

**REPORT OF THE HEALTH AND TOURISM POLICY OFFICER**

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**SUBJECT: HEALTH AND WELLBEING AND THE NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY**

Purpose of Report

A discussion document relating the Authority's developing, and significant role in relation to the health and wellbeing of both local and national communities. A position statement on health and wellbeing is proposed along with priority actions for the Authority.

Background

The National Park has been designated as a 'protected landscape' because of the special qualities found in its unique environment. This environment rich in natural and historic heritage is a unique health and wellbeing resource for both residents and visitors alike. The National Park and the Authority has a part to play in addressing poor health and associated wellbeing issues such as poverty and social exclusion. This can be for the people in Pembrokeshire, its neighbouring counties and across Wales as a whole.

The Welsh Government makes clear links between the social and economic wellbeing of the nation with social inclusion and good health. Communities and the people within them need to be free from the negative effects of poverty in order to be healthy, cohesive and economically sustainable. Wales has higher than average levels of physical inactivity and poor health in comparison to other European countries, and some communities in Pembrokeshire have mortality rates that are among the highest in Europe. Statistics suggest Wales is getting poorer at a faster rate than the rest of the UK, with a third of Welsh children now living in poverty. The promotion of good health and wellbeing outcomes for all members of our society is of key concern to the Authority.

The Authority's role in conservation and protection of the National Parks special qualities provides the Authority with a clear understanding of ecosystems and the role or 'services' ecosystems provide in relation to health and wellbeing. There is a wealth of evidence showing that the environment plays a vital role in supporting the health and wellbeing of people in two key ways. Firstly National Parks provide the settings in which activities that promote good health and wellbeing can take place. These include 'active' benefits as walking and 'passive' benefits such as those gained through 'tranquillity' or inspirational scenery. Secondly, National Parks support the good quality environments that are essential to maintaining clean air, water and land without which human health would suffer. This role in 'health protection' is well understood in terms of public health and the environment. The environments and ecosystems where humans live can be damaging or beneficial to population health. A 'health asset' is any factor or resource which enables individuals, communities and populations to maintain their health and wellbeing. This National Park is a 'health asset' and has a key part to play in the health of the nation.

## Understanding Health and Wellbeing

The Authority understands that good human health depends upon a good quality environment made possible by a flourishing and diverse ecosystem. The Authority is working with a range of national and local bodies to tackle some of the social determinants of health. The Authority understands that the good health of individuals, communities and Nations gives rise to other wellbeing benefits both social and economic. The Authority is striving to unlock the potential health benefits of the countryside to ensure the good health of Pembrokeshire's local and visiting population.

Contemporary medicine increasingly uses expensive and complex interventions such as surgery and pharmaceuticals for both prevention and treatment for many of the afflictions attributed to modern life such as obesity, heart disease and cancer. Many of these afflictions are disproportionately experienced by those most disadvantaged by poverty in our society. There is a move by public health and social care sectors in Wales to tackle some of the root causes of ill health and looks to deliver health and social care beyond the traditional service models.

Within Wales and Pembrokeshire there are significant social, economic and environmental variations between those communities with the poorest health and those with the best health. These health differences play out most notably in terms of poor quality of life and limited opportunities in life and consequently have clear links to poverty. These health differences are explained by 'social determinants of health', and are the economic and social conditions that influence individual and group differences in health status. These determinants are risk factors found in living and occupational conditions that influence the risk for a disease or vulnerability to disease or injury. The determinants are not individual factors, such as behaviour or genetics. *(See Appendix 1 : Social Determinants of Health and Wellbeing and the National Park).*

It is important to note that developing tools to measure the value of the health and well-being benefits raises particular challenges. This is simply because the benefits that arise from contact with environmental settings and undertaking outdoor exercise results from a complex interaction between variables of a social, environmental and individual nature. The often subjective outcomes are based upon qualitative data. Outcomes can also take a long time to play out within a population. However health and wellbeing outcomes may be extrapolated from other data sources such as employment figures or other measures of poverty or social status.

