

# Confirmed Minutes

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

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**Date of Meeting:** 10 February 2015

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

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**Executive Team in attendance:** Clive Thomas, Director for Governance  
Niall Reynolds, Director for Transition  
Catherine Smith, Executive Director for Communications  
Trefor Owen, Executive Director for National Service  
Kevin Ingram, Executive Director for Finance  
Ashleigh Dunn, Executive Director for ODPM  
Graham Hillier, Executive Director Operations South  
Rhian Jardine, Head of Sustainable Communities  
Martin Britton, Chief Information Officer  
Tim Jones, Executive Director Operations North and Mid Wales

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**Secretariat:** Kelly Goswell

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## Welcome

1. The Chairman welcomed all to the meeting.

## Apologies

2. Apologies were received from Hywel Davies, Ceri Davies, (Executive Director Knowledge, Strategy and Planning) deputised by Rhian Jardine and Emyr Roberts (Chief Executive)

3. The Chairman formally welcomed Martin Britton to the Board Meeting following his recent appointment as Chief Information Officer and as a full member of the Executive Team.

### **Declarations of Interest**

4. Madeleine Havard noted her appointment to the Open Air Laboratories (OPAL) and Citizen Science Cymru Steering Group .

### **Ratification of Minutes**

5. The minutes from the Board meeting on 4 December were agreed as a true record of the meeting and approved by the Board.

### **Matters Arising**

6. It was noted that the Outdoor Recreation and Access Strategy has been amended following the Board's scrutiny and has been renamed an Enabling Plan.
7. The Chairman confirmed that the final version of the Outdoor Recreation and Access Enabling Plan will be published on the NRW website.
8. The Board discussed whether new planting, replanting and felling figures for forestry in Wales are fully correlated. It was agreed that a fuller briefing would be provided to the Board.

***Action: Executive Director for National Services to provide a briefing note to the Board on new planting, replanting and felling figures for forestry in Wales.***

***Action: Executive Director for Communications to ensure publication of the Outdoor Recreation and Access Enabling Plan on the website.***

### **Review of Action log**

9. The Action log was reviewed with the following feedback:

*Action 1 - Policy to be presented to ARAC at the December meeting for consideration. Secretariat to note Forward Look for ARAC. Discharged.*

Action 2 - Secretariat to note forward look, presentation to be made at the December Board meeting – Progressing the organisation from transition to transformation. Discharged.

Action 3 – NRW to provide a briefing note to the Board on the Woodland Strategy Advisory Panel update. Carried over.

Action 4 – Circulate list of successful/unsuccessful Partnership Funding applications to Board members. Discharged. Noted – in future a list to be circulated to Board Members as soon as available to help Board members to support on communications.

Action 5 – Executive Director for Knowledge, Strategy & Planning to circulate the list of non-native species that pose the highest risk to Board Members. Discharged, Noted - item to be noted on the Protected Areas Committee agenda.

Action 6 – Secretariat to include the Dee Conservancy Annual Report on the Board Forward Look. Discharged.

Action 7 – Secretariat to note on Health and Safety on Board Forward look. Discharged.

Action 8 – Secretariat to circulate the presentation to Board members. Discharged

Action 9 – Secretariat to circulate minutes from the Land Management Forum. Discharged

Action 10 – Secretariat to confirm arrangements and availability for site visit. Discharged.

#### Finance Update - 2014/15 NRW B B 4.15

10. The Executive Director for Finance introduced the paper to the Board and explained that at the start of the year we planned for a budget of £191.4m with no surplus or deficit. At the three quarter mark our income for the full year is expected to be £203.3m, primarily due to £5m of additional income from Welsh Government for Invest to save initiatives and Natural Resource Management trials plus additional commercial income. Our annual expenditure demand has increased to £202.7m primarily to deliver this Welsh Government funded work, but has reduced to £202.2m by increased efforts on internal costs. This is a demonstration of our aspiration to deliver better outcomes with the resources available.

11. The Board noted the paper and welcomed the summary explanation. In addition, the following feedback was noted :

- The presentation of information in the annex, based on the new integrated finance system, was welcomed
- The work by the finance team and the wider leadership team to deliver sound financial management, in parallel with the implementation of the new integrated finance system, was complimented
- Assurances were given that when the next tranche of functionality, including payroll, goes 'live' in March, that sufficient testing has been undertaken to ensure this crucial function is delivered accurately

12. The Board approved the paper.

#### **Corporate Dashboard 2014/15 – 2nd Performance Review (NRW B B 5.15)**

13. The Director for Governance welcomed John Hogg to the meeting who provided the Board with a presentation on the Performance Report including the review of performance from April - November against the Corporate Dashboard 2014/15.

14. Each Executive Director provided an update for the “good for” Board which they chair on behalf of the Executive Team, explaining any amber/red indicators in further detail.

