



City and County of Swansea

Minutes of the **Gower AONB Advisory Group**

Multi-Location Meeting - Gloucester Room, Guildhall / MS

Teams

Monday, 25 September 2023 at 6.30 pm

Present: Councillor P Lloyd (Chair) Presided

Councillors

P R Hood-Williams

L James

S E Keeton

N L Matthews

Steering Group Members

Judith Doyle

Carrie Townsend Jones

Barbara Parry

Clive Scott

Officer(s)

Ursula Jones

Communities and Nature Project Officer

Paul Meller

Natural Environment Section Manager

Jeremy Parkhouse

Democratic Services Officer

Mike Scott

Gower AONB Officer

Apologies for Absence

Councillors: A H Stevens

Steering Group Members: Howard Evans, Alan Kearsley-Evans, Hamish Osborn and Paul Tucker

7 Declarations of Interest.

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

8 To approve & sign the Minutes of the previous meeting(s) as a correct record.

Resolved that the Minutes of the Gower AONB Advisory Group Meeting held on 26 June 2023 be approved and signed as a correct record.

9 NAAONB Annual National Conference.

Mike Scott, Gower AONB Officer and Clive Scott provided the Group with a verbal report regarding the NAAONB Annual National Conference they attended recently at Bath University.

It was highlighted that the Conference was an excellent, well organised event which offered a great variety of lectures / meetings, including outside groups and was very informative.

It was added that the event is annual and members of the Group were encouraged to attend in future.

Resolved that the contents of the report be noted.

10 NAAONB Branding.

The Gower AONB Officer verbally informed the Group that the National Association of AONB's (NAAONB) was discussing a significant rebrand to address some of the issues raised in the Glover Review. These were mainly around inclusion and working with under-represented communities, better communications, providing a more unified image, seeking to achieve a higher profile, and greater recognition of their contribution to nature recovery and climate change agendas.

He added that the English AONB's were slightly ahead of Wales and a statement from the Welsh Minister was expected in November 2023. In addition, it was also regarding communications / public face, explaining about the role of AONB's.

A more detailed update would be provided at the next meeting.

Resolved that the contents of the update be noted.

11 Replacement Local Development Plan.

The Gower AONB Officer informed the Group regarding the replacement Local Development Plan (LDP). It was explained that the process would be lengthy and in order to update the Group, provided a presentation on the Swansea Local Development Plan (LDP) Review and Replacement.

It was explained that the Swansea LDP, which was adopted in 2019, required a statutory formal review every 4 years and the LDP Replacement was now commencing. Progress and the key stages in the process were highlighted and it was noted that the period for submitting candidate sites for development was currently open until 31 October 2023.

It was queried whether the Group could comment as a body on any candidate sites within the AONB. It was confirmed that individuals were able to comment upon sites and the officer would clarify if the Group could comment.

Resolved that: -

- 1) the contents of the report be noted.
- 2) clarification be sought from the Strategic Planning Team regarding whether the Group could comment upon sites within the AONB.

12 Gower AONB Team Report.

Paul Meller, Natural Environment Manager, Mike Scott, Gower AONB Officer and Ursula Jones, Communities and Nature Project Officer presented a 'for information' update report on progress made by the Gower AONB Team since the previous meeting, on the following areas: -

- Gower Show
- Gower Dark Sky Community Application
- Gower Dark Sky – Retro Fit Projects Port Eynon Bay Dunes
- Built Heritage
- Fairwood Common
- Pennard Castle
- Gower Places of Worship
- Clyne Valley Country Park
- Parkmill Japanese Knotweed
- SDF Panel
- AONB Advisory Group
- NAAONB Rebrand
- AONB Team Staffing

It was noted that an "AONB Nature and Communities Officer" would be starting in October 2023, as a third member of staff within the AONB team, enabling more project work to be carried out. Work on restructuring the Natural Environment Section was continuing.

It was also noted that Julie James, Minister for Climate Change would be visiting Clyne Valley Country Park on 9 October 2023. The Chair, Paul Meller, Mike Scott, Ursula Jones and Barbara Parry would meet the Minister to outline the work completed at the Park and funding opportunities.

13 Sustainable Development Fund - Financial Summary.

Mike Scott, Gower AONB Officer presented the Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) Panel Financial Summary report 'for information'.

It was outlined that the SDF budget of £100,000 for 2023/24 had been confirmed by Welsh Government.

So far, 18 projects had funding committed, with a further 4 applications in progress at present. One project had reported that they were unable to go ahead, and funds had been returned, with a second unlikely to proceed.

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

Total Funds available	£100,000
Committed Funds	£79,932.10
Uncommitted Funds	£23,067.90
Applications in progress	£20,100

14 Gower AONB Advisory Group - Changes to Membership.

The Gower AONB Officer presented a report which outlined that since the previous meeting, Anthony Thomas has resigned from the group, leaving a vacancy on the AONB Advisory Group.

It was added that the Advisory Group did not have an archaeological voice and for the past 6 months, Glamorgan Gwent Archaeological Trust (GGAT) had an observer sitting on the group, Judith Doyle, who is the Stewardship Officer, as well as the Deputy Chief Executive Officer.

It was proposed that Judith Doyle be elected onto the Group as a GGAT / archaeological / heritage representative.

Resolved that Judith Doyle, GGAT be elected as a member of the Advisory Group.

15 Future Meeting Format - Discussion of format of future meetings.

The Gower AONB Officer highlighted the need to ensure the productivity and usefulness of future meetings and for the Group to be aware of what was happening in the AONB.

He added that in recent meetings, only the AONB Team had provided reports and it was proposed that Group members provide update reports to future meetings, on behalf of the body they represent or as individuals.

In addition, he proposed that each meeting receives a presentation on a relevant topic in order to raise awareness.

Barbara Parry proposed that a presentation be provided to the next scheduled meeting on food production / diversity on Gower.

It was further added that training opportunities were expected from the Welsh Government in relation to inclusivity and nature recovery. Details would be circulated once received.

Resolved that: -

- 1) The contents of the report be noted.
- 2) A presentation be provided to the next scheduled meeting on food production / diversity on Gower.
- 3) Group members provide update reports to future meetings.
- 4) Details of training opportunities be circulated once received from Welsh Government.

The meeting ended at 7.25 pm

Chair