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# Flood and Coastal Erosion Committee meeting: 22 February 2024: minutes

Minutes from the Flood and Coastal Erosion Committee Meeting No 15, 22 February 2024. Virtual, Microsoft Teams.

**First published:** 18 April 2024

**Last updated:** 18 April 2024

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# Attendance

## Committee Present

Martin Buckle (MB) Chair  
Paul Williams (PW) NFU Cymru  
Darren Thomas (DT) Pembrokeshire County Council  
Paul Blackman (PB) Wallingford Hydro Solutions  
Anne-Marie Moon (AMM) JBA Consulting  
Jeremy Parr (JP) Natural Resources Wales (NRW)  
Mike Wellington (MW) Waterco  
Natalie Haines (NH) Mott MacDonald  
Robin Campbell (RC) Arup  
Andrew Stone (AS) Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC  
Geraint Edwards (GE) Conwy County Borough Council  
Karen Potter (KP) Open University  
Catherine Wilson (CW) Cardiff University  
Dominic Scott (DS) Dwr Cymru – Welsh Water  
Jean-Francois Dulong (JFD) Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA)

## Welsh Government (WG)

Leanne Llewellyn (LL)  
Lowri Norrington-Davies (LND)  
James Jewell-Edmonds (JJE)  
Mark Alexander (MA)  
Alison Kitchener (AK)  
Stuart Ingram (SI)

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## Other Speakers

Dr Eurgain Powell (EP)	National Infrastructure Commission for Wales
David Tarrant (DT)	Natural Resource Wales
Simon James (SJ)	Natural Resource Wales
Ross Akers (RA)	Natural Resource Wales
Dafydd Sidgwick (DSi)	Natural Resource Wales

## 1/2. Apologies and introductions

The Chair noted that no apologies have been received and that DT will be joining later in the meeting.

## 3. Declaration of interests

RC noted work on behalf of Arup and AMM on behalf of JBA Consulting regarding the National Infrastructure Commission for Wales (NICW) report.

## 4. Minutes of the meeting 30.11.23 and matters arising

Minutes regarded as agreed. No matters arising to be discussed.

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## 5. Chair's announcements

The Chair made the following announcements:

“ I would like to update the Committee on the meetings and events that I have attended since our last meeting. In December, I attended the quarterly meeting with the Chairs of the English Regional Flood and Coastal Committees. The meeting had a particular focus on surface water flooding. My next meeting with them will be in March.

“ At the December meeting, we were also advised that the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs in England, (Defra) has launched a new project to produce guidance for England on post-flood investigations (known as Section 19 investigations). The project is being managed by a Project Board, with Welsh Government representation, who will ensure that outputs reflect the experiences of the risk management authorities, and the needs of users of flooding data. The project will provide valuable input into the work of our Section 19 Sub-Committee, which will be holding its first meeting next week.

“ In January, I met with the Minister for Climate Change. I updated her on the roll forward of our work programme, and on our work in responding to consultations, with a particular focus on the Sustainable Farming Scheme. I shared with her some of the key conclusions from our review of the Section 18 report prepared by Natural Resources Wales. I also brought her up-to-date on our progress in taking forward our reports on resources and on legislative change, and in working with the National Infrastructure Commission for Wales.

“ Also in January, I met with the Chair of the English Severn and Wye Regional Flood and Coastal Committee to develop a shared

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understanding of cross-border issues. We will be following that up in March with colleagues from Natural Resources Wales and the Environment Agency.

“ Earlier this month, I attended a meeting of the Flood and Coastal Risk Programme Board. We were advised that both the revenue and capital programmes were on target for a full spend in 2023/24. Looking ahead to 2024/25, when the scale of the capital programme is expected to be similar, the level of existing commitments indicates that the head room for new schemes will be relatively limited.

“ Looking ahead, I would draw attention to the Welsh Government’s consultation on its White Paper: Securing a Sustainable Future - Environmental Principles, Governance and Biodiversity targets for a Greener Wales. This Committee is one of the Welsh public authorities put forward to be overseen by the proposed Wales Environmental Governance Body. The Committee will need to respond to the consultation, which closes on 30th April.” ”

JFD enquired on the Section-19 Sub-Committee, questioning how it will tie in with the main Committee. MB noted that the Sub-Committee will discuss this at the first meeting next week.

