

Area Statements

Who is this guidance for?

Area Statements will improve our understanding, and support the implementation of, the contribution our natural resources make to our economic, social and environmental and cultural well-being – playing a key role in facilitating the innovative new solutions needed for the sustainable management of our natural resources.

Area Statements provide both a focus

- to NRW. Area Statements, being central to the delivery of its general purpose) will enable NRW to prioritise and organise their activities
- To inform wider public service delivery within the democratic governance at a local level within that area.

They will also provide evidence of opportunities within an area, which can be adopted by another party. For example evidence on biodiversity can be used by a public authority to help it deliver on its biodiversity duty.

Background - What is an Area Statement?

Area Statements are central to the delivery of NRW's general purpose

The Environment (Wales) Bill places a duty on Natural Resources Wales (NRW) to produce publish and implement area statements for the areas of Wales that it considers appropriate for the purpose of facilitating the implementation of the national natural resources policy.

Providing an integrated evidence base

Area statements will provide an **integrated evidence base** for NRW and others to take appropriate actions.

Facilitating joined up, collective action

In setting out how

- NRW proposes to address the priorities, risks and opportunities for the sustainable management of natural resources identified in the Area statement;
- taking all reasonable steps to implement it and;
- through encouraging others to take such steps,

Area Statements will enable the **joined-up, collective action, and innovative new solutions**, for the sustainable management of natural resources.

Add in an example

Preparation of the Area Statement

1. Principles of Sustainable Management of Natural Resources

Each Area Statement must provide an explanation of how the principles of SMNR have been applied in **preparing** the statement.

s11. Area Statements

(3) Each area statement must—

(b) explain how the principles of sustainable management of natural resources have been applied in preparing the statement;

s4 Principles of sustainable management of natural resources

Add in here

2. Facilitating the implementation of the National Natural Resources Policy

NRW must prepare and publish statements for the areas of Wales that it considers appropriate for the purpose of facilitating the implementation of the national natural resources policy.

s9. Duty to prepare, publish and implement national natural resources policy

(2) The national natural resources policy must set out what the Welsh Ministers consider to be the key priorities, risks and opportunities for sustainable management of natural resources in relation to Wales, including what they consider should be done in relation to climate change and biodiversity.

s11. Area Statements

(1) NRW must prepare and publish statements (“area statements”) for the areas of Wales that it considers appropriate for the purpose of facilitating the implementation of the national natural resources policy.

(3) Each Area Statement must explain why a statement has been prepared for the area, by reference to –

(iii) The priorities, risks and opportunities for the sustainable management of natural resources that need to be addressed.

For any other purpose in the exercise of its functions

NRW may also use the area statements for any other purpose in the exercise of its functions.

s11. Area Statements

(2) States that NRW may also use the area statements for any other purpose in the exercise of its functions.

3. Evidence base

Area statements provide an **integrated and coherent evidence base for NRW and others** to take appropriate actions in relation to the risks, priorities and opportunities identified in the National Natural Resource Policy in a way that promotes the sustainable management of natural resources at the local level.

They provide an opportunity to bring together the evidence across NRW's functions - for instance on climate change, water, flood, biodiversity, pollution, waste, forestry, landscape, access and recreation and how these are considered as a whole at the local level. They may also consider evidence from a wider range of plans, strategies and other documents.

s11. Area Statements

(3) Each area statement must—

(a) explain why a statement has been prepared for the area, by reference to—

(i) the natural resources in the area,

(ii) the benefits which the natural resources provide, and

(iii) the priorities, risks and opportunities for the sustainable management of natural resources which need to be addressed;

s10. Meaning of public body sets out the public bodies.

s14 (1). Duty of public bodies to provide information or other assistance to NRW to provide information will be provided by separate guidance.

3. Relationship to other plans

The following plans must have regard to any area statement:

A **National Park Authority** for a park in Wales which is proposing to publish, adopt or review any plan under this section must have regard to an Area Statement for an area the includes all or part of the park.

A conservation board of relevant local authority which is proposing to publish, adopt or review any plan...must have regard to any area statement for an area that includes all or part of the **AONB**.

Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act – LDP – have regard to any area statement that includes all or part of the area of the authority.

WFG Act **PSBs – wellbeing assessments** relates of any part of the local authorities area.

4. Format of an Area Statement

Area statements may be incorporated into another plan, strategy or similar document. For example, this may include NRW plans, such as River Basin Management catchment plans. Or wider plans such as those for a National Park or Integrated Coastal Zone Management plan.

s11. Area Statements

- 6) Before publishing an area statement, NRW must consider whether—
- (a) another plan, strategy or similar document should be incorporated into the area statement, or
 - (b) the area statement should be incorporated into another plan, strategy or similar document.

Implementing an Area Statement

1. Principles of Sustainable Management of Natural Resources

In each Area Statement NRW must provide an explanation of how the principles of SMNR have been applied in **addressing** the priorities, risks and opportunities in the statement.

s11. Area Statements

3) Each area statement must—

(c) state how NRW proposes to address the priorities, risks and opportunities, and how it proposes to apply the principles of sustainable management of natural resources in doing so;

2. Addressing the priorities, risks and opportunities

Each Area Statement must set out how NRW proposes to address the priorities, risks and opportunities and specify the public bodies which NRW considers may assist in addressing the priorities, risks and opportunities.

s11. Area Statements

(3) Each area statement must—

(c) state how NRW proposes to address the priorities, risks and opportunities, and how it proposes to apply the principles of sustainable management of natural resources in doing so;

(d) specify the public bodies which NRW considers may assist in addressing the priorities, risks and opportunities.

s10. Meaning of public body sets out the public bodies.

S11 (3) (d) separate guidance for public bodies will be provided.

Ways in which NRW may address the priorities, risks and opportunities

- Across the application of its functions (*for example advice and support to businesses, through its permitting function, grant funding*)
- Appendix A provides further guidance on the application of the new powers to enter into land management agreements and experimental schemes.

NRW may also specify the public bodies which NRW considers may assist in addressing the priorities, risks and opportunities.

4. Implementing the Area Statement

Each Area Statement must set out how NRW will take all reasonable steps to implement and area statement, and how it will encourage others to take steps to implement the Area Statement.

s11. Area Statements

- (4) NRW must—
- (a) take all reasonable steps to implement an area statement, and
 - (b) encourage others to take such steps.

s12. Welsh Ministers' directions to implement area statements to public bodies will be covered under separate guidance.

s13. Welsh Ministers' guidance about implementing area statements to public bodies will be covered under separate guidance.

S14 (2) Duty of Public Bodies to provide other assistance to NRW will be covered by separate guidance.

s15 (1) and (2) . Duty of NRW to provide information or other assistance to public bodies for the purposes of implementing an area statement will be covered under separate guidance.

Ways in which NRW may address the priorities, risks and opportunities

- Across the application of its functions (*for example advice and support to businesses, through its permitting function, grant funding*)
- Appendix A provides further guidance on the application of the new powers to enter into land management agreements and experimental schemes.

NRW may also specify the public bodies which NRW considers may assist in addressing the priorities, risks and opportunities.