



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

CYFARFOD, DOGFENNU

Cyfarfod y Pwyllgor Llifogydd ac Erydu Arfordirol: 6 Medi 2023: nodiadau

Nodiadau ar gyfer Cyfarfod y Pwyllgor Llifogydd ac Erydu
Arfordirol Rhif 13, 6 Medi 2023, Rhithwir, Microsoft Teams.

Cyhoeddwyd gyntaf: 10 Hydref 2023

Diweddarwyd ddiwethaf: 10 Hydref 2023

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Cynnwys

Attendance

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7. Every Time it Rains : British Red Cross research on flooding in the UK – Naomi White, Policy and Public Affairs Officer Wales

8. Managing Flood Impacts in Wales 2050: Review by the National Infrastructure Commission for Wales – To receive an update from Commissioners Eluned Parrott and Dr Eurgain Powell

9. Welsh Government Update – Dr Leanne Llewellyn, Head of Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management

10. Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS): Schedule 3 Post Implementation Review - Ian Titherington, Senior Policy Advisor Sustainable Drainage, Welsh Government.

11. National Climate Resilience Strategy - Michelle Delafield and Lindsey Bromwell, Climate Change Division, Welsh Government

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12. Sub-Committees

13. Reports

14. Any other business previously notified to the Chair

15. Date and venue of next meeting – Thursday 30th November, Bridgend County Borough Council building

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Attendance

Committee Present:

Martin Buckle (MB) Chair
Andrew Stone (AS) Rhondda Cynon Taf (RCT) CBC
Paul Williams (PW) NFU Cymru
Darren Thomas (DT) Pembrokeshire County Council
Paul Blackman (PB) Wallingford Hydro Solutions
Anne-Marie Moon (AMM) JBA Consulting
Jeremy Parr (JP) Natural Resources Wales (NRW)
Mike Wellington (MW) Waterco
Natalie Haines (NH) Mott MacDonald
Geraint Edwards (GE) Conwy County Borough Council
Karen Potter (KP) Open University
Catherine Wilson (CW) Cardiff University
Dominic Scott (DS) Dwr Cymru – Welsh Water
Robin Campbell (RC) Arup

Welsh Government (WG)

Tracy Goode (TG)
Rasheed Khan (RK)
Michelle Delafield (MD)
Lindsay Bromwell (LB)
Keith Ivens (KI)
Leanne Llewellyn (LL)
Ian Titherington (IT)

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Other Attendees

Eluned Parrott (EP) National Infrastructure Commission for Wales (NICW)

Eurgain Powell (EUP) NICW

Rachel Sion (RS) NRW

Ross Akers (RA) NRW

Naomi White (NW) British Red Cross

Apologies

Jean-Francois Dulong (JFD) Welsh Local Government Association

1/2. Apologies and introductions

The Chair gave the apologies and introductions were made.

MB introduced RC and noted it was his first meeting with the Committee.

3. Declaration of Interests

AMM noted that JBA are undertaking work for the NICW, including one area of work on planning and one on catchments.

RC noted two items; he was part of team supporting WG in terms of reviewing Schedule 3 and supported one of the work streams for NICW.

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4. Minutes of the meeting 03.02.23 and Matters Arising

MB noted the minutes had been circulated and invited members to raise any points.

The minutes were agreed.

Update on actions:

MB referred to Page 6 – a letter to be sent NRW about the Communities at Risk Register. Noted that discussions have been progressing with a view for the letter to be sent, but it has not yet been completed and regarded the action as outstanding.

MB noted Item 11.3 – NICW - feedback on the project advisory group membership has been actioned.

MB noted action under 11.4 – referring to the work programme has been actioned and will be picked up on the agenda.

5. Chair's Announcements

The Chair made the following announcements:

“ I would like to update the Committee on the meetings and events that I have attended since our last meeting. In June, I met with representatives of the National Infrastructure Commission for Wales, focusing on collaborative arrangements. We also discussed the scoping of the

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forthcoming workstreams within the Commission's review "Managing Flood Impacts in Wales 2050.

“ Also in June, I attended the quarterly meeting with the Chairs of the English RFCCs. The meeting had a particular focus on coastal adaptation, natural flood management, net zero carbon in FCERM programmes and Sustainable Urban Drainage. A further meeting takes place in September.

