Natural Resources Wales
Board Meeting – Wednesday 16th October

Confirmed Minutes

Present:

Board Members	**In attendance Executive Team Members**
Mike Brooker	Liz Davis
Hywel Davies	Ceri Davies
Ruth Hall	Clive Thomas
Madeleine Havard	Kevin Ingram
Harry Legge-Bourke	Trefor Owen
Peter Matthews (Chair)	Graham Hillier
Andy Middleton	Niall Reynolds
Nigel Reader	Tim Jones
Emyr Roberts (Chief Executive)	
Lynda Warren	
Paul Williams	

Secretariat: Geralene Mills

Welcome

1. The Chair welcomed all to the Board Meeting.

Safety Issues

2. Secretariat confirmed arrangements.

Apologies

3. Apologies for absence received from Morgan Parry and Harry Legge-Bourke.

Declaration of Interests

4. Mike Brooker declared his role with the Wales Audit Office, in respect of the Internal Audit Charter agenda item.

Minutes

5. The Minutes of the meeting held on 4rd September were approved with minor amendments.

Action Log

6. Reviewed and noted by the Board.

Matters Arising

7. No matters arising raised.

Update from the Chief Executive (including Health and Safety) 8. The Chief Executive reported on his attendance at a number of meetings and conferences, including the Environmental Protection Agency Network in Berlin which was beneficial. It was confirmed that the Minister for Culture and Sport had attended the recent opening of the new extension of the Coed Y Brenin visitor centre. 9. Health and Safety Update – confirmed that the absence rate is currently running at 3 days average which is below the public sector average. The Health and Safety Committee has now met 3 times since April with regional committees all due to meet shortly. 10. It was reported that an incident of a fire in a dishwasher had occurred in the Llandarcy Office which had caused some damage to one room; however, the office was operational by the following day. The fault had been referred to the manufacturer for examination. **Update from the Chair** 11. The Chair highlighted the event that had been hosted in the Senedd to profile NRW's first 6 months. The event had been successful in providing an opportunity to engage with stakeholders. 12. At the event and more widelythe Minister had been positive in recognising the progress and benefits for Wales from the establishment of NRW. Specific examples included flood prevention work, hydro schemes and plant health. 13. The Minister had also recognised the positive work that had led to the decision on flow standards for Hydro scheme permits that had been made at the September Board meeting.	
Report from Committees **Remuneration Committee** 14. The Board was provided with a verbal brief of the business undertaken at the Committee meeting held on 15th October, noting the the following decisions made • Agreement to appoint a Director for External Relations and Communications;recruit to follow existing HR policies • Changes to the portfolio of the Head of Governance to Director Governance, Performance and Planning • Extension of the secondment of the Executive Director of Organisational Development and People Management to 31/07/2014 • Extension of the contract of the Chief Information Officer to 31/07/2014 15. It was confirmed that minutes of the recent Remuneration Committee and	**Action Point: Secretariat to circulate minutes with the December Board meeting papers**

Transition Advisory Group meetings would be presented to the December meeting by the Secretariat team. **Audit and Risk Assurance Committee** 16. The Board noted the written report and confirmation was given that minutes would be presented at the December meeting. 17. It was agreed that the Board needs a fuller discussion on risk understanding and appetite. It was agreed that ARAC would consider an initial proposal in November and then a full Board discussion would be timetabled. 18. The Board noted the contents of the report. **Flood Risk Management Committee** 19. The next meeting is on Friday 18th October in Cardiff. It was confirmed that additional funding had been secured from the Welsh Government's National Infrastructure fund. **Protected Areas Committee** 20. Reported that the first meeting is due on 24th October and that a number of Committee members would be undertaking a site visit in advance.	**Action Point: Secretariat to circulate minutes with the December Board meeting papers.** **Action Point: Clive Thomas to develop a paper on Risk Management for ARAC and schedule for Board discussion**
Board Groups **Economy Group** – Andy Middleton 21. A paper submitted to the Executive Team highlighting *P. ramorum* challenges and opportunities had been circulated to the Board. It was reported that Head of Enterprise had met recently with Cardiff City Council to discuss renewable energy and timber use options for future developments. **Communities Group –** Ruth Hall 22. Ruth had attended the Eco therapy Conference on 19th September, which had focused on the role of the outdoor environment and its benefits to mental health. The next National Access forum meeting will be held in November. 23. Madeleine Havard, Equality and Diversity Champion provided the Board with details of a meeting held with Liz Davis and Adrian Williams which helped to clarify her role. She had also attended the recent Stonewall Cymru Conference. 24. The Chair referred to the Corporate Plan consultation and engagement with stakeholders. 10 events had been held across Wales with all sectors represented. Staff events had been held. It was confirmed that the consultation document had been agreed at the closed Board session – the consultation period would be from 4 November 2014 until 10 January 2014. 25. The Board requested that the draft Business Plan for 2014-15 be presented at the December Board meeting. **Environment Group – Lynda Warren** 26. Lynda reported that she had received requests from environmental NGOs for clarification regarding our involvement with a UK wide application for a	**Action Point: Draft 2014 – 15 Business Plan to be presented at December Board.**

