

NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

17th December 2014

Present: Councillor M James (Chair)

Mr A Archer, Mr D Ellis, Councillor P Harries, Mrs G Hayward, Councillor O James, Councillor L Jenkins, Councillor R Kilmister, Councillor PJ Morgan, Councillor R Owens, Mr AE Sangster, Councillor A Wilcox and Councillor M Williams.

[Ms C Gwyther arrived prior to consideration of the minutes (Minute 4); Mrs M Thomas arrived prior to consideration of the report of the meeting of the Standards Committee (Minute 8).]

(NPA Offices, Llanion Park, Pembroke Dock: 10.00am – 12.30pm)

1. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors S Hudson, RM Lewis and D Rees. Mrs M Thomas had rung to say she was caught in traffic and would be arriving late.

2. Disclosures of Interest

Mr A Archer disclosed a personal but not prejudicial interest in report 70/14 'Annual Report of the Monitoring Officer' due to his work with the Public Services Ombudsman.

3. Chairman's Announcements

The Chairman informed the Committee that since the last meeting he had unveiled interpretative panels at Manorbier Dovecote and the World War 1 Trenches at Penally. He wished to congratulate both the staff and the local groups involved in these projects. He had also presented long service awards (for 25 years' service) to four members of staff – Dave Maclachlan, Craig Mabe, Sam Carter and Sue Davies.

4. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on the 5th November 2014 were presented for confirmation and signature.

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 5th November 2014 be confirmed and signed.

5. Development Management Committee – Report of Meeting

It was **RESOLVED** that the report of the meeting of the Development Management Committee held on the 22nd October 2014 be received.

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

It was **RESOLVED** that the report of the meeting of the Audit and Corporate Services Review Committee held on the 12th November 2014 be adopted.



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

It was **RESOLVED** that the report of the meeting of the Chief Executive's Performance Review Panel held on the 12th November 2014 be adopted.

One Member asked about the target to engage with local politicians when Part 1 of the Review of Designated Landscapes was published, and the Chief Executive replied that it was likely that the recommendations of Part 1 of the Review would feed into the Party Manifestos and he would therefore be having discussions with politicians to clarify and build on those recommendations.

NOTED.

8. Standards Committee – Report of Meeting

It was **RESOLVED** that the report of the meeting of the Standards Committee held on the 19th November 2014 be adopted.

9. Improvement Plan 2015/16 - Part 1

Members were reminded that the Authority was required to publish its Improvement Plan as soon as practical for the new financial year and therefore the draft Plan attached to the report was presented to Members for them to consider the main activities proposed for next year, although there might be amendments when the budget was confirmed. It was reported that much of the plan had been carried over from 2014/15 and significant additions were marked with an * and possible deletions with a #. Where data was available, the measures and indicators showed progress in the current year to date, however these would be updated before the final plan was presented for approval.

Members noted that the funding section of the Plan contained a lot of question marks and asked about the current position. The Chief Executive replied that he had spoken to Welsh Government the previous day, who had advised that they were unlikely to be in a position to confirm the Authority's budget until the New Year. Given that the Authority had to approve its budget by 15th February, he considered this to be a very unsatisfactory situation, a sentiment with which Members agreed.

Turning to Outcome 1, Members asked why it was proposed to work only with communities in the Gwaun Valley to combat invasive species, and the Business and Performance Manager replied that this was a pilot project, funded in part by SDF, which would be looking at the catchment area of the Gwaun. It was agreed that reference could be made to other areas where work was ongoing. There was also support for investigation of Dark Skies designation, although Members appreciated that the geography of the National Park mitigated against this. It was also noted that it was proposed to remove the target for the area of land actively managed for conservation and one Member asked that a substitute target be included. The Business and Performance Manager agreed to talk further to the Authority's Biodiversity Officer, and it was also noted that data collected for Natural Resources Wales' forthcoming State of Nature Report would allow a more outcome based indicator to be developed.



Under Outcome 3, Members asked whether the “19” affordable housing units approved were units or should have referred to a percentage. They also questioned whether it was sensible to seek to increase the targets for this measure and that for the coastal bus service when the Authority had not met the current target for affordable housing and it was likely that funding for the coastal bus service would be reduced still further. The Business and Performance Manager agreed to look again at both targets.

Members’ comments on the Plan were **NOTED**.