“ June also saw a meeting of the Wales Flood and Coastal Risk Programme Board. The meeting reviewed the out-turn of the 2022/23 flood risk capital programme. It was pleasing to see that 98.8% of the funding available was utilised, and that similar levels of funding are reflected in the approved 2023/24 programme. Turning to the Coastal Risk Management Programme, of the 15 approved schemes, 10 were now complete or in construction, with the remaining 5 at advanced stages of preparation. We were also updated on progress with the Scoring Methodology Review for the Communities at Risk Register. The next meeting of the Programme Board is scheduled to take place by early November.

“ Towards the end of June, I met with the Minister for Climate Change, to present to her our Annual Report. I updated her on our collaboration with the National Infrastructure Commission for Wales, and on our response to the most recent TAN15 consultation. We also discussed our Report on Legislative Change, as well as the Minister's response to our Resources Report.

“ In addition, we discussed the appointment of Members to our Committee for the new three-year term. We discussed the strengths of the new Committee, as well as some issues arising from the recruitment process. While the outcome in terms of appointments was successful, the total number of applicants was modest, and the pool of applicants in terms of

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diversity was narrow. We will, therefore, be undertaking a lessons learned exercise to inform recruitment processes in the future.

“ I took the opportunity during the meeting with the Minister to extend to her an invitation to join us at one of our Committee meetings. She responded positively to this, and I am hopeful that she will join us at our next meeting.

“ In July, I attended a Flooding Resilience and Adaptation Symposium organised by the Welsh Local Government Association. Most Risk Management Authorities in Wales were also represented at the event, including many local authority cabinet members. The event included a presentation on the proposed National Climate Resilience Strategy, and following further discussions, this features on our agenda today.

“ Also in July, I was involved in a webinar organised by the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) in Wales, which focused on the interface between Shoreline Management Plans and Local Development Plans. Following this, I was interviewed by a journalist from the RTPI’s journal The Planner, and I believe that an article arising from the webinar will appear shortly in the journal.

“ Looking ahead, in October I have a meeting scheduled with the Chair of NRW’s Flood Risk Management Committee.” ”

6. Items from the Regional Groups

North Wales

DT noted that the regional meeting was a little out of sync, so the next meeting of the Flood Group is scheduled for 12 September and the Coastal Group on 14 September. There is little to update on Flood Risk Management as the next

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meeting has yet to take place, but the group is involved in Section 18 and supporting NRW in data collections and case studies, but currently no update on flood risk.

The Coastal Group met on 13 June and priorities were identified such as reporting on the SMP actions and implementation. Hannah Richards has been employed as a Coastal Officer from 7 August. Concerns were raised by group members over the coverage of pan-Wales Lidar, with no data collected to date.

The group has also been working with the Wales Coastal Groups Forum to report on the delivery of SMP actions, of which 57 actions were considered business as usual. The total number of SMP actions were reduced to 371.

GE noted that North Wales met in late July and mentioned the highly successful training event and feedback in Colwyn Bay. One item of concern that was discussed was the local strategies and ability to deliver by the end of financial year. Some LAs are ahead, others on target and some behind. Collaboration was discussed, with suggestion to set up a local sub-committee to support work on the local strategies. The aim to bring people together to share best practice.

DS also noted that there was a lot of focus on resourcing in LAs. DS also highlighted that the SUDs grant does not link in with WG funding at the moment, so those looking at doing the SUDs training scheme would be looking at it from a flood perspective and likely turn to WG for funding and not to the NRW SUDs grant. Also noted the good news from LAs around recruiting and that it was good to see new people coming into the sector. DS noted that the next meeting would be 19 October.

JP commented on feedback on the summer school and that it was good collaborative effort from the WLGA, NRW, LAs and DCWW. The event picked up a lot of NRW new starters and the idea would be to replicate that in South Wales, and a lot of thought is going into how this is sustained going into the future.

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IT requested an invite to the 19 October regional meeting to develop relationships and to build networks.

South East Wales

AS highlighted that he had not been involved in the group meeting but made himself available for any issues arising. He further provided a summary of further work undertaken by the group:

- The South East Wales subgroup on SUDs has been working actively on the SUDs review. Noted potential issues with dealing with private developers.
- Noted JFD has been working hard to get national consensus.
- Also identified pushback about laying new rail track and SUDs.
- SE Wales strategies are generally on track for March next year, some out for consultation.
- Local Flood Risk Management report is generally on track for March next year.
- Work commenced on a surface water policy tying into TAN 15 and linked it to local flood risk management strategy. There was S18 input from LAs. Noted LA's stretched resourcing was affecting output. Expressed positivity about the paid for resources available on the capital delivery side.
- Seeing an increase above inflation costs from consultants and contractors, putting pressure on pipeline budgets and business case developments and noting a squeeze on material costs too.
- Highlighted the potential for partner funding.

