

Agenda

Title of meeting:	NRW Board Public Meeting
Date of meeting:	Thursday 20 th March 2025
Time of meeting:	09:00 – 12:40

Time	Item
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Preliminary Matters

09:00
(5 mins)

Item 1. Open Meeting

- Welcome
- Declaration of Interests
- Explain conduct of meeting

Sponsor and Presenter: Sir David Henshaw (Chair)

Summary: To NOTE any declarations of interest

09:05
(5 mins)

Item 2. Review Minutes and Action Log

2A. Review Minutes from Public 23rd January Meeting

2B. Review Public Action Log

Sponsor and Presenter: Sir David Henshaw (Chair)

Summary: To APPROVE the minutes of the previous meeting and the Action Log

Setting the Scene

09:10
(10 mins)

Item 3. Update from the Chair

Sponsor and Presenter: Sir David Henshaw (Chair)

Summary: To NOTE the Chair's update to the Board

09:20
(10 mins)

Item 4. Report from the Chief Executive

Sponsor and Presenter: Ceri Davies, Acting Chief Executive

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

Paper Ref: 25-03-B11

Governance, Risk and Assurance

09:30
(20 mins)

Item 5. Update Reports of Committees and Forums

Sponsors and Presenters: Committee Chairs

- Audit and Risk Assurance Committee
- Evidence Advisory Committee
- Finance Committee – 6th February & 5th March (Verbal)
Paper Ref: 25-03-B24
- Flood Risk Management Committee – 11th February (*Joint FRMC/LEC meeting*)
- Land Estate Committee – 11th February
Paper Ref: 25-03-B12
- People and Customer Committee – 19th February
Paper Ref: 25-03-B13
- Protected Areas Committee – 13th February
Paper Ref: 25-03-B14

- Wales Land Management Forum
Paper Ref: 25-03-B23
- Wales Fisheries Forum
- Wales Water Management Forum – No meeting
- National Access Forum for Wales
- Enabling the Environmental Sector Group (Verbal)

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

Strategic Planning

09:50
(30 mins)

Item 6. Strategic Discussion: Regulation in a Time of Growth

Sponsor: Dom Driver, Acting Executive Director of Evidence, Policy and Permitting

Presenter: Nadia De'Longhi, Head of Regulation and Permitting; Martin Cox, Head of Operations; Mary Lewis, Head of Natural Resource Management Policy; Ruth Jenkins, Head of Development Planning and Marine

Summary: A strategic discussion about the implications of our changing operating environment to achieve the benefits envisaged in our Corporate Plan and manage our strategic risks.

Delivering Our Plan

10:20
(20 mins)

Item 7. Finance Performance Report

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

Presenter: Mark Collins, Business Finance Team 2 Manager

Summary: To APPROVE the latest financial position

Paper Ref: 25-03-B17

10:30
(20 mins)

Item 8. Business Plan Performance Dashboard Quarterly Update

Sponsor: Executive Team

Presenter: Ceri Davies, Acting Chief Executive

Summary: To APPROVE the Business Plan Performance Dashboard Quarterly Update Q3

Paper Ref: 25-03-B18

10:50
(20 mins)

Item 9. NRW on X (Formerly Twitter)

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

Presenter: Meinir Wigley, Head of Communications and Digital Transformation

Summary: To APPROVE the approach

Paper Ref: 25-03-B19

**11:10
(15 mins)**

Break

**11:25
(30 mins)**

Item 10. Motorsports on the Land in the Care of Natural Resources Wales

Sponsor: Dom Driver, Acting Executive Director of Evidence, Policy and Permitting

Presenter: Rachel Chamberlain, Acting Head of Land Stewardship;
Dave Liddy, Lead Specialist Advisor, Estate Recreation Planning

Summary: To discuss the implementation of the recently agreed Strategy

Paper Ref: 25-03-B20

Discussion by Exception

**11:55
(0 mins)**

Item 11. Wellbeing, Health and Safety Quarterly Report

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

Presenter: Charlotte Morgan, Wellbeing, Health and Safety Manager

Summary: To APPROVE the Wellbeing, Health and Safety Quarterly Report Q3

Paper Ref: 25-03-B21

**11:55
(5 mins)**

Item 12. AOB

**12:00
(10 mins)**

Item 13. How did we do in this meeting?

Sponsor: Sir David Henshaw, Chair

Summary: Review of the meeting

12:10

Close Meeting

**12:20
(20 mins)**

Public Q&A

12:40

Close Public Meeting

DRAFT Unconfirmed Minutes

Title of meeting: NRW Board Meeting – Public Meeting

Location: Board Room, CP2 and Microsoft Teams

Date of meeting: 23rd January 2025

Board Members present: Sir David Henshaw
Prof Steve Ormerod, Deputy Chair
Ceri Davies, Acting Chief Executive
Geraint Davies
Dr Pete Fox
Prof Calvin Jones
Lesley Jones
Prof Rhys Jones
Mark McKenna
Kath Palmer
Helen Pittaway
Dr Rosie Plummer

Executive Team Members present: 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

Attendees present: Phil Williams, Head of Governance and Board Secretary (All items)
Rob Bell, Head of Finance – items 7 and 8
Vic Rose-Piper, Head of Business Support Services and Adfywio – Item 9
Lisa Phillips, Senior Specialist Advisor, Regulatory Approaches – Item 9
Naomi Lawrence, Head of Customer Experience – Item 9
Andrew Jones, Business Transformation Manager – Item 9
Silas Jones, Renewal Services Manager – Item 9

	Charlotte Morgan, Wellbeing Health & Safety Manager – Item 9 Dion Griffiths (Teams), Lead Specialist Advisor, Organisational Development – Item 9
NRW Observers present:	None
Public Observers present:	Additional members of the public
Apologies:	Clare Pillman, Chief Executive
Secretariat:	Natalie Williams, Deputy Board Secretary and Board Secretariat Team Leader Rhiannon Spencer, Board Secretariat Team
Declarations of Interest:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr Rosie Plummer - Member Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority - wide-ranging interactions including Withy hedge with NRW including National Park landscape designation and protections including SAC rivers, Marine zones, diverse grant recipient and collaborator • Geraint Davies – Mentor with Farming Connect; Associate of Pwllpeiran Upland Research Centre; Section 16 Land Management Agreement in place with NRW • Prof Rhys Jones – part of a funded research project with Coventry University that will be examining the development and early implementation of the Sustainable Farming Scheme • Prof. Calvin Jones – A member of WG’s Biodiversity Metrics Advisory Panel • Ceri Davies – A trustee of Keep Wales Tidy

Item 1. Open Meeting

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

Item 2. Review Minutes and Action Log

Item 2A. Review Minutes from the 21st November Meeting

2. The minutes from the public Board meeting on 21st November were reviewed and agreed.

Item 2B. Review Action Log

3. The Action Log was reviewed and noted.

Item 3. Update from the Chair

4. The Chair updated the Board on the recruitment process for new Board members. A report was being prepared for the First Minister for members to join the Board in 2025. The Chair commended Welsh Government (WG) on the process and thanked the teams for their assistance.

Item 4. Report from the Chief Executive

5. The Acting Chief Executive (ACEO) gave an update on items in addition to the written Report. Following the recent storms, NRW continued to work with the local authorities in the most affected areas and would continue their work on the estates. Further weather warnings had been announced, with teams on standby to provide support.
6. There was ongoing work with Rhondda Cynon Taff (RCT), discussions were taking place regarding how to progress key areas of work in a number of areas. It was recognised that this was a Team Wales effort to help communities become more resilient. Further updates would be provided to the Board on the work and the incident reviews.
7. The team were aware that the season for spreading on land had ended around Wales. Queries and concerns had been received around river pollution; Pollution regulations were in place to ensure discussions with farmers were taking place.
8. The Acting Executive Director of Evidence Policy and Permitting (EPP) provided an update on his appearance at the Climate Change Environment and Infrastructure Committee to provide evidence on metal mines, quarries and coal tips, whilst also highlighting NRW's role in this area. An enquiry into biodiversity had been published. Further evidence had been provided and NRW were working with WG as the Nature Conservation Body. The Board queried how recommendations would be taken forward. The Committee were reviewing work around water environment, and infrastructure work.
9. NRW had retained the ISO 45001 Occupational Health and Safety Management Standard with no minor non-conformities. The success on effort with improving wellbeing health and safety in the organisation was noted.
10. BBC had been in contact in relation to the Wthyhedge Landfill investigation, to which NRW had been receiving a high level of complaints throughout January. The methane levels had been assessed and were overall low, although they were slightly elevated in one area; The teams would continue to regulate and substantiate these. A higher level of complaints was also being received in relation to the Hafod Landfill site and experts had identified areas of improvement for the site.

11. An update was provided on the Sustainable Farming Scheme (SFS). There had been a description change in the assessment, but the teams were hopeful in terms of what they could do for nature. The Board queried what NRW's view was in terms of changes in the SFS, and requested an update on the discussions taking place with the community groups. NRW were able to maintain what they currently had in biodiversity and conservation for the future and had been clear with WG of the targets being set in this area. Additional funding had been secured for when the Scheme came in.
12. The Board discussed how the management plans would be designed for specific sites in relation to the SFS. It was suggested that the Protected Areas Committee (PrAC) could monitor the progress of the management plans for designated sites, as it was crucial for land owners regarding the management of protected sites. Geraint Davies, Board member, highlighted that NRW would be visiting and assessing the protected areas on his site, ahead of the work that would be introduced.
13. Public meetings had taken place with the Board members in terms of the three visitor centres. The next steps were highlighted, including the opening of citizens space, inviting people with interest to do something at the three visitor centres. The teams were listening to what the community wanted to see there and discussions were ongoing for taking over provisions for the centres. NRW were awaiting legal advice, but noted that from 1st April 2025 there would be a refreshment provision at Bwlch Nant yr Arian and Coed y Brenin. Small investments were being made and the majority of the handover planning had been completed with a detailed demobilisation.
14. The Acting Executive Director of EPP provided an update on NRW's main responsibilities on the coal tips and quarries and would be representing NRW throughout the continuation of work with the local authorities and WG. An explanation of how the Disused Mine and Quarry Tips (Wales) Bill would work was provided and NRW supported the provisions and approach, as this was key for climate change. The costs were outlined and capital funding had been received from WG. However, there was a requirement to review the revenue and maintenance costs.

ACTION: The Acting Executive Director of EPP to provide an update on the coal tips and the Disused Mine and Quarry Tips (Wales) Bill to the Board.

Item 5. Update Reports of Committees and Forums

15. Kath Palmer, Chair of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC) gave an update from the meeting held on 13th December. The Internal Drainage Districts (IDD's) had been raised by Audit Wales and ARAC had requested a further briefing note. Also discussed was the progress made with risk management and ARAC would have oversight of the Governance Action Tracker and the Governance Action Plan (GAP). Two follow up audits had been raised as they would be delayed to 2026, due to the concerns around resourcing for these audits. It was agreed that the Executive Team (ET) would be picking up the action on resources. The Committee also discussed the risks and outcomes involved in the Case for Change (CfC).

ACTION: Secretariat to include a standing item for Governance on the Board Forward Look.

16. Helen Pittaway, Chair of the Finance Committee (FC) updated the Board from the meetings held on 5th December and 8th January. The Committee discussed NRW2030 and the concerns around a stabilised ICT project due to the lack of resources. FC also reviewed the financial performance, budget and business planning.
17. The financial impact of the recent storms was discussed and had queried whether NRW had made these costs clear with WG. The ACEO would follow up on where NRW were in terms of ensuring that resources were available, and suggested that it could be easier in terms flood assets and wind assets to make an estimate on other impacts. Discussions had taken place regarding the impact of the Warning and Informing team, as some staff were unable to carry out the business as usual (BAU) work. This would be reviewed to provide feedback to WG.
18. Prof. Steve Ormerod, Chair of the Evidence Advisory Committee (EAC) highlighted the Board members' invitation to NRW's Evidence Conference on 30th January 2025, where there would be discussions regarding how NRW were using evidence and turning it into impact.
19. Dr Pete Fox, Chair of the Flood Risk Management Committee (FRMC), updated the Board on the meeting held on 9th January. A review had been done on this years' Capital Programme. FRMC discussed the Outline Business Case (OBC) that attempted to set out the risks associated with the Capital Programme, including what risks should be progressed; the Committee gained a greater understanding of the risks carried with a large number of projects and programmes. Also discussed was the IDD's precepts and rates paper and the strategic discussion on IDD's had been deferred to the joint FRMC and Land Estate Committee (LEC) meeting.
20. Mark McKenna, Chair of the People and Customer Committee (PCC) provided an update on 10th December meeting, where they had discussed the strategic risks; the new People Strategy; the CfC; and the ISO 45001. A discussion on the People Strategy would be added to the Board Forward Look.

ACTION: Secretariat to add an item for the People Strategy to the Board Forward Look.

21. Prof Rhys Jones, Chair of the Wales Land Management Forum (WLMF), updated the Board. The Forum was presented with the Forestry Industry Strategy and considered all elements that were important in terms of NRW's objectives and the Land-use Strategy in Wales. It was queried how stakeholders viewed the changes and whether they were accepting them. There had been a positive response and although there had been some uncertainty in some aspects, this was a pathway they could support.
22. Prof Steve Ormerod, Chair of the Wales Fisheries Forum (WFF) and the Wales Water Management Forum (WWMF) updated the Board. The main theme in the WFF meeting was around the work of partners and collaborators. The catch numbers for the Atlantic Salmon were being monitored. Salmon and Seatrout byelaws had been brought in

following a review in 2020. The Forum discussed whether the byelaws were fit for purpose. The Board noted that the Dee LIFE Project would be concluding and it was important to have a new scheme in place to continue with the work already done. It was confirmed that there were ongoing activities and the Four Rivers for LIFE Project had attracted news and attention but funding issues had been identified. The Board discussed whether NRW could pursue alternative forms of funding or whether private sector involvement was possible. There was follow up work ongoing with the Teifi trial, to provide the follow on after a project had ended and to retain the improvement progress.

23. Rosie Plummer, who deputised as Chair of the National Access Forum for Wales (NAFW), updated the Board on the recent meeting. There had been discussions on national parks around encouraging sustainable transportation and the successful partnership working with stakeholders. The Landscapes Programme was discussed as well as liaising with stakeholders on the consultation for the new proposed national park. NAFW were presented with a shared approach to reducing the level crossing risks from Network Rail staff. There were a number of opportunities for collaboration and new ways of thinking in relation to funding and biodiversity.
24. Lesley Jones, Chair of the Enabling the Environment Sector Group (EESG) updated the Board on the meeting that took place with the Heritage Lottery Fund and how they could contribute. A meeting would be arranged between HLF and the Acting Chief Executive to discuss NRW's involvement.

Item 6. Board Business Management

25. The Chair introduced the item. The structure of the public session would be reviewed by the Chair and the Board Secretariat team, including how the Q&A session would be facilitated in future meetings.

ACTION: The Chair and the Head of Governance and Board Secretary to review how the public Q&A sessions would be facilitated in future meetings and bring a proposal back to the Board.

26. There were no Board member items to discuss.
27. The Forward Look was reviewed and discussed.

Item 7. Finance Performance Report

Presenter: Rob Bell, Head of Finance

28. The Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Services introduced the item. The Head of Finance provided an update on the Finance Performance Report. Funding had increased and the main component was an increase in Grant in Aid (GiA) from WG and the pay award uplift. The main variances on the expenditure were highlighted and NRW were carrying some risks in terms of underspend within the budget, but this was being actively monitored. Funds could be allocated through other pressures, which would be discussed with FC. A request had been made to WG for NRW to be able to use the Flood budget elsewhere on other Capital projects.

29. The risks and issues had been outlined and further clarity had been provided on the majority of items on the position towards the end of the year. The message to the wider organisation was to spend the budget but they would need to inform the Finance team if this was not possible. The budget provision for redundancies had been recognised, and the Finance team should have the figures in March 2025. WG had approached NRW and had requested that £7m would be paid into the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS). This would benefit NRW and the Board were asked for approval. WG would increase the GiA, which would be removed from the employee's contribution.
30. Responding to a Board query there would be a consultation regarding the timber sector's role, which may lead to different ways of working. There were some issues with the dispatch that would be continuously monitored. If trends were identified where people would commit to a sale, but not remove the timber, the Contract Management team would become involved. There was an appetite for saw mills to take on more and the Timber Industrial Strategy was NRW's chance to shape and change. The history of timber standards and contract management had significantly strengthened.
31. Although there were still some risks and opportunities that would need to be confirmed, the information was provided to give Board an idea of the scale of work the Finance team were dealing with. Discussions were ongoing to identify ways on managing the risks.

APPROVED: The Board approved the change in forecast from £272.9m to a forecasted £275.3m.

APPROVED: The Board approved the payment to the Environment Agency Pension Fund (EAPF) of up to £7m.

Item 8. Internal Drainage Districts Budget

Presenter: Rob Bell, Head of Finance

32. The Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Services introduced the item. The Head of Finance provided an overview of the Internal Drainage Districts (IDD) budget for the Board's approval. The Board were content that this had been fully scrutinised at FC and approved the IDD Budget.

APPROVED: The Board approved the Internal Drainage Districts Budget.

Item 9. NRW2030 & Transformation Update

Presenters: Vic Rose-Piper, Head of Business Support Services and Adfywio; Sarah Williams, Head of Corporate Strategy and PMO; Lisa Phillips, Senior Specialist Advisor, Regulatory Approaches; Naomi Lawrence, Head of Customer Experience; Andrew Jones, Business Transformation Manager; Silas Jones, Renewal Services Manager; Charlotte Morgan, Wellbeing Health & Safety Manager; Dion Griffiths, Lead Specialist Advisor, Organisational Development

33. The Head of Business Support Services and Adfywio introduced the item. The Wellbeing, Health and Safety Manager presented the Learning Management System

(LMS) drivers, and a demonstration of the LMS platform was provided by the Lead Specialist Advisor, Organisational Development. It was noted that the ISO45001 external auditor had welcomed the new LMS system and the Board appreciated the step changes.

34. It was recommended that Board members join the LMS for a series of courses, there would be advice as to whether these were compulsory or optional. It was clarified that staff could download their training records and copies of certificates. It needed to be clarified if the LMS could be shared with wider external audiences.

ACTION: The Wellbeing Health & Safety Manager to clarify if the LMS could be shared with external audiences.

35. The Board suggested that an introduction to all areas of the business be available for the whole organisation. The e-induction would be accessible and could be used for strategic workforce planning. Lessons learned and evaluation would be ongoing. It was recognised that the platform did have further functionalities which would be considered moving forward. The Board welcomed the new LMS.

36. The Renewal Services Manager presented the Electric Vehicle (EV) Transition Plan. The Board supported the approach, particularly staff engagement and suggested using the adopters as advocates. The Board commended the work undertaken and future collaboration opportunities.

37. In response to queries raised, an explanation was provided for the use of the 40kW A/C charger with the capacity to use a fuel card for public charging. The team were currently looking to switch electricity suppliers to a more flexible green tariff, what was available domestically was not available to the public sector framework and lobbying energy providers was an option. On the LMS there would be e-learning driving modules on optimising energy efficiencies and to give confidence.

38. There were capacity and resource challenges in increasing on-site renewable generation to feed into the batteries and this would take time. There were ongoing discussions with WG on identifying charges to share and EV joint procurement opportunities. The team were also looking at the back-office software to allow charging point access to other public sector staff. It was confirmed that there was a Charging Strategy in place with priority charging options available.

39. Financial modelling was being undertaken on EV running and maintenance costs and the variables were explained. There were currently no plans to give the public access to the charging points, but the alignment to connect with people was noted. An update on salary sacrifice for staff was provided and this would be revisited later in the year which the Board appreciated.

40. The Board were informed that due to resource and funding challenges the Programme was running behind schedule but work was now being accelerated. There were no immediate plans to install home chargers but it was thought that staff with the infrastructure to charge company EVs at home were reimbursed. The Board would be interested in seeing the results from a lessons learned exercise.

41. The Head of Customer Experience presented the Customer Platform, explaining its integrated capabilities and evolving nature of continuous improvement. Developing internal skills would empower staff to iterate BAU services moving forward, to reduce the reliance on external support.
42. Marine was the first service being hypothesis tested in Phase I – Alpha and the Senior Specialist Advisor, Regulatory Approaches outlined the initial research undertaken; WG funding had now been secured. The three key simultaneous workstreams were explained and feedback from engagement with staff and customers, had been positive. The opportunities identified in marine could be adopted in other services across the organisation. The Centre for Digital Public Services would provide assurance before moving on to Phase II – Beta.
43. The Board appreciated the methodology with engagement with staff. A potential design of the platform was shared. Other platforms could be layered for joint geographical information and the system would be automated where appropriate. The challenges were acknowledged and the narrative would be communicated to WG. There were collaboration opportunities, and other public sector body patterns were being followed to provide familiarity.
44. During the Alpha investigative phase, a number of different products could be identified but the key element would be the integration and increasing in-house knowledge of managing the systems to future proof. A suggestion was made to consider the Rural Payments Wales (RPW) structure for future development. Data-sharing with other organisations was also under consideration.
45. The Board felt it would be helpful to have a future session on NRW2030's over-arching vision. The roadmap work was highlighted, but key deliverables were needed. The Board realised the ambition and the constraints with current resources. The Board welcomed the three presentations and requested information on the way forward over the next five years. The NRW2030 Programme needed to be accelerated but needed adequate resource. It was explained that Deloitte were only looking at parts of the Programme but there was scope for further, or other expert involvement.
46. The current work of Digital, Data and Technology (DDaT), bringing multi-directional teams together and securing an ICT delivery partner was noted.

Item 10. How Did We Do in This Meeting

Sponsor and Presenter: Sir David Henshaw, Chair

47. The Board reflected on the meeting and noted the productivity and value in the in-person meetings.

Item 11. AOB

48. Prof. Steve Ormerod noted the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organisation's annual meeting, which would bring together relevant government and EU parties. Defra and NRW were involved in bringing the meeting to Cardiff between 2nd and 5th June

2025. There would be a number of events in various parts of Cardiff being hosted for the Board to attend.

Meeting Closed

Public Q&A

49. The Chair introduced the public Q&A session.

50. A query was raised regarding the visitor centres. There was ongoing work to protect what National Nature Reserve (NNR) activities would need to be addressed. The visitor centres and the NNR remained available for the public to visit. The Board acknowledged and welcomed the invitation to visit Ynyslas. The teams involved in the work with the visitor centres had recognised that not all were the same.

Public Meeting Closed

Board Action Log – Public

Action No.	Meeting Category	Meeting Date	Item No	Para No	Paper Sponsor	Action	Owner	Due	Status	Notes/Updates
46	Public	21/11/2024	5	11	Committee Chairs	ACTION: The Head of Evidence and Knowledge to provide the draft Evidence Strategy to the Board.	Chris Collins, Head of Evidence and Knowledge	23/01/2025	Completed	Suggest closing – update previously circulated to the Board via Dom Driver
4	Public	23/01/2025	4	14	Ceri Davies	ACTION: The Acting Executive Director of EPP to provide an update on the coal tips and the Disused Mine and Quarry Tips (Wales) Bill to the Board.	Dom Driver, Acting Exec Director of EPP	19/03/2025	Completed	Suggest closing - update circulated to the Board on 24/01/2025
5	Public	23/01/2025	5	15	Committee Chairs	ACTION: Secretariat to include a standing item for Governance on the Board Forward Look.	Secretariat	19/03/2025	Completed	Suggest closing - Standing item for Governance added to the Board Forward Look
6	Public	23/01/2025	5	20	Committee Chairs	ACTION: Secretariat to add an item for the People Strategy to the Board Forward Look.	Secretariat	19/03/2025	Completed	Suggest closing - Added to Board Forward Look for November (on PCC Forward Look for Sept)
7	Public	23/01/2025	6	25	Sir David Henshaw	ACTION: The Chair and the Head of Governance and Board Secretary to review how the public Q&A sessions would be facilitated in future meetings and bring a proposal back to the Board.	Phil Williams, Head of Governance and Board Secretary	19/03/2025	Ongoing	
8	Public	23/01/2025	9	34	Rachael Cunningham	ACTION: The Wellbeing Health & Safety Manager to clarify if the LMS could be shared with external audiences.	Charlotte Morgan, WH&S Manager	19/03/2025	Ongoing	

NRW Board Paper

Date of meeting:	20 March 2025
Title of Paper:	Chief Executive's Report (Public Session)
Paper Reference:	25-03-B11
Paper presented by:	Ceri Davies, Acting Chief Executive
Purpose	Information and discussion
Summary	The paper provides the Board with an update on current issues.

Introduction

1. The annual Evidence Conference took place at the end of January. As always, this was well attended and very well presented, with a wide range of topics and some excellent speakers from our own teams and external stakeholders. We were grateful to Claire Bennett, Director of Climate Change and Environmental Sustainability at Welsh Government (WG) for her keynote speech on the evidence needed for the sustainable management of natural resources in Wales, and Professor Jasper Kenter of Aberystwyth Business School for his thoughts on the value of valuation evidence. On the second day, Dr Aisling Lannin of the Marine Management Organisation spoke engagingly about evidence culture. A huge thank you to all of our internal contributors too, for ensuring the conference remains one of the most important and thought-provoking highlights of our year.
2. Following the storms and flooding at the end of 2024, I have had further meetings with Simon Brown, Services Director at the Met Office, and Councillor Andrew Morgan, leader of Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council. With the Met Office we considered the lessons learned reviews each are undertaking and how we understand uncertainties in our capability to make informed decisions, and we will continue working with the Met Office to improve our planning and prediction in relation to storm events. We are also considering what further investment may be needed to support enhanced capability. My discussions with Cllr Morgan have focused on the significant impact of flooding on residents and businesses in Pontypridd, and the potential for improving the take up of our flood warning services, improving community resilience and how we adapt our flood monitoring

and warning service based on experience. Both Andrew and I are determined to continue working collaboratively for the benefit of communities.

3. I have also met with Marian Spain, CEO of Natural England (NE), and Nick Halfhide, interim CEO at Nature Scot. This was a useful discussion, focused on how we can raise the profile of nature conservation and restoration, and how we focus our resources on the actions that will result in the best outcomes. We plan – with NE hosting – to bring together the Chairs and Chief Executives of all the nature conservation bodies to reinforce our collaborative working.
4. In February, I was delighted to attend the signing of a new Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between NRW, Cadw and Heneb (formerly the Welsh Archaeological Trusts). We have had such agreements in place since 2016, setting out our common objectives and understanding in respect of shared interests in the historic and natural environments. The latest MoU promotes ongoing collaboration and partnership to ensure more effective land management strategies and the continued preservation of natural and cultural heritage sites.
5. The Chief Executives of Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water (DCWW), Afonydd Cymru and I met with the Deputy First Minister and Counsel General to provide an update on the progress and outcomes to be delivered by the Teifi Demonstration Catchment (TDC). This project is led by DCWW and NRW. As CEOs, the three of us are providing support to our teams to work together and with a wide range of stakeholders to deliver short, medium and long-term scalable actions to improve river water quality in the Teifi catchment, whilst encouraging climate resilience and enhanced biodiversity, in line with the sustainable management of natural resources principles. We aim to develop innovative and agile regulatory and evidence communication approaches to support a range of interventions.
6. Gareth O'Shea and I met with the leadership of the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) in March to ensure we are working together to deliver our responsibilities for the communities of Wales. We collaborate with them under the umbrella of our revised MoU, signed in September 2023, which sets out the architecture for effective communication at tiered levels between WLGA, NRW and individual local authorities. This way of working is helping us to establish more trusted relationships and communicate more effectively regarding our common objectives. This month, our meeting considered the challenges of storm events and flooding affecting communities in Wales, budgetary matters and an update on our Case for Change programme.
7. Several of our teams have achieved excellent results in the last month. Our ICT team attained the Information Assurance for Small and Medium Enterprises (IASME) Cyber Assurance Level 2 Award. This is the first year we have undertaken work to achieve this advanced accreditation, which is valid for three years and reflects compliance with thirteen cybersecurity themes ranging from planning and organisation for information security, to incident management, protecting assets and business continuity. The assessment involved a

comprehensive audit of our cybersecurity controls and the accreditation confirms that we have robust security, privacy and data protection measures in place.

8. Congratulations also to our Wildlife Management teams, who have worked with an external assessor on our British Quality Wild Venison (BQWV) audit. The audit found no non-conformance and our venison production across the four larder sites was commended. More detail on this is included in the report below.
9. Our Internal Audit team has also had success with two colleagues passing exams on their way to achieving Certified Internal Auditor status. The full certification will follow on completion of their practical experience in July this year. The qualification is awarded by the Global Internal Audit Institute, and passing the exams is a huge achievement as the standard is high and the success rate only 48%. Our two internal auditors have done so at the first attempt, having joined our team in 2023.
10. The Executive Team and I continue to look for opportunities to connect more regularly with colleagues at all levels. We now routinely host the Managers' Monthly Update call, using this time to set context, cascade information from Board meetings and Committees and provide insight into strategic decisions – and to respond directly to questions from our management colleagues. We are also spending more time in our offices and depots, providing visible leadership and chatting to colleagues to better understand their views and feelings. In the same spirit of open communication, we are having more frequent discussions with our Trade Union partners, and welcome their ongoing constructive engagement with us.
11. I completed the Civil Service College Accounting Officer training in February. Thanks to WG colleagues David Richards, Director of Governance, and Tracey Burke, Director General Climate Change and Rural Affairs, and to Brian Whalley of the Civil Service College for supporting me in this role prior to the course.

Strategic Issues

30 by 30 Update

12. Work with Welsh Government on achieving the “30 by 30” commitment to protect and manage 30% of land, freshwater and sea for nature by 2030 is reaching a key milestone. In early March, the Biodiversity Deep Dive core group considered, among other things:
 - Proposals for contributions by the Other Effective Conservation Measures (OECM) mechanism, an emerging mechanism for describing a geographic site that delivers long-term biodiversity conservation under equitable governance and management. As part of this, we have mapped the land in our care and established that the network of ancient woodland, riparian zones, low impact silviculture (current and planned) and other non-woodland

habitats such as peatland could form the basis of an estate-wide OECM. This is around 30% or 40,000ha of the land in our care. This flows from the Strategy for Nature on the Land in our Care from which we resolved that OECMs were almost certainly the way forward to a more dynamic approach to defining success in biodiversity conservation. Our offer positions us as being ambitious for delivery of 30 by 30 and innovative in using the land in our care to work out how to deliver the commitment via sustainable management of natural resources.

- Thinking on the role of designated sites (National Parks and National Landscapes) in 30 by 30, with a debate on whether they can themselves contribute to 30 by 30 or whether elements of them can via the OECM mechanism.
- Imminent publication of final reports from expert groups, including from the Monitoring and Evidence Sub-group chaired by the Executive Director of Evidence, Policy and Permitting.

Independent Water Commission

13. In February, Dom Driver attended the launch of the Independent Water Commission's call for evidence about the water sector and its regulation in England and Wales (the Cunliffe Review). Key messages included the recognition of similarities and differences between Wales and England, with Wales' role being high profile, supported by the presence of the Deputy First Minister at the launch. It is a call for evidence and call for feedback on their initial thinking, and is about improving the current regulated private monopoly approach. The scope does not include re-nationalisation.
14. Themes of the review include how to create a national strategic plan with regional / local relevance; build greater public trust; improve water environment and maintain quality of supply while providing for the various uses of water; increase efficiency of regulation with an implication that simplification is needed; regulate a monopoly including refining the role of benchmarks to make them drive improvement and enable regional flexibility; support economic viability especially balance of risk and reward for private investors; and how to increase pace of infrastructure improvements. A commitment was given to delivering the report within the current agreed timescale.
15. Our teams are developing our response to the call.

The Sea and Us

16. In January, we published Y Môr a Ni (The Sea and Us) – an ocean literacy strategy for Wales, working alongside Wales Coasts and Seas Partnership. This is the first such strategy in the UK and only the second in the world after Canada. The project contributes to the wider UN Ocean Decade programme, which

identifies building ocean literacy as one of ten global challenges for the seas. Our strategy streamlines and amplifies work across Wales to engage and improve access and understanding of the marine environment at all levels whilst encouraging more sustainable behaviours to support resilient coasts and seas.

