



City and County of Swansea

## Minutes of the **Gower AONB Partnership Steering Group**

Barham Centre, Mount Pisgah Chapel, Parkmill, Swansea

Monday, 25 September 2017 at 7.00 pm

**Present:** Councillor P Lloyd (Chair) Presided

**Councillor(s)**  
M C Child

**Councillor(s)**  
P R Hood-Williams

**Member(s)**  
R Button  
R Cooper  
S Crocker

**Member(s)**  
S Heard  
S Hill  
H Osborn

**Member(s)**  
B Parry  
P Tucker  
D Vine

**Officer(s)**  
Chris Lindley  
Jeremy Parkhouse  
Mike Scott

Gower AONB Team Leader  
Democratic Services Officer  
Gower AONB Officer

**Also Present:**  
I Beynon, K Marsh

### **Apologies for Absence**

Councillor(s): J P Curtice, L James and A H Stevens

Member(s): G Howe and M Lewis

Officer(s): P Meller

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### **16 Welcome and Introductions.**

The Chair welcomed all present to Mount Pisgah Chapel and commenced proceedings.

### **17 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.

### **18 Minutes.**

**Resolved** that the Minutes of the Gower AONB Partnership Annual Meeting held on 26 June 2017 be accepted as a correct record.

**19 Matters Arising from the Minutes.**

There were no matters arising.

**20 Sustainable Development Fund Report.**

The Gower AONB Officer provided a report on the Sustainable Development Fund. It was outlined that the aim of the fund was to support innovative, sustainable, environmental projects, which involved local communities in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB's).

The SDF aimed, through partnership, to develop and test ways of achieving a more sustainable way of living in countryside of great natural beauty and diversity. The scheme sought to conserve and enhance the local characteristics of culture, wildlife, landscape, land use and community. Sustaining the social well-being and economic viability of communities were also important aims of the scheme.

Applications were for small grants of less than £3,000 or larger grants of up to £25,000. Applications over £3,000 were assessed by the SDF Grants Panel, a subgroup of the AONB Partnership Steering Group.

He added that Welsh Government had confirmed the SDF budget for 2017/18 as £55,000. There were currently 8 projects with SDF funding for 2017/18, with a further 3 applications in progress.

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

Total Funds available	£ 55,000.00
Committed Funds	£ 30,310.00
Uncommitted Funds	£ 24,690.00
Applications anticipated	£ 16,400.00

The grants panel met quarterly to consider applications. The proposed dates for 2017/18 were 9 October 2017 (training session); 11 December 2017 and 12 March 2018.

**Resolved** that the contents of the report be noted.

**21 Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) - Selection of SDF Grants Panel and SDF Appeals Panel.**

**RESOLVED** that: -

1) The following be elected to the Sustainable Development Fund Panel: -

Councillor P Lloyd (Chair)  
Councillor M C Child  
Councillor L James  
Councillor A H Stevens  
D Cole  
K Marsh  
P Thornton  
D Vine

2) The following be elected to the Sustainable Development Fund Appeals Panel: -

Stephen Heard (Chair)  
Councillor J P Curtice  
S Hill  
S Crocker  
A Baharie

**22 Future Landscapes Wales - Governance Principles and Update from Implementation Group Report.**

The Gower AONB Team Leader presented the Future Landscapes Wales: Governance Principles and Update from Implementation Group Report.

He provided the background to the 'Future Landscapes: Delivering for Wales' report following the Marsden Review. It was added that following the Review, a Future Landscapes Working Group was established to examine the recommendations. The Group also allowed consideration of the recommendations in the context of new legislation; the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 and the evidence provided in the inaugural State of Natural Resources Report.

Reference was made to the Future Landscapes Review, a report by the Working Group which sets out a new Proposition for Designated Landscapes to go beyond their current purposes relating to conservation and amenity value. It stated that Designated Landscapes should be the drivers of the sustainable management of natural resources providing wider public and private benefit. It emphasised the opportunity, through partnership working, to realise the economic potential of communities and promote green growth and the resilience of ecosystems through these landscapes.

