

Review of Community Engagement

Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority's approach
to working with communities across Pembrokeshire



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Produced by Community Development Cymru and Planning Aid Wales
on behalf of Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority

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SUMMARY

This review demonstrates that Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority (PCNPA) has implemented much good work around community engagement over a number of years and that this work continues to develop at many different levels. Strategically, PCNPA is fully committed to the Local Service Board (LSB) / Community Planning process in Pembrokeshire and adheres to good practice principles in their strategic planning. Work that is currently undertaken by staff on a day to day basis also demonstrates a strong commitment to the needs of the communities they serve. Case studies demonstrate that 'deep' and effective engagement work has been undertaken, albeit on a case by case basis, and those involved have indicated that this is being done in a robust and inclusive manner.

The experiences of partner organisations working with PCNPA has also been very positive. Much of the work that PCNPA has undertaken, and particularly the work around 'community hubs', could, potentially provide forums for more sustainable community engagement work in the future. Consequently, in reflecting on the effectiveness of PCNPA's approach to community engagement, it is important to acknowledge the good work already undertaken to date and to stress that a good foundation for further community engagement work is already in place through the organisation's existing approach.

However, it is also important to acknowledge that community engagement is a collective responsibility and that PCNPA is just one body involved in this process at a local level. In addition, during a time of restrictive public finance, the resources available to PCNPA to significantly expand their present community engagement work are likely to be limited. Consequently, the best results are likely to be achieved through collaboration as well as the pooling of resources and effort across a wide range of agencies.

To this end it is felt that the existing LSB / Community Planning process in Pembrokeshire is the best 'vehicle' to provide such a framework for collaboration as it offers an opportunity to place the needs of communities firmly at the heart of strategic planning. In addition, it is through a continued commitment to this process, led by Pembrokeshire County Council, that PCNPA along with other relevant agencies will most likely achieve service improvements that can be 'felt' at a community level and, in doing so, meet the requirements placed on PCNPA through the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009.

1. INTRODUCTION

Pembrokeshire Coast National Park is the only UK National Park designated primarily for the special qualities of its coastline. The body charged with delivering the purposes of the National Park is the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority (“the NPA”). National Park Authorities have two statutory purposes and a statutory duty, as set out in the Environment Act 1995. The NPA receives public funding from the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) and Pembrokeshire County Council (PCC) to undertake its purposes. Additionally PCNPA receives significant funding from special grants such as European structural funds, from the Countryside Council for Wales (CCW) and it also raises a proportion of income through its own means.

The statutory purposes of the NPA are:

- To conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the National Park
- To promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the National Park by the public

The NPA also has a duty to foster the social and economic wellbeing of local communities in carrying out these purposes. Where there is irreconcilable conflict between the two purposes, the Environment Act gives priority to the conservation purpose.

2. THE BRIEF

Public engagement is crucial to the work of the NPA and they have asked for this evaluation report in order to:

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

This review document aims to deliver 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).

3. OUR PERSPECTIVE ON THE BRIEF

Community or public engagement involves a wide range of people affected by a project or programme in all stages of a cyclical process, from identification, planning and design, through implementation to evaluation and beyond. Citizen engagement features prominently in many Welsh policies, as does the role of community development in helping regenerate communities by empowering them to participate more fully in local decision-making¹; this has been shown to help reduce disadvantage, exclusion and inequality. Sustainable development has recently become a core principle of Welsh policy-making¹. These two policy agendas are of particular relevance for the NPA because of their emphasis on engaging communities and visitors alike, which will, in turn, help Wales to become a more sustainable place to live and visit.

Engaging and working with communities is complex, especially where communities feel marginalised or under-represented in local decision-making. The evidence is that where the engagement process is well planned with communities and that they feel listened to, valued and involved with local issues, this leads to improved community health and wellbeing and civic action; a clear sign of a well-functioning democracy.

Developing a 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 will help ensure that the NPA delivers on these complex policy agendas in relation to anti-poverty, social inclusion, equalities and sustainable living.

On the downside, the process can be time consuming, resource intensive and may come up against problems of engagement fatigue, or general lack of community interest. Sometimes a process can make the mistake of involving only those whose voices are the loudest, which works against the empowering process mentioned above.

¹ See p 7 in this document for further details

4. THE METHODOLOGY

The approach we have undertaken to complete this report has involved the following methods:

- Desk research
- Focus Groups Discussions(FGDs)
- One to One interviews

Key partners involved in doing the work were Community Development Cymru and Planning Aid Wales, who have added a planning perspective to the work undertaken.

We have completed most aspects of work as agreed, however, the complexity of current approaches to engagement in the NPA means that it is very difficult for an outside organisation to derive accurate figures around what is currently allocated, explicitly or implicitly, to public engagement by the NPA; therefore, any estimate we could make would have limited value.

We also faced barriers when trying to access some grass root groups for interviews, due to the timing of this evaluation. Rather than FGDs, it was possible to talk to individuals from 5 projects and we have written case studies around these interviews. Key projects include Freshwater East Society and Community Association, the Tanyard Youth Project, Carew Community Association, the FERN project, and finally, the Young Farmers' Templeton Club.

Finally, we feel that this evaluation is the first of a number of steps that need to be taken to move forward the community engagement process of the NPA. Our recommendations section reflects this.

5. POLICY DRIVERS FOR CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT AND SERVICE BY PUBLIC AUTHORITIES

a. National context

Building engaged and sustainable communities: Key policies and strategies

As a public body, the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority's work takes place in the context of the Welsh Assembly Government's policies and those of its key partner organisations. A raft of national policies have emerged from the Welsh Assembly Government since its original inception. Only key policies of significance to the NPA are highlighted here, in particular those requiring the Authority to engage with its resident and visitor communities.

The following policy documents and strategies have been chosen and briefly summarised because of the strategic direction and guidance they offer in relation to community engagement and sustainable development. They include:

- *One Wales – A Progressive Agenda for Wales (June 2007)*
- *One Wales: One Planet – the revised Sustainable Development Scheme*
- *The Communities First Programme*
- *The National Strategic Framework for Community Development in Wales*
- *'The third dimension' A Strategic Action Plan for the Voluntary Sector Scheme*
- *Getting on Together – a Community Cohesion Strategy for Wales*
- *The Equality Act*
- *The Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009*

The overarching Welsh policy agenda

One Wales – A Progressive Agenda for Wales (June 2007) sets out the overarching policy agenda for Wales, putting 'citizen-centred local services' at the heart of government policy-making. *One Wales* makes clear that new ways of engagement are needed to empower and enable citizens and communities to determine their own lives and shape the communities in which they live.

One Wales: One Planet positions sustainable development as the central organising principle of the Welsh Assembly Government's and the public sector's policies and programmes.

The principle mechanisms for delivering *One Wales: One Planet* are the **Wales Spatial Plan**, **Community Strategies** and the **Local Service Boards**. These are reviewed in more detail in the following pages due to their direct relevance to the NPA's remit and work.

Policies related to Citizen and Community Engagement

Citizen and community engagement are recognised by Government and others as having a crucial role to play in tackling poverty, inequality and exclusion; the key areas below are chosen for discussion in more detail, because of their relevance to this work.

Communities First is the Government's flagship programme for improving quality of life and wellbeing for people living in the most disadvantaged communities across Wales. Communities First is about supporting communities to find their voice and to use their skills and experiences, working with their local service providers, to jointly plan for the benefit of their communities. The Government has now confirmed that Communities First will continue to 2012, with the focus on enabling local people to contribute more fully to the regeneration of their communities in partnership with local authorities, health bodies and other agencies.

Pembrokeshire has two Communities First Partnerships, Pembroke Monkton and Pembroke Dock Llanion (both of which are outside the National Park boundary). At a civic award ceremony in May this year, Pembroke Dock Town Council acknowledged the contribution that several Llanion Communities First Partners have made to the regeneration and development of the town. A group award was also made to the Pembroke Dock Festival Group for their 'sterling efforts' to promote and reinvigorate the town and for creating 'a greater sense of community pride'.

In 2006, the Welsh Assembly Government commissioned CDC to lead on the development of a **National Strategic Framework for Community Development in Wales**. This document provides a framework to guide effective community development activity and makes the case for integrating community development into the Wales-wide policy context.

The role of community development in building sustainable communities is acknowledged in '**The Third Dimension**' - **A Strategic Action Plan for the Voluntary Sector Scheme** (January 2008) which states *'through our work with the third sector and in programmes like Communities First we have come to recognise the value of community development'*. The Report also makes clear the need for community development training and learning.

Getting on Together is the fourth policy to be included as it is a key component of the Government's One Wales commitment to achieving 'a fair and just society.' The aim of the strategy is to support service providers such as local authorities and their partners to develop strategic approaches in promoting and maintaining cohesion in their local areas. **Getting on Together** focuses on those policy and service delivery areas that research has shown to have a significant impact on how well a community gets on together.

The fifth and final policy area is the **Equality Act** which will come into force from October 2010, providing a modern, single legal framework with clear, streamlined law aimed at tackling disadvantage and discrimination. Organisations already have legal duties to eliminate discrimination and promote race, gender and disability equality and good community relations

Implementing policy commitments

The **Wales Spatial Plan** is an important policy in clarifying how the priorities set out in One Wales and One Wales: One Planet, can be achieved. The purpose of the Wales Spatial Plan is to ensure that the work of the public, private and third sectors in Wales is integrated and sustainable. The aim is to deliver the Wales Spatial Plan through Area Strategies using a sustainable development approach which is about improving wellbeing and quality of life by integrating social, economic and environmental objectives and minimizing the use of natural resources.

The Wales Spatial Plan goes well beyond traditional land-use planning, and at local level its implementation brings together a variety of public and other bodies. In November 2006, WAG introduced **Local Service Boards (LSBs)** and **Local Service Agreements** as a new model for delivering **community strategies**. The LSBs will lead the development of community strategy visioning, public engagement and non-public sector improvement delivery aspects and the improvement of public service development and delivery.

The purpose of the **community strategy** is to fulfil the statutory duty placed on local authorities by the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009. This Measure links well being and community planning with service improvement and requires local partners to collaborate in the delivery of community strategic outcomes and to engage with citizens. A community strategy should provide a 10-15 year vision,

future direction and long-term strategy for the whole of a local area. There is a strong commitment to citizen engagement in the preparation of these strategies.

Summary

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

b. Local Policy Context

The following section focuses on the local drivers of community development policy which include the Community Strategy, the Local Development Plan, the National Park Management Plan, the Corporate Communications Strategy and the Social Inclusion strategy.

The Local Service Board

The Local Service Board (LSB) is responsible for overseeing the Community Strategy and delivering the Community Plan; and this is informed by the Local Development Plan. Although the NPA are not formally represented on the LSB, the development of the Community Plan and Action Plan has been delegated to sub-group entitled the Community Planning and Leadership Partnership (CPLP) and the NPA is a partner on this group.

In Pembrokeshire, the Local Service Board is working on three priorities which aim to improve the social and economic wellbeing of Pembrokeshire.

Affordable Housing The LSB has overseen the production of the joint Affordable Housing Delivery Statement for the County. This will make it substantially easier to

negotiate higher levels of affordable housing as well as giving developers more certainty on local authority expectations. The LSB has also explored the solutions suggested by WAG in its housing toolkit and as part of this has had a useful session with WAG housing officials.

Complex Care Teams This is an example of a project where the early stages are being led by the LSB through the LSB development fund, with the rest of the project being funded from another source (continuing health care funding). A project manager is in place, assembling three multi-disciplinary teams in Pembrokeshire (the pilot will be in Crymych). The teams will focus on people with a number of chronic illnesses such as diabetes, respiratory problems, arthritis and lower level mental illnesses, including some forms of dementia.

By blurring the distinctions of what were previously discrete services, resources can be focused on the needs of the individual citizen. The main outcome expected is much better care and higher customer satisfaction and a reduction in the demand for primary and, to a lesser extent, secondary care services.

Skills: This project has yet to start. The key for joint working will be ensuring that post 16 federation arrangements work properly. It is possible that this work will be focused in the Pembroke / Pembroke Dock area as, statistically, this has the highest levels of deprivation. There are also plans to expand the delivery of vocational training in this area on the existing secondary school site.

The Local Development Plan

This section looks at the key function of the NPA in terms of land use planning and the documents which shape this function; as it reviews these, it attempts to draw out any elements which, in turn, will shape their community engagement strategy.

Land use planning takes account of economic needs, social needs and environmental issues. It also considers history, public attitudes and the needs of future generations. However, the main issue for planners is to ensure that new development is in the 'public interest', which means that what is built benefits as many people as possible.

The National Park Authority's combined Delivery Agreement covers preparation of a Management Plan and Local Development Plan (LDP) for the Park area and it should be noted at this point that the new local Development Plan developed through this process was adopted by the PCNPA in September 2010.

The Delivery Agreement contains a Community Involvement Scheme which sets out how stakeholders and local communities will be engaged in the policy planning process. Whilst it is outside the scope of this review to evaluate the LDP preparation process as a whole (this was tested fully at the public Examination into the Authority's deposit LDP), a review of the community involvement aspects of the Delivery Agreement has been undertaken. This review explores the key principles of community and stakeholder engagement that the National Park Authority (NPA) sees

as fundamental to its success, and makes connections with other findings of the evaluation.

The LDP system in Wales is underpinned by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) and The Town and Country Planning (Local Development Plan) (Wales) Regulations (2005). In accordance with the agenda set out in 'Planning: Delivering for Wales', the aim is to make policy development more open, fair and transparent by providing opportunities for people to engage in forward planning issues from the very earliest stages of plan preparation. This approach seeks to build public confidence, deliver better quality plans, speed up the preparation process, and better integrate development plans with other plans and programmes.

It could be argued that the new LDP system represents a significant improvement on the previous Unitary Development Plan system. It aims to contribute to sustainable development by making community involvement a statutory requirement during the early stages of plan preparation. It also requires plans to be tested for 'soundness' before they are adopted. One of the ten tests of soundness is that plans must be prepared in accordance with the Delivery Agreement, including the Community Involvement Scheme. Other tests of soundness require that the LDP should link in with the aims of the Community Strategy or, in National Park areas, the National Park Management Plan (see below) , and should have regard to a variety of national policy documents including 'Planning Policy Wales', the suite of adopted Technical advice notes and circulars, and the Wales Spatial Plan.

The **PCNP Management Plan 2009-2013** is the primary strategy document for the National Park and should govern the work of all agencies working in the National Park. It provides the broad policy direction for managing all National Park resources. It describes the special qualities, communities, economy and environment of the park area and sets out a long-term vision, objectives and aims to achieve the Park Authority's primary purposes. Most importantly, it establishes a framework for the Authority to work with partners to achieve these aims and objectives.

