

NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

16 October 2019

Present: Councillor P Harries (Chair)

Mr A Archer, Councillor P Baker, Councillor Mrs D Clements, Councillor K Doolin, Councillor M Evans, Dr M Havard, Mrs J James, Mr G Jones, Councillor P Kidney, Councillor PJ Morgan, Councillor R Owens, Dr R Plummer and Councillor S Yelland

(NPA Offices, Llanion Park, Pembroke Dock: 10.00am – 11.35am)

1. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from. Dr R Heath-Davies, Councillor M James, Councillor A Wilcox and Councillor M Williams.

2. Welcome and Good wishes

The Chair welcomed Mr Michael Kent, the Authority's new Monitoring Officer, to the meeting. Mr Kent replied that he looked forward to working with Members, and to providing advice and training which would hopefully avoid challenge to any of the Authority's decisions.

Noting Councillor Mike James' apologies, the Chair advised he was recovering from an operation and wished him a speedy recovery.

3. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on the 4 September 2019 and 11 September 2019 were presented for confirmation and signature.

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on the 4 September 2019 and 11 September 2019 be confirmed and signed.

4. Matters arising

(a) National Development Framework/Sustainable Farming and our Land (Minutes 7 and 8 (4 September 2019))

Members were advised that final versions of the responses to these consultations were not yet available, but would be circulated once these had been agreed.

NOTED.

5. Chair's Announcements

The Chair reported that he had attended a number of meetings/events since the last meeting of the Authority. These included:

- National Parks UK Conference in the Yorkshire Dales on 16-18 September, along with Dr Havard, Councillor Doolin and the Director of Planning and Park Direction. This proved a worthwhile



event with good networking opportunities. At the Gala Dinner, National Parks UK Platinum Awards were presented and the Lifetime Achievement Award was won by Dr George Middleton, who even though in his 90s remained an active Voluntary Warden with the Authority. It was hoped to present his award to him in person at Oriell y Parc on 8 November and Members were asked to let the Chief Executive know if they wished to attend.

- Cross Party Group on Biodiversity on 1 October in Cardiff at which Dr Sarah Beynon from Dr Beynon's Bug Farm in St Davids was speaking about the prevention of insect decline.
- Friends of Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Children's Annual Literary Competition which had a high standard of entries. Two of the winning entries took the form of letters to the National Park, and the Chair had replied to both of these letters.
- Unveiling of the Niclas y Glais plaque in the Preseli's on 5 October
- Dinner to celebrate the 10th Anniversary of LNG in Pembrokeshire held at the V&A Gallery in London on 7 October. This was an excellent networking opportunity.
- Meeting with Friends of Pembrokeshire Coast National Park on 9 October, followed by a visit to Bombora, the wave energy project operating in the Haven.
- A 'Tourism Summit' meeting with Members and Officers from Pembrokeshire County Council on 14 October to discuss the way forward for tourism in Pembrokeshire.

6. 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 31 July 2019.
- (ii) Personnel Committee held on 4 September 2019.

7. PCNPA Planning Annual Performance Report 2018-19

It was reported that the Planning Annual Performance Report (APR) was a document produced by the Authority for submission to the Welsh Government by 31 October each year. Planning Authorities were required to prepare an annual report, identifying how it had performed against set indicators, noting what it had done well so that this could be shared with others, and what steps might be taken to address areas of performance in need of improvement. The 2018-19 Report had been circulated to Members prior to the meeting. Also included were the results of a biannual survey carried out with City, Town and Community Councils which aimed to assess their views and how they engaged with the Local Planning Authority.



The report showed that overall performance was good. The Community Council survey highlighted additional training needs for Community Councils and the need for better contact with officers, and these areas would be looked at further to see how they could be addressed. With regard to the performance of the enforcement service, a report had been presented to the meeting of the Operational Review Committee in September 2018 which had explained that the Authority had a backlog of historical cases that had since been cleared. The other positive outcome during the year was the publication of applications online and the Authority's performance in this respect was now green, not amber. There had been 100% success at appeal and an increase in applications determined within the required period, however figures showed a decrease in the percentage of applications approved. Having looked at the reasons for this latter statistic, no particular trend could be discerned, other than perhaps a number of applications awaiting the end of the bat season and refused due to insufficient information.

Members felt that this was a useful report, providing a picture of performance across the service and highlighting any areas of concern. They felt that such good performance deserved wider promotion in the press. Recognising that performance figures told only part of the story, they were also pleased to see more qualitative data included. It was noted that the report highlighted a number of issues, such as housing land availability, delivery of affordable housing and the rise of Airbnb, that were common across much of Wales and these would need to be addressed at that level, working with Welsh Government and other stakeholders. Another Member noted that the rise in Airbnb did not necessarily reflect an increase in accommodation provision, but more a change in the way it was marketed.

There was also some discussion regarding the responses of City, Town and Community Councils and attendance at the training already provided for them. Officers replied that a biannual seminar was held, however take-up was generally low. Other points related to the stated decline in the National Park population and the Director agreed to see if she could add any more information on this point.

Members noted that planning performance was reported to the Review Committees and questioned whether next year some of those targets could be increased slightly so that the service continued to strive for excellence.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority Annual Performance Report 2018/19 be approved for submission to the Welsh Government subject to amendments identified by Members.