It was added that a new way of working through governance arrangements that include a wide range of delivery and partnership models with a common vision was proposed. It also recommended that bodies and partnerships with responsibility for

the Designated Landscapes should work across boundaries with Natural Resources Wales and local partnerships to promote their social, cultural and economic value and sustainable use. The report stated that partnerships would be required to attract new resourcing and influence investments by others. It stressed that this new way of working would require a behavioural and institutional change.

An 18 month action plan of first steps to realise the Proposition was contained in the report. It was divided into the following elements:

- collaboration and partnership;
- vision and direction;
- refreshing governance: improving performance and accountability;
- innovations in resourcing; and
- driving well-being and resilience.

The Future Landscapes Review proposed a model for developing future public policies and drafting devolved legislation. Welsh Government had released a consultation over the summer - 'Taking forward Wales' sustainable management of natural resources' seeking views on new regulatory approaches to the sustainable management of natural resources in Wales.

The report also outlined an agreed set of good governance principles. A summary of the governance principles was provided at Appendix 1.

The Steering Group were asked to review the principles of good governance set out in the report and were recommended to adopt them in their governance of the AONB.

The Group discussed the following: -

- Whilst there were many good ideas, there was a need for more detail / depth within the report;
- The requirement for the Steering Group to judge itself against the principles within the report;
- The expectations of Welsh Assembly Government / Natural Resources Wales who would expect the Steering Group to measure up in some way;
- Comparisons with other AONB's / National Parks such as Wye Valley and Brecon Beacons;
- The Steering Group monitoring progress against the Management Plan;
- Examine best practice elsewhere prior to making a decision;
- Developing and implementing a strategic vision for the area.

Councillor P R Hood-Williams stated that in respect of legitimacy, participation and voice, the Steering Group was properly constituted at the AGM, where everyone had the opportunity to speak and raise issues. The Steering Group should therefore concentrate discussions upon developing and implementing a strategic vision for the area.

It was proposed that a Working Group be formed to look at the issue further.

**Resolved** that: -

- 1) The contents of the report be noted;
- 2) A Working Group be established to look at the issue further and report back to the next scheduled meeting;
- 3) The Working Group to have the following membership – Steve Heard, Hamish Osborn, Steve Crocker and Keith Marsh.

## **23 National Association for AONB's - Conference feedback. (Verbal)**

The Chair reported on the National AONB's Conference that was held in Winchester. He stated that the theme throughout the Conference was doing things differently in light of the austerity cuts and Brexit, with organisations having to work in partnership.

The Conference proved to be an excellent event where the AONB family and partners shared their learning. He added that there were some inspirational work being undertaken.

The main speakers highlighted culture and how it builds prosperity, including building stronger communities and increasing well-being. In addition, the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) had widened the visitor profile and discussions centred upon making landscape more focussed, providing examples of how this had been achieved.

The Conference was a network of people who were passionate about AONB's and identified opportunities of how to promote organisational excellence, sharing experiences of how to tackle a number of issues.

Councillor M C Child referred to the City of Culture bid by the City and County of Swansea and stated that, should it be successful, the Council should ensure that the AONB and its residents benefit. He added that the AONB was in a unique position and that no other AONB / National Park had been involved in a City of Culture bid.

The Steering Group discussed the following: -

- Improving communications highlighting the AONB;
- Doing things differently by improving communications and promoting the AONB, e.g. websites, radio and social media;
- Improving the signage at the entrances to the AONB and on the M4 to inform locals and visitors;
- Improving the information that is available regarding the AONB, highlighting its purpose;
- Improving the communication of the Gower Landscape Partnership and raising its profile;
- The lack of financial support to enable improvements to be made;
- Proposed funding changes for AONB's.

**Resolved** that the contents of the report be noted.

**24 Membership of the Steering Group.**

It was proposed that Keith Marsh, Bishopston Community Council be co-opted onto the Steering Group.

**Resolved** that the proposal be discussed at the next scheduled meeting.

The meeting ended at 8.25 pm

**Chair**