Nuclear Cross-Party Group

17. In January, we attended the inaugural meeting of the Nuclear in Wales Senedd Cross-Party Group (CPG) chaired by Vaughan Gething MS. The CPG will be the forum for Members of the Senedd, stakeholders and interested parties to raise awareness of the opportunities and challenges facing the civil nuclear sector in Wales, including across new build, decommissioning and the associated footprint, workforce and supply chain in Wales.
18. One of the key aims of the group is to make Wales a global leader in nuclear energy. The CPG will explore issues such as delivery of new nuclear projects, skill shortages, opportunities for the supply chain and ensuring communities are involved in shaping the future

Operational Issues

Padeswood Cement Works – Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS)

19. Heidelberg Materials is advancing its plans to install a post-combustion carbon dioxide capture plant at Padeswood Cement Works in Mold, Flintshire. About 800,000 tonnes of CO₂ per year captured at Padeswood would feed into the Hynet industrial cluster for geological storage in depleted oil and gas reservoirs offshore in Liverpool Bay. This development paves the way towards potentially the first net zero cement product plant in the UK.
20. We continue to work closely with the operator to ensure that a robust decision-making process protects the environment and local communities, while recognising the urgency of action to adapt to climate change through industrial decarbonisation. An important milestone was reached in February 2025, with our confirmation that the Installation Environmental Permit Variation application is “Duly Made”. The permit determination for the CCS plant is an essential step in the overall consenting process and involves first-of-a-kind technical solutions.

Wild Venison

21. Our first British Quality Wild Venison Standard (BQWV) audit concluded with no non-conformances found. The independent, external assessor commended our work across our four deer larders. The BQWV standard, which we helped to develop, aims to increase the traceability of wild venison in England, Wales and Northern Ireland and ensure that a set of standards are met throughout the supply chain to support consumer confidence and increase sales of wild venison.

22. Achieving the standard adds further assurance that NRW meets the highest operational standards. This is in addition to certification to international standards of sustainable forest management via the UK Woodland Assurance Standard, meaning that consumers can be confident that wild venison from the land in our care is healthy, high quality, produced while achieving the highest standards of animal welfare and comes from an activity that is part of sustainable management of natural resources.

Student Placements for Land Stewardship

23. The 2025/26 paid placement scheme for forestry is now underway, recruiting autumn interns to NRW. We are offering two placements, one in North West Wales and the other in Mid Wales, with each location covering National Park woodlands and forests. The successful students will be offered experience of our work in forest operations, land management and wider conservation projects.
24. The recent advertisement of these opportunities has been met with enthusiasm from both past placement students and new, with 21 new applicants to this latest campaign. Workforce succession and recruitment is a significant challenge in the forestry sector (in both public and private sectors) and this scheme has helped raise our profile with our future workforce and expose more people in the forestry sector (regardless of where their careers take them) to our approach to managing forests for the sustainable management of natural resources and multiple other benefits.

Hafod Landfill

25. We continue to receive complaints about odour from Hafod Landfill, and criticism relating to our regulation of the site, with the number of WIRs (Wales Incident Recording System reports) increasing significantly in recent months. A protest took place at the site on 31 January. We have had significant media and political interest both locally and from WG colleagues.
26. We have completed several site inspections and an in-depth landfill gas emissions audit recently, carried out by our Landfill Emissions Reduction Project team. The audit has provided several recommendations for improvements at the site and an action plan has been developed, with several actions having already been completed and further work planned over the coming weeks.
27. Our officers met with the site operators, Enovert, recently to emphasise the importance of making improvements at the site. Enovert gave their full commitment to address the issues, and we continue to monitor progress every week. We are also working closely with Wrexham County Borough Council (WCBC) and Public Health Wales. WCBC has raised a motion asking for a 'community concerns assessment'. We have agreed to convene stakeholder meetings, to include the operator, all key organisations, political representation and community members. The first meeting will take place in March and we are

considering holding a community drop-in event as well. We have already issued a newsletter to residents and have launched our Hafod Citizen Space page to provide updates to the local community.

Storm Darragh – South West Wales

28. Storm Darragh, which struck Wales on 7 and 8 December 2024, brought severe weather with winds reaching up to 90mph. The storm caused significant damage to the Welsh Government Woodland Estate (WGWE) in South West and whilst assessments are still ongoing, we know the area with the greatest devastation is Brechfa Forest, Carmarthenshire with an estimated area of 300 hectares or 135,000m³ of timber windblow.
29. Initial storm recovery focused on reopening access routes for emergency services, residents, stakeholder infrastructure, harvesting / restocking sites and for farmers to reach livestock. Although this work was completed in early January, the recovery process is still ongoing and visitors are advised to look at our website for the latest updates on site closures and trail conditions. We also recommend checking social media channels before planning any visits to the WGWE in South West.
30. The focus in the coming months will be on amending harvesting programmes, repairing fence lines, inspecting forest infrastructure and opening up walking / mountain bike trails. This will take time, as staff carry out the recovery work alongside delivery of committed programmes of work on the WGWE.

Dark Skies Good Practice Guidance

31. A launch event was held in February for the new Dark Skies Good Practice Guidance, which has been developed to help local planning authorities and developers better understand how to conserve and enhance dark skies in Wales through planning and good design. The guidance is relevant to all proposals that require planning consent, and to plans for new or replacement lighting, street lighting or retrofits. The aim is to improve awareness and understanding of light pollution and the benefits of having the right light in the right place, at the right time. Those benefits extend from community wellbeing, healthier natural environments and greater biodiversity to astrotourism: two thirds of Wales has dark skies, some of which are internationally recognised as dark sky reserves and sanctuaries.
32. The new guidance was written by an all-Wales working group, including NRW, and took twelve months to bring together from WG approval through to publication. The launch event, which was livestreamed on YouTube, included presentations and exhibitors and created real positivity and energy among attendees, who recognised the impact and importance of the guidance as well as the expertise, passion and strong collaboration involved in its production.

Internal Issues

IR35

33. External consultants Deloitte were engaged in November 2024 to seek to reach an agreed position with HMRC. Their work comprises four phases; the first, a review of historic correspondence and preliminary review of data to identify a proposed approach, was completed in December. The second phase involved a detailed review of the practical arrangements for the management of a sample of contractors, to identify the overall position regarding contractor status. This has also been completed, with the findings presented at a special meeting of the Board during February.
34. The third and fourth phases involve updating HMRC regarding the outcome of the Board's decision and responding to any follow-up questions from HMRC. Phase five, currently being developed, will involve Deloitte reviewing our use of a new framework and revised processes.

Commercial Update

35. Insolvency event of Clifford Jones Timber Ltd (Ruthin), sawmill now operating under a new business entity. There are some timber account issues with SDL Biomass Ltd and Western Bio-Energy (Fuels) Ltd as we manage credit liabilities. Timber Uplift performance is sluggish due to impacts of customer insolvency, Storm Darragh and Storm Eowyn as well as 2 weeks of lost haulage time due to a period of snow and ice in the uplands.
36. The Timber Sales team responded quickly post Storm Darragh, processing timber contract variances to allow urgent works on the WGWE, with customers supporting us to clear obstructions on crucial access routes.
37. The End of Year Timber Income forecast has been downgraded to £31,597,621. Storm Darragh and recent wet weather has impacted the market and the overall dispatch rate. Failure to access coupes or the need to remove windblow as a priority has resulted in some contracts being extended, pushing income in the next financial year.
38. A WG consultation on the proposed Timber Industrial Strategy launched in January and will close on 16 April. We are working across departments to submit a consensus response to the proposal.
39. We hosted our annual Timber Trade Liaison Day at the Royal Welsh Showground in February. This was a successful engagement event with positive customer feedback and several actions agreed for the next financial year. Presentations were given by Confor, WG on the Timber Industrial Strategy, and one of our main customers, Pontrilas, on timber market trends. Health and safety on the estate and timber volumes continue to be an ongoing concern for our customers; however, as

the drop in income demonstrates from an adverse effect, we need to balance the needs of the market with the sustainability of delivery for NRW.

Case for Change Update

40. In February, letters from the matching process that took place in December were issued, along with the outcomes from competitive selection. Colleagues who did not secure a role through these processes were put at risk of redundancy and offered priority access to any remaining vacancies, before these were opened up for internal recruitment. The Expression of Interest (EOI) application window started on 20 February and closed on 9 March. All steps were agreed through consultation with the Trade Unions.
41. During this difficult period, we have offered dedicated support to impacted colleagues and their managers, and will continue to do so over the coming months. The EOI phase took place in parallel with a thirty-day individual consultation period to assist colleagues who were placed at risk of redundancy in considering their options. Individual consultation packs were issued to all relevant managers, enabling them to support impacted team members through the EOI process and consider individual circumstances, including the option of voluntary redundancy.
42. Following the EOI application window, the process of recruiting openly into remaining vacancies began.
43. A formal review of our Enabling Services continues to explore opportunities for further integration and efficiencies in how these central corporate functions serve the wider organisation. A draft report is expected by April.
44. Our Embedding the Change project has started with the aim of effectively embedding the changes envisioned by Case for Change into our organisational working practices and ensuring the long-term sustainability of the change.

Communications

Corporate Communications

45. The Communications team continues to provide support as the Case for Change process progresses, primarily focusing on events and queries relating to the future of the Visitor Centres. The team supported the Commercial team in promoting the Expressions of Interest process for Ynyslas Visitor Centre, and at four public drop-in events held during January. Work is also ongoing to ensure the Case for Change intranet hub is continuously updated and support is being given to promote the launch and roll out of the Enabling Services Review.

46. We have continued to provide communications support to the windblow cell established in the wake of Storm Darragh, highlighting the cancellation of rallying events on the woodland estate and managing engagement with partners as the recovery process continues.

Communities are Resilient to Climate Change

47. The fifth anniversary of Storm Dennis provided an opportunity to reflect on the impact the February 2020 storms – and others since – have had on our communities, the progress we have made in relation to our services for warning and informing about flood risk, and the need for everyone to play their part in mitigating and adapting to climate change.
48. The media's focus on how communities have recovered and their continuing concerns about future flood risk – particularly in light of more recent flood events – meant that there were some difficult messages to manage. However, our engagement with broadcasters ensured coverage was balanced and that key messages around the challenges of making communities resilient to climate change were carried effectively.
49. An update on the progress of the Cardigan Tidal Flood scheme achieved good coverage in the media and provided an opportunity to reiterate the messages around what people can do themselves to minimise flood risk.

Pollution is Minimised

50. Community and media engagement around our regulatory responsibilities at landfills were a focus during this period. We have continued to provide proactive updates through newsletters and Citizen Space pages to address increasing interest in odours at Hafod Landfill and the alleged return of odour at Withyhedge, ensuring clarity about our regulatory role and the enforcement measures being taken.
51. Communication also focused on our work to minimise the risk of agricultural pollution. The announcement of changes to sheep dip disposal procedures attracted widespread media interest and the response of the farming community dominated coverage, meaning some stories were unbalanced. The Communications team worked with the BBC to ensure a wider representation of voices were featured in their coverage and clear messaging on the environmental impact of sheep dip disposal to land. In addition, as the closed period prohibiting the spreading of slurry and some other organic manures on grassland came to an end in January, our messaging reminded farmers to adhere to regulations and take necessary precautions to minimise the risk of agricultural pollution.
52. Communications support was provided to highlight the success of our enforcement work during this period. This included the promotion of a successful prosecutions of a construction company for polluting watercourses in Bridgend, fly-tipping in Dyfi

Forest and a prosecution for illegal waste storage in Caerleon. We also managed media interest in two Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water court hearings originally listed for this period, though they were eventually adjourned.

53. A podcast series highlighting the work of Ceredigion Environment team is continuing, with February's episode showcasing the work to protect habitats that have emerged from abandoned metal mines.

Nature is Recovering

54. Our interim State of Natural Resources Report (SoNaRR) was published at the end of 2024, signalling the start of a drumbeat of communications for the year ahead as we move towards the launch of the next full report. We will continue to work with the Future Generations Commissioner's office and dovetail our communications as they publish and promote their own progress report.
55. The successes of our nature restoration projects were showcased during this period. The Natur am Byth partnership project's work to conserve the UK's most endangered butterfly species, the high brown fritillary, was highlighted during a visit by the First Minister, Eluned Morgan MS, in Bridgend. A project to improve water quality in the River Cothi through the Four Rivers for LIFE programme was also promoted during this period.
56. We continue to highlight the importance of our partnership work to support nature's recovery. In January, NRW coordinated the communications around the launch of the Y Mor a Ni (The Sea and Us) initiative, highlighting a range of marine projects underway that build awareness of our influence on the sea and the sea's influence on us. The promotion of the new bait collection code with the support of the Nature Networks Fund also provided an opportunity to highlight the benefits better practice could bring to coastal habitats and species.

Summary of Complaints, Commendations and Correspondence

57. Between November 2024 and February 2025, a significant portion of public correspondence focused on storm recovery efforts, particularly following Storm Bert in late November and Storm Darragh in early December. Key themes included:
 - Response Times: Concerns were raised about our response in Pontypridd, where properties experienced flooding.
 - Flood Alerts: Complaints emerged regarding the non-receipt of flood alerts due to an administrative error involving duplicate customer accounts. This issue has now been rectified.
 - Land Management: Feedback highlighted issues related to land management practices in the aftermath of Storm Darragh.

- Environmental Concerns: Complaints were received concerning Hafod Landfill and Kronospan operations. We are now supporting the Head of North East Operations with Hafod-related correspondence to help reduce staff burden so they can focus on their core regulatory work.
58. Additionally, three Environmental Information Regulation (EIR) requests have been submitted regarding flooded properties in Wales. We have also supported the Head of Flood Risk Management in preparing a response for the Senedd's Climate Change, Environment, and Infrastructure (CCEI) Committee's flood review following Storm Bert and Storm Darragh.
59. On a positive note, we have continued to receive commendations, particularly for the exceptional post-storm response in North-East Wales. Since December, five public commendations have praised the dedication and efficiency of our teams, particularly in popular locations such as Newborough.
60. In February, we received further commendations for staff in Newborough, including a particularly positive story about a staff member who helped reunite a family with their stepdad after he got lost, fell and was unable to find his way back to them. The family expressed their deepest gratitude, noting that the situation could have turned out very differently.
61. We also received a commendation from a Member of the Senedd, who was impressed with our communications regarding Storm Darragh and how effectively we kept everything updated, allowing them to better support their constituents.
62. Another commendation highlighted the professionalism of our response: *"Thank you for your speed and efficiency in sorting what must be an incredibly small issue in the context of a major disaster. Thank you for restoring a bit of faith in Government process and thank you for being good at your job."*

Forward Look

Wednesday 9 April – Board Planning Day

Wednesday 16 April – Board Update Call

Thursday 17 April – Flood Risk Management Committee

Thursday 1 May – Finance Committee

Wednesday 7 May – Evidence Advisory Committee

Thursday 8 May – Protected Areas Committee Site Visit

Thursday 15 May – Land Estate Committee

Wednesday 21 / Thursday 22 May – May Board Meeting

NRW Board Paper

Date of meeting:	20 th March 2025
Title of Paper:	Finance Committee (FC) Board Update
Paper Reference:	25-03-B24
Paper sponsored by:	Helen Pittaway, Chair of FC
Paper prepared by:	Board Secretariat
Paper presented by:	Helen Pittaway, Chair of FC
Purpose of the paper	Information
Summary	To provide an update to the Finance Committee (FC) – 6 th February 2025

Background

This paper provides an aid to the Chair to provide a verbal update to the Board following the Finance Committee (FC) meeting on 6th February 2025. The minutes from these meetings can be made available to any Board member interested.

Financial Performance Update

1. Updates to the Financial Performance Report were presented including a decrease in the timber income forecast, the exit from Ty Cambria offices, the risks around underspend and revenue budget adjustments agreed by the Executive Team (ET).
2. FC recommended that NRW review the Welsh Government (WG) Timber Industrial Strategy consultation and raise the challenges in timber production and the likely increase in challenges due to climate change effects. Following a query, the WG timber income mechanism was explained.

Budget and Business Planning 2025-26 update

3. An update to the 2025-26 budget was presented, including the expected income, which reflected recent changes to the reservoir and Nature and Climate emergency (NaCE) budgets. Further budget updates were provided for coal tips, de-carbonisation, enforcement, the Wales Infrastructure Consent Act funding, and the budget exercise.

4. The Committee discussed the importance of longer-term budget settlements to aid business planning and suggested that Service Level Agreements (SLAs) could be used to aid budget allocation.
5. The 2025-26 Business Plan proposal was outlined and included elements that would remain the same as 2024-25 and additional items that would be included. The context of developing the Plan and the evolution of the 2024-25 Plan were also highlighted.
6. FC supported the approach and acknowledged the challenges with developing a Business Plan that fulfilled different functions and reported at different levels. The Business Plan was a pragmatic approach to reporting on how NRW delivered against the Wellbeing Objectives steps to take. The ambition would be to develop business planning and reporting further in the future.
7. The Committee suggested adding business as usual metrics and that the cultural value of targets that were challenging enough to reflect the climate change and nature emergency challenges should be considered.

Annual Review of Charges

8. A summary of the 2025-26 regulation charges proposals, the feedback from the consultation and the timeline and next steps were presented.
9. Following a query by the Committee, it was confirmed that species licensing had not received any feedback that would cause the proposal not to proceed.
10. FC were supportive of the proposals, however queried the quarry extraction when within a site element of the Water Resources proposals. The team had agreed to review the proposal in line with the comments.
11. It was confirmed that following the consultation, the charges had not been altered. FC endorsed the proposals.

NRW Board Paper

Date of meeting:	20 th March
Title of Paper:	Joint Land Estate Committee and Flood Risk Management Committee Update
Paper Reference:	25-03-B12
Paper sponsored by:	Calvin Jones, LEC Chair; Pete Fox, FRMC Chair
Paper presented by:	Calvin Jones, LEC Chair
Purpose of the paper	For information
Summary	To provide an overview of the 11 th of February Joint Land Estate Committee and Flood Risk Management Committee meeting.

Manging the NRW Estate and Flood

1. The Land Estate Committee (LEC) and Flood Risk Management Committee (FRMC) joined together for a strategic discussion on how Flood Risk Management, Commercial and Land Stewardship could work together. The opportunities and challenges within the management of the land in our care, and nature-based solutions to support Flood Risk Management (FRM) were presented along with work undertaken on the Welsh Government Woodland Estate (WGWE) since the February 2020 Flood Review recommendations. Recent work included an analysis of felling impact, a new ICT system, and the Peat Restoration Programme.
2. The members of FRMC and LEC discussed a variety elements including the new Welsh Government (WG) Timber Industrial Strategy, the need for mechanisms to integrate cost benefit analysis holistically across different objectives, opportunities and funding, the benefits of integrated forest management alongside flood risk reduction, partnerships, examples of ongoing operational work and the importance of evidence.

Internal Drainage districts (IDDs) Discussion

3. The Committees were provided with the operational, financial and geographical context of the Internal Drainage Districts (IDDs). The IDD were discussed including whether

they met the needs of all stakeholders, potential future management options, the merit of undertaking a review of IDD's and the need for external input. This was an internal discussion and would not conclude with changes to the current ways of working.

Heads of Business Report

Head of Sustainable Commercial Development Report

4. The Committee was provided with an update on key commercial activity including renewable energy, a potential offer to market in Cwm Carn, Kilvey Hill, collaboration on a Payment for Ecosystem Services Project with Operations colleagues and the timber market outlook.
5. LEC discussed green infrastructure and suggested that the Commercial team consider the opportunities in the National Nature Reserves. The parallels between the Payment for Ecosystem Services Project and the Upper River Severn Management Scheme were highlighted. Regular updates to the Committee on this and the new Commercial Strategy were requested for future meetings.

Head of Land Stewardship Report

6. The significant impacts of Storm Darragh were highlighted including the potential three-year clear up timescale and the estimated 700 hectares of effected land. Other updates were provided on the monitoring of wild pigs and the Recreation Strategy.
7. The Committee suggested that there should be an assessment of the wild pig population and noted that a small number of motorsport events had been cancelled due to the storm damage. Concerns were raised regarding the delay in the renewal of Forest Resource Plans and the options for the Recreation Strategy were discussed.

Forward Look

8. The Committee discussed having another joint Committee with the Flood Risk Management Committee in October.

NRW Board Paper

Date of meeting:	20 th March 2025
Title of Paper:	People and Customer Committee (PCC) Update
Paper Reference:	25-03-B13
Paper sponsored by:	Mark McKenna, Chair of PCC
Paper prepared by:	Board Secretariat
Paper presented by:	Mark McKenna, Chair of PCC
Purpose of the paper	Information
Summary	To provide an update to the Board in respect of 19 th February 2025 PCC meeting.

Background

1. This update for the Board is in respect of the 19th February People and Customer Committee (PCC) virtual meeting. Board members can access all Committee papers and minutes via the Diligent portal.
2. Equality objectives would be incorporated into this year's Board member and Chair Objectives.

Verbal Update on Current Risks and Issues

3. PCC were provided with verbal updates on current risks and issues, these included progress updates on the Customer Platform, and the opportunities for other customer service pathways, and the merging of the Incident Control Centre and the Customer Hub teams. The Green rating on the Red, Amber, Green (RAG) status of the Customer Quarterly Performance Reports gave assurance, and the approaches to test public perception and to develop advocacy were outlined. PCC welcomed that colleagues were engaging with the BBC to explore opportunities for increased coverage of NRW's activities in their broadcast reporting.
4. PCC were updated on items around People Management and recruitment and the challenges still being faced. Future planning resource and managing expectations were

noted and PCC understood the need to align business, people and financial planning. The ongoing good relationship with trade unions was welcomed.

Visitor Safety and Waterfall Country

5. PCC were provided with an overview of the approach and developments on visitor safety and the Waterfall Country, and the complex and dynamic nature of the area was understood. The four-year Project was welcomed and the infrastructure upgrades to certain sites were highlighted. The team were commended on progress and PCC suggested shared learning and collaboration with third parties. Social media influences and keeping messages current along with community engagement would be important.

NRW2030

6. The Committee was provided with an update on the progress of the new Wellbeing Objective Four. Capacity and resource were a challenge and an integrated approach was being pursued for all reporting.

Diversity and Inclusion – Annual Report 2024/ 25 and Pay Gap Report

7. PCC were provided with an overview of the Report and noted the opportunities in recruitment to diversify the workforce and to improve inclusive leadership. Additional Active Bystander training was being developed. Benchmarking against other organisations would be important. The Committee commended the team's work in engagement in staff networks.
8. The Committee suggested several formatting changes and the inclusion of infographics to the Report but were content to approve the Report.

Internal Audit Plan

9. PCC discussed the Internal Audit Plan pertinent to People and Customer and the status of follow-up progress reports was provided. It was noted that with the involvement of the language to support improvements, the perception of internal audits, across the organisation could improve.
10. PCC agreed that all the Board Committees should have sight of the Internal Audit Plan.

Information Items

11. PCC welcomed the Communications Quarterly Reports, the People Management Information, and the People Policies update.

Forward Look and AOB

12. Items for future meetings were discussed and it was agreed that Strategic Workforce Planning would be a substantive item at the June meeting and the September meeting would potentially be in person to incorporate a site visit to the Waterfall Country.
13. This was Dr Rosie Plummer's last PCC meeting and she was thanked for her time and contribution on the Committee.

NRW Board Paper

Date of meeting:	20 th March 2025
Title of Paper:	Protected Areas Committee (PrAC) Update for Board
Paper Reference:	25-03-B14
Paper sponsored by:	Dr Rosie Plummer, Chair of PrAC
Paper prepared by:	Board Secretariat
Paper presented by:	Dr Rosie Plummer, Chair of PrAC
Purpose of the paper	Information
Summary	This summary provides an update on matters following PrAC meeting which was held on 13 February 2025.

Background

1. This summary provides an update on matters that in the opinion of the Protected Areas Committee (PrAC) Chair should be brought to the attention of the whole Board following the latest PrAC meeting, which was held on 13th February 2025.
2. For further detail all Board members can access the agendas, papers, and minutes of committees via the Diligent portal.

Items for Public Meeting

Teifi Demonstrator Project

3. Background was provided on the Teifi Demonstrator Project, including the reasons for selection of the catchment and its environmental status. An update was provided on the collaboration and partnerships, current activities of the Project including the National Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) Proposal, named Teifi Fyw / Living Teifi and the potential themes and work packages. PrAC provided suggestions including stakeholders to engage with, highlighted the recently extended Memorandum of Understanding MoU between NRW, Cadw, and Heneb, and suggested consideration be given to the United Nations Educational, Science and Culture Organisation (UNESCO) convention on intangible cultural heritage in relation to the Project.

Update on the Protected Sites Programme

4. PrAC were presented with an update on the Ministerial Biodiversity Deep Dive; Audit Wales' review of the approach to the designation of SSSI at NRW; the implications of the recommendations of the Climate Change, Environment and Infrastructure Committee Report for NRW; the Environmental Governance, Principles and Nature Targets Bill; the Interim Environmental Protection Assessor for Wales (IEPAW) investigation into protected sites; and NRW's actions delivered on Protected Sites.
5. PrAC discussed the Audit Wales review and concerns were raised on the speed of work on the 30 by 30. There would be a challenge on prioritising designations and how to assess the risks. Different ways of working would be needed due to the size of the team and delivery expectations.
6. An update was also provided on the LMAs, with existing LMAs being funded up until 31st December 2025. It was noted that it was unlikely that the SFS would subsume all of the expiring LMAs on 1st January 2026. The likelihood of an underspend on the allocation was noted and regret was expressed that recent designations including Coedwig Dyfi fell outside the allocation. However, some agreements would continue where there were five-year agreements; these had break clauses, which could allow NRW to port arrangements across to the SFS if this was the desire of the land owners. There would also be land owners who would need some other form of financial support where they did not qualify for the SFS.

Protected Sites Warning Letter

7. PrAC discussed and noted the letter. It was suggested that the warning letter should be reviewed by the Flood Risk Management Committee (FRMC), as it highlighted an issue regarding flood asset maintenance and the tension between asset management, maintenance and protected sites requirements.

Dee Estuary SAC Boundary Amendment

8. PrAC discussed and noted the amendment to the Dee Estuary SAC boundary.

PrAC Governance

9. PrAC discussed and agreed the Forward Look.

AOB

10. PrAC recognised and welcomed the publication of the Interim State of Natural Resources Report (SoNaRR).
11. Geraint Davies noted that Caernarfon was the sponsor for the Royal Welsh Show, and drew attention to a forthcoming upland farming event opportunity for NRW staff and Board members.

12. PrAC and the Acting Chief Executive thanked both Dr Rosie Plummer and Geraint Davies for their time and valuable input to the Committee and the support they had provided to all staff involved.

NRW Board Paper

Date of meeting:	20 th March 2025	
Title of Paper:	Wales Land Management Forum (WLMF) Update	
Paper Reference:	25-03-B23	
Paper sponsored by:	Professor Rhys Jones, WLMF Chair	
Paper prepared by:	Bronwen Martin, Specialist Advisor: Agriculture	
Paper presented by:	Professor Rhys Jones, WLMF Chair	
Purpose of the paper	Information	
Approval/Consultation process:	Responsible: Who has developed the paper/process and who has had input?	
	Accountable: Who is accountable for the ultimate approval? Who will be or is being asked to approve?	
	Consulted: Who has been consulted to date? Where endorsement is required, is this in place? Will further consultation be required?	
	Informed: Who has been informed or who needs to be further informed about the work?	
Summary	Summarise what considerations, decisions, and actions you are seeking from the committee.	

Wales Land Management Forum (WLMF)

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

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

Update

9th December 2024 meeting

2. The most recent WLMF meeting was held on Monday 9th December 2024. The meeting had a forestry focus and included the following presentations/discussions:
 - National Forest for Wales (Stacey Delbridge, NRW)
 - Sustainable Farming Scheme: Forestry (Naomi Matthiessen, Welsh Government)
 - Timber Industry Strategy and Associated Skills Plan (Gail Merriman and Ann Burgoyne, Welsh Government)
 - Deer & Squirrel Management (Chris Tucker, NRW)
 - 'A case study of woodland creation' (Iwan Parry, Tilhill)
 - 'How the Private forestry sector works alongside NRW' (Iwan Lloyd Williams, Confor)
3. The next WLMF meeting will be held on 17th March 2025.
4. Once the meeting minutes have been reviewed and formally agreed by members, they are published on the WLMF page on the NRW website.

WLMF Sub Group on Agricultural Pollution

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

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

Once the meeting minutes have been reviewed and formally agreed by members, they are published on the WLMF Sub Group page on the NRW website.

Update

20th January 2025 meeting

6. The WLMF Sub Group meeting held on 20th January 2025 included the following items:
- Discussion: SAC Rivers Agricultural Technical Group Report – Representatives from the SAC Rivers Nutrient Management Boards joined the meeting to discuss the SAC Rivers Agricultural Technical Group Report, subsequent recommendations and how the report might help to inform the develop the Nutrient Management Plans for the SAC Catchments. The group to also used this meeting as an opportunity to identify who/how some of the recommendations can be taken forward.
 - Standing Item: The Water Resources (Control of Agricultural Pollution) (Wales) Regulations 2021 4-year review process – Dr Susannah Bolton, Independent Chair provided a brief progress update on the development of the report.

February 2025

7. Unfortunately, the meeting scheduled for February was cancelled to due unforeseen circumstances.

March 2025

8. 3rd March 2025 – NRW have decided to integrate the Sub Group into the main Wales Land Management Forum (WLMF). A letter communicating this decision will be circulated to WLMF Sub Group members on Monday 3rd March 2025.
9. 4th March 2025 – A webinar has been arranged by NRW for members of the WLMF, WLMF Sub Group, Wales Environment Link, Wales Fisheries Forum and Wales Water Management Forum on 4th March. The webinar will discuss the WFD Interim Classification and SAC Rivers Water Quality Compliance Assessment 2024 Data. NRW will release the 2024 WFD Regulations Interim Classification and SAC Rivers water quality compliance assessment on the 13 March 2025. This is a key water quality dataset and will be the first time we publish both together. The interim classification will provide the best overview of the water environment status in Wales.

NRW Board Paper

Date of meeting:	20 March 2025
Title of Paper:	Finance Performance Report
Paper Reference:	25-03-B17
Paper sponsored by:	Rachael Cunningham, Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Services
Paper prepared by:	Rob Bell, Head of Finance; Mark Collins, Business Finance Manager
Paper presented by:	Rob Bell, Head of Finance
Purpose of the paper:	Approval (change in forecast) / Discussion (Financial Performance)
Summary	<p>To approve:</p> <p>Change in the latest forecast from £275.3m to a forecasted £294.6m.</p> <p>To scrutinise:</p> <p>Financial performance to the end of January 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 (November).
 - Performance to the end of January 2025.

Risks and opportunities

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

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

Next Steps

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

Recommendation

- 6. Board to approve changes to the latest forecast, from £275.3m to £294.6m.
- 7. Board to scrutinise financial performance to the end of January 2025.

Index of Annexes

Annex A – Financial Performance Report



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Wales



NRW Board – 19th March 2025

Financial Performance Report – January 2025

Content and Key Messages

Update will cover:

1. Update on the latest forecast changes as at January 2025 compared to the opening budget. Endorse change in forecast since the last revised forecast was agreed - from £275.3m to £294.6m.

2. Financial Performance as at January 2025.

3. Update on contingencies and under/over programming.

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

5. Update on funding provided by Welsh Government

Messages:

1. The overall income forecast has increased by £19.2m, due to changes in external funding (-£0.2m), charges (-£0.8m), commercial (-£1.8m), use of charge balances (-£1.7m) and Grant in Aid (£23.7m). The decrease in external funding relates to the LIFE programme and Natural Flood Management projects (£0.5m and £0.3m respectively), which are offset by additional WG Reservoir grant income (£0.6m). The commercial element is primarily due to a reduction in timber (£1.5m) and retainable wind energy income (£0.4m). The charges and use of charge balances changes are linked to the recent review of income corporate costs and pay. The forecasted end of year position on charges has changed considerably, moving from a deficit of £1.8m to £0.1m and can be seen by the reduced draw on reserves. The GiA increase reflects additional funding for IR35 (£16m), pension payment (£6.9m), repayment no longer required to WG for DCF (£0.6m) and an increase in WG Grants (£0.2m).

