

**REPORT OF BUSINESS & PERFORMANCE MANAGER**

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**SUBJECT:**  
**CORPORATE STRATEGY 2013/14**

**Purpose of this report**

Approval is sought for the Corporate Strategy 2013/14 (attached).

**Introduction**

Following a series of workshops involving senior staff and Members the Corporate Strategy has been revised and updated to reflect the performance achieved during the past year and changes in what we wish to achieve during 2013/14.

**Proposal**

Following comments from Wales Audit Office the format of the strategy has changed this year by reducing the number of strategic outcomes to just four and taking a more strategic approach to the actions and measures included.

This document will be used to provide the basis of the Authority's Improvement Plan as required under the Local Government Measure.

**Recommendation:**

**Members are requested to APPROVE the Corporate Strategy 2013/14**

*(For further information, please contact Alan Hare, Business & Performance Manager on extension 4810)*



Pembrokeshire Coast  
National Park  
Authority

Corporate  
Strategy  
2013/14

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## Introduction

The National Park Authority delivers a wide variety of work that contributes to the vitality of the local area from conservation management and public access to local employment and affordable housing. The National Park Authority will continue to ensure that we meet the expectations of our customers, both residents and visitors, during a time of economic constraint. This document sets out our corporate priorities in the years ahead and sets specific targets for the National Park Authority to deliver in 2013-14.

## Why do we have a Corporate Strategy?

The Corporate Strategy sets out our vision, our role, and, in four improvement objectives, what the National Park Authority (NPA) will achieve over the next few years. All work or activity by our staff contributes to achieving one or more of the strategic outcomes.

## How did we develop the strategy?

Although the NPA is a relatively small organisation there are many factors influencing its work. These include

- The statutory purposes as defined in the Environment Act 1995;
- The National Park Management Plan which sets out the long term vision for the National Park;
- The policy context provided by the National Park Policy Statement produced by the Welsh Government;
- The Welsh Governments Programme for Government;
- The Strategic Grant Letter issued by Welsh Government to the National Park Authority each year;
- The statutory role as the planning authority for the national park area and the policies set out in the Local Development Plan;
- Welsh Government's sustainable development scheme One Wales: One Planet
- The Community Strategy/Single Integrated Plan for Pembrokeshire
- Other Welsh Government policies and strategies such as Natural Environment Framework
- The resources available to fund activities
- Past performance
- Reports by Wales Audit Office on the National Park Authority
- Responses to surveys from residents and visitors

A number of workshops were held, involving staff and Members of the Authority, to identify the priority outcomes for the National Park Authority and how these will be measured.

## Background

### Pembrokeshire Coast National Park

Pembrokeshire Coast National Park was designated in 1952 under the National Park and Access to the Countryside Act 1949.

The National Park covers an area of 612,km<sup>2</sup>, with approximately 23,000 people living in some 50 community council areas. At its widest, the National Park is about 16km wide and at its narrowest only 200m. Most of the National Park is in private ownership.

### Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority

The Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority was created as a free standing special purpose local authority under the 1995 Environment Act. The Authority consists of 18 Members, 12 nominated by Pembrokeshire County Council and six appointed by the Welsh Government.

### Park Purposes

The Act specifies that the purposes of a National Park Authority are

- ❖ To conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the park area
- ❖ To promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the area by the public.

The Act also states that in pursuing the above purposes the Authority has a duty to foster the social and economic well being of local communities.

As part of local government the Authority also contributes to many of the Welsh Government's wider goals for the economy, health, sustainability and social inclusion. In addition, the Authority meets the aspirations for better public services set out in policy publications including One Wales: One Planet and the emerging Living Wales Programme.

The Authority is the statutory planning authority for the National Park area and is responsible for the preparation of the Local Development Plan. Every five years the Authority is required to produce a National Park Management Plan which sets out how it would like to see the National Park managed not just by the Authority itself but by the other agencies and organisations whose activities might impact on the Park.

## Funding

The Authority's net expenditure is determined by the Welsh Government, by allocating the annual National Park Grant and levy, which remains unchanged for 2013/14 at £4,727,137 with an additional capital grant of £116,667.

