

Board Paper

09 July 2014

Paper Title	Interim Natural Resources Wales Position Statement on Natural Resource Management & Staff Guidance
Paper Reference:	NRW B B 55.14
Paper Sponsored By: Paper Authored By:	Ceri Davies Joanne Sherwood, Keith Davies, Russell De'Ath and Russell Elliott

Purpose of Paper:	Discussion The board are asked to consider the interim NRW position statement on NRM
Recommendation:	To agree the NRW interim position statement on Natural Resource Management and staff briefing paper.
Decision Required:	The Board is asked to approve the Position Statement and staff briefing, as our current position, recognising that it will need to be updated as the statutory framework develops.

Impact:	Impact on the Environment: The Environment White Paper will ultimately lead to an Environment Bill which will set a new agenda for natural resources management in Wales. Our response to the White Paper highlights the benefits to the environment, as well as to the economy and society, of the proposed improvements in the legal framework. Impact on the Economy: Our comments on the White Paper contribute positively to the development of the proposed new legislation to use natural resources in Wales to benefit the economy as well as communities and the environment. Impact on Community:
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	Our comments on the White Paper contribute positively to the development of the proposed new legislation to use natural resources in Wales to benefit communities as well the economy and the environment. Impact on Knowledge: Some of the proposals in the White Paper will have significant implications for the ways in which Natural Resources Wales (and others) gather, organise and share data, evidence and knowledge. This should lead to a common evidence base and understanding that decision makers can use to ensure natural resource use in Wales benefits the environment, the economy and communities.
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Issue

1. There is a need for an Interim Natural Resources Wales Position Statement on Natural Resource Management for communication to staff and external stakeholders pending confirmation of Welsh Government's final policy and legislative proposals for natural resource management.

Summary and Background

2. This draft position statement was previously endorsed by the Board in April. Since then the statement has been to various Welsh Government and Natural Resources Wales committees, including the Board's Environment Sub Group, Ecosystem Approach & NRM Programme Board, WG Marine Planning Project Policy Board, WG NRM Programme Board and the WG Natural Resources Reference Group.

Feedback from these committees has been incorporated in the final draft. This has resulted in changes such as a reordering of the contents, to flag up sooner the ideas behind the new approach. References to areas of work such as marine, climate change, health and wellbeing, have also been strengthened.

An 'accessible version' of the statement has also been developed, taking on feedback as above, and this accompanies the position statement. On reflection, we've taken the opportunity to use our corporate branding, as well as using some infographics developed for a recent Ministerial event. We welcome the Boards views on this repackaging. We will continue to develop more examples and infographics as our work on this evolves and matures.

Next Steps

3. The Board is asked to approve these final versions of the position statement and staff guidance note.
4. Natural Resources Wales staff will continue to engage directly with Welsh Government officials to ensure our understanding aligns with their emerging policy and legislative position. For example, we are working with Welsh Government officers to flesh out what the new requirement for us to report on the state of natural resources will mean. The Welsh Government's deadline for the interim report is September 2014, with full report by

November. The interim report will set out what the full report might look like, and provide a means of engaging with stakeholders about future content.

5. Once the legislation is in place it is envisaged that an updated version of the position statement and staff guidance notes will be produced.

Risks

6. The Interim Position Statement will help manage and address the risks identified in the Board Paper on 17 December 2013 outlining our response to the Environment White Paper consultation namely:

There is a risk that Natural Resources Wales will be asked to take on significant new duties without being allocated the financial resources to undertake them. This risk is high in the development and early implementation phase, particularly where “new” and “old” legal requirements may need to run in parallel. In mitigation, we will assess the impact of these new duties in terms of the resource requirements. If we are unable to reallocate sufficient resources within Natural Resources Wales, we will flag the issue to Welsh Government, seeking extra funding and / or agreeing what work stops and the consequences of this. We have also flagged this risk in the consultation response.

Some of the proposals would require new ways of working at the same time that Natural Resources Wales will be seeking to undergo further structural changes. This will represent significant change for staff who will need to develop new skills and capabilities to work in a different and more integrated way. We will address this risk through the workforce plan and by establishing an appropriate governance structure within Natural Resources Wales to deliver this transition programme of work.

There is a risk that the outcomes of the Environment Bill White Paper proposals will not be achieved in full regardless of the effort of Natural Resources Wales: this would impact on our reputation. This is a particular issue where other bodies, who can deliver these outcomes through their work, do not commit to do so. We have flagged this risk in the consultation response and will seek to make the link through our input to related legislative change for example, Welsh Government’s proposals for a Future Generations Bill and a Planning Reform Bill.

Financial Implications

7. The preparation and publication of the Interim Position Statement will not have direct financial implications for Natural Resources Wales. Its availability will help manage the financial implications of many of the proposals in the White Paper, which are significant for Natural Resources Wales but difficult to quantify at this stage and until the detail of the proposals is developed.

Communications

8. The Interim Position Statement will be communicated to Natural Resources Wales’ staff and will be published bilingually on our website, in line with standard practice.
9. We will continue to input to Welsh Government’s work on the detailed policy and legislative proposals and contribute through membership of, for example, Welsh

10. We will also continue to brief stakeholders as part of ongoing routine liaison meetings.

Equality impact assessment

11. No Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out as it is not considered that this paper raises any equality issues.

Annex

- Annex 1: Final draft text for the Interim Natural Resources Wales Position Statement on Natural Resource Management.
- Annex 2: Draft text for the staff guidance note on the above.