15. The Board noted the paper and presentation and provided the following feedback:

- Providing detail of the milestones under the Biodiversity target would help to further clarify progress
- The nature of target under the Marine section is problematic and will need revising as part of ongoing work with the Welsh Government.
- A query was raised regarding the transfer of data with Welsh Government in respect of agricultural programmes/Farming Connect data, and clarity sought whether it was noted as a green indicator based on the receipt of the data or the completion of the task

#### ***Action: John Hogg to clarify data enquiry.***

- Future targets in relation to the delivery of Natural Resource Management were agreed as important
- Assurances were sought around Flood Risk management and high risk assets that progress is being made to achieve the target of 99%. A review of asset categorisation is currently underway to ensure the prioritisation of high risk assets and this target will become more refined as a result
- The Board welcomed the positive actions and improving performance in respect of planning responses, but accepted that this target will not be achieved for the full year due to the cumulative impact of poorer performance in the first half of the year
- Income from fishing licences was raised and the Enterprise group will discuss at a future meeting.

- The Executive Director for Communications provided the Board with an update on Customer Care developments in her role as the Senior Responsible Officer for the Transformation programme on customer service that is currently being initiated. Paul Williams as relevant Board Champion will act in a non-executive capacity within this programme to input advice and provide assurance to the Board.
  - Measures to report our performance on customer care, possibly based on customer feedback, was identified as a specific requirement for the 2015/16 Dashboard
  - It was noted that Natural Resources Wales should advertise property disposals on the website in future.
  - A 'booklet' format of the performance report would be helpful
16. The Chairman noted that a number of the points raised were relevant to the next agenda item, in respect of developing a Dashboard based on the 2015/16 Business Plan and the Board agreed that these should be considered by the team and the Board Sub-group.

***Action: John Hogg to include any relevant comments in development of the Corporate Dashboard 2015/16***

17. The Board approved the paper and members agreed that the format of the report had facilitated their scrutiny of the performance of the organisation

#### **Business Plan and Budget 2015/16 (NRW B B 6.15)**

18. The Director of Governance introduced the paper to the Board and thanked the Board Group (Nigel Reader, Madeleine Havard and Ruth Hall) that had advised the team on the draft of the Business Plan ahead of the meeting.
19. The Board was satisfied with the inputs to the development of the Plan over the last 4 months. It was agreed that any points of detail should be sent to the Director of Governance within 10 working days.

***Action: Feedback to be sent to the Director of Governance.***

20. The Board approved the 2015/16 Business Plan and Budget subject to final consideration of any additional points of detail by the Board Sub-group. After this consideration, the Board agreed the Plan and Budget should be sent to the Minister for Natural Resources.

#### **Internal Drainage Districts – Rates and Levies 2015/16 (NRW B B 7.15)**

21. The Executive Director for Finance presented the paper to the Board detailing the proposed Precepts, Drainage Rates and Special Levies for 2015/16.
22. It was noted the Flood Risk Management Wales Committee had previously reviewed and agreed the proposals.
23. The Board approved all the proposals in the paper.

#### **Education and Skills Strategy (NRW B B 8.15)**

24. The Head of Sustainable Communities welcomed Gill Bilsborough to the Board meeting, who then presented the Education and Skills Enabling Plan.
25. The Board endorsed the paper and provided the following feedback:
  - The clear format and the innovative approach to this area of service were commended and supported. The emphasis on embedding the education of natural resource management was especially welcomed, however it was felt the Plan would benefit from a glossary of relevant definitions
  - It was suggested that full alignment with the Report from Professor Donaldson due to be published end of February 2015, should be checked
  - The link between education and poverty, including disadvantaged areas, was discussed.
  - It was noted that in order to deliver, and ensure that Natural Resources Wales is an exemplar organisation, staff also need to be appropriately skilled and educated.
  - The Executive Director for Operations North, as chair of the 'Good for People' theme Board, commended the Plan and looked forward to its delivery
26. The Board approved the Education and Skills Enabling Plan, the associated Action Plan and indicative Results Based Accounting (RBA) Plan.

#### **Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) Programme (NRW B B 9.15)**

27. The Head of Sustainable Communities welcomed Hazel Drewett to the meeting who presented the paper to the Board.
28. The Board noted the paper and provided the following feedback:

- The use of the same capability to provide the input to Glastir plans/consents and to undertake preparatory work for SSSI notification was discussed. The benefits from the Glastir work were recognised and assurances were given that any potential impact on the SSSI programme is actively managed on a risk basis. This pragmatic approach, with a programme of priorities used to manage workload, was welcomed
- It was also noted that overall SSSI management can benefit directly from the Glastir programme
- The Annual Programme of SSSI Notification will be discussed as an agenda item at the next Protected Areas Committee meeting.

