

# NOTICE OF MEETING



*Snowdonia National Park Authority*

*Emyr Williams*

*Chief Executive*

*Snowdonia National Park Authority*

*Penrhyndeudraeth*

*Gwynedd LL48 6LF*

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**Meeting:** Snowdonia National Park Authority  
**Date:** Wednesday 26 April 2023  
**Time:** 10.00 a.m.  
**Location:** The Oakeley Room, Plas Tan y Bwlch,  
Maentwrog and via Zoom

***Members are asked to join the meeting 15 minutes before the designated start time***

***Members appointed by Gwynedd Council***

*Councillor: Elwyn Edwards, Annwen Hughes, Louise Hughes, June Jones,  
Kim Jones, Edgar Wyn Owen, Elfed Powell Roberts,  
John Pughe Roberts, Meryl Roberts;*

***Members appointed by Conwy County Borough Council***

*Councillor: Ifor Glyn Lloyd, Jo Nuttall, Dilwyn Owain Roberts;*

***Members appointed by The Welsh Government***

*Mr. Brian Angell, Ms. Tracey Evans, Mrs. Sarah Hattle, Mr. Tim Jones,  
Ms. Naomi Luhde – Thompson, Ms. Delyth Lloyd.*

***\*This Agenda is also available in Welsh***

# A G E N D A

Page Nos.

1. **Apologies for absence and Chairman's Announcements**
2. **Corporate Update**  
To receive an oral update from the Chief Executive.
3. **Public Question Time**  
The Authority has allocated up to 20 minutes at the start of its meeting to allow members of the public the opportunity to ask specific questions that relate to the work of the Authority (apart from planning applications) that is relevant to the Park's duties and purposes.  
  
Questions must be submitted in writing (by post or e-mail) to the Director of Corporate Services at least 7 days prior to the meeting.
4. **Declaration of Interest**  
To receive any disclosure of interest by members or officers in respect of any item of business.
5. **Minutes** 4 - 10  
The Chairman shall propose that the minutes of the meeting of this Authority held on the 8<sup>th</sup> February 2023 be signed as a true record. (Copy herewith)
6. **Matters for Information arising from the minutes** 11 - 12
7. **Action Log** 13 - 21  
To submit the Action Log for information and decision. (Copy herewith)
8. **Mid-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) 2023/24 – 2026/27** 22  
To submit a joint report by the Chief Executive and the Chief Finance Officer. (Copy herewith)
9. **Appointment of Section 151 Officer** 23 - 24  
To submit a report by the Chief Executive. (Copy herewith)
10. **Report of the Interview Panel for an Independent Member of the Standards Committee** 25  
To submit a report by the Director of Corporate Services. (Copy herewith)
11. **Annual Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales** 26 - 28  
To submit a report by the Director of Corporate Services. (Copy herewith)
12. **National Parks Wales Members' Seminar 2023** 29 - 33  
To submit a report by the Chief Executive. (Copy herewith)
13. **Members' Working Group Report** 34 - 35  
To submit the report of the Members' Working Group meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> January 2023. (Copies herewith)
14. **Europarc Conference 3 – 6 October, 2023**   
To submit a report by the Chief Executive. (Copy herewith)

15. **Calendar of Meetings 2023/24**

To submit a Timetable of Meetings for the period 2023/24. (Copy herewith)

16. **Meetings of other Organisations**

To receive reports from Members on any recent meetings of organisations which they have attended as representatives of the Authority.

**37 - 42**

17. **To submit the following minutes for information:-**

Minutes of the Performance and Resources Committees held on 30<sup>th</sup> November 2022.  
(Copy herewith)

**SNOWDONIA NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY  
WEDNESDAY 8<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 2023**

Councillor Annwen Hughes (Gwynedd) (Chair)

**PRESENT:**

**Members appointed by Gwynedd Council**

Councillors Elwyn Edwards, June Jones, Edgar Wyn Owen, Elfed Powell Roberts, John Pughe Roberts, Meryl Roberts;

**Members appointed by Conwy County Borough Council**

Councillor Ifor Glyn Lloyd, Jo Nuttall;

**Members appointed by the Welsh Government**

Mr. Brian Angell, Ms. Tracey Evans, Mrs. Sarah Hattle, Mr. Tim Jones, Ms. Delyth Lloyd;

**Officers**

Mr. E. Williams, Mr. G.I. Jones, Mr. J. Cawley, Mr. D. Edwards, Mr. David Williams, Ms. Angela Jones, Ms. Helen Pye, Mrs. A. Gaffey.

**In attendance**

Ms. Rachel Freitag - Audit Wales.

**Apologies**

Councillors Louise Hughes, Kim Jones, Dilwyn Owain Roberts; Ms. Naomi Luhde-Thompson.

The Director of Corporate Services stated that as the meeting was being held remotely, it was being recorded to assist in verifying the minutes and would be made available online at a later date.

**1. Chair's Announcements**

**(1) Sympathy**

The Chair referred with sadness to the recent death of Caerwyn Roberts, former Chair and Member of the Snowdonia National Park Authority. On behalf of the Authority, the Chair took the opportunity to pay tribute to Caerwyn, a Member of the Authority for 30 years and Chairman for eighteen of those years. He was first appointed in 1987 by the Welsh Office and then by Gwynedd Council, when he was elected as a Member of that Council in 1999. The Chair expressed her thanks to Caerwyn for promoting Eryri at every opportunity and referred to his many achievements and the experience which he brought to the Authority. Caerwyn had worked tirelessly to secure the Hafod Eryri project, and later played a leading role in negotiations to enable the Authority to buy Yr Ysgwrn. He was an active member of National Parks UK and had served as their Chairman. Caerwyn was also a valued Member of Harlech Community Council for over 40 years. The Chair, on behalf of Members, expressed deepest condolences to his wife Bet, and children, Iwan, Bryn, Iola and their families.

The Chief Executive thanked the Chair for the opportunity to express his appreciation for Caerwyn's work and to convey condolences on behalf of the Authority's staff. Caerwyn's 30 years with the Authority had provided stability, for which the staff were very grateful. He was very respected in both the political sector and agricultural sector, for which he was awarded

the MBE, followed by an OBE for his work in the community of Harlech. He was always very thoughtful of the Authority's staff who wished to recognise his contribution. The Chief Executive was personally grateful for his constant support and although his illness had been a cruel one, Caerwyn still reminisced about the work of the National Park. The Chief Executive expressed his deepest condolences to the family on behalf of all the Authority's staff.

Members and officers stood as a mark of respect.

- (2) the Chair reported on meetings attended since the last Authority meeting:-
- the Chair and Vice-Chair had recently met with Audit Wales
  - meetings to discuss the Authority's financial position including a recent meeting with Sian Gwenllian MS
  - a meeting with The Snowdonia Society, and
  - a recent media training course at Plas Tan y Bwlch.

## 2. **Corporate Update**

Received – The Chief Executive provided an oral update on the following:-

- the Chief Executive provided an update on the Authority's current financial position. Since the recent meeting of the Members' Working Group, he had met with Janet Finch-Saunders MS and would be meeting with Mabon ap Gwynfor MS on the 9<sup>th</sup> February 2023.
- the Chief Executive advised that Welsh Government final grant allocation figures would be confirmed during the first week in March. If there was no improved offer, the Chief Executive will convene a meeting of the Panel of Members to consider the financial challenge.
- the freeze on recruitment had now been lifted to ease pressure on the Authority's staff.
- the Chief Executive advised that Audit Wales were undertaking a National Review of Governance in National Parks Authorities. Officers from Wales Audit were in-attendance at some of the Authority's meetings to observe, and as part of the review a number of staff and Members would be invited to attend interviews with officers from Audit Wales.
- tenders were currently being sought by Gwynedd Council, Conwy County Borough Council, and the Eryri National Park for the Snowdon Sherpa Service, which will be for a period of five years and will provide an improved service. The Authority continues to contribute income from three of its car parks to support this service.
- Hafod Eryri will re-open for the 2023 season and officers will undertake a site visit with the Railway Company to assess whether there will be any additional costs to the Authority.

## 3. **Public Question Time**

Members were informed that no public questions had been received.

## 4. **Declaration of Interest**

Members noted a correction to the Agenda in that Item 15 was submitted by the Chief Executive and not the Director of Corporate Services.

Arising thereon, Mr. Iwan Jones and Mr. Jonathan Cawley declared an interest in items 15 and 16 on the Agenda and left the meeting while these matters were being discussed.

5. **Minutes**

The minutes of the Authority meetings held on 16<sup>th</sup> November 2022 were accepted and the Chairman signed them as a true record.

6. **Matters for Information arising from the minutes**

There were no matters arising.

7. **Action Log**

Submitted – A log of strategic actions arising from decisions taken during meetings of the Authority, for information and action.

Authority Meeting 19.12.20

Action Item 7 – Action Log

This action was now complete and could be removed from the Action Log.

Authority Meeting 13.10.21

Action Item 11 – Scrutiny Panel Progress Report – Place Names

This action was now complete and could be removed from the Action Log.

Authority Meeting 09.02.22

Action Item 13 – Authority Resilience: Staff Terms and Conditions

This action was now complete and could be removed from the Action Log.

Authority Meeting 27.04.22

Action Item 9 – Governance Task and Finish Group

This action was now complete and could be removed from the Action Log.

Authority Meeting 15.06.22

- Action Item 10 – Sustainable Tourism Snowdonia National Park Authority

This action was now complete and could be removed from the Action Log.

- Action Item 22 – Meetings of other Organisations

The Director of Planning and Land Management advised that arrangements were now underway, and the action could be removed from the Action Log.

**RESOLVED to note the Action Log and remove the actions as outlined.**

8. **Final Accounts 2021/22**

Received – An oral report by the Chief Finance Officer.

Reported – The Chief Finance Officer advised that work to finalise the accounts was progressing and Rachel Freitag of Audit Wales was at the meeting to provide Members with a brief update. Rachel Freitag explained that difficulties had arisen due to the need to re-evaluate the Authority's assets every 5 years. This work was undertaken by external valuers and more details were awaited. As the figures were material to the accounts, Audit Wales were unable to give an opinion at this time. Members noted that several other Local Authorities were in a similar position.