2. Expenditure at the end of January equates to £186.9m against a planned spend of £190.0m, an underspend to date of £3.1m (2%). This is mainly due to an underspend on non staff costs (£1.8m), capital (£0.9m) and revenue projects (£0.4m). The non staff element is predominantly linked to Ops (£1.3m) and EPP (£0.4m). The Ops element is mainly linked to Land Stewardship activities, due to a delay in the restocking programme. The EPP element reflects lower than anticipated spend across Regulation (£0.1m), Evidence (£0.2m) and Land Stewardship (£0.1m). There is a significant proportion of the overall Land Stewardship programme left to be utilised across Ops and EPP, with £6.3m (35%) and £0.5m (32%) remaining respectively. Across all Directorates there remains considerable proportions of the non staff budget still to be spent; CSD £1.3m (28%) excluding the wind energy payment, CCC £0.2m (42%), EPP £9.8m (34%), FCS £5m (20%) excluding NRW contingency balances and Ops £9.2m (36%). The capital element reflects under spend within the Flood (£0.5m) and Externally Funded (£0.2m) projects programmes. The Flood programme currently has a surplus of £0.8m. We are exploring with WG the possibility of utilising the funding for other capital activities within NRW. The revenue project element is linked to Externally Funded, Land Stewardship and Water Resources programmes which are all under spent by £0.1m respectively. The overall income position is broadly in line with the budget to date, however charge income is slightly ahead of forecast (£0.1m), which is offset by an under recovery of £0.4m within externally funded projects. Please note that the timber income profile has been reduced in line with the forecasted decrease in outturn.

3. There is further detail on contingencies and over-programming in the report. The pay award, general and precautionary (for corporate costs) elements have now been removed. We currently hold contingencies for IR35 potential liability (£19m), building lease exit (now settled) and £1.8m for the Case for Change. We currently hold central over programming of £0.6m, which given our under spend position, ET have considered increasing that to £1.6m. In respect to our main programmes (Flood, NaCE and NRW2030), the over/under programming has reduced considerably since the start of the year and we currently only hold over programming within the NaCE programme which totals £0.3m. Flood, NRW2030 and Water Resources have surplus balances of £0.8m, £0.5m & £0.1m respectively. We are in discussions with WG as to whether we can utilise the flood under spend within other NRW activities outside of flood.

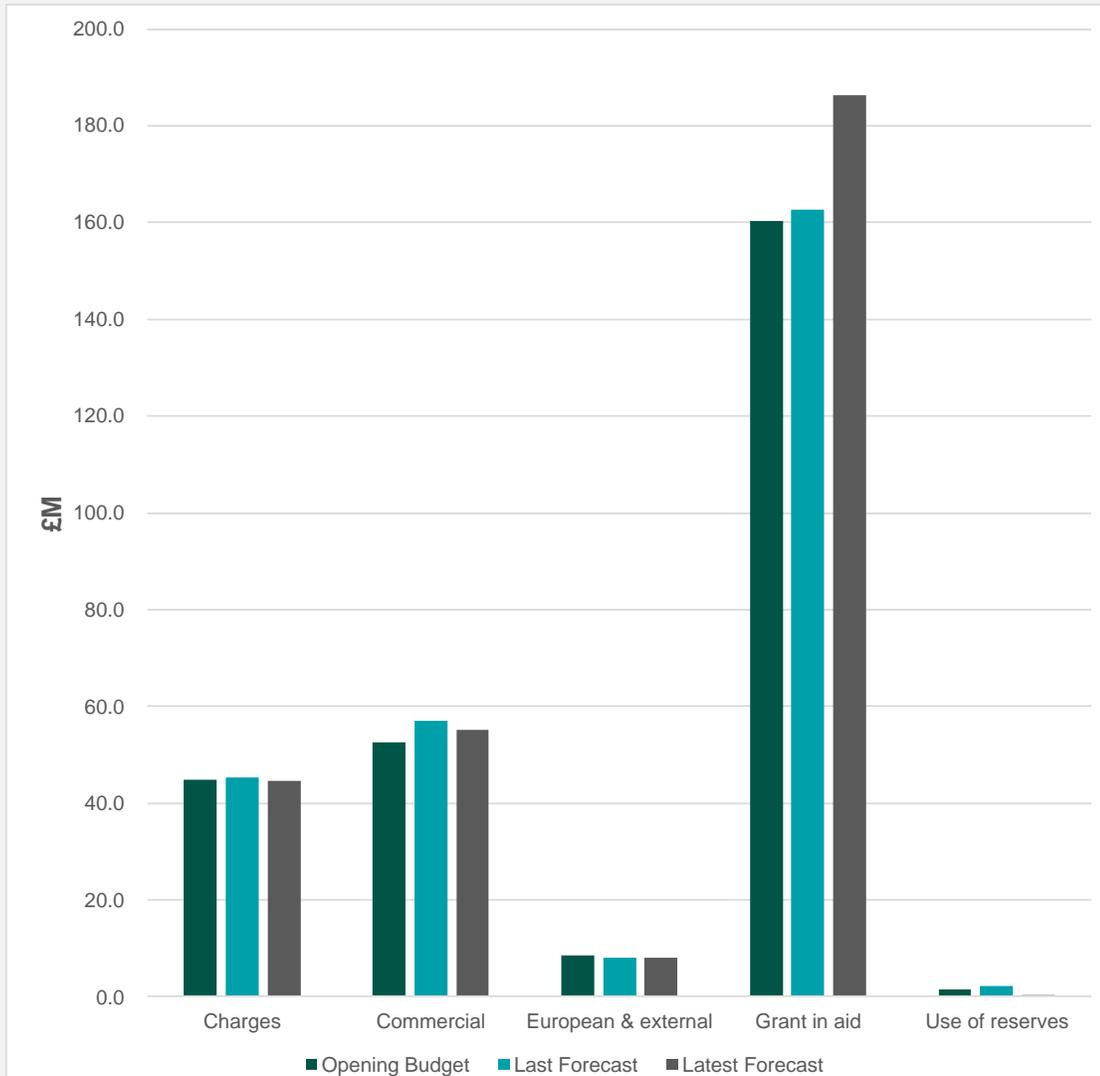
4. The main updates since the last reporting period will be concerning potential general revenue expenditure underspends, timber income and legal cases. The building lease exit is no longer categorised as a risk as it's concluded within the budget allowed. We are confident that we will meet the £9.3m staff costs savings target set at the beginning of the year.

5. We are in discussion with WG about our likely financial position at the end of the financial year - we have requested the ability to re-allocate the flood capital underspend within NRW and deciding whether we need the budget cover for the reduction in our timber income forecast.

Risks & Opportunities

Type	Description	Expenditure Category	Previous reported - Value/£m	Latest Value/£m
Risks				
Legal Risks	Risk that outcome of cases not in line with expectations.	Revenue		tbd
Central over-programming	It had decreased, with budgets returned in January. ET decided to increase it again to £1.6m based on spend at end of February.	Revenue	1.8	1.6
Opportunities				
General revenue expenditure position including Land Stewardship	There is concern that we will have a general underspend across a number of budgets, the largest of which is Land Stewardship. As a result, we have maintained a central over-programming assumption of £1.6m.	Revenue	1.8	1.6
NaCE / NRW2030 / Flood programmes	Very low amounts of over-programming so bigger chance of underspends. Flood are forecasting an underspend of up to £0.8m. NaCE are forecasting full spend. NRW2030 is also at risk of under spend within the capital programme. We have asked WG if we can have latitude to transfer funding to LIFE and Heritage Lottery funded projects.	Capital	0.7	0.8
Variables				
Timber Income	We have reduced the forecast as a result of the recent storms, cold weather and revised market expectations. Funding for that downturn will either be covered internally or by WG. Outturn still subject to variance.	Revenue	1.6-2.0	-
IR35	Budget cover (£19m) now in place for the potential liability. Liability won't be finalised until HMRC conclude their offset calculations.	Revenue	tbd	tbd
Case for change redundancies	We have budgeted £1.8m, however this exact figure will not be known until after the expression of interest phase. Should the conclusion of the Case for Change be delayed, this may have an effect on next year.	Revenue	tbd	tbd
Recruitment controls	Target of £9.3m, currently on track to meet/exceed the savings target.	Revenue	tbd	tbd

Financial Performance – Income Forecast



Charges

Charges income has reduced by £0.8m. The reductions are mainly due to anticipated deferrals of income into 2025-26 due to the current backlog of applications. The reduction in income has been offset by a reduction in corporate costs of £0.9m and trajectory savings of £1.7m. Both these figures were anticipated and built into our respective contingency and trajectory models.

The forecasted end of year position on charges has changed considerably, moving from a deficit of £1.8m to £0.1m and can be seen by the reduced draw on reserves.

Commercial

Commercial Income has reduced by £1.8m, predominantly due to a reduction in timber income (£1.5m), retainable (£0.4m) and surrenderable income (£0.1m). These are offset by an increase in telecom rental (£0.1m) and rechargeable works (£0.1m).

With the revised timber income position now below the WG guaranteed income level, we will need to decide whether to accept additional funding from WG.

European & Other External

European & other external income has reduced by £0.2m, mainly due to the decreases within the LIFE programme and natural flood management projects (£0.5m and £0.3m respectively), which are offset by additional WG Reservoir grant income (£0.6m).

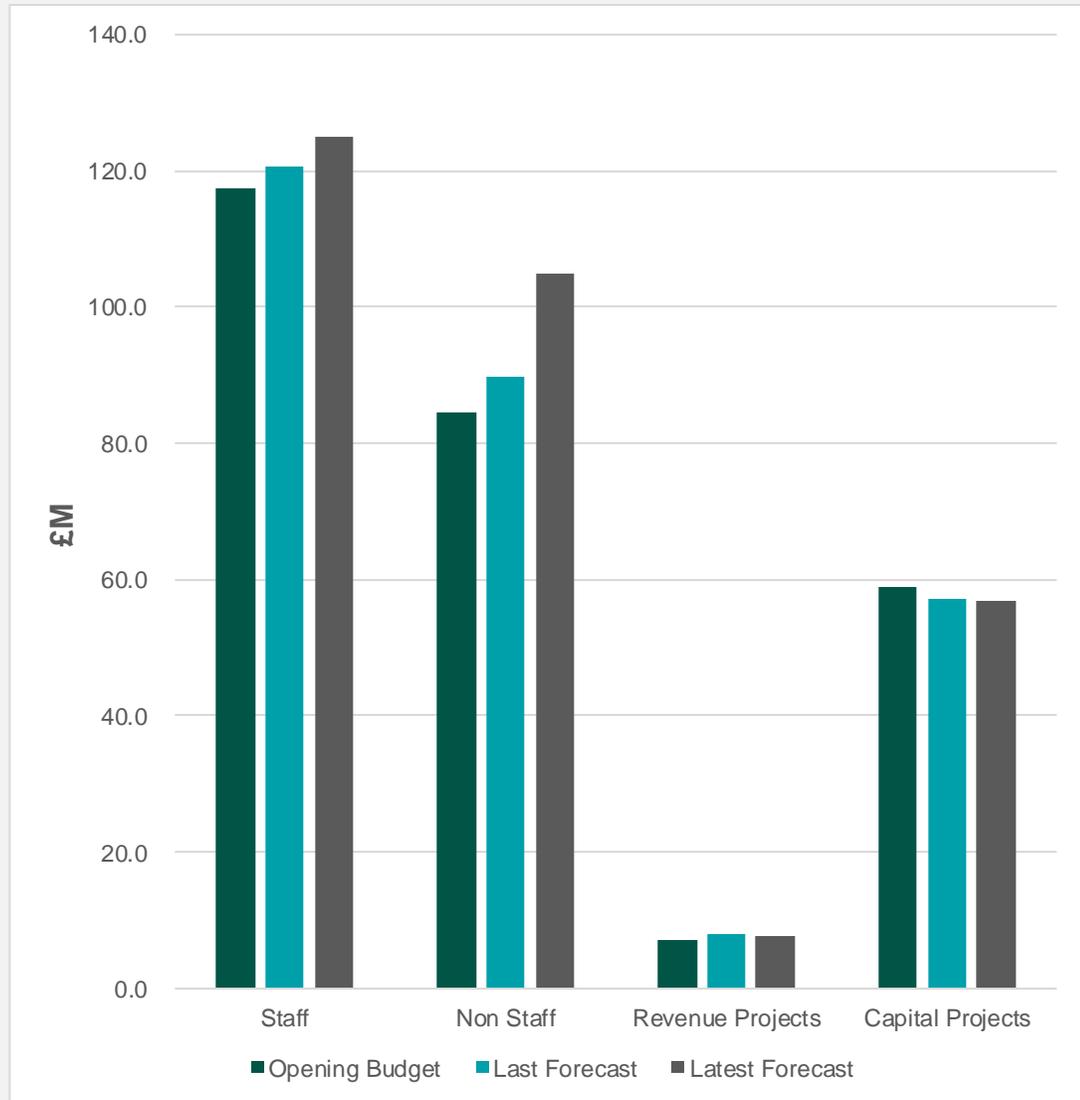
Grant in Aid

Overall grant in aid income has increased by £23.8m, mainly due to additional funding for IR35 (£16m), pension payment (£6.9m), repayment no longer required to WG for DCF (£0.6m) and an increase in WG Grants (£0.2m).

Use of Reserves

The use of reserves has reduced by £1.7m linked to the recent charge review. Whilst charge income has reduced by £0.8m, this has been offset by the reduction in corporate costs and savings within charge funded posts of £0.9m and £1.7m respectively.

Financial Performance – Expenditure Forecast



Staff

Staff costs have increased by £4.4m, predominantly due to the additional funding from WG for the pension payment (£6.9m), which was offset by a reduction of £1.7m following a review of charge funded vacancies along with a surplus of £0.6m from the allocation of the pay award and increments to individual posts. The pay award saving has been used to increase central contingencies.

Non Staff

Non Staff costs have increased by £15.1m, predominantly linked to the additional funding from WG for the potential IR35 liability (£16m) and reduction in repayment to WG regarding DCF (£0.6m) along with the transfer of the Water Resources over programming to help fund our £3m contribution towards IR35. These increases are offset by the reduction in timber income (£1.5m) and energy income (£0.5m).

Revenue Projects

Overall revenue projects have reduced by £0.2m, mainly due to the movement of £0.3m from the NRW2030 programme to fund pressures within BSS (Business Support Services) linked to increased fleet and building costs..

Capital Projects

Overall capital project budgets have reduced by £0.1m. The NRW2030 programme, external projects, natural flood management and WR programme have all reduced by £0.2m, £0.3m, £0.3m and £0.4m respectively. These are offset by additional WG Grant funding for electric vehicles and reservoir compliance of £0.4m and £0.6m respectively.

Financial Performance - Income

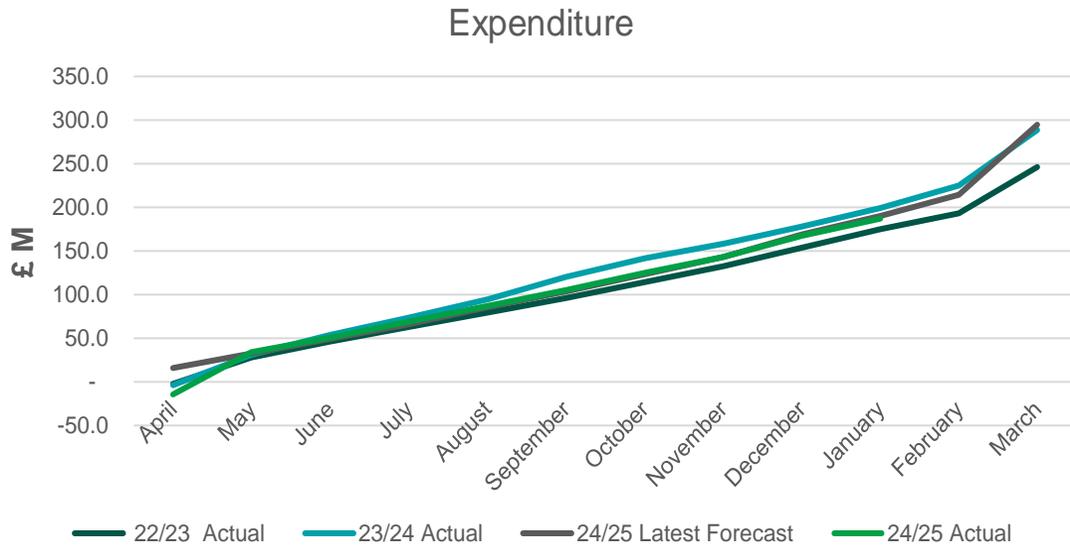
INCOME	Actual	Approved Forecast	Variance	Approved Forecast	Remaining Budget	Commentary
by Account Type	YTD £m	YTD £m	YTD £m	FY £m	FY %	
Charges	35.0	34.9	0.1	44.6	21%	Charge income received to date is currently in line to profile, however the end of year forecast has reduced by £0.8m. The reductions are mainly due to anticipated deferrals of income into 25/26 due to the current backlog of applications. The reduction in income has been offset by a reduction in corporate costs of £0.9m and charge based trajectory savings of £1.7m. Both these figures were anticipated and built into our respective contingency and trajectory models. The forecast end of year position on charges has changed considerably, moving from a deficit of £1.8m to £0.1m and can be seen by the reduced draw on reserves.
Commercial	44.0	44.0	0.0	55.2	20%	The timber forecast has been reduced to £31.6m from £32.5m. This had previously decreased from £33.1m in early January. Commercial have reported despatch performance by customers has been below previous years and likely to be low for the remainder of this year. The forecasted drop in production in December was realised, but slowed further by the impact of Storm Darragh and an extended period of snow and ice in the uplands, preventing safe despatch on timber. The forecast on retainable wind energy has increased by £0.3m following revised prior year royalty calculations on the Cefn Croes wind farm.
European & external	4.7	5.1	-0.4	8.0	41%	The current variance reflects under recovery within the LiFE programme (£0.2m) and Natur Am Byth projects (£0.2m). Any reduction in income will be reflected by a corresponding reduction within expenditure.
Grant in aid	106.9	106.9	0.0	186.4	43%	Income received in line with profile.
Use of Reserves	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.4	100%	Following the review of corporate costs and trajectory savings linked to charge posts, the draw on charge reserves has reduced considerably to £0.1m. The remaining £0.3m remains as previously reported and relates to work on the Internal Drainage Districts.
TOTAL: NRW	190.7	190.8	-0.1	294.6	35%	

Financial Performance - Expenditure

EXPENDITURE	Actual	Approved Forecast	Variance	Approved Forecast	Remaining Budget	Commentary
by Account Type	YTD	YTD	YTD	FY	FY	
	£m	£m	£m	£m	%	
Staff	96.4	96.5	0.1	125.1	23%	A net underspend of £0.9m in January. Vacancy rate currently stands at 15%, up from 14% reported in November. A number of vacant posts are funded from charge related activities, which equates to £0.2m of the overall underspend figure and cannot contribute to the £9.3m savings target. We are currently on track to meet the target. The current variance of £0.1m has remained unchanged from the November position, with an overspend on overtime/allowances and other pay costs offset by underspend on training. A significant proportion of the training budget remains to be utilised, however the training leads within CSD are confident costs will be inline to budget at year end.
Non Staff	50.5	52.3	1.8	104.9	52%	The current underspend of £1.8m is predominantly linked to Ops (£1.3m) and EPP (£0.4m) Directorates, with far smaller variances seen across the other Directorates. The EPP element mainly reflects lower than anticipated spend across Regulation (£0.1m), Evidence (£0.2m) and Land Stewardship (£0.1m). The Ops element is mainly linked to Land Stewardship activities, mainly due to the delay in the restocking programme. As part of the assumptions used to allocate £3m towards the potential IR35 liability, we assumed a likely under spend of £1m within the Land Stewardship programme. To date £350k has already materialised, with the reduction reflected in the report. There is a significant proportion of the overall Land Stewardship programme left to be utilised across Ops and EPP, with £6.3m (35%) and £0.5m (32%) remaining respectively. Across all Directorates there remains considerable proportions of the full year budget still to be spent; CSD £1.3m (28%) excluding the wind energy payment, CCC £0.2m (42%), EPP £9.8m (34%), FCS £5m (20%) excluding NRW contingency balances and Ops £9.2m (36%).
Revenue Projects	4.0	4.3	0.4	7.6	48%	The current variance predominantly reflects under spend within the Externally Funded, Land Stewardship and Water Resources programmes which are all under spent by £0.1m respectively. All are anticipated to utilise the full year allocation. The NRW2030 programme has under programming of £0.2m. The programme manager is confident the surplus can be reallocated and utilised by the end of the financial year.
Capital Projects	35.9	36.8	0.9	56.9	37%	The current capital variance is linked to the Flood and Externally Funded projects programmes, which are under spent by £0.5m and £0.2m respectively. Over programming across the main programmes has reduced considerably from the opening position with Flood, NRW 2030 and Water Resources showing under programming balances of £0.8m, £0.3m & £0.1m respectively, along with overprogramming of £0.3m within NaCE. NaCE are forecasting to spend within their full year allocation. We are exploring with WG the possibility of utilising the Flood under programming for other capital activities within NRW. With over programming being far lower/removed within programmes, should any projects be delayed due to weather/contractor availability etc, we are likely to see an underspend at year end. NRW2030 Programme Manager is reviewing their programme and an underspend is a possibility.
TOTAL: NRW	186.9	190.0	3.1	294.6	37%	

Financial Performance – Expenditure Trends

EXPENDITURE TRENDS



Commentary:

Expenditure at the end of January was £186.9m, £11.9m less than at the same point last financial year, where we incurred £198.8m.

The forecast for this year stands at £294.6m, £6.4m more than last financial year, primarily due to the additional WG funding to settle the potential IR35 liability (£16m), offset by reduced flood capital funding (£11m).

With the level of over-programming reduced and a considerable proportion of the overall budget still to be utilised, there is a greater level of risk of under-spend.

Financial Performance – Revenue Projects

Revenue Projects by Programme	Actual YTD £m	Approved Forecast YTD £m	Variance YTD £m	Approved Forecast FY £m	Remaining Budget FY %	Commentary
External Funded	1.6	1.8	0.1	2.5	33%	The current variance is linked to the Natur Am Byth project, with the remaining budget spread across this and one other LiFE project. We anticipate the fully year allocation to be utilised by the end of the financial year.
Internal Funded	1.0	1.2	0.2	1.7	43%	The current variance reflects underspend within the Water Resources & Reservoir Compliance programmes. All are anticipated to utilise the full year allocation.
NaCE	0.9	1.0	0.1	1.8	49%	Over programming is now very low (below £50k). We anticipate to fully utilise the £1.8m allocated.
NRW 2030	0.4	0.4	0.0	0.9	60%	Current spend inline with budget. The under programming has reduced following the transfer of £0.3m to fund pressures within fleet and facilities and now stands of £0.2m. The programme manager is confident the surplus can be reallocated and utilised by the end of the financial year.
Grants	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.7	95%	Significantly smaller programme this year with only two projects; Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and National Trails. All of which will be utilised by March 2025.
TOTAL: NRW	4.0	4.3	0.3	7.6	48%	

Financial Performance – Capital Projects

Capital Projects by Programme	Actual YTD £m	Approved Forecast YTD £m	Variance YTD £m	Approved Forecast FY £m	Remaining Budget FY %	Commentary
NRW 2030	1.8	1.6	-0.1	3.3	46%	Current costs are broadly in line with expectations. The overall programme is currently under-programmed by £0.5m. The programme manager is confident that the surplus can be reallocated in relation to the revenue aspects, however there is uncertainty on the ability to further increase expenditure on the capital side. Therefore, £0.3m capital under-programming could be reallocated within NRW balances to alleviate cross-organisation pressures by year-end. The holding code has reduced from £0.4m to £0.1m, following further budget allocations to the tech stabilisation sub programme.
External Funded	4.9	5.3	0.3	8.4	41%	Expenditure at the end of January is slightly behind the forecasted position. This remains predominantly linked to the Natur am Byth project where partnership spend is lower than anticipated and further exacerbated by delays in up to date budget forecasts. There is a risk relating to two LIFE projects where spend will likely be pushed into next year, however, due to the nature of the funding we do have the ability to defer the income to next year and facilitate this.
Flood Risk	12.6	13.0	0.5	18.4	32%	The programme is currently under-programmed by £0.8m. We are exploring with WG the possibility of utilising the Flood under programming for other capital activities within NRW.
Internal Funded	2.0	2.2	0.1	3.1	34%	The Water Resources Programme is now under programmed by £0.1m, which has reduced since the previous reporting month. There are also Land Stewardship projects (£1.2m), predominantly funded from WG Grants and a £1m budget for the purchase of NRW's EV Fleet, which has currently spent £0.8m as at the end of January. We anticipate to fully utilise the £1m budget. Should the WG Grant element be under spent, we will see an equal and opposite reduction in income.
NaCE	13.8	13.8	0.1	22.0	37%	Expenditure to the end of January is in line with the year to date budget. The programme is currently over-programmed by £0.3m, a reduction of £0.4m from the previous reporting month. We anticipate to fully utilise the £22m budget.
IFRS 16 Capital Leases Only (non-cash)	0.9	0.9	0.0	1.8	52%	The remaining budget reflects dilapidation costs for Ty Cambria, which we expect to be fully utilised.
TOTAL: NRW	35.9	36.8	0.9	56.9	37%	

Contingency and over-programming budgets

Rag status



Balances (contingencies and programme under/overs)	/£m Nov-24	/£m Jan-25	/£m Movement	Confidence Level (RAG Status)	Comments
In year pressure balancing targets					
Staff Reduction Targets	-1.9	-1.9	0.0		We are currently on track to meet the £9.3m staff reduction target. Whilst there appears to be no movement since November, savings of £1.7m have been generated however, these have been offset by the removal of the charge funded element, of the same value. The charge post savings have allowed us to reduced the draw on charge reserves. The position will be reviewed on a monthly basis to ensure we are still on track to meet the target, but at this moment in time we do not expect any significant change.
Vacancy Management	-1.7	-0.9	0.8		We are on target to manage the vacancy management target this year.
Contingencies and provisions					
Pay Award Provisions	6.1	0.0	-6.1		The pay award has now been allocated.
Other staff contingency	1.5	1.8	0.3		Consolidated central contingency budget for the Case for Change.
Central Contingencies & central overprogramming	1.2	-0.6	-1.8		Overprogramming was increased to £1.8m, as agreed at January ET to part fund our contribution to any IR35 liability and Facilities pressure. Following a number of budget returns, over programming currently stands at £0.6m.
Central Contingencies (corporate cost recharge)	0.8	0.0	-0.8		The contingency has now been removed following the application of the revised corporate cost charge for charge activities.
IR35 Contingency	0.0	19.0	19.0		WG has provided additional budget cover of £16m and £3m is our contribution.
Facilities Pressure	0.0	1.2	1.2		Position finalised, budget required now £0.4m less.
Timber Income contingency	0.0	-1.5	-1.5		Timber income has reduced from £33.1m to £31.6m so we are £1.4m below the £33m WG guarantee. That cover is available, if we need it.
Staff Budget Undistributed (Directorates)	0.2	0.3	0.1		Budgets approved for new posts not yet created.
Staff budget allocation for increments	0.4	-0.1	-0.5		Budget allocated in January.
Over-programming					
Overprogramming (Directorates)	-0.1	-0.1	0.0		Minor balances across Directorates, low value risk.
NaCE (Directorates)	-0.7	-0.3	0.4		Over programming is gradually reducing and will continue to be managed down so the programme comes in line to the allocated funding.
Under-programming					
Water Resources Capital (Directorates)	0.5	0.1	-0.5		Following a review of the programme £0.4m has been transferred to WR balances and then re-located to help fund other Water Resources related liabilities.
NRW 2030 (Directorates)	0.6	0.5	-0.1		Under programming is split across the capital (£0.3m) & revenue (£0.2m) programmes. The revenue element has reduced by £0.3m to fund pressures within fleet and accommodation costs.
Flood Risk Capital (Directorates)	0.2	0.8	0.6		We are in discussions with WG as to whether we can utilise the under spend within other NRW activities outside of flood.
Awaiting distribution					
NRW 2030 (Directorates)	0.4	0.1	-0.3		
Note					
All contingencies/over programming are held centrally unless indicated otherwise.					



Board Paper

Date of meeting:	20th March 2025
Title of Paper:	Annual Business Plan Performance Report: Quarter 3 and Internal Performance Report: Quarter 3
Paper Reference:	25-03-B18
Paper sponsored by:	Ceri Davies (Acting Chief Executive)
Paper prepared by:	Sarah Williams (Head of Corporate Strategy and PMO)
Paper presented by:	Sarah Jennings (Executive Director of Communications, Customer and Commercial) Gareth O'Shea (Executive Director of Operations) Dominic Driver (Acting Executive Director of Evidence, Policy and Permitting)
Purpose of the paper	Approval
Summary	<p>NRW must operate systems which enable review of performance against objectives in a timely and effective manner. Presented here are the Quarter 3 reports for the Annual Business Plan and Internal Performance Report.</p> <p>Following feedback from Board Members and Welsh Government Sponsorship Team we have included in this quarter's report business as usual metrics related to our development planning service and biodiversity related regulation activities (see Annex 3). These will evolve in quarter 4 to include metrics related to the shared investment priorities agreed between the NRW Chair and the Deputy First Minister.</p>

Background

Business Plan and performance

1. Each financial year, the Minister sends NRW a formal statement of its budgetary provision. In response to this, each year we have to prepare a business plan setting out the level of service to be achieved in key areas and the performance and output information to be collected to monitor progress.
2. The Welsh Government Framework document states that NRW must operate systems which enable review of performance against objectives in a timely and effective manner. Agreed monitoring information must be shared with the Welsh Government Partnership Team at agreed intervals to demonstrate progress, ensure targets are being achieved, and metrics are within acceptable levels.

3. At publication of the Corporate Plan, Executive Directors were identified as Leads for each Well-being Objective (WBO) with responsibility for performance, assurance and risk of their respective WBO and integrated scrutiny across the three WBOs to ensure a holistic view of progress. The Chief Executive is responsible for advising the Board on organisational performance. Scrutiny of performance is evidenced in the NRW Annual Report and Accounts.

2024-25 Business Plan

4. The 2024/25 Business Plan sets out what we will do specifically in 2024/25 to deliver against the three well-being objectives to meet our vision. This year's plan signals a difference in tone and approach, with clear alignment to the corporate plan vision, mission and well-being objectives.
5. We know we will not be able to realise the outcomes of each well-being objective or step to take straight away. In these early years, we need to lay the foundations by doing the preparatory work such as interrogating the evidence base or developing and testing different tools and approaches that will enable us to accelerate delivery in future years.
6. Across the three WBOs, the business plan identifies the steps to take where we have identified the 26 specific commitments that we will progress this year (seven for WBO1: Nature; nine for WBO2: Climate, nine for WBO3: Pollution, and one cross-cutting). This represents approaching 30% of the total steps to take in the corporate plan. Many of these annual commitments are aligned to priorities in the Term of Government Remit Letter and specific outputs defined in Welsh Government and other funding body grant award letters.
7. Each of the 26 steps to take identifies a commitment for this year and is accompanied by up to three key deliverables to demonstrate how progress will be made in this year.

Business Plan 2024/25 Quarter Three Performance Report

8. The Business Plan 2024/25 Quarter Three Performance Report can be seen in Annex One. A synthesis of progress against the WBOs is provided in the report alongside RAG (Red, Amber, Green) status of each commitment to show progress for this quarter and anticipated year-end position.
9. In quarter three **actual progress** against the 26 commitments identifies eleven reported green which is a reduction of three from Q2; thirteen reported amber, an increase of two from Q2 and two reported red, an increase from one in Q2.
10. For **year-end prediction**, compared to Q2 we are now seeing a reduction in the number anticipating a red at year end to two. Seven additional commitments anticipate reporting amber at year end; a total of twelve are now anticipated. Twelve commitments are now anticipating reporting green at year, down from seventeen in Q2.