When providing the funding, the Welsh Government also specifies a number of performance targets in its annual Strategic Grant Letter covering sustainability, social inclusion, corporate governance, access to the countryside and planning.

The Corporate Strategy sets out our four improvement outcomes and is intended to:

- State our aspirations for the Park and how these may benefit people
- Guide our work and explain our priorities
- Inform our staff and key partner organisations
- Inspire and engage others to contribute to our desired outcomes
- Form the basis of our business planning

## **Our Vision**

Enthuse for today, enlighten for tomorrow, cherish forever

## **Our Role**

To conserve the landscape, environment and culture, support community well-being and promote appreciation and enjoyment of the National Park.

## **The Improvement Outcomes we would like to deliver**

The successful delivery of this strategy will lead to an improvement in the delivery of the following outcomes:

- 1 – The landscape, environment and culture of the National Park are conserved for current and future generations.**
- 2 – Residents and visitors from a wide range of backgrounds enjoy, appreciate and understand the National Park.**
- 3 – The work of the National Park Authority has a positive impact on the local economy and the well-being of residents and visitors to the National Park.**
- 4 - The National Park Authority is recognised as meeting good practice standards in terms of governance, providing value for money and listening to the views of residents, visitors and partners.**

## **Improvement Outcome 1 - The landscape, environment and culture of the National Park are conserved for current and future generations.**

### Introduction

We will use our resources, expertise and statutory powers to support and encourage those responsible for land and buildings to minimise the impact of climate change and implement sustainable development. We will promote the wide variety of local, linguistic, artistic and social cultures found within the National Park through our conservation, education and interpretation activities.

### What are we trying to achieve? -

A special landscape

- Which is admired by everyone for its beauty
- Where the native species flourish
- Where local business benefits from the special qualities
- Where historic features are maintained
- Where the linguistic, artistic and social cultures are celebrated

### Where are we now

A recent landscape assessment using CCW's Landmap methodology identified 28 distinct landscape character areas within the National Park.

At present the National Park Authority manages directly or supports land owners to manage 1,800 hectares on 188 sites for conservation purposes and new sites are targeted to develop biodiversity corridors and extend zones. Although bio-diversity is generally in a more favourable condition in Pembrokeshire than nationally, the recent series of poor weather has had a negative impact on many species

A recent visitor survey indicates that the natural environment is a significant factor to the visitor experience and their associated activities, with walking becoming increasingly popular and most visit the area regularly.

Each year grants totalling £100,000 have been awarded for the improvement of historic buildings. We encourage landowners to conserve scheduled ancient monument sites although coastal erosion is probably the most significant cause of damage.

The Oriel y Parc visitor centre promotes understanding of the landscape through the medium of art in partnership with National Museum of Wales and with exhibitions and residencies by local artists.

### We will be succeeding in delivering this outcome when:

- a. There is no reduction in the quality of the landscape, as identified in Landmap;
- b. Trends in 'indicator species' populations on land managed in partnership with NPA are improving over time
- c. There is a reduction in the number of Listed Buildings at risk;
- d. Over 30,000 people are introduced to cultural aspects of the National Park through the Urdd Eisteddfod, archaeology, art and language related events.

We will take the following actions to deliver these Outcomes:

- a. Manage our own sites for conservation benefit;
- b. Increase the area of land managed for conservation in partnership with NPA by an average of 5% a year over the next three years;
- c. Encourage landowners and farmers to engage in agri-environment schemes, both national and local;
- d. Encourage sustainable development through our planning policies;
- e. Promote and support the artistic, linguistic and social cultures; and
- f. Encourage owners of historic and archaeological sites to protect them

How do we compare?

Although the latest key species indicators show a reduction, this is much less than most other species as shown in local and national comparisons such as the State of Wildlife in Pembrokeshire and the National Farmland Birds Survey. The percentage of listed buildings and archaeological sites at risk is similar to the average in the UK national parks.

