

NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

28 September 2016

Present: Councillor M James (Chair)

Mr A Archer, Mr D Ellis, Councillor ML Evans, Councillor P Harries, Councillor S Hudson, Mrs G Hayward, Councillor L Jenkins, Councillor R Kilmister, Councillor RM Lewis, Councillor PJ Morgan, Councillor R Owens, Councillor D Rees, Mr AE Sangster, Councillor A Wilcox and Councillor M Williams.

[Mrs M Thomas arrived during consideration of Report 51/16 Regionally Important Geodiversity Sites SPG]

(Coronation Hall, Dale: 10.00am – 12.15pm)

1. Apology

An apology for absence was received from Ms C Gwyther.

2. Disclosures of Interest

Councillor P Harries disclosed an interest in Report 52/16 Tourist Information Provision (Newport and Tenby) and withdrew from the meeting while it was considered.

Councillor R Lewis disclosed an interest in Report 50/16 Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Guidance and agenda item 8 Support for Ironman Wales and withdrew from the meeting while they were considered.

3. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on the 10 August 2016 were presented for confirmation and signature.

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 10 August 2016 be confirmed and signed.

4. Matters arising

(a) Member Skills Audit (Minute 14)

The Chief Executive reported that nine Members had responded to date but there was still time for further questionnaires to be returned. It was likely that Welsh Government would begin the recruitment process during the next couple of weeks but it was hoped that a few more responses would be received before sharing the results of the Audit with them.



5. Reports of meetings of various of the Authority's Committees

The following reports of meetings of a number of the Authority's Committees were presented to Members for consideration/information:

- (i) Development Management Committee held on 20 July 2016.
- (ii) Audit and Corporate Services Review Committee held on 27 July 2016

6. 2016 Annual Monitoring Report on the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Local Development Plan

The Annual Monitoring Report assessed the extent to which the Local Development Plan (LDP) strategy and policies were being achieved and looked back at the previous financial year. It measured various indicators to assess the performance of the individual planning policies set out in the adopted LDP and provided a general portrait of the social, economic and environmental conditions in the Park. Key findings were set out at the beginning of the document and this set out where issues had arisen and what further action was required. These issues had been discussed with Members at Workshops and would continue to be addressed as part of the LDP revision.

Members were asked to approve the Annual Monitoring Report for submission to the Welsh Government. The document would also be published for consultation with any issues raised being fed into the next monitoring report.

The Chair thanked the Head of Park Direction and her team for all the hard work that went into the Report. Another Member added that it contained no surprises with discussions having taken place on those areas that were a cause for concern; however the majority of the indicators were positive.

A question was asked with regard to benchmarking across Authorities and the officer noted that there were similar issues with other plans and drew Members attention to another performance document which was being prepared for Welsh Government which contained a tabular comparison of Authorities. She agreed to circulate this to Members for information when it was available, together with web links to the Annual Monitoring Reports of neighbouring Authorities and the other Welsh National Parks.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Annual Monitoring Report for the Local Development Plan be approved for submission to the Welsh Government by 31st October 2016.

[Councillor RM Lewis disclosed an interest in the following item and withdrew from the meeting while it was considered]



7. Local Development Plan: Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Guidance

The report acknowledged that new development could offer great benefits to the community by virtue of the homes, workplaces and facilities it provided. It stimulated the economy but also had consequences for the provision of public services. Pembrokeshire County Council (PCC) and the National Park Authority (NPA) secured developer contributions through legal obligations in order to ensure that local services and infrastructure had adequate capacity to meet the additional demands arising from new development.

In April 2016 the Authority agreed to publish a draft replacement Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) for public consultation jointly with PCC, and this set out the approach towards securing the improvement to local infrastructure, facilities, services and amenities there were required as a consequence of new development through the use of Section 106 Planning Obligations.

A public consultation on the Planning Obligations SPG took place between 11 May and 6 July 2016 and documents summarising the results and identifying recommended changes to the SPG were appended to the report. The main changes were also set out in the report and these were aimed at improving the clarity of the document and also ensuring compliance with the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations which placed restrictions on the ways in which Local Planning Authorities could use Planning Obligations. A number of issues had been raised by Members prior to the guidance being published for consultation and these were also addressed in the report.

It was reported at the meeting that the SPG had been approved by PCC's Cabinet on 12th September 2016.

One Member was pleased to see the inclusion at Para 1.14 of the SPG of the historic environment in the list of infrastructure types for which contributions could be sought. The Officer noted that there was a typographical error in the response to the consultation response listed at 6 on page 65 in this respect.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- a) the Officer's response to the consultation responses received in Annex 1 be agreed subject to correction of the above typographical error.
- b) The Supplementary Planning Guidance on Planning Obligations attached at Annex 2 to the report be adopted.



