

OPERATIONAL REVIEW COMMITTEE

17 June 2020

Present: Councillor S Yelland (Deputy Chair in the Chair for item 1.)
Councillor K Doolin, Councillor P Harries, Dr M Havard, Mrs J James, Councillor PJ Morgan, Dr R Plummer and Councillor A Wilcox.

(Virtual Meeting: 10.00am – 11.50am; 12.00pm - 12.35pm)

1. Election of Chair

It was **UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** that Councillor K Doolin be elected Chair for the ensuing year.

[Councillor K Doolin took the Chair and presided over the remainder of the meeting.]

2. Election of Deputy Chair

it was **UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** that Councillor S Yelland be elected Deputy Chair for the ensuing year.

3. Apologies

An apology for absence was received from Councillor ML Evans.

4. Disclosures

There were no disclosures of interest.

5. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on the 11 December 2019 were presented for confirmation and authentication.

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 11 December 2019 be confirmed and authenticated.

6. Working with Schools – Responding to the challenges of the new Curriculum for Wales

The report outlined a range of educational opportunities for schools delivered by the Authority, and these could be divided into four areas: the ‘charged for’ programme delivered at numerous locations in and around the National Park; the ‘charged for’ programme of activity delivered at National Park Centres; activities for school aged children linked to community engagement and the social inclusion objectives of the Authority; and project and partnership activity involving schools.

Some of these activities were delivered through the Pembrokeshire Outdoor Schools initiative, which aimed to promote the use of the



outdoors across the National Curriculum for young learners in Pembrokeshire. The Pembrokeshire Outdoor Schools Coordinator was employed by the National Park Authority on behalf of the initiative, and she was present at the meeting. She advised that during the lockdown period, the project had been offering support to parents and teachers via social media and there had been good engagement and feedback. She added that Welsh Government had recently issued guidance on learning over the summer term and this had a particular focus on outdoor learning which offered huge potential for the project to support teachers.

The Discovery Team Leader went on to explain that the new Curriculum for Wales Framework currently being developed, and which would be used throughout Wales from 2022, would present great challenges and opportunities for providers of learning opportunities such as the National Parks in Wales. Authority staff had already started to consider how its programmes could be adapted so that they continued to meet the needs of local schools; an educators workshop had been held in January of this year and this had provided a positive environment for collaboration between teachers and Authority staff.

It was widely considered that the next few years would provide ample opportunity to embed innovative approaches to outdoor learning into our schools. The Authority's approach was to offer experiences that were 'awe inspiring' and which children would therefore remember – this allowed teachers to build on those experiences within the classroom. The new curriculum was more cross-curricular and, working with teachers, authority staff were able to deliver themed programmes which linked to several areas of the curriculum. One work strand that was currently being developed was entitled 'Cynefin' which could be translated as a sense of place and belonging, and this tied in well with the focus on local areas necessitated by the Covid-19 lockdown.

Thanking the officers for an interesting presentation, Members noted that the education service was subsidised and agreed that this was appropriate, given that it formed the second of the Authority's purposes. They asked about the apparent focus of the work on primary education, and whether there were plans to work with secondary schools and further/higher education providers. The Discovery Team Leader explained that while some work had been done with secondary schools, such as Haverfordwest High School there were difficulties with timetabling, although assistance with fieldwork was offered. Officers continued to work with coordinators for the Welsh Baccalaureate, but colleges' lack of resources was also an issue. He added that post-18 education was an area for development in the future.

Members also suggested that the provision of digital media offered an opportunity to expand into secondary schools and the officer agreed that



this was becoming more important, and staff would be building on the resources being provided on the Pembrokeshire Outdoor Schools website. Materials related to the Authority's unique coastal location were also currently being developed.

NOTED

7. Reducing Light Pollution

It was reported that the Pembrokeshire Light Pollution Partnership, which included officers from the National Park Authority, Pembrokeshire County Council and Natural Resources Wales, had been established in response to increasing interest in the importance of dark skies and concern about the impact of artificial light at night. The key objectives of the Partnership were to enhance dark and starry skies in Pembrokeshire, and also the land and seascapes beneath, for wildlife, health, culture and heritage.

Over the past 18 months, the Partnership had identified key concerns, shared research and good practice examples, and worked together to identify opportunities to reduce the impact of artificial light at night. The Partnership had also produced "Starry Skies Pembrokeshire" which included information on the impact of light pollution, facts on night sky quality and star grazing in Pembrokeshire; the document was appended to the report for Members' information. It would be used to raise awareness of the importance of the topic and would help with action planning.

The Health, Wellbeing, Recreation and Tourism Officer highlighted some of the achievements of the Partnership, including the production of posters in many languages which provided advice on helping Manx Shearwaters which had become disoriented by the bright lights on ships, guidance for social housing providers and input into Supplementary Planning Guidance.

