



City and County of Swansea

Notice of Meeting

You are invited to attend a Meeting of the

Gower AONB Partnership Steering Group

At: Remotely via Microsoft Teams
<https://bit.ly/2DlujZX>

On: Monday, 21 September 2020

Time: 2.00 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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| 1 Apologies for Absence. | |
| 2 Disclosures of Personal and Prejudicial Interests. www.swansea.gov.uk/disclosuresofinterests | |
| 3 Minutes. To approve and sign as a correct record the minutes of the previous meeting(s). | 1 - 7 |
| 4 Gower Society Issues. | 8 |
| 5 Natural Resources Wales Grant Funding. | 9 |
| 6 Draft Supplementary Planning Guidance Consultation. | 10 |
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Next Meeting: Monday, 30 November 2020 at 2.00 pm

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Huw Evans'.

Huw Evans
Head of Democratic Services

Monday, 14 September 2020

Contact: Democratic Services: - 636923

Agenda Item 3



City and County of Swansea

Minutes of the Gower AONB Partnership Steering Group

Remotely via Microsoft Teams

Monday, 29 June 2020 at 2.00 pm

Present: Councillor P Lloyd (Chair) Presided

Councillors

M C Child

P R Hood-Williams

L James

A H Stevens

Steering Group Members

J France

S Heard

S Hill

H Osborn

P Thornton

Officer(s)

Paul Meller

Strategic Planning and Natural Environment Manager

Chris Lindley

Gower AONB Team Leader

Mike Scott

Gower AONB Officer

Jeremy Parkhouse

Democratic Services Officer

Apologies for Absence

Councillors: J P Curtice

Steering Group Members: R Button, James Chambers, G Howe, P Jenkins, B Parry and D P Tucker

39 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.

40 Minutes.

Resolved that the Minutes of the Gower AONB Partnership Annual Meeting held on 2 December 2019 be approved as a correct record.

41 Gower AONB Management Plan - Update. (Chris Lindley)

Chris Lindley, Gower AONB Team Leader provided an update report regarding progress of the Gower AONB Management Plan.

Details of the progress of the Gower AONB Management Plan Sub-group and the review process and reviewed timetable were provided. It was added that after some delay due to COVID-19, the timetable outlined the process and outputs required to

get an adopted, reviewed management plan by March 2022 (5 years since the current one was adopted). The timeframe provided a broad idea of what was required, the main activities of the Sub-group and was required to factor in statutory / public consultation periods and Welsh translation of the draft and final Plans.

It was highlighted that Natural Resources Wales (NRW) had provided all Welsh AONB's with a series of environmental datasets / statistics specifically cut to the AONB boundary and published the South West Wales Area Statement. Both of these points would be beneficial to and influential upon the preparation of the management plan.

It was concluded that the AONB team would formally write to NRW to start the review process (which would have further detail on the timeline) and we would also commence the compilation of the State of the AONB report.

Resolved that the content of the report be noted.

42 Welsh Government Funding & National Landscapes Partnership. (Chris Lindley)

The Gower AONB Team Leader presented a report regarding Welsh Government Funding and the National Landscape Partnership (NLP).

Further to a report the Steering Group in December 2019, it was outlined that Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority had been selected to host the NLP team, although work to proceed with this had been suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Details regarding a capital investment fund of £4.75 million across Wales' eight Designated Landscapes called the Sustainable Landscapes Sustainable Places Programme was outlined. Gower AONB was set to benefit £135,000 towards project delivery of the following capital projects:-

- Clyne Valley Country Park - Capital works and improvements to visitor facilities, access routes and heritage features.
- Purchase of battery-powered countryside management tools.
- Bishop's Wood Local Nature Reserve – sustainable drainage and access improvements.

The Steering Group discussed the following: -

- Access works to cater for additional visitors at Clyne Valley Country Park and the potential costs;
- Balancing the need to attract more visitors with the need to protect the landscape;
- The problems encountered between pedestrians and cyclists on the cycle track within the Country Park and the proposals being considered to improve matters.

Resolved that the contents of the report be noted.

43 Gower AONB Design Guide - Revision of Supplementary Planning Guidance. (Mike Scott)

Mike Scott, Gower AONB Officer presented a report which informed the Steering Group regarding the revision of Statutory Planning Guidance (SPG).