8. **Local Development Plan: Regionally Important Geodiversity Sites Supplementary Planning Guidance**

Members were reminded that Regionally Important Geodiversity Sites (RIGS) were a non-statutory geodiversity designation. The Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) helped to identify whether development had an adverse effect on the main features of interest within a RIGS and was supplementary to Policy 10 'Local Sites of Nature Conservation or Geological Interest'.

At its meeting in April, the Authority had approved, for public consultation, an amendment which added an additional site to the SPG. At that meeting one Member queried whether the designation would cause difficulties when research was being undertaken at the site and the report advised that this had been checked and there were no issues arising. The consultation took place between 11 May and 6 July 2016 and no adverse comment was received.

At the meeting, Members queried the red line which outlined the site as it appeared to cut through the feature. They also questioned some of the wording in the text of the Addendum to the Statement of Interest. The officer explained that both the map and Statement were produced by the RIGS Group and the Authority had no authority to change it but was merely reproducing the designation as described in order to protect it. She agreed, however, to clarify both points.

It was **RESOLVED** that Appendix A to the report be approved for insertion as an update to the Supplementary Planning Guidance on Regionally Important Geodiversity Sites which was originally adopted in October 2011.

[Councillor P Harries disclosed an interest in the following item and withdrew from the meeting while it was considered]

9. **Tourist Information Provision (Newport and Tenby)**

The Director of Delivery and Discovery reported that in May 2015 the Authority had set up a Task and Finish Group to explore potential changes to the provision of information to visitors, including the future roles of Tourist Information Centres and Visitor Centres. Having visited the centres, considered financial and visitor number trends and received presentations by other teams which delivered information, the Group felt that a new approach to the provision of visitor services by the Authority was now needed in order to meet the present and future challenges facing the local tourism industry as well as the needs of residents in Pembrokeshire.



The report summarised the work undertaken to review visitor centres over the last few years and some of the changes that had taken place in technology and the tourism industry as considered by the Group. Their view was that the Authority needed to focus on areas of work where it added the most value through its expertise in conservation and interpretation. As a result the three larger centres Oriel y Parc, Carew Castle and Castell Henllys were seen as sites where the visitor 'offer' was distinctly improved through the Authority's direct involvement. However there was consensus by the Task and Finish Group that the more generalised provision of tourist information, currently in operation at Tenby and Newport Visitor Centres could be delivered in different ways without the need for the Authority taking a direct lead role.

The report went on to outline potential new models and programmes which the Authority could deliver in the years ahead in order to provide a service that was fit for purpose for the challenges the Authority would face in the future and provide an opportunity to deliver its information services in a different way.

The Provision of Information to Visitors Working Group therefore recommended that the Authority entered into a period of consultation with businesses and community organisations in Tenby and Newport to see if it could deliver visitor information in these two important locations in partnership with others and without the need for the Authority to manage its current visitor centre buildings. Ultimately the Authority would like to put in place partnership arrangements that would ensure that both Newport and Tenby continued to receive localised visitor information services so that a proportion of the current expenditure associated with the Authority's premises could be re-allocated in order to support the package of new initiatives aimed at delivery of a modernised and more equitable service across the National Park. It was anticipated that the outcomes of the consultation would be presented to Members at its meeting in November 2016, with any changes to be implemented prior to the 2017 summer season.

Several Members expressed their sadness at the potential loss of the centres in Tenby and Newport but could understand why Members of the Group had reached the conclusions they had, as the Centres no longer provided what was required by today's visitors as a result of online information and booking. Members felt it had been useful for the Group to take an in depth look at the situation and they were thanked for their work. It was suggested that the Group next look at Castell Henllys which Members considered needed a targeted plan to bring up visitor numbers and spend as the figures recently presented to the Operational Review Committee were disappointing in this respect. Officers clarified that similar issues were being faced by other National Park Authorities and



meetings regularly took place between officers at which the approaches being taken were discussed.

Other Members stressed, however, that the profile of the National Park needed to be maintained in these and other locations and its work promoted. Considering other options for delivering information, it was suggested that redundant telephone kiosks could be used or information 'sheds' located in the Authority's car parks which could be manned during the peak season. The Authority also needed to embrace emerging opportunities provided by town centre Wi-Fi which could allow messages to be delivered to mobile phones in the vicinity advertising events, for example, taking place on the beach that day.

