

**REPORT OF THE FINANCE MANAGER**

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**SUBJECT: ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2017/18**

The Authority is required to produce an Annual Governance Statement and Members are invited to contribute to and shape the contents of the attached draft 2017/18 statement.

**Recommendation: Members are asked to COMMENT on this report**

*(For further information, please contact Richard Griffiths, extension 4815  
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# **2017/18 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT**

## **I. Introduction**

The Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority (“the Authority”) is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for and used economically, efficiently, and effectively. It is a Welsh improvement authority under section 1 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 and as such has a general duty under section 2 to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised. The Authority is also a public body as defined under the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act legislative requirement since 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016.

The Authority has an approved Code of Corporate Governance, which is consistent with the principles of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accounting (CIPFA)/Society of Local Authority Chief Executives and Senior Managers (UK) (SOLACE) Framework ‘Delivering Good Governance in Local Government: Guidance for Welsh Authorities 2016. This guidance recommends that the review of effectiveness of the system of internal control that local authorities are required to undertake in accordance with the Accounting and Audit Regulations should be reported in an Annual Governance Statement. In Wales the inclusion of the Annual Governance Statement in the Statement of Accounts is voluntary. In CIPFA also published an “Application Note to Delivering Good Governance in Local Government: A Framework”. This note has been developed to advise on the application of the “Statement of the Role of the Chief Financial Officer on Local Government” under the CIPFA/SOLACE Framework “Delivering Good Governance in Local Government”. The Authority reviews and adopts any additional guidance as issued and has decided to adopt the CIPFA framework and Annual Governance Statement approach for 2016/17.

## **II. The purpose of the Governance framework**

The governance framework comprises the committees, systems and processes, cultures and values, by which the Authority is directed and controlled and its activities through which it accounts to, engages with and leads the community. It enables the Authority to monitor the achievement of its strategic objectives and to consider whether those objectives have led to the delivery of appropriate, cost-effective services.

The system of internal control is a significant part of that framework and is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level. It cannot eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives and can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness. The system of internal control is based on an ongoing process designed to identify and prioritise the risks associated with the achievement of the Authority’s policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically.

### **III. The Governance framework**

There is clear definition of the roles of Members and officers and a clear committee and decision making structure. This is based on:

#### The Authority

The Authority comprises 18 Members and will meet at least 6 times a year and its main functions are:

- To approve the development of the Authority's strategic corporate planning framework through the National Park Management Plan (every five years), the Local Development Plan (every five years), and the Corporate Resources Plan (annually).
- To determine all policy matters in support of its strategic planning objectives. The Authority may receive advice from its committees and may also set up task and finish advisory groups to investigate and advise on specific matters.
- To determine all Service Standards and the Authority's Statutory Duties.
- To agree policies relating to the management of the Authority's resources i.e. finance, staffing and assets; and to approve the budget, levy, charges, and the Annual Accounts.
- To ensure that the Authority complies with all legislation affecting its services.
- To determine membership of other committees, task & finish groups, working groups and advisory groups, within the Authority, and their terms of reference, and the Authority's representation on external bodies and organisations.
- To determine the delegation of the Authority's responsibilities to other committees of the Authority and when appropriate to the Chief Executive.

#### Audit and Corporate Services Review Committee

The Committee will comprise 9 Members of the Authority to be selected and/or confirmed at the Annual General Meeting each year. The Committee meets quarterly, and its role is to exercise the powers and duties of the Authority in relation to the following functions:

1. Regulatory Framework
  - To monitor the Authority's performance against the National Park Management Plan
  - To oversee the production of the Annual Governance Statement and to monitor the Authority's performance against the associated Action Plan
  - To monitor the Authority's performance against the annual Strategic Grant Letter
  - To monitor performance against the Welsh Government's Standards relating to the Welsh language
  - To monitor performance against the Authority's adopted Service Standards
2. Audit Activity

- To consider reports from the Wales Audit Office (e.g. the Annual Improvement Report, Annual Audit Letter) and to monitor the Authority's performance thereon
  - To consider reports from Internal Audit on the Authority's financial systems and controls
3. Finance
    - To consider quarterly reports on the Authority's financial performance and budgetary matters
    - To monitor the Authority's performance in relation to its Annual Statement of Accounts
  4. Human Resources
 

To monitor the Authority's performance:

