

REPORT OF THE FINANCE MANAGER

SUBJECT: ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2016/17

The Annual Governance Statement provides the vehicle for demonstrating the Authority's success in delivering continuous improvement in performance, identifies control systems and processes and highlights significant governance issues to be addressed. This is an opportunity for members to contribute to and discuss the content of the Draft Annual Governance Statement for 2016/17.

The preparation of the draft statement involves consideration of information from a number of sources including; the Authority's risk register, the Cipfa assessment framework, the Internal Audit Report, and the Annual Improvement Report and Financial Audit Report from the Wales Audit Office. The statement was reviewed by Members in the February 2017 Audit & Corporate Services Review Committee; accordingly some additional governance issues have been identified in section VI of the document, together with the actions to be taken.

Recommendation: Members are asked to APPROVE the Annual Governance Statement 2016/17

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2016/17 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

I. Introduction

The Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority (“the Authority”) is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for and used economically, efficiently, and effectively. It is a Welsh improvement authority under section 1 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 and as such has a general duty under section 2 to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised. The Authority is also a public body as defined under the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act legislative requirement for 1st April 2016.

The Authority has an approved Code of Corporate Governance, which is consistent with the principles of the CIPFA/ SOLACE Framework ‘Delivering Good Governance in Local Government: Guidance for Welsh Authorities 2016. This guidance recommends that the review of effectiveness of the system of internal control that local authorities are required to undertake in accordance with the Accounting and Audit Regulations should be reported in an Annual Governance Statement. In Wales the inclusion of the Annual Governance Statement in the Statement of Accounts is voluntary. In CIPFA also published an “Application Note to Delivering Good Governance in Local Government: A Framework”. This note has been developed to advise on the application of the “Statement of the Role of the Chief Financial Officer on Local Government” under the CIPFA/SOLACE Framework “Delivering Good Governance in Local Government”. The Authority reviews and adopts any additional guidance as issued and has decided to adopt the CIPFA framework and Annual Governance Statement approach for 2016/17

II. The purpose of the Governance framework

The governance framework comprises the committees, systems and processes, cultures and values, by which the Authority is directed and controlled and its activities through which it accounts to, engages with and leads the community. It enables the Authority to monitor the achievement of its strategic objectives and to consider whether those objectives have led to the delivery of appropriate, cost-effective services.

The system of internal control is a significant part of that framework and is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level. It cannot eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives and can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness. The system of internal control is based on an ongoing process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of the Authority’s policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically.

III. The Governance framework

There is clear definition of the roles of Members and Officer and a clear committee and decision making structure. This is based on:

The Authority

The Authority comprises 18 members and will meet at least 6 times a year and its main functions are:

- To approve the development of the Authority's strategic corporate planning framework through the National Park Management Plan (every five years), the Local Development Plan (every five years), and the Corporate Resources Plan (annually).
- To determine all policy matters in support of its strategic planning objectives. The Authority may receive advice from its committees and may also set up task and finish advisory groups to investigate and advise on specific matters.
- To determine all Service Standards and the Authority's Statutory Duties.
- To agree policies relating to the management of the Authority's resources i.e. finance, staffing and assets; and to approve the budget, levy, charges, and the Annual Accounts.
- To ensure that the NPA complies with all legislation affecting its services.
- To determine membership of other committees, task & finish groups, working groups and advisory groups, within the NPA, and their terms of reference, and the Authority's representation on external bodies and organisations.
- To determine the delegation of the Authority's responsibilities to other committees of the Authority and when appropriate to the Chief Executive.

