

Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority

Recreational and Leisure Activities



Supplementary Planning Guidance
to the Local Development Plan for the
Pembrokeshire Coast National Park

Adopted December 2012



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Contents

1.0	Introduction	4
2.0	Background and Context	5
3.0	Recreational Character Areas	6
	Map 1: Recreation Character Areas in the National Park	8
	Appendix 1: The main attributes of activities and suggested management response.	16
	Appendix 2: Characteristics of draft recreation opportunity classes for Wales.	17
	Useful Contacts	18

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1. Policy 35 of the Local Development Plan relates to the Visitor Economy and includes the context for consideration of recreation and leisure proposals in the National Park¹. The policy directs attractions and recreation and leisure proposals to Centres wherever possible in the interests of sustainability. It also recognises that some proposals may need to be located in the countryside but requires evidence to support each case. In all cases the policy would not permit activities which would damage the special qualities of the National Park.
- 1.2. The special qualities of the National Park are highlighted in paragraph 4.56 of the Local Development Plan and Policy 8 sets out how the Authority will seek to protect them.
- 1.3. This Supplementary Planning Guidance provides additional advice on which recreational activities are likely to be considered appropriate for different locations within the National Park.
- 1.4. It is important that all applications are considered in a clear and consistent manner. This information will help to provide applicants with a better understanding of what activities are likely to be compatible with the special qualities of the National Park.
- 1.5. Supplementary Planning Guidance does not form part of the Local Development Plan, but when adopted has significant weight in deciding whether a proposal can receive planning permission.
- 1.6. A report of consultations detailing how the Guidance was consulted upon is available to view on the Authority's website²

¹ <http://www.pembrokeshirecoast.org.uk/Files/Files/dev%20plans/finalldp.pdf>.

² <http://www.pembrokeshirecoast.org.uk/files/files/Dev%20Plans/AdoptedSPG/report%20of%20consultationRecreationV2SPGFinal.pdf>

2.0 Background and Context

- 2.1 The ability to take part in recreational activities and enjoy the outdoors brings benefits to all levels of society. Pembrokeshire has some of the finest opportunities for outdoor recreation in Europe, based around its outstanding marine and coastal environment. The Wales Outdoor Recreation Survey recognises that the county already has one of the highest participation levels in outdoor activities in Wales. The natural beauty of the National Park is valued very highly among local residents and remains one of its strongest features for attracting visitors. The most popular main activity for visitors is to see a natural attraction e.g. coastline, countryside, island or nature reserve etc.
- 2.2 The special qualities of the National Park are those characteristics and features of the National Park which individually or in combination contribute to making this National Park unique³.
- 2.3 The Authority's Recreation Management Plan⁴ uses the special qualities of the National Park to place the environment at the heart of recreation management, and show that conservation and public enjoyment, the two statutory purposes of National Parks in the UK are not only compatible but can be complementary. It takes a proactive approach to encouraging recreation in suitable locations, based around the special qualities of the area and the capacity of a particular place to accommodate any given mix of recreational activities. The Recreation Plan sets out a spatial approach to recreation management which forms the basis of this supplementary planning guidance.
- 2.4 The approach divides the National Park into Recreation Character Areas typified by their landscape features and accessibility (See Map 1 on page 8 of this document). This often leads to particular types of activity orientating to specific parts of the National Park. The environmental tolerance of areas to different types of recreation across the National Park varies. By identifying the particular qualities of each area, it can be established which may be at risk from recreational and leisure activities and influence supply and demand to make sure that recreation is promoted at the most appropriate locations and times. The qualities considered to be most at risk from recreational activity are the sense of remoteness, tranquillity, the natural heritage and visual character of the area.

³ See the Local Development Plan (September 2011) <http://www.pembrokeshirecoast.org.uk/default.asp?PID=178>

