



City and County of Swansea

Notice of Meeting

You are invited to attend a Meeting of the

Gower AONB Partnership Steering Group

At: Down To Earth, Little Bryngwyn, Cefn Bryn, SA3 1ED

On: Monday, 23 September 2019

Time: 7.00 pm

Chair: Councillor Paul Lloyd

Membership:

Councillors: M C Child, J P Curtice, P R Hood-Williams, L James and A H Stevens

Steering Group Members: R Button, J Chambers, J France, S Heard, S Hill, G Howe, P Jenkins, H Osborn, B Parry, P Thornton and D P Tucker

Agenda

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Next Meetings:

- Monday, 2 December 2019 at 7.00 pm in Reynoldston Village Hall
- Monday, 23 March 2020 at 7.00 pm in Mount Pisgah Chapel, Parkmill

Huw Evans

Huw Evans

Head of Democratic Services

16 September 2019

Contact: Democratic Services: - 636923

Agenda Item 3



City and County of Swansea

Minutes of the **Gower AONB Partnership Annual Meeting**

Reynoldston Village Hall - Church Meadow, Reynoldston,
Gower, Swansea, SA3 1AA

Monday, 24 June 2019 at 7.00 pm

Present: Councillor P Lloyd (Chair) Presided

Councillors

M C Child
L James

J P Curtice
A H Stevens

P R Hood-Williams

Also Present:

R Button
G Howe
B Parry
R Vine
J McGregor
A R Jones
J Probert
M Dobbins
H Jones
M Jones
G Evans
A Berry
E Harris

S Crocker
M Lewis
D P Tucker
J Doyle
I Button
J Chambers
M Ap Gwent
S Samuel
J France
R Fisher
R Evans
P Thornton
R Harris

S Heard
H Osborn
D Vine
A Glass
P Jenkins
H Roberts
G Ap Gwent
L Roblin
R Kirby
S Fisher
S Berry
P Lanfear

Officer(s)

Tom Evans
Chris Lindley
Paul Meller
Jeremy Parkhouse
Mike Scott

Principal Planning Officer (Policy)
Gower AONB Team Leader
Strategic Planning and Natural Environment Manager
Democratic Services Officer
Gower AONB Officer

Apologies for Absence

S Hill, K E Marsh

1 Welcome and Introductions.

The Chair welcomed all present to Reynoldston Village Hall and commenced proceedings.

2 Disclosures of Personal and Prejudicial Interests.

In accordance with the Code of Conduct adopted by the City and County of Swansea, no interests were declared.

3 Minutes.

Resolved that the Minutes of the Gower AONB Partnership Steering Group Meeting held on 25 March 2019 be accepted as a correct record.

4 Matters Arising from the Minutes.

None.

5 Terms of Reference. (For Information)

The Terms of Reference were reported 'for information'.

6 Presentation - The Work and Roles of the Gower AONB Partnership & Gower AONB Team.

Mike Scott, Gower AONB Officer provided a presentation on the work of the Gower AONB Partnership. He outlined the Gower AONB designation, the role of the Gower AONB Partnership and the work of the AONB Team within the City and County of Swansea.

7 Presentations: -

- Gower Commoners

Peter Lanfear, Gower Commoners provided a presentation on the work of the Gower Commoners. He highlighted speeding traffic on the commons, loss of livestock due to traffic accidents and the loss of habitat on the commons due to the significant reduction in livestock grazing the commons.

- Natural Resources Wales (NRW)

Hamish Osborn, NRW provided a presentation on the role and work of NRW. He outlined the role of the organisation within the Gower AONB, including examples of work on Gower; the work of NRW with regards to forestry management and water quality; designated sites; protected landscape management work; water vole and eel projects; and the next NRW grant funding round in Autumn 2019.

- Gower Society

Guto Ap Gwent, Chair of the Gower Society provided a presentation on the work of the Society. He highlighted the history of the Society and the significant role the Society had on Gower, including its objectives. He made reference to the

planning work undertaken by the Society, its role in respect of tourism and the grants and financial support the Society had awarded during the previous year.

- Swansea Council, Strategic Planning Team

Tom Evans, Strategic Planning Team Leader provided a presentation on how the Local Development Plan recently agreed by Swansea Council affected Gower AONB and its communities.

8 Annual Review of Gower AONB Action Plan.

Chris Lindley, Gower AONB Team Leader provided a presentation which gave an annual review of the Gower AONB Action Plan. He commented that the Plan was due to end in 2021-22, sets out the framework for the Action Plan. He provided updates regarding the Local Development Plan, Gower Landscape Partnership, the Gower Dark Sky application, Mewslade wall project, the Gower Hedgerow Hub and outlined the proposed actions for 2019-20.

9 To Elect Ten Steering Group Members from Nominations Received.

The Chair explained that 12 nominations had been received for 10 membership vacancies on the Partnership Steering Group. Therefore, an election was required.

Voting papers were circulated to all present. 42 voting papers were cast.

Resolved that the following be elected to the Gower AONB Partnership Steering Group for a period of two years, in accordance with the Terms of Reference: -

Roger Button
James Chambers
John France
Steve Heard
Sue Hill
Gordon Howe
Philip Jenkins
Barbara Parry
Paul Thornton
Paul Tucker

The elected members would join the following on the Steering Group: -

Councillor Paul Lloyd (Chair)
Councillor Jan Curtice
Councillor Paxton Hood-Williams
Councillor Lynda James
Councillor Andrew Stevens
Hamish Osborn – Natural Resources Wales

10 To Elect the Vice Chair of the Steering Group for the 2019/2020 Municipal Year.

Resolved that Stephen Heard be elected as Vice-Chair of the Steering Group for the 2019/20 Municipal year.

11 To Appoint the Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) Grants Panel.

Resolved that the following be appointed to the Sustainable Development Fund Grants Panel: -

Councillor Paul Lloyd (Chair)
Councillor Mark Child
Councillor Lynda James
Councillor Andrew Stevens
David Cole
Keith Marsh
James Chambers
John France

12 To Appoint the Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) Grants Appeals Panel.

Resolved that: -

1) the following be appointed to the Sustainable Development Fund Appeals Panel:

Stephen Heard (Chair)
Barbara Parry

2) the remaining membership be confirmed at the next scheduled Steering Group meeting.

13 Public Question Time.

Rob Vine, Reynoldston Village Hall asked a question regarding the continued parking and overnight camping / parking problems at the top of Cefn Bryn.

The meeting discussed the topic at length, including the effect of the overnight parking / camping and general parking upon the landscape, the village of Reynoldston and the possible options available. It was added that due to the land being privately owned, the best option to alleviate the problems was partnership working.

It was commented that the area was under the control of Llanrhidian Lower Community Council. However, a joint letter from both Llanrhidian Lower and Reynoldston Community Councils would highlight the issues further.

Furthermore, the meeting was urged to report any issues of concern to South Wales Police on their 101 number.

Resolved that the subject be discussed at the next scheduled Steering Group meeting.

