leaders on reporting and investigating incidents. The importance of managing health and safety risks and supporting staff have been delivered through campaigns, with the WH&S forums and managers playing an important role in raising awareness of the need to report incidents.
- NRW retained registration to ISO 45001:2018 in December 2023.
- A total of 25 pre-qualification questionnaires were assessed, for a number of different teams. This assessment is required as part of health and safety legislation and ensures that our contractors and customers have been assessed prior to undertaking any work on NRW estate.
- 249 WH&S related training courses were undertaken by NRW staff.
- More detail on the headlines is provided below.

National Wellbeing, Health & Safety Committee

The National Wellbeing, Health & Safety committee met four times in 2024/2025 to discuss issues raised, update on progress and provide guidance and recommendations, addressing wellbeing, health and safety matters at a strategic level. Topics have included:

- Review of the Strategic Risk Register, particularly the WHS risks
- Incident reporting and analysis of data
- Discussion and review of current Serious Incident Reviews, with monitoring of actions
- Consideration of Internal and external audit findings and recommendations
- Feedback from Regional Forums and Trade Union representatives

In 2024/2025, all the WH&S forums continued with the action focussed approach developed previously, raising awareness of their existence and playing a role in delivery of the strategy and improvement plan items. They also focussed their attention on local initiatives and development of action plans on priority issues. The WH&S forums have seen an increase in engagement with employees to address WH&S issues that affect day-to-day working alongside discussions on best practice seen in the organisation.

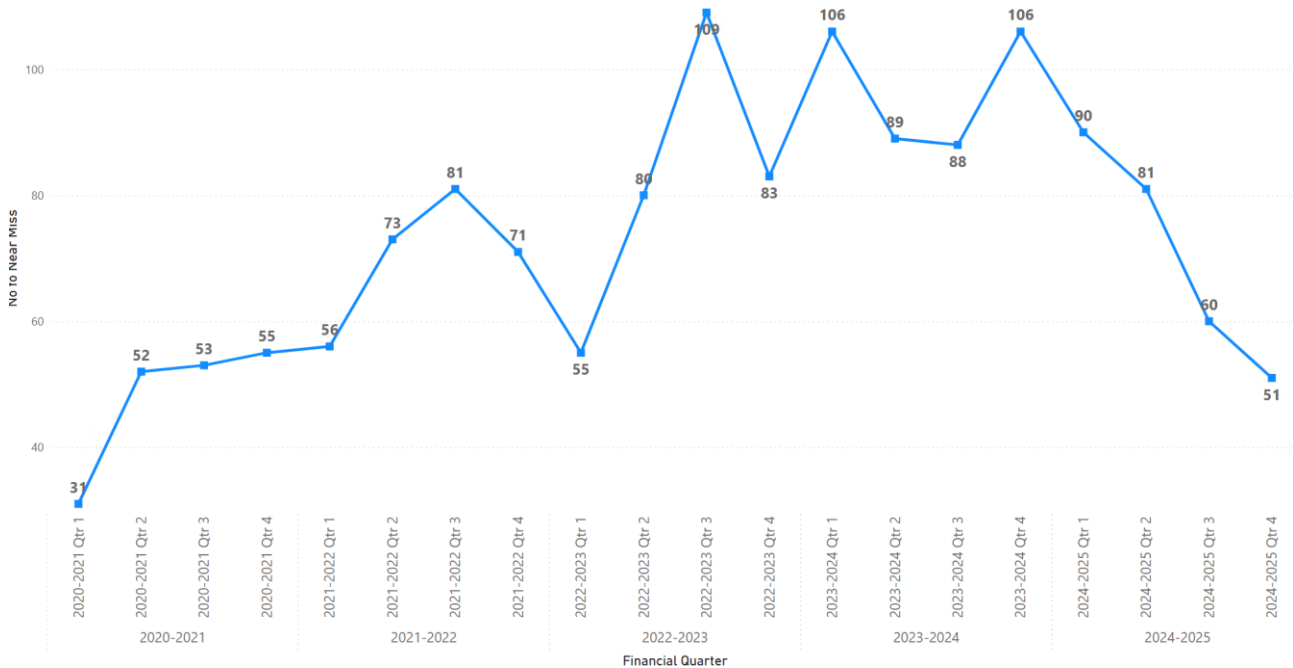
Performance – health and safety

Headline accident and near miss statistics

- RIDDOR reportable Lost Time Injuries (LTI)'s and Injuries with no lost time to staff have decreased this year.
- Near Miss reporting by staff has decreased in comparison to the last financial year. This could be attributed to the case for change and the vacancies that the teams have

