

File Note

NRW / Welsh Gov Transition Planning Meeting

Session 4 Transition Plan Regulator Working Group: Water Supply Planning

Engagement Session Details

Date: 01 October 2025

Time: 11:00 – 12:00

Location: Microsoft Teams

Facilitator: [REDACTED], Head of Water Reform

Attendees:

NRW

[REDACTED] (CH)

[REDACTED] (RJ)

[REDACTED] (MS)

WG

[REDACTED] (KB) WG

[REDACTED] (CM) WG

[REDACTED] (LTD) WG

Purpose of the Meeting

The meeting reviewed DEFRA's Water Supply Planning paper, aiming to:

- Highlight gaps in current planning and suggest regulatory improvements
- Consider transition approaches for PR29 business planning

Key Discussion Points

Scope and Relevance to Wales

CH noted the paper is England-focused and lacks consideration of Welsh systems and cross-border planning. MS highlighted the need to clarify the role of the Regional System Planner (RSP) in Wales, which is moving toward a centralized model.

Welsh Context and RSP Role

MS stated the RSP in Wales is more operational than strategic. CH suggested the RSP could support environmental objectives and raised whether those plans would require sign-off by Welsh Ministers as a statutory duty.

Capacity and Resources

CH emphasized that NRW's limited capacity and multi-role staffing would require additional resources to support the new regulator.

Action 1 – to be logged as a governance and operational risk.

Cross-Border Planning Considerations

MS stressed the need to reflect Wales's distinct spatial and governance context. CH noted cross-border catchments (e.g., Severn, Dee) require coordinated planning beyond national boundaries.

Action 2 – BC and BWJ to work closely with NRW on cross-border issues. MS could lead on this with support from NRW. Interactions and risks need to be mapped out.

Action 3 - LTD to identify and share any existing documentation related to cross-border issues (if any) with NRW.

Future Regulator and Sector Integration

CH shared that the new body will initially focus on water regulation, but it should potentially consider issues related to housing and agriculture post-2030. Funding mechanisms and environmental matters (remaining with NRW) are still under development.

Long-Term Planning Model

Interest was expressed in a 25-year supply cycle with 5-year delivery and 10-year committed planning. This model could reduce continuous planning and support strategic thinking, while maintaining cost reassessment every 5/6/7 years.

Action 4 – a separate discussion needs to be held on this point. BJW to be involved. Meeting to be arranged.

Evidence Gaps and Sector Needs

The group acknowledged gaps in understanding water needs across sectors and environmental requirements, which will take time to address.

Feedback from Water Companies

Companies noted the volume of plans is excessive. A clearer distinction is needed between investment-driving and operational plans, with input from Ofwat/new regulatory body and companies.

Strategic Scheme Coordination

Integration with regional groups, especially in cross-border areas, requires clear governance and alignment through national planning.

Next meeting to be held on 07 October 2025