The meeting ended at 9.07 pm

Chair

Agenda Item 5



Report of the Chair

Gower AONB Partnership Steering Group – 23 September 2019

2019 NAAONB Conference Report

This year's conference which formed part of the celebrations of the 70th anniversary of the National Parks & Access to the Countryside Act that paved the way for designated landscapes was held in the University of Essex, Colchester with its theme "Outstanding landscapes, outstanding beauty" & the themes explored included the role of landscapes in mitigating the effects of climate change, the importance of beauty in times of change & the impacts nature on health & wellbeing.

Set against a backdrop of unprecedented change & opportunity for designated landscapes, the conference was certain to engage & inspire delegates.

With the Designated Landscapes Review in progress in England, the Environment & Agriculture Bills due soon, the Welsh Government's publication of its Valued & Resilient policy paper & the UK government's 25 Year Environment Plan, it has never been a more important time to demonstrate the value of designated landscapes.

One of the main elements of the conference was the Glover Review of AONBs /National Parks in England. The purpose of the review is to renew the mission as set out in the 1949 National Parks & Access to the Countryside Act. The review was led by Julian Glover & supported by an experienced advisory group. The review has considered National Parks & AONBs in England, including the role of these areas in relation to other places designated for environmental purposes. Landscapes in Wales & Scotland are under devolved administrations & therefore don't fall under the scope of the review.

The review aims not to diminish the character or independence of our designated landscapes, or to impose new burdens on them and the people who live and work in the areas they cover. Instead, its purpose is to ask what might be done better, what changes could assist them, and whether definitions and systems- which in many cases date back to their original creation- are still sufficient.

Objectives: In the context of meeting both local & national priorities & wider environmental governance, the review will examine & make recommendations on:-

- * the existing statutory purposes for National Parks & AONBs & how effectively they're being met.
- * the alignment of these goals set out in the 25 year plan for the environment.
- * the case for extension or creation of new designated areas.
- * to improve individual & collective governance of National Parks & AONBs, and how that governance interacts with other national assets.
- * the financing of National Parks & AONBs.
- * how to enhance the environment & biodiversity in existing designations.
- * how to build on the existing 8 point plan for National Parks and to connect more people with the natural environment from all sections of society and improve health & wellbeing.
- * how well National Parks & AONBs support communities.

Please see below the Interim findings of the review-

Landscapes review - National Parks and AONBs: Review to consider the next steps for National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty sites (AONBs) in England.

Interim findings of the landscapes review

Letters between Julian Glover and Michael Gove setting out the interim findings of the designated landscapes review

July 2019

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Letter from Julian Glover to Michael Gove

Julian Glover
BY EMAIL

The Rt Hon Michael Gove MP

Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

Defra

Seacole Building

2 Marsham Street

London SW1P 4DF

15 July 2019

DESIGNATED LANDSCAPES REVIEW

Dear Secretary of State,

It is a year since I began leading the Designated Landscapes Review, which the government commissioned in response to the 25-year Environment Plan.

I intend to be ready to publish a complete report in the autumn. Before then we have agreed that it would be helpful to provide you with a short guide to our thoughts.

This letter sets out in broad terms what we have found, what we think could be done better and what officials might start doing now to prepare to implement the review, if ministers decide to do so.

What we have done

I have made sure our review has been open and responsive, and have given everyone a chance to tell us what they think.

In the last year members of our panel of six have been to every English National Park and - soon - will have been to every AONB, as well as to National Parks in Scotland and many unprotected landscapes.

Our call for evidence received over 2,500 responses - detailed and enthusiastic submissions from organisations and individuals. We have held many meetings in London with bodies representing those interested in our landscapes. We have also worked with the Policy Lab team in the Cabinet Office, who have made powerful films working with people whose voices are less likely to be heard, including those in cities who are not traditional visitors to the countryside - and we hope an ambitious response to this will be a core part of the new ways our landscapes work.

People everywhere have been generous with their time and ideas. I thank in particular the members of our panel: Sarah Mukherjee, Fiona Reynolds, Jim Dixon, Ewen Cameron and Jake Fiennes, as well as the excellent support we have received from Defra officials.

What we have found

The message from all this work has been vigorous and clear. We should not be satisfied with what we have at the moment. It falls short of what can be achieved, what the people of our country want and what the government says it expects in the 25-year plan for the environment.

Some of this failure comes from the fact that our protected landscapes have not been given the tools, the funding and the direction to do the job we should now expect of them. I want to praise the commitment of those who work to protect our landscapes today. Everywhere I've seen energy, enthusiasm and examples of success.

Supporting schools, youth ranger schemes, farm clusters, joint working with all sorts of organisations, tourism, planning and design, backing local businesses, coping with the complexities of local and central government - things like this happen every day, not much thanks is given for them and yet much of it is done well, for relatively small sums.

But all this impressive effort is not achieving anything like as much as it could.

Why? Because the national zeal of the founding mission for landscape protection has been eroded. There is a culture which has neither kept pace with changes in our society nor responded with vigour to the decline in the diversity of the natural environment.

We need to reignite the fire and vision which brought this system into being in 1949. We need our finest landscapes to be places of natural beauty which look up and outwards to the nation they serve.

In essence, our review will ask not ‘what do protected landscapes need?’, but “what does the nation need from them today?’.

What needs to change

The underlying argument of our review is that our system of designated landscapes should be a positive force for improvement with big ambitions made possible by these 44 areas uniting to become more than the sum of their parts.

More must be done for nature and beauty. More must be done for people who live in and visit our landscapes, too. And a lot more must be done to meet the needs of our many fellow citizens who do not know the countryside at the moment, or do not always feel welcome in it, but should be able to enjoy it. Our landscapes are open and free to all, but nonetheless can seem exclusive.

- Our system of landscape protection today is fragmented, sometimes marginalised and often misunderstood. We believe this leads to duplication, wastes resources and diminishes ambition. We will make proposals to address this, and will explore the potential for a National Landscape Service in the final report.
- We think in particular the current system of governance for National Parks should be reformed. Time after time we have heard and seen that boards are too big, do not do a good job in setting a strategic direction and ambition, and are unrepresentative of both society and, at times, of the things parks should be leading on, such as natural beauty, climate change, and diversity.
- We think that AONBs should be strengthened, with increased funding, new purposes and a greater voice on development. We have been impressed by what they often achieve now through partnership working.
- We would like to see the encouragement of a wider range of non-designated systems of landscape protection. This could include new areas of forest, along the lines of the successful National Forest in the East Midlands, and support for proposals for new urban National Parks such as the one proposed for the West Midlands, and the impressive work being done to bring the South Pennines together as a regional park. We also praise London’s National Park City movement.
- The 2010 Lawton Review and the most recent 2016 State of Nature Report are explicit about the crisis of nature and what needs to be done to bring about a recovery. We agree and we want to see designated landscapes lead the response.
- Our system of landscape protection has been hampered by having little influence over the things which have done most harm to nature, including a system of farming subsidies which, although it has improved, rewarded intensification regardless of the consequences.

