

BRECON BEACONS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

Telephone: (01874) 624437

Plas y Ffynnon
Cambrian Way
Brecon
Powys
LD3 7HP

Dear Member

A meeting of the **CORPORATE RESOURCES COMMITTEE** will be held in **THE MAIN CONFERENCE ROOM, PLAS Y FFYNNON, BRECON** on **THURSDAY 29TH JANUARY 2004** at **10.00AM** when your attendance is requested.

Yours sincerely

CHRISTOPHER GLEDHILL
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Cllr J Griffiths (Chairman)
Cllr Mrs M Tunnicliffe
Cllr G Jones
Cllr Mrs J Jones
Cllr E T Morgan
Cllr Mrs M Morris
Cllr E Williams
Cllr M Thomas

Cllr Mrs I Lewis
Cllr A Breeze (Deputy Chairman)
Mrs J Horton McNichol
Mrs J Charlton
Mr R Murray
Mrs M Taylor
Mr J Suter

Fire Evacuation Advice

***In the event of a fire, please exit the building via the main staircase,
and assemble in the car park at Assembly Point 3***

**MEMBERS ARE REMINDED TO BRING THEIR COPIES
OF THE BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT PLAN TO THE
MEETING FOR REFERENCE**

AGENDA

1.0 CORRESPONDENCE

To receive and consider the attached schedule of correspondence and make any recommendations thereon. (Below).

2.0 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To receive any declarations of interest from members relating to items on the agenda. ***Members' attention is drawn to the sheet attached to the attendance sheet and the need to record their declarations.***

3.0 MINUTES

To receive and adopt the minutes of the Corporate Resources Committee meeting held on 13th November 2003, and authorise the Chairman to sign them as a true record. (**Enclosure 1**).

4.0 INSURANCE PRESENTATION

Stephen Halsal of Marsh will give a presentation on insurance.

FINANCIAL ITEMS

5.0 BUDGET MONITORING REPORT 2003/2004 *Audrey M Oakley*

The Authority's revenue and capital expenditure and income reports for 2003/2004 are attached at **Enclosures 2 and 3**.

Work is currently being undertaken with budget managers to identify any overspends/underspends in order to project out-turn figures for 2003/04. A verbal report will be given at the Corporate Resources Committee meeting.

Members will wish to note that the projected outturn figures for the ANPA 2003 Conference are that only £10,000 of the £25,000 allocated from reserves is likely to be used. We are awaiting the final two or three invoices.

a) **Financial, Staffing and Improvement implications: Saving in reserves of £15,000.**

- b) **Equality Issues: No implications.**
- c) **Sustainability Appraisal: No implications.**
- d) **Human Rights: No implications.**
- e) **Background Papers: None.**

Recommendation: *To consider and approve the reports at Enclosures 2 and 3.*

Contact Officer: For further information contact Audrey Oakley on 01874 624437.

6.0 STATEMENT ON RESERVES

Audrey M Oakley

A Statement of Reserves and Provisions as at 31 December 2003 is shown at **Enclosure 4**.

- a) **Financial, Staffing and Improvement implications: The reserves have been held at £225,000 as instructed by members at the last Corporate Services Committee.**
- b) **Equality Issues: No implications.**
- c) **Sustainability Appraisal: No implications.**
- d) **Human Rights: No implications.**
- e) **Background Papers: None.**

Recommendation: *Members are asked to note the Reserves and Provisions Statement as at Enclosure 4.*

Contact Officer: For further information contact Elaine Standen or Alan Elliott on 01874 624437.

7.0 LEVY AND NOTICE TO UNITARY AUTHORITIES

Huw Morse

The Authority has been advised that the final revenue settlement for the three Welsh National Park Authorities is likely to be 7.8% and that the CAG formula will be used this year, but this has not yet been ratified by the Welsh Assembly Government.

Therefore it is proposed that a letter of notice of intention to levy should be sent out to the relevant Unitary Authorities after the Corporate Resources meeting on 29th January 2004 in accordance with the National Park Authorities (Levies) (Wales) Regulation 1995, subject to ratification from the Welsh Assembly Government. These regulations state that the levy shall be issued before 15 February in the financial year preceding the financial year for which the levy is issued. The Regulation provides guidance as to the maximum amount of the levy and to the apportionment of the levy.

The apportionment between the Unitary Authorities for the Brecon Beacons National Park levy is as set out in **Enclosure 5**, (subject to confirmation from the Welsh Assembly Government). The levy requires the Unitary Authorities to provide sums calculated in accordance with Section 72 levy requirement.

The regulations allow for a National Park Authority to issue a levy for a sum greater than the Authority's 25%, providing that the Authority has given prior consent in writing.

- a) **Financial, Staffing and Improvement implications: Growth of 7.8% has enabled unavoidable commitments to be funded as well as some growth items.**
- b) **Equality Issues: No implications.**
- c) **Sustainability Appraisal: No implications.**
- d) **Human Rights: No implications.**
- e) **Background Papers: None.**

Recommendation: That officers be instructed to issue a levy at the maximum amount in the proportions as set out in the Schedule to Regulation 5 of the National Park Authorities (Levies) (Wales) Regulations 1995, subject to the provisions regarding increased levies (Regulation 6(4)).

Contact Officer: For further information contact Elaine Standen or Alan Elliott on 01874 624437.

