

NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

12th December 2012

Present: Councillor JA Brinsden (Chair)
Mr A Archer, Councillor P Harries, Councillors M James, B Kilmister,
Mrs A Lee, PJ Morgan, R Owens and DWM Rees, Mr EA Sangster,
Mrs M Thomas and Councillors AW Wilcox and M Williams

*[Ms C Gwyther arrived during consideration of item 2 Chairman's
Announcements; Councillor Mrs L Jenkins arrived during
consideration of item 13 Mobile Infrastructure Project]*

(NPA Offices, Llanion Park, Pembroke Dock: 10.00am – 12.20pm)

1. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Mr D Ellis, Mrs G Hayward and Councillor RM Lewis

2. Chairman's Announcements

The Chairman began the meeting by welcoming Mr Lionel Spencer and Mr John Roberts who would be presenting reports to the meeting that morning. He also wished to welcome back Councillor P Morgan. He went on to report that since the last meeting, the Authority had successfully hosted the Welsh Members' Seminar at which we had been pleased to welcome the Minister John Griffiths, Professor Peter Matthews, Mr John Davies and Ms Carole-Anne Davies as speakers. A meeting had also been held with Professor Matthews who outlined his vision for Natural Resources Wales. Councillor Brinsden reported that he had also spoken at a national Blue Flag operators conference, attended a service at St Davids Cathedral to commemorate St John's Ambulance and laid a wreath on behalf of the Authority at the cenotaph in Haverfordwest. Forthcoming engagements included a meeting with the Minister John Griffiths and a service organised by the Friends of the Pembrokeshire National Park at St Davids Cathedral to celebrate the end of its 60th Anniversary Year.

Councillor M Williams wished to record his thanks to those who had been involved with the Members' Seminar as he believed it had been one of the best with regards to content and organisation in recent years.

NOTED.

3. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on the 26th September 2012 and 21st November 2012 were presented for confirmation and signature.

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on the 26th September 2012 and 21st November 2012 be confirmed and signed.



3. **Matters arising**

(a) Training Lecture (Minute 16)

The Monitoring Officer reported that this training had taken place following the Development Management Committee on 24th October 2012.

NOTED.

(b) Sageston Landholding (Minute 17)

Despite repeated contact with officers from Pembrokeshire County Council, a Section 106 Agreement had not been progressed. It was now likely to be January before this took effect.

NOTED.

(c) Car Parks (Minute 18)

The Chief Executive reported that the Director of Delivery and Discovery together with the Business and Performance Manager had met with officers at Pembrokeshire County Council and progress had been made. Information was now being collated which would be passed to PCC in the new year and it was hoped to start the formal procedure at the end of January 2013. He also reported that a proposal had been received from Solva Community Council regarding management of the Solva Car Park. A report on this would be brought to the next meeting of the Authority.

NOTED.

4. **Development Management Committee – Report of Meetings**

It was **RESOLVED** that the reports of the meetings of the Development Management Committee held on the 22nd August 2012, 3rd September 2012, 26th September 2012 and 24th October 2012 be received.

5. **Scrutiny Committee – Report of Meetings**

was **RESOLVED** that the reports of the meetings of the Scrutiny Committee held on the 22nd August and 12th September 2012 be adopted.

6. **Sustainable Development Fund Committee – Report of Meeting**

It was **RESOLVED** that the reports of the meeting of the Sustainable Development Fund Committee held on the 3rd October 2012 be adopted.

7. **Conservation and Planning Review Committee – Report of Meeting**

It was **RESOLVED** that the reports of the meeting of the Conservation and Planning Review Committee held on the 17th October 2012 be adopted.

8. **Member Development Strategy Working Group – Report of Meeting**

It was **RESOLVED** that the reports of the meeting of the Member Development Strategy Working Group held on the 24th October 2012 be adopted.

9. **Chief Executive's Performance Review Panel – Report of Meeting**

It was **RESOLVED** that the reports of the meeting of the Chief Executive's Performance Review panel held on 7th November 2012 be adopted.



10. Audit and Corporate Services Review Committee – Report of Meeting

It was **RESOLVED** that the reports of the meeting of the Audit and Corporate Services Review Committee held on 7th November 2012 be adopted.

11. Standards Committee – Report of Meeting

It was **RESOLVED** that the reports of the meeting of the Standards Committee held on the 14th November 2012 be adopted.