29. The Board noted the paper and the action being taken to manage resources effectively.

#### [Alternative Mitigation Programme for Rivers Previously Stocked with Salmon \( NRW B B 10.15\)](#)

30. Hazel Drewett introduced the paper to the Board.

31. The Board noted the paper and provided the following feedback.

- The Board agreed with the establishment of catchment groups for each of the seven rivers in question, and requested sight of the action plans in due course. It was suggested that the focus should extend beyond the seven catchments, if supported by evidence of potential benefit.
- An update of the current conservation status of migratory fish species, including stock levels, was requested

***Action: Executive Director for Knowledge, Strategy & Planning to circulate the action plans, and update on the conservation status of migratory fish, to the Board for information.***

- The role of other scientific institutions, and Governments outside Welsh jurisdiction, and the importance of ongoing engagement with all stakeholders to ensure progress, were both again highlighted by the Board.

32. The Board noted the paper.

#### [Update from the Chairman \(verbal\)](#)

33. The Chairman gave an update of meetings attended and reported on activities under the four pillars of Natural Resource Management including meetings with/and attendance at:

## **Environment**

NRM trial site visit  
Working with British Water on 'Sewage Safe '

### **Economy**

CBI function  
Presentation to YFC conference  
Bryn Composting site visit

### **Community**

Meeting with the Women's Institute

### **Knowledge**

Lecture at Anglia Ruskin University  
Meeting with CIWEM  
JNCC Review

### **Update from the Chief Executive (verbal)**

### **Wellbeing, Health and Safety update (Paper)**

34. In the Chief Executive's absence, the Executive Director for Organisational Development & People Management presented the paper on Wellbeing, Health and Safety.

35. It was suggested that the Wellbeing Health and Safety update would be more appropriate earlier in the Board agenda.

***Action: Director of Governance to consider further.***

### **Transformation Road map**

36. The Executive Director for Communications provided the Board with an update on the recent launch of the Natural Resources Wales Roadmap including staff engagement sessions. Personal Z cards, with the Roadmap and NRW Values & Behaviours, have been provided to every member of staff.

37. A more detailed presentation will be made on 12 March 2015 during the Board Development Session.

### **Partnership funding**

38. The Head of Sustainable Communities provided the Board with a brief update on Partnership Funding:

- Offer letters have been distributed
- Lead contacts have been in touch with all applicants
- A sub group meeting has been arranged for 6 March 2015
- The communication overall has been very positive, with some minor issues around the accuracy of 'second hand' information and the pace of information sharing.

### Report from Committees

#### **Remuneration Committee**

39. The confirmed minutes from the last Remuneration Committee were formally accepted by the Board.

40. The next meeting is scheduled for 20 March 2015.

#### **ARAC Committee**

41. The confirmed minutes from the last Audit and Risk Assurance Committee's (ARAC) were formally accepted by the Board

42. The next meeting is scheduled for 20 March which includes an agenda item on 'ICT Security', which the Chief Information Officer will deliver

43. The ARAC Chair confirmed the Wales Audit Office have begun their interim audit on NRW accounts.

#### **FRMW Committee**

44. The Committee met on 16 January including a session with the Finance Sub-group.

45. The Finance Sub-group discussed and approved:

- NRW Capital Programme variances
- The Forward look
- Proposed Precepts, Drainage Rates and Special Levies for 2015/16

46. FRMW meeting included updates and discussion on:

- FRMW Committee Review

- FRM – future directions and governance in Wales
- Natural Resources Wales’ Flood Risk role in the Planning System
- Funding Gap and Finance Sub-group Meetings.

47. The NRW Review of FRMW effectiveness has now been completed and the recommendations submitted to the Executive Director for National Services as the accountable Executive Director.

48. The Welsh Government are now undertaking a broader review of FRM governance in Wales. The NRW review of FRMW will be provided to the Welsh Government colleagues who are leading on this review.

49. The Board was reminded that the Coastal Review Delivery Plan was accepted by Welsh Government in December 2014, and Natural Resources Wales were awarded an additional £150K to co-ordinate the delivery of the Plan. Thanks were extended to Adrian Philpott and Louise Pennington for their work on this report and plan.

50. It was also noted that Welsh Government have announced £150K of new innovative funding for local authorities to address coastal FRM issues. The funding will be for three years, beginning in 2018/19, with Natural Resources Wales playing a supporting role to relevant local authorities.

### **Protected Sites Committee**

51. Two meetings have been held on 17 November 2014 and 2 December 2015 and minutes were included with the Board papers for information.

### **Updates from Board Groups (written)**

52. The Board noted the papers presented from the Board Groups.

### **Forward Look**

53. The Board agreed the Board Development Day on 12 March 2015 would be focused on further discussion on Natural Resource Management with a strategic update on the Roadmap and Transformation Programme.

### **Any Other Business**

54. No other business was noted.