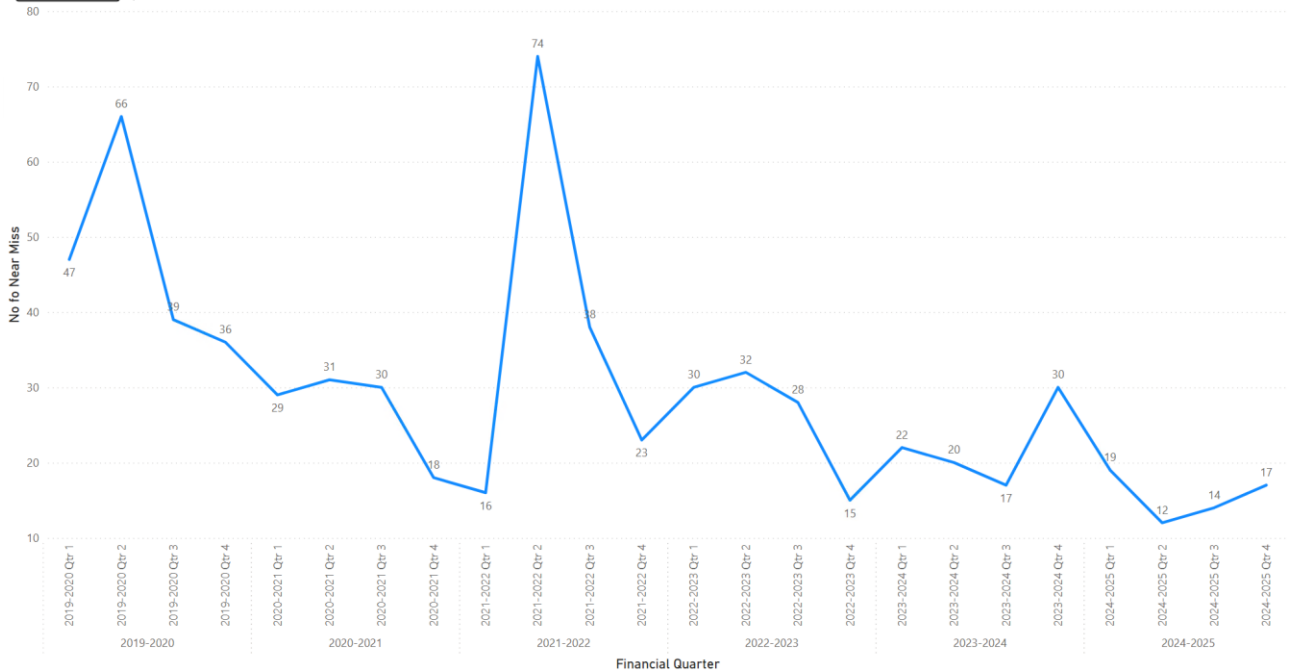
been carrying. This data allows for targeted communication to help prevent accidents taking place.

[Back to report](#) | NEAR MISS BY QUARTER



- Hazard reporting has also decreased this financial year.

[Back to report](#) | HAZARDS BY QUARTER



- Near misses to contractors have remained fairly static, and injuries to contractors have decreased.
- Members of the public injuries have decreased and near miss reports have remained static.
- NRW has delivered WH&S training on near miss reporting for managers and team leaders.

- Team leaders and managers are actively encouraging staff to report near misses in their WH&S forum meetings through active monitoring and their line management duties.

It is also pleasing to note that there has been continued efforts by the local WH&S forums to improve the quantity and quality of incident reports and to ensure incidents are investigated and closed off by line managers.

	2024-2025	2023-2024	2022-2023	2021-2022	2020-2021	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017
RIDDOR – staff	2	5	3	7	3	6	2	8	9
Lost time injuries – staff	5	6	3	3	1	4	5	8	4
Injuries, no lost time - staff	52	65	43	51	19	121	53	59	68
Near miss – staff	178	186	175	156	109	183	163	201	232
Serious incident reviews	8	5	8	4	4	5	2	3	9
Injuries - contractors	5	9	8*	3*	5*	5	9	9	8
Injuries – public	26	46	38	38	18	53	53	95	70
Near miss – contractors	67	70	68	62	46	50	40	44	62
Near miss – public	37	31	33	30	23	33	20	39	27
Property Damage	47	48	53	36	35	32	43	48	63
Hazards Reported	66	89	199	166	65	83	103	78	6

* Includes 1 RIDDOR Reportable injury to a contractor. This will have been reported to HSE by the contractor but has been included in our statistics to ensure a suitable investigation/review takes place.

- Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR) incident is a particular type of incident that is required to be reported to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE)
- A lost time injury (LTI) is where a member of staff is injured during the course of their work, and they have subsequently had time off or been on light duties as a result of their injuries (reportable under RIDDOR if over 7 days). Lost Time starts the first day after the person was injured. The LTI figure does not include LTI's that became RIDDOR reportable.
- An injury with no lost time (Non-LTI) is where a member of staff is injured during the course of their work but only needed minor 1st aid treatment and subsequently have not had any time off work.
- A Near Miss is an unplanned or uncontrolled event that does not cause injury, ill health or damage, but could do so.
- Member of public injuries relate predominantly to mountain bike accidents on our purpose-built trails, and slips, trips and falls on walking trails. Trails are risk assessed and routinely inspected periodically and are also inspected following an accident.
- Public near misses are predominately public incursions on to live harvesting sites or illegal off-road motorcyclists abusing contractors/members of the public.

Fatalities reported to NRW are below. The reported fatalities could have taken place on NRW estate or were reported to NRW as we were seen at the time of report to have a vested interest. These are included in the above numbers.

	2024-2025	2023-2024	2022-2023	2021-2022	2020-2021	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017
NRW Staff	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Contractors	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0
MOP	5	2	5	8	0	0	1	2	4

RIDDOR Reports – NRW

We have had two RIDDOR reportable incidents in this reporting period that relate to employees:

- 30th September 2024 – a member of staff has reported confirmed diagnosed Carpal Tunnel Syndrome.

- 18th August 2024 – a member of staff fell onto stones and rocks suffering injuries. This was a lost time injury.