- But we would also like to see a change in internal culture to do more on this. As the National Trust put it, in its submission to our call for evidence, “We believe that National Parks and AONBs are not currently delivering on their duty in relation to nature”.
- We would like to see designated landscapes become leaders in Nature Recovery Networks.
- Our landscapes are largely farmed landscapes and we think a partnership with farming which promotes nature recovery is needed. Our designated landscapes should be bold about the potential of subsidy reform, with the forthcoming Environmental Land Management System. We think all protected landscapes should be priorities for ELMs payments delivering nature recovery through farming.
- We would like to see them develop landscape scale, long term strategies to assess and improve natural capital in the areas they oversee as it is now, and as it could become - working with landowners through local ELMs plans.
- We want to see them take a lead in the national response to climate change in order to help them meet the goal of net-zero by 2050.
- We have found that many National Parks have not moved quickly or smartly enough to reflect our changing society, and in some cases show little desire to do so. We are all effectively paying for Designated Landscapes through taxation. Much more must be done to encourage first time visitors and a more diverse range of visitors.
- We heard repeatedly that the MOSAIC programme working with BAME groups had been a huge success - but it was a one-off, and largely fell away when its initial funding ran out. We want to see a new version of it brought in as a priority.
- Although there are already examples of links with the National Health Service there is no overall agreement about how these two great institutions from the post-war settlement might work together. Social prescribing has huge potential to improve physical and mental health at low cost.
- In almost every place we visited we heard similar warnings about the challenge communities face. Residents are getting older. Local communities see housing costs climb while not much affordable housing is built to add to the supply. We will make a specific proposal in our final report to for a proactive way for landscapes to address the shortage of social housing.
- We recognise that all calls for more public money to be spent will face understandable scrutiny. Budgets are tight for a reason. But doing more will cost more. We want to see our landscapes funded from a wider range of sources and will make proposals in the final report.
- But as John Dower wrote in 1945, “if National Parks are provided for the nation they should clearly be provided for by the nation”. At the very least we want to see existing budgets for National Parks secured in real terms and sustained for a further five year period. Any new

National Park designations must be funded with additional money not from the current budget.

- We believe there is a very strong case for increasing funding to AONBs. We will make proposals in our final review.
- We have been asked to give our view on the potential for new designations. We will set this out in our final report.

With best wishes



Julian Glover

Independent Review Lead

Designated Landscapes Review

Letter from Michael Gove to Julian Glover



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

The Rt Hon Michael Gove MP
From the Secretary of State for Environment,
Food and Rural Affairs

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Julian Glover

Landscapes.Review@defra.gov.uk

16 July 2019

Dear Julian,

Thank you for your letter detailing the interim findings of your Review of Designated Landscapes. I am immensely grateful to you and your panel for all the hard work you have undertaken to date.

Last year I asked you to conduct a Review of England’s Designated Landscapes as part of the Government’s 25 Year Plan for the Environment. We recognised the value of beautiful landscapes in creating a thriving natural environment - I asked you and your panel to ask open questions about how National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty could meet the needs of those who work, live and seek enjoyment there, and be truly special places for nature and beauty.

One year on, I am delighted to read your analysis of what needs to change and can be done. I believe your findings will spark enthusiasm and debate in all those who care about our designated landscapes – and for those who do not ordinarily consider National Parks and AONBs to be ‘their’ places. Your report can also provide the foundation for the renewed vigour that I agree is needed to rediscover that national zeal illustrated by those founders of the National Parks movement that you describe.

It is fitting that, on the 70th Anniversary of the Act of Parliament that made our National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty possible, you are setting out your views on what is needed for the long-term health of these places. You urge ambition – this is a challenge and a call to action to which all should listen. I look forward to the completion of your report, and your formal recommendations later this year. With every good wish,



Michael Gove



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landscapes.review@defra.gov.uk

Another main subject on the agenda was the AONBs Draft Declaration for Nature. "The Colchester Declaration"

Set against a backdrop of unprecedented concern for the future of the natural world, and intergovernmental reports that the current global response to the effects of human impact on nature is insufficient, the AONB network believes that now is the time to significantly increase the scale & pace of our delivery to address these issues.

Using the unique network & partnership model, the AONB network made a collective Declaration on Nature in AONBs setting out a strategy for change. The pledges include the following :-

- * to create opportunities within AONBS for people to make an emotional connection with nature.
- * to prepare a nature recovery plan for each AONB.
- * that at least 200,000 hectares of SSSIs in AONBs will be in a favourable condition by 2030.
- * that each AONB adopts a species on the threatened list & prepare & deliver a species action plan.

The AONB network has called on the government & the Welsh government to provide the power & resources to ensure that the aspirations outlined in the declaration can be met.

The Colchester Declaration 2019

Set against a backdrop of unprecedented concern for the future of the natural world, and intergovernmental reports that the current global response to the effects of human impact on nature is insufficient – the National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty believes that now is the time to significantly increase the scale and pace of nature conservation activity in AONBs. Using our unique network and partnership model, we are making a collective Declaration on Nature in AONBs, setting out our strategy for change.

With many AONB host authorities having taken the step of declaring a Climate Emergency we are demonstrating our readiness to act to redress declines in species and habitats within the context of a wider response to climate change.

We believe

1. Natural Beauty has intrinsic value and means so much to people
2. AONBs should be places of rich, diverse and abundant wildlife
3. Nature recovery is central to the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty
4. Climate change is the biggest threat to humanity and one of the greatest threats to biodiversity. Designated landscapes offer some of the most powerful solutions to the challenges of climate change
5. The network of AONBs and National Parks, their teams, partnerships, authorities and stakeholders offer a unique solution to tackling environmental challenges

We pledge

By July 2020

1. To enable an approach that creates opportunities within AONBs for people to make an emotional connection with nature.
2. To prepare a Nature Recovery Plan for each AONB

By 2024

1. To embed an ecosystems services approach into all AONB Management Plans
2. To ensure all AONB management plans include meaningful measures around climate change mitigation and adaptation, including clear, measurable targets to support Net Zero

By 2030

1. That at least 200,000 ha of SSSIs in AONBs will be in favourable condition
2. That at least 100,000 ha of wildlife-rich habitat outside of protected sites will have been created/ restored in AONBs to further support the natural movement of plants and animals
3. That at least 36,000 ha of new woodland will have been planted or allowed to regenerate in AONBs following the principle of the right tree in the right place
4. That, by each AONB immediately adopting a species on the threatened list and by preparing and delivering a Species Action Plan, at least thirty species relevant to AONBs will be taken off the list by 2030

We call on Westminster and Welsh Governments to provide the power and resources to make these targets achievable

Agenda Item 8



Report of the Gower AONB Team Leader

Gower AONB Partnership Steering Group – 23 September 2019

Gower Dark Sky Community Award Application

Our application to the International DarkSky Association (IDA) was considered by their last committee meeting at the end of July. In general, feedback from this meeting was very positive, but they have requested some further information/evidence regarding:

- the examples of projects where lighting controls have been applied
- our proposals for dark sky monitoring post-award

Subsequently, the IDA has also asked for clarification on the timescale and technical content for the revised Gower AONB Lighting Guide to being updated as Supplementary Planning Guidance to the Local Development Plan.

