

# OPERATIONAL REVIEW COMMITTEE

15<sup>th</sup> October 2014

Present: Councillor R Kilmister (Chairman)  
Councillor O James, Mr A E Sangster and Mrs M Thomas

(Councillor S T Hudson arrived following consideration of the Minutes  
(Minute 3 refers))

(Ms C Gwyther arrived during consideration of the update paper on  
Cilrhedyn Woodland Centre (Minute 4 refers))

(NPA Offices, Llanion Park, Pembroke Dock: 10:00am – 11:30am)

## 1. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors P Harries, PJ Morgan and A Wilcox.

## 2. Disclosures of interest

No disclosures of interest were received.

## 3. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on the 9<sup>th</sup> July 2014 were presented for confirmation and signature.

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> July 2014 be confirmed and signed.

## 4. Matters Arising

### Cilrhedyn Woodland Centre (Minute 5)

The Chief Executive apologised that a report on Cilrhedyn had not been placed on the agenda for the meeting that day. The report of the Director of Delivery and Discovery reminded Members that the future of the Authority's operations at Cilrhedyn was currently being reviewed with a future options paper to be presented to the Authority in due course and a timetable for the next steps was set out. A 'Cilrhedyn Futures' Workshop had been held at the Centre on 9<sup>th</sup> September in conjunction with PLANED and Coed Cymru, and this had provided a useful platform to begin the formal review process and for exploring more detailed joint working options with key local agencies throughout Pembrokeshire. The report also provided an outline of current operational costs of the Centre and the income generation and efficiency savings that had been achieved since 2012.

The Chief Executive added that the Authority was currently consulting on its future shape, both internally and externally, and the future of Cilrhedyn would be considered along with other sites and services as part of that



process. A variety of options would be presented to Members in due course.

Members acknowledged that the Cilrhedyn Centre carried out a number of useful functions, including its role in woodland management, but agreed that the Authority might need to consider new ways of carrying these out.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Update Report on the Cilrhedyn Woodland Centre be noted.

#### **5. Performance report for the period ending 31<sup>st</sup> August 2014**

The Business and Performance Manager presented the performance to date for the Park Direction, Delivery and Discovery Teams for the first five months of the financial year using the Ffynnon performance management system. This showed the percentage of work completed, together with the associated RAG (Red-Amber-Green) status for each action. Progress on each action was set out in the report.

It was reported that the majority of the actions and measures were proceeding in line with expectations, although some activities were not scheduled to commence until later in the year, and some data was not yet complete.

Officers answered a number of questions from Members about various measures and actions, including whether the revised Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) that was currently out for consultation was starting to have any effect, as it had been approved for Development Management purposes with effect from July 2014. The Director of Park Direction and Planning replied that there was still a lot of resistance from developers to having any affordable housing on their sites even though this was in line with Welsh Government policy. However, it was important to await the outcome of the consultation exercise before drawing any conclusions.

It was **RESOLVED** that the performance report be received.

#### **6. Audit of Planning**

The Director of Park Direction and Planning reported that in June 2014 the Wales Audit Office had issued a project brief entitled “Local Government Improvement Study: Delivering with less – are National Park Authorities providing efficient Planning services aimed at high performance even in the face of increasing budget constraints”. The full project brief was appended to the report.

A joint meeting had already taken place between the Auditor and officers of all three Park Authorities and he had provided them with a set of



questions which would inform his study. The Auditor would meet with Members, officers and various stakeholders of each Authority over a 2 day period in the near future. The final report was expected to be available in March 2015 and would be reported to the Authority at that time.

Members questioned the purpose of the audit and noted that the need to provide information for the audit would not help the Authority's performance or costs. The Chief Executive replied that the Wales Audit Office considered financial, performance and cross cutting/thematic issues as part of their work, across the whole of local government and this would therefore include National Park Authorities. The Business and Performance Manager added that the Authority's costs were similar to National Parks of similar size in England, but higher than other local authorities, however the reasons for this could be justified and the services provided were not directly comparable.

It was anticipated that the Chairman of the Committee would meet Mr Hathaway, the Auditor, and he would reflect the Committee's views in his discussions.

## **NOTED.**

### **7. Public Rights of Way Delegation Agreement**

The report of the Access and Rights of Way Manager updated the Committee on progress in seeking a formal variation of the Public Rights of Way Delegation Agreement with Pembrokeshire County Council (PCC).

Following a number of meetings with PCC, the Authority had now presented detailed proposals for the revisions of Schedules 2 and 3 of the Delegation Agreement. This would have the effect of increasing from 51 to 70 the public rights of way (PROW) in the National Park to be maintained by PCC (Schedule 2). These included PROW that predominantly experienced utilitarian use rather than recreational use, often urban in character with hard surfaces. Revisions to Schedule 3 – PROW crossing the boundary of the National Park to be maintained by the National Park Authority – would increase from 18 to 42. These routes were countryside paths which were similar in character to the network already maintained by the Authority. It was reported that Members and officers of the Authority were next due to meet PCC in early December with a view to concluding the variation to take effect on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015.

The Access and Rights of Way Manager explained that amendment of the Schedules would allow both Authorities to focus on the work they were more suited to, and showed slides to demonstrate the issues.



Members agreed that the amendments suggested were reasonable and thanked the Manager for the work he had undertaken to date.

**NOTED.**

**8. Forward Work Programme**

The Chief Executive asked Members to indicate what they would like the Committee to consider over the coming year. Four meetings were timetabled and four teams came within the remit of the Committee. The Chairman suggested that Members send to him their suggestions of items to be covered by the middle of November and he and the Deputy Chair would meet with officers to agree a work programme for approval at the next meeting of the Committee. A question was also asked about input into the Destination Management Plan and it was agreed that a report on this would be brought to the next meeting also.

It was **RESOLVED** that reports of the following be considered by the next meeting of the Committee:

- a) The forward work programme, following discussion of Members' suggestions with the Chairman and Deputy Chair;
- b) The Destination Management Plan.

**9. Continuous Improvement Group: delegation of issues**

It was **RESOLVED** that there were no issues that needed to be delegated to the Continuous Improvement Group for consideration.

