

NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

11 December 2019

Present: Councillor P Harries (Chair)

Councillor P Baker, Councillor Mrs D Clements, Councillor K Doolin, Councillor M Evans, Dr M Havard, Dr R Heath-Davies, Mrs S Hoss, Mrs J James, Councillor M James, Mr G Jones, Councillor P Kidney, Councillor PJ Morgan, Councillor R Owens, Councillor A Wilcox, Councillor M Williams and Councillor S Yelland

(NPA Offices, Llanion Park, Pembroke Dock: 10.00am – 12.50pm)

1. Apologies

An apology for absence was received from Dr R Plummer.

2. Welcome

The Chair welcomed Mrs Sarah Hoss, a Welsh Government appointed Member, to her first meeting of the Authority. He also welcomed back Councillor Mike James following his operation.

3. Disclosures of Interest

There were no disclosures of interest.

4. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on the 16 October 2019 were presented for confirmation and signature.

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on the 16 October 2019 be confirmed and signed.

5. Matters arising

(a) The Contribution of PCNPA to Meeting the Challenges of the Climate Change Emergency (Minute 10)

One Member asked whether any progress had been made on the Action Plan which it was agreed would be prepared. The Chief Executive replied that this would be brought either to the next meeting or to the meeting in April to allow it to be aligned with the Corporate Plan.

NOTED.

6. Chair's Announcements

The Chair reported that he had attended a variety of functions since the last meeting of the Authority. These included:

- The Tourism Heritage Project in Carmarthen on 21 October.



- Meeting with Dr Pike on 23 October for an interesting talk on carbon sequestration
- Presentation of a cheque to DPJ Foundation on 29 October in respect of proceeds received while hosting the Royal Welsh Show.
- Presentation of an award at the Pembrokeshire Tourism Awards at Meadow House Holiday Park on 7 November.
- Received the Green key eco-label that recognised commitment to sustainable tourism at Oriol y Parc
- Presentation of a life time achievement Platinum Award from National Parks UK to Dr George Middleton in St Davids on 8 November.
- Meeting with the Friends of Oriol y Parc on 8 November.
- Attendance at Newport's Court Leet Remembrance Parade on 10 November.
- Attendance, alongside other Members, at the Protected Landscapes Wales Seminar at Plas Tan y Bwlch, Snowdonia between 11 and 13 November and also the National Parks Wales Executive meeting held at the same time.
- National Parks UK Chairs' Forum meeting in London on 27th November.
- Met the Education Minister at Coastlands School to launch the Roots project which links schools and local food producers.
- Attended the Pembrokeshire Sport Awards at Folly Farm on 29 November.
- Attended the NFU Annual Dinner in Wolfscastle on 30 November.

7. 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 Committees held on 2nd and 11th September 2019.
- (ii) Operational Review Committee held on 25 September 2019.
- (iii) Audit and Corporate Services Review Committee held on 6 November 2019.
- (iv) Member Support and Development Committee held on 6 November 2019.

8. To appoint a Member(s) to fill the vacancies on the Audit and Corporate Services Review Committee, Employee Forum, Member Support and Development Committee, Appeals Committee and the South West Wales Regional Aggregates Working Party – Regional Technical Statement Member Forum.

It was **RESOLVED** that



- (a) Mrs S Hoss be appointed to the Audit and Corporate Services Review Committee, Employee Forum, Member Support and Development Committee and Appeals Committee.
- (b) Councillor M James be appointed to the South West Wales Regional Aggregates Working Party – Regional Technical Statement Member Forum.

9. Notice of Motion from Councillor R Owens: That the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park does not implement car parking charges at the West Angle Car Park

The Chair advised that this item would be considered later in the agenda (see minute 13).