Swansea Council and Dark Sky Wales have been working to address the above points and we are expecting that the IDA will approve our Dark Sky Community Award application at its next committee meeting (30 September).

Chris Lindley

Gower AONB Team Leader

13 September 2019



Report of the Gower AONB Officer

Gower AONB Partnership Steering Group – 23 September 2019

Sustainable Development Fund – Financial Summary

Welsh Government have confirmed the SDF budget for 2019/20 as £55,000, with a verbal commitment for the same for 2020/21.

The fund is now heavily committed, both for 2019/20 and 2020/21.

- **2019/20**

Total Funds available	£ 55,000.00
Committed Funds	£ 47,000
Uncommitted Funds	£ 8,000

For the current year, there are 10 projects approved with SDF funding for 2019/20, and a further application is anticipated, which will fully commit the SDF budget. There have been two further expressions of interest, for which there is currently no funding available.

The Committed Funds figure includes the CCS Management Fee of £5,500 (10%).

- **2020/21**

£36,030 committed, with 2 applications worth £19,000 anticipated, which would leave the fund fully committed.

- **2021/22**

£13,500 committed, with 1 application worth £10,000 anticipated

Mike Scott,
12th September 2019



**SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FUND
GOWER AONB**

ANNUAL REPORT

1st April 2018 – 31st March 2019

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FUND (SDF)

GOWER AONB

ANNUAL REPORT

1st April 2018 – 31st March 2019

1. Introduction

This report covers the period from 1st April 2018 to 31st March 2019. It refers to the Gower Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), which covers 188 square km within the City and County of Swansea (See Map Appendix 4).

During this period, 16 projects were funded, of which 11 were new projects. The total SDF expenditure was £55,000, which resulted in securing an additional £339,428 in match funding within the financial year (a levered funding ratio of c.6:1).

2. Summary of the Performance of SDF Scheme

A number of Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) are specified for the Scheme by Welsh Government.

Description of the Target - KPI	Date by when it should be achieved?	Evidence required	Achievement
Create 25 jobs or volunteering opportunities.	31 March 2019	Individual AONB, NRW summary report and project breakdown.	12 out of 16 projects running this year have created jobs or volunteering opportunities.
Deliver 5 training or awareness raising sessions on sustainability.	31 March 2019	Individual AONB, NRW summary report and project breakdown.	20 training or awareness raising sessions held during the year.
Ensure that all projects supported support at least two of the sustainable development principles as set out in the Welsh Government, Sustainable Development Charter.	31 March 2019	Individual AONB, NRW summary report and project breakdown.	Yes
Look to maintain high level funding levered in from public, private and voluntary sector. Guideline is a 6:1 ratio.	31 March 2019	Individual AONB, NRW summary report and project breakdown.	Levered funding ratio for 2018/19 6:1
Ensure that at least 40% of projects retain community participation post year 1, 2 and 3.	31 March 2019	Individual AONB, NRW summary report and project breakdown.	68.35% (54 out of 79 projects still running)

3. Publicity

The Fund was quietly promoted at a number of community and tourism stakeholder events, and also the website: www.swansea.gov.uk/aonb. This, combined with word of mouth, has generated 11 new applications (of which one was withdrawn) and several other informal enquiries which were not pursued, or which have been delayed for future consideration. Active promotion of the scheme is not currently seen as appropriate, as funds are fully committed for 2019/20 and 2020/21.

4. SDF Assessment Panel

Applications for grants over £3,000 are considered by a Grant Panel, which is a sub-group of the Gower AONB Partnership – the advisory body for the AONB - but with executive powers. The minutes of the panel are reported to the Partnership for information.

The grant panel membership list for 2018/19 is contained in Appendix 1.

The practice is to set panel meeting dates at quarterly intervals, and cancel them if there is insufficient business. The panel held two meetings during the period, 11th June and 26th November 2018.

Where consideration by the panel is required, the practice is for applicants to be given the opportunity to present their application at the panel meetings, followed by questions from panel members. Then applicants leave the room before the application is considered by the panel, and are subsequently informally notified of the panel's decision the same day by phone, with formal offer letters sent out within a few days.

For small grants under £3,000, applications are considered under delegated powers by the SDF Officer, in consultation with the NRW representative. All delegated applications are reported to the next panel meeting for information.

A separate Appeals Panel is also appointed by the AONB Partnership – however, only 2 appeals have been made in the last 15 years. There were no meetings of the Appeals Panel during this period.

5. Application Process

The application process has worked very satisfactorily, with electronic application forms used almost exclusively.

Some applicants require significant support to complete their applications, from the SDF Officer, before their applications can be assessed. This does mean that applications can take a long time to complete, although it does help to weed out unsuitable applications.

6. Finance

A total of £55,000 was claimed in grant aid for 2018/19, including £5,500 by the City & County of Swansea towards the administration costs of the scheme - Appendix 2 shows an Annual Funding Summary.

Annual payments have ranged from £150 up to £12,000 (2.26% - 63.94%), depending upon the needs of the individual projects. Most payments are made retrospectively, although flexibility is used to support projects which may have cash-flow issues.

Under the terms of the SDF Grant Scheme, applications for up to three years are invited. Applicants are often encouraged to consider 2-3 year projects, as these are believed to be better managed, and to have better results. As SDF funding is only confirmed for the current year, CCS as the Grants Manager, has to advise applicants that funding can only be absolutely guaranteed for that year, but that if Welsh Government funding is available, we will be able to provide funds for subsequent years.

Therefore the forward commitments detailed in Appendix 3 have been made for 2020/21, totalling £36,030, with additional forward commitments in 2021/22 of £13,500.

7. Details of Individual New Applications

GO12 YR17 – YMCA Transport For Gower

Project Timetable : April 2018 – March 2021
Applicant : Ms Charlotte Davies, YMCA Swansea
1 Kingsway, Swansea. SA1 5JQ
SDF Funding : £ 30,000 (£ 10,000/yr – 51.85%)
Match Funding : £ 27,859.20 (In-kind & own funds)

YMCA Transport to Gower aims to provide and promote increased levels of accessible opportunities in and around Gower by ensuring their participants are able to overcome barriers such as transport and social isolation.

Young people from urban areas, such as Swansea and the surrounding areas, have told YMCA Swansea that they find it difficult to access Gower, due to 'cost of transport', 'irregular bus services' or 'a lack of understanding about transport links'. This project aims to reduce these barriers by providing free transport, informal fun training about bus services, accessing opportunities that are participative and engaging, which are beneficial to young people, and implementing challenges such as 'Gower in an Hour'.

YMCA Swansea works with organisations that support young people to increase participation in activities such as; The Gower Show, Gower Chilli Festival, outdoor activities, roundhouse construction (with Down To Earth Ltd), volunteer at Rhossilli (with National Trust), archaeology projects and to attend a variety of local festivals.

