

File Note

NRW / Welsh Gov Transition Planning Meeting

Session 4 Transition Plan Regulator Working Group: Water Supply Planning

Engagement Session Details

Date: 07 October 2025

Time: 11:00 – 12:00

Location: Microsoft Teams

Facilitator: [REDACTED], Head of Water Reform

Attendees:**NRW**

[REDACTED] (RJ)

[REDACTED] (MS)

WG

[REDACTED] (LTD)

Key Discussion Points**1 Defra Paper Discussion**

The group agreed that meetings originally scheduled for Tuesdays should be moved to Wednesday afternoons. This change is intended to allow sufficient time for the Defra paper to be received and reviewed before discussions take place.

Action 1: LTD to re-arrange the meetings.**2. Water Resource Management and Pricing****2.1 Welsh Water Export and Pricing Disparity**

RJ and MS explained that water transfers from Welsh reservoirs to English regions are coordinated by multiple organizations with distinct roles. Llyn Clywedog Reservoir is vital for regulating the River Severn's flow, especially during dry periods.

United Utilities manage transfers to Liverpool and the Northwest, while Severn Trent Water oversees supply to Birmingham and the Midlands, drawing from regulated sources like the Severn. Although Hafren does not directly abstract water from Llyn Clywedog, it benefits from the reservoir's releases, which help maintain river levels for downstream use.

2.2 Severn Trent Abstraction Rights

RJ and MS explained that Severn Trent Water holds a statutory license under the Water Resources Act 1963 to abstract water from the River Tern under the Severn Corridor Abstraction Licensing Strategy, managed by the Environment Agency (EA). This legal entitlement is granted under UK legislation and is not based on any commercial agreement with Welsh Water.

2.3 Review of Abstraction Arrangements

RJ and MS added that the abstraction arrangements involving Severn Trent Water and other companies operating in water-stressed areas are under increasing scrutiny. These companies continue to abstract water from Welsh sources, raising concerns about long-term sustainability and equitable resource use. Given the environmental and legal complexities, a formal review and legal consultation are advisable.

Action 2: BC to seek legal advice on this issue.

3. National Environment Plan (NEP)

3.1 Integration of Water Cost Allocations

Water cost allocations must be incorporated into the National Environment Plan (NEP). This is essential for ensuring that environmental obligations are met and that water pricing reflects both ecological and economic realities.

4. WRMP Governance

4.1 Role of the RSP and NRW

MS explained that water resources management plans in Wales will be centralized. The RSP will be responsible for producing the Water Management Resource Plan (WMRP), setting up objectives and leading on their publication. Details were included in NRW's written response to Defra's session 4 which was shared with WG prior to this meeting.

5. Cross-Border Environmental Policy

5.1 Polluter Pays Framework

The group discussed the Polluter Pays Principle (PPP), which is foundational concept in environmental policy, asserting that those who cause environmental harm should bear the costs of preventing, mitigating, or remedying that damage.

The group agreed that these principles should be integrated into the National Water Strategy to ensure that the costs of environmental damage are appropriately attributed to polluters. It was proposed that the EA and the RSP could establish a collaborative agreement, which would facilitate the resolution of cross-border challenges, particularly those concerning water issues linked to river basin management.

Action 3: BC to discuss with LTD.

6. Data and Infrastructure

6.1 GSI Model and Recruitment Challenges

NRW has not implemented a GSI model and even if they have adequate funding they are facing recruitment difficulties. Extending this model across nations could lead to a unified infrastructure approach, enhancing consistency and efficiency.

The group discussed the importance of developing a national infrastructure model that provides a consistent methodology and set of tools to be implemented UK-wide, with contributions and alignment from all four nations. MS provided as an example the UK [Centre for Ecology & Hydrology \(UKCEH\)](#)

A national infrastructure model would support strategic planning, ensuring coherence and shared standards.

7.1 Reservoir Safety Representation

7.1 Representative for Reservoir Safety

A representative from NRW or WG with expertise in reservoir safety is needed to attend the upcoming Defra meeting (session 5).

Action 4: NRW/WG to look for a representative.

8. Sludge and Waste Management

8.1 Representative for Sludge and Waste Management

A representative from NRW or WG with expertise in waste management is needed to attend the upcoming Defra meeting (session 5).

Action 5: NRW/WG to look for a representative.

Next meeting to be held on 14 October 2025