12. Improvement Assessment and Annual Audit Letter

The Chairman welcomed Mr John Roberts from the Wales Audit Office to the meeting to present the report of the Auditor General which assessed the work of the Authority in discharging its duties under, and whether it had met the requirements of, the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009. The letter concluded that the Authority had discharged its improvement reporting duties under the Measure and had acted in accordance with Welsh Government guidance. It had published a useful and readable Improvement Plan that incorporated wide ranging comparisons however it also concluded that omissions and inaccuracies in some of the data contained within it weakened the Improvement Plan and made it more difficult for the Authority to set suitable targets for the future with specific examples being given. No statutory recommendations for the forthcoming year had been made, however the letter included a proposal for improvement seeking to ensure that information relating to measures of success were accurate and regularly reported to Members.

The Chief Executive highlighted the positive working relationship between the Authority and the Wales Audit Office and assured Members that officers would be acting and responding positively to the points made in the letter. The Chairman then thanked Mr Roberts for his presentation.

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

13. Mobile Infrastructure Project

The Chairman welcomed Mr Lionel Spencer of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport to the meeting to give a presentation on the mobile infrastructure project and the possible implications of it for the National Park. Thanking him for the opportunity to come and speak at the meeting, Mr Spencer explained that approximately 2% of the population of the United Kingdom had no mobile connectivity ie no signal on any network within 200m of their property. This was known as a 'not spot' and there were 6 clusters of 'not spots' within the National Park based on the information provided by the network operators. The purpose of the Mobile Infrastructure Project (MIP) was therefore to improve connectivity across the UK by erecting masts, subject to planning permission, in those areas where it was not commercially viable or where the building of infrastructure had been unsuccessful for planning reasons.

The Department was currently in the process of procurement for the project and it was hoped to get a supplier on board by the end of March 2013. They would then prepare a radio plan for the whole of the UK. State Aid approval had to be gained from Brussels and agreement also needed to be reached with mobile



operators that all infrastructure would be placed on the one mast and that any new entrants into the market had the same access. It was hoped that the masts would be 4G ready which might also assist those properties which were unable to access broadband from their fixed telephone lines.

Construction had to be started by 2015 and work had already begun in Brecon Beacons National Park which was in Phase 1 of the project. There some of the masts would be very large to allow line of site to existing infrastructure. In preparation landowners across the country were being identified who might be interested in hosting masts, although attempts were being made to keep operational costs down to make sites more attractive to operators. Although the 'not spots' were displayed for Members on a map, it was not possible to share the data, and therefore the exact location of these, with the Authority at present. Priority was determined by the number of premises affected by the 'not spots' and it was acknowledged that this was flawed in National Parks due to the high number of visitors.

Members sought clarification on the height of the masts likely to be needed in Pembrokeshire and were advised that until the radio plan was carried out it was impossible to tell. Although it was acknowledged that everyone wanted network coverage, some Members expressed concern over the impact of masts on the natural beauty of the National Park. Mr Spencer explained that pre-application discussions would be held before applications were submitted, however if there was a groundswell of opposition anywhere, a different site would be sought – masts would not be forced on any community. Therefore he considered that early engagement with communities was crucial and any efforts the Authority could make to facilitate this would be helpful.

The Chairman thanked Mr Spencer for attending the meeting.

NOTED.

14. Supplementary Planning Guidance: Recreation – Report of Consultation

Members were reminded that the Recreation Supplementary Planning Guidance had been approved for public consultation by the National Park Authority at its meeting on 13th June 2012. Wide consultation had taken place, and details of this were set out in the report. A total of 2 organisations had responded with 4 individual comments of support having been made and these were appended to the report. As a result there were no recommended changes to the document. It was therefore recommended that the Guidance be adopted.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- a) The Officer Response set out in Appendix 1 to the report be agreed as the National Park Authority response to the consultation.
- b) The Recreation Supplementary Planning Guidance to the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Local Development Plan be adopted for development management purposes.



15. **Consultation on the Choicehomes@Pembrokeshire Allocation Policy (Draft)**

The Choicehomes@Pembrokeshire Allocation Policy described how the allocation of social housing properties already in existence, and those newly constructed and handed to Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) to manage, would take place within Pembrokeshire. It was noted that the Authority sought to secure voluntary lettings agreements with all RSLs on properties built within the National Park, but in the absence of such an agreement, the Choicehomes@Pembrokeshire Allocation Policy was used. This had recently been revised and was the subject of a consultation exercise. The closing date for responses was 4th December and the Authority's draft response, which was set out in the report, had been forwarded to Pembrokeshire County Council with the proviso that it required the formal agreement of the Authority and might be subject to change.

Officers had proposed one change to the Policy, that reference in paragraph 13.5 be made to 'the Community Council and adjacent Community Council area' rather than the 'Electoral Ward'.

It was **RESOLVED** that the response to the consultation 'The Choicehomes@Pembrokeshire Allocation Policy' as set out in the report be approved.

