

# Agenda

<b>Title of meeting:</b>	<b>NRW Board Public Meeting</b>
<b>Date of meeting:</b>	<b>Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> February 2026</b>
<b>Time of meeting:</b>	<b>09:00 – 12:25</b>

<b>Time</b>	<b>Item</b>
<b>Public Session</b>	
<b>09:30 (5 mins)</b>	<p><b>Item 1. Open Meeting</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Welcome</li> <li>• Declaration of Interests</li> <li>• Explain conduct of meeting</li> </ul> <p>Sponsor and Presenter: Neil Sachdev (Chair)</p> <p><b>Summary: To NOTE any declarations of interest</b></p>
<b>09:35 (5 mins)</b>	<p><b>Item 2. Review Minutes and Action Log</b></p> <p><b>2A. Review Minutes from 27<sup>th</sup> November Public Board Meeting</b>  <b>2B. Review Minutes from 12<sup>th</sup> January Public Board Meeting</b></p> <p>Sponsor and Presenter: Neil Sachdev (Chair)</p> <p><b>Summary: To APPROVE the minutes of the previous meeting and the Action Log</b></p>
<b>09:40 (10 mins)</b>	<p><b>Item 3. Update from the Chair</b></p> <p>Sponsor and Presenter: Neil Sachdev (Chair)</p> <p><b>Summary: To NOTE the Chair's update to the Board</b></p>
<b>09:50 (20 mins)</b>	<p><b>Item 4. Report from the Chief Executive</b></p> <p>Sponsor and Presenter: Ceri Davies, Interim Chief Executive</p> <p><b>Summary: To NOTE the current position and update the Board on key activities</b></p>

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**Paper Ref: 26-02-B01**

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**10:10**  
**(20 mins)**

**Item 5. Update Report of Committees**

Sponsors and Presenters: Committee Chairs

- Audit and Risk Assurance Committee – 9<sup>th</sup> December

**Paper ref: 26-02-B02**

- Evidence Advisory Committee – 28<sup>th</sup> January (Verbal)
- Finance Committee – 3<sup>rd</sup> February (Verbal)
- Flood Risk Management Committee – 17<sup>th</sup> December (IDDs)/ 15<sup>th</sup> January

**Paper ref: 26-02-B04**

- Land Estate Committee – 22<sup>nd</sup> January

**Paper ref: 26-02-B05**

- People and Customer Committee – 4<sup>th</sup> December  
Inc WH&S Q2 Report Approval and WH&S Strategy Approval

**Paper ref: 26-02-B06**

**Paper ref: 26-02-B07**

**Paper ref: 26-02-B08**

- Protected Areas Committee – Next meeting 26<sup>th</sup> February

- Wales Land Management Forum

**Paper ref: 26-02-B18**

- Wales Water Management Forum

**Paper ref: 26-02-B19**

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

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**10:30**  
**(15 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: 26-02-B09**

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**10.45**  
**(15 mins)**

**Break**

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**11:00**  
**(60 mins)**

**Item 7. Place Presentation**

Sponsor: Lyndsey Rawlinson, Executive Director of Place and Service  
Presenter: Elsie Grace, Head of North East Operations

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Summary: Meet and hear from the management team to understand the key aspects and the place focussed delivery in the North East.

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**12:00**  
**(5 mins)**

**Item 8. AOB**

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**12:05**

**Close Public Meeting**

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**12:05**  
**(20 mins)**

**Final Public Q&A**

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**12:25**

**Close Meeting**

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**12:25**  
**(60 mins)**

**Lunch**

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# Unconfirmed Minutes

<b>Title of meeting:</b>	NRW Board Meeting (Public)
<b>Location:</b>	Cardiff and Teams
<b>Date of meeting:</b>	27 <sup>th</sup> November 2025
<b>Members present:</b>	Neil Sachdev, Chair Prof Steve Ormerod, Deputy Chair Ceri Davies, Interim Chief Executive Dr Hushnara Begum Dr Pete Fox Dr Rebecca Colley-Jones Dr. Calvin Jones Lesley Jones Prof Rhys Jones Mark McKenna Helen Pittaway Adam Taylor
<b>Executive Team Members Present</b>	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
<b>Attendees present:</b>	Phil Williams, Head of Governance and Board Secretary (All items) Meinir Wigley, Head of Communications and Digital Transformation Mark Collins, Finance Team 2 Manager – Item 6 Sarah Williams, Head of Corporate Strategy and PMO – Item 7 James Cornelius, Senior Specialist Advisor, Corporate Planning and Performance – Item 7
<b>Observers present:</b>	None

<b>Apologies:</b>	Karen Balmer
<b>Secretariat:</b>	Natalie Williams, Deputy Board Secretary and Board Secretariat Team Leader Rhiannon Spencer, Board Secretariat Team Andrea Bennett, Board Secretariat Team

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## Declarations of Interest

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### Item 1. Open Meeting

Sponsor and Presenter: Neil Sachdev, Chair

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

### Item 2. Review Minutes and Action Log

#### Item 2A. Review Minutes from 8<sup>th</sup> October Public Meeting

2. The minutes from the public Board meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> October were reviewed and agreed.

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

3. The Action Log was reviewed, and updates were provided. It was agreed that completed actions could be closed.

### Item 3. Update from the Chair

Sponsor and Presenter: Neil Sachdev, Chair

4. The Chair introduced himself and explained the opportunities that he had taken to meet staff and stakeholders. He planned to spend time further familiarising himself with NRW's work and staff through office and site visits in the future.
5. The Chair thanked staff for the extraordinary efforts during and following Storm Claudia, especially in Monmouthshire.

### Item 4. Update from the Chief Executive

Sponsor and Presenter: Ceri Davies, Interim Chief Executive

6. The Interim Chief Executive (CEO) thanked Steve Ormerod for his support regarding the Environmental Protection Agencies meeting that NRW had recently hosted in Cardiff. Positive feedback was received from delegates on both the outcomes and the event itself. The Interim CEO and Steve Ormerod also attended

- the Strategy Nature Conservation Bodies annual meeting that provided an opportunity for shared learning. In 2026, NRW would host the event in North Wales.
7. The European Nature Conservation Authorities (ENCA) virtual meeting was attended by the Interim CEO and other NRW staff. NRW were leading transformational change for nature in collaboration with counterparts from the Netherlands and Germany. The importance of taking opportunities to build relationships, discuss common challenges and learn from other countries was highlighted.
  8. The Audit Wales report on NRW's approach to designating Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) was acknowledged. Although it had been a disappointing result, NRW were using it as an opportunity to improve action on biodiversity and conservation. The lessons learnt from the report would be used across NRW. It was noted that the Species in Peril Report had been published.
  9. The Interim CEO and other members of staff had attended the Royal Welsh winter fayre. Improved working relationships with land management and agriculture stakeholders was highlighted.
  10. An update was provided on the Executive Team (ET) portfolio review. The implementation of the new structure was underway with recruitment of the two new interim Operations ET. WG had been kept informed with developments, and apart from the permanent Operations posts, the transition should be completed by the new financial year.
  11. The Management Monthly Update was highlighted as an example of ET's commitment to improved communication with staff. The opportunity provided a clear line of sight between Board, ET and Managers and Team Leaders, and had received positive feedback and engagement. The items at the meeting included celebrating successes.
  12. NRW's response to the recent floods were outlined. The organisation's main responsibilities in this area were warnings and advice, support to the blue light services and maintaining flood defence assets. The areas that had been mainly affected were outlined with particular reference to Monmouthshire. NRW had received positive feedback from the Local Authorities (LAs), and the early warnings had enabled preparation. With the increase in these types of events, NRW would need to consider catchment management.
  13. The Executive Director of Customer, Communication and Commercial (CCC) provided an update on visitor centres (VCs). The marketing exercises for Nant Bwlch yr Arain and Coed Y Brenin would commence shortly. The opportunities to lease the VCs outlined with the aim to find long-term, sustainable partners. Ynyslas already benefited from a partnership with the Gors Community Hub. Further to a query, assurance was provided that the Ynyslas partnership would be formally monitored. Appropriate monitoring points would also be built into contracts for the other two VCs, which would dependant on who would lease them. NRW remained

committed to transparency, public access and environmental protection. The Board would be kept informed on the process.

14. With regard to Monmouthshire flood event, it was queried if a flood risk revision process would be triggered automatically. There was a formal process under Section 19 (s19) that would be led by the LAs with NRW input. It was confirmed that the process was underway. The flood maps would be updated following the event and hydrometric data had been gathered for an internal review to improve NRW understanding and response for future incidents.
15. Regarding the Heidelberg Materials Cement update, it was queried if lessons could be learnt from successful outcomes and mainstreamed in broader work in terms of decarbonisation and beyond. It was also queried where regulation was discussed in any detail by the Board and its Committees. A group would review the success of the Heidelberg Materials Cement under Wellbeing Objective Two to disseminate the learning to the wider organisation. The point was well made as NRW rarely completed a review when there had been a successful outcome.
16. There were no designated Board groups for regulation. While aspects are reported as business-as-usual, they are not consistently integrated with Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) tracking. ET had previously discussed the need for a more structured approach. The Committee Review had highlighted a gap in regulatory oversight which would need addressing.
17. Further information was requested on the timeline for the release of beavers, and whether a similar approach would be used for eagle reintroduction. An overview of the license application for eagles by a group linked to Cardiff University was provided by Steve Ormerod. Applications would need to go through the International Union of Conservation of Nature Protocol which would need to be completed carefully and over a significant period of time. There was no intention to release beavers at this time. The next stage in the process would be to establish a beaver forum to bring together stakeholders to discuss a strategy.
18. The Chair thanked the Interim CEO for the flood update and highlighted that such events were no longer rare. The importance of improving the speed and accuracy of forecasting was emphasised and the successful coordination during this year's event was commended.
19. Attention was drawn to the importance of the Species in Peril Report in bringing the nature crisis to the forefront. It was suggested that a single severe event could result in the eradication of species, reinforcing the need to focus on creating further habitats and effective communication of the Report's messages.
20. The importance of sharing lessons learned from climate change impacts globally was acknowledged, as these challenges had no boundaries. Proactive learning from other regions and learning from successful responses would be important.

## **Item 5. Update Report of Committees**

Sponsors and presenters: Committee Chairs

### **Audit and Risk Assurance Committee – 17<sup>th</sup> October (ARA)**

21. The Head of Governance and Board Secretary, updated on the Committee meeting, including the Annual Report and Accounts (ARA) publication. A report from Audit Wales had been received and the Committee had approved the ARA for publication. The ARA had been laid before the Senedd.

### **Evidence Advisory Committee – 16<sup>th</sup> October**

22. Steve Ormerod, Chair of EAC provided an outline of the remit of the Committee. The meeting in October focused on the State of Natural Resources Report (SoNaRR2025) and how the results could be appropriately communicated.

### **Finance Committee – 6<sup>th</sup> November**

23. Helen Pittaway, Chair of FC highlighted the items from the meeting including the Financial Performance Report, the financial approvals and the clarity that had been provided on the 2026-27 Budget.

### **Protected Areas Committee (PrAC)**

24. The Chair of PrAC outlined the discussion points at October's meetings including the SSSI audit report from Audit Wales, recent designation and upcoming SSSIs for consideration for designation. The Committee also discussed the delivery of 30x30. A presentation on the Sustainable Farming Scheme and how it could deliver 30x30 had been provided.
25. Steve Ormerod highlighted that there was now a Welsh name for Other Effective Area Based Conservation. A Welsh Government (WG) strategic implementation group were developing and bringing forward candidates.

### **Wales Fisheries Forum – 21<sup>st</sup> October**

26. Steve Ormerod as Chair of the Fisheries Forum and the Wales Water Management Forum provided a summary of the roles of each of them.
27. The Fisheries Forum in October discussed the recent salmon and sea trout stock assessment, which had a RAG status of Red for the majority of Wales. The commitments that Wales would bring to the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organisation (NASCO) for key pressure action and an NRW Climate Resilient Fisheries Strategy were also discussed.

### **Wales Water Management Forum – 13<sup>th</sup> November**



28. The Wales Water Management Forum met on the 13<sup>th</sup> of November and discussed the current River Basin Management Plans' process. A workshop ran alongside Public Health Wales that carried out a health impact assessment of the process.

#### **National Access Forum for Wales – 4<sup>th</sup> November**

29. Lesley Jones, as Chair, provided an update on the topics discussed at the November meeting. This included an update on the proposed National Park and the associated consultation process. The discussion also covered work on updating and communicating the Countryside Code, and Welsh Government (WG) provided an update on the first pilot for the National Trail. The forum offered stakeholders an opportunity to provide feedback, and the value of engagement between stakeholders, NRW, and WG was highlighted.
30. The Chair queried if there were ET leads for each of the fora. It was confirmed that the Forums were all within the Executive Director of Evidence, Permitting and Policy's (EPP) remit.

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

Presenters: Mark Collins, Business Finance Team 2 Manager

31. The Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Services introduced the item. The Business Finance Team 2 Manager provided an overview of the Finance Performance Report, which had also been discussed with both ET and the Finance Committee (FC). The Chair of FC noted that the Committee had discussed how the underspend could be used.
32. The Board discussed the options available to use the underspend and this would be brought back for further discussion following an agreed proposition from WG. The breakdown of both staff and non-staff costs would be provided at a future meeting for further clarity.

**DECISION: The Board approved the latest financial position.**

#### **Item 7. Business Plan Performance Dashboard Quarterly Update Q2**

Presenters: WBO Leads; Sarah Williams, Head of Corporate Strategy and Programme Management Office; James Cornelius, Senior Specialist Advisor, Corporate Planning and Performance

33. The Interim Chief Executive introduced the item and outlined that the annual Business Plan was based on 28 commitments that aligned with the Corporate Plan and WG remit letter. NRW's performance had improved in Q2, with more objectives rated Green and no Reds, due to the lifting of the recruitment freeze and the reprioritisation of key activities. Progress had been made with recruitment, with 93 roles at recruitment or advert stage and 515 total recruitments since the exercise

began. NRW was recruiting to an affordable structure, maintaining headroom for budget flexibility and using a mixed economy model for delivery.

34. The process for changing the RAG rating of the Business Plan commitments was explained, and involved scrutiny by the Business Planning team, Leadership team and the Board to ensure transparency and control over performance reporting.
35. A financial strategy was being developed to align with the Corporate Plan's timeframe, aiming to clarify the multi-year planning parameters. The Board discussed the need for more strategic Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and a live dashboard to improve oversight and decision-making.
36. The findings from the Audit Wales review of SSSI designations were outlined. NRW were using the recommendations to reset and refocus conservation efforts, with robust management actions and a commitment to learning from both external and internal reviews. The Board discussed the importance of clear communication and regular updates to ensure the public were aware of biodiversity loss.
37. The Board were updated on the implementation of the ET portfolio review, with interim recruitment underway for key executive director roles and plans for a full external recruitment campaign in the new year, ensuring continuity and alignment with WG expectations.
38. The new Procurement and Contract Strategy was discussed, which aimed to leverage NRW's supply chain to drive positive environmental outcomes. The Strategy had been shared with stakeholders and was seen as a well-managed approach to public sector procurement.
39. An update was provided on the new phase for the Coed y Brenin and Bwlch Nant yr Arian visitor centres. This included the launch of the new marketing exercise for long-term partners and the arrangements would be monitored. NRW were seeking partners to enhance the sites for community and business benefit while safeguarding public access. The process was designed to be inclusive, allowing bids from community groups, businesses and social enterprises.
40. The Board requested assurance on monitoring arrangements for the community-run centres and the Executive Director of Communications, Customer and Commercial confirmed that more formal monitoring would be built into contracts for the new leases. The Commercial team would manage the process before handing over to the place-based teams.

## Item 8. AOB

41. There was no AOB.

## **Item 9. How Did We Do In This Meeting**

42. The Board discussed the meeting and were complimentary of the use of Welsh language and the translation services used throughout the meeting. The location of the February Board meeting was discussed.

## **End Meeting**

## **Public Q&A**

43. The Board responded to public questions on nuclear regulation engagement, the National Rivers Restoration Programme, flood management and the recent Senedd Resources paper on tree planting.

## **Close Public Meeting**

# Unconfirmed Minutes

<b>Title of meeting:</b>	NRW Board Meeting (Public)
<b>Location:</b>	Teams
<b>Date of meeting:</b>	12 <sup>th</sup> January 2026
<b>Members present:</b>	<p>Neil Sachdev, Chair  Prof Steve Ormerod, Deputy Chair  Ceri Davies, Interim Chief Executive  Karen Balmer  Dr. Hushneara Begum  Dr. Pete Fox  Dr Rebecca Colley-Jones  Prof. Calvin Jones  Lesley Jones  Prof Rhys Jones  Mark McKenna  Helen Pittaway  Adam Taylor</p>
<b>Executive Team Members Present</b>	<p>Prys Davies, Executive Director of Strategy, Policy and Evidence  Rachael Cunningham, Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Services  Dominic Driver, Acting Executive Director of Evidence, Policy and Permitting  Lyndsey Rawlinson, Acting Executive Director of Place and Service  Meinir Wigley, Head of Communications and Digital Transformation (Deputising for Sarah Jennings, Executive Director of Communications, Customer and Commercial)</p>
<b>Attendees present:</b>	<p>Phil Williams, Head of Governance and Board Secretary (All items)  Yvonne Burson, Corporate Communications Manager -  Keith Davies, Principal Advisor, Protected Landscapes – Item 2  Ash Pearce, Team Leader, Designated Landscapes Programme – Item 2  Bill Cordingly, Brown Jacobson – Item 2  Jessica Bannon, Brown Jacobson – Item 2</p>

<b>Observers present:</b>	Richard Sumner, Lead Specialist Advisor, Landscape and Natural Beauty Ffion Roberts, Senior Communications & Engagement Officer  Rosie Plummer Julie James Martin Glyn Murray
<b>Apologies:</b>	Sarah Jennings, Executive Director of Communications, Customer and Commercial
<b>Secretariat:</b>	Natalie Williams, Deputy Board Secretary and Board Secretariat Team Leader Rhiannon Spencer, Board Secretariat Team
<b>Declarations of Interest</b>	Karen Balmer – Lives in the proximity of the National Park proposed designated area (Attended the meeting for Item 2 as an observer)

## Item 1. Open Meeting

Sponsor and Presenter: Neil Sachdev, Chair

1. The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed everyone. Declarations of interest and apologies were noted as above. It was confirmed that the previous NRW Chair and CEO both resided in the proposed National Park designation area and had been recused from the discussions and evidence gathering throughout process. Karen Balmer recused herself from the decision on item 2 as she lived in the proximity of the proposed National Park and attended as an observer only.

## Item 2. National Park Decision

Sponsor: Dom Driver, Acting Executive Director of National Operations

Presenters: Keith Davies, Principal Advisor, Protected Landscapes; Ash Pearce, Team Leader, Designated Landscapes Programme; Bill Cordingly, Brown Jacobson; Jessica Bannon, Brown Jacobson; Richard Sumner, Lead Specialist Advisor, Landscape and Natural Beauty; Ffion Roberts, Senior Communications & Engagement Officer

2. The Interim Executive Director of National Operations introduced the item and highlighted the recommendations for the Board. The Principal Advisor, Protected Landscapes presented an update on the Designated Landscapes Programme. Bill Cordingly, from Brown Jacobson, provided the legal context and the relevant considerations. The decision had been governed by the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 and offered opportunities for open-air recreation.
3. The background to the Programme was outlined, including the stages within the designation process with both NRW and Welsh Government (WG). NRW had

produced and followed a clear guidance note outlining each statutory step. The Evolution of the Boundary was presented, which included the areas that had been added into the process when formally assessing the landscape. The team had evaluated and analysed the evidence and details and created a formal map in 2025.

4. An overview of the consultation and stakeholder responses was presented, followed by the sector's perspectives in relation to farming and land use; renewable energy; minerals; environment; and recreation. The feedback provided included challenges to the assessment and changes to the boundary, on both additional areas and to protect the landscape from development. Other concerns raised by the Local Authorities included long-term funding concerns, planning service implications and affordability. NRW had reiterated that these were WG considerations, not statutory designation tests, and the wider considerations not related to the statutory tests were outlined.
5. The recommendations and the next steps were presented. The team were recommending that the Board make the Glyndŵr National Park (Designation) Order 2026 under legal powers provided by and, in accordance with the procedures set out in the 1949 Act. Should the Board approve the recommendation, the formal statutory notices in specified publications would be published; and the Order and Map would be made available for inspection in the locality, prior to submission of the Order to Welsh Ministers for confirmation.
6. The Chair thanked the team for their work on this Programme. In response to a query, it was confirmed that the consultants were considered to be independent, as NRW had been through the procurement process. The Board discussed the recommendation, and it was suggested that the gathered evidence should also be shared with WG, including the additional evidence that Board had not been involved in. The Board recognised the risks around public misunderstanding of NRW's role.
7. The name of the proposed National Park was also discussed. There had previously been some negative responses around the name, however, this had gone through a thorough process that had been summarised within the Report. Legislation would allow WG to confirm the order, with or without modifications, and should they wish to change the proposed name, NRW would need to be consulted. It was confirmed that the consultation feedback would not warrant the reopening of a debate around the proposed name.
8. It was agreed that the following should be emphasised to WG: the need for long-term sustainable funding; a clear plan to address public concerns; and the need to ensure future governance supports the modern Welsh legislation, as well as climate and nature priorities. The Board approved the recommendations for the National Park Designation Order.

**DECISION: The Board approved the recommendation for the National Park Designation Order.**

### **Item 3. Internal Drainage District (IDD) Budget Decision**

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

Presenter: Pete Fox, Chair of FRMC

9. The Chair of the Flood Risk Management Committee (FRMC) introduced the item provided an update on the IDD Budget and commended the budget for approval, following discussions with FRMC. It was confirmed that this was an annual requirement for NRW. The average proposed increase was 5.5%, which reflected inflationary pressures. The challenges during the consultation with farmers were outlined, however it was agreed that NRW delivered value for money.
10. The Board discussed and approved the IDD Budget.

**DECISION: The Board approved the IDD Budget.**

### **Close Public Meeting**

## NRW Board Paper

<b>Date of meeting:</b>	12 February 2026
<b>Title of Paper:</b>	Chief Executive's Report (Public Session)
<b>Paper Reference:</b>	26-02-B01
<b>Paper presented by:</b>	Ceri Davies, Interim Chief Executive
<b>Purpose</b>	Information and discussion
<b>Summary</b>	The paper provides the Board with an update on current issues.

## Introduction

1. Our new directorate structure was introduced in mid December. Our Operations directorates are now led by Lyndsey Rawlinson and Dom Driver, respectively overseeing Operations (Place) and National Operations. Prys Davies leads our new Strategy, Policy & Evidence directorate, combining elements of the old Corporate Strategy & Development and Evidence, Policy & Permitting directorates. Our People, Fleet & Facilities directorate is also new, reflecting the recognised need for executive-level leadership in this area, and will be led by Louise White on an interim basis. The Communications, Customer & Commercial and Finance & Corporate Services directorates remain under the leadership of Sarah Jennings and Rachael Cunningham respectively.
2. The process of aligning departments and teams within the new directorates will take a little time to fully complete, as backroom systems and processes are updated to reflect the new structure. Business partnering across the organisation is being reviewed and adjusted where necessary. Permanent recruitment continues for key Leadership Team roles and budget discussions are taking place to ensure investment, wherever we can, in front-line teams, particularly those identified as areas for investment under the Case for Change. This process of review and renewal feels fitting and optimistic as we start the new year.
3. In December, we held our regular Partnership Council meeting, an important contact point between the organisation and our Trade Union partners. We strive to maintain open communication and strong working relations with the Trade Unions and this meeting always feels constructive and mutually supportive. The agenda covered the usual business and finance updates, an update on the Employment Rights Bill and a discussion ranging across resource planning, the options for closure of the Maes y Ffynnon office, and the Social Partnership duty. The Trade Unions are now



represented on our People and Customer Committee (PCC) and this arrangement appears to be working well.

4. I also attended the Wellbeing, Health and Safety Committee in December. We considered the health and safety elements on the Strategic Risk Register, updates on the PeopleSafe lone working system and our renewed ISO45001 certification. This latter achievement followed twelve days of auditing across many of our teams during November, which revealed only three minor non-conformities. My thanks go to our WH&S team for their continual hard work and leadership in ensuring we maintain such high standards across the many diverse aspects of our work. The draft WH&S Strategy to 2030 was also shared at the meeting; this places safety at the heart of our organisation, sets clear goals, and commits to transparent and accountable reporting of key indicators.
5. Also in December, I met James Jesic of Hafren Dyfrydwy, Gail Davies-Walsh of Afonydd Cymru and Matthew Edwards and Emma Woodcock of Audit Wales. Together with Gareth O'Shea, Executive Director of Operations, and the local Head of Place, I attended our regular meeting with Cllr Andrew Morgan of Rhondda Cynon Taf (RCT) County Borough Council. Cllr Morgan is also leader of the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA), with which we work closely on a range of issues. Our discussion covered river defences and recent flooding, and preparations for the winter months. We have very constructive working relationships with both the WLGA and RCT under Cllr Morgan's leadership.
6. I had a meeting with the CEOs of the Statutory Nature Conservation Bodies (SNCB) – my counterparts at Natural England, NatureScot, the Northern Ireland Environment Agency and the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC). This was a useful and wide-ranging discussion, covering our progress with 30 by 30, culture change and collaboration. We agreed the substance of a letter to the Inter-Ministerial Group for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: Biodiversity Deep Dive taking place in February. We also discussed the priorities for the next Chairs' and CEOs' meeting being hosted by NRW in early summer.
7. We also met with our Welsh Government (WG) Sponsorship team during December. Their attention is inevitably shifting towards the forthcoming election in May and we have reassured them that we are preparing for the increased number of Senedd members and the potential for increased correspondence about aspects of our work. WG are satisfied with our good progress during the enhanced monitoring they have undertaken over the past year. We continue to work closely with them on the Self-Assessment Model for Wales (SAM Wales) – a questionnaire for arms-length public bodies intended as a health-check of performance, efficiency, governance and accountability – and the Anti-Racism Wales Action Plan (ARWAP). All of our Executive Team have specific objectives linked to the latter and to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI), to ensure we embed and exemplify the right behaviours from the top down. I have had separate conversations with Cardiff University's Usha Ladwa-Thomas, who drove the development of ARWAP and continues to support its delivery, to understand how we can create a welcoming, inclusive and more diverse culture within NRW.
8. Early in January, we achieved a significant milestone in the process to designate a new national park in North East Wales. Following the Board's agreement that the

proposed Glyndŵr National Park and its boundary met the statutory requirements for designation, we signed and sealed the designation order and entered a further, final period of public consultation. The decision on the creation of the new national park will be made by WG on consideration of all the evidence and representations made by interested parties.