Internal performance report

11. The Internal Performance Report can be seen at Annex 2 and covers seven internally focussed measures, with their current (Q3) RAG status. This is a subset of more detailed management information, collected monthly and shared with all Executive Directors for scrutiny with their senior leadership teams.
12. For these measures the position remains unchanged to that reported in Q2 with six green, one amber and no red.

‘Business as Usual’ Operational Reporting

13. We plan to include ‘Business as Usual’ Operational Reporting for some areas of our work in future quarterly reports. A suggested format for this, using some of our development planning and biodiversity regulation work are included in Annex 3. We will extend this information in Q4 to other functions and include in the 2025-26 Business Plan and as part of performance reporting.

Risks, Risk Appetite and opportunities

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

Wider implications

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

Next Steps

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

Recommendation

19. NRW Board approve the Business Plan 2024/25 Quarter Three Performance Report and the Internal Performance Report.

Index of Annexes

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

Annex 2 – [Internal Performance Report: Quarter 3](#)

Annex 3 – [Business as Usual metrics](#)

Approval / Consultation process

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

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

Background

1. Across the three Well-being Objectives (WBOs), the business plan identifies the steps to take where we have identified 26 specific commitments that we will progress this year (seven for WBO1: Nature; nine for WBO2: Climate, nine for WBO3: Pollution, and one cross-cutting). This represents approaching 30% of the total steps to take in the corporate plan. Many of these are aligned to priorities in the Term of Government Remit Letter and specific outputs defined in Welsh Government and other funding body grant award letters.
2. Each of the 26 steps to take identifies a commitment for this year and is accompanied by up to three key deliverables to demonstrate how progress will be made in this year.
3. The annual commitments and key deliverables only reflect a small portion of the steps to take included in the corporate plan. We recognise that a breadth of other activity underpins our work on the three well-being objectives from environmental monitoring and reporting, responding to planning applications, issuing permits, undertaking compliance visits and where necessary taking enforcement action.
4. At publication of the Corporate Plan, Executive Directors were identified as Leads for each Well-being Objective (WBO) with responsibility for performance, assurance and risk of their respective WBO and integrated scrutiny across the three WBO to ensure a holistic view of progress. The 'WBO performance group', chaired by the Head of Corporate Strategy and PMO with the three ET WBO leads and the relevant Leadership Team step to take leads met again this quarter to consider performance and progress.

Overarching assessment of performance – emerging themes and risks

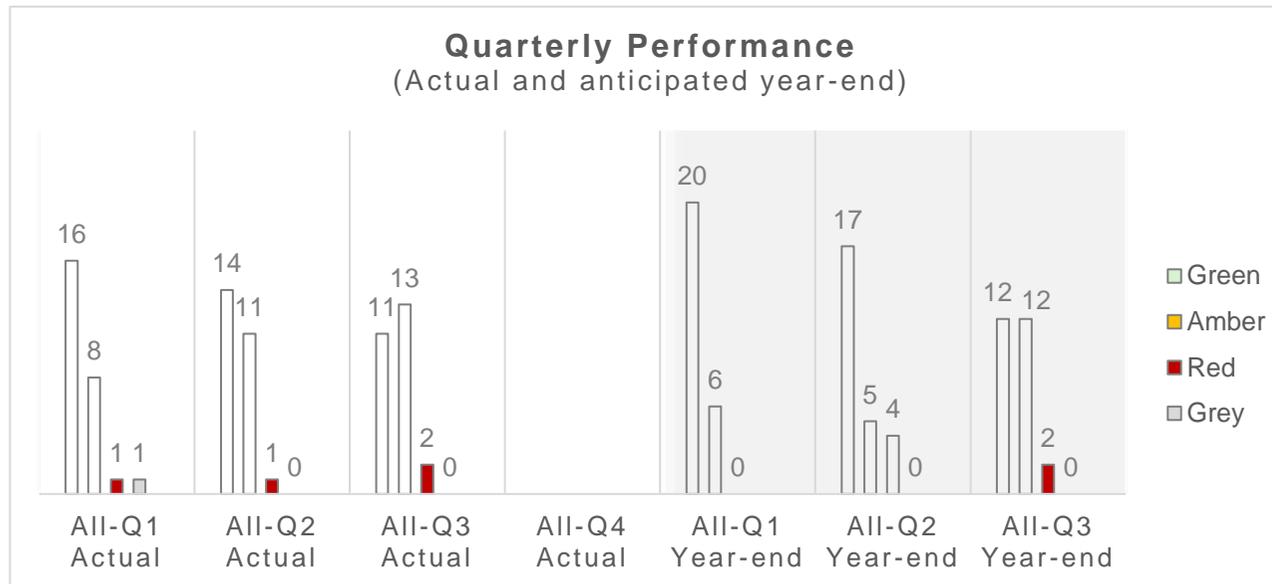
5. Across the three well-being objectives we are making progress on all the annual commitments and key deliverables. Notable achievements this quarter include: publication of the Interim Report for SoNaRR 2025; confirmation of Welsh Government's expectations on the support required to the development and implementation of the Sustainable Farming Scheme, with deliverables agreed; allocation of £2m to our

strategic partners through the Strategic Allocated Funding programme and £700k of funding under a competitive grant scheme to enable others to develop peatland restoration plans; restoration of peatland on the land in our care and on others' land through land management agreements has made good progress; completion of the flood defence structures at Stephenson Street in Newport providing protection to 814 properties; continued advice and guidance to Ofwat on the final determination of water company prices, securing record levels of water company investment in the environment to 2030; publication of the annual regulatory report. This sits alongside the significant "business as usual activities" such as permitting, compliance visits and statutory advice to the planning system. Responding to the flooding and damage across the land in care resulting from storms Bert and Darragh has been a major factor driving the work of many of our teams as they respond to and recover from the damage caused by these events.

6. The recruitment freeze has impacted delivery with progress on many commitments and key deliverables slower than anticipated at the start of the year. Team leaders, managers and leadership team are continuing to prioritise, pausing some work to create capacity for other higher priority work, scaling back ambition, and managing expectations with our customers and partners about what to expect. In addition, some new work has emerged through the year which we'd not anticipated, for example preparations for the new [Water \(Special Measures\) Bill](#) and the [Wales Audit Office review of protected sites work](#) under their Future Generations Act powers.
7. These pressures are reflected in the performance metrics, where we report an increase in the number of actual 'amber' and 'red' annual commitments in Q3 and an increase in the number of 'amber' and 'red' at predicted year-end.
8. The pathway to green for these commitments is dependent on the release of the recruitment controls. It is likely that the earliest these commitments will return to green is Q3 in 2025/26. For this reason, these commitments and deliverables will be retained within the 2025/26 Annual Business Plan.
9. It is important to acknowledge that many managers are prioritising delivery of the commitments in this business plan over other activities in the business group service plans. Thus, the true impact of the recruitment freeze on delivery and performance is masked. To provide a more holistic assessment of the pressures on performance we have included metrics reported through the NRM and Regulation Service Plans related to statutory advice to developers and local authority planners as well as metrics related to biodiversity licencing, consents and assents. (see Annex 3). We will evolve the format of this report for quarter 4 to include the shared priorities for investment agreed by the NRW Chair and Deputy First Minister and include these in the 2025/26 business plan.
10. The Planning and Resources Group (PRG) and its sub-groups have continued to meet to review recruitment controls and opportunities to deploy staff on a short-term basis to priority areas. Executive Team has considered a small number of cases for external recruitment on an exceptional basis.
11. The Case for Change is progressing, with matching completed and the Expression of Interest (EOI) stage opening at the end of February. If a post is not filled through the EOI, it will be released for open recruitment across the whole organisation. This will start from late March.

Performance Analysis

12. The graph below illustrates 'RAG' quarterly progress and year-end predicted positions across all 26 annual commitments; Table 1 reflects quarterly progress through the year for each annual commitment.



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

13. Against actual progress in quarter three, of the 26 commitments, eleven reported green - a reduction of three from Q2; thirteen reported amber - an increase of two from Q2 and two have reported red – up one from Q2.

14. For year-end prediction, we are seeing more commitments anticipating amber, and less anticipating red. Three commitments previously reporting red in Q2 are now anticipating amber (C20 and C21) or green (C6). One commitment previously reporting amber (C15) is now anticipating reporting red for year end.

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

	2024/25 Business Plan commitment:	2024/25			
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Year end
WBO1: Nature is recovering	C1: Evaluate the NRW Nature Networks Programme to inform future investment for protected sites	Amber	Amber	Amber	
	C2: Synthesise evidence to identify priorities for notification and renotification of sites contributing to the 30:30 target	Amber	Amber	Red	
	C3: Develop an understanding of the intervention impact of 11 of the place-based Natur am Byth partnership programme projects to refine conservation delivery	Green	Green	Green	
	C4: Consolidate understanding of the condition of features of Welsh only marine SACs and SPAs to inform prioritisation	Green	Green	Green	
	C5: Integrate nature recovery evidence into the proposed new National Park process and management of existing AONBs and National Parks to improve decision making for nature	Green	Green	Green	
	C6: Delivering multiple benefits and opportunities for nature, people and the rural economy through supporting Welsh Government in the development and implementation of the Sustainable Farming Scheme, providing evidence and expertise	N/A	Amber	Green	
	C7: Implementing No Mow May, piloting new approaches to working with nature on the land and assets that we manage, identifying prioritised recommendations	Green	Green	Green	
CC	C26: Develop an understanding of user needs, experience, and opportunities for common messaging and mainstreaming evidence into decision-making to inform the Interim Report for SoNaRR 2025	Green	Green	Green	
WBO2: Communities are resilient to climate change	C8: Invest in capacity building to enable delivery in 2024-25 and future expansion of the National Peatland Action Programme	Amber	Amber	Amber	
	C9: Strengthen capacity and evidence informing spatial prioritisation to enable effective future restoration within marine and coastal habitats	Amber	Green	Amber	
	C10: Deliver capital projects and sustain levels of protection for properties to reduce flood risk	Green	Green	Green	
	C11: Improve the Flood Warning Service and Telemetry System to deliver efficiencies and maintain continuity of service to customers	Red	Red	Amber	
	C12: Review the prioritisation approach for flood asset maintenance and management to ensure our investment is risk based	Green	Amber	Amber	
	C13: Develop understanding, using insight to enhance pre-application processes related to statutory planning and permitting applications to facilitate industrial decarbonisation and reduction of landfill greenhouse gas emissions	Green	Green	Amber	
	C14: Enhance evidence, guidance and pre-application advice to improve the quality of submissions for planning permissions and permit/licence applications (Re; low carbon and carbon capture technologies)	Amber	Amber	Amber	
	C15: Prioritise actions with the greatest cost benefit on carbon dioxide equivalent (CO2e)/ greenhouse gases (GHGs) to deliver our annual prioritisation within the Net Zero Plan	Green	Amber	Red	
C16: Embed the use of carbon reduction tools and plans into high value contracts and frameworks to improve the quality of submissions.	Green	Amber	Amber		
WBO3: Pollution is minimised	C17: Undertake farm inspections under Agriculture Pollution Regulations, in line with the enforcement sanctions policy to reduce pollution.	Green	Green	Amber	
	C18: Undertake compliance visits at prioritised regulated sites to reduce pollution	Green	Green	Green	
	C19: Provide support and advice on the new Workplace Recycling Regulations, targeting key workplace sectors and waste service providers to increase stakeholder awareness and understanding.	Green	Green	Green	
	C20: Provide challenge and advice to water companies to ensure their investment programmes reduce the risks and impacts of their operations on the environment.	Amber	Amber	Amber	
	C21: Set the ambition for water quality improvements at a catchment scale to build collaboration and deliver prioritised action	Amber	Amber	Amber	
	C22: Respond to prioritised pollution incidents to minimise environmental harm.	Green	Green	Green	
	C23: Enhance our understanding of the drivers of pollution incidents across Wales to inform the integration of preventative actions into incident response.	Green	Green	Amber	
	C24: Undertake investigation and enforcement action to minimise environmental harm	Green	Green	Green	
	C25: Strengthen ways of working with Local Authorities and third sector partners to maximise collective action on fly-tipping	Amber	Amber	Amber	

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

Synthesis of progress against each well-being objective

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

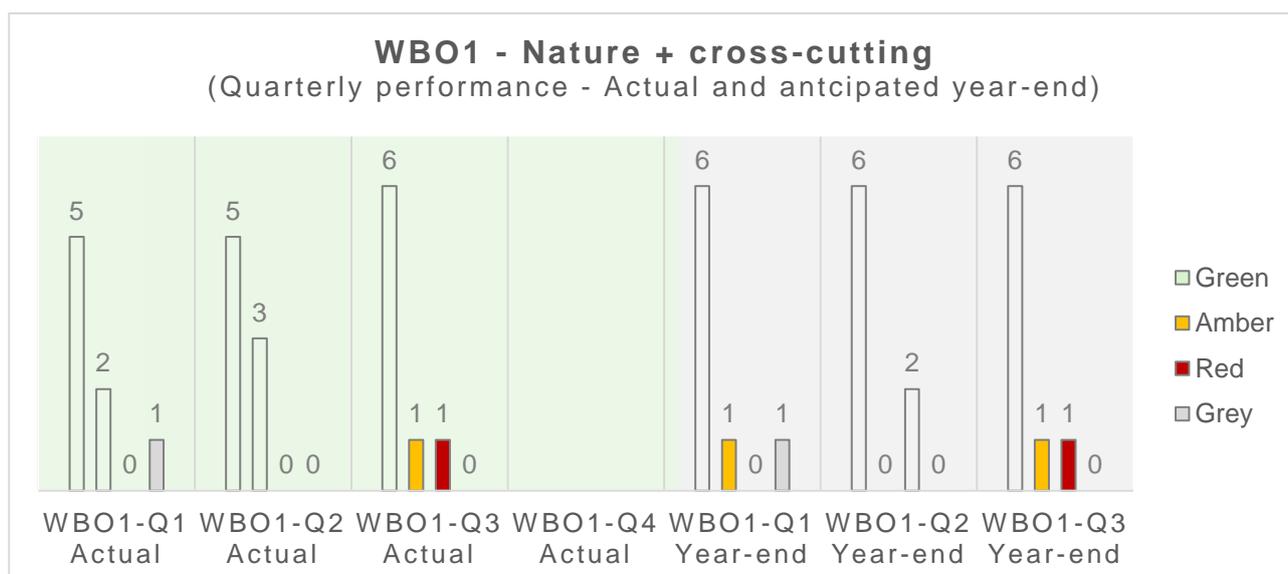
N.B. For reporting purposes only, we have now moved the cross cutting commitment (C26) under WBO 1.

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

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

2024/25 Business Plan commitment		2024/25			
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Year end
WBO1: Nature is recovering	C1: Evaluate the NRW Nature Networks Programme to inform future investment for protected sites	Amber	Amber	Amber	
	C2: Synthesise evidence to identify priorities for notification and renotification of sites contributing to the 30:30 target	Amber	Amber	Red	
	C3: Develop an understanding of the intervention impact of 11 of the place-based Natur am Byth partnership programme projects to refine conservation delivery	Green	Green	Green	
	C4: Consolidate understanding of the condition of features of Welsh only marine SACs and SPAs to inform prioritisation	Green	Green	Green	
	C5: Integrate nature recovery evidence into the proposed new National Park process and management of existing AONBs and National Parks to improve decision making for nature	Green	Green	Green	
	C6: Delivering multiple benefits and opportunities for nature, people and the rural economy through supporting Welsh Government in the development and implementation of the Sustainable Farming Scheme, providing evidence and expertise	N/A	Amber	Green	
	C7: Implementing No Mow May, piloting new approaches to working with nature on the land and assets that we manage, identifying prioritised recommendations	Green	Green	Green	
CC	C26: Develop an understanding of user needs, experience, and opportunities for common messaging and mainstreaming evidence into decision-making to inform the Interim Report for SoNaRR 2025	Green	Green	Green	

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



15. Through quarter three, overall 'actual' progress remains good. Of the eight commitments, the five commitments that reported green in Q1 and Q2 remain green in Q3. One other commitment is now reporting green in Q3 (C6). One commitment is reporting amber for actual progress, and one reporting red.

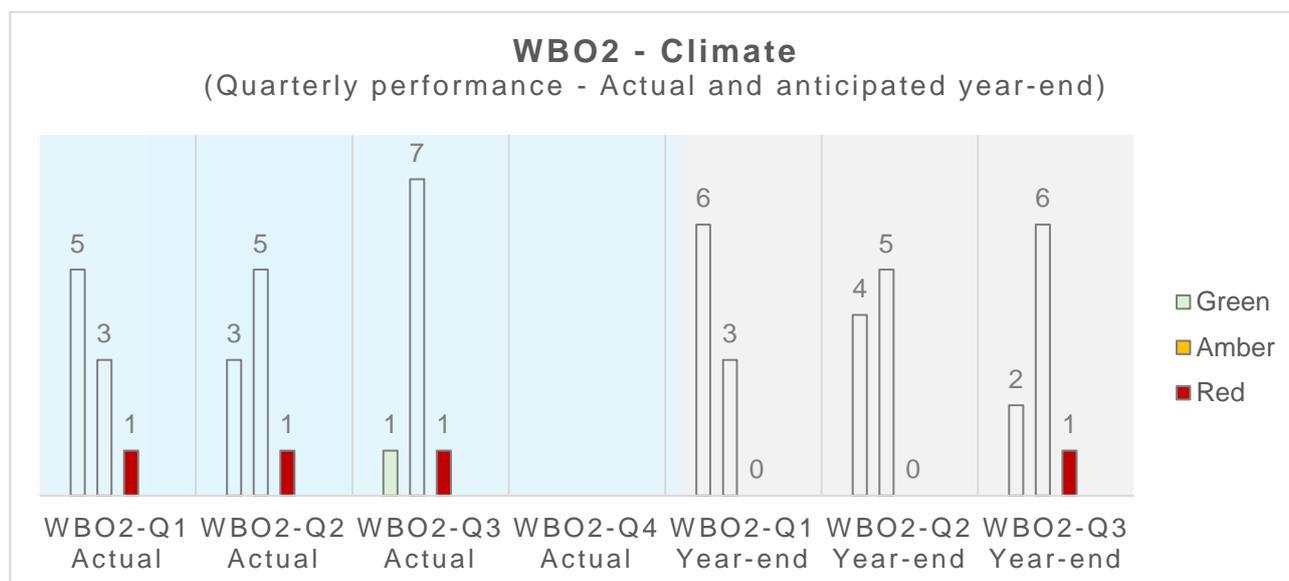
16. Year-end prediction in Q3 has changed from two predicted reds last quarter; to one amber and one red; the other six commitments remain green.
17. In this WBO, twelve identified risks have been mapped to the following top-level risk Registers (Strategic; Business Group; Place; 'Other', e.g. Marine).
18. Some of the commitments benefit from external funding – either through the Welsh Government Nature Networks Programme or the National Lottery Heritage Fund and are not subject to the same pressures as Grant in Aid.
19. C1- Evaluation of the NRW Nature Networks Programme remains amber for this quarter and is predicted amber at year end. The pace of work had slowed in Q2 as staff were diverted to evaluate the Nature Networks Fund NLHF (National Lottery Heritage Fund) applications. This Welsh Government investment will support improvements at protected sites. Although staff have now refocussed on progressing this commitment, it will not be possible to complete all of the deliverables by the end of the year. There is no realistic pathway to green by the end of the financial year and the deliverables will continue into the 2025/26 business plan.
20. C2 - Synthesis of evidence to identify priorities for notification and re-notification of sites contributing to the 30:30 target, has moved to red in Q3 for actual and year end position. The scope of the review of the SSSI series has been agreed and data/information requests defined, but the assessment of this evidence, due for completion in December, has not completed. The pace of work on the review of the SSSI Notification Handbook has slowed down due to other competing priorities, but we have drawn out lessons learnt on previous SSSI notifications that will inform the future programme prioritisation. The slow down in progress across the three deliverables is due to the recruitment freeze. There is no realistic pathway to green by the end of the financial year and these deliverables will continue into the 2025/26 business plan.
21. Six commitments are reporting green in Q3. C6 - Providing evidence to inform the development of the Welsh Government Sustainable Farming Scheme and identify with Welsh Government what support services may be required is now predicting green at year-end having previously predicted red in Q2. This reflects positive engagement with Welsh Government officials over the quarter culminating in agreement to revised key deliverables. C26 - the (Interim) State of Natural Resources Report 2025 was published in December 2024.

WBO 2: Communities are resilient to climate change

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

2024/25 Business Plan commitment		2024/25			
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Year end
WBO2: Communities are resilient to climate change	C8: Invest in capacity building to enable delivery in 2024-25 and future expansion of the National Peatland Action Programme	Amber	Amber	Amber	
	C9: Strengthen capacity and evidence informing spatial prioritisation to enable effective future restoration within marine and coastal habitats	Amber	Green	Amber	
	C10: Deliver capital projects and sustain levels of protection for properties to reduce flood risk	Green	Green	Green	
	C11: Improve the Flood Warning Service and Telemetry System to deliver efficiencies and maintain continuity of service to customers	Red	Red	Amber	
	C12: Review the prioritisation approach for flood asset maintenance and management to ensure our investment is risk based	Green	Amber	Amber	
	C13: Develop understanding, using insight to enhance pre-application processes related to statutory planning and permitting applications to facilitate industrial decarbonisation and reduction of landfill greenhouse gas emissions	Green	Green	Amber	
	C14: Enhance evidence, guidance and pre-application advice to improve the quality of submissions for planning permissions and permit/licence applications (Re; low carbon and carbon capture technologies)	Amber	Amber	Amber	
	C15: Prioritise actions with the greatest cost benefit on carbon dioxide equivalent (CO2e)/ greenhouse gases (GHGs) to deliver our annual prioritisation within the Net Zero Plan	Green	Amber	Red	
	C16: Embed the use of carbon reduction tools and plans into high value contracts and frameworks to improve the quality of submissions.	Green	Amber	Amber	

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



22. Through quarter three, overall 'actual' progress has continued to slow. Of the nine commitments, only one commitment (down from three in Q2) continues to report green in Q3. Seven commitments are now reporting amber. Two commitments (C9 and C13) changed from green in Q2 to amber in Q3. One commitment has now moved to red from amber for actual progress (C15), with another commitment moving from red in Q2 to amber in Q3 (C11).

23. Year-end prediction in Q3 has changed, with six now reporting amber, up by one from Q2. One commitment is now predicted red (C15). Two remain on target.

24. In this WBO, fourteen identified risks have been mapped to the following top-level Risk Registers (Strategic; Strategic and Major programmes/projects, Business Group; Place; 'Other', e.g. Procurement and contracts).
25. C8 – Investment in capacity building to enable delivery in 2024-25 and future expansion of the National Peatland Action Programme remains at amber for actual progress and for predicted year-end. We are making good progress restoring the top priority peatland sites on the land in our care, as well as supporting delivery projects on others land through land management agreements, strategic allocated grants and competitive grants. We have also made progress on developing guidance and advice to inform land use planning applications potentially impacting peat soils and peatland habitats. Despite this good progress, we have not been able to recruit the additional staff to ensure we can scale up delivery in future years. There is no realistic pathway to green by the end of the financial year and this commitment will continue into the 2025/26 business plan.
26. C11 – Improve the flood warning service and telemetry system to deliver efficiencies and maintain continuity of service to customers has now moved to amber from red in Q3. The flood warning information service was delivered on target in Q2 and is green. Of the 4 workstreams in the telemetry system project, 3 have made good progress, but the outstation replacement workstream is behind target and completion has been re-baselined from April 2025 to July 2025. There is no realistic pathway to green by the end of the financial year, this deliverable will continue into the 2025/26 business plan.
27. C13 – Develop understanding, to enhance pre-application processes related to statutory planning and permitting applications to facilitate industrial decarbonisation and reduction of landfill greenhouse gas emissions is now reporting amber for actual progress and continues to predict amber at year end. Although engagement with major stakeholders and industries is on-going, we have not been able to do as much as we planned due to resource constraints. We've provided specialist pre-application advice to enable specific schemes to go to trial and developers are now planning for deployment of the technology. Ongoing vacancies will likely be filled in the new financial year and the pace of delivery will pick up. We will continue to include this commitment in the 2025/26 business plan.
28. C14 - Enhance the evidence, guidance and pre-application advice to improve the quality of submissions for planning permissions and permit/licence applications in the marine environment remains amber for actual progress and year-end prediction. We have progressed approximately 45% of the high priority offshore renewable evidence needs and another 18% have been progressed largely independent of NRW. Individual receptor specialists have made progress on a small number of key pieces of guidance of highest priority. We have started the Marine Alpha project to support the development of a new digital platform to provide a streamlined service to those seeking a marine licence. We have formally started the Marine Licensing Fees Review with Welsh Government. Ongoing vacancies will likely be filled in the new financial year and the pace of delivery will pick up. We will continue to include this commitment in the 2025/26 business plan.
29. C15 - Prioritise actions with the greatest cost benefit on carbon dioxide equivalent/greenhouse gases to deliver our annual prioritisation within the net zero plan is reporting red for actual progress this quarter and red as anticipated year end. There has been good progress with the ERIC Carbon Modelling Tool, with 100% of all design scopes issued in the quarter by the Strategic Projects team using the tool. The driver of

the red status is the failure to achieve the climate literacy training target for NRW staff with only 117 of the 300 spaces taken up. This low level of uptake is linked to the staff capacity constraints. There is no realistic pathway to green by the end of the financial year and this deliverable will continue into the 2025/26 business plan.

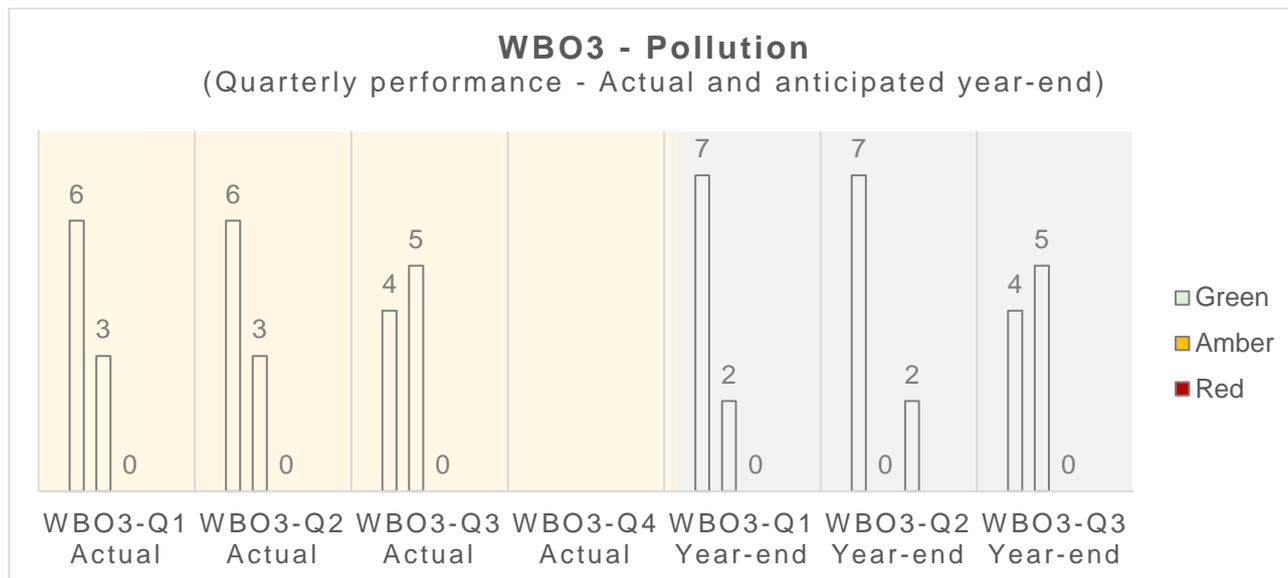
- 30.C16 – Embed the use of carbon reduction tools and plans into high value contracts and frameworks to improve the quality of submissions is reporting amber for actual progress this quarter and predicting green at year end. Good progress has been made on the use of carbon calculators. We have issued tender documentation for the pilot procurement exercise to suppliers on the ‘Well-being Impact’ related to the Community Woodlands Framework Agreement. There is no realistic pathway to green by the end of the financial year and this deliverable will continue into the 2025/26 business plan.

WBO 3: Pollution is minimised:

Table 4: WBO3 dashboard - Pollution is minimised.

2024/25 Business Plan commitment		2024/25			
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Year end
WBO3: Pollution is minimised	C17: Undertake farm inspections under Agriculture Pollution Regulations, in line with the enforcement sanctions policy to reduce pollution.	Green	Green	Amber	
	C18: Undertake compliance visits at prioritised regulated sites to reduce pollution	Green	Green	Green	
	C19: Provide support and advice on the new Workplace Recycling Regulations, targeting key workplace sectors and waste service providers to increase stakeholder awareness and understanding.	Green	Green	Green	
	C20: Provide challenge and advice to water companies to ensure their investment programmes reduce the risks and impacts of their operations on the environment.	Amber	Amber	Amber	
	C21: Set the ambition for water quality improvements at a catchment scale to build collaboration and deliver prioritised action	Amber	Amber	Amber	
	C22: Respond to prioritised pollution incidents to minimise environmental harm.	Green	Green	Green	
	C23: Enhance our understanding of the drivers of pollution incidents across Wales to inform the integration of preventative actions into incident response.	Green	Green	Amber	
	C24: Undertake investigation and enforcement action to minimise environmental harm	Green	Green	Green	
	C25: Strengthen ways of working with Local Authorities and third sector partners to maximise collective action on fly-tipping	Amber	Amber	Amber	

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



31. Through quarter three, overall 'actual' progress has slowed. Of the nine commitments, four remain green and five are now amber.
32. Year-end prediction in Q3 has changed significantly, with two commitments previously anticipating red at year end now anticipated to be amber, and a total of five commitments now anticipating amber. Four commitments remain on target.
33. In this WBO, twelve identified risks have been mapped to the following top-level Risk Registers (Business Group; 'Other', e.g. Business Group subgroup).
34. C17 – Undertake farm inspections under the Agriculture Pollution Regulations has moved to amber in Q3 and is now predicting amber for year-end. We have progressed 149 of the 164 farm visits scheduled this quarter. The slowdown in the pace of visits reflects a combination of factors including three vacancies in the team and it will be difficult to retrieve the position by year end to meet the 80% target.
35. C20 - Provide challenge and advice to water companies to ensure their investment programmes reduce the risks and impacts of their operations on the environment remains amber in Q3 and is now predicting amber (previously red) for year-end. Substantial work has completed this quarter culminating in the Ofwat Final Determination, securing record levels of water company investment in the environment. Good progress has also been made with the publication of drought plan guidance for water companies. We have been drawn into new unplanned, high priority work related to the Water Special Measures Bill and the release of a joint consultation with the Environment Agency on the Water Industry Environmental Performance Assessment for 2026-2030 which has meant that we no longer anticipate progressing Operator Monitoring Audits (OMA) for Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water and Hafren Dyfrdwy this year. This deliverable will continue into the 2025/26 Business Plan.
36. C21 – Set the ambition for water quality improvements at a catchment scale to build collaboration and deliver prioritised action remains amber in Q3 and is now predicting amber (previously predicting red) for year-end. We completed the review of 171 water company permits in June and are now progressing the determination of applications to vary some of those licences. Good progress continues to be made on water quality investigations in SAC rivers. The NACE funded projects are making slower progress than planned due to staff capacity and the complexity of actions required at some sites. We continue to work with others to develop an innovation bid for the Teifi catchment.

37.C23 – Enhance our understanding of the drivers of pollution incidents in Wales to inform the integration of preventative actions into incident response has moved to amber in Q3 from green in Q2 and is now predicting amber at year end. Good progress has been made identifying opportunities to improve incident management processes, with extensive engagement with managers and team leaders in operations and with Business Groups. ET has endorsed the proposed next steps. Through engagement with the business we have also built a stronger insight into our collective data needs and used this to inform the design of tools to interrogate the WIRS database. Although good progress has been made, the leads recognise they will need to invest greater time and energy to engage with colleagues to ensure the changes to ways of working bed in properly.