    - against its adopted HR policies
    - in relation to Health and Safety
  5. Information Technology
    - To monitor the Authority's performance in relation to its Information Technology Strategy
  6. Performance Management
    - To consider quarterly reports on the *Ffynnon* performance management system and to monitor the Authority's performance thereon
    - To review the Authority's Risk Register in terms of Audit and Corporate functions and make any recommendations to the National Park Authority to change levels of risk
    - To consider reports of the meetings of the Continuous Improvement Group
  7. Communications
    - To monitor the Authority's performance in relation to Communications and Marketing
  8. Other issues
    - To review any issue referred to it by the National Park Authority, any of its Committees or the Chief Executive Officer
    - To determine an Authority response on any proposals that affect the National Park or the Authority, its powers, duties, functions and responsibilities, particularly but not exclusively, from central, regional or local government, neighbouring authorities, partnerships and other external bodies where the proposals are relevant to the functions of the Committee and where the Chief Executive considers that such response should be determined by the Committee

#### Development Management Committee

The Development Management Committee is responsible for carrying out the Authority's statutory planning functions in relation to the determination of

applications, appeals and enforcement matters, and allied issues relating to development and the regulation of uses and activities.

The terms of reference of the Development Management Committee are:

- (a) Except where those powers and duties have been delegated by the Authority to one of its officers and subject to its decisions being in conformity with the Authority's approved statements and plans the Committee shall exercise, with power to act, all the powers and duties of the Authority relating to the consideration of planning, listed building and conservation area applications, notification schemes, tree preservation orders, the control of development and the enforcement of such control, and other consultation schemes where appropriate.
- (b) Where Members resolve to take a decision, contrary to an officer's recommendation, which the Chief Executive, the Director of Planning or the Development Management Team Leader identifies as constituting a significant departure from an approved plan or policy of the Authority, or as otherwise having significant implications for the Authority, the decision shall be deferred until the next meeting of the Committee.

If, ultimately, the Committee's decision is contrary to the officer recommendation, there shall be taken a full minuted record of Members' reasons for rejecting the officer recommendation, together with a recorded vote.

- (c) To receive reports from time to time from the Chief Executive (National Park Officer) and other officers on the exercise of any functions relating to the control of development which may have been delegated to them.
- (d) To deal with all matters relating to the designation and administration of Conservation Areas.

#### Operational Review Committee

The Committee comprises 9 Members of the Authority, to be selected and/or confirmed at the Annual General Meeting each year. The Committee meets on a quarterly basis and considers reports to the Authority on its performance. The role of the Committee is:

1. To monitor performance and make recommendations to the National Park Authority in relation to the functions of:
  - Development Management
  - Park Direction
  - Park Delivery
  - Discovery

2. To review the Authority's Risk Register in relation to the above-mentioned functions and make any recommendations to the National Park Authority to change levels of risk.
3. To review the Authority's financial performance in relation to the functions of the services referred to in 1 above.
4. To review any issue referred to it by the National Park Authority, any of its Committees or the Chief Executive.
5. To determine an Authority response on any proposals that affect the National Park or the Authority, its powers, duties, functions and responsibilities, particularly but not exclusively, from central, regional or local government, neighbouring authorities, partnerships and other external bodies where the proposals are relevant to the functions of the Committee and where the Chief Executive considers that such response should be determined by the Committee.

#### Continuous Improvement Group

The Continuous Improvement Group consists of four Members of the Authority plus the Chief Executive. The membership includes the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Authority along with the Chairs of the two Review Committees. The Group has authority to invite attendance of other Members or officers if the work programme indicates that their attendance or experience would add value to its work.

#### Internal Audit

The review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control and governance arrangements is informed by the work of the Internal Auditors and their reporting to the Authority. This work is undertaken by Gateway Assure. The terms of reference for internal audit require that work is conducted in accordance with standards as set out in the CIPFA Code of Practice for Internal Audit in Local Government. Gateway Assure provide an audit opinion which is reported to the Authority and act as the Chief Audit Executive.

#### External Audit

Wales Audit Office act as the Authority's external audit and make comments following their financial accounts and performance work and in the annual audit letter. They also express an opinion on the adequacy of internal audit work.

#### Section 151 Officer

Within the Authority the Finance Manager also acts as the Section 151 Officer. The Authority complies with the CIPFA "Statement on the Role of the Chief Financial Officer in Local Government". The Finance Manager is also a member of the Authority's Leadership Team.