9. The start of January was focused on preparing for our annual scrutiny session at the Senedd's Climate Change, Environment and Infrastructure Committee. This session provides an opportunity for the committee to ask questions about NRW's work and hold us to account on our performance and delivery. I attended alongside our Chair and Rachael Cunningham, Executive Director for Finance & Corporate Services. While we have some idea of the areas of questioning, our preparation is wide-ranging and intensive; I am hugely grateful for the support of colleagues across all aspects of our work for the time they commit to providing information and briefings.
10. On the day, the questioning was robust as always. Our Chair was asked to provide his reflections on his first few months, and we proceeded from there to questions about our preparations for the upcoming Senedd election, our budgets and topics including water industry reform, flood forecasting, protected sites and tree planting. Committee members expressed how impressed they were with our Ten Asks document, which sets out our call for the next leaders of Wales to back clear, bold, practical plans that protect our environment, communities and climate for generations to come.
11. In January, I met Roch Cheroux, the incoming CEO of Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water (DCWW), and with our Executive Team held a joint session with the DCWW team, which focused on building our relationships to facilitate more strategic engagement as we enter the most ambitious investment period to date. I subsequently attended a meeting at Lisvane and Llanishen Reservoirs Visitor Centre with David Henderson, CEO of Water UK, and representatives from DCWW and WG. Separately I met with Chris Walters, interim CEO of Ofwat, who is leading the organisation through the current period of transition.
12. In January, we wished Gareth O'Shea, Executive Director of Operations, a happy retirement. Gareth has been with NRW and its predecessor organisations for 42 years, and will be sorely missed by colleagues across the organisation. With his long experience and knowledge of NRW and our wider working environment, he has been an invaluable source of wise advice and support for me as interim Chief Executive.

## Strategic Updates

### Nutrient Ministerial Taskforce

13. The Ministerial Taskforce set up originally to meet six times in late autumn will now continue to meet into the spring. This has focused on marine nutrients namely Dissolved Inorganic Nitrogen (DIN) and failures in the Bury Inlet Inner and Milford Haven Inner waterbodies. The aim has been to support the Local Planning Authorities impacted – namely Swansea, Carmarthenshire, Pembrokeshire, Pembrokeshire Coast National Park and to a much lesser extent Neath – as competent authorities to be able to navigate the Habitats Regulations in their decision making relating to development planning.

14. A ministerial statement by Jane Bryant MS, Cabinet Secretary for Housing and Local Government, was issued before Christmas recess noting that Taskforce meetings – which bring together senior officials from WG, NRW, Local Authorities and DCWW – have been constructive and collaborative, reflecting the shared ambition from all parties to find sustainable solutions with the greatest of urgency. The statement confirmed that essential components for a successful solution have been identified and expedited, including the Nutrient Calculator and expert-led guidance, a Local Authority-led handbook for developers, which is at an advanced stage in development, and a national Nutrient Credit Trading Group, which meets regularly. These tools and guidance will allow developers and planning officers to identify the nutrient contribution of their developments and to put in place effective mitigation. The statement concludes that there is optimism that a clear path for developments to resume is being created.

### **Connah's Quay Power Station, Flintshire**

15. Connah's Quay Power Station in Flintshire has been identified as a priority development to join Hynet, a cluster of industries in North Wales and England aiming to capture vast amounts of carbon and store it in depleted gas fields under the seabed. Permitting and Development Planning Advice Service have been invited to a meeting with the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) to discuss fast-tracking the ongoing planning Development Consent Order process. We are approaching this with caution as our representations to the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) have previously highlighted significant concerns around Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) / Special Area of Conservation impacts, including air quality impacts. PINS subsequently issued a Procedural Decision asking the applicant to submit information to support an HRA derogation case showing Imperative Reasons of Over-riding Public Interest (IROPI) by the end of last year.

### **State of Natural Resources Report (SoNaRR)**

16. Following its publication in December, we formally launched our 2025 State of Natural Resources Report on 29 January at an event at SPARK in Cardiff. Published in alignment with the Senedd term, SoNaRR is Wales' authoritative evidence-base on the sustainable management of our natural resources.
17. Along with contributions from our Chair and NRW colleagues, key speakers at the event included the Deputy First Minister Huw Irranca-Davies MS, Future Generations Commissioner Derek Walker, and Elspeth Jones, Nature Guardian with the National Infrastructure Commission for Wales. The event was both a formal release of the report, and an opportunity to begin a wider conversation with the aim of mobilising stakeholders to share ideas for transformative action that reduce pressures on the environment. The launch was also an opportunity for us to introduce *Bridges to the Future*, a practical framework that translates SoNaRR evidence into systems change that Wales must deliver.

### **Mining Remediation Authority Co-operation Agreement**

18. The Mining Remediation Authority (MRA) and NRW are working on a new five-year horizontal agreement for the MRA to provide geotechnical assurance and a coal tip inspection regime. We are working through questions about the extent of liability and met in December to understand final questions from the MRA. They have confirmed

that they will continue to provide tip services to NRW until the agreement is agreed and signed.

19. We are in the process of submitting an application for a Coal Tip Safety Grant for £10,409,469 to cover the next three years. This builds on UK Government collaboration with WG in the area of coal tip safety. Budget certainty over the next three years for a multiyear Coal Tip Safety Grant Scheme will support the awarding of larger, more efficient contracts, reducing repetitive tendering costs, giving better clarity and greater flexibility in the planning and delivery of our schemes.

## Operational Updates

### Gwent Levels South East Pipeline

20. The South East Pipeline (SEP) is a 33 kilometre rising main conveying sewage from Chepstow to Nash Wastewater Treatment Works. It crosses four of the Gwent Levels Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and functionally linked land to the Severn Estuary Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar site. The pipeline has failed and given rise to a number of significant pollution incidents over recent years. DCWW, with our support, secured Ofwat approval in their PR24 business plan for £81 million linked to a biodiversity improvement driver to resolve the issue.
21. A number of options are currently being considered and DCWW has been asked to present an options appraisal so the final solution can be agreed with the regulators and work can commence as soon as possible. Given the size, complexity and need to ensure a solution that aligns with the principles of the sustainable management of natural resources, compliance with the Well-being of Future Generations Act and with Planning Policy Wales, the options selection process is critical. A stakeholder group involving NRW, WG, Ofwat and DCWW is meeting regularly to oversee the work.

### Waste Crime – Whitewall, Magor

22. Fly tipping and waste crime is an issue that is blighting the Gwent Levels and we deal with numerous complaints about this issue. We work in partnership with the Local Authorities across South East Wales to determine who is most appropriate to deal with these offences and how best the agencies can utilise powers and resources to tackle the issue. Multi-agency working is key.
23. One site that attracts much public interest is at Whitewall, Magor. We are working closely with Monmouthshire County Council and Gwent Police to achieve the best outcome for the site and protect the environment. We have a range of enforcement options at our disposal and are progressing with action against those responsible. This is a highly complex site with that is taking some time to resolve.

### Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal

24. Political interest in the future of the Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal remains high, with an announcement in December by the Deputy First Minister, Huw Irranca-Davies MS, of guaranteed funding of up to £400,000 every year for the next five years to support the continued supply of support water from Usk Reservoir by DCWW. The

Canal and River Trust (CRT) would contribute an additional £100,000 each year for the next five years.

25. The Deputy First Minister's Task and Finish Group, set up to consider other supplementary options for the supply of water for the canal, has established two further subgroups, a Technical Advisory Group and a Local Authorities Group. Terms of reference and membership of these groups are in the process of being agreed. NRW will have a seat on both subgroups.
26. We continue to work with CRT on improvements to their infrastructure to enable better monitoring and control of the water they abstract for the canal from the River Usk at Brecon Weir, which will help to ensure better management of their abstraction and reduce the likelihood of over-abstracting during low flows on the Usk.

### **Withyhedge Landfill Site, Pembrokeshire**

27. We have observed an increase in odours over the past two months (with reports into double figures on some days), possibly emanating from Withyhedge Landfill site. In response, members of the South West Industry Regulation team have requested support from Pembrokeshire County Council to undertake odour assessments, and attended site in December and January to undertake regulatory inspections. We have identified that landfill gas is being produced from Cell 9 (filled between January and September last year) and also from Cell 10A (filled from September to December). Infrastructure is however in place to collect landfill gas in both areas.
28. The odours emanating during December were caused by emissions from a part of Cell 9 that was uncapped at the time. Engineering work to cap the cell was completed in late December. More recent offsite odours could be from Cell 10A. The open season for slurry spreading started on 16 January so there may be instances where reports of odour from Withyhedge may actually be agricultural spreading and this may make substantiating incidents more challenging, but we will continue to assess any reports we receive in line with our procedures and work closely with the operator as required to resolve any landfill related issues.
29. We have been contacted by the leader of the Stop the Stink campaign group indicating that have reinstated their activity opposing the landfill, though it is not clear presently what action they intend to take. We visited two group representatives in December to provide a verbal update on regulatory work at the site. The investigation into suspected Environmental Protection Regulations offences (permit breaches) is nearing the final stages, with the landfill operator requested to attend an interview under caution.

### **Dairy Partners Creamery, Carmarthenshire**

30. In the last three months of 2025, over 100 reports of odour from the Dairy Partners Creamery site at Newcastle Emlyn were reported to NRW. Regulatory officers from the South West Industry Regulation team attended site and confirmed offsite odours on four occasions during this period. In November, odours were attributed to damaged infrastructure (tank lids and vents) and an incident of sludge overflow that inhibited an odour abatement system. The deficiencies with plant maintenance appears to have been known about by the operator, but not addressed until identified by our officers.

31. We continue to receive regular noise complaints in connection with the site. Implementation plans have been agreed for improvements to potential odour and noise sources, against which progress will be assessed in the coming months. The operator has indicated additional dosing of the Effluent Treatment Plant (ETP) in late 2025 in response to fluctuations in the influent. This will be another focus of upcoming regulatory scrutiny from NRW.
32. The relationship between the operator and residents is extremely hostile and it is becoming challenging for us to manage our own relationships with them. There is growing concern about the resource being required to regulate the site, and the limited impact this appears to have. The site is likely to be the worst performing installation in Wales again in 2025. We also understand the site is currently for sale.

### **Nant Mithil Energy Park Development of National Significance Application**

33. Nant Mithil Energy Park is a proposal for thirty wind turbines, solar generation and battery storage located in Powys. As statutory consultee, we have submitted an objection to the Development of National Significance (DNS) application, based on landscape and visual amenity grounds with further concerns regarding ecology, peat and impacts to protected sites. Concerns relate to the significant visual impacts the proposal would have on the Bannau Brycheiniog National Park and the location of the proposed site being outside Pre-Assessed Area 4 (a specific location designated for wind energy development) of Future Wales: The National Plan 2040, which is WG's national development framework for Wales.

### **Launch of the Sustainable Farming Scheme**

34. In the last year, NRW specialists have contributed advice to support WG in the drafting of habitat management standards, technical specifications for management actions and practical guidance for farmers, ensuring these can work together with the Sustainable Farming Scheme (SFS) to achieve environmental outcomes. We have also supported engagement with farmers, land managers and other stakeholders by participating in a series of WG Roadshows throughout the autumn, to help answer questions about the scheme and gather feedback on real-world situations, helping to ensure the scheme is practical and effective. The SFS launched at the start of January and will gradually replace the Basic Payment Scheme as the main support for Welsh farms.
35. We have representatives on the Trees and Woodlands Stakeholder Group and have contributed to work on identifying and finding solutions to "barriers to woodland creation", one aspect of SFS implementation. Universal Action 10 of the SFS requires entrants to complete a farm-specific Woodland Opportunity Plan and to demonstrate progress towards that plan. We are therefore anticipating an increase in requests for our Woodland Programme team's pre-application advice service, and subsequent verification of the submitted plans. Work is ongoing, in conjunction with WG Forest Policy, to ensure that the service remains efficient and effective in light of the anticipated increase in requests.
36. Looking forward, we are preparing to deliver a new service to work with farmers to develop designated site management plans, in support of the scheme. A team of SFS officers has been recruited and are being trained to be able to launch the full service in June, once we have confirmation on which farmers have entered the scheme. This will

support the commitment to bring 30% of Wales's protected areas into effective management by 2030.

### **South Wales Central Urban River Catchment Programme**

37. Our River Catchment Programme provides a transformative framework for integrated partnerships and solutions to the complex problems surrounding our urban rivers. These problems are increasingly challenging due to the cumulative pressures from historic industrial activity, intensive urbanisation, ageing infrastructure, pollution and exacerbating climate change.
38. Our urban river catchment approach is applied across South Wales Central, including the Ogmore (bathing waters), Taff (flood risk) and Ely (water quality), addressing statutory drivers as flood risk and Water Framework Directive compliance in an integrated way. It supports a long-term environmental improvement, nature recovery, community resilience, wellbeing and climate adaptation. Climate change is one of the five key drivers to biodiversity loss.
39. The defining strength of this approach is its focus on an effective partnership both in governance and delivery, acknowledging that no single organisation can resolve these challenges alone. It translates our national ambition into place-based delivery, demonstrating a strong example of the transformative framework with the focus on the Sustainable Management of Natural Resources ways of working, and valuing equitable partnerships, while environment is placed at the heart of decision making, as described in the South Central Area Statement.

### **Public Services Board Climate Change Risk Assessments**

40. There are three Public Service Boards (PSBs) in South Wales Central, and we are leveraging power of these partnerships, making good progress in identifying local climate change risks and further work. Cardiff and Cwm Taf Morgannwg (CTM) have undertaken local PSB Climate Change Risk Assessments (CCRAs) and are moving on to next steps, while the Vale of Glamorgan is due to complete in March. South Wales Central will then be the first place to have a whole set of CCRAs from the PSBs.
41. Whilst all of the identified risks are equally important, we wish to highlight two: firstly the risk from flooding to people, communities, businesses, services infrastructure and assets; and secondly the risk to institutional response, reputation and financial pressure.
42. We have successfully promoted the South Wales Central Urban River Catchment Programme to Cardiff and CTM PSBs. Being in the PSBs provides access to local leaders, allowing us to gain their buy-in and have a smooth start in building effective partnerships and governance for the programme. We are also leading the CTM PSB Post-Industrial Task Group, where we create a shared vision for CTM's post-industrial landscape. The river catchment programme will be the main driver for this task group, presenting opportunities, shared learning and identifying solutions to climate change risks to all aspects of wellbeing, benefiting everyone.

### **Swansea RainScape Project wins Ystradau Cymru Award**

- 43 A flood prone urban space outside a Swansea primary school has been transformed into a vibrant, nature-based solution for managing rainwater, boosting biodiversity and improving access. In partnership with Swansea Council, Urban Foundry and the Sandfields community, we are proud to mark the completion of the transformative RainScape project at St Helen's Primary School. This pioneering scheme, designed by Robert Bray Associates, reimagines how urban spaces can manage rainwater, support biodiversity, and create safer, more accessible routes for walking and cycling.
- 44 The project has delivered twelve rain gardens, permeable paving and playful features designed with and for the community. It has provided nature-based solutions that slow, clean and absorb rainwater, reducing flood risk, easing pressure on combined sewers and improving water quality downstream. The scheme also improves access to St Helen's Primary School for the first time in 150 years, with inclusive design features that reflect the needs of local families. Raised timber edges, bee habitat posts and biodiverse planting create a space that's educational, functional and beautiful.
- 45 The scheme was funded by WG with support from Transport for Wales through the Active Travel Grant, WG's Local Places for Nature Funding, and the NRW-delivered WG NaCE funded Water Capital Programme. It has recently been recognised in the Ystradau Cymru awards, which celebrate excellence in collaborative public sector land and property management in Wales, winning the overall prize for leading collaboration. Jayne Bryant MS, Cabinet Secretary for Housing and Local Government, visited the scheme in January to present the award.

### **Fencing Work on the Afon Conwy**

- 46 Work is ongoing with three landowners this year to undertake fencing work on the Afon Conwy. Fencing along the riverbank prevents cattle accessing the river and provides a buffer strip to protect the water quality in the upper reaches of the catchment, particularly when slurry spreading is underway. The fencing will allow trees and undergrowth to grow along the riverbanks, helping to connect fragmented woodland areas, and will also benefit Eidda Pastures SSSI at Tŷ Uchaf Eidda, as it enables grazing of the meadow by ponies and cattle – suppressing rushes and tough grasses and allowing rare meadow flowers to thrive. Solar troughs have been installed to prevent livestock watering direct from the river.

### **Afon Lwynor Culvert Replacement**

- 47 A scheme was recently completed to replace a culvert with a clear span bridge on the Afon Lwynor. This was the most cost-effective way of restoring access for all fish species and restoring natural river dynamics. The works improve the conservation status of the Special Area of Conservation species of the River Tywi catchment. The waterbody is currently at 'moderate' status under the Water Framework Directive (WFD) Regulations for fish.
- 48 The culvert was part of a forestry track crossing and caused a significant barrier to fish migration due to shallow fast flows through a twelve-metre long sloping pipe. The pipe also constricted the river, disrupting gravel movement and natural river channel dynamics. The improvement work has unlocked approximately 4.5 kilometres of upstream habitat on the Llandovery Bran, part of the River Tywi, and will benefit



species such as salmon, trout, bullhead, river lamprey and brook lamprey, and contribute to the improvement needed to tackle the WFD Regulations fish failure.

## **National Peatland Action Programme**

- 49 On World Soil Day in December, the outline 2025-2030 upscale plan for the next five years of partnership working through Wales Peatland Action was launched by the National Peatland Action Programme (NPAP), NRW and WG. The new plan involves restoring more peatland, including through increased funding to partners, increasing the capacity for green jobs and contracting, refining the monitoring and evidence, and continuing to share peatland expertise with policy makers and in planning. NPAP's public 2020-2025 review document is also available online, identifying the strength of the Wales Peatland Action partnership and a successful five years of delivery.

## **Wales Breeding Wader Survey 2026**

- 50 Preparations are underway for a Wales-wide wader survey focussed on curlew and also recording breeding lapwing, snipe, golden plover, dunlin and redshank. The survey is funded by WG and will improve our understanding of where these species remain to ensure that government support for woodland creation is targeted in the right areas. Landowners have been contacted directly to seek access permission and articles have been published in the Gwlad newsletter, in the FUW and NFU's newsletters and on our own website.

## **Wales Beaver Forum**

- 51 The first meeting of the Wales Beaver Forum will take place in February at Dyfi Wildlife Centre. Steve Ormerod will chair the forum, with the initial meeting being led by the Deputy First Minister. Membership will include a range of stakeholders from land management, fisheries and nature conservation organisations.

# **Commercial Updates**

## **Timber Sales**

- 52 Our operations have responded favourably in the aftermath of Storm Darragh in December 2024, with an increased offer of timber to the market this last year, meeting the upper target limits of 850,000m<sup>3</sup>. The current marketplace remains static with a forecast of overall reduced income for the Welsh Government Woodland Estate (WGWE) during this financial year. Impacts causing this reduced income include a slowdown in the marketplace due to reduced house-building confidence in the economy, resource moving to the private sector to deal with storm-damaged crops and reduced contractor resource for the forestry sector to undertake the harvest operations.
- 53 The current market situation, and the impact of Storm Darragh, has led customers to source timber from the wider marketplace. The current roundwood import commitments, sourced from Ireland and the Isle of Man to Birkenhead docks, will demand such supply contracts being honoured by Welsh sawmills prior to returning to full capacity on the WGWE.

- 54 A reduced timber income forecast of £31.4 million from an opening budget for the year of £32.5 million, remains underwritten by WG to allow our activities managing the WGWE to be met in the financial year. Our ongoing timber income forecasting is continually improving following several years of forecasting and identifying trends in the marketplace. This work has been complemented by the completion of a Timber Sales Assurance Framework by our Governance team, to offer a second and third line of assurance in upholding the status of our activities.

## **Renewable Energy**

- 55 Our role in enabling and facilitating renewable energy developments on the WGWE has achieved successes and faced challenges. Our renewable energy income this financial year is forecasted to attain £26 million following recovery of NRW actual costs, with £11 million net funds being secured by WG. Successful planning consent for a further wind energy development scheme in Clocaenog Forest, North East Wales, has secured further development and mobilisation work. We are also working closely with Trydan Gwyrdd Cymru (TGC) in developing the Glyn Cothi wind farm scheme in Carmarthenshire. We are seeking to develop a series of case studies with TGC to support future developments in submitting and achieving proposals that are exemplar, to benefit nature and communities.
- 56 A risk has been identified in respect of securing funds for future compensatory woodland creation, for further planning commitments for pipeline schemes, within the TGC programme. We are working with Land Stewardship and WG Sponsorship teams to secure a transparent compensation pipeline and full cost recovery of future schemes to maintain the size of the WGWE and productive potential of the estate. We are contractually bound by the funding arrangements on current schemes to 2030.
- 57 The commitments to secure a resilient and mixed woodland and retaining UKFS accreditation of our forests will require us to maintain the softwood productive potential of the estate and greater woodland creation by area. Early indications offer support for this approach from the WG Sponsorship team.
- 58 We are developing our renewable energy income forecasting and seeking to develop forecasting tools in collaboration with developers and operators. An improved forecasting model will provide greater assurance and support our finance role in managing the Grant-in-aid and draw-down of funds from WG, across the organisation.

## **Kilvey Hill**

- 59 The lease surrender and asset transfer of Kilvey Hill woodlands, in Swansea, have been completed between NRW and Swansea Council. The proceeds have been commissioned to our Land Stewardship team to seek acquisition of compensatory land for new woodland creation and expansion of the Welsh Government Woodland Estate (WGWE).

## **Growth & Value Strategy**

- 60 Following ongoing feedback on our proposed Growth & Value Strategy, we are entering a phase of wider engagement with NRW staff, external customers and stakeholders across a range of subject areas including timber, renewable energy, commercial recreation and business development. Presentations to date have included the Land Estate Committee, Executive Team, Land Stewardship and Commercial Business Group, and WG departments including our Sponsorship team and the Land, Nature and Forestry Directorate.
- 61 A draft plan has been prepared and will be accompanied by an online presentation and engagement questionnaire, which is in development with support from the Communications team. The publication of the engagement plan and proposals was completed in January and a series of webinars and engagement activities will be undertaken to seek views and ideas from a wide range of stakeholders. The Executive Team will be asked to approve the new strategy in April 2026 and the plan is to launch the strategy in summer, following the elections in May.
- 62 The business development area of green finance is creating the greatest level of interest currently. This work will demand a cross-section of interested internal and external stakeholders. We will need to ensure we fully explore the opportunities and focus on actions that support delivery of our Corporate Plan and meet the high standards of compliance and governance expected of a public body. This work area will demand an alignment to our Procurement & Contracts Strategy and the upcoming Finance Strategy.

## Internal Updates

### ISO14001 Certification

- 63 The NRW environmental management system (EMS) is certified to the ISO14001 environmental standard. We are externally audited annually by BSi to maintain certification, this provides third party assurance to WG and the public that we are managing our environmental impacts responsibly and effectively. In November 2025 NRW was formally recertified to the ISO14001 environmental standard for another three years.
- 64 The benefits of ISO14001 certification include:
- Regulatory compliance: Ensures compliance with environmental laws and regulations.
  - Cost savings: Streamlines operations to reduce costs associated with waste management and resource consumption.
  - Environmental impact reduction: Minimises our environmental footprint by reducing greenhouse gas emissions and manage waste efficiently.
  - Stakeholder trust: Enhances reputation and stakeholder confidence through demonstrated commitment to sustainability.
  - Employee engagement: Boosts morale and attracts talent by fostering a culture of environmental responsibility.
- 65 We were first certified to the ISO14001 standard in 2014, and external auditors have recognised NRW as following best practice in the areas of audit management, legal and other compliance, and approach to objective setting. A new version of ISO

14001 is expected to be published in April 2026; this will provide clarity and add value to keep the standard relevant as environmental management practices evolve.

## **CEO Recruitment**

- 66 Interviews for the CEO role took place on 4 February. Following the sifting process, four candidates went through initial interviews and psychometric assessments with our recruitment consultants, Odgers. Further stages of assessment included a staff engagement panel, a media assessment and the formal panel interview. The interview panel consisted of our Chair supported by two Non-Executive Directors, Mark McKenna and Helen Pittaway, and representation from WG.

## **Communications**

### **Corporate Communications**

- 67 Communications to welcome our new Chair were issued to colleagues, partners and our wider communities, resulting in coverage across eight news outlets. In early February, we will mark the Chair's "100 days in post" milestone with several media interviews.
- 68 Our presence at the Royal Welsh Show Winter Fair in November provided a valuable platform for NRW to engage with landowner and farmer organisations. November also saw the launch of our marketing exercise to find long-term, sustainable partners to run the visitor centres and surrounding areas at Bwlch Nant yr Arian and Coed y Brenin. The process, which runs until Summer 2026, has been designed to give a range of prospective interested parties – from community groups, small enterprises and start-ups to commercial businesses – the opportunity, time and support to make a bid.
- 69 We celebrated colleagues' hard work and innovation this quarter, including winning an Excellence in Landscape Planning and Assessment and the President's Award at the UK's top landscape awards. Our Dark Skies Working Group was also recognised for its pioneering Good Practice Guidance on conserving and enhancing Wales' dark skies.

### **Internal Communication and Engagement**

- 70 We have been building an evidence-base to evolve how we communicate internally. Research shows our current approach is busy and fragmented, leading to missed information and overwhelm. We're developing tools and a clearer strategy to improve what we share, when we share it and the channels available for communication.
- 71 As part of this project, we're working with our Digital team on improvements to our intranet. Our focus is on creating a single, cohesive narrative that reflects our values and transformative work. This includes a central space for organisational updates, leadership blogs and content that inspires behaviour change. We'll also support teams to showcase how everyday work demonstrates our values. A recent highlight was supporting the new Chair to connect with colleagues through his first video message. The message, shared alongside his Christmas greeting, received positive

feedback for its personal touch and potential to strengthen engagement across the organisation.