10. Consultation Draft National Park Management Plan 2020 - 2024

Members were reminded that a consultation draft National Park Management Plan 2020-2024 and accompanying documents had been approved for consultation by the Authority in June 2019. Public consultation had closed on 31st October 2019 and a final report of engagement and consultations was appended to the report. Fifty seven representations had been received on the consultation draft Management Plan and accompanying documents (namely the draft Sustainability Appraisal, draft Habitats Regulations Assessment and draft Equality Impact Assessment of the Plan). The representations, together with officer recommendations in response, were appended to the report.

The report went on to summarise proposed changes to the consultation draft Management Plan and its accompanying assessments and ‘tracked change’ versions of the documents showing the amendments were also appended to the report.

In terms of the next steps, it was reported that, subject to approval of the report’s recommendations, those who responded to the consultation would be contacted with feedback on how their representations had been taken into account, and the final documents would be published on the Authority’s website. The Authority would be working with partners to implement and monitor the Management Plan, and partners would be encouraged to adopt the Management Plan and / or the impacts within it, and to celebrate those contributions. The intention was to maintain conversations and engagement throughout the Management Plan delivery period. A cross-departmental engagement action plan group had been established within the Authority with this as a key task; outcomes would be reported through the Authority’s Performance Management framework. The officer concluded by thanking Members for their contribution and support in the Management Plan process on behalf of all the staff involved.



Members congratulated the team on the work that had taken place and were pleased with the level of engagement – both public and with key partners. They were pleased to note that this would be ongoing and that feedback would be provided to those who had provided comments. They agreed that if partner organisations were to adopt the plan that this would help its delivery. Some Members made detailed points, including a suggestion that the location of photographs contained within the document be provided to encourage people to visit.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- a) The final Report of Engagement and Consultation on the Draft Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Management Plan 2020-2024 and the Officer recommended amendments proposed, as set out in Annex 1 to the report be agreed.
- b) The final National Park Management Plan 2020-2024 and the Officer recommended amendments proposed (Annex 2 to the report) be approved.
- c) The final Equality Impact Assessment and the Officer recommended amendments proposed (Annex 3 to the report) be approved.
- d) The final Sustainability Appraisal (incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment) and final Sustainability Appraisal Summary (available via the Authority's Committee Papers page - National Park Authority 11/12/2019) be approved.
- e) The final Habitats Regulations Assessment and the Officer recommended amendments proposed (Annex 4 to the report) be approved.
- f) The Sustainability Appraisal post-adoption statement (Annex 5 to the report) be approved.
- g) Delegated authority be granted to the Head of Park Direction to make minor amendments (i.e. technical updates or typographical errors) to the above as necessary prior to publication.

11. Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority Safeguarding Statement

It was reported that the Authority's Safeguarding Statement and Guidance had been revised to take account of changes to legislation and in the way these changes had been interpreted and delivered at a local level in West Wales. It was noted that Pembrokeshire County Council, the lead agency in managing safeguarding locally, had provided support in updating the Authority's Statement and Guidance.

Members agreed that this was a comprehensive policy and some had provided detailed comments to officers. They agreed that the provision, as detailed in the policy, of Safeguarding cards to remind staff how to keep themselves safe, was good practice, but suggested that these could also include a reminder of the action to be taken if they suspect abuse or mistreatment.



It was **RESOLVED** that the Safeguarding Statement for Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority be approved.

12. Draft Equality Plan 2020-24

It was reported that under the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011, the Authority was required to prepare and publish its equality objectives every four years; publish a statement setting out the steps it had taken (or intended to take) to meet the objectives and how long it expected to take to do this; to make appropriate arrangements to monitor progress towards meeting its objectives and to monitor the effectiveness of its approach; and give appropriate consideration to relevant equality information it held when considering what its equality objectives should be.

The Authority's current objectives had been reviewed and the new proposed objectives fell under four areas with four longer term aims – The Park – A Landscape for Everyone; Our Services – accessible and Inclusive; Our Workforce – Diverse, Supportive and Inclusive; Governance and Engagement – Increased Participation.