The Management Plan therefore provides the strategic context for preparation of the Local Development Plan by establishing broad spatial and land use objectives. The Delivery Agreement explains that the Management Plan is the umbrella document for all National Park activities and describes the relationship between the Management Plan and the Local Development Plan.

The current **Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Local Development Plan** covers the period until 2021. It includes a broad range of strategic and land use policies relating to the economy, housing, the local environment, community regeneration and other development issues, provides the policy framework for decisions made on planning applications and is the 'primary material consideration' for these decisions.

The LDP replaces the Joint Unitary Development Plan, which was prepared in partnership with Pembrokeshire County Council (PCC). It was decided not to prepare a joint LDP to ensure closer policy linkages with the Management Plan. However, the Park Authority has aimed to work collaboratively with PCC and has aimed to take account of the PCC Community Strategy when preparing its LDP.

The Authority's **Delivery Agreement** was adopted in February 2007 following a period of consultation. It sets out the ways in which the Authority will involve local communities and other stakeholders during the key stages of preparation of both the Management Plan and the Local Development Plan. Key sections of the Delivery Agreement and its relevance to community engagement are included in Appendix 1.

The Corporate Communications Strategy and Social Inclusion Strategy

PCNPA's **Corporate Communications Strategy** and **Social Inclusion Strategy** also have a key influence over the strategic direction of the Authority's Community Engagement work. The Corporate Communications Strategy seeks to lift the overall level of people's interest in the National Park and NPA through particular interventions; and the Social Inclusion Strategy seeks to do the same but with particular reference to excluded people. Indeed, both of these points are reflected in the 2009 Community Engagement Strategy, which also adds the key elements of responsiveness and coordination, as well as value for money. Community capacity building is also noted. There is also a '3 Parks Social Inclusion strategy' - demonstrating a joint commitment to 'reaching out' to key communities throughout Wales.

Social Inclusion would have to be a key consideration of any action plan dedicated to community engagement, although there are issues around this which are discussed later in this report. It is important to note that PCNPA's head office is based in a Communities First ward area outside of the National Park boundary.

Comments

The PCNPA obviously has a commitment to sound community engagement. This is legally required for all NPAs (and, as can be seen later in this review, is obvious through talking to staff in the PCNPA).

In terms of commitment, the Delivery Agreement presents a comprehensive, coherent and clearly delineated framework for encouraging meaningful community involvement in the preparation of both plans. It is underpinned by sound principles of community engagement in policy development, including clarity, accessible language, managing expectations, being as inclusive as possible, educating and informing, creating trust and acknowledging diversity. It also aims for transparency through a commitment to publish all documents relating to both plans during their preparation processes and by inviting comments at all key stages.

In 2009, the NPA did develop a community engagement strategy, which sets out a broad framework for and principles which should be embraced by any NPA community engagement type activity. However, this was a vision developed in rather a 'top down' fashion and it needs to be made to work in a real operational context. Obviously, part of the role of this evaluation is to help develop an action plan towards

implementation of the theory, which enables input from the 'bottom up'. This, in turn, will allow *local ownership* of any community engagement approach adopted.

One of the key decisions that the NPA will need to make in relation to its future Community Engagement work will how to prioritise the work it wants to do around community engagement and this will be in part determined by the outcomes it wants to achieve. Bearing in mind its limited resources, it may also need to look at not only the most cost effective approach to community engagement but the one that is also the most sustainable in terms of longer term outcomes for the National Park. This may involve improved joint working, and pooling resources, but this in turn will demand agreement on understandings and priorities for community engagement. Any actions also need to reflect the organisation's commitment to addressing social exclusion issues.

6. EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE AROUND ENGAGEMENT

There are many specific examples of good community engagement practice done at a community level, but these may be useful to consider in detail in the future when the NPA is considering working with specific communities, with whom they are facing specific issues.

The following examples focus on more general examples of good practice in NPA areas. They provide a summary of activities undertaken and lessons learnt from Brecon Beacons National Park Authority Local Development Plan early engagement with Community and Town Councils and an overview of work in the Loch Lomond National Park area.

Brecon Beacons National Park Authority

Brecon Beacons National Park Authority commissioned Planning Aid Wales in early 2008 to help build the capacity of community and town councils within the Park to enable meaningful participation in the early stages of preparing a Local Development Plan. The work involved devising and delivering a structured programme of community engagement, and had three key aims:

- 1) To use the opportunity presented by LDP preparation to improve communication between the Authority and the fifty or so Community and Town Councils (CTCs) within the Park area.
- 2) To reduce conflict on local issues at later stages of plan preparation, specifically in relation to settlement development limits and land allocations.
- 3) To make the most effective use of limited officer resources.

In essence, each community council was offered the opportunity to take responsibility for organising involvement by their local communities during the early stages of LDP preparation. Around half of the community councils took up the offer, agreeing to work with their communities to define local preferences for future growth

in community areas, including identification of possible sites for future employment and housing development.

The community outputs from this locally-driven community engagement process assisted participating community councils to respond to a range of strategic development options put forward by the Authority, and the outputs from local engagement activities fed into the Authority's preparation of its preferred LDP strategy. It was recognised at an early stage that the process would have to be undertaken within a common set of agreed guidelines, including a consultation protocol and the requirement that each participating community council would produce a statement of consultation at the end of the process. The benefits of commissioning an independent organisation to undertake the work were also recognised.

Planning Aid Wales undertook the following elements of work:

- Design and delivery of an initial series of capacity-building workshops to which all community councils received an invitation. There were two rounds of capacity-building workshop:
 - The first gave participants a basic introduction to the planning process and their new role in it, which is a prerequisite before meaningful engagement in planning policy formulation can take place.
 - The second aimed to achieve agreement for a common approach and guidelines for CTCs to work with their communities to generate a meaningful response to strategic LDP options.
- A final round of workshops introduced a range of community involvement tools and techniques available to local councils wishing to engage with their communities to contribute to plan-making, at which a range of possible techniques were tested with workshop participants.
- The tools and techniques were modified in light of lessons learnt, and produced for all councils in the National Park in the form of a Community Participation Toolkit. This aimed to help councils generate a representative community response to forward planning issues.
- A comprehensive advice and information pack to enable CTCs to understand the context of their new role in the LDP preparation process.

The early stage community engagement work undertaken in 2008 was innovative and well-received locally; it was also recognised as a positive contribution in the review of the National Park Authority's planning functions undertaken by the Welsh Audit Office in 2009.

Following the early-stage engagement work undertaken in 2008, Planning Aid Wales has again been commissioned by the Authority to design and deliver a three-phase LDP training programme between April and November 2010, aiming to engage CTCs in the later stages of LDP preparation. The first two phases have entailed

delivery of capacity-building workshops for community councillors, and a training event for Authority members to ensure that they are fully briefed on the role of members and communities in the LDP preparation process. The final phase of the work will be two 'drop in' events scheduled for the middle of the eight week Deposit consultation period; these will be designed to assist councils preparing a response to the Deposit LDP.

As a spin off from this work, Planning Aid Wales has been working with the Planning Inspectorate to develop more user-friendly model representation forms and accompanying guidance, and these will be trailed during the Brecon Beacons Deposit consultation, with the 'drop in sessions' used to gain feedback from users of the new form. Following the trial in Brecon Beacons, the Planning Inspectorate and WAG will be encouraging all local planning authorities in Wales to use the new forms.

Loch Lomond

Community Futures is a programme of community action planning and community engagement designed by the Small Town and Rural Development Group (STAR) in 1998. The National Park Communities Future was established in 2002. The aims of the programme were to help communities;

- clearly identify their own needs and aspirations;
- build capacity so they could be partners in their own development;
- develop and implement the projects and actions that mattered to them.

The National Park Authority employed a Community Futures Programme Manager and trained and employed 8 Community Agents. The programme was managed by the Community Partnership which brought together representatives from the National Park Authority, the local authorities, Forestry Commission Scotland, Scottish Natural Heritage and community representatives appointed by the Association of Community Councils. Over a period of two years (2002-03) 24 communities in and around the National Park took part in the Programme, using the resources provided to help them prepare their own Community Action Plans.

Communities were assisted through the Community Futures programme to develop their organisational capacity. Communities took this opportunity to establish Community Development Trusts – charitable community companies that would enable them to raise funds for projects, purchase or lease land and property and employ people. The projects undertaken make a contribution to economic and social well being of communities as well as rural development thus creating a 'win-win' situation. The communities involved have been planning to make more of their heritage using their priorities. They have undertaken environmental; projects as well as, for example running visitor centres and a variety of other projects. Creating capacity at local level, and partnership working has been seen as key to the success of the process.

Loch Lomond is an excellent model for community engagement with plenty of ideas around mutually beneficial working arrangements for both the local population and the NPA. The next sections of this report will reflect on how far PCNPA might be in a position to move to this sort of model and what may need to be done to enable this.

7. STRUCTURES AND PROCESSES OF THE NPA

PCNPA has 18 Members, twelve are County Councillors who are appointed by Pembrokeshire County Council to provide local knowledge and expertise, but not to represent their own local authority constituency. The other six are appointed by the Welsh Assembly Government, to represent the national interest and to provide additional specialist skills relevant to the work of the Authority.

An important point to mention in relation to this review is that NPA members are currently not locally elected. This was seen as being of concern amongst a small number of individuals contacted by Community Development Cymru during the research work associated with this report. It was also highlighted as a potential issue during an independent review of National Parks in Wales, commissioned by WAG, and undertaken in 2004.

The views expressed by a handful of respondents indicated that an absence of election made some local community representatives feel that NPA Members might lose their 'connection' with local concerns and aspirations (although this is unlikely due to the predominance of locally elected Councillors on the NPA Committee). WAG's 2004 review suggested a possible need for elections but other parties have suggested that this could lead to the loss of a wider viewpoint and an independent input to decision making, especially in relation to the conservation interests of the NPA.

However, and in relation to this point, the fact that much of the land of the National Park, more than 95 %, is in private ownership suggests that there could even be an expanded role for private land owners to have a greater say in the decision making of the NPA. It is interesting to note that the Scottish National Park Authorities (Loch Lomond and The Trossachs and Cairngorms NPA's), have adopted a 'three thirds' model of governance, where a proportion of Members are appointed by the Regional Government, a proportion are nominated by the relevant Local Authorities and the remainder are elected locally, with all serving between 18 months and four years.

The effectiveness and accountability of differing governance arrangements for PCNPA is far beyond the scope of this report but it is worth noting these issues here as they were raised directly by local community representatives during the research phase.

In terms of the operational structure of the NPA, it is divided into 3 themed areas, and these are included in the box below.

Recreation and Communication,

Area Based Rangers

Wardens

Access officers

Administrative staff

Communications and Marketing Officers

Visitor attractions & TIC's

Education Service Officers

Area based staff

Graphic services

Conservation,

Specialist woodlands managers and officers,

Ecologists

Generalised Conservation officers

Planning and Enforcement officers

Research and Monitoring officer

Support Services.

Administrative Support personnel

Site Building Officers

All NPA staff have contact with different communities in the Park - for example, not only local geographical wards but also communities of interest and target communities, for example, tourists, farmers or schools. To add another layer of complexity, the Park and its staff should also serve the wider 'community' of Wales in terms of offering the benefits of the National Park as a 'national asset' (in line with the original ethos of National Park designation).

From the list of staff above, is it clear to see how complex the structure of the NPA is in terms of understanding the various engagement processes. Presently, there is no single officer with direct responsibility for community engagement but plenty of individuals will have contact with the public in the course of undertaking their duties. There are also several communities with which they could engage. Some people have engagement in their job descriptions, but only as a first point of contact for members of the public on role-specific issues. One of the key question for this evaluation is whether or not there should be a dedicated officer with a lead role for community engagement?

The NPA also work in partnership with several other voluntary and community based organisations in the area. Some of this work is addressed below in the 'other providers' section. Here, however, we should note that the NPA supports various projects through its Sustainable Development Fund (SDF). The projects supported through this fund are included in Appendix 2.

8. WHAT HAPPENS IN PRACTICE ? NPA STAFF PERSPECTIVE

The following section gives a broad overview of what happens in practice regarding community engagement, from the perspective of PCNPA staff. Interviews were carried out with key operational and management staff and some documents provided by the NPA were also reviewed, as detailed in the appendices section of this report.

Knowledge of policies which impact on engagement

At the broadest level, the key documents identified by staff as governing their community engagement work included the **National Park Management Plan** as well as the **Community Plan** produced by Pembrokeshire County Council. The PCNPA draft Community Engagement Strategy mentioned in the section above was hardly mentioned as it was put 'on hold' by SMT during the recruitment process for the Chief Executive's post as well as the two Director's posts. As a result, there have been no specific actions attached to this strategy document as yet. This contract is, in part intended help to give a tactical expression to the principles contained in PCNPA's draft Community Engagement Strategy. In particular, PCNPA were concerned that there is, in general, a missing tier between general policy statements and action on the ground; this report aims to provide suggestions as to how the organization can 'plug this gap'.

How does engagement happen?

Overall, PCNPA staff suggested that public engagement can be ad hoc at times with differing approaches adopted from project to project and from officer to officer. At present, there is no specific, overarching approach to general community engagement. It was acknowledged that this could create the potential for duplication of effort across organisations in Pembrokeshire.

However, when probed, there was clear evidence that a lot of good practice around community engagement does exist. When staff tried to break down key elements of community engagement in practice, they were able to come up with 5 areas of activity.

- a) the consultation processes required by the NPA's statutory planning function
- b) the involvement of key community groups in decision making
- c) the passing of information to community groups and community representatives
- d) a few more specific and more in depth pieces of work, to do with encouraging independent community initiatives.

e) High levels of day to day contact via operational staff activities

a. Consultation: statutory functions, primarily in planning, require draft plans to be made available to local communities for consultation and a clear process to be established for receiving feedback and receiving comments to particular issues as they arise.

However, it was also suggested by some staff that community engagement at this level has in many instances, been less effective than was hoped primarily because very few residents turn up to consultation events and it is often the same few people who attend every time.

b. Decision making: In terms of involving people in decision making, the National Park Management Plan seeks to involve people in strategic planning (such as management planning and development planning) as well as in more operational decisions (such as path creation and maintenance or site management). Our research suggests that involvement in management planning and development planning tends to be supported more through consultation activities rather than through an approach which empowers local communities to have ownership of the decision making process. However, there are definite localised examples of where residents have been fully involved in decision making around local issues. Sometimes, giving people information about what they could get involved with in the Park had motivated them to be involved more fully in local projects. These will be examined in more depth in the case studies section of this report.

c. Information giving: wider public engagement occurs through the passing of generic messages from the NPA to the public. The NPA operates many sites and services that specifically promote understanding through enjoyment and direct experience of the National Park. Staff highlighted that one of the Park Authority's priorities was 'physical engagement', i.e. engaging people with the physical environment of the park and encouraging people to undertake an activity or experience they haven't done before.