## External Affairs

- 72 Our stakeholder perceptions audit – our first formal assessment of how we are viewed by stakeholders – is now live. The questionnaire has been distributed nationally and locally in collaboration with People and Places teams to identify trends at both levels. The second element of the project, more formal deep-dive interviews with a representative sample, took place in January. The findings from both elements will inform our impact, reputation, relationship quality, collaboration potential and areas for improvement.
- 73 Work also continues to prepare a comprehensive stakeholder engagement toolkit for staff, and we expect to launch this before the end of this financial year. These two projects will help us meet the outstanding internal audit requirements.
- 74 We played a central role in supporting the launch of our State of Natural Resources Report, *SoNaRR 2025: Bridges to the Future*, which took place in Cardiff in January. We coordinated communications, securing national and sector media coverage, and produced content that reinforces NRW's leadership in evidence-based insights and collaboration on Wales' natural resource challenges.
- 75 We are actively preparing for the landmark Senedd election on 7 May. In preparation for an increased number of Senedd members (MSs), and changes to boundaries, we have mapped the new constituencies against our Place map and shared this information with colleagues. Externally, we have attended a series of events with MSs and candidates across the political spectrum outlining their manifesto priorities. We have held bilateral meetings with MSs, researchers and advisors to discuss our *Bold Steps for 2026 and Beyond* and our Ten Asks for the next Senedd term. We expect manifestos and full lists of candidates to be published before March.
- 76 after the election a First Minister will need to be appointed by 4 June, with appointments of Cabinet Ministers, Committee Structure and the Programme for Government following that.

## Waste Tracking

- 77 The Customer Hub is preparing for the go-live of the Waste Tracking public beta phase by delivering the Welsh language customer support. We are working closely with the Environment Agency, Defra and our Waste Regulatory Reform team to codesign training, guidance and map customer journeys, ensuring Welsh speaking customers receive an equal standard of service. This collaboration supports a Defra managed programme and includes securing annual funding for the Welsh language provision.
- 78 Our team's existing expertise in waste related regulatory enquiries positions us to resolve around 80% of customer contacts, helping customers navigate the new system and existing policy and licensing requirements. The service will strengthen organisational insight into waste movements across Wales, supporting good regulatory and environmental outcomes.

## Communities are Resilient to Climate Change

79 Communicating our role in preparing for and responding to flood risk was a major focus during this period, particularly in light of the significant impacts experienced in Monmouth and Carmarthenshire during rain events this winter. Significant resource was dedicated to warning and informing the public, engaging with communication partners and managing the media interest in these events, and explaining the continuous state of elevated flood risk we found ourselves in over this period. It allowed us to drive key messages around our online flood services and the challenges around managing future flood risk, while highlighting the work that goes on to inspect and repair assets following such events.

## Pollution is Minimised

80 The publication of the annual regulatory report provided the opportunity to not only highlight the strong statistics and impact of our regulation and enforcement work, but also reinforce the impact of adapting our strategic approach and putting resources where they can make the most difference.

81 The Communications team has worked closely with WG to address reputation risks arising from the challenges and impacts of nutrient neutrality proposals on the housing development sector. Our proactive engagement with the BBC, supported by well-prepared statements and interview briefings that emphasised collaboration and a shared commitment to finding solutions on this sensitive issue, was instrumental in securing balanced coverage.

82 We continue to highlight the importance of our compliance work to reduce pollution risks. We worked with Operations colleagues in the North East to promote our officers' visits to the Llay Industrial Estate where they offered practical advice on how to reduce pollution risks and improve environmental practices. These visits always achieve strong media coverage locally, and provide a wider perspective to the public on the breadth of our regulatory and enforcement work. We also continue to raise awareness of the importance of our regulation work, sharing the outcomes of enforcement action taken against cases of illegally deposited contaminated textile waste, and operating a waste wood site without the required environmental permit.

83 We also showcased the lesser-known measures we're taking to address pollution risks at their source. This included promoting our partnership work with water companies and local authorities to resolve misconnections in North East Wales and Cardiff, as well as highlighting the grants awarded to support sustainable urban drainage solutions.

## Nature is Recovering

84 The publication of the *Species in Peril* report in November helped to position NRW as an expert organisation, leading the way in developing new evidence that informs how we are working ourselves, and with partners, to ensure nature's recovery. The report makes Wales the first country in the UK to identify its rarest species based on how geographically limited they are, rather than using traditional assessment methods. Our preparation, working alongside Policy and Operations colleagues, ensured we were able to offer media a strong story package. Pre-recorded interviews with our experts, gathered on location at Newborough, together with live interviews on the

day, saw positive coverage on Radio 4's Today Programme, the BBC and in the Guardian.

- 85 Audit Wales' report on NRW's approach to designating SSSIs, published in November, presented challenges for the organisation. We worked closely with colleagues and with WG to develop a response that recognised the challenges and highlighted our commitment to implementing the report's recommendations while progressing our work to support nature's recovery as part of a wider strategy of interventions.
- 86 On World Soil Day in December, we celebrated the success of the National Peatland Action Plan's first five years with the launch of the next phase – a five-year plan that sets out even more ambitious targets for peatland restoration. We also promoted our collaboration with the University of Exeter on research around Milford Haven's maerl beds, helping to highlight the trust placed in our specialists and reinforce our standing as a respected authority in marine conservation.

### **Summary of Complaints, Commendations and Correspondence**

- 87 The Central Correspondence team has managed casework on Cosmeston Lakes regarding biosecurity and SSSI protection, including follow-up with Vale of Glamorgan Council. They have coordinated regulatory communications on Kronospan, including updates on noise plan resubmission, dust compliance and ongoing odour investigations. In respect of the Ogmore River catchment, the team reaffirmed NRW's commitment to reducing pollution and improving water quality through regulation, collaboration and a new Bathing Waters project team, clarifying that pollution sources across catchments are under investigation with partners, with audits and investment plans being developed to improve conditions.
- 88 A briefing has been provided to Samantha Dixon MP regarding PFAS (per and polyfluoroalkyl substances) in the River Dee catchment. She runs the Dee Summit Group and the briefing was of particular interest to her and her constituents. Our response confirmed strict regulatory controls, currently no concerning levels in the Dee Estuary, and our ongoing crossgovernment work on legacy contaminants.
- 89 We received a commendation from a member of the public in relation to November's flood event in Monmouthshire. Our Head of Operations for North West Wales, Sian Williams, gave an outstanding interview on BBC Radio Cymru, discussing the flood event. She was commended for her knowledge, expertise and professionalism while tackling a topic that is deeply personal for many in our communities. In this difficult context, Sian represented NRW in a very positive light.
- 90 Media commendations like this are rare, especially during flood events where so many people are affected. This particular recognition extends to every member of our flood teams: those out in the field, those working behind the scenes, and those on long duty and standby hours over the weekend.

## **Forward Look**

- Thursday 26 February – Protected Areas Committee

- Wednesday 4 March – People and Customer Committee
- Thursday 5 March – Audit and Risk Assurance Committee
- Thursday 12 March – Finance Committee
- Wednesday 18 and Thursday 19 March – March Board Meeting
- Thursday 16 April – Board Development Day
- Wednesday 22 April – Board Update Call
- Wednesday 29 April – Flood Risk Management Committee



## NRW Board Paper

<b>Date of meeting:</b>	12 <sup>th</sup> February 2026
<b>Title of Paper:</b>	ARAC Update for Board
<b>Paper Reference:</b>	26-02-B02
<b>Paper sponsored by:</b>	Karen Balmer, Chair of ARAC
<b>Paper prepared by:</b>	Board Secretariat
<b>Paper presented by:</b>	Karen Balmer, Chair of ARAC
<b>Purpose of the paper</b>	Information
<b>Summary</b>	To provide an update to the Board in respect of 9 December 2025 ARAC meeting.

## Background

1. This update for the Board is in respect of 9<sup>th</sup> December 2025 Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC) meeting. Welsh Government had attended the ARAC meeting as an observer for the first time.

## Update

### Audit Wales

2. Audit Wales provided an update on overview of the National Fraud Initiative (NFI) Report, highlighting the number of NRW's NFI 2024-25 data matches. NRW's proactive approach on their work with NFIs was welcomed. ARAC discussed the value of continued participation in the NFI and agreed to review comparable data over time to assess ongoing value.

### Audit Wales – Sites of Special Scientific Interest Report

3. An overview of the Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) Report was provided including the recommendations for improvement and the management response paper. ARAC discussed the Report and were assured that Audit Wales were content with NRW's response. The challenges faced due to resource constraints and capacity

issues were acknowledged. Other issues discussed included digital transformation, the progress towards the 30 by 30 biodiversity target and a lack of a clear vision for SSSIs.

4. ARAC agreed that SSSIs were an important tool but not the sole focus, and that the delivery plan should clearly set out priorities, funding opportunities, and roles for other partners. It was confirmed that the management response was endorsed, oversight would sit with the Protected Areas Committee (PrAC), and progress would be reported to ARAC.

### **Risk Management**

5. An update was provided on Risk Management, including external horizon scanning, progress on operationalising Risk Appetite Statements, cyber incidents and a proposal for risk spotlight sessions. The process for defining target risk scores for the Strategic Risk Register and aligning them with the Risk Appetite Statements was clarified. The work would be presented to ARAC and Board in 2026.
6. The scores of the strategic risks were discussed. Reporting through PowerBI was not yet live, however once activated, this would provide assurance and oversight of mitigation steps. The PowerBI report would also help visualise the connections between the Strategic Risk Register and the risk registers beneath this.
7. The spotlight sessions were welcomed and ARAC endorsed the proposed approach, suggesting a session on incident management.

### **Finance Update**

8. ARAC were provided with a Finance Update including Counter Fraud. A discussion took place on the high risk fraud areas and the Counter Fraud Strategy. ARAC also discussed the implications of NRW's self-insurance model.

### **Contingent Liabilities and High-Risk Legal Cases**

9. ARAC were provided with an update on the current contingent liabilities and high-risk legal cases.

### **Internal Audit Quarterly Update**

10. The Internal Audit Quarterly Update was presented to ARAC, including the Internal Audit Plan. Other highlights included the use of technology within Internal Audit and key performance indicators.

### **Executive Summary Internal Audit Reports**

11. Two Reports were received, the Project Internal Costs Allocations offered a Moderate opinion, and the Recreation Access and Permissions offered a Limited opinion. The IR35 Lessons Learned Report was also discussed.

### **ARAC Annual Terms of Reference Review**

12. An overview of the review was provided and ARAC endorsed the revised Terms of Reference.

### **ARAC Governance**

13. ARAC agreed the Forward Look and feedback was provided on the meeting.

## NRW Board Paper

<b>Date of meeting:</b>	12 <sup>th</sup> February 2026
<b>Title of Paper:</b>	Flood Risk Management Board Report
<b>Paper Reference:</b>	26-02-B04
<b>Paper sponsored by:</b>	Peter Fox, Chair of the Flood Risk Management Committee (FRMC)
<b>Paper prepared by:</b>	Board Secretariat
<b>Paper presented by:</b>	Peter Fox, Chair of the Flood Risk Management Committee (FRMC)
<b>Purpose of the paper</b>	Information
<b>Summary</b>	To provide an update on the Flood Risk Management Committee (FRMC) extraordinary meeting which was held on 17 <sup>th</sup> December 2025 and the full meeting held on 15 <sup>th</sup> January 2026.

## 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 FRMC extraordinary meeting, which was held on 17<sup>th</sup> December 2025, and the full meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> January 2026.
2. For further detail, all Board members can access the agendas, papers, and minutes of committees via the Diligent portal.

## Update

### 17<sup>th</sup> December 2025

#### Extraordinary Meeting to discuss Internal Drainage Districts: 2026-27 levies, precepts and rates

1. The proposed 2026-27 precepts, levies and special rates were presented to the Flood Risk Management Committee (FRMC) for scrutiny. The increases were across all areas and in line with inflation and maintenance costs. Feedback from the recent

Powysland Internal Drainage Board (IDB) was summarised and following a request, further information on the IDD costs was provided.

3. The Committee discussed Powysland in particular with explanations of the delay to work during 2025-26 and the increase in costs. It was explained that NRW develop the proposals based on the individual needs of each IDD, rather than a blanket proposal.
4. The Committee endorsed the proposals and recommended them for approval by the Board.

### **15<sup>th</sup> January 2026**

#### **Flood Risk Management (FRM) Update Report**

5. Updates were provided on the impacts of the storm events on the run up to the Christmas period, the MET Office long-term weather forecast for January to March 2026 and the recommendations from the Climate Change, Environment and Infrastructure Committee (CCEIC) Report, particularly Recommendation One.
6. The Committee discussed the need for improvements to forecasting as highlighted in the Recommendation, including probabilistic forecasting and the accuracy of six-hour forecasts. Further queries confirmed that data sets were updated every four hours with information taken from Welsh river gauges.

#### **Flood Risk Management Capital Programme Update**

7. An overview of the 2024-25 FRM budget was presented. The Programme variances were tracking as on target since the previous meeting and the key risks were outlined. FRMC welcomed the budget control and management of the 2024-25 Programme and thanked all those involved.
8. The options for the 2025-26 Flood Capital Programme was presented including the approach, three funding options, and the level of overprogramming. Following queries by the members, the level of funding for new projects was discussed as well as the mechanism for assessing risks.
9. The need for long-term investment scenario work to identify the annual investment level required to keep pace with flood risk was highlighted, including the benefits of multi-year planning. How the wider organisation was incorporating natural flood solutions was also discussed.
10. The Committee endorsed the recommended option and the level of over-programming.

#### **Flood Revenue Programme Overview**

11. An overview of the FRM Revenue Programme was presented including the basic principles, budget trends, work packages of activities and the distribution of staff resources. Further detail of the Routine Maintenance Programme was also provided,

with the risk-based revenue allocation methodology (RBRAM) that had been developed.

12. Community engagement and resilience was discussed as well as the opportunities from working with the third sector, local communities and other stakeholders. The mixed economy model was highlighted. An item on the RBRAM would be brought to a future meeting.

#### Telemetry Project Change Paper

13. Detail on the complexity of the Project and the reasons behind the changes were presented.  
The Committee raised concerns on the delays to the Project and following a request, assurance was provided that all issues had been resolved. However, the go live date could still be impacted by bad weather. The proposed lessons learnt exercise was also discussed and the chair suggested that once the project is closed that Internal Audit consider a formal review.
14. FRMC endorsed the change paper and recommended its approval.

#### River Taff Master Plan Update

15. A presentation on the Taff Catchment Strategic Flood Management Plan was provided. The approach, risks and a longlisting of opportunities, were described. Working well with stakeholders was highlighted as an important aspect for the Project. The next steps to delivering a flood resilient River Taff catchment were outlined along with nature-based solutions and land management.
16. FRMC welcomed the work and suggested that the Committee would benefit from a site visit to the area, with the potential of meeting stakeholders included.

#### Committee Effectiveness Review: Results and Recommendations

17. The results and recommendations from the FRMC Committee Effectiveness Review were highlighted. The overall findings from the review were broadly consistent with those of other committees.
18. The Committee discussed the findings, agreeing that the recommendations appeared to be common across the committees. Comments regarding alignment to the Wellbeing Objectives, stakeholder engagement, role clarity and committee overlap and skills and experience gaps of the Committee Board members.

## NRW Board Paper

<b>Date of meeting:</b>	12 <sup>th</sup> February 2026
<b>Title of Paper:</b>	Land Estate Committee Update
<b>Paper Reference:</b>	26-02-B05
<b>Paper sponsored by:</b>	Calvin Jones, LEC Chair
<b>Paper presented by:</b>	Calvin Jones, LEC Chair
<b>Purpose of the paper</b>	For information
<b>Summary</b>	To provide an overview of the 22 <sup>nd</sup> January Land Estate Committee meeting for the Chair's verbal update.

### Heads of Business Report

#### Head of Sustainable Commercial Development Report

1. The Committee was provided with an update on key commercial activity including timber sales, renewable energy, visitor centres and Kilvey Hill.
2. The Committee sought assurance on the sale of timber prices, and further detail was provided on timber value, storm damage effects on timber production, the timber markets and how modelling was used.

#### Head of Land Stewardship Report

3. The new Acting Head of Land Stewardship was introduced and an update on the progression of a master agreement with the Auto Cycle Union was provided. Other updates included an infrastructure funding bid submission and work to better link timber production to wider forest management outcomes.
4. The Committee discussed motorsports on the Welsh Government Woodland Estate and the need for consistency with the Recreation Strategy and environmental legislation.

### Growth and Value Strategy

5. An outline draft Growth and Value Strategy and associated communications plan had been prepared for consultation. It was being developed alongside the review of the Timber Sales and Marketing Plan.
6. The Committee provided their views on the exploration of green finance opportunities. The need for thorough due diligence, appropriate partnerships, clear governance and transparency was acknowledged.

### **How we report and forecast all our income streams**

7. The item outlined the need for improving forecasting. Timber sales forecasting had been greatly improved, and the ambition was to do the same for other areas.
8. Committee members questioned whether NRW should be investing time and resource into improving forecasts for income that was surrenderable and suggested that a financial buffer or different funding mechanism might remove the need for such detailed forecasting.

### **SMNR Toolkit**

9. A presentation on the SMNR toolkit was provided to the Committee. Examples of the opportunities within grassland ecosystems, mountains, moorland and heath were outlined. The toolkit was presented as well as how it would be used.
10. The Committee thanked the team behind the toolkit. The links between it and the discussion on green finance were noted and it was suggested that the examples could be narrated and publicised.

### **Committee Effectiveness Review: Results and Recommendations**

11. The results and recommendations from the LEC Committee Effectiveness Review were highlighted and the parallels with the Flood Risk Management Review recommendations was noted.
12. The connections with external stakeholders were discussed as well as bringing expertise into the Board. The balance of the level of detail to provide Board members with assurance without over burdening them was important.



## NRW Board Paper

<b>Date of meeting:</b>	12 <sup>th</sup> February 2026
<b>Title of Paper:</b>	People and Customer Committee (PCC) Update
<b>Paper Reference:</b>	26-02-B06
<b>Paper sponsored by:</b>	Mark McKenna, Chair of PCC
<b>Paper prepared by:</b>	Board Secretariat
<b>Paper presented by:</b>	Mark McKenna, Chair of PCC
<b>Purpose of the paper</b>	Information
<b>Summary</b>	To provide an update to the Board in respect of 4 <sup>th</sup> December 2025 PCC meeting.

## Background

1. This update for the Board is in respect of the 4<sup>th</sup> December People and Customer Committee (PCC) meeting. Board members can access all Committee papers and minutes via the Diligent portal.

## Resourcing and Recruiting

2. PCC were provided with an update and appreciated the work undertaken by the Recruitment Team since the lifting of the recruitment controls. The Committee discussed the need to attract younger candidates at entry level roles to secure a robust talent pipeline. Diversity data was also discussed and the low proportion of ethnic applications was of concern; however, work to review current application methods and the Unconscious Bias training was welcomed. PCC suggested the new Green Careers Pathway.

## Verbal Update on Current Risks and Issues

3. PCC were provided with verbal updates on current risks and issues from a People perspective, these included the impact on some staff with the cessation of market supplements but were assured that the risk was being managed. The structural changes to the People function, resource challenges for Strategic Workforce Planning and the new Risk Management Framework were also highlighted. The Committee appreciated the update and the ongoing work to mitigate these issues.
4. From a Customer and Communications perspective, risks and issues highlighted included, the uncertainty felt throughout the organisation with the changes in leadership

roles but understood that this also presented opportunities. PCC discussed external uncertainties with the upcoming elections and welcomed Communications' work to highlight NRW's focus on delivery and actions to tell the story. PCC also valued the strong relationship the Executive Team (ET) had with Leadership Team (LT) and Management Team (MT).

## **External Affairs Strategic Plan to include Annual Political and Public Perceptions Audit Findings**

5. The new External Affairs approach was presented and endorsed by the Committee, it was felt that it reflected the organisations' vision. PCC discussed the Board's role as visible champions and were assured there would be an alignment with Board commitments and Committee reviews. Supporting local communities and the sharing of success stories was encouraged. The Perceptions Audit was also discussed. The individual relationships NRW staff had with external stakeholders was positive; however, the perception of NRW holistically was less positive; work was ongoing to better understand and improve the perception in collaboration with Heads of Place who had those local connections.

## **Trade Union (TU) Engagement**

6. The TUs raised current issues they were supporting members on, which included, reviewing out of hours working arrangements, the closure of the Maes y Ffynnon office, the slow rollout of Electric Vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure and staff in the Flexible Resource Pool (FRP) following the Case for Change (CfC). PCC welcomed the discussion and thanked the TUs for their support throughout the CfC.

## **Wellbeing Health and Safety Strategy 2026-2030**

7. The Wellbeing, Health and Safety Strategy 2026-2030 was presented and discussed. PCC offered suggestions to strengthen the outward-facing elements and understood its role in helping to deliver Wellbeing Objective 4 (WBO4). PCC endorsed the Strategy.

## **Wellbeing Health and Safety (WH&S) Q2 Report**

8. Key points from the WH&S Q2 Report were provided: one Serious Incident Review (SIR) and two Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) reportable injuries. PCC welcomed the new style of Reporting and queried the overdue SIR actions. PCC endorsed the WH&S Q2 Report.

## **Annual Review of PCC Terms of Reference**

9. The proposed changes to the PCC Terms of Reference (ToR) were outlined with additional suggestions made. PCC endorsed the amended ToR.

## **Employer Liability Annual Review and Local Government Pension Scheme Policy**

10. PCC approved the Employer Liability Annual Review and the annual Local Government Pension Scheme Policy.

## People Transformation Programme

11. PCC were presented with an update on the Programme. It was understood that work from this Programme would form part of WBO4 going forward and the Committee encouraged alignment with the Strategic Workforce Planning and the Resourcing and Recruitment work.

## Strategic Workforce Planning

12. PCC were presented with an update from staff workshops undertaken and the next steps to take. PCC discussed the need to attract younger and more diverse candidates. Staff needed to be fully equipped with skills to meet future challenges.

## Information and Assurance Items

13. PCC welcomed and noted Q2 Reports from both Communications and External Affairs and Customer, the People Management Information and People Policies updates. An update was provided on Internal Audits.

## Standard Committee Business

14. The Forward Look was reviewed. On reflecting how the meeting had gone, the PCC Chair summarised on a quality but full meeting and gave special thanks to the Executive Director of CS&D for his approach, role and committee to the Committee.

## NRW Board Paper

<b>Date of meeting:</b>	12 <sup>th</sup> February 2026
<b>Title of Paper:</b>	Wellbeing, Health and Safety (WH&S) Strategy 2026-2030
<b>Paper Reference:</b>	26-02-B07
<b>Paper sponsored by:</b>	Prys Davies, Executive Director Corporate Strategy and Development
<b>Paper prepared by:</b>	Charlotte Morgan, Wellbeing Health & Safety Manager
<b>Paper presented by:</b>	Mark McKenna, Chair of PCC
<b>Purpose of the paper</b>	Scrutiny and Endorsement
<b>Summary</b>	The document sets out the strategic approach to Wellbeing, Health, and Safety for the next four years

## Background

1. This is the Wellbeing, Health & Safety (WH&S) Strategy for NRW from 2026-2030.
2. The document sets out the strategic approach to Wellbeing, Health, and Safety for the next four years. It explains how we will structure our efforts to ensure legal compliance as a baseline, while fostering a positive and sustainable culture that prioritises wellbeing, health, and safety. Our aim is to drive continuous improvement in performance.

## Risks, Risk Appetite and Opportunities

3. Wellbeing, health and safety risks will continue to be managed by the organisation, with co-ordination and oversight provided by the WH&S team. Looking ahead, NRW must sustain and strengthen the culture of monitoring and learning in WH&S. This commitment will remain a core element of our future strategy to drive progress.
4. The WH&S team will use the information gathered and lessons learnt as a result of our regular monitoring to inform the development of our future strategy and action plan.

## Index of Annexes

### Annex 1 – Draft WH&S Strategy

## Approval / Consultation process

<p><b>Approval/consultation process</b></p> <p><b>Responsible:</b> Who has developed the paper/process and who has had input?</p>	<p>The Strategy has been developed by the WH&amp;S team in consultation with stakeholders e.g. Executive Team, Trade Unions etc.</p>
<p><b>Accountable:</b> Who is accountable for the ultimate approval? Who will be or is being asked to approve?</p>	<p>Board are asked to approve the Strategy.</p>
<p><b>Consulted:</b> Who has been consulted to date? Where endorsement is required, is this in place? Will further consultation be required?</p>	<p>The draft Strategy has been consulted with the Trade Unions Executive Committee, Executive team, WH&amp;S National Committee and the directorate WH&amp;S forums for their comments and feedback.</p> <p>Comments/feedback received have been taken into account and most amendments have been taken on board and the Strategy updated.</p>
<p><b>Informed:</b> Who has been informed or who needs to be further information about the work?</p>	<p>Once approved the strategy will be launched on the intranet and through the WH&amp;S Managers Monthly.</p>

# Wellbeing, Health and Safety (WH&S) Strategy 2026-2030

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## The What

### Introduction

Welcome to our new WH&S Strategy for 2026-2030.

As the largest Welsh Government Sponsored Body and principal adviser on environmental and natural resource issues, we work with government, industry, communities, and the voluntary sector to protect and enhance Wales's environment.

We employ around 2,500 staff across Wales and support additional roles through contracts and volunteering. Our corporate vision—nature and people thriving together—inspires us to deliver solutions that benefit communities and future generations.

WH&S is central to our culture. This strategy sets out our goals, approach, and the leadership role in creating a safe, healthy, and caring environment. It reinforces that WH&S is everyone's responsibility, extending to all those affected by our activities.

Good health and wellbeing are essential for a motivated, engaged workforce and bring reputational and financial benefits. We are committed to promoting and maintaining physical and psychological health across our organization.

This strategy requires proactive action to prevent injury and ill health for colleagues and those who work with us. It defines our direction for the next four years, ensuring legal compliance as a minimum and fostering a positive, sustainable WH&S culture for continuous improvement

Signed by CEO and Chair

## The WH&S team

Our WH&S Team provides competent advice to all colleagues and acts as custodian of the high-level health and safety management system, including the WH&S Policy. The team supports the organisation by offering guidance, promoting positive wellbeing and safety behaviours, and monitoring performance through active engagement.

The team's core purpose is to:

- Provide competent WH&S advice by coordinating, supporting, and maintaining the effectiveness of the management system.”
- Enable leaders and managers to create a safe, healthy workplace and ensure compliance with statutory duties.

The WH&S Team delivers its core purpose by prioritizing activities based on NRW's most significant hazards, available resources, and realistic delivery timescales.

## Safety at the heart of our organisation

Our strategy will drive us toward our WH&S goals—setting new standards and supporting our vision of nature and people thriving together. It reflects our commitment to keeping people safe and well every day and creating a lasting legacy for future generations in Wales. Our WH&S practices will actively consider diverse needs or actions to ensure inclusivity is a principle, with consideration of diverse needs and demonstrates commitment to equitable safety practices.

We will commit to explore safe external reporting for transparency and accountability by publishing high level WH&S performance indicators.

