

REPORT OF CHIEF EXECUTIVE

SUBJECT: UPDATE AND PROGRESS REPORT ON THE WELSH GOVERNMENT'S PLANNING PROJECT: JOINT WORKING OF PEMBROKESHIRE COAST NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY AND PEMBROKESHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL PLANNING SERVICES

Purpose of Report

To update members on this project and to request agreement and instruction as to the way forward

Introduction

Members may recollect that Carl Sargeant, the Minister for Regeneration and Housing with a responsibility for planning throughout Wales held a meeting with representatives of this Authority on 16th January 2014. He was accompanied by his Head of Planning – Rosemary Thomas. He met with the Chair of the National Park Authority and the Chair of Development Management together with the Chief Executive, Director of Park Direction and Planning and Head of Development Management.

At that meeting it was put by the Minister to Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority (PCNPA) that he was seeking to set up a pilot between Pembrokeshire County Council (PCC) and PCNPA to engage a collaborative planning service of the two planning authorities with a main thrust on Development Management procedures being similar.

Following that meeting, the Chairman wrote to the Minister outlining how PCNPA envisaged it could work. See Annex A. The Ministers response is included as Annex B. As a result of this letter it became clear that there was a difference of opinion between the Minister and ourselves on the purposes and usefulness of a pilot. The main differences related to our suggestion that Ceredigion should be included in the pilot and the Minister did not agree with our suggestion that the pilot should take 2 years. This led to a further meeting with the Minister, which took place on 6th February 2014. At this meeting we agreed that the Minister would arrange a meeting with Senior Members of PCNPA and PCC to agree the political dimension of the pilot and that PCNPAs participation would be dependent on Members agreeing a suitable brief.

A meeting between Senior Members of PCNPA and PCC and the Minister took place on 2nd April 2014. This was a cordial meeting to discuss the way forward, however, it was reiterated at that meeting the need for PCNPA participation to be approved by our Members. The Minister agreed with this.

Although Welsh Government officers were in attendance at the three meetings mentioned above, we have not received minutes of any of the meetings.

Officers have also had parallel meetings with Welsh Government officers at Carmarthen on 13 February 2014 and 4 April 2014. Another is due on Friday 13 June 2014.

Proposal for the Project

On 16th April we received a draft proposal for the project. See Annex C.

On 25th April the Chief Executive submitted a response. See Annex D.

Two reminder e-mails were sent on 16th May and 23rd May. These e-mails were acknowledged with an indication that there would be a response from the Welsh Government. As of 4th June 2014 we have not received a response or a revised proposal from the Welsh Government.

Financial considerations

These are unknown until we are clear what the project will involve. It is inevitable that participation in this project will take up a significant amount of staff time. If no additional funding is forthcoming from the Welsh Government, we expect participation in the project will impact on our short term performance.

Risk considerations

The current political context highlights significant risks, from both participating and deciding not to participate. The direction of travel from the Welsh Government appears to be to reduce the number of Planning Authorities, however, there is little clarity on what impact this will have on the Planning status of National Park Authorities.

While not directly linked to the pilot project, it should be noted that the Authority's Head of Development Management has resigned to take up a role at the Planning Inspectorate. It should also be noted that PCCs Head of Planning and Ceredigion's Head of Development Management have also resigned to move to the Planning Inspectorate. The Welsh Government wishes to see more joint appointments, and in view of this we have contacted PCC to discuss the possibility of a joint appointment.

Conclusion

The report outlines a 5 month process of discussion on this issue. However, we are currently unable to provide a clear proposal for Members consideration. In view of this we seek the advice of Members on the way ahead.

Recommendation

Members are asked to provide clarification and confirmation on how they would wish to engage with this project and how to prioritise such work.

