

NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

26th June 2013

Present: Councillor M James (Chair)
Mr A Archer, Councillor JA Brinsden, Mr D Ellis, Ms C Gwyther,
Councillor P Harries, Mrs G Hayward, Mrs L Jenkins, B Kilmister,
Mrs A Lee, RM Lewis, PJ Morgan, R Owens and DWM Rees, Mr EA
Sangster, Mrs M Thomas and Councillor M Williams

(NPA Offices, Llanion Park, Pembroke Dock: 10.40am – 12.35pm)

1. Apologies

An apology for absence was received from Councillor S Hudson.

2. Chairman's Announcement

Thanking the Members for electing him Chairman, Councillor James said that he was proud to be following in the footsteps of two former Chairmen from St Dogmaels, Halkett Jones and Steve Watkins.

3. Disclosures of Interest

Councillor Paul Harries disclosed an interest in Report 31/13 Trading Strategy. Ms C Gwyther and Mr Tegryn Jones disclosed an interest in Report 32/13 Grant Approvals in Accordance with Section 78 of the Financial Standards (Revised 2012). All withdrew from the meeting while the relevant items were considered.

4. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on the 24th April 2013 were presented for confirmation and signature.

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 24th April 2013 be confirmed and signed.

5. Matters arising

(a) Minute 16 – South West Wales Economic Development Strategy

The Chief Executive reported that both Snowdonia and Brecon Beacons National Park Authorities had indicated that they were happy to participate in a Scrutiny Review of the Authorities' approach to meeting their socio-economic duty as defined under Section 62 of the Environment Act 1995, although Brecon Beacons NPA would not be taking a leading role as they were already committed to an existing scrutiny exercise.

NOTED.

(b) Minute 20 - Improvement Plan 2013/14 – Part 1

With regard to amending the Improvement Objective relating to Outcome 3 of the Plan, it was reported that correspondence had taken place with the Wales Audit Office about what was possible.

NOTED.



(c) Minute 27 – Provision of Legal Services to the Authority

The Chief Executive reported that confirmation had been received from Geldards Solicitors that they were happy to continue to provide the Authority with Development Management legal advice for a further twelve months. An indication had also been received from Brecon Beacons National Park Authority that they were happy to continue to provide legal advice to the Authority.

NOTED.

6. Development Management Committee – Report of Meetings

It was **RESOLVED** that the reports of the meetings of the Development Management Committee held on 20th March, 8th April, 17th April and 22nd May 2013 be received.

7. Scrutiny Committee – Report of Meeting

It was **RESOLVED** that the report of the meeting of the Scrutiny Committee held on the 10th April 2013 be adopted.

8. Sustainable Development Fund Committee – Report of Meeting

It was **RESOLVED** that the report of the meeting of the Sustainable Development Fund Committee held on the 8th May 2013 be adopted.

9. Audit and Corporate Services Review Committee – Report of Meeting

It was **RESOLVED** that the report of the meeting of the Audit and Corporate Services Review Committee held on 15th May 2013 be adopted.

10. Member Development Strategy Working Group – Report of Meeting

It was **RESOLVED** that the report of the meeting of the Member Development Strategy Working Group held on 15th May 2013 be adopted.

11. Sustainable Development Fund Committee and Member Development Strategy Working Group - Substitution

It was **RESOLVED** that the substitution by Mrs G Hayward of Mr EA Sangster at the SDF Committee held on the 8th May and Mr A Archer at the Member Development Strategy working Group held on the 15th May 2013 be confirmed.

12. Strategic Grant Letter 2013-14

Members were reminded that each year, the Authority received a Strategic Grant Letter from Welsh Government which set out their desired priorities and outcomes, and this was appended to the report. As a new policy statement was expected to be confirmed later this year, the grant letter was less specific than usual, but gave guidance as to the priority areas expected of the National Park Authorities.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Strategic Grant Letter for 2013/14 be received.

13. Risk Management Strategy

The Business and Performance Manager reported that the Authority had maintained a risk register for several years, and monitored and reported the



risks to Members at frequent intervals. However a clear risk management strategy setting out the roles and responsibilities, reporting and monitoring had never been presented to the Authority. The draft strategy, which was appended to the report, was a generic document which did not list the risk themselves, and Members' comments were invited.

Looking at the roles and responsibilities, Members asked if an additional sentence could be added to the Managers' role setting out their responsibility to keep Members up to date regarding their assigned risks and also to ensure that this update included changes to the likelihood of the risk occurring.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Risk Management Strategy be approved subject to the above amendment.

