

REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF RECREATION, MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS

SUBJECT: REVIEW OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

1) INTRODUCTION

The following report provides a brief overview of the key issues highlighted by Community Development Cymru as part of their recent review of the Park Authority's approach to community engagement.

2) BACKGROUND

Members will recall that a paper was presented at the NPA meeting in May of this year highlighting the Park Authority's commitment to the Pembrokeshire Community Plan 2010-25 and the ongoing work of the Local Service Board (LSB) and Community Planning & Leadership Partnership (CPLP) led by Pembrokeshire County Council (PCC).

As part of our commitment to this work the Park Authority agreed to assess our present approach to community engagement and subsequently commissioned Community Development (CDC), with assistance from Planning Aid Wales (PAW), to undertake an independent review. This report provides an overview of CDC's findings for consideration.

3) THE REVIEW BRIEF

Community Development Cymru were requested to undertake an evaluation process and, in turn, produce a report that:

- Reviews the current state of community engagement by, and on behalf of the NPA.
- Makes recommendations for the NPA's future approach to community engagement (with specific reference to opportunities for enhanced partnership working).

PCNPA also requested that the review document provided the following outputs and outcomes:

1. Set out the policy drivers and good practice context for citizen engagement by public authorities.
2. Describe the operational context for engagement existing and likely to exist in the PCNP and within Pembrokeshire, in terms of providers and processes.
3. Present a representative selection of examples of NPA public engagement (over the last 3 years) and provide a commentary on their effectiveness.
4. Provide an estimated breakdown of resources (time and finance) currently allocated, explicitly or implicitly, to public engagement by the NPA.
5. List the generic outcomes which public engagement should be expected to deliver, to the NPA and its stakeholders, in the short, medium and long-term.
6. Advise on the potential mechanisms available to the Park Authority in delivering these outcomes (detailed in point five above).
7. Advise on procedures for deciding how to allocate between different engagement options (e.g. based on audience number, or outcomes, or value for money, etc).

4) METHODOLOGY

The approach adopted by Community Development Cymru (CDC) involved the following methods:

- Desk research
- Focus group discussions(FGDs)
- One-to-one interviews

This involved meetings with a range of internal staff at various levels of the organisation as well as with key external agencies and community representatives including:

- PCC's Community Regeneration Unit
- Senior management at PLANED
- The Countryside Council for Wales (CCW)
- The Environmental Network for Pembrokeshire (TEN-P)
- Pembrokeshire Association of Voluntary Services (PAVS)
- 'The Haven's Community Council, Broad Haven
- Pembrokeshire Coastal Forum (PCF)

5) GENERAL FINDINGS

The independent review by CDC highlights the following:

- PCNPA adheres to good practice principles in undertaking engagement work
- There is a strong commitment by PCNPA staff to the communities they serve

- Case by case examples demonstrate 'deep' and effective engagement activities
- The LSB / Community Planning process in Pembrokeshire is the best 'vehicle' to provide a framework for improved collaboration as it offers an opportunity to place the needs of communities firmly at the heart of strategic planning

The report also gives evidence of innovative partnership work undertaken by PCNPA with a range of organisations currently operating in the National Park, both in the public and private sectors, and recognises that, on the whole, the Park Authority's approach to community engagement is integrated across a wide range of service areas.

Areas for improvement, as identified by CDC, relate to the capturing of specific community engagement data through the existing performance management systems (i.e. the Authority is achieving more with communities than our existing data systems capture) and the report suggest that PCNPA would benefit from adopting improved measures by which to judge existing community engagement activities.

6) CONCLUSION & NEXT STEPS

The independent review by Community Development Cymru highlights that, on the whole, PCNPA undertakes much good work around community engagement and that this work is happening at many different levels. Ultimately, however, the report identifies that the organisation needs to develop a more comprehensive and coordinated framework for working with and engaging the communities that live and work within the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park and for the visitors who come to enjoy the Park. The box below highlights areas that PCNPA will need to address in the coming months to move this work forward.

It is therefore clear that in this policy context, the NPA will need to take into account and demonstrate how it will;

- build strategic and executive commitment in taking forward the actions outlined in the community strategy / plan
- ensure that the NPA contributes fully to the wider strategic social and economic development of the Pembrokeshire area e.g. the LSB
- engage and support its resident and visitor communities in making lifestyle changes to minimise human impact on the Park to help conserve it for the future, contributing to the Assembly's targets for reducing Wales's carbon footprint
- develop the engagement strategy so that the diverse communities that live, work in and visit the Park are actively involved and engaged and able to participate in ways that are relevant and meaningful
- ensure that the equalities agenda underpins and informs involvement and engagement

- ensure that community development values and principles are embraced and
- relevant training and learning for staff and for resident communities are developed and provided
- effectively evaluate and monitor the engagement strategy and report findings and feedback to its partners and local communities
- measure improvements in social justice and community wellbeing

Next Steps

It is proposed that the findings of the CDC report will be discussed further with a range of staff and external partners (as detailed below) before a more comprehensive response to the report is brought before the NPA in 2011.

- The findings of the report will be explored and discussed with NPA Members in more detail at a future workshop
- Similarly, the report will be discussed at a future meeting of all PCNPA staff.
- The findings of the report and the experience of undertaking a review of this nature will be discussed at a future CPLP meeting
- A review of our approach to community events is currently underway and this will be used to ascertain how we use events to engage with communities in the NP
- A series of 'community engagement' related questions will be developed for consideration by the local Citizen's panel
- The report findings will be discussed at the forthcoming community councils seminar in 2011
- The results of the above actions will be used to compile a more detailed report for consideration at a future NPA meeting in 2011

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- 1. Note the update report.**
- 2. Endorse, subject to accommodating Member's advice, the 'next steps' highlighted in the conclusion section of this report.**

(For further information, or to obtain a copy of the full CDC report, please contact James Parkin, Director of Marketing and Communications on extension 4807)