8.0 THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CIPFA PRUDENTIAL CODE

Elaine Standen

8.1 Background

Following the ratification of the Local Government Act 2003, the Authority has, from 2004/05, the ability to finance capital expenditure by borrowing, provided it complies with the requirements of the Prudential Code. The Code gives significant new responsibilities to Members to ensure that any borrowing is affordable and prudent. According to Section 3(1) of the Local Government Act 2003 "A local authority shall determine and keep under review how much money it can afford to borrow". The principal mechanism by which this is to be achieved is the setting of indicators as laid down by CIPFA's Prudential Code. CIPFA's guidance on implementing the Code states that; "setting and revising indicators must be carried out by the same body that takes decisions on the authority's budget decisions about affordability should be made by elected members supported by the framework supplied by the Prudential Code and by the advice of their Chief Finance Officer". The Chief Finance Officer (CFO) has significant new responsibilities under the Code. The CFO is required to ensure that all relevant matters are reported to Committee and to establish procedures to monitor performance and determine the affordability of the Authority's financial plans.

In setting/revising the Prudential Code indicators, the Authority must consider: -

- Affordability
- Prudence/sustainability of the resulting borrowing requirements
- Value for money (i.e. proper appraisal of spending/financing options)
- Asset management planning (an asset management plan must be in place)
- Strategic objectives for the Authority
- Practicality (can expenditure plans be achieved with the resources available?)

The CFO should ensure that the Prudential Code indicators are regularly reviewed by members and updated to reflect changes in strategy or any other developments.

The Authority should have a 3-year capital programme in place, a forecast of future revenues and a treasury management strategy. The Authority's capital programme must be underpinned by asset management and capital investment strategies.

If the Authority decides to finance its capital programme by external borrowing, it must consider the financial impact of this over the whole period during which the borrowing will be repaid, to ensure that the programme is affordable in the context of other spending priorities. Under the Code, revenue and capital spending plans for at least the next three years must be considered to forecast future calls upon resources and whether these are affordable. The CFO is responsible for deciding whether spending forecasts for more than three years should be made if significant changes to expenditure/resources are anticipated in the longer term.

The full revenue impact of any capital investment should be reported to Members so that a proper judgement about spending priorities can be made. This should include all future costs and savings arising from the investment as well as an analysis of significant risks which may impact on the affordability of the project (eg the risk of cost overruns). Local Authorities will be required to consider the implications of capital spending plans for Council Tax levels. National Parks have a predetermined level of grant which places a ceiling on what can be spent and presumably will not be required to do this, although this issue is not specifically covered by the guidance.

8.2 The Prudential Indicators

The Authority can decide not to borrow money to support its capital programme. Instead, National Park Grant together with grants from other sources and capital receipts, if available, may continue to be used. However, the process of using the Prudential Indicators to determine the affordability of the Authority's plans must still take place. In preparing this initial set of indicators, the assumption has been made that the Authority will not borrow externally to finance its capital programme over the next three years. Any future decision to borrow would need, in order to comply with the Code, to have regard to prudence and affordability, i.e. in the context of a fully costed and appraised three-year capital programme, supported by a comprehensive asset management strategy and capital expenditure strategy which could then be considered by Members in the light of the indicators and principles laid down by the Code.

The Prudential Indicators are considered under 3 headings: - affordability, prudence, and treasury management. As well as the indicators required by the Code, the CFO could use other appropriate indicators to convey an accurate picture of the financial position to Members.

8.3 Affordability Indicators

1) Capital Expenditure (gross)

This indicates the resource requirements of the capital programme over the next three years. Figures for 2005-2007 are not yet based on specific expenditure plans but reflect an assumption that the Authority would wish to return to historical capital investment levels. They can be revised as more information is available.

Actual	Revised	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate
2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07
£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
414	334	50	50	50

2) Financing costs

This indicates the current and future cost to the Authority of external borrowing. As there is nil borrowing, this is represented by interest income on cash balances and is therefore negative. It has been assumed that interest rates remain stable and cash balances increase in line with the National Park Grant.

Actual	Revised	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate
2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07
£	£	£	£	£
(36,920)	(15,000)	(15,000)	(15,500)	(15,900)

3) Net revenue stream (National Park Grant plus Levies)

The net revenue stream is programmed to increase by 3% per year in 2005/6 and 2006/7. It represents the net resources available to the Authority to finance all its expenditure.

Actual	Revised	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate
2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07
£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
3,277	3,810	4,049	4,166	4,287

4) Ratio of financing costs to net revenue stream

This will again be negative as financing costs are negative. In an authority with borrowing, this would indicate what proportion of annual revenue was tied up in repayment of debt.

Actual	Revised	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate
2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07
%	%	%	%	%
(1.1)	(0.4)	(0.4)	(0.4)	(0.4)

5) Estimate of the incremental impact of capital investment decisions on funds available to finance the revenue budget.

(NB. Local authorities here calculate the impact on Council Tax but as there is a ceiling on the National Park Authority's approved expenditure that indicator is not applicable, an alternative indicator of the impact on revenue resources has been inserted in its place on the basis that all net capital expenditure will be financed from revenue. A 3% annual increase in 2005/6 and 2006/7 has been assumed.)

Total revenue budget for 2004/7 with current capital expenditure plans (ie nil spend 2004/7).

Estimate	Estimate	Estimate
2004/05	2005/06	2006/07
£000	£000	£000
4,048	4,170	4,295

Total revenue budget for 2004/7 with proposed capital expenditure plans as per item (1)

Estimate	Estimate	Estimate
2004/05	2005/06	2006/07
£000	£000	£000
3,999	4,120	4,245
100*	103*	106*

*Yearly increase (04/05 = 100)

6) Capital financing requirement

This shows an authority's underlying need to borrow for a capital purpose. This is distinguished in the Prudential Code from general borrowing, which may be for cashflow management purposes, in accordance with the CIPFA Code of Treasury Management. This Authority has had a positive cash position since 1996 and has therefore no general borrowing.

