

National Park Authority
11 February 2026

Present (In-person)

Dr M Havard (Chair)

Councillor S Alderman, Councillor D Clements, Miss F Day, Councillor T Evans, Councillor C George, Councillor SL Hancock MBE, Mr J Hogg MBE, Mrs S Hoss, Mr GA Jones, and Councillor A Tinley.

Present (Online)

Councillor M Bowen, Councillor M James, Councillor S Skyrme-Blackhall, Councillor V Thomas and Councillor C Williams BEM.

Also in attendance:

Kate Attrill (Development Management Manager), Jason Blewitt (Audit Wales), Lynwen Davies (Simultaneous Interpreter), Catrin Evans (Head of Finance & Fundraising), Emma Gladstone (Strategic Policy Manager), Richard Griffiths (Section 151 Officer), Georgia Jones (Democratic Services Officer), Tegryn Jones (Chief Executive), Michael Kent (Monitoring Officer), and Caroline Llewellyn (Democratic Services Manager).

[Preseli Suite, Llanion Park Offices and Online, 10.00am – 12.00pm]

1. Personal

The Chair welcomed Miss F Day as the newest Member to join the Authority, appointed by the Welsh Government. Miss F Day introduced herself briefly and thanked Members for their warm welcome.

2. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Ms H Gwenllian and Councillor B Price.

3. Disclosures of Interest

No declarations of interest were received.

4. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on the 17 December 2025 were presented for confirmation.

On the proposal of Dr Havard, seconded by Councillor Clements, it was **resolved** that the minutes of the meeting held on the 17 December 2025 be confirmed.

5. Action Log and Matters Arising

With regards to the action related to the Pay and Grading Review, the Chief Executive confirmed that the Head of People Services had returned

to the Authority following a period of sickness absence and so the review would be resumed. He confirmed that the report would then be presented to Members of the Employee Forum for consideration. As requested by Members, it was agreed that the report also be presented to the National Park Authority for consideration.

It was noted that the action related to examples of partnership working with Pembrokeshire County Council's Youth Service had been completed. The Chair suggested that a report on this topic be prepared and it was agreed that the paper be presented to the Operational Review Committee for consideration.

Noted.

6. Chair's Announcements

The Chair reported that she had attended the following events/meetings in the past month:

- A meeting with the Chief Executive and Executive Officers of the Friends of the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park to exchange information and to thank them and their volunteers for their hard work.
- A meeting with the new Chair of the National Park Partnership
- An event hosted by the Campaign for National Parks in the Senedd to discuss the proposed Marine National Park.
- Corporate Joint Committee (CJC) meetings where the strategic planning draft delivery agreement was approved and regional transport delivery plan and finances were discussed along with potential funding opportunities.
- The annual FUW charity breakfast where she had the opportunity to meet with stakeholders interested in the work of the National Park.

Noted.

7. Reports of other Authority Committee meetings

The minutes of the Development Management Committee held on 03/12/2025 were presented to Members for consideration.

It was **resolved** that the minutes of the above-mentioned committee be received.

Noted.

8. Committee Vacancies

The Democratic Services Manager reported that vacancies had arisen on several Committees as a result of the departure of Dr R Plummer. On the proposal of Dr M Havard, seconded by Councillor D Clements, it was **resolved** that the vacancies be filled as follows:

- Operational Review Committee – Miss F Day
- Grants Committee – Miss F Day
- Standards Committee – Mr J Hogg
- Income Generation Working Group – Miss F Day
- Member Support Working Group – Mr J Hogg

9. Audit of Accounts Report

The Head of Finance & Fundraising presented a report that featured the Audit of Accounts report that had been prepared by Audit Wales, the representation letter to auditors, the Annual Narrative Report, Statement of Accounts 2024/25 and Annual Governance Statement.

The Chief Executive highlighted several factors which had led to the delay of the papers being presented to Members including the level of resources within the finance department, the introduction of a new finance system and the significant volume of audit queries received from Audit Wales. The Chief Executive took the opportunity to thank the Authority's Finance Department for their hard work throughout the process.

The Chair welcomed Mr J Blewitt (Audit Wales) who presented the Audit of Accounts report. The key findings from the report were highlighted which included Audit Wales's intent to issue an unqualified opinion on the accounts, the fact that there had been one significant matter to report and one area that required further consideration, that there were no uncorrected misstatements in the accounts, and that the draft accounts had been received on the 7th of August 2025, which was after the deadline of 30 June 2025. It was added that Audit Wales aimed to certify the Authority's accounts on the 13th of February 2026, which was after the deadline of 31 October 2025.

A discussion ensued regarding the missed deadlines and the issues that has caused delays for both parties during the process. Mr J Blewitt stated that missed deadlines had been seen to be an issue across many local government bodies and he stated that this had been due to a range of factors including historic issues, internal issues such as the loss of key members of staff in small departments and insufficient resources. The Section 151 Officer highlighted that as National Park Authority Finance Departments were small and did not have dedicated staff to focus on the Audit, the statutory deadlines were considered to be unreasonable.

It was reported that underlying errors within the Revaluation Reserve balance had been identified as part of the audit and amendments had been made to the financial statements as a result of this. It was noted that these were historic errors that dated back a number of years. To clarify, Mr J Blewitt explained that Audit Wales audited on a sample basis which had resulted in the errors not being identified in previous audits.

Members acknowledged that despite the challenges of the auditing process, no significant risks had been identified, and training had been put in place to support small authorities to reduce these challenges in future.

