



Natural Resources Wales

Board Meeting

19 March 2013

Paper Title	NRW Responses to current consultations
Paper Reference:	Paper A (03/13)
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Purpose of Paper:	Discussion
Recommendation:	
Decision Required:	

Impact: To note – all headings might not be applicable to the topic	Impact on the Environment: Impact on the Economy: Impact on Community: Impact on Knowledge:
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Issue

1. To seek the Board's views on consultations by the Welsh Government [WG] and OFWAT which have implications for the environment in Wales.

Summary

2. There are 4 significant consultations that NRW would wish to respond to:
 - OFWAT Setting Price Controls for 2015-20
http://www.ofwat.gov.uk/pricereview/pr14/pap_con201301framework.pdf
 - Wales and the EU : European Structural Funds 2014 - 2020
<http://wales.gov.uk/consultations/businessandeconomy/130114walesandtheeu/?lang=en>
 - Common Agricultural Policy Reform: Direct Payments to Farmers - Next Steps
<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/environmentcountryside/farmingandcountryside/farming/cap/documents/cap-reform-direct-payments-next-steps/?lang=en>
 - Common Agricultural Policy Reform: Wales Rural Development Plan 2014-2020 - Next Steps
<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/environmentcountryside/farmingandcountryside/ruraldevelopment/ruraldevplanwales20142020/?lang=en>
3. The deadline for responses to these are either just ahead of or shortly after vesting day.

Background

4. Both NRW and the Environment Agency [EA] will respond to the OFWAT consultation.
5. EA Wales has been involved in developing up the response by the EA to OFWAT.
6. In addition EA Wales is working with WG and the Welsh water companies to develop a Wales focussed response to reflect devolution and the different arrangements in Wales. It is intended that this Wales response will be sent in a letter from Emyr Roberts to OFWAT to begin to establish the relationship.
7. The OFWAT consultation is significant for us in terms of our input to the Price Review of the Water Companies in Wales in 2014 [PR14]. This process subsequently determines the Water Bills over the period 2015 – 2020 and therefore the investment the water companies can make on environmental improvements for that five year period.
8. For the WG consultations the 3 legacy bodies would have responded independently, we have taken the opportunity to work together on joint consultation responses.

9. The WG European Structural Funds consultation will impact our ability to secure EU funding under the ERDF and ESF programmes for West Wales and the Valleys and East Wales for the period 2014 – 2020.
10. The 2 WG consultations on CAP Reform offer the opportunity to seek improvements to the way environmental outcomes are incorporated into basic agricultural standards and the funding available for key measures such as agri-environment, farm advisory service, forestry and wider rural development.

Next Steps

11. The Key Issues papers set out the points we intend to make.

Consultation Draft Key Issues Papers – Annex 1 – 4

Annex1	NRW Response to OFWAT – Setting Price Controls for 2015-20
Annex 2	NRW Response to European Structural Funds
Annex 3	NRW Response to Common Agricultural Policy Reform – Direct Payments to Farmers
Annex 4	NRW Response to Common Agricultural Policy Reform – Wales Rural Development Plan (2014-2020)

12. We seek your comments as we finalise our responses to the consultations.

Risks

13. If we fail to influence OFWAT and the Welsh Government through the consultation process we could lose the mechanism for securing environmental outcomes and significant sources of funding.