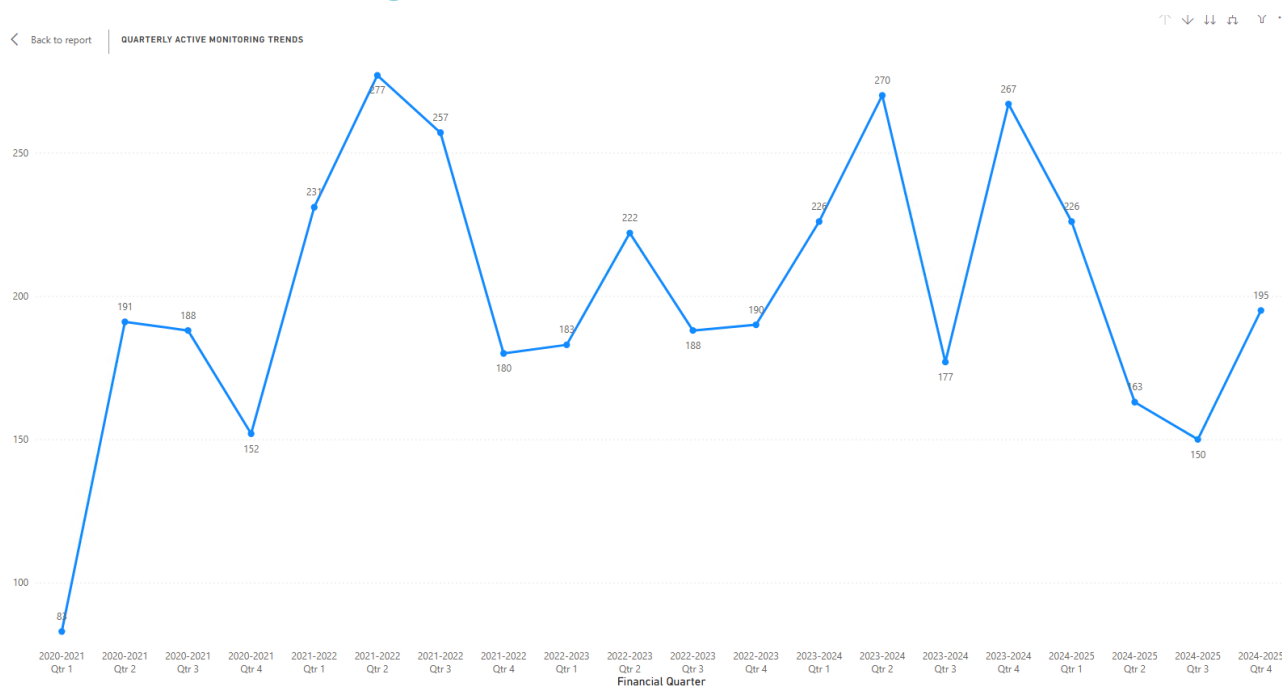
RIDDOR Reports - Contractors

There have been no RIDDOR Reportable incidents to a contractor.

Lost Time Incidents that are not RIDDOR reportable

- 24th November 2024 – Staff member suffered a musculoskeletal disorder when carrying out clearance work.
- 8th October 2024 – Staff member was stung on the lip by a wasp.
- 31st May 2024 – Staff member was involved in a road traffic collision and suffered an injury.
- 18th April 2024 – Staff member slipped whilst working at home and injured their ankle.

Active monitoring



It is pleasing to note that the active monitoring process is well established in NRW which can be seen by the increase since 2020.

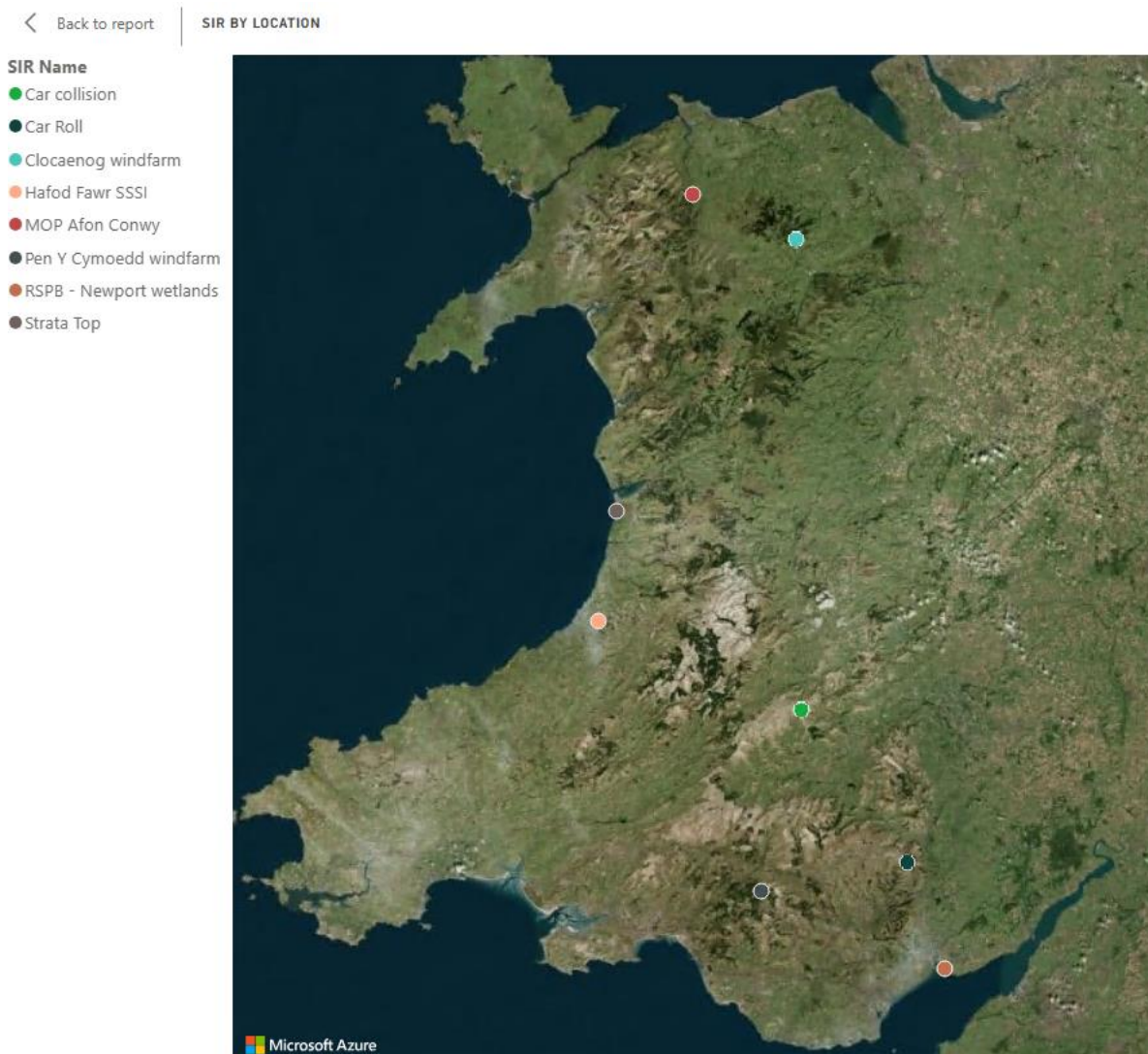
This data is provided at directorate and team level to allow targeted engagement pieces to be implemented by management.