IT responded that the issue with Transport for Wales and new rail track should not be happening and offered to resolve the matter.

JP linked back SE group's pressures on staff and budgets into the resources subcommittee work, and NRW's similar position, and the need to work with WG colleagues around these issues highlighted in the sub-committee report.

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7. Every Time it Rains : British Red Cross research on flooding in the UK – Naomi White, Policy and Public Affairs Officer Wales

UK Flooding report | Research | British Red Cross

Naomi White from British Red Cross (BRC) presented research on flooding in UK, sharing insight on BRC's most recent report.

In Wales, the BRC emergency response team were deployed 157 times, supported 1,70 people, and disbursed nearly £196,640 in cash-based assistance to those affected. Furthermore, the organisation offers shelter and psycho-social support, and most recently, set up a new emergency response in RCT following Storm Dennis in 2020.

The “Every Time It Rains” report intended to learn from the perceptions of communities impacted by flooding in the UK and their subsequent perceptions about flooding. The report made use of resilience experts along with garnering public opinion. The main findings of the report were that there are low levels of public awareness of flood risk and of how to prepare for floods, even in high-risk areas.

BRC used the social flood risk index (SFRI) as a measure which considers probabilities, vulnerability, and exposure (number of people affected). The SFRI was developed as a way of better understanding the relationship between SFRI and flood risk management and policies / funding. There was found to be a high flood risk in South Wales due to inland river flooding, whereas North Wales was more affected by coastal flooding. Furthermore, the research found that most people in Wales do not understand their flood risk, with 53% believing that their family would not be prepared, whilst 60% thought their community would not be prepared. Furthermore, 23% (19%, UK) of respondents said they knew how to

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access flood information; this figure was even lower, at 15%, in high SFRI areas.

NW highlighted that resilience could be built by improving awareness, community networks and preparedness, such as the use of flood risk maps, educational initiatives and improved links with the Fire and Rescue Services.

Questions / discussion:

AS thanked NW and endorsed the BRC report. He noted that insurance uptake was low in flood-hit households and RCT had recently appointed a Flood Risk Awareness & Support Officer who would like to work with BRC going forward.

DS picked up on LAs communicating risk and asked if BRC have a role in LAs contacting the public to help communicate the message from a more trusted organisation. NW agrees there is a role in that space but unsure as to what that role might look like to facilitate communication between LAs and the public. Notes BRC's work with NRW and community and flood volunteer groups.

JP said that NRW are keen on working with BRC. Pointed out the need to be practical and think carefully because getting change in these areas is difficult. Talks about resilience being a large element of self-help and realism about challenges. Very resource intensive work around building flooding resilience. Protection and communication were key.

NH asked for clarity about the data such as type of flooding used in the maps and notes the need to be mindful of coastal risk. RC expanded on NH's comments about a web resource that allows you to interrogate the mapping.

KP said that the need for RMAs to work closer with the voluntary sector to help capacity building was clear from the report. The concept of partnership working needs to embrace this sector.

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8. Managing Flood Impacts in Wales 2050: Review by the National Infrastructure Commission for Wales – To receive an update from Commissioners Eluned Parrott and Dr Eurgain Powell

EP thanked the Committee for feeding into their work and presented a brief recap; NICW are an independent and non-statutory advisory body for Welsh Ministers. NICW's role is to analyse, advise and make recommendations on Wales' longer-term strategic, economic, and environmental infrastructure needs and their remit is to look over a 5-to-80-year period. There is a new chair of NICW, Dr David Clubb, and eight commissioners in total. NICW have been tasked to look at assessing how the likelihood of flooding of homes, businesses and infrastructure can be minimised by 2050. Arup were commissioned to carry out a scoping exercise. Noted a lot of activity happening in this space so work needed to better understand it and where value could be best added.

NICW established a project advisory group to provide feedback and constructive criticism. Arup provided a report in March and identified 4 workstreams for further research and NICW have commissioned contracts for each of these workstreams:

1. Work around visioning – there is no long-term vision in place for Wales in 2050 in terms of flooding and sea level rise. NICW will work with stakeholders to develop this vision.
2. Focussed on catchment scale planning - looking at what is happening across Wales as approach is quite patchy and so will make recommendations on good practice and scale up in different areas across Wales. JBA consulting will assist.
3. Focussed on resources - stakeholders shared pressures on resources

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regarding funding, workforce planning and also appropriate skills in sector. Will review current arrangements in flood management and adaptation.

Miller Research have been commissioned to help with this work stream.