JP noted that the Section 18 report is now published on NRW’s website.

## 6. Items from the regional groups

AS provided an update on behalf of South East (SE) Wales, noting the local strategies are currently consuming a lot of resource pressure. However, they are progressing well at various stages, with some local authorities (LAs) engaging

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with consultants. Resources in general continue to be stretched in response to the adverse weather – there have been 29 yellow warnings since last April, including 2 this week. The WG SuDS review continues to impact on resources – we in the SE have provided 2 attendees on the Welsh Government (WG) steering group. SuDS applications are generally rising, with a huge increase in non-compliance issues on site. Any free spare resource for collaborative work is non-existent at present, however, paid-for resources are actually available and partner funding needs to be considered for collaborative projects.

GE provided an update for the North; the group has expressed that in order to develop best practice they would be keen to receive presentations as seen in this Committee. Concern was raised around the TAN 15 delays. Several authorities reported that they were approaching the consultation stage of the local FRM strategy development, however, completion by the end of the financial year seems unlikely for the majority of the group. The group also expressed a desire for the FCERM national strategy measures to be updated, acknowledging resourcing and budget pressures. DS noted a desire to implement a workshop in their April meeting, to focus on partnership working and collaboration.

JFD noted on local strategies, whilst doing an around the country progress update; sadly around 80% of LAs are not likely to make the deadline by March 24, despite a 2- year extension, which is disappointing.

AMM – a question on strategies – resource capacity and prioritisation are often noted as an issue; as a Committee, should we ask why these are not seen as priorities, and look into why, and if there is something we can do to help? AS assured AMM that all LAs know the importance of the strategies, however, the same resources are tied in with responses to warnings, flooding etc. These are often stretched, and it is hard work to balance the priorities. AMM acknowledged this, and highlighted the need to understand the reasons, i.e. is the document too long. MB noted that a lessons-learned process could be developed on the development of the local strategies. JFD highlighted a survey with LAs on how



they used their first round of local strategies to inform their work; the majority noted that they did not frequently use it, due to reasons of being too high-level etc. – that is why we developed a template, to assist. Confident that the latest round of local strategies will have greater value than the previous. AS highlighted that one of the issues with the local strategies is that they are tied up with LA's internal governance structures which limits processes, such as sharing draft documents amongst groups, due to final copies not being signed off because of the internal governance structure.

MB noted TAN 15 feedback from the North group and asked LL if there was an update; LL noted no update has been received internally in WG and it is likely the date of publication will slip, impacted by incoming new First Minister and subsequent cabinet reshuffle.

MB provided feedback on behalf of DT for South West Wales via a shared note, as follows:

#### Flood Risk Management:

- Southwest Wales Regional Update on South West Wales Regional FCERM Programme – feedback has been received from WG Programme Board on 14th February. A report has been circulated from the WG FCERM Programme Board to regional LA colleagues. The purpose of the report is to provide a quarterly update on the Southwest Regional FCERM programme. Each council is providing a summary of achievements and progress in Business Case Development and Construction Works. Recommendations, Improvements and items raised within this document will be shared with WG FCERM Programme Board to generate discussion.
- Regional Meetings – None held recently - next April 9th 2024.
- FRMS & Plan – Most SWW LA's to complete reports by April/May. Although past the deadline we feel good progress has been made over the last 6 months.
- National Infrastructure Commission Review – Discussion held to review

FCERM in Wales have been underway. Meeting held on 7th Feb with representatives from Neath Port Talbot, Swansea, Pembrokeshire and Ceredigion, and other separate meeting arrangements were in hand.

Coastal:

- Swansea and Carmarthen Bay Coastal Engineering Group (SCBCEG) met on 12 December 2023, with agenda items covering: Wales Coastal Monitoring Centre - Update and Presentation; SCBCEG Coastal Officer Update and Action Plan Changes; Shoreline Management Plan (SMP) Policy and Action Change Requests; SMP Refresh and Next Steps; NRW Landfill Report Presentations.
- The SCBCEG website is being refreshed.