**To develop and enhance the activities of the Authority so that it further supports improvements in public health and social wellbeing through interaction with the National Park, we consider that:**

- Everyone is entitled to experience the National Park because it can maintain and restore health and help to improve social and mental wellbeing

- Everyone should have easy access to the National Park regardless of their individual situation, however experiences of poor health, poverty and social exclusion negatively impact upon people's ability and opportunities to access the National Park and the special places within it
- The National Park and its special qualities is able to provide economic, social and health benefits essential to developing economically sustainable communities that will reduce health inequalities, reduce poverty and promote social inclusion
- Healthy and sustainable communities can be brought about through developing partnership with our communities and the organisations, public bodies and people concerned with the National Park
- Interaction with nature must be achieved sensitively so that people's health and well-being is optimised without compromising the special qualities of the National Park
- The protected landscapes and the associated environments within the National Park must be conserved and protected as they contribute to maintaining and improving public health, social and economic wellbeing .
- Experiences of nature found within our National Park can reduce the negative impacts of poverty and can improve opportunities for social inclusion and improved health.

### Position Statement

*“We will foster a sense of public ownership in relation to the National Park.*

*We will strive to ensure that all members of our community in Pembrokeshire and beyond are able to benefit from the intrinsic restorative and protective qualities of the National Park, its environment and its landscape features. We will endeavour to ensure that those at risk from poor health and poor well-being are able to have access to and participate fully in our National Park.*

*We will strive to protect and conserve the special qualities of the National Park and understand that by doing so we are supporting a high quality environment that is an essential ‘health asset’ to human health and well-being”.*

### **Priority Actions for Health and Wellbeing**

The Three Priority Actions described below reflect the aims of the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Management Plan 2009-2013. Sections detailing ‘Quality of Life’ and ‘Enjoying the National Park’ make explicit links to health and wellbeing. However the health and wellbeing agenda is cross cutting and concerns all other sections of the Management Plan.

Policies relating to directly and indirectly to health and wellbeing that impact both on individuals and communities and in relation to the National Park being a health asset are referenced in Appendix 3.

## Three Priority Actions

### **1. Raise awareness of the health and wellbeing benefits opportunities of the National Park**

In order to communicate how and why the National Park matters, we will:

- Work with and support organisations on the ground in order to engage with local and national communities including using the Authority's administration of the Sustainable Development Fund
- Develop resources including the Authority's 'Enjoy' website to promote the benefits of the natural environment
- Promote the message that the National Park is good for health and wellbeing to Local Authorities, Local Health Boards, Local Service Boards, the Welsh Government and 3<sup>rd</sup> Sector organisations such as West Wales Action for Mental Health.
- Work in partnership with key agencies including Natural Resources Wales, National Health Service, Local Authority, Communities First and third sector organisations such as West Wales Action on Mental Health to deliver work relating to 'health, wellbeing and the natural environment'
- Work in partnership with key agencies including Natural Resources Wales and other third sector organisations to ensure that the special qualities of the National Park including nature, heritage and living landscapes are understood, conserved and protected because of 'health asset' features benefiting public health (ecosystems services)
- Work in partnership with key agencies (as above) to develop opportunities to bring the special qualities of the National Park to people and communities outside the National Park boundary. This will help develop understanding and appreciation of how environments like the National Park can be of benefit to themselves in their own settings.

### **2. Maximise opportunities for all people in Wales to access the health and wellbeing benefits of the National Park's natural environment and landscape features**

We will develop partnerships with individuals, organisations and Welsh Government to promote the health and wellbeing benefits of nature found within the National Park. This will involve:

- Developing the New Economic Foundation '5 Ways to Wellbeing' to frame the work of the Authority's work and use this model to help promote the understanding of the Authority's contribution to health and wellbeing to external partners (*see Appendix 2: 5 Ways to Health and Wellbeing in the National Park*)
- Supporting programmes that enable children to regularly experience outdoor play, recreation and adventure
- Supporting the on-going development of the Public Rights of Way network to include consideration for health and wellbeing impacts

- Supporting organisations and communities that actively involve people in health improvement activities including recreation and sport in the National Park
- Supporting and developing initiatives that offer a range of activities in the National Park that will meet the needs of key target groups
- Helping to address health inequalities by focussing on people who do not readily access nature due to personal, cultural, physical and organisational barriers
- Linking with the health and social care sector to encourage practitioners to include exercise and exposure to the National Park as the primary intervention; and to recommend that their service users participate in projects that involve exposure to the natural environment

