

OPERATIONAL REVIEW COMMITTEE

25 September 2019

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

(NPA Offices, Llanion Park, Pembroke Dock: 10.00am – 11.45am)

1. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Dr M Havard, who was attending National Parks UK Member Induction, and Councillor ML Evans.

2. Disclosures

There were no disclosures of interest.

3. Minutes

The minutes of the meetings held on the 5 June 2019 and 12 June 2019 were presented for confirmation and signature.

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meetings held on 5 June 2019 and 12 June 2019 be confirmed and signed.

4. Conservation Report 2018-19

The Biodiversity Officer presented an overview of the Authority's conservation work during the financial year 2018-19. It was reported that this was carried out on over one hundred sites through management of the Authority's owned or leased estate and also as a result of working in partnership with private landowners through the 'Conserving the Park' scheme. While it was noted that there had been a drop in the number of new management agreements, the area of land managed for conservation had been maintained. It was also reported that a new full time Conservation Officer was being employed from the beginning of October, and it was hoped that this would lead to a steady increase in land managed for conservation over time.

The Authority was also involved in a number of collaborative projects, including the Stich in Time Project which used a top-down catchment approach to reduce Invasive Non Native Species. Additional funding had been received which would allow work on a new catchment at Castlemartin over the next three years.

Finally the Officer reported that a project was being undertaken to 'clean up' the extensive data on choughs which had been collected over many years, and the results would be presented to an international workshop; it was hoped that further analysis of the data could be undertaken in future.



She concluded by advising Members that she was happy to facilitate a visit to allow them to see the work on the ground, and distributed copies of two leaflets produce by the Authority entitled “The Green Roof Guide” and “The Pembrokeshire Hedgebank”.

Thanking the officer for a very readable report, Members asked whether future reports could provide a more strategic view to better link with the National Park Management Plan, and also whether the targets against which measurement had been taken could be included. The Biodiversity Officer replied that where targets existed, they could certainly be included, however it was sometimes difficult to set numeric targets as measurement was more qualitative in nature. She also added that a separate section focussing on the marine work would probably be created in future and Members agreed that this would be helpful.

NOTED

5. Community Archaeology Report 2018-19

The report highlighted the diverse array of work that the Authority undertook across a range of archaeological activities, which included archaeological research at Nevern Castle and Castell Henllys; projects, such as Heritage Guardians which aimed to engage school children, Heritagewatch, to raise awareness of heritage crime, and Farming the Past, working with YFC’s; monument safeguarding work (mainly fencing and scrub clearance) and organisation of a number of events and conferences, including the popular Archaeology Day. The Community Archaeologist noted that a limited number of free places to the 2019 Archaeology Day were available for Members, and details would be circulated to them.

The officer explained that as he had only been in post for a few months, the report had largely been written by his predecessor. However at the meeting, he gave a presentation on some recent work with which he had been involved, including excavations at St Patrick’s Chapel, Whitesands and Porth y Rhaw, Caerfai. The work with schools (Heritage Guardians project) had linked to the curriculum project on flying and had focused on some of the plane crash wrecks to be found in the Preseli’s. Drop-in sessions had also been held at which members of the public could bring along any finds to be identified and recorded.

Members congratulated the Community Archaeologist for his enthusiasm and for what had been achieved. They asked whether greater linkages could be made to the Corporate Plan in future reports, and the officer replied that he intended to work with the Performance and Compliance Coordinator to review the performance metrics and also to prepare a three year strategy for archaeology once he had a better grasp of the work to be undertaken. Members also praised the ongoing work with the



farming community and commended Pembrokeshire as a location for university groups, hoping that more could be attracted in future. They also believed there might be potential for marine archaeology.

NOTED

6. Adopting Visitor Safety Principles at Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority

It was reported that in recent years, Authority staff had started to adopt Visitor Safety principles when assessing risk on the Authority owned estate; these principles had been developed by the Visitor Safety Group (VSG), a nationwide body. In 2017, a Visitor Safety Strategy had been commissioned and a draft of this document was appended for the Committee.

Following advice given by the VSG, the Authority had embedded the main principles of Visitor Safety into all relevant current policy. In order to incorporate these principles, which provided a pragmatic approach to safety, into site risk assessments, a new Visitor Safety Risk Assessment had been developed, and it was intended create such assessments for the main sites owned by the Authority.

The Operations Manager reported that the Authority's staff were active members of VSG and took part in regular workshops with similar organisations across the UK and Ireland which had improved the knowledge and expertise of staff when managing Visitor Safety.

Thanking the officer for an interesting report, Members agreed with the pragmatic approach undertaken, believing that wild places had to be protected from excessive signage and other furniture, otherwise their special qualities would be lost. They also looked forward to reading the annual Health and Safety Report which was presented to the Audit and Corporate Services Review Committee but circulated to Members of the Operational Review Committee, and noted that it was important to learn lessons from any accident involving a member of the public. The Chief Executive added that this report would also be presented to the Audit and Corporate Services Review Committee, reflecting the corporate nature of Health and Safety.

NOTED.

7. Performance Report for the Period Ending 31st July 2019

The report given by the Performance and Compliance Co-ordinator followed the structure of the Corporate and Resources Plan for 2019/20 following the seven well-being objectives, with an additional section providing general governance information.



The report presented the performance to 31st July 2019 and included quarter 1 statistics for some data sets. It was noted that a number of actions were in amber or red and these related to areas where work had not yet begun, posts had been vacant or further work was needed to progress the activities. It was anticipated that the activities should move from red and amber to green as progress was made throughout the year.

The report highlighted a number of areas of work including planning performance (it was noted that an incorrect reference to quarter 1 statistics for 2018/19 in this section of the report should have read 2019/20 and on page 76 of the performance report, following a review of data the # office and centre based volunteer days for quarter 1 should read 5.5 not 0) , Parkwise training sessions, the Celtic Routes project, Outdoor Schools project, visitor numbers at the Authority's sites and sickness levels and Health and Safety.

NOTED

8. Risk Register

Members were asked to consider the latest Risk Register. The Finance Manager advised that some actions had been amended following a review by the Management/Leadership Teams and an additional risk of failing to recover outstanding debts was added to the register.

Members questioned the mitigation/control/monitoring actions for Risk 6 (delivery of targets laid down by Welsh Government's Valued & Resilient priorities) and the Chief Executive replied that further information was required from Welsh Government in order to measure the risk of failing to meet the targets. They also suggested that part of the mitigation of Risk 16 (staff capacity/skills for key work) should include health and wellbeing as lack of capacity could be as a result of staff sickness.

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.