Background Documents

As set out in the appendixes to this report

(For further information, please contact Tegryn Jones and Jane Gibson)

Annex A

23rd January 2014

Mr Carl Sargeant, AM
Minister for Housing and Regeneration
Welsh Government
5th Floor
Tŷ Hywel
Cardiff Bay
CF99 1NA

Dear Minister

Providing Excellent Customer Service through a Virtual Planning Partnership

Thank you for coming to see us on 16 January 2014. My members and officers felt that you had indeed considered the opportunity for joint-working in some detail and that you were committed to seeing through a pilot on this matter. At the meeting I was conscious that we did not expand in any detail what this pilot could specifically involve and therefore I thought it opportune to put pen to paper to set out a draft (see attached) of how we consider this could work for Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority. Clearly these are only initial thoughts and could be useful for discussion at the meeting of officers on 13 February 2014.

I will write separately on the other points raised – affordable housing provision and agricultural occupancy restrictions.

Yours sincerely



**Councillor Michael James
Chairman**



**Awdurdod
Parc Cenedlaethol
Arfordir Penfro**
Parc Llanion, Doc Penfro
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**Pembrokeshire Coast
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*Croesawn ohebiaeth
yn Gymraeg a Saesneg
We welcome correspondence
in English and Welsh*



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BUDDSODDWR MEWN POBL
INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Providing Excellent Customer Service through a Virtual Planning Partnership - Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority and Pembrokeshire County Council Planning Pilot project.

Introduction

The Welsh Government has invited both the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority (PCNPA) and Pembrokeshire County Council (PCC) to undertake a pilot project to further develop collaboration in relation to Planning. Both organisations have accepted this invitation and will work on the project with the support of the Welsh Government Planning Department.

Background

Since 1996 PCNPA has been the Planning Authority for the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park, while PCC have been the Planning Authority for the remainder of Pembrokeshire. From 2006 to 2010 both Authorities shared a Joint Unitary Development Plan. However, since 2010 both have separate and adopted Local Development Plans.

The status of PCNPA as a Planning Authority has been a contentious issue for some since 1996, with several attempts by PCC to argue that they should deliver the planning function for the whole of Pembrokeshire. The recent report by the Commission on Public Service Governance and Delivery (CPSGD) in January 2014 appear to once and for all have dismissed the notion that the functions of National Park Authorities should be delivered by Local Authorities. The pilot project needs to be considered in the context of the CPSGD.

The CPSGD report also recommended the merger of PCC with either Ceredigion County Council or with both Ceredigion County Council and Carmarthenshire County Council. While it was also recommended that the Welsh Government considers the benefits of creating one Authority to manage the three National Parks in Wales. Therefore there is a possibility, or even a likelihood, that both PCC and PCNPA will be part of new, bigger organisations within the next three years.

In view of this, and to prevent a waste of resources it is suggested that:

- the Welsh Government consider the value of continuing with the pilot at this current time;
- on the assumption that the Welsh Government wish to continue with the pilot, consideration should be given to involving other partners. At a minimum consideration needs to be given to inviting Ceredigion County Council to participate;
- the project partners need to focus effort on elements of the service that will survive the merger of organisations;
- consideration needs to be given to enabling the pilot to be expanded to include other organisations in the future; and
- consideration needs to be given to developing a model that could be implemented by planning authorities across Wales.

Focus/outcomes

It is proposed that the pilot project will focus on two outcomes:

- providing excellent customer service; and
- developing the resilience of both partners to provide excellent customer service.

The pilot should also ensure that it makes a positive contribution towards:

- Good Governance;
- Transparent decision making;
- Conserving the National Park, in accordance with the requirements of the Environment Act (1995);
- Enhancing sustainable development in Pembrokeshire.

The pilot should only consider issues that add value to the above.

A successful pilot can improve the service provided by both authorities to the customer. This can be achieved by managing knowledge and harnessing the skills and experience of a larger pool of planners that creates a “win-win” situation for both authorities and the public.