#### The Executive

An Executive structure for decision making for officers is based on a Senior Management Team and a Leadership Team.

#### Principles of Governance

The review of the effectiveness of the Authority systems of governance is undertaken in accordance with the following 6 CIPFA principles:

- Focusing on the Authority's purpose, on outcomes for the community including citizens and service users and creating and implementing a vision for the local area
- Members and officers working together to achieve a common purpose, with clearly defined functions and roles
- Promoting values for the Authority and demonstrating the values of good governance through upholding high standards of conduct and behaviour
- Taking informed and transparent decisions which are subject to effective scrutiny and managing risk
- Developing the capacity and capability of Members and officers to be effective
- Engaging with local people and other stakeholders to ensure robust public accountability

## IV. Actions Taken During The Year

Previously identified Significant Governance Issues, the actions taken to tackle these issues and their evaluations are shown in the table below:

<b>Governance Issues Identified</b>	<b>Action proposed</b>	<b>Evaluation</b>
Document Management System	Review alternative systems	
Impact of Future Landscapes Programme	A review will be undertaken to access the outcome of the programme	To be updated
National Park Grant Funding	Continue to work with Welsh Government to respond to funding position and developing a medium term financial plan	Work has been undertaken to prepare for 5% budget cuts over the next two financial years
Business Interruption	An internal group will be set up to lead all aspects of business continuity	The group is reviewing our existing approach and will test any changes
Compliance with the Equality Act	Continue the review to ensure compliance with the Act	Reporting on strategic equality plan has been mainstreamed into Annual Report on Meeting Well-being Objectives/ Improvement Plan Part 2. This includes reporting on workforce data
Information Governance	There will be a review by the Performance & Compliance Officer on Information Governance which will feed into staff training plans	Work has been undertaken to identify actions to comply with GDPR. This has included appointment of DPO, policy and procedures reviews and creation of data register
Change in Authority Membership	The impending change in the membership of the Authority will be managed effectively and necessary induction process and training provided	An induction process has been undertaken to support new members and enable them to function effectively as Members.

## **V. Review of Effectiveness**

The Authority is responsible for conducting an annual review of the effectiveness of its governance framework including the system of internal control. This review is informed by the work of the Authority's Members and its Committees, internal and external auditors, other review agencies (as appropriate) and senior managers who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the internal control environment. The normal process of review has been impacted by the delay in the production of the Annual Improvement Report from the Wales Audit Office.

The review is based on the six principles of the CIPFA Code of Corporate Governance.

### **Principle 1**

**Focusing on the Authority's purpose, on outcomes for the community including citizens and service users and creating and implementing a vision for the local area.**

The Authority has been focusing on developing work to ensure that it is 'fit for purpose' to meet the challenges of the future.

#### Future Landscapes Wales Programme

During the year officers of the Authority have been actively involved in the Future Landscapes Wales programme.

#### The Wellbeing of Future Generations Act

The Authority has worked with the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) as an Early Adopter and undertaken Member and officer training with Brecon Beacons and Snowdonia National Park Authorities (NPAs). The Corporate and Resources Plan for 2018/19 has been prepared to deliver against the seven Well-being Goals set by Welsh Government. The plan shows budget distribution across the Well-being Goals and the Authority's Well-being Objectives.

During 2017/18 the Wales Audit Office looked at the 'Setting up of the Pathways Project' as part of its work on developing new approaches to audit. The Authority will use feedback from the pilot work carried out with the Authority and others to inform how it demonstrates the five ways of working under the Act in its work and decision making.

#### Demonstrating Strategic Leadership

The Authority's current National Park Management Plan (NPMP) 2015/19 was approved in 2014 and was developed following full consultation with partners, stakeholders and communities, setting out policies and longer term objectives. We are expecting new guidance on producing NPMPs in light of the development of Area Statements and other legislative changes.

Corporate and Resources Plan The three National Park Authorities in Wales have agreed to work to a common format of an annual Corporate and Resources Plan to meet the requirements of both the The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011. The Corporate and Resources Plan document sets out the Authority's Well-being objectives (which are also the Authority's Improvement objectives) and aligned work programme for the forthcoming year and acts as our Annual Improvement Plan Part 1. The Well-being of Future Generations Act also requires public bodies to act in accordance with the sustainable development principles and this document highlights how these principles are embedded in the work carried out to achieve our objectives.

