

REPORT OF BUSINESS AND PERFORMANCE MANAGER

**SUBJECT:
CORPORATE STRATEGY 2012 - 2014**

Purpose of Report

Approval is sought for the Corporate Strategy 2012 – 2014 (attached).

Background

Following a series of workshops involving senior staff and Members the Corporate Strategy has been revised and updated to reflect the performance achieved during the past year and changes in what we wish to achieve during 2012/13.

Proposal

This strategy represents the second of the three year period and sets out the outcomes the Authority expects to achieve during that time. The document will be the basis of the Authority's Improvement Plan as required under the Local Government Measure.

Recommendation

That Members APPROVE the Corporate Strategy.

For further information contact Alan Hare on 01646 624810

Introduction

Last year we introduced the first of a new style of Corporate Strategy which outlined what we planned to achieve over the next three years. In preparing this Corporate Strategy we have reviewed our progress during 2011 and considered any changes in legislation or society in general which might affect our work.

The National Parks face growing and sometimes conflicting demands to deliver conservation, public access, local employment and affordable housing. Not all of the proposed actions in this corporate strategy will be completed in the coming year and it should be viewed as part of a rolling three year programme with specific key actions to take place during the year to ensure we meet the demands placed on us by our customers – both the residents of the National Park and the visitors.

Background

Pembrokeshire Coast National Park

Pembrokeshire Coast National Park was designated in 1952 under the National Park and Access to the Countryside Act 1949.

The National Park covers an area of 612,km², with around 23,000 people living in some 50 community council areas. At its widest it is about 16km wide and at its narrowest only 200m. Most of the National Park is in private ownership.

Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority

The Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority was created as a free standing special purpose local authority under the 1995 Environment Act. The Authority consists of 18 Members, 12 nominated by Pembrokeshire County Council and six appointed by the Welsh Assembly Government.

Park Purposes

The Act specifies that the purposes of a National Park Authority are

- ❖ To conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the park area
- ❖ To promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the area by the public.

The Act also states that in pursuing these purposes the Authority has a duty to seek to foster the social and economic well being of local communities.

As part of local government the Authority also contributes to many of the Welsh Assembly Government's wider agendas for the economy, health, sustainability and social inclusion, and better public services set out in policy publications including One Wales: One Planet and the emerging Natural Environment Framework.

The Authority is the statutory planning authority for its area, and is responsible for the preparation of the Local Development Plan. Every five years the Authority is required to produce a National Park Management Plan which sets out how it would like to see the area of the Park managed not just by the Authority itself, but by the other agencies and organisations which might impact on the Park. This Corporate Strategy sets out what actions the Authority plans to carry out.

Funding

The Authority's net expenditure is determined by the Welsh Assembly Government, by allocating the annual National Park Grant and levy, which for 2012/13 totals £4,739,804 with an additional capital grant of £116,667.

When providing the funding, the Welsh Assembly Government also specifies a number of performance targets in its annual Strategic Grant Letter, covering sustainability, social inclusion, corporate governance, access to the countryside, and planning.

This Corporate Strategy sets out our eight strategic outcomes for the next two years.

It is intended to:

- State our aspirations for the Park and how these may benefit people
- Guide our work and explain our priorities
- Inform our staff
- Inspire and engage others to contribute to our desired outcomes
- Form the basis of our business planning

Our Vision

Enthuse for today, enlighten for tomorrow, cherish forever

Our Role

To conserve the landscape, environment and culture, support community well-being and promote appreciation and enjoyment of the National Park.

The Outcomes we would like to deliver

The successful delivery of this strategy will lead to the delivery of the following outcomes:

- 1 - The National Park is conserved for current and future generations**
- 2 - Residents and visitors enjoy and appreciate the National Park**
- 3 - Residents and visitors use opportunities provided to adopt more sustainable lifestyles**
- 4 - Opportunities are provided for local people to live within the National Park**
5 - A thriving local economy exists based on the sustainable use of the National Park.
- 6 - Residents and Visitors from a wide range of backgrounds access opportunities for improved understanding about the National Park.**
- 7 - Residents and visitors recognise the distinct Pembrokeshire cultures within the National Park**
- 8 - The Authority is recognised as meeting good practice standards in terms of governance, providing value for money and listening to the views of residents, visitors and partners**

Improvement Objectives

Under the Local Government Measure the Authority is required to identify a number of Improvement Objectives as part of its Corporate Plan. These are

- 1. To monitor and improve the level of customer service and satisfaction in delivering the Corporate Outcomes.** Customer satisfaction surveys are currently carried out for many service areas, but are not co-ordinated and while they generally show high satisfaction and enjoyment levels, the surveys do not measure the effectiveness in delivering the corporate outcomes.
- 2. To achieve 85% of paths open and usable against the revised criteria.** A recent scrutiny and benchmarking exercise has identified that the Rights of Way function is below expected standards on some of the comparisons with the

number of paths maintained to the scrutiny criteria dropping from 86% to about 70%.