Focusing on structures and “who does what”, which has been a feature of the debate on planning in Pembrokeshire for almost 20 years adds no value and should be avoided. Value can be added by focusing on developing common processes and procedures and sharing knowledge and expertise rather than focusing on structures or who employs staff. Therefore the following will be accepted as starting points:

- The planning policy framework for the two authorities, as illustrated through the respective Local Development Plans, will remain unchanged;
- There will be no change in the decision-making role of Members, i.e. PCNPA Members will determine (non-delegated) applications relevant to the National Park, while the PCC Development Management Committee will determine (non-delegated) applications in the rest of Pembrokeshire;
- Each Authority will retain its current staff and there will be no change in line management of staff.

The pilot will be based on the principles of partnership, collaboration and meeting the needs of the customer.

Managing the Pilot

As a starting point it proposed to set up a Project Board to manage the pilot. The Board will have five members:

- A Member and Officer from PCNPA;
- A Member and Officer from PCC;
- One officer from the Welsh Government.

The group will draft an agree Terms of Reference for the pilot.

The Project Board will meet every three months to review performance and agree future actions.

Possible Activities

While the activities of the pilot will be decided by the Project Board, some options include:

- A review of current working procedures and protocols, with the aim of creating a set of common procedures used by both Authorities;
- Research into effective processes, with the possibility of utilising experts to advise on streamlined processes (subject to available funding);
- Research into the current satisfaction levels of the customer as a starting point to identifying how to improve the service provided to the customer;
- Undertaking a skills audit to identify the skills and expertise of all officers;
- Identification of skills and expertise gaps and developing options to meet these gaps;
- While the norm will be for PCNPA staff to determine applications in the National Park and PCC staff to determine applications in the rest of Pembrokeshire, a protocol needs to be developed to allow cross boundary working if necessary. This could include issues of funding;
- An evaluation of governance and transparency issues relating to cross boundary working;
- The development of a joint programme of training for officers. This should include training on the implementation of both LDPs;
- A review of the use of IT across both Authorities, including enabling the customer to access web based information;
- The identification of opportunities for the joint procurement of services.

Funding

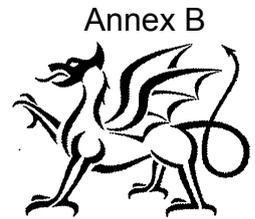
Any costs incurred by the pilot project will be jointly shared between the two Authorities. Will Welsh Government contribute?

Evaluation

The pilot will last for two years. Performance will be reviewed and evaluate every six months based on the following performance measures:

- Improved customer satisfaction with the planning service provided by both Authorities;
- Improvement in performance as measured by the Welsh Government.

Carl Sargeant AC / AM
Y Gweinidog Tai ac Adfywio
Minister for Housing and Regeneration



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref
Ein cyf/Our CS/00117/14

Councillor Michael James
Chairman Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority

pcnp@pembrokeshirecoast.org.uk

11 February 2014

Dear Michael

Thank you for your letter of 23 January, following my visit to Pembroke Dock on 18 January. Our subsequent meeting last week on 6 February was useful to explore how we can work with you in taking forward the pilot project between your Park Authority and Pembrokeshire County Council.

Your letter and enclosure set out your initial thoughts on how you consider the pilot project I outlined - to provide a single, more resilient planning service for both authorities - could work for Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority. You suggested the Welsh Government should consider the value of continuing with the pilot at the current time, that is following publication of the Williams' Report on Public Service Governance and Delivery, or expand it to include Ceredigion County Council as a minimum.

The Welsh Government issued the 'Positive Planning' Consultation Document in December, outlining its proposals for simplifying and improving the planning system, including securing better collaboration, and it is in this spirit that I am keen to take forward this initiative.

Your commitment to delivering a quality, sustainable and resilient planning service to the planning stakeholders in Pembrokeshire is very welcome, and following discussion of your thoughts as expressed in your letter and our subsequent meeting, I believe we are now clearer on how we can go forward.

As you are aware, my officials have set up a meeting with planning officers from both Pembrokeshire County Council and your Authority on 13 February. These discussions will take forward the initial pilot project which we have discussed.

