

### STATEMENT ON HBF'S WORK TO IMPROVE SAC RIVER HEALTH

Further to the Action Plan issued by the Welsh Government following the second summit, HBF have been involved in several of the actions and working groups. A summary of each is provided below along with some areas of concern:

5674 - Welsh Government and Home Builders Federation have established a task and finish group to identify options for temporary private treatment plants in sewered areas

Four meetings were held, and good progress was made. However, this progress has stalled since the last meeting of the group on the 17 March 2023. Following this meeting it was left with the Welsh Government leading the group to prepare a final report to be presented to the Minister. This has not happened.

5682 - Welsh Government will appoint a contractor to develop a nutrient calculator(s) suitable for all Local Planning Authorities to use across Wales, building on the calculators already produced for specific catchments.

HBF have attended a number of meetings and provided comments where required, the last correspondence from the group was on the 2 October 2023.

5691 - Welsh Government will convene a Nutrient Trading Task and Finish Group, which will consider the outputs from the feasibility study.

HBF have attended a large number of meetings and provided comments and feedback at all stages of the project. Good progress has been made and a comprehensive report has been produced. HBF's main concern is finding a balance between needing significantly more data and the need to deliver a trading platform as quickly as possible. A suggestion that the delivery of affordable housing would be priority in any trading system is also of concern.

5676 - NRW Permit reviews.

HBF would note that as of the 14 November 2023, only 22 of the 171 WwTW permits have been issued. This is slower progress than anticipated but it is positive that several of the permits reviewed have resulted in planning applications which have been on pause to start to move forward to determination. It is important that the remaining permits are issued to allow home building to resume in more areas.

5646 - Welsh Government established the SACROG to provide strategic direction and guidance to the Welsh Government, regulators, and delivery organisations...

HBF would note their disappointment at the slow progress which has been made towards establishing the new structure. As we understand it the Project Manager is not yet in place. Further, we were advised for the first time in late October that the SACROG group would no longer be



meeting. Although significant work is being done by a wide range of organisations in several work streams, the leadership and direction previously offered by SACROG was hugely beneficial. As such, HBF believes that the SACROG group should continue to meet.

HBF are keen to continue working with the Welsh Government and other key stakeholders to progress the good work to date. It is critical that there is a continued commitment to ensure things move forward at pace. In two months' time, home builders in Wales will have had their affected sites stalled for three years. This delay and any further delay is having both an economic and social impact, deepening the housing crisis, risking businesses and the jobs they provide and all of the community benefits that new development brings.