WH&S contributes to emergency preparedness and recovery with resilience training for staff and integrations with wider risk frameworks which strengthens our resilience message.

## The Why: refreshing our strategy

### Why now?

Our first strategy launched in 2015, following the creation of NRW from three legacy organisations. Today, with most of our workforce operating in hybrid and field-based roles, the risks we face have evolved significantly as our scope of work has expanded.

As a public organisation committed to continual improvement, this new strategy redefines our approach to WH&S for the next four years—keeping pace with legislative changes and modern management thinking. We aim to move beyond reactive or “tick-box” compliance and create a culture where all staff feel engaged and empowered to contribute to a safer, healthier workplace.

We will achieve this by:

- Providing clarity on health and safety roles and responsibilities.
- Making training, information, and guidance easily accessible.
- Encouraging ownership of work-related risks across the organisation.

Against a backdrop of evolving risks, this refreshed WH&S strategy ensures everyone understands the importance of health, safety, and wellbeing in everything we do.

## Safer Together



Protecting our colleagues is at the heart of our values and the foundation of everything we do. If people are not safe—or do not feel safe—we cannot achieve our vision of nature and people thriving together.

That’s why WH&S underpins all our activities. Every colleague is empowered to speak up and step in whenever something feels unsafe.

Our commitment is captured in our new framework, Safer Together, launching in 2025/2026. This framework focuses on key risk areas, enabling us to measure progress and achieve our strategic WH&S goals.



Through Safer Together, WH&S is integrated into everyday work. The framework is built on three pillars designed to connect everyone to our shared actions and behaviours—ensuring we do everything possible to keep people safe and well and leave a lasting legacy for future generations

## Why everyone is involved

The choices we make as individuals, team leaders and collectively with our external partners are crucial to keeping our workforce safer and healthier. This is detailed below:

- As individuals, we choose to protect ourselves and others from harm every day.
- As leaders, we choose to make decisions that will better protect people now and in the future.
- Together, we strive to achieve our objectives and seek outstanding wellbeing, health and safety performance.

Everyone in our organisation and our extended external partners and stakeholders have a part to play in taking action to put the WH&S of our colleagues, customers, contractors and local communities at the heart of the work we do.

## Why everyone is responsible

Effective leadership at all levels in our organisation is key to achieving our strategy for WH&S. Showing leadership requires every leader, including colleagues, staff, customers, contractors, members of the public and visitors to think, act and behave in a way that:

- puts WH&S first in every decision and action; and
- demonstrates commitment, accountability and honesty.

Everyone is responsible for WH&S, from our colleagues, our supervisors to our Executive Team and Board.

## Why leadership matters

Everyone involved and connected with our organisation has a role to play in continually improving our WH&S performance. However, it is our leaders who set the tone for our WH&S safety culture. Our leaders will focus on setting exemplary WH&S standards; taking safety critical decisions that could affect our performance and reputation, be visible and accessible and reviewing performance and identifying and implementing collective responses and interventions within their areas.

## Our opportunity

A mechanism will be developed for regular feedback from contractors, community partners and other stakeholders with a commitment to collaborate improvement in WH&S standards.

We are collaborating with external partners and stakeholders e.g. HSE, FISA, WG, Forestry & Land Scotland, Forestry England and Environment Agency whose leaders share our values and commitment to set industry-changing health and safety standards.

Through collaborative leadership and our Safer Together approach, we will:

- ensure we have a consistent culture with wellbeing, health and safety at its core
- empower our workforce to take care of themselves and others; and
- inspire everyone to contribute to a legacy for our future generations

## The how

### How our strategy works

Safer Together is how we bring our approach to WH&S to life at our organisation. It is both a mindset and a practical way of working that helps everyone feel personally connected to what we do—and how we do it. It is all about looking out for each other, making sure we stay safe and well, and building something positive that lasts into the future.

Our *Safer Together* framework is built around three clear pillars



- **I care** – Everyone is responsible for acting with care and helping maintain a safe, respectful environment.
- **You count** – Every team is accountable for managing health, safety, and wellbeing risks to prevent ill health and injury. We empower teams to make informed decisions and take responsible actions that drive meaningful improvements across the organisation.
- **We matter** – Together, we make safety a shared priority and collective achievement. .

By embedding the Safer Together approach into everything we do—and living our core value of safety—we stay focused on protecting one another. This commitment is central to achieving our strategy

Living our value of safety and creating an environment of exceptional WH&S cannot be taken for granted. It needs a strategic approach that includes:

- effective leadership
- fairness, consistency and transparency in our work
- respecting the people and places where we undertake activities

Through Safer Together our approach to WH&S is integrated into every aspect of our work. We achieve this in the following three ways.

- We embed health and safety into our culture, giving wellbeing equal priority to prevent harm.
- We design WH&S into our systems, placing safety at the heart of every process.
- We design health and safety into all NRW operations, ensuring colleagues and the public remain safe. Planning and risk assessments put WH&S at the core of our work.

## Our H&S focus areas

At the core of our WH&S strategy are five key focus areas. These represent the critical risks and controls identified across all NRW operations. By concentrating on these priorities, we can direct our efforts where they will have the greatest impact, delivering significant improvements in wellbeing, health, and safety.

These focus areas are informed by insights from Serious Incident Reviews (SIRs), active monitoring, and trend analysis. They also reflect our forward-looking approach to enhancing wellbeing, health, and safety across the organisation

## Behavioural Safety

We will plan and risk assess all operations to ensure that they are safe for our workforce, and all involved in our activities. Our commitment is to:

### Short term aims Year 1

- Ensure WH&S is designed in when developing work programmes.
- Launch the Safer Together culture across the organisation.
- Ensure H&S risks are managed and controlled in a sensible, proportionate and enabling manner.
- Launch the chemical management system in two workforce area (IWF and forestry).
- Support better workplace safety discussions and increase management visibility.”.

### Medium term aims Year 2

- Embed the Safer Together culture across the organisation.
- Ensure WH&S is designed in when developing work programmes.
- Ensure H&S risks are managed and controlled in a sensible, proportionate and enabling manner.
- Launch the chemical management system in two areas (Lab and Land management).

- Increase WH&S ownership for all.
- Enhance commitment and involvement in wellbeing health and safety from all.

### Longer term aims Year 3

- Monitor Safer Together culture across the organisation empowering every individual to speak up and make safe decisions.
- Ensure H&S risks are embedded, managed and controlled in a sensible, proportionate and enabling manner.
- Launch the chemical management system in further areas
- Improvement employee engagement in safety via drop in sessions, WH&S forums and active monitoring.

### Longer term aims Year 4

- Evaluate Safer Together culture across the organisation empowering every individual to speak up and make safe decisions.
- Ensure H&S risks are embedded, managed and controlled in a sensible, proportionate and enabling manner.

Evaluate the employee engagement in the wellbeing, health and safety field

## Occupational health and wellbeing

We believe occupational health and wellbeing matters as much as safety. Our commitment is to:

### Short term aims Year 1

- Raise the profile of occupational health and wellbeing
- Monitor sickness absence consistently and implement appropriate interventions.
- Design and develop with Public Health Wales (PHW) the new Public Sector organisation peer group implementation scheme.
- Launch wellbeing days (health checks).
- Carry out a stress check survey across the organisation and communicate the findings.

### Medium term aims Year 2

- Launch the new Public Sector organisation peer group implementation scheme.
- Review health surveillance for operational workforce.
- Focus on key health issues and provide advice, guidance, and signposting
- Research ISO 45003, which guides managing psychological aspects of workplace health and safety by identifying and controlling psychosocial risks like stress, burnout, and anxiety.

## Longer term aims Year 3

- Lead the new Public Sector organisation peer group implementation scheme.
- Bring our practices into alignment with ISO 45003..

### Longer term aims Year 4

- Evaluate the public sector organisation peer group mentoring scheme.
- Investigate the process for registering or certifying to ISO 45003.
- Research BS 30416 – Menstrual and menopausal health matters in your workplace and BS 30480 – suicide awareness.

## Technology and Compliance in Safety

We believe every member of our workforce, has the right to go home unharmed at the end of the working day. Our commitment is to:

### Short term aims Year 1

- Leverage technology and adopt smarter ways of working
- Retain ISO 45001 registration
- Ensure ongoing legal compliance and proactively adapt to evolving legislative requirements.
- Review risk assessments in safety-critical, high-risk areas .

### Medium term aims Year 2

- Leverage technology and smarter working practices, exploring ideas for new developments .
- Retain ISO45001 registration
- Maintain compliance and proactively keep pace with evolving legislation..

### Longer term aims Year 3

- Embed technology and smarter working practices, encouraging ideas for future development.
- Retain ISO45001 registration
- Maintain compliance and proactively adapt to evolving legislative requirements.

### Longer term aims Year 4

- Evaluate the current use of technology and smarter working.
- Retain ISO45001 registration.
- Maintain compliance and proactively adapt to evolving legislative requirements .

## Learning and development

We believe every employee should have access to high-quality information, instruction, and training to support their personal and professional growth. Our commitment includes:

### Short term aims Year 1

- Build a culture where people feel safe to report and the organization acts on lessons learned .
- H&S training requirements are clearly defined and accessible in the LMS. .
- All Executive Team to undertake training to strengthen their understanding and awareness of health and safety responsibilities.
- Establish competency frameworks for chainsaw use, forest works manager and manual handling.
- Undertake gap analysis work in relation to the Training Needs Analysis (TNA).

### Medium term aims Year 2

- Foster a learning culture where staff feel empowered to report and the business acts on lessons learned.
- Ensure all leadership complete training to strengthen safety awareness..
- Establish competency frameworks for working in/near water, wildlife teams.
- Continue gap analysis on the Training Needs Assessment (TNA).

### Longer term aims Year 3

- Monitor the learning culture where people feel empowered to report and where the business takes action to embed learning.
- Ensure all managers complete training to strengthen safety awareness..
- Develop competency frameworks for Integrated Engineering and Internal Drainage Teams.
- Continue gap analysis aligned with the TNA.

### Longer terms aims Year 4

- Evaluate the learning culture so people feel empowered to report and where the business takes action to embed learning.
- Establish competency frameworks for further teams.
- Continue to undertake gap analysis work in relation to the TNA.

## Safe supply chain management

We will engage all supply chain tiers to raise health and safety standards and support project success. . Our commitment is to:

## Short term aims Year 1

- Continue managing procurement and strengthen supplier relationships to enhance site health and safety.
- Revise the procurement of contractor procedure.

## Medium term aims Year 2

- Improve staff awareness of contractor procurement procedures.

## Longer term aims Year 3

- Monitor supply chain wellbeing and safety to ensure compliance.

## Longer term aims Year 4

- Evaluate and report supply chain wellbeing and safety compliance .

## How our strategy will raise standards

The primary objective of our WH&S strategy is to ensure that everyone connected with or affected by our work remains safe, and that their wellbeing is never compromised by our actions. As a publicly accountable organisation, we uphold a zero-tolerance approach to behaviours or decisions that fall short of this commitment.

Our strategy is underpinned by NRW's WH&S goal, which fosters a culture of learning, innovation, and continuous improvement. Each phase of the strategy will be delivered by applying lessons learned, strengthening the integration of wellbeing and safety practices, and consistently measuring performance.

We invest in our people to provide the skills, support, and behaviours required to achieve world-class standards in WH&S—both now and for future generations.

We will do this by:-

## Building a culture of trust

We will conduct all investigations into wellbeing, health, and safety incidents in a fair, transparent, and open manner. Our focus is on learning and improving performance rather than assigning blame. This approach helps build confidence and encourages our workforce to report unsafe behaviours, systems, and working conditions.

## Capturing and sharing good practice

In addition to learning from incidents, we will recognise positive behaviours, highlight good practice and celebrate our WH&S achievements..

## Accelerating learning from incidents

We are committed to continuously improving our incident investigation processes to ensure timely and effective capture, sharing and embedding of lessons learnt. By working collaboratively, we aim to identify and understand the root causes of incidents, prevent recurrence and create a safer, healthier working environment for everyone.

## Developing skills and behaviours

We are committed to clearly defining the skills, knowledge, and behaviours expected of our workforce. Positive behaviours that demonstrate our *Safer Together* principles and contribute to achieving our goals will be recognised and rewarded. How we measure performance

To establish a strong foundation for exceptional WH&S performance, we apply a comprehensive measurement framework comprising:

- **Proactive indicators** – ensuring accountability for achieving key milestones, supported by continuous monitoring and evaluation of behavioural interventions.
- **Reactive indicators** – assessing wellbeing, health, and safety performance across five core focus areas.

Clear, defined targets enable us to monitor performance across diverse business areas, identify emerging issues, and implement targeted improvements to strengthen health, safety, and organisational culture.

## The future: Monitoring our strategy

### A Strategy for today and tomorrow

Working in partnership with our stakeholders, we are setting new benchmarks for WH&S as we plan for the future. Our commitment is clear: to do everything possible to keep people safe and well every day, while creating a lasting legacy for future generations.

Our refreshed WH&S strategy outlines our aspirations and establishes a strong foundation that will remain constant. At the same time, the strategy is designed to adapt and evolve as we gain new insights and as our organisation continues to develop.

Through our new WH&S, we will hold ourselves accountable for delivering our Safer Together commitments against five key risk focus areas. Day by day, we will demonstrate that individual actions matter, team decisions count, and our collective efforts shape the culture and legacy we leave behind.



## NRW Board Paper

<b>Date of meeting:</b>	12 <sup>th</sup> February 2026
<b>Title of Paper:</b>	Wellbeing, Health and Safety (WH&S) Q2 update
<b>Paper Reference:</b>	26-02-B08
<b>Paper sponsored by:</b>	Prys Davies, Executive Director of Corporate Strategy and Development
<b>Paper prepared by:</b>	Charlotte Morgan, Wellbeing Health and Safety Manager
<b>Paper presented by:</b>	Mark McKenna, Chair of PCC
<b>Purpose of the paper</b>	Approve
<b>Summary</b>	To approve the Q2 2025/26 WH&S update.

## Background

1. This is the Q2 summary of our Wellbeing, Health & Safety (WH&S) performance for Natural Resources Wales (NRW). The Report provides an overview of how NRW have managed WH&S through Q2 2025/2026.

## Summary

2. This Report has been revised to enhance the data presented and make the key areas of focus clearer. More detailed data in some areas have been provided in the appendices. There is also a forward look section that has been added to aid proactive management of WH&S.

Headlines from Quarter 2 2025/26 include: -

3. Serious incident reviews (SIR). There were no SIRs commissioned in Q2 2025/2026. There are four outstanding SIRs which have been paused due to external factors including awaiting the coroner's report. Two SIRs are in the investigation stage.
4. Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) reportable and Lost Time Injuries (LTIs) – No RIDDOR for NRW in Q2. There were two LTIs in Q2.

5. Several wellbeing initiatives were delivered.

## Wider implications

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

## Next Steps

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

## Recommendation

10. Board are asked to approve the Q2 2025-2026 WH&S Update.

## Index of Annexes

Provide any supporting information:

Annex 1 – WH&S Report – Q2 – 2025-2026

## Approval / Consultation process

<p><b>Approval/consultation process</b></p> <p><b>Responsible:</b> Who has developed the paper/process and who has had input?</p>	<p>The paper was developed by the WH&amp;S Team.</p>
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<p><b>Accountable:</b> Who is accountable for the ultimate approval? Who will be or is being asked to approve?</p>	<p>Board are asked to approve the Q2 2025-2026 WH&amp;S Update.</p>
<p><b>Consulted:</b> Who has been consulted to date? Where endorsement is required, is this in place? Will further consultation be required?</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p><b>Informed:</b> Who has been informed or who needs to be further information about the work?</p>	<p>N/A</p>

# Wellbeing Health and Safety Q2 2025/2026

## Highlights

In summary, Q2 2025/26 had no Serious Incident Reviews (SIRs) commissioned.

There were no RIDDOR reportable incidents during Q2 2025/26 and there were two lost time injuries (LTI). Neither of these LTIs were related to NRW work activities.

Positives from this quarter includes several wellbeing initiatives being delivered, an increase in near miss report and a decrease in staff injuries.

Following feedback, changes have been made to this pack.

The main content has been reduced to help highlight the key points, with additional supporting information being supplied in the appendix. The SIR section of the report has seen a distinct reduction in content, due to this focus. There is now also a forward look section provided to help look at previous trends and aid point for discussion with directorates for the forthcoming quarter.

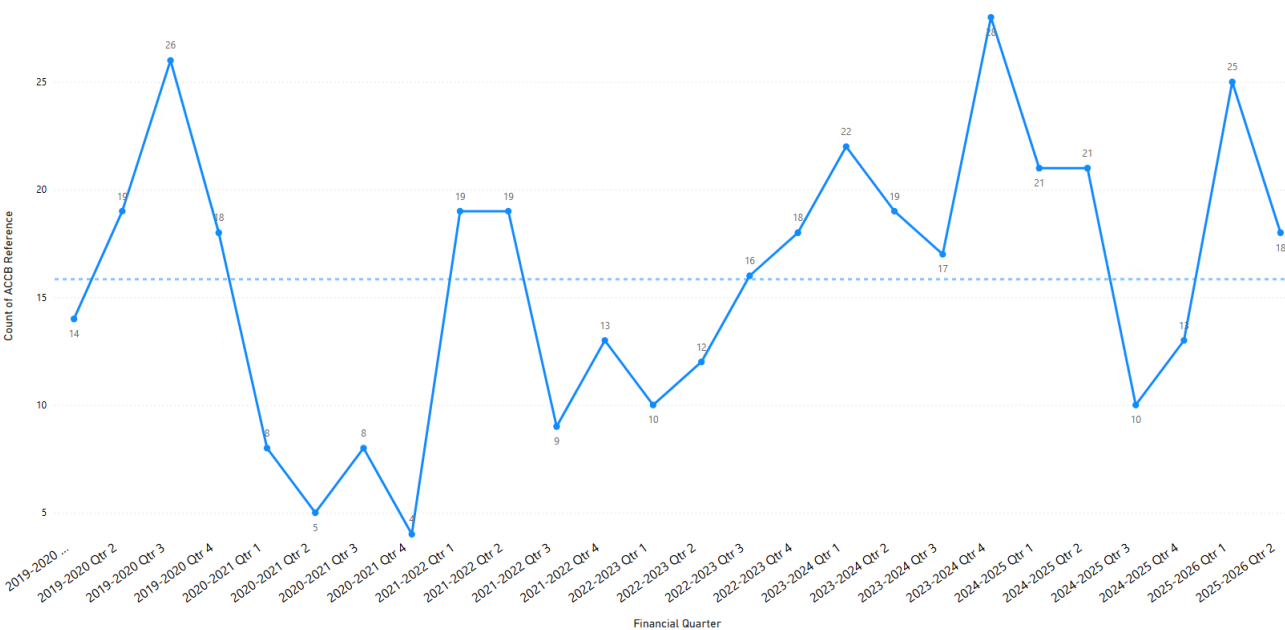
# Incidents in NRW

There were 92 incidents reported in NRW in Q2 25-26.

See [Appendix 1](#) for statistics table.

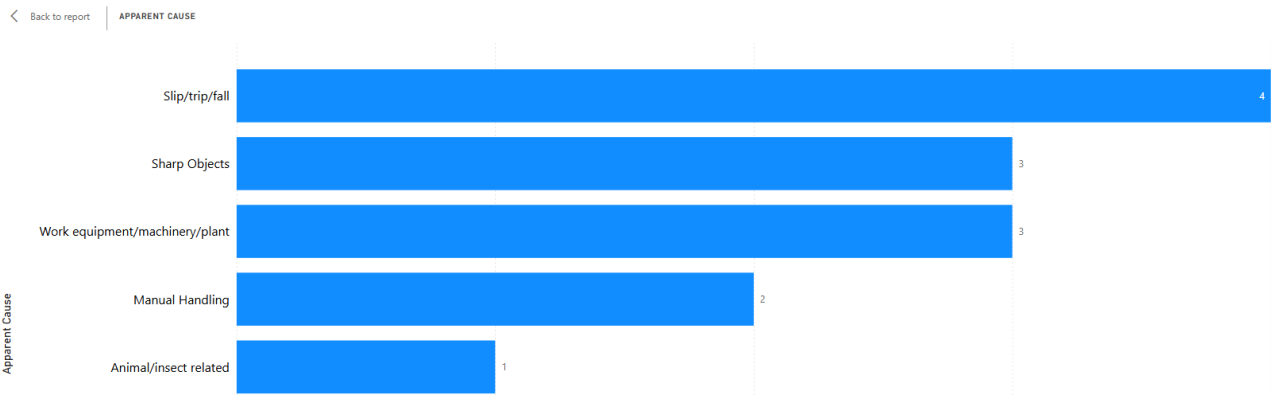
## Injuries

- Injury reporting



Staff injury trends have seen a decrease in reporting in Q2 25-26 compared to Q1 25-26. This is due to Q2 covering the summer months and there being decrease in colleagues being onsite. A breakdown of reports by directorate can be found in [Appendix 2](#).

- Cause of Injuries



This is the top 5 causes of injuries.

Slips, trips and falls were the highest reported cause of injury during Q2, with ankle injuries being the more likely injured part of the body.

Typically, we would expect to find slips, trips and falls in the winter months due to the wet weather and worse ground conditions, however the statistics show that within NRW, Slips trips and falls are historically the highest cause of injury all year round. The outdoor nature of our work will be a large factor in this.

September's WH&S Managers Monthly contained guidance on Slips, trips and falls and there is also a toolbox talk available on the WH&S intranet page. October's WH&S Managers Monthly contained an article about working in winter months and asking managers to undertake active monitoring to check the condition of PPE. These will be cascaded again through the organisation.

## Fatalities

There were two member of the public fatalities in Q2 25/26. These were:

- Scramble bike fatality in Radnor Forest.
- Unknown member of the public fatality where police informed us of the incident.

Historic fatality numbers can be found in [Appendix 3](#).

## RIDDOR reports

There were no RIDDOR reportable staff injuries in Q2.

## Lost Time Injuries

There were two lost time injuries to colleagues during Q2.

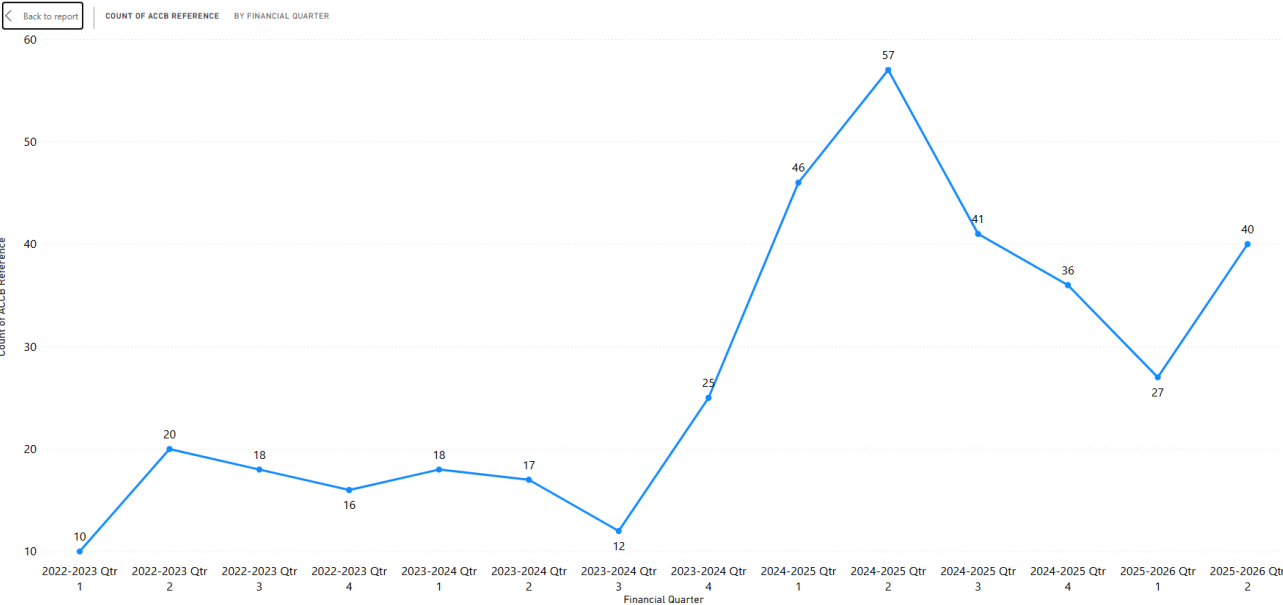
- A member of staff suffered from an anaphylactic shock. This resulted in one day of lost time.

The control measures in place to support the officer are being reviewed.

- A member of staff had a fall when on non-NRW land. The member of staff is still off but is due back into work in the middle of November.

# Near Misses

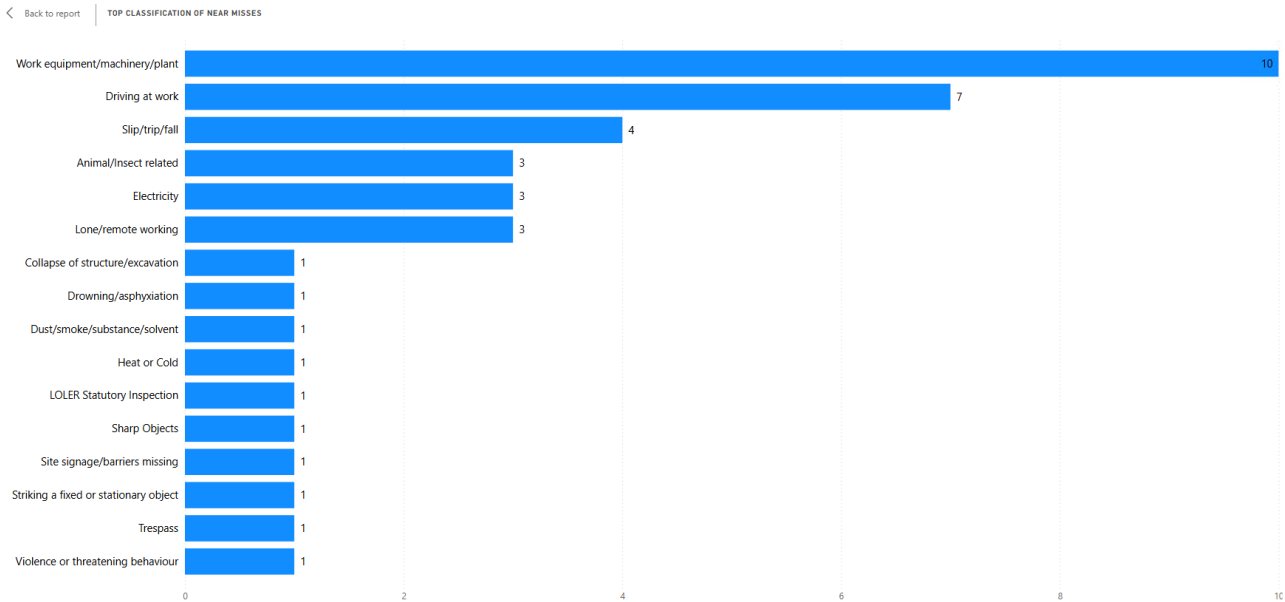
## Near Miss Reporting



There have been 40 staff related near misses reported in Q2 25/26, this is in comparison to 57 reported in Q2 24/25.