It was explained that following the adoption of the Local Development Plan (LDP) in February 2019, the Design Guide had been updated and extended by the Planning Policy Team, working with Nathaniel Lichfield & Partners. The revised edition would include new sections on:

- Chalets
- Lighting
- Advertising Signage

It was expected that a 6 week public consultation would start by October 2020, with adoption as SPG and publication by early 2021.

The adoption as SPG of the lighting guidance within the Design Guide would enable International Dark Skies to consider the application for Dark Sky Community status by the Authority.

Resolved that the contents of the report be noted.

44 Sustainable Development Fund - Financial Report. (Mike Scott)

The Gower AONB Officer presented the Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) Panel Financial Summary report.

It was outlined that the SDF budget for 2019/20 of £55,000 was fully committed, with all funds paid out. A total of 13 projects were supported, with grants from £150 to £12,000. An Annual Report had been submitted to Welsh Government, and would be distributed to Steering Group members shortly for information.

Welsh Government had confirmed the SDF budget for 2020/21 as £100,000.

There were currently 7 projects approved with SDF funding for 2020/21, with 2 applications to be considered by the SDF Panel in July, and 2 further applications anticipated at present.

Further projects would be brought forward during 2020/21, to fully commit the funds.

The Committed Funds figure included the CCS Management Fee of £10,000 (10%).

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Total Funds available | £ 100,000 |
| Committed Funds | £ 43,170 |
| Uncommitted Funds | £ 56,830 |
| Applications under consideration by the panel | £ 21,500 |

It was added that the budget for 2021/22 had not been confirmed, but was anticipated to be £55,000.

Resolved that the contents of the report be noted.

45 Clyne Valley Country Park. (Chris Lindley)

The Gower AONB Team Leader presented a report which examined the approach by Swansea Council towards managing Clyne Valley Country Park.

It was explained that the current Swansea Local Development Plan (LDP) which had been adopted in February 2019, included a specific policy (TR4) for Clyne Valley Country Park. The LDP identified the boundary to the Country Park and formalised Council policy relating to its use. Clyne Valley was also specifically acknowledged in the LDP as representing a strategically important green space and a key element of the County's Green Infrastructure network.

However, beyond these LDP policies, the Council had no identified management objectives or departmental responsibility for the Country Park. In addition, there had not been a review of Clyne Valley, the Country Park, the Council's strategy or objectives for the area since the 1978 planning study, which occurred more than 40 years ago. Management decisions were therefore taken following separate departmental priorities and within budgetary constraints.

It was added that Management issues over recent months, including damage from third party activities during COVID-19 restrictions, had identified the need to improve the Council's overall approach to managing the Country Park. Progress had therefore been made with a view to developing a strategy for Members and senior management to develop a clear view on direction and responsibilities into the long term.

The Steering Group discussed the following: -

- Problems caused by mountain bikes and the responsibility of the Council towards the direct management of the Country Park;
- Protecting and enhancing the natural environment within the Park while also improving public access;
- The involvement of partner organisations, e.g. Natural Resources Wales in the management of the Country Park.

Resolved that the contents of the report be noted.

46 Parking on Cefn Bryn. (Steve Heard)

Steve Heard, Vice Chair of the Steering Group reported on a number of queries he had received from local residents with regards to the parking situation on Cefn Bryn.

He made reference to the changes that had been implemented at the top of Cefn Bryn, specifically the placement of boulders adjacent to the road, which prevented vehicular access onto the land. He added that while this had been a positive preventative measure, some visitors had chosen to either drive over the bunding at the side of the road or park on the verge and sought progress to identify a permanent solution.

The Steering Group discussed the following: -

- Proposals for a crescent shape of boulders surrounding the parking area, lengthening the bunding area and creating a clearway from Cilibion to Reynoldston;
- Ensuring that the bunding was effective and prevented vehicular access onto the land at the top of Cefn Bryn and at other points such as the old pumping station;
- Proposed solution being designed by Swansea Council Highways and the consultation process / decision process to finalise the solution;
- The need to prevent overnight camping, particularly by mobile homes which was causing severe erosion at the top of Cefn Bryn;
- Possible park and walk solutions;
- Addressing the severe erosion and potential alternative surface options;
- How the Council was very restricted in what it could do;
- Focussing upon this problem in order to find a workable and sustainable solution;
- The positive progress made in getting the different organisations involved around the table to discuss the problem.

It was explained that the Sub-Group which was formed to progress the issue, would only be able to progress matters once the costings for the proposed Swansea Council Highways solution had been received.