There is a particular onus on the conservation of the park through activities that raise awareness and provide support for recreation, in turn, building people's enthusiasm for the environment and supporting responsible use of the countryside. For example, there are programmes of activities and events organised by PCNPA across a wide range of locations within the National Park. Similarly, the Park Authority runs an extensive and highly regarded schools programmes which operates through 'outreach' activities as well as through the key information centres and visitor attractions managed by PCNPA (the National Park Centre at Tenby, Newport TIC, Castell Henllys Iron Age Fort, Carew Castle and Tidal Mill and the Oriel y Parc National Gallery and Visitor Centre in St. David's).

There is also evidence of innovative partnership working with a range of organisations currently operating in the National Park, both in the public and private sectors. This approach is beneficial to people at the level that they are presently engaging and, in our view, should be further expanded as it has the potential to create additional engagement activities at different levels of the NPA's work.

PCNPA has a strong presence on the internet through Facebook, You Tube, Twitter, etc. and the main website is very accessible.

The Park Authority produces its free market-leading annual visitor newspaper, Coast to Coast, with 225,000 copies distributed via 500 Pembrokeshire outlets between March and October. The Authority also uses editorial features in local newspapers and a weekly slot on Radio Pembrokeshire to communicate and engage with local residents.

As well as simply giving people information about what is available in the Park, the NPA also aims to give information to help people's learning and foster opportunities for visitors to the National Park (including local residents) to make lifestyle changes either relating to health, the environment or more sustainable living in general.

d. **Encouraging independent community initiatives:** the NPA has strong partnerships with the voluntary sector locally. For example, they have had involvement with local community groups through the 'Communities as the Hub of Rural Life' project which is funded through the Rural Development Plan (RDP) and is managed by PLANED. The NPA also works directly with local groups to help them move forward with their own projects. This is achieved by officers supporting groups to develop and carry out their own plans and through occasional grant-aid assistance, mainly through the Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) which is administered by PCNPA (the range of groups supported through SDF funding are listed in Appendix 2).

As indicated in the methodology section of this report, five projects were evaluated in compiling this report and case studies for these will be presented in the Appendix (4). The groups who ran these projects were predominantly positive about the engagement work of the NPA. Some points are worthy of a summary note;

- a. Those interviewed suggested that communities felt ownership of the projects with which the NPA are involved:

"There is a strong feeling of ownership in the area and wish to be involved in decision-making and this appears to be successful. There was an initial lack of trust rooted from the planning history. Among older residents possibly still there but with newer residents the park has done a lot to build bridges."

- b. The NPA is seen to be more open than it used to be, groups are listened to and replied to and in some cases e.g. the FERN project, local development projects that were viewed as being potentially harmful to the special qualities of the area have been halted. The NPA is seen to be making more of an effort in the last 12 months or so, having a change in approach and developing mutual trust. The NPA is seen to have gained an increased understanding of the strength of local views and a recognition that it's better to work with local residents than against them.

- c. The Community Forums set up by the NPA meet four times a year and include a variety of community groups and were attended by 3 out of the 5 groups interviewed for this report.
- d. Some work is being done face to face with more excluded groups, for example the Tanyard youth project and through the NPA's 'flexible programme'. This work focuses predominantly on providing information, raising awareness of opportunities and getting people involved in Park activities but it does not always involve key target groups at a decision making level.

However, some community groups also suggested that more could be done:

“Our local community is an untapped resource and the more links we have the more the two way process can be helped.”

In particular it was noted by several interviewees that more could be done by the NPA to capture the views of young people, particularly in isolated rural areas, and to ensure that young people are adequately represented through NPA activities that determine policies and project delivery in the area

Some of the positive and negative points around community engagement at this level will be explored more fully in the case studies section of this report.

Examples of projects involving engagement provided by operational staff

The 'three wonder scheme' was a cross boundary community orchard that was supported through grant-aid assistance. The project involved building the capacity of local communities through skill sharing and there was a strong feeling from those involved that the project brought local people closer together. However, there was also a feeling that the project would have been more successful if there was further engagement support available.

Traffic management at St. Justinian's was also quoted as an example of a situation which requires continued engagement by the NPA and possible arbitration support to help resolve a range of conflicting local priorities. In particular, the local community wish to revive an old lifeboat station and car park and construct a visitor's centre on the site, but the NPA is viewed as being unsupportive of this approach by the small number of people interviewed.

Llanychaer Bridge' was a bridge building project that directly involved communities, and was generally seen as a success.

Bro Gwaun Ysgol paths was an example of a project where school children were involved in clearing and laying paths for community benefit.

- d. **Day to day work:** Operational staff suggested that, at their level, engagement happens naturally as a result of working on particular projects or during day-to-day encounters with members of the public. They also stated that engagement practices were intuitive and dependant on the type of project involved. Neither were there any

formal requirements through the NPA's performance management framework to formally feedback on engagement aspects of projects themselves (although there is clear evidence that this happens on an informal basis).

In particular, the community groups interviewed had a very positive view on the work of PCNPA's wardens and rangers, for example:

"We have a lot of volunteer work going on in the area for general maintenance. (we have also) just built a boardwalk done by volunteers. The Ranger responsible for the area has a list of volunteer rangers (accredited rangers) and will send a list of activity dates of work carrying on. (This could) also include local community."

Crucially, PCNPA staff, who were interviewed for this report, stated that the current level of freedom that they have in relation to engagement activities was a positive thing and they feared that more targets may increase the level of bureaucracy without achieving results 'on the ground'. There was a fear that formalising parts of the organisation's present approach may just lead to 'engagement for the sake of engagement' and divert officers away from more urgent/unplanned engagement opportunities. In relation to this, a number of PCNPA staff, also felt that the relationships they built are often done so on a one-to-one basis and it was felt that a generic role on engagement may not be able to achieve this level of personal interaction. However, the group did recognise the benefits of having specific officers who could act as mediators / facilitators on community projects and/or on specific themes.

Working with Partners

We also asked PCNPA staff which partner organisations or bodies they work with on engagement activities. The following list was compiled by management staff at PCNPA and some of the agencies listed have been interviewed for the purposes of this report.

- Community councils, and their umbrella groups. Stakeholder engagement is limited with individual councils, but community councillors are often relied on as representatives for local communities.
- Engagement via umbrella groups such as the Pembrokeshire Association of Local Councils and One Voice Wales has been more successful.
- Pembrokeshire Local Action Network for Enterprise and Development (PLANED) and related community associations.
- Partner organisations such as CCW.
- Stakeholder list held by planning.
- Pembrokeshire County Council heavily consulted
- Landowners
- Tourism groups
- User groups such schools, bridleway users, surfing clubs, etc.

Some of these partners were seen as a positive resource in terms of the NPA's community engagement work. For example, the Pembrokeshire Local Action Network for Enterprise and Development (PLANED) were cited as an outside organisation that provided extremely useful assistance with engagement activities – for example, they ran the engagement activities for the Freshwater East Nature Reserve, helping devise and run the project. The Pembrokeshire Coastal Forum has also supported PCNPA's work in a similar way. This type of independent, 'third party' support was seen, from the perspective of staff, as being hugely beneficial.

Critically, an impartial 'voice' was regularly cited as being extremely useful in helping to build trust with communities. For instance, consultants have been used to run a series of consultation events around the development of the LDP and PCNPA staff felt that this had improved responses and fostered more 'open' dialogue with communities. In such instances it was considered that staff may inadvertently stifle discussions.

Similarly, third party organisations have, in the past, provided a range of skills that helped PCNPA with engagement activities, including providing techniques and contact lists, as well as attending and facilitating events. However, low attendance rates by residents at a range of engagement events was highlighted as being a cause of frustration amongst PCNPA staff and raises questions about the cost-effectiveness of this approach.

Management staff at PCNPA specifically cited the Pembrokeshire Association of Voluntary Services (PAVS) as an organisation that had provided considerable assistance in the preparation of the LDP. Planning is a complex system to understand, and it is difficult to communicate the issues involved. Consequently, PCNPA staff felt that a certain amount of work might be needed to help build knowledge and capacity across communities in specific policy areas (such as affordable housing, climate change mitigation, etc) rather than pursuing a more generic approach which may not appeal to local communities.

PCNPA staff also highlighted the crucial role that community councils can often play in local decision making. Devolving engagement responsibilities to community councils was one method that PCNPA has previously trialed, particularly in relation to the local environment, but the focus groups mentioned were described as being 'unsure' of their authority and, as a result, such exercises have had only limited success to date.

Community Development

This extract is taken from the **National Strategic Framework for Community Development in Wales**.

'Community Development is a process of change whereby people work together around common issues and aspirations in ways that enhance learning, encourage participation, and support the development of a culture of informed and accountable decision making. Community may refer either to a geographical community where

the common issues are those of the locality or to a community of interest or identity where the common issues are not spatial’.

In line with the capacity building points above, PCNPA staff were asked how important community development is to PCNPA’s activities to engage with local communities (i.e. were the goals of engagement related specifically to the operational goals of PCNPA or were they more ‘altruistic’ in nature?). There were no examples forthcoming where community development was an explicit goal of PCNPA’s activities but both operational and management staff suggested that community development emerges normally as a result of a more general approach than a specific intention, as cited in some of the project examples above.

Harder to reach groups

The National Park Authority runs a tailored programme of activities, called the ‘flexible programme’, which caters for a wide range of target groups from across Pembrokeshire and further afield. The ‘flexible programme’ aims to work with local groups to identify and overcome barriers that may prevent their enjoyment of the National Park. Often this involves PCNPA developing tailored support and/or activities to ensure more equitable access to the special qualities of the National Park.

In addition, the NPA captures data from other programmes via its ‘social inclusion database’ where a number of key officers submit regular information regarding services delivered to key target groups. A brief analysis of the ‘social inclusion database’ reveals that the Park Authority caters for an extremely diverse range of target groups through its activities which helps demonstrate PCNPA’s commitment to what it terms ‘environmental justice²’.

PCNPA staff also draw on the knowledge of voluntary organisations working in the area. However, it was felt that engagement via such agencies was not always successful, as responses were limited (as mentioned above). It was, almost inevitably, often the case that the more proactive members of the community who sought to engage with the Park Authority were given priority. This raises the question, to what extent are ‘self selected’ community representatives truly reflecting the wider views of the specific area in question? It was the general consensus, amongst the PCNPA staff interviewed, that those who were ‘engaged’ were more likely to be the educated, enthusiastic and proactive members of the respective community in question, and/or those with more available time. It was further recognised that engaging with harder-to-reach groups requires substantial additional resources and, in particular, building-up long term relationships. PCNPA staff also suggested that balancing resources and priorities to engage with harder-to-reach groups was sometimes difficult.

In addition, the natural geography and boundaries of the National Park can be problematic in terms of identifying which communities to engage with. A number of PCNPA staff cited difficulties in relationships at a senior level between the NPA and Pembrokeshire County Council as ‘holding back’ opportunities for joint engagement

² Please see Wikipedia definition: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Environmental_justice

activities and suggested that better integration between the two organisations would be useful. Also, rurality was specifically mentioned as a difficult problem to overcome.

Some of those interviewed did note some groups they would like to engage with in the future, namely:

- The 'uninterested' (i.e. those who know very little about the National Park or have not had an opportunity to experience opportunities in the National Park)
- Older people
- The wider community rather than formally identified community representatives.
- Members of the local Gypsy and Traveler communities.
- Younger people outside of school (i.e. 'NEETs')

Evaluation of engagement activities

PCNPA staff and community groups interviewed as part of the research associated with this report stated that, in practice, there is limited formal evaluation of the qualitative benefits of engagement activities and no clear overall framework for evaluating engagement activities. Quantitative evaluation frequently occurs as part of the requirements of projects or external grant-aid funding, (e.g. numbers of people / communities engaged with is often monitored), but evaluation of the quality of engagement is less prevalent. Reflecting previous points, however, evaluation is often difficult as there are often no formal ends to processes / projects. Much work is ongoing and the need for better qualitative research is a common criticism across a wide range of organisations and, to a degree, needs to be driven by WAG and through the local community strategy process. One initial suggestion is for PCNPA to consider adding a formal section to committee reports that requests information relating to community engagement activities.

However, overall, it was agreed by PCNPA staff interviewed for this report that evaluation is a critical tool to assess the successes of engagement and to develop future engagement strategies.

Comment

Currently engagement takes place at a variety of levels in order to achieve a variety of functions. Some activity is driven by the statutory planning function at the level of consultation but more in-depth engagement takes place through partners and is frequently initiated directly by the NPA. The benefits of more in-depth engagement is acknowledged, as staff suggested that short-term projects involving NPA in public engagement can lead to long-term gains, however, resources are always a barrier.

This, as previously mentioned, suggests that the ‘pooling of resources, and the need to agree a ‘common approach’ across organisations involved in community engagement activities across Pembrokeshire might offer the best way forward. The NPA already works closely with a variety of partner organisations but this work can sometimes focus on the ‘usual suspects’ as opposed to identifying ‘new’ partnerships. In addition, sometimes the external partners involved in PCNPA’s work may have limited knowledge to deal with some of the more technical issues (particularly in terms of legislative knowledge or scientific understanding) which the Park Authority is sometimes involved in.

For example, local planning issues generally take priority in the eyes of the public and this is where the public’s relationship with the NPA has been criticized in the past. Often planning discussions are dominated by concerns relating to specific planning applications and this is felt, by some staff at PCNPA, to limit the discussions that need to take place on issues of wider strategic importance.

This suggests that building community ‘capacity’, as well as the skills of the staff facilitating community engagement, is of clear importance. This requires the building of long-term relationships in order to gain trust and nurture interest around key issues (particularly related to planning). Key NPA staff may also need to undergo additional training.

9. WHAT HAPPENS IN PRACTICE? OTHER PROVIDERS IN PEMBROKESHIRE

This section of the report looks at the perspectives that others providers in the Pembrokeshire area, both in the statutory and voluntary sector, have on the NPA’s community engagement approach. In line with the brief, and in order to provide further context, this section sets out key roles and responsibilities in Pembrokeshire and details activities around community engagement. It then sets out the interviewees’ perspectives on what the NPA is currently doing.

Interviewees.

Pembrokeshire County Council Community Regeneration Unit (PCCCRU) and Senior Management.

PLANED.

Countryside Council for Wales (CCW).

The Environment Network, Pembrokeshire (TENP).

Pembrokeshire Association of Voluntary Services (PAVS).

