



Confirmed Board Minutes

Title of Meeting: NRW Board Meeting – Public
Location:

Date of Meeting: Thursday 11th July 2019

Present Board Members: Sir David Henshaw, Chair
Clare Pillman, Chief Executive
Julia Cherrett
Geraint Davies
Prof Steve Ormerod
Zoe Henderson
Karen Balmer
Elizabeth Haywood
Prof Peter Rigby
Chris Blake
Dr Rosie Plummer

Executive Team Present: Kevin Ingram, Executive Director for Finance and Corporate Services
Gareth O'Shea, Executive Director, Operations South
Ceri Davies, Executive Director of Evidence Policy and Permitting
Tim Jones, Executive Director Operations North
Prys Davies, Director of Corporate Strategy and Governance

Additional Attendees Present: Tracey Mayes, Chief Executive Business Manager
Catrin Hornung, Head of Communications and External Relations
Sian Williams, Head of North West Wales Operations
Ruth Jenkins, Head of Natural Resource Management Policy - items 4 and 6
Bronia Bendall Lead Specialist Advisor - item 4
Rob Bell, Head of Finance - item 6
Martyn Evans, Head of South West Wales Operation – item 7
Lyn Williams, Transitional Post – item 3
Clive Walmsley, Lead Specialist Advisor: Climate Change & Decarbonisation - item 8
Rhian Jardine, Head of DPAS & Marine Service - item 7

Secretariat: Jenn Jones
Beth Jones

1. Welcome, Apologies & Declaration of Interests

- 1.1 Welcome – Chair welcomed all and members of the public to the meeting.
- 1.2 Apologies noted for Board member Howard C Davies and Catherine Brown

- 1.3 Declaration of interest: None declared

2. Review Public minutes from March Meeting and Action Logs

- 2.1 The March 2019 minutes of the meeting in public were agreed as a correct record of the meeting.
- 2.2 The actions in the action log were considered.

3. Welsh Language Report

Lyn Williams (transitional post) joined the meeting.

- 3.1 NRW has a statutory duty to publish a Welsh Language Report detailing how NRW has met the Welsh Language Standards and how it is developing as a bilingual organisation.
- 3.2 It noted that, at this time, 90% of staff within the organisation can understand or speak some Welsh with a quarter of staff being able to speak the language fluently. NRW's Welsh learning plan has been in place for the last five years and it was noted that 85% of staff who have learnt the language use Welsh in the workplace.
- 3.3 NRW now works closely with the Welsh language Commissioners Office. As a result, there have been less complaints to the Commissioner's Office and any complainants are invited to submit any concerns direct to NRW to consider.
- 3.4 In terms of development of the Welsh Language, NRW needs to consider its role in meeting WG targets as set out in their Welsh Strategy 2050 to have a million speakers that use the language day to day.
- 3.5 Post Organisation Design it is important to map Welsh language skills and identify gaps, to ensure that there is a Welsh speaking member of staff in all teams and that Welsh learners receive the support they need to develop.
- 3.6 Board noted the need to report back in 2020 on changes that have been made. NRW needs to be proactive in ensuring that customers are aware of the bilingual service provided, especially in terms of flood line. It was noted that, compared with other organisations, NRW is regarded as one of the best in offering a bilingual service.

NOTED: Board noted the excellent report and commitment of staff to achieve.

APPROVED: Board approved the report be published by September 2019.

4. Corporate Performance

- 4.1 The Chief Executive set out the final performance report for the 2018/19 financial year. Performance had been regularly reviewed during the year and several red measures had been subject to in-depth scrutiny by the Board at various points in the year. It was

highlighted that overall it was a mixed picture with some excellent areas of performance, but it was acknowledged there were areas where the performance needed to be improved. The Executive Team committed to continue to focus on improving overall performance.

