

# Priority A: Special Qualities of the National Park

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## A. Special Qualities of the National Park

- 4.56 The special qualities of the National Park are those characteristics and features of the National Park which individually or in combination contribute to making this National Park unique. Work has been undertaken to refresh the Authority's understanding of those special qualities for the Management Plan<sup>89</sup>. Those highlighted were:

Coastal splendour	Richness of habitats and biodiversity
Diverse geology	Islands
Diversity of landscape	Accessibility
Distinctive settlement character	Space to breathe
Rich historic environment	Remoteness, tranquillity and wildness
Cultural heritage	The diversity of experiences and combination of individual qualities

- 4.57 The strategy is to ensure that development in the Park conserves and enhances those special qualities. Even seemingly minor changes in the landscape can have an adverse effect and therefore attention to detail and the cumulative effects of change are important considerations. To support this strategy a Landscape Character Assessment and a Settlement Study have been prepared.

- 4.58 The Pembrokeshire Coast National Park is widely recognised as Britain's only predominantly coastal national park. The splendour of its coastline, the influence of the seascape, its spectacular scenery, and rugged, unspoilt beauty, provide a scenic quality which was recognised in its designation as a National Park along with the spectacle of the islands off the Pembrokeshire Coast. The geological resource is complex and a significant contributor to the natural beauty of the area. The varied landforms of the National Park are overlaid by millennia of activity by man forming a historic environment which is exceptionally rich and varied. Settlements, including urban areas, retain strong and distinctive character which encompass traditional and more formal architecture, and provide attractive places to visit. Tenby is dominated by Georgian architecture within the walled town, and planned medieval settlements are still evident at Newport and Angle along with their associated field patterns. There is a wealth of important habitat and species within the National Park. There is a strong interconnectivity between habitats in the Park and outside it, in particular in the remainder of Pembrokeshire. Pembrokeshire has a rich and diverse culture which has been shaped down through the centuries by waves of invaders and settlers. The accessibility of the Park is treasured where there is an ease of getting round and a range of activities freely available. A sense of tranquillity and remoteness is also highly valued amongst visitors to the area. This can include dark skies, free from light pollution.

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<sup>89</sup> Special Qualities of the National Park, Background Paper October 2007.

- 4.59 Supplementary Planning Guidance on landscape character and on best practice models for designing and siting technology in sensitive areas will be prepared.<sup>90</sup>

**Policy 8 SPECIAL QUALITIES<sup>91 92</sup> (Strategy Policy)**

**The special qualities of the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park will be protected and enhanced.**

**The priorities will be to ensure that:**

- a) The sense of remoteness and tranquillity is not lost and is wherever possible enhanced – see Policy 9.**
- b) The identity and character of towns and villages is not lost through coalescence and ribboning of development or through the poor design and layout of development. The identification of Green Wedges will assist in achieving this priority.**
- c) The pattern and diversity of the landscape is protected and enhanced – see Policy 14 and Policy 15.**
- d) The historic environment is protected and where possible enhanced<sup>93</sup>**
- e) Development restores or wherever possible enhances the National Park's ecosystems<sup>94 95</sup>. The protection of links between sites or the creation of links where sites have become isolated is of particular importance – see Policy 10 and Policy 11.**
- f) Development which would damage or destroy Geological Conservation Review<sup>96</sup> sites or any other important geological resource is not permitted.**
- g) Local biodiversity action plan species and habitats are protected for their amenity, landscape and biodiversity value – see Policy 11.**
- h) The Welsh language remains an important component in the social, cultural and economic life of many communities in the Park – see Policy 12.**
- i) Development of the undeveloped coast is avoided and sites within stretches of the developed coast are protected for uses that need a coastal location – see Policy 17, Policy 18, Policy 33 and Policy 35.<sup>97</sup>**

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<sup>90</sup> Supplementary Planning Guidance on Landscape Character for the National Park in support of the Joint Unitary Development Plan for Pembrokeshire will be consulted. That Supplementary Planning Guidance will form the basis of future guidance for the Local Development Plan.

