

Llyr Huws Gruffydd MS
Chair, Climate Change, Environment and Infrastructure Committee
Y Senedd
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1SN

By email only: seneddclimate@senedd.wales

21st October 2025

Annwyl Llyr,

CCEI Committee Report: The Response to Recent Storms

Thank you for your letter of 4 September 2025, inviting comment from Natural Resources Wales (NRW) on your committee's report on the response to the 2024/25 storms and floods. We are grateful for your committee's focus on this matter, and for the opportunity to provide evidence as part of this important work.

Overall, we very much welcome the inquiry and the report. We are acutely aware that flooding is a significant issue in Wales, that causes not only physical damage to communities, infrastructure and the environment, but which all too often also brings lasting and significant real human impacts, including to health, social and economic hardships.

NRW, alongside other organisations, undertakes extensive flood risk management work that brings significant benefits to many communities at risk but it is clear that the impacts of climate change will mean that we experience more extreme weather events and flooding in the future.

There is no single solution to this complex issue, and it is therefore appropriate and welcome that your report contains a wide range of recommendations for stakeholders (including public sector organisations, private bodies, the voluntary sector and community-based organisations) to tackle the issues identified.

As you will appreciate, NRW will be steered by Welsh Government's response to the recommendations. We are engaging with Welsh Government officials on how the recommendations, and specifically those that relate directly to NRW, are considered, and where appropriate, taken forward.

We have reviewed the recommendations and where NRW is directly named, we have provided a short response below. However, we have a strong interest in many of the other recommendations, including those on the Common Warnings Framework, lessons learnt processes, emergency planning, and the use of catchment approaches and nature-based solutions.

Therefore, should you or members of your committee wish for us to do so, we would be happy to provide a further response on any of the recommendations. We will, of course, as

resources and priorities allow, work with Welsh Government and other partners on all relevant recommendations that are accepted by the Cabinet Secretary.

Thank you once again for your committee's work in this vital area. This report highlights the need for sustained effort and investment in flood preparedness and response. We recognise the key role that NRW has to play and remain committed to continuing to deliver meaningful outcomes that make a difference to lives and livelihoods in this sector, working within the budgets, resource base and partnership opportunities at our disposal.

Should you require any further information or clarification on our responses below, we would be pleased to provide it.

Yn gywir,

Ceri Davies

Prif Weithredwr Dros-Dro
Interim Chief Executive Officer

NRW's Response to 'The Response to Recent Storms' Report

Recommendation 1

The Cabinet Secretary must ensure that NRW has immediate and ongoing access to the latest flood forecasting technologies and systems. The Cabinet Secretary should ensure that a programme of funding is available for this purpose, and to ensure that Wales is able to influence research and development priorities. The Cabinet Secretary should also ensure that NRW is able to access and participate in ensemble forecasting trials.

NRW welcomes this recommendation. We look forward to working with the Cabinet Secretary and Welsh Government to take this recommendation forward. Good forecasting of complex weather events and their hydrological impact is a vital part of the armoury of flood response. The climate is changing, and computing capabilities are advancing, and the whole infrastructure (data, systems and human components) needs to also advance and respond. NRW has a close working relationship with the Met Office and the Flood Forecasting Centre, and we are engaged in initiatives to identify flood forecasting improvements and how these are taken forward. We will continue to engage with Welsh Government officials on priorities and investment needs.

Recommendation 4

The Cabinet Secretary should work with NRW and relevant partners to increase public engagement with flood and weather warnings, with a particular focus on low-income and digitally excluded households.

NRW welcomes this recommendation. NRW does a lot of work to promote understanding of flood warning messages. We focus mainly on the central provision of information and tools through our website, which is available for householders, communities and partners to utilise. We agree there is a need to improve levels of awareness of weather and flood warnings, what they mean, and the actions that communities and householders need to take when warnings are issued. This needs to be a whole-sector effort, for all partners, and not just NRW alone. For example, weather warnings are issued by the Met Office, and we need to work in collaboration with them to ensure their weather warning and NRW's flood warnings align. Also, NRW has prioritised central provision of resources, because this is where best value is added, and also because we do not have the resource base to do much direct engagement – but other organisations can play a role here. We agree that there needs to be a particular focus on low-income and digitally excluded households and recognise for example that web-based resources will not be accessible to all.

Recommendation 5

NRW should update the Committee on the promotion, reach, and impact of its weather warning service, including how success is being measured and what actions are being taken to improve sign-up rates and accessibility.

We would be grateful if you could confirm if the reference to NRW and weather warnings in this recommendation is correct and intentional, or if it is an error. Weather warnings are the responsibility of the Met Office, and not NRW. If you confirm that the intention is that an update is provided by NRW on the *flood* warning service, we will be happy to provide. We will assume this is in the format of a one-off written submission to you as Chair of the Committee but would welcome guidance from you if your requirements are different to that.

Recommendation 12

There should be a stronger recognition of the role of community groups. The Cabinet Secretary should work alongside NRW to explore opportunities to provide sustainable funding for community resilience groups.

NRW welcomes this recommendation. We already engage with third sector organisations such as the National Flood Forum, British Red Cross and the WCVA. We have also built up a network of over 65 community flood volunteer leads across Wales to provide them with support and advice. We also engage with public sector organisations such as Local Authorities and WLGA to explore how we can reach communities, including work we are doing with Rhondda Cynon Taf to consider what more we can do in collaboration. However, a step change in the number of such groups across Wales is likely to require significant effort and contribution from others who have more local community connections, including local authorities, town and community councils, and third sector organisations.

Recommendation 13

The Cabinet Secretary should update the Committee on steps being taken by the Welsh Government or NRW to embed community participation in flood resilience planning processes, including through citizen forums and co-designed local plans.

We welcome this recommendation. We will work with Government and other agencies to support this recommendation work by providing information on flood risk, flood resilience and our knowledge and networks of partners who can also help in this space. It will require cross-organisation partnership working.