Each Directorate has set an active monitoring target to achieve per month and it is pleasing to note that this is having an impact on the number of active monitoring reports being undertaken.

To further support the reporting of active monitoring, a QR code and portal access to recording active monitoring has been rolled out. This will allow staff members at every level to record active monitoring.

Serious Incident Reviews

Eight serious incident reviews were opened in 2024/2025 using our serious incident review process, with the WH&S Lead Specialist Advisors, with involvement from the team leaders, Heads of Place and the Trade Unions.



Details on the eight serious incident reviews are set out below:

Injury – Member of Staff – Car Collision

Third party vehicle collision with a NRW vehicle containing a member of staff.

Injury – Member of Staff – Car Roll

NRW vehicle containing a member of staff rolled when avoiding an oncoming vehicle.

Incident – Contractor – Clocaenog

A third-party contractor drove forwarder into 6m underground electricity exclusion zone before stacking timber in unauthorised area directly above cable array. This SIR is still ongoing.

Near Miss – MOP – Hafod Fawr SSSI

Glysophate herbicide was sprayed in field without notification by a direct contractor. The SIR is still ongoing.

Fatality – MOP – Afon Conwy

A MOP fatality whilst walking their dog during flooding.

Incident – Contractor – Pen-Y-Cymoedd

A Contractor crossed underground cables on a windfarm. The SIR is still ongoing.

Injury – MOP – RSPB

A MOP sustained an injury whilst using a NRW asset.

Injury – Member of Staff – Strata Top

A member of staff fell onto stones and rocks suffering injuries. The SIR is still ongoing.

Performance – Wellbeing and health

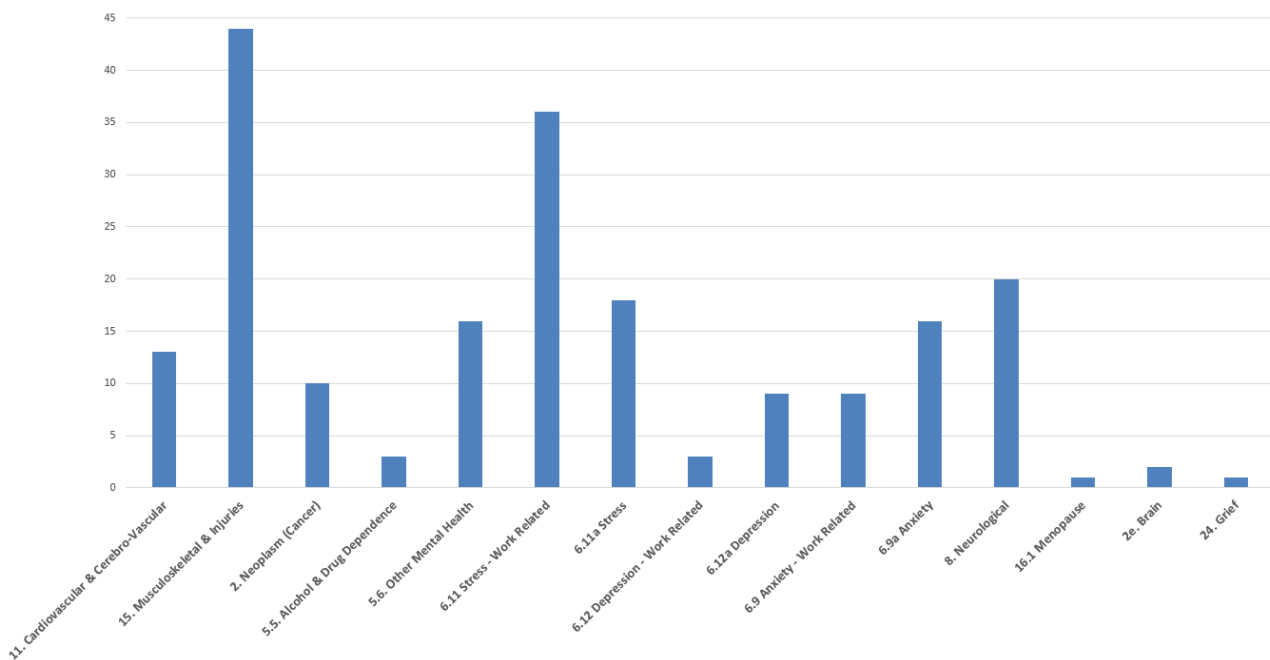
Occupational health statistics

Summary of annual activity

Our occupational health data for the reported year indicates that approximately 70% of our mental health referrals were work related (164% increase on last year)

