

# **Draft Habitat Regulations Assessment of the draft third cycle Western Wales and Dee River Basin Management Plans**

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## Acronyms

Acronym	Meaning
AA	Appropriate Assessment
AMP	Asset Management Plan
CAP	Common Agricultural Policy
CCW	Consumer Council for Wales
cSAC	candidate Special Area of Conservation
DrWPA	Drinking Water Protection Area
DWMP	Drainage and Waste Water Management Plan
DWPP	Diffuse Water Pollution Plan
EQSD	Environmental Quality Standards Directive
FCERM	Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management
FRMP	Flood Risk Management Plan
GES	Good Ecological Status
HRA	Habitats Regulation Assessment
INNS	Invasive Non-Native Species
LSE	Likely Significant Effect
MPS	Marine Policy Statement
N2K	Natura 2000
NFD	National Development Framework
NFM	Natural Flood Management
NRP	Natural Resources Policy
NRW	Natural Resources Wales
NSFCERMW	National Strategy for Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management in Wales
PoM	Programme of Measures
pSPA	potential Special Protection Area
RBD	River Basin District
RBMP	River Basin Management Plan
SAC	Special Area of Conservation
SAT	Strategic Assessment Team
SFP	Sustainable Fisheries Programme
SMP	Shoreline Management Plan
SMNR	Sustainable Management of Natural Resources
SPA	Special Protection Area
WFD	Water Framework Directive
Wco	Water companies
WGWE	Welsh Government Woodland Estate
WNMP	Welsh National Marine Plan
WRMP	Water Resources Management Plan

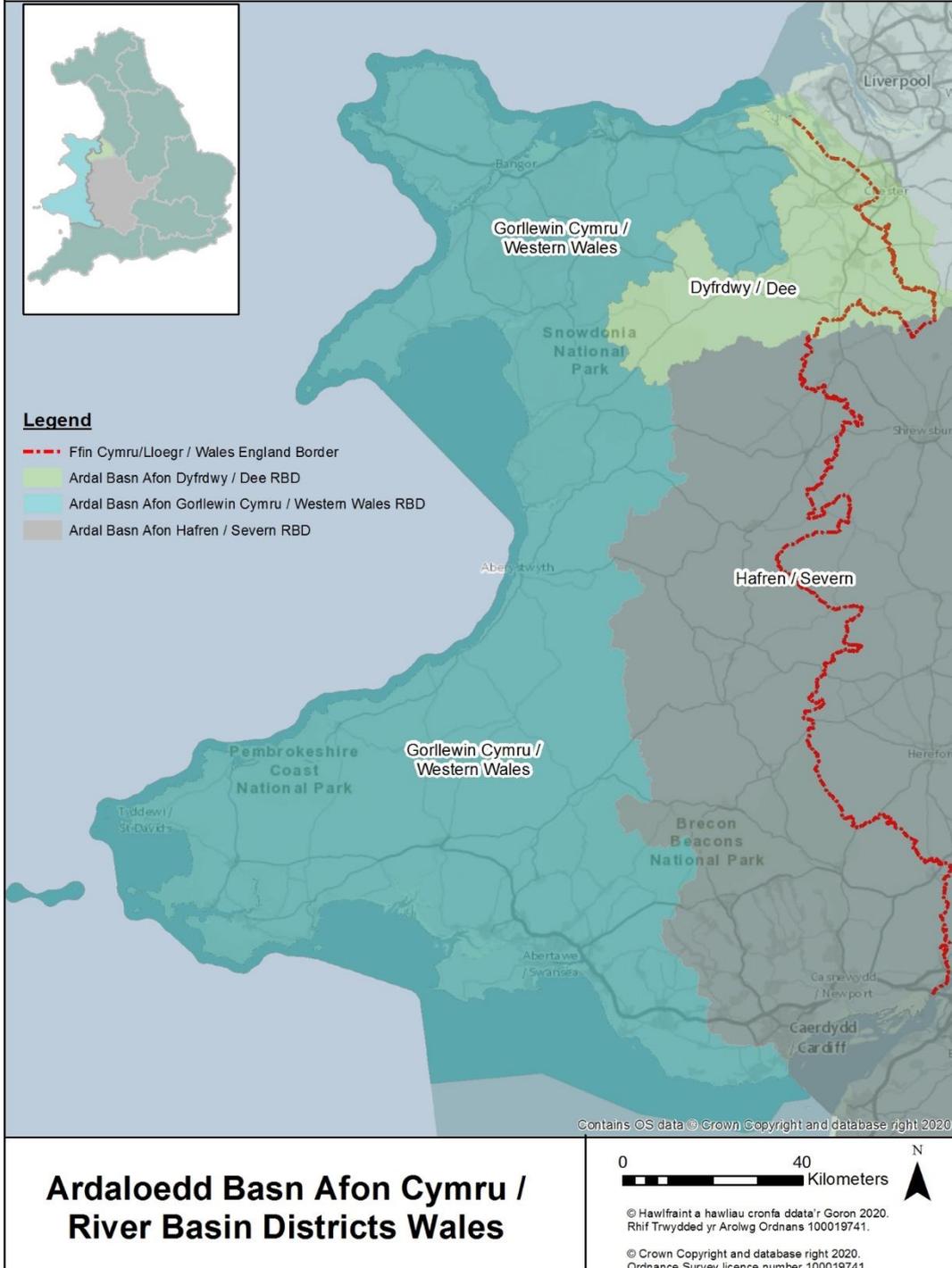
## 1. Introduction

This document sets out the draft strategic Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) of the third cycle Western Wales and Dee River Basin Management Plans (RBMPs). It will accompany and inform the “Consultation on updating the Dee RBMP for the third Cycle (2021-2027)” and the ‘Consultation on updating the Western Wales RBMP for the third Cycle (2021-2027)’.

The Western Wales RBMP has been produced by Natural Resources Wales (NRW) as the responsible authority for river basin planning in Wales.

As part of the Dee River Basin District (RBD) is within England, NRW has worked closely with the Environment Agency to produce the Dee RBMP. The plans are a requirement of the Water Framework Directive (WFD) (2000/60/EC) which is transposed into UK law under the Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) England and Wales Regulations 2017 (referred to as WFD Regulations 2017).

Figure 1 shows the study area for this HRA. The Dee RBMP is a cross border catchment, with some waterbodies in England. This HRA applies across all of the Dee and Western Wales RBD’s and so we have worked closely with the Environment Agency in its development. The neighbouring RBMPs, the Severn, South West and North West, will undergo HRA separately and will be delivered by the Environment Agency.



**Figure 1. Study area for the Dee and Western Wales third RBMP.**

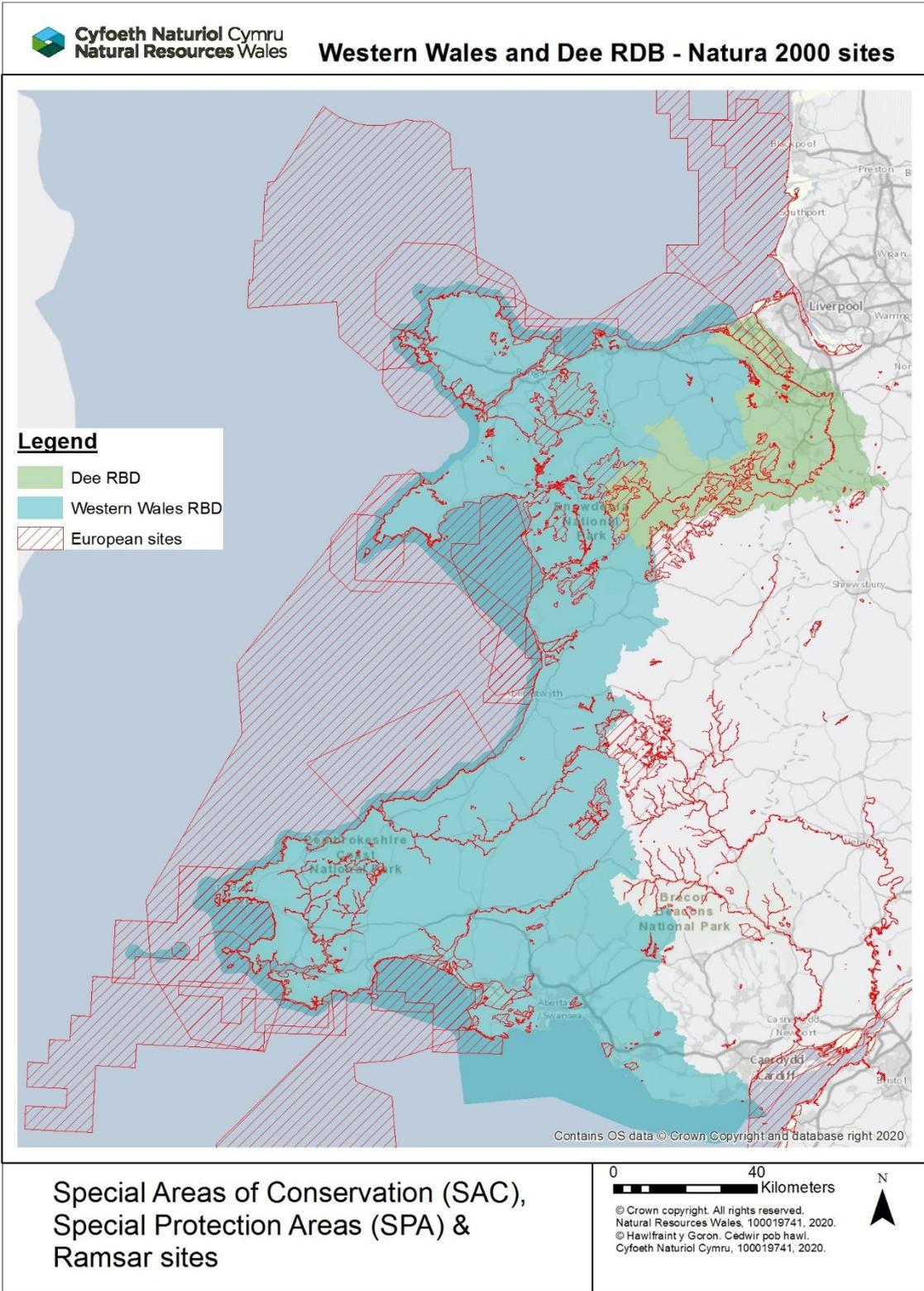
## 2. Determining the need for a Habitats Regulations Assessment

### 2.1 Introduction to Habitats Regulations Assessment

In Wales, the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (SI 2017/1012), termed the 'Habitats Regulations', implements the EU 'Habitats Directive' (Directive (92/43/EEC) on the Conservation of natural habitats and of wild flora and fauna) and certain elements of the 'Birds Directive' (2009/147/EC). This legislation provides the legal framework for the protection of habitats and species of European importance in Wales.

The protected sites comprise Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Areas (SPA), and the Habitats Regulations are also applied to candidate SACs (cSAC), potential Special Protection Areas (pSPA) and Ramsar sites (sites designated under the [1971 Ramsar Convention](#) for their internationally important wetlands). These sites are referred to collectively in this report as 'European sites'.

Figure 2 shows all SACs, SPAs and Ramsars within or close to the study area based on the most up to date information. It includes new SACs for harbour porpoises and sites that have been modified since the second cycle e.g. Liverpool Bay extension. We do not propose listing each European site in this document; the strategic, non-spatial nature of the plan means that the strategic HRA can only be undertaken at a high level.



**Figure 2. European Sites across the Western Wales and Dee RBDs.**

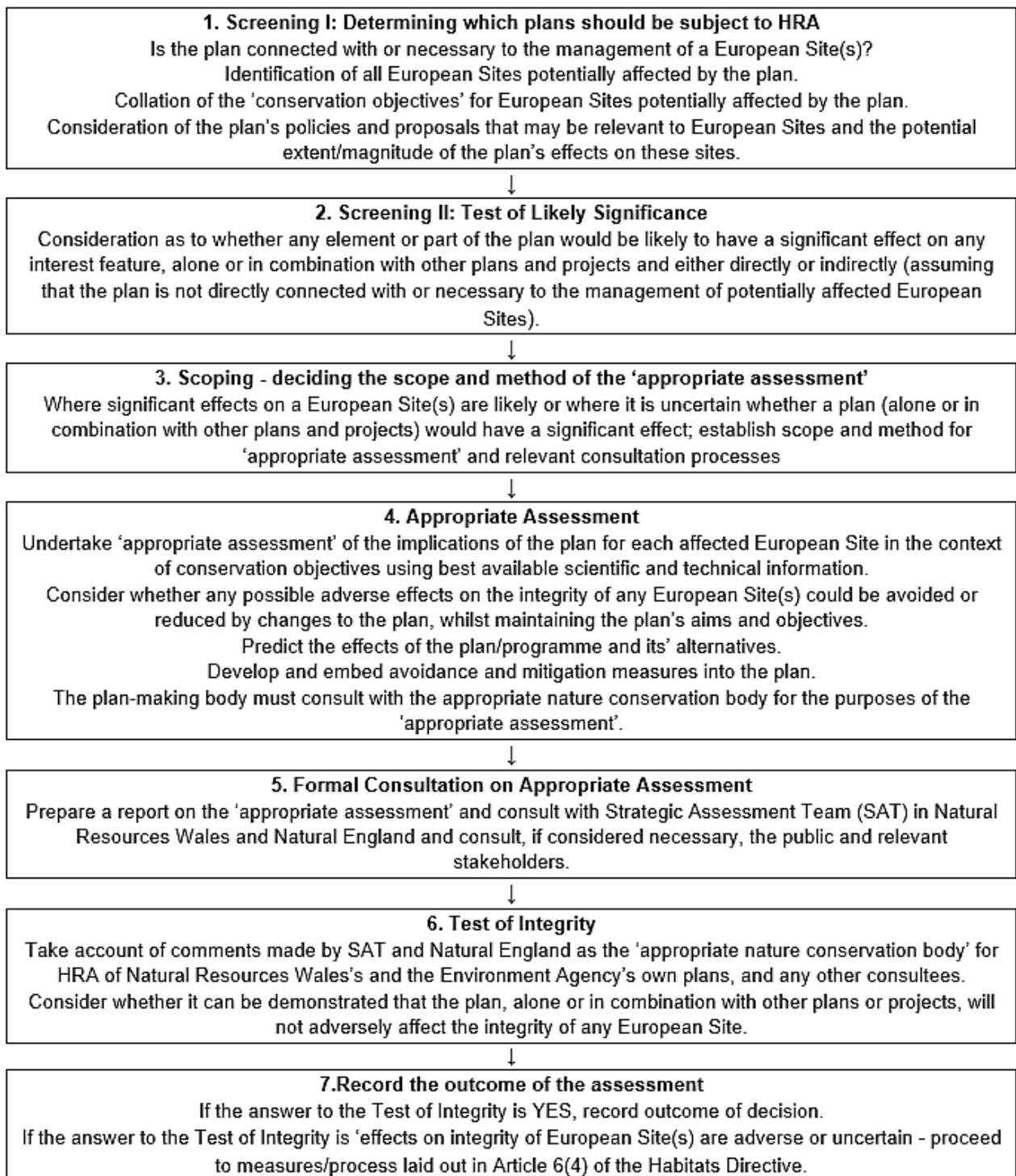
Regulation 9(5) of the Habitats Regulations requires that a competent authority must consider the requirements of Habitats Directive in exercising any of its functions. Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive and regulation 63 of the Habitats Regulations define the requirements for assessment of plans and projects potentially affecting

European sites. This requires that a competent national authority, before deciding to undertake, or give any consent, permission or other authorisation for a plan or project which is likely to have a significant effect on a European site, and is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of that site, must make an appropriate assessment of the implications for that site in view of that site's conservation objectives.

