



City and County of Swansea

## Minutes of the Gower AONB Partnership Steering Group

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

Monday, 23 September 2019 at 7.00 pm

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

### Councillors

M C Child

P R Hood-Williams

L James

### Steering Group Members

R Button

J Chambers

J France

S Heard

S Hill

G Howe

P Jenkins

P Thornton

D P Tucker

### 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

### Also Present: -

Reverend J Davies, I Button, J Gooding

### Apologies for Absence

Councillors: J P Curtice and A H Stevens

Steering Group Members: H Osborn and B Parry

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#### 14 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.

#### 15 Minutes.

**Resolved** that the Minutes of the Gower AONB Partnership Annual Meeting held on 24 June 2019 be approved as a correct record.

#### 16 Matters Arising from the Minutes.

- Minute No.7 – Presentations

Councillor M C Child welcomed the 'slow down' signs that had been placed at various locations on the Commons as part of the Safety on the Commons Campaign.

## 17 Landscapes for Life Conference Report.

The Chair presented a report on the NAAONB Conference 2019. It was explained that 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. The theme was "Outstanding landscapes, outstanding beauty" and the themes explored included the role of landscapes in mitigating the effects of climate change, the importance of beauty in times of change and the impacts nature on health & wellbeing.

It was added that 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 and the UK Government's 25 Year Environment Plan, it had never been a more important time to demonstrate the value of designated landscapes.

He made reference to the Glover Review of AONB's / National Parks in England and the interim findings were provided.

The Steering Group referred to the recent press coverage regarding the Review, which coincided with the Landscapes for Life week. The Group also recognised the similarity between England and Wales, highlighting that the target of net zero carbon by 2050 was too long into the future. A lack of resources, disadvantaged groups having access to the countryside and climate emergency issues were discussed.

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

## 18 Presentation - AONB's Declaration for Nature.

Chris Lindley, Gower AONB Team Leader provided the Steering Group with a presentation on AONB's Declaration for Nature. Details provided included: -

- Context - Climate change emergency declaration, Glover Review in England and Marsden Review in Wales (2015);
- Timeline – Response to Glover report, NAAONB Chair's Conference to sign off declaration and final declaration in December 2019;
- Opportunities for Wales and Gower AONB;
- Future Generations Commissioner 10 point plan.

The Steering Group discussed the following: -

- The Nature Recovery Plan being key;
- How Wales is affected as long as it is aligned support;
- Reporting what the Authority does and the bio-diversity link with future generations;
- Reversing the loss of flora and fauna;
- The declaration being the main thrust;

- The link with previous work undertaken by the Gower Landscape Partnership;
- The contradiction in wanting more visitors coming into the countryside and wanting to protect the environment;
- How imagination was required to give people access whilst at the same time protecting the environment;
- The need for wider communication;
- Establishing exactly what state of nature from the past was indicated as the aim because the landscape had changed significantly over many years;
- Achieving the aims of the AONB and defining the natural boundary;
- Understanding the effect of management upon the countryside;
- Establishing a framework with evidence.

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

## **19 Landscapes for Life Week 21-29 September 2019. (Verbal)**

Mike Scott, Gower AONB Officer provided the Steering Group with a verbal update regarding the Landscapes for Life Week 21-29 September 2019. He outlined that the week highlighted the following: -

- It is the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act;
- The conclusion of the Glover Review;
- Used common branding to raise awareness through social and traditional media;
- Facebook – posted twice a day featuring favourite reviews or aspects of Gower from individuals supported by a short piece of text;
- Twitter – common branding.

The Steering Group discussed the following: -

- The highlighted the lack of resources within the AONB Team to be able to undertake the work;
- How the week was a national event which had been organised nationally;
- The nature of the English centred approach of the Glover Review;
- The distinct lack of awareness, communication and lack of involvement of schools to promote the week.

**Resolved** that the content of the presentation be noted.

## **20 Gower Dark Sky Community Award Application.**

Chris Lindley, Gower AONB Team Leader presented an update report on the Gower Dark Sky Community Award Application.

It was outlined that the 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 had been applied, our proposals for dark sky monitoring post-award and 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.

It was added that Swansea Council and Dark Sky Wales had been working to address the above points and the Authority was expecting the IDA to approve the Dark Sky Community Award application at its next committee meeting on 30 September 2019.

The Steering Group highlighted providing examples of improved lighting on Gower and the issue of absentee landlords.

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

## 21 Sustainable Development Fund - Financial Summary.

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

It was outlined that the Welsh Government had confirmed the SDF budget for 2019/20 as £55,000, with the verbal commitment for the same for 2020/21.

The fund was 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 were 10 projects approved with SDF funding for 2019/20, and a further application was anticipated, which would fully commit the SDF budget. There had been two further expressions of interest, for which there was currently no funding available. The Committed Funds figure included 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.

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

**22 Sustainable Development Fund - Annual Report.**

The Gower AONB Officer presented 'for information' the Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) Gower AONB Annual Report, 1st April 2018 – 31st March 2019.

**23 Appointment of SDF Appeals Panel.**

The Gower AONB Officer reported that the Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) Appeals Panel had to be finalised.

**Resolved** that the SDF Appeals Panel be appointed as follows: -

S Heard (Chair), B Parry, H Osborn, P Thornton, S Hill, G Howe, Councillor P R Hood-Williams and P Tucker.

**24 Discussion - Parking on Cefn Bryn.**

Following discussions at the Annual Meeting, it was proposed that a Working Group be established to discuss the issue further.

The Group discussed the problems being encountered on Cefn Bryn including erosion, animal fatalities, speeding traffic, lack of grazing affecting the Common and prevention options.

**Resolved** that: -

- 1) A Working Group be established;
- 2) The membership consists of S Heard (Chair), S Hill, P Tucker, Councillor L James, Councillor P R Hood-Williams, J Chambers and P Lanfear;
- 3) The Working Group be supported by the Gower AONB Team;
- 4) The Working Group meets as soon as possible.

**25 Update - Gower AONB Management Plan Review.**

The Gower AONB Leader presented a Gower AONB Management Plan Review Update Report.

He outlined that the current plan was adopted as Council policy in March 2017. The Action Plan was reviewed by the last Steering Group meeting (March 2019) and now covered the period up 2022.

The Authority is 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 were provided and 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.

It was added that there had been significant changes and updates to the policy context that the new AONB Plan needed to consider and respond to, including:

Minutes of the Gower AONB Partnership Steering Group (23.09.2019)  
Cont'd

- 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 Emergencies by UK / Wales Governments and Swansea Council.

It was 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.

**Resolved that: -**

- 1) The Sub Group be established as outlined above;
- 2) The membership includes Gower Society representative, NRW representative, P Thornton and any 2 other interested parties.

The meeting ended at 8.50 pm

**Chair**