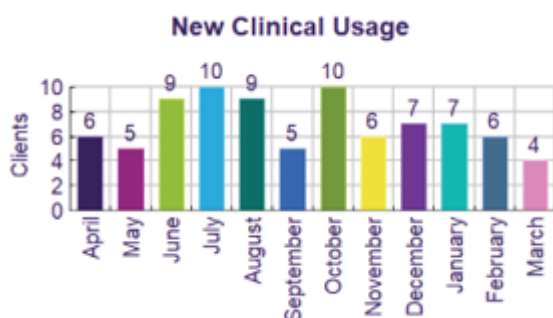
Summary 2024/2025	Summary 2023/2024
270 referrals	209 Referrals

Further detail on the reasons for referrals for the reporting year are provided in the table below. The highest reason for referrals is related to musculoskeletal and injuries, with the second highest being work related stress.



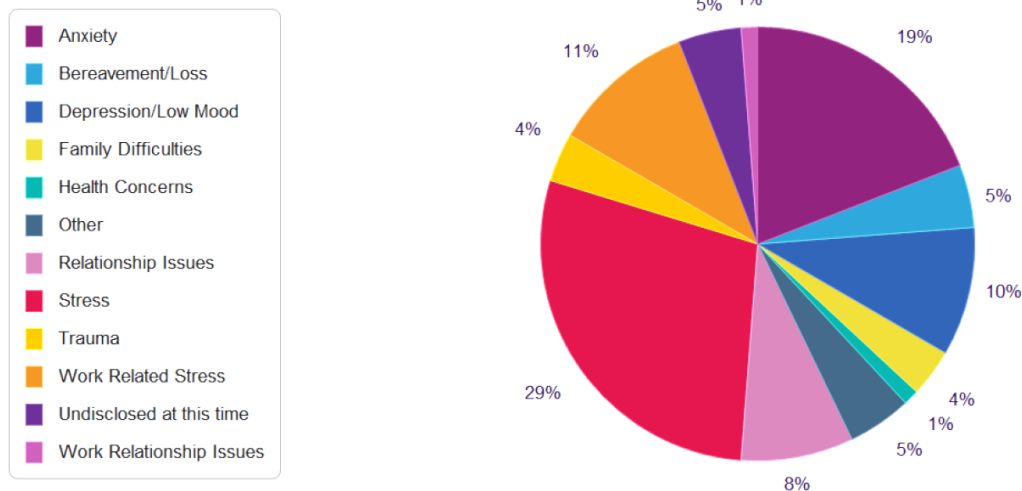
Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)

Vivup EAP provides an initial telephone assessment and triage process. All clients undertake an initial risk assessment and are provided with access to in the moment telephone support where required. Clients requiring access to telephone or face to face counselling are booked in for a telephone assessment with a counsellor. This includes assessment of risk, medication and presenting issues. Clients who presented with risk were triaged appropriately within the service and signposted/managed to ensure they received appropriate case management in this reporting period. During this reporting period 84 clients entered the counselling service via the 24/7 helpline:



The graph below shows the presenting issues that employees contacted the EAP service:

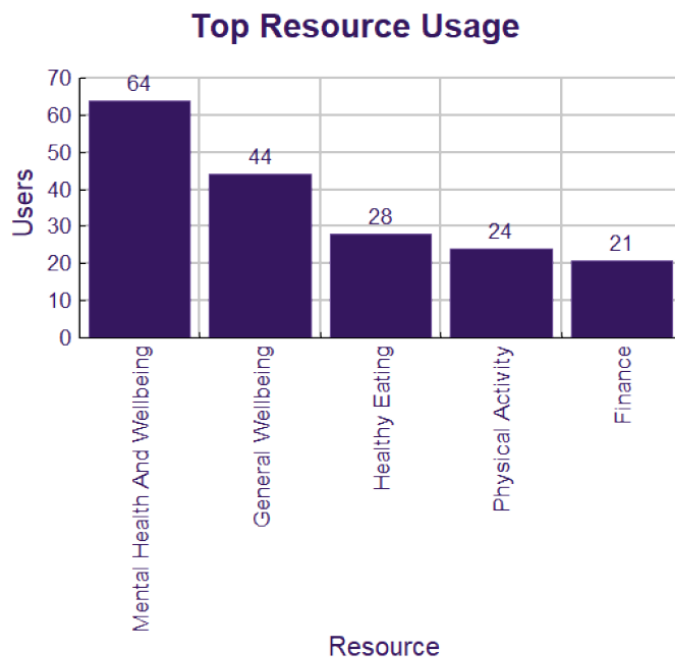
Natural Resources Wales (Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru) Presenting Issue



YourCare

Your Care is an area where your employees can monitor their own wellbeing and take steps to ensure they stay well. This is currently used by **351** of our employees.

The graph below shows the resource categories that employees were accessing for support with mental health and wellbeing being the highest resource downloaded.



Further developments in 2024/2025

Corporate Health Standard

Healthy Working Wales (HWW) informed NRW in June 2023 that due to a realignment of priorities agreed with Welsh Government that there would no longer be a Corporate Health Standard awards programme.

In 2024/2025, NRW with the support of Public Health Wales and likeminded public sector organisations e.g. Welsh Water, Betsi Cadwalladr Health Board established a peer group framework. The aim of the framework is to informally audit each other in the noted corporate health standard areas. This collaboration project is at the planning stage with key stakeholders involved.