10. Welsh Government Planning Performance Framework

It was reported that Welsh Government had recently announced a new performance framework which would come into effect in January 2015. This consisted of 18 indicators covering development management, development planning and enforcement, and these were set out in the report, together with the likely results for the Authority using figures for the year to date. It was likely that changes would have to be made to the planning computer system to record the new data required, however further detail regarding definitions, etc was still awaited.

Members were concerned that data regarding the time taken to investigate enforcement cases was not being recorded, however officers reassured them that the information was recorded, and the data could be provided once the definitions were clarified. There were also concerns expressed over the other ‘red’ indicators, however officers noted that work was ongoing in these areas to improve the situation.

NOTED.

[Ms C Gwyther tended her apologies and left the meeting at this juncture]

11. Consultations in Conjunction with the Planning (Wales) Bill

Members were reminded that Welsh Government had issued a series of consultations associated with the Planning (Wales) Bill. The responses before the Authority had been prepared on behalf of National Parks Wales and drafted by various of their officers.

Seven consultation responses were presented, and the Director of Park Direction and Planning requested that delegated authority be given to the Development Management Committee to agree a response to an eighth – on Mezzanine Floors – at its meeting in January.

Members considered each of the consultation responses and they were agreed subject to the following comments:

- Planning and related decisions of the Welsh Ministers – no comments
- Proposed amendments to legislation on the power to override easements and other rights – no comments
- Review of planning application fees (consultation document and draft regulatory impact assessment) - Q1a – delete last part of last sentence



regarding 20% increase. And instead insert 'Fees should be more targeted and equitable. WG should consider a more regular review of fees on an annual basis to avoid large increases in fees.'

- Planning Committees, delegation and joint planning boards (consultation document and draft regulatory impact assessment) - Members supported in principle Snowdonia's position that there should be reference to the Welsh language being identified as an issue of concern throughout
- Design in the planning process - no comments
- Frontloading the development management system - Q3 tick box 'Yes' (subject to further comment) in the comment box – 'this could be too short a timescale when considering complex applications. Different timescales for different types of applications could be appropriate.'
- LDP process refinement exercise – no comments

Members congratulated and thanked officers of all authorities for providing such a thorough number of responses in the short timescale.

It was **RESOLVED** that

- a) the draft National Parks Wales' response in respect of the following Welsh Government consultations be approved subject to the above comments:
 - i. Planning and related decisions of the Welsh Ministers
 - ii. Proposed amendments to legislation on the power to override easements and other rights
 - iii. Review of planning application fees (consultation document and draft regulatory impact assessment)
 - iv. Planning Committees, delegation and joint planning boards (consultation document and draft regulatory impact assessment)
 - v. Design in the planning process
 - vi. Frontloading the development management system LDP process refinement exercise
- b) Delegated Authority be given to the Development Management Committee to agree the Authority's response to the consultation on Mezzanine Floors.

12. Amendment to Officer Delegation Arrangements to Incorporate New Planning Process – Approving Non-material Amendments to an Existing Planning Permission

It was reported that recent legislation had introduced a formal application procedure by which non-material amendments to an existing planning permission could be approved. This replaced any informal arrangements that an authority might have for dealing with such 'working amendments'. Given this introduction, the Authority's scheme of delegation needed to be amended to reflect the change in statutory processes. The full details proposed were set out in the report.

It was **RESOLVED** that the scheme of delegation be amended as set out in the report.



13. Draft Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Management Plan 2015-19 – Report of Consultations

It was reported that a consultation draft Management Plan for the period 2015-19 and its associated impact assessments had been made publicly available for comment between 1st August and 31st October 2014, and a summary of the consultation exercise was set out. Representations received were appended to the report at Annex 1, together with officers' responses and recommendations regarding amendments to the consultation draft Management Plan where applicable.

Respondents had commented on a range of topics and had made useful observations on the content and/or presentation of the consultation draft; however no amendments to the aims and policies agreed by Members at the drafting stages were recommended, nor were any amendments to the impact assessments considered necessary. A small number of factual updates had become necessary during the consultation period and recommended changes arising from these were set out in Annex 2.

There were mixed responses from Members regarding the introduction of LED lighting by Pembrokeshire County Council referred to in responses under the heading of Dark Skies (para 4.3.4.4 of the draft Management Plan). It was agreed that light intensity must be appropriate to location.

Some Members commented on the response of Pembrokeshire County Council in relation to economic development, and asked that examples of economic contributions relating specifically to the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park (as taken from the "Valuing Wales' National Parks" ARUP report, 2013) should be the focus of the suggested additions at section 2 of the Management Plan.