derogation to enable continued use of cypermethrin for specific forestry purposes. The Group had discussed and agreed that due to NRW's wide remit, we should consider our position in the short and medium term on this matter. 27. The Board supported an ecosystem approach through integrated catchment management. In that context the Board supported the ultimate aim of stopping the use of harmful chemicals such as cypermethrin. However, it was recognised that in some circumstances, Natural Resources Wales does not yet have the alternative options for securing the protection of young trees. 28. The Board committed to implementing alternative silvicultural practices, building on its good track record of using alternative approaches, innovative biological controls, and setting tighter environmental standards, in its management of the Welsh Government woodland estate. 29. The Board confirmed that in the meantime, as part of the UK wide forestry sector, it would support the derogation seeking an extension to the use of cypermethrin beyond the life of the current derogation (June 2014). 30. In advance of this date, a review would be undertaken with stakeholders into the alternative options, costs and timescales for a different approach in Wales and a voluntary non-use of the derogation. **Knowledge Board Group** 31. The group had recently met and discussed: • Science Advisory Committee – concluding that they were not in favour of this option; further discussions would be held with Natural England. • Knowledge and Information Strategy – the group highlighted a need to explore methods of knowledge transfer in respect of the staff members leaving on voluntary early release. • Consider opportunities to connect more widely with NGOs • Citizen Science – group acknowledged a need to clarify the definition of 'Citizen Science' but endorsed the principle of involving wider stakeholder engagement in environmental monitoring. • Welsh Baccalaureate – Sue Williams (Education team) will be contacting Welsh Government in order to develop opportunities to integrate natural resource management in the Welsh Bac.	**Action: Ceri Davies to commission the review of alternative options**
Corporate Dashboard Report 32. The Chair confirmed that the report had been circulated to the Board for information and highlighted the points for the group to note in the future work.	
Finance Update – August 2013 (NRW B (O) 42.13) 33. The update paper was presented to the Board, highlighting expenditure to date against budget and income received. 34. It was explained that currently the Human Resources and Finance teams work on three separate computer systems. Recent transition work has led to the	

identification of a preferred new system and that the necessary due diligence work is underway prior to procurement. 35. In conclusion the Chair praised the staff and Executive Team in having handled some significant operational challenges in the first 7 months since 1 April, whilst remaining on budget.	
Financial Scheme of Delegation (NRW B (O) 43.13 36. The Chair confirmed that this paper would be considered at the December meeting.	**Action Point: Kevin to present at the December meeting.**
Internal Audit Charter (NRW B (O) 44.13) 37. Martin Veale was welcomed to the meeting. It was explained that the Public Sector Internal Audit Standard highlighted a requirement for an Audit Charter. The Charter had been considered and agreed by ARAC at the July meeting and approval for the Charter was now sought from the Board. 38. The Chair confirmed the Board's approval of the Internal Audit Charter.	
Corporate Communications Approach (NRW B (O) 45.13) 39. Catrin Hornung was welcomed to the meeting and presented the paper to the Board. The paper presented an approach to support the foundation of NRW's emerging Communications Strategy. 40. Board members expressed their gratitude to the work of the Communications team and provided feedback to support the development of the Communications Strategy. 41. In conclusion the Chair endorsed the next steps detailed in the paper.	
Newborough Forest (NRW B (O) 46.13) 42. Kim Burnham was welcomed to the meeting. A short presentation was given on the Newborough Forest area detailing the background and the current developments at the site. Kim 43. provided the following clarification to questions raised • Conifer trees had originally been planted on the site with a view of stabilising the mobile dune system • Trees along the front of the dunes are now dead and are being removed • 3000 hazel trees are due to be planted over the winter months with a view to creating a native forest with protection and good eco system management • John Ratcliffe joined the meeting and explained that conifers are thirsty and this affected the water table, reducing by about 1m over a 20-30 year period. The lowering of the water table risks dune slack, with the possibility of losing critical species • Social/ Economic implications – it was explained to the Board that beach concessions had recently been tendered for the site with a possible expansion of mountain biking and horse riding in due course.	

44. The Board was satisfied with the planned course of action. **Energy Island (Presentation)** 45. Iwan Williams joined the meeting and gave a presentation to the Board on the work of Natural Resources Wales in support of the Energy Island programme. Iwan responded to several questions from Board Members.	
Any Other Business 46. No other business was raised. Meeting Closed	