'The Havens' Community Council, Broad Haven.

Pembrokeshire Coastal Forum.

Understanding and experience of community engagement

In line with their different remits, the organisations interviewed all had different ways of working with local communities. For most of those interviewed, 'consultation' type approaches seemed to be the norm, as opposed to community development approaches, even where, as with PLANED, the approach is very bottom-up. Most of those interviewed expressed that they would like to do more to encourage development and input initiated through the community but time and resources did not always allow this.

For example, CCW tend to 'do' community engagement through partners whom they grant-aid for this purpose, but they also occasionally get involved directly through a variety of ways including speaking to small groups with specific projects and giving general advice.

PAVS 'engages' through their support of voluntary and community groups across the County and they tend to work with 'communities of interest'. Therefore, community engagement actions are primarily focussed through thematic networks e.g. people who run community buildings, older people, people with mental health issues, etc.

"Our engagement activities (in Pembrokeshire) tend to be driven by consultation out of the Assembly- i.e. they are driven by an external force- we will talk to people in the voluntary and community based organisation about what is in the consultations."

"We do hold some Forum events about things that are also important for our members but the balance needs to change and there needs to be a more 2 way dialogue (so that...) people are given the opportunity to put forward their own issues and not simply asked to comment on someone else's."

For PLANED, community engagement is central to their work. In addition, their role as a community development agency was stressed during the interview process i.e. they often base officers within communities and work closely with community councils to do the 'ground work'. PLANED also provides direct support to a range of more informal community networks and they gave details of participative 'visioning workshops' that have been used to help communities develop their own 'action plans'. PLANED also work with partners to extend the 'reach' of their work, for example the local CVC was cited as a key body.

"We try and look at what time is convenient, we offer child care, dependent care, try to be aware of local politics – although not take sides..."

In encouraging engagement we try to work with existing groups, for example a local play group, and go to their regular sessions to encourage them / explain to them the value of participating in the action planning process.”

For the local Community Council, interviewed for this report, community contact was through the elections process and when specific planning applications were brought to their attention.

Nature of working relationship with NPA

In general, those interviewed expressed that they had a very positive working relationship with the NPA. Overall, those interviewed pointed out that if anything restricted this work it would more than likely be staff time; both in terms of staff time within their own organisations as well as the NPA, as *'everyone is trying to do more with less'*.

Strategic level

For some, their relationship focused more on the strategic level; for example, CCW have direct contact through the Chief Executive and regularly liaise with PCNPA at a strategic level through periodic meetings with PCNPA's Senior Management Team (SMT). This is a positive process where the 2 organisations update each other on various strategic issues and also more local issues.

For PLANED the link with PCNPA has been formalised by inviting a senior representative of PCNPA to sit on PLANED's Board. PLANED also has regular contact with PCNPA's Chief Executive. According to the interviewee from PLANED, their relationship with the NPA has benefited both organisations over time, particularly as PCNPA gives formal recognition to PLANED's work when developing strategic action plans. This has, in turn, led to PLANED allocating European funding to community projects that meet both community needs and NPA priorities, making their grant-aid funding 'go further'.

PLANED have also had informal dialogue with the NPA specifically in relation to community engagement and how, by working more closely, they can develop mutually beneficial activities. PLANED have previously suggested that they could assist the NPA by developing a more formalised partnership arrangement whereby resources could be shared between organisations. Under such an arrangement it is suggested that PLANED could provide direct support to PCNPA's community engagement activities with a reciprocal arrangement being in place for PCNPA to provide technical information on issues relating to planning, interpretation, footpaths, tourism, etc to PLANED. However, these discussions are presently at a very early stage.

Many of those interviewed for this report, including representatives of both the Park Authority and the PCC, suggested that the relationship that the Park Authority has with PCC is good but could still be improved. Interviewees cited different organisational priorities and different objectives as a barrier; it was also suggested that different 'cultures' tend to stop the two Authorities working together as much as they could.

More formally, there are also statutory consultations regarding development planning for example, through the LDP and Development Management functions of the NPA where officers request inputs from different organisations.

“Do we discuss things with the NPA? – Yes. Their engagement is quite good in this respect - for example, if they don’t agree with what we say, they are quite good at giving an explanation as to why that is the case. They follow the procedures of the Joint Unitary Development plan. If there is a change of policy, they consult with us around the new proposals.”

“What happens is they get an application for a development; they copy us in and at the next meeting of the Council we decide if we support the application. If their decision is different from ours they’re obliged to ask us along to the National Park Planning Committee.”

Operational level

For others, and sometimes in addition to their contact at a strategic level, there was also joint working at the operational level and through contacts with individual members of staff. This could be contact at officer level through field level work with PCNPA wardens, for example. Alternatively, and in relation to TENP, PCNPA have provided speakers at TENP events and TENP Trustees also meet PCNP staff at sub-regional events, for example the ‘Low Carbon Region’ workshops organised by WAG and the SDC recently. In a similar fashion, the NPA have sent representatives to PAVS events to discuss opportunities for joint working and to ‘highlight the range of NPA services available to the organisations we represent’.

For CCW, at an officer level, they work on specific projects with the NPA, sometimes because they are grant funding the Park Authority directly, and sometimes because they both have interests in a particular project outcome. For example they liaise on the National Trail as it is grant funded by CCW. The two organisations also liaise on the ‘Pembrokeshire Grazing Network’, and on monitoring special protection areas for bird. CCW advise on the ‘Coastal Slopes Scheme’ and also sit as advisors on the Sustainable Development Fund, which is run by PCNPA on behalf of WAG.

Many organisations noted an overlap in remit between the outcomes sought by their own organisation and by the NPA

“To some extent there is an overlap in our remit: we are working together to deliver similar outcomes, for example, around access, recreation in the outdoor and nature conservation.”

NPA community engagement work

In general terms, many interviewees suggested that the community engagement work undertaken by the NPA is good. For example, some talked of the work carried out on a day-to-day basis by PCNPA Rangers, who were seen as having an extremely good level of engagement with local residents and users of the National Park. They also work well with local schools to raise awareness and other

interviewees highlighted the PCNPA volunteer programme as an example of good community engagement;

“Some NPA staff see the value of engaging with volunteers particularly in environmental and more recently heritage type projects. This positively reflects on the NPA.

NPA have wardens and rangers on the ground and they are very supportive of local groups for example the Newport Paths group and community archaeological digs.”

Some of the examples given indicated that much could be achieved when there was a possibility of a ‘win-win situation’ for both the local community and NPA in terms of achieving outcomes that benefited a range of parties.

In Carew, for example, the Oral History project linked to Heritage Interpretation was seen to be very positive; the community were supported by a voluntary organisation to link with NPA Officers involved with this;

“The Community was successful in securing ... money to deliver the project at a ‘sophisticated’ level and both PLANED and NPA officers were able to support the development of the project to secure funding. Carew Castle and Mill (NPA) were key to the project which had local and tourism benefits. This is a great example to try and replicate.”

A further example is ‘Freshwater East’; here, the community has been involved in developing a Local Nature Reserve (LNR) and according to some interviewees, the NPA was key in this process as they had responsibility for legal issues, access and ‘the Burrows’ for example.

There is a twice yearly management meeting of the ‘Freshwater East Reserve for Nature’ (FERN) group where all parties involved get together including community members. The value of hosting this is that information about the decisions taken at the shore and inland are conveyed directly to the community and the groups who operate there, e.g. coast care, residents, fishermen and in turn concerns and issues raised by the community can inform the direction of PCNPA ranger’s and warden’s work plans. In addition:

“We have good relations with the footpath access team. We’ve put in additional funds which helps them draw down more funds – creating circular and community links / looping into the National trail- the community benefits as well as tourism.”

NPA officers have also had involvement with local community groups through the ‘Communities as the Hub of Rural Life’ project funded through the Rural Development Plan, which started in 2008. This splits Pembrokeshire into 12 geographical hub areas and thematic hub areas. PLANED is the local action group (LAG) for Pembrokeshire (one LAG for each of the rural counties in Wales). Work has been undertaken in nearly all the 12 areas with at least one hub meeting in each but, in addition, there are small working groups outside of these focussed on

developing specific projects. NPA officers are involved in discussions when the ideas of certain groups are relevant to NPA activities.

“The hub area plans are the starting point for a wide range of projects. Rangers come to these meetings and hear about local concerns for example access to beaches and renewable energy plans and are sometimes able to offer support in the development of these projects.”

One of the issues with the ‘Hubs’ however, is that although on an individual community basis, residents are either in a Park area or a Local Authority area, the Hub areas don’t represent just one or the other. E.g. the Paths group in North Pembrokeshire has support from Ranger teams in North Pembrokeshire, but the NPA doesn’t have the capacity to do this in areas outside the National Park.

In order to resolve this issue, it would be important for community engagement work undertaken by the NPA to involve Pembrokeshire County Council and ways of working between these two Authorities needs to be improved, according to many of the providers interviewed. Although the hubs could, in theory, be used as models for more sustainable community engagement work, (such as with the Loch Lomond model cited elsewhere in this report), we would argue that more up-front work needs to be done first.

Some negative points were raised by interviewees in relation PCNPA’s ‘failure’ to communicate effectively around planning decisions.

“I don’t receive notification of all the decisions and why they are made. Whether the general public get enough information to understand decisions I don’t know”.

“Sometimes they get it terribly wrong. They should stick to their own rules more vigorously”.

A small number of interviewees questioned PCNPA’s commitment to the community engagement process. This will be examined more fully in the next section.

10. OUTSTANDING ISSUES IN RELATION TO COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Some providers working in Pembrokeshire suggested that they were not entirely convinced of the NPA’s ‘real’ commitment to the community engagement process. They suggested for example, that this was shown through a failure to send staff at ‘decision making level’ to meetings with voluntary and community sector organisations. It was suggested that it was often difficult for some of the planning officers as they were simply relaying information around decisions made at committee level. This point was balanced out by other interviewees who suggested that it is not a lack of commitment to community engagement but more a simple breakdown in communication between the NPA and communities and vice versa.

“As far as I know, the NPA (also) have a community consultation role, but I don’t know what that is. I don’t know how they carry out consultations - it may be (with the) local geographical community”

“There is very little understanding about what the NPA is actually doing in terms of community engagement.”

“I didn’t know they had a community engagement strategy.”

What does PCNPA wish to achieve through engagement?

Operational staff, interviewed in relation to this report, identified 17 points when asked about the ‘purpose’ of community engagement and suggested that none of these were more or less important. Management staff also identified 12 points but prioritised ‘two-way’ communication, and ‘maintaining support’ as distinct priorities.

During interviews the management staff identified that the following should be the top priorities for their community engagement work:

- Building support and ‘buy in’
- Two-way communication
- Building relationships
- Getting feedback

Operational staff listed the following:

- It changes behaviour
- It educates/allows information giving
- It should be people–led
- It can be beneficial to both but not always
- Communication should be the minimum purpose, but ideally it should build relationships
- It should be about information coming back (feedback)
- It should require both parties to abdicate some control
- It can only happen to a point, people have to be interested in engaging
- Both parties involved should listen to each other
- Both parties should be open to adapting ideas
- It should build trust and understanding
- It should build respect
- It should allow sharing
- It should develop appreciation and love for the countryside
- Information gathered should be acted upon
- It must be long term

Other providers working in Pembrokeshire also came up with additional points about the purposes of engagement, and these are detailed in the box below.

Thoughts on community engagement from partners:

“Community engagement is about recognising the social capital that exists in communities. There are lots of resources out there [which] represent a big resource for public sector agencies. There needs to be the goodwill to engage and a willingness on both sides to learn.”

“We do hold some Forum events about things that are also important for our members but the balance needs to change and there needs to be a more two-way dialogue (so that...) people are given the opportunity to put forward their issues.”

Community Development Cymru (CDC) feel that the key learning point from these responses is that some agreement as to what constitutes the processes and principles of community engagement would be needed before any joint working and pooling of resources could be achieved. Community engagement is ultimately about building relationships and supporting open and honest two-way dialogue. This is something that is discussed further in the Conclusions and Recommendations section of this report.

Who should be engaged with?

Currently, and according to the PCNPA staff interviewed, there are two main groups that the PCNPA focus on with regards to engagement activities – ‘*the ones who want something, and the ones who don’t*’. When the question was asked of PCNPA staff ‘what are the purposes and benefits of engagement’, very few staff came up with a point around who should be engaged. The draft PCNPA Community Engagement Strategy stresses the provision of opportunities for engagement and stated that a key purpose is to ensure that:

“All sections of the community feel they have opportunities – collectively and individually - to be involved in decision-making and influence the services that we, as an organisation, offer”

However we would suggest that in order for PCNPA to provide such opportunities, there needs to be a tranche of work that goes beyond merely setting up structures and processes that people can ‘buy into’ as some local residents may not have the requisite awareness, trust, confidence or resources to engage in this manner.

One of the approaches suggested as part of a PCNPA staff survey in 2008 was to target efforts where gains will be the greatest (i.e. where communities are receptive to the goals of PCNPA and have the existing capacity to engage). The National Park Management Plan suggests that working with children and young people, for example, may provide the biggest benefits in terms of environmental protection and social responsibility (i.e. by investing in the future residents of Pembrokeshire). This may be a fair point and is something that is raised in the next section around ‘returns on investment’.

However, there is a danger with the potential approaches highlighted above that sections of local communities who are not of school age or simply don't have the capacity to engage with NPA processes may 'lose out'. Careful attention will therefore need to be paid to ensuring that any system(s) of community engagement that are adopted by PCNPA are as fair, open and equitable as possible.

PCNPA staff acknowledged that because there is not, at present, a formalised framework for community engagement across the Park Authority's work this creates the potential for certain individuals and/or community groups to be 'missed' or not have a 'strong voice' within the wider range of community views being 'captured' by PCNPA.

Some of the providers interviewed during the process of compiling this report identified certain groups that use the Park and/or access NPA services less frequently than others (one example cited was drug users). However, ascertaining if such groups or individuals are 'excluded' either directly or indirectly through their under-representation is virtually impossible to ascertain.

NPA documents highlight that the organisation has a strong commitment to being 'inclusive' in its approach. Clear attempts to remove 'barriers' (real or perceived) are evidenced across a wide range of the Park Authority's work. Consequently, in ensuring that PCNPA's longer-term approach to community engagement is as inclusive as possible, maybe the key question is:

Should the focus of a community engagement strategy be on not being exclusive as opposed to being inclusive?

To this extent, a small number of interviewees suggested that the community strategy process (managed through the Community Planning & Leadership Partnership in Pembrokeshire) might provide an opportunity to identify a list of key target groups (identified through research) that all agencies in the county should target as a priority in undertaking their work.