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

Table 1: Wellbeing Objective 1 - Nature is Recovering

ET Owner: Dominic Driver

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

Area of Focus: Nature being protected

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

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

Key deliverables:

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

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

C1: Latest position (to end of December):

This commitment is Amber at the end of December.

For KD1: Our evaluation work has continued, using data from the Protected Sites database, Section 16 land management agreements the Nature Networks programme has delivered conservation activities on at least 223 SSSI across Wales. Marine elements of the programme have been fully evaluated to inform projects going forward into 2025/26. Some data collation and analysis were not completed. Welsh Government (WG) now intend to evaluate their whole Nature Networks Programme, (NRW and National Lottery Heritage Fund) during 2025/26. We are aligning our evaluation to match the new WG timelines.

For KD2: We are continuing to develop a prioritised programme and business case for WG in line with the indicative budget using evidence and feedback from evaluation work so far. We will be able to continue to deliver valuable Nature Network activities by continuing to co-design priorities for 2025/26. Without the full evaluation of the whole programme, risks a lack of evidence on the overall impact of the programme to improve the condition of protected sites features.

This commitment is anticipated to be Amber at the end of the financial year. The pathway to green for this is working closely with WG over the full programme evaluation and addressing capacity gaps through investment for delivering evaluation activity (e.g. Nature Networks proposing to recruit a Data/GIS officer in 2025/26).

Q3	Anticipated Year end
Amber	Amber

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

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

Key deliverables:

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

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

C2: Latest position (to end of December):	Q3	Anticipated Year end
<p>This commitment is Red at the end of December.</p> <p>For KD1: We have continued to develop the scope of work needed to complete a review the SSSI series. This has been agreed in broad terms and specific questions and data requests made (e.g. to the GIS Service Desk) to draw out the information needed to inform the assessment. The target was for completion by end of December (Q3). This has not been achieved and is reported as Red. Ongoing staff vacancies, competing priorities and the scale of reactive work for the remainder of the Team are slowing the pace of delivery. The Audit Wales project looking into SSSI notifications which has come in during Q3 is one example.</p> <p>For KD2: The OGN process for the SSSI Notification Handbook is in progress with a Task and Finish Group established. The scope of the first edition of the handbook has been agreed with the drafting of text underway. The pace of work on this deliverable has slowed because of competing priorities and the scale of reactive work for the remainder of the Team including the new Audit Wales project. We are focusing our limited resources on the delivery of KD1 and servicing key reactive work.</p> <p>For KD3: Information on previous SSSI notifications has been collated including lessons learnt from some of the latest notifications that required Board member meetings with landowners and occupiers to determine the confirmation of new sites. The work provides a snapshot of costs for a range of activities that need to take place in the notification process. As this deliverable is intended to make use of evidence from KD1 and KD2, it is not possible to fully complete currently. In practice, this means although we have costs for a range of activities in the notification process, we do not have the specific programme needs to be able to confirm what might be estimated as capital and revenue costs to effectively and efficiently notify new sites and re-notify existing sites with expanded areas.</p> <p>This commitment is anticipated to be Red at the end of the financial year. The main focus of this commitment is to enable a review of the current SSSI series and build a programme and prioritisation for new SSSI notifications and re-notifications. Without completing KD1 it is not possible to make evidence based decisions on priorities for future notifications. The pathway to Green for this work requires the vacancies to be filled and making space, slowing down, in other priority work to move this forward. KD1 is being prioritised and additional support is being brought in for a 'cold case' review. Reducing or slowing the number of new SSSI notifications would further support delivery of the review work (a slow down to then speed up).</p>	Red	Red

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

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

Key deliverables:

1. Increased understanding of the effectiveness of the 11 Natur am Byth place-based projects through testing the impact measurement framework and refining the product.
2. Increased the skills of all relevant programme staff through the delivery of Species Recovery Assessment training (to prepare for full scale review of species recovery targets in 25/26) (completed by Q2).
3. Increased understanding of the 67 Natur am Byth target species through the completion of the review of all ecological monitoring plans.

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

C3: Latest position (to end of December):

This commitment is Green at the end of December.

For KD1: This deliverable is Green at the end of December. Our main area of progress has been refining the way we capture progress reports from each Natur am Byth partner organisations on the extent of conservation management they have achieved on terrestrial and marine habitats. Clear metrics of success for habitat management, surveys and monitoring across every site within the programme is an essential component of our Impact Measurement Framework to ensure we communicate success to our funders. The programme has increased the number of sites where we are undertaking conservation management or monitoring from 146 sites in September 2023 to over 180 sites by December 2025.

For KD2: This key deliverable was completed on target in Quarter 2. To maximise this work we took action to share our experience at a UK scale of using our Species Recovery Assessment process, inviting other statutory agencies and partners across GB and NI to a Species Recovery Assessment workshop. This event was planned in December 2024, and will take place in February involving all UK statutory nature conservation agencies, WG, NI Environment Agency and various NGOs focused on species recovery across the UK.

For KD3: Our main area of progress has been Natur am Byth project staff reviewing their ecological monitoring activities planned for late winter 2025, spring and summer.

This commitment is anticipated to be Green at the end of the financial year. The pathway to green for this is to continue to implement programme management principles to manage risks and issues within the Natur am Byth programme. The programme board and partnership steering group will continue to execute their responsibility of supporting project staff and contractors deliver conservation action. The impact measurement framework will continue to be used to monitor activity and ensure that place-based project outcomes are realised, thus contributing to the Wales wide outcomes upon which our external funding relies.

Q3	Anticipated Year end
Green	Green

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

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

Key deliverables:

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

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

C4: Latest position (to end of December):

This commitment is Green at the end of December.

For KD1: Our main area of progress has been to complete 9 of the 12 conservation advice packages to endorsement stage by the project steering group. Unpinning this, we have completed eight SAC feature level condition assessments and three SPA site level condition assessments which allows us to set the objectives for the conservation advice packages. The last three conservation advice packages are nearing the final draft stage and all are due to be signed off in mid-March.

For KD2: Workshops completed, evidence and pressures agreed with specialists. Now moving on to report writing.

This commitment is anticipated to be Green at the end of the financial year. The pathway to green for this is to continue working at the current pace and with the existing staff to complete all the projects associated with this workstream.

Q3	Anticipated Year end
Green	Green

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

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

Key deliverables:

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

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

C5: Latest position (to end of December):

Q3	Anticipated Year end

This commitment is Green at the end of December.

For KD1: The planned public consultation took place during this period. The consultation was held over 10 weeks from October to December. A contract has also been put in place for processing data from responses, and this will start on schedule in December.

For KD2: Discussion with partners to explain that the main Management Plan Guidance has been made available and to explain that a strategic summary has been delayed to Q4. Work has been ongoing to review and streamline the Management Plan Guidance to provide a sharper focused document, highlighting key changes and step change required to focus on nature recovery and building climate resilience. During Q3, this was paused to enable a focus of staff resource to support the Public Consultation on the proposed new National Park. Work will resume during the next quarter.

For KD3: A series of discussions to clarify the relationship between Designated Landscapes and OECMS and related reporting systems. Delay to the publication of the final 30:30 Recommendations for Wales.

This commitment is anticipated to be Green at the end of the financial year. Continued focus on the National Park Designation project, including nature benefits report, with post consultation capacity across the team to deliver on the Management Plan Guidance strategic summary and the 30:30 recommendations.

Green

Green

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

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

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

Key deliverables:

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

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

C6: Latest position (to end of December):

This commitment is Green at the end of December.

For KD1: WG launched the scheme outline and the revised proposed Universal Actions at the Winter Fair which provides clarity on many of the positions on which NRW has been providing policy input (such as woodland creation, habitat management, designated sites management). We continue to support the development of more detailed proposals.

For KD2: The pilot team is now in place and has taken forward work to define the end-to-end process for third party involvement in developing designated site management plans. A shortlist of 26 sites has been generated for piloting and we are now reviewing the suitability of these. WG has redefined the scope of the pilot to consider the time of year and to help manage expectations of the pilot.

For KD3: An assessment of the support service requirements alongside the universal actions is underway. This will form the basis of a bid for

Q3

Green

Anticipated
Year end

Green

funding in 2025-26 Financial Year to support NRW operational readiness. A programme wide risk assessment is being established and will continue to guide the prioritisation of our work in Q4. NRW is actively involved in the SFS Business Case development process.

This commitment is anticipated to be Green at the end of the financial year. During Q4 it will be important to maintain focus on the areas of technical input that WG require based on their existing policy position. We need to ensure that insights gathered through the management plan pilot feeds into the development of the business case, and that regulatory impacts of the optional and collaborative proposals are appropriately factored in. To this end maintaining our risk register and programme focus will help prioritise our input.

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Area of Focus: NRW as an exemplar nature positive organisation

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

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

Key deliverable:

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

Next step for 2025-26: Implementing revised programme.

C7: Latest position (to end of December):

This commitment is Green at the end of December.

For KD1: We implemented our plans for No Mow May in May 2024. A review was undertaken and a report produced. OGN 257 (FRM asset maintenance regimes - grass cutting risk assessment) has now been published to NRW guidance pages.

We are considering the findings of the review report and embed into an FRM Improvements Project looking at adapting the way we operate our mowing regime in future. This commitment is anticipated to be Green at the end of the financial year.

	Q3	Anticipated Year end
	Green	Green

Cross Cutting

Step(s) to take:

...Identifying opportunities to optimise the collective action and impact of the public sector through using SoNaRR and Area Statements to work with the Public Services Boards, public health and local authorities.

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

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

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

Key deliverables:

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

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

C26: Latest position (to end of December):

This commitment is Green at the end of December.

For KD1: Our main area of progress has been finalising the content of the Interim report and publishing on 19th December 2024, meeting the Statutory deadline.

For KD2: Our main area of progress has been to publish the interim Report. We will track engagement and use during Q4 following communication to our stakeholders during early January 2025.

For KD3: Our main area of progress has been sharing the messages in the interim report during development with the Well-being of Future Generations Commission as they work on the Well-being of Future Generations report.

This commitment is anticipated to be Green at the end of the financial year. The pathway to green for this is to use the publication of the Well-being of Future Generations Report and associated engagements to ensure consistent messaging to better integrate nature into decision-making and broader stakeholder engagements. Follow on stakeholder engagements have been organised with Senedd Research Group and Welsh Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA) in Q4.

Q3	Anticipated Year end
Green	Green

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

ET Owner: Sarah Jennings

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

Area of Focus: Nature based solutions being widely adopted

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

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

Key deliverables:

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

3. Increased the development of shovel ready peatland restoration projects by increasing the funding available through our competitive development grant by 100%.

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

C8: Latest position (to end of December):

This commitment is Amber at the end of December.

For KD1: Our main area of progress has been 'Restoration efforts continue to be underway across Wales on land managed by NRW, as well as land managed by our trusted partners and private landowners. We are making progress on our top priority sites for the land in our care particularly at Cefn Croes and Hafod Elwy. Additionally, we are supporting direct delivery projects with landowners and managers across Wales through various funding mechanisms, including Section 16 Land Management Agreements, Strategic Allocated Funding, Competitive Development and Direct Delivery Grants.

For KD2: We have been developing our position on how we will respond to development planning applications involving peat soils and peatland habitats and engaging with individual planning applications with the potential to affect peat soils and peatland habitats.

For KD3: This deliverable is Green. We have now allocated the competitive development grant and doubled the funding available to £200K. Once the shovel ready restoration plan is in place, options to progress to restoration action include our follow-on competitive Delivery Grant (£50K-£250K). All those awarded a grant can now be seen on NRW's website.

This commitment is anticipated to be Amber at the end of the financial year. We are not where we wanted to be on this at the end of Q3 although we have continued to deliver with the resources we have and through others, we are currently Amber and will continue to be Amber at the end of year. One of our primary goals for this year was to recruit staff for the new teams to scale up delivery, but a combination of the case for change and the recruitment freeze has prevented this. This has impacted our ability to deliver for this financial year and to invest in capacity building for the next year so we will also have a slow start to scaled up delivery for next financial year. The SRO and the Nature and Climate Emergency Capital Oversight Group are fully aware of this issue, which is being addressed through existing NRW governance channels. We have extended existing staff in post and two additional staff are joining the team. The pathway to green will be realised once we start recruiting for the NPAP roles in the upscaled structure.

Q3	Anticipated Year end
Amber	Amber

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

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

Key deliverables:

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

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

C9: Latest position (to end of December):

Q3	Anticipated Year end

This commitment is Amber at the end of December.

For KD1: Our main area of progress has been to restructure the guidance documentation based on comments from internal consultees. We have not yet shared the draft with external parties ahead of finalising and publishing the guidance.

For KD2: Our main area of progress has been to finalise the specification for work to refine opportunity maps for the restoration of key marine and coastal habitats around Wales. We have not been able to let the contract for the work this year. We are working with The Crown Estate to deliver this work and the contract will now be let in the next FY.

This commitment is anticipated to be Amber at the end of the financial year. We have not been able to complete tasks within this FY due to a mixture of staff absence and collaborative working - nevertheless substantial progress has been made. We have drafted guidance and a specification to support mapping work, as well as continued to build relationships with key partners, for example through the Wales Seagrass Network and ReMeMaRe partnership, both around evidence and guidance development which does build capacity for marine and coastal restoration in Wales. We anticipate that we will fully complete these specific guidance and evidence tasks within 2025/26. The pathway to green for this is to continue to work on these tasks, completing them in 2025/26.

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

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

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

Key deliverables:

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

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

C10: Latest position (to end of December):

This commitment is Green at the end of December.

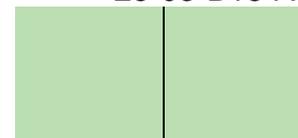
For KD1: Progress on the Stephenson Street project has gone well and the main elements of the new flood defence structures have been completed. This means that the new scheme is starting to benefit properties in Newport, and therefore this deliverable has been achieved. There remains some significant works to finalise the project including landscaping, finishes to roads and similar infrastructure, as well as the finalisation of various legal matters and payments. This work will continue well into next financial year as planned, but the properties can now be claimed as they are benefitting from the scheme.

For KD2: Maintenance works delivered through our FRM Capital Programme have ensured that flood assets continue to sustain levels of protection in locations including: Porth, Llandovery, Peterstone, Llangennech, West Pill, Windmill, Machen, Worthenbury, Ferryside, Bretton Drain and Ponthir. These works have benefitted 808 properties to date. This means that this year's target on this deliverable has been

Q3	Anticipated Year end
Green	Green

achieved. Our current programme plans indicate we will benefit a further 45 properties through our capital maintenance works by the end of the year, giving a total of 853 for the year.

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



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

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

Key deliverables:

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

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

C11: Latest position (to end of December):

This commitment is Amber at end of December.

For KD1: The new Flood Warning Information System for Wales was delivered on target in Q2 and is Green.

For KD2: The new Telemetry system project has 4 workstreams and 3 are progressing well. The 4th is about outstation replacements which is behind target. The delivery date for this project has been re-baselined from April 2025 to July 2025 and so we will likely miss our original deadline date. The impacts of this are tolerable though as the imperative to move out of Rivers House by April that dictated this delivery date, has now changed.

This commitment is anticipated to be Amber at the end of the financial year. Telemetry Replacement Project only will remain Amber until completion. The Flood Warning Service component is Green. There is no realistic pathway to green for the Telemetry Replacement Project due to the multiple risks it is actively carrying and managing some of which will remain right through to completion.

Q3	Anticipated Year end
Amber	Amber

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

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

Key deliverables:

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

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

C12: Latest position (to end of December):

This commitment is Amber at the end of December.

For KD1: The new allocation model continues to be embedded with increasing success, to date 31,345 hours of maintenance effort have been recorded against 10,795 completed actions. The data being collected is helping to improve the assumptions built into the RBRAM methodology which will improve the accuracy of plans in future years. The analysis shows that 5,323 properties have benefitted from 100% of the maintenance needs being undertaken on assets they benefit from this year, 76,189 properties have benefitted from at least 60% of the maintenance work being undertaken. 3,289 properties sit behind flood defences where none of the maintenance needs have been delivered.

It's important to note that this data is only indicative as the data being utilised is still improving as the new ways of working get embedded.

For KD2: Resource challenges (staff sickness absence; need for prioritisation on response/recovery on Flood Events and Flood Review work; focussing on KD1 as a higher priority) have delayed this project's initiation, and we are behind where we planned to be. Development of the project scope and the plan for this initial phase of works is ongoing but limited progress has been possible to date this year. We have not commenced the analysis work as previously planned due to resource challenges and unexpected staff absence. We are planning to initiate the project by year end, with some re-prioritisation of other works, but there are uncertainties with that. We are behind where we intended to be, and without a certain pathway to Green, and so are classing this as Red.

This commitment is anticipated to be Amber at the end of the financial year. We are unlikely to be able to complete as much of the analysis work planned regarding 'Assets Facing Change' (KD2) by year end due to resource and prioritisation challenges. The RBRAM work (KD1) is progressing well and is Green. The pathway to green for KD2 (Assets Facing Change work) would be to initiate and complete the initial analysis. Delays mean that we will only now be able to initiate and start the analysis. This is why we are reporting end of year status is not likely to be Green and likely to be Amber.

Q3

Amber

Anticipated
Year end

Amber

Area of Focus: Carbon emissions being reduced

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

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

Key deliverables:

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

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

C13: Latest position (to end of December):

Q3

Anticipated
Year end

This commitment is Amber at the end of December.

For KD1: Engagement with major stakeholders like DESNZ and other industries (e.g. Tata Steel and the HyNet cluster) is ongoing. Specific projects like the work at Tata and Padeswood have helped understanding constraints and initiating action. An overview of all projects is being collated and discussed at the Industrial Decarbonisation Working Group. We have not been able to adequately engage with some areas like the NE Wales Industrial Decarbonisation cluster and Freeports due to resource constraints

For KD2: Milford Haven's Dolphyn Hydrogen Sea trials demonstrate pre-application support translating into progress, early engagement and allowing trials to go ahead has enabled the project to progress further plans are now in place for deployment. Milford Haven CO2 project, dialogue has restarted on the project. Connah's Quay carbon capture project, charging agreement in place and pre-app advice started. We have not yet completed the process of providing pre-application advice for at least 10 projects (currently engaging in ongoing projects like Padeswood CCS and Uniper's Connah's Quay dialogue). We are addressing issues related to carbon capture efficiency for some applications.

For KD3: We have continued to deliver detailed landfill gas audits identifying areas where major savings in emissions can be made. We are one officer down which has resulted in a reduction in the number of audits delivered. The project plan has been amended accordingly.

This commitment is anticipated to be Amber at the end of the financial year. Progress may slow due to the need for further collaboration and lack of immediate additional resources to address these multi-faceted challenges. Ongoing vacancies in permitting and operations are unlikely to be filled this FY due to case for change constraints. By filling the vacancies pace will pick up in 2025/26, including managing the permitting queues.

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

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

Key deliverables:

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

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

C14: Latest position (to end of December):

This commitment is Amber at the end of December.

For KD1: We have progressed approximately 45% of the high priority offshore renewable evidence needs and another 18% have been progressed largely independent of NRW. Examples include a PhD about to start on habitat creation as mitigation for fish, work with developers on tidal energy, collaboration on a Defra project on noise abatement and a contribution to a project on migratory fish movements. Individual receptor specialists have made progress on a small number of key pieces of guidance of highest priority. These include Marine Mammal Management Units advice (awaiting publication) and Coastal Physical Process Guidance (complete). Due to staff vacancies, we have made limited progress with guidance production.

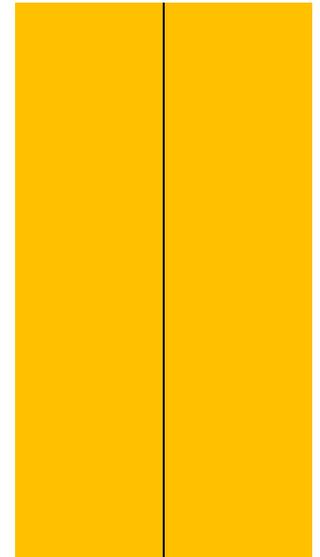
For KD2: Our main area of progress has been the commencement of the Marine Alpha project to support NRW2030 with the development on

Q3	Anticipated Year end
Amber	Amber

a new Customer Platform. We have formally started the Marine Licensing Fees Review with WG. We have been developing operational guidance and supporting substantial legislative reform in the marine function. We have continued to progress with the update to, and consolidation of, the Marine Licensing Handbook, and are in advanced stages of completing the new Marine Conservation Zone operational guidance. We have commenced work relating to the Strategic Adaptive Management for multiple marine projects. We are progressing with additional work to ensure that the Wales National Marine Plan is fully embedded into Marine Licensing decisions. We continue to regularly engage with Defra, DESNZ and the Devolved Administrations on the Offshore Wind Environmental Improvement Package (OWEIP) which aims to facilitate strategic compensation for offshore wind developments, including the development of a Marine Recovery Fund (MRF). We are responding to the formal WG consultation to proposed changes to Marine Licensing exemptions. Work on the Marine Licensing Template Review has been delayed, as has work on Band 2 and Band 3 process Reviews. The formal Marine Licensing Consultation Review is delayed because of delays with our Band 1 Review. Modelling Acceptance next steps work is dependent on other vacant roles to support and resulting in delivery delays.

For KD3: MLT have discharged conditions for Gwynt y Mor offshore wind farm.

This commitment is anticipated to be Amber at the end of the financial year. The red and amber deliverables are affected by ongoing vacancies which are unlikely to be resolved by the end of the FY. We do not anticipate the overall commitment being green by the end of the FY, but filling the vacancies referred to above will mean the pace of progress can pick up in 2025/26.



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

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

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

Key deliverables:

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

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

C15: Latest position (to end of December):

This commitment is Red at the end of December.

For KD1: Our main area of progress has been 100% of all design scopes issued during Q3 by the Projects & Programme Delivery Team have requested completion and analysis of the ERIC Carbon Modelling Tool. We have also progressed a Q3 training plan for use of the ERIC tools by Metal Mines Programme and River Restoration team.

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

Q3	Anticipated Year end
Red	Red

For KD3: Our main area of progress has been offering 300 places for climate literacy training this year. We have not been able to achieve the increase in climate literacy required to meet our target due to a focus on the Case for Change and corresponding low uptake (117 filed / 300 offered) of our course offerings. A decision was made earlier in the financial year at Group level to reduce the number of course offerings due to the likely impact of the Case for Change on uptake. Hence the target was always going to be out of range for this deliverable.

This commitment is anticipated to be Red at the end of the financial year. We are anticipating stopping/slowing. The overall commitment is red, however for the supply chain and project delivery elements we are making excellent progress. The climate literacy training element is red, however it must be kept into next year and it's profile raised by the senior leadership as mandated not optional. The pathway to green for this is to raise the profile of the climate literacy training and ensuring a clear link to WB02 achievement.

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

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

Key deliverables:

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

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

C16: Latest position (to end of December):

This commitment is Amber at the end of December.

For KD1: We were able to issue the tender documentation for our pilot procurement exercise to suppliers that were interested in the business requirement, specifically the Community Woodlands Framework Agreement. We have not been able to fill the role that would address this requirement (Procurement Technical Specialist - Strategy & Development) as this position is still held up by the recruitment freeze.

For KD2: Completed in Q1.

For KD3: Minimum target achieved in Q1 by way of the MEICA framework and the Water Management Consultancy Framework being awarded. The Climate Change Team will provide support to the successful bidders as required.

This commitment is anticipated to be Green at the end of the financial year. The impacts of the Case for Change initiative and the recruitment freeze is causing concern, but we have adapted to try and ensure we achieve a successful outcome via a pilot. The outcome of the pilot exercise, which is looking promising will need to be concluded in Q4 to confirm success.

Q3	Anticipated Year end
Amber	Green

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

Area of Focus: Effective use of regulatory tools and approaches

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

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

Key deliverables:

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

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

C17: Latest position (to end of December):

This commitment is Amber at the end of December.

For KD1: We continued to progress delivery of compliance inspections, delivered 149 of the scheduled 164 quarterly target. The slight reduction in inspection in Q3 was due to a number of minor issues, staffing, IT and external, which we have mitigated but has left us with a challenging inspection target to meet the 80% target by year end. This is the first full year of delivering this new duty and we continue to learn and adapt to the work. We also have three vacant posts since the start of the business year, affected by the recruitment freeze

For KD2: While we have progressed with delivery of compliance inspection visits during Q3, there have been factors which have impacted our effectiveness and efficiency and reduced our delivery outcome for the quarter. We have fed into the WG process on the 4 year review of the regulations and also started to develop the approach for the full year performance review. The implementation of the last set of requirements of the CoAPR regulations has impacted on delivery with the need to review and ensure we adopt the additional requirements consistently. During the period we have adopted a revised work process with Rural Inspectorate Wales for the reporting of cross compliance breaches. While this has caused some short-term delay it will provide a more efficient process moving forward. Further work is likely during Q4 to revise and improve the working arrangements.

This commitment is anticipated to be Amber at the end of the financial year. While we continue to work towards meeting the annual 80% target for 2024/25, we are unlikely to backfill the three vacant posts and thereby fall short of the full target which is achievable with a full complement of officers. The recruitment freeze has also hampered our ability to secure adequate level of Welsh speaking officers, specifically in the Northwest, this is a priority. Pathway to green for this deliverable requires action and filling the three vacant posts is the priority. There is a need to review current process which is also linked to our current dependency on a an excel spreadsheet to track and manage the delivery of regulatory duties. Current tools and process were hastily developed to respond to a new duty requirement, we are now delivering in excess of 700 inspections and the system and process are not fit for purpose. A long-term solution needs to be developed to meet current and future requirements. This should move us onto a pathway to green in 2025/26.

Q3	Anticipated Year end
Amber	Amber

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

Key deliverables:

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

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

C18: Latest position (to end of December):	Q3	Anticipated Year end
<p>This commitment is Green at the end of December.</p> <p>For KD1: Our main area of progress has been continuing to focus on permitted facilities where serious non-compliances have been identified and Category 1 and 2 breaches have been issued. We are where we would expect to be at the end of December. During April to June of 2024 there were 42 CAR Forms that identified either single or multiple Category 1 or 2 non-compliances at permitted facilities. In line with this measure these required a follow up visit within 6 months that falls within the Q3 reporting period. 40 out of the 42 CAR Forms (95%) received a follow up within the required 6 months. Justification was provided as to why the additional further compliance effort was not undertaken and this involves further monitoring and planned inspection work.</p> <p>For KD2: We are confident with our position for year end because Teams will focus their effort on poor performing sites where Cat 1 and 2 non-compliances are identified. There is a requirement to ensure that a protective, restorative and an enforcement response is in place for all these non-compliances. Annual Compliance Reports have been produced for Industry and Waste and the recommendations will be implemented via Sub-Groups. The 2023 Annual Regulatory Report was published on our website in December.</p> <p>This commitment is anticipated to be Green at the end of the financial year. The pathway to green for this is we will continue to monitor delivery and adjust workplans to ensure the highest priority work is delivered. This allows us to understand the gap between what is currently being delivered and the Regulatory Service Plan standards based on fully resourced capacity as well as put controls in place.</p>	Green	Green

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

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

Key deliverables:

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

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

C19: Latest position (to end of December):	Q3	Anticipated Year end

This commitment is Green at the end of December.

For KD1: Our main area of progress has been managing enquiries and reported incidents. We received 7 enquiries during Q3, which continue to decrease as the Regulations become embedded. Of the 115 enquiries received in total this year, 96% were responded to within 10 working days. During Q3, we also investigated an additional 10 reported incidents concerning non-compliance with the Regulations, with advice and guidance given to those found to be non-compliant.

For KD2: Our main area of progress has been increasing awareness with 18,205 businesses, with 15,716 of those reached through a Food and Drink Wales newsletter. We developed a resource pack for schools, which has been shared via Local Education Authorities. We also wrote to charity shops to address uncertainties regarding unsold textiles and electronic equipment. This brings the number of businesses we have contacted so far this year to a total of 28,846.

For KD3: Our main area of progress has been completing 171 assessments, with 99 (58%) compliant and 72 (42%) non-compliant. We held meetings with each Local Authority to assess the waste collection service offered and drafted a report which will be presented to WG and Ministerial Programme Board meetings in January. So far this year, a total of 383 assessments have been undertaken, with an overall percentage of 65% compliant and 35% non-compliant.

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

Green	Green

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

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

Key deliverables:

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

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

C20: Latest position (to end of December):

This commitment is Amber at the end of December.

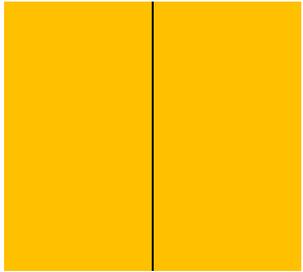
For KD1: We focused on supporting Ofwat ahead of their PR24 Final Determination. Through this, we have secured record levels of water company investment in the environment, targeting operations having the most impact on our waters.

For KD2: We have continued to advise water companies on their draft drought plans before they submitted to WG at end November 2024. The plans will be published for consultation in January 2025.

Q3	Anticipated Year end
Amber	Amber

For KD3: We have focused high priority, new work, such as preparations for the new Water Special Measures Bill; influencing water company action through the Price Review; progressing actions within the CSO Roadmap. On 2nd October 2024, NRW and EA jointly released a 2 month targeted consultation on the Water Industry Environmental Performance Assessment (EPA) for 2026 – 2030 data. We have not undertaken the OMA due to lack of resource: we focused on Pr24 and WG priorities.

This commitment is anticipated to be Amber at the end of the financial year. We are anticipating stopping work on the OMA, and will prioritise Water Company Investment, PR24 and building the new Compliance Unit. We would need to divert staff with the right skills to the OMA, which would have an impact on delivery of WG priority work.



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

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

Key deliverables:

1. Decreased the load of Phosphorus to highly protected river sites in line with modelled expectations by completing the review of all 171-water company permits.
2. Increased our knowledge and understanding of the causes of water body failure in Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) through the completion of 30% of outstanding investigations.
3. Increased the water quality in highly protected and designated waters by completing actions committed to as part of NRW's partnership projects (LIFE Programme, Nature and Climate Emergency Funds (NaCE)), with a minimum of 30 actions across 10 opportunity catchments in SACs.

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

C21: Latest position (to end of December):

This commitment is Amber at the end of December.

For KD1: Since Review of Permits (June), we determined applications for variation of some permits, published our nutrient neutrality principles, continued work on the Nutrient Management Boards (NMBs) for each failing SAC & Tywi. We are updating the compliance assessment for WQ attributes for the SAC rivers and will publish these later in the year alongside the WFD interim classification.

For KD2: We have added WQ investigations for SAC rivers to Safle (Wye, Cleddau, Eden, Dee) & carried out investigations for Eastern Cleddau, Western Cleddau & Ithon (Wye SAC). Investigation reports will be signed off by March 2025. Reports for the Eastern Cleddau, Western Cleddau & Ithon (Wye SAC) not yet signed off.

For KD3: Overall WQ capital programme is Green. The NaCE programme has carried out work to improve WQ in highly protected and designated waterbodies. Some projects relevant to KD3 are on Amber progress status due to staff resource issues and one project has moved to Red. We are working with others on an innovation bid for the Teifi catchment. We have not delivered as many farm visits/actions on Upper Wye as hoped and some work will now take place in 2025/26 due to lack of staff resource. Resource issues and the complexity of the site have affected the Ardudwy Leat project which leaves it at Red with no clear path to green without additional resource.

This commitment is anticipated to be Amber at the end of the financial year. We are slowing progress against some of the Key Deliverables due to resource and technical issues. We cannot get to green without recruiting to vacant posts.