Arising thereon, the Chief Finance Officer noted that he was hopeful that the Final Accounts 2021/22 would be presented to the Performance and Resources Committee on the 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2023. If this was not the case, the Final Accounts for 2021/22 would be presented to the Authority's meeting on the 26<sup>th</sup> April 2023. The Chief Finance Officer thanked Rachel Freitag, Audit Wales, for her support in this matter and thanked David Williams, the Finance Officer for his work.

## **RESOLVED**

- 1. to note the report, for information.**
- 2. to confirm that the Performance and Resources Committee have delegated authority to approve the Statement of Accounts on behalf of the Authority.**

### **9. The Authority's Budget and Levy on Constituent Authorities 2023/24**

Submitted – A report by the Chief Finance Officer requesting approval of the 2023/24 revenue and capital budgets and to raise levies on constituent authorities on the basis of the Welsh Government's draft grant allocation figure for the Authority.

Reported – The Chief Finance Officer informed Members that he was presenting the report for the final time, as he would be retiring in June 2023 after 20 years with the Authority. He stated that the Welsh Government draft grant allocation for 2023/24 was disappointing, and as National Park Authorities have no mechanism to increase revenue funding, he recommended that Members accept the report as submitted.

Members considered the report and discussed the following:-

- Members thanked the Chief Finance Officer for his commitment to the work of the Authority and for his expertise over the 20 years.
- Members and officers discussed future implications for the Authority's cash flow when taking on large projects such as the Celtic Rainforests (LIFE), which requires the Authority to utilise reserves to fund the projects until final payment is received. In response to a question, the Chief Executive explained how such projects were funded with an initial payment at the start, a further payment at the halfway stage and then a final payment upon completion.
- Appendix 4 - in response to a question, officers confirmed that the figure of £462,097 for Plas Tan y Bwlch was the revenue cost which did not include the additional maintenance costs referred to in the Asset Plan. The Director of Corporate Services advised that the figure included capital charges of £225k, which was not a cash cost to the Authority and represented depreciation across the age of the asset. The Chief Finance Officer agreed the figure could be an underestimate if there were urgent works necessary to maintain the building.
- the Chief Executive confirmed there was no baseline figure in the budget to support the Dark Skies project which was currently supported through various bids and working with partners. He also confirmed there was no specific budget for carbon zero work, and that this would be established when a Carbon Strategy is developed.
- officers and Members discussed unforeseen costs such as the possible overspend on capital schemes, the pay settlement for 2023/24 and other mitigations and agreed as these were unknown, they would be dealt with as they arise.
- the Chief Finance Officer advised that replenishing the Authority's reserves should be a priority for the Authority, but the ability to do so would depend upon future Welsh Government grant settlements.

- in response to a question, the Chief Executive confirmed that a bid for additional capital funding had been submitted to Welsh Government which would meet their priorities in the event of any slippage in their budget becoming available.

#### **RESOLVED**

1. to note the contents of the report.
2. to approve the revenue and capital budget for 2023/24 as set out in the report and appendices.
3. to authorise levies to be raised on the two constituent councils to a total amount of £1,373,262 in accordance with paragraph 6.3 of the Chief Finance Officer's report.

#### 10. **Capital Strategy 2023/24**

Submitted – The Chief Finance Officer's report to approve the Capital Strategy for 2023/24 and the recommendations relating to the Prudential Code.

Reported – The Chief Finance Officer presented the report which members considered in detail.

#### **RESOLVED**

1. to note that there was no intention to borrow monies for capital purposes, however, the limitations below were recommended on a prudent level as a precautionary measure in case of an emergency or need for expenditure at short notice.
2. to approve the present Authorised Borrowing Limit of £500,000 for 2023/24, and an Operational Boundary of £100,000.
3. that no limit be placed on the proportion of interest payable at a variable rate.
4. to adopt the Capital Borrowing Strategy for 2023/24 as outlined in para. 3.2 of the report and note the content relating to the Prudential Code (see tables under paras. 2.2, 3.2 and para. 7.1 of the report).
5. to adopt the Investment Strategy for 2023/24 as outlined in paras. 3.5 to 3.14 of the report, and note the institutions listed in para 3.6.

#### 11. **Report of the Interview Panel for Independent Members of the Standards Committee**

Submitted – A report by the Director of Corporate Services to appoint members to an Interview Panel to select Independent Members for the Standards Committee.

Reported – The Director of Corporate Services presented the report and background.

**RESOLVED to appoint a Panel of Members, as set out in para. 1.3 of the report, for interviewing prospective members to the Standards Committee. The following Members were appointed:-**

**Councillor Annwen Hughes (Authority Chair), Councillor Edgar Owen (Authority Vice-Chair), Mr. G. Iwan Jones (Director of Corporate Services), together with one Lay Member. Mr. Tim Jones was appointed in reserve.**

#### 12. **Gwynedd and Eryri Sustainable Visitor Economy – Strategic Plan**

Submitted – A report by the Partnerships Manager to formally adopt the Strategic Plan for a Sustainable Visitor Economy in Gwynedd and Eryri (2035).



Reported – The Partnerships Manager presented the report and updated Members on the production of the Strategic Plan. Members noted that the Snowdonia National Park Authority and Gwynedd Council were the only two local authorities in the U.K. to have such a strategy. The Partnerships Manager confirmed Conwy County Borough Council’s involvement and that they would be part of the steering group, with further discussions underway with regard to their role on the partnership and whether this would be as observers or full members. The Partnerships Manager advised that the Plan had now been approved by Gwynedd Council’s Education and Economy Committee and was being submitted to Gwynedd Council’s Cabinet next week. Once the Plan is adopted, it would be formally launched before the summer.

Arising thereon, Members made the following observations:-

- the Head of Engagement thanked the Partnerships Manager for her work which will allow the Authority to move forward with sustainable tourism in the area.
- Members also welcomed the report and strategy and thanked the Partnerships Manager for her work.
- Members noted that once the partnership is established a detailed action plan will be developed. The Partnerships Manager confirmed that the action plan will be reviewed annually.
- a Member asked whether the strategy evaluates the impact of tourism in terms of the cost of repairing damaged footpaths, litter collection etc., over and above what was currently expected. The Partnerships Manager confirmed that a baseline will be identified, and the Chief Executive stated that if a tourism tax is established in the future, this type of detailed work would be undertaken at that time.
- officers confirmed that the review of the Eryri Local Development Plan would look in detail at future planning policies which may impact on the strategy.
- in response to a question, the Head of Engagement advised that marketing of the Eryri brand, whilst there were elements in this strategy, comes under the National Park’s Engagement Strategy.

**RESOLVED to adopt the ‘Strategic Plan for a Sustainable Visitor Economy in Gwynedd and Eryri (2035)’ as set out in Annex 1 of the report.**

### 13. Working Group Reports

Submitted – Reports from the Working Group meetings.

(1) **Members’ Working Group**

Submitted – Reports of the Members’ Working Group meetings held on the 19<sup>th</sup> October and 7<sup>th</sup> December 2022.

**RESOLVED to note the reports.**

(2) **Local Joint Working Group**

Submitted – Report of the Local Joint Working Group meeting held on the 19<sup>th</sup> November 2022.

Arising thereon, the Chief Executive provided the following updates:-

Para. 5 – The Social Partnership & Public Procurement (Wales) Bill

A finalised response had been prepared and forwarded.

Para. 7 – Hybrid Working

A questionnaire would be sent to all staff in the coming days.

**RESOLVED to note the report.**

14. **Meetings of other Organisations**  
Members had not attended any external meetings as representatives of the Authority.
15. **Terms and Conditions of Service**  
**SNPA Senior Management Team: Directors**  
**Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972: Exemption from disclosure of documents.**  
Submitted – A report by the Chief Executive requesting Authority approval for the exemption of the subsequent report.

**RESOLVED that the “Terms and Conditions of Service – SNPA Senior Management Team: Directors” report be exempt from disclosure for the reasons outlined.**

16. **Terms and Conditions of Service**  
**SNPA Senior Management Team: Directors**  
Submitted – A joint report by the Chief Executive and the Head of Human Resources to report on the outcome of the Members Panel and to consider the Panel’s recommendations.

Reported – The Chief Executive presented the report in detail. He apologised that the Discussion Paper, as considered by Senior Members, had been omitted from the Agenda and that a copy was sent out separately.

Members noted the considerations and conclusion of the Panel of Senior Members also discussed the need for succession planning. Members also agreed that in order to complete the process, the terms and conditions of the Chief Executive should now be considered.