Actual	Revised	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate
2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07
£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
3	0	0	0	0

7) External Debt

The Authority is required by the Code to set authorised and operational limits for external debt.

The authorised limit equates to the authorised limit for all borrowing plus that for other long-term liabilities. It must be set and revised by Members and should not be exceeded. It empowers the Authority to borrow money and would be used in this instance to finance a short-term cashflow shortfall. The Authority has not, to date, experienced such a shortfall so this limit is precautionary only at this stage.

	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate
	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07
	£000	£000	£000
Borrowing	500	500	500
Long-term liabilities	0	0	0

The operational boundary is based on the Authority's probable level of borrowing and may occasionally be breached. It acts as an early warning of unexpected increases in borrowing. Breaches should be monitored by the CFO and reported to Members.

It is recommended that the operational boundary be initially set at nil to reflect the Authority's current debt-free status and cash balances.

	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate
	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07
	£000	£000	£000
Borrowing	0	0	0
Long-term liabilities	0	0	0

8.4 Prudence Indicators

1) Net Borrowing and Capital Financing Requirement

If an authority borrows over a three-year period to finance its revenue operations, an unsustainable level of revenue expenditure is indicated. The Prudential Code therefore requires an authority to compare net borrowing (ie all borrowing) with the capital financing requirement (ie borrowing needed to finance capital expenditure) to ensure that the former is not substantially higher than the latter. For the Authority over the next three years, both these elements are currently expected to be nil.

	<i>Estimate</i>	<i>Estimate</i>	<i>Estimate</i>
	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07
	£000	£000	£000
Capital Financing Requirement	0	0	0
Net Borrowing	0	0	0

2) Prudent Treasury Management

The Authority has adopted CIPFA's Code of Practice for Treasury Management and therefore complies with this aspect of the Prudential Code. Accordingly, the Treasury Management Plan for the year follows.

It is recommended that the Authority continues to maintain its borrowing at nil. Temporary borrowing to finance any cashflow shortfall is to be a maximum of £500,000. All daily cash surpluses will be automatically invested with the Authority's bankers on an immediate access basis. Long-term investments will be nil.

8.5 Treasury Management Prudential Indicators

These indicators are designed to ensure that an authority does not expose itself to unacceptable risks in relation to interest rate fluctuations on sums borrowed/invested by the authority. Those relating to borrowing have not application to the Authority while it is debt free. Accordingly, the limits are recommended to be as follows for fixed and variable interest rates receivable on short-term cash surplus investments.

	2004/05 £000	2005/6 £000	2006/07 £000
Total projected interest receivable on cash and at bank	15	15.5	15.9
Upper limit for fixed rate (%)	0	0	0
Upper limit for variable rate (%)	100	100	100
Effective range within which interest exposures will be managed			
Fixed rate 0% or	0	0	0
Variable rate 100% or	1,500	1,500	1,500

All surpluses are expected to be held on an immediate access basis. There will therefore be no risk in relation to the cost of early realisation of fixed-term investments before full term.

8.6 Conclusion and recommendations

The implementation of the Prudential Code allows the Authority to determine whether to borrow to finance its capital programme for the first time but also imposes substantial new responsibilities on both Members and Officers to ensure that a robust system of capital investment planning and treasury management is in place.

- a) **Financial, Staffing and Improvement implications: No implications.**
- b) **Equality Issues: No implications.**
- c) **Sustainability Appraisal: No implications.**
- d) **Human Rights: No implications.**
- e) **Background Papers: None.**

Recommendation: That Members note the contents of the report and approve the Prudential Indicators as set out in the report.

Contact Officer: For further information contact Elaine Standen or Alan Elliott on 01874 624437.

9.0 ESTIMATES 2004/2005

Audrey M Oakley

The Authority's revenue and capital expenditure and income estimates for 2004/2005 are attached at **Enclosure 6**.

Following discussions on the Business Improvement Plan targets for 2004/05, Strategic Intent and Directions, the Area Action Plans and other priority areas of expenditure identified by the Authority such as the Whole Authority Analysis, an in depth financial exercise was undertaken to identify funds.

The first part of the exercise identified core budget requirements including any pay award, incremental drift, inflation and the continued employment of the External Funding Officer. This took us right back to a zero based budget.

Then projects were identified and prioritised as being necessary to carry out the purposes of the Authority.

Following the identification of estimated budgets for core funding and projects the balance was put into a holding fund and options for spend were considered alongside proposals for generating more income to increase the funds available to allocate against priority spending issues.

The options for spend are identified at **Enclosure 6** but in order that Members may obtain a full understanding of the options the Chief Executive will give a power point presentation at the meeting.

- a) ***Financial, Staffing and Improvement implications: It is essential that the probable income targets be achieved otherwise projects will have to be delayed or cut.***
- b) ***Equality Issues: No implications.***
- c) ***Sustainability Appraisal: No implications.***
- d) ***Human Rights: No implications.***
- e) ***Background Papers: None.***

Recommendation: That the contents of Enclosure 6 be considered and approved.

Contact Officer: For further information contact Elaine Standen or Alan Elliott on 01874 624437.

10.0 TRADING REPORT APRIL TO DECEMBER 2003

Ruth Nicholson

Trading figures for the period April to December 2003 are attached at **Enclosure 7**.

