



# Confirmed Board Minutes

**Title of Meeting:** NRW Board Meeting – Public  
**Location:** Orbit Centre, Merthyr Tydfil

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**Date of Meeting:** Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> March 2019

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**Board Members present:** Sir David Henshaw, Chair  
Clare Pillman, Chief Executive  
Chris Blake  
Catherine Brown  
Julia Cherrett  
Geraint Davies  
Howard C Davies  
Dr Elizabeth Haywood  
Zoë Henderson  
Prof Steve Ormerod  
Prof Peter Rigby

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**Executive Team present:** Kevin Ingram, Executive Director for Finance and Corporate Services  
Gareth O'Shea, Executive Director, Operations South  
Niall Reynolds, Transformation Portfolio Director  
Ceri Davies, Executive Director of Evidence Policy and Permitting  
Tim Jones, Executive Director of North and Mid Wales Ops  
John Hogg, Head of South Central Operations

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**Additional Attendees Present:** Tracey Mayes, Chief Executive Business Manager  
Steve Wilson, Managing Director Wastewater Services – Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water – item 3  
Natalie Hall, Sustainable Water Manager - item 3  
Bob Vaughan Technical Specialist water and Contaminated Land item 4  
Pete Stanley Technical Specialist water and Contaminated Land item 4  
Amanda Paton Customer Programme Manager item 6

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**Secretariat:** Jenn Jones  
Carol Stevens  
Julia Chambers

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## 1. Welcome

1.1 The Chair welcomed members of the public to the meeting and explained that there would be an opportunity for questions from the public at the end of the meeting.

## Apologies/Declarations of Interest

1.2 Apologies were given from Karen Balmer (Chair of Audit and Risk Assurance Committee), Rosie Plummer and Catherine Love (Director Customer, Communications and Information). Best wishes were extended to Karen.

1.3 No declarations of interest made in respect of items on the Agenda.

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## 2. Review Minutes and Action Logs from January Public NRW Board Meeting

The minutes of the January 2019 Board meeting were presented and reviewed. The Board confirmed the minutes were an accurate record of the meeting subject to the following amendment:

Minutes Page 8 – should be Pen-Y- Cymoedd wind farm not Pen y Moelwyn

**ACTION:** *Secretariat to amend*

## Action Logs

The Board reviewed and noted the updates of the action log as presented from the January 2019 Board Meeting. The following verbal updates were given:

Public Board Meeting

Action No 5 Log – March 2019

State of Natural Resources Report

Update - a seminar is planned for April 2019 for Board members.

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## 3. Strategic Picture Water

3.1 The Executive Director of Evidence Policy and Permitting introduced Steve Wilson, Managing Director Wastewater Services – Dŵr Cymru/Welsh Water, and Natalie Hall, Sustainable Water Manager - NRW.

3.2 The Sustainable Water Manager set out the role of NRW within the sector, this includes monitoring water quality and regulating extraction from and discharge into water courses. The sustainable management of water is key in the Business Plan of NRW. However, within the Performance Framework some areas show as red status so there is a need to prioritise attention.

3.3 Interim classification for the Water Framework Directive shows 40% of water is meeting good or better status compared to 36% in 2015. Wales sits in the middle of the European average in terms of compliance.

3.4 The following pressures and challenges were set out:

- funding and prioritisation of capital improvement work;
- rural land management – there is work on going with the Agricultural Sub
- Group of the Wales Land Management Forum (WLMF) to inform government decisions now and beyond EU transition, to develop common understanding of issues and to look at solutions. A specific May 2019 Board agenda item is scheduled for this;

- Urban areas – paving of previously permeable areas affects discharge of surface water and pollution; work is ongoing with WG to inform planned development.