What are the returns on investment?

One of the ways of prioritising the NPA's future work will be to develop a 'measure' of what the National Park (not necessarily PCNPA) 'gets back' from the resources that the Park Authority 'puts in' to community engagement.

Currently, and in terms of inputs into engagement, there is no specific budget line for community engagement and no dedicated officer. However, this is not viewed by NPA staff as being an indication of a lack of commitment to community engagement. On the contrary, the organisation's approach is, on the whole, integrated across a wide range of service areas. It appears that, if anything, the greater problem is in capturing specific community engagement data through the existing performance management systems adopted by PCNPA (i.e. community engagement happens all the time as a natural part of the regular duties undertaken by PCNPA staff but the

organisation's ability to fully record and measure the effectiveness of this engagement work could, in our view, be improved).

General evaluations are, however, undertaken by PCNPA on a frequent basis, often as part of the requirements of individual projects or funding bodies - for example, the NPA measures user satisfaction around Park activities and commissions independent assessments of NPA-operated sites and services, - but these processes rarely capture subjective data on community engagement. More indirect measures of effectiveness include measures of take-up of publications, visits and repeat visits to sites as well as website traffic, etc. However, the impact of community engagement is perhaps more difficult to assess.

How does PCNPA maximize the impact of any existing engagement activities?

PCNPA staff at management level also suggested that having an officer and/or a Member with a lead role for community engagement (not necessarily a named 'Community Engagement Officer') might help in driving work forward and offer specific expertise and advice.

Interestingly, operational staff were not as sure on this point as they saw the value of the day to day relationships that they established. It was felt that a generic role on engagement may not be able to achieve this level of personal interaction. However, the group did recognise the benefits of having officers who could act as mediators / facilitators on community projects.

How deep should engagement be?

Freshwater East was often mentioned by interviewees as an area where, through a considerable investment of PCNPA staff time, community engagement is presently very good. In particular, respondents identified the development of meaningful dialogue and genuine respect as being at the core of this work. However, there are strategic decisions to be made around this approach as there are cost implications in terms of staff time and, as a result, it would appear difficult for PCNPA to replicate this approach across a wider geographical area. Short term projects involving public engagement can lead to long-term gains, but resources are always a barrier; and the level of resources put into this type of in depth engagement project would be unsustainable in the long term.

How to work with partners?

It was noted by other providers in Pembrokeshire that different organisations were holding events with the public to discuss similar issues (e.g. shore line management/sea level rise] – and that there was a lot of duplication going on. This is directly related to the resource issue above and some way of dovetailing what each organisation is doing, towards the best outcomes, needs to be determined. It has also been highlighted as a key issue to address in this evaluation. To this extent, it may be advisable for PCNPA to adopt an approach whereby staff work through

existing partner organisations who were already working with local residents rather than creating an independent approach which may lead to further duplication.

A survey of staff, undertaken by PCNPA in 2008 in relation to community engagement activities, flagged up Community Councils as a key partner who PCNPA could work more closely with as they represent the most localised level of political representation.

“We should be continuing to try and brief community councils and try to develop a relationship and rapport with them so that they can comment – on planning applications for example – from a position of understanding of the system and the nature of the application etc.”

However, bearing in mind previous points made, Community Councils do not always manage to reach the most socially excluded residents that they represent and the NPA may, therefore, need to work with other providers in the area to analyse suitable approaches to broadening the reach of Community Councils.

Using partners already working with communities would potentially answer another question raised in the previously mentioned 2008 survey of PCNPA staff around how to deal with “factional” communities as well as how to gain the interest of those not already involved in organised groups at a community level. However, as has been noted, if engaging new people is important strategically, then this may not be the only approach that is needed.

A further point, relevant to this section of the report, is that PCNPA needs to consider how it communicates internally, across Departments, as well as with external partner organisations and communities in order to ensure the consistency of NP ‘messages’.

How to make engagement relevant and attractive to the public?

One of the issues identified by NPA staff was ‘disinterest’ in the park amongst certain communities - *“people do not always see the park as being vital to their lives and don't need (to be involved) in park activities”*. It was suggested, by operational staff, that this should be recognised in engagement activities which, as a consequence, may mean that PCNPA may need to revise its expectations of what can be achieved by engaging with certain communities as some people are simply not interested in the benefits afforded by the National Park and may never be.

In addition, people don't necessarily see the Park Authority as having a separate identity to the National Park itself (i.e. the landscape designation). Indeed, as a result of this, many people may be blissfully unaware that a separate organisation even exists to implement the statutory purposes of National Park designations and, as a result, some residents may have no expectations of PCNPA at all. This suggests that there is a need promote a wider understanding of what benefits the National Park

landscape designation provides to the area and the services that the Park Authority provides that, in turn, help maximize those benefits for local residents.

With regards to the approach to engagement taken so far, NPA staff were very clear that they'll *'work with whoever wants to works with us'*, and every effort is made to respond to requests from communities to achieve their goals. Predominantly however, PCNPA's approach to community engagement is generally reactive and normally the result of the need to implement a specific project. Staff and providers agreed that more success could be achieved through the development of a 'common agenda' between the NPA and communities by engaging with residents, right at the beginning of any process.

Through these processes, relationship-building with individuals and groups occurs naturally and can be extremely fruitful. Awareness raising by PCNPA has, in several instances, activated community groups or individuals into more active involvement in the Authority's work but this perhaps needs to be done more systematically. In addition, PCNPA staff can become reliant on such relationships for engagement and, in such circumstances, this may create the potential for other 'community voices' to be missed.

However, staff also noted that one of the shortfalls of increased engagement is that expectations are raised – *"people think they can change a situation as a result and this isn't always possible, even with the greatest will in the world, as many aspects of delivery are beyond the control of the Park Authority"*. Consequently, engagement activities should include an element of expectation management through education. The NPA have to be able to offer something in return for engagement but also have to be clear on what the limits of these things are.

The above views were also reflected by comments made by other service providers working in Pembrokeshire. For example, one of the perceived problems with public agencies, such as the NPA, is that voluntary groups are consulted on formal documents e.g. the LDP, but this can sometimes be:

"A monologue, not dialogue. But it should be dialogue if they want to deliver policy effectively; they need to [work] with those who will be affected by a policy in the development stage- this would help them implement successfully."

"When we are consulted about future plans for example, they have earmarked a plot of land for development, they will sometimes change their minds. But in reality they are the decision makers."

It is also fair to say that, given the comments made by interviewees, many individuals and community groups don't always see the merit in getting involved in partnerships as they can't see that their input is going to change anything in the immediate term.

“There was reluctance from organisations to get involved. They just can’t see the point. I think the process is so complex – we often spend our time talking and can’t see the impact of the discussions on anything. Also as an umbrella body we are seen as an independent organisation so they are often happy for us to go.”

“In theory all partners sit round the table and see a direct result from their contributions. (In practice) the experiences however are not peculiar to 3rd sector organisations. All people are beginning to question time spent in partnerships in terms of what added value do they bring? All we seem to do is tell each others what we are doing and there are sometimes occasional links. But most activities will carry on regardless.”

It was noted by many interviewees that the NPA’s ‘hands are often tied’, as per the comment above, but, because this is the case, a parallel process may be required in order to have ‘real’, informal but constructive discussion.

How to overcome negative perceptions of NPA?

The need for the NPA to overcome negative perceptions regarding its work (particularly in relation to planning) was flagged up as a key issue for staff both in the PCNPA staff survey in 2008 and during the course of our interviews in 2010. In addition, this particular point was also raised by external providers in Pembrokeshire during the research undertaken in compiling this report. The fact that the NPA is the Planning Authority for the National Park area can bring the organisation into conflict with certain residents and/or communities.

“Many of their planning decisions have to be more stringent as they are working within the National Park legislation and policy. Inevitably this makes them unpopular as people don’t always like their planning decisions therefore it must sometimes be difficult for their people on the ground to get better engagement because they are all tarred with the same brush.”

“Although the NPA really have an open door regarding this, for historical reasons local residents don’t see this. They are perceived to have a closed attitude to development and planning. We have talked about how we can help with this, helping to open doors for them.”

In addition, some of the Park Authority’s processes are restricted by central government guidance and/or legislation.

“They made every effort to engage with the local community in relation to the Local Development Plan. But because of the complex issues involved although they tried to get understanding, their hands were tied because the process was set by government.”

11. FUTURE OPTIONS FOR PCNPA

In relation to these issues, possible future options for improving the community engagement approach of the NPA were also suggested, this time from the perspective of other providers.

a. One body for real practical debate

It was suggested that one way for the NPA to work better with other providers in Pembrokeshire was to develop a structure that enables real debate between different organisations in the public, private a voluntary sectors working in the area.

“There is no structure that more formally combines public, private and voluntary sector organisations in one body for that area”.

Interviewees suggested that this would support improved between public agencies such as the NPA and voluntary organisations who are working with and representing the interests of different community based groups.

“Formal strategy documents don’t help dialogue and consultations get in the way. We need a parallel process for discussion where people are prepared to discuss openly and accept that there may be disagreement but will at least, as a result, understand why.”

Cultural barriers were also mentioned as restricting genuine partnership working in Pembrokeshire. However, if these cultural differences could be overcome, many felt that the value of more open debate could be enormous;

“It would be a hard slog to get real debate going. Those working at the NPA are busy, but a public agency like NPA must go out more than they do. It is not making the best of the relationship that does exist between the public authority and voluntary organisations. We are still all fragmented more than we should be; are we making the most of our potential? This is not a criticism as everyone is overworked but there has to be a way that more could be achieved with less time and money.”

“The dialogue may be uncomfortable but this is just how it is. All sides need to respect each others opinions even if they disagree.”

One interviewee provided examples from other Local Authorities regarding how they have taken forward public engagement successfully at a more informal level. For example in Barnsley, the Metropolitan Borough Council don’t just consult they have a regular environmental forum every month where people can come and talk about environmental issues with the Council. Another interviewee suggested that the ‘Community Planning & Leadership Partnership (CPLP)’ for Pembrokeshire may be an ideal body to lead on this.

b. A ‘cross sectoral’ body (or vehicle) to disseminate information (e.g. a web site)

Interviewees suggested that duplication, in terms of getting people involved, was considered a waste of resources and also led to 'engagement fatigue'. It was suggested that instead there is a need to coordinate different efforts to engage with communities, especially when organisations were asking communities about similar issues. The predominant view seemed to be that mapping what was already happening would prove to be a useful first step and then linking all those engaging in similar issues through a website of some sort.

"It's a very practical thing- we need a single organisation coordinating all events in Pembrokeshire to do with the environment. It could be a voluntary sector body with public sector organisations as partners [as long as there is mutual respect]."

"A common web site listing all events across the County would help avoid duplication and competition for participants."

The Active Citizenship agenda, presents an opportunity for more joint working but less at a strategic level and more at a level of mapping different structures through which different organisations, including PAVS and the NPA work with different people. Indeed the NPA is already involved in the 'Citizen's Panel' for Pembrokeshire, managed by Pembrokeshire County Council (PCC). This agenda also legitimises a community development type approach.

"All the people we are working with, are citizens. We talk of them as volunteers, the LHB talk of them as patients and so on. More joint working would be good."

"Perhaps we need some sort of forum to look at what we are doing, mapping out the different structures through which we communicate with citizens."

"Are we making the best use of technology?"

c. Dedicated body/staff member

In relation to demonstrating real commitment to community engagement, one interviewee cited examples from Ealing where an independent body was set up to gather information on the priorities of local residents and these were then discussed at full Council meetings as summarised in the box below. Staff in the NPA have also stated that a dedicated officer responsible for public engagement could be used as a change agent and a source of expertise.

In Ealing, public sector officers working on Local Agenda 21 policy held a focus group discussion with residents every week for a few months to identify the local issues they wanted addressed, (e.g. waste, traffic, etc.) and a single officer reported back to the local authority. The issues were presented in a Committee Paper and discussed at full council. The response to the issues, in the form of an action plan, was sent back to the local residents via a report, endorsed by the Leader of the Council in terms of what could be done, by whom and when with additional feedback on why certain suggestions couldn't be implemented.

This type of process helps demonstrate that there was a genuine political commitment from the Local Authority at the highest level and that real community engagement was high on the agenda. A similar process could be developed by the NPA sending staff at decision making level to local events and meetings organised by different providers in Pembrokeshire. However, it is acknowledged that, due to the plethora of community organisations operating in Pembrokeshire, such an approach might be difficult to service in the long-term.

“A formal commitment from NPA to send Strategic level staff to (our) events as required.”

“We need to engage with decision makers (people who decide on policy). Currently we only get those who are at officer level, but we really need to see decision makers. There seems to be a reluctance of more senior officers to meet and engage with the public.”

“That person would need to be someone who could answer questions properly, and explain the justification for the policy. Either that or the officer who came would feel comfortable about being open and honest in their responses and be truthful about what they can’t answer- rather than just quote from policy. It would be an uncomfortable process, initially, but it has to be done if engagement is to be meaningful.”

From the interviewees perspective (quoted above), this type of approach might go some way to reducing the gap between policy and action:

“We shouldn’t think in strategy and implementation terms we want to see consistency in thinking across policy and action. That means closing the gap between policy making and action, perhaps by staff doing both! We need to bring things down to the ‘nitty gritty’ actions. How do we apply the principles and policies in practice? Why does this policy exist, and what does it hope to achieve?”

Another interviewee suggested that in order for engagement to become a real priority for the NPA, the process needs to be shown to have a ‘pay back’ for the NPA, however, s/he also suggested that this would be the case even if it only means that the policies that they want to deliver would be delivered more effectively just through increased understanding at a community level.

“If they don’t have people’s support, it won’t work. It is really a win win situation. There are legitimacy issues as well.”

“There is a consensus around what the park is for but a bigger issue is where the park is going. It is difficult for the NPA to take on this new agenda but working with community and voluntary groups will speed it up. The benefits of community engagement are mammoth if it is approached in the right way and there are added benefits to working practice (if you know what you are proposing has been endorsed and has the support of residents).”

There was also a suggestion that a more formal role for the 'community' could assist in terms of achieving objectives:

"It could involve communities as potential monitoring agencies for the National Parks. In this way we could be valuable [to] them."

Another interviewee suggested that perhaps PCNPA could undertake work much more on a case by case basis, in order to gain local interest and to ensure that any projects being discussed can achieve gains for both local residents and the NPA.

"They have to go to the local residents with specific issues and projects. Many people wouldn't get excited over the LDP but specific projects with definite impacts that they can see might get people interested in talking the NPA more."