10.1 National Park Visitor Centre

The National Park Visitor Centre has seen a significant increase (over 20%) in visitor numbers compared with the same period last year. November produced a particularly large increase with a significant rise in visitor numbers during off shoulder weekends.

Visitor numbers on weekdays during November and December have also improved mainly due to the Christmas Meals offered by the tearooms, particularly amongst local people.

The introduction of a one hour parking charge at the Centre (from late September) may have also had a positive effect on visitor numbers. Previously the shortest charge was for two hours and many visitors were unhappy about the level of fees for short-stay visits. For 2004/05 charges have been increased by 20% which should hopefully result in a £6000 increase in income from charges.

It is encouraging that all areas of income have continued to exceed estimates and targets to the end of December; and particularly, that car park income has continued to rise.

10.2 Craig-y-nos Country Park

Craig-y-nos has enjoyed an increase in visitor numbers of 13% compared with the same period in 2002 and 18% on 2001.

Trading has remained consistent but income from car parking has been higher than expected. There is a small anomaly with education income as a major educational client has yet to be invoiced.

10.3 Danywenallt Study Centre

Danywenallt has had a successful quarter with a 16% increase in occupation. The centre has seen an increase in school visits with an additional four groups groups visiting the centre compared with the same period last year. Encouragingly, seven Welsh groups have visited this year including four Welsh medium schools.

The centre has also hosted five walking groups and has seen an increase in self-catering bookings, mainly due to successful promotion.

10.4 Information Centres

Abergavenny Information Centre enjoyed a busy season and even though the Centre was open for two weeks less compared with last year, due to a late Easter, trading increased by 4%. The increase is thought to be the result of the introduction of new stock items such as key publications and and improvements to display of souvenirs.

Trading at Brecon Information Centre was slightly lower than last year with the final figure showing a 0.02% decrease. Reduced income was thought to be due to the non-availability of key National Park publications such as 'Walks in the Central Beacons' and 'Walks from Brecon'. These were delayed due to the heavy workload of the Graphic Designer but are ey work priorities for 2004/5.

Llandovery Information Centre saw a reduction in visitor numbers and income throughout the summer season with most visitors preferring coastal attractions. However, visitor numbers have increased in both November and December.

The Christmas Celebrations were a great success with families from Llandovery and the surrounding villages visiting the Centre to meet Father Christmas. A hundred and twenty children received a present and £400 has been collected. This will be donated to The Children's Hospital for Wales.

- a) ***Financial, Staffing and Improvement implications: The Centres have generated increased income, which will allow further improvements to be made.***
- b) ***Equality Issues: No implications***
- c) ***Sustainability Appraisal: Increased visitor numbers at the Centres, especially at the Mountain Centre, has increased the pressure on water and electricity supplies.***
- d) ***Background Papers: None***
- e) ***Human Rights: No implications***

Recommendation: That the contents of the report be noted.

Contact Officer: For further information contact Ruth Nicholson or Alan Elliott on 01874 624437.

11.0 EXTERNAL FUNDING

Jane Davies

11.1 Project Update

11.1.1 European Funding

Objective 1 - notification was received mid December that Objective 1, Priority 5 Measure 7 applications must be received no later than Friday 30 January 2004 as this round of funding is to close. BBNPA will be submitting an application to fund the Cylch Byw Project in Eastern Carmarthenshire. The total project is worth some £470,980 with a total contribution from EAGGF of £194,990 the balance of funds being drawn from contributions in kind, Private Sector, CCW and the Esme Fairbairn Foundation. The application has already been completed and will be submitted to WWEC in early January.

Objective 3 – The latest call for applications for the Objective 3 Programme has been issued with a deadline for submission on 23 January 2004. Objective 3 draws down funds from the European Social Fund. The ultimate aim of this programme is to develop people's skills and their potential for work. This round of funding is for projects with a start date of between 1 July 2004 and 31 October 2004. The project being developed for submission will be a partnership between Coleg Powys and BBNPA whereby we offer placements to students in the final year of the Land Based Agriculture course, the Catering and Hospitality course and the Outdoor Education (Sports Science) Course. Sian Pinner – Assistant Principal at Coleg Powys welcomed the opportunity to work in partnership with the National Park. The placements will form part of the curriculum and will assist students by providing valuable first hand experience. Many of our young people are looking to move out of the area, and by providing a link with the National Park and raising awareness of their surroundings we can encourage them to retain their skills within their home environment - this opportunity extends their experience and offers them a broader vision. The Objective 3 funds will help contribute to the cost of a project Co-ordinator who will be responsible for managing the programme and liaising with all parties involved. Match funding will also be utilised and possible sources have yet to be confirmed.

11.1.2 National Funding

Heritage Lottery Fund:

Brecon Castle and Town Walls – the application for a Project Planning Grant was submitted to HLF on 17 November 2003 and notice of the allocated Grants Officer received 11 December 2003. The HLF aim to process the application as quickly as possible but, we are to allow at least three months for the assessment of our application.

Central Beacons/Waterfalls Project – the first meeting of the working group set up to develop the Central Area HLF Project was held on 16 December 2003. The agreed title and common strand running through the Central Area is 'Recreational Access and Conservation' – the in-house working group consists of the External Funding and Business Support Manager, the Specialists, the Area Manager and a representative from the National Trust, the main partner in this project. The boundaries for this project were established and a framework for the development of the Project Planning Grant (PPG) application was agreed. The PPG will provide us with the necessary funds to engage a Project Officer to develop the main project for submission to HLF. A discussion took place regarding the inclusion/exclusion of the Gunpowder Works within this project. A meeting has been arranged with CADW for the New Year for consultation and guidance on the Gunpowder site, and the intention had been to take the Gunpowder Works out of the Waterfalls Project and develop it as a project in its own right. However, concern was expressed that if funding was unavailable from other sources for the Gunpowder Works it would again fall by the wayside if removed from the HLF application. The intention is, (depending on the outcome of the meeting with CADW in January) to approach The Ironbridge Institute (University of Birmingham) who offer post graduate courses in Heritage Management and Industrial Archaeology and offer them an opportunity to carry out fieldwork at the Gunpowder Factory this in turn will open up other avenues of funding.