The aim of the WFD Regulations 2017 is to establish a framework for the protection of all surface waters and groundwater with the aim to reach good status in all waters. Both the Habitats Regulations and the WFD Regulations 2017 promote the achievement of healthy aquatic ecosystems while at the same time ensuring a balance between water, nature protection and the sustainable use and management of natural resources. Indeed, there are many [synergies](#) as the implementation of measures will generally benefit the objectives of the nature legislation. However, this HRA has been developed iteratively with the third RBMP's to ensure there are no unintended consequences of its implementation on European sites.

### **2.1.1 Stages of Habitats Regulations Assessment**

European Commission [guidance](#) on the Habitats Directive and [guidance](#) on the Habitats Regulations sets out several stages to the carrying out of assessments required under Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive and Regulation 63 of the Habitats Regulations. We refer to this process as 'Habitats Regulations Assessment' (HRA). This HRA follows NRW Operational Guidance Note 209 on the HRA Process for Internal Plans. Figure 3 below, presents an overview of the HRA process.



**Figure 3. Overview of the stages of the HRA process.**

### **3. An overview of the Plans**

RBMPs take a holistic approach to managing our waters, looking at the water within the wider ecosystem and taking into account the movement of water through the hydrological cycle from source to sea. The purpose of the RBMPs is to protect and improve the water environment for the wider benefits to people and wildlife.

The first RBMPs were published in 2009 and set the framework for protecting and enhancing the water environment from 2009 to 2015. Some commitments extended to 2021 and /or 2027 and these were reviewed and updated in the second cycle RBMP, published in 2015. This third cycle again, reviews progress against the objectives and where necessary revises objectives and the associated Programme of Measures (PoM) for delivery between 2021 and 2027 (see Figure 4 below).



**Figure 4. Schematic demonstrating the periods of time covered by each RBM cycle.**

The third cycle RBMPs are produced by NRW and the Environment Agency under the Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) England and Wales Regulations 2017. Welsh Government, as the Appropriate Authority for RBD's that are wholly in Wales and the Welsh section of cross-border RBDs, has provided draft guidance to assist NRW in the development of the RBMPs.

Since publishing the second cycle RBMPs, new Welsh legislation has placed greater emphasis on the Sustainable Management of Natural Resources (SMNR) and the importance of this in securing wellbeing for future generations. The Environment (Wales) Act 2016 and the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act (2015) require us to manage, use and enhance Wales' natural resources to deliver lasting, sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits. This puts in place an area-based approach to plan and manage our natural resources in a more joined-up way to improve ecosystem resilience and the ability of our ecosystems to adapt to climate change. This will involve the alignment of RBMP objectives with [Area Statements](#), which outline the priorities, challenges and opportunities for SMNR at a regional level in Wales.

In order to achieve this, the plan includes a summary of:

- most recent classification of water bodies. This enables us to understand the current condition of the water bodies including all the quality elements. Preventing deterioration from this baseline is a key objective of this plan, and also one of our greatest challenges in protecting the water environment.
- proposed PoM needed to achieve the objectives of the WFD Regulations 2017. The Habitats Regulations are listed in the WFD Regulations 2017 as basic measures that need to be implemented. The PoM therefore includes

measures necessary to achieve compliance with standards and objectives for water dependant Natura 2000 sites, listed in the register of Protected Areas. The programme sets out the actions over the next planning cycle 2021-2027 with a focus on collaborative working and the delivery of multiple benefits for people and wildlife.

- proposed environmental objectives set for each quality element in all water bodies, including an objective for the water body as a whole. The default objective is to aim to achieve good status or potential by 2015. In some instances, we have extended the deadline to 2027 or beyond where this is justified on the basis of natural conditions, or technical infeasibility for a small number of chemicals, or set an objective of less than good where this is justified on the basis technical infeasibility or disproportionate cost.

The PoM is aligned with the list of the most important issues we believe threaten the current and potential future uses of the water environment (please note that these are not in order of priority). We have focused on those issues where more action is needed to achieve status objectives. Between the 22 June 2019 and 22 December 2019 NRW undertook a public consultation called “challenges and choices” to share an overview of the significant water management issues identified across Wales’ RBD’s. The consultation responses have informed the review of the program of measures. The issues are consistent with the second cycle RBMPs:

- **Physical modifications.** Man made changes to the natural habitat, for example poorly designed or redundant flood defences and weirs, and changes to the natural river channels for land drainage and navigation and shellfisheries on estuaries and in coastal waters. These modifications can cause changes to natural flow levels, excessive build-up of sediment, and the loss of the habitat that wildlife needs to thrive.
- **Pollution for sewage and waste water.** Waste water can contain large amounts of nutrients (such as phosphorus and nitrates), ammonia, bacteria and other damaging substances
- **Pollution from towns, cities and transport.** Rainwater running over manmade surfaces and carrying pollutants into waters, toxic substances from contaminated land, atmospheric pollution causing acidification and sewage from houses ‘misconnected’ to surface water drains rather than sewers.
- **Pollution from rural areas.** Poor agricultural practice and forestry can result in nutrients and sediments affecting the water environment (also known as 'diffuse rural pollution').
- **Pollution from mines.** Contaminated water draining from mines, most of which are now abandoned.
- **Changes to natural low and levels of water.** Taking too much water from rivers lakes and underground causes problems for wildlife and reduces the water available for people to use.

- **Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS)**. presence of invasive non-native plants and animals in our watercourses poses a threat to biodiversity, increases flood risk, affects the state of our water environment and costs the economy billions per annum.

In Wales for the third cycle RBMP's we aim to achieve a place-based approach to catchment prioritisation that also delivers WFD Regulations 2017 outcomes. We have identified a list of catchments that represent the best suite of opportunities to deliver sustainable management for both water and well-being outcomes. The Area Statement engagement process was central to the selection of these 'Opportunity Catchments'. Ten Opportunity Catchments have been identified across Wales and represent the strongest mix of opportunities for integrated catchment managed within each place.

Opportunity Catchments will focus staff resource across NRW's functions to support partners to deliver integrated catchment management solutions. It is anticipated that partners operating within the ten Opportunity Catchments will also be able to contribute towards improvements within these areas. NRW will continue to work with partners in other catchments that are not selected as an Opportunity Catchments including focussing on addressing physical modifications, fisheries restoration plans, metal mine remediation and pollution from rural and urban areas.

The proposed ten Opportunity Catchment areas are:

- Dee
- Clwyd
- Conwy
- Anglesey
- Teifi
- Taff/Ely
- Cleddau/Milford Haven
- Swansea Bay
- Central Monmouthshire
- Ithon

In England, work is organised at the Operational Catchment level. All Operational Catchments in the English part of the Dee have been included in this HRA. Some measures identified in the English part of the Dee RBD in cycle two have been carried over into cycle three (Annex 2).

This draft HRA has been undertaken iteratively with the developing draft PoM. HRA must be an iterative process and the conclusions have and will continue to, inform the development of the RBMPs. The draft HRA will continue to be discussed with

Statutory Nature Consultation Bodies (NRW and Natural England) and will inform public consultations on the draft plans. It will be revised in light of these discussions, responses to the consultation and as the RBMPs themselves evolve, concluding in a Final HRA which will be published alongside the adopted RBMPs.

#### **4. Screening I: Is the Plan directly connected with or necessary to the management of a European site for the purposes of conserving the habitats or species for which the European sites are designated? Could the plan affect a different European site to the one it is intended to conserve?**

The third cycle Dee and Western Wales draft RBMPs are not directly connected with or necessary to the management of European sites. By their nature, they are designed to improve our environment and hence should be complementary to the management of European sites and meet Protected Area objectives for water dependant European sites. However, the plans include measures that could result in physical interventions in the environment and consequently, there is potential for effects on European sites located on, adjacent to or linked with (e.g. downstream of) measures. NRW have therefore determined that the Dee and Western Wales RBMPs should be subject to HRA.

This draft HRA has been produced as one document to cover both the Western Wales and Dee RBMP. The measures published within the RBMPs are at a national scale and so apply across the Western Wales RBD and the Welsh part of the Dee and Severn RBD. This draft HRA will also assess the measures set by the Environment Agency for the English parts of the Dee catchment.

### **5. Screening II: Test of Likely Significance Alone**

#### **5.1 Screening approach**

The screening stage in strategic HRA is undertaken in stages. A pre-screening is initially undertaken where measures that have no pathway for effects on European site features are screened out immediately, with justification provided. Those with potential pathways for effects will be considered in the second stage which is the Test of Likely Significant Effect.

#### **5.2 Pre-Screening of measures**

Measures have been allocated into one of 13 categories according to the ways in which they could affect Natura 2000 and Ramsar sites. These are described in Table 1 and are taken from the [Habitats Regulations Handbook](#) (DTA Publications Ltd).

Where pathways or uncertainties exist, the national measures will be taken forward to the test of likely significance.

**Table 1. Pre-screening Assessment Categories.**

Category	Description
A	<p><b>General statements of policy/general aspirations.</b> Policies which are no more than general statements of policy or general political aspirations should be screened out because they cannot have a significant effect on a site.</p>
B	<p><b>Policies listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals.</b> These general policies cannot have any effect on a European site and should be screened out.</p>
C	<p><b>Proposal referred to but not proposed by the strategy.</b> Screen out any references to specific proposals for projects, such as those which are identified, for example, in higher policy frameworks such as the Wales Spatial Plan or National Policy Statements, relating perhaps to nationally significant infrastructure projects. These will be assessed by the Secretary of State or Welsh Ministers. A useful ‘test’ as to whether a project should be screened out in this step is to ask the question:</p> <p>‘Is the project provided for/proposed as part of another plan or programme and would it be likely to proceed under the other plan or programme irrespective of whether this subject plan is adopted with or without reference to it?’</p> <p>If the answer is ‘yes’, it will normally be appropriate to screen the project out in this step.</p>
D	<p><b>Environmental protection/site safeguarding policies.</b> These are policies the obvious purpose of which is to protect the natural environment, including biodiversity, and/or to conserve or enhance the natural, built or historic environment, where enhancement measures will not be likely to have any adverse effect on a European Site. They can be screened out because the implementation of the policies is likely to protect rather than adversely affect European sites, and would not undermine their conservation objectives.</p>
E	<p><b>Policies or proposals that steer change in such a way as to protect European sites from adverse effects.</b> These types of policies or proposals will have the effect of steering change away from European sites whose qualifying features may be affected by the change, and they can therefore be screened out.</p>

Category	Description
F	<p><b>Policies or proposals that cannot lead to development or other change.</b> Policies that do not themselves lead to development or other change, for example, because they relate to design or other qualitative criteria for development, such as materials for new development. They do not trigger any development or other changes that could affect a European site, and can be screened out.</p>
G	<p><b>Policies or proposals that could not have any conceivable adverse effect on a site.</b> Policies which make provision for change, but which could have no conceivable effect on a European site, because there is no causal connection or link between them and the qualifying features of any European site and can therefore be screened out.</p>
H	<p><b>Policies or proposals the (actual or theoretical) effects of which cannot undermine the conservation objectives (either alone or in combination with other aspects of this or other plans or projects).</b> Policies or proposals which make provision for change, but which could have no significant effect on a European site, either alone or in combination with other aspects of the same plan, or in combination with other plans or projects, and can therefore be screened out. These may include cases where there are some potential effects which (and theoretically even in combination) would plainly be insignificant and could not undermine the conservation objectives.</p>
I	<p><b>Policies or proposals with a likely significant effect on a site alone.</b> Policies or proposals which are likely to have a significant effect on a European site alone should be screened in.</p>
J	<p><b>Policies or proposals not likely to have a significant effect alone.</b> These aspects of the plan would have some effect on a site, but the effect would not be likely to be significant; so, they must be checked for in-combination (cumulative) effects. They will then be re-categorised as either Category K (no significant effect in combination) or Category L (likely to have a significant effect in combination), as explained below.</p>

Category	Description
K and L	<p><b>Policies or proposals not likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination (K), or likely to have a significant effect in combination (L) after the in-combination test.</b> Where an aspect of a plan could have some effect on the qualifying feature(s) or a European site, but the effects of that aspect of the plan alone would not be significant, the effects of that aspect of the plan will need to be checked in combination firstly, with other effects of the same plan, and then with the effects of other plans and projects. i.e. policies or proposals which will have no likely significant effect alone or in combination are classified as Category K. Policies or proposals which are likely to have a significant effect in combination are classified as Category L. Category L policies or proposals will require further consideration in terms of potential in-combination effects. Firstly, this will be with regard to other aspects of the Plan itself, and subsequently with other separate plans or projects, for example neighbouring Local Plans.</p>
M	<p><b>Bespoke area, site or case-specific policies or proposals intended to avoid or reduce harmful effects on a European Site.</b> Examples of these may be policies or proposals which: are area specific; or provide a bespoke mitigation plan or strategy; or require that a particular proposal be accompanied by a detailed “construction management plan”, or similar plan; or require a proposed change to be subject to early warning monitoring.</p>

## Supplementary Material

Annex 1 Annex 1 lists the national measures, applicable across Wales (Western Wales and Welsh Dee RBD), and Annex 2 lists the measures set by the Environment Agency for the English parts of the Dee catchment. They are grouped under their most relevant Significant Water Management Issues and the pre-screening decision and our justification is recorded. The Measure ID reflects the origin of the measures. WW/Dee/S prefixes indicating that they have been carried forward from the first cycle, CYM prefix indicating that they have been carried forward from the second cycle RBMPs and NEW indicating that these are new for the third cycle.