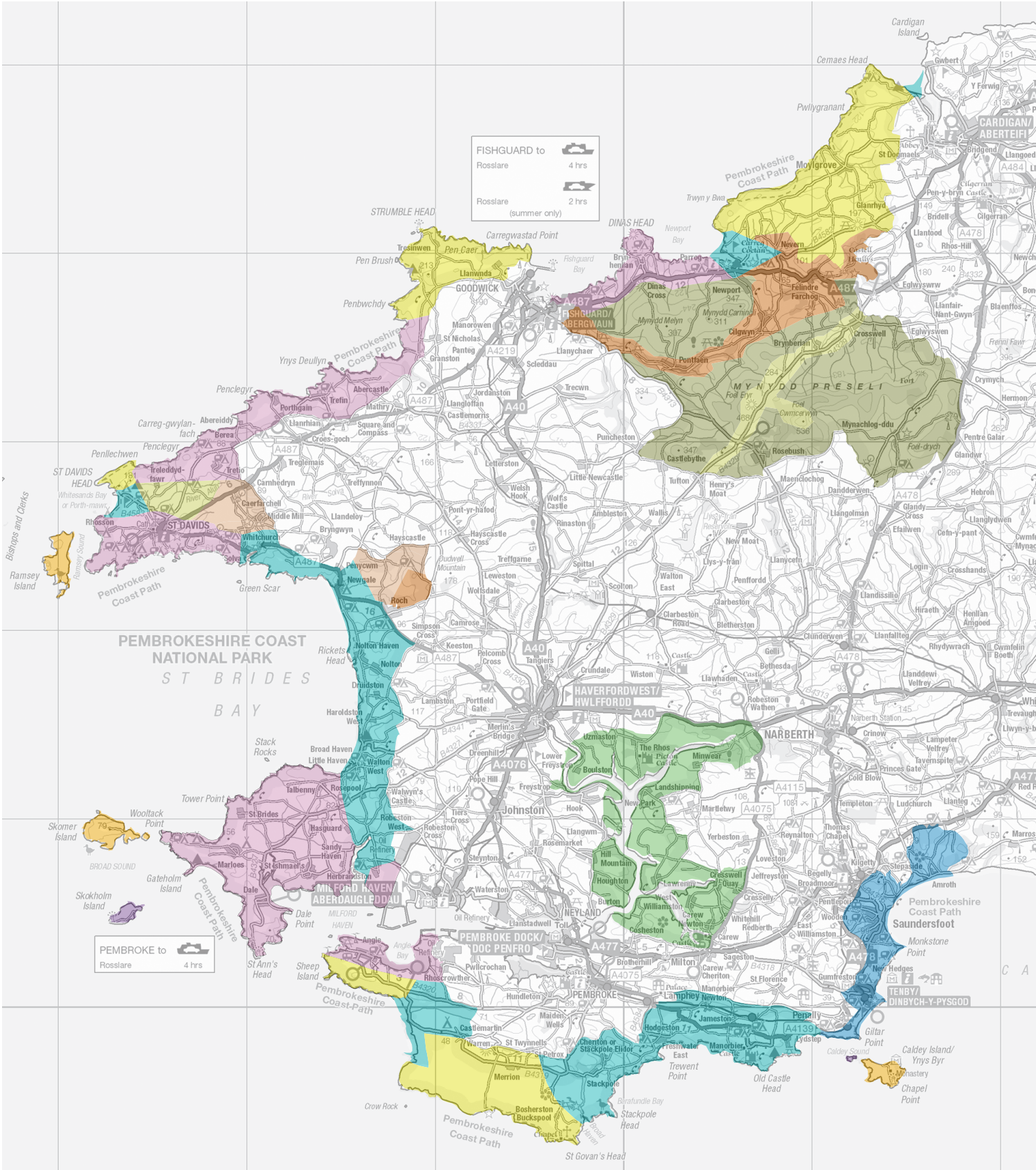
⁴ Enjoying the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park, September 2011.

3.0 Recreational Character Areas

- 3.1 Recreational activities can broadly be divided into 4 distinct groups according to their attributes. These are listed in the table in Appendix 1. The table shows that some activities are much more likely to impact on the special qualities of the National Park than others and therefore a management approach for each of the groups is also suggested where these activities take place in the National Park.
- 3.2 The Compass approach to recreational planning being promoted by the Countryside Council for Wales defines geographical areas under 4 recreation opportunity classes:
- Developed formal
 - Development semi-natural
 - Accessible natural
 - Remote natural
- More detail on the characteristics of each of these groups is given in Appendix 2.
- 3.3 A Landscape Character Assessment of the National Park was adopted as supplementary planning guidance by the Authority in June 2011. This identifies distinct landscape character areas within the National Park using the Landmap methodology developed by CCW for the systematic assessment of landscape character. By matching the landscape character areas with the Compass approach and the 4 recreation opportunity classes it has been possible to identify 8 Recreation Character Areas.
- 3.4 The following series of tables list each of the 8 Recreation Character Areas in terms of their characteristic features and highlight the key sensitivities for each area. Finally the potential of each area to accommodate different recreational activities and what is considered to be appropriate within each area is identified.
- 3.5 The following provides a key to the tolerance of each area to support various recreational activities. The boundaries of the groups are not fixed. Individual activities may move from one group to another depending on the scale of the activity, the location or the way it is pursued. Commercial operations or large events are likely to move the activity towards a higher numbered group because of additional numbers or regularity.