Whilst this is a decrease, it is possible to see that over all near miss reporting had decreased since Q2 24/25 (to a low of 57), reporting has increased over the last three quarters and all near miss reporting sits at 76 for Q2 25-26, compared to 81 for Q2 24-25 - [Appendix 4](#). This increase over the last three quarters shows that the campaign for near miss reporting is working. Furthermore, licences for all operations staff to have access to the mobile app for reporting has been approved. Once this has been rolled out, colleagues will be able to report in the moment and we should see a further increase.

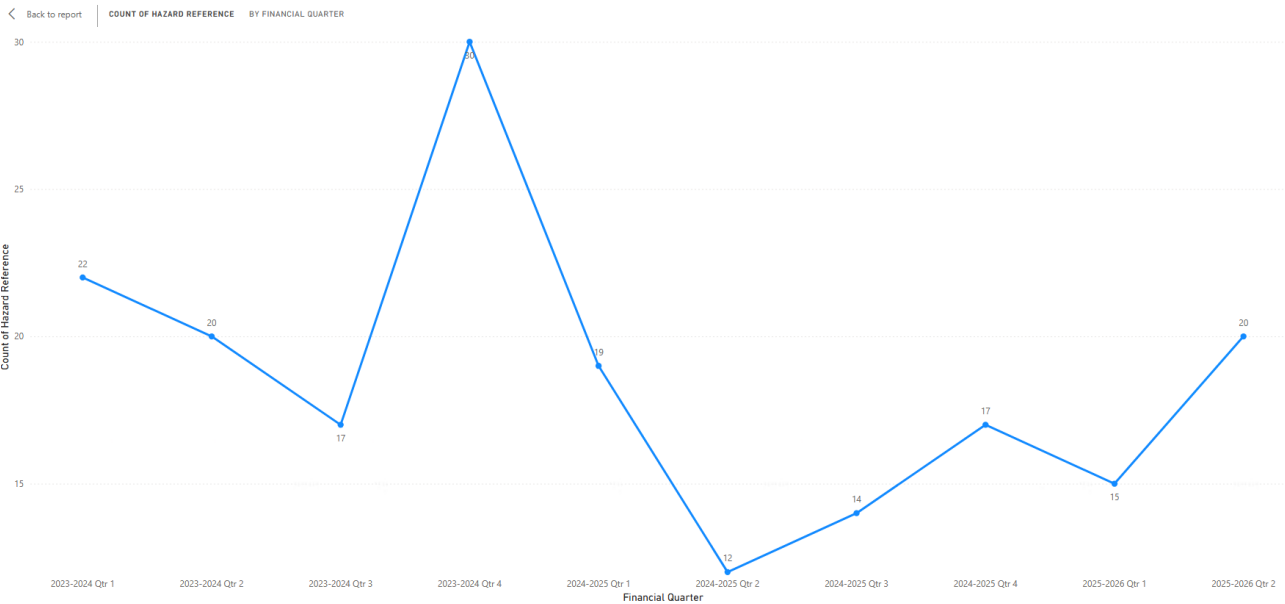
## Cause of Near Misses



Work equipment was the highest cause of near misses to employees over Q2 25-26. The work equipment is made up of 4 different issues within the labs and 6 other different issues including a faulty gas monitor, incorrectly sealed buckets and a mobile phone that had run out of battery.

Driving at work was the second highest cause of near misses for Q2 25-26. There has been a emphasis on driving at work from both Fleet and WH&S which will have focused the staff attention and therefore contributed to the reporting.

## Hazard Reporting Q2



Hazard reporting has increased in Q2 25-26 compared to both last quarter and Q2 24-26. This shows that the campaign for reporting has been successful. Furthermore, licences for

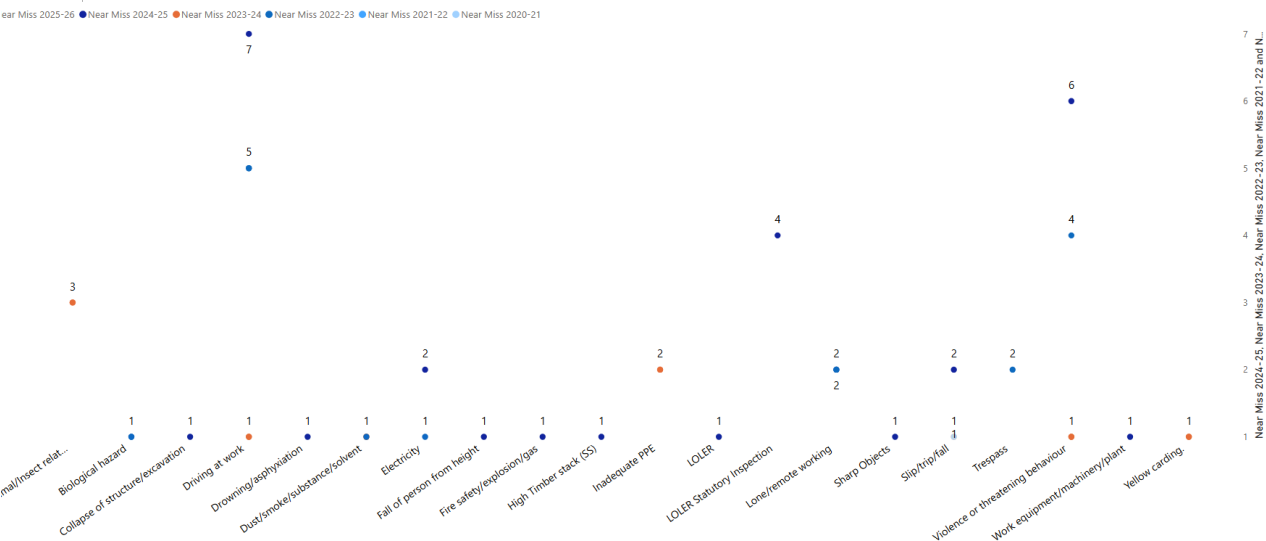


all operations staff to have access to the mobile app for reporting has been approved. Once this has been rolled out, colleagues will be able to report in the moment and we should see a further increase.

## Forward Look into Quarter 3

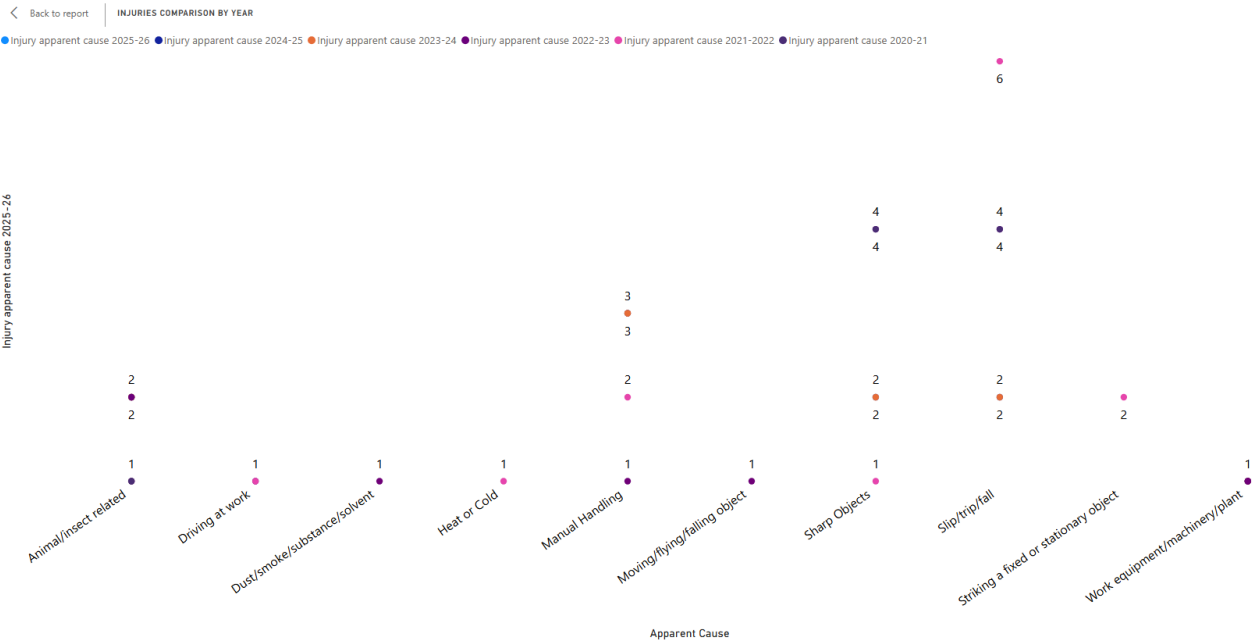
By looking backwards at Q3 in previous years, it is possible to see if there have been any trends and look to put initiatives in place to support staff in advance.

## Near Misses Q3



Historically Violence at work and Driving at work have been high causes of near misses in Q3. WH&S will be sharing a toolbox talk on violence at work and working with fleet to share a driving toolbox talk.

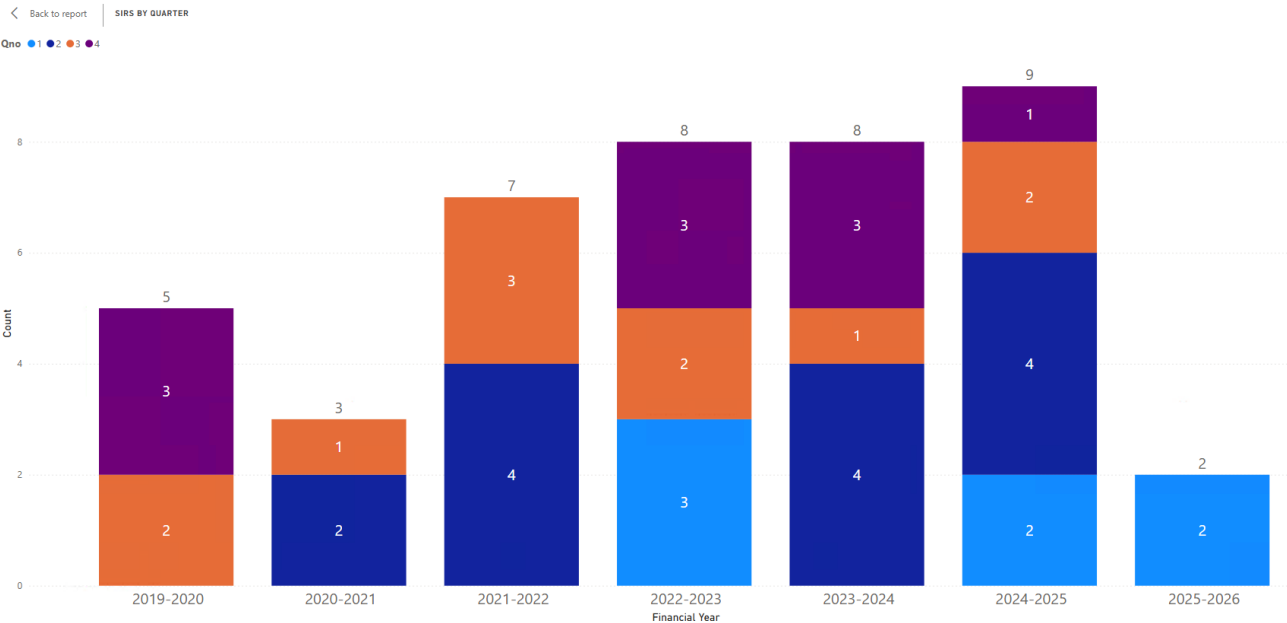
# Injuries Q3



Historically, slips, trips, falls have been the highest cause of injuries during Q3. A toolbox talk will be shared as a reminder of steps that can be taken to reduce the likelihood of slips, trips and falls.

# Serious Incident Reviews

During Q2, there were no Serious Incident Reviews (SIR) commissioned.

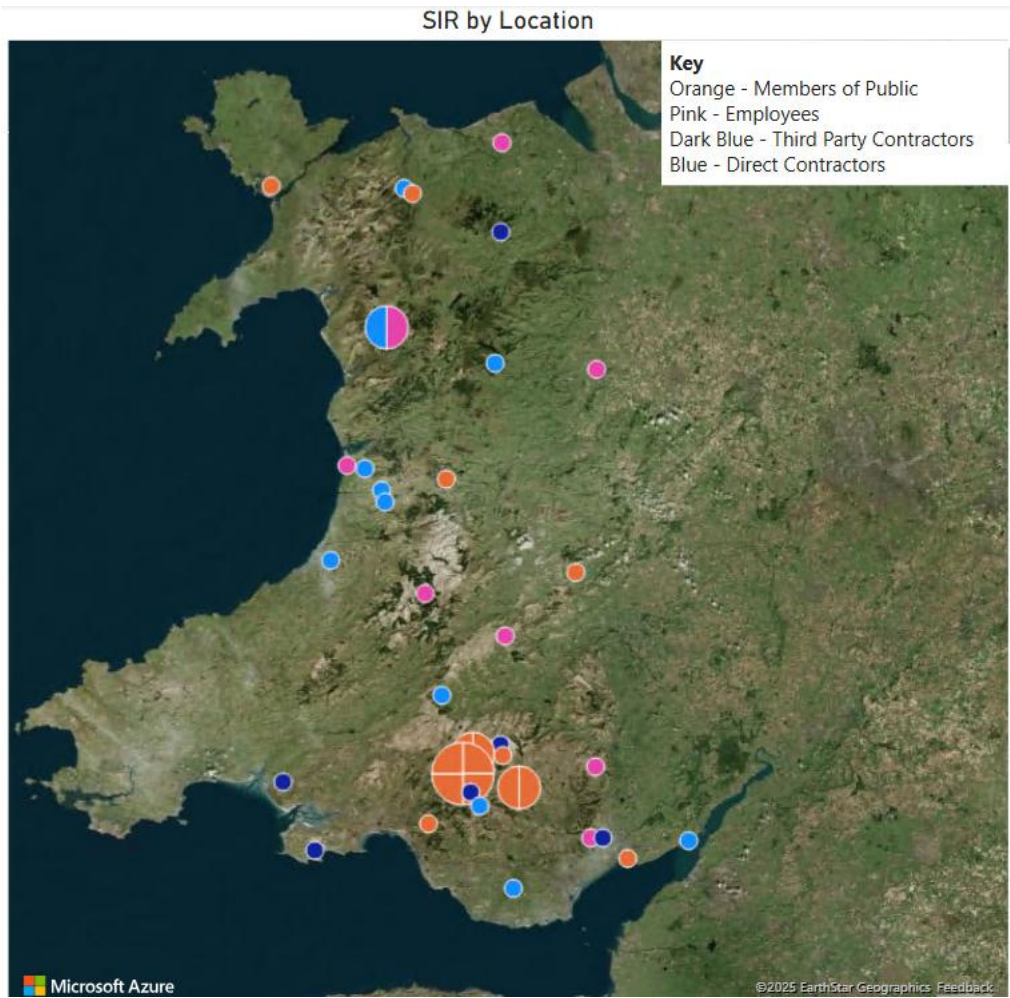


SIR Status

Status	SIR Name	SIR Type	Brief Description	Incident Date
Complete - Actions in progress	Failure of lifting equipment	Dangerous Occurrence	Boom became detached on one side. The worked immediately stopped works and removed the machine from site to prevent any environmental issues	21 October 2019
Complete - Actions in progress	Millwood	Injury	Contractor injury when hit by splitting tree	15 December 2023
Complete - Actions in progress	Car collision	Injury	3rd party vehicle collision with NRW vehicle	27 March 2024
Complete - Actions in progress	RSPB - Newport wetlands	Injury	MOP fell out of a scooter which is paid for by NRW but managed by a 3rd party	13 April 2024
Complete - Actions in progress	Strata Top - Employee	Injury	Employee slip, trip, fall during site survey work	13 August 2024
Complete - Actions in progress	Car Roll	Incident	NRW vehicle collision with 3rd Party	28 August 2024
Complete - Actions in progress	Pen Y Cymoedd windfarm	Incident	Contractor crossed underground cables	25 September 2024
Complete - Actions in progress	Clocaenog windfarm - 3rd Party Contractor	Incident	Third party contractor drove forwarder into 6m underground electricity exclusion zone before stacking timber in unauthorised area directly above cable array.	07 October 2024
Open - Investigation stage	Hafod Fawr SSSI - Contractor	Hazard	Glyphosate herbicide sprayed in field without notification	03 March 2025
Open - With Action Owners	Car Jack	Near Miss	Car fell off jack during vehicle repair	12 May 2025

See [Appendix 5](#) for more details on all open and awaiting closure SIRs.

Serious Incident Review Locations



The cluster of Member of public (orange) SIRs in South Wales is predominately made up of Waterfalls incidents. Following the section 28 notice, a report was commissioned and staff have been appointed to undertake the actions required by the notice. These are being managed by the Operations Directorate.

## SIR Open Actions

All open actions are being chased through ET members as agreed in the WH&S committee meeting.

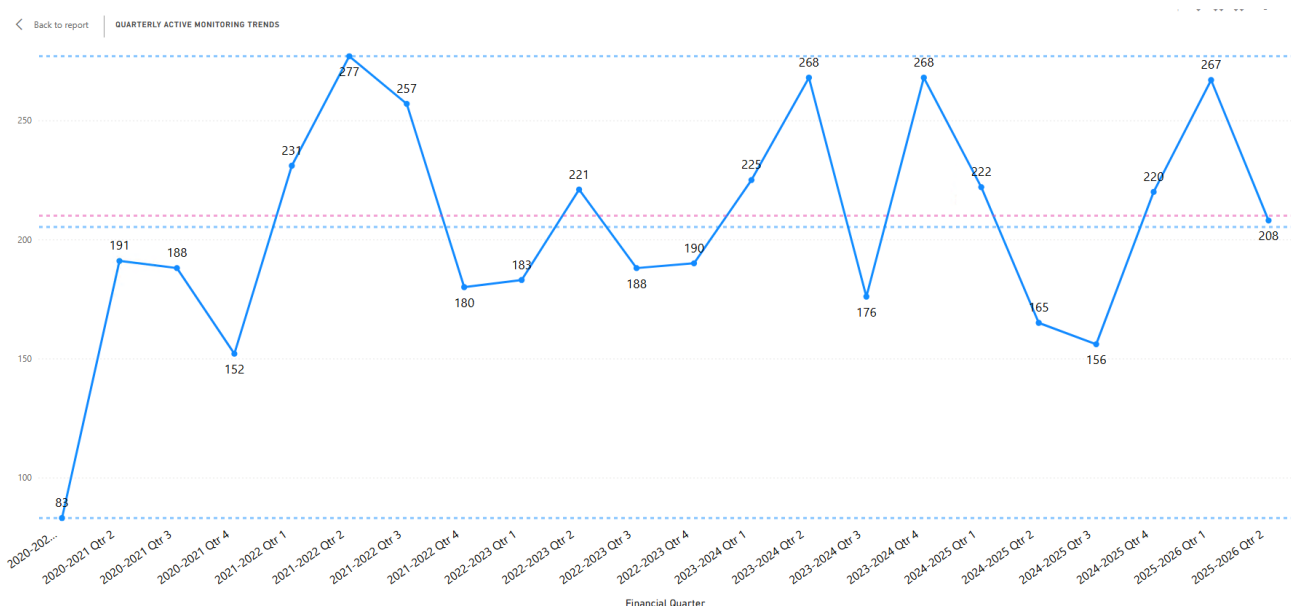
There are 40 actions open following SIR reviews.

There are 31 actions that are overdue. 20 of these have agreed extensions, but as per the agreement with the WH&S committee, the original due date will not change.

There are a further 6 actions due in Q3.

The full list of SIR actions can be found in [Appendix 6](#).

## Active Monitoring



The pink line is quarterly target for active monitoring (70 reports per month, 210 per quarter). For the mid year point (Q1 and Q2 combined), active monitoring is currently over target.

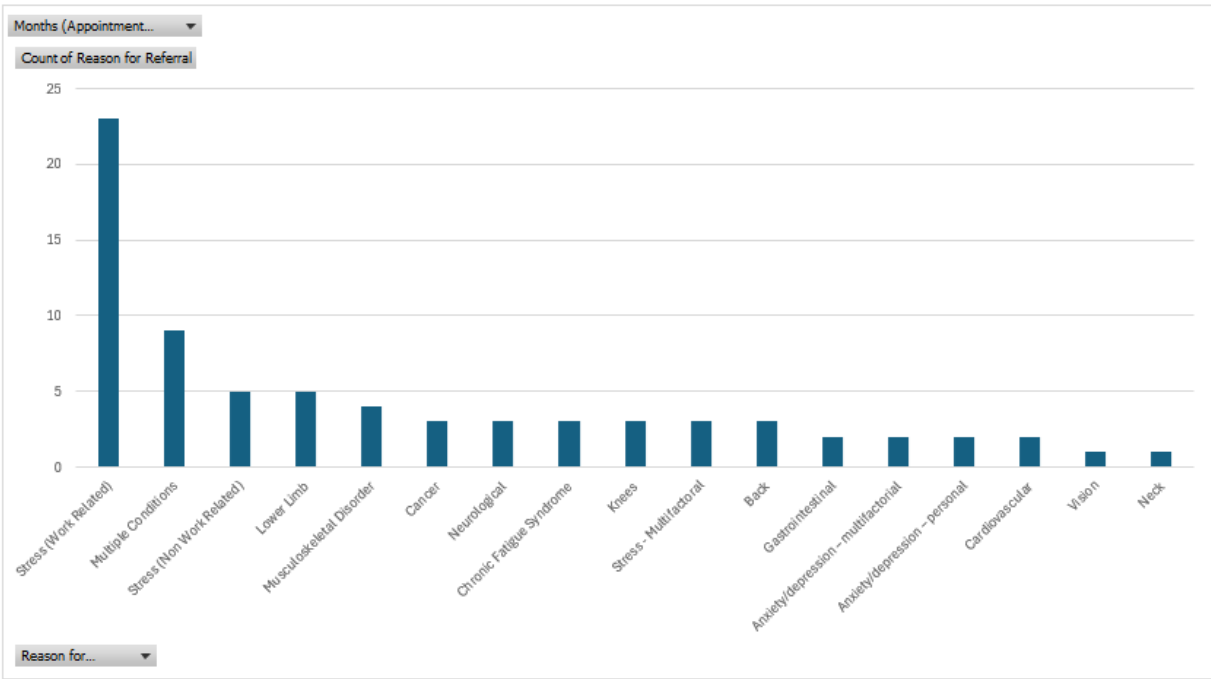
Active Monitoring has seen a decrease in the number of reports in Q2 25/26 compared to Q1 25/26. Due to Q2 being over the summer holidays, there is reduced working taking place. This could be due to holidays or due to species protection orders in place on a number of sites (often in place May – September).

There has been an increase in reporting when compared to Q2 24/25. There has been a reporting campaign and training has been provided to teams over the last year. The directorates need to continue the efforts undertaken so far to keep the progress (See [Appendix 7](#) for directorate break down for Q2).

## NRW occupational health statistics

Q2 2024/25	Q2 2025/26
97 referrals	74 referrals

### Reason for referral



In Q2 2025/26, the main reasons for work related stress. This was closely followed by referrals for multiple conditions and stress (non work related).

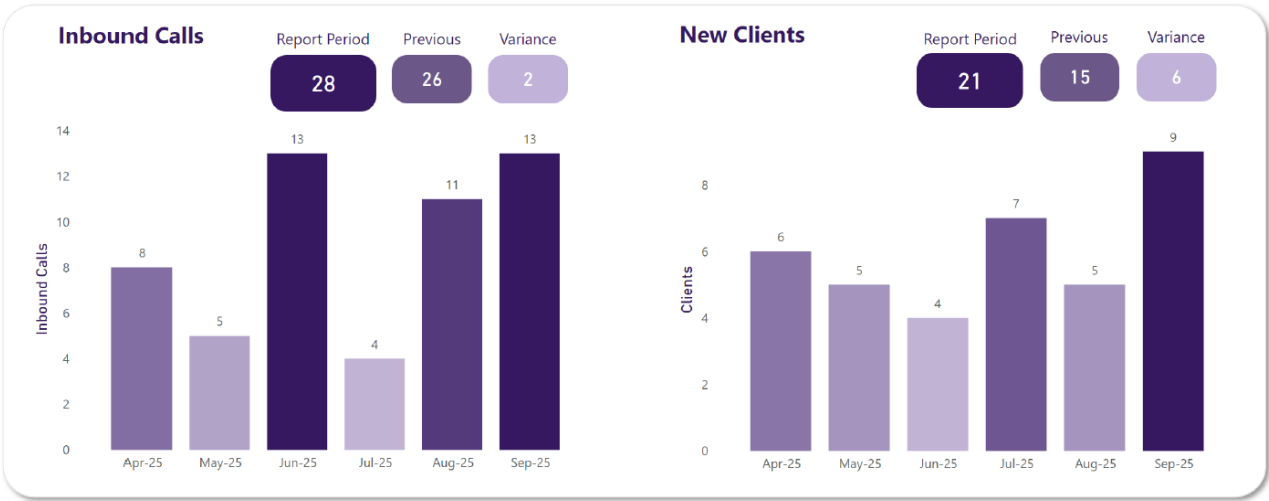
## NRW Employee Assistance Programme statistics

### Accessing 24/7 helpline

Every new caller to our 24/7 EAP helpline receives a clinically led telephone triage. This includes an initial risk assessment and access to in-the-moment emotional support when needed.