**RESOLVED**

1. **to appoint additional technical support for the Senior Management Team (resource identified).**
2. **to introduce arrangements whereby Directors are allowed TOIL for evening and weekend working.**
3. **to allow St David’s Day as a discretionary day’s leave for the Directors.**
4. **to support a two-pay point increase in the salary of the Directors to reflect enhanced responsibilities, backdated to April 2022.**
5. **the Human Resource Officer to monitor senior officer salaries over the coming 3 years.**
6. **that the Authority continues to support officers with managerial and leadership training, and where appropriate relevant work experience.**
7. **that the Panel, together with the Monitoring Officer and the Head of Human Resources, further consider the terms and conditions of the Chief Executive, and to present a report to the next meeting of the Authority if required to do so.**
8. **that the Panel, together with the Head of Human Resources and the new Section 151 Officer, are tasked and authorised to address potential matters resulting from turnover of personnel in the Senior Management Team.**

**The meeting ended at 11.45**



## TAFLEN WEITHREDU – ACTION SHEET

### AUTHORITY MEETING – 25.09.2019

ITEM NO. AND TITLE	DECISIONS / OBSERVATIONS	ACTIONS	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	UPDATE or COMPLETION DATE	REMOVE FROM ACTION LOG
8. Budget Update	<p>- a report on the budgetary pressures faced by the Property Section to be presented to a future Working Group.</p> <p>- a report by Yr Ysgwrn Project Group to be presented to Members in the New Year.</p> <p>- to provide Members with a copy of the Aberdyfi judgement once it becomes available.</p>	<p>To present the reports.</p> <p>To email Members with the judgement.</p>	<p>EJ</p> <p>NJ</p> <p>GIJ</p>	<p>Update - The Assets Subgroup met on 4 March 2020 and considered a report, which outlined budget pressures and recommendations to reinvest income from income generating sites in future maintenance budgets from 2021/22 onwards. A subsequent report to be prepared for Autumn Performance &amp; Resources committee. Covid 19 was identified as a potential risk and has resulted in the report being postponed owing to wider financial pressures arising from the pandemic. The Assets Sub-Group was convened on 15th January 2021. An update report will be presented to Members prior to April 2022 and an appointment has been made to the newly created Property Officer post. A detailed update has been circulated to the Members of the Assets Subgroup with the aim of convening a further meeting in the Autumn. <b>UPDATE: The Asset Subgroup met on the 30.11.22 and the work is ongoing.</b></p> <p>Update – at the end of the 2021 season a report will be presented to Yr Ysgwrn Board before being presented to the Authority meeting by the Head of Cultural Heritage in late 2021 / early 2022. <b>COMPLETED</b></p> <p>Members were provided with a copy of the judgement on 28.11.19 <b>COMPLETED</b></p>	<p>NO</p>



# TAFLEN WEITHREDU – ACTION SHEET

## AUTHORITY MEETING – 08.02.2023

ITEM NO. AND TITLE	DECISIONS / OBSERVATIONS	ACTIONS	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	UPDATE or COMPLETION DATE	REMOVE FROM ACTION LOG
16. Terms and Conditions of Service – SNPA Senior Management Team: Directors	- <b>that the Panel, together with the Monitoring Officer and the Head of Human Resources, further consider the terms and conditions of the Chief Executive, and to present a report to the next meeting of the Authority if required to do so.</b>	Need to arrange a meeting to consider the issues, date is yet to be agreed	NM/GIJ	Date to be confirmed	<b>NO</b>
	- <b>that the Panel, together with the Head of Human Resources and the new Section 151 Officer, are tasked and authorised to address potential matters resulting from turnover of personnel in the Senior Management Team.</b>	Need to arrange a meeting to consider the issues, date is yet to be agreed	NM	Date to be confirmed	<b>NO</b>

**ITEM NO. 8**

<b>MEETING</b>	Snowdonia National Park Authority
<b>DATE</b>	26 <sup>th</sup> April, 2023
<b>TITLE</b>	<b>MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN (MTFP)</b>
<b>AUTHOR</b>	Chief Executive / Head of Finance
<b>PURPOSE</b>	To discuss and adopt the Medium Term Financial Plan

**1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 Members have previously considered the need to adopt a medium term financial plan (MTFP), (Attached as Appendix 1) following a recommendation by Audit Wales.
- 1.2 The Minister for Climate Change has confirmed the budget for National Park Authorities Wales, up to the end of the 2024/25 financial year. The budget has been confirmed as a flat budget for the period.
- 1.3 The challenge and impact of inflation is significant on the Authority, the MTFP is drawn up specifically to give members a medium term outline of the financial challenges facing the Authority. The Authority will need to have a prudent use of reserve funds when responding to the challenge of inflation without an increase in the basic grant from the Welsh Government.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 To note the issues outlined in the MTFP and comment on them.**
- 2.2 To adopt the Medium Term Financial Plan as a Working Document.**

## **MID TERM FINANCIAL PLAN : 2023/24 – 2026/27 SNOWDONIA NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY**

### **1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 This is an overview document outlining the main financial matters that will affect the Authority over the coming years. The document is based on technical papers prepared by the Authority's Finance service, with the Authority's Section 151 Officer advising on strategic forecasts.
- 1.2 This document explains the situation in compact form, and specifically to enable Authority Members and staff to gain further understanding in relation to:
- Modelling scenarios / financial projections,
  - Principles adopted when allocating resources,
  - Determining the extent of any financial challenges / opportunities,
  - Principles for tackling funding pressures.

### **2. MID TERM FINANCIAL PLAN (MTFP) REQUIREMENT**

- 2.1 This Mid Term Financial Plan (MTFP) illustrates the Authority's strategic approach towards managing its finances and outlines a range of financial situations that could face the Authority over the next four years. The task of accomplishing the strategy depends on the resources available through Welsh Government (WG) settlements and how successful the Authority will be in balancing resources with service priorities.
- 2.2 The MTFP notes the general condition of the Authority budget and outlines a model of the financial resources required by the Authority for the service levels it hopes to provide in the mid-term. This provides a framework which will enable Members and officers to develop detailed annual budget allocations.
- 2.3 The MTFP will be a key instrument for proactive financial management. It will be used as a basis for the process of setting the annual budget and ensuring that the resource requirements of the Authority for the coming year are sufficiently met and in line with the correct services but will also allow for setting future financial needs far enough in advance so that plans can be set in motion for the appropriate steps to be taken to deal with the anticipated funding levels.
- 2.4 The Welsh Government has officially suggested there will not be an increase in the National Park Grant allocation for the next two years (2023/24 – 2025/26). Despite a suggestion that the situation could change the following year (2025/26), uncertainty remains at this time. This is a serious situation considering the current effect of inflation on the economy. The CPI rate is currently 10.4% (February 2023), with forecasts suggesting it will fall (CPI peaked at 11.1% in October 2022 and while the Government expect it to fall to 2.9% by the end of 2023, forecasts vary with other agencies suggesting a higher final figure).
- 2.5 The National Parks aren't prioritised by Welsh Government and therefore the grant doesn't include provisions to meet the effect of inflation on costs within the

Authority's Budget. However, it has been suggested that one-off sources of funding will be available, which can be utilised to meet the deficit. A grant has already been received in March 2023.

### **3. MID TERM PRIORITIES AND AIMS OF THE AUTHORITY:**

3.1 The MTFP will need to accomplish mid to long term priorities, together with the statutory aims and purposes of the Authority. The Authority's statutory purposes are defined in the Environment Act of 1995 as follows:

- Protect and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the area,
- Promote opportunities for the public to understand and enjoy the special characteristics of the area.

And in pursuing these purposes, the Authority should try and enhance the economic and social wellbeing of the local communities.

3.2 The following documents are key to guiding the Authority during this period:

- The National Park Management Plan,
- The Local Development Plan,
- Our Vision,
- Wellbeing statement,
- Service Priorities,
- Corporate Work Programme,
- Welsh Government's term of government remit letter for the national park authorities.

3.3. The Covid-19 pandemic has presented several additional challenges over the last three years, this has had a particular effect on the Authority's budget to protect the public and the Authority's staff members. Welsh Government granted funding in 2021-22 and the authority ear-marked a provision of £76k from its reserves to address this challenge in 2022/23. At this time, no provision has been made for the 2023/24 budget with the hope that there won't be a further requirement for such a provision within the timescale of this report.

### **4. THE FINANCIAL CHALLENGE**

4.1 Since the national park authorities were established in 1996, the Authority has been empowered to manage its own budget, but a lack of discretion to set the levy amount (which is a factor of the 'flat' National Parks Grant received from the Welsh Government) means the total budget can't be amended.

Despite the grant being 'flat', 2021/22 saw additional grant funding through Welsh Government, namely £900,000 from "Sustainable Landscapes, Sustainable Places" (S.L.S.P.) This arrangement has continued and extended in 2022/23 with a further S.L.S.P in the form of a three-year plan worth up to £2.5 million available to the authority up to and including 2024/25. A further grant of £230,000 has also been

received in 2022/23 to meet this financial challenge. This trend could continue in subsequent years if Welsh Government has surplus funds available towards the end of the financial year.

#### 4.2 Authority Basic Budget:

Here is a summary of the situation regarding the Authority's initial budget:

Year	2023/24 £'000	2022/23 £'000	2021/22 £'000	2020/21 £'000	2019/20 £'000
Gross Revenue Expenditure	9,994	9,964	9,939	10,385	11,165
Revenue Income	-2,450	-3,370	-3,318	-5,201	-6,307
Net Revenue Expenditure	7,544	6,594	6,620	5,184	4,858
Net Capital Expenditure	828	-201	1,037	1,795	998
<b>Original Budget Total</b>	<b>8,344</b>	<b>6,393</b>	<b>7,657</b>	<b>6,979</b>	<b>5,856</b>
Grant	4,120	4,120	4,120	3,745	3,745
Levy	1,373	1,373	1,373	1,248	1,248
Reserves / Contingency Funds	2,850	900	2,164	1,986	863
<b>Budget Total</b>	<b>8,343</b>	<b>6,393</b>	<b>7,657</b>	<b>6,979</b>	<b>5,856</b>

*\* The above table does not include cuts made during the year, the additional grants received, or amendments made to the budget during the year.*

#### 4.3 Annual Budgets:

The Authority is obliged to set its budget in a timely manner. To set a levy on constitutional local authorities, the Authority needs to agree on a balanced budget by the Authority's committee meeting in February. As Welsh Government will not be confirming the final grant settlement figure before March, this could change in the meantime. Should the settlement be higher than expected, the Authority will have to forego the additional levy. Should the settlement be lower, the Authority can seek agreement with the constituent Authorities to stay with the levy as approved in the Authority meeting in February. No negotiations were required in 2023/24 as the final figure was as projected in February.

#### 4.4 Annual Financial Pressure on the Authority:

Each year the Authority incurs financial pressure. This pressure is the cumulative effect of:

- Inflation pressure
- Unavoidable commitments
- Planned efficiency measures / Income streams.