MB, coming back to the local strategies, noted a fairly similar picture across the regions – are there indications that any LAs will miss the deadline by many months? JFD said that there are a couple that will be unlikely to publish this calendar year, due to resource issues and lack of prioritisation from senior leadership on this work. MB asked if there is a process, noting statutory requirements, whereby this can be picked up, i.e. via the Programme Board? LL noted that WG do not intend to extend the deadline further and noted a planned letter with JFD to highlight the urgent need to complete work and to prioritise the local strategy work, which is to be shared with the LAs; the Minister will be briefed and may wish to speak with LA leaders on slippage.

## **ACTION**

MB will seek an update at the next Programme Board meeting.

## **7. Welsh Government Sustainable Farming Scheme - Mark Alexander, Deputy Director**

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# Agriculture

MA provided an update on the proposed Sustainable Farming Scheme (SFS).

## Questions / feedback:

MW asked whether changes in land values would affect the payments? MA noted this is a voluntary scheme and operates above regulations, designed to support and enable further enhancements. MW noted difficulty in gaining buy-in from farmers on NFM. MA commented that in areas where there are long-term consequences it may be worth consideration – offer to discuss further with MW on this. JFD noted that there is perhaps a leading role from RMAs to identify the opportunity for catchment approaches, and to encourage the landowners within the areas to join the scheme? PW felt that SFS will not be the vehicle to deliver NFM, suggesting the need to think more on a bespoke catchment scheme with additional / new funding.

JP commented that the water management aspects do not jump out and highlighted the need to look on a catchment basis. This will require input from NRW, LAs, River Trusts etc... is there anything more than can be done to ensure join-up with other schemes? As per MW's point, there needs to be buy-in from farmers and that connect does not come through at the moment. This also needs to be balanced on identifying the best locations to do this, capturing evidence. MA noted that this is an agricultural scheme, however, this quickly moves into the fact that water is essential for agricultural practice and is not isolated or separate. The universal baseline / actions will help bring some people up to a higher standard and support them in doing this; for some people, our ambition here is not high enough; however, I see this as the stepping stone – identify the issues, what is the need and what is the opportunity – this will hopefully lead to further / better conversations with farmers. The ambition is to have an active farming stakeholder group. However, I recognise the point that

there is more we can do – the scheme intends to bring everyone along at the same level, but also provide the opportunity for people to do more, quicker – however it is a fine balance to achieve.

DS supported JP's comments, also noting the need to consider the water quality aspects as well as quantity - and how we can encourage responses that allow improvements in those areas, but at a minimum address deterioration due to climate change. RC - from a water management and flood risk management perspective, it would be valuable for these to be flagged beyond biodiversity, and the 10% woods / 10% habitat bar feels a missed opportunity whereby some locations will offer limited benefits whilst others the coverage will miss opportunities. MB acknowledged the offer of further conversations and would wish to take this up post-meeting.

KP noted missed opportunities for the Universal Action stage to support the multifunctionality of the woodland and hedgerow features; there could be potential to map out what can be achieved and where. MA noted that these are good points and agreed that this is the direction we need to go and need to provide the right advice and support to achieve this. PW noted that there are huge concerns on habitat map accuracy - the Habitat Scheme Wales has brought these problems to light at the moment resulting in loss of confidence going forward.

JFD - I like the concept of mandatory measures to bring farmers to a similar standard but not sure how this can be achieved if the scheme is only voluntary. Is this likely to create a widening gap in practices between farmers and make farms with poor practices even more difficult to reach, especially if they are in key locations like SAC rivers (impacting on planning with phosphates) or NFM opportunity catchments, etc?

CW noted with regards to the water management aspect the need to find meaningful metrics; selling NFM to farmers is difficult in terms of outlining benefits it will bring to people downstream. Currently NFM is promoted as a way

of keeping soil nutrients on land, however, we would welcome water management benefits being brought forward as a benefit basis.

MA noted that this is a genuine consultation and noted input is valued.

## **8. Sustainable Farming Scheme Consultation, Preliminary Draft Committee Response – Paul Williams**

PW noted that aforementioned feedback for the previous item resonates and indicated that the industry is more than willing to engage with Natural Flood Management (NFM) but noted that SFS may not be the vehicle for this, instead highlighting a potential collaborative approach. PW also noted that not all Universal Actions are relevant to the work of the Committee.

