

REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF RECREATION, MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS

SUBJECT: WALES COAST PATH MARKETING CONTRACT

1. Introduction

This report highlights the new contractual role awarded to Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority (PCNPA) by the Countryside Council for Wales (CCW) to manage the marketing procurement for the Wales Coast (WCP). It describes how the award of contract from CCW is assisting the Park Authority in delivering Welsh Government (WG) priorities beyond the National Park boundary and how the Authority has also used the funding to enhance its own marketing activities.

2. Background

Wales's outstanding 1359km coastline is one of the country's most important economic assets and potentially an important driver for creating new jobs and economic wealth, particularly through tourism. However, the use and enjoyment of the coastline varies considerably. Along some lengths, notably the Pembrokeshire Coast Path National Trail, the path is of a high standard¹, well-used and supported by a range of visitor accommodation and services². In other areas the path is either nonexistent, or there is a lack of visitor infrastructure.

As a result, in 2006, Rhodri Morgan AM, as First Minister, announced a new initiative to increase access to the coast, including additional provisions for cyclists, horse riders and those with mobility problems. This led to the establishment of the Coastal Access Improvement Programme (CAIP) with the two aims of improving access within a 2km zone of the coast and delivering an all-Wales path. The CAIP is funded by European Convergence Funding, the Welsh Government and is managed by the Countryside Council for Wales. The work on the ground is carried out by the relevant Local Authorities but other aspects of delivery, such as the marketing of the Wales Coast Path (WCP) and the monitoring and evaluation of the scheme have been procured through third party organisations via 'Sell-2-Wales'.

PCNPA made a bid to manage the marketing procurement for the WCP in February 2011 and the Authority was successfully awarded the contract to the value of £41,000 by CCW in March 2011. Further details of the contract and the WCP marketing activities that PCNPA are contracted to manage are detailed below.

¹ <http://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/need-to-read/2011/08/10/pembrokeshire-coast-path-walks-off-with-accolade-of-being-one-of-world-s-top-trails-91466-29209191/>

² <http://travel.nationalgeographic.com/travel/coastal-destinations-rated/top/wales/>

3. Overview – WCP Delivery

PCNPA has been awarded a contract to manage the procurement of third party bodies to implement key elements of the Wales Coast Path Marketing Plan (2010-12). This involves PCNPA project managing the delivery of the WCP Marketing Plan (2010-12) and providing marketing advice and procurement assistance (such as, market research, drafting specifications and criteria, liaising with prospective suppliers, conducting evaluations for the marketing services and goods required) for the implementation of individual items. This includes:

- Working with the national CAIP Communications Committee to advise on the most efficient and effective way to implement the key elements of the Wales Coast Path Marketing Programme and agree a work programme for delivery.
- Assisting with the procurement of goods and services to deliver the agreed marketing work programme to time and on budget.
- Participating in all necessary meetings required to successfully manage the programme of work to deliver the WCP Marketing Plan.
- Assisting the CAIP Communications Committee to resolve any problems as soon as they are identified.
- Successfully concluding the project by the 15th December 2012

As a result, PCNPA will be responsible for procuring agencies to deliver the following WCP marketing services to a total value of £147,500 on behalf of CCW:

- Website – to establish and launch a new WCP website that will also work on smart phones
- PR – to provide Welsh national and UK regional PR, with Visit Wales also delivering key aspects at a UK level and beyond
- Press pack – which will provide a key overview of the WCP including key statistics, etc to help drive press coverage
- Official launch – to deliver a major launch event(s) that marks the official opening of the WCP
- Promotional leaflet – to create a general WCP information leaflet for distribution throughout Wales

4. Marketing Officer – PCNPA Priorities

The award of contract by CCW supports PCNPA to employ a Marketing Officer for 2 days a week until January 2013 to co-ordinate the WCP tasks listed above, as well as covering social media activity, including Twitter and Facebook. However, in addition to the 2 days per week funded through CCW, the Park Authority took the decision to augment this post, by utilising part of the Authority's existing marketing budget, to add an additional 3 days per week to the contract. As a result, PCNPA now has a temporary full-time Marketing Officer who's time is split (roughly 60:40) between marketing the WCP and the wider marketing of the Park Authority's services.

The priorities for the Marketing Officer, outside of the WCP work, include:

- Leading on marketing the National Park Authority's attractions and Visitor Centres, including developing and updating customer databases, working to increase visitor numbers and income at all sites.
- Co-ordinating the Park Authority's presence at corporate events.
- Encouraging Park Authority staff awareness and understanding, in particular key attractions and Visitor Centres, of the value of the marketing process in service delivery.
- Developing the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park brand identity and related positioning and messaging, and to manage use of the brand by third parties.
- Working with Pembrokeshire communities and businesses to develop the brand value potential offered by National Park designation.

It is hoped that the value of the Marketing Officer's role, combined with the potential to generate additional income for the Authority, will ultimately allow PCNPA to retain the post beyond January 2013.

5. Benefit & Risk Analysis

The WCP is a high profile national project which provides a unique opportunity for PCNPA to demonstrate how it has the capability and expertise to deliver on Welsh Government priorities in a way that stretches beyond the National Park boundary. However, the WCP is presently behind schedule and, as a result, PCNPA's involvement comes with a number of risks that Members should be aware of, as detailed below.

Reputational risk: influenced by:

- Project already facing significant delays in delivery of marketing elements, increasing the pressure to deliver as there is now not only the need to deliver on time but to make ground on time already lost.
- Elements of contract delivery are outside of PCNPA's control – i.e. the procurement process and award of contract has to be handled directly by CCW.

Reputational gain: influenced by:

- Political 'win' of securing and managing the contract as well as assisting WG to deliver a key recreation and tourism priority.
- National profile among partner agencies of PCNPA managing the contract.

Consequently, on balance, it was felt by the Senior Management Team (SMT) at PCNPA that the benefits, on the whole, outweighed the potential risks and the decision was therefore made to tender for the work.

6. Delivery Team

The key officers at PCNPA involved in delivery are:

- Director of Recreation, Marketing & Communications
- Head of Marketing & Communications
- Marketing Officer

7. Conclusion

The WCP is an exciting and innovative Welsh Government initiative that will increase access to the coast for a range of users and will allow both residents and visitors to Wales to walk the entire circumference of the country (as the WCP will link with the Offa's Dyke National Trail). The PCNPA is extremely pleased to be involved in the delivery of the marketing procurement process through our contract with CCW. Winning a contract of this nature demonstrates the way in which the organisation and its staff are beginning to embrace new, and more commercially focussed, ways of working.

In addition, it helps to cement PCNPA's reputation, building on our role in managing and marketing the Pembrokeshire Coast Path National Trail, as an organisation that is committed to utilising the public rights of way network as a means of delivering wider socio-economic goals that extend beyond the Park Authority's 'traditional' remit. It is hoped that successful delivery of the WCP marketing procurement will, in turn, provide further opportunities for PCNPA to become involved in large-scale national projects of this nature.

Appendix A

The Wales Coast Path branding (below) which will be applied to all relevant marketing materials.



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(For further information, please contact Marie Edwards at mariee@pembrokeshirecoat.org.uk)