

NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

26th September 2012

Present: Councillor J A Brinsden (Chair)
Mr A Archer, Mr D Ellis, Councillor P Harries, Mrs G Hayward,
Councillor M James (Deputy Chair), Councillors Mrs L Jenkins, R
Kilmister, RM Lewis, R Owens and DWM Rees, Mr EA Sangster,
Mrs M Thomas and Councillors AW Wilcox and M Williams.

(NPA Offices, Llanion Park, Pembroke Dock: 2.30pm – 4.30pm)

1. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Ms C Gwyther, and
Councillors Mrs A Lee and PJ Morgan.

2. Chairman's Announcements

Since the previous meeting the Chairman had attended the
Pembrokeshire County Show in August.

NOTED.

3. Disclosures of Interest

Mr A Archer disclosed a non-pecuniary interest in Report number 49/12 –
Annual Report of the Monitoring Officer (*Minute 16 below refers*) – as he
had recently been appointed as a Planning Adviser to the Public Service
Ombudsman in Wales.

Mr EA Sangster declared a non-pecuniary interest in Report number
51/12 – PCNPA Management of Car Parking Sites (*Minute 15 below
refers*) – as he was a member of the Board for the Saundersfoot Harbour
Commissioners.

4. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on the 8th August, 2012 were presented
for confirmation and signature.

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on the 8th August
2012 be confirmed and signed.

5. Development Management Committee - Report of Meeting

It was **RESOLVED** that the report of the meeting of the Development
Management Committee held on the 18th July, 2012 be received.



6. Audit & Corporate Services Review Committee – Report of Meeting

It was **RESOLVED** that the report of the meeting of the Audit and Corporate Services Review Committee held on the 5th September 2012 be adopted.

7. Substitution of Members – Audit & Corporate Services Review Committee: 5th September 2012

It was reported that Councillor RM Lewis had been unable to attend the meeting of the Audit & Corporate Services Review Committee held on the 5th September, 2012 and that Councillor M James had attended in his place.

The Administration and Democratic Services Manager reminded Members that County Council- and Welsh Government-appointed Members could substitute for fellow County Council- and Welsh Government-appointed Members respectively, provided that the substitution was agreed prior to the meeting and subsequently reported to the next Authority meeting.

It was **RESOLVED** that the substitution of Councillor RM Lewis by Councillor M James at the meeting of the Audit and Corporate Services Review Committee held on the 5th September 2012 be noted.

8. Improvement Assessment Report: Wales Audit Office – Corporate Assessment Update Letter

The Chairman welcomed Mr John Roberts of the Wales Audit Office to the meeting.

Mr Roberts presented his Report to Members which was in the form of a letter addressed to the Chief Executive which summarised whether the Authority had discharged its duties and complied with the requirements of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011.

In relation to work carried out by the Wales Audit Office on the Authority's processes, he concluded that Authority was likely to comply with the requirement to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement during the financial year.

He went on to say that the Authority's Improvement Plan for 2012-13 used a format which was easy to read, concise and clear, and included measures and targets, where appropriate for its improvement objectives. The process also invited communities or stakeholders to propose new improvement objectives for the Authority.

Turning to the proposals set out following the previous year's Audit assessment, Mr Roberts stated that the Authority had made progress in some, although it was felt that it was too early to judge progress on



others: Further details had been included in the Improvement Assessment Letter itself, but in summary:

- The Authority was using data from the *State of Wildlife in Pembrokeshire* Report as a baseline that would provide information on progress in achieving strategic outcomes;
- The Service Level Agreement (SLA) between the Authority and the National Museum of Wales was under review;
- Until the Authority published its self-assessment of performance (due by the 31st October each year) it was felt too early to comment on whether that self-assessment included relevant comparisons of performance with other authorities;
- The Authority had responded quickly to proposals to strengthen its risk assessments to take account of how risks might affect the delivery of priorities, and
- It was felt that encouraging progress had been made in reviewing, updating and adopting new policies, especially those linked to the new people management strategy and the Authority's approach to the performance management of staff. However it was also felt there was more to do to complete this work.

He considered the issue of scrutiny to be a challenge for National Park Authorities; however, it was felt that constructive efforts were being made to improve scrutiny arrangements although the full potential might not be realised until the Authority could ensure they were fully supported by appropriate systems. Clarity was needed on what matters would go before a Scrutiny Committee.

It was reported that the Authority's planning service were developing more meaningful measures of performance, increasing capacity, improving its systems and ensuring better engagement with stakeholders. Staff were exploring options for introducing measures of performance that focussed less on speed of delivery and more on the quality of the service and on its outcomes.