14. Response to Major Incident

The Business and Performance Manager explained that the Authority did not have a lead role in responding to any major incident or emergency, however staff with expert knowledge, equipment, vehicles and other resources could play an important supporting role in some incidents. The report therefore set out the roles and responsibility of the key personnel likely to be involved in any incident.

Members felt that the document was a useful one, and suggested that it should be exercised and reviewed on a regular basis.

It was **RESOLVED** that the procedures set out in response to a major incident be confirmed.

15. Annual Governance Statement for 2012/13

The Annual Governance Statement provided the vehicle for demonstrating the Authority's success in delivering continuous improvement in performance, identified control systems and processes and highlighted significant governance issues to be addressed. It formed part of the regulatory framework and followed the CIPFA model for good practice. The Chief Executive explained that officers, together with the new Chairman and the Chair of the Audit and Corporate Services Review Committee, had attended a workshop organised by the Wales Audit Office a few weeks ago at which ideas for further improvement over the coming year were suggested which would make the document more evaluative in nature.

Members welcomed the document, but suggested that for consistency with the Risk Management Strategy, the paragraph on Risk Management under Principle 4 should refer to Members 'monitoring', rather than 'overseeing', risks.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Annual Governance Statement of 2012/13 be approved.

[Councillor P Harries disclosed an interest in the following item and withdrew from the meeting while it was discussed]

16. Trading Strategy 2013 - 2018



The Finance Manager explained that although trading was not a primary function of the Authority, being incidental to its main purposes, the income generated did help finance the cost of the free information service which was one of the primary objectives of the Authority. The report set out the core objectives of the Trading Strategy, as well as the considerations which would be taken into account in achieving them.

Members asked about the process for selling the work of individual craftspeople, and officers explained that apart from Oriol y Parc, where a more formal process had been put in place, centre managers were usually approached by individuals and sold articles on a commission basis – it was a reactive, rather than a proactive process. Another Member suggested that there was a greater opportunity for products produced at Cilrhedyn to be sold over the internet, through eBay, for example.

It was **RESOLVED** that trading as set out in the report be acknowledged and the Trading Strategy for 2013 – 2018 approved.

[Ms C Gwyther and Mr T Jones disclosed an interest in the following item and withdrew from the meeting while it was discussed]

17. Grant Approvals in Accordance with Section 78 of the Financial Standards (Revised 2012)

It was reported that, in accordance with Section 78 of the Authority's revised Financial Standards, authorisation was required for payments where the total value of grant and sponsorships under any one agreement was over £10,000. In the current financial year there were two payments which fell into this category: payment of £20k to Pembrokeshire Coastal Forum to help integrate and manage coastal activity and a payment of circa £73k to Pembrokeshire County Council as a contribution towards the Pembrokeshire Greenways Partnership. Details of the support that these payments provided was outlined in the report.

It was **RESOLVED** that payments to Pembrokeshire Coastal Forum and Pembrokeshire County Council as a contribution towards the Pembrokeshire Greenways Partnership be approved.

18. Supplementary Planning Guidance Documents: (a) Accessibility and (b) Low Impact Development Making a Positive Contribution (One Planet Development)

Members were reminded that these two guidance documents had been approved for public consultation by the National Park Authority in July and December 2012 respectively, and details of the consultations that had been carried out were outlined in the report.

Taking first the Accessibility Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG), a total of 6 people/organisations had responded to the consultation and the responses were appended to the report. As a result of the consultation it was recommended that potential for a web map to accompany this SPG be explored.



Although a workshop had been held for Members earlier in the year, a number of Members remained concerned at the implementation of the policy which the SPG was supporting. They considered it illogical that applications for affordable housing and also tourist related activities, were not covered to the same extent by the policy, when the occupiers of such housing were less likely to run a private car. They felt that the policy totally ignored the reality that people in Pembrokeshire were totally dependent on the car.

Officers replied that the Authority's policy reflected the advice set out by Welsh Government in Planning Policy Wales and Technical Advice Note 6, pointing out that affordable housing in the countryside had to be justified by a need to live or work in that local area. A similar justification had to be provided by tourist attractions which had to demonstrate a need to be in a countryside location. Welsh Government's intention was to reduce the need for people to travel by private car.

Another Member made the point that Pembrokeshire County Council had received a cut in its Local Transport Services Grant this year, and it was likely that further cuts would occur in future with a resultant loss in rural bus services. This would therefore affect the Authority's ability to deliver housing. Greater dialogue with Welsh Government was needed regarding their policy to reduce car use in remote rural areas. It was suggested that a reduction in carbon emissions could be more effectively achieved by encouraging use of public transport for those travelling between Cardiff and Newport, rather than worrying about a few short local journeys.