Wellbeing initiatives

We organised participation in many specific wellbeing initiatives throughout the year. These included:

- Menopause café – monthly appointments arranged for all staff.
- Financial wellbeing webinar by Moneyworks Wales was delivered during May to talk about good vs bad credit.
- Mental health awareness week May 2024
- National Walking month – May 2024
- Stroke awareness month – May 2024
- Live Fear Free – celebrating Welsh Women's Aid (WWA) 20th anniversary which included a webinar commemorating the WWA helpline – June 2024.
- Samaritans awareness day – July 2024.
- Cycle to work day – August 2024.
- World Suicide prevention day. Arranged an anti-stigma talk with Time to Change Wales – September 2024
- World menopause day – October 2024.
- 16 days of activism – awareness session arranged with Welsh Women's Aid around the topic of domestic abuse.
- Time to talk day – some of our mental health first aiders arranged virtual coffee break sessions.

All these initiatives reminded and encouraged staff of how to look after themselves and their colleagues at work and outside of work. These initiatives have been communicated to staff through our Intranet, Manager's Monthly updates, Yammer pages and through engagement at local WH&S Forums and team meetings.

Stress awareness sessions

Drop-in sessions for team leaders and line managers were developed to focus on stress awareness. These sessions covered how and why team leaders and line managers need to proactively manage stress in the workplace and the support systems that are available for them. The sessions also cover personal stress and what managers can do to ensure the wellbeing of their staff.

A separate stress awareness for employees was also developed and delivered to help support and signpost staff to deal with stress.

Learning and Development (L&D)

Learning Management System (LMS)

As part of the transformation portfolio and following detailed exploration of the solutions available to NRW, the LMS was successfully procured and launched to the business in July 2024. The system was launched with a focus on mandatory eLearning compliance, with courses available in the medium of Welsh, improved reporting including manager dashboards a pre-test option for repeat courses. Initial feedback from business has been extremely positive and encouraging. The next phase is working with the Training Needs Analysis (TNA) data and cross referencing our historic WH&S training records to upload the information for face-to-face courses to the LMS. The project is looking at the TNAs for Operations as a pilot, to identify the resource and time required to transfer the records into the LMS.

Course Delivery

The L&D Team organised a total of 344 courses in 2024/2025 of which 249 courses were categorised as WH&S. These courses are predominantly delivered face to face, with 93 courses delivered virtually this year. WH&S categories covers a range of courses including: Water Safety, First Aid, Hostile Situations, IOSH Managing/Working Safely, 4x4 Driver, Working at Height, Chainsaw courses (Operator and Supervisor), Forest Works Manger, Forklift Trucks, Electricity for Foresters, Safe use of Powered Pole Pruner, Woodchippers and Pesticides.

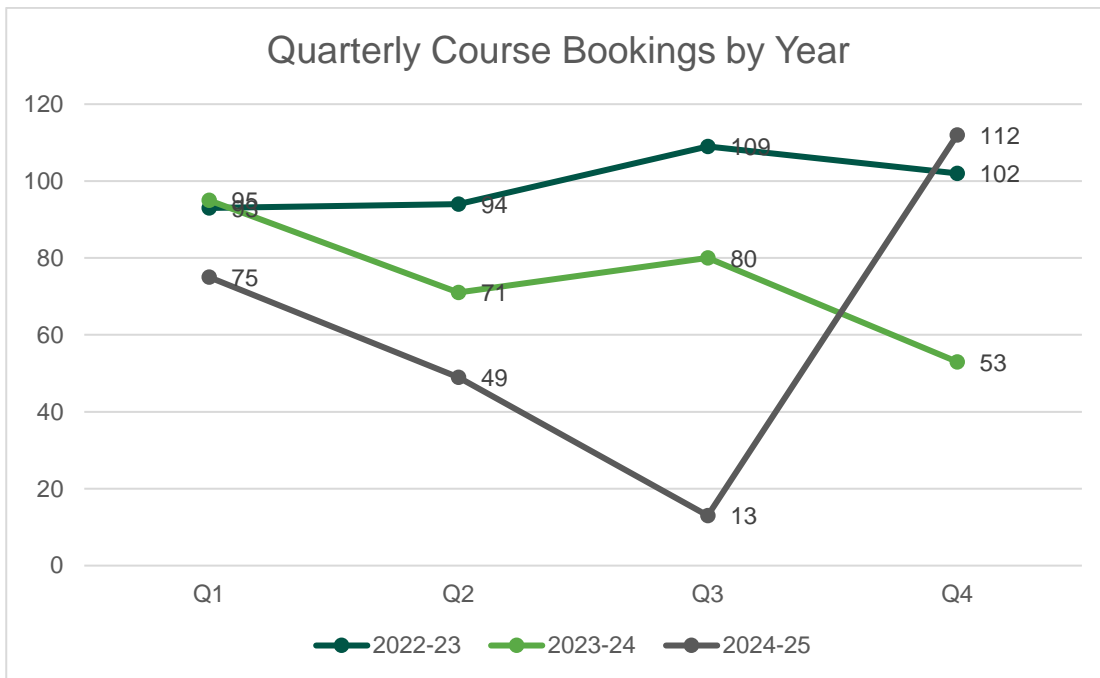
Course delivery was impacted in Q3 with two of our main WH&S suppliers ceasing trade. Procurement has been undertaken by the L&D Team in collaboration with Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) from across the business. Framework contracts have been put in place maximising the four-year term wherever possible.