The plan appended to the report was a draft plan, on which Members' comments were sought. The final version of the Equality Plan would be presented to the meeting of the Authority in February.

In drafting the Plan, officers had identified that the Authority's equality objectives and plan could have greatest impact through considering the evidence, feedback from engagement, best practice and strategic links, and the Evidence and Engagement document appended to the report set out how these had influenced the creation of the Objectives and actions.

Members suggested that greater reference should be made to the role of Members and also volunteers. The importance of accessibility of public spaces was also highlighted and officers replied that it was hoped that some of the actions set out would strengthen this area. Finally it was suggested that interim milestones should be set for the actions.

NOTED.

13. Annual Review of the 2019 Operation and Management of the Authority's Charging Car Park Sites

Members were reminded that in November 2016 Members had approved a report which outlined the existing car park operation and set out recommended changes to include yearly updates.

The report to the Authority was the third such annual report and it provided overall figures for numbers of tickets issued, car parking receipts



and operating costs. The report confirmed that work to progress a variation of the Authority's Car Parking Order had been completed, following a period of public consultation, with the implementation date being 1st December 2019. The Order provided for the introduction of parking charges at Nolton Haven, West Angle, Penally and Amroth Car Parks, the extension of the charging day across all sites to include the period between 5pm and 7pm and an increase in the daily charge for coach parking from £3 to £8. A public awareness campaign and installation of pay and display machines and replacement signage would be undertaken in the coming months so that the changes would come into effect from the commencement of the charging year, ie 15th March.

The report went on to advise that work to establish the cost/benefit, as well as the reliability, of introducing cashless pay and display machines at its sites was ongoing, and would be the subject of a report to the Authority in due course. However it was confirmed that officers were not currently considering withdrawing cash as a means of payment at the Authority's charging car parks. Discussions were also ongoing with Pembrokeshire County Council to establish the cost benefit of extending enforcement patrols in the Authority's car parks to what was known as 'civil twilight' ie half an hour before sunrise.

Finally it was noted that Broad Haven car park would be the subject of a comprehensive upgrade and refurbishment to be completed in two phases. Officers clarified that this work would be funded from a reserve created at the end of 2017/18.

Members made a number of comments on the report, and one noted that at a meeting of one of the Committees of Pembrokeshire County Council it was suggested that the National Park Authority could take over the running of public toilets where these were adjacent to a car park run by the Authority. Officers replied that discussions regarding destination management were ongoing with the County Council and a report on this was likely to be brought to the next meeting of the Authority. Any proposals put forward would be a matter for Members to discuss.

NOTED.

14. Notice of Motion from Councillor R Owens: That the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park does not implement car parking charges at the West Angle Car Park

Councillor Owens explained that he felt that because Angle did not have a strong economic base and was not able to maintain a shop and post office, car parking charges should not be introduced. This motion was seconded, and it was noted that in inclement weather people did not visit as there were no attractions other than the beach. It was also noted that there was a general understanding in the village that the land was gifted



to the Authority by the Angle Estate for free car parking, which was contrary to the wording of the actual conveyance document. In respect of this point, the officer advised that it had been made clear to the Angle Estate that if they were able to put forward any documentation which clarified its intention in respect of charging when the land was gifted to the Authority, this would be considered. Another Member expressed concerns about the damage to the Authority's reputation if there was any doubt regarding the gifting of the land.

However other Members noted that many villages did not want car parking charges to be introduced and believed that an exception should not be made for Angle as this would set a precedent that was difficult to justify. Other Members felt that the Authority needed a policy, so that decisions such as this one could be made within a wider context.

The motion to not implement car parking charges at Angle was put to the vote, however this was lost.

NOTED.

15. A Policy Framework for the Authority's Charging Car Park Operation

It was reported that the meeting of the Audit and Corporate Services Review Committee on 6th November 2019 considered a report by the Authority's Internal Auditors which recommended that a car park policy would be helpful and ensure consistency. A number of Members agreed with this recommendation and therefore officers had produced this report which set out policy objectives which would provide a framework for the continuing delivery of a charging car park operation by the Authority. However it was noted that detailed operational issues would continue to be considered during the annual review.