Coalfields Regeneration Trust:

Henllys Vale Colliery – confirmation was received on 15 Dec 2003 from CRT that the Trust will accept an application from BBNPA. However, we are informed that support will in any event be modest as the project does not fit well with Trust priorities for 2003-06. At least we will have the opportunity to drawn down funds to cover an initial hydrological survey. A visit to both Henllys Vale and Herbert's Quarry has been arranged for 18 December 2003 to fully assess the extent of the required works and to obtain a perspective of the Heritage aspects of the two sites.

Biffaward

An application is being prepared for submission to the Small Grants Scheme of Biffaward. This scheme runs under The Landfill Tax Credit Scheme and applications can be made for funding up to £5000 for

projects which have the primary aim of improving an amenity located within 10 miles of a Biffa operation.

In this instance we require funding to carry out footbridge repairs and disabled access at the Gunpowder Works. Whilst these repairs are not a Health and Safety issue they are nevertheless essential to prevent any further deterioration in the condition of the existing footbridge.

Aggregates Levy Fund

A site meeting with David Eccles from the Aggregates Levy Fund has been arranged for Tuesday 6 January 2004 at Craig-y-Nos Country Park to re-consider the merits of our application for match funding from the ALF to enable us to carry out various improvements at the Country Park. This will be an opportunity to discuss funding requirements for other projects within the Park that will inevitably require match funding.

11.1.3 Other Funding Opportunities

A meeting was held on Thursday 11 December 2003 with The Wildscreen Trust, a UK registered charity whose charitable objectives are:

“To promote the conservation of nature for the purposes of study and research and to educate the public in the understanding and appreciation of nature, the awareness of its value and the need for its conservation”.

The Trust's projects seek to harness the power of wildlife images to encourage people to get involved in local, national or global conservation activities. The Wildscreen Trust aims to fulfil this mission through;

- Promoting the natural history film-making industry through the Wildscreen Festival.
- Developing ARKive, a 21st century Noah's Ark, (£4million project) which harnesses the latest digital technology to bring together, for the first time, the world's most important nature films, photographs, sound recordings and memories. This material is then used to build vivid and fact-backed portraits of Earth's endangered plants and animals, freely accessible via its website. ARKive is leading the virtual conservation effort - finding, sorting, cataloguing and copying key records of species and building them into a comprehensive and enduring audio-visual record.

Wildscreen has links with National Geographic, The Discovery Channel and the BBC Natural History Unit. They are keen to work with us and are prepared for us to link in to their web-site and for them to link in to ours. Wildscreen are also developing a Media Booth to be placed in Visitor

Centres offering interactive access into local endangered plants and species. Keen to work with all National Parks they are prepared to pursue a partnership with BBNPA in the first instance and may be willing to partner us in our funding applications and vice versa. The ARKive project is being designed so that anyone from school children to scientists can use it;

- Planet ARKive is designed for children with a reading age of 9-10 years
- ARKive Education is designed for teachers, educators and parents with lesson plans, project ideas and support materials.

A further meeting is to take place in the New Year to discuss opportunities to work together on a variety of projects to our mutual benefit.

11.2 Area Action Plans

At the time of preparation of this report priorities within the Area Action Plans requiring external funding were still to be finalised but are anticipated as follows;

EASTERN AREA

PROJECT	FINANCE	STAFF
Black Mountains Upland Project	Potential requirement for external funding in the future – may link in to Cross Border Initiative with funding from English Nature and CCW	Area Manager/Ecologist
Information - Gateway Centres. Abergavenny TIC, Hay TIC, Blaenavon TIC (World Heritage Site), Goytre Wharf/Pontypool.	Once projects finalised initial negotiations for funding to take place with Monmouthshire CC, Hay Town Council, Torfaen BC, British Waterways.	Area wardens, TIC staff, Visitor Services Manager
Educational – There are projects in existence that will require external funding but their future depends on the educational strategy	Educational Foundations and Trusts, ELWa, individual benefactors and Local Education Authorities	Educational Officer, Area Manager, Wardens.
Rights of Way	Crickhowell	Town ROW Officer, Area

Improvement Programme – Crickhowell, Llanthony, Blaenavon WHS Area Access – Community Programmes	Council, Torfaen BC, CCW, Interreg IIIB, SDF, Monmouthshire CC, Hereford CC, Brecknock Wildlife Trust.	Manager, Wardens, Community Services.
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CENTRAL AREA

PROJECT	FINANCE	STAFF
Central Beacons/Waterfalls-Recreational Access to include the Gunpowder Works, Cwm Porth Gwan Hepste – Communication and Interpretation	Heritage Lottery Fund – application for Project Planning Grant to support Project Co-ordinator, CADW, Local Authorities within Project area	External Funding Manager, Area Manager, Specialists, Visitor Services Manager
PROW improvements, Usk Valley Improvements	Local Authorities within the improvements area	Area Manager, Wardens.
Car Park Watch Scheme	Provision of vehicle for use by volunteers requested upon favourable terms from major commercial vehicle manufacturers	Area Manager, Wardens, Volunteers

