

Confirmed Minutes

Title of Meeting: **Board Meeting (Business)**

Canolfan Cae Cymro, Clawdd Newydd

Date of Meeting: 9 July 2015

Board Members: Ruth Hall
Madeleine Havard
Harry Legge-Bourke
Peter Matthews (Chair)
Andy Middleton
Nigel Reader
Emyr Roberts (Chief Executive)
Lynda Warren
Paul Williams

Executive Team in attendance: Clive Thomas, Director of Governance
Kevin Ingram, Executive Director of Finance & Corporate Services
Gareth O'Shea, Executive Director, Operations South
Tim Jones, Executive Director, Operations North and Mid
Ceri Davies, Executive Director of Knowledge Strategy and Planning
Trefor Owen, Executive Director for National Services
Catherine Smith, Director for External Relations & Communications

Secretariat: Kelly Goswell
Geri Mills

Welcome

1. The Chairman welcomed all to the meeting.
2. The Chairman stated that the agenda would be re-ordered to enable Board members to discuss the paper on 'Management Options to Address the Decline in Stocks of Salmon and Sea Trout in Wales' with some of those in attendance, during the coffee break.
3. The Chairman noted the sad passing of Moc Morgan and recognised the lifelong contribution he had made to fisheries in Wales.

Apologies

4. Apologies were received from Board Member Hywel Davies; Ashleigh Dunn, Executive Director of Organisational Development and People Management; Niall Reynolds Director of Transition; and Martin Britton, Chief Information Officer

Declarations of Interest

5. The following declarations were noted:
 - Harry Legge-Bourke noted his Chairmanship of the Usk Fisheries Association
 - Paul Williams noted his membership of various angling syndicates
 - Lynda Warren noted her previous Wildlife Trust trustee role in relation to the briefing on European Beaver paper.

Ratification of Minutes

6. The minutes from the Board meeting on 7 May were agreed as a true record of the meeting and approved by the Board.

Review of Action log

7. Actions were reviewed with the following comments:
 - Action 1: Executive Director of Knowledge, Strategy & Planning *to provide a briefing from the forestry business sector meeting for the July Board meeting* – Discharged – circulated with Board papers.

- Action 2: Executive Director of Organisational Development and People Management to *review the sickness absence benchmark and revise wording of the target* – Discharged, wording reviewed.
- Action3: Executive Director of Knowledge, Strategy & Planning to *develop an options paper and to provide further updates on Action Plan development for future Board meetings* – Discharged, Agenda item.
- Action 4: *Executive Director of Knowledge, Strategy & Planning to finalise the Natural Resource Management funding criteria with the support of the Communities Board Group* – Discharged, circulated with Board papers.
- Action 5: *Director of Governance to provide a report on legal activity for a future Board meeting* – Discharged, noted on the Board Forward Look.
- Action 6: *Date to be arranged for the Environment Bill session* – Discharged, comments submitted by email and now submitted.

Wellbeing, Health & Safety Update NRW B B 38.15

8. The Chief Executive introduced the paper to the Board detailing statistics from the 1 April 2015 to the 12 June 2015.
9. Sickness absence was noted as a continuing concern, as not all the data for 2015/2016 are available due to the ongoing configuration of the MyNRW system. This issue is now being actively managed by the MyNRW Project Board.
10. An update report was provided within the paper with regard to the incident reported at Coed y Brenin. The contractor is now recovering from his injuries and the work site has been re-started with a revised method statement and risk assessment.
11. Facilities Management are now reviewing the first aid coverage at offices and depots to ensure adequate cover of qualified first aiders.
12. The Operational Directors briefed the Board from their perspective and collectively confirmed that Wellbeing, Health and Safety is a high priority and progress continues to be made in implementing and embedding new systems.
13. The Board discussed the statistical analysis and how trends can be used to target preventative action. This is especially important in relation to the wellbeing of staff.

14. The Board noted NRW's corporate membership of Cardiff City Council's Active Scheme (providing lower access costs to staff at all their leisure facilities) and suggested extending this to other NRW staff across Wales.
15. The issue of lone working arrangements in respect of mobile phone coverage was raised and Operations Directors advised the Board of current arrangements.