- 3. To continue to develop and improve the performance of the planning service.** Although gradually improving following changes in systems and personnel, the development management performance still falls short of the top quartile of planning authorities in Wales.
- 4. To increase and improve the opportunities for access and understanding of the National Park for under represented groups.** The Authority will work with CNP on the MOSAIC project to engage with ethnic groups and with Lottery funding to encourage local groups such as Communities First to make use of the National Park.

Outcome 1 - The National Park is conserved for current and future generations

To achieve this outcome

We will use our planning powers to ensure that the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park retains its special features. We recognise that those responsible for land and buildings need to make a living and we will seek to support them to balance this need with the need to protect the natural and historic landscape and promote biodiversity for its environmental and economic benefits.

We will be succeeding in delivering this outcome when:

- a. Trends in 'key species' populations are increasing over time;
- b. The area of land managed for conservation in partnership with NPA increases by an average of 5% a year (currently 1630 ha);
- c. A range of State of the Park indicators shows that the rates of decline in biodiversity and other features are diminishing.
- d. The percentage of listed buildings at risk remains below 5% (currently 4.1%) and less than 33% of Scheduled Ancient Monuments are in a worsening condition (36% currently).
- e. At least 33% of housing development and 45% of employment allocation permitted is on previously developed land;
- f. Only greenfield and open space which is allocated for development in the LDP is lost to development each year;
- g. At least 65% of enforcement matters are closed within 12 weeks

Where are we now

The authority's conservation strategy is to identify key areas and locations

where the maximum benefit for the limited resources may be obtained in order to create sustainable habitat and species populations. This is achieved through management of our own properties and through management agreements and practical assistance for land owners. At present 1,600 hectares on 174 sites are managed. This work has contributed to positive trends over the longer term for the populations of three key species – chough, skylarks and shelduck, although poor Spring weather in recent years has reduced some populations.

Grants totalling £100,000 have been awarded for the improvement of historic buildings each year. We encourage landowners to conserve scheduled ancient monument sites although coastal erosion is probably the most significant cause of damage.

New developments for housing and employment are provided for in the Local Development Plan.

We will take the following actions to deliver these Outcomes:

- a. Manage our own sites and encourage others to manage for conservation benefit;
- b. Assist landowners and farmers to engage in agri-environment schemes, both national and local;
- c. Investigate the cost and practicality of mapping the spread of invasive species through remote sensing technology.
- d. Implement LDP policies;
- e. Replace the roof on the Lesser Hall in Carew Castle and other improvement work
- f. Carry out a feasibility study into Geopark Status.

Outcome 2 - Residents and visitors enjoy and appreciate the National Park

To achieve this outcome

We will promote access and provide opportunities for residents and visitors to enjoy recreation and the natural, cultural and historic environment of the Park.

We will be succeeding in delivering this outcome when:

- a. There is an increasing trend in the number of people using the rights of way and other paths;
- b. The length of public rights of way in use exceeds 85% (Welsh average about 60%)
- c. We maintain or increase the lengths of rights of way suitable for the less able.
- d. The satisfaction level of footpath users is maintained or improved
- e. Number of accesses of promoted walks on website increases
- f. The number of people involved in volunteer activity with the Authority increases

Where are we now

The Authority maintains over 1102km of footpaths and bridleways, including the popular Coast Path. Over 87% of the paths are open and usable and many lengths of paths have been adapted to be more suitable for the less able, with improved surfaces and removal of stiles. Details of walks are available in publications, and leaflets

with over 210 downloadable maps on the website. The Authority also maintains over 50 sites and car parks giving access to the most popular walks and beaches. Surveys indicate that over 85% of the users are satisfied or very satisfied with the quality of the paths and that the majority of local residents use the paths occasionally and up to 40% use them at least once a month.

We will take the following Actions to deliver these Outcomes:

- a. Maintain Coast Path, inland rights of way, other paths and sites;
- b. Develop website and other media
- c. Negotiate a revised PROW delegation agreement with PCC;
- d. Develop good practice agreements and recreation management with groups such as divers, coasteering and fishermen using the approach developed through the outdoor charter and marine code;
- e. Provide and promote well managed circular walking opportunities within 500m of 45 of the biggest 50 settlements in the park.
- f. Commence implementation of the Origins project at Castell Henllys
- g. Investigate operational costs and funding possibilities for second Preseli woodland multi-user network by 2013

Outcome 3 - Residents and visitors use opportunities provided to adopt more sustainable lifestyles

To achieve this outcome

We will encourage the adoption of more sustainable lifestyles by providing easy access to recreation, promoting sustainable transport, renewable energy sources and the well-being of communities.