<sup>91</sup> Chapter 13 Planning Policy Wales, Edition 3, Welsh Assembly Government, July 2010 deals with how pollution issues should be addressed with any planning application. Paragraph 12.4.1 deals with the protection of water quality and the adequacy of supply.

<sup>92</sup> See Welsh Office Circular 10/99: Planning requirement in respect of the Use of Non-Mains Sewerage incorporating Septic Tanks in New Development.

<sup>93</sup> Chapter 6 Planning Policy Wales, Edition 3 deals with Conserving the Historic Environment. Welsh Office Circulars 60/96 'Planning and the Historic Environment: Archaeology', and 61/96 'Planning and the Historic Environment: Historic Buildings and Conservation Areas' provide guidance.

<sup>94</sup> Includes Natura 2000 sites, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, National Nature Reserves and Marine Nature Reserves.

- 4.60 The policies and advice below provides additional guidance on protecting the National Park's special qualities.

#### Light Pollution

##### Policy 9 Light Pollution

**Proposals that are likely to result in a significant level of lighting shall include a full lighting scheme and will be permitted:**

- a) where the lighting proposed relates to its purpose; and,
- b) where there is not a significant adverse affect on the character of the area, local residents, vehicle users, pedestrians and the visibility of the night sky.

- 4.61 Parts of the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park are still relatively undeveloped with minimal impact of lighting on the night sky. This policy is intended to protect that and also to relate any lighting proposed to its purpose, such as site security or floodlighting recreational facilities, so that careful design and the use of appropriate means of lighting and lighting levels minimise the impact on adjoining areas. There is also a possibility that light pollution could adversely affect the integrity of a Natura 2000 site where development coincides with roost sites/transit routes.

#### Biodiversity

- 4.62 Planning Policy Wales, Edition 3 sets out clear statements of national development control policy on areas and sites and protected species with statutory nature conservation designation (including Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Special Protection Areas and Special Areas of Conservation).<sup>98</sup> Please refer to Chapter 5 'Conserving and Improving Natural Heritage and the Coast'. Sites are identified on the Proposals Map.

##### Policy 10 Local Sites of Nature Conservation or Geological Interest

**Development that would be liable to significantly harm the nature conservation value of a Local Nature Reserve or other site of local nature conservation interest, or the main features of interest within a Regionally Important Geodiversity Site, will only be permitted if the importance of the development outweighs the local value of the site and mitigation, minimisation or off setting has been investigated.**

- 4.63 Local Sites of nature conservation interest may be formally recognised, such as Local Nature Reserves (shown on the Proposals Map), or may not be formally recognised but provide

<sup>95</sup> The Water Framework Directive (WFD) (2000/60/EC) transposed through the Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) (England and Wales) Regulations 2003.

<sup>96</sup> Geological Conservation Review [GCR] the sites selected provide the basis of statutory geological and Geomorphological site conservation in Britain. Regionally Important Geodiversity Site [RIGS] are advisory designations.

<sup>97</sup> Chapter 5, paragraph 5.7.2 Planning Policy Wales, Edition 3, Welsh Assembly Government, July 2010 refers.

<sup>98</sup> See Glossary of Terms.

important nature conservation value. The value of a site may include its role as a wildlife corridor or stem from lack of disturbance for example. Habitats such as unimproved grassland, coastal habitats and heath and moorland, as well as features such as road verges have a nature conservation value in their own right and as stepping-stones to other habitats. It is not possible to identify such sites on the Proposals Map and this policy is intended to ensure that development which would harm the nature conservation value of a site provides appropriate steps to mitigate or minimise harm, or provides compensation to off set harm. This may be in the form of habitat creation elsewhere.

- 4.64 The West Wales Biodiversity Information Centre holds a geodatabase of species records and habitat information, constantly updated by maintaining strong links with public bodies, conservation organisations and individual biological recorders. This enables the Centre to assist nature conservation by informing decision makers, conservation organisations and the general public on the occurrence and locations of EU and UK priority species and habitats, and those of Welsh and local importance in the region. The Local Records Centre records can be particularly useful at pre-application stage and the public are encouraged to contact the centre before an application is submitted. The Authority will use the Local Records Centre to help establish whether there is local nature conservation interest at a development site. Where there is local nature conservation interest which would be significantly harmed, the potential for mitigating satisfactorily minimising or off-setting will need to be investigated by the developer and demonstrated to the Authority.
- 4.65 A list of Regionally Important Geodiversity Sites are currently being formulated for the National Park area, and will when finalised, provide Supplementary Planning Guidance to the plan to identify the location of sites and the main features of interest.