Officers responded that the criterion in the policy was a material planning consideration, rather than an absolute, and pointed out that relatively few applications were affected by the policy. Also it had been supported in a number of appeal decisions in recent months. Another Member agreed, pointing out that the policy had already been agreed and that this SPG helped Members to interpret the policy in order to make better and more consistent decisions. Other Members were heartened that the criterion regarding accessibility was a material consideration to be weighed along with other material considerations and asked that a statement to this effect be included in the SPG. It was also suggested that better communication of the policy's intentions and the reasoning behind it was needed to increase public understanding. Members also expressed an interest in attending another workshop on the subject.

Turning to the SPG on Low Impact Development, one Member pointed out that native planting might not be appropriate on historic sites, as species were often sourced from far away. The Head of Park Direction agreed to qualify the sentence, which could be found in Paragraph 2.21 of the document.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- a) The officer Response as set out in appendices 1 and 2 of the report be agreed as the National Park Authority response to these consultations; and



- b) The Accessibility Supplementary Planning Guidance to the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Local Development Plan be adopted for development management purposes subject to inclusion of a statement to the effect that the criterion regarding accessibility was a material consideration to be weighed along with other material considerations..
- c) The Low Impact Development Making a Positive Contribution (One Planet Development) Supplementary Planning Guidance be adopted for development management purposes subject to qualification of the statement favouring plants of native species and local provenance at historic sites.

19. Draft Supplementary Planning Guidance Documents on: a) The Cumulative Impact of Wind Turbines, b) Seascape Character and c) An update to the Adopted Sustainable Design Guidance

Members were requested to approve two Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) documents, which were appended to the report, for public consultation. A third consultation involved updating the Authority's adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance on Sustainable Design. Each of the three guidance documents had been prepared to support the policies and proposals of the Local Development Plan and a report on the results of the consultation exercise would be brought to the Authority in the autumn.

The Head of Park Direction explained that the Authority's SPG on Sustainable Design required a minor update to reflect concerns raised by Members. She then noted that a joint workshop with representatives from other authorities had been arranged for that afternoon where the consultant, Mr Simon White, would present an overview of the guidance on the Cumulative Impact of Wind Turbines and Seascape Character Supplementary Planning Guidance. Mr White had a lot of experience in these areas, having worked extensively with the Countryside Council for Wales on landscape and seascape assessment work.

One Member recalled that the Development Management Committee had recently received a report on the colour of wind turbines and how this could be used to disguise them in the landscape. He asked whether that work was reflected in the SPG. Officers replied that the guidance document looked at consistency of approach, and colour would form part of that assessment.

Members were pleased to note that the Authority had worked collaboratively to commission both guidance documents, however they asked whether the purposes of the National Park had been taken into account sufficiently in this joint approach. Also whether the consultation exercise would be a joint one and if so how would the responses be reported. The Head of Park Direction replied that she believed the document took account of the special qualities of the National Park, however as this was a consultation document, this was an issue upon which others could comment. With regard to the final document, she explained that the Authorities were at different stages in the preparation of their Local Development Plans and therefore the exercise would not be a joint one from this point forward. The responses received by the NPA and the proposed



amendments to the consultation draft would be shared with the other Authorities before they were reported back to Members.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- a) The draft Supplementary Planning Guidance to the Local Development Plan on Cumulative Impact of Wind Turbines be approved for public consultation purposes.
- b) The draft Supplementary Planning Guidance to the Local Development Plan on Seascape Character be approved for public consultation purposes
- c) Authority be delegated to the Head of Park Direction to ensure that the formatting of the draft supplementary Planning guidance on Cumulative Impact of Wind Turbines and Seascape Character reflected the Authority's template approach prior to the commencement of the consultation.
- d) The update to the Authority's adopted Sustainable Design Guidance be approved for public consultation purposes.

20. Delegation of Matters relating to Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects

It was reported that the Planning Act 2008 (amended by the Localism Act 2011) had introduced new procedures for dealing with nationally significant infrastructure projects, with the Planning Inspectorate dealing with applications for development consent orders for such projects rather than the Local Planning Authority (LPA).

At various stages of the process, the LPA within which the site is located would be required to comment as the 'relevant Authority'. These stages are carried out under stringent time requirements.

Members were reminded that there were currently two projects within or close to the National Park: the proposal for a Combined Heat and Power Plant at South Hook and a proposal for an offshore wind farm in the Atlantic, known as the Atlantic Array project. Pre-application responses for both of these had been reported to Members, although in the case of the South Hook Project a follow up pre-application response was not able to be reported to Members due to the time scale. Furthermore a response to the adequacy of consultation was also required within a very short time frame and both responses were sent following endorsement by the Chairman of the Authority. Copies of these responses were attached to the report and the additional letter to the Planning Inspectorate was tabled at the meeting.

