

Annex 1: STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

Background

1. It is important that the people of Wales have confidence in our work and in our ability to deliver value for tax payers' money. Building that confidence relies on good practice across all our business at all levels and on building trust between the organisation and the people we work with and whose lives our work affects. One way to build this trust is through effective stakeholder engagement. This is why Natural Resources Wales needs a strategic, proactive and coordinated approach to this work.
2. Evidence from the experience of the founding bodies for Natural Resources Wales, suggests that it is crucial to invest time and effort into stakeholder engagement. The three founding organisations all have experience of where stakeholder engagement has paid dividends or has not been particularly successful. We will learn from each other and from our past experiences and take the good practice forward.
3. Stakeholder engagement will be required at a strategic and operational level. The principles and approaches set out in this strategy are applicable to any form stakeholder engagement.
4. Effective stakeholder engagement is about building sustainable relationships with people who are affected by what we do and the services which we provide, and who have a contribution to make with regard to what we do. It relies on a mutual commitment to engage, listen, respond and communicate openly and honestly with stakeholders.

Why we need to engage

5. Successful stakeholder engagement enables better planned and more informed policies, projects and services. This will result in benefits for us and our stakeholders.
6. Good public and stakeholder engagement has the following benefits for the organisation:

Benefits of stakeholder engagement for Natural Resources Wales	Benefits of stakeholder engagement for stakeholders
Improved decision-making and outcomes as a result of input by a wider range of stakeholders and communities. We recognise that others have experience and expertise that we should learn from.	Greater opportunities to contribute directly to programme development

Increased efficiency and effectiveness as we have a better understanding of the issues that face individuals, communities and other organisations	More open and transparent lines of communication and increased accountability of Government
Improved risk management practices – allowing risks to be identified and considered earlier, so reducing future costs.	Better access to decision making processes, resulting in the delivery of more efficient and responsive services
Challenging of established methods and ideas and encouragement of innovation and creativity;	Early identification of synergies between stakeholder and Government work, encouraging integrated and comprehensive solutions to complex issues.
Better informed prioritisation and scheduling	Increased sense of ownership of issues and of being valued
Improved evidence resources and enhanced organisational confidence.	Better knowledge, awareness and understanding of issues and processes.

Stakeholder engagement objectives

7. The objectives of this strategy are to:

- Build, strengthen and nurture mutually beneficial relationships with stakeholders;
- Ensure that the organisation proactively seeks productive engagement with stakeholders to shape programmes and services;
- Ensure that all relevant stakeholders are given sufficient and appropriate opportunities to consider and influence plans and decisions made by the organisation
- Ensure our engagement activities are prioritised and relevant audiences are clear on how we make our decisions and how they can influence them;
- Make certain that our stakeholder engagement work is closely identified with our business priorities and that our decisions are evidence based;
- Engage a diverse range of customers, communities and partners (old and new) in the organisation's work so that views come from a wide constituency of people. We will learn from the expertise and experience of others.

Our ways of working

8. Our aspiration is that any individual, community or organisation will have appropriate opportunities to express their views and to understand how we consider those views in our decision making processes. We must understand that we don't always have all the answers and so we must harness the knowledge and expertise of our stakeholders and communities. It is about "having a conversation" about what we want to achieve together and ensuring that we feedback how we reached our final decision.

9. There is no one size fits all model for stakeholder engagement. We must be able to tailor our process tailored to the particular need of the situation, work undertaken and stakeholders selected. Ensuring appropriate engagement requires a judgement – asking what, who, when and how are essential in determining the most appropriate way to engage stakeholders.

10. We will follow the "Working with others" approach - working with stakeholders as early as possible, in order to understand their concerns, interests and priorities. This approach allows us to be flexible, working with stakeholders creatively and in ways that suit their needs.

11. We will practice equity and equality in all our stakeholder engagement work.

12. Whilst all staff will have a responsibility for engaging with stakeholders, the Communications team has a key role to provide advice to staff to enable them to engage successfully. This will vary from provision of guidance and toolkits to hands-on involvement and facilitation as well as overseeing the information flow throughout the organisation. The level of involvement of the Communications team will be proportionate to the level of risk associated with the issue.

13. Board members will share with senior staff their professional and personal networks. We will then ask Board members to support offices as appropriate.

The Principles of stakeholder engagement

14. Our stakeholder engagement processes will adhere to the ten National Principles of Public Engagement in Wales. These principles, developed by Participation Cymru in consultation with other public sector organisations in Wales, were endorsed by the Welsh Government in March 2011.

- **Engagement is effectively designed to make a difference**

Engagement gives a real chance to influence policy, service design and delivery from an early stage.

- **Encourage and enable everyone affected to be involved, if they so choose**

The people affected by an issue or change are included in opportunities to engage as an individual or as part of a group or community, with their views both respected and valued.