Pre-screening is based on the identification (or not) of a pathway for any likely significant effects on the European sites outlined in Figure 2. A precautionary approach has been taken where any uncertainty exists because of the following:

- Plans or programmes are still in-development;

- Plans or programmes have no detailed spatial information in terms of their delivery; and
- Plans or programmes are being delivered externally to NRW.

In these instances, we have taken the draft RBMP measures forward for further consideration of pathways in the test of likely significant effects on European Sites.

### **5.3 Test of Likely Significant Effect**

Of the 93 Wales national measures, 73 were screened out at the pre-screening stage and 20 require further consideration under the Test for Likely Significant Effect. There were also 6 Environment Agency measures, 5 of which have been carried forward from the second cycle RBMP and so were assessed under the HRA of the Dee second cycle RBMP and 1 which requires further consideration (EANEW, see section 5.3.2 below). The HRA of the second cycle remains relevant for the third cycle. The Aldford Brook (EAT61) and Wych Brook (EAT64) measures were assessed as having no pathways for effects on European sites and it was recommended that the Upper and Lower Worthenbury measures (EAT62 & EAT60 respectively) be considered at a project level for direct effects on the Midlands Meres and Mosses Ramsar, Brown Moss SAC and Fenns Whixall, Bethsfield, Wem and Cadney Mosses SAC and indirect effects on the Dee and Bala Lake SAC. The baseline information used in the HRA of the second cycle RBMP has remained unchanged for these sites and so the recommendation for project level HRA is still valid.

Those measures requiring further consideration of their likely significant effect upon European site/s alone are documented in Sections 5.3.1 to 5.3.7 below. Section 6 considers the likely significant effect in combination with other plans and projects.

#### **5.3.1 Manage pollution from sewage and wastewater**

*CYM18 - Water companies develop and deliver catchment management options that improve water quality and deliver additional ecosystem services*

*NEW25 - Water companies will deliver DWMPs (Drainage and Wastewater Management Plans)*

*EANEW - The Water Companies will deliver a programme of investigations and improvements under the Water Industry National Environment programme and AMP7 (2020-25) – 38 new local measures*

In Wales, the National Environment Programme (NEP) is driven by NRW, the equivalent in England is the Water Industry NEP (WINEP) and these were presented in RBMP cycles one and two as one of the key mechanisms for water companies contributing to the delivery of WFD Regulations 2017 objectives.

These measures (CYM18, NEW25, EANEW) form part of the NEP and WINEP which in turn informs the Water Company Business Plans (Asset Management Plan (AMP)). AMP evolves over time depending upon, amongst other things, the RBMP cycles. AMP7 is the period from 2020-2025. These water company measures in the NEP/WINEP were published for cycle two, however, for cycle three the measures in the draft are at a national level. The strategic direction for AMP is set by the latest Water Resources Management Plans (WRMP) and the forthcoming Drainage and Wastewater Management Plans (DWMP). The WRMPs underwent Habitats Regulations Assessment and it is a requirement for the DWMP to undergo HRA.

CYM18 is a continuation of water company ambition to deliver 'pilot' SMNR projects, directed by changes in Welsh Government legislation since the second cycle, i.e. the introduction of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016. This programme of catchment management options will be captured during AMP7.

NEW25 reflects the requirement, established by Welsh Government's 'Water Strategy for Wales' (2015), Water UK's 21<sup>st</sup> Century Drainage Programme and [Ofwat's final PR19 methodology](#) for water companies to develop Drainage and Wastewater Management Plans (DWMP). The aim being to bring long-term improvements to Wales' drainage and wastewater planning. The first DWMPs are due for publication in 2023. These will outline the management of drainage and wastewater assets at the local, regional and strategic level to support better receiving water quality, flood risk management and climate change offsetting across the 13 distinct Welsh drainage basins (aligned with RBMP's RBDs) over the proceeding 25 years. As per [Water UK's framework](#) for the production of the DWMPs, there is direct mention of legislation that "*companies must take account of... as relevant to their plans*", including the Habitats Regulations, Strategic Environmental Assessment Regulations (2004), WFD Regulations (2017), Environmental Quality Standards Directive (EQSD) as transposed into the WFD (Standards and Classification) Directions (England and Wales) 2015, and key Welsh Government legislation (Well-being for Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015; Environment (Wales) Act 2016).

Measures CYM18, NEW25, EANEW are an important delivery mechanism for WFD Regulations 2017 improvements, however, they will be delivered through various other water company plans and programmes, including the new DWMP. We therefore conclude that these measures can be screened out as **Category C: Proposal referred to but not proposed by the RBMP**. The measures are provided for/proposed as part of another plan or programme and, whilst the RBMP adds weight to their delivery, they would be likely to proceed under the other plan or programme irrespective of whether the RBMP is adopted with or without reference to it.

*NEW10 - The Water Industry will deliver a programme of investigations and improvements to sewage discharges (both continuous and intermittent) in order to*

*support delivery of WFD Regulations 2017 and Protected Area objectives in AMP7 (2020-25)*

NEW10 will ensure continued compliance by the water companies and looks to further improve sewage discharge procedures and quality (focussed on continuous and intermittent discharges) to prevent further deterioration of surface water status and support the delivery of the third cycle Protected Area objectives (including water dependant European sites). This measure will be delivered by the water companies during AMP7.

The measure includes safeguarding wording as investigations and improvements will support delivery of WFD Regulations 2017 and Protected Area objectives, we therefore propose screening this measure out of the HRA as it aligns with **Category D: Environmental protection/site safeguarding policies**.

### **5.3.2 Manage pollution from towns, cities and transport**

*CYM24 - Deliver priority actions set out in Natural Resources Wales' Diffuse Water Pollution Plan*

This measure has continued through the cycles of the RBMP's. [The Diffuse Water Pollution Plan](#) (DWPP) identifies strategic priorities for addressing diffuse pollution in eight priority areas:

- industrial estates
- small sewage discharges (private)
- drainage misconnections
- surface water drainage from developed areas
- livestock management
- land management
- storage – slurry, fuel, oils, chemicals
- mine waters

Under each of these priority areas there are strategic actions identified such as:

- Developing, improving pollution prevention best practice in the priority sectors and working with business to encourage its uptake.
- Enhance NRW enforcement and regulatory powers introducing new regulations where required.
- Provide new codes of practice for priority Sectors.

The DWPP promotes priority being given to Protected Areas such as Bathing Waters, Drinking Water Protected Areas, fisheries, shellfish beds and water dependent European sites.

The DWPP focuses on strategic changes in business practices and culture, legislation and policy, rather than interventions on the ground. Given the nature of

the actions recommended by the DWPP we propose screening this measure out of the HRA as it aligns with **Category D: Environmental protection/site safeguarding policies**. This measure aims to protect the natural environment, including biodiversity, and will conserve or enhance the natural environment. The measures which are largely implementation and promotion of best practice and enhancement of enforcement and regulatory powers, will not be likely to have any adverse effect on a European Site.

### 5.3.3 Physical modifications

*CYM4 - Deliver the sustainable fisheries programme in Wales to secure improvements to fish habitat and migration*

The Sustainable Fisheries Programme (SFP) is a theme covering several different, but related objectives for fish stocks and fisheries. These include:

- the SFP itself which is a small fund provided by Welsh Government to deliver a range of outcomes including fish habitat improvements and fishery promotion;
- a programme of 'alternative mitigation' providing river habitat improvements as an alternative to migratory salmonid artificial rearing and stocking initiatives that NRW has now ceased;
- occasional other sources of funding for delivery of fish habitat restoration, including Welsh Government capital funding provided in 2020/21.

These initiatives are supported and managed by NRW and look to continue previous work undertaken in the first and second cycle RBMP, initiating new projects across Wales to improve fish stocks and habitat. NRW works closely with Afonydd Cymru and the family of six Rivers Trusts in Wales, as described in the Memorandum of Understanding between the parties, to develop and deliver the programme.

Further activities undertaken by partners include riparian habitat repairs and some fish passage improvements. These are all subject to appropriate permissions and safeguards required by NRW.

The sustainable fisheries concept was driven originally by the declining status of fish populations, particularly migratory fish populations, across Wales and the statutory duties set out in the Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries Act 1975 (as amended) and the Environment Act 1995. The programme is based principally on restoration of river habitats and therefore delivers wider benefits for all aquatic flora and fauna including other species of fish.

The SFP is not a published plan but a programme of activities that will continue to be developed based on evidence and priorities delivered at the project-level, dependent upon available funding, to enhance and protect the fish stocks, fisheries and rivers

across Wales. The location and nature of projects is continually reviewed based on budget availability and technical and environmental constraints and opportunities. **Based on the available information it is uncertain whether this measure would have significant effects on European sites and so on a precautionary basis, we propose screening this in under Category I, for further appropriate assessment.**

*NEW02 - A programme to deliver appropriate river restoration options at a number of high priority, high benefit river catchments identified under the integrated River Restoration Programme for Wales*

*NEW09 - Deliver program of Natura 2000 (N2K) river restoration alongside the development of a strategic approach to funding, includes delivery of the Dee LIFE project.*

NEW 02 and NEW09 capture NRW's aspiration to develop an integrated River Restoration Programme, including for rivers designated as a European site, to bring together related work across Wales. The aim is to take a nature-based approach to restore characteristic river habitat for the benefit of hydromorphology, water quality, biodiversity, fisheries and flood regulation. The focus of this work can be defined as: the re-establishment of natural physical processes (e.g. variation of flow and sediment movement), features (e.g. sediment size and river shape) and physical habitats of a river system (including submerged, bank and floodplain areas).

There will be several strands to the River Restoration Programme including prioritisation of water bodies for restoration works, production of a series of strategic river restoration plans for priority rivers including SAC rivers, collation of activity data and development of best practice case studies. The SAC rivers have been identified by the [Prioritised Action Framework for Wales](#), and the subsequent Thematic Action Plans and Prioritised Improvement Plans, some of which include river restoration schemes.

Despite these measures being for the restoration and improvement of rivers, there is potential for the approaches listed above to have pathways for effects on certain features of European sites, even if they might be benefitting other features. **Based on the available information, it is uncertain whether these measures would have significant effects on European sites and so on a precautionary basis, we propose screening them in under Category I, for further appropriate assessment.**

*CYM5 - In waterbodies designated as heavily modified due to flood and coastal protection, mitigation for NRW owned assets and activities will be reviewed and delivered on a prioritised basis.*

*NEW16 - Maintenance, repair and improvements to flood risk systems will be delivered sensitively, sustainably and will seek to deliver environmental and social benefits.*

Developed as a requirement of the Flood and Water Management Act (2010) and, in part, the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 (creation of the Flood and Coastal Erosion Committee), the [Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management \(FCERM\) Strategy](#) (still at draft stage) sets out Welsh Government ambitions for continued improvements to Wales's flood risk systems. It is the responsibility of Risk Management Authorities, including NRW, to deliver the measures proposed in the strategy. The FCERM strategy is set at a national level and establishes the need to manage the flood risk to communities in Wales through various means. Some flood risk management approaches consist of the construction and maintenance of flood risk assets meaning there is potential for effects on European Sites. However, this has been considered and a [Strategic Environmental Assessment](#) of the FCERM strategy has been undertaken, in addition to a HRA.

All Flood Risk Management activities are delivered under the FCERM strategy but this RBMP measure aims to promote those activities being delivered in a sensitive and sustainable way that delivers wider benefits. We therefore conclude that these measures can be screened out as **Category C: Proposal referred to but not proposed by the RBMP**. The measures are provided for/proposed as part of another plan or programme and would be likely to proceed under the other plan or programme irrespective of whether this subject plan is adopted with or without reference to it.

*NEW19 - Water Companies will address the impacts of water company assets on fish passage causing failure of WFD Regulations 2017 objectives in accordance with objectives in AMP7 (2020-25). This will address structures that act as barriers to fish migration which are associated with other aspects of water company operations, such as trunk sewers and mains pipes located in river channels, and associated concrete sills and structures. In some cases, there may be uncertainty over asset ownership which will need to be resolved. Solutions may often be implemented through working in partnership with other sectors.*

*NEW38 - Habitat improvement schemes, such as sediment management, to reduce the impact of physical modifications (water company reservoirs)*

Despite these measures being for the restoration and improvement of rivers, there is potential for the approaches listed above to have pathways for effects on certain features of European sites, even if they might be benefitting other features. **Based on the available information, it is uncertain whether these measures would have significant effects on European sites and so on a precautionary basis, we**

**propose screening them in under Category I, for further appropriate assessment.**

#### **5.3.4 Changes to natural flow and levels of water**

*CYM 73 Support the delivery of the Welsh Government National Peatland Restoration Programme.*

NRW was commissioned in July 2019 (during cycle 2) by Welsh Government to develop a costed National Action Programme for peatland restoration in Wales from 2020-2025. The main purpose of this programme is to progress Welsh Government's peatland policy ambition for restoring Welsh peatlands as set out by the Minister in a decision report on 26th June 2019.

A comprehensive raft of policy statements and commitments underpin the requirement for a national action programme for peatlands. For example, the Climate Change Adaptation Plan for Wales (Welsh Government, 2019) includes a specific action (AN1) for "Natural Resources Wales to produce a costed national action plan for a five year period to restore our peatlands", with detail in the technical annex including the policy ambition to "bring under sustainable management all areas of peat supporting semi-natural habitat" with the dual target of: (i). ensuring all peatlands with semi-natural vegetation are subject to favourable management/restoration (a minimum estimated area of 30,000 ha), and (ii). restore a minimum of 25% (~c. 5,000 ha) of the most modified areas of peatland (i.e. those currently under conifer/improved grassland) to functional peatland ecosystems.