MA noted that NFM should be a choice specific to farmers. However, there is some scope in the collaborative space to develop. MA also noted practice in England and would welcome views on this, offering to take the conversation offline post-meeting. PW welcomed further conversations to ensure the Committee's response to the consultation is as robust as possible. PW also noted that this is a voluntary scheme and the view from the sector is a desire for as many farmers as possible to access this scheme – however, the parameters for entry at present are an issue.

KP - do we need to distinguish between NFM schemes and agricultural practices that incrementally reduce flow? AS agreed, there is much general practice that will affect flow and provide benefits in agriculture such as reducing soil erosion. MA noted that resulting actions will be seen from the universal layer which will do just that, such as soil testing, etc.

JFD – how can the scheme tie in with wider government core commitments,

such as biodiversity and the climate change agenda? MA noted there is an opportunity to build on this, using soil testing as an example where a farmer may be able to identify where they are losing money and WG may be able to provide support. Also, there would be opportunity for increased efficiency, reduction of carbon, improved animal welfare, water storage etc. There are a whole host of benefits which may branch from this. However, we need to identify actions which are relevant for each farm – it is impossible to tailor the scheme for each individual farm, however, it is designed to enable a baseline which can be progressed from.

JP noted that water management does not come through clearly in the proposals. MA asked for this to be fed back in FCEC consultation response, specifically looking at how each action can be strengthened or improved. JP noted further discussion with NRW on this would be prudent, which MA noted and indicated meetings are scheduled.

PW highlighted two significant issues – the first being funding, with massive asks based on very little money; the more we ask of this scheme, the more the funding will be spread more thinly. The second issue is politics, which is getting in the way – PW noted agriculture spend in England is ringfenced, which means the scheme can better be implemented over the border; many great things can be achieved by the sector in Wales, but more funding is needed.

## **9. Managing Flood Impacts in Wales 2050: Review by the National Infrastructure Commission for Wales – To receive an update from Commissioners Eluned Parrott and Dr Eurgain Powell**

EP introduced the item and provided an update on the NICW review.

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## Questions / feedback:

MB noted exemplary levels of engagement on the review.

JP – regarding ownership and what happens next, there potentially could be a product which could be used by us in the sector beyond the review. Do the commissioners see this as a piece of work that will end, or to keep a degree of focus and momentum? EP – in terms of outputs, i.e. web platform, this will be hosted on the NICW website initially, but could potentially be hosted elsewhere long-term; the report published later this year will require a response from WG on recommendations. NICW also has a responsibility to monitor work previously undertaken and to make sure recommendations are being followed up, which will ensure some longevity of the project. SI noted that if the next election period in Wales impacts on commissions, we need to ensure the effective handover of information.

JFD – on prioritisation, in relation to the likely significant range of recommendations, could we agree some key priorities going forward with regards to this Committee? EP is mindful of this and would be happy to work together.

NH – on workstream 2 - the draft case studies, I think the Committee may not have seen this, please can this be shared? SI noted that the case studies will now be coming as part of the final draft report. NH asked if there is agreement in the Committee on how we feedback? MB noted the desire for NICW receiving the response on behalf of the whole Committee; however, members are still free to feedback individually.

RC – on the 4 workstreams of evidence, we need to manage the interface of those finishing and their long future, as per JP's point; furthermore, what are the timescales on Commissioners report? EP – we will welcome ongoing input from the Committee into the process. RC – the energy review had launch events associated with it; this may be something for NICW to consider how a launch for

this review may reach wide and engage hard to reach groups.

MB – there will be much media and communications interest in what is coming on stream in coming months – has a communications plan been drawn up to manage this? It would be useful to see a draft prior to publication. EP noted this is on the to do list and is being considered.

## **10. Communities at Risk Register – David Tarrant and Simon James, Lead Specialist Advisors, Flood Risk Analysis, Natural Resources Wales**

DT provided an update on the Communities at Risk Register (CaRR).

### **Questions / feedback:**

AS noted that this is a very valuable tool for LLFA decision-making. Mentioned the use of a 2019 dataset whilst alongside new CaRR data being used – is this correct? DT – in FRMPs and Long Term Investment Requirements (LTIR) work, we used an interim version of Climate Change CaRR. AS expressed frustration on behalf of LLFAs that this data has not been available when working on local strategies, meaning we have been unable to model data based on future climate change effects due to restrictions on data. DT -we are conscious on changes to data in background, which led to constraints, however, I acknowledge that this could have been done better and we will do in future CaRR work. RA – there are issues with sequencing and the timetable of data releases which needs improvement. SJ – this is the issue around communication, and if climate change data was released without accompanying comms, this would cause confusion, which was considered. MB noted lessons to be learnt for future on this.



