

## **REPORT OF THE DISCOVERY TEAM LEADER**

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### **SUBJECT: WORKING WITH SCHOOLS – RESPONDING TO THE CHALLENGES OF THE NEW CURRICULUM FOR WALES**

#### Purpose of Report

To provide members with a review of the Authority's education work and how our present and planned activity in this area is being developed in response to the challenges of a new Curriculum for Wales.

#### Introduction/Background

##### **New Curriculum for Wales**

A new Curriculum for Wales Framework (<https://gov.wales/curriculum-wales-overview>) is being developed, which will be used throughout Wales from 2022, with schools already piloting the new approach with pupils.

The new Curriculum presents great challenges and opportunities for providers of learning opportunities such as the National Parks in Wales. The Curriculum takes a more holistic approach to a student's 'learning journey', placing a greater emphasis on 'local curriculums' and supporting schools to design their own curriculum and assessment arrangements.

Whilst we will need to review and adapt programmes in order to remain relevant, it is widely considered that the next few years will provide ample opportunity to embed innovative approaches to outdoor learning into our schools.

PCNPA educators have already started to consider how we might adapt our offer so that it continues to meet the needs of local schools, with key PCNPA staff consulting with and working alongside teachers to ensure we make the best of the changes envisaged.

##### **Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority Education Services**

Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority (PCNPA) delivers a range of educational opportunities for schools which are broadly described below. In 2018-19 we worked with 10,800 learners, from young children in the Foundation Phase through to A level and college students \*(see Table 1 for more a detailed breakdown of figures). Whilst the majority of participants are local to Pembrokeshire, there are some schools which travel from out of county to make use of the Authority's education offer. This is particularly true at Castell Henllys, where the uniqueness of the setting attracts schools from the wider west Wales region and beyond.

The education services we offer are evaluated using a quantitative feedback rating from 1 to 11 (with lower scores indicating dissatisfaction with an element of our service). Average scores for our service are around 10.0 suggesting a high degree of customer satisfaction. Qualitative feedback received from teachers also provides a positive view of the services we offer.

**The National Park Authority's Education Services can broadly be divided into 4 areas:**

- i. The 'charged for' programme of activity delivered at numerous locations in and around the National Park, which offers Curriculum linked activity over a range of subject areas. This programme is managed by the Llanion Park based Discovery team, and delivered by both Area Rangers and Discover Team officers
- ii. The 'charged for' programme of activity delivered at National Park Centres (primarily Castell Henllys and Carew Castle, with a smaller amount of work undertaken at Oriell Parc). Activities are cross-curricular in nature, but predominantly focus on the historical interest of the two sites. The programmes are managed and delivered by each of the centre based teams.
- iii. Activities for school aged children linked to community engagement and social inclusion objectives of the Authority. Sessions are delivered by Area Rangers and to a lesser extent the Discovery Rangers and National Park Centres, the majority are delivered without a charge.
- iv. Project and partnership activity involving schools. Activities provided with specific objectives, often linked to external funding/sponsorship. Present examples include Roots/Gwrieddau (a food and environment project) supported by South Hook LNG and ongoing sponsorship from Forest Holidays (NPUK) for a range of education initiatives.

**Pembrokeshire Outdoor Schools**

The National Park Authority plays host to the Pembrokeshire Outdoor Schools initiative's project officer.

Pembrokeshire Outdoor Schools (<http://pembrokeshireoutdoorschools.co.uk/>) was established in 2010 as a collaboration between the Professional Learning Community in Pembrokeshire (including headteachers, teachers and local authority advisers) and key strategic partners including Darwin Science, Sports Pembrokeshire and Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority. The initiative aims to promote the use of the outdoors across the National Curriculum for young learners in Pembrokeshire.

A full-time project officer, supported with funding secured by PCNPA (Welsh Government additional funding and Postcode Lottery grant), works with the Outdoor Schools partnership and engages with educators across the County, working collaboratively to design and deliver a range of curriculum linked outdoor learning.

Comparisons

In comparison with other National Parks in the UK beneficiary numbers are high for PCNPA's education programme, this may, at least in part be due to the range of services offered; from centre based to outreach (across the National Park) and from 'free to access' to 'charged for'.