He concluded by saying that the Authority had discharged its improvement planning duties under the Measure and had acted in accordance with Welsh Government Guidance. However, there was always room for improvement, and the Improvement Assessment Letter concluded with a number of proposals

Some further proposals for improvements were also set out in the Letter:

- the Authority should ensure that the business and service plans make explicit links to the Authority's improvement objectives, not just to its strategic outcomes;



- the Authority should consider reviewing the risk management process with a view to ensuring it dealt appropriately with service risks;
- the review of the Authority's policies should be completed and, in doing so, it should consider the usefulness of asking staff whether they know where to find the policies and whether training on any specific policies was needed, and
- the extent to which the various existing terms of reference supported the effective and efficient operation of the Authority's new scrutiny committee, should be monitored and, where appropriate, reviewed accordingly.

The Auditor concluded that he was grateful to the Authority for the way in which it had helped to facilitate the Wales Audit Office's work and hoped to see even more effective and efficient arrangements developing over time.

The Chairman thanked Mr Roberts for his presentation and for the good working relationship that existed between both organisations.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Report be received.

9. ISA260 Report to those Charged with Governance.

The Chairman welcomed Mr Terry Lewis from the Wales Audit Office who presented the report.

Mr Lewis explained that the Authority's draft statement of accounts had been received by the Auditors in June 2012. His report and presentation to Members that day would cover the more significant issues arising from that audit as these had to be considered prior to approval of the Authority's financial statement. After his presentation, he would ask the Chairman to sign the accounts on behalf of the Authority and they would subsequently be signed by the Appointed Auditor.

He reported that the Wales Audit Office had no concerns about the qualitative aspect of the Authority's practices and financial reporting and did not encounter any significant difficulties during the audit process. In addition, there were no significant matters discussed and corresponded upon with management which had to be reported. There were also no other matters significant to the oversight of the financial reporting process that needed to be reported and finally the Auditor had not identified any material weakness in the Authority's internal controls.

Mr Lewis went on to say that he and his team had a very good working arrangement with the Finance Manager and his team and he took the opportunity to thank them for their help in carrying out the audit.



Following a query from one Member, Mr Lewis confirmed that there were no uncorrected misstatements in the 2011-12 statement of accounts, and that the Authority's audited year-end funds and reserves were as reported therein.

The Chairman then thanked Mr Lewis for his help and assistance and praised the good collaboration between the National Park Authority and the Wales Audit Office.

It was **RESOLVED** that the ISA260 Report from the Wales Audit Office be accepted and that the Chairman be authorised to sign the Statement of Accounts 2011/12.

10. Improvement Plan 2011/12 Part 2

The Business and Performance Manager reminded Members that the Authority was required, under both the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 and the Wales Programme for Improvement, to publish the second part of its Improvement Plan by the 31st October 2012. This document reported on the progress made against the work programme proposed in Part 1 of the Improvement Plan for the year 2011/12.

The report identified four service areas which were considered to be prioritised improvement objectives for 2011/12 and outlined how they had performed.

Another recommendation from the previous year was to provide some comparable statistics and these had also been added in order to provide a benchmark where possible.

In response to a question from Councillor R Kilmister, the Business and Performance Manager reported that the Authority's performance in using Section 106 Agreements and planning conditions to ensure delivery of affordable housing would be reported in the annual monitoring report of the Local Development Plan, which would be reported to Members shortly.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Improvement Plan Part 2 for 2011/12 be approved.

11. Risk Register

It was reported that the Authority's Risk Register had historically included mainly risks of a corporate or strategic nature. In order to improve corporate governance, a number of improvements were proposed and these were set out in the report, together with an extract of the current risk register. One of the changes was that each identified risk was now allocated to two members of staff – one to monitor and manage any



mitigating actions, while the other ensured the risk was being appropriately managed.

The Business and Performance Manager added that the full risk register would be reported to the Audit and Corporate Services Review Committee as usual, but that relevant risks would also be reported to the other Review Committees. It was also proposed that a Member be assigned to monitor the most significant risks and that a report on this matter be presented to the Authority in due course.

Members enquired as to whether there were smaller risk registers in place (i.e. for separate projects) or whether these were all included on the full Risk Register. The Business and Performance Manager confirmed that the highest level risks would go on the main register however there would be smaller registers running underneath this.

It was **RESOLVED** that the proposed changes to managing the Risk Register be approved.

12. Financial Standards Update

The Finance Manager reported that the Authority's Financial Standards were reviewed on a four yearly cycle and the Report before Members that day requested Members to approve the updated Standards. The Financial Standards provided a financial framework in which the Authority could operate and ensured that legislation was complied with, the assets of the Authority were safeguarded, the funds available were spent and controlled efficiently, liabilities were met and best value was achieved.

He reported that the updates reflected changes in Authority structures, both personnel shifts in job responsibilities and Committees, changes in Authority policies and changes in government legislation. The other main changes related to signing off invoices and the issuing of rentals, operating leases, licences, etc.

