

# River Wye governance proposals

July 2023

# A governance refresh

Tackling the issues with phosphate in the River Wye catchment requires extensive and committed partnership working; and there is a long history of this in the catchment. However the challenges are diverse and divisive which makes it hard to reach consensus. This has been exacerbated of late with the level of political and stakeholder challenge brought about by the spotlight on the condition of the river. Progress is being made with delivery of actions, but this is being overshadowed, and potentially stalled, to the detriment of making tangible progress.

All parties involved want the focus to remain on solutions to the issue. We recognise that short-, medium- and long-term actions are required. We recognise that evidence is needed to support these actions. And we recognise that there is no easy answer: compromise is essential and some sectors or groups will be impacted more than others. For this reason we need to refresh our governance and partnerships to make sure we are able to reach consensus and move forward.

This paper proposes a way forward. It comprises three groupings of partners – all closely linked and working together, but with distinct remits:

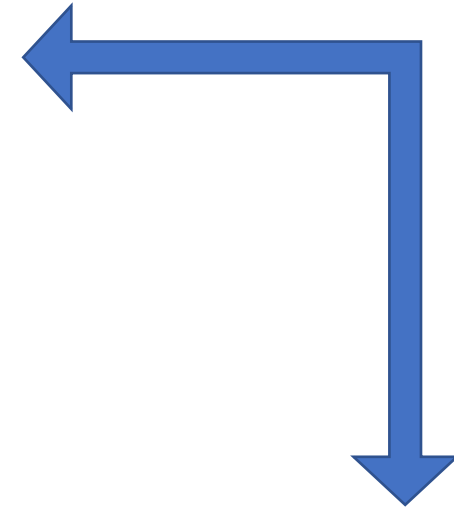
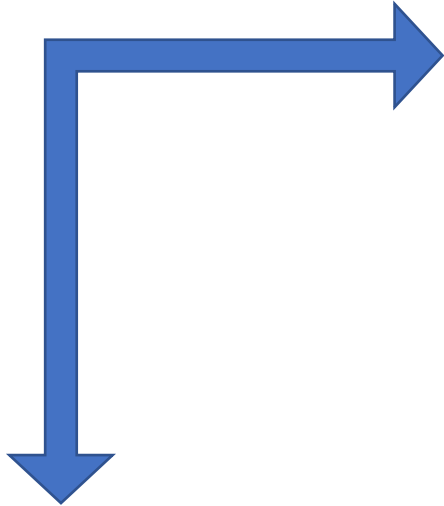
- An **Executive Leadership Group** (ELG) is a new group made up of senior officials from those organisations with relevant statutory responsibilities within the catchment. Collectively they own the Nutrient Management Plan (NMP) and make decisions about how they will use their respective remits and resources to deliver the actions within it. One of the first actions of the ELG is to review the NMP and ensure the actions within it remain relevant, that new (ongoing or emerging) actions are captured and resourced, and that the plan is both shared and reported against.
- The **Nutrient Management Board** (NMP) is where all partners with an interest in the catchment and a role in delivering improvements to improve its condition. It acts as a public forum to advise the ELG and steer the content of the NMP. It is a group where the widest range of issues and views will come together and so is vital in helping partners to understand the wide range of views across the catchment. Reaching consensus is key so the Board is independently chaired to help ensure impartiality. The Board also has a key role in influencing the wider national debate on issues that affect the catchment.
- The **Caba steering group and partnership** is a combination of the Wye Catchment Partnership and the Technical Advisory Groups (TAGs). It is where all stakeholder groups with a focus on delivery come together. It also plays a critical role in evidence gathering and testing actions. The TAGs are commissioned by, and report (via the Caba) to the ELG. Annex 1 contains a fuller discussion of this proposal.

This proposal to reshape the governance is based on a strong collaboration with honest discussion about how we resolve challenges between the organisations. It draws on partnership across the catchment but also a strong focus on commitment to delivery of a refreshed NMP. It is supported by the Environment Agency, Natural England and Natural Resources Wales. We would expect to review it after 12 months to ensure it is working for all involved, and to make any adjustments as needed.