Audit and Corporate Services Review Committee

The Committee will comprise 9 Members of the Authority to be selected and/or confirmed at the Annual General Meeting each year. The Role of the committee is to exercise the powers and duties of the Authority in relation to the following functions:

1. Regulatory Framework
 - To monitor the Authority's performance against the National Park Management Plan
 - To oversee the production of the Annual Governance Statement and to monitor the Authority's performance against the associated Action Plan
 - To monitor the Authority's performance against the annual Strategic Grant Letter
 - To monitor performance against the Welsh Government's Standards relating to the Welsh language
 - To monitor performance against the Authority's adopted Service Standards
2. Audit Activity
 - To consider reports from the Wales Audit Office (e.g. the Annual Improvement Report, Annual Audit Letter) and to monitor the Authority's performance thereon
 - To consider reports from Internal Audit on the Authority's financial systems and controls

3. Finance
 - To consider quarterly reports on the Authority's financial performance and budgetary matters
 - To monitor the Authority's performance in relation to its Annual Statement of Accounts
4. Human Resources

To monitor the Authority's performance:

 - against its adopted HR policies
 - in relation to Health and Safety
5. Information Technology
 - To monitor the Authority's performance in relation to its Information Technology Strategy
6. Performance Management
 - To consider quarterly reports on the *Ffynnon* performance management system and to monitor the Authority's performance thereon
 - To review the Authority's Risk Register in terms of Audit and Corporate functions and make any recommendations to the National Park Authority to change levels of risk
 - To consider reports of the meetings of the Continuous Improvement Group
7. Communications
 - To monitor the Authority's performance in relation to Communications and Marketing
8. Other issues
 - To review any issue referred to it by the National Park Authority, any of its Committees or the Chief Executive Officer
 - To determine an Authority response on any proposals that affect the National Park or the Authority, its powers, duties, functions and responsibilities, particularly but not exclusively, from central, regional or local government, neighbouring authorities, partnerships and other external bodies where the proposals are relevant to the functions of the Committee and where the Chief Executive considers that such response should be determined by the Committee

Development Management Committee

The Development Management Committee is responsible for carrying out the Authority's statutory planning functions in relation to the determination of applications, appeals and enforcement matters, and allied issues relating to development and the regulation of uses and activities.

The terms of reference of the Development Management Committee are:

- (a) Except where those powers and duties have been delegated by the Authority to one of its officers and subject to its decisions being in conformity with the

Authority's approved statements and plans the Committee shall exercise, with power to act, all the powers and duties of the Authority relating to the consideration of planning, listed building and conservation area applications, notification schemes, tree preservation orders, the control of development and the enforcement of such control, and other consultation schemes where appropriate.

- (b) Where members resolve to take a decision, contrary to an officer's recommendation, which the Chief Executive the Director of Planning or Development team Leader identifies as constituting a significant departure from an approved plan or policy of the Authority, or as otherwise having significant implications for the Authority, the decision shall be deferred until the next meeting of the Committee.

If, ultimately, the Committee's decision is contrary to the officer recommendation, there shall be taken a full minuted record of Members' reasons for rejecting the officer recommendation, together with a recorded vote. (*Policy Committee, 10/97*)

- (c) To receive reports from time to time from the Chief Executive (National Park Officer) and other officers on the exercise of any functions relating to the control of development which may have been delegated to them.
- (d) To deal with all matters relating to the designation and administration of Conservation Areas. (*Policy Committee 10/97*)

Operational Review Committee

The Committee comprises 9 Members of the Authority, to be selected and/or confirmed at the Annual General Meeting each year. The Committee meet on a quarterly basis and considers reports to the Authority on its performance. The Role of the committee is:

1. To monitor performance and make recommendations to the National Park Authority in relation to the functions of:
 - Development Management
 - Park Direction
 - Park Delivery
 - Discovery
2. To review the Authority's Risk Register and make any recommendations to the National Park Authority to change levels of risk.
3. To review the Authority's financial performance in relation to the functions of the services referred to in 1 above.
4. To review any issue referred to it by the National Park Authority, any of its Committees or the Chief Executive.

5. To determine an Authority response on any proposals that affect the National Park or the Authority, its powers, duties, functions and responsibilities, particularly but not exclusively, from central, regional or local government, neighbouring authorities, partnerships and other external bodies where the proposals are relevant to the functions of the Committee and where the Chief Executive considers that such response should be determined by the Committee.

Continuous Improvement Group

The Continuous Improvement Group consists of five members of the Authority including the CEO. The membership includes the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Authority along with the Chairmen of the two Performance Review Committees. The group have the power to invite attendance of other members or officers if the work programme indicates that their attendance or experience would add value to its work.