WESTERN AREA

PROJECT	FINANCE	STAFF
Herberts Quarry/PenRhiw Wen	Aggregates Levy Scheme, Landfill Tax Credit Scheme	Area Manager, Landscape Architect, Wardens, Visitor Services Manager, Archaeologist
Henllys Vale Colliery	Coalfields Regeneration Trust funding up to £10K available for essential works all other funding opportunities likely to be jeopardised by remaining short term of	Landscape Architect, Area Manager, Wardens, Visitor Services Manager

	Management Agreement	
Carreg Cennen LNR	CADW, CCW	Area Manager, Visitor Services Manager, Solicitor
Garn Goch	CCW, CADW, Esme Fairbairn Foundation	Farm Liaison Officer, Area Manager, Wardens
Llandovery Information Centre/Llandeilo TIC	Carmarthenshire CC, Llandovery TC, WTB	Visitor Services Manager, Area Manager
Craig-y-Nos Country Park	Aggregates Levy, WTB, WDA	CP Manager, Area Manager, Visitor Services
PROW Network	County Councils within Network, WTB	Area Manager, Estate Team, ROW Officer

N.B The above **Priority Projects** taken from the Area Action Plans are only those projects with external funding requirements. All future external funding opportunities will be clearly identified prior to the implementation of the project and applications to the relevant sources will be made accordingly.

- a) **Financial, Staffing and Improvement Implications: See Area Action Plans (prepared by Area Managers) for full project finance details - all shortfalls to be met through external funding – staffing is as set out in the above tables.**
- b) **Equality Issues: No implications.**
- c) **Sustainability Appraisal: No implications.**
- d) **Human Rights: No implications.**
- e) **Background Papers: None.**

Recommendation: That the contents of the report be noted.

Contact Officer: For further information contact Jane Davies on 01874 624437.

12.0 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FUND

Helen Roderick/Jonathan Cook

12.1 Grant Awards Update

Four grants totaling £14,589 were approved at the November Panel meeting:

12.1.1 Brecon Community Action Team : Project Co-ordinator, Brecon Cyber Café

Brecon Community Action Team has worked in partnership with a number of local organisations to establish an IT facility for the community, catering for all ages, from upper primary school age to retirement. The main purpose of the Cyber Café is to provide affordable computer access to those who do not have computers at home. The facility was also established to provide an IT training resource for people who might feel inhibited in more formal or institutional settings. The café provides a friendly atmosphere in which young and old mix easily. The Cyber café was set up with the help of a two year SDF grant, which comes to an end at the end of December. Revenues from users and training have been secured during the last year although this has not yet reached a level where the café is financially sustainable. This grant covers the salary costs of a part time project co-ordinator for a year to further develop the cyber café and maximise revenue towards long term sustainability.

12.1.2 Llangynidr Burial Ground Trust – Ground Shoring System

In March 2004 the Llangynidr Burial Ground Trust were awarded £4,000 towards the cost of setting up a green burial ground in the village of Llangynidr. Following a risk assessment carried out at the site additional costs were identified, the major one being the requirement for a Grave Shoring System as the subsoil at the site consists of poorly graded glacial sand and gravel posing a risk to grave diggers, mourners and the general public. The Trust were therefore awarded an additional £4,000 towards the cost of purchasing a grave shoring system to eliminate the risks.

12.1.3 Talgarth Tourist Information & Telecentre

The Talgarth Information and Telecentre is an independently managed enterprise, located in the historic Tower Shop in the centre of town. A £4,369 grant was awarded to help finance a co-ordinator for a further 9

months. This co-ordinator will manage all aspects of the running of the Tourist Information and the telecentre, including recruitment and training of volunteers. The co-ordinator will also work to secure the continued funding of the Centre and improve revenues within it.

12.1.4 Bethlehem Walks

The Bethlehem Association is a small group of local residents wishing to promote the appreciation of the countryside and the antiquities of Bethlehem by an annual walk chosen from four routes. This will be for the benefit of inhabitants of Bethlehem and the general public. The walks will be in the form of a conducted tour and vary from four to six miles. It is intended to produce leaflets for the walks and to produce a guidebook with detailed information. A £900 grant was awarded.

12.2 Programme Spend 2003/04

The SDF financial spreadsheet is attached at **Enclosure 8**. New applications and requests for grant increase totalling £14,589 were approved at the last Grant panel meeting on 5th November 2003. On the basis that the fund still had £23,938 left to allocate the National Assembly has requested £20,000 be given back to them. This has been agreed on the basis that it is unlikely to be spent this year. We have requested that this amount be given back in 2004/05. This leaves £3,938 still to be allocated this year and of the projects already allocated money some projects will for one reason or another be unable to spend it this year. Of the money already allocated this year £113,911 remains unclaimed at the beginning of December. Of the revised £230,000 available in the current financial year, £226,062 has been allocated. The following funds are available for new projects during the current three year programme:

- 2003/04 - £3,938
- 2004/05 - £130,547
- 2005/06 - £140,862

- a) **Financial, Staffing and Improvement implications: No financial or staffing implications as SDF is a stand alone budget.**
- b) **Equality Issues: All SDF projects aim to address social inclusion and equality of opportunity issues.**
- c) **Sustainability Appraisal: All projects have been assessed according to the criteria established for the SDF programme by the Assembly.**

d) **Human Rights: None.**

e) **Background Papers: None**

Recommendation: To note the contents of the report.

Contact Officer: For further information contact Helen Roderick or Jonathan Cook on 01874 624437.