Resolved that the contents of the report be noted.

47 Gower Society Issues. (Gordon Howe)

A report was submitted on behalf of the Gower Society in respect of the following matters: -

- 1) Concerns and anomaly of permitted Development for 28 days to sell products in sensitive locations within the AONB and effects upon the landscape.

Resolved that the item be discussed at the next scheduled meeting.

2) Protection of sensitive woodlands, trees and hedgerows from indiscriminate felling at an earlier stage, prior to any potential damage

It was suggested that better and quicker collaboration between the managers of the AONB and other agencies such as NRW would improve matters and reference was made to recent examples such as Carters Ford Woodland, Fairy Hill Parkland, Long Acre Field and adjacent woodland in Caswell.

Discussions took place regarding: -

- Issues surrounding the removal of trees such as obtaining a felling licence;
- Situations where a felling licence was not required;
- Illegal / non-illegal removal of trees during nesting season ;
- Sanctions involved, particularly surrounding Tree Preservation Orders;
- Suggested examples listed which did / did not have licences;
- How quicker action would prevent trees being removed.

Resolved that the item be discussed at the next scheduled meeting.

3) The Council had received its first application in the AONB for a One Planet Earth enterprise that included two potential dwellings. Currently the Local Development Plan (LDP) could allow this but if it was approved where does it end? It was initially excluded in the final Draft LDP but was changed in the Final Approved version.

Resolved that the item be deferred as it was a live planning application.

48 COVID 19 Restrictions and Visitor Behaviour. (James Chambers and Roger Button)

A report was submitted on behalf of James Chambers and Roger Button regarding COVID 19 Restrictions and Visitor Behaviour.

It was highlighted that as lockdown unravelled, with holidays abroad complicated by quarantine measures and an absence of local controls, Gower was a playground for those who just wanted to get out. In recent weeks, Gower had been victim to significant littering to hedgerows and beaches, indiscriminate parking and public fowling, particularly where car parks were open but toilet facilities were closed. This was largely caused by people from outside of the area, in contravention of the pandemic travel restrictions, which had increased the risk of cross infection / contamination and reduced access for emergency responders to local communities.

Measures were sought which would help limit the potential damage and vandalism of the environment within in the AONB and improve the safety of its communities, while the pandemic was prevalent.

Discussions centred around the following: -

- How some public toilets had reopened, alleviating some of the issues raised;

- The need for improved control and Policing to prevent similar situations to those that had occurred at Langland Bay;
- Use of enforcement when individuals stepped out of line;
- The difficulty in opening public toilets / preventing further spread of COVID 19;
- Addressing the large number of visitor numbers to specific sites in Gower during the period, some of whom had travelled long distances and the difficulty in policing their movements.

Resolved that the content of the report be noted.

The meeting ended at 3.15 pm

Chair

Agenda Item 4



Report of the Gower Society Representative

Gower AONB Partnership Steering Group – 21 September 2020

Gower Society Issues

The Gower Society would appreciate discussion and comment from Members on the following matters: -

- 1) Concerns and anomaly of permitted Development for 28 days to sell products in sensitive locations within the AONB and effects upon the landscape.
- 2) How we can protect sensitive woodlands, trees and hedgerows from indiscriminate felling at an earlier stage of any potential damage?

Better and quicker collaboration between the managers of the AONB and other agencies such as NRW is suggested. Recent examples such as Carters Ford Woodland, Fairy Hill Parkland and Long Acre Field and adjacent woodland in Caswell.

Gordon Howe
Gower Society Representative

Agenda Item 5



Report of the Gower AONB Officer

Gower AONB Partnership Steering Group – 21 September 2020

Natural Resources Wales Grant Funding

The Annual Report to Natural Resources Wales (NRW) for its grant support for Gower AONB was submitted on 4th September 2020, as part of the annual reporting process. A copy of the report has been distributed to the Steering Group members.

The grant is provided under the Gower AONB Partnership Programme 2018-21, which offers 75% funding (up to £216,671) over three years. Its aim is to support the implementation of the Gower AONB Management Plan.

In 2019/20, the grant paid by NRW totalled £72,223, with the project delivery split between the AONB, Rights of Way, Nature Conservation and Planning Policy Teams.