YMCA Swansea's Health & Well Being Programme works with young people to improve fitness, wellbeing, mental & physical health, nutrition, aid recovery from illness & injury and support people with disabilities. The programme offers an alternative to mainstream provision, with specialist support for young people with 'protected characteristics', including BAME young people, LGBTQI young people, young carers, young people who may have been excluded from school and young offenders.

YMCA Swansea - Transport to Gower will contribute towards the AONB Management plans actions around several themes and support participants to engage in activities associated with; Biodiversity, Geology, Natural Resources, Tranquillity and Awareness raising by making transport available to those from urban areas to access Gower.

This project directly targets hard-to-reach groups within Swansea, who often experience barriers to accessing Gower. YMCA have extensive experience of working with these groups, and are an ideal partner for this area of activity.

Outputs	Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 23 individual volunteers engaged (Yr1)• 324 volunteer hours accredited by Millennium Volunteers to project (Yr1)• 218 young people engaged by project (Yr1)• 3 young people qualified for Sports Leader Navigation - Level 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Greater engagement and awareness by young people in Gower, and the recreational opportunities it can provide.• Young people report feeling less isolated, and have higher self-esteem and confidence.• Greater awareness of Gowers' environment and culture amongst young people.

GO13 YR17 – Reynoldston Ramblers Walks Book

Project Timetable : February – March 2019 (later amended to September 2019)

Applicant : Roger Button,
Pitton Cross, Rhossili, Swansea, SA3 1PT

SDF Funding : £300 (18.75%)

Match Funding : Cash & In-kind - £1,300 (own funds)

This project aims to develop a self-financing future for a guide book of walks around Gower, previously produced by the Reynoldston Ramblers. The guide includes 24 walks around Gower, with a range of lengths – previous editions of the guide have been very well received, selling well locally. However, funding for re-prints/new editions has been difficult.

The project will benefit both residents and visitors to Gower, providing opportunities to explore the network of footpaths across Gower. It will encourage walkers to explore beyond the established visitor “hot spots”. Initially, 200 copies will be printed – with further copies funded by the sales of this initial print run.

Roger Button (owner of a local caravan site, and keen local walker) has reached an agreement with the Reynoldston Ramblers, that he will update and reprint the guide using his own funds (and SDF funding initially). Sales of this initial print run will then be used to fund further print runs, enabling the guide to become self-financing.

Due to Roger becoming unwell in March, the project timetable has been amended to September 2019, in order to allow him to complete the project. I am anticipating publication of the guide by the end of September, as the book has now been sent to the printers.

Outputs	Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 24 walks around Gower promoted.• 200 copies in initial print run.• Further print runs funded from sales of the book.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• More visitors and residents take walks around Gower.• Greater use of non-honey pot areas.• Greater awareness of Gowers' environment and culture.

GO01 YR18 – Gower Hedgerow Hub

Project Timetable : November 2018 – March 2020

Applicant : Helen Grey, Gower Landscape Partnership,
City and County of Swansea, Civic Centre. SA1 3SN

SDF Funding : £5,500 (8.93%)

Match Funding : Cash - £50,069 (HLF, NRW, NT & CCS), In-kind - £6,000

This work will enable wider awareness and appreciation of hedgerows on Gower and the need to protect them. The project specifically aims to conserve and enhance Gower's field boundaries, which are a direct link to past cultural heritage and part of the farming community. As a protected habitat, with associated protected species, the project will improve management of hedgerows in the landscape.

This project will work to conserve and protect existing hedgerows and associated features, and to re-/establish hedgerows along old and / or new boundaries across Gower.

The project is a legacy of the HLF-funded Gower Landscape Partnership programme, for which a 10 year management and maintenance plan must now be delivered and which this project will contribute to. It will also contribute towards fulfilling the aims of the Gower AONB Management Plan and Local Biodiversity Action Plan.

This will involve working with Gower landowners and activities may include:

- double fencing to protect hedgerows
- hedgelaying to conserve hedgerows
- planting of new hedgerows to establish new or re-establish old / ancient field boundaries.
- liaising with landowners to discuss what support is needed for a wider and more strategic / sustainable approach to hedgerow management
- where possible we will also seek to support and enhance other initiatives such as the work being done (led by NRW) to address water quality issues of the Burry Pill and inlet.
- support for the next phase of the conservation of the Vile field boundaries.

The project provides the opportunity to bring together several funding sources, to make a significant impact on the hedges and other field boundaries on Gower. As such, the SDF funding requested of £5,500 or 8.93%, represents a small contribution to the overall cost of the project.

Outputs	Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• £56,069 cash levered in from other sources• 11 training & skills sessions in surveying and laying hedges• 18 volunteer days, laying hedges• 3000m hedges improved or enhanced• Involvement with annual Gower Hedge-laying Match	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increased awareness of hedgerows amongst landowners, and volunteers• Improved hedges around Gower, with landowners encouraged to carry out further work• Local contractors better able to lay hedges, and more likely to offer this as a service.• Better biodiversity and connectivity as a result of the hedges.

GO04 YR18 – Gower Ambassadors Scheme

Project Timetable : April – September 2018

Applicant : Steve Crocker, Tourism Swansea Bay
Barham Centre, Mount Pisgah, Parkmill, Swansea SA3 2EQ

SDF Funding : £3,000 (50.00%)

Match Funding : Cash - £500 (TSB), In-kind - £2,500

As part of the Gower Landscape Partnership programme, an innovative Ambassador Scheme has been piloted involving and engaging communities, individuals, groups, organisations and business from across the peninsula. Over 50 volunteers have received professional training and increased their knowledge of Gower's unique heritage and distinctive landscape through a series of 'familiarisation visits'.

There is an appetite for activities to continue, but local support and resources are needed to help consolidate and develop what has been achieved to date, to enable the Ambassadors to become a self-sustaining and active group.

The next phase of the project, will provide much-needed local support, coordination, resources and also provide access to a wider network for the further development and delivery of the Gower Ambassador programme. Tourism Swansea Bay (TSB) are ideally placed to support and develop the Gower Ambassadors scheme.

Outputs	Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quarterly meeting of a “steering group” of Ambassadors established • 26 Ambassadors actively engaged in supporting events • 14 events at which Ambassadors supported event organisers/organised the event • 13 prospective Ambassadors waiting for training • 200+ local businesses encouraged to involve Ambassadors in their events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteers (Ambassadors) have greater awareness and knowledge of Gower, its special qualities and heritage • Visitors have enhanced experience, and knowledge, of Gower and its special qualities and heritage • Businesses have increased activity due to greater tourist activity, and gain greater awareness of Gowers special qualities • General public gain increased awareness and knowledge of Gower and its special qualities



GO05 YR18 – Mewslade Wall Completion

Project Timetable : September 2018 – August 2019

Applicant : Mike Scott, Gower AONB Team

City and County of Swansea, Civic Centre, Swansea, SA1 3SN

SDF Funding : £10,500 over 2 years (49.99%)

Match Funding : Cash - £10,540 (Gower Society, CCS)

The project has enabled the completion of the Mewslade Wall, a special and unique landscape feature of South Gower. The reconstruction of the Mewslade Wall was a key project within the GLP package – and is a significant legacy. The wall will remain, with minor occasional repairs, for at least a century – standing as a reminder fo Gower’s cultural past, whilst contributing to its future management.