### **NMP executive leadership group (ELG)**

*Membership: Officials from statutory bodies only, rotating chair*

*Purpose: Owns the NMP, agree actions & secure resources, commission TAG*



### **Nutrient Management Board**

*Membership: Those with a role in delivering restoration of catchment, independent chair*

*Purpose: Acts as a public forum to steer ELG on content and delivery of the NMP*



### **Wye Caba steering group & partnership**

*Membership: Experts from relevant organisations, various leads.*

*Purpose: Provides technical expertise & advice to support action development & delivery, leads on stakeholder engagement, Citizen science overview and hosts the TAG working groups*

# NMP Executive Leadership Group ToR

<p><b>Purpose</b></p>	<p>A collaboration of the statutorily responsible authorities operating within the catchment to restore the Conservation Status for the River Wye Special Area of Conservation.</p> <p>The Board does not have any formal powers or resources and as such cannot make any decisions collectively but it's members can on behalf of their individual organisations. The purpose of this group is to reach agreement on how they will collectively use those powers and resources to improve the catchment condition and share this via it's Nutrient Management Plan.</p>					
<p><b>Membership</b></p>	<p>Voluntary forum made up of officers from the bodies with statutory responsibilities relating to the river and impacts of water quality issues within the catchment.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="509 596 2453 728"> <tr> <td data-bbox="509 596 1156 728"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Natural England</li> <li>• Natural Resources Wales</li> <li>• Environment Agency</li> </ul> </td> <td data-bbox="1156 596 1803 728"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Herefordshire County Council</li> <li>• Powys County Council</li> <li>• Monmouthshire County Council</li> </ul> </td> <td data-bbox="1803 596 2453 728"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brecon Beacons Bannau Brycheiniog</li> <li>• Forest of Dean DC</li> </ul> </td> </tr> </table>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Natural England</li> <li>• Natural Resources Wales</li> <li>• Environment Agency</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Herefordshire County Council</li> <li>• Powys County Council</li> <li>• Monmouthshire County Council</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brecon Beacons Bannau Brycheiniog</li> <li>• Forest of Dean DC</li> </ul>
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<p><b>Operating principles</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meetings will be held quarterly following the NMB in order to allow the ELG to task work resulting from that discussion, though there is a recognition that meetings may be needed more regularly in an initial period whilst the new governance is finalised and becomes established.</li> <li>• Meetings will be held privately with any material or discussions that can be shared publicly being done via the NMB.</li> <li>• The group will seek, and take into account, the views of the NMB in its decision making.</li> </ul>					
<p><b>Terms of reference</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The group will work together to review contributions across all bodies, working collaboratively to achieve the objectives and ensuring all members understand the issues and work together to resolve them.</li> <li>• The group may make recommendations or requests of the bodies that make up its membership, via the relevant Board member.</li> <li>• The group will produce a Nutrient Management Plan setting out these actions. It will keep it under review proportionately annually and carry out a fuller review once every 4 years.</li> <li>• Members will be responsible for delivery of the actions their organisation commits to on the basis of the Board's recommendations or requests.</li> <li>• The group will review performance and delivery of agreed actions as a whole and report on progress to the NMB. It will also advise on or seek timely corrective action where identified.</li> <li>• The group will commission the Technical Advisory Groups where additional actions or evidence is required to help inform its formation of views and recommendations / requests.</li> <li>• Where actions are driven by a particular remit or have a particular consequence, no one area or sector has automatic priority. Each organisation remains responsible for decisions on and delivery of its own remit, but it is expected to do this in full understanding of the impact this has on others' ability to discharge their own remit.</li> </ul>					