- 4.2 It was noted that the Performance framework for 2019/20 was signed off by the Board at the July 2019 meeting; NRW should be ambitious and set targets high.
- 4.3 The Board noted the impact of OD on delivery and questioned whether this was more prevalent in some areas of the business. The Chief Executive stated the delivery of projected outcomes had been affected across the organisation by OD, but the impact of the unforeseen Fisheries Bylaws inquiry and the Grant Thornton report were particularly noticeable. The Chair referred to the resilience of the organisation and the need for ET to address unplanned issues better, using skills and staff across the organisation. Organisational development will consider transferability of skills and the need for better planning to address unseen upcoming issues that could affect performance. This was seen recently in terms of General Licensing, where working across the organisation and with key external stakeholders was successful.
- 4.4 The Board referred to the red measure around tree and plant health and the need for a change in the way of measuring this to reflect WG standards. The Chief Executive noted that the disease is moving faster than anticipated and the previous target was unrealistic so has been revised and reviewed. NRW is part of a sector wide plant health group, that considers what the policy needs to look like in respect of the disease, which will lead and drive us to undertake action. This sector wide group has reviewed and set the policy framework for WG.
- 4.5 The Board noted that the Finance Planning & Performance Committee has considered the format of the report and the capturing of measured outcomes, however the business needs to consider other significant accomplishments that sit outside the set targets and ensure that they are noted and celebrated, and that staff are made aware that they have been recognised.
- 4.6 The Chief Executive noted thanks to all staff involved, and that the Board have noted the efforts of all staff across the organisation in meeting these targets in the difficult circumstances of organisational design.

5. Health and Well-Being strategy

Bronia Bendall (Lead Specialist Advisor Health & Well-being) and Ruth Jenkins (Head of Natural Resource Management Policy) joined the meeting.

- 5.1 The Executive Director of Evidence Policy and Permitting stated that the aim of this strategy is that health and well-being is reflected across all policies in the organisation. This strategy will help us prioritise what we do to ensure that and to influence the Public Services Board (PSB) members in considering the environment within all their policies.
- 5.2 The agenda for action within the strategy sets out how NRW embeds health in all policies, functions and delivers for our employees. NRW achieved a Silver in Corporate

Health Standards this year. We work with stakeholders at a national level and have an MOU with Public Health Wales but need to meet the challenge to deliver locally and need to ensure we communicate this to the public. It was noted that NRW has a duty to undertake a health impact assessment in 2020.

- 5.3 This is the first NRW Health & Well-Being Strategy and is short term until 2022, aligned to our current corporate plan, giving NRW the opportunity to develop a longer-term vision and continue conversations with external partners.
- 5.4 Next steps:
- Develop a work plan for delivery.
 - Continue to develop our remit which is already having an impact on public health.
 - Build in the environment in all our health policies so we lead by example.
 - Build the practical solutions.
 - Focus on the next version of the strategy.
- 5.5 The Board noted the pressures on health services and a lack of opportunity to think strategically and were interested to note what response comes from the Health Boards. The Executive Director, Operations South, stated that in his views the public health agenda often looks at prevention; NRW therefore needs to continue to explore and develop how we influence strategically and consider what support we can offer health colleagues and PSB's.
- 5.6 Head of North West Wales Operations stated that there are differences to note across Wales in how PSB's work with NRW around health prevention and associated projects; networking and co-working is key, and secondments are being considered to enhance this. Examples were given of partnership projects in the area where NRW are working with GP Trusts, local schools, the National Trust and National park to achieve results for all involved. The Board noted the need to look at priority areas to maximise achievements.
- 5.7 The Board raised the need to demonstrate and record what NRW had achieved and the measures that have been considered to evaluate this. Lead Specialist Advisor Health & Well-being stated that performance indicators have been considered but, as the impact will be seen across the organisation, more discussion is needed with colleagues. It is also noted that more indicators need to be developed for the Health & Well-Being team. Discussions have been had within PSB's to develop some common measures to record combined achievements.
- 5.8 It was noted that children's programmes of outdoor initiatives are ongoing across a wide range of organisations; linking education with the environment and outdoor learning is key and a partnership approach should be explored and developed further. The Lead Specialist Advisor Health & Well-being confirmed work is ongoing on this, with the new structure enhancing the resource available.
- 5.9 The Chair referred to the infrastructure within Public Health, and the need for NRW to consider more radically in how they address the relationship between Public Health and the environment and be possibly more proactive.