There are a number of other providers locally, including:

- The National Trust (Stackpole Centre in particular)
- The Wildlife Trust (at Cilgerran Wildlife Centre)
- Darwin Science
- Field Studies Council (Dale and Oriellton) [largely out of county users]
- Valero Field Centre – Pwllcrochan
- Outdoor Schools (partnership of which we are a lead partner)
- Outdoor Activity Providers

The services offered by the above don't necessarily complete with our own offer and in many cases are complimentary. The mix of heritage education (at Castell Henllys and Carew Castle) and a flexible offer available at a range of locations across the National Park delivered by our ranger teams provide a unique service with broad and varied content for learners.

The development of the Pembrokeshire Outdoor Schools partnership in recent years, with the profile it has achieved amongst educationalists both locally and further afield suggests that there is value in a more collaborative approach to delivering education services.

The emerging new National Curriculum for Wales arguably presents greater opportunities to engage educators (and learners) in assets such as the National Park, particularly given the number of links to the 'whole school curriculum' at all levels and the renewed focus on locality indicated by the curriculum guidance to date.

#### Financial considerations

In 2018/19 PCNPA education services had a collective income of around £27k (see Table 1 below). However, the cost of delivering the service across the Authority was £51,965 (this excludes additional overheads, equipment and materials). In general terms outdoor and environmental education services offered by most practitioners rarely yield significant income streams and most commonly become subsidised services.

#### Risk considerations

The education work we deliver is dependent upon core funding, other than project based activity outlined earlier in the paper. Whilst some income is derived from education activity it is small compared to costs and so where priority is given to income generation the Authority's work with schools might suffer as a consequence.

Demand for the services we offer seems unlikely to diminish greatly in the coming years, particularly if the emphasis of the new Welsh Curriculum encourages thematic and cross-curricular learning which could play to the strengths of a strong offer from the education team(s). However, there will be a need to ensure that our offer fits the requirements of the curriculum in order to remain an attractive option for educators.

Additional challenges for the service largely relate to our customer base. The rising cost of transport (coach travel) for schools is a known limiting factor for schools planning educational visit and this seems likely to continue to be the case. Developing the market for our work represents a challenge, with 'hard to reach' schools and teachers requiring more targeted work in terms of their engagement with outdoor learning.

#### Compliance

The Authority's education services are linked to the requirements of the Welsh National Curriculum and support the role required of public bodies by the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act. The services comply with the Welsh Language Standards (2016) and we are able to offer at least part of our programme in the medium of Welsh. The Authority's education services could be more clearly aligned to corporate objectives, although recent reviews have started to address this, for example in working alongside PCNPA planners to develop new learning resources.

#### Human Rights/Equality issues

Our Education services address key equality issues in terms of access to the natural heritage of Wales and contributed to the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority's own Equality Plan.

#### Biodiversity implications/Sustainability appraisal

Our education services have no discernible negative impact on biodiversity in the National Park. The content of educational programmes contributes to increased awareness of biodiversity in Pembrokeshire (amongst new audiences) and involves participants in positive actions which support biodiversity.

#### Welsh Language statement

Our Education programmes provide a platform to engage with a range of groups and communities in the medium of Welsh.

#### Recommendation

Receive the report and note for future consideration.

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Table 1

<b>Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority Education Services 2018-19</b>									
	<b>Number of Participants</b>	<b>Number of Sessions</b>	<b>% Sessions Primary Schools</b>	<b>% Sessions Secondary Schools</b>	<b>% Sessions Further Education / University</b>	<b>% Sessions Additional Learning/ Support Needs Education Groups</b>	<b>% Sessions Work Experience sessions/ D of E Open/Other</b>	<b>% Sessions delivered to schools/colleges based in Pembrokeshire</b>	<b>*Income (£'s)</b>
<b>Castell Henllys</b>	4,037	101	96.04%	0.99%	1.98%	0.00%	0.99%	20.79%	15,086
<b>Carew</b>	2,013	50	96%	2%	2%	0	0	68%	5,604
<b>Discovery, Rangers and Direction (Community Archaeology and Stitch In Time)</b>	4,744	223	45.74%	13.00%	13.90%	19.28%	8.07%	88.79%	6,365
									<b>27,055</b>