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1NA

*Wedi'i argraffu ar bapur wedi'i ailgylchu (100%)
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Llinell Ymholiadau Cymraeg 0845 010 4400
Correspondence: Carl.Sargeant@wales.gsi.gov.uk
Printed on 100%

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As I said at last week's meeting I would be very happy to meet key members from both the Park Authority and the County Council to explain my thinking and discuss the way forward. I will ask my officials to liaise with your staff to arrange a suitable date in due course.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'C. Sargeant', written in a cursive style.

Carl Sargeant AC / AM
Y Gweinidog Tai ac Adfywio
Minister for Housing and Regeneration

PEMBROKESHIRE COAST NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY AND PEMBROKESHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
JOINT PLANNING SERVICES DELIVERY

CONCEPT

1. The Welsh planning service, like all public sector delivery agents, faces an increasing expectation of high quality outputs in the face of reducing budgets, staff resources and a shrinking pool of specialist expertise. Local planning authorities in Wales must provide planning services, including the preparation of development plans, and determination of sometimes complex and highly technical planning applications. The Minister for Housing and Regeneration has made it clear that local planning authorities need to work together in order to provide resilience within the system, to maximise use of public sector funding and continue to fulfil their statutory duties.
2. The Minister for Housing and Regeneration, in agreement with Cllr Rob Lewis, Deputy Leader, Pembrokeshire County Council and Cllr Mike James, Chair of the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority, has proposed that the Park Authority and the County Council undertake a project to provide a joint planning service to support the Planning Committees of both planning authorities, in accordance with the principles of delivering a high quality and resilient planning service.
3. The two planning authorities have been identified for this project due to their close physical proximity, their sharing of a single border and the close relationship between the Park Authority and certain other departments of the County Council which inform the planning service.

OUTPUTS

4. The main outputs from this joint working project will be:
 - The operation of an agreed Committee process by both separate authorities, including agreed Committee protocols for site visits, delegation, call-in and officers' reports, within the existing separate decision making legal framework;
 - Formalising existing joint working arrangements and shared specialist expertise between the two local planning authorities;
 - Standardisation of administrative, procedural and technical support to the two Planning Committees in accordance with agreed best practice to ensure commonality of practice; and
 - Preparatory work to facilitate opportunities for a joint review of Local Development Plan issues when required

OUTCOMES

5. The main outcomes from this project will be:
 - An external common customer experience of a single planning service, with comparable outcomes for applications to both planning authorities, within the existing separate decision making legal framework;
 - The sharing and standardisation of best practice between the two planning departments;

- A resilient service by standardising procedures which enables both authorities to utilise staff to meet work areas of high demand in either authority, and provide cover in the event of staff absence or leave ; and
- Best practice examples, and advice on lessons learned, which can be used by other planning authorities undertaking joint working arrangements elsewhere in Wales.

TIMESCALES

6. Timescales for implementation of this project will be:
 - Establishment of proposed common technical and administrative support protocols by September 2014;
 - Operation of standardised Committee practices by September 2014; and
 - Full implementation of joint working arrangements by March 2015

SUPPORT

7. The Welsh Government will support this project by:
 - Commissioning an external consultant to act as a “critical friend”, to facilitate establishment of common Committee practices, through workshops with Members; and
 - Part fund support to backfill an officer post in each planning authority, to enable their work on the project, within financial year 2014-15.
8. The local planning authorities will support this project by:
 - Providing facility time for Members to participate in the Committee workshops, and subsequently implementing the workshop outputs; and
 - Using officer time to develop and implement common practices between the two authorities.