Policy 11	<p><b>Protection of Biodiversity</b></p> <p><b>Development that would disturb or otherwise harm protected species or their habitats or the integrity of other habitats, sites or features of importance to wildlife and individual species including Local Biodiversity Action Plan species and habitats will only be permitted where the effects will be acceptably minimised or mitigated through careful design, work scheduling or other measures.</b></p>
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- 4.66 This policy aims to ensure that species and their habitats identified in the Local Biodiversity Action Plan are not adversely affected by proposed development. Mitigation measures can often be implemented, but it should be noted that translocation is seldom successful in sustaining the nature conservation interest of affected habitats and is not supported. It is particularly important that the continuity of wildlife corridors is maintained.

Welsh Language
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- 4.67 Government advice on Welsh language issues is set out in Technical Advice Note 20, which states that 'the land use planning system should also take account of the needs and interests of the Welsh language and in so doing can contribute to its well-being'. In a policy statement published in July 2002, the Welsh Assembly Government advised that it is wholly committed to re-vitalising the Welsh Language and creating a bilingual Wales. In line with government guidance this policy seeks to recognise and protect the role of the Welsh language within those communities where the language is an important component of the social and cultural fabric.

**Policy 12 Welsh Language**

**Development of a nature, type or scale that is likely to prejudice the interests of the Welsh language within the community will not be permitted.**

- 4.68 The policy will normally apply in Community and Town Council areas with over 30% Welsh speaking population, as identified in the Census. Where the Community Council average does not reflect the existence of concentrations of Welsh speakers within specific villages in the Community or Town Council areas, a more qualified and sensitive measurement will be required. This policy should not be interpreted as justifying development that would not otherwise be acceptable solely on the grounds of contribution to safeguarding the Welsh language in the community. Where development can reasonably be shown, on planning grounds, (for example, the scale of development proposed) to pose a significant threat to the continued role and well being of the Welsh language within that community, the National Park Authority will use its powers to resist such development.

**Historic Environment**

- 4.69 Planning Policy Wales, Edition 3, sets out clear statements of national development control policy on certain matters which is not repeated here. Please refer to Chapter 6 'Conserving the Historic Environment' of Planning Policy Wales, Edition 3 for:
- the preservation of listed buildings, optimum viable use and their demolition
  - Development in a conservation area including demolition, advertisements and trees. Fourteen Conservation area assessments and proposals documents have been prepared and adopted<sup>99</sup> by the National Park Authority between 2002 and 2005. These have been adopted as supplementary planning guidance and will carry significant weight in decisions on planning applications. (shown on the Proposals Map)
  - Protecting historic landscapes, parks or gardens and their setting. (shown on the Proposals Map).
  - Scheduled Ancient monuments and archaeological remains (ancient monuments are shown on the Proposals Map).

**Policy 13 Historic Landscapes Parks and Gardens**

**Historic Landscapes, Parks and Gardens are shown on the Proposals Map.**

- 4.70 In assessing the archaeological potential of a proposed development site information from the Historic Environment Record held by Dyfed Archaeological Trust will be taken into account. This record is officially recognised by the National Park Authority. When introduced, the Heritage Protection Bill will seek to establish a unified heritage protection system that brings together the existing separate systems of listed buildings, scheduling ancient monuments, designating wrecks and registering historic parks, gardens and landscapes. This will therefore result in changes to the legislative framework. Changes to planning guidance for the historic environment and guidance on the content and maintenance of the Historic Environment Record are also proposed by The Welsh Assembly Government. The National Park Authority will prepare Supplementary Planning Guidance relating to the Historic Environment.

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<sup>99</sup> See Glossary of Terms.

