

NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

4 September 2019

Present: Councillor P Harries (Chairman)
Mr A Archer, Councillor P Baker, Councillor Mrs D Clements, Dr M Havard, Dr R Heath-Davies, Councillor M James, Councillor PJ Morgan, Councillor R Owens, Dr RM Plummer, Councillor A Wilcox, Councillor M Williams and Councillor S Yelland.

(NPA Offices, Llanion Park, Pembroke Dock: 10.00a.m. – 11.45a.m.)

1. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor K Doolin, Mrs J James, Mr GA Jones, and Councillor P Kidney. Councillor M Evans had advised that he would be arriving late.

2. Disclosures of interest

No disclosures of interest were received.

3. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 25 July 2019 were presented for confirmation and signature.

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meetings held on 25 July 2019 be confirmed and signed.

4. Matters Arising

a) Appointment of Monitoring Officer (Minute 8)

The Chief Executive advised that two candidates would be interviewed that afternoon, and that it was hoped to make a recommendation to the Extraordinary meeting of the National Park Authority on 11 September 2019.

NOTED.

5. Chair's Announcements

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

- Meeting with the Deputy Minister, Hannah Blythyn following the meeting of the NPA on 25 July, and accompanying her on visits to Carew and Freshwater East when the opportunity to highlight relevant issues was taken. She was also presented with a miniature waymarker post which had been made at Cilrhedyn.
- Attendance at Carew Castle Medieval Fayre.



- Various receptions and networking events at the County Show, including presentation of the prize in the Supreme Sheep Championship.
- Greeting the Cruise Ship Aidabella at Fishguard.
- Presentation of a cheque to the winner of the County Show Fossil Competition at Castell Henllys.

NOTED.

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

Reports of meetings of a number of the Authority's Committees were presented to Members for consideration/information.

It was **RESOLVED**:

- (a) that the report of the meeting of the Development Management Committee held on 19 June 2019 be received, and
- (b) that the reports of the meetings of the Audit and Corporate Services Review Committee held on 5 June, Sustainable Development Fund Committee held on 5 June and 3 July 2019 and the Member Support and Development Committee held on 31 July 2019 be adopted.

7. National Development Framework

It was reported that the National Development Framework (NDF) was the highest tier of development plan in Wales and was focused on land use planning issues and challenges at a national scale. The purpose of the NDF was to set out where Welsh Government considered Wales should grow and the types of development needed over the next twenty years to help Wales be a sustainable and prosperous society.

A consultation process on the National Development Framework 2020-2040 was launched on 7 August and would run until 1 November 2019. Officers would be responding to the consultation as part of the South West Wales Regional group and as three Welsh National Parks, with the key issues relevant to the National Park identified as renewable energy, including its location just outside the boundary of the National Park, affordable housing, biodiversity, mobile phone coverage and green infrastructure. Members were requested to provide any comments or views on the draft consultation document to officers by 23 September 2019.

Members acknowledged the importance of the document. In respect of the issues it raised, concern was expressed regarding the lack of mobile signal and broadband connectivity in parts of the county as well as the potential impacts of phone masts. Members also agreed that the cross



boundary impacts, both visual and economic, of solar farms needed to be taken into consideration as well as the implications of loss of agricultural land. It was hoped that restrictions on large scale renewable energy within the National Park would not prevent innovative technological advances being permitted in the future. With regard to the housing growth figures set out in the document Members believed it was important for these to be sustainable and that affordable housing continued to be delivered. With regard to rural development, it was noted that there was an important balance to be struck between tourism and the needs of people living in the area.

It was proposed that the response be agreed with the Chair of the Authority and Members asked if this could be shared with them once it had been submitted.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Authority's response to the National Development Framework 2020-2040 consultation be delegated to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Chair of the Authority, and that the agreed response be circulated to Members.

8. Sustainable Farming and Our Land

Members were reminded that last year Welsh Government had published the Brexit and Our Land consultation, a high-level consultation setting out the case for changing how Welsh Government (WG) would support farmers and proposing new schemes to replace the Common Agricultural Policy in Wales. WG had considered the views expressed in the consultation and made a number of changes to its proposals, of most importance, these now explicitly recognised the interaction between food production and environmental outcomes.

Welsh Government's revised proposals were set out in the new consultation "Sustainable Farming and Our Land" which aimed to protect the land and the environment for future generations whilst providing a stable income for farmers through a new Sustainable Farming Scheme. The consultation period on this document would run until 30 October and the Authority would be responding on a three Parks basis. Members were invited to provide any comments or views on the draft consultation document to the Authority's Farm Conservation Officer by 30 September 2019.