Although it was preferable to bring matters relating to nationally significant infrastructure projects to the Authority, this was not always possible due to the time constraints. Officers also considered that there were other elements of the process that did not necessarily have to be subject to full Authority approval, such as procedural matters, pre-application enquiries, representation at examination and the discharge of conditions. As such it was recommended that these be delegated to the Chief Executive/ Director of Park Direction and Planning and Head of Development Management. However Members were reassured that as with all officer views, a disclaimer was added that the



comments were made without prejudice to what Members might want to say at a later date.

With regard to the Authority's formal response to projects through the submission of a Local Impact Report, it was considered that these should be the subject of Member approval. However in view of the short timescales attributed to these, it might on occasion not be possible to report to the full Authority meeting, and it was requested that if the timescale dictated, these matters be delegated to the Development Management Committee for consideration.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

a) the following be added to the Planning Scheme of Delegation:

“5. The following matters under the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects regime:

- All procedural matters including responses to the Statement of Community Consultation and adequacy of consultation request
- Response to Pre-application enquiries
- Preparation and Presentation of Evidence at Examinations
- The consideration and determination of information required by conditions of development consent orders”

b) where it is not possible to report the Authority's formal response to projects thorough the submission of a Local Impact Report to the full Authority, that these matters be delegated to the Development Management Committee.

c) the changes take immediate effect.

d) the responses to the Combined Heat and Power Plant project at South Hook be noted.

21. Member Development Strategy

Members were reminded that the Member Development Strategy and supporting Member Support and Development Programme was adopted in 2008 and was therefore due for review. Revised documents had been agreed by the Member Development Strategy Working Group in May and were attached for Members' consideration.

The Administration and Democratic Services Manager reported that the Support and Development Plan now contained only the key elements of Member induction and training, and that it was intended to develop a more detailed training plan to link to these key elements, and which would incorporate those training needs that had been identified by Members as a result of the Personal Development Review (PDR) process. She added that she would be grateful to receive any further Personal Support Plans from Members and could then produce a training plan which would hopefully be considered at the next Member Development Strategy Working Group meeting in September.



Members asked if electronic copies of the forms could be circulated, which would ease their completion and the officer agreed to do this. They also asked about progress towards the Advanced Charter and were advised that completion of the training plan, and therefore the Personal Support Plans, was a key element of the Advanced Charter.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- a) The revised Member Development Strategy and Member Support and Development Programme be adopted.
- b) The Member Development Strategy Working Group be delegated the authority to review and amend the Member Support and Development Programme on an annual basis in light of that year's Personal Development Review process.
- c) A comprehensive review of the over-arching Member Development Strategy be undertaken in 2017.

22. Welsh Language Scheme: Annual Monitoring Report

Members were reminded that the Authority had adopted a Welsh Language Scheme, which set out how the Authority would give effect to the principle that, in the conduct of public business in Wales, it would treat the English and Welsh languages on a basis of equality.

The Authority was required to present an annual Monitoring Report on its performance against this Scheme and to submit this to the Welsh Language Commissioner's Office. Members were therefore asked to endorse the report, which had been circulated to them prior to the meeting, as the Authority's submission to the Welsh Language Commissioner.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Annual Monitoring Report be endorsed as the Authority's submission to the Welsh Language Commissioner.

23. Annual Summary Report – Mosaic Cymru Project

Members were reminded that the Mosaic Project was an initiative led by the Campaign for National Parks (CNP) to increase the number of black and ethnic minority people who visit National Parks. The project had begun in 1992 in England and had been very successful, with 7500 new participants accessing National Parks in the last 2 years alone. As a result, CNP alongside the National Parks, had extended the Mosaic Project to cover the whole of Wales and as a result, the three Welsh Authorities had worked closely with CNP and the Youth Hostel Association to develop a bespoke Mosaic Project for Wales entitled Mosaic Cymru.

The report set out the targets and outcomes for the project, as well as its achievements during its first year of operation, between February 2012 and January 2013. The Discovery Team Leader explained that the focus was on identifying and equipping Community Champions who would communicate information back to their communities.

Members were pleased with the project, and agreed that outdoor activities had the ability to break down barriers. They suggested that work could be done to



engage with the Llanelli multicultural network, as well as the Gypsy Travellers within the County. They also asked what would happen to the project when the lottery funding ran out and the Discovery Team Leader replied that it was intended to mainstream the work so that it could continue as part of the Authority's normal activities. This was part of the model that had been developed by Mosaic in England.

NOTED.

24. Welsh Government's Draft Protected Landscape Policy

The Chief Executive informed Members that the consultation document had still not been published and he hoped an update would be provided at the next meeting.

NOTED.