Measures & Indicators

Measure	Actual 2011/12	Target 2012/13	Actual 2012/13 (where known)	Target 2013/14	Comparison/Comment
Number of developments approved contrary to LDP policies 8 or 15				2	New indicator
% of NPA managed sites where indicator species are stable or improving					New indicator
Area of land managed for conservation in partnership with NPA	1630 ha	1710ha	1800ha (est)	1890ha	
% of listed buildings at risk	4.1 %	7%		4%	Average in English NPAs – 3%
Number of listed buildings at risk rescued through NPA action during the year, as a % of the total number of listed buildings at risk in the National Park.	12%(7)	10%		10%	SNPA 2.33% (7) Top quartile for English NPAs – 17%
Number of people engaged through cultural events				30,000	New indicator



## **Improvement Outcome 2 - Residents and visitors from a wide range of backgrounds enjoy, appreciate and understand the National Park.**

### Introduction

We will promote access and provide opportunities for residents and visitors to enjoy recreation and the natural, cultural and historic environment of the Park, and we will use the special qualities of the National Park as the basis for lifelong learning for all.

### What are we trying to achieve?

Safe and accessible opportunities for public enjoyment and understanding of the National Park's special qualities by;

- Providing easy access to appropriate recreational activities free from barriers for all potential users
- Information and interpretation is easily available and accessible
- The resources and special qualities of the National Park are inspirational for life long learning

### Where are we now

The Authority maintains over 1014km of footpaths and bridleways, including the popular Pembrokeshire Coast Path National Trail. Over 75% of the paths are open usable and maintained to a quality standard. In addition, many lengths of paths (180km in total) are suitable for the less able with improved surfaces, removal of stiles, limited steps and gradual slopes, including 50km suitable for wheelchair users. Details of the wide variety of walks throughout the National park are available in publications and leaflets, with over 210 downloadable maps on the Park Authority's main website. The Authority also maintains over 50 sites, including car parks, giving access to the most popular walks and beaches in the area.

Over 250,000 people a year make use of the Authority's visitor centres and the Authority's website attracts more than 160,000 individual visits. 225,000 copies of the Authority's flagship visitor publication, Coast to Coast, are distributed every year and over 300 activities and events are organised throughout the National Park to promote enjoyment and understanding of the Park's special qualities.

In the first half of 2012/13 980 people took part in the 'Your Park' project with a further 3,000 people participating in events organised by the NPA. Similarly, 3,800 pupils visited Carew and Castell Henllys as part of the Authority's education service. Specific work has been undertaken to encourage more people from ethnic minority backgrounds to use the National Park. As a result, the MOSAIC Wales project supported four ethnic groups from Swansea in visiting the area. The National Park Rangers have organised work events for 403 volunteers and community engagement events involving 792 people.

### We will be succeeding in delivering this outcome when:

- a. There is an increasing % of the rights of way meeting the Authority's agreed standards,
- b. The number of people using the path network is increasing,

- c. We engage directly with at least 250,000 individuals including at least 5,000 ‘hard to reach’ participants, through the Discovery programmes and via the Authority’s visitor centres and attractions.
- d. The number of volunteers involved with National Park activities increases in both number and range of skills involved

We will take the following Actions to deliver these Outcomes:

- a. Maintain and improve the Coast Path, inland rights of way, other paths and sites;
- b. Develop interpretation, education, website and other media to promote the relevance of the National Park in addressing environmental and socio-economic concerns;
- c. Engage with new audiences, including ‘hard to reach’ groups, at our centres and through a wide range of organised events including Mosaic Wales, and ‘Your Park’ activities.
- d. Recruit, train and support the development of new volunteers and involve them in a wide range of activities designed to conserve the National Park and enhance both their own experience and that of the other users of the National Park.

How do we compare?

In 2011/12 approximately 75% of paths in the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park were open and usable compared to 76% in the Brecon Beacons National Park. The average in England’s National Parks is 85% with the average across Wales estimated at about 55%. The cost of maintaining the Coast Path National Trail was similar to the other National Trails in the UK.

Our extensive programmes of education activities and events exceed those of most of the other National Parks, although we wish to increase the opportunities for volunteers to be more actively involved in the Authority’s work.