The programme has been developed through expert opinion and a comprehensive suite of evidence concerning the condition of the Welsh peatland resource and the main pressures and threats affecting it. This includes evidence compiled for the 2018 Article 17 Reporting which is a Habitats Directive requirement for Member States to provide information on the conservation status of habitats and species such as raised bogs, mires and fens.

The programme aims to deliver the following core objectives:

- improving peatland ecosystem resilience;
- contributing to the climate change emergency response through peatland restoration;
- making use of the exceptional relevance of peatlands in providing nature-based solutions to a range of other environmental issues in Wales;
- increase public and sectoral understanding of and support for the importance of restoring Welsh peatlands.

The following projects are being identified in order to meet these objectives:

**Peat Erosion** - The main techniques used will include reprofiling and revegetation with turves of exposed peat faces coupled with the use of peat dams or in some cases peat baffles to encourage water retention and the restoration of peat-forming vegetation.

**Peatland Drainage** – Ditch blocking

**Sustainable management Of Peat** - During the action programme we propose to identify the drivers influencing *Molinia* and ericoid dominance on target sites and then address each of these through mowing, grazing regime modification, *Sphagnum* inoculation and low contour bunding: areas of erosion and drainage are the focus of other plan themes. Assessing seeding-in conifers is another important issue, especially for the *Calluna-Eriophorum* bogs of the north-central moorlands

**Actions for lowland peatlands** will focus on completing the current programme of survey and addressing major issues which hamper ecosystem recovery and the achievement of sustainable management, including scrub cover, dense vegetation which makes sites unattractive to graziers, adverse hydrological and hydrochemical regimes, access and security for grazing, and the availability of local graziers. Addressing these factors will increase the feasibility of long-term sustainable management to be delivered in the main by owner/occupiers, supported where necessary by the future sustainable farming scheme and land management agreements.

**Afforested Peat** - refresh the selection of priority sites for peatland restoration on the WGWE. Initiate/continue peatland restoration at priority locations where restoration is likely to be feasible and where poor tree productivity, carbon balance and wider ecosystem service benefits considerations indicate peat restoration should be the priority. Support private forestry in contributing to peatland restoration.

Despite this measure being for the restoration and improvement of peatlands, there is potential for the approaches listed above to have pathways for effects on certain features of European sites, even if they might be benefitting other features. **Based on available information it is uncertain whether this measure would have significant effects on European sites and so on a precautionary basis, we propose screening this in under Category I, for further appropriate assessment.**

### 5.3.5 Manage pollution from rural areas

*CYM 41 NRW delivers a prioritised programme of measures on the Welsh Government Woodland Estate to support delivery of WFD Regulations 2017 and Protected Area objectives*

Welsh Government's '[Woodlands for Wales' Strategy](#)' outlines the purpose and role of the Welsh Government Woodland Estate (WGWE) in support of SMNR, including co-delivery of WFD Regulations 2017 and Protected Area objectives. The [Strategy's Action Plan](#) outlined (14) priority actions across six areas:

- Tree health;
- Supporting woodland creation and management;
- Enhancing the management and production of Welsh timber and its economic benefits;
- Improving the condition of woodland and trees;
- Non-timber value of forestry, woodlands and trees; and
- UK-cross border working.

Priority action No.3 – 'Use the statutory framework in Wales to deliver woodland creation to optimise the benefits provided by forestry, woodland and trees' – contained 'Woodlands for Wales' indicators No. 21 and 22 which feature the interactions between woodland creation and pressures on natural waters. Further, NRW's 25 [Forest Resources Plans](#) (15 approved, 10 under development) set out a Summary of Objectives (including the management of water resources), and their relation to European sites, in terms of the next ten years of management. Both the 'Woodlands for Wales' Action Plan and the Forest Resource Plans (FRP) are aspirational and set overarching objectives and direction for managing the WGWE at the national and local level, and the FRPs undergo HRA to determine any likely significant effect on European sites.

The RBMP promotes delivery of this measure through the FRP and "supports delivery of WFD Regulations 2017 and Protected Area objectives" and so we conclude that this measure, as it incorporates this safeguarding wording can be Screened out as **Category D: Environmental protection/ site safeguarding policies**.

### 5.3.6 Manage pollution from mines

*CYM49 Deliver metal (non-coal) minewater preventative and remediation programme as identified under the Metal Mine Strategy for Wales.*

*WW0031 Continue to investigate minewater impact and develop remediation plans in accordance with the Metal Mines Strategy for Wales*

The 'Metal Mine Strategy for Wales'<sup>27</sup>, published in 2002, outlined a strategy to focus remediation and mitigation objectives on the top 50 sites considered "...as having the greatest environmental impact".

Works from the current Strategy<sup>27</sup> have been ongoing for many years, an example of this is Frongoch which was delivered in the second cycle. The programme will be developed in line with the Metal Mines Strategy and is continually reviewed based on budget availability and technical and environmental constraints and opportunities. Despite this measure being for the remediation of metal mine sites, there is potential for the projects to have pathways for effects on certain features of European sites (e.g. Calaminarian Grassland is dependent upon metals from the sites). **Based on available information it is uncertain whether these measures would have significant effects on European sites and so on a precautionary basis, we propose screening them in under Category I, for further appropriate assessment.**

*DE0014 - Coal Authority minewater preventative and remediation programme*

*WW0141 - Implementation of best practice controls and remediation at abandoned coal mines. DECC funded prioritised (phased) programme*

The Coal Authority is a government body (and so a Competent Authority under Habitats Regulations) responsible for managing the effects of past coal mining, including mine water pollution and other mining legacy issues. It is responsible for dealing with water pollution caused by historical coal mining. Whilst these measures have obvious WFD Regulations 2017 benefits, they are not solely driven by the RBMP, they are a core responsibility of the Coal Authority. We therefore conclude that these measures can be screened out as **Category C: Proposal referred to but not proposed by the RBMP**. The measures are provided for/proposed as part of another plan or programme and would be likely to proceed under the other plan or programme irrespective of whether this subject plan is adopted with or without reference to it.

### 5.3.7 All significant water management issues

*NEW05 - At risk Drinking Water Protection Areas (DrWPAs) (and all upstream water bodies) have been taken forward as 23 (21 plus original 2) Safeguard Zones for funded Asset Management Plan (AMP) Investigations to assess the sources of the raw water failure and to identify viable catchment solutions. Where catchment solutions are found to be possible, and stakeholder agreement can be assured, improvement measures will be delivered throughout AMP7.*

Measure NEW05, is driven by the provision within the WFD Regulations 2017 for Drinking Water Protected Areas and is delivered through various other water company plans and programmes, including AMP7. We therefore conclude that this measure can be screened out as **Category C: Proposal referred to but not proposed by the RBMP**. The measure is provided for/proposed as part of another

plan or programme and would be likely to proceed under the other plan or programme irrespective of whether this subject plan is adopted with or without reference to it.

*NEW06 - A range of measures are planned to endeavour to achieve the microbial standard in shellfish flesh. A number of actions are planned under PR19 and locally that will lead to improvement in Shellfish Quality. Plans are also in place to deliver a better understanding of improvements required to achieve Shellfish Water Protected Area objectives and information to support cost benefits analysis.*

Despite these measures being for the improvement of Shellfish Water Protected Areas, there is potential for the improvements to have pathways for effects on certain features of European sites. **Based on the available information, it is uncertain whether this measure would have significant effects on European sites and so on a precautionary basis, we propose screening this in under Category I, for further appropriate assessment.**

*NEW23 - Water Companies will deliver a programme of investigations and improvements to deal with chemicals to support delivery of WFD Regulations 2017 and Protected Area objectives in AMP7 (2020-25).*

This measure includes safeguarding wording as investigations and improvements will support delivery of WFD Regulations 2017 and Protected Area objectives, we therefore propose screening this measure out of the HRA as it aligns with **Category D: Environmental protection/site safeguarding policies.**

## **6. Screening II: Test of Likely Significance in combination**

### **6.1 Identifying possible in-combination effects**

The Habitats Regulations require us to consider whether the RBMP would have significant effects either alone, or in combination with other plans or projects. The pre-screening and Test of likely Significant Effect have screened out 84 of the 93 measures from the assessment. 9 measures are being put forward on a precautionary basis for appropriate assessment due to uncertainty of likely significant effects.

In this section we consider which plans have the potential to act in combination with the RBMPs. Given the high-level, non-spatial nature of the plans, only relevant high-level plans have been considered. At appropriate assessment stage we will consider in greater detail the in-combination effects of the nine measures screened in.

Plans that we have identified and will consider at appropriate assessment stage are:

- **Area Statements** were published in Spring 2020 and set out the themes, priorities and actions required across 7 areas of Wales to promote the sustainable management of natural resources. The statements promote collaborative working and will be developed over coming years to work towards delivery of the **Natural Resources Policy** priorities. Themes and priorities include sustainable management of the water environment and there are many synergies with the RBMPs. The synergies are drawn out in the sector specific information on [Area Statements and Water](#). The Statements and their HRA's will inform RBMP projects and plans and their HRA's.
- **The UK Marine Policy Statement (MPS) and Welsh National Marine Plan (WNMP)**: implements the requirements of The Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009, and sets out a framework for a system of marine planning, providing the high level policy context for the sustainable development of the United Kingdom marine area, and in the case of the WNMP, for the Wales marine area, supporting the vision for clean, healthy, safe, productive and biologically diverse oceans and seas. The MPS places a duty on marine plan authorities to prepare Marine Plans for the Welsh inshore and offshore regions. The WNMP was adopted in November 2019 and sets the planning framework that applicants and public authorities must use in applying for and determining proposals and licence applications.
- **Welsh Governments National Development Framework (NDF)** will set the long-term spatial direction for Government policy, action and investment and for others who the Government work with. The vision is to help deliver sustainable places by supporting positive placemaking and ensuring that our spatial choices direct development to the right places, make the best use of resources, create and sustain accessible, healthy communities, protect our environment and support prosperity for all. The NDF is due to be laid before the Senedd in autumn 2020 and following scrutiny is expected to be adopted in Spring 2021.
- **Shoreline Management Plans (SMPs)**: are the regional strategic plans that set out the priorities and strategic direction for all flood and coastal erosion risk management on the coast. SMPs have a geographic framework set out according to an area of coastline known as a sub-cell within a littoral sediment cell (length of coastline that is relatively self-contained in terms of the movement of sediment). A policy is assigned to each sub-cell to direct FRM activities around the coast.
- **Flood Risk Management Plans (FRMPs)**: are high-level planning tools that set out objectives for flood risk management across each river catchment and estuary. They were adopted in 2015 by NRW and the Environment Agency for the three main catchments in Wales (NRW led on the Western Wales FRMP and Dee FRMP and the Environment Agency led on the Severn FRMP). They consider inland flood risk from rivers, surface water, groundwater and tidal flooding, and are designed to set the overall direction of flood risk

management on a catchment basis. They identify broad flood risk management policies that are economically practical, have a potential life of 50 to 100 years, and will help NRW work with others to put them in place. They are due for review in 2020/21.

- **National Strategy for Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management in Wales (NSFCERMW) and National FCERM Strategy England:** in response to the Flood and Water Management Act 2010, the National FCERM Strategies were adopted in 2011 to manage flood and coastal erosion risk management in England and Wales. The FCERM strategies described what needed to be done and by whom to manage the risk of flooding and coastal erosion, and to manage its consequences. It set out the national approach to flood and coastal risk in England and Wales, describing the long-term goals for managing flooding from rivers and the sea and how these will be achieved. The FCERM strategy in England was adopted in September 2020. The FCERM strategy in Wales is due for adoption in Autumn 2020.
- **Water Resources Management Plans (WRMPs):** WRMPs are written in response to, primarily, the Water Act (2003); though many other regulatory documents are linked to the plans (e.g. Water Strategy for Wales 2015, Well-being for Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, Environment (Wales) Act 2016, and the English equivalents). Every five years these plans are published to deal with water supply and demand pressures identified across the set RBDs, with a view to the challenges of at least the next 25 years. In England and Wales the most recent updates were published (as Final) in 2019 in preparation for adoption from 2020.
- **Woodlands for Wales Strategy:** This [Strategy](#) (last updated in 2018) sets out the former Welsh Government's approach to sustainably manage woodland across Wales. Since the first publication in 2001, the strategy has run parallel to UK legislation, and more recently, Welsh legislation (e.g. Well-being for Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, Environment (Wales) Act 2016), in order to manage the deliver the policy objectives of sustainable woodland expansion and management. The Strategy is reviewed consistently to ensure best practice for management is followed.

Other important plans that are under development are:

- **The third cycle Severn RBMP, North West RBMP, South West RBMP** are currently under development and are expected to be published as drafts in 2021, so we cannot consider in combination effects at this stage, but the HRA of these plans should consider these plans in their in-combination assessment.
- **Rural Land Use** – No specific plans have been reviewed for this in combination assessment, however, it is recognised that the Agriculture Bill (Wales) will seek to provide the legal framework for leaving the Common

Agricultural Policy (CAP) and establishing new systems for agricultural and land management support across the UK.

## 7. Appropriate Assessment

### 7.1 Approach to the appropriate assessment

The likelihood and significance of effects of the plan have been identified in the earlier parts of this HRA. The Appropriate Assessment (AA) is the consideration of whether adverse effects on site integrity will occur for the measures that have not been screened out (Section 5.3). We have taken these measures forward into the AA because of uncertainty over the scale/location/magnitude of significant effects that we could not conclude were not likely to happen. There are real and credible pathways for effect that could occur but at this level of plan we do not have the detail available to say where, how or when effects might occur. As a result, we are outlining avoidance and mitigation measures that will give us confidence that any adverse effects on European sites will be avoided or adequately mitigated.