Members welcomed the report, however it was felt that what had been put forward was too broad and not a policy as it did not follow the Authority's standard template. It was suggested that the document be redrafted to include headings such as the basis for charging, where charging took place, roles and responsibilities, communications, season tickets and the outcomes for communities. It should also set out a review period and complaint and enforcement procedures. It was felt that this would provide clarity going forward and put the Authority in a stronger position.

It was **RESOLVED** that officers produce a revised draft of the policy framework which considered car parks in a wider perspective and that this be presented to a future meeting of the Authority.



16. Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales Draft Annual Report 2020/21

Members were reminded that the remit of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales was to prescribe the salaries and allowances payable to Members by local authorities, including National Park Authorities, in Wales. Its draft Annual Report for 2020/21 had been published, and the main recommendations relevant to this Authority were set out.

Members' opinion was sought on whether to submit a response to the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales' draft Annual Report, and if so, the content of such a response.

It was **RESOLVED** that the report be noted, and that no response be sent to the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales.

17. Composition of Standards Committee

It was reported that the Authority's Standards Committee had been established under the Standards Committee (Wales) Regulations 2001 to safeguard its standards of conduct and propriety. Its composition was set out in the Regulations, and currently comprised six Members, three of whom were Independent Members.

Regulation 24 stated that the quorum for the Committee was three Members, and that half of these were to be Independent Members. Under the current arrangements, if one of the Independent Members was not available for a meeting, there could be more Authority Members than Independent Members, rendering the meeting inquorate. In order to avoid this situation, it was recommended that the membership of the Standards Committee be increased to seven. As the term of office of the Chair of the Committee had come to an end, an advertisement for two new independent members could be placed, were Members to agree to the increase.

It was also noted that a vacancy had arisen for a Member of the Authority to serve on the Standards Committee; this was a four year appointment. Prior to the meeting Dr R Plummer had advised the Chair that she was willing to serve on the Committee.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- a) Dr R Plummer be appointed to serve on the Standards Committee;
- b) The Membership of the Standards Committee be increased to seven by increasing the number of Independent Members to four; and
- c) An advertisement for two new Independent Members of the Standards Committee be placed at the earliest opportunity.



18. Microsoft License Suite Upgrade

It was reported that the majority of the Authority's IT systems and applications were hosted by a fleet of servers running Microsoft infrastructure server software, the Authority's email system was Microsoft Exchange and each desktop PC and laptop had Microsoft Office and Outlook installed. As a result of budgetary constraints, the Authority had not upgraded the installed versions of server or desktop software for a number of years, and as from January 2020, Microsoft would no longer provide technical support or software and security updates for the server platforms the Authority's systems were running on, and the same support would be removed for the installed versions of Exchange and Office in October 2020.

It was reported that there were two options going forward – hosted, whereby Office 365 would be hosted and supported by Microsoft; and on premises, whereby Office 2019 would reside on the Authority's servers with technical support and updates provided remotely by Microsoft. While Office 365 would provide a number of collaborative and transformational working opportunities, the Authority did not currently have the revenue budget available to commit to the annual spend required.

It was therefore recommended that an Office 2019 perpetual licence (ie one off capital cost) be purchased; an indicative quote circa £108k for server licensing and the Office 2019 platform had been received. The funding would be from the Authority's Capital Receipts Reserve. It was noted that while support would be provided by Microsoft through to 2025, a review of the Authority's systems could take place before that.

It was **RESOLVED** that expenditure of £108k to cover the provision of Microsoft licenses through to 2025 be approved.

19. Approval of Additional Capital Expenditure for the Procurement of the Installation of Electric Vehicle Charge Points and the Variation of Contract Standing Orders in the Procurement Procedure

The Chairman advised that, as the Finance Manager was present, he would take this urgent item out of sequence on the Agenda.

