

# Operational Review Committee

30 November 2022

Present: Dr R Plummer (Deputy Chair in the Chair)  
Councillor R Jordan, Dr M Havard, Mrs J James, Councillor PJ Morgan, Councillor M Wiggins and Councillor C Williams.

(Virtual Meeting: 10.00am – 11.25am)

## 1. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Dr S Hancock and Councillor A Wilcox

## 2. Disclosures

Dr R Plummer made a general declaration; Dr M Havard and Councillor M Wiggins declared an interest in reports 07/22, 08/22 and 09/22 as Trustees of the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Trust however all remained in the meeting and played a full part in the discussions.

## 3. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on the 29 June 2022 were presented for confirmation and authentication.

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 29 June 2022 be confirmed and authenticated.

## 4. Matters Arising from the Minutes

### a) Performance Report for the period ending 31 January 2022 (Minute 6a)

A Member asked whether any update had been sent regarding the future of the collaborative project to develop a regional approach to One Planet Developments and Biodiversity Enhancement. The Chief Executive replied that the issue had been raised at a regional level and officers were looking to develop an approach.

**Noted.**

### b) Work Programme for the Ensuing Year (Minute 11)

One Member asked whether the meeting had taken the theme of 'Conservation' following the suggestion of devoting each of the quarterly meetings to one of the 'C's of the Authority's Strategy. Another Member noted that it was important not to think of the work of the Authority in silos, as a number of the reports before the Committee that day showed the impact of the work on communities and reducing the carbon footprint as well as conservation itself. The Chief Executive added that a report on Kickstart would be looked at in future.



**Noted.**

c) Actions

It was suggested that to ensure actions were not missed, an action log could be developed. The Chief Executive agreed to speak to the Democratic and Executive Services Manager on this matter.

**NOTED.**

**5. Update on the Notice of Motion that the Authority enters into negotiation with Lamphey Community Council, and any interested parties, to either gift or sell land in Freshwater East, for the provision of a children's play area.**

Members were reminded that this Notice of Motion had been delegated to the Committee by the National Park Authority, and that the matter had been considered at a previous meeting when it had been resolved that officers enter into further communication with Lamphey Community Council regarding the provision of a children's play area at Freshwater East and report back.

The Chief Executive reported that the Estates Officer had attended a meeting of Lamphey Community Council in the autumn and had explained that while the Authority was happy to work with them on this matter, it was first necessary for them to provide a substantive proposal for its consideration. Nothing further had been heard from the Community Council since that meeting, so the agreed action point still rested with them.

He noted that the Committee had previously agreed that if no further approach had been received, the Notice of Motion would be considered as closed and a report would be made to the National Park Authority accordingly. This would also be communicated to Councillor Kidney, who had raised the matter, but was no longer a Member of the Authority. He added that the Authority remained happy to work with the Community Council should they put forward any proposals in future.

**Noted.**

**6. '70 Trees for 70 Years' commemorative tree planting scheme**

Members were reminded that in November 2021 the National Park Authority had approved a proposal put forward by Cllr Reg Owens to commemorate its original designation 70 years ago by planting 70 trees in each National Park community. The report set out the progress made to date, and at the meeting the Ranger Service Manager provided an update, advising that 16 planting schemes were now underway and discussions had taken place with both Community Councils and other



community groups about further schemes across the County which would hopefully come to fruition in 2023. She noted that a wide variety of trees were being planted, and their location was being recorded to ensure their ongoing maintenance. The assistance of local volunteers, including the Authority's Tree Wardens was welcomed in this respect.

Members congratulated the Ranger team on a fantastic project and on their assistance with individual schemes, some of which the officer agreed to follow up after the meeting. The value of the linkages with the PCNP Trust's Wild about Woodlands and Make More Meadows projects was highlighted, and the officer noted that thanks to the Trust's support, funding would be available to replace any trees that failed.

**Noted.**

## **7. Annual Archaeology Report 2021-2022**

The report presented the work of the Authority in relation to archaeology during the financial year 2021- 2022. Work relating to the Archaeology Action Plan 2020 - 2024 was presented. In addition, the contribution of Archaeology towards achievement of the relevant objectives in the National Park Management Plan 2020 – 2024, the Corporate and Resources Plan 2021 – 2022 and the Authority's Wellbeing Objectives was highlighted. It was noted that while COVID-19 continued to have an impact, this had reduced from the financial year 2020 - 2021.