The wall is a significant and impressive feature within the landscape – and has cultural, biodiversity and historical importance. Its reconstruction will enable the re-establishment of traditional land management on the south coast.

Because of its prominence, and the iconic nature of this feature in the landscape, it was important that it was rebuilt to the highest standard – by a skilled local craftsman, with knowledge and experience of the local style.

The success of this project has led to a long-term project with Gower Society and National Trust, which will see similar walling undertaken around Rhosilli, over the next 5 years.

Outputs	Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of Mewslade Wall (131.5m) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restoration of important landscape feature within South Gower Coast. • Re-establishment of traditional land management (grazing of sheep & cattle) either side of the wall. • Establishment of longer term project to re-build walls in the area, as part of a reintroduction of sustainable management



GO07 YR18 – Gower Sea Rowing Club

Project Timetable : March – November 2018

Applicant : Mr Jeff Payne,
1 The Boarlands, Port Eynon, SWANSEA SA3 1NX

SDF Funding : £410 (17.44%)

Match Funding : Cash - £18,000 (Sports Wales), Cash & In-Kind - £6,100 (Own Funds)

This project will enable the establishment of a sea rowing club, based in Port Eynon, open to all in the Gower area. The club specifically aims to include those of all abilities, with equal opportunities for all members.

Gower has a long-standing cultural history associated with the sea, and possesses a proud history of maritime activity. However, there is little in the way of formal recreational facilities relating to the sea, nor links to its cultural history. The club intends to celebrate the historical links and traditions of Gower, as well as providing a social community.

The grant enabled the Gower Sea Rowing Club, to establish an active group of rowers, and hire a suitable sea rowing boat. Their initial costs include the rental of a sea rowing boat (from a sea rowing club in Tenby), until funding from Sports Wales in 2019 will enable them to purchase their first boat. The new club has produced a “business plan”, based on the interest generated to date, which indicated that the club anticipates being self-financing by March 2019, with continued growth to enable them to purchase a second boat within 2-3 years. This will also enable them to ensure that the expressed interest can support the club in reality.

There are no similar clubs in Gower or Swansea, despite a long and important maritime history. Establishing the club will provide a link to this history, and raise awareness of this aspect of Gowers’ history.

Outputs	Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establishment of a Sea Rowing Club, based at Port Eynon, Gower• Hire of competitive Sea Rowing boat• Club Membership of 18 – January 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increased physical & social activity within local community• Increased awareness of marine issues• Increased awareness of cultural & landscape issues

GO10 YR18 – Taste of Gower – Walking Project

Project Timetable : September 2018 – March 2021

Applicant : Ms Barbara Parry,
127 Broadmead, Dunvant, Swansea SA2 7RJ

SDF Funding : £1,000 over 3yrs (17.48%)

Match Funding : Cash - £1,000 (Gower Society), In-Kind - £3,720 (Own resources)

This small scale, simple project aims to support and enable the continuation of a GLP legacy project, aimed at engaging groups and individuals from Swansea, funding minibus hire for monthly walks, which are led by volunteers.

Taste of Gower provides the opportunity for many people to access the countryside who otherwise would have difficulty doing so. Numbers vary each month depending on the weather, with a good-weather minimum of thirty and on special occasions up to seventy walkers. There is a core of regular walkers and a shifting population from NHS and other groups. There are two principal groups of Taste of Gower walkers.

The first group is independent walkers, some of whom have difficulty accessing the countryside for economic reasons or for a variety of self-confidence issues.

The second group of participants is drawn from NHS and social services teams. Taste of Gower provides a resource for ABM ULHB Local Primary Mental Health Support Services and other services. These walkers are supervised by their professional carers and integrated into the walk, participating in basic countryside procedures such as gate management. They join in the conversations along the way, and of course the refreshments at the end of the walk.

There are also experienced walkers from the Ramblers and other groups who provide support for the walk leaders including back- and middle-markers.

Taste of Gower Walks were shortlisted for the 2018 Swansea Sports Awards in the new Getting Swansea Active category, and attended the awards ceremony in the Brangwyn Hall on 13 March 2019.

Outputs	Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment of a programme of monthly walks • Hire of minibus for 12 walks • 445 walkers (many regulars) attending the walks (an average of c.35/month) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased access by excluded individuals and groups • Increased physical & social activity within local community • Increased awareness of Gower's history and landscape



GO11 YR18 – Vile Field Boundaries Project

Project Timetable : January – February 2019

Applicant : Alan Kearsley-Evans, National Trust
South Pilton Green Farm, Scurlage, Gower SA3 1PQ

SDF Funding : £1,500 (50.00%)

Match Funding : Cash - £1,500 (NT)

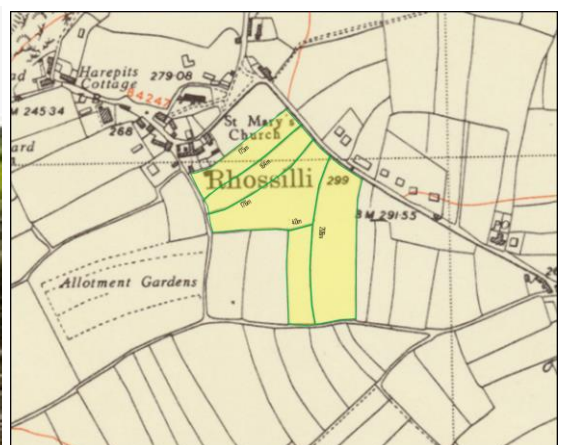
This project has contributed to the conservation and enhancement of the special and unique landscape of Gower, particularly The Vile, where field size and boundaries are an important historical and cultural feature. The Vile is a unique remnant of a Mediaeval open field system at Rhossili, which relies upon field boundaries to maintain its landscape, biodiversity and cultural interest.

The National Trust has recently started to implement a new, invigorated, management plan with respect to its agricultural land on Gower. This now prioritises recovering biodiversity and landscape value. The project will contribute to sustainability on Gower by ensuring recently enhanced field boundaries and associated habitats and wildlife are protected and maintained.

Local contractors undertook a total of 1,360m of fencing, which has enabled volunteers (from both National Trust and Gower Hedgerow Hub) to plant new hedges (separate projects).

Through the “Gower Hedgerow Hub” Facebook page, they will share information in relation to Gower's hedgerows, which will help raise awareness and understanding of the value of hedgerows in the sustainability of Gower's landscape.

Outputs	Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1,360m fencing erected to protect hedges within The Vile. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Important landscape features improved and safeguarded. Biodiversity improved within a key honey-pot area of the AONB. Volunteering opportunities created – particularly hedging projects in 2019/20 and beyond. Improved partnership working on landscape-scale projects.