4. Links with land use planning - quantify issue of planning concerns on flood plains to understand picture and look at attitudes of local planners and policies and estimate costs; JBA also involved.

The timeline for these is that they are in the process of starting and the Committee will be engaged in the work. Aim is to ensure all projects are working together with projects finalised by the end of March, with view to allowing a good few months to process findings and recommendations. NICW Report expecting to be published in autumn 2024.

Questions / discussion:

DT voiced his interest in the presentation. Provided feedback that economic regeneration is a challenge. There is pressure on major developments and regeneration sites to override flood risk for the “greater good” of community in the case of wealth and housing creation. Also mentioned context around TAN 15 discussions. The Resources Sub-committee have discussed whether flood risk management should have a higher priority in the regional joint committees as currently it is not prioritised. EP responded that they are aware of those challenges and those issues are already under consideration.

NH asked about the Project Advisory Group (PAG) and whether they are a single group across all 4 work themes? She would like faster engagement on work commencing as notes a struggle to look at work in detail within short time periods. EUP noted that awareness of issues around stakeholder engagement and notes that a timetable should be shared to help with collaboration and greater transparency around information sharing and will provide a preliminary timetable.

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DS commented that organisational challenges exist due to the Cooperation Agreement around flooding. The multi-agency approach, different funding sources, different regulations and different priorities could cause disharmony. Suggested a need for a central vision around collaborative working and an integrated vision.

JP highlighted that there are challenges around timeframes and thinks there needs to be a clarity of workstreams and their aims. Consultants on different work streams should work together despite being from different organisations. Also mentioned the need for sustainability and long-term maintenance for what is being set out to be achieved.

MB noted in terms of engaging with communities, there is a Resources Sub-Committee which has already submitted a report to the Minister to be discussed later in the agenda. There is a strong case for an interface between consultants and the Sub-Committee regarding work streams. Looking more broadly, MB welcomed the catchment scale approaches and expressed interest in how the Commission plans to deal with cross-border issues and cross-border consultation. Sees potential for the Commission's involvement in flood risk management and its links to other infrastructure providers to offer advice and recommendations. Would like a longer window for FCEC to consider the draft reports across all workstreams and for a longer opportunity for discussion in responding and before recommendations are finalised. EUP welcomes opportunity for strategic conversations.

DT commented that often a disjoin between policy and applications exists. Thinks a collaborative approach for a common message to be adopted to streamline processes.

JP noted some aspects raised before via the PAG - there is value in thinking about 'what are the blockers' that hinder us from doing what we know is needed and know we want to do - we don't need to be told what to do, it is more a case of how to achieve it. Pilot projects have a role to play here, and the fact this is

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long-term work, and does not end with the report.

9. Welsh Government Update – Dr Leanne Llewellyn, Head of Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management

LL provided an overview of the main challenges faced over the summer. She noted that budgetary challenges were the bulk of her focus. WG are carrying a £900m pressure and as a result all Ministers have been tasked to review their portfolios with a view of parking or stopping work that is not critical. WG have lost £1 million from their capital budget this year, but to date the revenue budget has remained.

There have been CRMP impacts, and the team strongly defended the position to enable the remaining schemes to go ahead. WG have ring fenced revenue for CRMP budgets but written out to LAs for forecasts with regards to ongoing schemes and stressed the importance of this. LL added that 34 schemes have had no input or claims or spend despite a contractual agreement. She stressed that this information is essential. She speculated that there may be some apprehension from LAs about receiving cuts and noted that it would be looked upon more favourably if money is returned for repurposing.

LL further detailed challenges facing WG's Flood Branch. They are carrying 4 vacancies and that will be compounded when KI leaves at the end of September. There are vacancies for Financial Governance Officer and Technical Appraisals Officer. There are additional vacancies in Flood policy. LL notes that she had spoken with Flood Officers from Bridgend County Borough Council who presented the view that skills and capacity issues are a huge barrier to delivery. Also noted a challenge in getting the right applicants for the advertised roles.

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LL noted regarding next year's budget, she had not heard anything yet and was not anticipating a draft budget until late December. Moving on to TAN15, the team were struggling for resourcing and not expecting updates before Christmas. Also, the Section 19 report has now been published along with a written statement and a 45-minute slot in plenary for debate. LL also mentioned TG's work with the Joint Research Programme. TG is part of a group for weather preparedness ahead of winter and business continuity planning across the branch.

LL also mentioned there was a lot of work going on regarding legislation, particularly with the Retained EU Law Bill. LL also praised the Porthcawl CRMP scheme as a huge success and a positive around flood work being done. RC added that the scheme had been shortlisted for a British Construction Industry award.