Turning specifically to the Tenby Centre, Members noted that this was a large building that they felt was underused. They questioned the figures for the settlement of lease and rates, considering that early settlement rates or subletting the building was likely and therefore these costs would be reduced making the savings greater. However they did acknowledge there would be other indirect consequences of its closure such as the disadvantage that staff such as the Buildings Conservation Officer would no longer be able to work from the office.

Another Member noted that the situation in Newport was slightly different due to a different sort of visitor and poorer mobile coverage. There was also felt to be greater potential for community involvement in future information provision.

Considering the recommendation, one Member asked what the consultation would involve. The Director explained that the recommendation was that an intention to withdraw from both sites be approved. He wanted the Authority to be honest with the community but to engage in a detailed conversation to understand the impact of what that would mean, what work was required to mitigate withdrawal and whether the suggested initiatives for delivery of information were the right ones. He noted that as closure of the centres was not currently a financial imperative, there was an opportunity to have a proper discussion over services provided in the future.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Authority consult on a proposal to change the way information services were delivered in Tenby and Newport in order to invest in a package of new initiatives aimed at supporting the growth of the wider visitor economy in Pembrokeshire.



10. Variation of Contract Standing Orders and the Creation of an Earmarked Reserve for a Heritage Lottery Fund bid for the Skills in Action II Programme

It was reported that the Authority had been awarded an Access Grant in respect of a number of specific projects including one to undertake repairs to the gabion wall revetment of the byway at Point House Lane, Angle with the budget for this project being £40,000. The awarding of all contracts in excess of £25,000 was subject to the Authority's Financial Regulations relating to Major Contracts. This required procurement from the Sell2Wales framework and the exercise would normally be undertaken by National Park staff.

At present, due to staff caseload and sick leave, there was a need to outsource the procurement work in order to utilise the available funding in the current financial year. The Authority had already commissioned engineering consultants Atkins to undertake a condition survey and costed work programme. At the request of the Authority, Atkins had indicated that they could undertake the procurement exercise as well as contract management and site supervision if needed. The cost of this additional work would be in line with the Authority's Financial Standards.

The second element of the report sought creation of an Earmarked Reserve to provide £15,000 as match funding towards a Heritage Lottery Fund bid for Skills in Action II. This programme would be delivered through a training programme combining Level 2 Diploma in Work Based Environmental Conservation, practical skills certificates, individual interest short courses and a range of work experiences alongside experienced professional staff. It would create opportunities for up to 24 traineeship places over 2 years. It was reported that funding would come from the General Reserve balance which at the end of the last financial year stood at £702k.

The Chief Executive added that in a quick review of the 10 past participants in the original project, 1 was self-employed, 1 was in higher education and 8 had found employment in the environmental field. This was a great success.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- a) Atkins be authorised to undertake the procurement exercise as set out in the report in order to expedite repairs to the gabion revetment of the byway in the financial year 2016-17.
- b) The creation of an earmarked reserve of £15,000 be approved in order to support a Heritage Lottery Fund bid for the next phase in the Skills in Action programme.



11. Sustainable Development Fund Annual Report 2015-16

It was reported that the Welsh Government's Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) provided support for innovative sustainable projects that demonstrated practical solutions for a more sustainable way of life. Provision for small grants of less than £1500 was provided through the Little Green Grant (LGG) which was administered by Pembrokeshire Association of Voluntary Services. The SDF Annual Report provided information on progress of the SDF for the period April 2015 to March 2016 and had been distributed to the SDF Committee and other interested parties; a copy was attached for all Members.

In total £92,801 had been paid out to support 17 projects (include 8 LGGs). The report also identified how each project contributed to sustainable development in identified key work areas, contributed towards achievement of the Welsh Government's Well-being goals and delivered SDF scheme objectives.

The Finance Manager referred to the request at a previous meeting for a report of projects funded by SDF over the past sixteen years, and it was anticipated that this would be reported to the November meeting of the Authority.

NOTED.

12. Solva Conservation Area – Confirmation of Article 4(2) Direction

In the absence of the Buildings Conservation Officer, the Director of Planning reminded Members that in June, the Authority had resolved to make an Article 4(2) Direction for Solva Conservation Area. In the interests of conserving the character of the area, the Direction withdrew certain permitted development rights including alterations to doors, window, boundary walls and hard-standings for dwelling houses fronting highways or public spaces.

Further to the statutory consultation, no response had been received to date. Following a presentation to Solva Community Council, they were in support of the Direction.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Article 4(2) Direction be confirmed in relation to the land within Solva Conservation Area as highlighted on the map within the report and that the formal Direction be noted.