Each of the screened in measures are likely to result in physical works and whilst the long-term aim is environmental improvement, the HRA needs to establish that there are no unintended consequences of the implementation of the RBMP on European sites. For example, weir removal aimed at improving fish passage, can result in mobilisation of suspended solids, affect the hydrogeomorphology of a channel, disturb species such as otters or bats, and so impact on other features of European sites.

The measures screened in are:

- CYM4 - Deliver the sustainable fisheries programme in Wales to secure improvements to fish habitat and migration
- NEW02 - A programme to deliver appropriate river restoration options at a number of high priority, high benefit river catchments identified under the integrated River Restoration Programme for Wales
- NEW09 - Deliver program of N2K river restoration alongside the development of a strategic approach to funding, includes delivery of the Dee LIFE project
- NEW19 - Water Companies will address the impacts of water company assets on fish passage causing failure of WFD Regulations 2017 objectives in accordance with objectives in AMP7 (2020-25). This will address structures that act as barriers to fish migration which are associated with other aspects of water company operations, such as trunk sewers and mains pipes located in river channels, and associated concrete sills and structures. In some cases, there may be uncertainty over asset ownership which will need to be resolved. Solutions may often be implemented through working in partnership with other sectors.
- NEW38 - Habitat improvement schemes, such as sediment management, to reduce the impact of physical modifications (water company reservoirs)

- CYM73 - Support the delivery of the Welsh Government National Peatland Restoration Programme.
- CYM49 - A programme to deliver appropriate treatment at a small number of high priority, high benefit metal mines identified under the Metal Mine Strategy for Wales
- WW0031 - Continue to investigate minewater impact and develop remediation plans in accordance with the Metal Mines Strategy for Wales
- NEW06 - A range of measures are planned to endeavour to achieve the microbial standard in shellfish flesh. A number of actions are planned under PR19 and locally that will lead to improvement in Shellfish Quality. Plans are also in place to deliver a better understanding of improvements required to achieve Shellfish Water Protected Area objectives and information to support cost benefits analysis.

The RBMP's are overarching plans covering a very wide number of environmental programmes all aiming to improve the water environment. Because of the high level of the plans there are inherent difficulties and uncertainties in carrying out an AA at this scale. However, adverse effects on the integrity of European sites must be assessed as far as possible using the available detail associated with the screened in measures. This AA must then inform development of those measures, with lower tier plan, programme and project level HRA increasing in specificity in subsequent stages.

In this AA we aim to provide high level mitigation to avoid or reduce any possible impacts associated with the development and delivery of the screened in measures. These are described in section 7.3 and they provide us with confidence that lower tier plans, programmes and projects can be developed and delivered without causing an adverse effect on site integrity for any European sites. The mitigation is not intended to be comprehensive, and it is very likely that there will be other impacts and therefore other mitigation that will be required which it is not possible to identify at plan level because the nature, timing, duration, scale or location is not yet known. This detail is deferred to the HRA of lower tier plans, programmes and projects.

We seek to defer the HRA to lower tier plans and projects, where a greater level of detail will be available to inform the HRA, mitigation and compensation. The criteria that must be met to defer down are:

- The higher-level plan assessment cannot reasonably predict any effect on a European site in a meaningful way; whereas
- The lower tier plan or project level, which will identify more precisely the nature, timing, duration, scale or location of development, and thus its potential effects, will have the necessary flexibility over the exact nature, timing, duration, scale and location of the proposal to enable an adverse effect on site integrity to be avoided; and

- The HRA of the lower tier plan or project is required as a matter of law or Government policy.

We have shown throughout this assessment that the national scale of the measures lack detail of approaches and spatial extents or locations. For the measures we have screened in, we have not been able to conclude with sufficient certainty that significant effects would not arise. There is insufficient detail available to predict the likelihood and significance of effects in a meaningful and robust way. The programmes and projects that will be developed under these measures will have greater detail and flexibility in terms of locations, timing and options appraisal that takes into account the sensitivities of European sites and features.

Where NRW is developing and delivering programmes and projects they must be delivered following our Operational Guidance Notes. Those of relevance are:

- OGN 84: Screening internal plans, programmes and strategies for SEA
- OGN 85: Undertaking SEA of Internal plans, programmes and strategies
- OGN 86: Environmental screening of internal projects
- OGN 87: Undertaking environmental assessment of internal projects
- OGN 200: Habitats Regulations Assessment of projects
- OGN 209: Habitats Regulations Assessment of internal plans
- OGN 72: Guidance for assessing activities and projects for compliance with the WFD

It is possible that under CYM4, NEW02 and NEW09, the fisheries and river restoration programmes, our partners may be delivering projects under grants from NRW. A condition of these grants is that our partners must ensure all relevant assents and consents are in place when they deliver the work, this would include a HRA.

Any proponent of projects, whether NRW itself, or Rivers Trusts, Water Companies etc, are required by law to complete a HRA when undertaking operations that could have pathways for effects on European sites. Or in the case of NRW or Local Authorities, when determining applications made by external parties for any form of authorisation to undertake projects with the potential to affect European sites.

We are therefore confident that the criteria for deferring down the HRA to a lower tier are met.

## **7.2 Assessment of potential in-combination effects**

The Habitats Directive and the Habitats Regulations require competent authorities to include within an AA, the assessment of effects on a European site in combination with other plans or projects.

For the purpose of this assessment, and in keeping with the high-level nature of the plan, only key relevant high-level plans that could potentially result in in-combination effects have been considered. At this national scale, it is not possible to provide an extensive list of all plans and projects which may lead to in-combination effects together with the RBMP. These will however need to be considered further where AA is required in lower tier assessments. The key high level plans considered are summarised below:

- Natural Resources Policy & Area Statements
- Welsh National Marine Plan (WNMP)
- Future Wales: The National Plan 2040 (previously named National Development Framework) (Draft).
- NSFCERMW
- National FCERM Strategy for England
- Shoreline Management Plans
- Second Cycle Flood Risk Management Plans – Dee, Severn, Western Wales, North West and South West
- Water Resource Management Plans (Welsh Water, United Utilities, Dee Valley Water)
- Woodlands for Wales Strategy

### **Natural Resources Policy and Area Statements**

The Natural Resources Policy (NRP) sets out the priorities for the SMNR as:

- Delivering nature-based solutions
- Renewable energy
- Circular economy
- Place based approach

The RBMP has been developed to support and deliver these priorities, where relevant. For example, river restoration and peatland restoration are nature-based solutions that not only benefit the ecology of those habitats but will provide multiple benefits such as water quality improvements and run-off reduction to benefit flood risk management. The prioritisation for measure delivery in the Opportunity Catchments by the RBMP and the delivery mechanisms linking through Area Statements reflect the place-based approach. The area statements promote collaborative working and they will be developed over coming years to work towards delivery of the NRP priorities. Themes and priorities include sustainable management of the water environment which complements the RBMPs. The synergies are drawn out in the sector specific information on [Area Statements and Water](#). The delivery of nature-based solutions and collaborative and place-based approach promoted through area statements will benefit RBMP delivery of measures and is not anticipated to result in in-combination effects.

### **Welsh National Marine Plan**

The WNMP HRA focussed on the potential effects of sector policies promoting or supporting development on European sites. The high level nature of the plan, meaning uncertainties in location, scale, type and timing of future activities, meant that the HRA could not identify specific effects on European sites. Uncertainties are inevitable and common in high level plans and the HRA recommended that the general policy safe-guards, a requirement for project level HRA and regular review of the WNMP (3 yearly) will ensure no adverse effect on the integrity of European sites.

The WNMP explicitly supports the achievement of Good Environmental Status (GES) under the UK Marine Strategy. Its goal is to achieve or maintain GES in coastal and marine waters, which is defined through 11 “Descriptors” covering the whole marine environment. The policies set out in the WNMP play a key role in supporting the achievement of GES. The RBMP measures scoped into the AA, in particular, NEW06 and measures that will reduce diffuse pollution, will complement the WNMP and would be unlikely to result in significant effects on European sites.

### **Future Wales: The National Plan 2040 (previously named National Development Framework) (Draft)**

Future Wales is Welsh Governments draft national development framework which was laid to the Senedd on 21 September 2020. It will set the long term spatial direction for Government policy, action and investment and for others who the Government work with. The vision is to help deliver sustainable places by supporting positive placemaking and ensuring that our spatial choices direct development to the right places, make the best use of resources, create and sustain accessible, healthy communities, protect our environment and support prosperity for all. The framework sets out 11 outcomes that the Government aim to achieve in its 20-year life. This includes “the environmental, social and cultural value of our natural resources will be managed, maintained and enhanced, while economic benefits will be utilised sustainably and appropriately by promoting nature-based solutions and a circular economy. Across Wales better resource choices will be reflected in more sustainable places, which benefit from reductions in levels of pollution, and be healthier and more liveable.”

The RBMP measures in the appropriate assessment that are associated with water company measures are aimed at improving the status of water courses and the marine environment. Development will inevitably require infrastructure associated with water resources and wastewater treatment, but the WFD Regulations 2017 itself requires that such development will be undertaken in a manner that does not result in detriment to the ecological potential or status of waterbodies.

The framework sets the context for lower tier plans and projects, including safeguarding in relation to European sites. Therefore, no in combination effects can

be predicted at this level. The main potential for in combination effects on European sites will come from lower tier plans and projects arising from the two plans, so consideration will be required in their HRAs.

### **National Strategy for Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management in Wales**

The aim of the NSFCERMW is to reduce the risks to people and communities from flooding and coastal erosion. The strategy describes the roles and responsibilities of those involved in managing the risk of flooding and coastal erosion, the approaches to managing those risks and their consequences, and the way funding for flood and coastal erosion risk management is allocated. It sets out the national approach to flood and coastal erosion risk in Wales, describing the long-term goals for managing flooding from surface water, rivers and the sea, as well as coastal erosion, and how these will be achieved.

The strategy promotes Natural Flood Management (NFM) and nature-based solutions which will have synergies with the RBMP objectives. This encourages interventions that will slow the flow of water and utilise natural flood plains with the indirect benefits this provides in reducing diffuse pollution. The strategy seeks to prevent inappropriate development on the floodplain and develop approaches to coastal adaptation which will have indirect benefits for the RBMP in maintaining and restoring coastal and fluvial habitats.

However, potential conflicts with the RBMP arise where hard engineering in fluvial and coastal environments are required to protect existing communities that are at flood risk. The HRA of the strategy concluded that its implementation could affect the integrity of European sites as a result of interventions required to protect communities. The HRA documented the alternatives considered, the imperative reasons of overriding public interest and the measures proposed to compensate for the loss of any features of European Sites. It is not anticipated that the RBMP would have any in combination effects with the strategy. The measures scoped into the AA that aim to improve fish passage, habitat and river restoration aim to restore a legacy of hard engineering, some of which was associated with FRM activities.

The strategy requires that NFM is included in the options appraisal for all projects, this coupled with the need for project level WFD Regulations 2017 Compliance Assessment and Habitats Regulations Assessment will mitigate the risk on European sites.

### **National FCERM Strategy for England**

As required by the Flood and Water Management Act 2010, in a similar manner to the NSFCERMW, the National FCERM Strategy for England sets out the overall framework for managing flood risk and coastal erosion in England. The strategy describes what needs to be done and by whom to manage the risk of flooding and coastal erosion, and to manage its consequences. It sets out the national approach to flood and coastal risk in England, describing the long-term goals for managing

flooding from rivers and the sea and how these will be achieved. The Strategy was adopted in 2020. As with the NSFCERMW, it is not anticipated that the RBMP would have any in combination effects with the Strategy. The measures scoped into the AA that aim to improve fish passage, habitat and river restoration aim to restore a legacy of hard engineering, some of which was associated with FRM activities.

### **Shoreline Management Plans**

Shoreline Management Plans (SMPs), the second generation of which were adopted in Wales in 2013, set out the priorities and the strategic direction for all flood and coastal erosion risk management on the coast. They support and help to achieve the objectives of the NSFCERMW and so the in-combination assessment above is also valid for the SMPs.

### **Flood Risk Management Plans**

The first cycle FRMPs were published alongside the second cycle RBMPs in 2015. They are high-level planning tools that set out objectives for flood risk management across each river catchment and estuary. They cover the same spatial scale as RBMPs, being at a RBD scale (Dee, Western Wales and Severn), the aim being to encourage synergistic planning of activities in the water environment. The FRMPs are designed to set the overall direction of flood risk management, prioritised depending upon risk to communities. They identify broad flood risk management policies that are economically practical, have a potential life of 50 to 100 years, and help NRW to work with others to put them in place.

The second cycle FRMPs are being developed and are due for publication in 2021. As with SMPs, they will support and help to achieve the objectives of the NSFCERMW and so the in-combination assessment above is also valid for the existing FRMPs. The second cycle FRMP will undergo SEA and HRA which will consider in combination effects with the RBMPs.

### **Water Resource Management Plans**

In England and Wales the most recent updates were published (as Final) in 2019 in preparation for adoption from 2020. They provide details of how Water Companies will ensure that adequate water is available to meet the planned growth in population, housing and economic activity in its supply area, while taking account of climate change and minimising impacts on customers' bills and the environment.

Options to address a deficit in water supply include:

- encouraging water efficiency,
- reducing leakages and
- seeking water resource through new or existing sources.

The HRAs of the WRMPs concluded that they will have no significant or adverse effects on any European site as a result of their implementation.

There are links with the RBMPs as certain infrastructure such as reservoirs have a shared function of providing water resource but also allowing control of releases during periods of high flows. However, the main potential for in combination effects on European sites will come from project delivery arising from the two plans, particularly if location and timing are close. There is insufficient detail on the timing and design of these projects and so in combination effects will need to be considered through the project level HRAs.

Projects delivered from the WRMP will undergo Environmental Impact Assessment and HRA at a project level where necessary. This will identify any potential effects on European sites alone and in combination at a project level, as more detail emerges. Environmental Impact Assessment and HRA input to the options appraisal process will seek to avoid, reduce or mitigate potential effects.

