

REPORT OF THE FINANCE MANAGER

SUBJECT: GRANT APPROVALS IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 78 OF THE FINANCIAL STANDARDS (REVISED 2012)

Purpose of Report

Authorisation is required in accordance with Section 78 of the Financial Standards (2012) which states that where there is a payment of 'Total value Grant and Sponsorships under any one agreement over £10,000', approval must be obtained from the National Park Authority.

In the current financial year there are two payments which fall into this category: payment of £18,026 to Pembrokeshire Coastal Forum to help integrate and manage coastal activity and secondly a payment of circa £72,400 to Pembrokeshire County Council as a contribution towards the Pembrokeshire Greenways Partnership.

Pembrokeshire Coastal Forum

Pembrokeshire Coastal Forum has for more than 15 years brought stakeholders together - including government, statutory agencies, industry, local business and communities in order to identify coastal management issues and broker solutions. It is considered that the Pembrokeshire Coastal Forum is a cost-effective vehicle for delivery of work essential to achieving National Park purposes and the NPA's duty.

Last year the Authority reduced its contribution to Pembrokeshire Coast Forum in line with a number of budget cuts and moved away from a model of funding the organisation to one focused on delivering specific projects.

For the current financial year it is proposed that the Authority contributes the sum of £18,026 to Pembrokeshire Coastal Forum to undertake the following work:

- Stakeholder engagement at St Justinians - £2,500;
- Creation of codes of conduct for recreational drone usage within the National Parks - £3,000;
- Support for Year 2 of the Recreational Audit for Disabled Access project. During this phase the project will look at Assessing and evaluating potential solutions for improving access through Pembrokeshire Outdoor Charter Group members - £2,526;
- Work on the Outdoor Charter and marine Code to assist the work of the Authority on recreation - £10,000.

Pembrokeshire Greenways Partnership

The payment to the Pembrokeshire Greenways Partnership includes funding 50% of the Greenways Officer Post (the other 50% is funded by Pembrokeshire County Council), this amounts to £16,400. A further £46,000 of the budget is used as the Authority's contribution to the Coastal bus services. Of this amount £22,000 is used to fund the Strumble Shuttle and Poppit Rocket Bus Services two-days a week through the winter; £24,000 is used to fund the Celtic Coaster service through the summer.

This service remains the most patronised service of all the Coastal Bus Services since 2010 providing access to the popular visitor locations around the St Davids Peninsula, including St Justinians. The patronage of the service has continued to rise, with over 25,000 passengers carried in the 2015 season – an increase of 20% on the previous year.

In total the services carried 68,700 passengers in the 2015 season. The National Park Authority contributes approximately 15% of the overall cost of the Coastal Bus Services. The remainder is funded by Pembrokeshire County Council through its Local Transport Services Grant.

The services operate almost entirely within the National Park and as well as providing access to the majority of the coast for visitors also provide a service for residents which would not otherwise be sustainable.

The National Park Authority also contributes to the Tenby Park and Ride Service which helps to reduce congestion in the town centre of Tenby and provides easy access for those using the car parks furthest away from the town centre. The 2015 service was supported by this Authority and Pembrokeshire County Council following a request from Tenby Town Council as commercial operators did not find the service sufficiently lucrative to continue following a pilot commercial operation in 2014. Pending similar contributions from Pembrokeshire County Council and donations from other bodies and businesses in Tenby it is anticipated that the 2016 will once again help to support this service.

The remainder of the sustainable transport budget is used for publicity (Coastal Bus Services advertisement in Coast to Coast) and supporting other Greenways Projects with the other Partners such as Bikemobility which provides cycling facilities for children and adults of all abilities. This remains a very popular activity with a steady increase in patronage.

Recommendation.

Both the above payments have been made over a number of years and as a result of the revised financial standards in 2012 members are asked to approve these payments.