

# NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

14 June 2017

Present: Mrs G Hayward (Chair)

Councillor P Baker, Councillor Mrs D Clements, Councillor K Doolin, Councillor M Evans, Councillor P Harries, Dr R Heath-Davies, Mrs J James, Councillor M James, Councillor PJ Morgan, Councillor R Owens, Mr AE Sangster, Councillor A Wilcox, Councillor M Williams and Councillor S Yelland

(NPA Offices, Llanion Park, Pembroke Dock: 10.30am – 12.20pm)

## 1. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Mr A Archer, Ms C Gwyther and Councillor P Kidney.

## 2. Welcome

The Chair welcomed Mr Steven Jones, the Authority's recently appointed Operations Manager, to the meeting.

## 3. Minutes

The minutes of the meetings held on the 29 March 2017 and 17 May 2017 were presented for confirmation and signature.

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meetings held on 29 March 2017 and 17 May 2017 be confirmed and signed.

## 4. Matters arising

### (a) St Davids City of Culture 2021 (Minute 9, 29 March 2017)

The Chief Executive reported that a bid regarding the above had been submitted on time, however shortlisting had been delayed due to the Parliamentary elections and the result – which was usually of 4 or 5 cities – was not expected until early July, however the date of the announcement was unknown.

**NOTED.**

## 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 8 February 2017, 27 February 2017 and 22 March 2017;
- (ii) Operational Review Committee held on 22 March 2017;
- (iii) Chief Executive's Performance Review Panel held on 11 April 2017;



- (iv) Audit and Corporate Services Review Committee held on 10 May 2017.

## **6. Future Landscapes Wales**

Members were reminded that in November 2015, they were presented with a copy of the Review of Designated Landscapes, which was the outcome of the review process undertaken by a group under the leadership of Professor Terry Marsden. That paper also outlined the intention of the Welsh Government to set up a Future Landscapes Working Group, under the leadership of Lord Dafydd Elis-Thomas AM involving representatives of the National Park Authorities, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs), interest groups, business, and local government. This group's main remit was to explore the recommendations arising from the Review of Designated Landscapes and report their findings during 2016.

In December 2015, the Welsh Government set up groups as part of the Future Landscapes Wales Programme on which the Authority was represented and details of these were set out in the report.

A final version of the Future Landscapes: Delivery for Wales report was published by the Cabinet Secretary for Environment and Rural Affairs on 10 May 2017 and a copy was appended to the report for Members. It was hoped that this would bring to an end what had been a four year period of review. However the Authority now moved onto a period of discussing and implementing the recommendations in the report and Members' comments were sought to inform this process.

The Chief Executive added that he believed the report contained some opportunities, however he was concerned that the recommendations were not very clearly written. Wider stakeholder consultation on the report would take place during July. A debate on the report had been held in the Senedd on 6 June 2017 and a link to the webcast would be sent out to Members. It highlighted the need for greater education of Assembly Members of the work of National Park Authorities. However the debate had also made clear that any changes would require primary legislation and there would therefore be plenty of opportunity to input into the process.

Members' comments on the report fell into three broad areas – the suggestion of continued reductions in funding requiring the delivery of 'more with less', which would require the Authority to pool resources and empower and engage with its communities; fear that the need for primary legislation regarding a third economic purpose would lead to this element being lost or badly delayed; and the lack of references to seascape, conservation and particularly enhancement of eg biodiversity, with the associated danger that the drive for the current economic duty to become



a purpose could lead to damage of the very things the National Parks were created to protect.

The Chief Executive responded to some of these points by noting that with regard to the lack of references to conservation, the language in the report had been updated to reflect that found in new legislation, and it was understood to be included in the term 'landscape management'. He added that there was an expectation that there would be legislation during the current Assembly term, and this would most likely propose inclusion of the economic duty as a purpose and the process would allow proper debate on this issue. With regard to joint working, while it was acknowledged that more work could be done to celebrate its achievements, the Authority could not deliver as it did if it did not work extensively with a variety of partners, particularly Pembrokeshire County Council. One Member added that it was hoped there could also be closer working in the areas of health and education to which the Authority had much to contribute.

Regarding the next steps, one Member asked how the implementation plan within the report would become an action plan, focusing on those areas where the National Parks could have an impact. The Chief Executive replied that National Parks Wales had been awarded £150,000 by Welsh Government to deliver the outcomes and he outlined some of the current proposals for taking this forward.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- a) the Future Landscapes Wales report be noted
- b) Members' views and the issues they highlighted in the meeting be included in ongoing discussion with the Welsh Government.

## **7. Pembrokeshire Well-Being Assessment**

Members were reminded that the Well-being of Future generations Act 2015 established Public Service Boards (PSBs) for each Local Authority, with the purpose of the Pembrokeshire PSB being to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Pembrokeshire. The first Pembrokeshire Well-being assessment was agreed by the PSB on 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2017 and a copy was appended to the report. Its next task was therefore to prepare and publish a local well-being Plan for Pembrokeshire setting out local objectives and the actions it proposed to take to meet them. The Well-being Plan was required to be agreed by May 2018 and the work of the developing it would include consultation with a wide range of stakeholders. Members of the Authority were therefore asked to highlight issues of priority for inclusion in the Well-being Plan and this information would be fed into discussions by the PSB.