GO12 YR18 – Reynoldston Upper Green Restoration

Project Timetable : February – April 2019

Applicant : Deborah Vine, Reynoldston Community Council
Brolonydd, Reynoldston, Swansea SA3 1AA

SDF Funding : £1,346.82 (with an additional £2,000 from 2019/20) (63.94%)

Match Funding : Cash - £1,887.18 (Reynoldston Community Council)

Reynoldston Community Council applied for SDF funding to help restore the Upper Green, where parking had severely damaged the green, and the edge of highway.

This followed over 12 months of discussions and negotiations between the Community Council, The Somerset Trust, Cefn Bryn Commoners, CCS Highways, and the King Arthurs Hotel, facilitated by Gower AONB Team.

The final solution was agreed by all parties, with the edge of the highway being reinforced with stone material, additional soil being brought in to enable the bank to be reprofiled, and block stone used to prevent parking along the edge of the road.

The final cost (£5,234) was greater than initially estimated due to the amount of reinforcement required to support the edge of the highway, and additional funding was required.

They were initially awarded £1,346.82 from the Gower AONB SDF grant fund, with an additional £2,000 from SDF funds in 2019/20, with the balance coming from the Community Council reserves and precept.

A short section at the top of the road was completed initially to demonstrate the intended work. A local contractor then completed the remaining work by the end of March 2019, with the key partners confirming that they were content upon completion.

Outputs	Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 150m of Village Green verge repaired. • 150m highway underpinned & repaired. • 300 - 400m² of Village Green restored. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highway prevented from collapsing. • Village Green restored. • Roadside parking prevented – enabling traffic (inc. emergency vehicles) to pass. • Working relationships between Community Council, Commoners and Landowners established, with threats of legal action lifted.



Appendix 1: SDF Panel Membership List (as of 31st March 2019)

Name	Organisation	Address	Telephone / E-mail Address
Councillor Paul Lloyd (Chair)	City and County of Swansea	2 Hafnant, Winch Wen, Swansea. SA1 7LG	07789 167128 Paul.Lloyd@swansea.gov.uk
Councillor Mark Child	City and County of Swansea	35, Riversdale Road, West Cross, Swansea, SA3 5PX	01792 518473 Cllr.Mark.Child@swansea.gov.uk
Councillor Lynda James	City and County of Swansea	39 Pennard Road, Kittle, Swansea SA3 3JY	01792 234316 Cllr.Lynda.James@swansea.gov.uk
Councillor Andrew Stevens	City and County of Swansea	11 Pleasant Close, Penyrheol, Gorseinon, Swansea SA4 4FD	01792 417407 cllr.andrew.stevens@swansea.gov.uk
Keith Marsh	Bishopston Community Council	16, Brandy Cove Road, Bishopston, Swansea, SA3 3HB	01792 233735 Keith.marsh@swansea.gov.uk
Deborah Vine	Reynoldston Community Council	Brolonydd, Reynoldston, Swansea SA3 1AA	07493 230113 deb.vine@reynoldston.com
Paul Thornton	Wildlife Trust of South & West Wales	14 Clos Sant Cenydd, Llangennith, SWANSEA, SA3 1JT	07966 564372 p.thornton@welshwildlife.org
David Cole	Individual	209, Frampton Rd, Gorseinon, Swansea, SA4 4FX	01792 895602 cole209@ntlworld.com
Aled Davies (Observer)	Natural Resources Wales	Partnerships Officer South West, Maes Newydd, Britannic Way West, Llandarcy, Neath/Port Talbot. SA10 6JQ	03000654078 Aled.Davies@cyfoethnaturiolcymru.gov.uk
Chris Lindley (Observer)	Planning Services	Gower AONB Officer, Regeneration & Housing Department, Swansea Civic Centre,	01792 635094 Chris.lindley@swansea.gov.uk
Mike Scott (Observer)	Planning Services	Gower AONB Officer, Regeneration & Housing Department, Swansea Civic Centre,	01792 635741 Mike.scott2@swansea.gov.uk
Paul Meller (Observer)	Planning Services	Strategic Planning & Natural Environment Manager, Regeneration & Housing Department, Swansea Civic Centre	01792 635740 Paul.Meller@swansea.gov.uk

Appendix 2: Annual Funding Summary for 2018/19

Ref No	Project Name	Current Status	Total Costs	Grant Paid	% Grant	Funding Summary Notes
GO07 YR16	Gower Play Our Way	Completed	£6,650.00	£653.18	30.00%	Amended grant offer splitting costs over 2 yrs (£1k - 2017/18, £1k - 2018/19)
GO09 YR16	Lost Caves of Gower - Phase2	Completed	£32,100.00	£8,830.00	28.93%	2 Yr funding - with 2 payments per year (2017/18 & 2018/19)
GO16 YR15	Pennard Parish Hall	Completed	£1,500.00	£500.00	29.00%	3 Yr funding (2016/17 to 2018/19)
GO03 YR17	Gower Badger Vaccination	Paid	£270,517.00	£12,000.00	2.26%	3yr funding with 2 payments per yr - £36k total (2018/19 to 2021/22)
GO12 YR17	YMCA - Transport For Gower	Paid	£19,287.00	£10,000.00	51.85%	3 yrs funding £30k total – 2018/19 to 2020/21 - GLP legacy project.
GO13 YR17	Reynoldston Ramblers Walks Book	Completed	£1,600.00	£300.00	18.75%	1 yr application - single payment in 2018/19
GO15 YR17	Nitten Field 2	Paid	£470.00	£150.00	31.91%	3yr funding for on-going project
GO03 YR18	Pill House Pig Sty - Initial Drawings	Completed	£2,000.00	£1,000.00	50.00%	1 yr application - single payment in April 2018
GO04 YR18	Gower Ambassadors Scheme	Completed	£6,000.00	£3,000.00	50.00%	1 yr application - two payments in 2018/19 - GLP legacy project
GO05 YR18	Mewslade Wall Completion	Paid	£12,000.00	£6,000.00	49.99%	2 yr application - £10,500 total SDF - GLP legacy project
GO07 YR18	Gower Sea Rowing Club	Completed	£2,350.00	£410.00	17.44%	1 yr application - single payment in 2018
GO10 YR18	Taste Of Gower - Walking Project	Paid	£1,400.00	£310.00	17.48%	3 yr application - first year - GLP legacy project
GO12 YR18	Reynoldston Green Restoration	Completed	£5,234.00	£1,346.82	63.94%	1 yr application - single payment in 2018.
GO01 YR18	Gower Hedgerow Hub	Paid	£30,320.00	£3,500.00	8.93%	2yr project - GLP legacy project
GO11 YR18	Vile Field Boundaries Project	Completed	£3,000.00	£1,500.00	50.00%	1 yr application - single payment in 2018 - GLP legacy project
	CCS admin costs @10%			£5,500.00		
		YEAR TOTAL	£394,428.00	£55,000.00		