#### 4.5 Pressures from Inflation:

As a rule, a report is presented to the Authority on pressures resulting from inflation; these are the pressures estimated for the next four years:

Year	2023/24 (£)	2024/25 (£)	2025/26 (£)	2026/27 (£)
Pay Inflation	231,600	195,000	203,000	210,000
Other Inflation	30,000	30,000	15,000	15,000

At the time of compiling the report, there is no clarity regarding the April 2023 pay agreement, with recent trends suggesting there will be months before a final agreement is reached. The original provision of 4% for 2022/23 was insufficient with the final agreement costing the Authority an equivalent of over 6%. The original budget for 2023/24 set in February included a provision of 5%. However, the Authority considers that the final figure could be higher.

The general inflation figure was increased from its historic amount of £10,000 to £15,000 by 2022/23, with a further increase to £30,000 in the original budget for 2023/24. Recent developments suggest that the effect of inflation could be approximately 10% for 2023/24 before decreasing in following years.

#### 4.6 Unavoidable Pressures:

The following have been identified as pressures which the Authority cannot avoid:

2023/24 The core National Park Grant will remain at the same level as provided in the 2021/22 and 2022/23 settlements, without any additional provision for inflation.

The income from Car Parks has exceeded the target the past two years. At this time, this target has not been increased for 2023/24, with the target for Tourist Information Centres also remaining at the same level. The income target has also been unchanged for Yr Ysgwrn, but recent visitor numbers suggest that this target is unattainable. Hafod Eryri is expected to re-open in the Spring with an estimate rent of £50,000 to be received.

The actuarial valuation for Gwynedd Pension Fund (held every three years) has set a revised employer contribution for the Authority effective from April 2023 until March 2026. The reduction in the employer contribution will save up to £75k annually for the Authority.

Despite the income target increasing at Plas Tan y Bwlch, the level of expenditure is impacted significantly by inflation, with the increase in the cost of energy and supplies beyond the additional income budgeted for.

- 2024/25 The National Parks core grant settlement is expected to remain the same again by 2024/25, without any additional provision for inflation. As already suggested, if the trend of additional funding sources at the end of the year from the Welsh Government continues, this could alleviate some of the pressure.
- 2025/26 Welsh Government haven't released any official information, because of the uncertainty due to inflation. Therefore, the Authority is aware of the need to plan projects at short notice to take advantage of funding sources that may become available. This also requires Authority staff to be proactive in seeking various sources of grant funding, to extend and offer progression opportunities for a number of projects, and to provide assurance to staff. However, funding sources such as these typically include thorough monitoring and audit requirements which increase officers' workload.
- 2026/27 Welsh Government hasn't provided any information which could be interpreted to estimate the settlement figure.

Whilst recognising the Authority's responsibility to maintain the listed building and gardens at Plas Tan y Bwlch, the current "service provision" arrangements are temporary, as running a bed and breakfast business utilising public funds is not within the scope of the Authority's work objectives. It is anticipated that the arrangement will be reviewed soon, with a view to finding a solution within the timescale of this report.

#### 4.7 Authority Reserves:

The Authority has 14 reserves, with the table below reflecting the situation as at the end of March 2022:

<b>Reserves</b>	<b>31/3/2022</b>
	<b>£'000</b>
Usable Capital Receipt Reserve	164
Section 106 Reserve	457
Revenue Grants Reserve	1,743
Capital Grants Reserve	2,095
Asset Management Reserve	918
Public Inquiry Reserve	225
Match Funding Reserve	991
Slippage Reserve	831
Projects Reserve	936
Snowdon Infrastructure Reserve	56
Specific Risks Reserve	424
Staff Resilience Reserve	120

Commercial Risks Reserve	100
General Revenue Reserve	714
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,774</b>

The authority reviews its reserve funds on a regular basis to ensure sufficient resources are ear-marked and appropriate use of its reserves. In 2023/24, the Authority intends to utilise reserves to ease the unusually high effect of inflation. A report on the Authority's reserves following closure of the 2022/23 accounts will be presented in a subsequent meeting.

#### 4.8 National Park Grant Settlements:

As noted above the National Park Grant settlement figure has remained at the same level for 2023/24, which gives a grant and levy total of £5,493,051.

In the absence of indicative figures from the Welsh Government, the following are possible figures for the three subsequent years:

<b>Change in funding from National Park Grant and levy</b>	<b>2024/25</b>	<b>2025/26</b>	<b>2026/27</b>
	<b>(£)</b>	<b>(£)</b>	<b>(£)</b>
+10%	549,310	494,370	444,940
+5%	274,650	260,920	247,870
+2.5%	137,330	140,760	144,280
+1%	54,930	55,480	56,030
0%	0	0	0
-1%	-54,930	-55,480	-56,030
-2.5%	-137,330	-140,760	-144,280
-5%	-274,650	-260,920	-247,870
-10%	-549,310	-494,370	-444,940

## 5. SERVICE PRIORITIES AND OPERATING PRINCIPLES:

### 5.1 Service Priorities:

The Authority has reviewed and adopted its service priorities and operating principles to help it in a challenging financial climate. The Authority's service priorities are as follows:

- Ensure that the aims in the Park Management Plan are successfully achieved by us, our partners and our stakeholders in order to improve the condition of the Park;
- Ensure that the statutory planning function has sufficient resources and is efficiently managed to meet the demands of national policies, that it meets customer expectations and supports sustainable communities.
- Find new income sources to support the purposes of the Park and the Authority.

- Ensure that we are familiar with the demands of the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Environment Act (Wales) 2016 and deliver them.
- Demonstrate the advantages of the National Park Authority both locally and nationally in terms of managing such a special place as Snowdonia, for now and for future generations.
- Ensure that staff and Members have sufficient support in their work arrangements during this situation, and that staff welfare is being supported.

## 5.2 **Operating Principles:**

The Authority has adopted the following operating principles (in accordance with part 3 of the current Corporate Work Programme):

- Enabling role with less emphasis on ownership and management.
- Avoid embarking on projects with long term maintenance commitments.
- Encourage and enable local communities to manage and take responsibility for providing services in their areas.
- Use electronic media as the main means of providing services and information.
- Strategic approach to sustainable tourism, environmental education and wardening;
- Finding new income sources to support the purposes of the Park and the Authority.

The Authority should ensure that each activity it plans is consistent with the above, and that this is the first parameter to use when setting the annual budget.

The way that the Authority carries out its duties during these hard economic times remain as important and in this context the Authority will adopt the following operating method:

- Incorporate even deeper sustainable development as a core principle to follow in pursuing all our duties.
- By working with our partners, adopt an enabling and facilitating role as we achieve our purposes.
- Evaluate all long-term financial commitments and other commitments for every possible project.
- Work with our communities to achieve the Authority vision.

### 5.3 **Financial Strategy:**

In general, the income targets for 2023/24 have been maintained on the same level as 2021/22 except for Plas Tan y Bwlch.

It is expected that the core National Park Grant settlement will remain at the same level over the next 3 years, without any provision for inflation. Despite this being disappointing, this does at least provide some certainty with regards the Authority's financial situation.

Any additional money received through specific grants (other than core grants) brings with it additional administrative work that stretches current staff resources. Therefore, consideration needs to be given to the implication of this additional work pressure on some of the Authority's services by evaluating the value of the grants against the additional staff requirements.

### 5.4 **Relevant Steps for the Future:**

- Review the MTFP as relevant information becomes available to the Authority.
- Work in co-operation with Welsh Government (WG) Ministers and officials to ensure provision towards the increase in costs because of inflation in 2023/24
- Work in co-operation with Welsh Government (WG) Ministers and officials to develop commitment on indicative budgets in the future.
- Ensure that the Authority achieves its statutory implications.
- Ensure that capacity matters to deliver capital allocations are addressed.
- Ensure full use of the additional £2.5 million offered by Welsh Government through the S.L.S.P. funding allocation for 2022/23 – 2024-25
- Try and influence Welsh Government (WG) Ministers and officials to ensure provision for the increase in costs as a result of inflation in the core grant for 2024/25 and 2025/26.
- In 2023/24, utilise reserves as a one-off measure to ease the effect of the unusually high level of inflation on the Authority.

<b>MEETING</b>	Snowdonia National Park Authority
<b>DATE</b>	26 April 2023
<b>TITLE</b>	<b>SECTION 151 OFFICER</b>
<b>REPORT BY</b>	Chief Executive
<b>PURPOSE</b>	To consider options for appointing a Section 151 Officer to act on behalf of SNPA

**1. BACKGROUND:**

- 1.1 The Authority's Principal Finance Officer (the Section 151 Officer) is retiring at the end of June 2023 and the Authority will need to appoint a qualified officer to replace him.
- 1.2 In accordance with Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 the Authority must appoint an officer who will be responsible for the proper administration of its financial affairs. After the Authority was established independently in 1996, the Treasurer of Gwynedd Council served as the Authority's Section 151 Officer via an arrangement.

**2. APPOINTMENT OF A SECTION 151 OFFICER:**

- 2.1 The arrangement with Gwynedd Council for the Treasurer of the Council to be appointed as the Authority's Section 151 Officer has worked well. We are holding discussions with Gwynedd Council regarding extending the current arrangement and there is an agreement in his place in principle.
- 2.2 There are other possible options which include appointing a full-time officer within the Authority or to seek an arrangement with other organizations. The Management Team would prefer to continue with the arrangement with Gwynedd Council.
- 2.3 In accordance with the Authority's standing orders, the Authority retains the ability to appoint a 151 Officer. In order to do so, and if is the members are in agreement, the Authority will need to ask Gwynedd Council to allow it's Treasurer to act as Snowdonia National Park Authority's Section 151 Officer.

**3. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:**

- 3.1 Confirmation required if there will be any change in resource requirements.