Planning Division
Welsh Government
08 April 2014

From: Tegryn Jones
Sent: 25 April 2014 11:39
To: 'Kris.Hawkins@Wales.GSI.Gov.UK'
Cc: cllr.mike.james@pembrokeshire.gov.uk; Gwyneth Hayward
[REDACTED] Jane Gibson;
hywel.jones@pembrokeshire.gov.uk
Subject: Pembrokeshire CC/Pembrokeshire Coast NPA Draft Project brief
Attachments: Pembrokeshire CC and NPA - Collaboration project brief with PCNPA comments
25 April.docx

Kris

Thank you for the e-mail sent to Jane Gibson regarding the proposed pilot between the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority and Pembrokeshire County Council. A number of members and officers have had meetings on this issue, therefore we present our collective feedback.

The draft proposal presents an useful starting point. Our understanding from our meeting with the Minister on 3rd April was that the consultant appointed by the Welsh Government would work with the two Authorities to prepare a brief that would then be presented to our members for approval. While I think that this approach would have been effective in gaining buy-in from our members, the existence of you draft suggests that the consultant will be brought in at a later date and therefore we will provide comments on your draft.

Our members have made it very clear to us that they wish to approve our participation in this project, and therefore we are mindful of the need to create a brief that will achieve this. I think it will be very challenging for our members to approve the current draft. Some of this is fairly cosmetic and a change in terminology may make the brief more acceptable. However, we do think that it would be beneficial for us all to develop a greater understanding of what is being attempted and the challenges we face. While your draft goes some way to outlining what you want to achieve, it is based on a number of assumptions that we would question, and are likely to lead to questions from our members. We have included a number of questions and suggestions in the attached document, which it may be useful to consider as part of the process of developing a stronger brief.

In addition to strengthening the brief, we consider that it would be beneficial to prepare a Risk Analysis and a Change management plan before we start. While these would be expected good practice before starting any project of this nature, we also think that they would be useful in developing a realistic understanding of the issues we face and how we overcome them. It could also highlight the activities that could improve customer service and provide resilience and prevent us from focusing on areas that provide little value.

In addition to the comments provided in the attachment we have a few specific questions that would be useful to get a better understanding of:

- The meeting note suggests that the brief has been base on “the “single service” model proposed by Pembrokeshire CC” – we have not seen a copy of this proposal and therefore we would be grateful if you could provide us with a copy;
- We also note that the meeting note makes reference to the project” at an officer level” – we would suggest that we are dealing with one project, which involves both officers and members and to avoid any confusion we need to focus on one project;
- We note a change in terminology from a pilot to a project – could you let us know the significance of this;
- We would appreciate a better understanding of the resources available to support this project. I don’t think either Authority has spare capacity to devote to the project and we would not wish to see the service provided to our existing customers suffer if we take this project forward.

We look forward to a revised version of the brief but please feel free to contact me if you wish to discuss.

Pob hwyl
Tegryn

Tegryn Jones

Prif Weithredwr / Chief Executive

Awdurdod Parc Cenedlaethol Arfordir Penfro / Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority

Parc Llanion / Llanion Park

Doc Penfro / Pembroke Dock

Sir Benfro / Pembrokeshire

Ffôn / Tel: 01646624803

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Hapus i gyfathrebu'n y Gymraeg - Happy to communicate in Welsh

**PEMBROKESHIRE COAST NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY AND PEMBROKESHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
JOINT PLANNING SERVICES DELIVERY**

CONCEPT

1. The Welsh planning service, like all public sector delivery agents, faces an increasing expectation of high quality outputs in the face of reducing budgets, staff resources and a shrinking pool of specialist expertise. Local planning authorities in Wales must provide planning services, including the preparation of development plans, and determination of sometimes complex and highly technical planning applications. The Minister for Housing and Regeneration has made it clear that local planning authorities need to work together in order to provide resilience within the system, to maximise use of public sector funding and continue to fulfil their statutory duties.
2. The Minister for Housing and Regeneration, in agreement with Cllr Rob Lewis, Deputy Leader, Pembrokeshire County Council and Cllr Mike James, Chair of the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority, has proposed that the Park Authority and the County Council undertake a project to provide a joint planning service to support the Planning Committees of both planning authorities, in accordance with the principles of delivering a high quality and resilient planning service.
3. The two planning authorities have been identified for this project due to their close physical proximity, their sharing of a single border and the close relationship between the Park Authority and certain other departments of the County Council which inform the planning service.