13. St Justinians – Future Management of Visitor Facilities

Members were reminded that when debating the planning application for the continuation of the temporary car parking arrangement at Rhosson Campsite, St Justinians at the Development Management Committee in December 2015, officers were instructed to use best endeavours to



attempt to bring stakeholders together to resolve the current situation with regard to boat operators using the old St Justinians lifeboat slip for boat trippers which had a knock on effect for the need for a suitable transport solution for visitors to the peninsula.

Pembrokeshire Coastal Forum (PCF) had been engaged to undertake a series of stakeholder engagement events and discussions over several months to facilitate discussion among the interested parties associated with St Justinians on how best to manage the access, facilities and area going forward.

The PCF report had now been produced, however no real solution or way forward had been proposed. The Director noted that the problems identified did not relate only to car parking - this was actually a secondary issue and the landownership matters needed to be resolved first with several important players being fundamental to any resolution. The report had been made available to Members, and their views were sought.

The Chief Executive added that in its regulatory role regarding planning, the Authority was limited as to what it could do. However it could take a degree of control over the access point if it became part of a partnership which took a more proactive role.

Members were keen to explore the possibility of taking a more proactive role, but it had to be financially viable. They asked that a report be prepared setting out what options the Authority had.

It was **RESOLVED** that Pembrokeshire Coastal Forum be thanked for its chairing of the stakeholder meetings and the full report and officers be requested to explore the options to find a resolution to the ongoing problems at St Justinians and present a report to a future meeting of the Authority.

14. Certificate of Compliance for the Audit of Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority's 2016-17 Improvement Plan

The Wales Audit Office was required under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 to give an opinion on whether the Authority had discharged its duties in respect of improvement reporting and met the requirements of the Measure. The Auditor General for Wales had recently given his opinion that the Authority had discharged its duties and a copy of his Improvement Assessment letter was appended to the report.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Improvement Assessment letter be received.



15. Wales Audit Office – Annual Improvement Report 2015-16

The Auditor General for Wales was required, under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 to report the audit and assessment work in relation to whether the Authority had discharged its duties and met the requirements of the Measure. The Annual Improvement Report 2015-16 had been received from the Auditor General and circulated to Members.

The Chief Executive went on to explain that this Annual Improvement Report related to the work of the Authority during 2014/15. The detailed recommendations were set out in the report, and the Chief Executive noted that while the Authority was still working on some of these issues which had been raised at the time, due to the delay in receiving the report it was very difficult to act on the formal recommendations and this was not satisfactory.

Members felt that a number of the points raised were not entirely within the remit of the Authority, such as the reduction in numbers using the coastal bus services but sought a reassurance that funding levels would not be reduced further. There was also disagreement with the implication that the planning service should be used as a means of revenue generation rather than simply providing a cost effective quality planning service. Officers replied that the reduction in numbers using the coastal buses had been due to the Tenby Park and Ride service being provided by a private operator, however it was noted that a presentation on the work of the Pembrokeshire Greenways Partnership would be made to the next meeting of the Authority. With regard to income generation in planning, the Director of Planning explained that this recommendation related to the introduction of charging for pre-applications which had been started in Brecon Beacons National Park before the scheme introduced by Welsh Government in 2016 when this Authority had started charging.

The Chief Executive went on to explain that following the publication of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act, a more long term perspective was required and officers had therefore been working with Audit to find a different way of auditing. It was suggested that if the right arrangements were in place, the Authority would deliver properly and a four year programme had therefore been developed during which the Wales Audit Office would undertake a series of governance reviews; the first of these would be an examination of the governance culture. This would involve a confidential survey of Members, staff and Stakeholders with questions covering the seven areas of the CIPFA Code of Good Practice. There would also be focus groups with Members and staff and a small number of structured interviews. The Chief Executive added that the Audit fee would remain at its current level.



NOTED.

[Councillor RM Lewis disclosed an interest in the following item and withdrew from the meeting while it was considered]

16. Ironman Wales

The Chief Executive reported that Ironman had been part of the local calendar since 2011 and Pembrokeshire County Council was currently in negotiation for the event to be held in Pembrokeshire for another 5 years, until 2021. The Authority had been part of the original funding package, however it had not been necessary for this funding over the years to be approved by the Authority as it had been under £10,000. The Authority had now been asked to increase its contribution to a maximum of £14,000, however the exact level would depend on whether and how much funding was received from other bodies locally.

Members agreed that Ironman was a wonderful event which generated £3.5 million for the economy of the County.

It was **RESOLVED** that delegated authority be given to the Chief Executive to contribute up to £14,000 pa towards Ironman over the next 5 years.

Councillor ML Evans asked that it be recorded that he abstained from voting.

17. Thanks

The Chair thanked the people of Dale for their welcome that day and in particular the Coastlands History Group for their interesting display on Dale – then and now.