**4. RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- 4.1 **Request that Officers hold further discussions with Gwynedd Council regarding the provision of a 151 Officer to serve the Authority.**
- 4.2 **If arrangement is confirmed, to invite the relevant Officer to a meeting of the Authority in order to consider formal appointment.**

<b>MEETING</b>	Snowdonia National Park Authority
<b>DATE</b>	26 April 2023
<b>TITLE</b>	<b>REPORT OF INTERVIEW PANEL FOR INDEPENDENT MEMBERS OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE</b>
<b>REPORT BY</b>	Director of Corporate Services
<b>PURPOSE</b>	To appoint an Independent Member to the Standards Committee

## BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The terms of reference of the Standards Committee contains two general functions namely to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by the members and co-opted members of the Authority and to assist members and co-opted members of the Authority to observe the Authority's code of conduct.
- 1.2 The Standards Committee also has responsibility for a number of specific functions namely to advise the Authority on the adoption of or revision of the Authority's codes of conduct, to monitor the operation of the Authority's codes of conduct, to advise on training of members and co-opted members of the Authority on matters relating to the Authority's codes of conduct and considering and where appropriate determining matters referred to it by the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales.
- 1.3 The Standards Committee is also responsible for considering Complaints against Members and co-opted Members, granting dispensations to members or co-opted members who have a personal interest in any business of the Authority, authorising payments by the Monitoring Officer of allowances and expenses to persons who have assisted in an investigation by the Monitoring Officer and to establish the procedure for determining complaints referred to it for consideration.
- 1.4 Finally, the Standards Committee also has some staff functions namely as a final internal appeal on disciplinary matters and as a final appeal on grievances or on conditions of service.
- 1.5 In order to comply with the rules that govern Standards Committees a balance must be maintained between Members of this Authority and Independent Members. In addition both the Chairman and Vice Chairman must be appointed from amongst the Independent Members. The Standards Committee of this Authority has six members namely two from Local Authority, one member appointed by the Assembly and three Independent Members. Following the resignation of Mrs Rachael Leah Jane Davies it was necessary to appoint an additional Independent Member in order to ensure that the balance was maintained.

- 1.6 An interview panel of four including one lay member was set up in accordance with the rules. The role of the panel is to interview the applicants and then to make a recommendation to the Authority, the Authority having the final decision in the matter as to who is to be appointed.

## **2. INTERVIEWS**

### **2.1 Interview Panel**

Councillor Annwen Hughes; Councillor Edgar Wyn Owen; Mr. Iwan Jones and Mr. Aled Williams (lay member)

### **2.2 Candidates**

A total of five applicants were short-listed for the post namely:

Mr. Peter Barnes  
Mr. John Davies  
Mr. Mark Jones  
Mr. Dafydd Mali  
Ms. Patricia Thynne

All five were considered to be of sufficient experience and calibre to be interviewed.

- 2.3 The decision of the Panel after interviewing the five candidates was to recommend that the Authority appoints Mr. Mark Jones. Mr. Jones served in a variety of roles for North Wales Police from Constable to Chief Superintendent. In his 16 years experience in the Command ranks he sat on panels that considered breaches of the discipline code and standards of behaviour of police officers and police staff. In 2015 he joined Cartrefi Cymunedol Gwynedd (now Adra) and served as Vice Chair and then Chair for the maximum permitted term until 2021 with responsibility for governance as well as Code of Conduct matters.
- 2.4 The Panel was therefore of the opinion that Mr. Mark Jones met the requirements of the post and that his background will be of benefit to the working of the Standards Committee.

## **3. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS - None**

## **4. RECOMMENDATION**

- 4.1 **That the Authority appoints Mr. Mark Jones to be an Independent Member of the Standards Committee for a term of five years.**

## **5. BACKGROUND PAPERS**



<b>MEETING</b>	Snowdonia National Park Authority
<b>DATE</b>	26 April 2023
<b>TITLE</b>	<b>ANNUAL REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL FOR WALES</b>
<b>REPORT BY</b>	Director of Corporate Services
<b>PURPOSE</b>	To discuss the Annual Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales

## 1 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Members will no doubt recall that a report was submitted to the Authority on 16th November 2022 when the draft report of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales was discussed. The Authority decided that it should accept the draft report and recommendations as submitted with the minor resource implications which will necessitate an increase to existing budgets.
- 1.2 The Authority has now received the final report of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales which can be found at the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales' website, a link for which is set out below for both the Welsh and English versions:  
[panel-annibynnol-cymru-ar-gydnabyddiaeth-ariannol-adroddiad-blynyddol-2023-i-2024](#)  
[Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales: annual report 2023 to 2024](#)
- 1.3 The Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales has not changed any aspect of the draft report insofar as it relates to National Park Authorities.

## RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

The increase in allowances set out above will have minor resource implications which will necessitate an increase to existing budgets.

## RECOMMENDATION

To note the contents of the report.

## BACKGROUND PAPERS

Report to Performance and Resources committee dated 24th November 2021 Annual Report

<b>MEETING:</b>	Snowdonia National Park Authority
<b>DATE:</b>	26 <sup>th</sup> April, 2023
<b>TITLE:</b>	<b>NATIONAL PARKS WALES MEMBERS' SEMINAR, 2023</b>
<b>AUTHOR:</b>	Emyr Williams, Chief Executive
<b>PURPOSE:</b>	To inform Members

## **1. BACKGROUND:**

- 1.1 Welsh National Parks Authorities support an annual workshop to provide opportunities for members to be briefed on emerging matters and share experience with other National Parks in their role as Authority members. The last workshop was held in Eryri in November 2019. Due to Covid restrictions no workshop has been held since then.
- 1.2 Welsh Members Workshop is a popular date in Members calendar which is open to all Members, and an important element in developing knowledge and understanding of National Park Members. The Member's Workshop is in addition to local and UK training opportunities offered to Members in terms of development. Member training has been highlighted as an important aspect of being a member and our Minister has highlighted that member development should be a priority.

## **2. 2023 SEMINAR:**

- 2.1 This year's Members Seminar is hosted by Brecon Beacons National Park Authority in a venue near Crickhowell. The theme for the seminar is "WATER – The Undervalued Resource". The format of the seminar consists of study tours on the first day followed by in-depth discussion on the second day. Dates for the 2023 members seminar are from the 24<sup>th</sup> to the 25<sup>th</sup> of May.

At the time of writing this report twelve of Eryri's Members have confirmed their attendance.

## **3. RECOMMENDATION:**

- 3.1 **Note content of Members Seminar for 2023.**
- 3.2 **Members to confirm their attendance or not with the members Services Officer.**



ITEM NO. 12 -  
APPENDIX

## National Parks Wales Seminar – 24 - 25 May 2023 The Manor Hotel, Crickhowell

### WATER – *The Undervalued Resource*

#### DRAFT Programme

#### Wednesday 24 May

- 10.00 Registration and Check in for Delegates
- 11.00 Welcome from the Chair
- 11.20 Introduction
- 11.40 *The Undervalued Resource*
- 12.30 Buffet Lunch
- 13:45 *Taking Action: The Role of the Individual and the Community*
- 14:30 Depart for preferred activity\* from hotel
- 17.30 Free time
- 18.30 Dinner
- 20.00 *Health, Recreation and Tourism*

#### Thursday 25 May

- 09.00 *What does the future of water look like?*
- 10:00 *How do National Parks in Wales respond?*
- 10:40 Coffee Break
- 11.00 Panel discussion – *Sustainable Farming Scheme (SFS)*
- 11.45 *One approach – The Usk Catchment*
- 12.30 Lunch
- 13.30 *Introduction to Systems Thinking*
- 14.00 *Governing for the Well-being of Future Generations*
- 15:00 Closing words
- 15:30 Depart



Parciau Cenedlaethol Cymru  
National Parks Wales






Plas y Ffynnon  
Ffordd Cambrian / Cambrian Way  
Aberhonddu / Brecon  
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gofyn@parciaucenedlaethol.gov.uk.  
ask@nationalparkswales.gov.uk



**National Parks Wales Seminar - 24 - 25 May 2023  
The Manor Hotel, Crickhowell**

**WATER - *The Undervalued Resource***

**\*Day One Activities - please select first and second choice**

		<b>Difficult y</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup> Choice</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Choice</b>
<b>Tools for Self-Reliance</b>	Volunteers aim to improve the lives of African communities by refurbishing and providing old hand tools and sewing machines, as well as selling repaired specialist tools, that are not required in Africa, from the workshop.		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Bullpit Meadow Riverside Walk</b>	A flat accessible walk along Bullpit Meadow, which runs alongside the riverbank and passes the 18 <sup>th</sup> Century stone bridge. Excellent views of Llangattock escarpment.		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Langton's Farm</b>	A visit to the property of 'first-generation farmers, growing food that's good for people, good for the environment and supporting the local economy.'		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Beechwood, Llangattock</b>	A circular woodland walk that is valuable as a local resource, enjoyed by many. It also provides a habitat for a wide variety of wildlife.		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Hydro Scheme, Llangattock Green Valley's Group</b>	Site visit to view the five micro-hydro sites installed and operated in the valley.		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Please note:** activities are subject to change based on weather, availability, and circumstances outside of our control. We will do our best to ensure you are allocated to your first choice of activity, however we are not able to guarantee this.



Parciau Cenedlaethol Cymru  
National Parks Wales

Plas y Ffynnon  
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**REPORT OF THE MEMBERS' WORKING GROUP MEETING HELD ON 25<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 2023**

**PRESENT:**

**Members appointed by Gwynedd Council**

Councillors Elwyn Edwards, Annwen Hughes, June Jones, Edgar Owen (Chair), Elfed Roberts, John Pughe Roberts, Meryl Roberts (a.m.);

**Members appointed by Conwy County Borough Council**

Councillors Ifor Glyn Lloyd, Jo Nuttall, Dilwyn Owain Roberts;

**Members appointed by the Welsh Government**

Mr. Brian Angell, Ms. Tracey Evans, Ms. Sarah Hattle, Mr. Tim Jones, Ms. Naomi Luhde-Thompson, Ms. Delyth Lloyd (a.m.);

**Officers**

Emyr Williams, G. Iwan Jones, Jonathan Cawley, Dafydd Edwards, Eiliw Owen, Jane Jones, Geraint Evans, Angela Jones, Helen Pye, Alec Young, Anwen Gaffey;

The Director of Corporate Services advised that the meeting was being recorded to assist in verifying the minutes.

1. **Apologies**

Councillors Louise Hughes, Kim Jones;

2. **Declaration of Interest**

No declarations of Personal Interests were made in respect of any item.

