



City and County of Swansea

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

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

Monday, 25 March 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

### **Steering Group Members**

R Button  
S Heard  
H Osborn  
D Vine

R Cooper  
G Howe  
B Parry

S Crocker  
M Lewis  
D P Tucker

### **Co-opted Member(s)**

K E Marsh

### **Officer(s)**

Chris Lindley  
Paul Meller  
Jeremy Parkhouse  
Mike Scott

Gower AONB Team Leader  
Strategic Planning and Natural Environment Manager  
Democratic Services Officer  
Gower AONB Officer

**Also Present:** - I Button

### **Apologies for Absence**

Steering Group Members: D Vine

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## **28 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.

## **29 Minutes.**

**Resolved** that the Minutes of the Gower AONB Steering Group meeting held on 3 December 2018, be accepted as a correct record.

### 30 Matters Arising from the Minutes.

- Presentation - Port Eynon / Horton Feasibility Study - Bro Partnership

The Steering Group sought clarity on progress made since the previous meeting and whether any recommendations had been made to the bus services. Chris Lindley, Gower AONB Team Leader stated that various responses had been received and Peter Beynon, Destination Development Co-ordinator would be providing an update presentation to the RDP meeting in April 2019. He added that no recommendations had been made regarding improving services and the next stage would include more detail.

The Steering Group commented that Gower was served by a very good bus service.

### 31 Gower AONB Management Plan.

The Gower AONB Team Leader presented a report on the Gower AONB Management Plan. It was outlined that an updated version of the Action Plan for 2018-21 had been agreed by Swansea Council with Natural Resources Wales (NRW), as the delivery basis for its AONB Partnership grant-aid programme. The first step recommended that the Action Plan be updated and reviewed to include an extension to cover the remainder of the existing plan period (up to 2022).

The report provided a commentary / review of progress to date against the actions / objectives in the Action Plan and also recommended a set of actions that covered the remainder of the current plan period (up to 2022).

The Steering Group discussed the following: -

- The apparent lack of consultation between Planning and the Gower AONB Team;
- A number of small issues occurring in Gower that were having an effect upon the AONB, e.g. The National Trust establishing an Orchard in a field above Fall Bay;
- How the Gower AONB Team focussed upon what it can / cannot do, the impact of LDP policies in protecting the AONB and use of the AONB Design Guide;
- Objective 22 – Develop a clear understanding of the recreation activities in the AONB and around the coast, particularly the progress of the 'Wales Activity Mapping Project';
- Objective 29 – Improve the provision of sustainable and active travel networks and services across the AONB – particularly linking bus services to the coastal path similarly to Pembrokeshire and sustainable transport / active travel grants available from Welsh Government;
- The apparent need for more investment in and more emphasis upon Gower AONB by Swansea Council;
- The investment of the Council by providing two dedicated officers, supported by a network of officers to support the AONB;
- No budgetary issues were raised regarding the AONB and the value placed upon the AONB by the Council.

**Resolved** that the contents of the report and Gower Management Plan be noted.

### 32 Sustainable Development Plan.

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

He outlined that Welsh Government had confirmed the SDF budget for 2018/19 as £55,000, with the same for 2019/20. The fund was now heavily committed, both for 2019/20 and 2020/21. Details for 2018/19 were provided as follows: -

- **2018/19**

|   |             |
|---|-------------|
| Total Funds available                         | £ 55,000.00 |
| Committed Funds                               | £ 55,000    |
| Uncommitted Funds                             | £ 0         |
| Applications under consideration by the panel | £ 0         |

During the current year, 16 projects were approved with SDF funding for 2018/19, achieving a full spend of the SDF budget.

The Committed Funds figure included the CCS Management Fee of £5,500 (10%). Future years were outlined as follows: -

- **2019/20**

£37,160 committed, with 4 applications worth £17,840 anticipated.

- **2020/21**

£28,000 committed, with 3 applications worth £27,000 anticipated.

