

# **Pembrokeshire Coast National Park**

## **National Park Management Plan “A *Partnership Plan for the National Park*” (2025-2029)**

Draft Initial Sustainability Appraisal Report:  
Executive Summary

**PEMBROKESHIRE COAST NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY**

**19<sup>th</sup> June 2024**

### Context

1.1 European Directives and United Kingdom legislation requires the formal assessment of certain plans and programmes that are likely to have significant effects on the environment; this definition includes National Park Management Plans. The duty of National Park Authorities to foster the economic and social well-being of National Park communities in pursuit of their purposes, suggests that it is appropriate to consider wider sustainability objectives in an assessment of the National Park Management Plan. Guidance on National Park Management Plan preparation published by Natural Resources Wales (NRW) advises that the requirements of SEA and SA can be met in a single appraisal. The sustainability of the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Management Plan has been assessed through a process of Sustainability Appraisal incorporating a Strategic Environmental Assessment (working draft Designated Landscape Management Plan Guidance Volume 2, Appendix C, para C.2, 2024).

### Sustainability Objectives

1.2 For the purposes of the Sustainability Appraisal of the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Management Plan, in accordance with guidance from the Welsh Government and United Kingdom Governments, sustainability is defined in terms of a sustainability framework made up of Sustainability objectives. These were subject to public consultation and are:

- i. Economically viable agriculture and forestry sectors play a key role in managing, conserving and enhancing natural resources, landscape, biodiversity, including habitats, ecological resilience, nature based solutions that reduce flood risk and contribute to community well-being.
- ii. Locate developments so as to minimise the demand for travel, especially by private car.
- iii. Conserve and enhance landscapes, townscapes and seascapes, and all their components (including the built environment and archaeology) with reference to the special qualities of the National Park.
- iv. Sustainably increase the number of residents and visitors taking part in physical forms of recreation (especially walking and cycling) and volunteering opportunities, balancing against environmental limits.
- v. Increase the number of visitors using the National Park outside the peak visitor season.
- vi. Manage the effects of and adapt to climate change with particular reference to the risk of flooding, coastal erosion and coastal

squeeze which could negatively impact on existing habitats and biodiversity, infrastructure including the National trail and community, social, economic and well-being including public health.

- vii. Mitigate and reduce factors contributing to climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions from transport and energy use.
- viii. Maximise the contribution of the limited opportunities for development to sustaining local communities.
- ix. Encourage access for all to the National Park, reflecting the social mix of society.
- x. Maintain the cultural distinctiveness of communities.
- xi. The adverse effects of minerals exploitation in the National Park decline from the present level and the potential biodiversity and landscape gains of former minerals sites are realised.
- xii. Reduce the negative impacts of waste.
- xiii. Community facilities (including health & social care facilities, social facilities and retail provision) continue to meet the needs of the National Park population
- xiv. Maintain and enhance biodiversity, ecological resilience, habitats and habitat connectivity both within and outside designated sites
- xv. Promote sustainable use of, and maintain and enhance the quality of, inland and coastal waters.

1.3 More information on the development of the Sustainability Objectives is included in section 4 of the Draft Initial Sustainability Appraisal Report.

### **What would happen in the absence of the National Park Management Plan?**

1.4 Guidance on Sustainability Appraisal and the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive require that the likely evolution of the Plan area in the absence of the Management Plan is considered. Many of the Sustainability Objectives for the National Park are subject in large part to policy and activity beyond the remit of the Management Plan. The working draft Designated Landscape Management Plan Guidance Part 1 (2024) advises at para 2.19 (page 17) that "Designated Landscape management plans should present an integrated approach to the planning and management of the Designated Landscape at a strategic level. It is a plan for the geographic area of the designation and not for any one authority. They are important policy document for each Designated Landscape and no major decisions should be taken affecting the future of a Designated Landscape without reference to its management plan."

1.5 It is not enough to co-ordinate existing action, but also to determine whether that action is sufficient to affect (improve) the state of the Park in a timely way. Thus, the process of preparing a Management Plan should

also identify where new action, or new scales of action, are required to achieve National Park purposes. This has been the case. In the absence of the Management Plan, these additions would have had to have been incorporated – if possible – within other plans. However, it is not clear whether the actions would have been identified in the absence of the Management Plan process. Furthermore, iterative Sustainability Appraisal of the Management Plan has identified additions to a number of policy impacts. In the absence of the Management Plan (and the process which gives rise to it), there is no way of determining the sufficiency of action in relation to Park purposes (also see Section 4 paragraphs 4.10 and 4.11).

## **Appraisal of National Park Management Plan Policies**

1.6 The policies of the National Park Management Plan were assessed to predict their impacts with regard to the Sustainability Objectives. Comments are made largely on the likely positive impacts of the policies and no recommendations for changes were made. This was largely due to the many of the policies remaining largely unchanged since the last Management Plan.

## **What will be the cumulative impacts of the Plans' proposals?**

1.7 It is a requirement of Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment that policy options are not only considered singly, but that their cumulative effects are also assessed. The net impact of all policies was determined against each Sustainability Objective. From this exercise it was found that there are no undesirable cumulative effects on any of the Sustainability Objectives.

## **How will other Plans impact?**

1.8 As an over-arching plan for the achievement of National Park purposes within the National Park, the Management Plan is reliant on other plans for delivery. These include:

- Action Plan for Pollinators Wales (Review 2013-18 and Future Actions), Welsh Government
- Cardigan Bay Special Area of Conservation Management Scheme, 2008
- Carmarthen Bay and Estuaries European Marine Site Management Scheme, 2013
- Invasive Non-Native Species action plan, Pembrokeshire Nature Partnership
- Marine Area Statement, Natural Resources Wales
- Nature Recovery Action Plan for Pembrokeshire, 2018, Pembrokeshire Nature Partnership
- Pembrokeshire Marine Special Area of Conservation Management Scheme, 2008
- Rights of Way Improvement Plan for Pembrokeshire 2018-2028, Pembrokeshire County Council and Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority
- South-West Wales Area Statement, Natural Resources Wales
- Wales National Marine Plan, Welsh Government
- Well-being Plan for Pembrokeshire 2023, Public Services Board
- Pembrokeshire Climate Adaptation Strategy 2022, Public Services Board
- Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority's adopted Local Development Plan 2

- Western Wales River Basin Management Plan 2021-2027, Natural Resources Wales
- Natural Resources Wales Flood Risk Management Plan: South West Wales Place, Natural Resources Wales (2023 – 2029)