

REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF DELIVERY AND DISCOVERY

SUBJECT: UPDATE – PCNPA MANAGEMENT OF CAR PARKS

Purpose of Report

To update Members on progress regarding Officer discussions with Pembrokeshire County Council (PCC) to expand the scope of Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority's (PCNPA's) existing legal enforcement powers for car park sites that are presently managed (owned or leased) by the Park Authority.

Introduction

At the National Park Authority (NPA) meeting held on the 26th September 2012 Members gave approval for Officers to undertake detailed discussions with PCC and other local agencies in order to explore opportunities for cost savings and/or improved services in relation to the management of the 48 car parks presently managed by the Authority.

The work undertaken to date has been prioritised accordingly:

- Phase 1 – to review and update (if necessary) the legal powers of the Authority in relation to car park management
- Phase 2 – to seek opportunities for more 'joined up' management arrangements with local agencies
- Phase 3 – to make any practical changes necessary (e.g. update relevant policies, adapt car park signage, approve management agreements, etc) and implement

It is anticipated that the whole process, detailed above, could take approximately 2 years to implement but the key priority to date has been to review and update PCNPA's legal powers. This paper, therefore, focuses on the progress made to date in relation to this priority issue.

Background

An 'Off Street Parking Order' was originally prepared for the Park Authority by Dyfed County Council in 1991 which applied to just eight car parks and set out the charges and charging periods. Since then the demand for car parking, the traffic management implications, the cost of providing and maintaining parking, and the legislation have changed and, as a result, the Authority has undertaken a review of its legal powers with assistance from Officers at Pembrokeshire County Council (PCC).

The review process revealed a number of potential issues including (but not limited to) the following:

- The need to bolster PCNPA's legal powers to address certain issues such as overnight parking at key sites
- The need to expand the scope of PCNPA's existing legal powers to cover a range of additional sites
- The need to create greater consistency in terms of PCNPA's existing rules and regulations

As a result, it is clear that PCNPA needs to amend and expand the scope of its existing legal powers ('Off Street Parking Order'), which are now over 20 years old. Officers of the Authority have, therefore, been working with the Highways and Legal Teams at PCC to make the necessary changes.

Key Changes

PCC, as the Highway Authority, is the only agency that can amend the National Park Authority's existing 'Off Street Parking Order'. A number of proposed revisions to the Order have now been submitted to PCC for consideration. PCC are now undertaking the necessary legal preparations for the new 'Off Street Parking Order'.

The key proposed changes include:

- To include all charging car parks;
- The Order will also include all the parking areas managed by the Authority (with only a handful of exceptions) to simplify the management of these sites but will not introduce any new charging car parks.
- It is also proposed to vary the charging season, (currently 1st April to 31st October), to 15th March to 7th November to reflect the periods when the car parks are most used.
- The current order permits 24 hour charging, but the new order proposes daily charging period between 9 am and 5 pm to bring PCNPA car parks in-line with PCC car parks in order to reduce possible confusion amongst users.

The revised Order will be subject to a formal public consultation process which will be managed by PCC on behalf of PCNPA. The process will allow local communities and key users to formally respond to the proposed legal changes as outlined above.

The consultation process will take place in the forthcoming months. A paper will then be presented to the NPA detailing the consultation responses received and any policy, legal and/or practical management issues that need addressing by the Authority before a revised Order is issued by PCC and implemented by PCNPA.

It is hoped that the consultation process, the follow-up paperwork and the ultimate issuing of a revised 'Off Street Parking Order' can be completed within a 3 month period (i.e. by the 2013 summer season) but this is dependent on a number of issues outside of PCNPA's control, not least the need to consult with local communities before any changes are implemented.

Financial considerations

The legal and advertising costs associated with revising the existing Order and consulting with the general public are estimated at approximately £4,000. Further cost implications will be brought before the NPA in relation to Phases 2 & 3 of implementing revised car park arrangements (as detailed above). However, there is

likely to be no significant change in the running costs and/or income received by the Authority in relation to the 48 car parks that it presently manages. However, the Authority aims to achieve a number of service improvement over time.

Risk considerations

Customer expectations in relation to car parking are changing and the volume of correspondence relating to people breaking current parking regulations has increased in recent times. Consequently, there are a number of reasons for PCNPA to explore ways to manage car parking provision in new and more flexible ways and, crucially, to improve the Authority's powers of enforcement.

Compliance

The management of car parks has a direct impact on the Authority meeting both its statutory purposes and 'well-being duty'.

Human Rights/Equality issues

There are a number of issues relating to the accessibility of car parks and the equity of certain services relating to parking. By entering into discussions regarding joint management arrangements the Authority is afforded an opportunity to review both its approach to car parking provision and to ensure that our policies are consistent with those of other organisations providing parking facilities across the county.

Biodiversity implications/Sustainability appraisal

Parking provision is an important part of the 'visitor offer' but needs to be managed carefully in order to ensure that an appropriate balance is struck between providing opportunities for people to enjoy the National Park without having a detrimental impact on its special qualities. Consequently, by 'joining up' services with other organisations in Pembrokeshire it is hoped that PCNPA can limit environmental damage and support more sustainable transport options in-line with the National Park Management Plan and LDP.

Welsh Language statement

The opportunity to review car parking services will allow PCNPA to ensure that our approach continues to comply with the Authority's Welsh Language Scheme.

Conclusion

At the NPA meeting on the 26th September 2012 Members gave approval for Officers to undertake detailed discussions with PCC and other local agencies in order to explore opportunities for cost savings and/or improved services in relation to the management of the Authority's 48 car parks.

A separate paper is presented before the NPA today detailing how the Authority is working with a number of local bodies to explore alternative models of service delivery that, in turn, support shared goals delivered through a 'community enterprise' approach.

However, this paper specifically outlines the progress made to date in expanding the scope of the Authority's existing enforcement powers and in adjusting the associated charging periods at the Authority's 48 car parks. A formal consultation process will take place in the forthcoming months and, subject to NPA approval, it envisaged that

a revised 'Off Street Parking Order' will be issued by PCC to PCNPA later in the year.

Recommendation

Members are asked to note the update report.

Background Documents

NPA Paper – PCNPA management of car parking sites – 26th September 2012

(For further information, please contact Director of Delivery & Discovery, James Parkin)

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