Measures & Indicators

Measure	Actual 2011/12	Target 2012/13	Actual 2012/13 (where known)	Target 2013/14	Comparison/Comment
% of RoW open & accessible meeting the quality standard	72%	80%	80%	85%	Wales average is 55%, top quartile is 75%
Number of people using footpaths (from fixed counters)					New indicator
Number of people involved as volunteers			403 (6 months)		New indicator
Number of volunteer events					New indicator
Level of inspiration of learners/pupils engaging with the National Park as reported		10		10	BBNPA 10 SNPA 10

Measure	Actual 2011/12	Target 2012/13	Actual 2012/13 (where known)	Target 2013/14	Comparison/Comment
by teachers (modal score, 11 point scale)					
Total number of people engaged directly by NPA staff	270,495	275,000	205,310 (6 months)	280,000	Include centres, schools, Activities & Events, Social Inclusion, health events
Number of 'hard to reach' people engaging with the National Park			1,730 (up to Dec)	5,000	

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### **Improvement Outcome 3 - The work of the National Park Authority has a positive, sustainable, impact on the local economy and the well-being of residents and visitors to the National Park.**

#### Introduction

We will encourage the adoption of more sustainable lifestyles by providing easy access to recreation, and by promoting sustainable transport, renewable energy sources and the well-being of communities. We will use our planning responsibilities to assist in the provision of affordable homes.

We will encourage local businesses, in particular tourism and agriculture, to ensure a sustainable use of the resources of the Park in the development of their businesses.

#### What are we trying to achieve?

The National Park Authority's work is recognised as improving the economic and social well being by

- Promoting affordable and quality housing
- Encouraging and supporting local sustainable business
- Engaging with local communities and encouraging volunteering
- Providing activities which have a positive impact on health
- Promoting a clean and safe environment, and
- Promoting sustainable development

#### Where are we now

In 2011/12 18% of housing permissions were for affordable units, although the number completed is restricted by the current economic climate.

The National Park Authority's primary purposes relate to conservation and recreation, however, much of the Authority's work also contributes to a range of economic, health and community priorities. The Pembrokeshire Coast Path National Trail and wider path network attracts many visitors, to the benefit of the accommodation and hospitality sector. Similarly, the promotion of walking contributes to the health and well-being of the population. The visitor centres support the recreation and activity providers and many local businesses use the National Park in promotion materials. Volunteer projects and community engagement helps to break down various social barriers, and the planning service ensures that there is a sustainable use of resources within the National Park.

The Authority is a funding partner in local sustainable transport schemes and also supports many renewable energy proposals with over 85% of planning applications for energy installations approved.

#### We will be succeeding in delivering this outcome when:

- a. Over 20% of all planning approvals for housing will be for affordable homes
- b. There is an increasing trend in the number of people walking and cycling regularly (CCW Outdoor Recreation and other surveys)
- c. The number of people using coastal buses, park and ride and similar schemes increases each year

We will take the following Actions to deliver these Outcomes:

- a. Implement the recommendations from the current scrutiny exercise into affordable housing provision
- b. Commence an interim review of the Local Development Plan
- c. Work with the Destination Pembrokeshire Partnership to encourage and support sustainable tourism businesses and promote Pembrokeshire as a resort
- d. Continue the 'Walkability', 'Your Park' and Mosaic Wales projects and other inclusion related activities.
- e. Continue financial support for Greenways bus services

How do we compare?

Data on well being is not generally available for the National Park area. All Wales statistics available from Welsh Government indicate that since 2007, 12% of PCNPA approvals for housing units have been affordable. This is the eighth best out of the 23 welsh planning authorities where the average is 10%.

Measures & Indicators

Measure	Actual 2011/12	Target 2012/13	Actual 2012/13 (where known)	Target 2013/14	Comparison/Comment
% of new housing units which are affordable	20%	20%	20%	20%	Above the average for Welsh Planning Authorities
Number of people using coastal buses etc	77,400	83,000	83,000	85,000	Service jointly funded with PCC
Number of people involved in health related events arranged by NPA			700 (6 months)	1,200	New indicator

**Improvement Outcome 4 - The National Park Authority is recognised as meeting good practice standards in terms of governance, providing value for money and listening to the views of residents, visitors and partners.**

Introduction

We will work to meet standards of good practice in terms of governance, fairness and efficiency, and we will work with residents, visitors and partners.