16. **Draft Supplementary Planning Guidance on Low Impact Development Making a Positive Contribution (One Planet Developments)**

Due to the introduction of new Guidance from Welsh Government, the Authority's Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) on Low Impact Development Making a Positive Contribution, or One Planet Developments as they were now known, had been revised. Members approval was therefore sought to carry out a public consultation exercise on this draft Supplementary Planning Guidance which had been prepared to support the policies and proposals of the Local Development Plan.

Members asked if there were any significant changes from the current SPG, and were advised that the changes were slight and reflected national guidance. With regard to Requirement D (page 8 of the SPG), one Member asked if this could be strengthened by highlighting National Park Purposes and the Head of Park Direction agreed that a reference could be included prior to the document being circulated for consultation.

It was **RESOLVED** that Local Development Plan draft Supplementary Planning Guidance Low Impact development Making a Positive Contribution (One Planet Developments) be approved for public consultation, subject to the inclusion of a reference to National Park Purposes under Requirement D.

17. **Woodland Policy**

The report before Members was for information and provided a summary of why and how the Authority was involved in woodland management. This would provide Members with a context ahead of a more specific report on the Cilrhedyn Woodland Centre that would be brought to a future meeting of the Authority.



NOTED.

18. Risk Register

Members were reminded that at the previous meeting of the Authority, they had approved a recommendation that Members be more involved in monitoring the Authority's more significant risks. The risk register currently listed 51 risks, and it was now proposed that Members should monitor all these risks and a suggested allocation was appended to the report.

It was anticipated that Members would be involved in monitoring, not direct management of the risks, and further guidance would be provided in a report to a future meeting.

It was **RESOLVED** that Member involved in risk management be approved and the allocation of risks to be monitored be agreed as set out in the appendix to the report.

19. Draft Corporate Strategy

Members were reminded that following a series of workshops involving senior staff and Members, the draft Corporate Strategy 2013/14 had been produced to reflect the performance achieved during the year and changes that it was desired to achieve during 2013/14. The number of Improvement Outcomes had been reduced from 8 to 4 in an attempt to make the document more strategic in nature. Further detail would then be provided in team and section plans. Members were invited to comment on the draft, which would be brought back to the February meeting of the Authority for approval.

While supporting the Strategy, one Member suggested that supporting and developing links with businesses could be given greater attention under Outcome 3 the document. The Business and Performance Manager replied that this was an area that it was difficult to measure and the Strategy therefore concentrated on working with sustainable tourism businesses. Another Member asked for a chart which showed the interrelationship of the Authority's vast array of documents and plans. The Manager advised that he could provide the Member with a hierarchy which might help clarify the situation.

NOTED.

20. Conservation Area Grants Administration

Members were reminded that the Conservation Area Grant Scheme had been in operation since 1988 with the aim of conserving the exterior fabric of historic buildings within the National Park's 14 Conservation Areas. To date 402 (21%) of the historic buildings within the Conservation Areas had received grants totalling £9.7 million. The annual budget had been £100,000 (contributions of £50,000 each from CADW and the Authority) with demand far exceeding supply every year.

The report set out the current criteria, selection process and means of allocating the funds. The reporting mechanism was by means of an information report to



the former Conservation Area Grants panel and latterly to the Conservation and Planning Review Committee with Members having had no involvement in consideration of appropriate criteria or in influencing decisions. This was considered to be a shortcoming and therefore future operation of the Scheme was being reviewed.

The report recommended a criteria-based delegation procedure, similar to that currently used with planning applications. It was also proposed to revise the intervention rate and to cap grant aid at a maximum of £20,000, CADW had indicated their support in principle for these proposals, and their contribution formed an important element of the scheme. The report therefore recommended that the NPA grant would only be available if there was match funding from CADW or a similar body.

Members asked whether it was likely that funding would be forthcoming from CADW next year and if not, what would happen to the budgeted £50k. Officers advised that CADW were not in a position to say what would happen in the forthcoming year and if no money was forthcoming, the decision as to how the £50k would be spend would be brought back to the Committee.

It was **RESOLVED**:

(a) Subject to CADW's agreement, the PCNPA Conservation Area Grants be administered in the following way:

1. The grant is discretionary
2. The NPA grant will only be available if there is match funding by CADW (or a similar body).
3. Only Listed and unlisted buildings predating 1939 are eligible.
4. Only available to properties falling within conservation areas
5. Limited to owners with freehold or more than 7 years leasehold interest in the property
6. All types of properties are eligible.
7. The grants are not means-tested
8. The grants are capped at no more than 25% of the eligible conservation works or to a maximum of £20,000 excluding VAT.
9. No property can benefit from more than 3 grants in any 10 year period
10. The grants are subject to a three-year claw-back provision, which is registered with the Land Registry.

