MILLER

Research Evaluation Consulting

WaterSource22

Summary Conference Report

Dwr Cymru Welsh Water

Report v1.0 / November 2022

WaterSource22 Conference Report
Nick Miller, Nick Morgan, Susannah Lynn, Katie Lloyd
Miller Research (UK) Ltd.

In association with

For further information please contact:

Name
nick@miller-research.co.uk

Pen-y-Wyrlod, Llanvetherine, Abergavenny, Monmouthshire, NP7 8RG, UK
www.miller-research.co.uk | 01873 851880 | Twitter: @miller_research

Context

This short report summarises the results of discussions at WaterSource22, organised by Dwr Cymru Welsh Water on 9th November 2022 at the Vale Hotel, Hensol. The WaterSource Conference is an annual event held by Welsh Water as part of their drinking water catchment management programme.

Drinking water sources in Wales are facing unparalleled challenges from land use pressures and climate change. It is Welsh Water's 2050 ambition to safeguard drinking water through catchment management and have recognised the actions needed to protect drinking water can achieve multiple benefits that will also help to address the Nature and Climate Emergencies.

The theme of WaterSource22 was *Enabling Collaboration.* The event provided an opportunity to explore the recommendations of the recent Welsh Government Biodiversity Deep Dive[1] and explore the common barriers to delivery that we need to overcome to ensure effective and timely action at scale.

The day was held across four main sessions as described below:

Session 1.

Delegates were asked to work together to identify key challenges facing the sector. This was a very open and wide ranging discussion which surfaced a number of key themes. Following the session, these were rationalised into six themed topic areas.

Theme	Specific Actions
Regulation	• Regulation challenges/ resourcing e.g. for monitoring & enforcement • Bureaucracy • Clarity on the shape of Sustainable Farming Scheme • The commons • Planning processes
Data	• Citizen science • Data collection and accessible communication • Data quantity, data transparency and presentation • Translation of research
Skills and Capacity	• Skills gaps / low capacity to deliver • Local capacity building • Time and resources
Governance and Leadership	• Funding – including sustainability / legacy • Shift in pace and culture
Culture and Collaboration	• Stakeholder engagement • Tools for collaboration

---

[1] https://gov.wales/biodiversity-deep-dive-recommendations-html

MILLER
Research Evaluation Consulting

Communications and Narrative	• Risk aversion (all parties)
	• Valuing water appropriately / fairly
	• Denaturalisation of water systems
	• An empathetic and progressive approach
	• Use of inclusive language to foster collaboration
	• Cause and effect / public awareness
	• "Could vs should we do it?"
	• The need to question assumptions

Session 2

This session focused on identifying solutions and collaborative ways of working to address the challenges brought up in session 1. Delegates were invited to choose a theme and attend the discussion on the allocated table for that subject. After 45 minutes, people were encouraged to switch table and take forward the conversation around a different theme.

Theme	Specific Actions
Regulation	How do we realign policy, regulation and enforcement to be impactful, both perceived and real to allow and enable change and unlocking opportunities?
Data	How do we best create, collect and share high quality data that is inclusive and accessible to all?
Skills and Capacity	How do we reskill and build capacity through asset sharing at a time of reducing funding?
Governance and Leadership	How do change governance and leadership to bring long-termism to funding delivery and impact measurement?
Culture and Collaboration	What can be done to foster a long-term asset-based, evidence led based approach e.g. to investment, rather than competition?
Communications and Narrative	How do we reframe the narrative to be more inclusive and help encourage behaviour change?

Session 3

This session took forward one or two key actions from session 2 and asked delegates to collaborate on planning a roadmap for action to address the question. This was designed to drill down into the issues and start to build true collaboration amongst delegates.

Theme	Specific Actions
Regulation	• Better understanding of regulatory principles
	• Actions targeted at the offender (polluter) and driven by data/evidence
Data	• Devise integrated innovative data collection and knowledge sharing solutions using citizens, AI, drones and satellites.
Skills and Capacity	• Develop a skills pipeline across organisations to take students from social to work
	• Shift the way we recruit to allow creativity

MILLER
Research Evaluation Consulting

Governance and Leadership	• Vision for Wales at FM level backed by water deep dive (or application of the biodiversity deep dive with respect to water) • Plans driven by partnership at national and catchment level • Delivery by partnership or newly appointed body
Culture and Collaboration	• Team Wales as a collaborative entity with shared purpose and delivery - Building as a water We Work centre. • Upskilling programme in facilitation and community organising.
Communications and Narrative	• Run a campaign about making it socially unacceptable to pollute and degrade water quality.

Session 4

This looked briefly at key actions needed to implement change – and tried to recruit changemakers to lead on these actions.

- <u>Regulation</u>: An implementation plan for outcomes-based measures focused on a single pilot catchment.

- <u>Data</u>: The main initial focus for data was to set up a data monitoring group to take plans forward.

- <u>Skills and Capacity</u>: An upskilling programme in facilitation and community organising.

- <u>Governance and Leadership</u>: Establish a task and finish group to look at policy and other blockers and opportunities for nature-based solutions to deliver water quality improvements.

Conclusions

- The purpose of WaterSource is to explore how we safeguard drinking water quality both now and for future generations. There was a lot of energy and enthusiasm in the room during WaterSource22 supporting the ambitions of Welsh Water and recognising the opportunities catchment management for drinking water quality can deliver for multiple benefits.

- Further work now needs to be carried out to encourage ownership of actions within a defined, systemic, strategy for ensuring a resilient supply of safe drinking water and more.

- Welsh Water would be pleased to host further events and/ or focus groups to keep these conversations going as we deliver our "Team Wales" plans.

MILLER
Research Evaluation Consulting