Questions / discussion:

DS would like to hand out tasks for regional groups to deliver on and questioned whether there is scope to draw on the National Strategy for an action plan, and whether the National Strategy needs to be refreshed. LL said that the National Strategy is a 10-year process and that it can be revisited if there is a need for it. DS added the need for actions to be in a digestible format and not so convoluted that they are difficult to track.

DT noted communication difficulties with his counterpart chief officers. Also noted resourcing difficulties. DT further asked LL about getting Business Case Approval for one of his authority's schemes. LL replied that they are being worked through chronologically but that resource pressures meant there is potential for delay.

RC asked whether there was anything the Committee could do in terms of facilitating awareness of timelines around TAN 15 and budgets. Also said uncertainty in terms of budgetary allocations would lead to inefficiency. MB

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responded that he was conscious of constraints around WG's Planning Team and notes these issues have been raised with the Minister. The Minister has invited the Committee to meet with the Planning Division for discussions. The resource flexibility available to WG colleagues is constrained. MB also noted the certain need to follow-up on LL's point about flood mitigation groups not always "blowing their own trumpet" in celebrating and sharing successes when they happen. Mentioned that WG does have a significant communications team, but they have not been deployed to support Flood team's work. LL notes that Flood Branch have a good relationship with communications officers, but some have been moved to work on the COVID enquiry.

10. Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS): Schedule 3 Post Implementation Review - Ian Titherington, Senior Policy Advisor Sustainable Drainage, Welsh Government.

Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) Schedule 3 Post Implementation Review

IT updated the Committee on the Schedule 3 Review and said that it was published before the summer break. The next step is for advice and recommendations to be given to the Minister. He stressed that it is not a WG report, but a report completed for WG, and had received a wide range of feedback from industry professionals and SABs. Furthermore, he had a meeting with JFD and the feedback was that he generally agreed on recommendations such as having a clearer system to improve SABs and SUDs. The intention is to make existing legislation work better. IT also plans to have a discussion with Planning colleagues in the Welsh Government to learn what works in planning as there are a lot of parallels with the SABs and SUDs systems.

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MB asked if IT was expecting a Ministerial statement that sets out the Minister's responses to all the recommendations. IT responded that there will be a statement in relation to the delivery and prioritisation some time in Autumn. MB said some elements of the recommendations have common ground with some of the proposals from the Resources Sub-Committee and there is potential value in taking them forward on a joint basis. IT agrees with "Team Wales" approach and all parties need to be involved. Also notes he has engaged in conversation with Defra and highlighted the need to work across borders and share experiences. MW thinks developers would benefit from process involvement in the same ways SABs are. IT said that there was a chronic shortage of knowledge in SABs and drainage. He stressed the need for accredited training to encourage growth of the workforce.

IT ended by thanking RC and his team for the support they provided on the report.

11. National Climate Resilience Strategy - Michelle Delafield and Lindsey Bromwell, Climate Change Division, Welsh Government

MD presented a strategic overview of approach being taken to the National Climate Resilience Strategy refresh.

In her presentation, MD remarked how Climate Conscious Wales sets out the Welsh Government's actions on climate adaptation. Climate related risk is increasing and there is a widening adaptation gap, as actions are not happening as they need to be. A first report from the Adaptation Committee is due to be published on 14 September 2023. LB added they were working on developing a new national target for climate change adaptation. There would be several climate resilience plans that sit under this strategy to align with the Climate

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Change Committee (CCC) Monitoring Framework and a lot of policy areas are interrelated. PW replied from an agricultural perspective and asked which category agriculture would fall into. LB said that there is significant consideration for agriculture, and it would have input into areas like land and seas, food security and water supply.

PW noted that there may not be opportunity to provide feedback into the WG's new agricultural framework and policy development going forward and the potential for disparities arising. LB responded that agriculture colleagues are being consulted and would lead on some of the systems and the frameworks were being developed in parallel to ensure things line up. LB continued that there was a need for a long-term vision and clear objectives, and clarity around what actions WG would take across several policy areas. She reiterated the need for a "Team Wales" approach and for consideration to be given regarding the roles and expectations of other partners and stakeholders. Additionally, she issued an open invitation to stakeholders to involve them at key points in the development of the strategy.

MD returned to the topic of agriculture that the risk to agricultural productivity is largely covered in 'working land and seas' which covers a wide scope, and that there was a need to understand what interdependent actions were necessary across policy areas as they are interrelated. PW replied that the new Land Management Scheme, covering factors such as environment and food production, would be a key driver in future policy and that recommendations need to be fed in as soon as possible. MD said that they are being careful in not duplicating policy developments happening elsewhere. The new sustainable farming scheme will be critical for realising agricultural actions and there is interlink with their own strategy. MD also discussed how other sectors could tie-in to support agriculture, such as when there is a risk from drought.