We will be succeeding in delivering this outcome when:

- a. Planning approvals include sustainable design proposals (from 2012)
- b. There is an increasing trend in the number of people walking and cycling regularly (CCW Recreation and other surveys)
- c. The number of people using coastal buses, park and ride and similar schemes increases each year
- d. The CO² emissions generated by our energy and travel requirements are reduced by an average of 3% a year.

Where are we now

The Authority has published policies and planning guidance on provision of renewable energy and sustainable design within the National Park.

Fixed counters on the inland paths showed an increase in the number of people using the inland paths during 2011. In partnership with PCC, the Authority helps fund Greenways bus services, which have been used by slightly fewer passengers in 2011. Last year we reduced our CO² emissions by 2.9% compared to the previous year. The Sustainable Development Fund has supported two community renewable energy projects with grants.

We will take the following Actions to deliver these Outcomes:

- a. To pilot walking referral schemes with two GP surgeries.
- b. Maintain our investment in Greenways & Coastal Buses schemes
- c. Use all available Sustainable Development Fund;
- d. Install a new biomass boiler at Llanion HQ and investigate renewable energy generation at other NPA owned sites
- e. Reduce energy consumption and carbon emissions by 3% by energy reduction, building management and changes to travel.

Outcome 4 - Opportunities are provided for local people to live within the National Park

To achieve this outcome

We will use our planning responsibilities to assist in the provision of affordable homes.

We will be succeeding in delivering this outcome when:

- a. The % of planning permissions granted for affordable homes is in line with the Welsh average.

Where are we now

Although not a housing authority, the NPA recognises the need to provide affordable homes and has introduced policies to ensure a proportion of new houses are affordable. Supplementary planning guidance has been issued on affordable homes and a development payment is now imposed to contribute to affordable developments. During 2011, planning permission was approved for only 15 affordable homes, largely due to the economic

climate which has reduced the number of developments taking place. The Authority has submitted an outline planning application with a Section 106 agreement for one of its properties. Meetings with Housing Associations are taking place on a 6 monthly basis and landowners have been contacted in the Autumn of 2011 to explore future intentions.

We will take the following Actions to deliver these Outcomes:

- a. Use Section 106 agreements and planning conditions to ensure delivery;
- b. Contact owners of land allocated in the Local Development Plan to monitor progress
- c. Review outstanding permissions with housing associations and consider how to activate
- d. Investigate selling surplus NPA land that is suitable for affordable housing development.

Outcome 5 - A thriving local economy exists based on the sustainable use of the National Park.

To achieve this outcome

We will encourage local businesses, in particular in tourism and agriculture, to ensure a sustainable use of the resources of the Park in the development of their businesses. We will support the development of the tourism industry by promoting the sustainable use of the National Park resource as a tourism attraction

We will be succeeding in delivering this outcome when:

- a. There are more examples of businesses using the Park sustainably;
- b. Surveys of tourism providers show increasing sustainable use of the Park;
- c. The Sustainable Development Fund supports at least one commercial enterprise each year
- d. 85% planning applications for commercial activities are approved;

Where are we now

The Authority works closely with Pembrokeshire Tourism and through various charter groups to encourage sustainable tourism and good practice. Charters setting good practice are in place with boat operators, climbers and other groups. We have tourism policies to ensure the National Park environment continues to hold its attraction and to encourage a more sustainable industry by encouraging

more activity in the quieter months, promoting activities that are in keeping with the National Park's special qualities. Employment policies encourage small provision through allocations (including live work allocations) and the re-use of buildings.

The SDF fund has supported a number of private sector projects, particularly in renewable energy feasibility projects. Our historic building grants have supported the local building trade, especially in Tenby and St. Davids.

To date 85% of commercially related planning applications have been approved.

We will take the following Actions to deliver these Outcomes:

- a. Greater promotion of the contribution of the Park to the economy;
- b. Develop tourism partnership working with Pembrokeshire Tourism and PCC;
- c. We will develop surveys to get a better understanding of the impact of tourism and commercial activities
- d. Closer working and partnerships such as Pembrokeshire Business Club and support for Outdoor Charter and Marine Code;

Outcome 6 - Residents and Visitors from a wide range of backgrounds access opportunities for improved understanding about the National Park.

To achieve this outcome

We will use the special qualities of the National Park as the basis for lifelong learning for all.