RC sought clarification on what is meant by protected / defended? There are different degrees of robustness of asset which needs to be clarified. DT – CaRR considers 3 groupings of properties, one of the subsets being ‘key services’, such as sub-station etc. In terms of defences, we have a product which is called a ‘cutter’. We use this to associate the standard of protection with products – however, this is not published – is there potential to use this data for adaptation planning? RA – on adaptation planning, this is an interesting area we can look at; we started this conversation with the publication of our FRMP, in identifying change and risk. On infrastructure, CaRR is focused on the direction we get from WG on people and on property; however, regarding the resilience of communities, we rely on local knowledge when we get down to the scheme-level

DS – in Welsh Water, we have used the CaRR to work as an indicator on where we could work collaboratively with RMAs. There was a suggestion on a six monthly / annual release – is this still the case? DT – as with FRAW, we want to get into a cycle of two-year update / releases.

PB – regarding climate change and adaptation and your climate change analysis, will this give the risk scenario with current defences in place? SJ – it will show the undefended scenario and will then bring in unmitigated factors. PB noted difficulties in scenarios based on keeping pace with climate change.

KP – on social vulnerability, I am pleased to see this referenced, however, are you tracking ongoing work around this? It would be useful to know beyond schemes, how does the CaRR prioritise, and can you feed back to wider government on structural inequalities? DT – the CaRR uses the Flood Vulnerability Index and uses three social characteristics as financial deprivation indicators. We are however aware of other methodologies, and they are very much on our radar.

NH – I would welcome a move to make the circles in which CaRR is used bigger and make it more transparent. A published programme of when you are going to do the updates would be welcomed. Meta data behind the CaRR is also

important – having a reference point as to how climate change is calculated would be useful; it needs to become public. On the challenge process – this exists for flood maps but does not exist for CaRR – a transparent challenges process for the CaRR is needed.

DT noted these as valid points; we have considerations of where we place this data, i.e. is the audience public or professional? There is a need to find a balance. NH – we also need to ask the question is the CaRR suitable for the process? It is referred to in the business case guidance for LAs. DT noted that it has grown organically and is industry-standard research. It has been extensively used in Wales and we have not had any challenges to date but recognise the validity of a proposed challenge process.

JFD – have you considered using WCMC data to feed into the CaRR, along with over-topping exercises – would there be an opportunity to create an adaptation CaRR too? The data could help present policy change and how to prioritise work. DT – we would need consistent coverage around the coast on wave overtopping data prior to using; RA – we will come back to adaptation work on LTIR item later in the meeting.

MB noted that the scale of the questions highlights how important this work is.

## **11. Welsh Government Environmental Sustainability Directorate: Skills and Capacity Review - Alison Kitchener, Programme Lead for Local Places for Nature**

AK delivered an update on the Welsh Government Environmental Sustainability Directorate: Skills and Capacity workstream.

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## Questions / feedback:

MW – noting difficulties in recruitment – there is no pathway at present from certain qualifications to degree level. There is a noted blind spot in the FCERM sphere – how do we get people on apprenticeships? AK – agreed and noted cycle of colleges not running courses because they are unsure of demand etc, and noted approach of micro-credentials which may fill some gaps. There are issues with courses being delivered over the border and lack of provision in Wales. AK requested to meet with MW post-meeting.

DT – noted Resources Sub-Committee where this has been identified as a significant issue – we have obtained data on this; however, further work on skills gap identification and jobs in demand is in the pipeline. Noted training and development courses are not available in Pembrokeshire / West Wales.

JP – noted this was picked up by Audit Wales regarding the critical skills gap. The challenge we have in Wales is doing something about it. There are two key things - the need to be joined up across the sector and secondly, we all need to subscribe to a gameplan / strategy. AK noted success in other sectors such as education and health on the push for recruitment for Wales; there is a need for this in environment – starting from a very different place however, such as lack of registrations of professionals etc. JP – we are struggling to see the pathway through this to the solution.