The table below shows the number of courses organised by the L&D team each month with the percentage of courses booked classed as WH&S. Overall 72% of the courses delivered for NRW employees in 2024-2025 were for WH&S courses, this is a 2% increase from last year.

	2024-25	Total No of Courses	Total No of H&S Courses	H&S as % of Total Courses	Virtual Delivery
Q1	Apr-24	30	21	68%	2

	May-24	39	26		11
	Jun-24	41	28		15
Q2	Jul-24	38	32	78%	8
	Aug-24	7	6		1
	Sep-24	18	11		4
Q3	Oct-24	15	8	50%	3
	Nov-24	7	3		1
	Dec-24	4	2		2
Q4	Jan-25	38	28	77%	14
	Feb-25	50	33		18
	Mar-25	57	51		13
Total		344	249		93

The graph below shows the comparison of the WH&S course bookings by quarter for the last 3 years.



Training Needs Analysis

In order to maintain certification to ISO 45001:2018, but more importantly be legally compliant to WH&S legislation, the development of Training Frameworks were further progressed in 2024/2025.

The process of the Training Framework involves collaborating with teams across NRW to ensure each and every role is identified, their training needs captured and agreed with Team Leaders, Managers, checked by WH&S and finally the relevant Business Sub Board/Group and/or Executive Team to ensure a governance process has been followed.

The progress throughout 2024/2025 has been significant, with the training needs analysis activity for all NRW teams being completed.

Engagement with stakeholders

The Health & Safety Executive (HSE) and Forest Industry Safety Accord (FISA)

NRW have continued to engage with the HSE through attendance at bi-annual Arboriculture and Forestry Advisory Group (AFAG) meetings. The WH&S team together with colleagues from Estates Standards and Operations, supported the HSE with arranging planned inspections of chemical stores across Wales, however these inspections were later cancelled by HSE and have not been rearranged to date. Staff across NRW continue to support FISA by attending and inputting to its various working groups. The Lead Specialist Advisor Forest Operations on behalf of the Head of Land Stewardship, attends and represents NRW at FISA steering group.

Timber Customer Liaison Day

Members of the WH&S team provided a presentation for NRW's annual timber customer liaison day, which was delivered by the Timber Sales & Marketing Manager. This covered health and safety statistics and performance, pre-commencement meetings, site inductions, a planned review of the timber sales and health and safety pre-qualification process and an emerging trend relating to violence and aggression.

Forestry & Land Scotland and Forestry England

Members of the WH&S team meet periodically with members of the WH&S teams in Forestry & Land Scotland and Forestry England, to discuss common WH&S related issues.

Progress against wellbeing, health and safety actions / initiatives

Lone & remote working system

Peoplesafe is NRW's lone and remote working system, which was launched in July 2018. The system brings together mobile phones and GPS Spot trackers on one platform, offering a solution that can be used by lone and remote workers in areas of poor or no phone signal.

At the end of the financial year, March 2025, there were 978 users with an average use of 88%.

Policy/procedure update

The following policies and procedures were developed and/or revised in 2024/2025:

- Pregnancy loss procedure (new)
- Confined spaces (revised)
- Incident reporting (revised)
- Water safety matrix (revised)
- New and expectant mothers procedure (revised)

Contractor Management

A number of teams have worked together to ensure that contractors and customers who work on NRW land are adequately assessed at the pre-qualification stage, to ensure that they are competent and have made suitable arrangements in place to manage WH&S.

In total, the following have been assessed and approved –

6 – Arb and Chainsaw contract. 1 approved at initial assessment. 5 failed the initial assessment, which required further clarification and then approved.

1 – Standing Sales. All failed the initial assessment, which required further clarification and then approved.

2 – Standing and Roadside Sales (combined assessment). All failed the initial assessment, which required further clarification and then approved.

1 Roadside Sales. All failed the initial assessment, which required further clarification and then approved.

1 – Direct Production Harvesting Framework. All failed the initial assessment, which required further clarification and then approved.

6 – Bat Advice contract. 3 approved at initial assessment. 3 failed the initial assessment, which required further clarification and then approved.

1 – Wales Coastal Path and National Trails Visitor Survey framework. All failed the initial assessment, which required further clarification and then approved.

1 - Compact tractor and remote flailing deer infrastructure maintenance contract. All failed the initial assessment, which required further clarification and then approved.

1 - South Wales Goalposts (Electricity) Contract. All failed the initial assessment, which required further clarification and then approved.

2 – Mobile pump hire framework. All failed the initial assessment, which required further clarification and then approved.

1 – Roadside flailing contract. All failed the initial assessment, which required further clarification and then approved.

1 – Mechanical Weeding contract. All failed the initial assessment, which required further clarification and then approved.

1 – Spot Weeding contract. All failed the initial assessment, which required further clarification and then approved.

Where potential contractors/customers/suppliers fail the initial assessment, further guidance is provided in that area to allow them to re-submit further supporting evidence. The guidance is reviewed and updated to improve the process for NRW's contractors and customers.

Undertaking this action ensures that NRW is fulfilling its legal obligations and also provides NRW with assurance that our customers and contractors have robust systems and procedures in place to manage Health and Safety when working for NRW.

Risk assessment management

Employers in each workplace have a legal duty to ensure the health and safety of workers in every aspect related to their work. The purpose of carrying out a risk assessment is to enable the employer to take the measures necessary for the health and safety protection of workers. As part of being compliant with ISO 45001:2018, all NRW teams will need to have work activity specific risk assessments. In 2024/2025 further work has been progressed to ensure that teams across NRW have suitable and sufficient risk assessments in place. The WH&S team have worked with the business to assist and support and development of the risk assessments in AssessNET.