Mike Scott,
Gower AONB Officer
10 September 2020

Agenda Item 6



Report of the Gower AONB Officer

Gower AONB Partnership Steering Group – 21 September 2020

Draft Supplementary Planning Guidance – Public Consultation

As part of its work to develop up-to-date Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG), Swansea Council is carrying out a consultation and engagement exercise relating to the following Draft Supplementary Planning Guidance documents:

- **Revised Gower AONB Design Guide.**
- **Trees, Hedgerows and Woodlands on Development Sites**
- **Development and Biodiversity.**

The documents provide guidance as to how the relevant policies of the Swansea LDP should be applied in order to assist in the determination of planning applications submitted to the Authority in future.

The Council would like the public's views on whether the draft SPG documents cover an appropriate range of planning issues, and if they consider it provides sufficient clarity for decision makers, applicants and all other interested parties.

The consultation is now live and will run until **5pm Friday 16 October 2020.**

Three short presentations outlining the draft SPGs will be given by Strategic Planning staff on 23rd September – Steering Group members will be e-mailed a link so that they will be able to take part via Microsoft Teams. Recordings of the presentations will be available afterwards.

Mike Scott,
Gower AONB Officer
11 September 2020

Agenda Item 7



Report of the Gower AONB Team Leader

Gower AONB Partnership Steering Group – 21 September 2020

Port Eynon and Horton – Update

Port Eynon and Horton share a popular Blue Flag beach, though it is accessed by separate roads. Port Eynon retains its character as a traditional coastal village with a strong maritime heritage and contains cafes, a restaurant, beach shop and a public house. Horton is much smaller and quieter. There are extensive caravan and camping sites at both locations, as well as large numbers of holiday lets. During the summer both sites are very popular and occasionally at capacity. However, the tourist season is short and there is far less activity outside the school holiday period.

Swansea Council owns considerable property in the area, including the car parks and toilet blocks at both sites, and the slipway at Port Eynon. Borfa House Outdoor Activity Centre is owned and managed by the Council. Swansea Council also owns the foreshore beach and the dune system that extends from Port Eynon to Horton.

A feasibility study in 2018 by Swansea Council (with funding from the Swansea Rural Development Partnership) started a comprehensive assessment of the foreshore and the management of the area for visitors.

The feasibility study was commissioned by Swansea Council following a recognition that there was a need to undertake a comprehensive assessment of the foreshore and the management of the area for visitors. The study involved a mixture of: community events; meetings with organisations and stakeholders; a survey of visitors; liaison with officers in Swansea Council and the local Councillor. The work also included a photographic and observational survey to understand how the resort operated during peak periods. Several issues emerged from these data gathering exercises; these were grouped into 20 recommendations for Port Eynon and 7 for Horton.

In summary, Port Eynon appears neglected and under-resourced. The village is under considerable pressure during the height of the season and the main issues relate to:

- the management of the carpark;
- the poor quality of the toilets;
- traffic congestion and interaction with pedestrians;
- boat launching;
- the prolific number of signs on the seafront
- the road layout near the disabled car parking bays; and
- the quality of the litter bins.

The report also recommended further work to develop proposals to replace the existing toilet block with a modern multi-functional centre which would cater for visitors and provide facilities for residents. The proposed new centre could solve many of the main issues identified at Port Eynon, notably those relating to the management of the car park, the condition of the toilet and boat launching procedures on the slipway.

