

## REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

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### **SUBJECT: AMENDING THE AUTHORITY COMMITTEE STRUCTURE**

#### Purpose of Report

The aim of the paper is to propose changes to the Committee Structure of the Authority.

#### Introduction/Background

The current Committee Structure for the Authority was agreed in 2003. Members of the Continuous Improvement Group discussed proposed changes to the committee structure at their meeting held in September and agreed the proposals outlined in this paper.

#### Current Situation

The Members' Handbook identifies that in addition to the National Park Authority (NPA), the Authority has 16 Committees. These Committees vary from the key Committees of the Authority such as the Performance Review and Development Management Committees comprising all Members of the Authority to smaller informal Committees which comprise two or three Members. Where possible the membership of Committees reflects the membership of the Authority, with two Members nominated by Pembrokeshire County Council to every one appointed by the Welsh Assembly Government.

#### Options

In making recommendations for change, there is a need to ensure that the following principles are met:

- improved openness and transparency of decision making and working;
- improved use of Members' time;
- reduce costs;
- improving the opportunity for Members to develop an understanding of the work of the Authority.

The following changes are proposed:

#### National Park Authority

This is the main decision-making body of the Authority and includes all Members. The Authority meets six times a year. No change is proposed.

However, currently the timetable of meetings is inconsistent with a six week gap between meetings in May and June and a 14 week gap between meetings in June and September. Since the NPA is the only decision-making body for a number of the Authority's areas of work, long gaps can lead to the need for Extraordinary meetings to deal with urgent issues. In order to try and minimise the need for Extraordinary meetings, it is proposed in future to have a meeting every two months.

### Performance Review Committee

Currently the Committee meets every quarter and looks at the performance of the Authority. All Members sit on the Committee.

While the current structure works relatively well, this paper will propose the disbanding of the Performance Review Committee and its replacement with three Committees focusing on the work of the three Directorates within the Authority. These will be:

Audit and Corporate Services Review Committee – looking at corporate risks, governance and issues relating to the work of the Chief Executive Officer and departments reporting to him such as HR, Finance, IT, Communications, performance management. In addition, this Committee will look at performance against the Welsh Assembly Government Grant letter.

Conservation and Planning Review Committee – looking at risks and performance in areas covered by the Director for Conservation and Planning. This will include issues such as climate change, the Natural Environment Framework as well as the performance of Development Management.

Recreation and Tourism Review Committee – looking at risks and performance in areas covered by the Director for Tourism, Communications and Marketing. This Committee will oversee the work of centres such as Oriel y Parc, Carew Castle and Castell Henllys. At a recent Performance Review Committee it was suggested that the current Oriel y Parc Committee be expanded to include Carew Castle and Castell Henllys. However, if this proposal is accepted then this will not be necessary and the Oriel y Parc Committee will be disbanded.

All three Committees will report to the NPA and have a membership of six (four PCC and two WAG). We should aim to ensure that all Members of the Authority sit on one Committee. However, if Members decided that they wish to have more Members on the Committees then it would be possible to increase the number to nine.

The Committees will meet three times a year. However, there may be a case for the Corporate Committee to meet four times a year in order to have a quarterly look at the finances of the organisation. This will more than double

the performance review element of the organisation, without increasing the workload of staff.

It is considered that these proposals will improve on the current system through:

- Providing Members with more opportunity to scrutinise the work of the Authority;
- Where currently areas of work are considered once a year or less frequently by the Performance Review Committee, the new system will provide an opportunity to consider performance on a more regular basis;
- Members will develop a better understanding of areas of work of the Authority;
- In some cases it will allow officers to benefit from greater Member input into their work.

### Oriel y Parc

Currently this Committee has nine Members.

If Members adopt the proposal to create three Performance Review Committees then this Committee would be discontinued and its functions taken over by the Recreation and Tourism Review Committee. In certain circumstances representatives of external organisations could be invited to attend meetings where there is a need to discuss specific issues.

However, if this is not accepted then the Oriel y Parc Committee will change into a Tourism Sites Committee and encompass issues relating to Castell Henllys, Carew Castle, Tourist Information Centres, as well as Oriel y Parc. With this model the Committee would comprise of nine Members.