3. **Minutes**

The minutes of the Members' Working Group meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> December 2022 were accepted and the Chair signed them as a true record.

4. **The Authority's Budget and Response to Inflation**

Submitted – A report by the Chief Executive to consider the report and the advice of Senior Members.

Reported – The Chief Executive presented the report and provided further information as follows:-

- National Park Authority funding can be found under the Welsh Government's draft budget expenditure line 347 – Landscape and Outdoor Recreation.
- para. 6.1.1 information on improvement in the grant and levy allocation will be known during the first week in March.
- para. 6.1.3 capital funds will be available over the next two years, details of which will be provided on an annual basis.
- para.7.1.7 the Chief Executive advised that he had met with Welsh Government officers on two occasions since his meeting with senior Members.
- para. 7.1.8 the Chair had contacted Mabon ap Gwynfor MS but was still waiting for a response, and the Vice Chair confirmed that he had recently contacted the office of Sian Gwennlian MS to arrange a meeting and would hopefully know more in the coming days.

- the Chief Executive advised that following confirmation that no additional funding will be available in the 2024/25 financial year, the Management Team and senior Members should move their meeting forward.
- the Chief Executive believed that the funding shortage and the effects of inflation will result in a fundamental change in what the Authority can deliver.

Arising thereon, the Chief Finance Officer agreed that unlike other public bodies, National Park Authorities have no mechanisms to increase revenue funding and only some flexibility for raising car parking fees, rents etc. The effect of inflation meant a 10% cut in real terms for the National Park Authorities and the Chief Finance Officer agreed that Members should take every opportunity to raise this injustice with local Senedd Members.

The Chief Finance Officer confirmed that Eryri would be able to buy some time over the next two years by using available balances to ease the financial effect of inflation, and while there was no immediate urgency, there was a need for Members to consider the Authority's priorities, efficiencies, and possible cuts in services and present a report to the Authority in the Autumn.

Members considered the report in detail and made the following observations:-

- a Member noted that Natural Resources Wales could raise licensing fees to meet funding shortfalls. Also, the Minister had recently acknowledged that the National Parks were doing a particularly good job in tackling the nature crisis in Wales and this funding deficit will result in the Authority being able to deliver a lot less. The Member felt it was important to raise the matter with each of the political parties in North Wales and was happy to assist in any way.
- the Chief Executive stated that in the light of the funding shortage and the pressure on National Parks to carry out nature recovery work, officers will ask the Minister to consider revising the Term of Government Remit Letter. He also advised that additional capital funds will be allocated on an annual basis to fill some funding gaps.
- a Member thought the Authority should look for savings in the first instance and then consider whether the Authority was getting value for money. The Member would be interested to know how much the Authority had spent on external consultants over the last three years.
- a Member stated that assets which were a drain on resources and were marginal in achieving National Park purposes should be reviewed. Also, if capital funding becomes available, the Authority should have a clear process to determine where this capital money is spent, in order to save costs and achieve income/savings for the future.
- in response to a question, the Chief Executive advised that any benefit from a tourism tax was at least 5 years away.
- Members agreed to appoint a Conwy County Borough Council Member and a Welsh Government Member to the team of Senior Members to progress, without delay, the Authority's priorities, efficiencies, and possible cuts in services.
- the Chief Executive confirmed that a review of the Authority's Property Portfolio is carried out every four to five years and that a further review will be undertaken once the Authority has agreed a way forward.

## **RESOLVED**

- 1. to note the report and the advice of Chairs as identified in section 7.**
- 2. to note the need to identify use of reserves/potential savings in setting a balanced budget for 2023/24.**
- 3. to nominate Councillor Dilwyn Owain Roberts and Mr. Tim Jones as Members of the team of Senior Members.**
- 4. to await a further report in due course.**

### **5. Draft Review Report on the Eryri Local Development Plan**

Submitted – A report by the Principal Planning Policy Officer for Members to discuss and provide input on the draft Review Report.

Reported – The Principal Planning Officer presented the report which provided a summary of the main findings from the Review Report and a draft timeline for preparing a replacement Local Development Plan. Members noted that a summary of the review of each Eryri LDP policy was provided in Table 1: of the review report (pages 4 – 9).

Members considered the Review Report in detail and made the following observations:-

- Development Policy 7: Listed and Traditional Buildings - in response to a question, the Director of Planning and Land Management confirmed that the process for designating traditional buildings would be reviewed and formalised. He advised that a letter from the Minister also refers to establishing a more formal method in future. A Member asked for the Listed and Traditional Buildings development policy to be more flexible.
- Development Policy 27: Snowdonia Enterprise Zone – a Member asked for the policy review to be more specific as it was difficult to understand whether the development would have a negative effect on the landscape, the biodiversity, or both.
- Development Policy 21: Tourism and Recreation – a Member believed this policy should be more flexible to benefit the local economy, diversification and prevent the countryside from losing its young people and language. He also felt the Section 106 commuted sum policy should be reviewed as it was too restrictive for local people.
- a Member felt historical planning control, such as requiring stone-wall facing on dwellings, was too restrictive for young people and that he supported modern designs which would keep homes affordable.
- a Member agreed that requiring stone-built dwellings was not carbon friendly. Use of wood for building would be cheaper and the Authority should look further at its policies.
- a Member stressed the importance of retaining the commuted sum policy to stop holiday homes being sold separately from farm holdings.
- a Member sought to ensure that dark skies status should not have a negative effect on the rural economy.
- ‘Wild Camping and Camper Vans/Motor Homes’ – a Member asked officers to specify under para. 4.18 that wild camping was very different to irresponsible camping.
- ‘Visitor Traffic and Car Parking’ – a Member asked, under para. 4.17, to research and consider whether there will be a need for more car parking in some strategic locations.
- ‘Second homes and short-term holiday accommodation evidence’ – a Member asked officers to include glamping under para. 4.15.
- in response to a question, the Director of Planning and Land Management confirmed that the Authority has the opportunity to influence Welsh Government policies.
- the Principal Planning Policy Officer confirmed that the revised Eryri LDP will conform with Future Wales – The National Plan 2040 and the Well Being of Future Generation Act and reflect its objectives.

- Opportunities for Collaborative Working – a Member welcomed the opportunity to collaborate with neighbouring authorities such as Powys.
- Appendix 1: Key Stakeholders – The Principal Planning Policy Officer agreed to consider housing associations as key stakeholders and noted that the CLA and North Wales Tourism will be added to the list.
- the Principal Planning Policy Officer confirmed that formal consultation with all communities to call for sites is likely to start during Winter 2023 to Spring 2024.
- Appendix 2: Progress on Allocated Housing Sites – members were advised that officers will be looking at every allocation to establish whether they were likely to come forward.
- Members were invited to present further observations to the Principal Planning Policy Officer by email.

**RESOLVED subject to noting Members’ observations, to accept the report as submitted.**

**6. Presentation by Wales Centre for Behavioural Change, Bangor University on Behaviours surrounding Littering in Eryri.**

Submitted – A report on the studies carried out into behaviours surrounding littering in the National Park in 2021-22. The Partnerships Manager introduced Alec Young, Yr Wyddfa Ddi-blastig Officer, and John Parkinson, Professor of Behavioural Psychology, Bangor University to the meeting.

Reported – The Partnerships Manager presented the report which provided the background, the 2021 research outline and subsequent recommendations. The results of the 2022 Research would be presented to Members by Professor John Parkinson.

Professor John Parkinson delivered his presentation and advised members of the COM-B approach, provided an assessment of the issues and a summary of the draft recommendations.

Members welcomed the presentation and made the following observations:-

- a Member asked whether there was any indication that visitor numbers were reducing as the public return to holidaying abroad following Covid.
- a Member asked whether as an exercise, officers should consider what type of litter could be regarded as acceptable in the longer-term, such as orange peel etc.
- following a pre-Covid questionnaire in Caernarfon, some of the issues raised were bins being over-filled and that directional signs were dirty and illegible. These concerns were addressed simply by emptying the bins twice a day at peak times and cleaning the signs.
- a Member asked whether the other two National Parks in Wales suffered from the same litter problems as Eryri. The Head of Engagement advised that the three National Parks in Wales had recently worked on a joint communication strategy, and that all the National Parks have similar problems in busy areas. Members noted that dog fouling was also a problem as was recycling lorries that allow their rubbish to fly around.
- a Member referred to the ‘Comparison to Scotland approach’ and the need to provide positive messages rather than negative ones. Establishing a collaborative group with other parks could allow Eryri to be included in a national communication approach which would widen the message over time.



- a Member noted that some visitors to Eryri do not know exactly what a National Park represents and that whilst 90% of visitors were excellent, some tourists expected National Park staff to clear away their litter at the end of the day, as happens in theme parks. The message should be widened, possibly with help from the local communities, and litter bins should be placed in specific locations to reinforce the message.
- a Member suggested that the National Parks should put pressure on outdoor leisure industries to use their websites to educate their customers to respect the countryside alongside advertising walking/cycling routes etc.
- Members were agreed that social media was the best tool to educate the next generation.
- a Member suggested that the 'leave no trace' principle, with the emphasis on protecting the environment, should be professionally communicated to the public.

The Chair thanked Professor John Parkinson for the presentation and for attending the meeting to present his findings.

### **RESOLVED**

- 1. to note the report and welcome the presentation.**
- 2. to note the progress achieved so far in the project.**

#### **7. Gwynedd and Eryri Sustainable Visitor Economy – Strategic Plan**

Submitted – A report by the Partnerships Manager to update Authority Members on the production of the Strategic Plan for a Sustainable Visitor Economy in Gwynedd and Eryri.

Reported – The Partnerships Manager presented a report and slide presentation to update Members on the production of the Strategic Plan for a Sustainable Visitor Economy in Gwynedd and Eryri.