MB suggested AK join the Resources Sub-committee at a future meeting to allow more in-depth conversation.

RC – noted his own professional background and the issues seen in recruitment in water-related consultancy. RC highlighted a 50% increase in demand for water-based skill demands. Regarding the issues surrounding Tata Steel in Wales – there are many crossover areas in which former employees of this sector could be trained to work in water-based roles. Also, with the advent of

home working, this can attract talent from Wales to elsewhere.

AMM – noted experience in my consultancy is the approach to training on the job, which has been successful – however, I acknowledge that LAs do not often have the capacity to implement this approach. In England, my organisation takes on a lot of apprentices, but we are unable to do this in Wales as there is not the opportunity to do so due the absence of levies.

MB noted that KP, who is a member of the FCEC and Resources Sub-Committee, has undertaken work on behalf of the Open University on this and would be useful for AK to engage with.

## **12. Welsh Government FCERM Update – Dr Leanne Llewellyn, Head of Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management**

LL provided an update on behalf of WG. A significant amount of time has been spent on finance issues, and there are still huge pressures across central budgets and operating costs. The capital budget has been retained at £34m; unfortunately, the £8m uplift has not been given, and there is a £500k drop in revenue. We received 78 EOIs from main capital programme and 79 applications for the small scale works grant. In Policy, a huge amount of cross-policy work has been undertaken, such as climate resilience strategies and work on the SFS, NFM, SMPs, S19 etc. On the 2024/25 capital investment programme, the MCC has a planned oral statement on 19th March. On 20th March the new FM will be announced, and no Ministerial decisions will be taken after March 12th due to the leadership election.

It is likely that the new FM will reshuffle, and we are unlikely to know if a new MCC in place until at least mid-April. The next few months will be challenging for

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us – briefings to be drafted for new FM, and potentially the new MCC; we will also be working on a first 100-day plan.

We are still receiving high levels of correspondence in branch. On staffing, one programme officer has been lost but we have permission to recruit to fill this roll. A new officer has joined the team to work on NFM, whilst a new Head of Water has also been appointed. Prioritisation planning is being undertaken across the directorate – MB will meet to discuss joined-up priorities in due course.

NH asked if there will be a hiatus period at the beginning of the financial year due to political changes in government, and will the likely result in spending being weighted towards the latter end of the next year? LL – we need to do a round-robin with LAs to check in on long-standing schemes which may have stagnated. We need to establish their status / prioritisation. With good forecasts received in good time, it will be possible to repurpose funds. At present, we are on track to use budgets, with only minor underspend by the close of this financial year.

## **13. Sub-Committees**

### **13.1 Policy & Legislation Sub-Committee – To receive the minutes of the meeting held on 30th January 2024, and to consider the following report – Legislative Change Report: Ministerial Response – Implications for the Committee and proposed way forward.**

AS noted the minutes and asked the Committee to consider the report providing advice to FCEC in response to the Minister. Three proposals with recommendations not to include in our proposals or tracking. However, the rest were expected to a certain extent.

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NH – reflecting on TAN 15, which is not likely to be published any time soon – this delay gives an opportunity to still influence; we need further clarity on when TAN 15 will come out so we can plan on how to provide further advice – even if a broader timescale can be provided. LL again noted that there is currently no indication of publication but will endeavour to liaise with WG Planning team soon. MB noted this is one to keep an eye on, with a view to further influence the outcome of the TAN 15 consultation / report. There is frustration on this in the sector.

MW – will a possible reshuffle affect our programme of work? MB – our work programmes are for us to determine; whilst we seek the Minister's support, I don't believe we should feel the need to begin from scratch and as such continue to work on the current priorities we have.

KP – on crossover with proposal 10 on the Resource Sub-committee – I am pulling together a report on known issues in the sector, inequalities in accessing insurance in the sector etc. I can share this with NH to collaborate.

JFD – noted a new Adaptation Policy Sub-group to report back through the WLGA – first meeting in several weeks and shall feedback in due course; should the adaptation FCEC work theme be held back at present until the NRW policy sub-group has further information? LL noted being unable to provide commitment on when adaptation work will resume within WG as it is still being scoped.

Acceptance noted of the Sub-committee's advice in on the Minister's letter.