Comment [TJ1]: PCNPA members are unlikely to agree to any proposal seeking to create a joint service. We would suggest that the project focuses on collaboration. Perhaps "Planning Partnership" would be more acceptable.

Comment [TJ2]: It would be useful for our members to develop a better understanding of why the Welsh Government considers that this is the best model for providing a resilient service. What is the definition of a resilient service and how will we know when we succeed? I'm sure that some of our members would consider that pooling expertise with amongst the three NPAs would provide a more effective model.

Comment [TJ3]: The focus of our meeting on 3 April was more on collaboration rather than creating a joint service. Our members have argued against the creation of one planning service therefore this is not likely to be an acceptable aim of ... [1]

Comment [TJ4]: While this may be true, it may be worth reflecting that this project will be challenging as the two authorities do work to different legislative frameworks and there ... [2]

Comment [TJ5]: We are not sure of what is meant by this and what benefit there is in "formalising existing arrangements". If arrangements already exist then there is little s ... [3]

Comment [TJ6]: The main focus of the rest of the document is on the DM element of planning, therefore the inclusion of a planning policy / LDP dimension does not logically fit ... [4]

Comment [TJ7]: We think that a greater focus should be given in the outcomes on developing a better service for the customer

Comment [TJ8]: We should recognise that this will lead to a less transparent system when compared with what we have currently. Consideration should be given to ensuring that this pro ... [5]

Comment [TJ9]: This does not suggest much improvement in service and could be interpreted as working to the lowest common denominator. We would suggest that a more ambit ... [6]

Comment [TJ10]: While this looks ok on paper, it fails to recognise that the facts impacting on demand are likely to be the same for both authorities, meaning that at times of heavy demand n ... [7]

Comment [TJ11]: We should recognise that this will lead to a less transparent system when compared with what we have currently.

OUTPUTS

4. The main outputs from this joint working project will be:
 - The operation of an agreed Committee process by both separate authorities, including agreed Committee protocols for site visits, delegation, call-in and officers' reports, within the existing separate decision making legal framework;
 - Formalising existing joint working arrangements and shared specialist expertise between the two local planning authorities;
 - Standardisation of administrative, procedural and technical support to the two Planning Committees in accordance with agreed best practice to ensure commonality of practice; and
 - Preparatory work to facilitate opportunities for a joint review of Local Development Plan issues when required

OUTCOMES

5. The main outcomes from this project will be:
 - An external common customer experience of a single planning service, with comparable outcomes for applications to both planning authorities, within the existing separate decision making legal framework;
 - The sharing and standardisation of best practice between the two planning departments;
 - A resilient service by standardising procedures which enables both authorities to utilise staff to meet work areas of high demand in either authority, and provide cover in the event of staff absence or leave ; and

- Best practice examples, and advice on lessons learned, which can be used by other planning authorities undertaking joint working arrangements elsewhere in Wales.
- [The development of an effective Governance Framework to account for two planning authorities working in collaboration.](#)

Comment [TJ12]: While we recognise the benefits of this, we get the impression that the Welsh Government wishes to create a consistent planning process across Wales. If this is the case, would it not be more effective to involve all Authorities and undertake under the guidance of Planning Improvement and Advisory Service?

Comment [TJ13]: The paper prepared by PCNPA earlier this year included a number of safeguards. The inclusion of these safeguards are likely to be required by our members. The safeguards on staff and protecting the national park are likely to be essential.

Comment [TJ14]: It is not clear what is meant by these, however, the timescales look challenging. For example, work on technical and administrative support is dependent on resolving IT issues. Past experience, such as the 12 months it took getting the APAS system to work between the two authorities, suggests that this is not a realistic timescale.

Comment [TJ15]: As PCNPA members will not agree to participate in the project until their NPA held on 11 June, this is not likely to be a realistic timescale.

