

**JOINT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**  
**21<sup>st</sup> February 2014**

Present:

Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority representatives:

Members: Mrs G Hayward, Councillor DGM James and Councillor B Kilmister.

Officers: Mr T Jones, Chief Executive and Mrs J Evans, Administration and Democratic Services Manager.

Snowdonia National Park Authority representatives:

Members: Councillor A Gruffydd, Dr I ap Gwynn, Councillor S Jones (in place of Councillor E Edwards), Councillor C Roberts and Mrs E Roberts.

Officers: Mr A Phillips, Chief Executive, Mr I Jones, Director of Corporate and Legal Services, Mr J Cawley, Director of Planning and Cultural Heritage, and Mr E Williams, Director of Land Management (Chief Executive elect).

(Canolfan Rheidol, Aberystwyth: 10.00a.m. – 12.45p.m.  
and 1.15p.m. – 1.50p.m.)

**1. Election of Chair**

It was **UNANIMOUSLY AGREED** that Mrs G Hayward be elected Chair of the Joint Scrutiny Committee.

**2. Election of Deputy Chair**

It was **UNANIMOUSLY AGREED** that Dr Iolo ap Gwynn be elected Deputy Chair of the Joint Scrutiny Committee.

**3. Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor RM Lewis and Mr AE Sangster (Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority), and Councillor E Edwards (Snowdonia National Park Authority).

**4. Disclosures of interest**

No disclosures of interest were received.

**5. Scrutiny in the National Park Authorities**

Mr T Jones stated that, as Members would be aware, the National Park Authorities (NPAs) operated different models of governance to the county and county borough councils and, as such, the scrutiny process implemented by those authorities could not be adopted by the NPAs.

In light of this, and in an effort to identify an effective scrutiny process that could be introduced into the work of the NPAs, both the Pembrokeshire Coast and the Brecon Beacons NPAs embarked on a joint scrutiny project, with Snowdonia NPA taking a watching brief on how the project progressed. The Centre for Public Scrutiny was also involved and provided a number of training sessions aimed at developing the scrutiny skills of those Members taking part. Two scrutiny reviews were also undertaken during the life of the project, one being on the effectiveness of the Sustainable Development Fund in helping to establish low carbon communities, while the second focused on the value and effectiveness of public rights of way.

Mr Jones outlined to Members how the process had been developed and evolved as a result of the project, emphasising the need to plan carefully, to ensure that all available information was to hand before interviewing expert witnesses and, most importantly, to ensure that the review was manageable within a reasonable timeframe.

Questions were asked of the Pembrokeshire Coast Members involved with the scrutiny project with the Brecon Beacons and clarification was sought from officers on a number of points.

Following a discussion, it was **AGREED** that the process outlined by Mr Jones be utilised to undertake the joint scrutiny review in hand.

## **6. Scoping exercise**

Mr T Jones reminded Members that they had been charged by their respective Authorities to undertake a joint scrutiny review in connection with the socio-economic duty of National Park Authorities (NPAs). The exact remit of the review was to be determined by the Joint Committee that day.

To help Members determine the subject matter for the review, Mr Jones suggested that they use the Scoping Proforma that had been devised during the previous joint scrutiny project between the Pembrokeshire Coast and Brecon Beacons National Park Authorities. Members agreed it would be a useful tool and then set about agreeing the specific topic area and a general way forward.

A lengthy discussion ensued where Members concluded that it would be extremely beneficial to gather evidence as to whether existing policies supported sustainable communities. However, in order to keep the review manageable, it was considered that the work should be limited to one specific topic area – micro businesses. It was also considered necessary to secure baseline data from the outset and that this could be carried out by an independent party, e.g. Bangor University.

It was **AGREED**:

- (a) that a review be undertaken to establish how successful National Park Authority policies and work were in supporting job creation in micro businesses;
- (b) that Dr I ap Gwynn, Mr T Jones and Mr A Phillips agree a brief to be submitted to an independent party (e.g. Bangor University) for the securement of baseline data on micro businesses within and immediately adjoining the three Welsh National Park Authorities;
- (c) that Mr A Phillips liaise with Arup Consultants in relation to information that has already been collected concerning micro businesses within and immediately adjoining the three Welsh National Park Authorities;
- (d) that representatives from the under-mentioned organisations/bodies, together with a selection of individuals from the sectors referred to below, be invited either to present or submit written evidence to the Joint Scrutiny Committee:

Constituent County Councils (Local Authority Business Advisory Services);

Businesses in the National Parks who have experience of the planning process;

Farmers in the National Parks, particularly those who have diversified their business;

Federation of Small Businesses;

Farmers' Union of Wales, National Farmers' Union and the Country

Land and Business Association;

Town and Community Councils;

Chambers of Trade;

Planning agents;

Rural Development / Tourism Partnerships, including Visit Wales;

Licensed Victuallers' Association;

Outdoor Charter Groups;

Young Farmers' Club and Youth Councils;

Community Groups, and

Welsh Government (in connection with broadband infrastructure)

- (e) that the next meeting be arranged for April 2014, and
- (f) that the scrutiny review be completed by autumn 2014.