Finance Report - End of Year 2014/15 NRW B B 39.15

16. The Executive Director of Finance & Corporate Services presented the paper to the Board providing an update on the financial position as of 31 March 2015, timescales for the completion of the Annual Report and Accounts for 2014-15, and the progress on a number of other current finance matters.
17. The Chair of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee endorsed the rigour and accuracy of the financial management and reporting
18. The Board discussed the paper and noted the recently launched 'Success with Less' programme will be factored into future finance reports. The programme aims to engender culture change, to help achieve the intended efficiency savings with supporting case studies.

ACTION: Contact to be made with progressive businesses with an interest in preserving the environment to share good practice on topics such as procurement with NRW.

Charges Consultation Proposals – 2016/17 & 2017/18 NRW B B 42.15

19. The Executive Director of Finance & Corporate Services presented the paper to the Board detailing that following the launch of the first NRW Charging Scheme on 1 April 2015 for the financial year 2015/16, there is a requirement to periodically review these schemes and consult upon any proposed changes.
20. The Board discussed the proposals with the following noted:
 - The Board agreed that the Charging Sub Group will have delegated responsibility to finalise the proposals in conjunction with the Executive
 - Sharing of knowledge and intelligence with other counterpart organisations will help to ensure the rigour of the final proposals.
 - The Board noted longer term discussions with consultees is required and a communications plan explaining our decisions will be important.
 - It was noted that for some charges, similar flexibility to that put in place for micro hydro schemes, will be important for micro businesses.

21. The Board agreed the approach was appropriate, and all endorsed the proposals and delegation.

ACTION: The Executive Directors of Finance and Knowledge, Strategy & Planning to work with the Charging Sub Group to finalise the proposals

Delivering Biodiversity through Natural Resource Management NRW B B 43.15

22. The Executive Director of Knowledge Strategy and Planning welcomed Hazel Drewett to the meeting and presented the paper to the Board, asking the Board to note our biodiversity delivery role and how this will be taken forward within the context of sustainable management of natural resources.

23. The Board discussed the paper and provided the following feedback:

- The Board supported the continued 'Team Wales' approach to improving outcomes for biodiversity.
- Through the implementation of the Environment Bill, NRW needs to demonstrate links to delivery of improved outcomes for biodiversity
- It was noted the Nature Recovery Plan consultation with Welsh Government will be finalised by the autumn, which will identify priorities and outline roles and responsibilities.
- Further work is required to ensure nature conservation is reflected in our Comms messages, ensuring external communication is clear with a consistent syntax and message.
- The need to reflect our role in protecting and improving marine biodiversity was highlighted
- The use of the State of Natural Resources Report to provide the evidence base to inform priorities was advised
- It was felt that meeting the 2020 biodiversity targets across Europe, the UK and within Wales was unlikely and that concerted action is required
- The importance of engaging with key partners and stakeholders is vital to enable delivery. The recent response to Wales Biodiversity Week was commended.

24. The Board agreed that improving biodiversity outcomes is key to our aspirations for natural resource management, but that the wider influences impacting biodiversity adversely need to be taken into account by the Welsh Government when setting targets.

Water Framework Directive and the River Basin Management Plans – Next steps NRW B B 44.15

25. The Executive Director of Knowledge Strategy and Planning welcomed Rhian Thomas to the meeting and presented the paper to the Board summarising the consultation responses to the draft Water Framework Directive River Basin Management Plans and the next steps proposed for the development of the final plans.

26. The Board discussed the paper and provided the following feedback:

- The implementation of the Water Strategy will help support NRW's delivery of other outcomes, including those for biodiversity
- Further work is required with Welsh Government to explore wider funding options.
- It was noted a task and finish group has been established to consider and communicate the ongoing implementation requirements
- The Board agreed the success and positive reaction to the catchment workshops should inform the future engagement with key stakeholders and groups.
- The Board agreed the targets were ambitious but realistic and appropriate
- Reassurance was sought that costs to implement 'on the ground' would be outlined in due course.

27. The Board endorsed the paper and accepted the difficult challenges ahead and commended the role for General Binding Rules as a significant tool to support delivery.

Welsh Language Scheme Annual Report to Welsh Language Commissioner 2014-15 **NRW B B 45.15**

28. The Chief Executive presented the Welsh Language Scheme Annual Report prepared for the Welsh Language Commissioner, which sets out the progress by NRW during the last year.

29. Some of the highlights include expanded training provision, development of a Welsh Language handbook and the planned introduction of software to ensure bilingual working by March 2016.

30. The Board welcomed the report and commented favourably on the enthusiasm and efforts of staff to learn Welsh within the organisation.