## **13.2 Research Sub-Committee - To receive the minutes of the meeting held on 14th December 2023, and to consider the proposed Terms of Reference (ToR).**

JFD – our second meeting took place just before Christmas. We took time to finalise the ToR. Working around collaboration was a key theme. The ToR has

now been finalised and the next meeting will be in a couple of weeks – we will be looking at a work programme at next meeting. Regarding research findings – there is a view to undertake a piece of work to see how RMAs are using these.

AS – noted proposal 5 of the PLSC interfaces with the Research Sub-committee – research on assets.

MB – the presentation by Environment Platform Wales was interesting. It is evident that what is in place across Welsh HE institutions is a strong framework and a considerable willingness to work with organisations such as us to gain maximum value, which was welcomed.

DS – on historical research – there is a need to catalogue / index on what has been done before so it can be utilised and avoid future duplication. JFD - there is a role to monitor value for money of research which could lead to a programme of better promotion, etc. MB noted the EA role on the joint-programme escalated to ensure conclusions of research are carried into practice, and the EA are increasingly ensuring that briefs for research ensure effective dissemination at the end.

AMM – agree that dissemination is a key element; also, is there need for interpretation and how should this be shared? We need to work to ensure the research is used and holds value for people.

JP – these are the things that the Sub-group are intending to grapple with. We need to be realistic on what we can do – we cannot replicate the joint-programme, but to maximise the benefits of what we can take from it.

The Committee noted the minutes and accepted the ToR.

### **13.3 Resources Sub-Committee – To receive the minutes of the meeting held on 18th January 2024.**

MB provided a brief update - significant discussions around skills and capacity and how we can move this forward have taken place. It would be helpful to bring along AK to next meeting to discuss her work. Insurance in support of communities, particularly Flood RE, will be something that is reviewed at the next meeting. Discussions are ongoing with DS on partnership working and how to develop a partnership approach with the water industry. The minutes were noted.

## **14. Reports**

### **14.1 Long Term Investment Requirements (LTIR) – Ross Akers, Manager, & Dafydd Sidgwick, Lead Specialist Advisor, Strategic Planning and Investment, Natural Resources Wales.**

RA and DS presented on the LTIR.

#### **Questions / feedback:**

PB – linking back to the CaRR to highlight future adaptation challenges is a good point.

AMM – there is a carbon as well as economic cost to bringing in defences, and things like coastal squeeze, I think it is important to consider these alongside economic costs. Also, adaptation takes time – so does this consider how soon we need to take action?



DT - adaptation prioritisation might need some wider thinking and investment needs to take into account wellbeing of future generations; this means to have cognisance to making sure the benefits are shared with some nod toward equality.

RC –I would be interested to understand to what extent can NRW draw on these conclusions to inform your business planning, especially considering this report is now in the public domain. It may strengthen the case for NRW to use its powers to raise its own funding off the back of this report. I look forward to seeing equivalent revenue report on this. I would like to see this as a core function of NRW and continue to update.

RA – in terms of influencing our own work – we want to stand by the messaging that this is a national level of data and is a risk-based maintenance allocation tool. DS noted one other thing to add in terms of cost - for the areas that are uneconomic to invest in, walking away from an asset comes at a cost. We have several live projects that are looking at this type of thing, they take several years, lots of staff time, and finance to implement, so the 'Do Nothing' option that the report looks at, costs a lot of money.

JP – we have always seen this as key evidence for the long-term picture, and it feeds into the adaptation debate. We are often walking a tightrope with regards to questions about blighting locations. We also experience difficulties in being an arms-length government organisation [at NRW] with regards to political sensitivity – however the view is there that we need to do this. RA – we also need to challenge ourselves with whether we're trying to achieve social equality or an equitable service that is fair to those most at risk.

## **14.2 Committee Work Programme - To receive the report of the Chair on the update of the Work Programme, and to consider the recommendation that the updated Work**

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## **Programme be approved.**

MB provided a brief update - changes to explicitly capture the workload arising from working and collaborating with NICW are noted; also highlighting the workload resulting from the various engagements with consultations. By the next Committee meeting, we will need to respond to the draft environmental governance white paper.

The updated Work Programme was approved.

## **15. Any other business previously notified to the Chair**

None.

## **16. Date and venue of next meeting**

Thursday 23rd May 2024, Mott MacDonald offices, Cardiff.

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