- 5.10 The Board emphasised the requirement for increased focus on mental health, and the opportunity to undertake intergeneration work to support an aging population and link with the work of Dementia Friends. Also noted was the work being done across the third sector, and the need for NRW to ensure that all within the communities can interact and take part in activities.
- 5.11 The Chief Executive noted that our more successful projects have been in partnership with the National Trust and the challenge between now and 2022 is to work with other partners to achieve more across the environment sector. The Lead Specialist Advisor Health & Well-being confirmed this is being considered under MOU's.

6. Grants Strategy

Rob Bell (Head of Finance) joined the meeting.

- 6.1 The Executive Director of Evidence Policy and Permitting stated that the new grants mechanism was endorsed at the May 2019 Board, and since then Board members and staff have been involved in the consideration and development of this overarching strategy framework.
- 6.2 The Head of Natural Resource Management detailed why it is important to have a grant package and programme and how the procedures and policy has been developed, to facilitate how we work with others through our grant funding programme. Consideration of outcomes have been made in line with the corporate plan, business plan and place-based plans. Feedback from stakeholders has been considered. In particular, the third sector has been clear that they are not ready for another competitive fund and they were pleased to see the mechanisms that had been put in place. This programme will enable staff to be much more agile in how they use their budgets to work with others and take the opportunities that come out of the PSB's
- 6.3 The Head of Finance confirmed that, whilst there is an allocated budget, there is also the opportunity for staff to use other programme / project budgets.
- 6.4 The Board noted the need to ensure that monitoring is emphasised so that we can make sure maximum value for money is achieved. The Head of Natural Resource Management Policy confirmed that the mechanism for delivery monitoring is being developed, considering how much risk NRW are prepared to take around these new ways of working, projects and new partners. The Chair suggested that measured outcomes be agreed with the partner / applicant; however, it was noted that it was standard for those being given grant opportunities to have a report form to submit.
- 6.5 The Board queried how strategic partners will be identified and whether they would change with changing priorities. Head of Natural Resource Management confirmed there will be a need to be agile but this will not be an annual process. This will possibly be an opportunity to work with some strategic partners with whom the relationship with NRW has faltered and suffered in recent years.
- 6.6 The Chair noted the need for publicity and a launch of the programme when all preparatory work is completed.

ACTION: Consider a launch of the Grants Strategy to publicise new ways of working when the programme and processes are completed.

7. Area statements update

Martyn Evans (Head of South West Wales Operation) and Rhian Jardine (Head of DPAS & Marine Service) joined the meeting

- 7.1 The Executive Director, Operations South stated that whilst currently NRW's focus is the delivery of the Area Statements, we should remind ourselves that this is the second significant product of the Environment Act, with SONNaR being the first. The intention of the Area Statements is to provide a key evidence base to inform the next round of Well-Being Plans at the Public Service Boards.
- 7.2 The Head of South West Wales Operations highlighted that that this is a national update from the seven areas; highlighting risks and deliverables and setting out the dashboard measures which will be the focus of the deliverables for the year. Dashboard measures will record:
- Engagement sessions scheduled until September 2019
 - Looking at options
 - Looking at options of intervention.
- 7.3 The process has included working with EPP and engagement with internal teams across the organisation. This is a new concept for all internally, but we are now able to consult externally, engaging using evidence that has come through from WG, SONNaR and PSB objectives. We have also established a Critical Friends group from which feedback has been received. The approach across Wales is the same as are the outcomes; a consistent message and approach will be adopted but always considering the difference in 'place.' It was noted that statistics of web interaction shows interest from across the UK.
- 7.4 The Board referred to stakeholder response and to a degree of cynicism in some areas with some consultation apathy. However, the Head of South West Wales Operations stated that no negativity has been noted from officer feedback and a participatory mapping approach has been taken in programming the interaction with stakeholders.
- 7.5 Regarding the 7th area, Marine, the Head of DPAS & Marine Service stated there is engagement with a consultancy sub-group of WG and conversations with other small groups planned to look at emerging themes. It was noted that all deliverables and actions would not be the sole responsibility of NRW across the 7 areas.
- 7.6 Engagement achieved between May and September will be reviewed across all areas. It was noted that emerging themes are:
- sustainable land management,
 - decline of biodiversity,
 - climate change,
 - improving health.
- However, it was noted that subtly different themes are emerging in some areas.
-