### **3. Continue to develop evidence-based policy and practice in relation to health and wellbeing and the natural environment and landscape features**

We will strengthen our own work and partnerships with other organisations to enhance the gathering of evidence and development of policy and practice that will:

- Ensure that health and wellbeing outcomes related to the work of the Authority are considered, accounted for and shared with key partners, including those associated with the Pembrokeshire Single Integrated Plan and Creating an Active Wales
- Ensure that health and wellbeing impacts of Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority policies and programmes are appropriately evidenced through internal monitoring
- Share project examples and learning to help ensure that our health related work in the outdoors is understood by external health bodies and other relevant bodies

#### Compliance

The Position Statement and Priority Actions provide a mechanism for Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority to deliver outcomes 1,2,3 of the '2013-14 Corporate Plan' which highlights the Authority's continuing commitment to ensure that it's work has "a positive, sustainable, impact on the local economy and well-being of Pembrokeshire".

#### Human Rights and Equality issues

The Position Statement and Priority Actions will enhance our work in this area and are likely to improve and contribute to the Authority's commitment to uphold the rights and freedoms contained in Human Rights Act 1998 and relevant equalities legislation.

### Biodiversity/sustainability

The Position Statement and Priority Actions brings attention to the importance of the special qualities of the National Park as protected landscape designation as key aspects of the 'health asset'. This, in turn, should bring a greater degree of acknowledgement and protection to the special qualities of the National Park.

### Welsh Language Statement

Any promotional or other material would be provided in accordance with the Authority's Welsh language policy.

### Recommendations

Members are asked to:

1. Approve the draft Health Position Statement and Priority Actions for the Authority set out in this report.
2. Agree that the Statement and Priority Actions listed be used to inform the current review of the Management Plan and associated Action Plans and the current review of the Authority's Social Inclusion and Child Poverty Action Plan.

*(For further information, please contact Hannah Buck, Health and Tourism Policy Officer, Park Direction, PCNPA)*