	Q3	Anticipated Year end
	Amber	Amber

Area of Focus: Incident response being risk-based

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

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

Key deliverables:

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

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

C22: Latest position (to end of December):	Q3	Anticipated Year end
<p>This commitment is Green at the end of December.</p> <p>For KD1: Up to end Q3 we responded to 96% of incidents initially categorised as High Level. We built upon our Q2 commitment to target support to maintain and improve performance and will continue to do so.</p> <p>For KD2: We built upon the work done in Q2 to gain ET approval of the removal of Feedback. We also delivered communications and web blog to communicate this along with the wider anticipation of efficiencies delivered through the WBO3 Incident Management Service work. We have finalised an Operational Incident Decision tool to guide a more effective prioritisation of responding to incidents to air, land and water. We have started launching the approach and will continue this through discussions and workshops through Q4.</p> <p>This commitment is anticipated to be Green at the end of the financial year. In Q4, we will draft a report that evaluates progress to date and identify the stages for continuous improvement that refines incident management approaches post-April 2025 to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish KPIs to measure success and conduct formal reviews (March–April 2025). • Use feedback and data analysis to adapt strategies from April 2025 onwards. 	Green	Green

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

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

Key deliverables:

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

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

C23: Latest position (to end of December):	Q3	Anticipated Year end

This commitment is Amber at the end of December.

For KD1: Our main areas of progress have been:

1. The development of an operational incident decision tool and the commencement of its introduction to Management Tier and Team leaders within Operations.
2. The presentation of 'WBO3 Incident Management Work Area – Information Update to Executive Team, December 2024' seeking endorsement of approaches, including new feedback procedure.
3. Endorsement of paper at IMBG seeking joint collaboration with RBG to develop approaches to differentiate more clearly the distinction between WIRS reports that need an incident management response and those that require solely a regulatory or enforcement response.
4. Launch of Intranet article and targeted communications of WBO3 Incident Management Approaches to LT, MT and TL level.

For KD2: Our main area of progress has been gaining insight into data needs from key service area users in Incident Management, Regulation, Water and Regulatory futures to inform and shape the query build to effectively transform our WIRS data to useful analytical outputs. We have not progressed the delivery of the KD2 due to prioritising more focus within KD1. KD2 also needs key technical capability to enhance (or change) the existing tool (Power Bi link via elastic pool to WIRS) in order to extract and present data in an effective manner. We are currently in liaison with key business areas to identify and source capacity and capability to undertake the required tool build.

For KD3: Our main area of progress has been the Endorsement of paper at IMBG seeking joint collaboration with RBG to develop approaches to differentiate more clearly the distinction between WIRS reports that need an incident management response and those that require solely a regulatory or enforcement response. We have also worked jointly with Regulatory Service Leads to begin to develop approaches to providing pathways for reports, initially logged as incidents, to move into prioritised regulatory response. We have not progressed as far as we wanted to as the knowledge element to inform prioritisation under KD2 is key in supporting this element and has slowed due to capacity/capability. This element of work is key to ensuring the cultural shift in approaches to Incident response that will arise as a result of KD1 will have a clear pathway for operations teams to be more efficient in prioritising WIRS reports. Engagement with business leads is making a difference to supporting the development of clear pathways though further capacity and informed knowledge is essential for this deliverable to be effective.

This commitment is anticipated to be Amber at the end of the financial year. We are anticipating needing more time to ensure that we are able to support the new approaches to incident response that will be delivered by Q4 have the right information to develop pathways of response on completion of initial incident response activity. The pathway to green for this is to further identify the capacity and capability to effectively analyse WIRS information to inform the identification and prioritisation of work that either does not require an immediate incident management response to mitigate environmental harm, and build upon collaboration with key service areas to build pathways to consistently prioritise approaches within specific incident types (e.g. incident reports of illegal waste deposition, CSO pollution, Regulated site pollution etc..)

Amber

Amber

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

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

Key deliverables:

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

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

C24: Latest position (to end of December):

This commitment is Green at the end of December.
 For KD1: Our main area of progress has been to maintain monitoring and Green level of performance. Q3 enforcement response is 100%.
 For KD2: One area of progress has been completing the Tackling Waste Crime Q2 report and circulating this in Q3, as planned. The Q3 report is being drafted and is scheduled for circulation in Q4 2024/25. The Annual Regulatory Report was published in Q3. The Report included useful infographics for the first time as part of continuous improvement.
 This commitment is anticipated to be Green at the end of the financial year. The pathway to green for this is to maintain the current level of enforcement effort and closely monitor performance.

Q3	Anticipated Year end
Green	Green

Step to take: Minimising the harm from illegal waste through taking action with local authorities and third sector partners to prevent fly-tipping

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

Key deliverables:

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

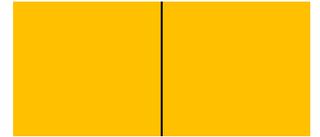
Next step for 2025-26: Improve processes, tools and actions to prevent fly-tipping.

C25: Latest position (to end of December):

This commitment is Amber at the end of December.
 For KD1: Our main area of progress has been a further review of the additional survey responses gathered from stakeholders and work done to date. Work is also nearing completion on a draft document that can be shared with key partners. Discussions also held at FtAW enforcement working group in November. The draft will need to be taken to NRW waste sub-group and subsequent sharing with WG & WLGA for comment. We have also attended community stakeholder meeting on Gwent Levels along with Newport CC and provisionally agreed with Newport CC to work on local agreement for area - meeting will be arranged with stakeholders in Q4 to gain wider stakeholder agreement. We have not finalised the draft document yet because FtAW have had to prioritise work related to an independent review that WG have asked us to carry out of the programme which is now complete. This has meant pausing work on the protocol which has now resumed (in January). Being one senior officer down in the team continues to impact on our ability to focus time on progressing the protocol work area as they have had to cover other priority work e.g. running enforcement working group.
 For KD2: Our main area of progress has been further loans of our surveillance equipment to LAs - we have loaned cameras to RCT and Flintshire during Q3. Survey issued to LAs asking them how much they have utilised the Mallard enforcement support membership to provide evidence around further support for this initiative next year. Responses being analysed. Face to face Mallard enforcement training course organised for January at CP2 for LA staff and 10 spaces offered to NRW staff also.
 This commitment is anticipated to be Amber at the end of the financial year. The protocol work, whilst still being progressed, is unlikely to be completed by the end of Q4 which is why the deliverable is Red and the overall commitment is Amber. Prioritising work on the protocol to enable a draft document to be signed off by end Q4 could move overall position to Green but this is unlikely unless we can recruit to vacant

Q3	Anticipated Year end
Amber	Amber

role in team as the Team Leader continues to cover various work areas and will need to prioritise work on securing future funding for FtAW programme from April 2025.



Annex 2 – Internal Performance Report

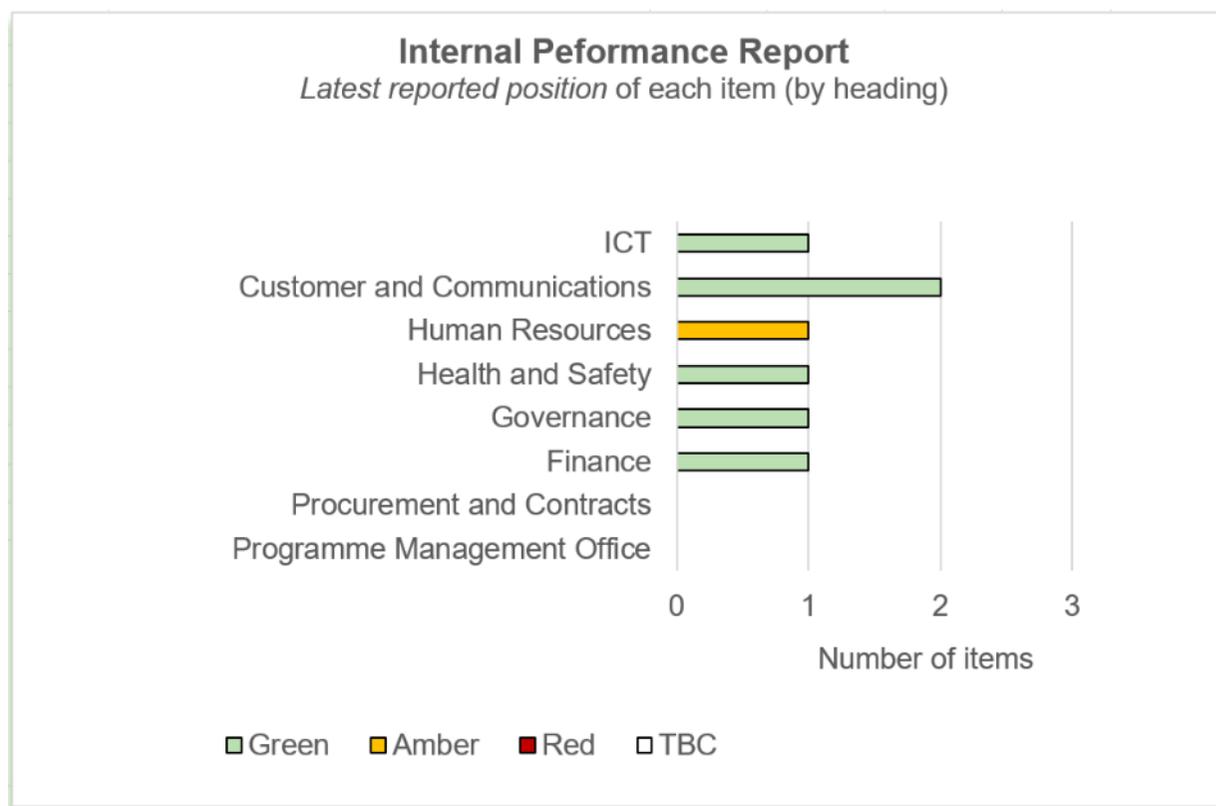
The following pages reflect a quarter end performance snapshot in relation to a number of key measures relating to the ‘health’ of our organisation.

Summary

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

- Six green
- One amber
- None red

(see next page for detail)



* Key: Green - achieved; Amber - close; Red – missed; Grey – N/A

Measures to note

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

Human Resources:

- **Sgwrs in place** (staff priorities and development agreement) remains Amber at the end of this quarter, at 80% (at least 90% would be considered Green). Internal reminders have been issued on needing to complete these. Green is anticipated at year end.

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

* Key: Green - achieved; Amber - close; Red – missed; Grey – N/A

Remaining measures

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

Customer and Communications:

- **Access to Information requests** responded to within 20 days is Green for the quarter at 97%.
- **Complaints** responded to within service level is Green for the quarter at 97%.

ICT:

- **Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) reported incidents** is Green at the end of the quarter with no such investigations ongoing and no incident reported to the ICO in the quarter.

Health and Safety:

- **Health & Safety Near Miss** reporting is Green at the end of the quarter, with 16 near misses reported for December compared with 10 for December last year. **Amber is anticipated at year end.**

Governance:

- **Declarations of Interest** (where people working for us declare when their official and/or private interests may be perceived to conflict with NRW's work) is Green at 95% at the end of the quarter (at least 90% is considered green). Reminders have been issued to complete these. Green is anticipated at year end

Finance:

- **Payments performance** to our suppliers remains Green at the end of the quarter at 99%. Green is anticipated at year end.

* Key: Green - achieved; Amber - close; Red – missed; Grey – N/A

Annex 3: Summary operational performance – shared priority areas identified by the NRW Chair and Deputy First Minister

Discussions between the NRW Chair and Deputy First Minister have identified shared priorities for investment in 2025/26. To demonstrate the impact of this additional investment, we are developing metrics to provide greater transparency on the scope and scale of activities and will use this to identify opportunities for further improvement in ways of working.

The presentation, content and coverage of these metrics will evolve over the remainder of this financial year before settling on the format for inclusion in the 2025/26 business plan.

The shared priorities for investment underpin our work across all three Well-being Objectives, where we are focussing on

1. Biodiversity
2. Water
3. Evidence/ monitoring
4. Flood Risk Management

The metrics included have been drawn from the Regulatory Service Plan and the DPAS Service Plan.

In this report we are focussing on biodiversity

Mock up

Service standards

We are working to establish a common service standard and expected delivery to help build a clearer picture of what we expect to deliver with anticipated, current and future resources. This will evolve over time.

- Service Standard (or '**desired**' level) – reflecting where we believe resources need to be, i.e. demand/requirement (may not be SMART)
- Expected Delivery (or '**target**' level) - reflecting originally anticipated available resources for each year (SMART requirement)
- Projected Delivery (or '**anticipated**' level) – considers actual available resources; used to manage/plan delivery in year; forward looking

Key: All included detail tables in this snapshot report use the common key* for Red, Amber or Green (also used in the Business Plan dashboard, Internal Performance Report and Management Information). Within the common key we have additionally included the specific boundary conditions we use between Red, Amber and Green; ensuring all these numeric item reports are on the same basis. The key can be found below.

The key used for all included reports is: **Green** = Achieved ($\geq 90\%$); **Amber** = Close to (≥ 80 and $< 90\%$); **Red** = Missed ($< 80\%$);

Development Planning Service Performance

We are a statutory consultee to the land use planning system, providing pre-application advice to developers on their proposals and then formally responding to planning authorities. The advice we provide provides an integrated and holistic assessment of the potential impact on the environment and natural resources, covering for example biodiversity, water, flood risk, waste.

Commentary:

Development Planning performance¹ to Q2 for the items given below reflects two items green.

Planning application consultations:

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Planning application consultations received ² :	1,769	1,446		
Planning application consultation responses submitted ² :	1,819	1,827		
Planning application consultation responses submitted within deadline:	1,793	1,810		
Planning application consultation responses outside of deadline:	26	17		
Responses within deadline:	99%	99%		
Actual against desired level*:	Green	Green		

Local Development Plan (LDP) consultations:

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
LDP consultations received ² :	10	8		
LDP responses submitted ² :	12	6		
LDP consultations responded within deadline:	12	6		
LDP consultations responded outside deadline:	0	0		
Responses within deadline:	100%	100%		
Actual against desired level*:	Green	Green		

Background/Notes:

¹Figures on this page relate to multiple shared priorities. See [consultation](#) for full listing of potential topics covered.

- Planning application consultations: Consultation responses taken together contribute to three of the shared priorities
- Local development plan consultations: Consultation responses taken together contribute to three of the shared priorities

²Difference between consultations received and submitted reflects different periods response required (i.e. not all in same quarter received)

Shared Priority 1: Biodiversity

Regulatory performance for: Biodiversity

Commentary:

Regulatory performance for biodiversity to Q3 relates to permitting, consents and assents.

The year saw a significant number of gull control licence applications and an increase in applications related to infrastructure and housing projects and other developments.

The introduction of charging has created additional administrative pressures whilst generating much needed cost recovery.

Species licensing:

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Number of licences processed:	507	362	413	
Number of licences processed outside service level:				
% of licences processed within service level:	92%	96%	99%	
Actual against desired level*:	Green	Green	Green	

Consents:

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Number of consents applications determined:	120	126	126	
Actual against desired level*:	Amber	Red	Red	

Assents:

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Number of assents applications determined:	95	122	101	
Actual against desired level*:	Amber	Red	Red	

Background/Notes:

- Species licensing: We are initiating an internal end-to-end review of our Species Licencing processes in 25/26, subject to recruitment, using funds from newly established charge funds

- Consents & Assents: a higher 95% target was set to be in line with that for other permissions issued without an understanding of our current baseline as this year is the first year that we have been able to report against this target

Board Paper

Date of meeting:	20 March 2025
Title of Paper:	NRW's future presence on X (formerly Twitter)
Paper Reference:	25-03-B19
Paper sponsored by:	Sarah Jennings, Executive Director for Communications, Customer and Commercial
Paper prepared by:	Lynette Bowley, Senior Specialist Adviser (Media)
Paper presented by:	Lynette Bowley, Senior Specialist Adviser (Media) and Meinir Wigley, Interim Head of Communications
Purpose of the paper	Discussion and decision
Summary	The Board is requested to discuss and approve the approach on NRW's future presence on X (formerly Twitter)

Background

1. Since Elon Musk's acquisition of Twitter and its rebrand to X, the platform's policies have undergone significant changes. Some critics argue that these changes have contributed to an increase in misinformation, disinformation, and divisive political discourse, while others contend that the platform now prioritises free speech over content moderation. Concerns have also been raised about the spread of extreme views, though opinions on the impact of these changes remain divided.
2. With ongoing controversies and media coverage surrounding its leadership and direction, many public and private sector organisations have taken the decision to scale back their presence on the platform, or to deactivate their accounts completely.
3. In Wales, North Wales Police has removed its presence from the platform, and others, like Gwent Police have removed their individual officers' accounts. Health Boards such as Betsi Cadwalader and Aneurin Bevan have stated that they will use X for posts related to major incidents only. Woodland Trust Cymru and Keep Wales Tidy are examples of the growing number of ENGOs that have also announced their intentions to no longer use their X accounts.

4. Welsh Government continues to have its presence on X but has reduced the number of posts it shares on the platform.
5. There has been increasing discussion internally amongst colleagues, and amongst members of the Board if NRW should also consider its own future presence on X, debating whether the platform aligns with our values and whether it is now worth considering focussing efforts on alternative platforms. To note - Trade Unions proposed that NRW remove itself from X at the Partnership Forum on 19 December 2024.
6. There is no denying that X is still a key space for connecting with stakeholders, partners, and the public, especially when we need to share time sensitive updates or warn and inform in relation to incidents. There continues to be a strong journalist and media presence on the platform, and it also provides us with opportunities to find out what conversations are happening and what others are saying about us.
7. However, since Twitter was rebranded to X, the site's algorithm has changed to push content like our own down in follower feeds. We have seen a consistent decline in followers on our main corporate account since July 2024 with many followers dormant. At the time of writing, we have 23,600 followers on our main account. Our place-focussed X account follower numbers have also remained stagnant in comparison to Facebook, where numbers have increased month-on-month. We are also now no longer able to measure the impact of our presence on the platform as there is a £1,000 per month fee to access the platform's analytics.
8. As the discussion around X continued, we have been investigating alternative options and registered our account names on BlueSky and Threads. However, given our social media listening tool, Orlo, has not added the platforms to its portfolio (BlueSky was only added 7 Feb), monitoring and posting to these channels via Orlo has not been possible.
9. While this paper is focussed on X, the Communications Team is also looking to review how it uses its social media channels to ensure we tailor and target the content we post ensure we reach a targeted and more diverse audience.
10. Taking all of this into consideration, we have prepared this paper to outline the opportunities and risks of remaining on or leaving X and sought the feedback of the Staff Engagement Group and Staff Networks and Trade Union representatives.
11. These groups have shared their views with us and we have included a summary of those responses at **Annex 1**.

Assessment

12. We believe that there are three options to consider

- Option A – Deactivate NRW’s main corporate, place-focussed and employee X accounts (e.g. @WaterNRW) completely with immediate effect.
- Option B – Scale back our presence on the platform by continuing to use the main corporate @NatResWales account for key updates and incident / warning and informing related posts but deactivate place-focussed and employee X accounts completely. Additional consideration to be given to project-focussed accounts (e.g. LIFE) if X is referenced as part of the project bid.
- Option C – Continue as we are with no reduction in activity.

13. We have set out some considerations below:

Opportunities

- **Clear Purpose:** Using X solely for incident-related communications can streamline our messaging and ensure that posts are more focused and purposeful. It could become a go-to source for timely updates, especially during incidents or emergencies.
- **Less Noise:** By reducing general content, we can avoid getting caught up in potential distractions.
- **Reputation management:** Reducing non-essential use might reduce the risk of being drawn into contentious discussions or becoming the subject of negative trends.
- **Control over messaging:** Reducing our presence to only key updates or incident communications can give us more control over our message and allows for better consistency.
- **Resource efficiency:** If X is less of a priority, we can put more focus into platforms that align better with our audience or are more effective in building relationships.
- **Partner presence:** Many partners – particularly Category One responders continue to have a presence on X. Met Office use X as their primary social media channel for severe weather communications. We routinely use that content to warn and inform our own audiences. Given Met Office does not use Facebook for that warning and informing purpose, we would lose a key communications channel if we were to remove our X presence entirely.
- **Reputation:** Removing or reducing our presence on X will demonstrate to colleagues who have voiced their concerns, or partners that have removed their presence that that we are taking a strong stance on the issue.

Risks

- **Reputation:** Continued presence on X could have a negative impact on our reputation and how we are perceived not only by partners who have removed their accounts but also our colleagues – particularly those who have strongly voiced their concerns about the platform’s ethics on our internal channels.

- **Our commitments to our colleagues and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion:** Our EDI commitments state that we should support a 'safe environment' to enable all our colleagues to thrive (physically, mentally and neurologically). Considering the views of some colleagues who feel we should deactivate our X presence, are we undermining those principles by continuing our presence?

There is also a risk that some colleagues who have to monitor or post on X as part of their role could be exposed – or even subjected to – hateful content and the impact of that should be considered.

- **Reach:** X is known for real-time conversations and viral interactions. By limiting our use, or removing ourselves completely, there is a risk we may miss out on the chance to engage in conversations and build a connection with a community. There is also a risk that by posting less frequently, the number of people we reach could decrease when we do post.
- **Reduced warning and informing capacity:** X's speed and accessibility are often key in incident situations. If we decide to remove our presence completely, we might get criticised by those who follow us for these updates for not getting the word out sooner.
- **Reduced visibility:** Cutting back or removing our presence could result in losing touch with an important group of followers, meaning we might miss out on engagement opportunities, awareness-building or the chance to rebut information.
- **Monitoring and security:** Our social media listening platform, Orlo has only just added BlueSky to the portfolio of channels it monitors. Threads and Mastodon would have to be updated and monitored natively by Customer Hub and communications duty officers, presenting a security challenge as passwords would have to be shared individually.
- **Unpredictable Platform Shifts:** While X might not seem central now, trends could shift, and the platform could be sold once again. Cutting back could leave us less prepared to leverage new opportunities if the platform evolves into something more beneficial in the future.
- **Project communications:** Consideration would need to be given to how partner projects (e.g. LIFE) might have referenced how they will use X specifically as part of their bid papers. They may have targets in relation to X followers so may need to continue to post to their specific accounts.

Recommendation

14. We recommend that we go with **Option B** – that we continue to have a presence on X via our main corporate channel (@natreswales) but that we significantly scale back on what and how regularly we post, focussing on incident related communications and key corporate updates only. We recommend that we also deactivate our place-focussed and employee managed X channels, directing followers to our local Facebook accounts

or the main corporate channel for updates. The decision relating to the future presence of Partner projects (LIFE etc) on X depends on what has been committed to as part of their project briefs.

15. Continuing to have a presence on the platform will also allow us to use it as a listening tool and enable us to engage selectively in key conversations or events that align with our values and corporate plan objectives.

Risks, Risk Appetite and opportunities

16. This matter relates to Risk 6 on the Communication Team's risk register 'Inappropriate use of social media channels.'

Wider implications

- (a) **Well-being Objectives:** Our proposed action will address the new WBO4 – How we work. Adapting how we use X in the future will enable us to put more focus into platforms that align better with our audiences or are more effective in building relationships.
- (b) **Finance:** N/A
- (c) **Resource implications:** If agreed, the changes will be implemented by the communications team within existing staff resources.
- (d) **Equality:** We have consulted with our Lead Specialist Adviser, Diversity and Inclusion and have shared this paper with them.
- (e) **Data Protection:** N/A

Next Steps

17. Approval of the recommendation at Board would need to be communicated to colleagues that manage an X account and use it post in their NRW capacity.
18. Communication to wider colleagues would need to be done as part of the monthly MMG updates and via MT/LT briefings to teams. A post will also be shared on Yammer and on an intranet page.

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19. Annex 1 – Summary of responses from Trade Union and Staff Engagement Network representatives.

Approval / Consultation process

<p>Approval/consultation process</p> <p>Responsible: Who has developed the paper/process and who has had input?</p>	<p>Lynette Bowley</p> <p>Meinir Wigley</p> <p>Matthew Jones</p> <p>Wider communications team</p>
<p>Accountable: Who is accountable for the ultimate approval? Who will be or is being asked to approve?</p>	<p>ET and Board</p>
<p>Consulted: Who has been consulted to date? Where endorsement is required, is this in place? Will further consultation be required?</p>	<p>Shaheen Sutton, Lead Specialist Adviser, Diversity and Inclusion</p> <p>Staff Network Leads</p> <p>Staff Engagement Group</p> <p>Trade Unions</p>
<p>Informed: Who has been informed or who needs to be further information about the work?</p>	<p>Update to be shared with managers for dissemination via MMG. An intranet and Yammer post will also be required.</p>



Annex 1 – Summary of feedback from Trade Unions and Colleague engagement networks/groups

To note – the feedback received from members of these groups should not be considered the overall views of the entire group.

Trade Unions

Trade Union representatives were consulted. They welcomed the paper and are supportive of the recommendation to reduce NRW's presence on X.

They flagged that they raised the issue of NRW continuing to have a presence on X at the Partnership Forum in December and questioned whether it was appropriate for an environmental organisation to use a platform which does not discourage misinformation on issues such as climate change.

They recognise the value to NRW, and to the public, of using social media platforms to communicate incident related messages and accept that, currently, X is useful to disseminate incident related communications.

Colleague Engagement Group (CEG)

Those members who responded to the call for feedback presented a number of views.

One respondent stated that *"we [NRW] have a set of core values and X does not align with those values"*. They state that *"continuing our presence on X would indicate at the least indirect support for X which currently is a flag waver for sexism, misogyny etc."*

They have flagged the risk that NRW will undermine its EDI principles and our commitment to provide a 'safe environment' to staff if we remain on the platform.

They also said that *"The need to provide a service (notifying our customers on X) should not trump our principles, otherwise it is a bit pointless of having them."*

One member suggested that we should consider whether X would pass our procurement tests and whether it meets our principles if we were procuring it as a communications supplier. On consideration, they have suggested X would not pass those tests and that it does not support the Well-being of Future Generations Act.

One member who feels we should remove our presence states that – if we were to deactivate our account – we should state publicly why we are no longer using it. They do also say that **option b** (remaining but reducing posts) is the most pragmatic choice given the need to engage with stakeholders.

Another respondent from this group has stated that **option b** is the “*most pragmatic choice*”, but note “*that there is a strong argument that regular users of 'X' may no longer be reachable.*” This respondent suggests that we should continuously review our presence on social media platforms and “*maintain those that are working, scale back those that aren't*”.

Members of the Carers Network, Cwtch

Their members feel that NRW should leave X on the basis that it does not align with NRW's values or their personal values.

Some also say that we should also be considering our presence on Facebook.

Women's Network

We only received one email with feedback from a member of this group and so it is not representative of the network.

Feedback provided one member of this group flagged people's rights to share and express their views even if people disagree.

They flag the X Rules and state that they do not differ too greatly from Bluesky's community guidelines. They have also flagged that, while Bluesky isn't getting revenue from advertising, that may change and that could lead to it turning into a subscription service. Would NRW pay that?

They also flag NRW's duties as a Category One responder who has a responsibility to share information regardless of political affiliations.

They feel being exposed to “*different opinions and beliefs is healthy*” and that “*moving to an echo chamber of groupthink*” could mean that your “*thoughts are not challenged.*”

They conclude by saying **Option B** would be their preferred option.

Calon Network

Their members expressed that they personally felt Option A should be the preferred choice. However, there was recognition that using the platform to promulgate emergency messages could perhaps be justified whilst the platform is still used by many people in Wales, so members understood why Option B was the recommendation.

They have stressed the need to speed up adoption of Bluesky to ensure we continue to reach and engage with those audiences that have moved from X to other platforms.

Members felt that by remaining on X, NRW risks contradicting its **Bold** and **Caring** values.

They also flagged that X would not pass NRW's procurement processes.

The group also suggested that we should review our presence on Meta platforms (like Facebook). The group has recently announced changes to its fact-checking policies.

In general the group felt that *“it was hard to separate personal feelings from this decision, when the owners of these platforms have repeatedly expressed views that run counter not only to our organisational values, but also to our purpose of addressing the nature and climate emergencies.”*

Neurodiversity Network

This group presented an amended version of the paper we submitted for feedback where they shared their views in full.

In summary, the group does not think a continuing presence on X would be *“in line with NRW’s support for action on climate change or its commitment to EDI values.”*

They feel strongly that that NRW should remove its presence from the platform and *‘fulfil its duty of care’* to members of staff – particularly those in minority groups – who may be exposed to hate content on the site. They also suggest that consideration needs to be given to whether NRW’s procurement rules would forbid a relationship with X.

Christian Fellowship Group

They have had limited opportunity to gather feedback due to colleague availability and are happy to align with views of other networks.

Natural Resources Wales Board Paper

Date of meeting:	20 th March 2025
Title of Paper:	Motorsports on the land in the care of Natural Resources Wales.
Paper Reference:	25-03-B20
Paper sponsored by:	Dominic Driver, Acting Executive Director of EPP
Paper prepared by:	Rachel Chamberlain, Acting Head of Land Stewardship, Richard Owen, Team Leader, Estate Recreation Planning; David Liddy, Specialist Adviser, Estate Recreation Planning
Paper presented by:	David Liddy, Specialist Adviser, Estate Recreation Planning
Purpose of the paper	Decision
Summary	<p>Following the Board's agreement of the Strategy for Recreation, it is now time to decide on the future of motorsports on the land we manage. This is in the form of special stage car rallies on the Welsh Government Woodland Estate (WGWE).</p> <p>We recommend continuing to allow rallying on the land we manage. Welsh Government want to support rural economic and community benefit. Nevertheless, in keeping with the recreation strategy and priorities in our corporate plan, we should put less of our own resources into administering the activity. Therefore, we recommend renegotiating the current Master Agreement with a longer term agreement more self-administered by the organisers and/or with deeper recovery of our costs.</p>

Background

1. Motorsports events in the form of special stage car rallies have taken place over the last 70 years on the WGWE. They are enabled under a Master Agreement between us and Motorsports UK (MSUK) the sport's national governing body. The agreement includes passing responsibility for competition regulation, spectator safety management and forest road repair to MSUK, effectively insulating us from these liabilities.

Nevertheless, the current agreement requires us to allocate significant administrative resources to provide permissions for exclusive use of the forest for the events, rallying being the only type of events where such exclusion is required for safety reasons.

2. The Master Agreement was revised in 2020 with the proviso that we conduct a Review of Motorsports in relation to the principles of the sustainable management of natural resources (SMNR). This review took place in 2021 and concluded that in the conditions at the time motorsport did exist within the SMNR space with the only breach being in system CO₂ emissions.
3. In the light of the review findings, the NRW Board agreed for motorsports to continue provided that we work with MSUK on sustainability improvements, particularly to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and for us to come back to the NRW Board to seek direction on the successor to the current master agreement, which we are now doing.

Changing circumstances

4. Since the NRW Board's decision, our operating environment and priorities have changed. We feel that these affect how we should approach motorsports on the land in our care. Key changes are:

4.1. **SMNR considerations:** The scale of motorsports on the WGWE has reduced significantly since Wales Rally GB (WRGB) was cancelled in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the Welsh Government withdrawing their annual (~£1million) grant funding to MSUK for WRGB. Today, there are an average of eight local events per calendar year. This means that the economic and social SMNR benefits are reduced. Our work with MSUK have resulted in a set of sustainability improvements. These are welcome but are unlikely to have moved the greenhouse gas emissions sufficiently into the SMNR space to make motorsports an activity on the land in our care that we would actively promote, especially in the light of the continuing nature and climate emergencies.

4.2. **NRW's Corporate plan for 2023 – 2030 and Recreation Strategy:** our Corporate Plan expresses a vision for nature and people thriving together, with a mission for nature's recovery, resilience to climate change and minimising pollution through SMNR and sets this in the context of the Welsh Governments declaration of climate and nature emergencies. There are references to re-connecting nature and people by engaging with and inspiring people to act; equitable access to green spaces; and social and environmental justice; and equity and inclusion informing and strengthening our decision-making.

The "Recreation strategy: how we manage access to nature on the land in our care 2024-2030" was approved by our Board in May 2024 and published in August 2024. It flows from the Corporate Plan and sets a strategic direction for outdoor recreation on land in our care to put relatively less of our own resources into creating opportunities for recreation in and of itself and relatively more into managing (and in some cases restricting) recreational activity to protect nature, to enable people to connect with nature, and into helping disadvantaged people gain

health and well-being benefits from “local, everyday” access. The vision is to 2050 for a future where every person, regardless of background, can access the land in our care to enable a connection with nature.

We must include people who support or participate in motorsports in our consideration; this is about the activity, not the people who participate in the activity. Nevertheless, the Corporate Plan and Recreation Strategy imply that we should put less of our own resources into the use by motorsports of the land in our care.