It was reported that the Authority had gone out to a joint tender with Pembrokeshire County Council (PCC) for the provision of electric vehicle charge points (EVCP's) in the county. The tender had requested two distinct pricing packages, one for PCC and one for the Authority, with each Authority managing a separate contract with the provider. As a result of the tendering exercise, PCC had appointed Silverstone Green Energy to supply and fit the EVCP's, and the Authority would seek to appoint the same company.



The Authority's approved Capital Budget for 2019/20 included £30k for the provision of EVCP's, and part of the funding recently awarded by Welsh Government included a further £30k to support the installation of EVCP's. Following the tender exercise, the amount quoted for the four Authority EVCP's was £83,030 which included a contingency of £9,825. The Authority would therefore have to fund from its own resources a maximum of £23,030 in excess of the £60k funded by Welsh Government.

Members believed this to be an excellent project and it was confirmed that fast charging points would be installed and these would be the same as those procured by PCC to provide standardisation across the county.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- a) Variation to the contract standing orders for the procurement of four Electric Vehicle Charge Points through Pembrokeshire County Council be approved.
- b) A further £23,030 be allocated to the project in addition to the £60k funded by Welsh Government.

20. Dissolution of National Parks UK Ltd

It was reported that since its formation the Authority had worked in partnership with other National Park Authorities in Wales, England and Scotland. Prior to devolution the Association of National Park Authorities (ANPA) had provided the focus for this partnership working and had been an effective means of lobbying on issues such as the Environment Act, 1995. Since the setting up of the National Assembly for Wales and the Scottish Parliament in 1999, most of the issues that National Park Authorities engaged with had been devolved with National Parks Wales becoming the main focus of their work. In England a similar change had occurred with their main focus being on working together as National Parks England.

Since devolution ANPA, or National Parks UK as it had been re-named in 2014, had struggled to find a role and focused most of its time on communication, training of Members and events such as the National Parks Conference (which was organised by an individual National Park Authority by rotation).

The Chairs of the National Park Authorities had each been Directors of National Parks UK, however over the past five years there had been a recognition that the partnership was not working effectively, which had led to a long process of re-assessing the work of National Parks UK. In 2018 the Directors took a series of decisions which included moving away from a model of partnership focussed on one central organisation, to one that focused on delivering a limited range of services delivered by individual National Park Authorities on behalf of all Authorities via an "internal commissioning" process. In addition, the Directors of National Parks UK had agreed to dissolve the company structure for National Parks UK. While this decision was ultimately one for the Directors, it was



considered good practice to get the consent of the Members of National Parks UK, ie the Members of the 15 National Park Authorities.

It was **RESOLVED** that the dissolution of National Parks UK Ltd be approved and any action required to implement this decision be delegated to the Chairman.

[Dr R Heath-Davies tendered her apologies and left the meeting during the following item.]

21. **Coast Path 50th Anniversary**

It was reported that the 50th Anniversary of the Pembrokeshire Coast Path in 2020 would offer an ideal opportunity to celebrate one of the world's finest long distance walking routes and provided an opportunity to highlight the Authority's important role in managing the Coast Path.

A small number of dedicated events had been planned to support the anniversary due to the challenging economic climate in which the Authority was operating. Wherever possible, existing NPA activities would be branded to highlight the significance of the year and maximise opportunities for engagement with key audiences and raise the profile of the Path and the Anniversary.

A proposed list of events was set out in the report, and this contained a number of opportunities linked to various user groups, for example schools engagement, and Members were asked to endorse the programme.

Members were enthusiastic about the events proposed and suggested other ideas. It was suggested that a Working Group be established to take this forward, and Members were asked to put their names forward if they were interested in sitting on such a Group.

It was **RESOLVED** that a Working Group be established to consider events in relation to the 50th Anniversary of the Coast Path.