*Author: Hannah Buck Health and Tourism Policy Officer Park Direction*

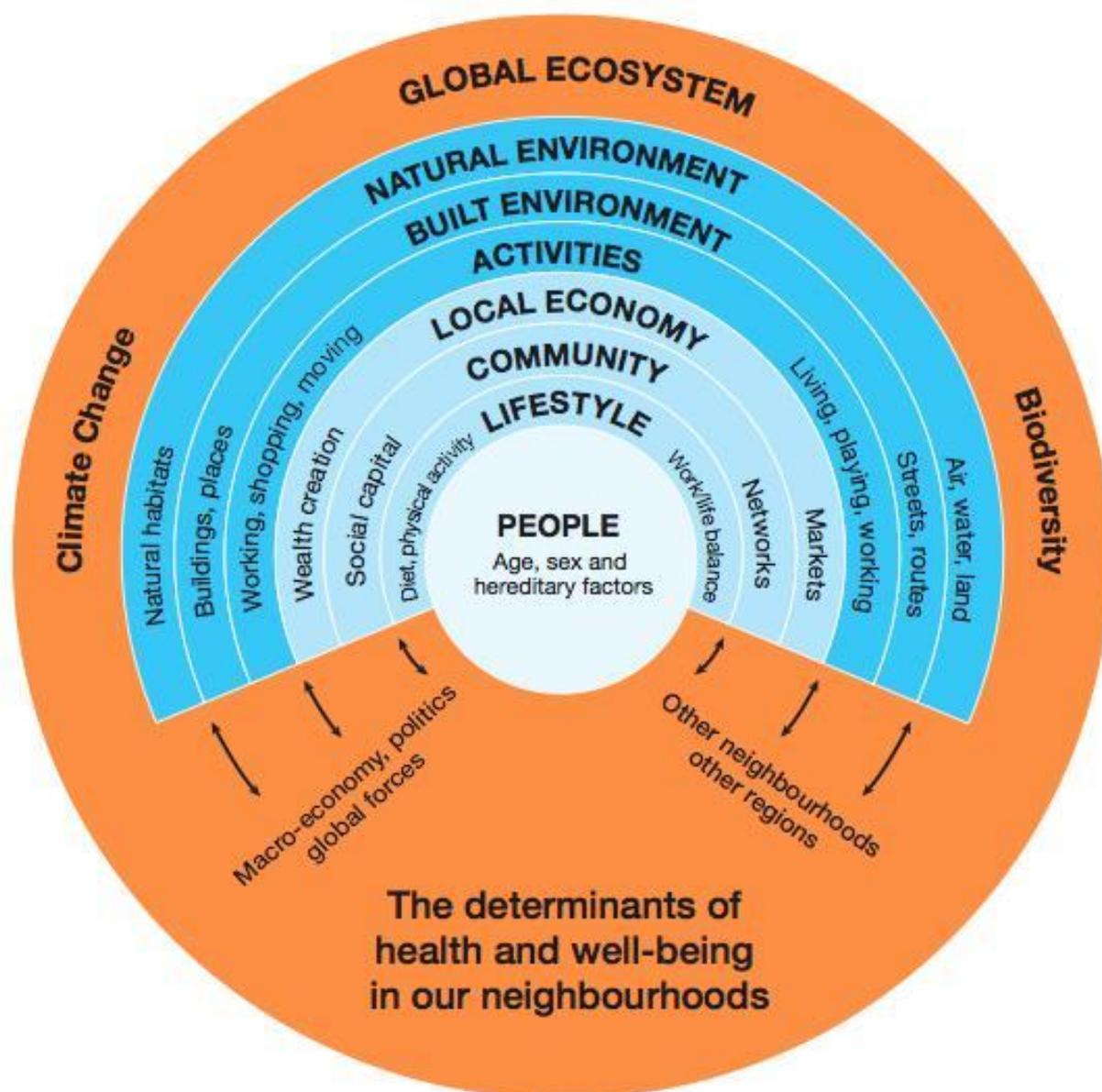
*Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority Consultees:  
James Parkin Director of Delivery and Discovery PCNPA  
Anthony Richards Access Officer PCNPA  
Graham Peake Discovery Team Leader PCNPA  
Libby Taylor Ranger Service Manager PCNPA  
Emma Taylor Sustainable Development Fund Officer PCNPA  
Phil Barlow Monitoring and Sustainability Officer PCNPA*

## Supporting Documents

- [Health and Wellbeing Background Paper](#)
- Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority Management Plan 2009-2013  
<http://www.pembrokeshirecoast.org.uk/Files/files/Conservation/Conservation%20publications/National%20Park%20Management%20Plan%202009-2013-eng.pdf>
- Social Inclusion and Child Poverty Action Plan 2012-2014  
[http://www.nationalparks.gov.uk/npw\\_social\\_inclusion\\_and\\_child\\_poverty\\_strategy\\_and\\_action\\_plan\\_2012-14.pdf](http://www.nationalparks.gov.uk/npw_social_inclusion_and_child_poverty_strategy_and_action_plan_2012-14.pdf)
- Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority Recreation Plan  
<http://www.pembrokeshirecoast.org.uk/Files/files/PCNPA%20Recreation%20Plan%202011%20Low%20Res.pdf>
- Pembrokeshire Single Integrated Plan 2013-07-18  
<http://www.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/content.asp?nav=646,101,126,2182>
- Welsh Government Key Health Statistics For Wales 2012  
<http://wales.gov.uk/docs/statistics/2012/120927keyhealth12en.pdf>
- Public Health Wales NHS Trust (2012) The Wider Determinants of Health  
<http://www.wales.nhs.uk/sitesplus/922/page/60502>
- Five Ways To Wellbeing: The Evidence New Economics Foundation (2008)  
<http://www.neweconomics.org/publications/entry/five-ways-to-well-being-the-evidence>
- Public Health Wales Good Practice Scheme  
<http://www.publicmentalhealth.org/Documents/749/Good%20Practice%20Scheme%20Information%20Booklet%20for%20Initiatives%20Final.pdf>

Appendix 1 Fig.1

Social Determinants of Health and Wellbeing and the National Park.