- 7.7 Roger Cooper, Chair of the WG Woodland Strategy Advisory Panel, added that WG has set a major target in terms of the creation of new forest as part of their decarbonisation programme. Area statements should show priority areas where woodland creation could take place, however the forestry sector has an issue in identifying and getting permission through NRW to plant new forests. He stated that the forestry sector would be keen to engage in consultation on the area statements.
- 7.8 The Head of Natural Resource Management confirmed that NRW has been using mapping tools to provide information for consideration at Area Statement consultations.

ACTION 1: Area statement progress to be reviewed further at the November Board meeting – giving more consideration to emerging themes.

ACTION 2: Circulate a list of opportunities for Board engagement in remaining Area Statement stakeholder events - Head of South West Wales Operation

ACTION 3: Circulate a list of the Emerging Themes of all 7 Area Statements - Head of South West Wales Operation

8. Climate Change

Clive Walmsley (Lead Specialist Advisor, Climate Change & Decarbonisation) joined the meeting.

- 8.1 A presentation was made recently to the First Minister and Minister for the Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs on NRW's response to the WG Climate Change Emergency. As requested in July Board, a top ten of possible interventions has been developed, which, with the Board support, need to be prioritised. There will then be a need to move forward to consider scheduling, cost and whether they are wholly within the remit of NRW.
- 8.2 The Lead Specialist Advisor, Climate Change & Decarbonisation stated that this is an interim update; work is ongoing in bringing the areas of the organisation together to discuss. To reach this point consideration has been given to our work already on Carbon Positive projects, UK Committee on Climate Change recommendations, and the Low Carbon Delivery Programme published in March by WG.
- 8.3 Top 10 responses for consideration are as follows:
- Deep peat restoration
 - Woodland Creation
 - Renewable Energy generation
 - EV Infrastructure and vehicles
 - Low Carbon Heat and energy buildings and assets
 - Procurement related emissions.
 - Influencing external emissions reduction across Wales, in the Welsh Public sector.
 - Planning DPAS service / role and regulatory role of NRW – explore internally and with WG
 - Work to influence change in behaviour and culture of staff and public, in respect of decarbonisation in partnership with Cardiff University
-

- Evaluate and communicate current impacts of climate change in Wales to stimulate further discussion.
- 8.4 The Board were pleased to see the attention and focus given to the emergency. The result of addressing some elements and the effect this would have on other issues was highlighted, as was the possible role of the grants process in taking forward actions with stakeholders. WG have been asked for their input and a copy of this presentation will be forwarded to the First Minister and Minister.
- 8.5 Board noted the financial impacts of delivering the top 10 listed and asked whether there was an indication of additional support and funding from WG. The Chief Executive stated that current conversations with WG are in respect of £4m for Peat Bog Restoration only.
- 8.6 Roger Cooper, Chair of WG Woodland Strategy Advisory Panel, added that in respect of woodland creation it seems that funding to create woodland on NRW estate will not be forthcoming and having access to wind farm royalties is possibly the only way forward. It seems the opportunity is on farm land; providing and convincing farmers on creating woodland is key. He stated that as a trustee of Coed Cymru he is aware of the availability of 2,000 hectares of farm woodland potential but the funding and approval system needs attention. Removing some of the barriers that exist on creating woodland on farmland is key. There is a need to add to the matrix that a key multiple benefit of increasing the woodland estate is timber production and the opportunity to possibly lock up carbon beyond the harvesting of the trees in wood products.

9. AOB

- 9.1 An Update on Dementia Friends was provided:
- decision for adopting a more ambitious plan has been delegated to the Business Boards, it was emphasised that to be able to meet any set measures there is a need for a quick decision.
 - A request has been received from Public Health Wales for details of NRW activities for memory loss.
 - House of Memories is being taken forward, and a meeting has been held with Welsh Ambulance.

Close of meetings