### **Woodlands for Wales Strategy**

The Woodlands for Wales Strategy (last updated in 2018) sets out Welsh Government's approach to sustainably manage woodland across Wales. Forestry operations have the potential to affect water quality and the hydromorphology of watercourses. However, the Woodlands for Wales Strategy requires that "all woodlands and trees are managed sustainably to high standards of environmental stewardship, safeguarding and enhancing the full range of ecosystem services through more widespread and effective application of the United Kingdom Forestry Standard and greater uptake of auditable standards such as UK Woodland Assurance Standard". The Woodlands for Wales Strategy has synergies with the RBMPs as it:

- promotes woodland creation as integral elements of land management,
- promotes urban woodlands and trees as making a contribution to water management and
- recognises the carbon storage capacity of woodlands

Measures for habitat restoration and peatland restoration are likely to be undertaken within areas of forestry and so there could be potential for in combination effects. However, there is insufficient detail on the timing and design of these projects and so in combination effects will need to be considered through the project level HRAs.

### **7.3 Avoidance and Mitigation of Impacts**

Recent European Court judgement in the case of People Over Wind (People Over Wind & Sweetman v. Coillte, 2018) has clarified that it is not appropriate at the screening stage to take account of measures intended to avoid or reduce the harmful effects of a plan or project upon a European site, and such measures should, instead, be taken into account as part of an AA. This has changed our approach to the HRA of the third cycle RBMP, in comparison to the second cycle. The development of the draft RBMP and the HRA was an iterative process whereby consideration was given to amending wording of measures, where appropriate, to avoid adverse impacts. As well as wording changes and strengthening of measures,

Table 2 has also been developed which highlights mitigatory approaches which must be adhered to when preparing programmes and projects.

The aim of the WFD Regulations 2017 is to establish a framework for the protection of all surface waters and groundwater with the aim to reach good status in all waters. Both the Habitats Regulations and the WFD Regulations 2017 promote the achievement of healthy aquatic ecosystems while at the same time ensuring a balance between water, nature protection and the sustainable use and management of natural resources. Indeed, all water dependent European sites are “Protected Areas” under WFD Regulations 2017 and so the implementation of measures will aim to benefit the objectives of the nature Regulations.

There is a legislative requirement for HRA to be undertaken for any plans, strategies or projects that could have pathways for effects on European sites. This is required by NRW as an authority undertaking works on or near sites, or by NRW (or other consenting authorities), permitting or consenting strategies or projects that take place on or near a European site. Table 2 to 5 below highlight mitigatory approaches relevant to those measures scoped into the AA. The measures have been grouped into similar activities to prevent duplication and repetition. These are not intended to be comprehensive, and it is very likely that there will be other impacts and therefore other mitigation that will be required which it is not possible to identify at plan level because the nature, timing, duration, scale or location is not yet known. However, they should be considered when preparing lower tier programmes and projects.

**Table 2: Mitigatory Approaches for Fisheries & Habitat Restoration measures (CYM4, NEW02, NEW09, NEW19, NEW38).**

<b>Potential Impact pathways</b>	<b>Generic mitigation</b>
Habitat loss, damage or fragmentation	<p>Minimise the footprint of the works. Also consider access routes and any compound areas that might be required. At the river entry point, consider protection for the bank to prevent future erosion, loss of habitats and compaction that may lead to an increase in invasive or non-desirable species after the works.</p> <p>Effects on riparian habitat and in-river habitat must be considered, including indirect effects brought about by changing geomorphology. Will the watercourse try and change its course after the works and erosion and deposition patterns altered? Could river-gravels used for fish spawning be washed away?</p> <p>Shrub or tree removal should be kept to a minimum and timed to avoid sensitive periods. Where unavoidable, planting mitigatory trees and shrubs may be required.</p> <p>Make certain that impact pathways are well understood and ensure that appropriate avoidance and mitigation measures can be delivered and are built into method statements where potential for adverse effects are identified.</p>
Disturbance causing damage or harm to a designated species feature.	<p>Ecological surveys undertaken early in project appraisal to determine presence or absence of species. Followed by specific protected species surveys. Note, these can be seasonally dependent and so must be factored into project plans accordingly.</p> <p>Indirect effects must be considered for example, in a fluvial environment impacts can occur some distance downstream.</p> <p>Noise/visual disturbance should be avoided or minimised.</p> <p>Timing of works to avoid sensitive periods e.g. fish migration, otter resting/breeding, bat roosting, bird nesting, overwintering birds and otter movement.</p> <p>Make certain that impact pathways are well understood and ensure that appropriate mitigation measures can be delivered and are built into method statements where potential for adverse effects are identified.</p>

<b>Potential Impact pathways</b>	<b>Generic mitigation</b>
Emissions to air, such as dust, vehicle emissions	The scale and nature of projects under the RBMP is unlikely to generate significant impacts on air quality. But method statements should include standard best practice such as dust suppression on site.
Soil quality/compaction	Access routes, compounds and work areas must be protected from soil compaction, or where unavoidable, be reinstated post construction. Appropriate mitigation measures should be built into method statements where potential for adverse effects are identified.
Water quality – works in in the marine, river or lake environment may result in suspended solids, release of contaminants or changes to the chemical &/or biological quality of the water course	<p>Any coastal or in-river works can generate suspended solids and/or chemical contamination that may affect European site interest features. Consider if the river entry point can be upstream of the works, so that mitigation will be easier to put in place. <a href="#">Guidance for Pollution Prevention</a> should be followed at all times to minimise risk.</p> <p>Ground investigations and consultation with Geoscience should identify the risk of any contaminated land within the study area.</p> <p>Early consideration in options appraisal and in designing method statements will be required.</p> <p>Make certain that impact pathways are well understood and ensure that appropriate mitigation measures can be delivered and are built into method statements where potential for adverse effects are identified.</p>
Biosecurity	<p>Working with large equipment in, and importing material to, watercourses poses a high risk of introducing INNS to an area, or spreading diseases / pathogens. Contractors required to produce robust risk assessment and method statements and have rigorous procedures for cleaning plant and equipment. All non-virgin materials to be strictly screened. For example, if river-gravels are used from another site, specialist advice would be needed.</p> <p>An assessment should be made of which INNS are the highest potential risk; both to the habitat and features at the working site, or if there are any present that could later be spread elsewhere.</p>

<b>Potential Impact pathways</b>	<b>Generic mitigation</b>
Water resources – change in water levels e.g. abstraction or ditch blocking	<p>Any projects that alter the hydrological regime has the potential to adversely affect European sites.</p> <p>Make certain that impact pathways are well understood and ensure that appropriate mitigation measures can be delivered and are built into method statements where potential for adverse effects are identified. Works to weirs has a potential to affect water flows some distance away from the site.</p> <p>European sites can be affected by water abstraction and discharge of effluent from wastewater treatment works or other waste management streams over large distances, therefore ensure that potential impacts have been considered within and outside of a plan/project area.</p>

**Table 3: Mitigatory Approaches for National Peatland Restoration measure (CYM23).**

<b>Potential Impact pathways</b>	<b>Generic mitigation</b>
Habitat loss, damage or fragmentation	<p>Minimise the footprint of the works. Also consider access routes and any compound areas that might be required. Use low ground-pressure (i.e. &lt;3 Pounds per Square Inch (PSI)) construction plant to implement restoration.</p> <p>Shrub or tree removal should be timed to avoid sensitive periods.</p> <p>Make certain that impact pathways are well understood and ensure that appropriate avoidance and mitigation measures can be delivered and are built into method statements where potential for adverse effects are identified.</p>
Disturbance causing damage or harm to a designated species feature.	<p>Ecological surveys undertaken early in project appraisal to determine presence or absence of species. Followed by specific protected species surveys. Note, these can be seasonally dependent and so must be factored into project plans accordingly.</p> <p>Indirect effects must be considered for example, in a fluvial environment impacts can occur some distance downstream.</p>

Potential Impact pathways	Generic mitigation
	<p>Noise/visual disturbance should be avoided or minimised. Timing of works to avoid sensitive periods e.g. fish migration, bat roosting, bird nesting, overwintering birds and otter movement.</p> <p>Make certain that impact pathways are well understood and ensure that appropriate mitigation measures can be delivered and are built into method statements where potential for adverse effects are identified.</p>
Emissions to air, such as dust, vehicle emissions, and GHGs	The scale and nature of projects under the RBMP is unlikely to generate significant impacts on air quality. However, method statements should include standard best practice such as dust suppression on site and avoid extensive ground penetration that release Green House Gases (e.g. methane).
Soil/peat quality/compaction	Access routes, compounds and work areas must be protected from soil/peat compaction, or where unavoidable, be reinstated post construction. Appropriate mitigation measures should be built into method statements where potential for adverse effects are identified.
Water quality – works in in the marine, river or lake environment may result in suspended solids, release of contaminants or changes to the chemical &/or biological quality of the water course	Make certain that impact pathways are well understood and ensure that appropriate mitigation measures can be delivered and are built into method statements where potential for adverse effects are identified.
Water resources – change in water levels e.g. abstraction or ditch blocking	<p>Any projects that alter the hydrological regime has the potential to adversely affect European sites.</p> <p>Make certain that impact pathways are well understood and ensure that appropriate mitigation measures can be delivered and are built into method statements where potential for adverse effects are identified.</p> <p>European site features can be affected by water abstraction and holding (e.g. ponding), therefore ensure that potential impacts have been considered within and outside of a plan/project area.</p>
Biosecurity	Working with large equipment within a watercourse poses a high risk of introducing INNS to an area, or spreading diseases / pathogens. Contractors required to produce robust risk assessment and method

Potential Impact pathways	Generic mitigation
	<p>statements and have rigorous procedures for cleaning plant and equipment. All non-virgin materials to be strictly screened.</p> <p>An assessment should be made of which INNS are the highest potential risk; both to the habitat and features at the working site, or if there are any present that could later be spread elsewhere.</p>

**Table 4: Mitigatory Approaches for Metal Mine Remediation measures (CYM49, WW0031).**

Potential Impact pathways	Generic mitigation
Habitat loss, damage or fragmentation	<p>Minimise the footprint of the works. Consider access routes and any compound areas that might be required.</p> <p>Make certain that impact pathways are well understood and ensure that appropriate avoidance and mitigation measures can be delivered and are built into method statements where potential for adverse effects are identified. Particular focus should be given to Calaminarian Grassland, which by its nature is prevalent to metal mine sites.</p> <p>Shrub or tree removal should be kept to a minimum and timed to avoid sensitive periods. Where unavoidable, planting mitigatory trees and shrubs may be required.</p>
Disturbance causing damage or harm to a designated species feature.	<p>Ecological surveys undertaken early in project appraisal to determine presence or absence of species.</p> <p>Noise/visual disturbance should be avoided or minimised.</p>

Potential Impact pathways	Generic mitigation
	<p>Timing of works to avoid sensitive periods e.g. fish migration, bat roosting, bird nesting or overwintering birds and otter movement.</p> <p>Make certain that impact pathways are well understood and ensure that appropriate mitigation measures can be delivered and are built into method statements where potential for adverse effects are identified.</p>
Emissions to air, such as dust, vehicle emissions	The scale and nature of projects under the RBMP is unlikely to generate significant impacts on air quality. But method statements should include standard best practice such as dust suppression on site.
Soil quality/compaction	Access routes, compounds and work areas must be protected from soil compaction, or where unavoidable, be reinstated post construction. Appropriate mitigation measures should be built into method statements where potential for adverse effects are identified.
Water quality – works in or adjacent to marine, river or lake environments may result in suspended solids, release of contaminants or changes to the chemical &/or biological quality of the water course	<p>Any physical works in or adjacent to a wetland environment an generate suspended solids or chemical contamination that may affect European site interest features. Consider if the river entry point can be upstream of the works, so that mitigation will be easier to put in place. <a href="#">Guidance for Pollution Prevention</a> should be followed at all times to minimise risk.</p> <p>There are also potential pollution issues from work related vehicles and materials e.g. from oil spillages, working with cement. Good work practices need to be followed.</p> <p>Metal mine remediation will change the water chemistry, which could benefit some features of European sites but impact on others.</p> <p>Make certain that impact pathways are well understood and ensure that appropriate mitigation measures (e.g. application of Guidance for Pollution Prevention 5 – Work or maintenance in or near water) can be delivered and are built into method statements where potential for adverse effects are identified.</p>
Biosecurity	Working with large equipment within a watercourse poses a high risk of introducing INNS to an area, or spreading diseases / pathogens. Contractors required to produce robust risk assessment and method

<b>Potential Impact pathways</b>	<b>Generic mitigation</b>
	<p>statements and have rigorous procedures for cleaning plant and equipment. All non-virgin materials to be strictly screened. For example, if river-gravels are used from another site, specialist advice would be needed.</p> <p>An assessment should be made of which INNS are the highest potential risk; both to the habitat and features at the working site, or if there are any present that could later be spread elsewhere.</p>
<p>Water resources – change in water levels e.g. abstraction or ditch blocking</p>	<p>Any projects that alter the hydrological regime have the potential to adversely affect European sites.</p> <p>Make certain that impact pathways are well understood and ensure that appropriate mitigation measures can be delivered and are built into method statements where potential for adverse effects are identified.</p> <p>European sites can be affected by water abstraction and discharge of effluent from wastewater treatment works or other waste management streams over large distances, therefore ensure that potential impacts have been considered within and outside of a plan/project area.</p>

**Table 5: Mitigatory Approaches for Shellfish measures (NEW06)**

<b>Potential Impact pathways</b>	<b>Generic mitigation</b>
<p>Habitat loss, damage or fragmentation</p>	<p>Minimise the footprint of the works. Also consider access routes and any compound areas that might be required. At the entry point, consider protection for the bank to prevent future erosion, loss of tidal, inter-tidal and terrestrial habitats and compaction that may lead to an increase in erosion and introduction/spread of invasive or non-desirable species after the works.</p> <p>Effects on all relevant tidal, inter-tidal and terrestrial habitats must be considered, including indirect effects brought about by changing geomorphology, including sediment supply.</p> <p>Shrub or tree removal should be kept to a minimum and timed to avoid sensitive periods. Where unavoidable, planting mitigatory trees and shrubs may be required.</p> <p>Make certain that impact pathways are well understood and ensure that appropriate avoidance and mitigation measures can be delivered and are built into method statements where potential for adverse effects are identified.</p>
<p>Disturbance causing damage or harm to a designated species feature.</p>	<p>Ecological surveys undertaken early in project appraisal to determine presence or absence of species. Followed by specific protected species surveys. Note, these can be seasonally dependent and so must be factored into project plans accordingly.</p> <p>Direct effects (e.g. underwater noise – consider <a href="#">guidance</a> to minimise disturbance risk) and indirect effects must be considered (e.g. in an estuary/coastal environment impacts can occur some distance downstream/around the coast).</p> <p>Timing of works to avoid sensitive periods e.g. fish migration, spawning, bird nesting, or overwintering birds.</p> <p>Make certain that impact pathways are well understood and ensure that appropriate mitigation measures can be delivered and are built into method statements where potential for adverse effects are identified.</p>
<p>Emissions to air, such as dust, vehicle emissions</p>	<p>The scale and nature of projects under the RBMP is unlikely to generate significant impacts on air quality. But method statements should include standard best practice such as dust suppression on site.</p>