Barton, H. and Grant, M. (2006) A health map for the local human habitat. *The Journal of the Royal Society for the Promotion of Health*, 126(6), pp252-253. (Adapted from Welsh Assembly Government 2009 : *Our Health Future : Technical Working Paper*)

## Appendix 1 Fig. 2

<b>Determinant of health and wellbeing</b>	<b>Examples of Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority contribution</b>
Global ecosystem and natural environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Responsibilities to conserve and protect the 'special qualities' of the Park through its policies and actions, providing clean and safe environments and good quality food and produce.</li> </ul>
Built environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Local Planning Authority for the National Park</li> <li>- Responsibilities to conserve and protect the 'special qualities' of the Park through its policies and actions.</li> <li>- Policy, guidance and management of the development and management of Park infrastructure including that relating to recreation and housing, and also the local economy such as tourism or agriculture.</li> </ul>
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Through the employment in the Authority.</li> <li>- Through planning policy</li> <li>- Policy, guidance and management of the development and management of Park infrastructure including that relating to recreation and housing, and also the local economy such as tourism or agriculture.</li> <li>- Provision of services and direct work through the Discovery and Delivery Ranger and Warden Teams, including the responsibilities for the footpaths and associated networks.</li> <li>- Communication and marketing of opportunities within the National Park including those relating to activities and events</li> </ul>
Local economy - includes wealth creation and markets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Policy, guidance and management of the development and management of Park infrastructure including that relating to recreation and housing, and also the local economy such as tourism or agriculture.</li> <li>- Communication and marketing of opportunities within the National Park including activities and events and Coast 2 Coast</li> </ul>
Community - social capital and networks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Responsibilities to conserve the 'special qualities' of the Park that include those relating to culture</li> <li>- Provision of services and direct work through the Discovery and Delivery Ranger and Warden Teams that promote community understanding and social cohesion</li> <li>- Communication Team activities including social networking, Coast To Coast and other information developing public awareness such as footpath signage</li> </ul>
Lifestyle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Through planning, policy and others on the development and management recreation, local economy such as tourism or agriculture.</li> <li>- Provision of services that offer 'lifestyle' choices, such as walking and direct work through the Discovery and Delivery Ranger and Warden Teams</li> </ul>

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## **Appendix 2 5 Ways to Health and Wellbeing in the National Park**

### **New Economics Foundation 2011: The 5 ways to well-being model:**

- A set of 5 evidence-based public mental health messages aimed at improving the mental health and overall wellbeing of the whole population
- Understands and defines the health and well-being agendas to be dependent on the wider determinants of health
- Grounded in theory that the wellbeing of individuals and communities as a whole will only be achieved if the well-being of the whole population is nurtured.
- Promotes resilience, moving away from a health care model that focuses on 'treatment' to that of 'prevention' and ultimately towards a healthier happier society as a whole less vulnerable to ill-health.
- Is 'doubly-cost effective' as cost of treating the sick is reduced and also that by improving society as a whole less people get sick.

<b>Key Message</b>	<b>National Park Examples</b>
<p><b>Connect</b>            Feeling close to and valued by other people a fundamental human need and one that contributes to functioning well in the world. Social relationships are critical for promoting wellbeing and for acting as a buffer against mental ill health for people of all ages</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Groups such as Walkability and Your Park.</li> <li>-The protection by Planning of green community space for children to play.</li> <li>-Providing community spaces where groups can meet.</li> <li>-Volunteering with PCNPA and/or other local conservation agencies</li> <li>-SDF support for community projects that help bring people together for their own benefit and the benefit of the wider community</li> </ul>
<p><b>Be Active</b>            Regular physical activity is good for physical health on a wide range of factors and h and is proven to have a positive impact upon mental health including preventing dementia and depression.            Physical activity is also a great way for people to connect with others.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Groups such as Walkability and Your Park.</li> <li>-The Recreation Management Plan</li> <li>-Volunteering opportunities including Voluntary Warden service</li> <li>-The provision of spaces for active pursuits such planning and maintenance of the footpath network and National Trail.</li> <li>-Information - Website Enjoy and main / Coast-2-Coast / NP visitor centres</li> <li>-'Web-walks'</li> </ul>

