

**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 (2016) 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 2019/20 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 £73,000 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 2019/20 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.
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.;

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.

### **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 £49,600 of the budget is used as the Authority's contribution to the Coastal bus services. This amount has risen by £3,600 since last year but in the face of Welsh Government and Pembrokeshire County Council cuts to the transport budget has meant that these services have continued to operate.

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. Following year on year increases in the number of passengers carried, the patronage of the service reduced in 2018/19 by 11.6% (4,200 passengers). It is highly likely that the reduction is due to the introduction, last season, of privately operated buses by the commercial boat operators who use St Justinians as an embarkation point for their boat passengers. It is also likely that the very warm weather in the summer had an impact on the overall number of passengers using the coastal bus services which fell by 4.4% on the previous year.

The total number of passengers carried however was just short of 86,000. 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 will also contribute £7k to the Tenby Park and Ride Service in 2018 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. It has also funded the main bus timetable/advertisement in Coast to Coast.

The National Park Authority contributions towards the provision of the Coastal buses helps to ensure the continued operation of these services, not only allowing communities in the Park to reach work and other services and visitors to explore some of the most spectacular areas of the coast, but also providing an alternative to car travel which is a central tenet of Welsh Government policy

### **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.**