JP asked whether it would be beneficial to have a matrix on flood-related impacts, such as the cause of the impacts and their location. LB replied that there is indeed a need for people to understand flood impacts and it was

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important that the subject is very visible. MD said that CCC report structure will be used to align with the structure of the strategy, and that feedback from the Committee would be welcomed.

RC noted that the CCC report is UK-wide and whether England and Wales had a comparable resilience strategy approach or if there are perhaps some purposeful distinctions? MD replied that she thinks there is an advantage compared to colleagues in UK government because their statutory requirement for publication of their plans didn't align well with receiving advice from the CCC. As such, MD said they'd be taking a different approach to colleagues in England but also noted that she thought colleagues in UK government would take a similar approach in the future. MB noted MD's offer of consulting with the FCEC Committee and if they would like to share material in between attending further Committee meetings, to allow for feedback. He also noted that communication could happen by email to allow for more expedited discussions.

LB and MD both welcomed the idea of close communication.

MB requested that when available, could LB/MD highlight specific feedback they'd like from FCEC.

12. Sub-Committees

12.1 To consider appointments to Sub-Committees, together with a proposal to establish a Section 19 Reports Sub-Committee.

MB introduced the item 12. It was proposed that other colleagues from the Committee or from organisations represented on it may attend as appropriate, at the discretion of the sub-committee Chair.

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The report referred to links with key stakeholders and the interface with the regional groups as it has been important for the Committee from the outset and continues to be. He added that the Wales Coastal Groups Forum was also a key interface for a number of years. David Harris had previously represented the Committee on the Wales Coastal Groups Forum but had stood down at the end of the previous Committee term. He was pleased that AMM had stepped in to take over that role.

Appendix 1 – sets out proposed membership of the 4 sub-committees that will be operating.

Appendix 2 – proposed the terms of reference for a Section 19 Sub-Committee.

The Committee have been endeavouring to take this forward since the approval of the National Strategy, which allocates Measure21 for the Committee to address on Section 19 reports. The National Strategy had proposed for work to be completed this year, but MB noted that it would not be achievable, and that the Sub-Committee would consider what its work programme needs to encompass, and for the Sub-Committee to come back and advise the Committee in due course.

JP referred to Section 19 and that although it is LA work predominantly, NRW has interests in that area and would like to be involved. MB replied that ensuring different organisations were represented in the Sub-Committee meetings would allow for flexibility and allow for a wider scope of attendance when appropriate to do so.

The report was agreed.

12.2 Responses to Committee Reports – To consider the responses to the Committee’s Resources and Legislative Change Reports from Welsh Water and from Natural

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Resources Wales.

MB referred to responses from Welsh Water and Natural Resources Wales.

DS said that their approach was to take the report through a couple of internal committees and that subsequently lead to the chief executive. It highlighted a few themes and these were about the scale of pressure to deliver the Storm Overflow Improvements programme which would be required for a reduction in surface water. He also noted that DCWW do not own all drainage infrastructure and therefore do not have power to work on all of it. He added that it was a challenge to deliver to regulatory commitments given that at times they were relying on other asset owners. He highlighted how they were trying to put resources in that area to support partnership working. He added that the overarching message was that DCWW were keen to continue to support the recommendations of both reports.

IT reiterated DS's point that water companies are limited in their powers and would like to see increased communications between stakeholders to aid delivery – such as between LAs and DCWW. AS pointed out it takes a lot of officer time and a lot of partnership working to drive initiatives forward and said there is a need to look at joint funding arrangements early on in establishing partner projects. He said that when there is not a shared pot of funding, it is a real problem because while they have got resources, they are paid for resources for their projects. He added that they remain concerned with regards to land drainage and surface water from the historical network of sewers.

JP noted that we are going to see more and more of those types of impacts and all risk management authorities have a have a stake in that. He asked whether it is something that might need to be addressed in the future by the FCEC.

MB welcomed DCWW's consideration into the report and thinks there is a strong case for their letter to be referred to Sub-Committees to be considered in further detail.