Internal Audit

The review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control and governance arrangements is informed by the work of the Internal Auditors and their reporting to the Authority. This work is undertaken by Gateway Assure . The terms of reference for internal audit require that work is conducted in accordance with standards as set out in the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Code of Practice for Internal Audit in Local Government. Gateway Assure provide an audit opinion which is reported to the Authority and act as the Chief Audit Executive.

External Audit

Wales Audit Office act as the Authority's external audit and make comments following their financial accounts and performance work and in the annual audit letter. They also express an opinion on the adequacy of internal audit work.

Section 151 Officer

In the Authority the Finance Manager also acts as the Section 151 Officer. The Authority complies with the CIPFA "Statement on the Role of the Chief Financial Officer in Local Government". The Finance Manager is also a member of the Authority's Core Management Team.

The Executive

An Executive structure for decision making for officers is based on a Senior Management Team, Core Management Team and a Leadership Team. During the year a review of the internal committee structure led to a change where the Leadership Team meetings take place every two weeks and the Senior Management Team meet every two weeks.

Principles of Governance

The review of the effectiveness of the Authority systems of governance is undertaken in accordance with the following 6 CIPFA principles.

- Focusing on the Authority's purpose, on outcomes for the community including citizens and service users and creating and implementing a vision for the local area

- Members and officers working together to achieve a common purpose, with clearly defined functions and roles.
- Promoting values for the Authority and demonstrating the values of good governance through upholding high standards of conduct and behaviour
- Taking informed and transparent decisions which are subject to effective scrutiny and managing risk
- Developing the capacity and capability of Members and officers to be effective
- Engaging with local people and other stakeholders to ensure robust public accountability.

IV. Actions Taken During The Year

Previously identified Significant Governance Issues, the actions taken to tackle these issues and their evaluations are shown in the table below:

Governance Issues Identified	Actions proposed	Evaluation
Document Management Systems	Review alternative systems	In February 2017 the Authority approved the purchase of a Document Management System.
Impact of Future Landscapes Program	Work with partners to seek to influence the outcome of the program	Officers and Members were engaged fully in the development of Future Landscapes Program.
National Park Grant funding	Continue to work with Welsh Government to respond to funding position and developing a medium term financial plan	Despite the 6% reduction National Park Grant the Authority was able to balance its budget for the 2016/17 financial year.
Continuity Planning following experienced leaving the Authority	Monitor staff workloads and ensure Authority is run as effectively as possible	The Authority was able to recruit suitable calibre staff to replace those who left during the year.
Provide members with most efficient distribution of Authority documents	Review of options in conjunction with practice of PCC	In February 2017 National Park Authority Meeting the Authority agreed to adopt the use of paperless committee documentation.
Compliance with the Welsh language Act	Continue the review to ensure compliance with the Act	While the Authority has adopted most of the requirements of the Act it also has been successful in challenging two aspects of the Act which were considered too onerous.

V. Review of Effectiveness

The Authority is responsible for conducting an annual review of the effectiveness of its governance framework including the system of internal control. This review is informed by the work of the Authority's, Members and its Committees, internal and external auditors, other review agencies (as appropriate) and senior managers who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the internal control environment. The normal process of review has been impacted by the delay in the production of the Annual Improvement Report from the Wales Audit Office. The review is based on the six principles of the Code of Corporate Governance.

Principle 1.

Focusing on the Authority's purpose, on outcomes for the community including citizens and service users and creating and implementing a vision for the local area.

The Authority has been focusing on developing work to ensure that it is 'fit for Purpose' to meet the challenges of the future.

Future Landscapes Wales Program

During the year officers of the Authority have been actively involved in the Future Landscapes Wales programme. This programme has taken forward the recommendations of the Review of Designated Landscapes and produces a series of options for the Welsh Government to consider in relation to designated landscapes. The programme has a number of elements and currently one Member and three officers are participating in the programme. The final report is due to be launched on 15th March 2017.