Thanking the officer for an inspiring presentation with stunning photographs, one Member commented on the benefits to tourism of promoting the county's dark skies. However it was also suggested that further advice was needed on the practical ways that businesses, communities and individuals could reduce light pollution, either in a complementary document or on the website. Reflecting on some excellent training that Members had received, they also considered that working with Town and Community Councils was key to taking the message forward. The Chief Executive added that the most recent Community Council Seminar had focussed on this very subject – sadly the night had been cloudy and it had not been possible to see the stars, however those who attended had found the session worthwhile.

NOTED



8. Performance Report for the Period Ending 31st March 2020

The report given by the Performance and Compliance Co-ordinator followed the structure of the Corporate and Resources Plan for 2019/20 following the seven well-being objectives, with an additional section providing general governance information.

The report presented the performance for the full financial year April – March 2019/20 and included quarter 4 data (January – March) for the majority of data sets. However some quarterly data sets were outstanding due to issues relating to accessing systems and records as a result of Covid-19 and staff working from home. Data for some measures were provisional and source data would be reviewed prior to inclusion in the Annual Report on meeting Wellbeing Objectives (Improvement Plan Part 2).

Where work streams, measures or actions related to the Authority's S6 duty under the Environment (Wales) Act these were labelled accordingly. It was noted that a number of actions were in amber at the end of the financial year and these related to areas where further work was needed to progress the activities, actions were part of longer term project or an action had been affected by Covid-19.

The report highlighted a number of areas of work where the RAG (Red Amber Green) rating was red or amber, including some planning statistics, Parkwise training, Walkability and the West Wales Walking for Well-being Project, and the Pembrokeshire Outdoor Schools Project and updates were provided on the actions being taken in relation to these.

It was reported at the meeting that the Inspector's Report into the Local Development Plan had been received and the Authority was waiting for an opportunity to adopt the Plan.

Thanking the officer for the report, Members particularly valued the commentary provided as part of the introduction to the report, which identified areas marked as red or amber and therefore needed to be drawn to Members' attention. They felt that the report showed a strong performance overall and staff were to be congratulated. However they asked for a key to the RAG ratings and a bit more explanation with regard to the reason for the rating in some cases. The officer explained that the Performance Management system was currently under review, and the way things were reported going forward would be considered. The comments were input by different officers across the Authority which could lead to varying levels of detail and she suggested that additional guidance could be provided to staff.



Where information was currently unavailable due to the Covid-19 lockdown, Members asked what systems were in place to ensure that the end of year report was complete. The officer replied that the end of year report took the form of the Improvement Plan Part 2 which would be reported to the National Park Authority in due course. Prior to its completion, all data would be reviewed and any gaps identified and updated.

NOTED

[The Committee adjourned for 10 minutes]

9. Risk Register

Members were asked to consider the latest Risk Register. The Chief Executive advised that it had been reviewed by both Management and Leadership Teams and changes since the previous report were highlighted. These included risks resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic.

Members suggested that additional entries on the register could be considered in relation to the effect of climate change/coastal erosion on the Authority's resources, and also the risk of general diseases – human, animal or plant (eg Foot and Mouth). It was also suggested that with regard to Risk 45, Impact of Covid-19, this should include impacts on the health and wellbeing of staff and the positive steps that were being taken to mitigate these.

Another Member asked that the progress updates provided be reviewed and it was noted that reference should also be made to the 'Responding to the Climate Change Emergency' Action Plan recently approved by the Authority.

A number of Members noted that the approach to risk assessment and the way it was reported in organisations in general had changed in recent times, and wondered whether a development session should be held for all Members to consider the Authority's approach. The Chief Executive responded that the format of the Register had been changed as a result of an Internal Audit recommendation, however following the recent appointment of new Internal Auditors further consideration could be given to this matter. At a future meeting, the Risk Register would be tabled at the start of the meeting, rather than being placed at the end of the agenda to allow greater time for discussion.

NOTED

10. Celtic Routes

The Director of Countryside, Community and Visitor Services provided the Committee with a brief overview of the Celtic Routes project. He



explained that this was a tourism project which showcased the cultural heritage of the counties of Pembrokeshire, Carmarthenshire and Ceredigion in Wales and Waterford, Wexford and Wicklow in Ireland. It aimed to encourage visitors who may be passing through to stay, or return, and experience places that are less well visited. The project particularly targeted visitors from France, Germany and the United States, however it was hoped that the Project's marketing plans would help to restart tourism more generally following the Covid-19 pandemic lockdown, and it was likely that these would be adjusted in response. Information could be found on the Project's website <http://www.celticroutes.info> which included spectacular photography; other marketing activities included articles in magazines, posts on social media and billboard advertising. A contract for evaluation of the first phase of the project had gone out to tender.

Members asked for a copy of the presentation and for a further update to be provided at a future meeting.

NOTED.

11. Continuous Improvement Group: delegation of issues

It was suggested that the Authority's use of digital technology, for example for storing and distributing Committee Reports and associated presentations, could be considered. The Chief Executive replied that options were currently being considered for a technological solution, and he was hopeful that a budget could be found.

It was **RESOLVED** that there were no issues that needed to be delegated to the Continuous Improvement Group for consideration.