Members welcomed the presentation and made the following observations:-

- in response to a question, the Partnerships Manager reported that work was ongoing with officers from Conwy County Borough Council and the intention was to establish a formal Memorandum of Understanding with Conwy in due course. Officers would provide Councillor Dilwyn Owain Roberts with contact details as he was interested in contributing to this work.
- in response to a question, the Partnerships Manager confirmed there was consultation with the North Wales Economic Ambition Board.
- a Member asked, in terms of monitoring and evaluation, whether the strategy includes how people travel into the National Park to assess whether the Authority is having an effect on this. The Partnerships Manager advised that a survey undertaken in 2021 provided a stark fact that 98% of visitors to Eryri travelled in their own transport, although this could be as a result of the Covid pandemic. The intention was to repeat the survey every 5 years and officers would definitely be able to measure this important indicator.

**RESOLVED to note the report and recommend that the final draft in Annex 1 is presented to the Authority for formal adoption.**

**The meeting ended at 14.40**

<b>MEETING:</b>	Snowdonia National Park Authority
<b>DATE:</b>	26 <sup>th</sup> April, 2023
<b>TITLE:</b>	<p><b>EUROPARC CONFERENCE, 3 – 6 OCTOBER, 2023</b> (Travelling to and from on 2<sup>nd</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> October)</p> <p><b>TRIBUTE TO OUR LANDSCAPE, WHERE NATURE AND PEOPLE MEET IN HARMONY – Learn from the past to prepare for the future</b></p> <p><b>Located at Leeuwarden, Northern Netherlands</b> European Capital of Culture, 2018</p>
<b>AUTHOR:</b>	Chief Executive
<b>PURPOSE:</b>	To inform Members of the Conference and to nominate attendance

## 1. BACKGROUND:

- 1.1. 2023 marks EUROPARC Federation's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary as the representative body of Europe's Protected Areas. The Federation has a membership of 378 responsible authorities in over 36 countries and facilitates international co-operation in all aspects of Protected Area Management to improve and conserve our natural inheritance. The Federation is recognised worldwide as a professional network of European Protected Areas providing a forum to share professional experiences, collaborate on technical projects and progress common aims.
- 1.2 Snowdonia National Park Authority has been a member of the EUROPARC Federation for over 25 years and hosted the EUROPARC Conference in Eryri in 2006.

## 2. EUROPARC FEDERATION CONFERENCE, 2023

- 2.1 The conference approach is based on the two conference pillars:
  - The theme, "Tribute to our landscape, where nature and people meet in harmony" and
  - Celebrating 50 years of Europarc Federation: learning from the past, preparing for the future.
- 2.2 The three central questions during the conference will be:
  1. **Why**, relating to the topic, is it relevant to find long-term harmony and fulfil the UN Sustainable Development Goals?
  2. **How** can we, personally and together, change our behaviour and act on regional, national and European level to find this harmony?

3. What lessons have we learned from past policies and measures with regards to the impact on the European Landscape?
- 2.3 The conference focuses on networking and information exchange. The 4-day programme consists of key note speeches, topical themed workshops and field visits to various habitats ranging from the world's largest man-made nature park at Nieuw, a bird paradise on the former seafloor or a visit to the largest continuous bog in NW Europe - to name a few.

### **3. ATTENDANCE AT EUROPARC CONFERENCE, 2023**

- 3.1 Snowdonia National Park has historically nominated two delegates to attend the Conference. In recent years delegates have been selected on their particular professional discipline taking regard of the Conference theme.

### **4. RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- 4.1 **Members are requested to decide if SNPA should be represented at the 2023 EUROPARC Conference and if so, approve the number of delegates.**
- 4.2 **Subject to 4.1 above, request nominations (member/staff) from Snowdonia to attend the EUROPARC Conference in 2023 and for the Chair and Chief Executive to approve the delegation.**

### **5. BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

Conference Website and further details on the programme, workshops and site visits: <https://www.europarc2023.nl/>

AWDURDOD PARC CENEDLAETHOL ERYRI / SNOWDONIA NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

Amserlen / Timetable 2023/2024

CYFARFOD	DYDD	AMSER	2023							2024							MEETING	
			MEH	GOR	AWST	MEDI	HYD	TACH	RHAG	ION	CHWE	MAW	EBR	MAI	MEH	DAY		TIME
AWDURDOD	MER	10.00	CCB 14 AGM			13		15			7		24		CCB 12 AGM	WED	10.00	AUTHORITY
PWYLLGOR PERFFORMIAD AC ADNODDAU	MER	10.00		12				29				20				WED	10.00	PERFORMANCE & RESOURCES COMMITTEE
PWYLLGOR CYNLLUNIO A MYNEDIAD	MER	10.00	28			6	18		6	24		6	17	22	26	WED	10.00	PLANNING & ACCESS COMMITTEE
PWYLLGOR SAFONAU	GWE	pm				1							26			FRI	pm	STANDARDS COMMITTEE
PANELI YMWELD Y GOGLEDD A'R DE	MER	am	7	5		20	25		13	31		13		1	5	WED	am	NORTHERN AND SOUTHERN INSPECTION PANELS
BWRDD PLAS TAN Y BWLCH	MER	am/pm	14			13		15			7				12	WED	am/pm	PLAS TAN Y BWLCH BOARD
BWRDD YR YSGWRN	MER	pm					11				21					WED	pm	YR YSGWRN BOARD
GWEITHGOR AELODAU	MER	am/pm	28			6	18		6	24		6	17	22	26	WED	am/pm	MEMBERS' WORKING GROUP
CYD WEITHGOR LLEOL	GWE	am	30					17							28	FRI	am	LOCAL JOINT WORKING GROUP
DIWRNOD DATBLYGU AELODAU	GWE	am/pm	23									15			21	FRI	am/pm	MEMBER DEVELOPMENT DAY
SEMINAR AELODAU TIRWEDDAU DYNODEDIG CYMRU (Parc Cenedlaethol Arfordir Penfro)																		DESIGNATED LANDSCAPES WALES MEMBERS' SEMINAR (Pembrokeshire Coast National Park)
EUROPARC Leeuwarden, yr Iseldiroedd.							3 - 6											EUROPARC Leeuwarden, the Netherlands.
<b>CYFARFOD</b>	<b>DYDD</b>	<b>AMSER</b>	<b>JUNE</b>	<b>JUL</b>	<b>AUG</b>	<b>SEPT</b>	<b>OCT</b>	<b>NOV</b>	<b>DEC</b>	<b>JAN</b>	<b>FEB</b>	<b>MAR</b>	<b>APR</b>	<b>MAY</b>	<b>JUNE</b>	<b>DAY</b>	<b>TIME</b>	<b>MEETING</b>

**PERFORMANCE AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE  
WEDNESDAY 30<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 2022**

Councillor Elfed Powell Roberts (Gwynedd) (Chairman)

**PRESENT:**

**Members appointed by Gwynedd Council**

Councillors Elwyn Edwards, Annwen Hughes, June Jones, Kim Jones, Edgar Wyn Owen, John Pughe Roberts, Meryl Roberts;

**Member appointed by Conwy County Borough Council**

Councillor Jo Nuttall;

**Members appointed by the Welsh Government**

Mr. Brian Angell, Ms. Tracey Evans, Mrs. Sarah Hattle, Mr. Tim Jones, Ms Delyth Lloyd;

**Officers**

Mr. Emyr Williams, Mr. G.I. Jones, Mr. J. Cawley, Mr. D. Edwards, Ms. B. Hughes, Mr. David Williams, Ms. Nia Murray, Mrs. Awel Gruffydd, Mr. Rhys Owen, Mrs. A. Gaffey;

**Apologies**

Councillors Louise Hughes, Ifor Glyn Lloyd.

The Director of Corporate Services stated that the meeting was being recorded to assist in verifying the minutes.

**1. Chair's Announcements**

The Chair welcomed staff and members to the Authority's first Hybrid meeting.

**2. Declaration of Interest**

No declarations of Personal Interests were made in respect of any item.

**3. Minutes**

The minutes of the Performance and Resources meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> July 2022 were accepted and the Chairman signed them as a true record.

**4. Action Log**

Submitted – A Log of strategic actions arising from decisions taken during meetings of the Performance and Resources Committee, for information and action.

**RESOLVED to note the Action Log, for information.**

**5. External Grant Funding Update Report**

Submitted – A report by the Chief Executive to provide an update on projects supported by the Authority and to confirm priorities for future external grant support.

Reported – The Chief Executive presented the report and background and provided further details for the benefit of Members who had recently been appointed to the Authority. He advised that not all the National Park Authorities benefit from being able to deliver projects by utilising external grant funding and suggested that

Members should keep a copy of the report for reference purposes, as they will be asked to complete a questionnaire as part of an income survey by Audit Wales in the next month or so. Members were invited to contact the Chief Executive directly if they required further clarification on any matter.

Members considered the report in detail and made the following observations:-

- the Head of Conservation, Woodland and Agriculture, in response to a question on the profile spend and profile years of the Celtic Rainforest Wales LIFE Project, reassured Members that the project had a high-cost element over the first three years and was regulated very robustly by the European Monitor, who was happy for the Authority to apply for a 2-year extension in the next week to 10 days.
- in response to a request from a Member, the Chief Executive agreed to amend Appendix 2 to provide a more strategic layout in future.
- Members and officers further discussed the complexities of securing management agreements with a number of private landowners. Officers confirmed that Natural Resources Wales have their own funding which can also add value to the Authority's work.
- Appendix 2 - item 14 Decarbonisation – a Member suggested this could be reviewed after the Carbon Strategy Group had reported and suggested that carbon reduction and promotion could be funded through this mechanism in future. Also, data collection on the impact of climate change within the National Park itself being presented in a more meaningful way, could assist strategic considerations for the future.

#### **RESOLVED**

- 1. to note the capital funded projects 2022 – 2025.**
- 2. to note progress on live projects (Appendix 1).**
- 3. to confirm the priority areas for future bids (Appendix 2).**
- 4. to note the Member Approval Flow Chart (Appendix 3).**

#### **6. Strategic Scrutiny for 2023-24**

Submitted – A report by the Chief Executive for Members to note the report and to consider further scrutiny areas for 2023-24 in the next financial year.