While the Authority has received a token financial sum from the Welsh Government for its participation on the programme, the time requirement, in particular for the officers is significant. On a positive note, the programme provides an opportunity for the Authority to shape future options for its governance and operation.

The Wellbeing of Future Generations Act

The Authority has worked with WLGA as an Early Adopter and undertaken Member and officer training with Brecon Beacons and Snowdonia NPAs. The Corporate and Resources Plan for 2017/18 has been prepared to deliver against the seven Well-being Goals set by Welsh Government. The plan shows budget distribution across the Well-being Goals and Authority's Well-being Objectives.

Demonstrating Strategic Leadership

The Authority's current National Park Management Plan (NPMP) 2015/19 was approved in 2014 and was developed following full consultation with partners, stakeholders and communities setting out policies and longer term objectives. We are expecting new guidance on producing NPMPs in light of the development of Area Statements and other legislative changes.

Annual Improvement Plan

The Authority sets out its improvement objectives and priority work activities for the forthcoming year. This document is developed in consultation with Members, staff and stakeholders.

Quality of Service

The Authority carries out surveys of the effectiveness of its service delivery through customer satisfactions surveys, performance against quality standards and by monitoring formal complaints which remain at a low level.

Ffynnon System

The Authority has continued to adopt the Ffynnon system to ensure that we develop and manage a robust system of performance information to highlight the impact of the work undertaken by the Authority. Performance review committee reports are prepared directly from Ffynnon.

Budget Pressures / Joint working

Work has continued to reduce costs and to identify options for joint working. Discussions are on-going with a number of other Authorities to identify efficient ways of delivering our services.

Community Engagement

The Authority has endorsed Participation Cymru's 10 National Principles for Public Engagement in Wales. The Authority has carried out consultation and engagement activities with communities on key decisions that will affect them. The Authority is part of the Pembrokeshire Engagement Network which promotes engagement practice and provision in Pembrokeshire. The Authority undertook significant public consultation on the future delivery of its information services and in particular the future of its Tenby and Newport information Centres.

Membership of Public Service Board

The Authority is an invited member of the Pembrokeshire Public Services Board (PSB). The PSB is currently working to prepare the Pembrokeshire Well-being Assessment, which will be agreed in March 2017. The Authority will contribute to the work of the PSB to develop the Pembrokeshire Well-being Plan, which will be agreed by May 2018. From 2018 onwards the Authority's Corporate Plan will reflect the Well-being Objectives agreed in the Pembrokeshire Well-being Plan.

Principle 2

Members and officers working together to achieve a common purpose, with clearly defined functions and roles.

Reduction in National Park Grant and Levy

A balanced revenue budget for 2016/17 was approved in February 2016. Fortunately the Authority was able to absorb the pressure from the successive years of continued reduced funding. In 2014/15 the Authority absorbed a £349k, or 7.4%, reduction followed by a reduction of 4.12% in 2015/16 and a 6.04% for 2016/17. The total the N.P.A. Grant and Levy therefore fell by £782k from £4,721k for 2013/14 to £3,939k in 2016/17. When the consumer prices index is applied the overall reduction in real terms equates to 24.5% for the period from 2013/14 to 2016/17.

The Authority practice of holding Budget workshops following NPA's meeting has proven very helpful in developing the budget for 2016/ 17 and a medium term financial strategy and identifying areas for rationalisation. With a cut in core funding over 17% in the last three years continuation of the workshops will be essential if it is to successfully manage the anticipated budgetary challenges ahead.

Scrutiny Committee

Members and officers have in place an agreed scrutiny process, through which they can access how successful National Park Authority policies are working.