Policy 14	<p><b>Protection of Buildings of Local Importance</b></p> <p><b>Development affecting buildings which make an important contribution to the character and interest of the local area will be permitted where the distinctive appearance, architectural integrity or their settings would not be significantly adversely affected.</b></p>
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4.71 The National Park is rich in buildings that are not listed but because of their vernacular architecture and construction are fundamental to the character and interest of the settlement or are important elements in the landscape.

- 4.72 The following criteria will be used for selection:
- degree to which the building remains in its original condition;
  - quality of the individual building’s architecture;
  - position and influence on the townscape or landscape;
  - association with an important local figure or event.

4.73 When considering development proposals, the Authority will give due regard to the difference in status between buildings of local importance and those that are statutorily listed and, hence, the level of protection which they respectively attract.

Landscape

Policy 15	<p><b>Conservation of the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park</b></p> <p><b>Development will not be permitted where this would adversely affect the qualities and special character of the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park by:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) <b>causing significant visual intrusion; and/or,</b></li> <li>b) <b>being insensitively and unsympathetically sited within the landscape; and/or</b></li> <li>c) <b>introducing or intensifying a use which is incompatible with its location; and/or</b></li> <li>d) <b>failing to harmonise with, or enhance the landform and landscape character of the National Park; and/or</b></li> <li>e) <b>losing or failing to incorporate important traditional features.</b></li> </ul>
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4.74 The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the qualities of the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park landscape are not lost to future generations. Policy 8 identifies the special qualities of the National Park.

4.75 Attention to detail and the cumulative effects of change are important considerations. Even seemingly minor changes in the landscape can have an adverse effect; prominent individual buildings or widespread application of inappropriate trends in design detailing can have an

impact much wider than their immediate environs and cumulatively will subtly and irreparably alter the often fragile landscape character of the National Park.

- 4.76 Where there is a possibility that development may cause significant visual intrusion, impacts should be assessed as applicable from:
- public access points;
  - the Coast Path (a National Trail);
  - Public Rights Of Way (as well as the public highway);
  - views on entering and leaving settlements;
  - views on entering and leaving the National Park itself;
  - the offshore islands;
  - waterborne craft on the Daugleddau and coastal waters;
  - important vantage points within settlements.
- 4.77 Particular attention should be given to medium and distant views, as well as the more obvious impacts on immediate environs and streetscape with special emphasis on the effects on the settings of Listed Buildings, Scheduled Ancient Monuments and Conservation Areas. The appearance of individual and groups of buildings, and settlements in their landscape settings, traditional building details and boundary treatment also need to be considered. Planting using native trees and shrubs, where appropriate, and landscaping can enhance and help to blend new development into its surroundings. This may help to balance in part the loss of original features.
- 4.78 Given the very restricted geographical extent of the National Park and its generally exposed coastal nature, any major or large-scale development is likely to sit uneasily in visual terms within the National Park's landscape. Development outside the National Park may have an impact on the qualities of the National Park and the National Park Authority will use the same principles as set out in Policy 15 when commenting on proposals outside of the National Park.
- 4.79 Where a development would constitute the introduction or intensification of a use which is incompatible with the location, for example noisy activities in a relatively undisturbed location, such development would not be considered appropriate by the National Park Authority.
- 4.80 Supplementary Planning Guidance on landscape character for the Joint Unitary Development Plan was published alongside the Deposit Local Development Plan. It is proposed that this guidance will be taken forward to support the policies of the Local Development Plan once that Plan is adopted.

Open Space & Green Wedges
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- 4.81 Planning Policy Wales, Edition 3 sets out clear statements of national development control policy on formal and informal open space, playing fields and green wedges. Please refer to Chapter 11 'Tourism, Sport and Recreation' and Chapter 4 'Planning for Sustainability'.
- 4.82 In determining whether there is a need for additional open space provision or whether there is an excess of playing field provision the Authority will refer to the Open Space Assessment Background Paper. This will be used in conjunction with Policy 48 which deals with planning contributions. Open space, playing fields and green wedges are identified on the Proposals



Map. The Assessment currently identifies a need for childrens' playspace/playgrounds at Amroth, Freshwater East, Moylegrove, Newport, Saundersfoot, Trefin, and St Davids. There is also a need for pitch space at Moylegrove and Marloes/Dale.

