

Operational Review Committee

06 March 2024

Present: Councillor SL Hancock, Councillor R Jordan, Mr G A Jones, Dr RM Plummer, Councillor M Wiggins, Councillor A Wilcox and Councillor C Williams.

Also in attendance: Tegryn Jones (Chief Executive), Tomos Jones (Community Archaeologist), Caroline Llewellyn (Democratic Services Manager), Jamie Taylor (Dark Skies Project Officer) and Mair Thomas (Performance and Compliance Officer).

(Virtual Meeting: 10.00am – 11:05am)

1. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs J James and Councillor P Morgan.

2. Disclosures

Dr R Plummer made a general declaration as a Board Member of Natural Resources Wales, a Trustee of Plantlife and a Member of the Welsh Mills Society however she remained in the meeting and played a full part in the discussions.

3. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on the 06 December 2023 were presented for confirmation and authentication.

On the proposal of Dr R Plummer, seconded by Councillor R Jordan, it was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 06 December 2023 be confirmed and authenticated.

4. Action Log and Matters arising

The action log was noted by Members and the Chair suggested that in relation to action 955, information on electric bikes also be featured in the upcoming report.

Noted.

5. Annual Archaeology Report 2022/23

The Chair welcomed the Community Archaeologist who presented a report that outlined work of the Authority in relation to archaeology during the financial year of 2022/23. The report featured background information, information related to the role of Archaeology in the Management Plan (2020-2024), the contribution of archaeology to the Corporate and Resources Plan (2022/23) and the Authority's Wellbeing Objectives. The presentation also



detailed the work programme of activities for 2022/23 and finally, the next steps for the next financial year.

The report detailed the Heritage Watch Scheme that was established to prevent, monitor and raise awareness of heritage crime. It was noted that during the financial year of 2021/22, there were 22 incidents of heritage crime reported, including criminal damage, arson and disturbance, a figure which several Members expressed concern about. The Officer explained that to deter heritage crime, site visits were periodically conducted by Officers and volunteers. It was noted that often heritage crime was often committed as result of lack of awareness and lots of events tried to address this.

In response to a Members' query, the Officer clarified that the acronym found under item 19 of the report, 'CUPHAT', represented 'Coastal Upland Heritage and Tourism project'.

Images of Manorbier Dovecot before and after clearance were featured in the report and a Member queried whether the improved visibility could subsequently increase the level of heritage crime at the site. The Officer confirmed that the scrub clearance work was required due to ivy overgrowth that was having a negative impact on the structure. It was added that the team were mindful of achieving a balance between accessibility for the public and the protection of sensitive heritage sites. The Officer confirmed that as a result of this, the team chose not to promote sites online for conservation purposes on occasion.

The Chair asked whether the team had any intentions of offering virtual events in future. In response, the Officer confirmed that the team had hosted virtual events in the past and were actively seeking opportunities for more events of this nature in the future. The impact of virtual events was acknowledged due to their potential to reach more community groups.

Noted.

6. Well-being Objectives Performance Report

The Chair welcomed the Performance and Compliance Coordinator who presented the Wellbeing Objectives Performance report that detailed progress made against priority indicators/projects/work programmes for the period ending 31 December 2023. The report also included quarter 3 statistics for some measures.

The performance report set out the Authority's performance against its four Wellbeing Objectives (Conservation, Climate, Connection and Communities) set out in our Corporate and Resources Plan 2023/24 – 2026/27.

The Officer highlighted that the report before Members was the first version of the revised performance report. It was explained that the report was more

concise as separate reports had been developed for partnership working and assurance monitoring. It was added that the report did however include a number of new measures.

The Officer confirmed that following Members' feedback, future Operational Review Committees would be themed based on each of the different 'C's' from the beginning of the next financial year.

It was reported that the number of electric vehicle (EV) charging sessions at PCNPA charging points had increased from 5,437 in 2022/23 to 7,020 in 2023/34. The Chief Executive added that research had shown that Pembrokeshire had more EV points than any other county in Wales and this had been achieved through the work of the Authority.

On the topic of the new report layout, a discussion ensued regarding the new, potentially unbalanced, level of accountability between the Audit and Corporate Services Review Committee and the Operational Review Committee as a result of the separate reports that had been developed to reduce the volume of information featured in the Performance Report. The Officers reassured Members that a change in style of the Committees had been proposed which would address the situation and restore equal accountability.

Noted.

7. Dark Skies Project

The Chair welcomed the Dark Skies Officer, who gave a brief presentation to update Members on the SDF funded Dark Skies project, which focussed on what the Authority could do to reduce the impact of lighting from its own buildings and to support partner organisations to do likewise. The presentation provided a brief overview of the project, details of relevant accreditation, a summary of the project aims, next steps and also engagement events for the project. Members acknowledged the importance of the project and agreed that a lot of work was needed to raise awareness of the impacts of light pollution.

Noted.