- **Engagement is planned and delivered in a timely and appropriate way**

The engagement process is clear, communicated to everyone in a way that's easy to understand within a reasonable timescale, and the most suitable method/s for those involved is used.

- **Work with relevant partner organisations**

Organisations should communicate with each other and work together wherever possible to ensure that people's time is used effectively and efficiently.

- **The information provided will be jargon free, appropriate and understandable**

People are well placed to take part in the engagement process because they have easy access to relevant information that is tailored to meet their needs.

- **Make it easier for people to take part**

People can engage easily because any barriers for different groups of people are identified and addressed.

- **Enable people to take part effectively**

Engagement processes should try to develop the skills, knowledge and confidence of all participants.

- **Engagement is given the right resources and support to be effective**

Appropriate training, guidance and support are provided to enable all participants to effectively engage, including both community participants and staff.

- **People are told the impact of their contribution**

Timely feedback is given to all participants about the views they expressed and the decisions or actions taken as a result; methods and form of feedback should take account of participants' preferences.

- **Learn and share lessons to improve the process of engagement**

People's experience of engagement should be monitored and evaluated to measure its success in engaging people and the effectiveness of their participation; lessons should be shared and applied in future engagements.

Our stakeholders

15. A stakeholder can be defined as any person, or group, or organisation who believes they could be affected by, interested in or could affect or influence the work of Natural Resources Wales.

16. Stakeholders will vary in the impact, significance, interest, longevity and relevance in relation to our objectives. For this reason, it is important for us to map our stakeholders regularly and even more so when we are starting new projects and activities or moving through phases of projects.

17. Annex 1 describes how we will undertake our corporate strategic analysis, along with the types of approaches to engagement. Once complete, we will develop an engagement plan.

18. Local teams will also use this strategic framework to identify local stakeholders. They will then develop specific engagement plans.

Tools

19. We recognise that tools and mentors are required to help in the understanding of stakeholder engagement.

20. We will follow the “Working with Others” approach and a toolkit that provides guidance for staff on how to plan and manage stakeholder engagement is available on our intranet. Communications staff will advise all staff as they develop engagement plans.

21. In addition, Natural Resources Wales has a call off contract for facilitation support where we can call upon the service of the contractors for advice, designing and running stakeholder engagement events. The Communications Team can assist advise on using this service.

Evaluation of the Strategy

22. Evaluating the stakeholder strategy will allow Natural Resources Wales to capture lessons learned, allowing us to drive continuous improvement in future engagement processes

23. Whilst evaluation of engagement activities will be incorporated into normal operations, the Communications Team will also review effectiveness of our stakeholder engagement efforts on three main elements – stakeholder participation (involvement in process); stakeholder alignment (compatibility with Natural Resource Wales’ priorities) and Natural Resources Wales’ commitment (our willingness to act on stakeholders’ proposals)

Annex 1: Strategic Stakeholder analysis and levels of participation

At a corporate level, the first step will be to develop a single inventory of the organisations we will or should work with. Following that we can analyse our stakeholders in two ways:

- **Proximity mapping** – the stakeholders are plotted according to our relationship and communication with them. The stakeholders with whom we have a good relationship and frequent communication are plotted closer to the centre, while those we have little communication with are on the outer circle.
- **Interest / Influence Matrix** – the same stakeholders are then plotted on a matrix where **Influence** represents the potential influence stakeholders can exert upon our ability to deliver the strategy and meet our targets and **Interest** reflects the stakeholders' current level of concern for our agenda and strategic direction.

Once this analysis is complete, then we can map them on to a quadrant to determine the level of engagement required.

High		High Influence	High Influence
		Low interest	High interest
		Stakeholders who need to be actively involved in and supportive of our work. Aim to increase their level of interest	Stakeholders we need to work in partnership with. Focus most effort on this group
Low	Level of influence	Low influence	Low influence
		Low interest	High interest
		Stakeholders who need to be aware of our work and kept informed of the main developments	Stakeholders we need to consider for particular areas of our work.
		Level of interest	
		Low	High

Once we have undertaken a stakeholder analysis, it is vital to have a good understanding, and indeed consider what level of participation is actually being sought.

	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
Stakeholder engagement goals	To provide balanced, objective, accurate and consistent information to assist stakeholders to understand the problems / issues, alternatives and / or solutions	To obtain feedback from stakeholders on analysis, alternatives and / or outcomes	To work directly with stakeholders throughout the process to ensure that their concerns and needs are consistently understood and considered	To partner with stakeholders including the development of alternatives, making decisions and the identification of preferred solutions	To place final decision making in the hands of the stakeholder. Stakeholders are enabled and equipped to actively contribute to the achievement s of outcomes
Promise to stakeholders	We will keep you informed	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge your concerns and aspirations and provide feedback on how your input influenced the outcome	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how your input influenced the outcome	We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the outcomes to the maximum extent possible	We will implement what you decide where we can. We will support and complement your actions