European Beaver in Wales NRW B B 41.15

31. The Executive Director for Operations, North and Mid Wales presented the draft position statement for NRW in respect of European beaver reintroduction to Wales.

32. The Board agreed the statement subject to some amendments which were welcomed by the Executive Director for Operations, North and Mid Wales.

Management Options to Address the Decline in Stocks of Salmon and Sea Trout in Wales NRW B B 40.15

33. The Executive Director of Knowledge Strategy and Planning welcomed Peter Gough to the meeting who presented the Board with information on the status of stocks and proposed next steps, including planned engagement with stakeholders.
34. The Chairman opened the discussion by making it clear that NRW and all stakeholders share the same concerns about current stocking levels and are committed to finding solutions to achieve flourishing fisheries across Wales.
35. The Board discussed the issue and provided the following feedback:
- Full agreement that the situation is serious and the socio-economic impacts could be significant, therefore a serious response is required
 - In relation to catch and release, it was clarified that this also includes the use of nets.
 - The relevance and links to the earlier papers on the Water Strategy, the Water Framework Directive and delivery of Biodiversity outcomes through Natural Resources Management were agreed, as was the development of integrated working within NRW
 - The commitment to gain a better understanding was agreed, including through further engagement with bodies such as STA, IFM and CIWEM.
 - It was noted that water management plans for operations have already been produced for NRW managed woodlands and also by the wider forest industry
 - The Board discussed how General Binding Rules could support delivery of the objectives and further work on this approach was commended
 - The Board agreed that the options outlined in the paper should be discussed with stakeholders within their catchment groups before any final decisions by the Board are taken

ACTION: Secretariat to note a future update on the Board Forward Look

36. The Board extended thanks to Peter Gough for the helpful and clear presentation which reiterated NRW's commitment to take action to achieve our aspirations for a long-term solution. The proposals in principle were fully supported and the Board emphasised the importance of the planned consultation with catchment groups.

Update from the Chairman (verbal)

37. The Chairman provided an update of meetings attended and reported on activities under the pillars of Natural Resource Management :

Environment

- Water conference
- JNCC

Economy

- NFU
- Green Economy

Knowledge

- Citizen science
- CIEEM awards luncheon attended on behalf of the Chair by Lynda Warren. NRW won the 'best practice' award for 'small scale conservation' for the Fairbourne Brickpits Wetland Habitat creation.

Update from Chief Executive (verbal)

38. The Chief Executive provided a verbal update to the Board which included:

- Positive feedback from a number of meetings with health boards to discuss the health prospectus
- Attendance at the official opening of the Gwynt y Mor windfarm
- A number of meetings with senior representatives from Welsh Universities to explore common interests and collaborative opportunities
- Attendance at the 25 Year celebration of Plantlife

39. The Chief Executive provided an update on actions to address the recent Staff survey results. An Action Plan has been developed and recently shared with all staff. Key actions have been identified to address the main challenges and the Executive Team has sought to engage with staff to understand the concerns apparent in the survey. One of the main messages in the Action Plan is to continue this listening and engagement.

Reports from Committees

Remuneration Committee

40. The Committee met on 11 June with the minutes circulated to the Board for information and ratification. Topics discussed included the Individual Voluntary Exit Scheme, Job evaluation and transformation work.

ARAC Committee

- 41. The Committee met on 11 June with the minutes from the meeting circulated to the Board for information and ratification. The ARAC Annual report was also circulated.
- 42. ARAC will meet again on the 17 July to consider the Annual Report and Accounts for 2014/15.

FRMW Committee

- 43. Madeleine Havard has now been appointed interim Chair for the FRMW Committee until the new Committee is established under the Environment Bill.
- 44. The next meeting is on the 16 July.

Protected Sites Committee

- 45. The Committee noted no formal meetings, but the Committee continues to advise on a number of protected area issues.

Updates from Board Groups (written)

- 46. The Board Group reports were provided for information.

Forward Look

- 47. The Chairman noted that the Minister has asked him to remain in post beyond his scheduled finishing date as he has decided to re-advertise the Chairman post.
- 48. The Chairman noted a review of the next Board Meeting date is now required.

Action: Secretariat to arrange new date for September meeting

Any Other Business

- 49. It was noted the BDRO report is to be published on the Welsh Government website – details of which will be circulated. Thanks were extended for this report which is a huge milestone for NRW.

50. The Chairman closed the meeting