**Policy 16      Open Space and Green Wedges**

**Existing Open Space and Green Wedges are shown on the Proposals Map.**

- 4.83      Green Wedges play an important role in maintaining the landscape setting of urban and rural settlements, and in preserving openness. Pressures for development outside Centre Boundaries can result in an erosion of the openness and a detrimental effect on the character and special qualities of the rural National Park can result. Such development alone or cumulatively can have a detrimental impact on the character and landscape of the National Park and provides justification for the designation of green wedges as a local interpretation of national policy.

**Coast**

- 4.84      Planning Policy Wales, Edition 3 sets out clear statements of national development control policy on the coast and coastal defence work. Please refer to Chapter 5 'Conserving and Improving Natural Heritage and the Coast'. Locations in coastal areas considered suitable for development are shown on the Proposals Map.

**Policy 17      Shore Based Facilities**

**Development of shore based facilities including those linked to proposals below mean low water, will be permitted within the developed areas of the coast where compatible with adjacent uses.**

**Marina developments are not considered appropriate on the sensitive coast of the National Park.**

- 4.85      This policy aims to protect the undeveloped, quiet stretches of coastline by directing development to those areas more suited in terms of maritime requirements, on-shore access, parking and other associated facilities.
- 4.86      There are a multitude of structures and buildings associated with the shore or harbour or mooring provision, either extending out into the water, such as jetties and slipways or associated with equipment beyond the mean low water mark. It is also possible within the Plan period that larger developments such as mineral exploration could operate off the Pembrokeshire coast, with implications for on-shore structures.
- 4.87      Policy 33 on Renewable Energy deals specifically with onshore connections to offshore renewable energy generators. It is accepted that technically feasible locations for such connections may need to be located on the undeveloped coastline. Other possible exceptions are the construction of lifeboat stations, landing stages/pontoons/slipways etc., work related to sewage treatment and sea defences.
- 4.88      Proposals will often share the waters with other users so it is important that no conflict or congestion will result from any development. Some uses along the coast are often seasonal in

nature e.g. deck chair hire and ice cream sales. In such instances Policy 8 will be the primary policy used for the consideration of such proposals.

- 4.89 The Welsh Coastal Tourism Strategy published in December 2008 by the Welsh Assembly Government recommends expansion of the marina capacity outside this National Park. The National Park coast is for the greater part undeveloped and highly sensitive in landscape terms and often for nature conservation reasons too. Furthermore, although there are numerous small harbours around the coast, due to their tidal characteristics, access by boat is not possible for significant periods of the day. The works required to provide the sort of access and supporting developments which a successful marina would need would be substantial thereby increasing further the urbanisation of the location. See also Policy 18.

<b>Policy 18</b>	<b>Porthgain, Saundersfoot, Solva and Tenby Harbours</b>
	<b>Development within the identified harbour areas as shown on the Proposals Map, will be permitted provided that:</b>
	<b>a) it sustains working harbour activities; and</b>
	<b>b) it conserves or enhances the existing character of the harbour.</b>

- 4.90 The aim of this policy is to ensure that the working harbours at Tenby, Saundersfoot, Solva and Porthgain are viable in the long term. These harbours are identified on the Proposals Map.
- 4.91 When proposals are submitted in these harbour areas the Authority will request evidence with the application which will set out the relationship between the operation of the harbour business and the proposal and how the proposal will contribute positively to ensuring the long term viability of the harbour. This is what is meant by criterion a) of the policy. Where appropriate a planning condition will be imposed or a planning obligation secured by agreement that the development remains part of the working harbour. All development in harbours will require a flood consequence assessment.
- 4.92 Each of the harbours contribute to the settlement within which they are located. The undeveloped nature of Saundersfoot harbour which allows a visual link from the village centre to the sea is a critical element of that character. Similarly, Porthgain harbour is largely undeveloped. Development opportunities at Solva are also constrained by its location.
- 4.93 Tenby harbour provides the principal access to Caldey Island. Development proposals located in the harbour will need to ensure that access for the residents and businesses of Caldey Island is maintained.