As part of this process:

"The NPA could up the ante in terms of looking at the benefits of the natural environment in economic terms. For example people come here as it's a beautiful place, so we need to keep it this way. As another example, explain to people the economic benefits of the National Trail. We could do more at local level about this. Raising awareness more is a missed trick."

d. Public relations newsletter/code of practice

This has to some extent been covered under other points above, but some questioned more generally;

"To what extent do they engage in public relations? – they are not promoting any sustainable development policies they might have, for example. Where is the monthly newsletter³ for example which gets to residents and voluntary groups?"

At a more community based level, communication with local residents who contact the NPA could also be improved:

"In an ideal world we would have a code of practice where the officer should respond within a certain time period to telephone enquiries , e:mails, and letters."

In a similar vein, and in order to be clearer about what are perceived as inconsistent planning decisions;

"The planner should (feel comfortable) about coming to (a) community and saying what has been approved and why. This is very simple (request) and the officers would have to be 'brave' but not feel too defensive. Engagement is about working towards a constructive and open relationship with the community."

³ It should be stressed again here that a newsletter does exist but perhaps the NPA needs to rethink about how to ensure that other organisations can access it, or the information in it in a way that suits them

“They need a PR exercise in terms of what they are trying to promote. People expect the Park to be beautiful. It is sometimes about them being clear and ‘bold’ about why they are making planning decisions. i.e. to maintain the beauty of the Park, and seeming to act fairly (e.g. Bluestone raised many negative associations).”

One interviewee suggested that this might require NPA staff being prepared to put themselves in a more public arena to talk to ‘unfriendly’ residents and that whoever was going to explain decisions to local residents should be able to explain thoroughly and at a high level the reasons why particular decisions were made:

“It could possibly be addressed simply by their staff putting themselves up for a bit of flack. Do they feel prepared to do this? It might be difficult if they are not sending senior staff and send instead people at officer level.”

However, they also suggested that additional use could be made of existing, more community based PCNPA staff such as Rangers and Wardens who, in many cases, have built relationships with local people over a long period of time;

“They could also make more use of those at ranger level as they have a good relationship with local residents; in Newport at a recent community event, for example, a ranger was able to give a reasoned view to event participants in an informal way, putting the facts forward and raising awareness of why they are what they are, and are saying what they are saying.”

“We have historically had people who could hold a level of debate and those coming ought to be prepared to do this. The approach we take is bottom up but the people involved understand issues above a basic level and they are also often frustrated that they are not getting to the key decision makers.”

“They have to be open to open discussion and answerable to their decisions.”

Finally and in relation to the community engagement point, there needs to be improved communication between departments in the NPA, such as meetings across departments would be enormously beneficial to avoid repetition and sharing best practice.

e. Joint identification in terms of win- win opportunities for local economic development

One suggestion put forward relates to the development of the local economy and joint work that could be undertaken.

“Maybe both sides could be proactive to identify win-win opportunities in terms of local economic development- for example things that can help improve the local economy and help people enjoy the national park.”

For example, multi-user routes accessing the National Park can be developed into special interest trails (horse-riding, heritage, cultural, etc) and marketed as rural

tourism packages. Community Transport can be used to make it easier for walkers – this is already done using the Puffin Shuttle, etc. The free walks offered by Park Rangers could be used as “community rewards” for people who contribute time in their communities (as part of Good Neighbour Schemes, etc):

“It’s important for us to understand a little bit more about NPA direction / priorities so this can help the communities we work with to understand.”

Examples provided by NPA staff in 2008 regarding what they could do to improve their community engagement process in the future.

- Have secretariat role to take on community engagement process, give out direct contacts etc. A ‘planning’ receptionist.
- Use media beyond local newspapers such as ITV news.
- Plan to contribute more to community newsletters.
- People outside the Park are as much stakeholders as those who live in it – around recreation -infrastructure provision- do more here.
- Make more use of the web.
- Look at ways of recruiting more volunteer wardens and find ways of better supporting existing ones.
- Get people who enjoy the Park to realize they can be involved in the conservation of it.
- Establish an organised informal process.
- Ensure partners are told early about event they could become involved with.
- Put on a map all the failed applications to see how crowded the Park would be and take to -school, capture up and coming generation- getting to children may be way of getting to In between groups (although slightly different approach to getting to these groups tried in Tenby).
- Showcase to communities what they have done.
- Get locals involved in interpreting their local history to tourists.
- Improve friendliness of organisational image; take out word ‘Authority’.
- Mutual understanding of priorities to get ‘circles of interest ‘closer.
- Support organised groups to work better. This may help reach those outside of them.

. For example the Marine Code/Outdoor Charter group members – these people are in business but are not necessarily in contact with their community council so every different angle we can bring to bear adds more people to the ‘engagement surface’.

-Divide communities into 30 units and hold internal meetings. Senior member of staff responsible for each unit. (This approach was suggested by other providers in terms of having allocated senior staff member who can answer questions).

-Set up softer voluntary warden type job and group which does softer sides of wardens’ job and does not require quite such formal process for recruitment.

-More links between NPA departments e.g. conservation and recreation.

CONCLUSIONS

This review has shown that 'the NPA' has implemented much good work around community engagement and that this work is happening at many different levels. From our perspective, community engagement is not, nor should be seen as a single dimensional activity, where deeper engagement is seen as 'better' engagement. Different levels of engagement are appropriate in different situations. The work that the NPA is doing around engagement reflects this. The evaluation has shown that there are a variety of different groups with whom the NPA engages and that staff engage with these groups in different ways and at different levels, appropriate to the circumstances. Any future strategic approach should reflect any good practice undertaken already but must also be coherent enough to guide staff at an operational level in deciding what level of engagement is appropriate.

This evaluation has provided a 'cross section' of the work currently being undertaken. Strategically, the NPA are fully committed to the LSB / Community Planning process in Pembrokeshire, and adhere to good practice principles in their key strategic documents. In addition, the work that is undertaken by PCNPA staff on a day to day basis demonstrates a genuine commitment to address the needs and aspirations of local communities.

Case studies demonstrate deeper and effective engagement work has been undertaken, albeit on a case by case basis, and those involved have indicated that this is being done appropriately. Some of this work is in the early days of development and it is therefore difficult to judge its overall effectiveness within the context of this report but initial indications suggest that it is going in the right direction.

Similarly, visitors to the area are engaged at the level of providing information and it appears that the mechanisms through which this is done are clear and delivering on the Park Authority's objectives around improving people's understanding and enjoyment of the National Park.

The experience of other organisations working with the NPA is also very positive. Much of the work that PCNPA have undertaken in recent times, and particularly the work around community hubs, could, potentially, provide forums for more sustainable community engagement work in the future provide (mirroring the Community Trusts model established in Loch Lomond mentioned earlier in this report).

Overall, it is important to acknowledge that PCNPA's approach to community engagement is, on the whole, very good and, as a result, any potential changes to their approach will require just minor 'tweaks' as opposed to a fundamental change in direction. Consequently, it is important that PCNPA incorporates any current work into any future community engagement strategy/approach, building on the foundations that already exist.

However, it is Community Development Cymru's view that, there are three main issues which need further consideration before any work to expand PCNPA's community engagement work is implemented:

1) Firstly, not everyone within the NPA or more widely across Pembrokeshire has the same understanding of what community engagement is or what its purpose should be. Despite a good understanding of the principles of engagement, as evidenced in local strategic documents, there seem to be a number of ‘understandings’ of what constitutes community engagement in practice. These have been presented by some as ‘cultural’ differences and are perceived as a key barrier to more effective partnership working in the county. For instance, one agency suggested that it is unwise to consult people where the agency that is doing the consulting has no room for manoeuvre, whereas others had a different view. Other points made include the fact that real in-depth engagement, from the word go, is resource intensive. Many agencies could see that it was a useful thing to do but many expressed that their organisation simply didn’t have the resources to do it fully. This makes any proposals around joint working very difficult and is something that needs to be addressed at the outset. We would like to suggest as part of these recommendations that there has to be some way of making what happens more streamlined and a good starting point is for a range of organisations, including PCNPA to reach a joint understanding of what ‘community engagement’ is all about.

2) Secondly, the NPA’s approach to community engagement can sometimes be viewed as intermittent and there appears to be a need to improve communication between PCNPA and other providers in the area around key strategic priorities. The internal communication across PCNPA Departments concerning activities relating to community engagement could also be improved (e.g. knowing which Departments are currently ‘engaging’ with specific communities at any given point). Meetings across departments would be enormously beneficial in allowing formal communication of engagement activities, which, in turn, would avoid repetition and enable the sharing of best practice. In this respect, a formal launch of the NPA’s draft ‘Community Engagement Strategy’ might provide an opportunity to enable discussions to have a reference point for working together in future.

3) Thirdly, we see community development as central to enabling continuous dialogue to take place with a variety of groups, including some of those who are socially excluded; and this latter point is central to many NPA documents and the Pembrokeshire Community Plan. From a ‘bottom up’ perspective, we agree that some people will simply not want to be involved, however there will be others who, if work is done to build up their knowledge and skills, would benefit from involvement with Park projects and activities and indeed the National Park would also benefit from such individuals being ‘more engaged’. Some staff in the NPA and other outside bodies acknowledged that the community development aspects of the NPA’s work was often created as a by-product rather than a focus of what the organization delivers in partnership with local communities (as reflected in the Park’s statutory purposes). We would suggest that a consistent community development approach may get more people involved in activity around conservation and enhancement of the natural environment and, in its community learning aspects, help develop a greater understanding and enjoyment of aspects of the National Park, particularly for those who understand it least at the moment. Ultimately, this may require the NPA to place a greater emphasis on the socio-economic aspects of its work when communicating with local communities in order to involve local people in the Park Authority’s wider conservation interests.

We acknowledge that the NPA has limited resources in taking forward the recommendations of this report , however, if community development principles are adhered to in the engagement process, work which enables participation, building relationships and ultimately leadership at a local level could ensure a community engagement process that is more sustainable in the longer term. This calls for more effective partnership working across a range of agencies in Pembrokeshire, less duplication, better communication and indeed understanding of the intricacies of the diverse options available when undertaking 'community engagement'.

As part of this process we also feel that it may be beneficial, in terms of building relationships with local residents, and in terms of cost effectiveness, for NPA staff to have some training which enables them to more fully understand some of the 'barriers' faced by local residents in using Park facilities and also the perspective they have around the NPA at the moment. Training may also be needed to be able to facilitate a process whereby the concerns and aspirations of local residents can be balanced with the strategic goals of the NPA.

Finally, there are several more practical and ongoing measures that could be put in place to enhance existing practice around community engagement. Consequently, we are recommending that a 3 phase approach is adopted, as detailed overleaf.

RECOMMENDATIONS

DESIGNING THE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

Key statutory and voluntary agencies need to come to a joint understanding around community engagement. An externally facilitated process could enable this. There are a range of agencies, including Community Development Cymru (CDC) that can assist PCNPA and other local organisations in developing a framework through which community engagement can be better understood.

Initially, a mapping and analysis exercise with key statutory and voluntary agencies would help enable an overview of the groups presently operating in Pembrokeshire who could gain the most from involvement and who would like to be involved. We would suggest that, with agreement from key players this could be done through the Community Planning and Leadership Partnership (CPLP) group managed by Pembrokeshire County Council.

This process could be facilitated by asking key questions of the groups identified (utilising the Barr and Hashagen, ABCD Handbook⁴).

- Personal empowerment- do the individuals you wish to engage have the skills and confidence to engage?
- Positive action- do those initiating the process (i.e. the NPA and other voluntary and community organisations) recognise the power relations which may prevent people from getting engaged?
- Community organisation- are people in the community organised enough to engage?

This facilitated process could take a 'Stakeholder Analysis' type approach. This would involve listing key groups who could affect or be affected by the work done in the National Park. It then asks the group undertaking the analysis to list what their interests might be in what the National Park is aiming to do (hidden or overt). Some of these may be positive and some negative. It then asks the group undertaking the analysis to prioritise work with these stakeholders depending on what their interest might be.

A further tool, to jointly determine priorities could be a matrix, that helps analyse who the Park would most like to reach in terms of its strategic priorities and who is important to engage with in terms of the influence that this group might have on positive or negative achievement of Park objectives.

⁴ ABCD Handbook: *A framework for evaluating community development* by Alan Barr & Stuart Hashagen. 2000 by Community Development Foundation, London

We feel that this might be a useful and jointly undertaken exercise, to come to a joint understanding of where a community engagement approach might focus.

ACTION: Externally facilitated JOINT UNDERSTANDING AND MAPPING EXERCISE; could be done through CPLP see below (Stage 1)

In line with suggestions made by other providers in Pembrokeshire and key NPA staff, we concur that there needs to be commitment to the Community Engagement process at all levels, including gaining full Executive approval. There may also be merit in having a specific NPA Member who acts as a 'Community Champion' to oversee this work. Similarly, at an officer level, PCNPA may wish to develop a 'Community Engagement Officer' role or allocate a formal 'lead role' to an existing officer/post. Alternatively, local organisations may wish to pool resources to employ a new role of this nature, possibly through the CPLP partnership or a similar 'county wide' body.

ACTION: Discussions with members of CPLP around funding of dedicated community engagement officer (Stage 1)

IMPROVING JOINT WORKING AROUND ENGAGEMENT

One body for debate

This will have been initiated, in part, by action point 1 above. In line with the suggestions of several interviewees, we suggest that a way of moving forward with more effective community engagement across the County would be to establish a working body to enable informal discussions across the public, private & voluntary sector to improve community engagement (in line with the 'Making the Connections' agenda). One suggestion put forward has been the Pembrokeshire LSB / CPLP, which potentially offers opportunities for joint working.

However, there were questions raised from some quarters regarding the merit of such an approach as it was suggested that maybe the 'wrong people' were on the requisite groups. Resolving this issue would depend on honest discussion amongst those involved. Secondly, there would need to be agreement on using a framework, like the one suggested above, to overcome perceived cultural difference between the organisations represented. Again this could be an externally facilitated exercise that aims to encourage all parties to agree the key principles behind engagement.

ACTION : Facilitated meeting by the CPLP (or another body specifically set up for this purpose) to agree on 'sticking points' around community engagement (as above)

Website

Once the mapping exercise is complete, a website could be established or an existing website adapted as a 'one stop shop' for information on what is happening around community engagement in Pembrokeshire.

ACTION: As part of a facilitated meeting, agree how to establish clear lines of communication with local communities and the associated resources that might be available to support this (Stage 1)

IMPROVING EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS/PUBLIC RELATIONS

PCNPA need to target groups with whom they could work in the long term. The NPA's actions in this respect need to target those groups where they have had particular problems in the past. As part of this process they need to identify win win situations for themselves and the residents. The Social Inclusion Learning Programme (see below) should help with this process.