Reported – The Chief Executive presented the report and background. He advised that a scrutiny programme for the ensuing year was agreed annually by the Performance and Resources Committee each November. This year, the Management Team, after considering the current pressures on staff, recommend that the Authority should not commit to a further programme of strategic scrutiny at this time.

#### **RESOLVED**

- 1. to note the report and the continued scrutiny role which remains in relation to both Carbon and Place Names.**
- 2. to consider further scrutiny areas in the next financial year.**

#### **7. Corporate Work Programme 2022-23**

Submitted – A progress report by the Director of Corporate Services for the first and second quarters (April – September) of the financial year.

Reported – The Director of Corporate Services presented the report and Corporate Work Programme and asked Members to note that the Well-being Objectives had been cross-referenced to targets set for SNPA in the current Welsh Government Remit Letter.

Members and Officers discussed the report and made the following observations:-

- **Resilient Environments**

Addressing the decline in Nature

Officers confirmed they were still waiting confirmation of continued funding by Welsh Government over the next 3 years to develop the Action Plan for nature recovery in Eryri. The Head of Conservation, Woodland and Agriculture confirmed that capital works were continuing, although it was dependent on future funding and capacity issues in the department. The Chief Executive advised that the newly appointed Nature Recovery and Carbon Sequestration Strategic Officer was also contributing towards this work.

- the Chief Executive confirmed that following the recent publication by Welsh Government on the proposed deep dive into the decline in nature, the family of Protected Landscapes had written to Leslie Griffiths MS. In response, the Minister confirmed that she would consider utilising officers as facilitators in the new scheme to co-ordinate actions across a number of agreement holders to support protected landscapes.

- **Resilient Ways of Working**

Modernising Governance Arrangements

In response to a question on Member development, the Chief Executive reported that appointments have been made to the three Welsh Government funded Strategic posts, one of which will address Inclusion, Diversity and Governance Excellence which includes Member development and is hosted by Pembrokeshire Coast National Park. A training and development programme will be established, and a discussion paper presented to a Members' Working Group early in 2023. He also advised that new member induction sessions have been held, and the UK New Member Induction Course was held in Northumberland in November, although new members from Eryri had been unable to attend on this occasion. The Welsh National Parks Members' Seminar was being arranged and hosted by the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority in May 2023 and the Authority has also appointed Sarah Hattle to assist with Member Mentoring.

**RESOLVED to note the report.**

8. **Strategic Equality Plan**

Submitted – A joint report by the Head of Administration and Customer Care and the Head of Human Resources to present the Annual Report for 2021/22.

Reported – The Head of Administration and Customer Care presented the report and the Strategic Equality Plan Annual Report for 2021/22. In response to a question, Members were assured that the Authority continues to work in accordance with its Well-being Statement 2021-2026.

**RESOLVED to note the report and approve the Strategic Equality Plan Annual Report 2021/22 for publication on the Authority's website.**

9. **Environment (Wales) Act 2016 Part 1 – Section 6**  
**The Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Duty Report 2022**

Submitted – A draft report by Dafydd Roberts, Senior Ecologist.

Reported – The Head of Conservation, Woodland and Agriculture presented the report on behalf of the Senior Ecologist who had been unable to attend.

Members discussed the report and made the following observations:-

- Members thanked the Senior Ecologist for his excellent report which was concise and clear.
- in response to a question on the footpath work at Cors Geuallt SSSI, the Head of Conservation, Woodland and Agriculture confirmed that officers consult with Natural Resources Wales on every occasion and that the Authority has learnt to adapt its practices and procedures over time. Officers were mindful of their duty to train the footpath teams and the need to tighten up requirements for external contractors. The Chief Executive advised that the Head of the Warden Service was preparing a report which will outline principles for upgrading future footpaths and include reasons why and for whom the Authority was carrying out the work. He also confirmed that planning permission was not required for the bridlepath as the Authority undertakes footpath work under highway authority powers held by Conwy County Borough Council.
- Members and Officer's discussed planning breaches that have a negative impact on biodiversity and whether this was something Members should focus on. The Director of Planning and Land Management confirmed there was positive support from the Welsh Government who have issued a directive to the planning authorities to ensure biodiversity improvements for every development. Unfortunately, due to lack of any guidance, this has created more complications as individual authorities deal with the directive in a different way. The Authority continues to wait for the guidance and in the meantime, officers draw the developers' attention to the requirement to incorporate biodiversity enhancement measures into their proposals as a planning condition. A Member noted concerns that if planning conditions were not being followed up, there were no sanctions, which undermines the whole process. The Director of Planning and Land Management confirmed that whilst the Authority has the powers, the reduction in staffing levels in the compliance service meant that the necessary monitoring work was not being carried out.
- Members and Officers discussed the evidence available through ERAMMP and Cofnod and whether they were sufficient for the Authority's purposes. The Chief Executive was of the opinion that ERAMMP was not delivering as it should, as it was trying to look forward, and the Cofnod system was good but was dependent upon the quality of data gathering. The Head of Conservation, Woodland and Agriculture advised that ERAMMP had just been awarded its second contract and would hopefully be able to show progress and decline and provide a better baseline moving forward. Members were also advised that the new Living Wales satellite imagery had the potential to be a more robust way of looking at breaches and subtle changes in land use over time. Members noted that the Authority benefits from having officers with the necessary skills to interpret the data, which may not be available to other designated landscapes at this time.
- the Chief Executive advised that the use of technology will change rapidly over the next 5 years with software systems such as google analytics being able to provide real time information on any landscape, which will effect the way in which we manage and add value for the future.



- Members further discussed possible curlew data collection by the community, and rhododendron management on land subject to organic agreements.

**RESOLVED to note the report and approve its future presentation to the Welsh Government.**

10. **Health and Safety Annual Monitoring Report 2021/22**

Submitted – An information report by the Head of Human Resources to advise Members on Health and Safety issues within the Authority.

Reported – The Head of Human Resources presented the report and background.

Members discussed the report and raised the following matters:-

- a Member was concerned that comparison data was not included and that the report should provide more monitoring information. The Head of Human Resources explained that the data was not sufficient to be included in the report and the Director of Corporate Services agreed that available data had been difficult to interpret. He advised that the information was being updated and would in future be available electronically.
- Members and officers discussed the upcoming review of working practices and the adoption of an agile approach to future working. In response to a question, the Director of Corporate Services felt that whilst this work was ongoing it would be difficult to assess the impact of home working on staff's wellbeing but assured Members that monitoring would be reinstated without delay. Members were advised that all staff were encouraged to follow instructions on how to set up their equipment and address their home-working needs. Arising thereon, the Head of Human Resources confirmed that an update report will be presented to the next meeting of the Performance and Resources Committee.

**RESOLVED**

1. to note the report, for information.
2. to await an update report on working practices to the next meeting of the Performance and Resources Committee.

11. **Information Centres Annual Report**

Submitted – A report by the Sustainable Tourism Manager to update members on the Centres' progress against financial targets.

Reported – The Sustainable Tourism Manager presented the report in detail and provided an overview of the 2022/23 year to date and comparison figures from 2019/20.

Members discussed the following matters:-

- Members were sympathetic to the staffing problems experienced by the service.
- there was a need to publicise that the Sherpa Service operates to Beddgelert.
- the Sustainable Tourism Manager confirmed that staff at the Visitor Centres were retained during the winter months, although the Aberdyfi Visitor Centre, which was a more seasonal destination, had lost staff due to being closed from the end of October to the end of March.
- Members discussed the possibility of using the Information Centres as warm spaces this winter. The Sustainable Tourism Manager agreed to look into this possibility.

- a Member noted concerns that staff recruitment and retention problems could be a corporate risk to the Authority and that in order to provide a corporate focus, Members needed an insight into why this was the case. Arising thereon, officers were asked to consider organising a recruitment drive. The Chief Executive stated that this had already been raised by the Head of Human Resources who was currently working on promoting the Authority as an employer of choice. The Chief Executive and the Director of Planning and Land Management were also looking at working in partnership with other local authorities in Wales to attract Welsh speaking Planning Officers. The Chief Executive reminded Members that the Authority had recently raised staff salaries by two incremental points across the workforce in order to compete with salaries paid by Conwy County Borough Council, Gwynedd Council and Natural Resources Wales and the Director of Corporate Services believed prospective candidates could be attracted by the Authority's agile approach to working practices, which provides flexibility and an improved work/life balance.
- a Member recommended various options for attracting staff to work at the information centres such as creating more part-time roles to encourage older workers or offering to pay travel costs etc.
- Members discussed options for creating a social media campaign to promote the TIC's and draw more people to the Centres.
- in response to a question, the Sustainable Tourism Manager advised that she attends an annual trade fair in Harrogate, works with local suppliers, varies the stock, and utilises various methods such as selling goods on commission for local craftspeople etc., in order to improve profit margins.

**RESOLVED to note the report and approve the actions for 2023/24, as outlined.**

12. **Minutes of the Plas Tan y Bwlch Management Board**

Submitted - Minutes of the Plas Tan y Bwlch Management Board meeting held on the 13<sup>th</sup> July 2022, for information. The Chairman of the Plas Tan y Bwlch Management Board presented the minutes, and the Director of Corporate Services provided a summary of the current position.

Members and officers discussed the following:-

- for information, the Director of Corporate Services advised that 'S4C - Priodas Pum Mil' had recently filmed at Plas Tan y Bwlch and the programme would be broadcast over the Christmas period.
- in response to a question, the Director of Corporate Services stated that as Plas Tan y Bwlch was a Grade II\* listed building, there was a need to maintain the condition of the building in the short term. He further advised that once the Business Plan had been agreed, long-term decisions on grant funding and future partnership potentials will all be presented to the Authority for consideration before any formal decision is made on the future of Plas Tan y Bwlch.
- the Chief Executive further advised that if the Welsh Government settlement was not favourable, circumstances could change very quickly, and Members could be asked to consider the future of Plas Tan y Bwlch at an earlier date.

**RESOLVED to note the minutes, for information.**

**The meeting ended at 11.50**