Risk register

The strategic risk register was revised, reviewed and amended in 2024/2025. There is one strategic risk register with a particular focus on WH&S, that of health and safety of staff/contractors/visitors. Work has been undertaken by the WH&S Manager and Executive Director of Operations to ensure that the risk register is effective and fit for purpose. The risk also has a risk appetite statement included. There is a monthly review of the risk register to update and record any completed actions. This is an ongoing project with mitigating actions being updated as and when necessary.

Public Safety Work

Visitor Safety Group (VSG)

NRW continue to sit as a board member of the group promoting public safety best practice in the UK and Ireland and continue to play an active role in the group.

National Nature Reserves (NNR) Audits

There is a rolling combined audit plan of the National Nature Reserves (NNR) which is set by Internal audit which carried out with our colleagues from Conservation Management and Environmental Management and WH&S. This provides our NNR staff reassurance on

how they are managing their reserves with respect to public safety, conservation management and environmental management (ISO 14001). Audits have been limited this year due to illness of colleagues involved and the case for change.

Audits took place for:

- Maes Y Facrell
- Ceunant Cynfal
- Ceunant Llenyrch

With further site inspections and visits to discuss particular public safety issues taking place at:

- Cwmcaern Forest Visitor Centre
- Bontuchel Fish Pass
- Chester Weir and Fish Pass
- Ynyslas Visitor Centre

And reservoir public safety visits to:

- Gwydir Uchaf
- Cyfty
- Goddion
- Tynymynydd

Public Safety across NRW

We continue to protect our landscapes, encourage public access where appropriate and achieve levels of risk that are acceptable to society. We do this by having a Public Safety Policy and associated Operational Guidance Note (OGN168) in place, ensuring we have staff who are competent in carrying out Public Safety Risk Assessment (PSRA) and inspection, and review reported member of the public incidents according to our incident management policy. We follow current best practice, as published by the Visitor Safety Group (VSG) guiding principles which are endorsed by the HSE. There is a work programme in place to ensure all our assets that the public can interact with are risk assessed and inspected according to OGN168. We continue to ensure staff are competent in PSRA and inspection and train relevant staff in this process.

In total 7 Visitor Safety Principles and Risk assessment courses have been attended by 68 members of staff. This is now in the annual training calendar and is scheduled to run again in September 2024. Training is delivered by an external provider which covers the VSG principles, zoning, control measures and recommendations.

In order for NRW to manage the flood risk aspect in relation to public safety, 4 courses were run in 2023-2024 with 51 staff attending. More courses are planned for this forthcoming year.

The public safety risk assessments for flood management assets are stored on the AMX system which was purchased to replace the legacy flood asset application.

The majority of our sites are unstaffed outside of working hours and this will be reflected in the quantity and quality of the data we receive. Our colleagues work closely with our partners, emergency services and reviewing social media to ascertain information about incidents that happen on our land that NRW may not be aware of, to enable NRW to assess the risks to the public appropriately. However, there are occasions where we are unaware of near miss and injuries on our land.

Internal advice and guidance

NRW teams gained Health and safety advice and guidance on estate standards, public safety, forestry, facilities, marine teams, and enforcement teams.

Internal Audit

During 2024/2025 an internal audit was undertaken on our Serious Incident Review. The audit report was published in Q4 with a substantial assurance rating given. The report noted two medium recommendations with a substantial assurance over three of the four key risk areas.

ISO 45001:2018 Management Standard

On the 23rd of December 2021, NRW received formal confirmation of registration to ISO 45001:2018.

The re-certification process began in August 2024 and finished early January 2025 with 12 audit days involving various teams across Wales. NRW were successfully awarded re-certification to ISO 45001:2018 standard. There were no minor non-conformities noted.

The ISO 45001:2018 standard is designed to prevent work-related injury and ill-health and to provide safe and healthy workplaces by providing a framework where we can manage and continuously improve our approach to health and safety.

Achieving this standard will help NRW ensure the long-term wellbeing, health, and safety of everyone – staff, visitors, contractors and customers.

NRW should be proud of the achievement, many organisations fail to attain the standard, as it is a difficult standard to achieve and maintain.

Next Steps and Future Work for NRW in 2025/2026

There has been significant progress in 2024/2025 with delivery of key wellbeing, health and safety improvements. However, further progress needs to be made, and we will do this by focussing on priority work areas in 2025/2026: -

Leadership

Continuing to improve visible leadership from the Board, Executive Team, Leadership Team, Management Team and Team Leaders, especially about the ownership and management of risk.

Health and Wellbeing

Continue to implement the actions in the current WH&S strategy and monitor and evaluate the measurement of performance.

External Engagement

Continue the engagement with both internal and external stakeholders and work together to improve our WH&S performance.

Learning & Development

Continue to assist with key training requirements, the further development of the learning management system with the training needs analysis being transferred, with further gap analysis work to ensure legal compliance and promote the importance of undertaking WH&S training. Determine and develop competency frameworks for the higher risk activities. Implementation and roll out of additional training as identified by the training needs analysis and gap analysis using the funding secured.

System development

Monitor and review the WH&S systems to ensure they are suitable and sufficient.

Performance monitoring & audit

Fully participate in relevant WH&S topics within internal audit programme for 2025/2026.

Enable use of strategic risk register through clear ownership of risk areas and routine assessment of risks.

Legal compliance

Launch a new wellbeing, health and safety strategy in 2025/2026 to strive for legal compliance.

Staff engagement

WH&S National Committee and Forums continue to actively engage with staff in developing and promoting a safe working environment and culture.