It was **RESOLVED** that the revised Financial Standards be approved.

13. Draft Service Level Agreement – Oriel y Parc

The Director of Delivery and Discovery introduced Mr Mark Richards, Deputy Director General of Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales to the meeting.

The Director explained that Oriel y Parc operated as a partnership between Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales (AC-NMW) and the National Park Authority and that this arrangement was governed by a Service Level Agreement (SLA). The SLA was subject to regular review and a revised version of the document was appended for consideration to the report before Members' that day.



He reminded Members that the gallery area itself was categorised as Grade A in terms of security and environmental controls and was a beneficial addition to the Oriel y Parc centre.

Mr Richards then addressed Members by saying that he greatly appreciated the way in which the partnership continued to prosper as the relationship was important to AC/NMW and they would do all that they could to maintain it. He went on to say that the previous eighteen months had seen Oriel y Parc flourish, with the appointment of a new Manager, a significant increase in visitor numbers and the franchising out of the cafe which was now very successful in its own right. Visitor numbers were now reported monthly to AC/NMW trustees and to the Welsh Government, which was good in terms of cross-departmental working. In addition, the newly established Friends of Oriel y Parc now stood at over 180 members, which was extremely encouraging.

In response to queries from Members, he replied that AC/NMW would be taking more of a lead on the marketing side in future and that, in fact, Oriel y Parc was now featured on the front page of their website. In terms of signage, he agreed that there was a need to improve both internal and external signage and that this would be discussed with relevant officers.

The Chairman thanked Mr Richards for his presentation, agreeing that the partnership was important to both the National Park Authority and Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales.

It was **RESOLVED** that the revised Service Level Agreement for Oriel y Parc be approved.

14. 2012 Annual Monitoring Reports on the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Local Development Plan

Members were advised that an Annual Monitoring Report was required to be submitted to the Welsh Government which assessed the extent to which the Local Development Plan (LDP) strategy and policies were being achieved. The Monitoring Report, which covered the previous financial year from 1st April 2011 to 31st March 2012, measured various indicators to assess the performance of the individual planning policies set out in the adopted Development Plan. It also provided a general portrait of the social, economic and environmental conditions in the National Park.

The Head of Park Direction went on to say that the previous 2011 Annual Monitoring Report had been made available for comment until the 1st June, 2012 when one comment had been received. The officer response to this comment was detailed in Appendix A to her covering report to Members that day.



She explained that the Monitoring Report used a “traffic light” system, where green meant that targets/objectives were being achieved, amber had not been achieved but there were no concerns over implementation of the policy/objectives and red indicated areas of concern over implementation of the policy/objectives.

Members raised the fact that the Scrutiny Committee was currently looking into the issue of affordable housing and asked that any information gathered could be fed back to all Members. The Chair confirmed that the Scrutiny Committee would indeed report back.

Members then queried the indicators used to measure the “vibrancy” of retail centres within the National Park. The Head of Park Direction replied that the indicators and measures used were standard methods in planning terms; however, she stated that this aspect could be reconsidered in the next Annual Monitoring Report.

Another issue raised was that of community facilities. It was considered that, although none were being lost there would always be a need for extra facilities due to an ageing population. The Head of Park Direction explained that there were adequate opportunities available within the current planning system to accommodate the need for additional community facilities.

It was **RESOLVED**:

- (a) that the officer response to comments received on the 2011 Annual Monitoring Report, as set out in Appendix A to the covering report of the Head of Park Direction, be agreed, and
- (b) that the 2012 Annual Monitoring Report on the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Local Development Plan be approved for submission to the Welsh Government by the 31st October, 2012.

15. Review of Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Management Plan

The Conservation Policy Officer reported that the Authority had produced and approved a Delivery Agreement (timetable and method of preparation) for its current National Park Management Plan and the adopted Local Development Plan in early 2007. The Management Plan had been adopted on the 17th December 2008 and would have a life of four years, whereupon it would be reviewed.

The draft Delivery Agreement now before Members was for the replacement Management Plan only and focused on the timetable and method for updating Management Plan Policies and for the Authority agreeing and co-ordinating actions flowing from the Management Plan.



The draft Delivery Agreement contained a timetable of key stages for Plan review and the methods by which the community would be engaged, together with details of how and when the National Park Authority would carry out the Sustainability Appraisal for the Plan review. The key stages of the Delivery Agreement were:

- Delivery Agreement agreed by the National Park Authority at its meeting on the 28th September 2012;
- Consultation completed on the Draft Management Plan revision, Action Plan, Sustainability Appraisal and Addendum by December 2013, and
- Adoption of the final National Park Management Plan by March 2014.

In order to do this, it was proposed that a Core Member/Officer Working Group be established comprising Chairs and Deputy Chairs of the Authority, Development Management Committee and the three Review Committees together with the officers on the Leadership Team. The group would also be open to any other officer or Member of the Authority or external stakeholder as the need arose. The Authority would ultimately be responsible for making all the key decisions at each stage in the Plan preparation process.