Member and Officer Joint Training & Development

During the year Members & Officer undertook several joint training programmes which covered the following areas:

- Presentation by Camping and Caravanning Clubs
- Development of National Significance joint workshop with PCC
- Governance Workshop
- Design - joint workshop with PCC
- Presentation from Milford Haven Port Authority
- Finance and Scrutiny by WLGA
- Visit to Pentre Solar joint workshop with PCC

Consultations

Members have contributed their comments to responses to Welsh Government consultation papers including: Together for mental health, Code of Practice for species control provisions in Wales, Draft Renewable Energy SPG, Proposals for new Marine SACs and Special Protection Areas in the seas around Wales, Planning Committee protocol, Procurement regulation in Wales, Contaminated Land Inspection Strategy 2016, Getting Wales Moving, Consultation on fee rates and fee scales 2017-18, Planning law in Wales scoping paper, Draft Technical Advice Note 24: The Historic Environment, Regulations and statutory guidance regarding area plans following the population assessment, Proposals for secondary legislation to support the Historic Environment (Wales) Act 2016 and various best-practice guidance documents, Appeals, costs and standard daily amounts, Practice Direction Number 3, Review of the Designated Areas and action programme to tackle nitrate pollution in Wales, Review of the Environmental Impact Assessment (Agriculture) (Wales) Regulations 2007

Employee Forum

The Authority has in place an Employee Forum. The purpose of the forum is to provide a platform for members and staff to discuss a range of employee matters and to gain an understanding from each other on issues facing the Authority

Task and Finish Groups

The Authority task and finish group into the provision of visitor information contributed significantly into the decisions surrounding the Tenby & Newport Information Centres. The work of the support services group continued in 2016 and is currently ongoing.

Principle 3

Promoting values for the Authority and demonstrating the values of good governance through upholding high standards of conduct and behaviour.

A Code of Conduct for Members and a Code of Conduct for Officers is in place. Issues relating to breaking the Code of Conduct are dealt with by the following:

The Standards Committee

It is the responsibility of the Authority's Standards Committee to promote high standards of conduct by Members and Officers. It does this by advising on and promoting awareness and understanding of the code of conduct for Members and the code of conduct for officers, both of which are documented in the Authority's Constitution.

Monitoring Officer

The statutory Monitoring Officer functions set out in Section 5 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 (as amended) i.e., in short, to report to the Authority if the Monitoring Officer considers that any proposal, decision, or omission by the Authority may give rise to unlawfulness or maladministration. The Monitoring Officer provides an Annual Report of his work to both the Standards Committee and the National Park Authority.

Public Sector Ombudsman for Wales

The Public Service Ombudsman for Wales has jurisdiction over the Authority's functions by virtue of the Public Service Ombudsman (Wales) Act 2005. He has not made any investigation into the Authority either in relation to any alleged breaches of the Members' Code of Conduct adopted by the Authority on 25 June 2008. However there has been one investigation with regard to the Authority's planning process.

Staff Members

Issues relating to the conduct of staff are normally considered in accordance with the Authority's Disciplinary procedures, which are normally reviewed in accordance with the Peoples Strategy. All Authority staff have annual and interim performance appraisals. This process allows an opportunity for managers and staff to review past performance, highlight potential areas of concern and agree future objectives to ensure they are linked to service plan/corporate targets.

Whistle Blowing Policy

In the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 the Government has given statutory protection to employees who 'blow the whistle' by speaking out against corruption and malpractice at work. It protects them against victimisation and dismissal. The Authority has approved and adopted such a policy in 2002 which was updated in 2009. In its commitment to the highest standards of openness, probity and accountability, it says "The authority encourages employees and others with serious concerns about the Authority's work to come forward and raise their concerns with the Authority".

Safeguarding Policy

In August 2014 the Authority approved a safeguarding policy. The policy aims to ensure that sound working practices are in place that put safeguarding as a priority and which are effective in managing risk for these vulnerable groups, but which will also protect staff and volunteers against wrongful or malicious allegations.

Anti-Fraud and Bribery Policy

The Authority has in place approved an Anti-Fraud and Bribery Policy. The policy covers all employees, volunteers and members of the Authority. It incorporates the changes to the bribery legislation that have been included in the Bribery Act 2010. The Bribery Act 2010 establishes criminal offences and individuals found guilty can face an unlimited fine and imprisonment up to ten years. Where an organisation itself is found guilty of the offence then the penalty is an unlimited fine.