ACTION

- PCNPA to agree & then target key communities that we feel have not 'bought in' to the Authority's work or have been particularly critical in the past*
- Review internal/external communication channels to ensure that they are 'fit for purpose' in creating genuine dialogue with local communities.*
- Specific training that helps the Authority ensure that residents aren't excluded from the agreed communication channels mentioned above (this may require additional training).*

TRAINING

The NPA may wish to look at various training options which can support their engagement process. One suggestion is training that enables local residents to gain an understanding of issues faced by those providing services, as well as enabling those providing services to gain an understanding of the perspectives of local residents, on the services they offer. Increasing capacity in this way may enable more targeted and effective practice for those working around engagement in the NPA, particularly in terms of accessing the more socially excluded people living in and outside the National Park. Many providers, including CDC run such courses and could provide a tailored programme as required by the NPA. Social Inclusion Learning Programme, which as a whole is intended to give.

ACTION: Adopt a tailored training programme looking at issues around social exclusion (Stage 2)

EVALUATING THE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

The Scottish Community Development Centre (SCDC) Benchmarks or '10 standards for community engagement' as it is sometimes referred to, may provide PCNPA with a good template for evaluating community engagement approach (see the box below). These standards highlight community development principles, such as the importance of equality and recognising the diversity of people and communities; a clear sense of purpose; effective methods for achieving change; building on the skills and knowledge of all those involved; commitment to learning for continuous improvement. They are also measurable through indicators provided by the SCDC.

SCDC benchmarks

Involvement – we will identify and involve the people and organisations who have an interest in the focus of engagement

Support – we will identify and overcome any barriers to involvement

Planning – we will gather evidence of the needs and available resources and use this evidence to agree the purpose, scope and timescale of the engagement and the actions to be taken

Methods – we will agree and use methods of engagement that are fit for purpose

Working together – we will agree and use clear procedures that enable the participants to work with one another effectively and efficiently

Sharing information – we will ensure that necessary information is communicated between participants

Working with others – we will work effectively with others with an interest in the engagement

Improvement – we will develop actively the skills, knowledge and confidence of all participants

Feedback – we will feed back results of the engagement to the wider community and agencies affected

Monitoring and evaluation – we will monitor and evaluate whether the engagement achieves its purposes and meets the national standards for community engagement

Communities Scotland www.communitiesscotland.gov.uk/

The above indicators form a useful starting point for establishing a clear set of principles that can help guide PCNPA's work in this area. However, other frameworks are available and, Community Development Cymru, can assist PCNPA in identifying a model that best suits their needs.

ACTION: Adopt & implement a development, monitoring and evaluation framework for community engagement process (Stage 3).

Tips around engaging people (Community Development Federation - CDF)

- Focus on how an issue relates to people's every day life experiences
- Make sure all literature is accessible- no jargon and can be accessed by anyone regardless of for example disabilities. Use traditional routes as well as internet
- Never allow anything to turn into an 'us versus them' type situation. Remember the difference between consultation and engagement
- Its easier to engage people if there is something in it for them. Offer them new skills as part of the engagement process. It may also give them more confidence in their ability to change things
- Make sure a venue is accessible for all and not too intimidating for some
- Make sure there are a variety of routes to get involved. For example, other routes short of actually attending a meeting maybe by signing a petition for example
- Respect people's time, holds things at appropriate times for the people you want involved and keep people informed if they can't attend

<http://www.commonpurpose.org.uk/home/public/civilsociety/skills/community/participation/advice-on-engaging-people.aspx>

Appendix 1

Key sections of the combined Delivery Agreement

Executive summary:

The summary provides a baseline aim for community engagement in plan preparation as follows: “The aim of engaging stakeholders in the preparation of Plans is to gain consensus on the best way forward for the future of the National Park.” (p.4)

Introduction: This outlines the purpose of the Delivery Agreement, noting that the document itself contains two main elements: a timetable for the key stages of plan preparation, and a Community Involvement Scheme which defines how and when communities and stakeholders will be engaged at different stages of the preparation processes for both plans. The introduction also outlines what the NPA wants to achieve through the plans by setting out eleven ‘destination statements’ which the Authority will aim to achieve over a five year period. Four of these have specific relevance to community engagement:

- Stakeholders gaining a better understanding of the planning service, the National Park’s special qualities and the benefits its status as a protected landscape area brings.
- Working in a fair and transparent way.
- Improving the delivery of National Park purposes through stakeholder engagement.
- Ensuring communities have a genuine opportunity to engage with policy development.

Timetable: This sets out the key milestones and target dates for the preparation of, and consultation on the Management Plan and LDP. Notably, the Agreement states that the timetable will allow the NPA to achieve a sufficiently high level of public and partner engagement, and how duplication and confusion in consulting separately on each plan will be avoided.

Community Involvement Scheme (CIS): In relation to this evaluation assessment, this is the most important aspect of the Delivery Agreement. The CIS establishes what the NPA intends to do to involve stakeholders and members of the public in the preparation of the plans. It also sets out the Authority’s expectations of members of the public and statutory consultees wishing to participate in plan preparation.

The CIS provides six core principles of engagement that communities and stakeholders can expect from the Authority during preparation of the plans (p.19):

- “We will seek to make the best use of existing information and networks to avoid duplication and consultation fatigue.”

- “We are committed to ensuring that we communicate and consult with all sections of the community using a range of appropriate approaches.”
- “We are committed to ensuring that feedback is reported, and is an integral part of our decision making processes.”
- “The inputs and outputs of all our engagement measures will be public information.”

“We will aim to be realistic about how far we can build consensus recognising that this is more likely when developing options rather than when writing the detailed policies of the Plans; when aiming to agree on what the main issues are rather than how to respond; and when agreeing what needs to be developed rather than where it is developed.”

- “We will aim to outline clearly where there are opportunities for local discretion and where there is a need to respect national policy and statutory designations.”

In the section ‘Who can get involved and how ?’, the CIS categorises the different types of people and groups that will be invited to participate and describes how the general public will be involved, including press notifications, a questionnaire survey in a community newsletter (direct mailing), and the development of a direct mailing group to allow interested individuals to register and be kept informed during all stages of the plans’ preparation.

In relation to engaging with hard-to-reach groups (or the ‘seldom heard’, as some prefer), the CIS also explains the mechanisms the LPA will use to build contact with the identified groups, whilst also attempting to engage with individuals who may not have any such representation, committing reasonable resources to doing so. Hard-to-reach groups are initially broadly defined as voluntary organisations, visitors and young people, but a complete list of such groups is provided in an appendix to the document. It is interesting to note that visitors have been categorised as a hard-to-reach group, and are prioritised over those who may traditionally be considered hard-to-reach. However, this selection does highlight the consideration given by park officers of the local context and the Park’s underlying aims. The CIS also proposes to establish the following consultation groupings :

- A Key Stakeholder Panel.
- A Sustainability Appraisal Group.
- Nine Community panels covering different geographical areas of the Park area.
- A Citizen’s Panel, to be established as part of the LDP consultation process.

The Authority aims to draw on a wide variety of representatives to act as sounding boards during each stage of plan preparation. Some panels would participate in

stakeholder workshops and meetings, and all would receive direct consultations at each consultation stage of the plans as defined by the timetable. It is important to note that the community panels will only be consulted before the plan is placed on deposit, rather than at early stages of strategy developed. It is appreciated that developing strategy is made more difficult through initial involvement with members of the public, however, it should be noted that the level of influence the panels have over the plan is reduced by consulting at later stages.

The CIS goes on to clearly define the type of feedback groups and individuals making input to the process will receive, including acknowledgements of comments and written responses to specific issues raised. Finally, a well structured and logical table entitled 'Key community involvement stages and key actions' defines each key stage of the plan preparation process, which types of groups will be involved during each key stage, and the consultation / notification mechanisms that will be put in place. Another element of good practice is highlighted by the fact that Community Panels and Key Stakeholder Panel workshops to be run by impartial trained facilitators, thereby eliminating any tensions between the public and park staff, and allowing the sessions to focus on the issues presented in the LDP.

Monitoring and review: This section recognises that the Delivery Agreement timetable may be subject to future review and amendment to reflect possible slippage or changes in the availability of resources. This section also outlines the annual monitoring and review process the adopted LDP will be subjected to, providing further opportunities for community and stakeholder panel involvement post adoption.

What happens next / useful contacts: Both of these sections, whilst short, demonstrate good practice in outlining what happens following consultation on the Delivery Agreement, and crucially, provides contact information for both park officers and Planning Aid Wales. Both contacts would be able to provide further clarifications and address any questions readers may have on the Agreement, thereby serving to further improve understanding.

Appendices: These provide further information on: the ten tests of soundness which the LDP will be subjected to (including links to further information on the subject); a demographic profile of Park residents; detailed information on other plans at a national and local level which have direct links to the Management Plan and LDP; and a list of consultation groups to be invited to participate in plan preparation (Appendix 4). The latter includes hard-to-reach groups, Pembrokeshire Association of Voluntary Services, specific consultation bodies including community and town councils and other statutory consultees, and a comprehensive list of other general consultation bodies within and outside of the National Park area.

Appendix 2

Projects supported through the PCNPA under the Sustainable Development Fund

Alternative Fuelled Mini Bus

Anaerobic Digestion Feasibility Study

At Home in the Park

Celtic Bio Diesel

Celtic Biodiesel - Phase II

Change Climate Change

Coastal Connections Pembrokeshire

CPRW Youth Conference

Crymych C.P. School Ext & ICC

Cwm Arian Community Energy Phase I

Cwrwg y Mor/Sea Coracle

Cynllun OGAM Project

Economies R Us

Energy & Environment (E) Information Centre

Energy for Tomorrow / Ynni Yfory

ESTEAM Native Tree Nursery

e-Trails National demonstration project

Far offshore renewables

Green Giant Power in the Countryside - Phase 2

Havenlink Water Taxi

IGNITE Woodfuel

Integrated Transport for All

Kisses Across the Irish Sea

Land for Learning

Launching Bio Energy in Pembrokeshire

Marine Futures Roadshow

Marloes & St Brides Community Green Energy

Middle Broadmoor Eco Education & Tourism Centre

Milford Haven Tidal Stream Power Feasibility Study

Nerth y Gwynt

Old Ways for New Days

Organic Supply/Benefits Proposal

Our Working Woods: The Cilrhedyn Timber Processing

Pembrokeshire Marine Code Group

Pembrokeshire Plant Oil for Transport - Phase I

Pembrokeshire Plant Oil for Transport - Phase II

Pembs Recovery of Energy from Tidal Streams

Plant Oil Extraction Plant

Postcards from Pembrokeshire

Preseli Green Dragon Walkers Bus

Preseli Green Dragon Walkers Bus

RamseyPower Project

REAS-Pembs

Renewable Energy - on your doorstep

Scientific Assessment of Novel Fishing System asse

St Davids Eco City Project

St Oswald's Playgroup & Community Facility

Stackpole Mencap gardens

Sustainable Agriculture

Sustainable Building Directory

Sustainable Livelihoods, Sustainable Communities

Sustainable Living for Pembrokeshire Artists

Sustainable Schools Food Procurement Pilot

The Green Giant - Phase I

The Lime Centre of West Wales

The People's Power Station

Timber Heat Treatment

Tir, Coed a Dwr / Land, Wood & Water

To Gwyrdd - 'Building a Rural Future' Phase II

Ty Unnos Affordable Housing from homegrown timber

Whitesands Bay Initiative

Wildfuels (formerly Thatch it

Y Gragen Eco Build Study Case

Appendix 3: Overview of organisations working in Pembrokeshire

The organisations we interviewed represent a variety of structures, purposes and indeed opportunities for the working practice of the PCNPA in terms of their engagement strategy. They include the following:

A Local Authority Regeneration Unit, delivering services to all community groups and community and Town Councils around how these groups can access funding;

PLANED mainly cover Pembrokeshire in their work, but work also on projects across Wales and transnationally. They are community led and their Board consists of community members. There were, until recently almost 40 people on the Board, but following the AGM there are now 15 community representatives, who are elected by community associations and forums. There are also public sector and private sector representatives, including a PCNPA representative. Their purpose is, in general terms, bottom up, integrated, rural development. Their key focus is supporting existing Community Forums and Associations and helping communities to establish these if they don't exist;

Pembrokeshire Association of Voluntary Services (PAVS), is a network organisation who support voluntary action across the county. The main remit of PAVS is generic support services to voluntary and community groups in Pembrokeshire. 1000 groups are on the database. Their membership base is lower at about 160 groups with full membership; however their service is open to all community and voluntary groups. In practice, most of their activities are focused on voluntary sector service providers or community groups at key stages in their development- for example, they are just becoming established or they are winding up but their remit is around support for establishing and constituting a group; project and policy development; strategic planning and signposting to other sources of support;

The Environmental Network Pembrokeshire (TENP) was established 3 years ago and includes about 50 voluntary sector environmental organisations, all of whom have their own membership across Pembrokeshire (some are local groups, other local branches of national bodies), thus they do have good bottom up type access. The purpose of the network is to develop a greater understanding of sustainable development and to work towards a sustainable society in Pembrokeshire;

CCW are the government advisor in Wales on National Conservation and countryside issues. They work at a variety of levels, ranging from individuals, local groups to big business, as well as with local authorities, government agencies and third sector partners. CCW tend to do community engagement through partners whom they grant aid for this purpose, but they also occasionally get involved directly through a variety of ways, including for instance speaking to small groups with specific projects- for example, giving some advice but also showing how things could be managed in a different way;

The Havens Community Council was formed in 1910 and consists of 10 Councillors and represents local residents (about 1100), working largely with the Pembrokeshire County Council on infrastructure issues and PCNPA on planning issues. There are elections every four years. A report of the Meetings (not the actual Minutes which are available on line) goes in the Community Diary which is available free to all households. However, there is obviously no guarantee that these are being taken notice of and all of the work is done in meetings of the Councillors.

Appendix 4: Case studies

Case Study 1

Young Farmers Templeton Club

Type of Group: One of several county youth associations, in Pembrokeshire, their remit being advertised as being to increase links between members of the rural community and “meeting to have a good laugh.....competing in competitions and learning life-long talents!!”

Until recently the Young Farmers Club (YFC) had little knowledge of the PCNPA and therefore had not been involved to any extent in decision-making. Their representative considered that overall they had little understanding of PCNPA’s structure and processes unless it impacted upon their family in terms of planning. The YFC hold an annual field day and the PCNPA rangers have always been supportive in the community.

This has changed recently when the CEO approached them. They have had an initial meeting and as a result, the secretary thinks there will be a change of emphasis now, with more information sharing between PCNPA and YFC. They are planning to have NPA speakers in club meetings and as their new year starts in September, they are going to promote the NPA in their newsletter and seek ideas for increased involvement and awareness raising.