We will be succeeding in delivering this outcome when:

- a. 75% of people surveyed display an improved understanding of the National Park following an organised event;
- b. Increasing trend in the number of hits on the National Park Authority web site;
- c. Over 260,000 people make use of our centres each year
- d. At least 75% of school groups feedback an inspiration score of 10 or higher
- e. We have maintained the numbers of agreements we have with business (eg Outdoor Charter, Bourne Leisure ranger etc) that help businesses to pass on understanding to their clients
- f. We maintain the number of 'hard to reach' participants taking part in our events and activities at over 2,000 a year.

Where are we now

Over 250,000 people annually make use of the Authority's visitor centres

and the website attracts more than 150,000 individual visits. 225,000 copies of Coast to Coast newspaper are distributed every year and over 300 activities and events are organised to raise awareness and understanding. Feedback from school activities shows inspiration levels averaging over 10 on a scale of 1 – 11. Events engaging the 'hard to reach' and social exclusion groups involve over 2,000 participants.

We will take the following Actions to deliver these Outcomes:

- a. Increase support for secondary schools to engage with NP
- b. Provide environmental training for tourism operators
- c. Participate in MOSAIC project with CNP and other National Parks
- d. Provide in service training for teachers
- e. Work with one of the lower performing schools to improve performance through out of classroom activities.
- f. Investigate further use of new technology and social networking to distribute information about the National Park.

Outcome 7 - Residents and visitors recognise the distinct Pembrokeshire cultures within the National Park

To achieve this outcome

We will promote the wide variety of local, linguistic, artistic and social cultures found within the National Park.

We will be succeeding in delivering this outcome when:

- a. Surveys of visitors and residents show at least 50% recognise the cultural aspects of Pembrokeshire
- b. Over 30,000 visitors to Oriel y Parc visitor centre also go into the gallery (currently 28,000)
- c. The number of people visiting our historic culture sites and attending historic related remains at or above current levels of approximately 67,000 a year.
- d. The number of historic related activities and events increases each year.

Where are we now

The facilities at Oriel y Parc, Carew Castle and Castell Henllys offer opportunities to recognise for the artistic, historic, and social cultures.

Local artists are now exhibiting at Oriel y Parc.

Bi-lingual services are provided under an approved Welsh Language Scheme.

We will take the following Actions to deliver these Outcomes:

- a. Investigate new technology opportunities to promote cultural activities
- b. Encourage use of the Welsh language and local dialects
- c. Promote traditional land management and building techniques
- d. Use our centres and activities to promote and demonstrate cultural heritage
- e. Continue to exhibit some of the collection of the National Museum of Wales
- f. Showcase the work of local artists
- g. Pilot musical events at Oriel y Parc in partnership with the St. Davids Festival.

Outcome 8 - The Authority is recognised as meeting good practice standards in terms of governance, providing value for money and listening to the views of residents, visitors and partners

To achieve this outcome

We will work to meet standards of good practice in terms of governance, fairness and efficiency, and we will work with residents, visitors and partners.

We will be succeeding in delivering this outcome when:

- a. We receive a favourable Corporate Review and Annual Improvement Report each year from Wales Audit Office;
- b. We meet the targets in Strategic Grant letter;
- c. Customer satisfaction levels are improving;
- d. We maintain our position as a good employer, with engagement levels remaining high
- e. We retain Investors in People
- f. Improvement in the number of valid complaints and compliments
- g. The trend in the number of serious health & safety incidents is reducing
- h. The majority of our media coverage is positive or neutral

Where are we now

The Annual Improvement Report from Wales Audit Office refers to several instances of good practices and identifies areas where some improvements might be considered. The performance of our planning service has improved significantly since 2007, with 65% or more of applications determined within the 8 week target. The Authority Members have been trained in scrutiny

procedures and have undertaken two pilot scrutiny projects. A development plan is prepared for Members. A review of the National Park Management Plan is underway. Savings of over £150,000 were achieved during 2011.

We will take the following Actions to deliver these Outcomes:

- a. Improve the response times for both pre-application enquiries and planning applications
- b. Continue to implement efficiency savings, joint working, benchmarking and sharing experiences
- c. Improve performance management and include benchmarking data
- d. Develop ways to measure and improve our customer satisfaction levels
- e. Commence on a process of reviewing the effectiveness of our Support Services
- f. Introduce a formal scrutiny process
- g. Apply for accreditation of the Advanced Charter for Members
- h. Publish an interim review of National Park Plan and develop a methodology for state of the park reporting by 2012/13
- i. Commence work on a document management system for the planning service to improve internet access for planning information.
- j. Implement new IT systems for finance and HR.
- k. Develop methodology to measure the quality and added value of the planning service