13.0 MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME 2004/2005 Audrey M Oakley

The new Members' Allowances Scheme came into force on 1st April 2003 and was adopted at the March NPA meeting following recommendations from the Three Park Members Working Group.

The current scheme is made up of the Special Responsibility Allowances (payable to Chairmen and Deputy Chairmen of Committees) and the Members' Attendance Allowance, ie the Basic Allowance of £2000 pa (payable in 12 equal monthly installments):

2003/2004 Scheme

	SRA £	Basic £
Chair of the Authority	3,000	2,000
Deputy Chair of the Authority	1,320	2,000
Chair of Corporate Resources	660	2,000
Deputy Chair of Corporate Resources	435	2,000
Chair of Strategy & Policy	600	2,000
Deputy Chair of Strategy & Policy	435	2,000
Chair of Development Control	2,000	2,000
Deputy Chair of Development Control	1,320	2,000
Chair of Access & Rights of Way	660	2,000
Deputy Chair of Access & Rights of Way	435	2,000
Chair of Standards	0	0
Deputy Chair of Standards	0	0
Other Standards Committee	0	0
Members x 14	-	28,000
	<u>10,925</u>	<u>48,000</u>

The scheme has now been reviewed and a recommendation is put before the Committee to increase the special responsibility allowance for Chairman and Deputy Chairman from 1st April 2004.

Proposed 2004/2005 Scheme

	SRA £
Chair of the Authority	3,075
Deputy Chair of the Authority	1,353
Chair of Corporate Resources	677
Deputy Chair of Corporate Resources	446
Chair of Strategy & Policy	677
Deputy Chair of Strategy & Policy	446
Chair of Development Control	2,050
Deputy Chair of Development Control	1,353
Chair of Access & Rights of Way	677
Deputy Chair of Access & Rights of Way	446
Chair of Standards	0
Deputy Chair of Standards	0
Other Standards Committee	0
Chair of Events	677
Deputy Chair of Events	446
	<u>12,323</u>

It is also recommended that we dispense with the Basic Allowance of £2000 and revert to an attendance allowance paid on attendance at each meeting (£35 per meeting is recommended), to be implemented on 1st April 2004.

As there are an estimated 80 meetings per year this will mean a basic allowance of £2,800 if Members attend.

Attendance: 80 meetings Φ Average 20 Members x 35 = 56,000
12,323
68,323

- a) **Financial, Staffing and Improvement implications: The increase has already been accommodated in the 2004/05 Estimates.**
- b) **Equality Issues: Only those members who attend meetings will be paid the attendance allowance.**
- c) **Sustainability Appraisal: No implications**
- d) **Human Rights: No implications**
- e) **Background Papers: None**

Recommendations:

- a) ***That the Basic Allowance of £2000 pa to all members be discontinued with effect from 1st April 2004;***
- b) ***That the Authority reverts to an Attendance Allowance of £35 to be paid on attendance at each meeting (limited to one claim per day) with effect from 1st April 2004;***
- c) ***That the increase in Special Responsibility Allowances as outlined in the report be approved, with effect from 1st April 2004.***

Contact Officer: For further information contact Audrey M Oakley on 01874 624437.

14.0 AREA ACTION PLANS

Chris Ledbury

Area Action Plans for the East, West and Central areas of the Park were considered by the Strategy and Policy Committee on 23rd January 2004.

The financial implications of these plans will be brought to this meeting of the Corporate Resources Committee with a tabled report and any recommendations.

- a) **Financial, Staffing and Improvement implications: An estimate of £140,000 has been provided for in the 2004/05 estimates.**
- b) **Equality Issues: No implications**
- c) **Sustainability Appraisal: No implications**

d) **Human Rights: No implications**

e) **Background Papers: None.**

Recommendation: That the report be noted.

Contact Officer: For further information contact Chris Ledbury on 01874 624437.

15.0 ICT REVIEW

Christopher Gledhill

15.1 Background

At their meeting of 13th November 2003, Members of the Corporate Resources Committee instructed the Chief Executive to commission a review of the Authority's ICT Services. Following that meeting and on advice from the Welsh Development Agency, Embrace IT was engaged to do this work.

15.2 Remit of the Consultants

The remit of this review was:

- Infrastructure and Systems Review
- How does BBNPA – ICT Strategy meet our business needs.
- Cost/Benefit Analysis of Alternatives
- Knowledge Management Needs
- Risk to Business continuity

15.3 Methods of Work

The consultants worked with staff over a two week period and conducted extensive interviews and analysis of our current systems and strategy.

15.4 Key Findings

ICT Team

- Hard working and committed ICT Team
- ICT Team reactive
- Lack pro-active Management
- Do not focus on business requirement

Systems and infrastructure

- No standardisation
- Unusable products
- Inconsistent procurement strategy
- No build scripts
- E-mail and file servers reliable
- Secure network
- Applications are platform independent

ICT Strategy

- ICT Strategy does not meet the business requirements
- Previous IT Manager was hands-on
- Limited Management information
- Poor project definition and planning

The review has been very comprehensive and having considered the recommendations, they fairly represent our needs as an organisation and conclude with four key recommendations.

15.5 ICT Consultants' Recommendations

- Produce a set of practical plans for the introduction of appropriate software and technology to support organisational objectives.
- A mechanism to keep ICT strategy in line with any changes in Corporate Strategy and legislation.
- Stable core systems meeting the needs of user community.
- An ICT team to be developed to support the growth of the computer system throughout the Authority and the needs for a dedicated help desk.