8. 2019 Annual Monitoring Report on the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Local Development Plan

Members were reminded that the Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) was produced by the Authority each October, looking back at the previous financial year and assessed the extent to which the Local Development Plan (LDP) strategy and policies were being achieved. The Report measured various indicators to assess the performance of the individual planning policies set out in the adopted LDP and to provide a general portrait of the social, economic and environmental conditions in the Park.

The 2019 Report was attached for Members' approval so that it could be submitted to Welsh Government by 31 October. The document would also be published for comment.

The Report showed that only 7 of the 36 indicators suggested areas of concern over implementation of policies/objectives and 2 where targets had not been achieved. Details of these were provided in the 'Key Findings' section of the report. It was noted that all of these issues had been considered during the Examination into the Replacement LDP which had taken place during July 2019.

Members felt this to be a helpful report, but noted that the performance of some indicators was given as N/A and others were blank and it was suggested that in future a commentary as to why this was the case would be helpful. They also asked whether a RAG rating could be provided for the Sustainability Objectives in the Sustainability Appraisal Monitoring section of the Report. Officers replied that they would look into this, however they were more difficult to quantify.

Finally, in response to a question, the Head of Park Direction provided an update for Members on the progress of the Replacement LDP towards adoption. She advised that at the final hearing session on 1 October, the Inspector had given a guideline of the end of January 2020 for receipt of her Report for fact checking; the Report would be binding on the Authority. However since that time the presentational requirements for publication of the Matters Arising Changes agreed during the Hearing Sessions, and which would be the subject of public consultation, had become more substantial than anticipated and the timescale was now in doubt. She agreed to provide an update for Members once the timescale became clearer.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Annual Monitoring Report for the Local Development Plan be approved for submission to the Welsh Government by 31 October 2019.



9. Environment (Wales) Act 2016, Section 6 (Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Duty) – PCNPA Signposting Document

It was reported that the Section 6 duty required that public authorities must seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity so far as consistent with the proper exercise of their functions, and in so doing, promote the resilience of ecosystems. As it was considered that a separate plan would run counter to the principle of integrated planning and delivery which the Authority already operated, the signposting document had been prepared in order to demonstrate how the Authority considered that the requirements of S6 were met and monitored, and to identify any areas which might be strengthened.

Members agreed with the approach that had been taken and welcomed the document. One Member questioned whether the document could more practically demonstrate the work being undertaken, but other Members noted that this would be better achieved through publicity.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Section 6 Signposting Document be approved.

10. The Contribution of Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority to Meeting the Challenges of the Climate Change Emergency

It was reported that in March 2018 the Welsh Government had published 'Prosperity for All: A Low Carbon Wales' which set out policies and proposals to set the foundations for Wales to transition to a low carbon nation. On the 29th April 2019, the Welsh Government's Environment Minister had declared a climate emergency in Wales, highlighting the threat it posed to the nation's health, economy, infrastructure and natural environment.

The report before Members, which had been written with input from staff across the Authority, outlined how the Authority was currently responding to Climate Change, via carbon reduction and sequestration, adaptation and mitigation. It also set out recommendations on where, potentially, the Authority could make further reductions or impact.

Members felt that the report was a reassuring one, and that it was helpful to draw, into one place, information on the actions being undertaken by the Authority. They made a number of suggestions for strengthening the wording in places and highlighting successes. Other, more specific suggestions included stating that the issue had been raised by staff at the Employee Forum in the first instance as a response to the climate change emergency, questions regarding carbon offset schemes, positively influencing suppliers, inclusion of Members' mileage within the calculations and actions that could be taken to raise awareness of carbon reduction among the general public. There was some discussion around carbon measurement tools and some disappointment that Welsh



Government had not yet shared the standard calculation methodology which could then be used for benchmarking. It was suggested that this be raised with the Minister at the forthcoming Designated Landscapes Wales Members Seminar.

Thanking officers for the document, it was suggested that the next stage was production of an Action Plan to be reported back to the Authority in due course.

It was **RESOLVED** that an Action Plan to take forward the contribution of the Authority to meeting the challenges of the climate change emergency be presented to a future meeting of the Authority.

11. Environmental Policy

It was reported that the purpose of the Environmental Policy was to set out the Authority's commitment to minimising negative impacts on the environment and to help facilitate enhancements where possible. The policy defined the scope of environmental activities for which the Authority had direct control and accountability, and responsibilities identified as within the remit of the Authority through wider collaborative partnerships where actions and results could be monitored and tracked.

The Environmental Policy had been reviewed in accordance with the standard 3 year review cycle and significantly updated in response to the Welsh Government's climate emergency declaration and subsequent target to achieve a carbon neutral public sector by 2030. The tone of the policy had been strengthened to include clear statements of intent from which an action plan could be developed, implemented and tracked.

Members supported the policy, but suggested that the text be clarified to explain that the number of face to face meetings would be reduced by utilising virtual meeting technologies only where travel was required.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Environmental Policy be approved.

12. Thanks

The Chair noted that Mr Allan Archer's term of office would soon come to an end, and today was his final National Park Authority meeting. He thanked him for his thoughtful contributions, particularly on planning matters and wished him well for the future, stating that he would be missed.

Mr Archer replied that he would miss the Authority also. He was pleased to note that business was always conducted with respect and felt that, following an unsettling few years of Designated Landscapes Reviews, the Authority was in a good position going forward. He thanked both Members and officers and wished them good luck for the future.