3.5 Steve Wilson, Managing Director Wastewater Services – Dŵr Cymru/Welsh Water gave an overview of the organisation including:

- Business planning and aspirations to working differently.
- Huge number of assets and infrastructure
- a new 5-year business period which considers the organisation's 2050 vision

3.6 SMNR is seen as an opportunity for Dŵr Cymru and NRW to work together. 4 pilot catchments areas are set out within the 5-year plan:

- Bathing water of Rhyl – managing storm water and sewerage discharge to protect homes from flooding
- Afan / Port Talbot – reducing flooding in Winter and working with Tata steel on cleaning up effluent to reduce abstractions.
- Teifi river - phosphorus removal working with farmers and creamery to obtain the same environmental benefit as costly sewerage works.
- Alyn river –tightening up the standard of the discharge from Mold sewerage works whilst working in an innovative way to maintain river levels.

3.7 The Executive Director of Evidence Policy and Permitting set out the background to the recommendation in the paper of establishing a Water Management Forum (WMF) along the same format as WLMF and clarified where it would sit within the wider collaborative structure.

3.8 The Board gave approval for the establishment of a WMF with a nominated lead member from the NRW Board.

***ACTION:*** *It was requested that a Board member chairs the Water Management Forum. Chair to discuss appointment with Board members and confirm.*

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#### 4. Metal Mines Programme Update

4.1 The Executive Director of Evidence Policy and Permitting gave an insight into the session and highlighted the innovative aspect of some of the work that had been undertaken and how possibly this could be replicated elsewhere within the organisation.

4.2 The Technical Specialist water and Contaminated Land referred to the 1,300 metal mines found across Wales, most of which have been inactive for over a100 years. The proximity of the sites to water courses is a problem but their ecological impact can be both positive and negative. In dealing with these sites consideration must be given to their important social and cultural history. Putting traditional treatments into the areas is a challenge due to their location, access and available utilities. The Metal Mine Strategy was written in 2002 and from it the top 50 sites in Wales were focused on.

4.3 Detail was given on work undertaken at a prime site at Abbey Console. The site was identified as a priority because it is less complex than some of the others, however, it

is a very important site because of the presence of lichen and mosses and its medieval and industrial history.

4.4 Reference was made to some of the research and development trials undertaken with various organisations on water treatment; some of the work detailed is now world leading technology. The level of innovation was highlighted and NRW needs to accept that there is a risk of undertaking work in this way; failure needs to be accepted alongside success.

4.5 NRW staff attend The International Mine Waters conference which, in 2019, is in Russia. Staff will also be visiting Sweden in 2019 to observe and learn.

4.6 Detail was given on the Mine Exchange, a two-day conference, which academia, consultants, Welsh Government etc attend every year. Reference was also made to the International Mine Waters Conference that is looking for a future event location.

***ACTION:*** Board members to be invited to attend the Mine Exchange event in Aberystwyth in 2019 - Technical Specialist water and Contaminated Land to issue invite via Secretariat.

4.7 Board were interested in exploring the outcomes of the work and recovery of the ecology of the sites, and whether some of the material recovered could generate an income. The Technical Specialist Water and Contaminated Land gave details on some work already being trialled around income generation and how this could be explored further by the Commercial Director when appointed.

4.8 Board highlighted that there is a need to promote extensively the globally important work being undertaken in this area. Board supported the proposal to encourage the staging of The International Mine Waters conference in Wales.

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## 5. Corporate Dashboard and Performance Management Report (NRW 1903-B10)

5.1 The Chief Executive referred to the report that included data to December 2018 and highlighted three new red indicators:

- incident response,
- river restoration
- impact of industry and waste sites

5.2 The Chief Executive noted that incident response was discussed in detail at the January 2019 Board. The failure to achieve the set targets with regards to river restoration was attributed to staff being diverted to deal with the fishing inquiry. It is proposed that the impact of industry and waste sites will be presented for discussion at the May 2019 Board meeting.

***ACTION:*** Impact of industry and waste sites to be examined in detail at the May 2019 Board meeting

5.3 The Chief Executive confirmed that some progress is expected on other measures to bring them to amber/green by the end of the financial year. This would include Flood

Risk Capital programme, the Wales Coast Path and Promoting Outdoor Recreation. Some indicators are expected to carry forward into the next financial year.