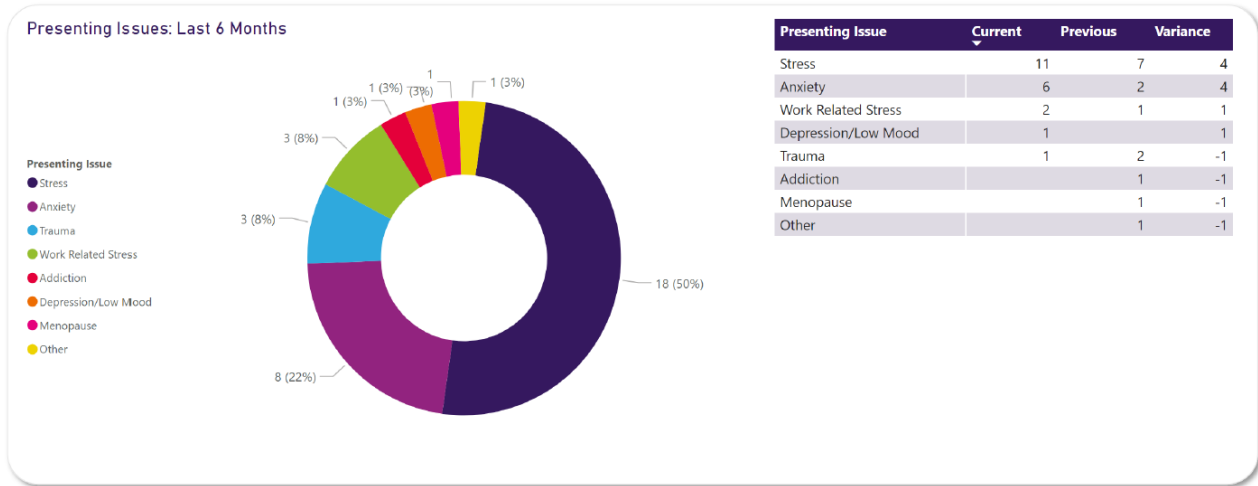
Where appropriate, individuals are booked in for a full clinical assessment with a qualified counsellor, covering their presenting concerns and any risks. If a client presents with elevated risk, the EAP respond promptly with tailored care planning and case

management, ensuring safety and continuity of support. The below graph shows the number of calls received by the EAP and the amount of new staff who have been triaged.



## Presenting issues

The graph below captures the core concerns brought forward by clients during their clinical assessment. These issues offer a snapshot of the emotional and psychological pressures affecting our workforce – ranging from stress and anxiety to relationship difficulties or workplace challenges.



## Wellbeing initiatives and developments

- August we launched the new cancer in the workplace procedure which provides managers with advice on how to support a colleague who is affected by cancer. We also launched the new critical illness procedure which is to help and support any of our colleagues who are affected in some way by the diagnoses of a critical illness.
- We were awarded the Bronze Payroll Giving Quality Mark award from the Charities Aid Foundation for 2024-2025 which recognises our efforts to grow employee engagement in our Give as You Earn Scheme.

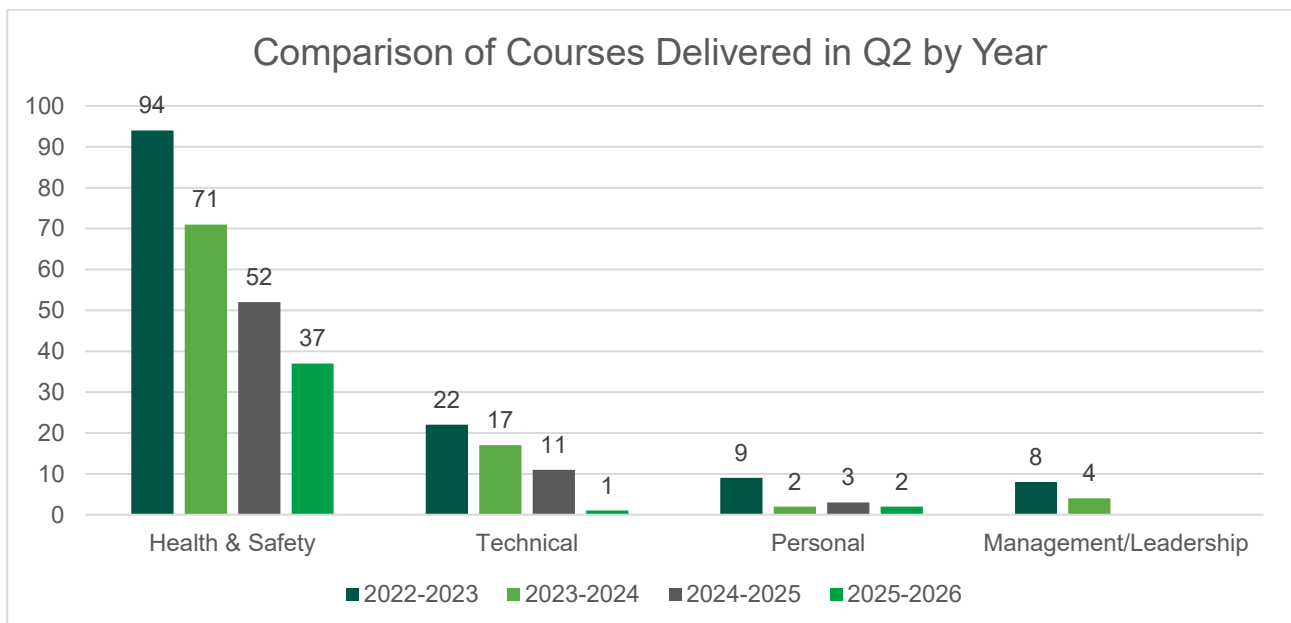
- World Suicide prevention day was held in September, reminding us of the need to talk openly and honestly about mental health and suicide. We advertised the Green Cross Globals free webinar to raise awareness, deepen understanding and inspire change.
- We continue to support Mental Health First Aiders (MHFA) and are having quarterly check ins. We continue to feed any issues raised to our leadership team and executive team member.

## Learning and Development (L&D)

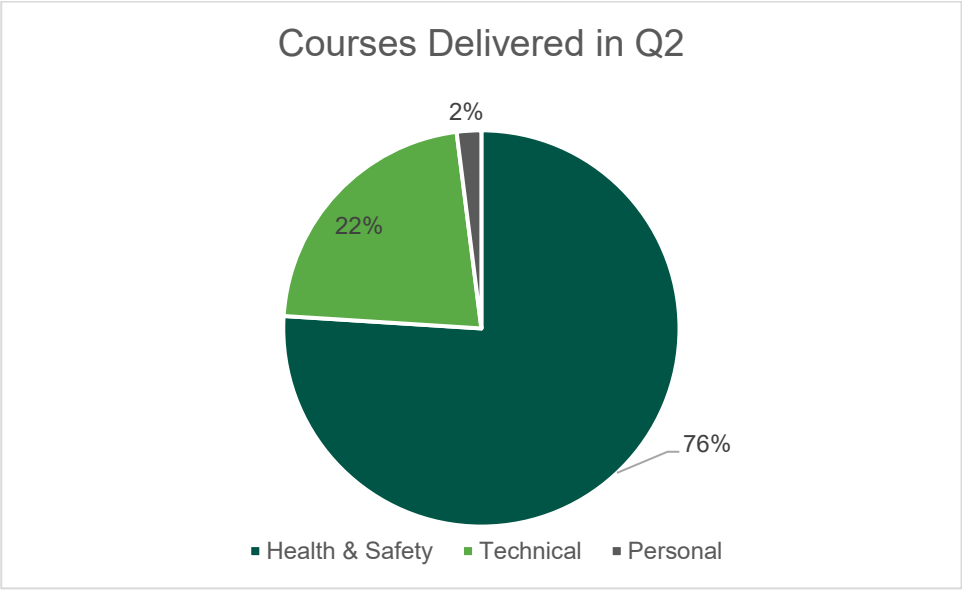
### Course Delivery:

In Q2 2025/2026, 37 Health, Safety & Wellbeing courses were sourced and delivered across the business. Q2 is historically the quietest quarter due to summer holidays. Case for Change has also impacted the acceptance levels of training courses, meaning fewer training courses are being delivered. In Q4, face to face training courses will be bookable through the LMS enabling managers to have visibility on staff bookings and attendance.

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



Focus for the L&D team remains on delivery of essential H&S courses, 76% of the all courses delivered in Q2 this year are for H&S.





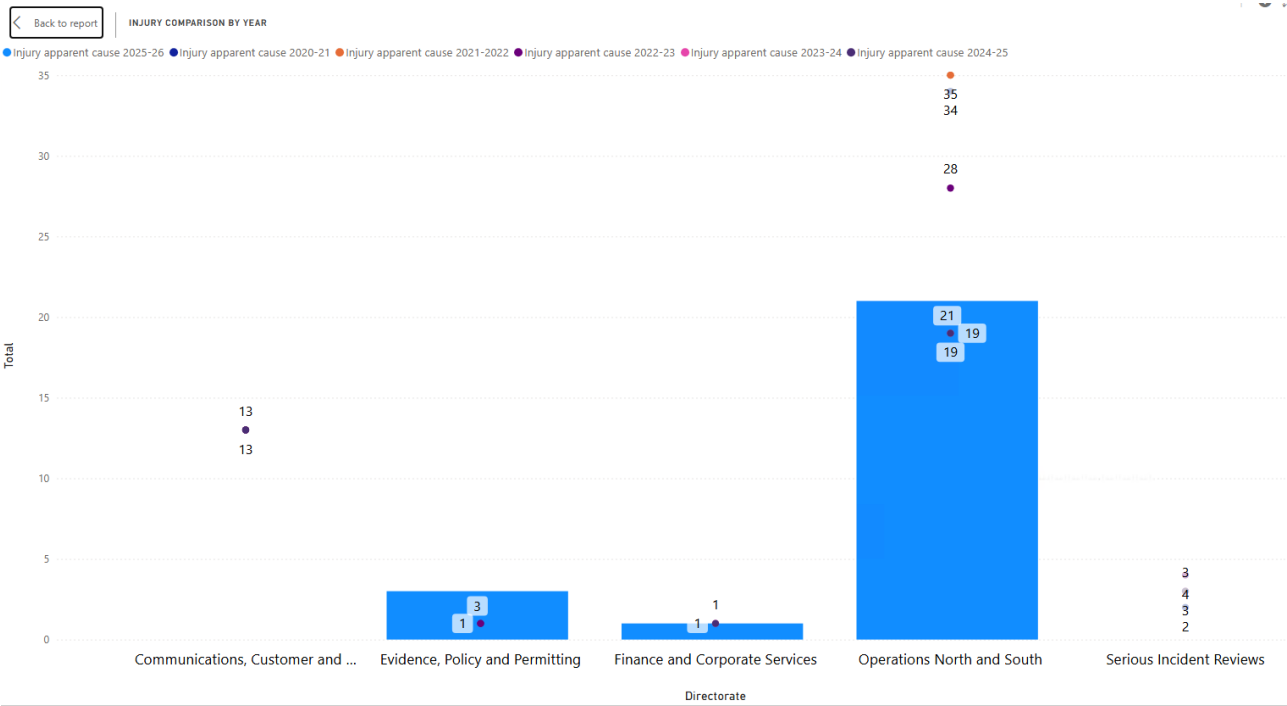
## Appendix 1 – Incident statistics Q2 comparison

	Q2 25/26	Q1 25/26	Q2 24/25	24/25	23/24	22/23	21/22	20/21
<b>RIDDOR – staff</b>	0	2	0	2	5	3	7	3
<b>Lost time injuries – staff</b>	2	2	1	5	6	3	3	1
<b>Injuries, no lost time – staff</b>	11	18	20	52	65	43	51	19
<b>Near miss – staff</b>	38	36	33	178	186	175	156	109
<b>Serious incident reviews</b>	0	2	1	8	8	9	7	2
<b>Injuries - contractors</b>	1	1	2	5	9	8*	3*	5*
<b>Injuries – public</b>	6	6	12	26	46	38	38	18
<b>Near miss – contractors</b>	12	22	20	67	70	68	62	46
<b>Near miss – public</b>	9	10	30	37	31	33	30	23
<b>Property Damage</b>	13	14	11	47	48	53	36	35
<b>Hazards Reported</b>	18	15	19	66	89	199	166	65

\* 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.

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## Appendix 2 – Injury statistics



[Return to main document](#)

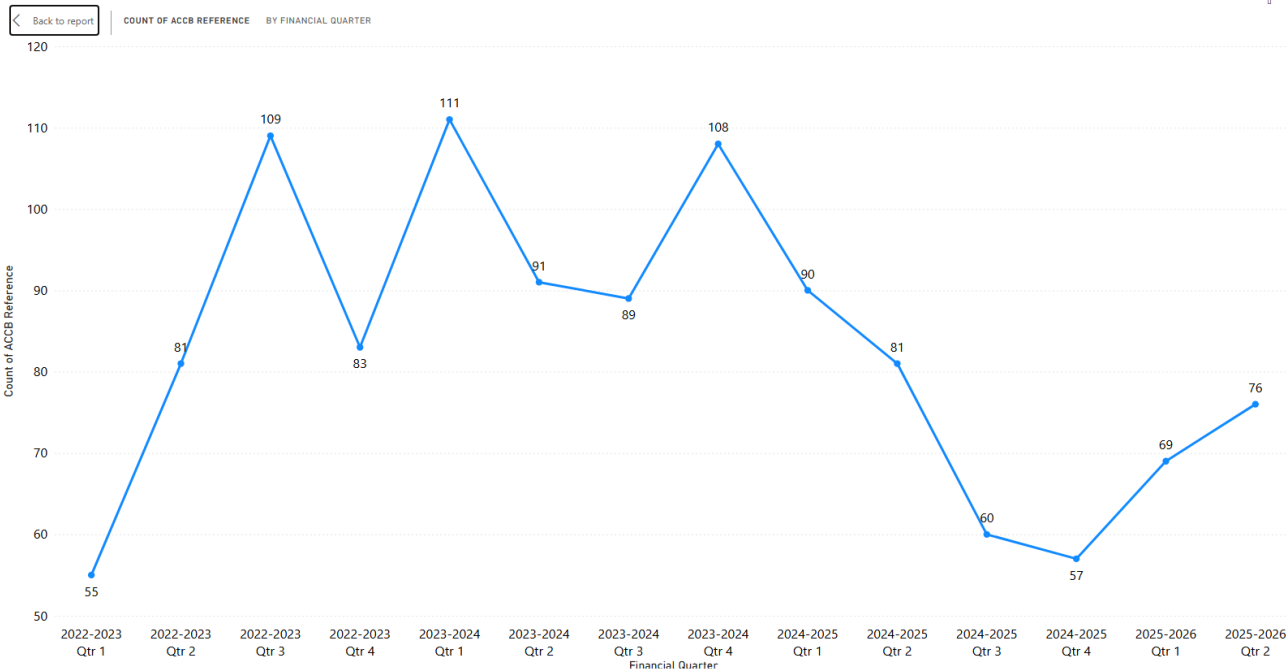
## Appendix 3 – Historic Fatality Statistics

	Q2 25- 26	Q1 25- 26	24- 25	23- 24	22- 23	21-22	20- 21	19- 20	18- 19	17- 18	16- 17
NRW Staff	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Contractors	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0
MOP	2	2	5	2	5	8	0	0	1	2	4

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.

[Return to main document](#)

## Appendix 4 – Near Miss Statistics



[Return to main document](#)

## Appendix 5 - Serious Incident Reviews Summary since Aug 2019

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

SIRs Closed Q2 (inc. in number above)	0
SIRs completed with actions to be completed	7

SIRs paused due to external investigation	4
SIRs in investigation status	2
<p>Details: Fatal accident on NRW estate to a sub-contractor working on a standing sales site. Coed Taff Forest.</p> <p>Reference: ACCB1092/A12</p> <p>Incident date: 12/10/2021</p> <p>Type of SIR: Fatal incident.</p> <p>Full investigation: SIR opened and paused.</p>	<p>The SIR has been paused due to further investigation by the police and Health and Safety Executive. Forest Operational team members were on site with the HSE and provided information. The Wellbeing, health &amp; safety manager attended site.</p>
<p>Details: MoP fatality. MoP fell from closed footpath</p> <p>Reference: ACCB924/A74</p> <p>Incident date: 26/06/2024</p> <p>Type of SIR: Fatal incident.</p> <p>Full investigation: SIR opened and paused.</p>	<p>This has been paused pending coroners inquest</p>
<p>Details: MoP fatality. MoP collided with a tree whilst on a motorbike experience</p> <p>Reference: ACCB890/A11</p> <p>Incident date: 12/06/2025</p> <p>Type of SIR: Fatal incident.</p> <p>Full investigation: SIR opened and paused.</p>	<p>This has been paused pending coroners inquest</p>
<p>Details: MoP fatality. It is believed that MoP was struck by a tree branch</p> <p>Reference: ACCB916/A98</p> <p>Incident date: 13/09/2025</p> <p>Type of SIR: Fatal incident.</p> <p>Full investigation: SIR opened and paused.</p>	<p>This has been paused pending coroners inquest</p>

<p>Details: Contractor chainsaw operator trip whilst escaping falling tree</p> <p>Reference: ACCB1097/A5</p> <p>Incident date: 15/12/2023</p> <p>Type of SIR: Injury</p> <p>Full investigation: Complete – actions in progress</p>	Total Actions: 18	
	Of which:	
	Completed & Closed:	17
	Open:	1
<p>Details: Failure of lifting equipment. Boom became detached on one side. The work immediately stopped works and removed the machine from site to prevent any environmental issues</p> <p>Reference: ACCB1092/A1</p> <p>Incident date: 21/10/2019</p> <p>Type of SIR: Dangerous Occurance</p> <p>Full investigation: Complete – actions in progress</p>	Total Actions: 15	
	Of which:	
	Completed & Closed:	14
	Open:	1
<p>Details: MOP fell out of a scooter which is paid for by NRW but managed by a 3<sup>rd</sup> party</p> <p>Reference: ACCB1096/A3</p> <p>Incident date: 13/04/2024</p> <p>Type of SIR: Injury</p> <p>Full investigation: Complete – actions in progress</p>	Total Actions: 9	
	Of which:	
	Completed & Closed:	8
	Open:	0
	Overdue:	1

<p>Details: 3rd party vehicle collision with NRW vehicle</p> <p>Reference: ACCB1092 / A18</p> <p>Incident date: 27/03/2024</p> <p>Type of SIR: Injury</p> <p>Full investigation: Complete – actions in progress</p>	Total Actions: 24	
	Of which:	
	Completed & Closed:	3
	Open:	21
<p>Details: Clocaenog Windfarm</p> <p>Reference: ACCB1093 / A1</p> <p>Incident date: 07/10/2024</p> <p>Type of SIR: Incident</p> <p>Full investigation: Complete – actions in progress</p>	Overdue:	19
	Total Actions: 16 (Refer to above incident)	
	Of which:	
	Completed & Closed:	10
<p>Details: Pen Y Cymoedd Windfarm – Contractor crossed underground cables</p> <p>Reference: ACCB1097/A7</p> <p>Incident date: 25/09/2024</p> <p>Type of SIR: Incident</p> <p>Full investigation: Complete – actions in progress</p>	Open:	6
	Overdue:	3
	Total Actions: 11	
	Of which:	
<p>Details: NRW road traffic collision (Car roll)</p> <p>Reference: ACCB1096 / A4</p>	Completed & Closed:	5
	Open:	6
	Overdue:	3
	Total Actions: 3 (Refer to above incident)	
	Of which:	

Incident date: 28/08/2024 Type of SIR: Injury Full investigation: Investigation in progress	Completed & Closed:	2
	Open:	1
	Overdue:	1
Details: Contractor applied herbicide without notifying land owner. Reference: ACCB1092/A20 Incident date: 03/03/2025 Type of SIR: Near Miss Full Investigation: Investigation in progress	SIR is in investigation stage	
Details: When changing a tyre, the jack being used failed and broke. Reference: ACCB893/A5 Incident date: 12/05/2025 Type of SIR: Near Miss Full Investigation: Investigation in progress	SIR is in investigation stage	

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## Appendix 6 - SIR Actions

Record Reference	Action Required	Issued To	Issued date	Due Date	Directorate	Agreed Extension
ACCB1097/A5	Explore NRW requirements for working on licenced sites and considerations around motor manual felling	Huwel Manley	22/05/2024	30/11/2024	Ops	No Agreed extension

ACCB1092/ A1	NRW policy to be developed for plant disposal and replacement.	Robert Ashcroft	29/07/2020	16/12/2024	FCS	31/03/2026
ACCB1096/ A3	Improve NRW maps so that it is clear where motor scooters are advised to go – see Coed-Y-Brenin for examples	Robert Campbell	26/09/2024	31/03/2025	Ops	No Agreed extension
ACCB1092/ A18	Fleet to send communication to all SROs for vehicles to explain their current responsibilities.	James Poyser	13/02/2025	31/03/2025	FCS	31/06/2026
ACCB1092/ A18	Fleet to issue a brief instruction to ICC on the process to follow in the event of a RTC.	James Poyser	13/02/2025	31/03/2025	FCS	31/03/2026
ACCB1092/ A18	Stickers to be created by Novuna and stickers for Insurance on Dashboards. Consider cards.	James Poyser	13/02/2025	31/07/2025	FCS	31/03/2026
ACCB1092/ A18	Split out Insurance and Driverline to have distinct lines for Breakdowns and accidents.	James Poyser	13/02/2025	31/07/2025	FCS	31/03/2026
ACCB1092/ A18	Fleet & WHS to publish MMG article on staff needing to check that extinguishers are secure and if not to take action to store correctly.	James Poyser	13/02/2025	31/07/2025	FCS	31/03/2026
ACCB1092/ A18	Ensure the vehicle daily checks cover all aspects required, including the need to secure loose objects in the rear of the vehicle. Fleet to also include this in MMG article on staff needing to check that extinguishers are secure and if not to take action to store correctly.	James Poyser	13/02/2025	31/07/2025	FCS	31/03/2026
ACCB1097/ A7	Review of Timber Sales pre-qualification process (possible RAG status and limited bidding for new customers) increased monitoring for new customers by NRW. Review to also consider how NRW deals with poor customer H&S performance as well as how to recognise and incentivise good H&S performance.	Charlotte Morgan	14/08/2025	29/08/2025	CSD	No Agreed extension
ACCB1097/ A7	Review of Timber Sales pre-qualification process (possible RAG status and limited bidding for new customers) increased monitoring for new customers by NRW. Review to also consider how NRW deals with poor customer H&S performance as well as how to recognise and incentivise good H&S performance.	StJohn Ashworth	14/08/2025	29/08/2025	EPP	No Agreed extension



ACCB1097/ A7	Timber Sales Manager to prepare some communications to remind all timber customers of their responsibility: 1. to appoint a competent person(s) to undertake the role of Forestry Works Manager (FWM) 2. that in fully discharging the FWM role, NRW's expectation (supported by FISA Managing Health and Safety in Forestry) is that timber purchaser FWM's arrange and lead the pre-commencement with their contractor, inviting NRW as Landowner to be present, rather than the other way around 3. to ensure that they have their own pre-commencement forms on which their FWM's can record the pre-commencement meeting, a copy of which should be provided to NRW in exchange for a copy of our own pre-commencement form	StJohn Ashworth	14/08/2025	29/08/2025	EPP	No Agreed extention
ACCB1093/ A1	Reinforce 1) the role of the CLO in acting as a bridge between NRW Operational teams and Energy Delivery teams and the Windfarm Operator/Developer as consultees to any work within the windfarm 2) the importance of ensuring cover for the CLO in the event of leave, sickness absence etc	Lester Fulcher	14/08/2025	29/08/2025	Ops	No Agreed extention
ACCB1093/ A1	Reinforce 1) the role of the CLO in acting as a bridge between NRW Operational teams and Energy Delivery teams and the Windfarm Operator/Developer as consultees to any work within the windfarm 2) the importance of ensuring cover for the CLO in the event of leave, sickness absence etc	Paula Harley	14/08/2025	29/08/2025	Ops	31/03/2026
ACCB1092/ A18	Fleet to contact all SROs for same model and make vehicles to ensure the fire extinguishers are secure or refitted.	James Poyser	13/02/2025	04/09/2025	FCS	31/03/2026
ACCB1092/ A18	Build better ICC/FFM links through the use of scheduled meetings and training with ICC staff, particularly important with the ICC being absorbed into the Customer Hub.	Robert Ashcroft	13/02/2025	30/09/2025	FCS	31/03/2026
ACCB1092/ A18	Fleet Management will add links to all WHS policies, procedures and risk assessments when undertaking the review of the driver's handbook.	James Poyser	13/02/2025	30/09/2025	FCS	31/03/2026

