

## National framework Senior Steering Group summary March 2021

The national framework senior steering group held its tenth meeting on 30 March 2021. This was the fourth virtual meeting held and was chaired by Jean Spencer. The meeting focused on how we can make sure that high quality regional water resources plans are implemented that realise the group's shared ambitions.

The agenda was shaped to help manage strategic risk 1 – “Failure to meet heightened expectations for delivery of high quality, multi-sector regional plans that will deliver resilient water supplies for the future.” This overarching risk includes consideration of the links between regional plans, water resource management plans and business plans, delivery of the multi-sector element of plans and that affordability considerations need to be taken into account on a timely basis in developing regional plans that will then cascade into water company resource plans and PR24.

The meeting took an early look at the challenges emerging from regional plans (led by WRSE), heard about the emerging outputs from CCW's work on affordability (CCW) and heard from NFU on their irrigation strategy.

The meeting kicked off with updates from the regulators and Defra. Defra highlighted that the Senior Demand Management group is being set up in order to track trajectories to deliver demand reductions. The National Policy Statement is due to be laid before parliament and the Government response to the water efficiency consultation will be published shortly. The Strategic Policy Statement is also being drafted with a focus on the environment, WINEP, CSO issues and chalk streams.

The Environment Agency outlined that it is currently looking at linking flood and drought. Further work on this has been commissioned for later this year. The water stress consultation has completed and the water resources planning guideline is now available.

The DWI shared that the updates to the WR planning guidance will soon be live on its website including changes concerning interim risk mitigations and the connection between WRMP and drought plans.

RAPID updated the group on the progress of the working groups looking at regulatory and commercial frameworks, the modelling projects, progress with strategic schemes and cross-regulator engagement.

March 2021

Reconciliation inputs document	Consultation version	Draft regional plan	Final regional plan
<p><b>Aug 2021</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collated set of supply demand balance and options tables based on common assumptions</li> <li>Document for regulators: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explanation of supply demand balance changes</li> <li>Strategic context / implications / scenarios</li> <li>Explanation of options</li> <li>Potential cross-border/multi-party options highlighted</li> <li>Overview of methodology to be used for selecting options</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>Jan 2022</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public document: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supply demand balances explained</li> <li>Strategic context / implications</li> <li>Explanation of options</li> <li>Reporting outputs of reconciliation process to select options (with dates) especially cross-border/multi-party</li> <li>Strategic choices highlighted for consultation,</li> </ul> </li> <li>It is <b>not</b> a formal preferred plan</li> </ul>	<p><b>Aug 2022</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public document – an updated version of previous document with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Full options selection completed following consultation</li> <li>Alternative plans for consultation with proposals</li> </ul> </li> <li>Consistent draft WRMPs</li> <li>Planning tables assumed to be with WRMPs not a separate regional output</li> <li>It is now a formal preferred plan signed-off by regional / water company boards</li> </ul>	<p><b>Sep 2023</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public document – an updated version of previous document with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Full options selection updated following formal WRMP consultation</li> <li>Strategic choices confirmed following consultation</li> <li>Explanation of consultation feedback and changes</li> </ul> </li> <li>Consistent final WRMPs</li> <li>Planning tables assumed to be with WRMPs not a separate regional output</li> <li>It is now a final plan consistent with Welsh Ministers/ Secretary of State decisions on WRMPs</li> </ul>

Water Resources West introduced the work that the regional coordination group have progressed to make sure that the plans align. This includes a reconciliation period from August 2021 and agreed milestones in the process building on those set out in the water resources national framework. These are set out above.

Following on from this, each regional group explained the progress it had made since the previous meeting and the challenges ahead. All of the regional groups have updated their resource position statements and are working towards reconciliation of the regional plans in August.

WRSE presented its proposed approach regarding its Investment Drivers and Bill Impacts. WRSE plan to use the DEFRA bill model in order to understand the potential impact on bills.

CCW highlighted the ways in which water resource planning may impact customers in regard to affordability, including the most vulnerable. The cost uncertainty was emphasised as being a big factor to manage.

NFU touched on its integrated water management strategy which includes the need for farmers and growers to be engaged in playing a central role in managing the impact of flood and drought. NFU will return on this in June.

SSG briefly reviewed the programme for the meeting in June which will focus on demand management to help mitigate the risk that projected demand savings are not realised.

To close the meeting Jean Spencer thanked Simon Cocks and Milo Purcell as this was their last meeting with the group.