(b) That priority be given to:

1. Listed buildings on the 'at risk' register
2. Buildings of historic/architectural/social importance (as identified in the Conservation Proposals Document)
3. Buildings in poor condition (as identified in the Conservation Proposals Document)
4. Buildings requiring aesthetic improvement/replacement of lost features.

(c) That the Chief Executive, Director of Park Direction and Planning and Head of Planning are delegated authority to process and determine all



grant applications which are less than £10,000. (Grants over this amount are to be determined by National Park Authority).

(d) That the Conservation and Planning Review Committee receive an annual report on the previous year's achievements and the properties benefiting from the new year's allocation.

(e) That the scheme is advertised on the PCNPA website and with community councils and through CADW.

21. Welsh Government Consultation – Proposed Changes to Non-Domestic Permitted Development Rights

The Head of Development Management reported that the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (GPDO) listed those developments and changes of use that were permitted development and as such did not require a formal planning application. The Welsh Government was consulting on proposed changes to Parts 3, 8 and 32 (relating to Changes of Use, Industrial and Warehouse development and Schools, Colleges, Universities and Hospitals respectively) of the GPDO and also to proposed new Permitted Development Rights for office buildings, shops and financial services establishments. These were intended to improve the operation of the planning system by reducing the minor, uncontentious planning applications, allowing local planning authorities to concentrate on the more complex applications and by reducing unnecessary regulation help to stimulate economic recovery for small and medium sized businesses.

The new approach looked at impacts rather than traditional volume and size criteria and many excluded buildings in National Parks. The report set out the main changes affecting National Parks and the Authority's response was provided at Appendix A.

It was **RESOLVED** that the recommendation set out in Appendix A of the report be endorsed.

22. Retention of Investors in People Accreditation

The report informed Members that the Authority had successfully retained its Investors in People accreditation at the recent review, and the assessment report was attached to the report.

Members were pleased that the Authority had been successful in retention of the accreditation.

NOTED.

23. Welsh Language Scheme: Annual Monitoring Report

Members were reminded that the Authority had an adopted Welsh Language Scheme which set out how the Authority would give effect to the principle that, in the conduct of public business in Wales, it would treat English and Welsh languages on a basis of equality. The Authority was required to prepare an annual Monitoring Report, which had been circulated to Members prior to the



meeting, on its performance against the scheme and to submit this to the Welsh Language Commissioner's Office.

It was **RESOLVED** that the report be endorsed as the Authority's submission to the Welsh Language Commissioner.

24. Exclusion of the Public

It was **RESOLVED** that the public should be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following items due to the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 14 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972

25. Change of Banking Arrangements

The Finance Manager reported that a recent tender exercise reviewing the Authority's banking arrangements had resulted in the receipt of responses from a number of financial institutions. Taking into consideration the credit rating, cost of service and convenience of location for the main High Street Banks, it was proposed to change the Authority's bank from HSBC to Lloyds TSB. Careful consideration had been given to such a recommendation, with one of the main considerations being the closure by HSBC of the branch in Pembroke Dock and the imminent closure of the branch in St Davids, meaning that the cost of staff time to undertake the banking would increase due to travel to other branches.

It was therefore **RESOLVED**:

- a) that the contract for the provision of banking services be awarded to Lloyds TSB
- b) It was further resolved that the Bank be authorised to accept the list of signatories, properly authorised in accordance with the Authority's mandates, both now and in the future, and therefore confirm that those signatories to the Authority's accounts, are duly authorised to act as signatories of the Authority.

The following are individuals authorised to sign on behalf of the council's behalf at this time and are to be signatories on the said account(s). These individuals, being employees of the Authority are:- Tegryn Jones, Jane Gibson, James Parkin, Alan Hare & Richard Griffiths.

26. Possible Purchase of Replacement Work Base

The Head of Park Delivery explained that the Authority's wardens were organised into 3 area teams covering the north, west and south of the National Park with bases currently located at Cilrhedyn, Haverfordwest and Sageston/Carew respectively. As the Authority was hoping to sell the Sageston site, it was necessary to look at an alternative base for the south team. A variety of locations had been considered, including partnership arrangements with other organisations, and a potential site had now been identified which met the identified need. Agreement was therefore sought from Members to authorise officers to negotiate the acquisition of this site.



Members asked whether a suitable budget had been identified, and this was confirmed.

It was **RESOLVED** that officers be authorised to negotiate the acquisition of a replacement warden team base covering the southern sector of the National Park subject to the satisfactory agreement of purchase price, planning and access.

27. Seasons Greetings

The Chairman concluded the meeting by wishing everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