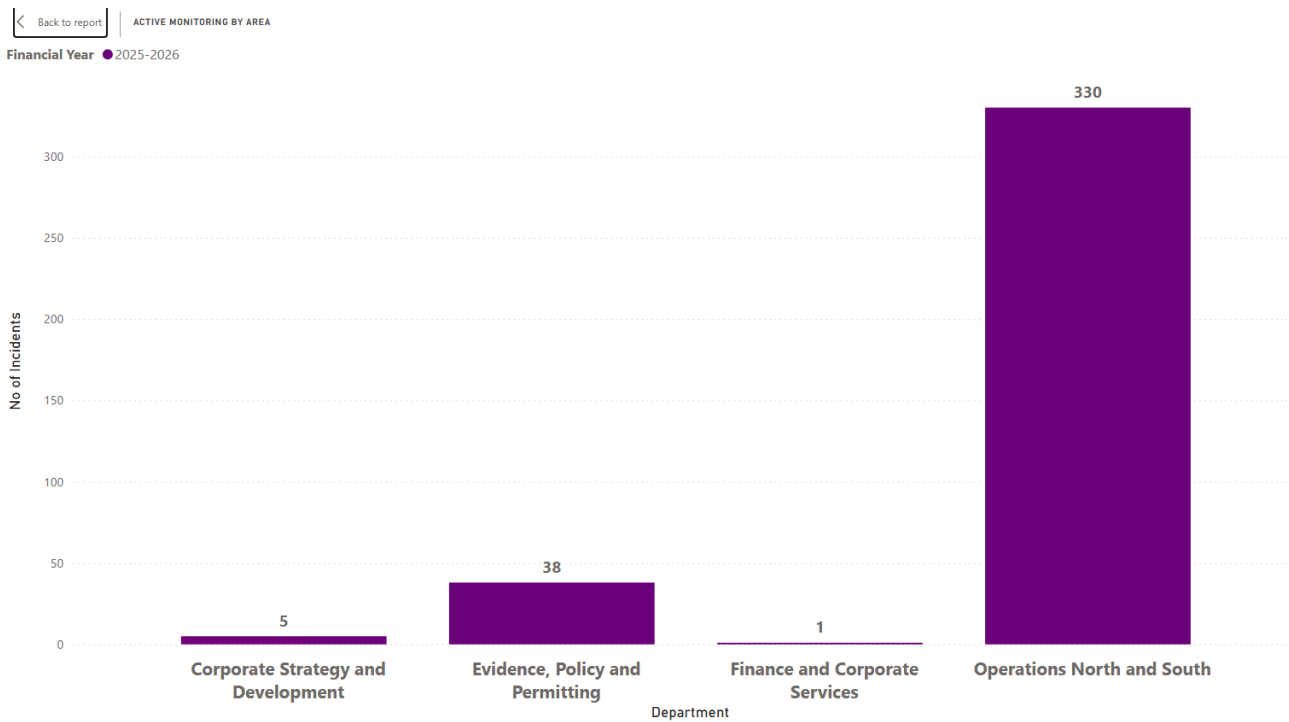
ACCB1092/ A18	Mandate that everyone has the relevant telephone numbers listed in their mobile phone contact list (personal and work)	James Poyser	13/02/2025	30/09/2025	FCS	31/03/2026
ACCB1092/ A18	Fleet and L&D to work together to create a module on learning management system for all drivers with key driving information. This will need to be made mandatory for all staff driving NRW vehicles on a yearly basis.	Claire Leith	13/02/2025	30/09/2025	FCS	31/03/2026
ACCB1092/ A18	Explore the provision of advanced driver training and capture this in the training needs analysis for fleet users where relevant.	Claire Leith	13/02/2025	30/09/2025	FCS	31/03/2026
ACCB1092/ A18	Fleet and L&D to work together to create a module on learning management system for all drivers with key driving information.	Claire Leith	13/02/2025	30/09/2025	FCS	31/03/2026
ACCB1092/ A18	Fleet and L&D to work together to create a module on learning management system for all drivers with key driving information. This will need to be made mandatory for all staff driving NRW vehicles on a yearly basis.	James Poyser	13/02/2025	30/09/2025	FCS	31/03/2026
ACCB1092/ A18	Easy reference guide at front of handbook in the car giving easy access to the relevant numbers	James Poyser	13/02/2025	30/09/2025	FCS	31/03/2026
ACCB1092/ A18	Undertake review of Drivers Handbook. Index to be changed if required.	James Poyser	13/02/2025	30/09/2025	FCS	31/03/2026
ACCB1092/ A18	Fleet and L&D to work together to create a module on learning management system for all drivers with key driving information.	James Poyser	13/02/2025	30/09/2025	FCS	31/03/2026
ACCB1092/ A18	Ensure the vehicle daily checks cover all aspects required, including the need to secure loose objects in the rear of the vehicle. Fleet to also include this in MMG article on staff needing to check that extinguishers are secure and if not to take action to store correctly.  This will also be considered when developing L&D LMS module.	James Poyser	13/02/2025	30/09/2025	FCS	31/03/2026
ACCB1092/ A18	Ensure the vehicle daily checks cover all aspects required, including the need to secure loose objects in the rear of the vehicle. Fleet to also include this in MMG article on staff needing to check that extinguishers are secure and if not to take action to store correctly.	Claire Leith	13/02/2025	30/09/2025	FCS	No Agreed extension

	This will also be considered when developing L&D LMS module.					
ACCB1092/A19	Review working outdoors procedure to ensure that emergency considerations are clear.	Phil Mostyn	14/08/2025	30/09/2025	CSD	No Agreed extension
ACCB1092/A19	Undertake review of team functional risk assessments also taking account of the working outdoors procedure	Marius Urwin	14/08/2025	30/09/2025	Ops	No Agreed extension
ACCB1093/A1	Reinforce the role of NRW Operations staff in checking the content of the FWM and Contractor risk assessment and method statement (RAMS) and then later follow up with active monitoring to provide assurance that this is being done	Lester Fulcher	14/08/2025	31/10/2025	Ops	No Agreed extension
ACCB1093/A1	Reinforce the role of NRW Operations staff in checking the content of the FWM and Contractor risk assessment and method statement (RAMS) and then later follow up with active monitoring to provide assurance that this is being done	Paula Harley	14/08/2025	31/10/2025	Ops	No Agreed extension
ACCB1097/A7	Once the guidance is changed, to send a reminder e-mail to Forest Operations and Land Management Team Leaders (CC'd to Land and Asset Managers) and also raise at the Harvesting, Restock and Land Management Co-ordination Groups.	Sally Tansey	14/08/2025	28/11/2025	EPP	
ACCB1097/A7	Consider making electrical awareness training a mandatory requirement for any persons working on a site with electrical cables (inc windfarms)	Sally Tansey	14/08/2025	28/11/2025	EPP	
ACCB1097/A7	Estates Standards Team to review how best to deliver the recommendation and incorporate outcomes into relevant documentation working with the relevant operations co-ordination groups. The team is currently in Business Continuity measures and this work will not commence until the Specialist Advisor Operations has been recruited and inducted to lead this work	Sally Tansey	14/08/2025	28/11/2025	EPP	
ACCB1093/A1	Consider whether a standalone PCM form is required for the	Sally Tansey	14/08/2025	28/11/2025	EPP	

	windfarm environment or whether to incorporate a section with relevant questions regarding windfarms into the existing Pre-Commencement Meeting (PCM) form					
ACCB1093/A1	Undertake a full review of the SOP and the Principal Method Statement taking account of the learning outcomes from this incident. As part of that review, consider creating a checklist as an appendix to the SOP or Principal Method Statement, that consolidates the key Landowner, FWM and Contractor responsibilities when working within the windfarm, into one place. Also to consider who should be present at the PCM for harvesting sites within windfarms and the subsequent induction of those not required to be present at PCM.	Gordon Baird	14/08/2025	31/12/2025	Ops	
ACCB1093/A1	Undertake a full review of the SOP and the Principal Method Statement taking account of the learning outcomes from this incident. As part of that review, consider creating a checklist as an appendix to the SOP or Principal Method Statement, that consolidates the key Landowner, FWM and Contractor responsibilities when working within the windfarm, into one place. Also to consider who should be present at the PCM for harvesting sites within windfarms and the subsequent induction of those not required to be present at PCM.	Dan Bown	14/08/2025	31/12/2025	Ops	
ACCB1092/A18	Undertake review of Drivers Handbook. Index to be changed if required.  In addition this will reflect any appropriate changes required as a result of the publication of the Fleet Strategy in 2025-2026	James Poyser	13/02/2025	31/03/2026	FCS	
ACCB1096/A4	complete actions from further considerations report assigned against ACCB1092/A18	James Poyser	13/02/2025	31/03/2026	FCS	
ACCB1092/A18	Undertake a review on the fleet strategy.	Victoria Rose-Piper	30/05/2025	20/04/2026	FCS	

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# Appendix 7 – Active Monitoring



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## NRW Board Paper

Date of meeting:	12 <sup>th</sup> February 2026
Title of Paper:	Wales Land Management Forum (WLMF) Update
Paper Reference:	26-02-B18
Paper sponsored by:	Professor Rhys Jones, WLMF Chair
Paper prepared by:	Nichola Taylor, Specialist Advisor SMNR
Paper presented by:	Professor Rhys Jones, WLMF Chair
Purpose of the paper	<b>Information</b>

## 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 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

**15<sup>th</sup> December 2025**

2. The most recent WLMF meeting was held on Monday 15<sup>th</sup> December 2025 and was a Microsoft Teams Pollution themed meeting. The meeting included the following presentations/discussions:
  - Review of Terms of Reference – Professor Rhys Jones, WLMF Chair led a discussion on updating the WLMF Terms of Reference, prompted by the pausing of the sub-group on agricultural pollution and incorporation of the Agricultural Pollution Subgroup into the main Forum and a broader discussion on the role of the WLMF and how that might adapt. The focus of discussions was on purpose, membership, and ways of working. Key areas and points discussed were the purpose of focusing on strategic land management issues (e.g., nature recovery, integrated land use, 30 by 30) and support information sharing. Continuing the trend of thematic meetings (woodlands & forestry, pollution, nature recovery) with four meetings/year (three virtual, one in-person) and not to lose sight of the value in having task and finish or a deep dive approach into specific issues. The September in-person forestry

session was cited as valuable; logistics and cost remain constraints. Thematic agendas also aid targeted participation from relevant WG teams. A proposal for expansion of membership to key strategic land managers not currently represented was discussed such as the MoD, WLGA, National Trust and RSPB. Some members emphasized the need to have space for practitioners' voices to balance between strategic breadth and practitioner insight. There were also calls for clearer articulation of the Forum's role in resolving issues in a constructive way. The Deputy Chair is to be independent of NRW/WG; there will be a process to invite short Expressions of Interest followed by member vote and an increased use of Welsh language in meetings and documentation in line with public sector standards. There were also calls for mapping the engagement landscape and to compile/align maps of related fora (e.g., nutrient management boards, Water Forums) to clarify any interfaces.

- Marine SACs – Marc Williams, NRW gave a presentation on our Marine Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) on the background to the condition assessments, the interim advice and the agricultural sector. Marine SACs have a number of ecological features designated for environmental protection including estuaries, coastal lagoons, large shallow inlets and bays and mudflats/sandflats that are sensitive to high levels of nutrients. In June 2025 NRW published the updated conservation advice packages (Regulation 37) and the condition assessments for the marine SAC and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) located entirely in Wales. Three marine SAC catchments are in unfavourable condition for both chemical (DIN) and biological (phytoplankton and opportunistic macroalgae). Nutrient neutrality for nitrogen has been advised by NRW to be considered for planning and permitting applications. Source apportionment indicates contributions from: diffuse agricultural sources, continuous sewage discharges, and freshwater nutrient flux. Nutrient Neutrality Guidance issued to LPAs with interim screening zones. There is a need for further technical work on nutrient flux modelling, restoration measures, and potential nutrient trading mechanisms.
- Annual Regulation Report - Martyn Evans, NRW provided an update on the recently published Annual Regulation Report. Every year we publish an Annual Regulation Report to highlight our regulatory and enforcement activities. The 2024 Annual Regulation Report was published on 13 November 2025. It summarises our incident response, permitting and licensing, compliance, and enforcement and sanctioning actions, reflecting our statutory regulatory duties. This is based on data from our key incident, permitting, compliance and enforcement systems during the 2024 calendar year. There were 3,769 compliance assessments (a 55% increase from 2023) with 650 Control of Agricultural Pollution Regulation (CoAPR) inspections with 53% non-compliant with >1 CoAPR requirements. Intensive farming compliance assessments increased by 27%. Water discharge permit compliance assessments increased by 91%. The effectiveness of advice-led enforcement was queried; NRW are reviewing and evaluating this issue. The Sector asked for clearer, simpler guidance.
- The Water Resources (Control of Agricultural Pollution) (Wales) Regulations 2021: 4-year Review – Andrew Chambers, Welsh Government provided an update on membership of the group and the general approach. The Task & Finish Group has been established and is chaired by Gareth Bevington. The workstreams cover 23

recommendations from the March 2025 Review. First meeting will be held in January focusing on the Terms of Reference and the relationship between control of agricultural pollution regulations on holdings that are under TB restrictions. Future farm pilot is under consideration to inform discussions on the recommendations in the context of current farm practices in the Sustainable Farming Scheme.

- NRW Updates – Liz Haliwell, NRW provided responses to WLMF members questions about the written NRW Updates and to provide an opportunity for members to identify scope for further discussion as required. Members acknowledged the wide-ranging and detailed quarterly NRW report.

Key queries:

- Conservation Translocation Code: NRW developing guidance based on IUCN standards to clarify expectations for reintroduction/conservation translocation proposals.
  - Beaver Stakeholder Group: Welsh Government establishing group early in 2026, membership and timelines to be clarified by WG; NRW to participate.
  - Glyndŵr National Park proposal: consultation now closed. NRW Board to consider in January, no further update available at the meeting.
  - Sheep Dip: Members requested renewed discussions with NRW and Welsh Government due to concerns the shortage of disposal facilities In Wales.
- Member updates – A round table discussion for each Forum member to provide an update on key topics from their own organisation.

Summarised updates include:

- Farming Union Wales: Significant work on SFS with a number of roadshows in the Autumn. Continuing concerns around inheritance tax and significant pressures on the industry makes engaging a challenge. There was a request for early engagement on optional SFS actions.
- NFU Cymru: Main focus has been on supporting members through significant change into the SFS and focussing on the development of the optional and collaborative layers. The other priority is the Senedd elections 2026 and launching the agricultural manifesto.
- CLA: In addition to the SFS and Senedd election undertaking preparations for CLA Cymru Rural Business Conference (5 March 2026) at the ICC, Newport.
- Farming Connect: End of programme cycle with ongoing ICT support for farmers. New programme launching in April 2026.
- United Utilities: Positive engagement with Welsh farmers and progressing on Dee catchment collaboration.
- Matthew Walters, Welsh Government: Defra and Welsh government are tendering for a new research project on water quality in the River Wye.
- Bethan Davies, Welsh Government: the next Water Summit will be on the 22nd of January and will have a focus on agriculture.

3. The next WLMF meeting will be held in March 2025 date to be confirmed and will have a Nature Recovery & Biodiversity Theme.



4. Once the meeting minutes have been reviewed and formally agreed by members, they are published on the WLMF page on the NRW website.
5. We are continuing to share relevant updates with the forum; a December Update was circulated prior to the meeting to align with the Terms of Reference on information sharing. This received positive response from members on the value of and importance of the update.
6. The themed based meeting worked well and will be a format to be adopted with more time for discussion at the end of each talk. Adopting a themed based approach is likely to encourage more meaningful engagement with relevant staff from NRW and Welsh Government and will align more with our Corporate objectives moving forwards.
7. Overall, there was a rich discussion of the evidence presented highlighting the complex challenges around tackling pollution with more opportunities and improvements to communications identified to enable better collaborative working within and outside the Forum using new and existing engagement channels and methods to tackle the issues at a strategic (e.g. Nutrient Trading) as well as at a local level (e.g. Four Rivers for Life Project).

## NRW Board Paper

<b>Date of meeting:</b>	12 <sup>th</sup> February 2026
<b>Title of Paper:</b>	Wales Water Management Forum Update (WWMF)
<b>Paper Reference:</b>	26-02-B19
<b>Paper sponsored by:</b>	Steve Ormerod, WWMF Chair
<b>Paper prepared by:</b>	Ceri Jones, Lead Specialist Advisor: Catchment Management
<b>Paper presented by:</b>	Steve Ormerod, WWMF Chair
<b>Purpose of the paper</b>	Information
<b>Summary</b>	Highlights from the Wales Water Management Forum held on the 13 <sup>th</sup> November 2025

## Background

1. An update from the Wales Water Management Forum (WWMF) was last provided in September 2025. The WWMF meets twice a year and provides an opportunity for the forum's membership organisations to share evidence and opportunities for working together to achieve the sustainable management of water in Wales - from source to sea. As well as ongoing discussion of regulatory issues and performance – for example with respect to the Water Environment (Water Framework Directive (WFD) (England and Wales) Regulations 2017 – broader aspects of water quality, water governance and water resources in Wales have been key themes.
2. WWMF also explores opportunities to develop, support and communicate shared messages and recommendations on the sustainable management of natural resources more generally alongside the Wales Land Management Forum, Wales Fisheries Forum (WFF), National Access Forum for Wales and the Wales Marine Advisory and Action Group.

## Update

3. The most recent session was held on the 13<sup>th</sup> of November, this was a virtual meeting.

4. The session was divided into a two-hour workshop event and then more general WWMF matters. The workshop was open to our other fora and looked at the Health Impact Assessment (HIA) work which is being undertaken to support the Strategic Environmental Assessment of the River Basin Management Plans (RBMPs) for the Western Wales River Basin District (RBD) and the Welsh parts of the Dee and Severn RBD's. The HIA will identify health risks and benefits, both direct and indirect, with an additional focus on vulnerable population groups. While HIA is not yet a legal requirement in Wales, it will become mandatory under the Public Health (Wales) Act 2017 once regulations take effect (expected 2026). Conducting a HIA now reflects best practice and aligns with recommendations from the Independent Water Commission to embed public health in water sector planning. This was a well received interactive session.
5. Following a short break the session continued with just WWMF. An update was provided on the RBMP work including the feedback from the RBMP Task and Finish Group which continues to meet every two months. The T&F group had been focused on the Cycle 3 progress review work and the Cycle 4 approaches for the Challenges and Choices consultation; both were published on the 21<sup>st</sup> of October. In the new year, attention will be focused to the draft RBMP and approaches to the programme of measures.
6. The next WWMF meeting is scheduled for the 12<sup>th</sup> of March 2026. This will be a face-to-face session, and we are hoping to hold it as a joint session with the RBMP T&F Group 2025. The day will focus on the RBMP work alongside our regular more general water update matters.
7. Meeting notes are made available on the NRW website page for WWMF.

## NRW Board Paper

<b>Date of meeting:</b>	12 February 2026
<b>Title of Paper:</b>	Finance Performance Report
<b>Paper Reference:</b>	26-02-B09
<b>Paper sponsored by:</b>	Rachael Cunningham, Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Services
<b>Paper prepared by:</b>	Rob Bell, Head of Finance; Mark Collins, Business Finance Manager
<b>Paper presented by:</b>	Rob Bell, Head of Finance
<b>Purpose of the paper:</b>	Approval (change in forecast) / Discussion (Financial Performance)
<b>Summary</b>	<p>To note:</p> <p>Finance Committee requested to approve the change in latest forecast from £302.5m to £303.3m.</p> <p>To scrutinise:</p> <p>Financial performance to the end of November 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 (September).
  - Performance to the end of November 2025.

## Key Points

2. Income to date is £155.1m and is on profile at the end of November. There are four main variables impacting whether we will meet our full year forecast of £303.3m:

- We are forecasting some under-utilisation of our Welsh Government Grant in Aid and grant budgets. To mitigate that, we are seeking to progress land acquisitions before the end of March which will have significant benefits.
  - Energy income, we have improved the forecasting process this financial year; by getting more frequent updates from operators but by its very nature, there are likely to be variances.
  - Timber income is reported at £31.4m, with Welsh Government providing budget cover to £33m, in line with our agreement. The latest forecast has indicated a further reduction to £31m.
  - Utilisation of our external income (mainly from Europe and Heritage Lottery) – again, this has been revised in line with programme expectations.
3. Expenditure to date is £147.5m and is 2% behind profile at the end of November. The main risks to the utilisation of our budget this year are:
- We will not use all the revenue budget set aside for staff costs this financial year and had previously notified Welsh Government that we would return £5m of Grant in Aid – that forecast as now reduced to circa £3m. This is primarily due to the re-categorisation of DDAT disaster recovery work as revenue along with several emerging pressures. We are discussing alternative solutions with Welsh Government about how that funding could be utilised for the benefit of NRW.
  - Capital projects, spend to date of £26.6m against a full year forecast of £67.4m. We are unlikely to use our full year forecast within the flood capital programme and because we have re-categorised capital to revenue for disaster recovery, we also have other capital funds to re-prioritise. We are looking at alternative options, primarily around land purchase to increase the WGWE, also utilising the funds from a lease surrender at Kilvey Hill.
  - In our non-staff budget, Operations are currently £1.2m behind profile in the Land Stewardship programme. We are still forecasting full spend and we are ahead of where we were this time last year but is still a risk.
  - We have increased our central over-programming to £1.5m due to an anticipated risk of underspend across our revenue programmes.
4. Welsh Government intend to provide NRW with a further £6m in 2025-26 to pay the Environment Agency Pension Scheme for employer contributions. There is no net benefit / cost to NRW as its just paying contributions earlier and our funding will be adjusted accordingly by Welsh Government next financial year. We have recommended approval to the Finance Committee.

## Risks and opportunities

5. 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.

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

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

## Recommendation

8. Note that Finance Committee have considered approval of changes to the latest forecast, from £302.5m to £303.3m.
9. Board to scrutinise financial performance to the end of November 2025.

## Index of Annexes

- Annex A – Financial Performance Report



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



**NRW Board – February 26**

**Financial Performance Report – November 2025**

# Content and Key Messages

## Update will cover:

Update on the latest forecast changes as at November 2025, compared to the approved budget as at September 2025 - an increase of £0.8m from £302.5m to £303.3m.

Financial Performance as at November 2025.

Update on contingencies and under/over programming.

The main risks and opportunities to our budget this year. Potential return of funding to Welsh Government.

WG intend to provide NRW with a further £6m in 2025-26 to pay the Environment Agency Pension Scheme for employer contributions. Recommend Finance Committee approve.

## Messages:

There has been a relatively small increase (£0.8m) in our funding level between September and November spread across most categories - the forecast income and expenditure pages provides an explanation of those movements. We expect to reduce our funding from Welsh Government in January and have introduced a summary page that provides further detail. The previously reported £5m revenue Grant in Aid reduction is likely to be nearer £3m. Other reductions in funding are capital and grant related and collectively likely to be in the range of £3m to £4m.

Income is broadly in line with profile, with minor variances across charge, commercial, European & external funding sources. Expenditure at the end of November equated to £147.5m, £2.5m (2%) below the planned expenditure profile. The £2.5m variance is split across staff (£0.5m), non staff (£1.2m) and projects (£0.7m).

We have central provisions for pay award, flexible resource pool, along with a central contingency for unfunded pressures, which has been largely allocated, with just £0.2m remaining. We also hold general overprogramming of £1m plus specific over-programming held against various programmes. There are no concerns.

We have not included a page on contingent liabilities in this report as the position has not changed significantly. We have also removed the risks and opportunities page we normally produce and replaced that with the page mentioned above. Many of those risks and opportunities have crystallised and have now included a page on a number of areas where we recommend that we request that our funding levels are reduced subject to more due diligence in January.

This is standard practice, there is no net benefit / cost to NRW as we are paying contributions early and our funding will be adjusted accordingly by WG next financial year.

The individual pages within the report provide further detail on the points raised above.

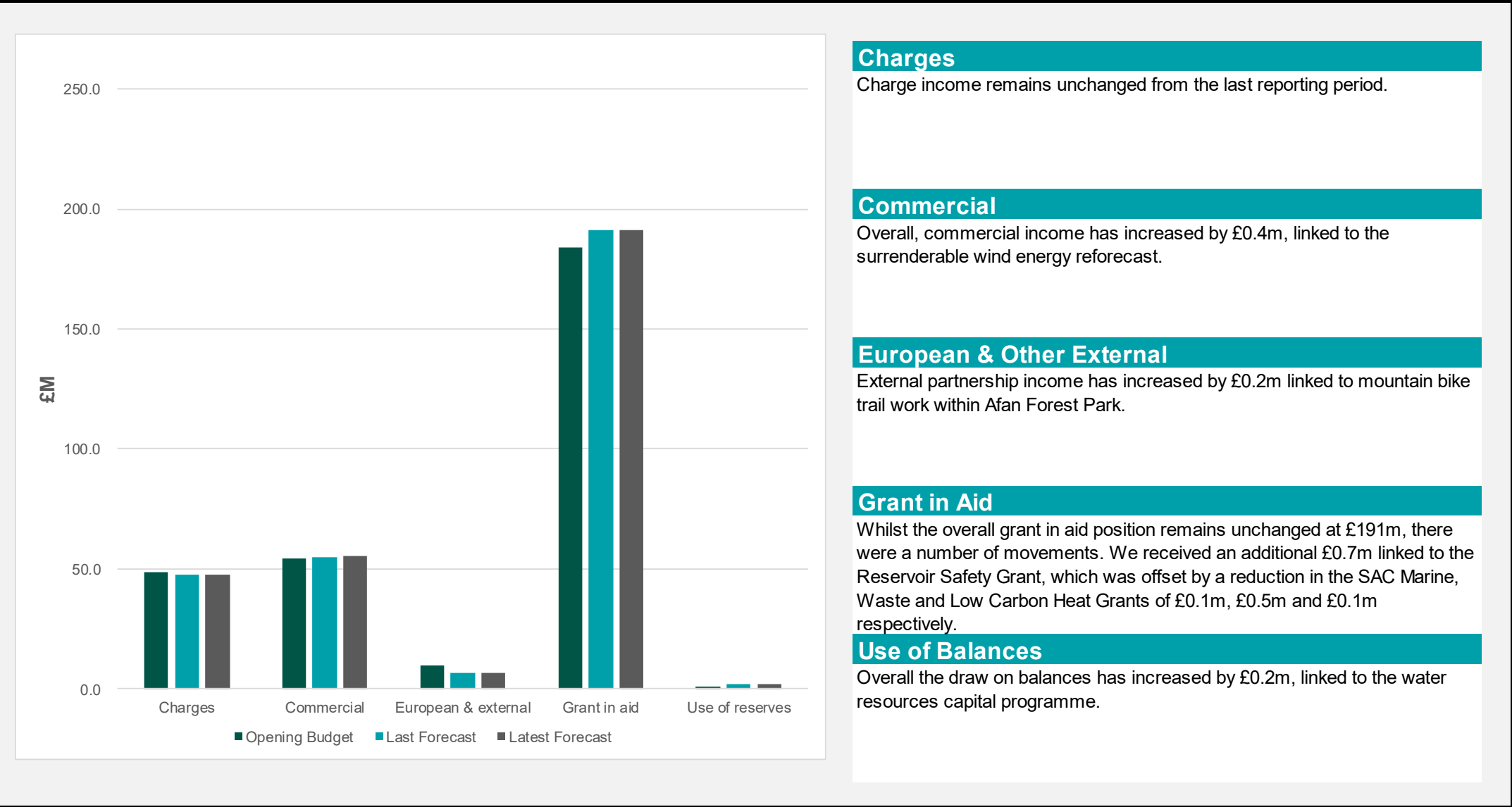


## Year End Outlook - Update on potential return of funding to Welsh Government

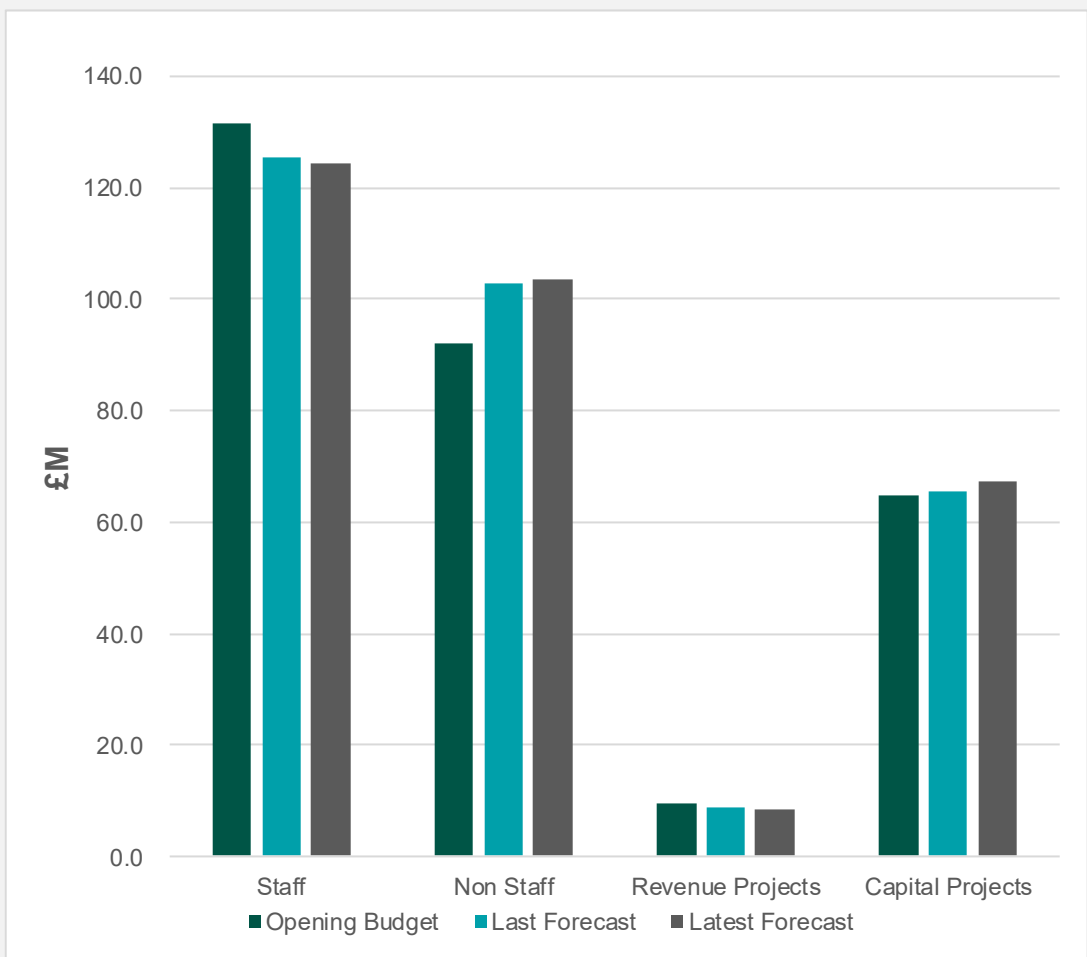
Item	Value	Description
Revenue GiA	£3m	We had previously indicated that we would return £5m to Welsh Government and requested a reduction in our IR35 liability repayment. That figure should be reduced primarily because of the re-categorisation of DDAT disaster recovery work as revenue. We will also increase our central over-programming to £1.5m due to an anticipated risk of underspend.
Capital GiA	£1.5m	Primarily due to DDAT disaster recovery work being recategorised as revenue. We are exploring different land purchases, both on and off the WGWE, as an alternative use of the funding.
Capital GiA - Fleet bid	£0.5m	Due to a reduced amount of EV sites that can be delivered. We will notify WG of this reduction in early January.
Capital GiA - Flood	£0.2m	Likelihood that Flood will not be able to utilise it's full capital budget this year, but we are exploring whether it can be used.
Ring Fenced Grants and Grant in Aid	£0.8m	Likely underspend on Enforcement (£0.7m) and Sustainable Farming Scheme (£0.1m). We have already notified WG of a reduction in the Waste grants (£0.3m).
Receipt from lease surrender at Kilvey Hill	£1.5m	We are in receipt of the lease surrender. We are exploring opportunities to purchase land so we can compensate for the loss of tree cover. If approved, then we would also have to commit revenue funding in future to planting and management.