Members welcomed the Assessment, noting that it provided a fascinating insight into Pembrokeshire and the issues it was facing. The issues they identified for inclusion in the Well-being Plan included greater empowerment for use of the Welsh language in both North and South of the County; the



importance of Higher Education to equip people for work opportunities; infrastructure needs such as improvements to broadband and road/rail communications; greater collaboration with the Health Board to improve the health and wellbeing of the population including those with disabilities and poor mental health. They highlighted particularly the excellent work of the Authority in this respect in improving footpaths for those who were less able and through projects such as Walkability, GoFort and its successor Your Park which worked with young people as well as the new Pathways project which would encourage volunteering across a range of age groups.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Pembrokeshire Well-being Assessment be noted and that the issues highlighted above be raised with the Public Service Board when developing the Pembrokeshire Well-Being Plan.

#### **8. Wales Audit Office Audit Plan 2017**

Members were reminded that as part of the Authority's governance arrangements, it was audited by the Wales Audit Office annually, with the main aims of this process set out in the report. The programme of work for the forthcoming year was outlined in the Wales Audit Office Audit Plan 2017 and this was appended to the report.

One Member pointed out a typographical error at paragraph 13 and asked whether certification work on grant claims would form part of the work programme. Officers clarified that the Auditor's had not been requested to carry out such work; the Authority's Sustainable Development Fund was now audited as part of the Core Grant.

Noting the costs, Members asked officers to continue to raise the issue of high fees and to seek to change the structure of the assurance framework so that fees could be reduced.

**NOTED.**

#### **9. Marine Protected Areas**

Following receipt of a letter recently from the Cabinet Secretary for Environment and Rural Affairs, the report set out the marine designations within or adjacent to the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park and provided Members with an overview of the Authority's responsibilities with regard to these protected areas. While the National Park boundary stopped at the Mean Low Water mark, the Authority was a Relevant Authority in respect of the legislation. This was a complex and challenging area, compounded by a lack of resources across all Authorities.

While the Authority's contribution, both financial and in officer time, to the management of marine protected areas was welcomed, Members agreed that the implications of for example Brexit and any developments regarding Seascapes coming out of the Future Landscapes Wales report should continue to be monitored.

**NOTED.**



## 10. Review of Conservation Area Boundaries

It was reported that the Authority had a total of 14 Conservation Areas, which were areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character of which it was desirable to preserve or enhance. The boundaries of 12 of these – Angle, Caerfarchell, Caldey Island, Little Haven, Manorbier, Newport, Newport Parrog, Portclew, St Davids, Saundersfoot, Solva and Trefin had been reviewed and found to be fit for purpose with no boundary amendments proposed.

Members were reminded that Article 4(2) Directions existed in St Davids, Little Haven, Solva, Tenby and Newport where survey had found erosion of character.

The relevant Town/Community Councils had been consulted with all in favour of retaining the boundaries as existing, except Lamphey Community Council which had suggested a minor amendment to Portclew Conservation Area to include a ruined cottage and copse to the north of the settlement. The officer considered that alternative protection in the form of a Tree Preservation Area would be a more relevant form of protection in this instance, and the cottage was not considered to be of high historic/architectural importance.

Tenby and Porthgain Conservation Areas would be the subject of further review and future reporting to the Authority.

It was **RESOLVED** that the existing boundaries of Angle, Caerfarchell, Caldey Island, Little Haven, Manorbier, Newport, Newport Parrog, Portclew, St Davids, Saundersfoot, Solva and Trefin Conservation Areas be reconfirmed as fit for purpose and that the map layers and dates on the boundary maps be updated.

## 11. Corporate Events

The report set out those events to which Members of the Authority had been invited this year and nominations for attendance at these was sought.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- a) Two Members be authorised to attend the Europarc Conference between 6<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> September 2017 in the Magic Mountains, Portugal. Councillors P Harries and K Doolin expressed an interest in attending.
- b) All Members be authorised to attend the National Parks Wales Annual Members' Seminar on 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> October 2017 hosted by the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority.
- c) Four Members be authorised to attend the UK National Parks Conference between 25<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> October 2017, hosted by the South Downs National Park. Mrs G Hayward as Chair, Mr AE Sangster as Deputy Chair, Councillor M James and Councillor A Wilcox expressed an interest in attending.
- d) All new Members be authorised to attend the National Parks UK National Induction Courses between 31<sup>st</sup> October and 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2017 in the Lake District National Park or between 13<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> March 2018 in the Broads Authority.



- e) Up to 5 Members/officers be authorised to attend the WLGA Annual Conference. Details of this would be circulated in due course.

[Councillor A Wilcox tendered his apologies and left the meeting at this juncture]

## 12. Review of Standing Orders

It was reported that the introduction of the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2017 required Local Planning Authorities to modify their Standing Orders in relation to Planning Committees, whereby the quorum should be 50% of the membership rounded to the nearest whole number. As the Authority's Standing Orders had not been reviewed for many years, this need for change had prompted an overall review. The revised Standing Orders were appended to the report.

It was **RESOLVED** that the revised Standing Orders be adopted.

## 13. Welsh Language Standards

In accordance with the Compliance Notice issued by the Welsh Language Commissioner, the Authority was required to produce an Annual Report by 30<sup>th</sup> June 2017 setting out how it was complying with the Standards imposed under the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011. The officer apologised for the lateness of sending out the report to Members for their consideration, and endorsement for its submission to the Welsh Language Commissioner was sought.

Some amendments to the report were suggested by Members, which officers agreed to take on board.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Welsh Language Standards Annual Report be endorsed as the Authority's submission to the Welsh Language Commissioner subject to the amendments suggested at the meeting.