<p><b>Take Notice</b>  'Taking notice' can strengthen and broaden awareness. Being aware of what is taking place in the present directly enhances well-being and savouring 'the moment' can help to reaffirm people's life priorities. Heightened awareness also enhances people's self-understanding and allows them to make positive choices based on their own values and motivations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Interpretation resources that help people engage with surroundings.</li> <li>-Historical information, tours and talks.</li> <li>-Rangers encouraging people to take notice of changing seasons or report things of concern.</li> <li>-Social media help to raise awareness of 'what's out there' at any time of day)</li> <li>-Providing opportunities for people to access places that encourage them to stop and 'take in the view' via Coast Path, beaches, viewpoints etc.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Learn</b>  Continued learning through life enhances self-esteem and encourages social interaction and a more active life. Evidence shows that the opportunity to engage in work or educational activities particularly helps to lift people out of depression. The practice of setting goals, which is related to adult learning in particular, has been strongly associated with higher levels of wellbeing.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Interpretation/learning resources through the Park.</li> <li>-Your Park and other group work such as the John Muir Award.</li> <li>-Sustainable Development Fund supported activities. Coast-2-Coast</li> <li>-Activities and Events organised by Rangers and partner organisation including 'wildlife sightings', historic talks, school and community education projects .</li> </ul>
<p><b>Give</b>  Participation in social and community life has attracted a lot of attention in the field of wellbeing research. Individuals who report a greater interest in helping others are more likely to rate themselves as happy. Research into actions for promoting happiness has shown that committing an act of kindness once a week over a six-week period is associated with an increase in wellbeing.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Volunteer and charitable opportunities with the park foster a greater sense of 'looking after' the environment.</li> <li>-Opportunities for volunteering and participation in Sustainable Development Fund supported community projects e.g. Pembrokeshire MenCap at Stackpole Gardens, Himalayan Balsam eradication project</li> </ul>

[http://dnwssx4l7gl7s.cloudfront.net/nefoundation/default/page/-/files/Five\\_Ways\\_to\\_Well-being\\_Evidence.pdf](http://dnwssx4l7gl7s.cloudfront.net/nefoundation/default/page/-/files/Five_Ways_to_Well-being_Evidence.pdf)

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## Appendix 3

### Policies

<b>Table 1 Policy Directly Supporting Health and Well-being</b>
A1: Reduce traffic emissions E1 : Promote appropriate type of recreation E2: Remove barriers to people’s enjoyment of the National Park E3: Manage coastal and inland access/recreation opportunities E4: Manage access to inshore and inland waters U1: Promote the National Park as an inspirational basis for lifelong learning U2: Explain organisations’ purposes and values U3: Involve people in decision making U4: Tailor messages to audience and outcome U5: Help people to make lifestyle changes
<b>Table 2 Examples of Policy Supporting the National Park as ‘Health Asset’</b>
A2: Mitigate pollutant/environmental interactions AR3: Raise awareness of the archaeological resource B1: Promote an ecosystem approach to land management B2: Limit the impacts of climate change on biodiversity B3: Promote regional and local conservation-grade food production and consumption B4: Promote an ecosystem approach to marine management B5: Support sustainable fisheries policy B6: Limit the impacts of development on wildlife CC1: Contribute to national targets for energy conservation and efficiency and for renewable energy CC2: Encourage use of public transport and reduce car use CC3: Encourage carbon-sensitive land management CC4: Reduce, repair, reuse, recycle CC5: Reduce risks of/from fluvial and coastal flooding G1: Manage the impacts of development on geodiversity G2: Promote land management which improves soil condition G3: Manage the impacts of climate change on geodiversity G4: Raise awareness of the geological resource H2: Raise awareness of the historic built environment H5: Promote traditional building techniques and local materials L5: Limit noise pollution W1: Manage flow rates and groundwater levels W2: Reduce water pollution W3: Limit the impact of climate change on water resources and quality W4: Reduce marine pollution risks W5: Manage the impact of development on water resources and quality

\*some policies may have cut across both areas.