

REPORT OF THE FINANCE MANAGER

SUBJECT: GRANT APPROVALS IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 78 OF THE FINANCIAL STANDARDS

Purpose of Report

Authorisation is required in accordance with Section 78 of the Financial Standards (2012) which states that where there is a payment of 'Total value Grant and Sponsorships under any one agreement over £10,000', approval must be obtained from the National Park Authority.

In the 2018/19 financial year there are two payments which fall into this category: payment of £12,500 to Pembrokeshire Coastal Forum to help integrate and manage coastal activity and secondly a payment of circa £72,400 to Pembrokeshire County Council as a contribution towards the Pembrokeshire Greenways Partnership.

Pembrokeshire Coastal Forum

Pembrokeshire Coastal Forum has for more than 15 years brought stakeholders together - including government, statutory agencies, industry, local business and communities in order to identify coastal management issues and broker solutions. It is considered that the Pembrokeshire Coastal Forum is a cost-effective vehicle for delivery of work essential to achieving National Park purposes and the NPA's duty.

Over recent years the Authority reduced its contribution to Pembrokeshire Coast Forum in line with a number of budget cuts and moved away from a model of funding the organisation to one focused on delivering specific projects.

For the 2018/19 financial year it is proposed that the Authority contributes the sum of £12,500 to support:

1. £5,000 contribution to the Pembrokeshire Marine Code Spatial Approach Project to widen the Marine Code approach and use of the Marine Code App to the outdoor adventure sector and tourism sector through delivery of training to encourage citizen science and greater recording of biodiversity and invasive species in the coastal environment. (Total project value £50,000 in 2018/19);
2. £5,000 contribution to the Sustainable Recreation Management Project: to promote, educate, and manage outdoor recreation through codes of conduct, best practice and recreation management agreements and encourage outdoor recreation participants to value the environment and set benchmarks for behaviour with wildlife. This work will largely be achieved through support for the Pembrokeshire Outdoor Charter Group through delivery of an annual training and engagement plan. (Total project value £52,000 for 2018/19);

3. £2,500 contribution to updating the Wales Activity Mapping dataset for the Pembrokeshire coast through carrying out survey work and updating the web-based GIS system. The project will include a review of previous work on carrying capacity, recreational disturbance to designated sites and develop and test a protocol to expand to other MPA's in Wales. (Total project value £60,000 for 2018/19)

Pembrokeshire Greenways Partnership

The payment to the Pembrokeshire Greenways Partnership includes funding 50% of the Greenways Officer Post (the other 50% is funded by Pembrokeshire County Council), this amounts to £16,400. A further £46,000 of the budget is used as the Authority's contribution to the Coastal bus services. Of this amount £22,000 is used to fund the Strumble Shuttle and Poppit Rocket Bus Services two-days a week through the winter; £24,000 is used to fund the Celtic Coaster service through the summer.

The Celtic Coaster service remains the most patronised service of all the Coastal Bus Services since 2010 providing access to the popular visitor locations around the St Davids Peninsula, including St Justinians. The patronage of the service has continued to rise, with 30,000 passengers carried in the 2016 season – an increase of 20% on 2015 figures which also had a similar increase on the previous year.

The number of passengers using the Coastal Bus services hit 70,000 for the first time ever. The National Park Authority contributes approximately 15% of the overall cost of the Coastal Bus Services. The remainder is funded by Pembrokeshire County Council through its Local Transport Services Grant.

The services operate almost entirely within the National Park and as well as providing access to the majority of the coast for visitors also provide a service for residents which would not otherwise be sustainable.

The National Park Authority also contributed to the Tenby Park and Ride Service in 2016 which helps to reduce congestion in the town centre of Tenby and provides easy access for those using the car parks furthest away from the town centre.

The remainder of the sustainable transport budget is used for publicity (Coastal Bus Services advertisement in Coast to Coast) and supporting other Greenways Projects with the other Partners such as Bikemobility which provides cycling facilities for children and adults of all abilities. This remains a very popular activity with a steady increase in patronage.

Recommendation.

Both the above payments have been made over a number of years and as a result of the revised financial standards , Members are asked to approve these payments.