

REPORT OF CHIEF EXECUTIVE

SUBJECT: MEMBER STRATEGY TASK AND FINISH GROUPS

Purpose of Report

This is a discussion paper recommending the creation of one or more Member Strategy Task and Finish Groups to guide the future direction of the Authority's services.

Introduction

The National Park Authority (NPA) has already dealt with significant budget changes over recent years with an expectation that we will face additional reductions over the next three to five years. There is also a possibility that the recommendations of the Review of Designated Landscapes may lead to changes in the governance of the Authority. One or both of these is likely to lead to a need for the Authority to consider what services it delivers and how it delivers them.

Current Practice

Currently all decisions are undertaken by the Authority, with the exception of determining planning applications which is the remit of the Development Management Committee. The NPA meets around six times a year, although occasionally, an Extra-ordinary NPA will be called to deal with one or more urgent items.

Members have the opportunity to discuss issues through specially organised workshops or training events. Examples of these include a series of Workshops following NPAs to discuss budget cuts and a Training and Information event to discuss changes in agriculture. Workshops and Training events are not decision making meetings.

While this practice tends to work well under normal circumstances, it does not easily lend itself to consider a wide range of options, in-depth consideration of options and a discussion on new approaches to delivering services.

Proposed Changes

The expectation that we will need to re-model and re-prioritise our service delivery creates a need for Members and officers to work together to develop options and new ways of working. We should move away from officers presenting recommendations and Members approving them to a model where Members and officers work together to "co-produce" solutions that meet the needs of the Authority and local communities.

This paper proposes the creation of Member Strategy Task and Finish Groups to provide a forum for Members and officers to discuss issues and develop options to deliver services.

While Members will have the ability to agree Terms of Reference for these Groups at a later NPA meeting, the main principles will be as follows:

- all Groups would be set up by the resolution of the NPA, with the purpose of the Group along with a timescale for reporting being clearly identified;
- the Groups will not have decision-making powers – any findings/recommendations will be presented to the NPA for consideration;
- membership of Groups could vary according to the issue to be considered, but would normally be in the region of 6 Members. The exact membership to be determined by the NPA at the time of establishing the Group;
- where appropriate Members could invite representatives of other organisations to discuss issues.

Financial considerations

Direct costs – should increase by virtue of additional travelling costs for Members although, where possible, meetings will be held on a day when Members already have a scheduled meeting.

Indirect costs – includes additional officer time to prepare for and service meetings.

However, these costs are balanced by improved decision making by ensuring that Member views are reflected in proposals presented to NPA.

Risk considerations

This approach seeks to involve Members early on in the development of proposals and therefore could be considered as limiting risk.

Compliance

No particular issues although involving Members early on in the process of developing proposals could be considered good practice.

Human Rights/Equality issues

There are no specific Human Rights or Equality issues from this proposal.

Biodiversity implications/Sustainability appraisal

The proposed policy contributes towards a fairer society.

Welsh Language statement

There are no specific Welsh Language issues from this proposal, and all meetings will meet the requirements of the Authority's Welsh Language Scheme.

Recommendation:

Members are asked to agree the proposal to set up member Strategy Task and Finish Groups.

Background Documents

*(For further information, please contact Tegryn Jones, Chief Executive
tegrynj@pembrokeshirecoast.org.uk)*

Author: Tegryn Jones

Consultees: Leadership team