Members felt that there had been a positive response to the previous consultation, however there was still much uncertainty regarding the future. It was noted that the document talked about habitat management, however there was also a lack of clarity on what the baseline was from which improvements would be measured e.g. Air Quality and a reduction



in chemical pollutants; this linked to concerns regarding the designation of Nitrate Vulnerable Zones and officers agreed to seek clarity on the relationship between the two. As the Sustainable Farming Scheme was developed, it was felt that the input and expertise of the National Park Authorities could add much to the debate and their involvement was vitally important. It was also considered important that as the scheme developed, consideration be given to 'outside' factors that had a significant impact on farmers, such as a supermarket's purchasing strategy.

Again, due to the importance of the consultation, it was proposed that the response be agreed with the Chair of the Authority and Members asked if this could be shared with them once it had been submitted.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Authority's response to the Sustainable Farming and Our Land consultation be delegated to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Chair of the Authority, and that the agreed response be circulated to Members.

9. West Wales Walking for Wellbeing Project

It was reported that during 2019, Sport Wales and Welsh Government's Healthy and Active Fund had provided £400,000 to support the West Wales Walking for Wellbeing project. This money would be allocated to the Authority through a series of payments over the next 3 years (the project was due to be completed in 2020) and PCNPA would be the lead partner and manage the project on behalf of the project partners. In addition to PCNPA, the partnership included Ceredigion Actif (Ceredigion County Council), Carmarthenshire Fifty Plus Forum (Walking Well Carmarthenshire), Hywel Dda Local Public Health Team (Public Health Wales) and Snowdrop Independent Living, The Authority would hold this fund under a separate budget in accordance with the conditions of the grant.

Section 77 of the Authority's Financial Standards regulated the payment of grants and it stipulated that payment of grant in excess of £20k required National Park Authority Approval.

As lead partner for the project, the Authority would be in receipt of all funds over a period of three years, but would be required to distribute some of the funds to project partners over the life time of the project for the purpose of project delivery. In order to allow for the prompt and effective distribution of the budget it is therefore proposed, and expressly only in relation to this project, that the Authority agree a variation to the Financial Standards regarding grants in excess of £20k and delegates to the Chief Executive the approval of any payments to partners as outlined in the grant offer letter for the West Wales Walking for Wellbeing project.



The Discovery Team Leader then went on to outline the aim of the project which was to develop a sustainable model for health and wellbeing walking groups across Hywel Dda University Health board area that supported individuals who currently lived sedentary or relatively sedentary lives, to become more physically active. By engaging with the Primary Health Care sector, the goal was to produce a sustainable social prescribing model which could be shared with Welsh Government and others.

Members felt that this was a really innovative project and were pleased to hear that the project would link to existing walking groups and included those with mobility issues. Members were advised that it was intended to work with other teams within the Authority to enable participants to actively engage with the landscape by enriching their knowledge of it.

It was **RESOLVED** that a variation to financial standards be approved in relation to the Healthy and Active Fund project, West Wales Walking for Wellbeing and to delegate to the Chief Executive the approval of any payments to partners as outlined in the grant offer letter.

10. Equal Opportunities Policy

It was reported that the Authority currently had a Dignity at Work Policy and a Strategic Equality Plan, but did not have a separate Equal Opportunities Policy. Having such a Policy strengthened the Authority's policy position, particularly for service users and would help strengthen staff awareness of their legal responsibilities. The Policy was appended to the report, and Members were asked to consider and approve it.

The Performance and Compliance Coordinator reported at the meeting that one Member had provided some comments in advance of the meeting and these had included a suggestion to incorporate, in Section 10, provisions for Members to report a concern or complaint. A number of other detailed wording changes were suggested and officers agreed to include these where they were in line with the legislative wording incorporated in the document.

Members agreed that this was an important document, however it was essential that staff and managers were aware of the duties and requirements set out within it. The officer agreed that additional work would be done to ensure staff, both new and long-standing, as well as contractors, were aware of the contents.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Equal Opportunities Policy be approved subject to the incorporation of Members' comments where possible.



11. **Data Protection Policy, ICT User Policy and Data and Information Security Policy**

It was reported that the above-mentioned suite of policies had been reviewed to ensure that the Authority complied with changes in data protection law, and had also been updated to reflect the way in which the Authority currently used IT resources.

In addition to a number of detailed points which would provide better linkages both within and between policies, there were questions regarding the references to Members within the policies, and the need for training to ensure they were compliant. Also in respect of monitoring, officers clarified that data protection indicators were included in the performance report presented to both Audit and Corporate and Operational Review Committees. It was confirmed that Members would be made aware of any significant data protection breaches.

Members acknowledged the onerous responsibilities relating to Data Protection and thanked officers for their work in updating the policies.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Data Protection Policy, ICT User Policy and Data and Information Security Policies be approved subject to the amendments suggested by Members.