Financial Standards

The Authority revised recently its Financial Standards. The purpose of the Financial Standards is to provide a financial framework within which the Authority can operate and will assist the Authority in ensuring that:

- Legislation is complied with.
- The assets of the Authority are safeguarded.
- The funds available are spent wisely and efficiently.
- Appropriate income generation is undertaken.
- Best value is achieved

Principle 4

Taking informed and transparent decisions which are subject to effective scrutiny and managing risk.

The Authority has taken the following action to improve its processes and structures and also to tackle identified issues of risk.

Risk Management

Following recommendation by Internal Audit the Risk Register is now presented to each meeting of both the Audit & Corporate Services and Operational Review Committees and annually to the full Authority. It is regularly reviewed by the Leadership Team when current risks are reviewed and new risks evaluated.

Performance Management

The Authority signed up for a further two years to use the Ffynnon performance management system. Staff are updating the Ffynnon system directly with information to update performance reporting on a regular basis.

Upgrading systems infrastructure

During 2016/17 the Authority made further investments in the following IT systems; planning document management system, Pobl y Parc, Parcnet and the EPOS systems.

Internal Audit 2016/17

As part of the Authority's corporate governance programme a risk assessment was made on all it services and formed the basis of the work carried out during 2015/16 by the Authority's internal auditors' Gateway Assure. The focus of the Audit was on the following areas:

- Review of Previous Year Agreed Action Plan
- Key Financial Controls – Procurement & Creditors
- Information Governance - Corporate Governance
- Performance Management
- Planning Fees
- Departmental Review – Benchmarking Survey

The Chief Audit Executive's Opinion

In the Audit & Corporate Services Review Committee Meeting of **??? 2017** Robin Pritchard of Gateway Assure, the Authority's Internal Auditors, gave the following audit opinion for the year 2016/17:

“Overall in our opinion, based upon the reviews performed during the year, the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority:

- has adequate and effective risk management;
- has adequate and effective governance; and
- has adequate and effective control processes.”

Committees

Individual service team leaders update Members of their respective Review Committee with details of the work in progress within the team. There is a clear documenting of decisions, meeting agenda and minute process. Members therefore make decisions based on timely and accurate information, although some decisions are deferred to allow members for considered decisions. Members reviewed the committee structure towards the end of the year and made recommendations where appropriate.

Wales Audit Office Reports

Wales Audit Office passes an opinion on their review the Authority's performance and Statements of Accounts which is recorded in the WAO Improvement Assessment Letter and the ISA 260 report. The Wales Audit Office 2013/14 Annual Improvement Report was not available in 2014/15 to action any recommendations.

Wales Audit Office National Park Authorities – Governance Review

Following the Auditor General's consultation on the Well-being of Future Generations Act and audit, all three National Park Authorities in Wales agreed to work with the Wales Audit Office in piloting approaches to audit under the Act. It has been agreed that over the next four years, the Wales Audit Office will undertake a series of governance reviews aimed at facilitating improved governance in the context of the Well-being of Future Generations Act. In 2016-17 the Wales Audit office has been undertaking a governance review of governance culture involving survey and workshop activities with staff and Members.

Benchmarking

The Authority undertakes benchmarking activities across a number of areas. Key performance indicators within the annual Corporate Plan are benchmarked against other National Park Authorities where comparative data is available. The Authority submits an Annual Performance Report every November as part of the Welsh Government Planning Performance Framework. The annual report discusses how the Authority has performed against the indicators, identifying what it had done well so that this can be shared with others, and what steps might be taken to address areas of performance in need of improvement. Through the Framework the Authority is able to benchmark its performance against other Planning Authorities in Wales.

In conjunction with Brecon Beacons National Park the Authority commissioned its internal auditors to undertake a 15 National Park wide benchmarking exercise on support costs. The findings were reported to the Authority on 29th March 2017

Principle 5

Developing the capacity and capability of Members and Officers to be effective.

The Authority has undertaken the following to develop the capacity and capability of Members:

Skills Audit

During this year the Authority undertook a Members Skills Audit. This information contributed towards the future planning of training sessions and was also passed onto the Welsh Government to assist them with the process of appointing two new Members of the Authority.