# Nutrient Management Board ToR

<p><b>Purpose</b></p>	<p>An independently chaired voluntary Board which brings together all those who have a role (formally or otherwise) in restoring the Conservation Status for the River Wye Special Area of Conservation.</p> <p>The Board does not have any formal powers or resources and as such cannot make any decisions, this lies with the statutory organisations via the ELG. However it does advise the ELG on issues important to those who live and work in the catchment, provides opinion and advice to help form ELG decisions on actions, and as such shape the Nutrient Management Plan. It also acts as a public forum for scrutiny of delivery of the plan.</p>					
<p><b>Membership</b></p>	<p>Voluntary forum made up of those who have a role in delivering restoration of the catchment. It includes statutory and non-statutory organisations and is independently chaired to help reach consensus.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="514 658 2451 868"> <tr> <td data-bbox="514 658 1151 868"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Natural England</li> <li>• Natural Resources Wales</li> <li>• Environment Agency</li> <li>• Herefordshire County Council</li> <li>• Powys County Council</li> </ul> </td> <td data-bbox="1151 658 1798 868"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monmouthshire County Council</li> <li>• Brecon Town Council <b>Bannau Brycheiniog</b></li> <li>• Dwr Cymru Welsh Water</li> <li>• Countryside Land &amp; Business Association</li> <li>• National Farmers Union</li> </ul> </td> <td data-bbox="1798 658 2451 868"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Catchment Partnership member</li> <li>• Chair of the stakeholder group</li> <li>• Other members as Board see appropriate</li> <li>• Herefordshire Construction Industry</li> <li>• Wildlife Trust</li> </ul> </td> </tr> </table>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Natural England</li> <li>• Natural Resources Wales</li> <li>• Environment Agency</li> <li>• Herefordshire County Council</li> <li>• Powys County Council</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monmouthshire County Council</li> <li>• Brecon Town Council <b>Bannau Brycheiniog</b></li> <li>• Dwr Cymru Welsh Water</li> <li>• Countryside Land &amp; Business Association</li> <li>• National Farmers Union</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Catchment Partnership member</li> <li>• Chair of the stakeholder group</li> <li>• Other members as Board see appropriate</li> <li>• Herefordshire Construction Industry</li> <li>• Wildlife Trust</li> </ul>
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<p><b>Operating principles</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Board will operate in a transparent and open manner, whilst being mindful of the sensitivity around discussing draft evidence, proposals and information.</li> <li>• Meetings will be held quarterly.</li> <li>• Meetings will include an open session, broadcast on YouTube, where all interested individuals can ask questions (in advance) or watch proceedings and a closed session, if needed, to discuss any material that cannot be made public at that time.</li> </ul>					
<p><b>Terms of reference</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Board will work together to review contributions across all bodies, working collaboratively to achieve the objectives and ensuring all members understand the issues and work together to resolve them.</li> <li>• The Board will help to review the Nutrient Management Plan proportionally on an annual basis with a fuller review every 4 years; it's aim will be to advise the ELG on partner and stakeholder views of what needs to be included, and commitment to helping to deliver actions.</li> <li>• The Board will review performance and delivery of agreed actions as a whole and share views on progress with the ELG.</li> <li>• The Board will agree shared communications to be issued on key issues. Where not all members are in agreement this will be openly shared and discussed amongst the Board members with the aim of reaching consensus on what it can say.</li> </ul>					

# Caba Steering Group & partnership ToR

<p><b>Purpose (proposed not currently resourced)</b></p>	<p>The <a href="#">WCP</a> is hosted by the Wye and Usk Foundation (WUF) and Natural Resources Wales and brings together stakeholder groups operating within the Wye catchment to deliver environmental and societal improvement.</p> <p>The Wye Catchment Partnership takes on the following responsibilities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>education and information sharing</li> <li>providing a forum for collaboration between stakeholder group</li> <li>public engagement and citizen science liaison</li> <li>oversight and coordination of the Technical Advisory Group's working groups.</li> </ol>					
<p><b>Membership</b></p>	<p>Voluntary forum made up of key members plus a wider partnership group open to all with an interest in the Wye Catchment.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="512 644 2481 776"> <tr> <td data-bbox="512 644 1195 776"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Environment Agency</li> <li>Natural England</li> <li>Natural Resources Wales</li> </ul> </td> <td data-bbox="1200 644 1882 776"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty</li> <li>Wye and Usk Foundation</li> <li>Dwr Cymru Welsh Water</li> </ul> </td> <td data-bbox="1888 644 2481 776"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wildlife Trusts,</li> <li>Farm Herefordshire</li> <li>Farming Connect (Wales).</li> </ul> </td> </tr> </table>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Environment Agency</li> <li>Natural England</li> <li>Natural Resources Wales</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty</li> <li>Wye and Usk Foundation</li> <li>Dwr Cymru Welsh Water</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wildlife Trusts,</li> <li>Farm Herefordshire</li> <li>Farming Connect (Wales).</li> </ul>
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<p><b>Operating principles</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Working groups come together under the WCP to enable a close working relationship between working groups, stakeholders and the public. This helps with transparency of actions feeding into the NMB &amp; ELG.</li> <li>Steering group meetings are held Quarterly and Partnership meetings every 6 months.</li> <li>The TAG working groups meet as required with a minimum of every 2 months</li> <li>The Caba receives some funding from the Environment Agency as part of the Catchment Based Approach.</li> </ul>					
<p><b>Terms of reference</b></p>	<p>The full Terms of Reference for the Caba Partnership are available on the website. The following Terms of Reference relate only to the TAG's.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The TAG working groups (currently Evidence, Regulation, Farm Advice, Poultry and Projects) are hosted within the Caba. The Caba provides coordination, supports on developing work plans under the oversight/steer of the ELG. It also assists with reporting to the ELG.</li> <li>The TAGs are technical groups working collaboratively across the relevant bodies involved for their individual remit. They are not decision making bodies and they are responsible but not accountable for their work.</li> <li>The TAGs are responsible for delivering and reporting on progress of NMP actions as commissioned by the ELG.</li> </ul>					