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JP presented NRW's position. NRW has a board and various committees including the Flood Risk Management Committee. Peter Fox is the new Chair. NRW's flood works are in the context of nature, the climate emergency, and the pollution emergency. There is a need to be working on integrated solutions to address all of them. Integrated catchment planning is integral to looking at how water is managed both in low flow and high flow, and the land management opportunities within it. JP continued that the amount of work NRW have to undertake, such as running the flood warning system and maintaining their assets has led to resourcing pressures. NRW fully supports the work of these sub-committees and the recommendations made by them.

MB suggested to AS that a response from DCWW and where relevant from the WLGA and the minister features on the agenda for a forthcoming policy and legislation meeting.

12.3 Resources Sub-Committee – To receive the minutes of the meeting held on 18th August 2023, and to consider the following report - Resources Report: Responses – Implications for the Committee and Proposed Way Forward.

MB presented the Resources Sub-committee minutes. The minutes were noted.

MB moved onto the report. He said there was a great deal for the Committee to consider. MB noted that the Committee could only work within the resources available and there was a need to look at what measures could be taken to ensure progress was made. He noted there would be a need for further discussion with WG about the resources available to the Committee.

Proposal 1 was about preparing a capital funding action plan, and the response from the Minister is that whilst something like that would be welcomed, it is not

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necessarily seen as an immediate priority, although there are some aspects of it that are being taken forward.

Action 1.2 refers to securing investments in assets not in Risk Management Authority ownership – the proposal is that this is referred to the Policy & Legislation Sub-Committee for further consideration.

A number of proposals in the report refer to the spatial planning system and how it can contribute to resources and reduce burdens on flood risk management authorities. The Minister invited the Committee to engage with WG's planning team.

One area highlighted were concerns about skills and capacity in the flood risk management sector and the importance of being able to address those as a key priority including potentially the creation of a resource improvement programme and the suggestion in the report is that that might be something taken forward as part of the existing Programme Board. The Minister indicated that she is inviting her officials to review the terms of reference.

Proposal 12 involves a proposal to establish a working group with a wider range of stakeholders, including the professional institutions and representatives of higher education to develop a coordinated education and training action plan. The Minister has expressed support for this.

Proposal 14 focuses on flood risk management, governance, and collaboration. While the Minister has indicated support for the FCEC to play a leading role in taking this forward.

Proposals 17 and 18 refer to property resilience and insurance. Welsh Government's review of property flood resilience, which has yet to be made public, will be key in moving these proposals forward. The suggested advice is that this be brought into the public domain as soon as possible.

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There has been a great deal of positivity from responses across the board and a general acceptance of the Committee taking on a more substantive role in moving the proposals forward. WLGA flagged about organisational capacity and that flood and coastal erosion risk management is not one of their core funded activities. MB suggested a response that it is a key component of the climate change adaptation agenda, and he would like for WLGA to review this position on what is and isn't considered a core funded activity.

JP commented on three proposals. On proposal 10 for a Resource Improvement Programme, he suggested that perhaps a different approach be necessary to give it full consideration due to its expansive size. He added that proposal 14 on regional governance would benefit from an independent review and offered some push back against the phrasing around NRW's work in proposal 16 on a Communities Action Plan, noting its complexity.

MW discussed proposal 12 and noted feedback that there is a need for apprenticeships where there are skill shortages in areas such as environmental engineering and flood risk management. It is clear that current ways do not serve the purpose of ensuring there are sufficient skills in the right areas. He noted that a workshop he attended for this was very poorly attended. He asked for support from the Committee in addressing these concerns, and that he would be happy to contribute to the Resources Sub-Committee on this. MB responded that MW's input was discussed in the Resources Sub-Committee, and MW could perhaps be a member of such a working group.

DT further supported the input from MW. He discussed a CITB initiative that can cause issues for public sector organisations who are not members of the CITB directly, that public sectors do not benefit from the funding they put into degree courses. He also highlighted the need for more technical apprentice programmes. MW responded that CITB Wales will be funded by WG.

IT reiterated the point that there was a gap in the market for further and higher education on flood risk, SUDs and other technical areas. KP noted that a variety

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of skills were needed in flood risk management and not exclusively engineers. AMM agreed. AS inputted that he had noticed interest in subjects like environmental science and environmental engineering and it was a positive route to take. MB asked LL about whether WG colleagues in education might play a role in these discussions. LL noted there have been discussions but not much progress so far; there is a need to make further links with colleagues across WG. MB said there is a strong case for WG colleagues involved in education to be involved at FCEC meetings. DT said that course availability was dependent on funding and that education institutions would need to be shown that there is sufficient demand for these courses in order to develop and run them. MW reiterated the point about showcasing the demand and that there needed to be industry collaboration for it to happen.