<b>Potential Impact pathways</b>	<b>Generic mitigation</b>
Soil/sediment quality/compaction	Access routes, compounds and work areas must be protected from soil/inter-tidal sediment compaction, or where unavoidable, be reinstated post construction. Appropriate mitigation measures should be built into method statements where potential for adverse effects are identified.
Water quality – works in the marine, river or lake environment may result in suspended solids, release of contaminants or changes to the chemical &/or biological quality of the water course	<p>Any coastal or in-river works can generate suspended solids and/or chemical contamination, including changes in the physicochemical characteristics (e.g. pH), that may affect European site interest features. Consider if the river entry point can be upstream of the works, so that mitigation will be easier to put in place. <a href="#">Guidance for Pollution Prevention</a> should be followed at all times to minimise risk.</p> <p>Ground investigations should identify the risk of any contaminated land within the study area. Early consideration in options appraisal and in designing method statements will be required. Make certain that impact pathways are well understood and ensure that appropriate mitigation measures can be delivered and are built into method statements where potential for adverse effects are identified.</p>
Biosecurity	<p>Working with large equipment and importing materials within a watercourse/coastal environment poses a high risk of introducing INNS to an area, or spreading diseases / pathogens. Contractors required to produce robust a Biosecurity risk assessment and method statements and have rigorous procedures for cleaning plant and equipment. All non-virgin materials to be strictly screened.</p> <p>An assessment should be made of which INNS are the highest potential risk; both to the habitat and features at the working site, or if there are any present that could later be spread elsewhere.</p>
Water resources – change in water levels	<p>Any projects that alter the hydrological regime have the potential to adversely affect European sites.</p> <p>Make certain that impact pathways are well understood and ensure that appropriate mitigation measures can be delivered and are built into method statements where potential for adverse effects are identified.</p>

## 7.4 Conclusions of the appropriate assessment

We have considered 9 of the 93 measures in this AA. This approach was taken on a precautionary basis in light of recent case law and the uncertainty of effects of certain measures at the high level of the RBMP. It should be considered in the context of the main aim of the RBMPs which are to improve the water environment, including Protected Areas.

The AA sets out that the criteria for deferring down the HRA to lower tier plans, programmes and projects are met and we are confident that they can be delivered without causing adverse effects on site integrity.

There are a series of measures and approaches, as described in section 7.3 above, which, along with an appropriately detailed HRA, will ensure mitigation is implemented within the lower-tier plans, programmes and projects to avoid and reduce any impacts on European site integrity.

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## Supplementary Material

### Annex 1. Screening justification for national measures.

Tables A-H set out the pre-screening outcomes for the Welsh national measures. Each table sets out measures under the most relevant Significant Water Management issue.

Table A: Screening justification for national measures to ‘manage pollution from sewage and waste water’.

Measure ID	Third RBMP Measure Description	Screening Decision & Justification
CYM14	Work strategically with UK administrations to share best practice on preventing and resolving misconnections	Screen out Cat A: General statements of policy/general aspirations.
CYM17	Welsh Government to develop a regulatory framework that encourages sustainable, innovative solutions to waste water management	Screen out Cat A: General statements of policy/general aspirations.
CYM18	Water companies develop and deliver catchment management options that improve water quality and deliver additional ecosystem services	Further screening consideration of the measure and potential pathways for effects on European Sites as set out in Section 5.3.
CYM75	Develop and deliver a more focussed approach to sewerage and drainage management	Screen out Cat A: General statements of policy/general aspirations.
WW0212	Promote the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) and provide guidance for integrating development and water planning.	Screen out Cat A: General statements of policy/general aspirations.
NEW10	The Water Industry will deliver a programme of investigations and improvements to sewage discharges (both continuous and intermittent) in order to support delivery of WFD Regulation 2017 and Protected Area objectives in AMP7 (2020-25)	Further screening consideration of the measure and potential pathways for effects on European Sites as set out in Section 5.3.

<b>Measure ID</b>	<b>Third RBMP Measure Description</b>	<b>Screening Decision &amp; Justification</b>
NEW25	Water Companies will deliver DWMPs (Drainage and Waste Water Management Plans)	Further screening consideration of the measure and potential pathways for effects on European Sites as set out in Section 5.3.

Table B: Screening justification for national measures to ‘manage pollution from towns, cities and transport.

<b>Measure ID</b>	<b>Third RBMP Measure Description</b>	<b>Screening Decision &amp; Justification</b>
CYM19	Natural Resources Wales working with Welsh Government and others to promote and embed the use of Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) into planning policy and devolved building regulations	Screen Out Cat A: General statements of policy/general aspirations.
CYM20	The development of SuDS Approval Bodies to provide consistent advice for planning activities and maintenance of schemes	Screen Out Cat A: General statements of policy/general aspirations.
CYM21	Welsh Government to review legislative framework surrounding urban diffuse pollution	Screen Out Cat A: General statements of policy/general aspirations.
CYM22	Promote the implementation of SuDS (sustainable drainage systems) in new and existing developments, in both urban and rural areas to gain environmental, water quality, social and flood risk benefits	Screen Out Cat A: General statements of policy/general aspirations.
CYM23	Influence planning authorities to require the use of SuDS and contribute to the implementation of appropriate SuDS technology.	Screen Out Cat A: General statements of policy/general aspirations.
CYM24	Deliver priority actions set out in Natural Resources Wales' Diffuse Water Pollution Plan	Further screening consideration of the measure and potential pathways for effects on European Sites as set out in Section 5.3.

Measure ID	Third RBMP Measure Description	Screening Decision & Justification
CYM25	Work in partnership to investigate misconceptions including the targeting of hotspots. Include outreach work to increase public and community awareness and engagement	Screen Out Cat A: General statements of policy/general aspirations.
CYM26	Use UK Government's Electronic Property Information Mapping Service (ePIMS) which is a property asset system to identify publicly owned industrial estates and depots within failing water-bodies and work with Welsh Government and Local Authorities to resolve issues such that these sites aim to achieve best practice	Screen out Cat A: General statements of policy/general aspirations.
CYM27	Assess the environmental impacts and reduce contamination from historic industrial and waste sites	Screen out Cat D: Environmental protection/site safeguarding policies.
CYM51	Continue to improve awareness and implementation of the UK Forestry Standard Guidelines (including "Forests and Water" Guidelines), and Practice Guides (including "Managing forests in acid sensitive water catchments"), across the forest sector.	Screen out Cat A: General statements of policy/general aspirations.
CYM79	We will undertake a review of current drainage ownership and related legislation, with a particular emphasis on surface water and orphan assets and on drainage misconceptions.	Screen out Cat A: General statements of policy/general aspirations.
CYM82	Control the release of chemicals, to the water environment, at source i.e. production and use, through the implementation of domestic Legislation and International agreements.	Screen out Cat A: General statements of policy/general aspirations.
S70280	Improve understanding of the origins and solutions to diffuse pollution by carrying out local investigations (e.g. Clear Streams)	Screen Out Cat G: Policies or proposals that could not have any conceivable adverse effect on a site.
S70421	Use pollution incident data to target pollution prevention advice and activities.	Screen out

Measure ID	Third RBMP Measure Description	Screening Decision & Justification
		Cat A: General statements of policy/general aspirations.
WW0010	Raise awareness of the benefits and successes of managing surface water run-off through SuDs (sustainable drainage systems) and rainwater harvesting in order to mitigate flooding and pollution.	Screen out Cat A: General statements of policy/general aspirations.
WW0146	Implementation of SuDS (sustainable drainage systems) Code of Practice. Comply with published advice for operators on sustainable drainage systems	Screen out Cat A: General statements of policy/general aspirations.
WW0216	Advise small and medium sized businesses on pollution prevention	Screen out Cat A: General statements of policy/general aspirations.

Table C: Screening justification for national measures to manage 'physical modifications'.

Measure ID	Third RBMP Measure Description	Screening Decision & Justification
CYM2	Deliver our statutory duties to maintain, improve and develop salmon, trout, freshwater and eel fisheries	Screen out Cat D: Environmental protection/site safeguarding policies.
CYM3	Give strategic direction for fisheries work in Wales as set out in the Agenda For Change for Fisheries	Screen out Cat A: General statements of policy/general aspirations.
CYM4	Deliver the sustainable fisheries programme in Wales to secure improvements to fish habitat and migration	Further screening consideration of the measure and potential pathways for effects on European Sites as set out in Section 5.3.

Measure ID	Third RBMP Measure Description	Screening Decision & Justification
CYM5	In waterbodies designated as heavily modified due to flood and coastal protection, mitigation for NRW owned assets and activities will be reviewed and delivered on a prioritised basis.	Further screening consideration of the measure and potential pathways for effects on European Sites as set out in Section 5.3.
NEW02	A programme to deliver appropriate river restoration options at a number of high priority, high benefit river catchments identified under the integrated River Restoration Programme for Wales	Further screening consideration of the measure and potential pathways for effects on European Sites as set out in Section 5.3.
NEW09	Deliver program of N2K river restoration alongside the development of a strategic approach to funding, includes delivery of the Dee LIFE project	Further screening consideration of the measure and potential pathways for effects on European Sites as set out in Section 5.3.
NEW13	Deliver a programme of hydropower scheme inspections to ensure that they are operating in compliance with abstraction and impoundment licence conditions and take appropriate enforcement action where they fail to do so. Replaces CYM1 from Cycle 2.	Screen Out Cat G: Policies or proposals that could not have any conceivable adverse effect on a site.
NEW14	Apply our current guidance and environmental design standards to new abstraction and impoundment licences for hydropower and continue to develop our understanding of the individual and cumulative environmental impact of small scale, high-head, run-of-river hydropower schemes in Wales. Replaces CYM1 from Cycle 2.	Screen Out Cat G: Policies or proposals that could not have any conceivable adverse effect on a site.
NEW15	All new flood alleviation schemes will integrate the principles of SMNR as required by the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 to deliver sustainable schemes which maintain and where possible improve ecological status or potential. Integrate, where appropriate natural flood management options in the delivery of flood risk management.	Screen out Cat D: Environmental protection/site safeguarding policies.

Measure ID	Third RBMP Measure Description	Screening Decision & Justification
NEW16	Maintenance, repair and improvements to flood risk systems will be delivered sensitively, sustainably and will seek to deliver environmental and social benefits.	Further screening consideration of the measure and potential pathways for effects on European Sites as set out in Section 5.3.
NEW17	Support Wales to have a coastline that is sustainable and resilient to climate change. Plan for coastal adaptation in line with Shoreline Management Plan policy for coastal defence management. Enable the National Habitat Creation Programme to deliver compensatory intertidal habitat where required. Integrate, where appropriate, nature-based solutions into the delivery of coastal defence schemes.	Screen Out Cat C: Proposal referred to but not proposed by the strategy. The Welsh Government NFRMS and SMP sets the strategic direction and both have HRA.
NEW19	Water Companies will address the impacts of water company assets on fish passage causing failure of WFD Regulations 2017 objectives in accordance with objectives in AMP7 (2020-25). This will address structures that act as barriers to fish migration which are associated with other aspects of water company operations, such as trunk sewers and mains pipes located in river channels, and associated concrete sills and structures. In some cases, there may be uncertainty over asset ownership which will need to be resolved. Solutions may often be implemented through working in partnership with other sectors.	Further screening consideration of the measure and potential pathways for effects on European Sites as set out in Section 5.3.
NEW38	Habitat improvement schemes, such as sediment management, to reduce the impact of physical modifications (water company reservoirs)	Further screening consideration of the measure and potential pathways for effects on European Sites as set out in Section 5.3.

Table D: Screening justification for national measures to manage 'changes to natural flow and levels of water'.

Measure ID	Third RBMP Measure Description	Screening Decision & Justification
CYM28	Welsh Government, supported by NRW, will continue to move water resources licencing into the Environmental Permitting Regulations	Screen out Cat A: General statements of policy/general aspirations.
CYM30	New Authorisations (licensing of historically exempt abstractions)	Screen out Cat D: Environmental protection/site safeguarding policies.
CYM31	Investigations to assess the environmental impacts of impoundments and possible mitigation measures.	Screen out Cat A: General statements of policy/aspirations.
CYM32	Prioritise solutions to tackle water body failures due to abstraction	Screen out Cat A: General statements of policy/general aspirations.
CYM33	In line with the Welsh Government's Water Strategy for Wales, seek ways to reduce waste and improve water efficiency	Screen out Cat A: General statements of policy/general aspirations.
CYM71	Revise Glastir to better support and prioritise N2K wetlands/peatlands conservation management and water level management.	Screen out Cat A: General statements of policy/general aspirations.
CYM73	Support the delivery of the Welsh Government National Peatland Restoration Programme.	Further screening consideration of the measure and potential pathways for effects on European Sites as set out in Section 5.3.
N2K0016	Target land management measures through Glastir agri-environment scheme and Section 15 agreements to mitigate diffuse pollution from agriculture and reduce impact of drainage to enhance biodiversity and achieve favourable conservation status.	Screen out Cat E: Policies or proposals that steer change in such a way as to protect European sites from adverse effects

Measure ID	Third RBMP Measure Description	Screening Decision & Justification
NEW27	Welsh Government supported by NRW have commissioned a study in to Multi-Sector demands (ARUP). This will help to identify where water saving measures can be made. The study will identify hotspots for environmental impact and/or security of supplies. The study results then to inform potential future work on adaptation methods to help farmers etc. to have in place more resilient supplies. This would include water efficiency measures but also be wider for example creation of water storage, use of different sources.	Screen Out Cat G: Policies or proposals that could not have any conceivable adverse effect on a site.
NEW28	Waterwise have identified a need for mandatory water labelling on water appliances linked to minimum standards. Collaborative working with England, Wales, Scotland and NI	Screen out Cat A: General statements of policy/general aspirations.
NEW29	Collaborative working with Welsh Government/Water companies/CCW/NRW/Waterwise to identify water efficiency evidence gaps, prioritise and co-ordinate research, engagement, initiatives in Wales	Screen out Cat A: General statements of policy/general aspirations.