Appendix 3: Forward Commitments

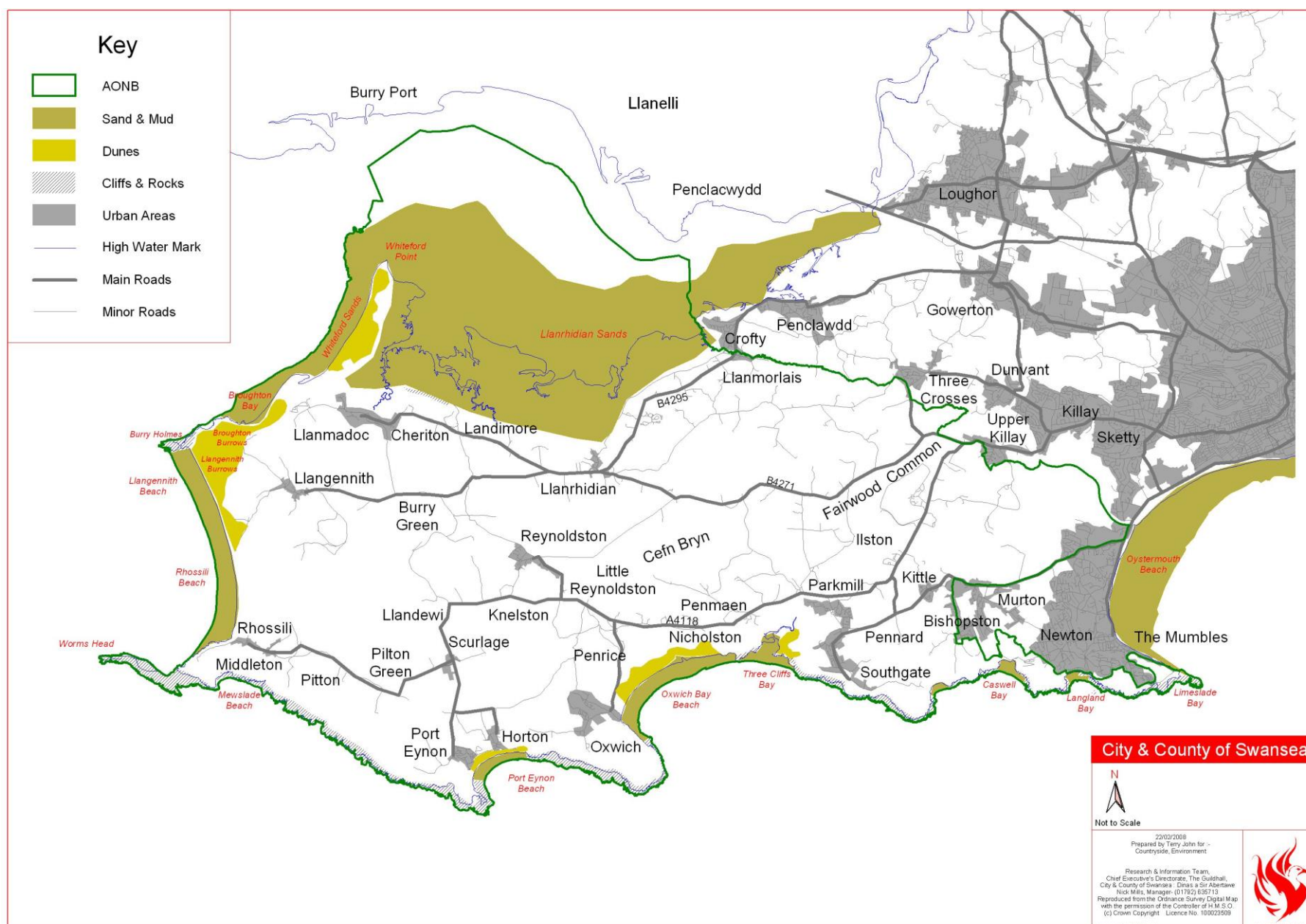
Forward Commitments 2020/21

Ref No	Project Name	Total Cost	Grant	Funding Summary Notes
GO12 YR17	YMCA - Transport For Gower	£ 10,287.00	£ 10,000.00	3rd year of 3 yr project - £10k/yr
GO03 YR17	Gower Badger Vaccination	£ 270,517.00	£ 12,000.00	3rd year of 3yr project - £36k
GO15 YR17	Nitten Field 2	£ 470.00	£ 150.00	3rd year of 3yr funding for project
GO10 YR18	Taste Of Gower - Walking Project	£ 1,400.00	£ 380.00	3 yr application - final year - GLP legacy project
GO13 YR18	Lost Caves & Submerged Lands	£ 32,770.00	£ 8,000.00	2nd year of 3yr application - £8k/yr
	CCS admin costs @10%		£ 5,500.00	
	YEAR TOTAL	£ 315,444.00	£ 36,030.00	

Forward Commitments 2021/22

Ref No	Project Name	Total Cost	Grant	Funding Summary Notes
GO13 YR18	Lost Caves & Submerged Lands	£ 32,770.00	£ 8,000.00	3rd year of 3yr application - £8k/yr
	CCS admin costs @10%		£ 5,500.00	
	YEAR TOTAL	£ 32,770.00	£ 13,500.00	

Appendix 4: Map of Gower AONB



Agenda Item 11



Report of the Gower AONB Team Leader

Gower AONB Partnership Steering Group – 23 September 2019

Update – Gower AONB Management Plan Review

The Gower AONB Management Plan is a statutory plan, prepared by the Gower AONB Partnership on behalf of Swansea Council. The Plan 'formulates the policy for the management of the area of outstanding natural beauty and for the carrying out of the Council's functions in relation to it'.

The current plan was adopted as Council policy in March 2017 and can be found here:

<https://www.swansea.gov.uk/gowermanagement>

The Action Plan was reviewed by the last Steering Group meeting (March 2019) and now covers the period up 2022.

We are required to review the Management Plan every five years and Natural Resources Wales has a statutory role in that process. The stages of the review are outlined in Box 1. To comply with that timescale, the Plan review should start in the current year.

The last review concentrated on updating the plan evidence, objectives and actions. The Vision has remained unchanged since the first statutory plan in 2006:

Gower is recognised by residents and visitors as a protected landscape of international importance where the interaction of people and nature over time has produced an area of distinct character with significant aesthetic, ecological and cultural value, and with high biological diversity. Its natural beauty will be sustained by the conservation and enhancement of its natural special qualities, whilst at the same time supporting a sustainable local economy and maintaining culturally rich communities and is reflected in the quality and scale of the built environment

There have been significant changes and updates to the policy context that the new AONB Plan needs to consider and respond to, including:

- The Environment (Wales) Act 2016 and how the Plan can contribute to the Sustainable Management of Natural Resources in the AONB
- The declaration of a Climate Change Emergency by UK, Wales and Swansea governments

It is recommended that the AONB Partnership Steering Group forms a sub-group with the Gower AONB Team to formally initiate the first stages of the review process; the sub-group would report back to the Steering Group in due course.

Chris Lindley

Gower AONB Team Leader

13 September 2019

Box 1: AONB Management Plan Review Process.

(SEA = Strategic Environmental Assessment
 SA = Sustainability Appraisal
 HRA = Habitats Regulations Assessment)

