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Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

MINISTERIAL ADVICE -

For decision by: Huw Irranca-Davies, Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change and Rural Affairs

Subject	Enhancing Bathing Water Quality in Wales, Strategic and Local Initiatives - Revised Financial Request
100 word summary	Natural Resources Wales (NRW) has submitted a revised financial request for the Vale of Glamorgan Bathing Waters Project and the Strategic Bathing Water Programme post, following a detailed reassessment of delivery costs. This reflects refined planning and a clearer understanding of operational requirements. The updated funding profile now totals £629,000 over two years—an uplift of £77,000 from the previously approved £552,000 in MA/HIDCC/0758/25—ensuring the resources are in place to fully deliver the agreed project outcomes.
Timing	Urgent – to avoid delays in programme start-up
Recommendation	The Cabinet Secretary is recommended to: Agree the revised financial request from NRW for £241k in financial year 2025 – 2026 and £388k for 2026 - 2027 totalling £629,000 an uplift of £77,000 from the originally agreed total of £552,000.
Decision report	This decision requires a Decision Report, which may be published at any point.

ADVICE

Background

1. Following your approval of the original proposal (MA/HIDCC/0758/25), NRW has revisited its delivery model and internal budget planning to ensure costs are accurate and appropriate. As a result, NRW has submitted a revised funding profile, now totalling:
 - Year 1 (2025/26): £241,000
 - Year 2 (2026/27): £388,000
 - **Total Revised Ask: £629,000**
2. This represents an uplift of £77,000 from the originally approved figure of £552,000.
3. The requested uplift is essential to enable NRW to fully deliver the intended outcomes agreed under MA/HIDCC/0758/25. As delivery planning has progressed, several areas of the project have been refined, revealing the need for additional funding to ensure that the objectives are met effectively and to a high standard.
4. NRW has now applied confirmed internal salary rates, including pension, national insurance, and a standardised 15.6% corporate overhead. This adjustment ensures that the key project roles—two Grade 5s, a Grade 6, and a Grade 7—are accurately costed and can be fully resourced across the two-year delivery period. These roles are fundamental to managing the delivery programme, coordinating stakeholder engagement, and leading technical investigations across both Watch House Bay and Ogmore-by-Sea.
5. The consultancy support requirements have been more clearly defined. The original business case identified consultancy as a necessary component, but the uplift reflects the expansion and clarification of this scope. Key areas now include establishing a natural capital baseline, assessing the feasibility of nature-based solutions, investigating urban diffuse pollution sources, developing catchment partnerships, and undertaking targeted water quality investigations. These inputs are critical to building the evidence base, engaging stakeholders, and identifying replicable solutions to persistent pollution challenges.
6. In addition, the revised funding accounts for the operational realities of delivering a complex, multi-stakeholder project over a sustained two-year period.
7. Officials believe the uplift to be justified by the need to ensure full delivery of the project's intended benefits. These include improving bathing water quality at two high-profile locations, developing a scalable and replicable model for catchment-based delivery, and enhancing policy development through the Strategic Bathing Water Programme post.
8. Officials in the Water Branch have reviewed the revised costings and are satisfied they are reasonable, proportionate, and consistent with delivering

value for money. The uplift can be accommodated within the existing water budget.

Recommendation

The Cabinet Secretary is recommended to:

9. Agree the revised financial request from NRW totalling £629,000 over financial years 2025/26 and 2026/27. An uplift of £77,000 from the originally approved figure of £552,000.

Financial implications

10. *[information redacted]*

11. Table showing 2025-26 Budget allocation and commitments:

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MA/HIDCC/-0758/25 Vale of Glamorgan Bathing Waters Project will require a budget of £225,000 in 2025/26 & £177,000 in 2026/27, covering staff costs and essential project activities, including stakeholder engagement, assessments, misconnection work and nature-based solutions.	300,000 (this MA recommendation will reduce this to £241k)
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MA/HIDCC/-0758/25 Vale of Glamorgan Bathing Waters Project will require a budget £177,000 in 2026/27, covering staff costs and essential project activities, including stakeholder engagement, assessments, misconnection work and nature-based solutions. The Strategic Bathing Water post will require £75,000 for 2026/27, to support a dedicated policy post and the development of a prioritised programme.	252,000
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