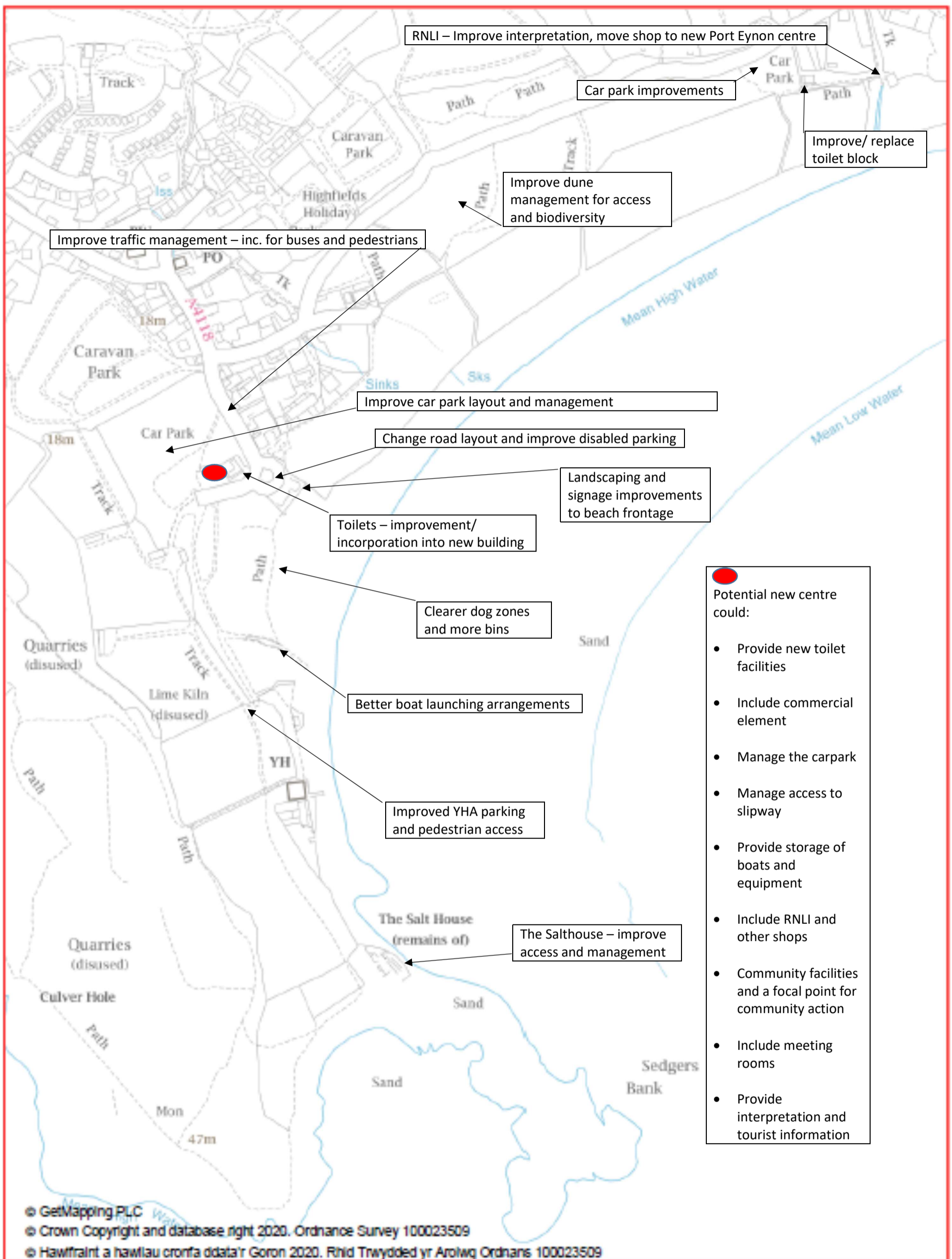
The recommendations for Horton relate to:

- car parking;
- the condition of the toilet block;
- pedestrian access to the beach; and
- the condition of boardwalks and the interpretation of the dunes.

The key issues and opportunities for development work are presented in **Figure 1**.

Going forward, the Gower AONB Partnership and Swansea Council are developing the report recommendations. The Sustainable Development Fund Panel has awarded a grant that enables Swansea Council to commission the design of a scheme of detailed, costed improvements to visitor facilities and public realm infrastructure in the short term; the commission would also develop the medium-term capital investment recommendation for a new beach/community centre building.

Chris Lindley
Gower AONB Team Leader
14 September 2020



Agenda Item 8



Report of the Gower AONB Officer

Gower AONB Partnership Steering Group – 21 September 2020

Sustainable Development Fund – Financial Summary

Grant Scheme 2020/21

Welsh Government have confirmed the Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) budget for 2020/21 as £100,000.

There are currently 12 projects approved with SDF funding for 2020/21, with 1 application currently being assessed, and 3 further applications anticipated shortly.

Further projects will be brought forward during 2020/21, to fully commit the funds.

The Committed Funds figure includes the CCS Management Fee of £10,000 (10%).

| | |
|----------------------------------|-----------|
| Total Funds available | £ 100,000 |
| Committed Funds | £ 74,420 |
| Uncommitted Funds | £ 25,580 |
| Applications under consideration | £ 3,000 |

Grant Scheme 2021/22

The budget for 2021/22 has not been confirmed, but is anticipated to be £55,000.

Two projects have been approved, with £25,500 committed, and currently £29,500 uncommitted.

Mike Scott,
Gower AONB Officer,
10 September 2020