Table E: Screening justification for national measures to 'manage Invasive Non-Native Species'.

Measure ID	Third RBMP Measure Description	Screening Decision & Justification
CYM34	Continue to improve knowledge of species distributions and improve public awareness of new and established INNS, including using mechanisms such as online and smart phone recording systems	Screen out Cat A: General statements of policy/general aspirations.
CYM35	Support implementation of the EU regulation on Invasive Alien Species and Marine Strategy regulations 2010 to improve the coordination of measures and create stronger controls on pathways of entry for the most damaging species, especially those arriving in estuarine and coastal water bodies	Screen out Cat A: General statements of policy/general aspirations.
CYM36	Implement the updated GB strategy on invasive species	Screen out Cat A: General statements of policy/general aspirations.

Measure ID	Third RBMP Measure Description	Screening Decision & Justification
CYM56	Work with partners and support the development of new and innovative solutions, such as AquaWales and Aquainvade led by Swansea University to investigate early detection and eradication of freshwater INNS and aquaculture; and the Small Business Research Imitative innovation programme.	Screen out Cat A: General statements of policy/general aspirations.
CYM59	In line with the regulation implemented by DEFRA for England under the Wildlife and Countryside Act, ban the sale of 2 invasive non-native aquatic plants in Wales: New Zealand pigmyweed ( <i>crassula helmsii</i> ) and water fern ( <i>Azolla filiculoides</i> )	Screen out Cat A: General statements of policy/general aspirations.
CYM60	Develop and promote adoption of codes of conduct and biosecurity initiatives, and raise awareness of impacts of INNS across marine, terrestrial and freshwater N2K habitats and species.	Screen out Cat A: General statements of policy/general aspirations.
CYM61	Ensure that risks to N2K habitats and species posed by INNS are managed by integrating biosecurity best practice into appropriate regulatory regimes.	Screen out Cat D: Environmental protection/site safeguarding policies.
CYM62	Support research into effective control and eradication methods for INNS (marine, terrestrial and freshwater) with significant impacts on N2K.	Screen out Cat A: General statements of policy/general aspirations.
NEW26	Investigation into the potential pathways of transfer for INNS through the activities related to water supply, potential mitigation measures to be identified	Screen Out Cat G: Policies or proposals that could not have any conceivable adverse effect on a site.
NEW 37	Investigate the impact of INNS on water company land and from transfers of water between catchments.	Screen Out Cat G: Policies or proposals that could not have any conceivable adverse effect on a site.

Table F: Screening justification for national measures to ‘manage pollution from rural areas’.

Measure ID	Third RBMP Measure Description	Screening Decision & Justification
CYM37	Welsh Government to review legislative framework surrounding rural diffuse pollution	Screen out Cat A: General statements of policy/general aspirations.
CYM38	Ensure the Rural Development Plan supports sustainable agricultural practices to achieve WFD Regulations 2017 and Protected Area objectives	Screen out Cat A: General statements of policy/general aspirations.
CYM41	NRW delivers a prioritised programme of measures on the Welsh Government Woodland Estate to support delivery of WFD Regulations 2017 and Protected Area objectives	Further screening consideration of the measure and potential pathways for effects on European Sites as set out in Section 5.3.
CYM42	Continue to improve awareness and implementation of the UK Forestry Standard Guidelines (including "Forests and Water" Guidelines), and Practice Guides, across the forest sector.	Screen out Cat A: General statements of policy/general aspirations.
CYM44	Welsh Government target Glastir Woodland Management incentives to deliver improvements to the water environment	Screen out Cat A: General statements of policy/general aspirations.
CYM46	Welsh Government implement the Nitrates Pollution Prevention (Wales) Regulations 2013 (as amended) as appropriate	Screen out Cat A: General statements of policy/general aspirations.
CYM54	Deliver Water Awareness Events to staff and contractors who work on Welsh Government Woodland Estate (and in private forestry) to cover water management on operational sites.	Screen out Cat A: General statements of policy/general aspirations.
CYM66	Review the implementation of Statutory Management Requirements (SMR) and Good Agricultural Environmental Condition (GAEC) to strengthen the drivers for best agricultural practice - ensure that there is parity in terms of the monitoring for and consequences of practices causing diffuse pollution (within the catchments of N2K sites) with SMR.	Screen out Cat E: Policies or proposals that steer change in such a way as to protect European sites from adverse effects.

Measure ID	Third RBMP Measure Description	Screening Decision & Justification
CYM67	Strengthen links between agri-environment options and N2K objectives on farms within catchments which are currently impacting on N2K sites	Screen out Cat A: General statements of policy/general aspirations.
CYM68	Review and strengthen the effectiveness and enforcement of relevant legislation and policy (gap analysis) to improve its ability to deal with diffuse water pollution	Screen out Cat A: General statements of policy/general aspirations.
CYM69	Investigation to identify where N2K sites downstream of forestry may benefit from improvements (i.e. riparian vegetation improvements, forest drain realignment and roadside drain disconnection from watercourses) to meet current UKFS standards, in order to minimise any risk of diffuse pollution and acidification.	Screen out Cat E: Policies or proposals that steer change in such a way as to protect European sites from adverse effects.
CYM74	Align statutory duties under permitting and planning legislation to support a holistic approach to nitrogen deposition in Wales, integrating both air and water quality impacts and engage with external stakeholders to deliver a natural resources management approach	Screen out Cat A: General statements of policy/general aspirations.
CYM83	We will encourage Natural Resources Wales and our own Agricultural Advisory Services to work with landowners to develop a common understanding of diffuse pollution and how they can help to prevent it through improved land management.	Screen out Cat A: General statements of policy/general aspirations.
DrWPA0488	Monitor, investigate and resolve the source of pollution in Drinking Water Protected Areas	Screen out Cat D: Environmental protection/site safeguarding policies.
NEW12	New Regulations in Wales for agriculture to include: nutrient management planning; sustainable fertiliser applications linked to the requirements of the crop; protection of water from pollution related to when, where and how fertilisers are spread; manure storage standards	Screen out Cat A: General statements of policy/general aspirations.

<b>Measure ID</b>	<b>Third RBMP Measure Description</b>	<b>Screening Decision &amp; Justification</b>
NEW30	Welsh Government and Natural Resources Wales will work with the sectors to develop and deliver a programme of voluntary measures to drive improvements to diffuse pollution in order to support delivery of WFD Regulations 2017 and Protected Area objectives	Screen out Cat A: General statements of policy/general aspirations.
NEW31	Welsh Government and Natural Resources Wales will develop, embed and deliver a programme of advice and guidance to drive improvements to diffuse pollution in order to support delivery of WFD Regulations 2017 and Protected Area objectives	Screen out Cat A: General statements of policy/general aspirations.
NEW32	Welsh Government and regulators will develop and deliver an integrated programme of regulation to drive improvements in order to support delivery of WFD Regulations 2017 and Protected Area objectives	Screen out Cat A: General statements of policy/general aspirations.
NEW33	Welsh Government and Natural Resources Wales will work with innovation funding to develop and deliver a programme of innovation to drive improvements to diffuse pollution in order to support delivery of WFD Regulations 2017 and Protected Area objectives	Screen out Cat A: General statements of policy/general aspirations.
NEW34	Welsh Government and Natural Resources Wales and others will embed checks and balances and deliver a programme of incentives to drive improvements to diffuse pollution in order to support delivery of WFD Regulations 2017 and Protected Area objectives	Screen out Cat A: General statements of policy/general aspirations.
NEW35	The sector led Wales Land Management Forum (WLMF) Sub Group on Agricultural Pollution are working together to develop a suite of measures and approaches that will help deliver the joint goal of eliminating agricultural pollution, whilst maintaining a sound sustainable agricultural sector able to thrive within Wales.	Screen out Cat A: General statements of policy/general aspirations.

Table G: Screening justification for national measures to ‘manage pollution from mines’.

<b>Measure ID</b>	<b>Third RBMP Measure Description</b>	<b>Screening Decision &amp; Justification</b>
CYM49	Deliver metal (non-coal) minewater preventative and remediation programme as identified under the Metal Mine Strategy for Wales.	Further screening consideration of the measure and potential pathways for effects on European Sites as set out in Section 5.3.
DE0014	Coal Authority minewater preventative and remediation programme	Further screening consideration of the measure and potential pathways for effects on European Sites as set out in Section 5.3.
WW0031	Continue to investigate minewater impact and develop remediation plans in accordance with the Metal Mines Strategy for Wales	Further screening consideration of the measure and potential pathways for effects on European Sites as set out in Section 5.3.
WW0141	Implementation of best practice controls and remediation at abandoned coal mines. DECC funded prioritised (phased) programme	Further screening consideration of the measure and potential pathways for effects on European Sites as set out in Section 5.3.

Table H: Screening justification for national measures to manage all SWMIs.

<b>Measure ID</b>	<b>Third RBMP Measure Description</b>	<b>Screening Decision &amp; Justification</b>
NEW03	NRW and its partners deliver improvements for water quality, to the wider environment and to people within the 'Opportunity Catchments'	Screen Out Cat A: General statements of policy/general aspirations.
NEW05	At risk Drinking Water Protection Areas (DrWPAs) (and all upstream water bodies) have been taken forward as 23 (21 plus original 2) Safeguard Zones for funded Asset Management Plan (AMP) Investigations to assess the sources of the raw water failure and to identify viable catchment solutions. Where	Further screening consideration of the measure and potential pathways for effects on European Sites as set out in Section 5.3.

Measure ID	Third RBMP Measure Description	Screening Decision & Justification
	catchment solutions are found to be possible, and stakeholder agreement can be assured, improvement measures will be delivered throughout AMP7.	
NEW06	A range of measures are planned to endeavour to achieve the microbial standard in shellfish flesh. A number of actions are planned under PR19 and locally that will lead to improvement in Shellfish Quality. Plans are also in place to deliver a better understanding of improvements required to achieve Shellfish Water Protected Area objectives and information to support cost benefits analysis.	Further screening consideration of the measure and potential pathways for effects on European Sites as set out in Section 5.3.
NEW08	Natural Resources Wales reviews its Core Management Plans for Natura 2000 sites to ensure that the conservation objectives reflect the latest knowledge	Screen out Cat E: Policies or proposals that steer change in such a way as to protect European sites from adverse effects
NEW11	Working with other organisations to protect and improve the water environment through NRW's Forums, in particular the Wales Water Management Forum	Screen out Cat A: General statements of policy/general aspirations.
NEW20	Deliver actions within the annual Marine Protected Area Network Management Action Plan linked to the MPA Network Management Frameworks for Wales 2018-2023. These actions include reviewing impacts of unregulated activities, improving biosecurity for marine invasive species and improving condition of features within Marine N2K sites. Replaces CYM 63,64 and 70 from Cycle 2.	Screen out Cat D: Environmental protection/site safeguarding policies.
NEW21	Deliver actions within Prosperity for Wales: A Climate Conscious Wales 2020-2025	Screen out Cat A: General statements of policy/general aspirations.
NEW22	Ensure WFD Regulations 2017 measures deliver multiple benefits, nature based solutions and biodiversity benefits to deliver "Vital nature" which sets out NRW's priority areas for our work on biodiversity and ecosystem resilience to	Screen out Cat A: General statements of policy/general aspirations.

Measure ID	Third RBMP Measure Description	Screening Decision & Justification
	2022 under six themes to contribute to achieving NRW's well-being objectives and the objectives of the Wales Nature Recovery Action Plan.	
NEW23	Water Companies will deliver a programme of investigations and improvements to deal with chemicals to support delivery of WFD Regulations 2017 and Protected Area objectives in AMP7 (2020-25)	Further screening consideration of the measure and potential pathways for effects on European Sites as set out in Section 5.3.
NEW24	Implement the UWWTD sensitive areas review (review completed by 2021)	Screen Out Cat G: Policies or proposals that could not have any conceivable adverse effect on a site.

**Annex 2. Screening justification for the measures in the English parts of the Dee.**

Table I: Screening justification for local measures to ‘manage pollution from rural areas’.

Measure ID	Third RBMP Measure Description	Screening Decision & Justification
EAT60	To control or manage diffuse source inputs - Reduce diffuse pollution at source at Lower Worthenbury Brook (GB111067052090).	This measure has been carried forward from RBMP2 and was considered under the RBMP2 HRA, recommending HRA is undertaken at a project level
EAT61	To control or manage diffuse source inputs - Reduce diffuse pollution at sources at Aldford Brook (GB111067052120).	Aldford Brook screened out of RBMP2 HRA – no pathways for effects
EAT62	To control or manage point source inputs – Reduce source pathways (i.e. control entry to water environment) at Upper Worthenbury Brook (GB111067052200).	This measure has been carried forward from RBMP2 and was considered under the RBMP2 HRA, recommending HRA is undertaken at a project level
EAT62	To control or manage diffuse source inputs - Reduce diffuse pollution at source at Upper Worthenbury Brook (GB111067052200).	This measure has been carried forward from RBMP2 and was considered under the RBMP2 HRA, recommending HRA is undertaken at a project level
EAT64	To control or manage diffuse source inputs - Reduce diffuse pollution at source at Wych Brook (GB111067052230).	Wych Brook screened out of RBMP2 HRA – no pathways for effects

Table J: Screening justification for local measures to 'manage pollution from sewage and wastewater'.

Measure ID	Third RBMP Measure Description	Screening Decision & Justification
EA NEW	The Water Companies will deliver a programme of investigations and improvements under the Water Industry National Environment programme and AMP7 (2020-25) – 38 new local measures	Further screening consideration of the measure and potential pathways for effects on European Sites as set out in Section 5.3.