As this is a relatively new relationship, they feel these initial steps are sufficient and they are happy this is as much involvement they require in the NPA at this time. In the future, they would be looking to learn more about NPA policies and strategies. At this time, they did not feel they knew enough about these to comment on whether NPA policy framework reflected the needs and priorities in the area.

The YFC hears of projects in the area through the website and through Geraint Jones with whom they have a good relationship.

The NPA will gain from engagement with the YFC in finding out what young people, particularly from rural backgrounds, think about the policies and projects in the area. To date, the views of young people do not appear to have been adequately represented (this is a view expressed from a number of respondents).

The YFC is aware of the volunteer programme being organised through NPA and as yet, has had little involvement as a group but a number of their members may have been involved. None of the projects or events organised by the Templeton YFC have been supported under the Sustainable Development Fund but this could be explored when they know more about the fund. The Secretary, Hannah Phillips considered there to be a strong possibility that both organisations could learn from each other and they were making efforts to build a positive relationship.

Case Study 2

Freshwater East Society and Community Association (FESCA)

Type of Group: Community group originally formed as a pressure group in Freshwater East

The group has been involved with PCNPA since its inception and it has always maintained strong wish to have close links and two-way communication. The NPA meets twice per year to discuss land issues within the NPA remit. FESCA is one of the organisations invited to attend. Contact between the two organisations is initiated from both organisations dependent upon the issues that arise. Other means of communication between the organisations is through the rangers, community council and public domain information. The website is used frequently by individual members of FESCA as they look at planning issues in the locality which are advertised. The website however, isn't considered a resource for the group as a whole.

FESCA feel the relationship over time has given the local community and members of FESCA a greater understanding of planning and other issues whilst developing a strong sense of community ownership and wish to be involved in decision-making. This, according to FESCA, is working well now after a long period of lack of trust, rooted from the planning history. There may be still some hesitance with some older residents but there is a feeling that the NPA has done a lot to build bridges.

Some of the FESCA members also provide volunteering as wardens. This mean they get involved in all sorts of activities which builds trust and relationships between the two organisations.

There is a feeling that the NPA policies and strategies reflect local priorities and aspirations generally and, on the whole, there appear to be sufficient resources made available to achieve programmes of work. FESCA feel they are able to influence decisions and that their views are generally taken on board.

FESCA consider the NPA to have benefited from the relationship in understanding the strength of local views. During engagement and delivery of projects, the NPA appear to be clearly focused on the aims of the project or event and FESCA feel that there are still elements of the local community which are an untapped resource. There is always potential to offer more in terms of project delivery and decision-making and FESCA feel they will continue to be involved with the NPA in the foreseeable future.

Case Study 3

Tanyard Youth Project

Type of Group: A youth project open to 10-18 yr olds from Pembroke and Pembroke Dock area. Its mission is "... to provide an excellent standard of facilities, activities and services for all young people in a safe, welcoming and educational environment in order to enable them to develop physically, mentally and spiritually; becoming in turn, mature members of society and positive citizens of the community." Established by the Pembroke Tanyard Management Trust in 1997, it provides inclusive learning and leisure activities for young people

The Youth Project has had very little formal involvement with PCNPA and therefore has little understanding of the decision-making processes adopted by the Authority. However, the group has been involved in Mentro Allan scheme and therefore has been working with the NPA officer, Tom Moses. Through this involvement the youth project have seen more of the national park and some awareness has been raised but not necessarily on the internal mechanisms of PCNPA. There is a will to be more involved, particularly through conservation activities and maintenance.

In terms of NPA policies and strategies, it is understood that there is more of a shift towards engaging young people but there isn't yet an abundance of evidence. However, John Heffernan, the Project Manager, felt it was equally the responsibility of the youth group to make efforts to increase interface and involvement.

The usual mechanism for finding out about events and projects in the NPA is because John is on an NPA mailing list, therefore emails and specific approaches through Mentro Allan appear to be the way information is filtered through to the project. Because there hasn't been enough involvement by the Project, it is too soon to feel their views are being listened to by the NPA and there is not a lot of consultation they are aware of.

The NPA has, similarly not gained much benefit from the Project. However, indirect awareness raising is an outcome and increased outputs within the Mentro Allan could be considered a benefit to NPA.

As yet, the group do not attend the forum meetings nor are they formally linked to the NPA. This is something they would be willing to explore. They are aware of the volunteer programmes but again, are not involved.

This Group has a strong infrastructure and good membership. They would be ideal partners to increase awareness of the NPA to young people and subsequently increase their involvement.

Case Study 4

Carew Community Association

Type of Group: Community association interested in history and in particular the local history. The Group completed a HLF bid entitled Changing Times in Carew which was then commended in the PCNPA National Park Awards in 2008.

The Group is not directly involved in the decision-making process of PCNPA but they have a representative on the Stakeholder's group and attend NPA events by invitation. Phil Bennett also provides information and talks when asked so the Group are content with the way NPA makes decisions and they feel listened to, engaged and consulted. Meetings are arranged on an as needs basis and this seems to work for the Group. When asked about NPA policies and strategies, the NPA, as a planning authority seemed to work well and reflect local priorities according to the respondent.

In terms of projects and consultations with the Community Association, Elaine Jones was involved in the development of their previous PCNPA HLF project. She and other NPA staff attended various events during the lifespan of that project. The Community Association responds to any issues required of them by NPA and from the interview it was clear that there is a strong sense of ownership in the locality and the NPA does not hinder this. As a small rural area, there are a number of associations active locally and some of them link – eg the Castle development, the Community Council and Carew 500. There appears to be awareness of the NPA and how to influence decisions. The Association derive information through the Stakeholders Group, flyers, invitations, the community council and Elaine Jones. There was not mention of the NPA website during the interview.

The NPA has gained the benefit of community views but there could be room for more involvement. For instance, there appeared to be a lack of awareness of the volunteer programme and therefore the community association had not been involved. This would have increased their involvement with NPA.

Case Study 5

Freshwater East Reserve for Nature Group (FERN)

Type of Group: A group of enthusiastic villagers from Freshwater East who are organising as a group to develop with the NPA, a piece of land as a nature reserve.

Individuals in the Group have been very involved with PCNPA for a long time since being partly associated with FESCA and now in the development of the nature reserve. Two rangers work with FERN and 10-12 NPA volunteers are actively involved with developing the reserve.

There is a strong sense of ownership in the area and since the NPA has designated the site as access land instead of it being allocated for housebuilding, the villagers feel they are listened to and have influenced and shaped their locality. This has reduced the tension between the planning authority and the community and it is felt that both organisations are making more effort and realising greater rewards.

There may still be some tensions as memories are long but generally, it was agreed that the NPA policies and strategies reflect local priorities and aspirations. The NPA has also been helpful in putting a stop to a number of local developments which villagers did not feel were in keeping with the area.

Apart from a continued use of the website to find out planning applications, wardens convey information about projects. Emails are also sent out along with flyers, bulletins etc. Freshwater East residents attend the Stakeholder Group and this increases the sense of their voices being heard and acted upon. The joint management council which sits about four times a year includes representatives from Lamphay Community Council, FESCA, Fisherman and Boatmen's Association, Coast Care, FERN and councillors. Anything relating to the area is discussed at these meetings.

The Group feel the NPA has gained a better understanding and ability to work with the community as a result of the continued relationship with the group. There is much more a sense of working with the community rather than 'against us'.

The volunteer programme is made maximum use of in developing the nature reserve. The Ranger has a list of volunteers, a lot of whom have been trained as accredited volunteer rangers and there is often a list of activity dates made available for work being undertaken in the area.

PLANED have organised community events and consultations on specific topics. Sometimes these are in conjunction with the NPA so this is a useful method of evaluation and gauging ideas.

Appendix 5: A framework for analysis community engagement

Engagement of local people can take a number of different forms, and a variety of different models have been developed to explain the different forms of engagement (Arnstein 1969, Wilson & Wilde 2003⁵). The models tend to be differentiated by five factors:

- the type or form of relationship that local people are invited to engage with by a public body e.g consultation etc.
- the level of 'control' which is passed to local people
- the intended functions or aims of that relationship
- decisions made regarding 'who' needs to be engaged
- mechanisms and tools whereby they are enabled to do so.

However, Wilcox's (1994) adaptation of Arnstein's ladder of participation departs from the implication in the original that one level of engagement is more desirable than the next. Depending on the objectives, the issues and the communities to be engaged with, he suggested that some approaches might be more suitable than others. Wilcox has thus developed five levels of participation, each offering increasing degrees of control to a community (Table 1).

Information:	The least you can do is tell people what is planned.
Consultation:	You offer a number of options and listen to the feedback you get.
Deciding together:	You encourage others to provide some additional ideas and options, and join in deciding the best way forward.
Acting together	Not only do different interests decide together what is best, but they form a partnership to carry it out.
Supporting independent community initiatives:	You help others do what they want – perhaps within a framework of grants, advice and support provided by the resource holder.'

So far this table is really in line with the different levels of engagement that the NPA is involved in. However, leading on from this, a key point to note is that the appropriateness of a 'stance' on community engagement really depends on what a provider is trying to achieve through community engagement, and the resources it has at its disposal: we are thus able to provide a menu of possible outcomes and we have summarised these in a table, below. This table highlights the form and function

⁵ Arnstein, Sherry R. "A Ladder of Citizen Participation," *JAIP*, Vol. 35, No. 4, July 1969, pp. 216-224

of the community engagement approach and the possible positive outcomes of each approach. It has also identified potential pitfalls which might be faced if the form of community engagement practiced is being badly used. We feel that this table can be used to determine what key outcomes the NPA and others are seeking from an engagement process and to be honest about what is possible with the resources available. This could be done internally initially, but then could be used jointly with other providers.

	<i>LEVEL of ENGAGEMENT</i>	
Negative impacts	Intended functions	Positive Outcomes
	INFORMATION: Influencing and advising	
Manipulation Unequal power relationships Lack of diverse representation, leading to poor reflection of local priorities	CONSULTATION: Efficiency Influencing and advising	Capacity building to achieve shared goals Joined up thinking
Manipulation of information available. Distortion of work of one partner. Unresolved conflict. Lack of diverse representation leading to poor reflection of local priorities	DECIDING TOGETHER: Synergies. Efficiency.	More sustainable outcomes. Joined up thinking. Buy in from Stakeholders. Additional capacity to achieve mutual goals
Confidence of one partner is reduced. Not representative	ACTING TOGETHER/ CO-PRODUCING: Efficiency. Influencing and advising. Inclusiveness.	Empowerment of partners. Reciprocity. Improved resource use.

<p>Insufficient capacity.</p> <p>Lack of sustained efforts leading to poor response.</p>	<p>CO-OWNERSHIP:</p> <p>Inclusiveness.</p> <p>Efficiency.</p>	<p>Sustainable outcomes.</p> <p>Accountability.</p> <p>Shared ownership.</p> <p>Positive impact of multi-competency.</p> <p>Sharing ideas and perspectives.</p> <p>Delegation of key tasks through enabling partners to receive grants.</p> <p>Influencing and advising.</p> <p>Behavioural change.</p>
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Adapted from Alain Thomas Consultancy 2001

Appendix 6- Interview Prompts for NPA staff

- What is the purpose of community engagement?
- How are you enabling it to happen and at what level; e.g. please
- What is the basis on which these decisions (around where you engage) are made and who is responsible; is there a clear understanding on the outcomes that you are seeking (please expand, focus in on WHO they want to engage as priority) or is it more ad hoc. What outcomes have been achieved?
- On the basis of the thoughts just put forward, is a generic or dedicated role the most effective and what are the perceived issues around this?
- How do you evaluate your community engagement process?
- How far do you see community development as an aspect of your community engagement process – what are the issues regarding this?
- Who are your key and preferred partners and why?
- How would you feel about others undertaking aspects of community engagement on your behalf? And which aspects of community engagement would be the most appropriate to be taken up by others.

Appendix 7: Prompts for interviewees- partners

Could you tell me a little about your organisation: When set up? How many members? What geographical area do you cover? Which key client groups/community members, do you work with

Organisational objectives.

- Purpose: What is the main aim or purpose of your organisation?
- Activities. What are the key activities that your organisation does to try and achieve these aims?
- Priorities. What are your organisation's main priorities at the moment?
- Understanding of Community engagement. What is your organisation's understanding of community engagement

Links with other organisations

- What other organisations or groups does your group work most closely with?
- What kind of things do you work on together?
- How do these organisations or groups help you to achieve your aims?

Motivation to work with NPA

- What do you know about NPA and what it does?
- Previous experience. Has your organisation ever tried to work with the NPA and in what capacity?

If "no" ask 5.3.

If "yes" go to question 6

- What are the reasons that you haven't worked with the NPA?
- What, if anything could PCNPA do to encourage you to develop a working relationship with them and in particular to help them to engage groups you might be working with?
- Which groups would these be?
- What, (if appropriate from response,) would be the best way for PCNPA to make contact with your organization and/or the groups you work with?

Perception of working with NPA

- Can you explain what you see the PCNPA purposes to be?
- Can you explain a bit more about your experience of working with PCNPA ?
- What made you decide to work with PCNPA?
- What did you aim to achieve?
- How successful were you?
- How far do you think the work you have done with them has helped them to engage your client groups in the purposes of the PCNPA?
- How do you think engagement can be made relevant and exciting for your client group? /What types of projects do you think might engage people?
- What particular obstacles (if any) did you face in joint working, and how did you try to overcome these obstacles?
- What could PCNPA do to improve your working relationship?
- What could PCNPA so to improve their relationship with local communities?

Appendix 8 Documents accessed

- 3 Parks Social Inclusion Strategy 2009
 - 3 Parks Social Inclusion Action Plan 2009 mid year update
 - Community Audit Working Copy 180308
 - Community Engagement Strategy 2009
 - Community Plan Paper April 2010 (draft)
 - Community Futures, Mapping outcomes from the Community Action Plans, Loch Lomond and the Trossachs 2002-2008
 - Institute of Welsh Affairs press release; Action needed to give Welsh National Parks a role in promoting the economy
 - National Park Management Plan 2009-2013
 - NPA staff structure
 - Strategic Grant letter targets 2010
 - Vision Circular 2010
 - Wales National Parks final report 2004
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- One Wales – A Progressive Agenda for Wales (June 2007)
 - One Wales: One Planet – the revised Sustainable Development Scheme
 - The Communities First Programme
 - The National Strategic Framework for Community Development in Wales
 - 'The third dimension' A Strategic Action Plan for the Voluntary Sector Scheme
 - Getting on Together – a Community Cohesion Strategy for Wales
 - The Equality Act
 - The Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009