#### Quality of Service

The Authority carries out surveys of the effectiveness of its service delivery through customer satisfactions surveys, performance against quality standards and by monitoring formal complaints which remain at a low level.

#### Ffynnon System

The Authority has continued to adopt the Ffynnon system to ensure that we develop and manage a robust system of performance information to highlight the impact of the work undertaken by the Authority. Performance review committee reports are prepared directly from Ffynnon.

#### Budget Pressures / Joint working

Work has continued to reduce costs and to identify options for joint working. Discussions are on-going with a number of other Authorities to identify efficient ways of delivering our services.

#### Community Engagement

The Authority has endorsed Participation Cymru's 10 National Principles for Public Engagement in Wales. In 2017/18 The Authority held a workshop with its Leadership Team and Team Leaders to increase awareness of engagement and to carry out an engagement mapping exercise to inform the development of an engagement action plan.

The Authority has carried out consultation and engagement activities with communities on key decisions that will affect them. Officers met and engaged with Community Councils across the National Park as part of the development of the preferred strategy for the Local Development Plan (LDP) replacement. The Authority is part of the Pembrokeshire Engagement Network which promotes engagement practice and provision in Pembrokeshire. The Authority undertook significant public consultation on the future delivery of its information services and in particular the future of its centre in Newport.

#### Membership of Public Service Board

The Authority is an invited member of the Pembrokeshire Public Services Board (PSB). The PSB is currently working to prepare the Pembrokeshire Well-being Plan, which will be agreed by May 2018. This work builds on the Well-being Assessment

agreed in March 2017 and consultation with stakeholders. From 2018 onwards the Authority's Corporate Plan will reflect the Well-being Objectives agreed in the Pembrokeshire Well-being Plan.

### Welsh Language Strategy

Under the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011, all local authorities in Wales must comply with a framework of Welsh Language Standards. Standard 145 requires the Authority to produce a 5-year strategy that sets out how we propose to promote the Welsh language more widely in the National Park. The strategy must also include a target (in terms of the percentage of speakers in the National Park) for increasing or maintaining the number of Welsh speakers in the National Park by the end of the 5 year period concerned, together with a statement setting out how we intend to reach that target.

Following a six-week consultation period, Members approved the 5-year strategy at its meeting held on the 29<sup>th</sup> November 2017. The strategy must be reviewed within 5 years of its publication.

## **Principle 2**

**Members and officers working together to achieve a common purpose, with clearly defined functions and roles.**

### Reduction in National Park Grant and Levy

A balanced revenue budget for 2017/18 was approved in February 2017. The Authority's core funding from the National Park Grant and Levy for the year remained unchanged from 2016/17. This was a welcomed halt to the successive funding reductions since 2013/14 which saw core funding being reduced by £782k. Fortunately the Authority was been able to absorb the pressure from the successive years of continued reduced funding. The Authority practice of holding Budget workshops has proven very helpful in developing operational budgets, a medium term financial strategy and identifying areas for rationalisation.

### Scrutiny Committee

Members and officers have in place an agreed scrutiny process, through which they can assess how successful National Park Authority policies are working.

### Member and officer Joint Training & Development

During the year Members & officers undertook joint training sessions which covered the following areas:

- Design Commission for Wales workshop on the impact of buildings in the rural landscape
- Wales Audit Office governance culture workshop
- Presentation by Hywel Dda University Health Board on transforming clinical and mental health services

### Consultations

Members have contributed their comments to responses to Welsh Government and other bodies' consultation papers including: Taking forward Wales' sustainable management of natural resources; Pembrokeshire Public Services Board's Pembrokeshire Well-being Plan, and the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales' consultation on Member remuneration.

#### Employee Forum

The Authority has in place an Employee Forum. The purpose of the Forum is to provide a platform for Members and staff to maintain open and collaborative employee relations by discussing a range of employee matters and gaining an understanding from each other on issues facing the Authority.

#### Task and Finish Groups

The Authority task and finish group into the provision of visitor information contributed significantly to the decisions surrounding the future of the Tenby & Newport Information Centres. The work of the support services group continued in 2017.