- 4.3. **Government priorities:** the Government’s growth and delivery agenda implies that the rural economic and community benefit of motorsports is a consideration as is the perception of what the WGWE is for in terms of recreation, especially in the context of the changes we are making to visitor centres.

Options.

5. We can see 4 options for how we manage the future of motorsports on the WGWE:

- 5.1. **New master agreement with MSUK including self-administration and/or full cost recovery:** Negotiate a new Master Agreement that integrates the current sustainability proposals together with monitoring and reporting protocols and gives greater responsibility for the administrative function to MSUK and/or a national scale partner or, if that were not possible, increases the charge for each event to cover our costs of administration. The agreement would be to 2030 to fit the Corporate Plan period.

Recommended because this is the option that achieves the best trade-off between our Corporate Plan and Government priorities and is most practicable in terms of implications for our resources.

- 5.2. **Energise further improvements:** Agree a new Master Agreement that requires MSUK to set still more ambitious sustainability goals and to make more rapid progress. We would define monitoring and reporting protocols, probably including independent adjudication. If MSUK failed to meet these goals by a defined period, we would serve notice to exit from the master agreement. The defined period could be to 2030, to keep to the Corporate Plan timescale or earlier, say 2027, 3 years being probably the minimum reasonable time to allow progress.

Not recommended because it is unlikely we could find the resources to track and adequately test achievement of the sustainability standards without significant negative impact on other, higher priority areas of work.

- 5.3. **Exit:** Decide now that the implication of our Corporate Plan and Recreation Strategy is that that motorsports on the land in our care are no longer appropriate. We would open consultation with MSUK, giving them notice to exit if the consultation response does not change our decision. Under the terms of the Master Agreement, motorsports events would cease at the end of 2026.

Not recommended because this is inconsistent with the Welsh Government's position on rural economic and community benefits and public perception of what the WGWE is for; Minsters being the landowners.

- 5.4. **Short term extension to the Master Agreement:** An extension to, say, end 2027 could allow negative coverage around the Visitor Centres and the perceived withdrawing from recreation to dissipate. It would also allow us time to work out the implications of Government policy emerging after the next Senedd elections.

Not recommended because we need stability and it is remote that Government's position on this matter will change in the timescale. In any case, the Master Agreement allows for renegotiation if our mutual context changes sufficiently.

Risks, Risk Appetite and Opportunities

6. The main risk is reputational. Opinions about motorsport events are polarised. Most environmental stakeholders would welcome an end to the sport on the WGWE. Many other stakeholders strongly support motorsports and any campaign in favour of continuing it on the WGWE would almost certainly link with the growth agenda and rural economic benefit in Wales.
7. Our recommendation exacerbates risks of lack of capacity. The simpler approach to permissions mandated by the Case for Change will allow us to manage this risk in the next few years but only if we can also apply the expectation that the organisers do more for themselves and/or cover our costs in full.
8. Note that there is an acute problem right now due to the impact of windblow caused by Storm Darragh. The effort we would have to take to ensure the safe running of such events, certainly in the first half of the year would be disproportionate to any benefit. Therefore we have decided to cancel motorsports events in the first half of 2025. We have agreed this with MSUK. This is a short-term decision due to the impact of Storm Darragh and has no bearing on the longer-term recommendation.
9. This is an opportunity to influence rallying to be still more sustainable. However, under our recommended option it is remote that we would put significant resources into driving this nor would we put our own resources into promoting rallying on the land in our care.

Wider implications

10. See discussions above and:
 - 10.1. **Well-being objectives:** as discussed above.
 - 10.2. **Finance / resource implications:** the resources to carry on with rallying as now are not included in our current baseline resources. Under our recommended option, we would negotiate with MSUK for self-administration of permissions or an increase in NRW's charge for each event to cover our costs.
 - 10.3. **Equality:** we have done an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA), which is updated as we reach key milestones.

10.4. **Data Protection:** n/a

Next Steps

11. If you agree our recommendation, we will start negotiating with MSUK as soon as is practicable. Motorsports events would continue under the current Master Agreement until a new agreement were set up, subject to local decisions based on safety.

Recommendation

12. Negotiate a new Master Agreement with MSUK to 2030, including integrating sustainability requirements and increasing MSUK's responsibility for the administrative function or, if that were not possible, increasing the charge for each event to cover our costs of administration.

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None.

Approval / Consultation process

<p>Approval/consultation process</p> <p>Responsible: Who has developed the paper/process and who has had input?</p>	<p>Acting Head of Land Stewardship.</p> <p>Acting Executive Director, Evidence Policy and Permitting.</p>
<p>Accountable: Who is accountable for the ultimate approval? Who will be or is being asked to approve?</p>	<p>Acting Chief Executive via Executive Team (ET) then Natural Resources Wales Board.</p> <p>The current Master Agreement was signed by the Executive Director of Operations after Executive Team discussion.</p>
<p>Consulted: Who has been consulted to date? Where endorsement is required, is this in place? Will further consultation be required?</p>	<p>Welsh Government colleagues.</p> <p>Land Stewardship Business Group Land Estates Committee</p>
<p>Informed: Who has been informed or who needs to have further information about the work?</p>	<p>MSUK, Rally for Wales.</p>

Board Paper

Date of meeting:	20 th March 2025
Title of Paper:	Wellbeing, Health and Safety (WH&S) Q3 update
Paper Reference:	25-03-B21
Paper sponsored by:	Prys Davies, Executive Director of Corporate Strategy and Development
Paper prepared by:	Charlotte Morgan, Wellbeing Health and Safety Manager
Paper presented by:	Charlotte Morgan, Wellbeing Health and Safety Manager
Purpose of the paper	Discussion
Summary	To discuss the Q3 2024/25 WH&S update.

Background

1. This is the Q3 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 Q3 2024/2025.

Summary

Headlines from Quarter 3 2024/25 include: -

2. Serious incident reviews (SIR). There was one SIR commissioned in Q3 2024/2025. There are five outstanding SIRs which have been paused due to external factors including awaiting the coroner's report. Three SIRs were completed and awaiting actions to be closed. Eight SIRs has been closed.
3. RIDDOR reportable and LTI's (Lost Time Injuries) – No RIDDOR for NRW in Q3. There was one LTI in Q3.
4. Several wellbeing initiatives were delivered and the internal audit on the SIR process returned a substantive rating.

Wider implications

5. **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

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

Recommendation

9. ET are asked to approve the Q3 2024-2025 WH&S Update.

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Provide any supporting information:

Annex 1 – WH&S Board paper – Q3 – 2024 -2025

Approval / Consultation process

<p>Approval/consultation process</p> <p>Responsible: Who has developed the paper/process and who has had input?</p>	<p>The paper was developed by the WH&S Team.</p>
<p>Accountable: Who is accountable for the ultimate</p>	<p>ET are asked to approve the Q3 2024-2025 WH&S Update.</p>

approval? Who will be or is being asked to approve?	
Consulted: Who has been consulted to date? Where endorsement is required, is this in place? Will further consultation be required?	N/A
Informed: Who has been informed or who needs to be further information about the work?	N/A

Wellbeing Health and Safety Q3 2024/25

Highlights

In summary, Q3 2024/25 resulted in the commissioning of one serious incident review (SIR). This was in relation to a standing sales contractor, forwarding timber from the harvested area to create a new timber stack in an area that had not been agreed/approved for stacking timber.

In Q3, one SIR was closed as all actions have been completed.

There was no RIDDOR reportable incidents during Q3 2024/25 and there were one Lost time staff injury (LTA) due to a manual handling injury.

Positives from this quarter includes several wellbeing initiatives being delivered and a substantive rating on the internal audit carried out on the SIR process.

Serious Incident Reviews

During Q3, there was one Serious Incident Review commissioned and one Serious Incident Review closed with all actions completed with evidence uploaded.

Please see below for details.

Serious Incident Reviews Summary since Aug 2019

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

SIRs Closed	19
SIRs Closed Q3 (inc. in number above)	1
SIRs completed with actions to be completed	8
SIRs paused due to external investigation	5
SIRs in investigation status	5
<p>Details: Eye injury from projectile stone in Coed Y Brennin Forest</p> <p>Reference: ACCB890/A10</p> <p>Incident date: 11/09/2023</p> <p>Type of SIR: Injury</p> <p>Full investigation: Closed</p>	
<p>Details: Fatal accident on NRW estate to a sub-contractor working on a standing sales site. Coed Taff Forest.</p> <p>Reference: ACCB1092/A12</p>	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

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

	including the response to the reg 28 report. The inquest has not yet been heard.											
<p>Details: MoP fatality in Waterfalls Country</p> <p>Reference: ACCB890/A9</p> <p>Incident date: 01/09/2023</p> <p>Type of SIR: Fatality</p> <p>Full investigation: SIR opened and paused.</p>	<p>External commissioned report was presented to NRW and other stakeholders.</p> <p>The Land Stewardship Board meeting in October accepted the report and confirmed the commitment to work in partnership with the other stakeholders.</p> <p>NRW are continuing to work with Bannau Brycheiniog National Park Authority to coordinate our visitor safety work.</p> <p>NRW have recruited officers with the relevant experience of visitor management, to provide more of a focus on our work. Initially there will be focus towards pulling together a more detailed plan of work for Waterfall Country.</p> <p>NRW have recently finalised a bid via National Forest to improve management of Gwaun Hepste car park which is one of the key access points for the Waterfall Country area to improve arrangements for BBNPA and NRW to manage, engage with and educate visitors.</p> <p>The Coroner's investigation has started. NRW have provided information to the coroner including the response to the reg 28 report. NRW have been identified as an interested party. The inquest has not yet been heard.</p>											
<p>Details: Timber Lorry Overturn</p> <p>Reference: ACCB1092 / A5</p> <p>Incident date: 16/08/2021</p> <p>Type of SIR: Fatal incident.</p> <p>Full investigation: Complete - Actions in progress</p>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td colspan="2" data-bbox="743 1496 1114 1547">Total Actions: 14</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2" data-bbox="743 1547 1114 1637">Of Which:</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="743 1637 1114 1771">Completed & Closed:</td> <td data-bbox="1114 1637 1437 1771">12</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="743 1771 1114 1906">Open:</td> <td data-bbox="1114 1771 1437 1906">1</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="743 1906 1114 2040">Overdue:</td> <td data-bbox="1114 1906 1437 2040">0</td> </tr> </table>		Total Actions: 14		Of Which:		Completed & Closed:	12	Open:	1	Overdue:	0
Total Actions: 14												
Of Which:												
Completed & Closed:	12											
Open:	1											
Overdue:	0											

<p>Details: Contractor chainsaw operator trip whilst escaping falling tree</p> <p>Reference: ACCB1097/A5</p> <p>Incident date: 15/12/2023</p> <p>Type of SIR: Injury</p> <p>Full investigation: Complete – actions in progress</p>	<p>Total Actions: 18</p> <p>Of which:</p>	
	Completed & Closed:	15
	Open:	3
	Overdue:	0
<p>Details: Contractor hit by wind blown tree being felled</p> <p>Reference: ACCB1097/A6</p> <p>Incident date: 01/02/2024</p> <p>Type of SIR: Injury</p> <p>Full investigation: Complete - Actions in progress</p>	<p>Total Actions: 5</p> <p>Of which:</p>	
	Completed & Closed:	4
	Open:	1
	Overdue:	0
<p>Details: A contractor working on behalf of NRW was undertaking felling trees when he sustained a fracture.</p> <p>Reference: ACCB1094/A2</p> <p>Incident date: 01/02/2024</p> <p>Type of SIR: Injury</p> <p>Full investigation: Investigation in progress</p>	<p>Total Actions: 7</p> <p>Of which:</p>	
	Completed & Closed:	4
	Open:	2
	Overdue:	1
	<p>Total Actions: 7</p>	

<p>Details: Chainsaw kick back and cut chainsaw operators chainsaw trousers during flood embankment chainsaw work</p> <p>Reference: ACCB891/A5</p> <p>Incident date: 09/01/2024</p> <p>Type of SIR: Injury</p> <p>Full investigation: Complete – actions in progress</p>	Of which:	
	Completed & Closed:	4
	Open:	3
	Overdue:	0
<p>Details: Unearthing of electric cable</p> <p>Reference: ACCB1092/A2</p> <p>Incident date: 09/01/2020</p> <p>Type of SIR: Near miss</p> <p>Full investigation: Complete – actions in progress</p>	Total Actions: 13	
	Of which:	
	Completed & Closed:	11
	Open:	2
	Overdue:	0
<p>Details: MOP fell out of a scooter which is paid for by NRW but managed by a 3rd 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:	7
	Open:	0
	Overdue:	2

<p>Details: 3rd party vehicle collision with NRW vehicle</p> <p>Reference: ACCB1092 / A18</p> <p>Incident date: 27/03/2024</p> <p>Type of SIR: Injury</p> <p>Full investigation: Investigation in progress</p>	<p>SIR is in investigation stage</p>
<p>Details: NRW road traffic collision (Car roll)</p> <p>Reference: ACCB1096 / A4</p> <p>Incident date: 28/08/2024</p> <p>Type of SIR: Injury</p> <p>Full investigation: Investigation in progress</p>	<p>SIR is in investigation stage</p>
<p>Details: Staff member slip, trip, fall onsite.</p> <p>Reference: ACCB1092/A19</p> <p>Incident date: 13/08/2024</p> <p>Type of SIR: Injury</p> <p>Full investigation: Investigation in progress</p>	<p>SIR is in investigation stage</p>

<p>Details: An excavator based harvester crossed a live cable array in a windfarm</p> <p>Reference: ACCB1097/A7</p> <p>Incident date: 25/09/2024</p> <p>Type of SIR: Near Miss</p> <p>Full investigation: Investigation in progress</p>	SIR is in investigation stage
<p>Details: An excavator stacked timber on a live cable array in a windfarm</p> <p>Reference: ACCB1093/A1</p> <p>Incident date: 07/10/2024</p> <p>Type of SIR: Near Miss</p> <p>Full investigation: Investigation in progress</p>	SIR is in investigation stage

Recent incidents in NRW

Incidents

	Q3 24/25	Q2 24/25	Q1 24/25	Q3 23/24	23/24	22/23	21/22	20/21	19/20	18/19	17/18
RIDDOR – staff	0	1	0	2	5	3	7	3	6	2	8
Lost time injuries – staff	1	0	1	2	6	3	3	1	4	5	8

Injuries, no lost time – staff	10	16	20	9	65	43	51	19	121	53	59
Near miss – staff	39	54	33	45	186	175	156	109	183	163	201
Serious incident reviews	1	3	1	1	8	9	7	2	6	2	3
Injuries - contractors	1	2	2	1	9	8*	3*	5*	5	9	9
Injuries – public	3	8	12	5	46	38	38	18	53	53	95
Near miss – contractors	18	18	20	16	70	68	62	46	50	40	44
Near miss – public	1	6	30	2	31	33	30	23	33	20	39
Property Damage	13	10	11	7	48	53	36	35	32	43	48
Hazards Reported	16	10	19	16	89	199	166	65	83	103	78

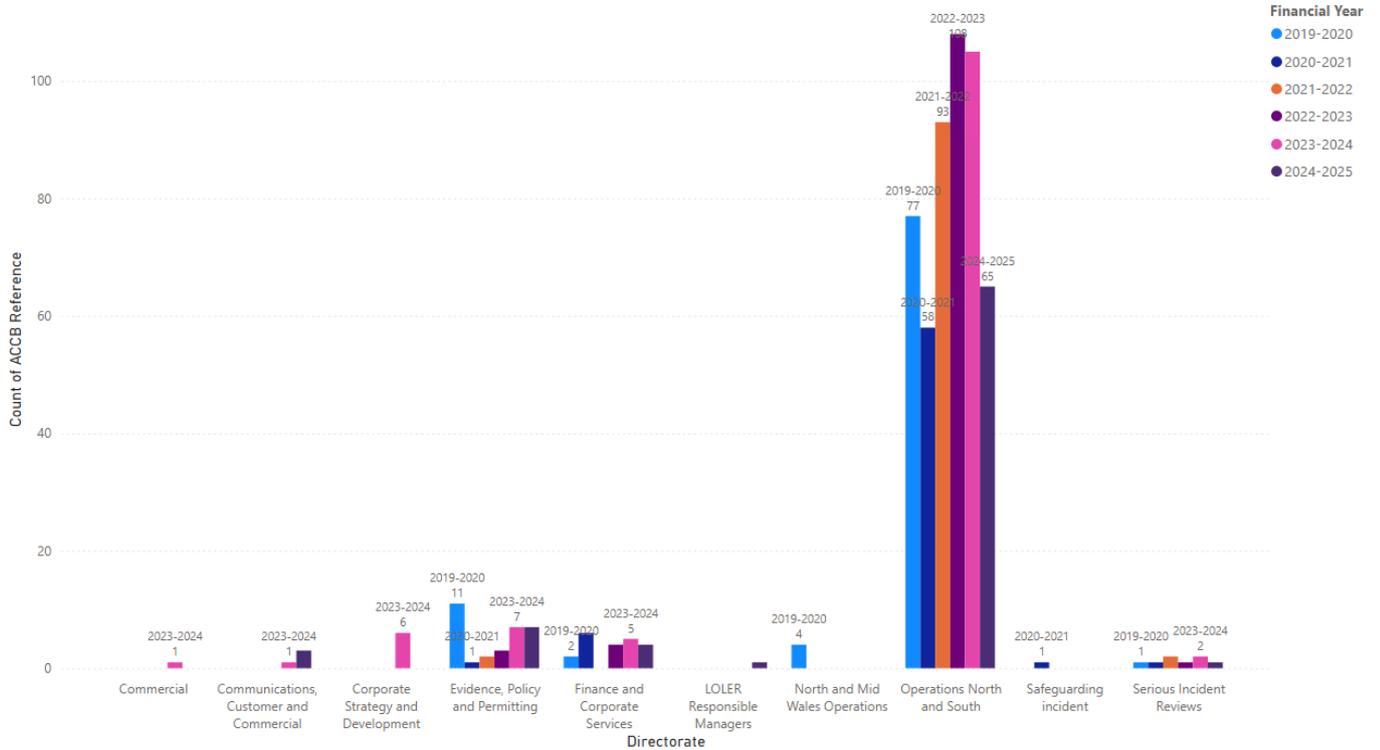
There have been 39 staff near misses reported in Q3 24/25, this is in comparison to 54 reported in Q2 24/25 and 45 in Q3 23/24. Hazard reporting has increased in Q3 24/25 (16) compared to Q2 24/25 (10) and is comparative to Q3 23/24 (16).

NRW totals for Q3 2024/2025

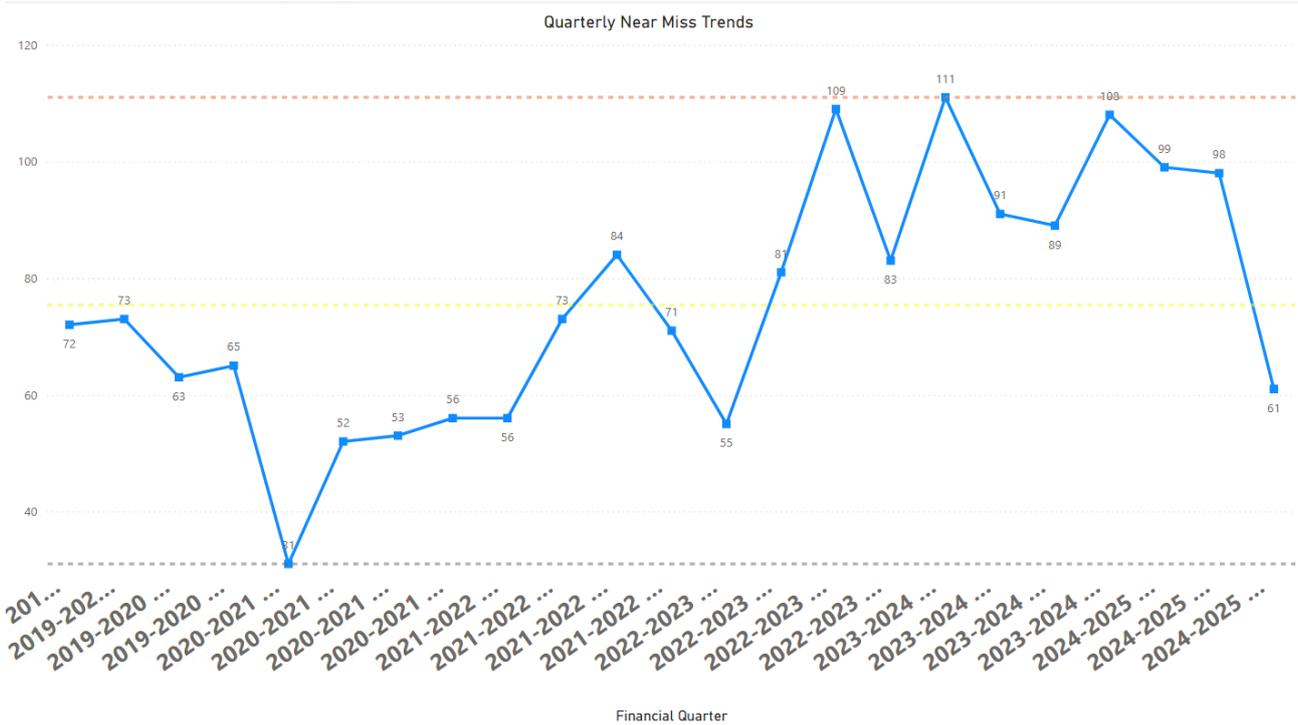
NRW had 0 RIDDOR reportable incident to staff in Q3 2024/25. There has been one lost time injury to a member of staff. This was a manual handling incident.

AssessNET incident data comparison (all NRW) Q3

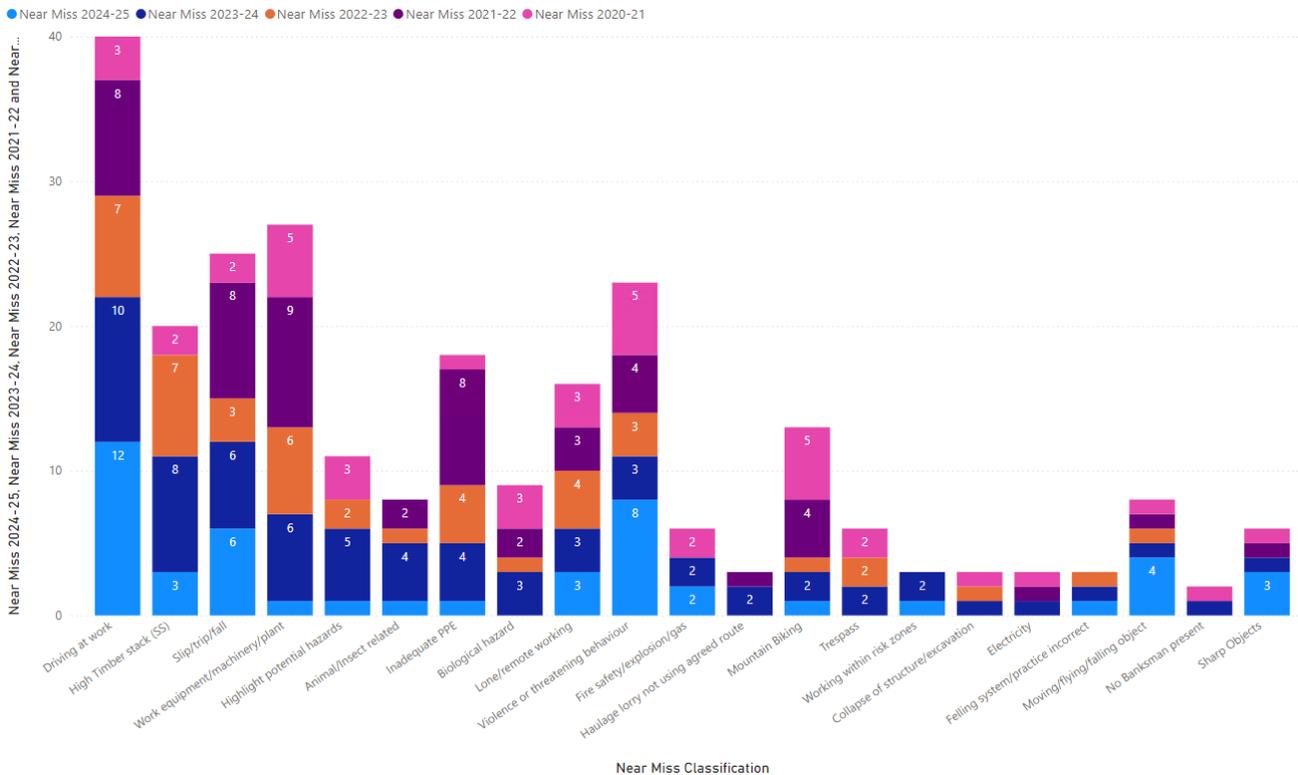
Incidents By Directorate



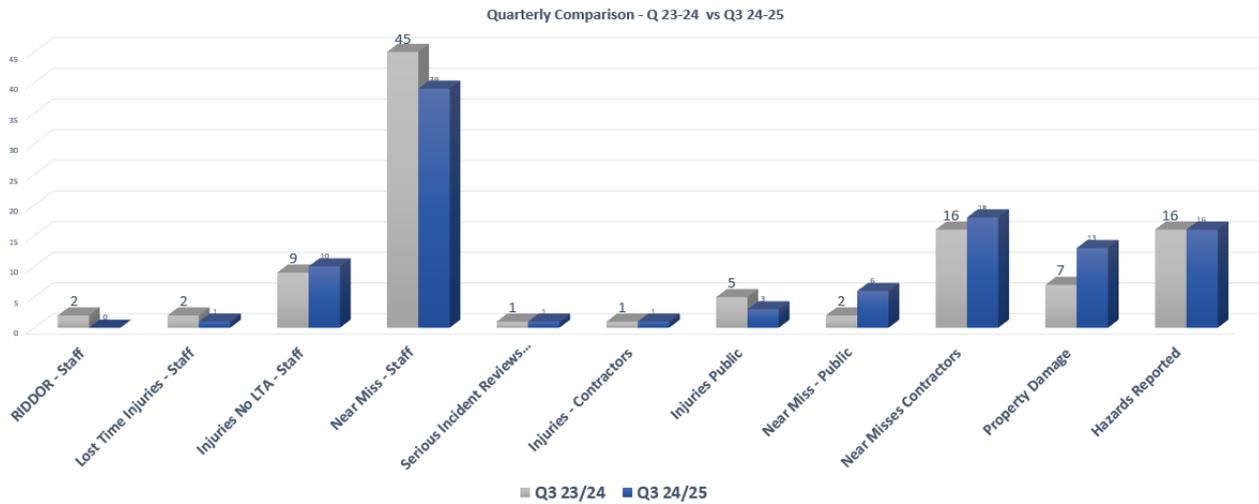
It is possible to see that reporting incidents particularly in Ops has reduced comparatively to Q3 in previous years. This is being noted in the Ops forums and the communication via managers monthly.



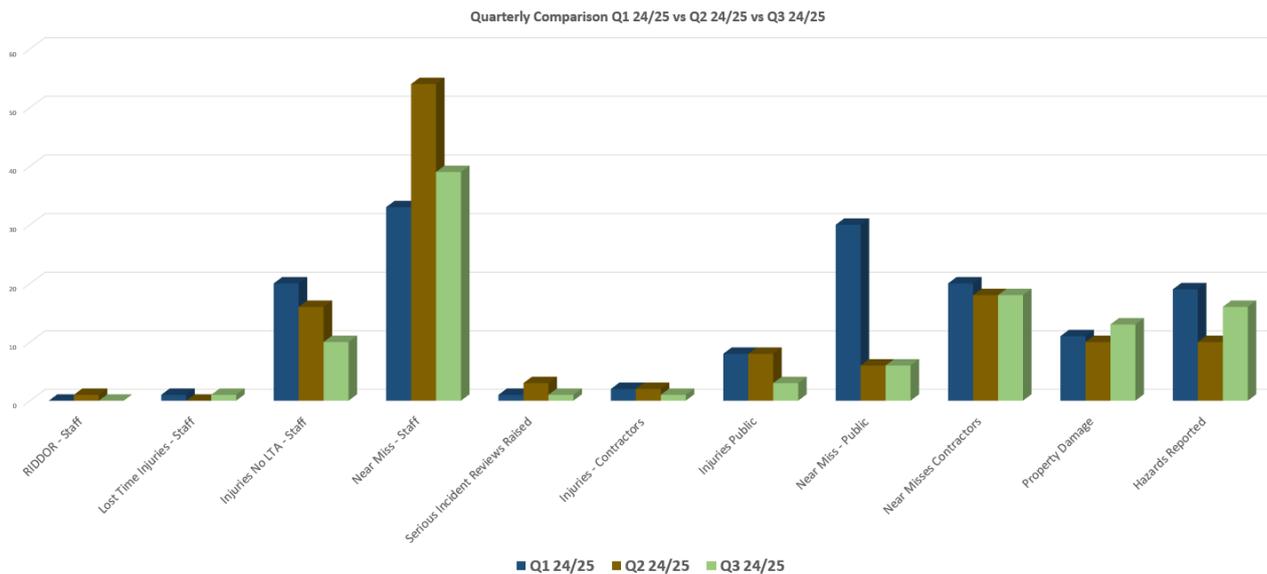
In Q3 2024/25 there has been a larger than usual decrease in the number of near misses reported. In order to support the continuation of positive incident reporting (Near miss, hazards), near miss series of drop in sessions will continue in Q3 for team leaders and managers. A recording of this session will also be available to all staff through the learning management system.



Near miss classification trends show that driving at work is the most common cause of near miss reporting, followed by work equipment and then slips, trips, and falls.



In Q3 2024/25 there was lower reporting across all incident types that in Q3 23/24 with the exception of contractor near misses.

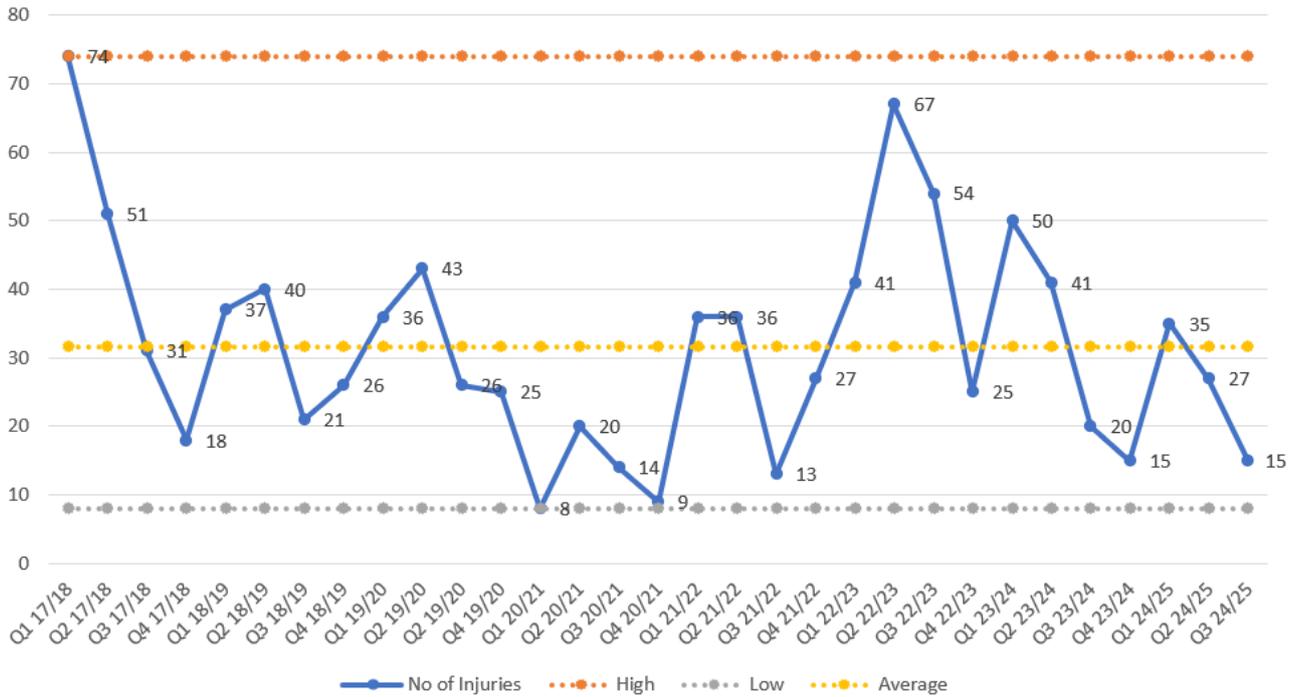


Reporting across Q1 to Q3 2024-25 has seen a decrease in most areas.