Finally, a number of Members agreed with the comments by Mr Whitby with regard to Coasteering, particularly the disturbance caused in the nesting season. Officers acknowledged the potential management issues, however they considered that the Concordat approach, promoted through the Pembrokeshire Outdoor Charter Group, was preferable to licencing, and confirmed that work in this area would continue.

The Conservation Policy Officer clarified that once agreed, officer responses would be issued to all those who had made comments on the consultation draft Management Plan, together with a letter of thanks.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- a) the consultation draft Management Plan 2015-19 be amended as per officer recommendations at Annex 1 and Annex 2 of the report, subject to Members comments set out above, with publication of the final Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Management Plan 2015-19 to follow.
- b) delegated authority be granted to officers to make any minor factual corrections or technical updates that might arise before the Plan was published.
- c) that the final Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Management Plan 2015-19 bear a date of approval by the NPA of 17th December 2014.



14. Annual Report of the Monitoring Officer

The report of the Monitoring Officer set out the nature and background of the work that he had undertaken during the previous year. He stated that he had not made any reports under Section 5 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989; he had completed two reports under the Authority's complaints procedure but had not found there to be any maladministration by the Authority in either case; finally he had not dealt with any appeals to the administration of the Sustainable Development Fund.

NOTED.

15. Community Consultation

The Director of Park Delivery and Discovery reported that, as Members were aware, the Authority faced considerable financial challenges over the coming years and it was therefore essential that the decisions of the Authority were driven by the wishes of those who lived, worked and played in the National Park.

For this reason, the Authority had undertaken an extensive consultation exercise between February and November 2014 designed to help staff and Members increase their understanding of the needs of a wide variety of individual, communities and stakeholders, including local businesses. The results of the consultations would be used to inform the future strategic direction of the Authority's work.

The primary outcome of the consultation was to identify which aspects of the Authority's work were most valued by the public, however there were other objectives, such as to promote more widely the work of the Authority, increase understanding of its role and strengthen relationships with local communities and key stakeholders.

Views were sought through a variety of means, including an online survey, public consultation at the County Show and Tenby Market, a series of Community Consultation events as well as meetings with local bodies and key focus groups. The main results were outlined in the report.

Members were interested to see the responses received and asked that some follow up be provided to those who had submitted comments, to show that these had been taken seriously. The Director suggested that a summary of the results could be made available on the Authority's website.

NOTED.

16. Report on the National Parks of Wales Social Inclusion and Child Poverty Strategy and Action Plan – Revision of PCNPA Action Plan

Members were reminded that the 2012-14 Social Inclusion and Child Poverty Strategy and Action Plan for National Parks in Wales had been produced to



provide strategic guidance to all three National Parks in Wales. It states that the Authorities will promote social inclusion in the exercise of their purposes, duty and delivery of services and contains action plans for each of the Authorities.

A revision was now proposed to the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority Action Plan, which sought to update and refresh the Authority's approach to delivering social inclusion work across its service areas from April 2015 onwards. The revised action plan, which was appended to the report, took greater account of local priorities and had been produced in partnership with a number of local organisations.

The Plan contained four higher level aims:

- A Organisational change to mainstream Social Inclusion within the 3 Welsh National Park Authorities
- B National Park Authorities support an inclusive local agenda, which promotes sustainable development and health and wellbeing and connects with National Park Purposes
- C National Park Authorities promote inclusive opportunities for the understanding and sustainable enjoyment of the special qualities of the Parks for the people of Wales and the UK
- D National Park Authorities contribute to the eradication of Child Poverty in Wales

Members were pleased to see the work that was being undertaken by the Authority in the area of social inclusion, particularly through the Mosaic project and asked to be kept informed of any events that were going on in Pembrokeshire. They were also interested to know how the work would be measured, and the Chief Executive replied that this would come within the remit of the Operational Review Committee and he would ask for a report to be prepared on this during the early part of the coming year.

To conclude the presentation, the Discovery Team Leader showed one of five short films that had been produced by the Authority and which were available on its website. The film demonstrated the work of the Walkability project and the benefits that it gave to those involved.

It was **RESOLVED** that the revised Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority Social Inclusion and Child Poverty Action Plan included at Annexe A of the report be approved for inclusion in the National Parks in Wales Social Inclusion and Child Poverty Strategy 2014-16.

17. Seasons' Greetings

There being no further business, the Chairman concluded the meeting by wishing all staff and Members a happy Christmas and New Year, thanked them for their work and looked forward to working together in the New Year.