On the proposal of Councillor D Clements, seconded by Councillor S Alderman, it was **resolved** that the Audit of Accounts report prepared by Audit Wales be accepted and the representation letter to auditors be approved.

On the proposal of Mr J Hogg, seconded by Councillor S Skyrme-Blackhall, it was **resolved** that the Annual Narrative Report, Statement of Accounts 2024/25 and Annual Governance Statement be approved.

[Councillor D Clements left the meeting at this juncture].

10. Letter on Audit Fee Consultation 2026/27

The Chief Executive presented a letter from the Auditor General regarding Audit fees for 2026/27. It was reported that the audit fees would increase by 5.3% over 2026/27, which had been noted as being significantly above the rate of inflation and any reasonable expectation of increase in the Authority's core budget. The report confirmed that the Authority along with the other two National Park Authorities had responded to a consultation by Audit Wales on its fees for 2026/27. The Chief Executive explained that audit fees made a significant element of the Authority's costs and while the Authority had been receiving flat line budgets and managing significant deficits, Audit fees had continued to increase. The Chief Executive confirmed that the Authority would continue to make representations to Audit Wales regarding the increasing audit fees.

Noted.

11. Pembrokeshire County Council Levy 2026/27

The Head of Finance and Fundraising presented a report that sought Members authorisation to issue the levy of £1,183,000 to Pembrokeshire County Council for the financial year of 2026/27. The Officer explained that the levy had increased by £45,805 over that of 2025/26 due to the

increase in Welsh Government National Park Grant on which the calculation of the levy is based.

On the proposal of Councillor S Hancock, seconded by Councillor C George, it was resolved that:

- a) The calculation of the Levy for 2026/27 be approved.
- b) The issue of the Levy letter to Pembrokeshire County Council for the sum of £1,183,000 be authorised.
- c) The National Park Authority continue with the current arrangement of 12 equal monthly instalments receivable on or before the 12th of each calendar month, by bank transfer.

[Councillor D Clements joined the meeting online during consideration of the following item. Mrs S Hoss was not present for the entirety of the following item.]

12. Local Development Plan 2 – Supplementary Planning Guidance

The Strategic Policy Manager presented a report that sought Members approval of four Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) documents that would be used as a material consideration in planning decisions. It was reported that the draft SPG documents had been subject to public consultation and the SPG's had been amended to take into account the comments raised by members of the public with a summary of changes featured in the report. The report also featured further background information, details of the consultation and strategic policy context.

A Member queried whether the revised SPG's would allow for further opportunities for development in the Park and in response, the Officer confirmed that the affordable housing exception sites would offer developers a key mechanism for delivery. She added that as part of developing the Local Development Plan 3, the team was required to identify suitable sites where affordable housing could be maximised.

Members agreed that the SPG's would help to provide further clarity and would support both Officers and Members in their decision-making process.

On the proposal of Councillor A Tinley, seconded by Councillor S Alderman, it was **resolved** that:

- a) The following documents be adopted as supplementary planning guidance (SPG):
 - i. Conversions in the countryside SPG (Appendix A)

- ii. Replacement dwellings in the countryside SPG (Appendix B)
- iii. Conservation and Enhancement of Dark Skies Good Practice Guidance and explanation note (Appendix C)
- iv. Affordable Housing SPG (Appendix D)

b) The report of consultation be noted.

13. Delivery Agreement Consultation Response

The Strategic Policy Manager presented a report that sought Members approval for the consultation response to the Strategic Development Plan's (SDP) Draft Delivery Agreement for submission to the South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee (CJC). It was reported that the South West Wales CJC had a statutory duty to prepare an SDP which set out the regional framework for the development and use of land. It was added that upon adoption, the SDP would have a development plan status and would form part of the development plan hierarchy in Wales.

On the proposal of Dr M Havard, seconded by Councillor S Alderman, it was **resolved** that the consultation response of the Strategic Development Plan's Draft Delivery Agreement be approved and its submission to the South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee be agreed.

[The meeting adjourned from 11:25am – 11:40am]

14. Zero Racism Wales Policy

The Chief Executive presented a report that sought Members agreement to sign the Zero Racism Wales Policy to ensure the Authority continued to uphold the highest standards of inclusion and appreciation for diversity. It was added that the Authority had included the intention to sign the Zero Racism Wales Policy in its Equality Plan which had been approved by Members at the National Park Authority meeting on the 5th of February 2025. The Chief Executive highlighted that the policy was available online to be signed by both organisations and individuals.

Members agreed that although the signing of the policy would be an important step, the challenge would be for the Authority to embed and deliver the policy aims throughout the organisation.

On the proposal of Councillor S Hancock, seconded by Councillor T Evans, it was **resolved** that the Zero Racism Wales Policy be signed.

15. Corporate Events

The Democratic Services Manager presented a report that sought Members approval for the level of representation at the Wales Planning Conference, Welsh Members Seminar and UK National Parks Conference.

On the proposal of Dr M Havard, seconded by Councillor C George, it was **resolved** that the following level of representation be authorised:

- i. Wales Planning Conference: 18 June 2026 – Cardiff (Chair and/or Deputy Chair DM Committee)
- ii. Welsh Members' Seminar hosted by Bannau Brycheiniog National Park Authority 8-9 July 2026 (All Members)
- iii. UK National Parks Conference - Cairngorms National Park, 15-18 September 2026 (4 Members)

16. Calendar of Meetings

The Democratic Services Manager presented a report that sought Members approval for the draft calendar of meetings for 2026/27.

On the proposal of Councillor D Clements, seconded by Councillor M James, it was **resolved** that the calendar of meetings for 2026/27 be approved.