

## **Case for Change: Overview of proposals for Business Groups and Enabling Services Directorates**

Under proposals put forward to manage the financial challenges faced by Natural Resources Wales (NRW), a review of work has been undertaken to prioritise the activities we undertake, reflecting our statutory duties, the priorities set out in our term of Government Remit Letter as well as the wellbeing objectives of the corporate plan.

The review considered what NRW can and should continue doing, what should be scaled back and what should stop.

Here is a brief outline of the proposed changes for each Business Group and Enabling Service Directorate.

### **Natural Resources Management (NRM) Business Group**

This business group facilitates the sustainable management of natural resources by influencing policy using evidence and providing advice, to secure integrated environmental outcomes for biodiversity, land, water and marine. The group secures additional funding for projects and programmes like peatland restoration and water quality improvement by working with Welsh Government and external funding bodies.

The level of resource committed to some activities will scale back including outdoor access and recreation, grants delivery, strategic environmental policy and climate change.

Some marine activities, fisheries, strategic assessments, statutory planning and landscape duties, groundwater and contaminated land, invasive non-native species programme, sustainable land management (including soils policy), external funding and the Development Planning Advisory Service (DPAS) will also see some reductions or changes in resource levels.

We propose to no longer have a dedicated education and health team, we also propose to stop activities related to Sustainable Management of Natural Resources (SMNR) training and accreditation, Evidence Policy and Permitting (EPP) Area Statements and well-being planning co-ordination and support and the green infrastructure programme.

### **Evidence Business Group**

This group is responsible for ensuring robust evidence collated from unique environmental data on Wales' natural resources, is available to decision-makers including those in government, local authorities, and the private sector.

Under the proposals, activities which will continue are the management, analysis and assessment of monitoring data for freshwater, terrestrial, marine and waste. NRW will scale back on the level of resource committed to integrated evidence (social science, economics, statistics and operational research) and there will be reductions in knowledge & information activities.

All library services will stop under the proposals.

### **Land stewardship Business Group**

The service manages 150,000 hectares of natural resources in Wales, including woodland and nature reserves with responsibilities for open access land rights of way and waymarked trails. It also includes managing assets on the land under NRW's care to minimise health and safety risk and control landowner liabilities including forest roads, bridges, culverts, reservoirs, ex-industrial coal tips, as well as potentially dangerous trees.

We propose scaling back on the management of heritage features on the Welsh Government Woodland Estate, the operation of non-commercial recreation and visitor access and estate recreation planning.

Our work on managing estate standards, managing non-flood reservoirs, capital and maintenance programme managing legal liabilities, land agency work, assets inspection and maintenance, managing safety will see some reductions or changes to ways of working.

### **Regulation Business Group**

We as an organisation regulate a wide range of site based and non-site-based activities including industry and waste, water quality and resources, forestry, fisheries species protection, and designated sites to ensure that people and the natural environment are protected.

We are proposing some small reductions in enforcement including tackling waste crime and some reductions in development of regulatory approaches (provision of evidence, advice and guidance). We will increase regulatory compliance capacity across water and maintain current levels for waste and industry compliance activities.

Work on alternative market mechanisms will stop.

### **Flood Risk Management Business Group**

This group is responsible for setting out how NRW manages and responds to flood risk. It operates and manages existing flood assets, provides a flood warning system, regulates reservoir safety, provides advice and guidance to planning authorities, models and predicts flood risk, and provides a plan, respond and aid service during flood events.

Under the proposals, no changes to structures are included, but a separate review looking at ways of working and organisational arrangements to realise greater efficiencies and opportunities for integrating flood more closely with other services, for example Land Stewardship, will report in December 2024.

### **Incident Management Business Group**

This group leads the planning and preparation for incidents and emergencies. It prepares by planning, training and exercising for events and sets out guidance and procedures for incident response and recovery. It operates a 24-hour Incident Communications Centre (ICC) to respond to calls and activate responses using duty officers and standby staff.

Under the new proposals, the ICC will continue to operate, but will be merged with the Customer Hub

Work is already underway to strengthen and improve our approach to environmental incident management with greater interrogation and synthesis of evidence and data to identify sectors and geographies which are having the greatest impact and offer the greatest opportunity for targeted activity. We are starting to change our approach to incidents – adopting a higher tolerance of risk, being more targeted and reducing the number of low priority calls we respond to. Once we have implemented the first phase of the change programme we will assess the impact on the specialist and general rotas.

### **Communications, Customer, Commercial Enabling Service Directorate**

The Communications, Customer and Commercial directorate (CCC) leads the organisations approach and delivery of services related to for customer, communications, digital and translation functions. The Directorate leads all commercial activities – timber sales, windfarm development and other commercial agreements – and it leads on procuring and managing contracts in line with best practice.

We are proposing to scale back on integrated communications services and there will be some reductions or changes to the translation, customer, procurement and contracts, commercial land agents, business development, commercial business

support, energy delivery governance, timber marketing and commercial development (sales and marketing).

We are proposing to no longer operate catering and retail provision at visitor centres, we will actively seek out partners to run these services. The sites will remain open for walking, biking, play areas, car parking and toilet provision.

### **Corporate Strategy and Development Enabling Service Directorate**

This directorate sets the strategic direction for the organisation through the corporate plan and the performance management framework, including setting the annual business plan. It develops policies and provides the tools to enable delivery across NRW for staff to carry out their day-to-day work and for the organisation to function. The services delivered are: legal services, people management, people development and wellbeing, governance & board secretary, corporate strategy and PMO (Programme Management Office).

There will be some reductions or changes to the services provided within governance and risk, staff engagement, corporate planning and performance management, HR support & recruitment.

All central co-ordination and provision of continuous improvement tools will stop.

### **Finance & Corporate Services Enabling Services Directorate**

This directorate provides central support and coordination services that enables NRW to operate efficiently. It sets policies and provides tools for staff, covering areas such as ICT, finance, business support services, NRW2030 (a programme of work to streamline processes to reduce the burden on staff), and internal audit and Environmental Management Systems (EMS).

Under these proposals, the NRW2030 portfolio will provide the organisational focus on driving improvements to efficiency and effectiveness .

There will be reductions in the level of service in finance and fleet & facilities.

No services will stop under these proposals although it is anticipated there will be changes to what is offered.