5.4 Board noted concerns on the format of the report and highlighted that wording and categorisation / classification needed concentrated effort to achieve improvement in setting, achieving and recording performance management in future. Board emphasised that the business needed to deliver on outcomes and that going forward Organisational Design should not be used as an excuse for failing to reach agreed outputs/targets.

**ACTION:** *Finance, Planning and Performance Committee to consider scale of outputs and specific targets for 2020-21.*

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## 6. Customer Programme – 6 Month Review (NRW 1903-B11)

6.1 The Customer Programme Manager set out how the strategy, programme and 13 projects within it had been initiated using direct customer feedback from both internal (NRW staff) and external customers. A key statistic was that only 27% of our customers believe we get it right first time. Improvements are being made, but it was acknowledged that there is a lot more to be done.

6.2 All 13 projects, and any new ones that come for consideration, must demonstrate how genuine customer involvement has been integrated into development, delivery and review so that demonstrable customer improvements are achieved. Projects must also demonstrate transition into NRW business as usual, to ensure sustainable and cost effective long-term integration as this programme is only set to run until March 2020.

6.3 Recent improvement work within the Customer Contact Centre was highlighted including greater connectivity within NRW and improvements to culture and ways of working which has already resulted in efficiency savings. The centre is transforming into the Customer Hub; developing team and customer experience through better involvement with the business and visiting and learning from others externally.

6.4 Web improvements is another key objective. An online Write guide has been developed by staff as a go to reference which covers standards for written correspondence. To support the rollout, training workshops will begin in May 2019; the initial 5 pilot sessions have been increased to 11 due to requests from the business.

6.5 Future work to highlight:

- Speech analytics to be introduced into the Customer Contact Centre.
- Development and networking pilot workshop on the 9th May 2019 in St Fagans for front-line engagement staff from across the business.
- Improvements to customer self-serve transactional services online.

**Noted:** Board Members are welcome to attend the Workshop on the 9th of May 2019 at St Fagans and are also asked to feed through any relevant comments/customer feedback they receive.

6.6 Board were concerned about the statistics on customer satisfaction, the next customer survey timeline and targets for improvement. The Customer Programme Manager confirmed that plans are being finalised with the Institute of Customer Service (ICS) to re-run a customer survey within this financial year. It was emphasised that each of the projects and the programme has measures and targets that are proportionate and distinguish between customer satisfaction of our service as opposed to their satisfaction with the outcome of our decisions.

**ACTION:** *Details of the ongoing measures and targets to be circulated - Customer Programme Manager to circulate before the 30<sup>th</sup> April 2019*

6.7 Board applauded the content of the Customer Strategy document and programme but emphasised that there was a need to keep the content of the document alive for staff by emphasising the benefits. Board were asked to submit any thoughts and ideas on how to achieve and maintain staff involvement to the Customer Programme Manager.

6.8 Board highlighted that recognition through some medium, of good results, ways of working and achievement by staff needs consideration going forward, Board were asked to give consideration on the mode of this recognition.

6.9 The Board noted and gave approval for the direction of travel.

**ACTION:** *Customer Programme to be reviewed by Board fully every six months, as well as periodically being reviewed by PaRC.*

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## 7. Close of meeting

The Chair closed the meeting

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### The Chair welcomed questions and observations from the Public:

Topics covered were:

- Recommendations of the Institute of Welsh Affairs report on renewable energy was questioned and discussed. Assurance was given that NRW are committed to renewable energy and interested in community ownership. Discussions on any community renewable ideas or incentives would be welcomed. The Executive Director of North and Mid Wales Ops was highlighted as a key contact for this.
- Stakeholder event Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> March 2019 – positive feedback was received for the event.
- It was highlighted that Board meeting information on the internet needs to better be managed with the correct dates and locations included and with papers being made available within the stated timescale.
- An email had been received around the current regulation regarding water abstraction, foul water discharge and protection from pollution. It was asked whether NRW considers the current regulation sufficient in light of the expanding intensive livestock industry across Wales and the warning of water shortages in the short-term future.

**ACTION:** *Executive Director of Evidence Policy and Permitting to reply fully and in detail to the query raised by e-mail on water abstraction foul water etc, as set out in the final point*

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