### **Principle 3**

#### **Promoting values for the Authority and demonstrating the values of good governance through upholding high standards of conduct and behaviour.**

A Code of Conduct for Members and a Code of Conduct for Officers is in place. Issues relating to breaking the Code of Conduct are dealt with by the following:

#### The Standards Committee

It is the responsibility of the Authority's Standards Committee to promote high standards of conduct by Members and officers. It does this by advising on and promoting awareness and understanding of the code of conduct for Members and the code of conduct for officers, both of which have been adopted by the Authority..

#### Monitoring Officer

The statutory Monitoring Officer functions are set out in Section 5 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 (as amended) i.e., in short, to report to the Authority if the Monitoring Officer considers that any proposal, decision, or omission by the Authority may give rise to unlawfulness or maladministration. In light of the impending retirement of the Authority's Monitoring Officer, a review was undertaken as to how the function would be provided going forward. The Authority has agreed to the appointment of the Administration and Democratic Services Manager as Deputy Monitoring Officer to support the post of Monitoring Officer, which is a part-time post.

#### Public Services Ombudsman for Wales

The Public Services Ombudsman for Wales has jurisdiction over the Authority's functions by virtue of the Public Services Ombudsman (Wales) Act 2005. He has not made any investigation into the Authority either in relation to any alleged breaches of the Members' Code of Conduct adopted by the Authority on 25 June 2008, or in relation to a complaint made against the Authority.

### Staff Members

Issues relating to the conduct of staff are normally considered in accordance with the Authority's Disciplinary procedures. All Authority staff have annual and interim performance appraisals. This process allows an opportunity for managers and staff to review past performance, highlight potential areas of concern and agree future objectives to ensure they are linked to service plan/corporate targets.

### Whistle Blowing Policy

In the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 the Government has given statutory protection to employees who 'blow the whistle' by speaking out against corruption and malpractice at work. It protects them against victimisation and dismissal. The Authority approved and adopted such a policy in 2002 which was updated in 2009. In its commitment to the highest standards of openness, probity and accountability, the policy states "The Authority encourages employees and others with serious concerns about the Authority's work to come forward and raise their concerns with the Authority".

### Standing Orders

The Authority reviewed its Standing Orders during the year to reflect changes in legislation, to formalise practices that had evolved over the years and to incorporate best practice from other local authorities. The revised set of Standing Orders was adopted on the 14<sup>th</sup> June 2017.

### Safeguarding Policy

The Authority approved a safeguarding policy. The policy aims to ensure that sound working practices are in place that put safeguarding as a priority and which are effective in managing risk for these vulnerable groups, but which will also protect staff and volunteers against wrongful or malicious allegations. During the year the Authority's Internal Auditors gave a full assurance level in their review of safeguarding.

### Anti-Fraud and Bribery Policy

The Authority has in place approved an Anti-Fraud and Bribery Policy. The policy covers all employees, volunteers and members of the Authority. It incorporates the changes to the bribery legislation that have been included in the Bribery Act 2010. The Bribery Act 2010 establishes criminal offences and individuals found guilty can face an unlimited fine and imprisonment up to ten years. Where an organisation itself is found guilty of the offence then the penalty is an unlimited fine.

### Financial Standards

The Authority recently revised its Financial Standards, the purpose of which is to provide a financial framework within which the Authority can operate. The Standards will assist the Authority in ensuring that:

- Legislation is complied with.
- The assets of the Authority are safeguarded.
- The funds available are spent wisely and efficiently.
- Appropriate income generation is undertaken.
- Best value is achieved

### Data Protection and GDPR compliance

In preparation for the General Data Protection Regulations coming into force on the 25<sup>th</sup> May 2018 the Authority has been reviewing its practices and identifying and implementing actions to ensure compliance by this date. Actions identified have been informed by guidance from the Information Commissioner's Office including 'Preparing for the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 12 steps to take now.' Activities undertaken include appointing a Data Protection Officer, the creation of a data register, awareness raising with staff and Members through presentation on GDPR at a Staff meeting and at Committees and reviewing policies and practices.

### **Principle 4**

#### **Taking informed and transparent decisions which are subject to effective scrutiny and managing risk.**

The Authority has taken the following action to improve its processes and structures and also to tackle identified issues of risk.

### Risk Management

The Risk Register is presented to each meeting of both the Audit & Corporate Services and Operational Review Committees and annually to the Authority. It is regularly reviewed by the Leadership Team when current risks are reviewed and new risks evaluated.

