

## **CEO Performance Review Panel**

**21 October 2021**

**1:30 pm**

### **In attendance:**

Tegryn Jones, Chief Executive

Cllr Paul Harries, Chair of the Authority (and Chair of meeting)

Cllr Di Clements, Deputy Chair of the Authority

Dr Rachel Heath-Davies, Deputy Chair of Audit and Corporate Services Review Committee (Note taker)

### **Notes of meeting:**

#### **1. Apologies**

All members were present and there were no apologies.

#### **2. Disclosures of interest**

There were no disclosures of interest by Members.

#### **3. Exemption of the public**

It was agreed that the public would be excluded due to the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 12 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

#### **4. CEO review**

##### **Objective 1 – to ensure that resources are managed effectively**

TJ reported that the financial position was positive and more so than was forecast when budgeting was undertaken during the height of the pandemic. The compensatory income received last year had supported the financial position of the organisation well, especially through the challenging year. Car parking figures are almost double what was forecasted (due to being conservative with the budget in the middle of the lock down) and visitor revenue had also been healthier than forecasted. However, there was also cautious optimism due to the risk of bigger cuts across the public sector on the horizon. Continuing to plan ahead for the medium and longer term will be important.

In this regard, the panel talked about the lessons from Covid, and to realise efficiencies into the future. In this way, DC felt there was a need to remain 'lean and mean'.

The proportion of overall income received from Welsh Government had reduced over the years and the need to generate income continued to be important. Fund raising in particular was felt to be a particular skill and mindset and while there were some successes there is more work to do to engage all staff and Board Members with this approach.

A counter view was that more income may become available in future due to the increasing awareness of the benefits of the outdoors and national parks since covid. There was also a view that more opportunities for funding may come from decarbonisation grants/ income streams besides mainstream Welsh Government funding.

In terms of income generation from other sources, TJ outlined how the work of the Trust with fund raising was a long-term investment and some of the work today will come to fruition in 5-10 years time.

PH asked about the UK Parks Partnership and TJ explained that there was potentially a large donation from a beauty manufacturer and retailer on the horizon. It was unclear as to what if any share PCNPA will have from this UK wide parks donation. He also outlined the work undertaken with Palladium to attract corporate donations. This type of investment was felt to be welcomed at the moment, while also acknowledging that it brings its own risks. Executive team will seek guidance from the Board on these matters to the future.

### **Objective 2 – To complete the corporate review and revise the Corporate and Resources Plan.**

TJ outlined progress made with the draft strategy and the ongoing work to develop the steps enacting the strategy. He reported that recent steps had been challenging in some areas of the organisation in recent times and it was proving particularly harder to identify work that we were not going to undertake in the future.

Decarbonisation is really important and the authority will need to recruit new skills to the organisation to undertake this work.

Three elements or steps to the process were outlined as - strategy, structure, and then new pay scales. TJ also said that a draft Corporate and resource strategy was in progress.

There was a discussion with the panel on implementing the strategy and buy-in and manager expertise in leadership of change was highlighted.

TJ concluded by saying that he hoped there would be progress on organisational change to report by March 2022.

### **Objective 3 – To develop and implement initiatives to tackle climate change**

The report listed some progress with projects, but TJ explained that there was a sense of frustration with the lack of ambition to think bigger amongst some areas of the authority. To have a real impact with biodiversity, maybe a 10-year plan was needed in order to plan for and deliver the level of ambition and scale required.

Impact of climate change was felt to be more challenging as this requires partnership working across the county and beyond. TJ a high-level Public Services Board group to get a more coordinated approach across Pembrokeshire on this now.

Decarbonisation is an important area and he had commissioned two companies – Afallen, and Aquatera who had expertise in this area and would submit reports by March 2022. They would produce a road map for us and identify initiatives and funding streams. Following a question about the new methodology, TJ said that he felt that there was a group working internally to look at the new WG methodology however, this was an areas where additional skills would be identified as part of any new structure (see strategy objective 2 above).