### Continuous Improvement Group

The Continuous Improvement Group was originally set up to oversee improvement in Development Management, however, over the past few months it has extended its work to cover other areas such as joint work and Committee membership. While this Group was set up with a specific purpose the existence of this Group has been highlighted as a positive contribution in our Corporate Assessment undertaken by the Wales Audit Office. It also provides a valuable opportunity to discuss proposals before taking them to NPA. Currently its membership comprises of four Members – the Chairman of the Authority, the Chairman of Development Management and two other Members. It is proposed to change the membership to include five Members - the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Authority and the three Chairs of the Performance Review Committees. Where required this Group may co-opt additional Members.

### Chief Executive Performance Review Panel

This Panel will continue to meet twice a year (or more frequently if required) to agree with the Chief Executive targets and objectives for the year ahead and to review progress at the 6 month stage and again to review progress at the year end to roll over into the next year's objectives.

The Panel will comprise 3 Members, these Members to be nominated annually in January from the following positions: Chair and Vice-Chair of the Authority, Chair and Vice-Chair of the Audit and Corporate Review Committee, and onwards to Chair/Vice-Chair of Personnel or Chair/Vice-Chair of Development Management until a 2:1 ratio of Pembrokeshire County Council to Welsh Assembly Government nominated membership is achieved.

### Sub-Groups

The Authority has a number of Sub-Groups involving Members of the Authority and staff. These include the Business Review Group, Social Inclusion Group, Communications Group, Buildings, Property and Conservation Group and Landscape Group. With the exception of the Buildings, Property and Conservation Group, these groups rarely meet and have little or no identifiable outcomes. It is proposed to discontinue all these groups, with the exception of the Buildings, Property and Conservation Group. Where needed, Task and Finish Groups including Members, Staff and, if necessary, other experts will be set up.

### Other Committees

No changes are proposed to the following Committees:

- Development Management Committee;
- Personnel Committee;
- Employee Forum;
- Standards Committee;
- The Sustainable Development Fund Grant Assessment Panel – the membership of this Panel was recently reviewed and changes agreed by the Authority in September;
- Member Development Strategy Working Group;
- Conservation Area Grants Panel;
- Standards Committee Appointments Panel; and
- Local Development Plan/National Park Management Plan Core Group – having agreed the National Park Management Plan last year and the Local Development Plan this year, it is unlikely that this Group will need to meet for the foreseeable future. It is proposed that the membership is reviewed when required.

### Informal Groups

The Authority has a number of Informal Groups such as the Carew Castle Steering Group, the Castell Henllys Steering Group, the Tycanol Woodland Advisory Group and the Youth Hostel Association Liaison Group. While these

provide a valuable opportunity of discussing issues with key stakeholders they are not included within the list of Formal Committees of the Authority. It is proposed to consider the future role of these groups during a review of partnership currently being undertaken.

#### Location of Meetings

Currently almost all Authority meetings take place at Llanion Park. In an effort to ensure greater transparency we propose to pilot holding some of our meetings at locations within the National Park. By doing this we hope to give the communities of the National Park an opportunity to get a better understanding of the work of the Authority and the way it makes decisions.

This will be a twelve month pilot and will be reviewed to assess its impact.

#### Financial considerations

The proposal to re-organise the Committees seeks to be cost neutral. We even hope that there may be a small saving if the proposals are implemented.

The proposal to pilot taking meetings to the communities of the National Park also seeks to be cost neutral, although the exact impact on cost will depend on the location of the meetings and how Members travel to the event.

#### Risk considerations

None.

#### Compliance

No specific issues.

#### Human Rights/Equality issues

No specific issues.

#### Biodiversity implications/Sustainability appraisal

No Specific Issues.

#### Welsh Language statement

The strategy will be delivered in accordance with our Welsh Language Statement.

#### Conclusion

If the above proposals are approved they will be implemented during the next round of Committee appointments in June 2011.

#### Recommendation

**Members of the Authority are asked to approve the recommendations above for changes to the:**

**National Park Authority;**

**Performance Review Committee;  
Oriol y Parc Committee;  
Continuous Improvement Group;  
Chief Executive Performance Review Panel; and  
Sub-Groups**

**and a pilot to locate some of the meetings of the Authority in the communities of the National Park.**

*(For further information, please contact Tegryn Jones)*

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