

Operational Review Committee

16 March 2022

Present: Councillor K Doolin (Chair)
Councillor P Harries, Dr M Havard, Mrs J James, Councillor P
Kidney (non-voting), Councillor PJ Morgan, Dr R Plummer and
Councillor S Yelland

(Virtual Meeting: 10.00am – 11.50am)

1. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor M Evans and
Councillor A Wilcox.

2. Disclosures

A personal but not prejudicial disclosure of interest was received from Dr
R Plummer in respect of item 4 (Freshwater East Play area) and Report
04/22 (Ranger Annual Report); however she remained in the meeting and
played a full part in the discussions.

3. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on the 1 December 2021 were presented
for confirmation and authentication.

It was **resolved** that the minutes of the meeting held on 1 December 2021
be confirmed and authenticated.

4. Notice of Motion by Councillor P Kidney that the Authority enters into negotiation with Lamphey Community Council, and any interested parties, to either gift or sell land in Freshwater East, for the provision of a children's play area

The Chair advised that this Notice of Motion had been considered by the
Authority at its meeting on 9th February 2022, when the matter had been
referred to the Operational Review Committee for consideration at its next
meeting. As the Committee did not have authority to make a decision on
this matter, the outcome would be reported back to the Authority at the
earliest opportunity.

The Estates Officer had prepared a report on behalf of the Asset
Management Group which set out the history of this request, which had
originally been made by Lamphey Community Council in October 2021.
This explained that following a discussion at the Asset Management
Group, a response had been provided to the Clerk stating that officers
were unable to identify any obvious need for a dedicated children's
playground in this location but inviting the Community Council to provide



any further information. It was noted that no further correspondence had been received.

The Chair welcomed Councillor Kidney to the meeting, as proposer of the Notice of Motion. Councillor Kidney explained that Lamphey Community Council hadn't felt that their request had been adequately considered and they were not happy with the response they had received. He understood that they just wanted to purchase a small area of land between the car park and the beach for a small playground. This would benefit local families, who could not necessarily travel to the playground in Lamphey, as well as visitors. He noted that the community contained many second homes, and a grant would be sought from the Enhancing Pembrokeshire Fund to undertake the development.

The officer advised that the land had been acquired by the Authority in order to protect and preserve the dune area. The Community had wanted to designate the area as a Village Green, which the Authority had resisted as this would have prevented any development. It had subsequently been designated as a Local Nature Reserve and as access land under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, but was also the subject of other constraints. The Chief Executive added that officers regularly engaged with residents in Freshwater East and although there were many groups with differing priorities, the Community Council was recognised as the body with democratic responsibility.

Thanking officers for explaining the background, Members said that it was unfortunate that the dialogue between the Community Council and the Authority had not continued. They suggested that the lines of communication needed to be reopened so that the Community Council could clarify their needs and the Authority could explain the constraints of the area so that a better mutual understanding could be reached. Depending on the outcome of the discussion, the possibility of a site visit in future was raised.

It was **resolved** that the Committee requests that officers enter into further communication with Lamphey Community Council regarding the provision of a children's play area at Freshwater East and report back to this Committee so that a recommendation can be made to a future meeting of the National Park Authority.

[Councillors P Harries and P Kidney tendered their apologies and left the meeting at this juncture]

5. Annual Governance Statement

Members were reminded that the Authority was required to produce an Annual Governance Statement and their comments were sought on the draft 2021/22 statement. This would become an Annex to the Annual



Accounts which would be presented to the Authority later in the year. The Finance Manager noted that the Head of Internal Audit's Annual Opinion to be found in Section 5 of the document was printed in red as this was yet to be presented to the Authority.

Thanking the officer for a comprehensive document, Members suggested that reference should be made in the Governance Framework section of the Statement to the review of risk, which had resulted in the amendment of the Terms of Reference for the Committee earlier in the year, although it was noted that this was reported in the Review of Effectiveness section. It was also suggested that the document could be more reflective of the Authority's actions in response to the Welsh Language and the climate and nature emergencies. It was suggested that the inclusion of paragraph numbers would make cross reference easier; other, more minor comments would be emailed to the officer directly.