ET has agreed for Finance to firm up the figures and confirm the reduction with Welsh Government, in line with what has been outlined above.

# Financial Performance – Income Forecast



# Financial Performance – Expenditure Forecast



## Staff

Staff budgets have reduced by £1.2m since September. This is primarily due to the trajectory forecast where we reallocated salary based savings to non staff and capital projects across Operations, Finance and Corporate services directorates.

## Non Staff

Overall non staff budgets increased by £0.5m, primarily due to the redistribution of the additional £1m NRW2030 allocation from WG for specific Ddat improvements (£0.8m from revenue projects), the reallocated salary based savings following the trajectory forecast (£0.6m) which is offset by reductions within the WG Grant Programme.

## Revenue Projects

Revenue projects have reduced by £0.6m, largely due to the distribution of the additional £1m NRW2030 revenue budget, which is offset by the reclassification of the Vale of Glamorgan Bathing Water grant (£0.2m).

## Capital Projects

Overall capital project budgets have increased by £2.0m, predominantly due to the additional allocation following the trajectory review (£0.8m), the new Reservoir Safety grant award (£0.5m) along with an increase in the compensatory planting (£0.4m), linked to additional surrenderable wind energy receipts.

## Financial Performance - Income

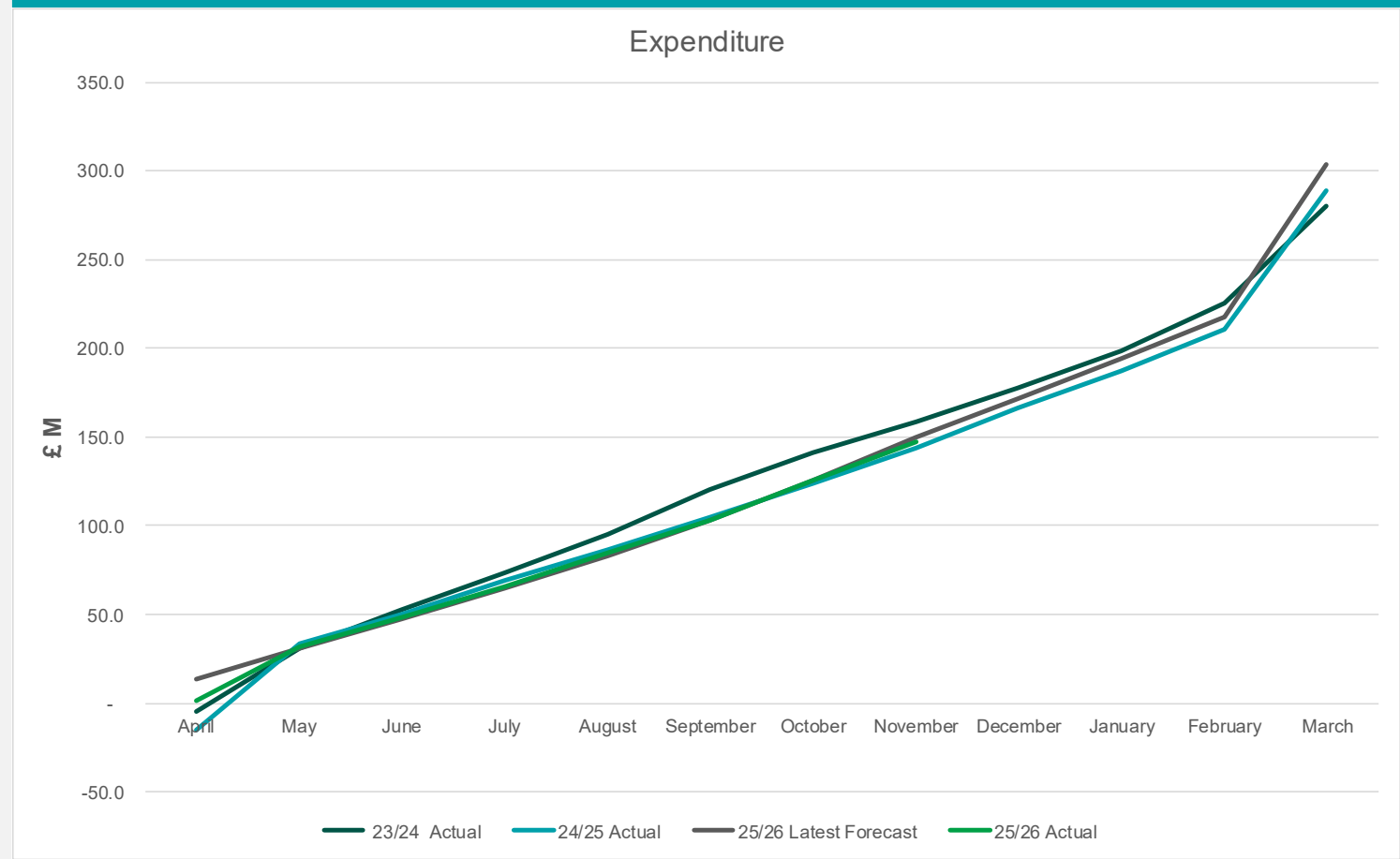
INCOME	Actual	Approved Forecast	Variance	Approved Forecast	Remaining Budget	Original Budget	Commentary
by Account Type	YTD £m	YTD £m	YTD £m	FY £m	FY %	FY £m	
Charges	34.6	34.5	0.2	47.7	27%	48.4	The variance on charge income is minimal and predominantly linked to Mooring and Landing rents where we have received unexpected additional income this period. We are expecting revisions to the approved forecast in the next period, linked to AMP8 Water Quality and within the Nuclear charge regime. These will be relatively small and whilst they will increase the draw on charge balances, they will be offset by the salary savings associated with charge funded activities.
Commercial	36.9	36.8	0.1	55.5	34%	54.5	Commercial income is in line with forecast. We continue to monitor timber income and discussions with the commercial team indicate that the current timber income forecast is holding at £31.4m. We will continue to monitor despatches on a regular basis and will communicate any risks to the forecast. We also continue to monitor wind energy performance and have been working to obtain a higher level of business intelligence from the operators. This intelligence has indicated that there is a limited risk to the full year forecast, however we will continue to monitor this outlook.
European & external	3.4	3.5	-0.2	6.8	50%	9.8	The current variance is linked to Natur Am Byth and LiFE funded projects, where we are also seeing a corresponding variance on the expenditure side. Limited risk to the full year forecasted position.
Grant in aid	80.3	80.2	0.0	191.1	58%	183.8	In line to profile.
Use of balances	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.2	100%	1.1	The movement in the use of balances between the original budget and the current full year forecast has increased due to the reduction in charge income forecast. The salary re-forecast has resulted in an estimated £1.7m of salary savings linked to charge funded activities, which will reduce the draw on balances reported in the table to £0.5m.
<b>TOTAL: NRW</b>	<b>155.1</b>	<b>155.0</b>	<b>0.1</b>	<b>303.3</b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>297.6</b>	

## Financial Performance - Expenditure

EXPENDITURE	Actual	Approved Forecast	Variance	Approved Forecast	Remaining Budget	Original Budget	Commentary
by Account Type	YTD	YTD	YTD	FY	FY	FY	
	£m	£m	£m	£m	%	£m	
Staff	73.9	74.5	0.5	124.2	40%	130.3	An underspend of £0.6m in respect to salaries due to the number of vacant posts. Recruitment levels are improving however it will take time for this to be reflected in the financial figures due to the nature of the process. NRW's current staffing levels are at 94%, based on current projections the headcount ceiling will nearly be reached from current active recruitment. There is currently an overspend on other staff costs of £0.1m, where overspends on other pay costs, travel & subsistence and people support costs are offset by an underspend on training. It is likely there will be a small overspend on other staff costs at year end. We are in discussion with WG on the utilisation of the previously identified £5m of salary savings. Due to a number of recent pressures/opportunities we could possible utilise £2m - £3m of the £5m.
Non Staff	43.3	44.6	1.2	103.4	58%	93.2	Underspend of £1.2m on land stewardship funded activities, across the Operations and EPP directorates, mainly due to profiling. A reforecasting exercise is being undertaken and current expectations are of spend in line with budget.
Revenue Projects	3.7	3.5	-0.2	8.3	56%	9.5	All programmes are broadly in line with budget, with the exception of NRW2030, due to the Disaster Recovery project which was initially funded from capital, but on further analysis of the work, the majority will not meet capitalisation requirements. This will likely be funded from the forecasted salary savings. No concerns at present with the remaining project programmes.
Capital Projects	26.6	27.5	0.9	67.4	61%	64.6	The current under spend is predominantly linked to the flood, internal and externally funded programmes, which are currently £0.6m, £0.2m and £0.3m underspent respectively. We are unlikely to utilise the full capital allocation and anticipate returning a proportion of the flood, additional capital Grant in Aid (linked to the EV grant) and capital GiA funding to WG. NaCE overprogramming now stands at £0.6m, a reduction of £0.5m from that reported in September and we expect this reduction to continue as we move towards the end of the financial year, similar to previous years.
<b>TOTAL: NRW</b>	<b>147.5</b>	<b>150.0</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>303.2</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>297.6</b>	

# Financial Performance – Expenditure Trends

## EXPENDITURE TRENDS



**Commentary:**  
Expenditure at the end of November 2025 is £147.5m, equating to 49% of the full year forecast of £303.3m. This is slightly ahead of where we were last financial year, when spend was £143.5m against a full year budget of £290.7m.

The current year forecast is £21m more than the full year expenditure for 24/25 which stood at £282.6m.

# Financial Performance – Headcount Ceiling

NRW Headcount Ceiling Summary	Nov Headcount ceiling (ftes)	Oct Headcount ceiling (ftes)	Variance
<b>Performance against ceiling</b>			
<b>Non ring fenced posts</b>			
Headcount ceiling	2,053.4	2,060.1	-6.7
Staff in post	1,960.8	1,963.7	-2.9
<b>Variance</b>	<b>92.6</b>	<b>96.4</b>	<b>-3.8</b>
Staffing level	95%	95%	0%
<b>Ring fenced posts</b>			
Headcount ceiling	427.6	432.5	-4.9
Staff in post	363.0	347.7	15.3
<b>Variance</b>	<b>64.6</b>	<b>84.8</b>	<b>-20.2</b>
Staffing level	85%	80%	4%
Active recruitment	162	179	
Current projected recruitment profile (int / ext)	80%	79%	
Revised vacancies after recruitment	28	40	

## Commentary:

- Following feedback from various forums, placement posts have now been removed from the headcount figures, October figures have been adjusted for comparison purposes.
- A review of agreed funding for new posts yet to be created has taken place over the last month, budgets have been adjusted to reflect the likely appointment date, which is the main reason for the reduction in budgeted fte's.
- Staffing level is at 95% for non ring fenced posts, no change from October. There were a number of external appointments but have been negated by exits and internal movements. The staffing level of ring fenced posts has increased to 85%, 80% in October, following external recruitment and internal movement from non ring fenced posts.
- The number of staff now stands at 2,323.8fte, an increase of 12.4fte.
- There are approximately 162 active recruitments (as per Kallidus) from advertising to interview stage. Recruitment profile has remained consistent, with 80% projected to be external. Applying this projection to active recruitments would result in an overall staff level of 99%.
- CCC and CSD continue to be over their ceiling. Both have increased since October and have a number of posts in active recruitment.
- The number of agency staff now employed is 28, consistent with October.
- Recruitment levels are positive with current projections suggesting the headcount ceiling will be reached from current active recruitments. However, due to the nature of the recruitment process and natural turnover of staff we remain likely to be under the headcount ceiling at 31st March 2026.

## Notes:

- The active recruitment number is taken from the online recruitment system - Kallidus, is based on number of posts (not fte) and includes those categories where posting has not yet been actioned.
- This report does not identify if these are being recruited internal and/or external or if they are ring fenced or non ring fenced.
- Projected recruitment profile (80% ext/20% Int) taken from recruitment data report as at 20th November.
- Information has been kept at a high level but the actions that need to be undertaken in each Directorate will depend on the underlying information.

# New Funding

Area of Funding	2025-26 Budget /£000	2025-26 Forecast spend /£000	2025-26 Forecast Variance /£000	Variance Explanation	What did we plan to achieve with this money
<b>Baseline:</b>					
Biodiversity	600	287	313	No change reported since October. Shortfall remains driven by delays in recruitment. NRM are considering alternative uses of the remaining forecast and anything that cannot be utilised will be returned.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Development of protected site regulatory guidance and advice, including to support LMAs.</li> <li>- Deliver technical advice across upland and heathland ecosystems in Wales.</li> <li>- Develop a rapid assessment approach for protected site effective management;</li> </ul>
Water Quality	500	424	76	No change reported since October. Shortfall remains driven by delays in recruitment. NRM are considering alternative uses of the remaining forecast and anything that cannot be utilised will be returned.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Improving water company performance and ensuring delivery of the water company asset management programme.</li> <li>- Improving stakeholder awareness and participation in delivering measures to improve the water environment.</li> <li>- Ensuring that the regulation of the water environment is fit for purpose and works with nature.</li> </ul>
Flood Risk	1,100	1,100	-	No shortfall forecast.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Catchment approaches – increasing the focus on the Taff catchment plan project.</li> <li>- Further our facilitator role for local multi-benefit water interventions.</li> <li>- Community engagement to tap into the potential of other delivery agents and foster self-help community networks.</li> </ul>
Evidence monitoring	800	563	237	No change reported since October. Shortfall remains driven by delays in recruitment. Evidence are considering alternative uses of the remaining forecast and anything that cannot be utilised will be returned.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Data management and data analysis to improve the quality and accessibility of our monitoring data.</li> <li>- Feasibility studies to explore the potential of innovative solutions.</li> <li>- Water quality monitoring and analysis including laboratory investment.</li> </ul>
NRW2030	1,000	1,000	-	Since October the reporting structure for NRW2030 has changed and budget transferred to People Management and DDaT (digital, data & technology) teams. This makes tracking spend slightly more challenging however, the expectation is there will be an underspend. Note there is a revenue pressure for disaster recovery that underspend may be redirected to.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- AI discovery (£150k).</li> <li>- E-recruitment system - configuration &amp; training (People) (£165k).</li> <li>- Process Streamlining - potentially Customer Platform (Service) (£75k).</li> <li>- Pre discovery - permitting to further enhance the benefits of the customer platform work (Service - £150k).</li> <li>- Learning management System - continuation of staff (People - £60k).</li> <li>- CRM Project - precursor work for the Data Platform work to commence (£50k).</li> <li>- Business Board and Enabling Services quick wins - to improve workflows and efficiencies for staff on processes such as MyNRW (£350k).</li> </ul>
<b>Grant or externally funded:</b>					
Infrastructure	5,000	5,000	-	There may be an underspend on the non staff budget of potentially £0.9m. Option to allocate to eligible staff costs. To be confirmed in January.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increases in terrestrial and marine advisory capacity, permitting capacity and systems/tools development.</li> <li>- Action to accelerate infrastructure consenting includes preparation for and implementation of the new Wales Infrastructure Consent regime.</li> </ul>
Marine ICT	2,700	2,700	-	No change reported.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Pioneer Marine Licensing as the initial product to help create the building blocks of customer platform that will then encompass NRW's regulatory functions and other external interactions with stakeholders.</li> </ul>
Water Enforcement Funding	2,723	2,021	702	Forecasted shortfall has increased from prior month due to a reassessment of recruitment timescales. Time-limited nature of posts would suggest unlikely to recruit immediately. DDaT forecast remains a risk with £250k in this financial year with no clear forecast provided by DDaT or spend to-date.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Operator Monitoring Assessment (OMA) and Operator Self-Monitoring (OSM) compliance review,</li> <li>- Reporting on the current Environmental Performance Assessment (EPA),</li> <li>- Evaluation of compliance data returns and WQ compliance debt management,</li> </ul>
SFS	1,093	983	110	Notional underspend being forecast (10%). Driven by delays in recruitment (but not the work delivered). Seeking approval from Welsh Government to re-invest some of this underspend to increase capability and progress delivery of the scheme.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- NRW operational readiness for the Sustainable Farming Scheme including.</li> <li>- Development of Designated Sites Management Plans and translating existing management agreements into SFS.</li> <li>- Ongoing technical support and advice for habitat and species actions on Designated Sites and developing guidance.</li> </ul>
Waste	4,314	3,757	557	Shortfall driven by delays in recruitment and ongoing vacancies. We have notified Welsh Government and formally returned £0.5m. DEFRA postponed capital / waste tracking build to 2026/27 onwards, which has impacted the capital position. £330k of revenue funding is being held pending work at one of the waste sites we regulate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Support the development of Welsh Government's legislative programme of reforms.</li> <li>- Provide Welsh Government with a central point of contact for expert technical and policy advice, assurance on regulatory implementation across the programme and project and programme management support.</li> </ul>
<b>Total</b>	<b>19,830</b>	<b>17,835</b>	<b>1,995</b>		



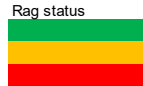
## Financial Performance – Revenue Projects

Revenue Projects by Programme	Actual YTD £m	Approved Forecast YTD £m	Variance YTD £m	Approved Forecast FY £m	Remaining Budget FY %	Original Budget FY £m	Commentary
External Funded	1.6	1.7	0.1	3.4	54%	3.1	The current variance is almost solely linked to the Natur am Byth project. The project finance officer will meet with partners early in the new year to reassess and readjust the forecasts.
Internal Funded	1.0	1.2	0.2	2.4	60%	1.6	The main variance is linked to the Organisational Change project, where there remains £0.4m (50%) of the full year allocation still to be utilised. Current projections indicate an underspend of up to £0.2m. Discussions are being held in January to reassess and readjust the forecast.
NaCE	0.4	0.5	0.0	1.5	70%	1.6	The revenue programme element accounts for £1.5m (6%) of the overall NaCE Programme. The current expenditure position is in line to budget and we anticipate this to be the case at year end.
Other	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.2	70%	0.0	On profile, no significant issues.
NRW 2030	0.5	0.0	-0.5	0.0	-9737%	2.3	The NRW2030 revenue programme is currently showing an overspend of £0.5m, linked to the Disaster Recovery Ddat project. This was initially funded from capital, but on further analysis of the work, the majority will not meet capitalisation requirements. This will likely be funded from the forecasted salary savings.
Grants	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.8	88%	0.9	Limited risk, with the remaining payments due to go out in March 26.
<b>TOTAL: NRW</b>	<b>3.7</b>	<b>3.5</b>	<b>-0.2</b>	<b>8.3</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>9.5</b>	

## 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 %	Original Budget FY £m	Commentary
NRW 2030	2.4	2.3	-0.1	6.1	60%	6.0	Current costs are in line to budget. The current NRW2030 project programme budget will be amended, with the Tech and People Transformation elements moving out. There still remains £1.4m awaiting project setup which has reduced considerably since the last reporting period. There is also 60% of the full year allocation to be utilised in the remaining four months of the financial year. Finance will work closely with the programme leads to manage and reassess the forecast coming up to year end. We have anticipated a level of budgetary surplus primarily linked to the disaster recovery reclassification to revenue, which may lead to us having to reduce our funding level from Welsh Government.
External Funded	5.9	6.1	0.2	12.9	54%	13.8	The LiFE project extension application has been successful, with the projects now having an additional two years to complete. No additional budget is needed, however all three have included an additional contingency to ensure any inflationary costs are covered. Natur Am Byth is slightly behind profile and will be reviewed in January.
Flood Risk	8.6	9.1	0.6	17.7	52%	17.6	The overall programme position has changed a number of times over the last few months, from an initial surplus to a slight deficit. We anticipate that we will not need all the capital funding and estimate a return of circa £0.5m. Next financial year, we will begin the year with a prudent level of over-programming. Current over programming stands at £0.2m. Finance will work closely with the team to ensure we manage this risk up to year end.
Internal Funded	2.9	3.2	0.3	9.9	71%	3.6	Broadly in line to profile. The key programmes are EV fleet purchase (£4.4m) and Water Resources (WR) (£1.8m). Due to better than expected EV purchase prices along with complications on EV infrastructure roll out, we are unlikely to utilise £0.5m of the award. The WR programme is currently under programmed by £0.3m, which is likely to be returned to balances for use in future years.
NaCE	6.7	6.7	0.0	20.1	66%	20.8	Current costs in line with budget. Overprogramming now stands at £0.6m, a reduction of £0.5m from that reported in September and we expect this reduction to continue as we move towards the end of the financial year, similar to previous years. There is still 66% of the full year allocation to be utilised.
IFRS 16 Capital Leases Only (non-cash)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.7	97%	2.8	Following a value for money assessment on vehicle acquisitions, the most favourable outcome was to purchase vehicles resulting in the transfer of £1.4m to the EV and Fleet purchase budget. Of the three planned building lease extensions, only two will likely take place this year. This has resulted in £0.7m of the lease budget being transferred to fund additional work within the NaCE capital programme.
<b>TOTAL: NRW</b>	<b>26.6</b>	<b>27.5</b>	<b>0.9</b>	<b>67.4</b>	<b>61%</b>	<b>64.6</b>	

# Contingency and over-programming budgets



Balances (contingencies and programme under/overs)	Sep-25 £m	Nov-25 £m	Movement £m	Confidence Level (RAG Status)	Comments
<b>Contingencies and provisions</b>					
Pay Award Provisions	4.2	4.2	0.0		Pay award of 3.72% agreed and will be paid in December. Pay award budget being distributed in December as well.
Other staff contingency	0.8	0.6	-0.2		Budget distributed for market forces and increments. Contingency held for flexible resource pool and any corrections required to the opening budget. It is likely that the whole of this contingency will not be required. The movement predominantly reflects case for change costs that we were unable to accrue last financial year and staff within the flexible resource pool.
Central Contingencies	0.2	0.2	0.0		Central balance for unfunded pressure bids.
Infrastructure (additional WG GiA funding) (EPP directorate)	0.1	0.0	-0.1		The previous residual balance has now been removed.
Staff Budget Undistributed (Directorates)	2.1	1.6	-0.5		Budgets have been distributed to posts associated with new funding in June/July. The balance will continue to reduce as positions are set up by the recruitment team.
<b>Over-programming</b>					
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)	-0.5	-0.5	0.0		In addition to the land stewardship overprogramming £0.3m, there is also additional funding agreed to support Mid Wales Integrated Workforce £0.2m. The Integrated Workforce element will be cleared through the allocation of the Ops reinvestment fund.
Under programming (Directorates) WG Grant	-0.1	-0.1	0.0		The over programming relates to Wales Coastal Path project, where we anticipate not all costs will come to fruition, hence the slight over programming.
Flood Risk Capital (Directorates)	0.1	-0.2	-0.3		The overall programme position has changed a number of times over the last few months, from an initial surplus to a slight deficit. We anticipate that we will not need all the capital funding and estimate a return of circa £0.5m. Next financial year, we will begin the year with a prudent level of over-programming.
NaCE (Directorates)	-1.1	-0.6	0.5		The overprogramming has reduced from July and we expect this to continue as we move through the year, similar to previous years.
<b>Under-programming</b>					
Water Resources Capital (Directorates)	0.3	0.2	-0.1		The balance has now moved into a surplus position following a review of the overall programme. This is likely to be returned to balances for use in future years.
<b>Awaiting distribution</b>					
NRW 2030 (Directorates)	3.4	1.4	-2.0		This has reduced considerably from the last reporting period, with the current balance reflecting just the capital programme. All revenue budgets have now been distributed.

## Note

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