In addition to this Working Group, Policy and Action Plan Groups would also be established to act as an expert sounding board for policy review and Action Plan preparation. Representatives of other organisations would also be invited to provide expert technical advice where necessary.

Members queried whether the newly established Environment Body for Wales would disrupt the Management Plan programme. The Conservation Policy Officer replied that the sentiment within the Plan would not change, but this would be monitored, however.

It was **RESOLVED** that the draft Delivery Agreement for the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Management Plan be agreed.

(Councillor AW Wilcox tendered his apologies and left the meeting at this point.)

16. Annual Report of the Monitoring Officer

The report before Members set out the nature and background of any reports completed by the Monitoring Officer in the previous 12 month period. The reports fell into three categories as follows:

- a) those under Section 5 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 of which one report had been completed and one was pending;



- b) those under the Authority's own complaints procedure of which none had been referred to him to determine, and
- c) those under the Sustainable Development Fund of which there had been no appeals.

He went on to say that he had not dealt with any referrals from the Public Service Ombudsman for Wales regarding Code of Conduct issues in relation to any Members and this was a credit to Members.

He then advised Members that there would be an update/refresher lecture on Code of Conduct issues on Wednesday 24th October, 2012 and welcomed suggestions from Members as to what they would like to have included in this.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Annual Report of the Monitoring Officer be noted and the date for the refresher lecture endorsed.

17. Authority's Land Holding at Sageston

The Estates Officer reminded Members that an outline planning application had been submitted to Pembrokeshire County Council for development of the Authority's land holding at Sageston. He could now report that the Council's Planning & Rights of Way Committee had approved outline consent for the development subject to the completion of a Section 106 Agreement addressing the issue of affordable housing and commuted payments. This had now been received and he was therefore in a position to commission an external firm of Chartered Surveyors to carry out an initial six month marketing exercise on behalf of the Authority (he referred to an error in the report before Members that day, which stated that Chartered Surveyors had already been instructed). The surveyors would be able establish the strength, depth and variety of developer interest that existed for the subject site under the prevailing market conditions with the benefit of outline planning permission.

He went on to say that, as a small part of the subject site currently provided operational low grade secure storage for the Southern Warden Team, consideration would need to be given to identifying and securing a replacement facility for them. This would be the subject of a separate paper to Members in due course.

It was **RESOLVED** that Members endorse the ongoing actions of officers as outlined in the report.

18. PCNPA Management of Car Parking Sites

The Director of Delivery and Discovery advised Members that the Authority operated 48 car parks throughout the National Park as well as having an interest in a range of other sites where parking also took place (e.g. on land that was leased by the Authority). These sites provided a



vital component of the Authority's approach to opening up access to the National Park but they needed to be managed carefully in order to minimise damage to the local environment.

He went on to say that there were potential opportunities to create a more 'joined up' car parking service in Pembrokeshire through the Authority working more closely with a range of partner agencies including Pembrokeshire County Council. It was envisaged that opportunities for joint management arrangements might allow the Authority to 'unlock' a range of potential benefits in terms of visitor management, environmental protection and sustainable transport.

As a result, Officers sought the approval of Members to begin non prejudicial exploratory discussions with key local agencies with the explicit aim of improving the efficiency and effectiveness of local parking services, particularly in sensitive areas of the National Park. In particular, the Authority was keen to work closely with the County Council to amend and expand the scope of its existing legal powers in order to tackle parking infringements more effectively and more swiftly.

One Member stated that it was essential to ensure that local needs were not lost in the process and that car parks needed for community use were kept solely for that purpose.

Members also had some queries on parking tickets and whether or not they were transferrable. The Business and Performance Manager confirmed that all day tickets could be used in all National Park car parks; however, discussions were also being held with the County Council about the possibility of providing a County-wide parking ticket.

It was **RESOLVED**:

- (a) that Officers be authorised to enter into discussions with other local agencies involved in providing car parking services in order to explore opportunities for cost savings and/or improved services, and
- (b) that a formal request to Pembrokeshire County Council for the scope of the Authority's existing Parking Order to be amended and expanded to cover additional sites as a means of improving localised enforcement be approved.

19. Exclusion of the public

The Solicitor advised Members on the grounds put forward by officers for excluding the public during consideration of the report relating to an update on Key Risks. She agreed that the grounds were sound.

It was **RESOLVED** that the public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following item (*Minute 20 below refers*) due to the



likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 12, 13, 14 and 16 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

20. Update on Key Risks

The Chief Executive provided Members with an oral update in connection with the action being taken by officers in relation to prospective court proceedings involving the Authority.

It was **RESOLVED** that the action taken by officers be endorsed.