### Performance Management

The Authority uses the Ffynnon performance management system. Staff update the Ffynnon system directly with information to update performance reporting on a regular basis.

### Upgrading systems infrastructure

During 2017/18 the Authority undertook work on the following IT systems; document management system and an applicant tracking system. A process to improve the working practices of the Authority via the use of digital technology is also being explored.

### Internal Audit 2017/18

As part of the Authority's corporate governance programme a risk assessment was made on all its services and formed the basis of the work carried out during 2017/18 by the Authority's internal auditors Gateway Assure. The focus of the Audit was on the following areas:

- Departmental Review – Communications
- Income Generation
- IT Health Check
- Income Generation
- Key Financial Controls – Payroll and Expense
- Human Resources
- Grant Income

### The Chief Audit Executive's Opinion

Robin Pritchard of Gateway Assure, the Authority's Internal Auditors, gave the following audit opinion for the year 2017/18:

"Overall in our opinion, based upon the reviews performed during the year, the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority:

- has adequate and effective risk management;
- has adequate and effective governance; and
- has adequate and effective control processes."

### Committees

Individual service team leaders update Members of their respective Review Committee with details of the work in progress within their respective teams. There is a clear documenting of decisions, meeting agenda and minute process. Members therefore make decisions based on timely and accurate information, although some decisions are deferred to allow Members more time for considered decisions.

### Wales Audit Office Reports

Wales Audit Office passes an opinion on its review of the Authority's performance and Statements of Accounts which is recorded in the WAO Improvement Assessment Letter and the ISA 260 report.

### Wales Audit Office National Park Authorities – Governance Review

Following the Auditor General's consultation on the Well-being of Future Generations Act and audit, all three National Park Authorities in Wales agreed to work with the Wales Audit Office in piloting approaches to audit under the Act. It has been agreed that over the next four years, the Wales Audit Office will undertake a series of governance reviews aimed at facilitating improved governance in the context of the Well-being of Future Generations Act. In 2016-17 the Wales Audit office undertook a governance review of governance culture involving survey and workshop activities with staff and Members. Key areas identified for improvement from this work were scrutiny, communication, engagement, the appraisal process, equality and the Welsh Language.

During 2017/18 the Wales Audit Office looked at the 'Setting up of the Pathways Project' as part of its work on developing new approaches to audit. The Authority will use feedback from the pilot work carried out with the Authority and others to inform how it demonstrates the five ways of working under the Act in its work and decision making.

### Annual Report on meeting the Well-being objectives

In 2017/18 the Authority published its first Annual Report on meeting the Well-being Objectives (which also acted as our Annual Improvement Plan Part 2 under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011). This report sets out our performance on delivery in 2016/17 against the Authority's Well-being Objectives.

### Benchmarking

The Authority undertakes benchmarking activities across a number of areas. Key performance indicators within the annual Corporate and Resources Plan are benchmarked against other National Park Authorities where comparative data is available. The Authority submits an Annual Performance Report every November as part of the Welsh Government Planning Performance Framework. The annual report discusses how the Authority has performed against the indicators, identifying what it had done well so that this can be shared with others, and what steps might be taken to address areas of performance in need of improvement. Through the Framework the Authority is able to benchmark its performance against other Planning Authorities in Wales.

## **Principle 5**

### **Developing the capacity and capability of Members and officers to be effective.**

The Authority has undertaken the following to develop the capacity and capability of Members:

#### Member induction

Following local government elections in 2017, 5 changes were made to Pembrokeshire County Council's Member representation on the Authority. In addition, two new Welsh Government Members were appointed. A series of induction sessions, including a general induction to the Authority, Code of Conduct and planning training, were held with all new Members. Some of the more established Members also attended as a refresher.

#### Wales Charter for Member Support and Development

The Authority currently holds Charter status for the Welsh Local Government Association's Wales Charter for Member Support & Development.

#### Staff Development

Learning and development needs are identified at annual performance reviews and priority 1 needs form the basis of the plans for the year. All new staff are 'inducted' on an individual basis when they start, with an annual corporate induction with the Chief Executive and Directors, and the opportunity to attend an all-UK National Park event. Appropriate certificated training is identified and scheduled with periodic refreshers.