Comment [TJ16]: As the points above indicate, this is not a realistic timescale. We should look towards undertaking a Risk Analysis and a Change Management programme to indicate a realistic timescale to undertake the project.

Comment [TJ17]: While we have no problem with this, we would suggest that there are other areas of the project that are far more challenging and likely to require external assistance.

Comment [TJ18]: A clear understanding of the support available is likely to be required by our members before approving our involvement in the project.

Comment [TJ19]: We would suggest that this should be 2014-15 and 2015-16

Comment [TJ20]: This project is likely to add a significant workload in addition to continuing to provide an excellent planning service. At a minimum the Welsh Government should agree to provide the necessary resources to cover all the additional work

Comment [TJ21]: We would suggest that the proposal should consider how to govern the project, e.g. how will difference of opinions be resolved?. The PCNPA paper earlier this year presented an option.

SAFEGUARDS

TIMESCALES

6. Timescales for implementation of this project will be [agreed following the preparation of a Risk Assessment and an agreed Change management plan](#):
 - Establishment of proposed common technical and administrative support protocols by September 2014;
 - Operation of standardised Committee practices by September 2014; and
 - Full implementation of joint working arrangements by March 2015

SUPPORT

7. The Welsh Government will support this project by:
 - Commissioning an external consultant to act as a “critical friend”, to facilitate establishment of common Committee practices, through workshops with Members; and
 - Part fund support to backfill an officer post in each planning authority, to enable their work on the project, within financial year 2014-15.
8. The local planning authorities will support this project by:
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 - Using officer time to develop and implement common practices between the two authorities.

GOVERNANCE

Planning Division
Welsh Government
08 April 2014

Page 1: [1] Comment [TJ3] Tegryn Jones 24/04/2014 09:41:00

The focus of our meeting on 3 April was more on collaboration rather than creating a joint service. Our members have argued against the creation of one planning service therefore this is not likely to be an acceptable aim of any project they agree to undertake. We would suggest that there is a need to focus on collaboration rather than creating a joint service.

Page 1: [2] Comment [TJ4] Tegryn Jones 24/04/2014 09:07:00

While this may be true, it may be worth reflecting that this project will be challenging as the two authorities do work to different legislative frameworks and there is an acceptance that in terms of organisational culture, the two authorities are very different.

Page 1: [3] Comment [TJ5] Tegryn Jones 25/04/2014 11:18:00

We are not sure of what is meant by this and what benefit there is in “formalising existing arrangements”. If arrangements already exist then there is little service benefits to be gained from formalising arrangements. It could be argued that formalising arrangements works against innovation and adapting to the needs of the customer. Greater clarity would be useful.

Page 1: [4] Comment [TJ6] Tegryn Jones 24/04/2014 09:08:00

The main focus of the rest of the document is on the DM element of planning, therefore the inclusion of a planning policy / LDP dimension does not logically fit in. Our current agreed policy is to retain a separate LDP and therefore the inclusion of this may be problematic for our members.

Page 1: [5] Comment [TJ8] Tegryn Jones 24/04/2014 09:18:00

We should recognise that this will lead to a less transparent system when compared with what we have currently. Consideration should be given to ensuring that this project does not lead to a more confusing and less effective service for the customer

Page 1: [6] Comment [TJ9] Tegryn Jones 24/04/2014 09:42:00

This does not suggest much improvement in service and could be interpreted as working to the lowest common denominator. We would suggest that a more ambitious outcome is set to truly create an effective model of how to deliver a planning service. This would need appropriate support and resources to achieve, in addition to working to a realistic timescale.

Page 1: [7] Comment [TJ10] Tegryn Jones 25/04/2014 11:19:00

While this looks ok on paper, it fails to recognise that the facts impacting on demand are likely to be the same for both authorities, meaning that at times of heavy demand neither is likely to have spare capacity. This aim is more likely to be achieved by a wider partnership.