High Environmental Tolerance				Low Environmental Tolerance
Encourage and actively promote, management minimal except to provide associated facilities and access	Encourage and support, management to develop close liaison with users and operators	Encourage with responsible use, management to develop good practice and oversee out of season events	Encourage only proven good practice or out of season, lobby for stricter training, insurance and codes of practice	Do not encourage in this area or encourage elsewhere

Map 1: Recreation Character Areas in the National Park



Key

Resort Beach Coast



Developed Formal

Beach Coast



Developed Semi-natural

Small Bay Coast



Accessible Natural

Wild Cliff Coast



Remote Natural

Islands



Accessible Natural



Remote Natural

Estuaries



Developed Semi-natural

Inland Valleys



Remote Natural



Accessible Natural

Inland Commons and Hills



Remote Natural



Accessible Natural

Table 1

Recreation Character Area	The resort beach coast				
Areas	Coast between Penally and Amroth, including Tenby and Saundersfoot.				
Overview	These areas contain the most intensive areas for recreation and accommodation and includes the Centres of Tenby and Saundersfoot. Visitors are attracted by the fine, expansive beaches fronted by attractive resort towns providing an extensive range of facilities and services. The beaches are clean, safe and accessible and access and parking is good. These areas are typically lively with significant provision of caravanning, camping, self-catering and serviced accommodation. This is the most intensively used stretch of coast in Pembrokeshire and one of the most popular stretches of the Coast Path.				
Compass recreation opportunity class	Developed formal				
Key sensitivities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seasonality of recreation. User conflicts in busy areas and at busy times. Disturbance caused by motorised water craft. Parking and congestion problems during busiest times. 				
Management guidance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allow all popular activities May be some tolerance of personal water craft although it is restricted by Tenby and Saundersfoot Harbour Commissions and launching of craft for jet skiing banned at Amroth. 				
	High Environment Tolerance				Low Environmental Tolerance
Tolerance to activities	Beach Activities (passive) Beach Activities (active) Canoeing/Sea Kayaking Cycling (Bridleways/lanes) Dinghy Sailing/Yachting Horse Riding (Bridleway) Rowing Snorkelling Swimming Walking	Climbing Coaststeering Diving Dog Walking Angling Surfing Wildlife Boat Trips Windsurfing	Power Kite flying Kite Surfing Power Boating Waterskiing	Beach Riding PWC/Jet skiing Land Yachting Motorised Land Activities	

Table 2

Recreation Character Area	Beach coast
Areas	Areas between Giltar Point and Castlemartin Range; St Brides Bay from Solva to Little Haven Freshwater East and Freshwater West Barafundle Bay Whitesands Bay Newport Bay Poppit Sands
Overview	Typically low coastline with small and large beaches and relatively easy access, parking and launching opportunities. The spectacular coastline is linked by the Coast Path and a small communities which can offer a good range of facilities and services. For many these areas typify Pembrokeshire and support the county's tourism destination reputation in Wales and the UK.
Compass recreation	Developed semi-natural

opportunity class					
Key sensitivities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access is typically along narrow road which can cause congestion and cause conflict with residents. • Most recreational activity occurs harmoniously • Spare capacity outside the high season 				
Management guidance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recreation of a type and scale that will not cause major issues in the small villages or on the beaches/beach heads should be encouraged. • Guard against the introduction of too many urbanising features into the landscape. • Efforts need to be made to reduce car use and additional parking and other formal features resisted. • Possibility of introducing new access routes, particularly for horse-riding and cycling. There may be opportunities for the creation of a multi-user route. • Resist use of inshore water by high-speed craft, although it may be more suitable in these locations outside the peak season rather than in more remote locations. • Cliff angling is popular but awareness raising of problems caused by angling litter must be addressed. • Promote beach use. • Promote walking and swimming to levels which can be tolerated by the character of areas and by local communities. • Beach-based hire should be limited to activities which are acceptable within this area and which are not already provided locally. 				
	High Environmental Tolerance				Low Environmental Tolerance
Tolerance to activities	Beach Activities (passive) Beach Activities (active) Canoeing/Sea Kayaking Cycling (Bridleways/lanes) Dinghy Sailing/Yachting Horse Riding (Bridleway) Rowing Snorkelling Surfing Swimming Walking Windsurfing	Climbing Coaststeering Diving Dog Walking Angling Wildlife Boat Trips	Power Kite flying Kite Surfing Power Boating	Beach Riding PWC/Jet skiing Land Yachting Motorised Land Activities Waterskiing	

