



Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru
Natural Resources Wales



**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN
NATURAL RESOURCES WALES AND
AFONYDD CYMRU CYFYNGEDIG**



December 2018

Memorandum of understanding between:

NATURAL RESOURCES WALES and AFONYDD CYMRU

Purpose

This is an agreement which aims for closer collaboration and understanding between Natural Resources Wales and Afonydd Cymru and its member Rivers Trusts. It intends to achieve more effective collaborative working towards our common interests in improving river catchments, inland fisheries and the ecology of Wales' rivers bringing wider environmental, community and social benefits.

Background

Natural Resources Wales (NRW) is the public body maintaining, improving and protecting the environment in Wales. As well as regulating and managing salmon, trout and freshwater fisheries, its work includes tackling flooding and pollution, reducing industry and agriculture's impacts on the environment, cleaning up rivers, coastal waters and contaminated land, managing woodland, protecting and conserving biodiversity and improving wildlife habitats. NRW is also the competent authority for the implementation of the Water Framework Directive within the three River Basin areas of Wales. NRW is also the competent body for the delivery and maintenance of the Habitats Directive. There are seven rivers with Special Area of Conservation status as well as many Llyns and wetlands. Many of these work areas focus around river catchments and achieving an integrated approach to regulating the aquatic environment, sustainable development and support to the wider socio-economic benefits generated by fisheries and aquatic conservation.

Afonydd Cymru represents six river trusts in Wales. They are the Clwyd, Conwy and Gwynedd, Welsh Dee, West Wales, Severn, South East Wales Rivers Trusts and the Wye and Usk Foundation. All these Trusts are registered charities and have objects that include river restoration, fisheries management, education and tourism related schemes (Including navigation and access). In addition, there are events and other initiatives that involve local communities. The Trusts have developed a local and regional network of river users, riparian owners and fisheries interests, and can communicate and deliver environmental best practice effectively to this diverse group of people.

Historically, many of the links between Natural Resources Wales and the Rivers Trusts have developed at regional level. This agreement will make sure that the best examples of working together are used across the Principality.

Objectives - The way we will work together

Both Natural Resources Wales and Afonydd Cymru want to promote a more strategic relationship, as well as a framework for strong collaboration both at local and regional levels.

We want to maximise the sustainable, environmental and socio-economic benefits for users and local communities. Partnership working will help us link our statutory duties and local initiatives to improve the fisheries, biodiversity and recreational use of our river catchments as well as achieving the necessary targets defined in the various Directives

To achieve this, we will collaborate to achieve the following aims and outcomes:

- Environmental improvements will help to reduce the impact of climate change on wildlife and people.
- More waters and wetlands achieve good or better ecological status.
- Protected wildlife sites together with priority habitats and species are recovering and expanding.
- More people, from all backgrounds, enjoy and benefit from improved local environments through angling, navigation, sport and other recreation.
- Our rivers and freshwater environment are protected for future generations

Together we will ensure that we:

- Contribute resources, activities and competencies (according to the strengths of the partners) as our resources allow
- Develop a culture of trust and respect, aim to understand what each partner does best and use this to secure greater resources and influence
- Seek at all times to prevent delays in responses, consenting, and funding decisions

- Prevent late or non-delivery of agreed funding that cause problems for trusts and their over stretched budgets
- NRW will appointed an account manager to link between the organisations
- Seek innovative approaches to delivering environmental and social benefits
- Share and celebrate success and publicity on successful projects and properly recognising the contribution of partners
- Recognise, document and address lessons learnt from what hasn't gone so well.
- Encourage the development of Rivers Trusts and recognise their capabilities and needs at various stages of their evolution
- Recognise the statutory, regulatory, governance and policy constraints on our respective organisations.

The Next Steps

We expect that:

- Our local organisations will reflect the principles of this agreement, in our partnership programmes and day-to-day operations
- We will find common ground on which to build and extend our collaborations
- We will identify and involve other partners to help achieve our objectives
- Develop joint funding bids to contribute to our local programmes.
- We will review our progress against this collaborative agreement at least twice a year.

How we will Deliver:

Some of the prime opportunities for local collaboration have been identified as:

- Providing integrated improvement, awareness or education projects within catchments

- Developing, sharing and publicising good examples of working
- Establishing external funding bids across multiple catchments and River Trusts
- Sharing data and information to identify catchment needs and help provide good solutions.

Locally, this will lead to:

- Exchanging data and information between us and others, that contributes to our joint projects
- Sharing knowledge, training, technical developments and support materials for our staff
- Use of our contact networks to share information and experience (when appropriate)
- Considering assignments for staff between our organisations
- Providing advice and guidance to one another
- Assisting and supporting the development of river trusts and emerging like-minded groups
- Establishing more efficient consenting processes, where available, for programmes of work under these collaborative arrangements
- Developing clear communication links and points of contact between our organisations.
- Developing an annual programme of works that identifies projects to be delivered in partnership between NRW and Afonydd Cymru

At a regional level the following is relevant:

- Consulting on relevant policy or legislative change
- Co-operation on joint influencing initiatives towards our common aims
- Developing shared awareness of our relevant communication campaigns and engagement with them by agreement

- Inclusion of Natural Resources Wales representation within the Afonydd Cymru advisory structure *and vice-versa*.

Status

NRW, as a Welsh Government Sponsored Body, is accountable to Ministers and the Welsh Government, as set out in the Establishment Order for the Body and the agreed Governance Framework. The parties recognise that any relevant requirements in these governance arrangements take precedence over this Memorandum.

The parties agree that this Memorandum is not legally binding between them and does not create any form of partnership or legal rights or obligations. It is however a statement of their shared intention to work together in a spirit of co-operation in pursuance of the matters outlined above.

Nothing in this Memorandum of Understanding shall fetter the discretion of NRW and its duties to be impartial, fair to all affected persons and to exercise (and be seen to exercise) its functions in accordance with the requirements of relevant legislation at all times. Accordingly, nothing in this Memorandum is to be taken as limiting or affecting in any NRW's exercise of its powers and duties.

It is proposed this agreement should operate initially for five years, with both parties reviewing the agreement annually.

The parties agree to the terms set out in this Memorandum of Understanding.

Clare Pillman
Chief Executive
Natural Resources Wales

Dr Stephen Marsh-Smith
Chief Executive
Afonydd Cymru

Date:

Date