TJ reported progress in asking staff and Board members for big ideas and said that 46 had been received. These were now being sifted and that the ideas had been grouped thematically and would be evaluated accordingly. There may be opportunities for champions to pitch for their ideas or indeed potential to combine ideas. He hoped to have around 6 projects ready for future opportunities.

PH asked a question about the marine national parks and both TJ and PH explained that some preparatory discussions had taken place and while in its early stages, there is potential to develop in this area going forward.

#### **Objective 4 – Support the health and wellbeing of staff**

TJ reported that he felt there had been a descent into the autumn/ winter with staff feeling some more of the challenges of working from home having done so for a sustained period of time. Having said this, it was difficult to get a handle on genuinely how difficult this is and how much is work attributable or more generally life's challenges. He also said that more staff were using the counselling service, which is a good thing, but also could be an indication of the increase in concern.

He went on to explain that limited numbers of staff were attending the office physically. One possible reason were the barriers to doing so perceived by staff: especially the need to complete a risk assessment, which has been taken to mean that attending the office is discouraged. The panel provided some ideas on ways to seek feedback from staff including 'A Team Charter' and 'pulse survey'. There was also a discussion on ways to kick start a new hybrid form of working by creating a desk booking system, lateral flow test, and using office days as ways to have team events/ check-ins/ catch ups rather than meetings per se. One panel member also queried whether the Board room could be used for small teams to meet and work in the same room.

One member relayed the frustrations that had been relayed to him about still not being able to meet with planners face to face. TJ explained that this was possible just that a risk assessment needed to be prepared.

#### **Objective 5 – Work with partners and engage with external stakeholders to raise the Authority's profile**

The panel agreed that the objective wording was outdated now with its reference to Brexit. The panel agreed that this would be amended accordingly.

TJ elaborated on his written report by saying that the Authority had contributed to the WLGA manifesto and one from the National Parks and PH mentioned how he still referred to these in meetings as a Chair of the Authority.

TJ continued to engage with the sponsor branch in WG and perhaps there had been less engagement with Ministers now that National Parks are located within a larger department since the election. Both PH and TJ welcomed the meeting with the Minister which was imminent. There was some further discussion about some possible interests and steers the Minister may have based on experiences around Board Members and planning cases.

#### **Other matters -**

#### **Risk Register –**

RHD asked about progress with the risk register and the recent internal audit commissioned work. TJ explained that some ideas in the TIAA report were useful and there were some areas to improve in terms of presenting a more accurate and stronger risk register in audit committees. He was also considering the risk appetite element and perhaps highlighting and reporting on changes to the risk register and the 5 most important risks, and this was welcomed by the panel.

### **Health and Safety –**

RHD asked about the capacity within HR to fully carry out the Health and Safety elements of the role. In particular, there was limited or no reporting on public health and visitor centre aspects of health and safety and this was a particular concern and risk with covid. TJ reassured RHD by saying this work was taking place and that he would consider how to ensure that future reports covered these aspects more fully. There was also an acknowledgement to look at HR capacity for this role as part of the strategy workstream.

PH added that he was concerned about the abuse of planners and enforcement officers and how this could have a knock on effect on their mental health.

### **Objectives going forward**

- i. Model budget options and manage the Authority's resources effectively, taking account of the impact and lessons from Covid19, including Members in the process, raising staff ambition, building efficiency and resilience through new ways of working and seeking opportunities and innovation through new sources of funding;
- ii. Following a corporate review, formulate and consult on the Authority's long-term strategy and subsequently revise the Corporate Plan to clearly set out and communicate the high-level priorities for staff and Members to drive forward together;
- iii. Develop and implement initiatives on land and within the marine to enable the Authority to assist with tackling climate change and the loss of biodiversity;
- iv. Support the health and wellbeing of staff through supporting the HR Manager to complete a revision of policies and complete the Welsh Government Corporate Health Standard; and
- v. Work with partners and engage external stakeholders to continue to raise the profile of the Authority and influence relevant policies locally and nationally.