Table 3

Recreation Character Area	Small Bay Coast
Areas	North-west stretch of the National Park, excluding Strumble Head. Southern coastline of St Davids Peninsula Marloes/Dale Peninsula Northern coastline of Angle Peninsula
Overview	This area is characterised by cliffs backed by agricultural land overlooking small bays. There is a greater sense of tranquillity and wildness within little intrusive development outside small coastal communities. The coastline is largely regarded as undeveloped creating a sense of connection to the sea and the habitats it supports. It is also often defined by the opportunities it provides for niche-based outdoor recreation.
Compass recreation	Accessible natural

opportunity class					
Key sensitivities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access, parking and launching opportunities are limited and also restrict the size of craft. • Undeveloped coast. • Seasonal traffic congestion along narrow roads. • Litter in intensively-used areas such as embarkation points for boat trips. • Safety concerns of some activities such as cliff-jumping. • Poor practice leading to disturbance of cliff-nesting birds, trampling of ecosystems and cliff erosion. • Internationally important for several activities such as climbing, diving and coasteering. 				
Management guidance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage non-motorised activities • Important to manage visitor numbers. This is currently limited by parking and access and this should not be developed further in order to maintain the undeveloped character of the area. • Encourage activities with the potential to harm wildlife and geology only through responsible use. • Actively promote swimming, snorkelling, cycling and walking. • Use the potential of active adventure and exploration activities to support a more year-round recreation product. • Area is suitable for a range of specialist, low-volume active recreation. • Certain activities which have the potential to impact upon each other should be managed or redirected and codes of practice introduced to avoid damage or disturbance. 				
	High Environmental Tolerance				Low Environmental Tolerance
Tolerance to activities	Beach Activities (passive) Beach Activities (active) Cycling (Bridleways/lanes) Dinghy Sailing/Yachting Horse Riding (Bridleway) Rowing Snorkelling Surfing Swimming Walking Windsurfing	Canoeing/Sea Kayaking Climbing Diving Dog Walking	Coasteering Power Kite flying Kite Surfing Angling	Beach Riding Motorised Land Activities Power Boating Waterskiing Wildlife Boat Trips	PWC/Jet skiing Land Yachting

Table 4

Recreation Character Area	Wild cliff coast
Areas	Coast between Poppit and Newport Strumble Head St Davids Head Southern coast of Angle Peninsula Castlemartin Ranges
Overview	This area is characterised by open wilder land and seascapes, extensive views, a high level of exposure and remoteness, high rocky cliffs and islets. They are sparsely populated. The feeling of isolation is highly valued in these areas.
Compass recreation opportunity class	Remote natural

Key sensitivities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solitude and tranquillity (or wildness caused by weather). • Low levels of useage. 				
Management guidance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilities managed to deliberately maintain the sense of unmanaged wildness. • Development is controlled but also surfaces, signage and furniture needs to be limited to protect the wild character. • Quiet recreation in small groups is encouraged but larger groups would cause an unwelcome intrusion in the wider landscape. • Motorised activities should not be permitted but redirected to more appropriate areas, where possible. • Discovery and wildness are given priority. • Any intensification of current activities should be closely monitored for impact on the landscape and wider visitor experience. • Avoid specific site promotion or new access facilities at Strumble. 				
	High Environmental Tolerance				Low Environmental Tolerance
Tolerance to activities	Cycling (Bridleways/lanes) Horse Riding (Bridleway) Rowing Snorkelling Swimming Walking	Beach Activities (passive) Beach Activities (active) Climbing Dog Walking	Canoeing/Sea Kayaking Coasteering Dinghy Sailing/Yachting Diving Power Kite flying Surfing Windsurfing	Kite Surfing Power Boating Angling Wildlife Boat Trips	PWC/Jet skiing Land Yachting Motorised Land Activities Waterskiing