MB asked KP about Open University courses. KP replied that it is very intensive to produce a new course. RC said he would like to identify potential for careers in this sector to generate interest. He added that passion is also important in this sector and not just skills. KI spoke about opportunities within the flood and water sector and the breadth is significantly bigger and that opportunities should be better conveyed. NH added there is an appetite in the private sector also for quality graduates in this area. JP agreed that the skills shortage is a widespread issue.

The report was agreed.

Action - MB to write to the Minister, WLGA, NRW and DCWW with a copy of the report.

Action – LL to invite WG Education Policy colleagues to next meeting.

13. Reports

13.1 Flood Risk Management Plan, Natural Resources

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Wales - Consultation Response by the Committee.

MB introduced item 13.1 which had been previously agreed by Committee Members electronically, and invited JP to provide feedback.

JP said NRW had received 44 responses and were looking at them to draft the Flood Risk Management Plan, which they would like to publish in October, along with a summary of consultation responses. The responses were generally supportive of the proposals including how it was structured. Some points were under consideration such as spelling out the aims and objectives and how they link to the measures being taken. The report has been written in the broader catchment context. He thinks there should be a single plan for what needs to happen in a single location and as such backed a joined-up approach with other authorities and organisations but recognised the different responsibilities and so potential challenge in joining up. He added that they are not seeking to adjust the final draft but would augment explanations.

13.2 Report under Section 18 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010, Jeremy Parr and Ross Akers, Manager Flood Risk Strategic Planning and Investment, Natural Resources Wales.

RA presented the draft Section 18 report for the Committee's advice. JP said there is a role for FCEC to advise on S18 and was keen to gather FCEC's comments. This report was built on feedback from previous reports.

RC suggested ideas around an infographic, especially for the outcomes to show achievements in an easily digestible format. NH agreed that reports are going in the right direction and said that accessibility is important. AMM asked whether there should be a clearer distinction between the status of complete and ongoing work as some work could be "completed" but still need ongoing management.

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MB said previous reports were written for professionals and may not be suitable for reaching a wider audience so something that could be available for wider stakeholders and the public would be important. Another issue with the last report was that it was very factual and that there was some concern that it was not analytical. Noted it was a good role for the committee to be making recommendations. As the document is not open to wider consultation at this stage, the FCEC will pull together consolidated Committee responses.

JP offered a response about the report being “too factual.” He felt that there was a risk that it could be seen as NRW reviewing its own performance and so the preference to stick to factual statements to support neutrality.

Action - Members of the Committee to return comments on the draft Section 18 Report by 22 September.

Action - MB to circulate a first draft of a consolidated response to the report for further comment by 2 October.

13.3 Committee Work Programme - To receive the report of the Chair on the roll forward of the Work Programme to 2025-26, and to consider the recommendation that the updated Work Programme be approved.

MB presented the report and provided an update on the themes and actions surrounding them.

He referred to the reliance on the Severn Estuary Partnership to provide secretariat support for the sub-committee meetings and so date adjustment will need to take their capacity into account. There will be a process to establish people’s availability. The Chair of the Section 19 Sub-Committee has yet to be confirmed.

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MB said he is open to potential within the work programme for encompassing other themes. He said it is evident that workload is substantially more than anticipated in the original work programme despite the same resourcing / staffing. Difficult decisions may be needed in order to prioritise themes.

RC asked for committee meetings to be in diaries as soon as possible.

The Report was agreed.

13.4 Review of Local Government Section 19 and Natural Resources Wales' reports into extreme flooding in Wales, 2020-21 - Keith Ivens, Welsh Government.

KI presented the 'Review of Local Government Section 19 and Natural Resources Wales reports into extreme flooding in Wales, 2020-21'.

AS referred to the input provided by RCT. He said that he broadly endorses the report's conclusions.

JP said that it is not a conventional report and highlighted the approach to numbered recommendations as an example of that. He asked for a feel of what happens next in terms of taking any recommendations forward. KI said that officials will consider recommendations; the layout was intentional to focus on actions.

MB said that the proposed Section 19 Sub-Committee should consider this report as one that could be incorporated into their own work programme. Professor Elwen Evans has offered to speak about the report, and consideration need to be given as to how best and when to do that. KI mentioned that Professor Evans may additionally be able to help with the educational aspects of discussions, such as skills capacity within universities.

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14. Any other business previously notified to the Chair

None.

15. Date and venue of next meeting – Thursday 30th November, Bridgend County Borough Council building

Efallai na fydd y ddogfen hon yn hollol hygyrch.

Drllenwch ein [datganiad hygyrchedd](#) i gael rhagor o wybodaeth.

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