Thanking Members for their comments, the Finance Manager advised that the report had recently been reviewed by the Authority's Audit and Corporate Services Review Committee and the comments received would be reflected in the document before it was finalised. Also new guidelines had been received from Audit Wales which would result in some changes in referencing legislative guidance and some of the sections of the AGS being rearranged.

Noted.

6. Performance Report for the Period Ending 31 January 2022

The report followed the structure of the Corporate and Resources Plan for 2021/22. This followed the approach of the Well-being of Future Generations Act with seven well-being objectives, with an additional section providing general governance information. Activities responding to Covid 19 recovery had been mainstreamed into work streams under each of the well-being Objectives.

The report, which was presented by the Chief Executive, showed the performance to 31 January 2022 for monthly data and quarter 1 to quarter 3 (April – December) for quarterly statistics, and went on to highlight relevant statistics in respect of the work of the Authority's various teams and departments.

Members asked that their thanks be passed on to the officer for an excellent report. While they recognised the challenges being experienced by the planning service, they also wished to applaud the professional standards of the team and what was being achieved despite the pressures. They welcomed the innovative ways that were being used to meet the recruitment challenges. A question was asked about the future of the collaborative project to develop a regional approach to One Planet



Developments and Biodiversity Enhancement which was currently reported as on hold due to changes with project partners. The Chief Executive agreed to find out as the Director of Planning and Park Direction was not present in the meeting.

Members also requested that a comment be included in future on the wider impacts of climate change eg erosion, storm damage and sea level change. Also it was suggested that the report could report on the Authority's successes.

Noted.

7. Defence Training Estate – Ranger Annual Report 2021

Members were reminded that the Castlemartin Ranger Service monitored and managed the special features of the Military Ranges of South Pembrokeshire and safeguarded public access to them. Since 2003 the service had been provided through a unique partnership between the Ministry of Defence (MoD) through the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO), Natural Resources Wales (NRW) and the Authority.

The significant achievement of the partnership was in support of the rural land management plan for the Ranges, a key requirement of which was the employment of a Ranger and Seasonal Assistant to manage the interface between recreation, nature conservation and military use. The Rangers ensured that recreational activity had minimal impact on cliff nesting birds and other notable species such as seals through an effective series of agreed seasonal climbing restrictions, management of the public access network and provision of other access opportunities. The Rangers were closely involved in monitoring the conservation features of the scheduled sites on the MoD Ranges, liaising with user groups, both civilian and military, and ensuring that sustainable public access was achieved whenever possible, in balance with military requirements.

The Ranger Annual Report 2021 was appended to the report and this was presented by the Castlemartin Ranger, who focussed on key projects and items of work at each of the sites covered.

Members thanked the officer for a good report which provided a useful summary of what had obviously been a busy year. They wished to applaud the partnership as an exemplar of three key organisations working together for positive outcomes and hoped that in future the report could be shared more widely to highlight the work. They were disappointed to read that the online Range Briefings would not be continued, but hoped that further consideration could be given to a revised model in future.



Noted.

8. Continuous Improvement Group: delegation of issues

In response to the question raised at the previous meeting regarding inclusion of this item on the agenda, the Chief Executive advised that although the Group had not met for many years, he felt that it provided a useful mechanism to consider any issues that arose. He therefore suggested that the item could be removed from the agenda, however the ability for the Committee to refer any items to the Group would remain.

It was **resolved** that there were no issues that needed to be delegated to the Continuous Improvement Group for consideration, and that this item be removed as a standing item on future agendas.

9. Thanks

The Chair noted that this would be his last meeting of this Committee as he was not standing in the forthcoming election, and he wished to thank officers and Members for their help, and their contributions in the five years he had been Chair.

Noted.

The Minutes of this meeting were confirmed at the meeting of the Operational Review Committee held on 29 June 2022 without amendment
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