The Community Archaeologist noted that archaeology was very much a cross-cutting theme across all of the Authority's objectives, and thanked the range of stakeholders – those in the community as well as National Park colleagues and those leading on projects – for making the activity possible.

Members thanked the officer for an excellent report, highlighting particularly the partnership working and work with volunteers and children/youth that had taken place. They were concerned to read of the incidents of heritage crime that had taken place, and the officer outlined the work that had been undertaken, in cooperation with the police and other organisations, to address this. He stressed the importance of monitoring in identifying problem areas and of highlighting the issue via the press and social media to raise awareness. The Chair asked about the priorities for archaeology going forward and asked whether it was possible to include a forward-looking section in next year's report.

**Noted.**

## **8. Conservation Report 2021-2022**

The report set out the outcomes achieved by the Authority through its conservation work during the previous financial year, particularly the



impact of conservation land management activities; specific examples of achievements under the 'Conserving the Park' scheme; progress made on the management of Authority owned sites; a report on partnership projects and collaboration; progress on the 'Stitch in Time' project; and species monitoring results and interpretation. The report also set out the key achievements of the team over the previous ten years.

Members congratulated the team on the increased scope and extent of their reach, and the resultant increase in community engagement. They noted that the use of volunteers and partnership working had been critical in achieving this. The inclusion of case examples had been interesting, and they thanked the officer for responding to the Committee's previous request to report on key achievements. The effect of wildfires over the summer was also questioned and Members commended the work on traditional boundaries and hoped that this would continue. Officers acknowledged that wildfires were likely to increase as a result of drier summers, but that the Authority, as Chair of the Pembrokeshire Wildfire Group was actively involved in trying to manage the problem. They also agreed that hedgerows were important for many reasons including wildlife connectivity and hoped that funding for this area of work would be included in the new sustainable farming scheme, so that the Authority's money could be directed more towards communities.

**Noted.**

#### **9. Performance Report for the Period Ending 30 September 2022**

This report followed the structure of the Corporate and Resources Plan for 2022/23 and presented the performance to 30 September and included Q1 – Q2 statistics for some data sets recorded quarterly. The report of the Performance and Compliance Coordinator highlighted a number of measures and actions to the Committee in respect of the work of the Authority and she provided a number of updates at the meeting regarding delivery plans, EV charging and delivery of electric vans. She also noted that some RAG ratings had been updated following comments made at the recent Audit and Corporate Services Review Committee and the RAG guidance would be reviewed as a result.

Noting that many of the targets were green, one Member asked whether these were ambitious enough. Updates were also sought, in future reports, on the pay and grading scheme, Green Room redevelopment project and the project considering the future direction of Oriel y Parc. Officers responded that there were measures relating to those items and progress on them would be highlighted in future. The Chief Executive added that an item on redevelopment of the Green Room would be included on the agenda for the forthcoming Authority meeting.



While commending the team on the work undertaken, the disappointing planning performance metrics were highlighted, and it was hoped that the appointment of the Director and additional staff would lead to progress being made in this regard. The officer advised that unfortunately, due to the nature of the targets, the figures were likely to dip before they improved, as the backlog was tackled. In response to other questions regarding the planning service, the Director of Placemaking, Decarbonisation and Engagement explained that Equality Impact Assessments were not undertaken on individual planning applications but on the Development Plans against which those applications were assessed. She added that there were still vacancies within the team and action was being taken to fill the posts. The use of consultants by the Authority would be reviewed in January when a number of contracts came to an end, although the Chief Executive noted that this would continue to be a tool used by the Authority to help maintain an effective planning service. The Chair suggested that it might be helpful to clarify the approach regarding Impact Assessments at a future DM Committee.

Members also looked forward to receiving training in relation to decarbonisation and carbon literacy, and hoped this would find its way into the Member Development training programme; on the subject of Member Development, it was noted that Members were currently being encouraged to undertake their Personal Development Reviews in accordance with the guidance circulated by the Democratic Services Manager. Other points raised related the missed response time for an EIR request, which the officer explained had been due to a changeover in staff, and an update on the staff liability injury claims. The Chief Executive added that thought would be given as to the best way to keep Members informed in respect of this latter point, due to the length of time that such claims took to resolve.

## **NOTED**

The Minutes of this meeting were confirmed at the meeting of the Operational Review Committee held on 15 March 2023 without amendment