Table 5

Recreation Character Area	Islands				
Areas	Caldey, Skomer, Skokholm, Grassholm, Ramsey				
Overview	The islands are unique isolated microcosms of natural and human activity, varying according to their location and exposure to the sea. Most of the coast and waters around the islands are protected by national and international conservation legislation. Tourism and recreation are primarily dependent on the health of the natural environment. The sense of remoteness and coastal splendour area also fundamental to the quality of the environment.				
Compass recreation opportunity class	Accessible Natural and Remote Natural				
Key sensitivities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural heritage and historic and archaeological diversity. • Sense of remoteness • Wildlife breeding populations – some of which are internationally important colonies. 				
Management guidance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouragement of snorkelling, swimming and walking on and around the islands. • Wildlife trips can be encouraged subject to compliance with the marine code. • Seasonal restriction of motorised craft. • Seeking ways of encouraging sustainable recreation which allows observation of wildlife in their natural habitats so building up future environmental awareness. 				
	High Environmental Tolerance				Low Environmental Tolerance
Tolerance to activities	Snorkelling Swimming	Rowing Walking Beach	Canoeing/Sea Kayaking Dinghy Sailing/Yachting Diving	Angling Wildlife Boat Trips	Climbing Coasteering Cycling (Bridleways/lanes)

		Activities (passive)*	Windsurfing		PWC/Jet skiing Power Kite flying Kite Surfing Land Yachting Motorised Land Activities Power Boating Surfing Waterskiing
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*Caldey only.

Table 6

Recreation Character Area	Estuaries				
Areas	The Daugleddau Estuary and Milford Haven Waterway				
Overview	The Daugleddau Estuary is a sensitive areas of low energy, relatively low wind speeds and sense of silence in the upstream areas. It is characterised by mudflats, salt marshes and reed beds with coniferous and deciduous woodland surrounding. It is a popular boating area for sailing and motor craft, canoeing and rowing. Walking, cycling and angling are also popular. The area also has important historic agricultural and industrial landscapes.				
Compass recreation opportunity class	Developed – semi-natural				
Key sensitivities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tranquillity of the area, especially upstream of Lawrenny. • Marine SAC covers the whole estuary showcasing important marine species such as tide swept songes and molluscs. • Important ecosystem but susceptible to pollutants and discharges which cannot be dispsered as effectively as at the open coast. • Noise can be particularly intrusive in narrower sections of the estuary. • Wash from fast craft can be erosive. 				
Management guidance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities for a wide range of recreational activities. • Restriction of high-speed craft upstream of Lawrenny. • Promotion of low-impact land activities. • Promotion of appropriate water recreation in co-operation with Milford Haven Port Authority. • Prioritise promotion of the Haven through initiatives with towns of Pembroke Dock, Neyland and Milford Haven. • Need to reduce congestion pressure from smaller launch sites. • Deep water landing stages in the lower Haven to improve accessibility. 				
	High Environmental Tolerance				Low Environmental Tolerance
Tolerance to activities	Cycling (Bridleways/lanes) Horse Riding (Bridleway) Walking	Canoeing/Sea Kayaking Dinghy Sailing/Yachting Diving Dog Walking Rowing Angling Windsurfing	Power Kite flying	Beach Riding PWC/Jet skiing** Power Boating Waterskiing Wildlife Boat Trips	Kite Surfing Motorised Land Activities Snorkelling Swimming

**Except Milford Haven Port Authority Ski Zone

Table 7

Recreation Character Area	Inland Valleys
Areas	Gwaun Valley Middle Mill Brandy Brook/Rhyndaston

Overview	Typically characterised by secluded low-lying wooded valleys, heath, secluded settlements and a mosaic agricultural network. They are tranquil and often intimate areas, relatively sheltered compared with the open coast and which retain a traditional character. These are sheltered environments shaped by agriculture and settlement creating areas of distinctive cultural landscape.				
Compass recreation opportunity class	Accessible natural and remote natural				
Key sensitivities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tranquillity, remoteness and historic built resource. • Traditional character. • Distinctive cultural landscape • Agricultural landscape and working populations. • Congestion at small car parks and along narrow lanes at busy times. 				
Management guidance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential to develop walking, horse-riding, cycling (land and mountain biking) and bird watching. • Potential to develop the rights of way network. • Limit facilities outside settlements to necessary signage. • Encourage use of public transport, walking and cycling over car use. 				
	High Environmental Tolerance				Low Environmental Tolerance
Tolerance to activities	Cycling (Bridleways/lanes) Horse Riding (Bridleway) Walking	Dog Walking Angling	Power Kite flying	Motorised Land Activities	