Wales Charter for Member Support and Development

The Authority currently holds Charter status for Member Support & Development

Staff Development

Learning and development needs are identified at annual performance reviews and priority 1 needs form the basis of the plans for the year. All new staff are 'inducted' on an individual basis when they start, with an annual corporate induction with the CE and Directors, and the opportunity to attend an all-UK National Park event. Appropriate certificated training is identified and scheduled with periodic refreshers.

In 2015-16, the 3-year SLA with PCC delivered an autumn/winter programme of learning opportunities for leadership team and team leaders, plus some coaching. Relevant managers also undertook an Equality Impact Assessment workshop. A regular programme of lunchtime training and awareness events takes place. A training programme with the West Wales Action on Mental Health team is ongoing, including for team leaders in their role as people managers. Over 50 staff took part in sessions introducing Mindfulness as an aid to wellbeing.

Health and Safety

There was an internal audit of Health and Safety during 2015/16 with a substantial assurance. The Authority produces an annual Health and Safety Plan which sets out its priorities for the year. Members received a comprehensive annual report in November 2016 and endorsed a set of priorities and actions. An HSE inspection took place following a RIDDOR report of a work related health condition. Three team leaders have successfully completed a 4-day IOSH accredited 'Managing Safely' course and all managers have taken part in a workshop to refresh management understanding of manual handling.

Staff Development.

Both team leaders and administrative staff participated in professional development programs ran by Pembrokeshire County Council. A cross authority programme to support administration staff was commenced during the year.

Principle 6

Engaging with local people and other stakeholders to ensure robust public accountability.

During the past year the Authority has sought to engage with local people and stakeholders through a range of consultations. Following last year's survey of community councils training sessions on planning have been provided to all who requested it.

The Authority proposes to continue to undertake consultation with residents, visitors, organisations and other stakeholders on a long term strategy on service delivery on the reducing funding anticipated over the next few years.

Strategic Equality Plan

The Authority joined a consortium of most of the public bodies in south west Wales to undertake a major equalities perception survey which was managed by Carmarthenshire County Council. In April 2016 the Authority approved a revised Strategic Equality Scheme.

Partnership working arrangements

The Authority works with a number of external bodies helping to improve value for money and in communicating with various other interest groups to deliver a number of common projects, e.g.:

- Carmarthenshire County Council; SLA's Payroll / Pension, Minerals
- South Wales Local Authority Purchasing Group
- Brecon Beacons & Snowdonia National Parks Authorities, brokerage Insurance / joint IT manager and Mosaic project Community Consultation; there has been significant engagement with Town and Community Councils on the changes in planning guidance and on Budget priorities for the Authority.
- Future Landscapes Wales programme
- Public Services Board
- Apprenticeship scheme with Brecon Beacons National Park and Torfaen Borough Council
- National Park Partnership on corporate social responsibility options and other sponsorship funding
- The UK National Parks on support services benchmarking.

VI. Significant Governance Issues

Governance Issues Identified	Action to be taken
Document Management Systems	Review alternative systems
Impact of Future Landscapes Program	A review will be undertaken to assess the outcome of the program
National Park Grant Funding	Continue to work with Welsh Government to respond to funding position and developing a medium term financial plan
Business Interruption	An internal group will be set up to lead all aspects of business continuity
Compliance with the Equality Act	Continue the review to ensure compliance with the Act
Information Governance	There will be a review by the Performance & Compliance Officer on Information Governance which will feed into staff training plans
Change in Authority Membership	The impending change in the membership of the Authority will be managed effectively and necessary induction process and training provided.

VII. OPINION

We propose over the coming year to take steps to address the matters referred to in part VI to further enhance our governance arrangements. We are satisfied that these steps will address the need for improvements that were identified in our review of effectiveness and will monitor their implementation and operation as part of our next annual review.

SIGNED _____
Chairman

DATED _____

SIGNED _____
Chief Executive

DATE _____

SIGNED _____
Section 151 Officer

DATE _____