Quarterly trend analysis

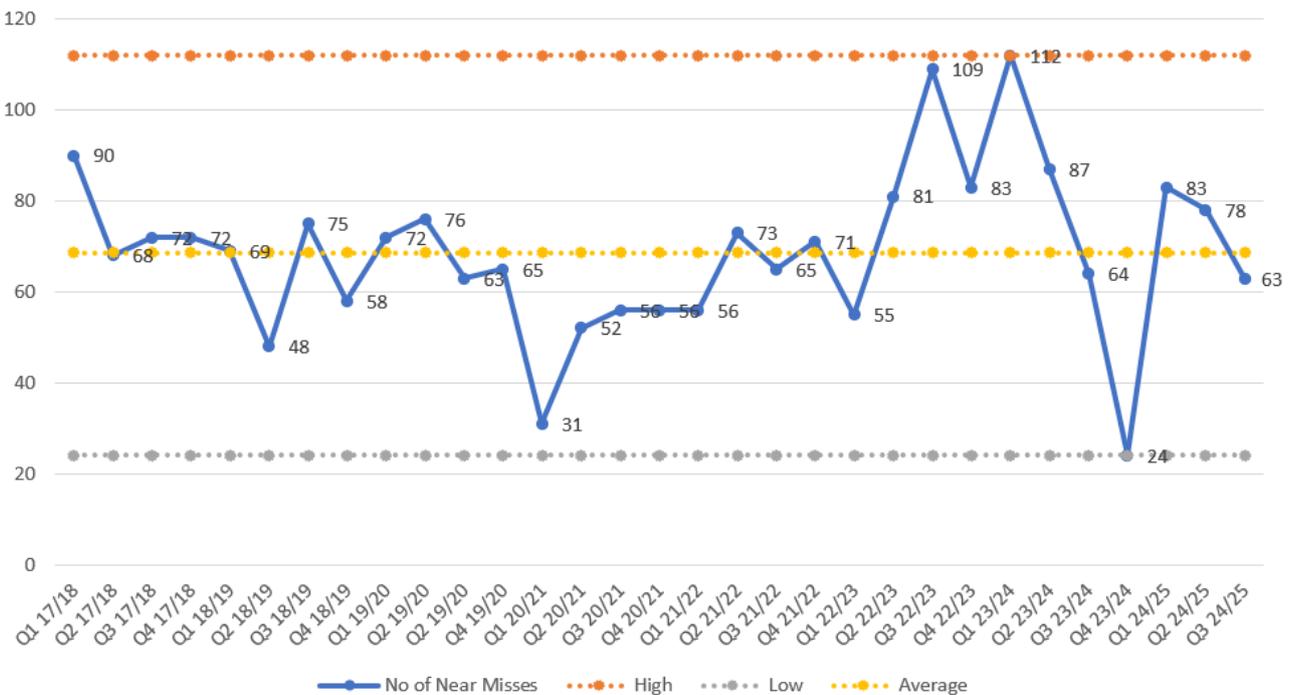
The following quarterly trend graphs include a high, average and low line. This provides an idea of where NRW are against their highest number of reports in each graph as well as against their average reports and lowest. By looking at these graphs as a visual, it is possible to ascertain where NRW are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

Quarterly Injury Trends



Total injury trends have seen a steady decline over the last three quarters.

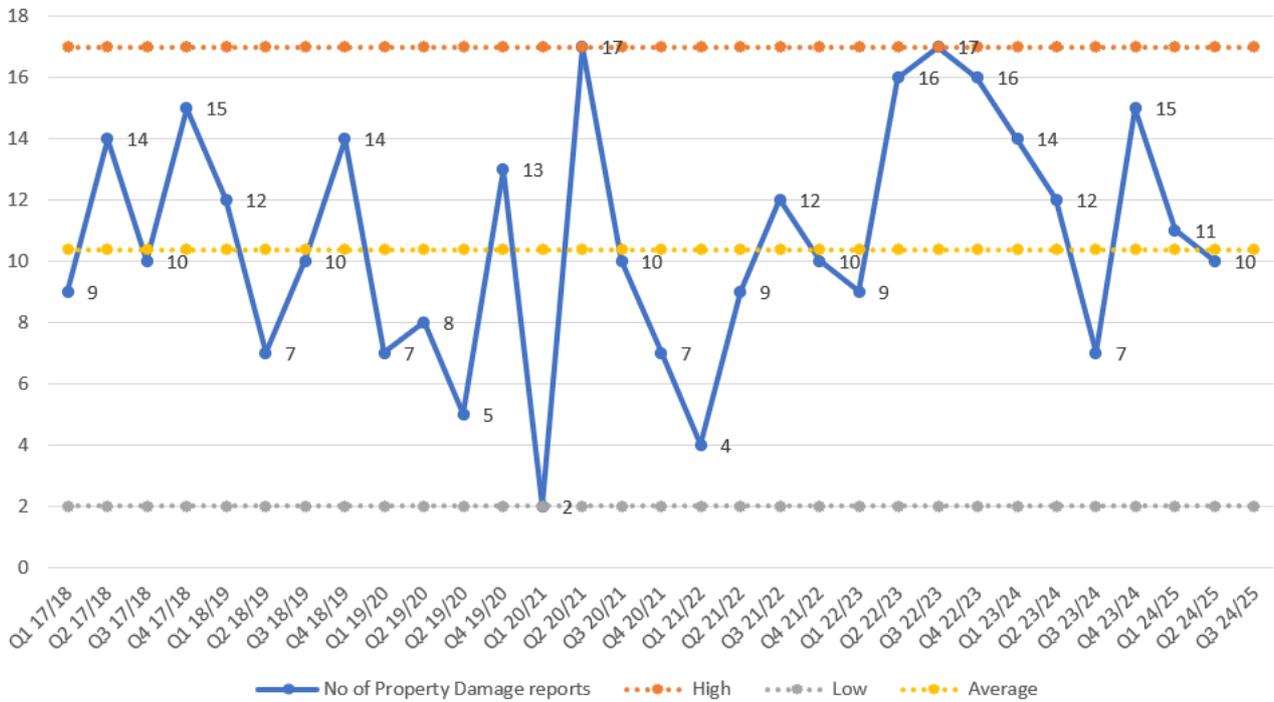
Quarterly Near Miss Trends



There has been a steady decline in the number of near miss reports over the last three quarters. In order to support the continuation of positive incident reporting (Near miss,

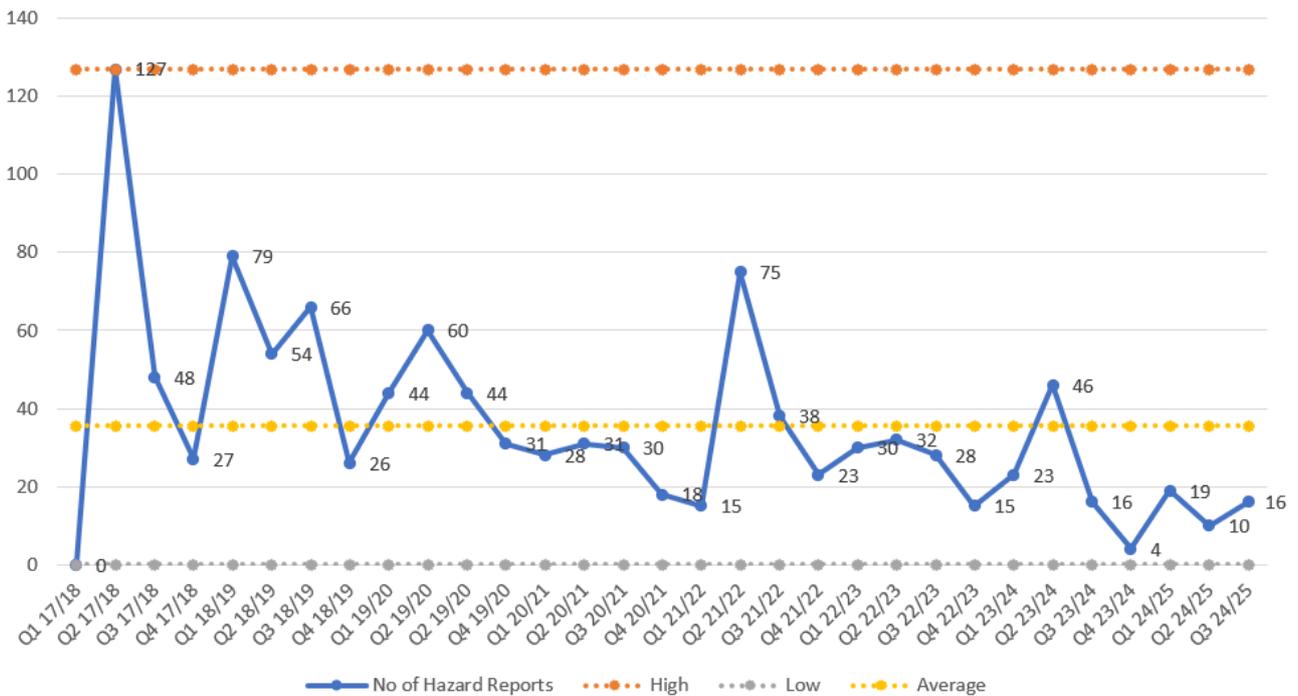
hazards), near miss series of drop in sessions will continue in Q4 for team leaders and managers.

Quarterly Property Damage Trends



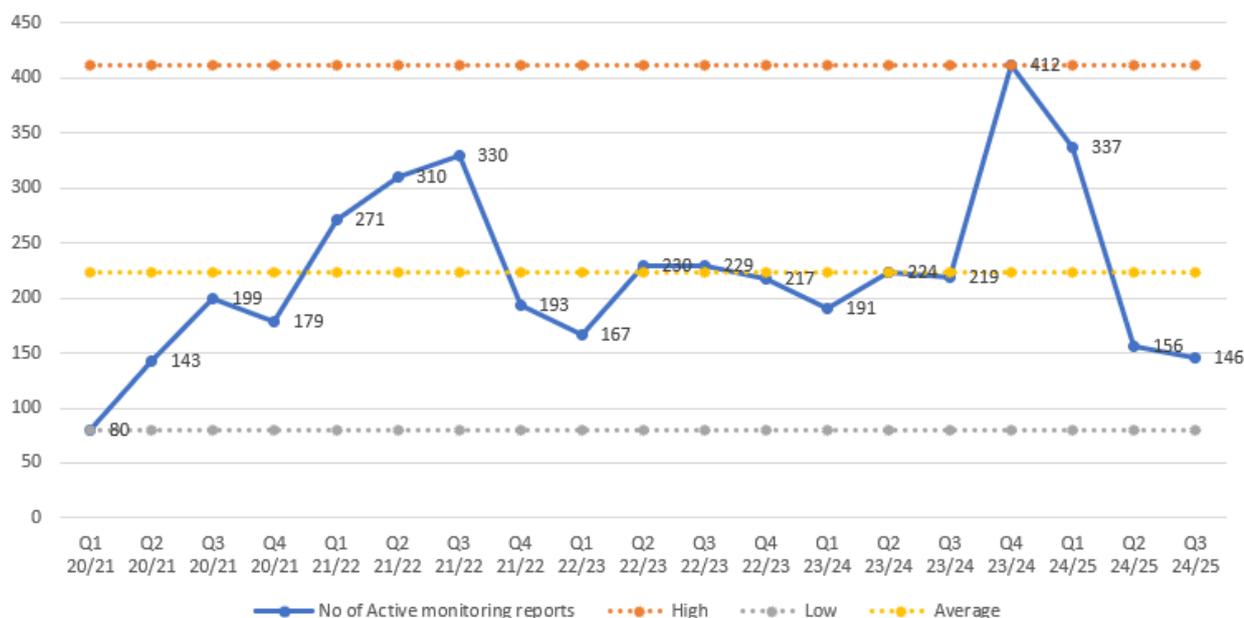
Property damage is seeing a downward trend towards pre COVID levels.

Quarterly Hazard Trends



There has been a small increase in the number of hazard reports in Q3 24/25. The reporting levels are still well below the average level. In order to support the continuation of positive incident reporting (Near miss, hazards), near miss series of drop in sessions will continue in Q4 for team leaders and managers.

Quarterly Active Monitoring Trends



Active Monitoring has seen the continuation in decrease in reports in Q3 24/25 since Q4 23/24. Work is being undertaken to look at trends of active monitoring so that team leaders, line managers have “themes” to monitor.

Wellbeing initiatives and developments

- To co-incide with World Menopause Day on 18 October NRW committed to being menopause friendly, taking support through an accreditation process. This means meeting a clear set of criteria, which is assessed by an independent panel to make sure NRW is doing all that it can.
- An awareness session with Welsh Womens aid was arranged in November that covered who Welsh Womeans aid are, definitions of domestic abuse, myths and stereotypes we tend to hear about, what a good response looks like to someone who discloses and the Ask Me training provided by Welsh Womans Aid – which is free training going into more depth on the content mentioned above.
- During the case for change it was noted that there was an increase in occupational health referrals for stress and some staff may be coming close to burnout. A link was provided to the burnout awareness session which took place in February 2022, the session covered what is burnout, risk factors of burnout and prevention and cure of burnout.
- Staff were reminded about taking their Wellbeing hour. Managers were also reminded the importance of taking their Wellbeing Hour. If colleagues see them and others taking their wellbeing hour this should encourage wider acceptable and take up of this staff benefit.

Mental Health First Aiders

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

ISO 45001

In Q3 24/25, ten surveillance audit days were undertaken by the external certification body with the final two taking place in Q4 24/25.

Internal Audit

An internal audit was carried out on the SIR process. The result of this audit was a substantive rating.

NNR Audits

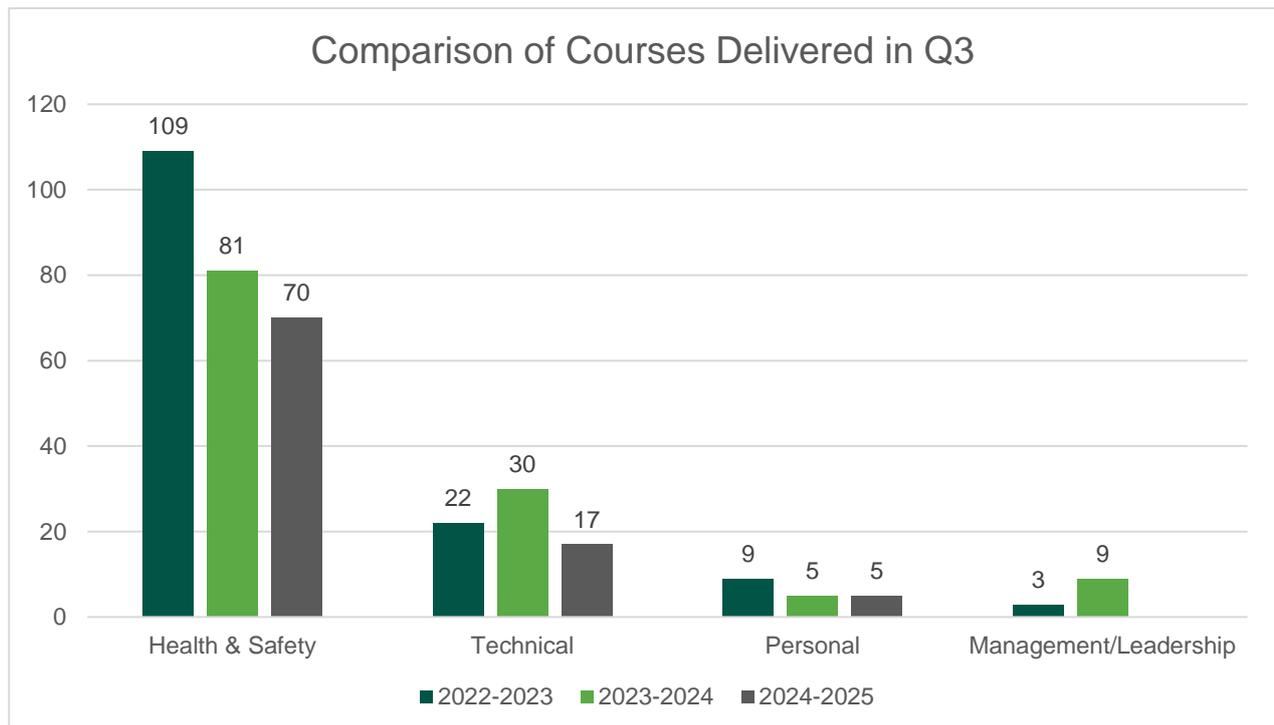
During Q3 24/25 three NNR audits were carried out. These were carried out in Maes Y Facrell NNR, Ceunant Llenyrch NNR, Ceunant Cynfal NNR. All the audits are recorded on AssessNET and agreed actions assigned accordingly.

Learning and Development (L&D)

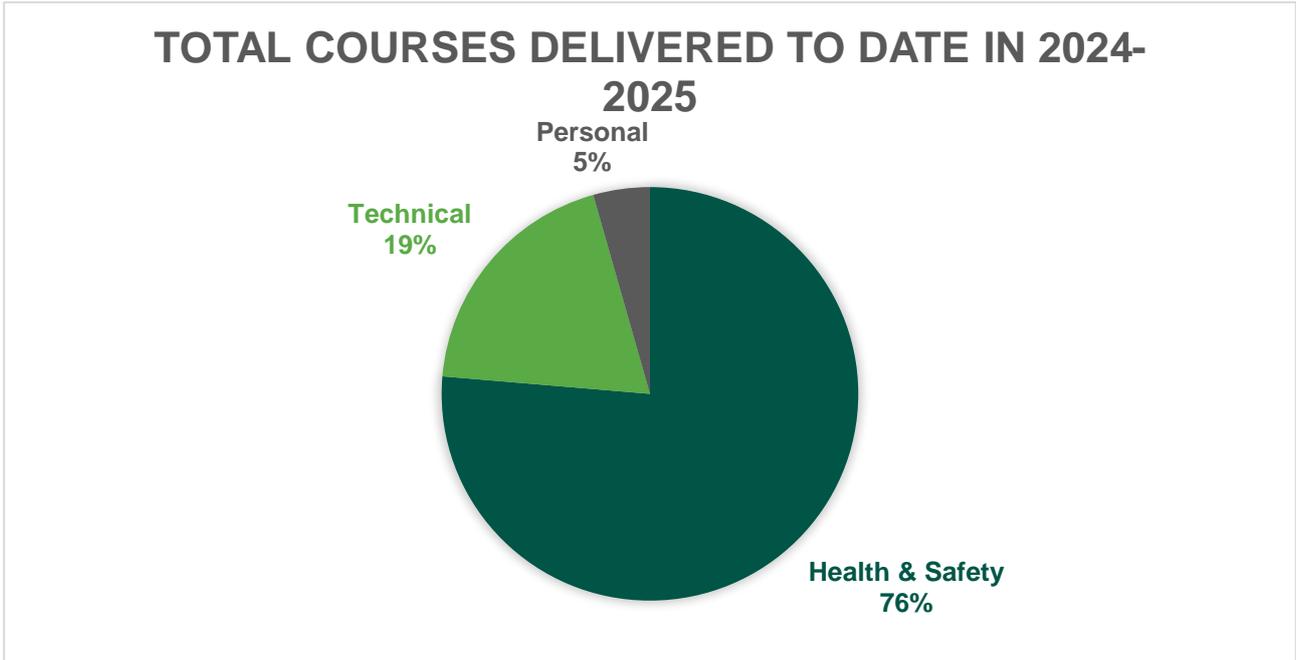
Course Delivery:

In Q3 24/25, 92 courses were sourced and delivered across the business.

The diagram below shows a comparison of courses delivered by category in Q3 for the last three years.

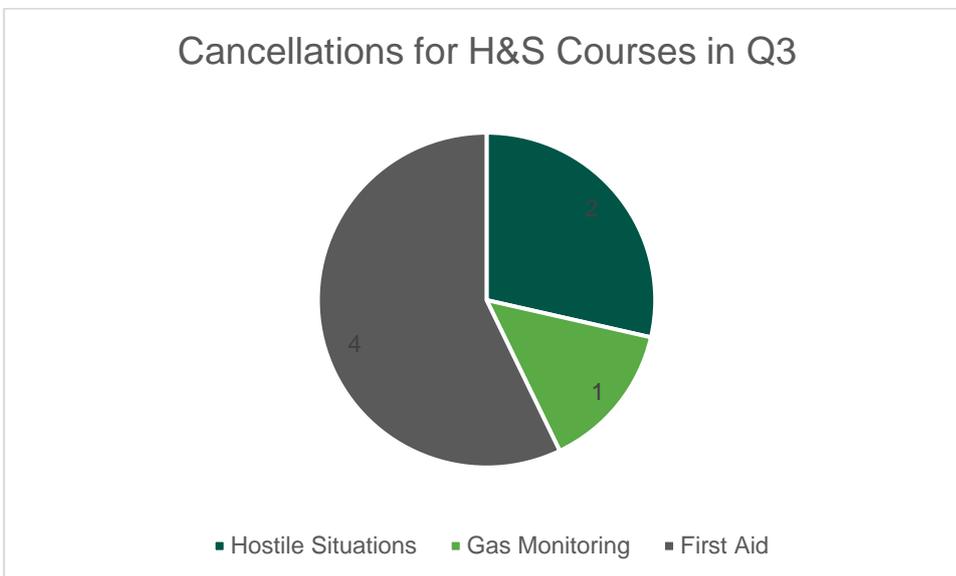


Focus for the L&D team remains on delivery of essential H&S courses, 76% of the all courses delivered so far this year are for H&S.



Cancellations

There were 14 cancellations reported in Q3 2024/25, with 9 of these cancellations providing less than 14 days' notice. Of these 9 cancellations, 7 were H&S courses.

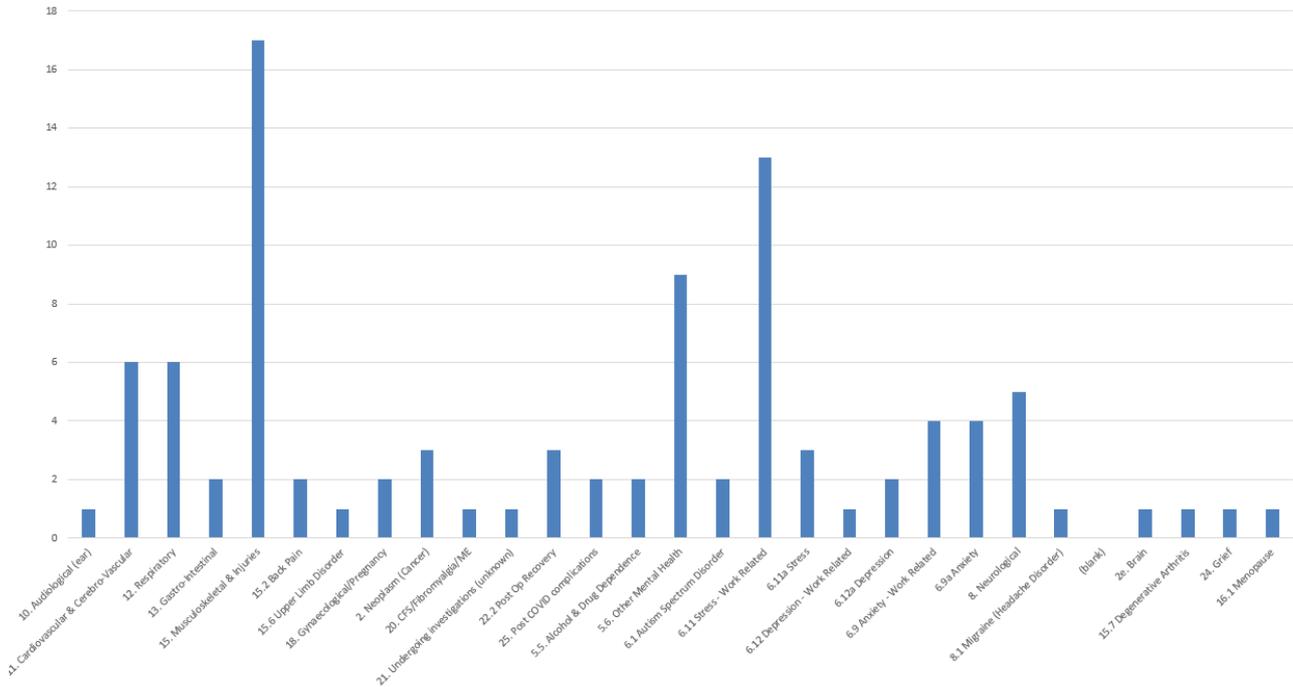


NRW occupational health statistics

Q3 2023/24	Q3 2024/25

59 referrals	97 referrals
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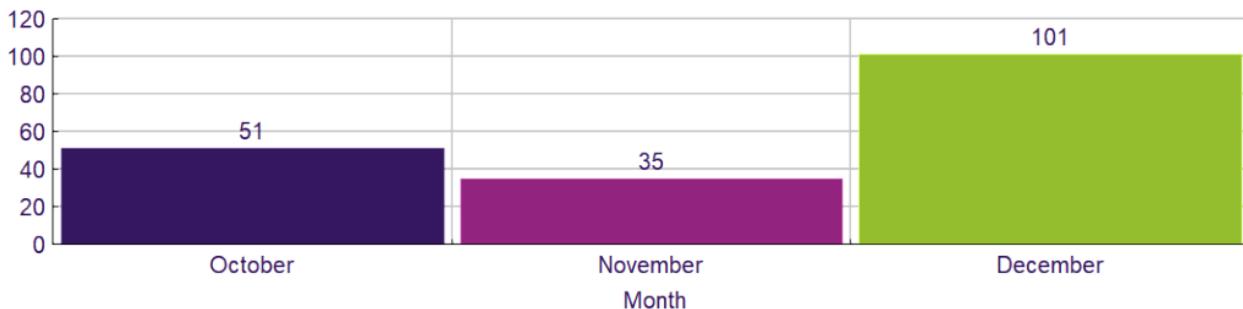
Reason for referral



In Q3 2024/25, the main reasons for referral to occupational health was for musculoskeletal & injuries and work related stress. This was closely followed by anxiety and stress which is in line with the most common causes for referral across all sectors according to our occupational health provider.

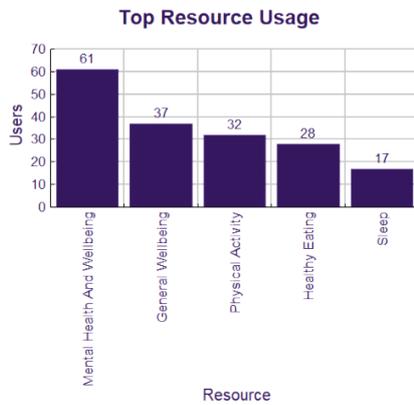
NRW Employee Assistance Programme statistics

Portal access by month



Top resource usage

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

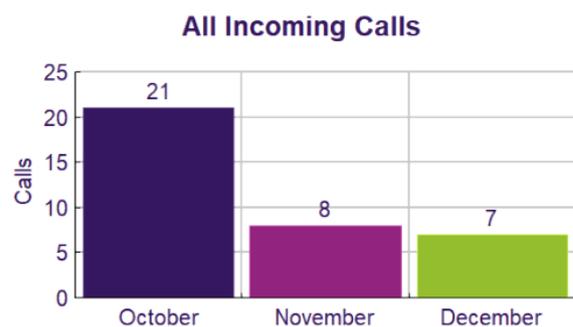
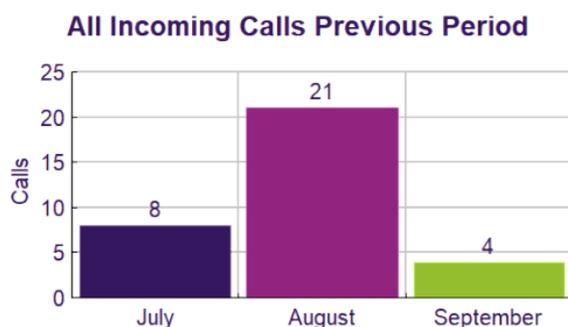


Self help

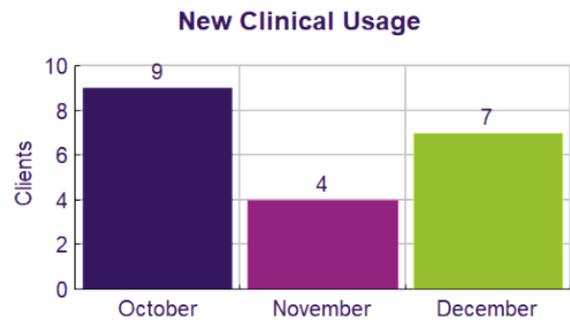
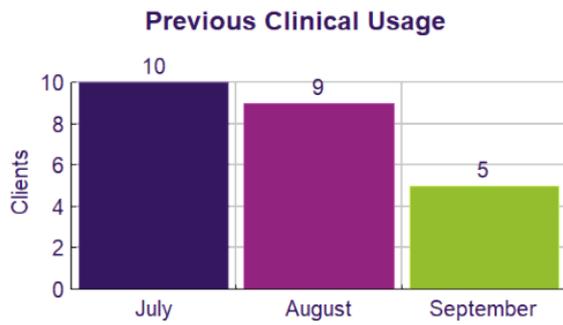
In Q3 2024/25, NRW staff utilised the Vivup portal to access face to face and virtual counselling and self help workbooks more than other offerings.

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

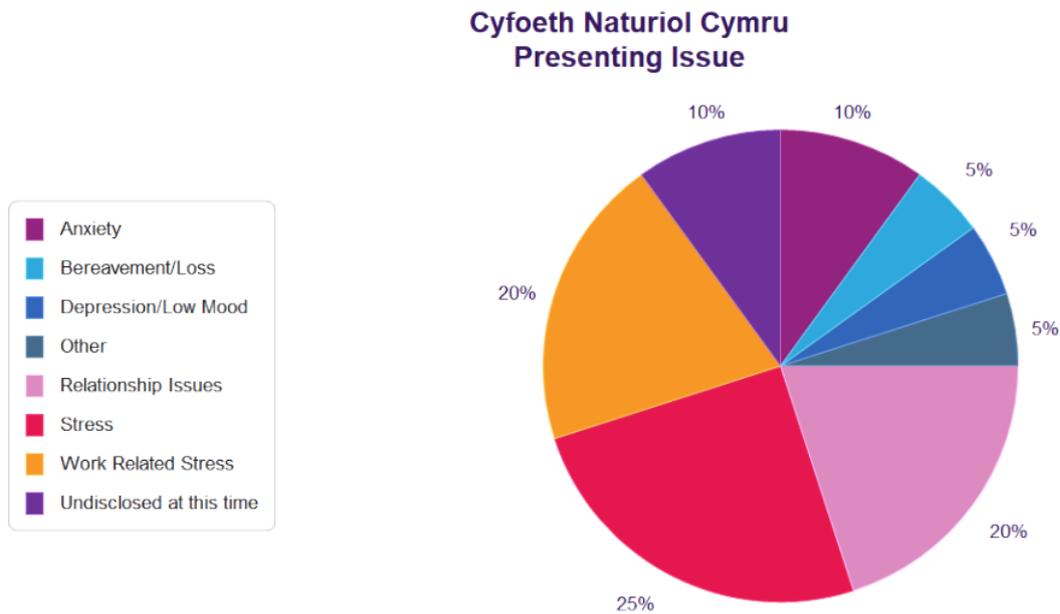
Accessing 24/7 helpline



During this period 20 clients entered the counselling service via the 24/7 helpline.



Presenting issues



The top reasons for counselling sessions for NRW staff in Q3 2024/25 were stress, work related stress and relationship issues.

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