The Steering Group asked questions of the Officer, who responded accordingly. Discussions were on the following: -

- SDF report to the Partnership Annual Meeting;
- SDF reporting procedures.

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

### 33 Dark Sky Project Update.

The Gower AONB Team Leader provided the Dark Sky Project Update report.

He outlined the activity that had taken place since the last AONB Steering Group meeting to progress the application to become an internationally-recognised Dark Sky Community.

It was added that the Gower AONB Team had purchased 4 Sky Quality Meters (SQM) units for future annual monitoring surveys. Gower Ambassadors and other volunteers would also be attending a training course on 27 March to enable them to undertake the annual monitoring.

In addition, the Project Steering Group (comprising reps from Swansea Council, Gower Society and Dark Sky Wales) would meet shortly to discuss / approve the draft application. The formal application would be submitted to the International DarkSky Association (IDA) at the end of May 2019.

It was noted that the Gower Society had generously provided financial support for the project.

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

### **34 Local Development Plan.**

Paul Meller, Strategic Planning and Natural Environment Manager provided the Steering Group with a verbal update on the Local Development Plan (LDP).

He outlined that the LDP was adopted by Swansea Council on 28 February and the six week challenge period ended on 11 April 2019. A number of policies within the LDP related to the AONB and the AONB Team had direct input into the drafting of these policies. The LDP would be available to view on the Council website and will be published after 11 April 2019.

The Steering Group asked a number of questions regarding the report which were responded to by the Officer. Discussions centred around the following: -

- Swansea Council actively using the LDP and all relevant officers working collaboratively to ensure it was delivered successfully;
- The LDP being the most up to date plan in Wales;
- All previous policies / guidance matching the LDP;
- The LDP requiring developments to have a larger percentage of affordable housing, proposed developments at Pennard and Scurlage and the need for further affordable housing development throughout Gower / potential sites;
- The huge amount of work put in by officers to deliver the LDP.

The Chair and Steering Group thanked the Strategic Planning and Natural Environment Manager and his team for their work.

**Resolved** that: -

- 1) The contents of the report be noted;
- 2) A presentation on the different sections of the LDP applicable to the AONB be provided to a future meeting.

**35 Gower Landscape Partnership - Summary Final Report.**

The Gower Landscape Partnership Summary Final report was provided 'for information'.

The Gower AONB Team Leader / Gower AONB Officer outlined the content of the report and thanked all the individuals / organisations who had contributed to the project. They also highlighted that the project went from high risk to low risk at the end and the was a reflection of the work completed.

Discussions considered potential opportunities for the future, employing less consultants on future projects, establishing a wider brief than tourism only on future projects and having visible project legacies.

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

**36 Gower AONB Partnership Annual Forum - 24 June 2019.**

The Gower AONB Officer stated that the Annual Partnership Group meeting on 24 June 2019 would include elections to the Steering Group, SDF Panel and SDF Appeals Panel. He outlined some of the proposed events scheduled to take place during the next year.

Potential venues for the Annual Forum included Reynoldston Hall, Penclawdd Community Centre and Pennard Community Centre.

**Resolved** that the Democratic Services Officer confirms one of the above as a venue for the Partnership Annual Forum on 24 June 2019.

**37 Plastic Collections from Campsites.**

It was noted that Swansea Council had commenced plastic collections from campsites which was a very positive change.

**38 Ash Dieback.**

Hamish Osborn, NRW explained that Ash Dieback was beginning to have a significant impact on Gower, particularly the land managed by NRW. He added that matters would get worse and highlighted the toolkit which provided guidance on Facebook. He also circulated the NRW newsletter highlighting the disease.

**39 Sea Wall at Llanmadoc.**

Progress regarding repairing the sea wall at Llanmadoc was requested.

It was advised that funding was being sought and it was hoped that a solution would be found.

The meeting ended at 8.55 pm

**Chair**