

OPERATIONAL REVIEW COMMITTEE

13 June 2018

Present: Councillor K Doolin (Chair)
Councillor P Harries, Mrs J James, Dr RM Plummer, Councillor PJ Morgan, Mr AE Sangster, Councillor A Wilcox and Councillor S Yelland.

(NPA Offices, Llanion Park, Pembroke Dock: 10.00am – 12.15pm)

1. Apologies

An apology for absence was received from Councillor ML Evans.

2. Disclosures

There were no disclosures of interest.

3. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on the 7 March 2018 were presented for confirmation and signature.

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 7 March 2018 be confirmed and signed.

4. Castell Henllys

The report of the Visitor Services Manager North Pembrokeshire updated Members on current operations at Castell Henllys, recent developments, future plans and partner projects.

Thanking officers for a useful report, Members asked various questions about future plans for the site, including potential for receipts in respect of room hire and holiday accommodation, links with bee keepers at the National Botanical Gardens and Scolton Manor, potential for development of the site as a centre for the Welsh Language and the ongoing problem with lack of signage for the site's café.

NOTED.

5. Commercial Activity in the Centres

The Visitor Services Manager South updated Members with recent, current and future commercial activity in the centres, providing information on visitor numbers, admission income and merchandise sales, as well as an outline of the special events held, and income from filming and catering outlets.

Members thanked the officer for helpful report which acknowledged the balance that needed to be made between commercial activities and the



purposes of the National Park. They encouraged full economic costings to be made to establish the profitability of events and the development of self-led trails which might extend the dwell time of visitors. Suggestions were also made regarding development of the Annual Pass into a Membership Scheme, online shop opportunities and development of the Columbia clothing range.

NOTED.

6. Conservation Land Management Report 2017-2018

The report of the Biodiversity Officer set out the range of outcomes being achieved for the National Park through the Authority's conservation and historic environment work, focusing specifically on the land management monitoring results for 2017-2018, examples of achievements under the 'Conserving the Park' scheme, progress made on the management of sites owned by the Authority; examples of historic environment conservation, progress on Stitch in Time and Naturally Connected projects and species monitoring results and interpretation.

At the meeting, a presentation was made on the results of the Naturally Connected pilot project which had finished earlier in the year, and Members agreed that the relationships built with the businesses which had participated would be beneficial for future engagement.

The Community Archaeologist went on to outline the success of the Heritage Guardians project, currently running in three schools, which had engaged with children and their families. She explained that more schools, from both the north and south of the County were interested in participating during the next school year. Members commented that children could prove an excellent means of building relationships with the community and the fact that the sessions so far had been undertaken through the medium of Welsh was a credit to the Authority.

Members thanked the officers for a useful report that was both interesting and informative of the work being undertaken by the Authority. It was suggested that a summary of the targets and achievements could be included in future, and that the report acknowledge the enhancement of the environment of the National Park that the Authority was achieving.

NOTED.

7. Performance Report for the Period Ending 31 March 2018

It was reported that the performance report followed the structure of the Corporate and Resources Plan for 2017-18, which itself followed the approach of the Well-being of Future Generations Act with seven well-being objectives and an additional section providing general governance information.



The report presented the performance for the full financial year April 2017 – March 2018 and included quarter 4 data (January – March) for some data sets.

The report highlighted those areas where targets had not been met and provided some explanation for these, which Members questioned further. They also asked about the development of projects to refer NHS patients for 'walking' therapies, such as the Authority's Walkability Project. Officers advised that this was an area of ongoing engagement which it was hoped to develop further in the future.

Finally the Chief Executive expressed some concern about the financial and reputational risks posed to the Authority of the percentage of Member made decisions against officer advice, which had increased in Q4 to 4.88%. Discussions on this matter with the Audit and Corporate Services Review Committee had suggested that additional planning training might be beneficial; however some Members of the Operational Review Committee expressed the view that their role was not simply to agree the reports put before them, but to also consider the views of the community. There also needed to be some discussion on the approach they should take on areas of policy where there was disagreement.

It was resolved that the Performance Report be **RECEIVED**.

8. Risk Register

The Chief Executive reported that the risk register had been reviewed by both the Management and Leadership Teams and recent progress and changes noted. No significant changes in risks had been identified or removed in the quarter, and the full register was appended for Members' consideration.

It was reported that the recent meeting of the Audit and Corporate Services Review Committee had considered whether Risk 15 of a flawed decision on planning matters should be increased to high due to the increased number of approvals outside policy and decisions against officer recommendation. However they had concluded that the situation should continue to be monitored and a planning training workshop be arranged for Members.

Providing updates on the risks marked as high, the Chief Executive advised that a process would be put in place in the coming months to allow Members to consider the Authority's budget in light of current funding pressures (Risk 2) and added that progress, albeit slow, was being made with regard to implementation of the Document Management System (Risk 28).



Members questioned whether specific reference should be made under Risk 4 to GDPR, and whether additional training should be offered to Members on this subject.

NOTED.

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.