In 2015-16, the 3-year SLA with PCC delivered an autumn/winter programme of learning opportunities for leadership team and team leaders, plus some coaching. Relevant managers also undertook an Equality Impact Assessment workshop. A regular programme of lunchtime training and awareness events takes place. A training programme with the West Wales Action on Mental Health team is ongoing, including for team leaders in their role as people managers. Over 50 staff took part in sessions introducing Mindfulness as an aid to wellbeing.

#### Health and Safety

There was an internal audit of Health and Safety during 2015/16 with a substantial assurance. The Authority produces an annual Health and Safety Plan which sets out its priorities for the year. Members received a comprehensive annual report in November 2016 and endorsed a set of priorities and actions. An HSE inspection took place following a RIDDOR report of a work related health condition. Three team leaders have successfully completed a 4-day IOSH accredited 'Managing Safely' course and all managers have taken part in a workshop to refresh management understanding of manual handling.

#### Staff Development

Both team leaders and administrative staff participated in professional development programmes run by Pembrokeshire County Council. A cross authority programme to support administration staff is ongoing.

### **Principle 6**

#### **Engaging with local people and other stakeholders to ensure robust public accountability.**

During the past year the Authority has sought to engage with local people and stakeholders through a range of consultations. Following last year's survey of community councils training sessions on planning have been provided to all who requested it.

The Authority proposes to continue to undertake consultation with residents, visitors, organisations and other stakeholders on a long term strategy on service delivery on the reducing funding anticipated over the next few years.

#### Strategic Equality Plan

The Authority's Strategic Equality Plan (2016-20) was informed by a consultation exercise involving a major equalities perception survey carried out by a consortium of public bodies in south west Wales, managed by Carmarthenshire County Council. . Actions to deliver on this plan have been mainstreamed into the Corporate and Resources Plan. Performance against these activities is included in the Annual Report on Meeting Well-being Objectives (Improvement Plan Part 2) and this acts as our Annual Equality Report including reporting on workforce diversity data

#### Partnership working arrangements

The Authority works with a number of external bodies helping to improve value for money and in communicating with various other interest groups to deliver a number of common projects, e.g.:

- Carmarthenshire County Council; SLA's Payroll / Pension, Minerals
- South Wales Local Authority Purchasing Group
- Brecon Beacons & Snowdonia National Parks Authorities, brokerage Insurance / joint IT manager and Mosaic project Community Consultation; there has been significant engagement with Town and Community Councils on the changes in planning guidance and on Budget priorities for the Authority.

- Future Landscapes Wales programme
- Public Services Board
- Apprenticeship scheme with Brecon Beacons National Park and Torfaen Borough Council
- National Park Partnership on corporate social responsibility options and other sponsorship funding
- The UK National Parks on support services benchmarking.

### **Embedding Engagement across the Authority**

The Authority has endorsed Participation Cymru's 10 National Principles for Public Engagement in Wales. In 2017/18 The Authority held a workshop with its Leadership Team and Team Leaders to increase awareness of engagement and to carry out an engagement mapping exercise to inform the development of an engagement action plan.

## **VI. Significant Governance Issues**

<b>Governance Issues Identified</b>	<b>Action to be taken</b>
Action Wales Audit Office Pilot recommendations on scrutiny, internal and external communication, engagement, appraisals process, equality and the Welsh Language	Workshops with Members. Staff Reps, Leadership Team Action recommendations from these Workshops Pilot internal newsletter and other mechanisms and forums to promote internal communication and collaboration
National Park Grant Funding	Continue to work with Welsh Government to respond to funding position and developing a medium term financial plan
Support staff to deliver on General Data Protection Regulations Compliance	Data Protection Officer in Place. Data register and update of policy and guidance for staff in place. Data Protection Awareness raising week held. Review of Privacy Notices. Data Protection Impact Assessment Framework in place.
Change in Authority Membership	The impending change in the membership of the Authority will be managed effectively and the necessary induction process and training provided.
Benchmarked – Planning Performance: Enforcement	Clear back log of historical cases

## **VII. OPINION**

We propose over the coming year to take steps to address the matters referred to in part VI to further enhance our governance arrangements. We are satisfied that these steps will address the need for improvements that were identified in our review of effectiveness and will monitor their implementation and operation as part of our next annual review.

SIGNED \_\_\_\_\_  
Chairman

DATED \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNED \_\_\_\_\_  
Chief Executive

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNED \_\_\_\_\_  
Section 151 Officer

DATE \_\_\_\_\_