Table 8

Recreation Character Area	Inland Commons and Hills
Areas	Preseli Hills; St Davids Commons
Overview	This area is characterised by open expansive upland areas with distinctive views from hilltops. Much of the landscape is mountainous and exposed with open moorland and heath. There are significant areas of coniferous woodland. There is a sense of remoteness and exposure on the hills that is distinct from that at the coast, supported by the altitude and relative inaccessibility. The value of this historic landscape and past human influence adds to the sense of place of what has gone before rather than how the sea is shaping the coast in the future.
Compass recreation opportunity class	Accessible and remote natural
Key sensitivities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sense of remoteness and exposure. • Potential for impact of new activities on existing activities. • Erosion along paths in popular areas. • Concern to local graziers caused by the relatively new activity of paragliding.
Management guidance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote recreational uses with the knowledge and support of landowners and communities. • Encouragement of low-scale recreation, especially that making use of the cultural landscape. • Opportunities for walkers, dog walkers, cyclists, orienteering and snow sports. • Encouragement of non-motorised sports. • Development of new horse-riding trail and permissive bridleway. • Restrict vehicle recreation.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential for the development of multi-user routes. • Examine potential for more technical mountain bike trails. 				
	High Environmental Tolerance				Low Environmental Tolerance
Tolerance to activities	Cycling (Bridleways/lanes) Horse Riding (Bridleway) Walking	Climbing Dog Walking Angling	Power Kite flying	Motorised Land Activities	

Appendix 1: The main attributes of activities and suggested management response.⁵

Group	Main attributes of activity	Examples	Management Response
1	Has health benefits, is non-intrusive, is intrinsically non-polluting and is based on active enjoyment of the special qualities of the National Park.	Walking, cycling, riding, swimming, sea rowing, surfing, sailing.	Encourage and actively promote, management minimal except to provide associated facilities and access.
2	Has similar attributes to those above, provided the participants are responsible and choose their location/season sensibly, but the activity does have potential for adverse impact.	Climbing, canoeing, coasteering, kite surfing, windsurfing, casual beach riding, dog walking.	Encourage with responsible use, management to develop good practice and oversee out of season events.
3	May or may not have health or education benefits, but may have public safety consequences and/or environmental impact if pursued in certain ways or at certain locations, and generates complaints from other users.	Wildlife boat trips, organised beach riding, cliff fishing, water skiing.	Encourage only proven good practice or out of season, lobby for stricter training, insurance and codes of practice.
4	Has limited health benefits, and by its nature or scale may compromise the special qualities of the National Park or character of selected sites. Likely to have public safety consequences and to generate complaints from other users. Is usually powered and has associated sustainability issues.	PWC, speed boat racing, quad biking on public land, hovercraft, raves.	Only encourage in specified areas with strict management / licensing /planning in place/encourage elsewhere.

The boundaries of the groups are not fixed. Individual activities may move from 1 group to another depending on the scale of the activity, the location or the way it is pursued. Commercial operations or large events are likely to move the activity towards a higher numbered group because of additional numbers or regularity.

⁵ See National Park Management Plan 2009 – 2013
<http://www.pembrokeshirecoast.org.uk/Files/files/Conservation/Conservation%20publications/National%20Park%20Management%20Plan%202009-2013-eng.pdf>

Appendix 2: Characteristics of draft recreation opportunity classes for Wales.

Source COMPASS: Adapted from McCool, Clark & Stankey (2007) An Assessment of Frameworks Useful for Public Land Recreation Planning

Developed Formal	Developed Semi-Natural	Accessible Natural	Remote Natural
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Not remote• Easy to access• Not natural• Highly managed• High frequency of social encounters	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Not remote• Easy to access• Semi-natural• Managed• Reasonably frequent social encounters	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Remote• Natural• Promoted• Less managed• Frequent social encounters	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Remote• Hard to access• Un-promoted• Limited management• Few social encounters

Useful Contacts

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