

# Board Paper

17<sup>th</sup> March 2016

<b>Paper Title:</b>	<b>State of Natural Resources Report</b>
<b>Paper Reference:</b>	<b>Paper NRW B 21.16</b>
<b>Paper Sponsored By:</b>	<b>Ceri Davies</b>
<b>Paper Presented By:</b>	Ruth Jenkins

<b>Purpose of Paper:</b>	<b>Scrutiny</b>
<b>Recommendation:</b>	To scrutinise progress and future plans. To agree to sign off the final content of the report by 22 <sup>nd</sup> July, outside of the board meeting.

<b>Impact:</b> To note – all headings	<b>Impact on the Environment:</b>
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might not be applicable to the topic

The State of Natural resources Report (SoNaRR) will inform the National Natural Resources Policy (NNRP) which will drive changes to the environment.

**Impact on the Economy:**

By reporting on the sustainable management of Wales' Natural Resources and informing the NNRP, SoNaRR could drive changes in the economy.

**Impact on Community:**

By reporting on the sustainable management of Wales' Natural Resources and informing the NNRP, SoNaRR will drive changes to the well-being of the people of Wales. It will provide a National evidence base to contribute to Area statements, a requirement of the Environment Bill, and well-being assessments, a requirement under the Well Being of Future Generations Act. It will be one of the sources of information available to Public Service Boards when they are working at the community level.

**Impact on Knowledge:**

SoNaRR will be a collation of evidence on the State of Wales' Natural Resources. It will provide a baseline and add to our knowledge.

How do the proposals in this paper help NRW achieve the Well-Being of Future Generations Act principles in terms of:

## Issue

1. To inform the Board of plans and progress to produce Wales' first State of Natural Resources Report

## Background

2. We have to publish the first State of Natural Resources Report (SoNaRR) by September 2016. The specific requirements of the report are set out in the Environment Bill, as shown below. The purpose of the report is to inform Welsh Government's National Natural Resource Policy and, where appropriate, the Area Statements that NRW will produce.
3. Current intentions are for the report to be available on our website at the end of September 2016. There will also be a printed summary document of key findings. This will help engagement with Assembly Members, Welsh Government Officials, Public Service Boards and other stakeholders.
4. Section 8 of the Environment (Wales) Bill gives us the Duty to prepare and publish a state of natural resources report. It also gives us the duty '*to pursue Sustainable Management of Natural Resources in relation to Wales, and apply the principles of Sustainable Management of Natural Resource*' in carrying out our functions'. *The state of Natural Resources Report will inform our annual reporting of this duty.*
5. Specifically:
  - (5.1) *NRW must prepare and publish reports in accordance with this section containing its assessment of the state of natural resources in relation to Wales.*
  - (5.2) *Each report must, among other things, set out—*
    - (a) *NRW's assessment of the extent to which sustainable management of natural resources is being achieved;*
    - (b) *NRW's assessment of biodiversity (including the living organisms and types of habitat included in any list published under section 7);*
    - (c) *what NRW considers to be the main trends and factors that are affecting, and are likely to affect, the state of natural resources;*
    - (d) *any aspects of the state of natural resources about which NRW considers that it does not have sufficient information to make an assessment.*

6. *An assessment of the state of our natural resources* will involve looking at environmental status and drivers of change. It will highlight the risks to the resilience of ecosystems and the impact on wellbeing
7. *The extent to which the sustainable management of natural resources is being achieved* will involve looking at human management of the environment; land use; pollution and waste management; resource efficiency
8. The report will describe causes of change to Wales' Natural Resources and Ecosystems and the extent of the pressures these changes have made over time. The first report will start to assess the extent to which sustainable management is being achieved by mapping benefits (ecosystem services) that the people of Wales receive from the environment. It will identify opportunities for maximising these benefits and contributing to the Well-being goals.
9. We produced the "Snapshot of the State of Wales Natural Resources" in July 2015 as an example of the type of evidence that we would use in SoNaRR. This was shared with the Board members in December 2015. It was used to support our evidence during scrutiny of the Environment Bill. We have built on this report and are currently drawing the evidence together from internal "expert" groups.
10. The "Snapshot" report was based around a traditional State of Environment Report, It Included examples of interconnections between parts of the environment. We have worked with Welsh Government to understand what is required in relation to the assessment of the extent to which sustainable natural resources is being achieved. This has led to agreement on the finalised structure of the SoNaRR as described in Annex 1.
11. We are committed to co-production. We are engaging and consulting with external stakeholders through existing stakeholder fora (e.g. Nature Recovery Plan Evidence Group; WG Natural Resources Reference Group and Marine Stakeholder Group; Wales Land Management Forum; Wales Air Quality Forum. We have had separate discussions with RSPB, WEL, JNCC and CEH.
12. The development of SoNaRR is overseen by an internal NRW Steering Group (Annex 2). We have regular meetings with Welsh Government to update on progress. We have a plan for the internal and external Quality Assurance and review of SoNaRR. (Annex 3)

### 13. Next Steps

- Prepare draft chapters for internal review – **11th April 2016**
- Benefits check and assessment of opportunities – **30th April 2016**
- Sharing of key messages with main external stakeholders. An opportunity to find out what others think – **May 2016**
- Writing of SoNaRR document and completion of Quality Assurance and review (as described in Annex 3) – **1st July 2016**
- Sign-off by NRW Board – **22nd July 2016**
- Final report published – **30th September 2016**

### Assessment

14. A communications plan is in place for the production, sharing with external stakeholders and publication of SoNaRR.

15. The next key activity will be to share key messages with stakeholders. Our aim is to use maximise participation and discussion from all interested parties. To do this we will use webinars to share the messages and main findings and interactive forums for feedback and discussions.

16. The SoNaRR itself will be presented in three ways:

- 16.1 Simple designed version of summary and main messages – this can be used as an introduction to stakeholders who are unfamiliar with the report and its uses.
- 16.2 A chaptered version of SoNaRR on the website.
- 16.3 One downloadable pdf document of the complete report.

17. Once these packages are in place we will use all opportunities to promote awareness of SoNaRR and how the knowledge can be best used by others.

### Recommendation(s)

18. It is proposed that the final draft report is circulated to the board in July, following the review process outlined in Annex 3. The Board is asked to agree to this process, which culminates with final sign off by 22nd July. Due to the tight timescales, this will need to be outside the scheduled board meeting. The

report will be circulated with the Board papers for 6/7th July but not in time for your considered response at this meeting.

### **Key Risks**

19. The timescales are short. With other priority work affecting delivery across KSP we are currently 6 weeks behind where we intended to be. We are addressing this by assessing the critical pathways and revising the timetable as appropriate.
20. The content and structure of SoNaRR have changed in recent months. The original stakeholder engagement work in autumn 2015 raised expectations which may not be met. We will manage this by communication with specific stakeholder groups now that as soon as the content of the final product has become clearer.

### **Financial Implications**

21. Cost of design and publishing of the report is included in the budget for SoNaRR in 2016/17

### **Equality impact assessment (EqIA)**

22. We have been advised that as the evidence provided in SoNaRR will inform National policy which will affect the wellbeing of the people of Wales, an EqIA may be required. We have not yet completed a full assessment of the issues to determine if an EqIA is indeed required.

### **Index of Annex**

- 1 Structure of SoNaRR
- 2 Membership of SoNaRR steering group
- 3 Timeline for Quality Assurance and review of SoNaRR