What are we trying to achieve?

The general public can have confidence that Authority

- Is open, fair and transparent in its decision making
- Provides value for money and quality services
- Works well with partner organisations
- Listens to and respects the views of local communities
- Contributes to reducing the impacts of climate change
- Is well managed and governed, and
- Is recognised as a good employer

Where are we now

The Annual Improvement Report from Wales Audit Office refers to several instances of good practice and identifies areas where some improvements might be considered. The performance of our planning service has improved significantly in recent years and now consistently determines about 65% of applications within the 8 week target. The Authority has introduced new scrutiny procedures. A review of the National Park Management Plan is underway. Additional savings of over £150,000 were achieved during 2011/12. The Authority recently retained the Investors in People award for the third time.

We will be succeeding in delivering this outcome when:

- a. We receive a favourable Corporate Review and Annual Improvement Report each year from Wales Audit Office;
- b. Customer satisfaction levels are improving;
- c. We maintain our position as a good employer, with engagement levels remaining high
- d. Our planning service is recognised as delivering a quality service
- e. The CO<sup>2</sup> emissions generated by our energy and travel requirements are reduced by an average of 3% annually.
- f. The Authority's score in the Best Companies Survey is improving each year

We will take the following Actions to deliver these Outcomes:

- a. Improve the response times for both pre-application enquiries and planning applications and develop improved on-line access to application information
- b. Continue to measure and improve our customer satisfaction levels
- c. Continue to improve the governance of the Authority
- d. Improve efficiency and reduce costs of the organisation
- e. Continue to reduce CO<sup>2</sup> emissions

Measures & Indicators

Measure	Actual 2011/12	Target 2012/13	Actual 2012/13 (where known)	Target 2013/14	Comparison/Comment
CO <sup>2</sup> emissions generated by our energy and travel	443,899	430,500	180414 (6 months)	417,500	6.9% reduction – average in English NPAs was 12%
Member attendance at main committees	81%	75%	80% (6 months)	75%	Brecon 84% SNPA 76%
Member attendance at training events		66%	61% (6 months)	66%	BBNPA 70% SNPA 73%
Employee costs as a % of total revenue cost	55%	55%	55% est	55%	58% in 2010/11
Best Companies Score	613	630		640	New indicator

Statutory Indicators

Measure	Actual 2011/12	Target 2012/13	Actual 2012/13 (where known)	Target 2013/14	Comparison/Comment
The number of working days/ shifts per full time equivalent (FTE) local authority employee lost due to sickness absence.	6.5	7	6.5 (est)	6	SNPA 13 BBNPA 7.4 Public sector average 8.1 Private sector 5.9
Number of planning applications registered	532				SNPA 296 BBNPA 311
The percentage of planning applications determined during the year that were approved.	87%	87%			SNPA 84% BBNPA 84%
The % of planning applications determined within the 8 or 13 week period	65%		66% (to date)	70%	
% planning appeals supporting the NPA decision	66%	75%			14 out of 22 BBNPA 85% SNPA 61.5%
% of enforcement cases closed within 12 weeks		75%	85% (after 6 months)	85%	SNPA – 53% BBNPA - 22%

Measure	Actual 2011/12	Target 2012/13	Actual 2012/13 (where known)	Target 2013/14	Comparison/Comment
Number of enforcement cases outstanding for more than 12 weeks	Over 120	100	92 (after 6 months)	80	BBNPA 140 cases outstanding
The number and percentage of posts in our Customer Contact Centre that have been designated “Welsh essential” and that have been filled by bilingual staff	3 fte 66%	3 fte 66%		3 fte 66%	Welsh Language Scheme indicator
The percentage of staff who have received Welsh language training to a specific qualification level	25%		25%	27%	6 to ‘A’ level 34 to GCSE (Welsh Language Scheme indicator)
The number of complaints received in relation to the operation of the Welsh Language Scheme	1	0		0	Welsh Language Scheme indicator