15.6 Next Steps

- a) Migrate to Microsoft products to provide main operating system.
- b) Introduce a standard desktop environment with manufacturers warranties and service contract. This would cost in the region of £89,000 but if leased over three years would bring the annual costs to £30,000. The benefits of this approach would be the introduction of software and hardware that would better meet our business outputs.

c) Develop and refocus our ICT Team to better meet the business needs of the Authority.

a) **Financial, Staffing and Improvement implications: Business improvement and approved effectiveness and efficiency. Possible leasing costs of £30,000.**

b) **Equality Issues: No implications**

c) **Sustainability Appraisal: IT Strategy linked to our Business Plan resulting in better targeting.**

d) **Human Rights: No implications**

e) **Background Papers: None.**

Recommendations:

a) ***That the report be noted;***

b) ***That the Chief Executive be authorised to tender for costs for the lease of software and hardware products to meet the recommendations of ICT review which should be in the region of £30,000 per annum.***

Contact Officer: For further information contact Christopher Gledhill on 01874 624437.

16.0 ADFWYIO: MATCH FUNDING FROM RESERVES – CRAIG-Y-NOS COUNTRY PARK
Chris Ledbury

Earlier this year a programme for improvement was developed for the Country Park with a total spend of £44,000. This was dependent on grant from Adfwyio, Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), The Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund (ALSF) and National Park Reserves. Unfortunately HLF and ALSF grant was not approved but in the meantime the Assembly has made additional funds available for improvements at Visitor Centres. The final situation is thus as follows:

Total spend £32,500, comprising £18,000 from Adfwyio, £10,000 from Welsh Assembly Government and £4,500 from Reserves. This total is being spent as follows:

- £10,000 on promotion and marketing including a joint leaflet with the Castle.
- £2,500 on events.
- £20,000 on signage and exhibition.

In order to make use of the Adfwyio funding all work must be completed by the 31st March. The work we will not be able to carry out is the path improvements for which a sum of £12,000 was originally allocated.

This report is for information purposes only.

- a) **Financial, Staffing and Improvement implications: A saving on the original allocation OF £10,000 from reserves has been achieved, and will be incorporated into the reserves statement.**
- b) **Equality Issues: Works will be designed to be accessible for all.**
- c) **Sustainability Appraisal: High positive impact on raising awareness.**
- d) **Human Rights: None.**
- e) **Background Papers: None.**

Recommendation: That Members note the contents of the report.

Contact Officer: For further information contact Richard Levy on 01874 624437.

17.0 FEES AND CHARGES 2004/2005

A note of Fees and Charges for the next financial year is attached at **Enclosure 9.**

17.1 Countryside

17.1.1 Danywenallt

The Youth Hostel Association (YHA) will make a basic charge of £19.20 for children and £23.50 for adults. The NPA will charge for educational services. The total charges are shown in **Enclosure 9.**

17.1.2 Craig-y-nos Country Park

Parking charges have been increased by an average of 18%.

17.1.3 The Mountain Centre

Parking charges have been increased by an average of 20%. However, it is not proposed to increase minibus fees as this is an important market for the Centre which is very sensitive to price change.

17.1.4 Education Fees

A simplified charging policy is being developed for the education service as set out at **Enclosure 9**.

17.2 **Conservation and Community**

17.2.1 Development Control

It is proposed to increase the costs of viewing files by 25%. This applies to request more than six files.

17.2.2 Local Biodiversity Action Plan

No changes proposed.

17.3 **Strategy and Formal Planning/Corporate Services**

All charges for strategy and policy are remaining static for 2004/05.

Photocopying costs are recommended to increase as they have not been increased for 4 years.

a) Financial, Staffing and Improvement implications: The increased income generated from the above charges for 2004/05 has already been incorporated into the estimates for 2004/05.

b) Equality Issues: No implications.

c) Sustainability Appraisal: No implications.

d) Human Rights: No implications.

e) Background Papers: None.

Recommendation: That the fees and charges for 2004/05 be considered and approved.

Contact Officer: For further information contact Chris Ledbury or Alan Elliott on 01874 624437.

18.0 BEACONS COUNTRY PRODUCTS/BEACONS LAMB PRODUCERS PROJECT
Alan Elliott

The above project was subject to a European Commission audit in September 2002 and has now been signed off.

The Commission originally provided an advance against the project and the excess grant monies, amounting to £37,500, have been provided for in the accounts of the Authority for a number of years.

Confirmation has now been received from the Commission that a reimbursement of 52,601.63 euros is payable on the due date of 15th January 2004.

The reimbursement was actioned within the stipulated timescale.

- a) ***Financial, Staffing and Improvement Implications: 52,601.63 euros repaid to the European Commission, funded from the creditor provision of £37,500 in the Balance Sheet of the Authority.***
- b) ***Equality Issues: No implications.***
- c) ***Sustainability Appraisal: No implications.***
- d) ***Human Rights: No implications.***
- e) ***Background Papers: European Commission Debit Note 3240505740 received 8th December 2003.***

Recommendation: That the contents of the report be noted.

Contact Officer: For further information contact Alan Elliott or Elaine Standen on 01874 624437.

19.0 LONG SERVICE AWARD

Audrey M Oakley

Attached at **Enclosure 10** is a list of staff who will be eligible for the £100 Long Service Award in the 2004/05 period.

- a) **Financial, Staffing and Improvement Implications: £100**
- b) **Equality Issues: No implications.**
- c) **Sustainability Appraisal: No implications.**
- d) **Human Rights: No implications.**
- e) **Background Papers: None**

Recommendation: That the contents of the report be noted.

Contact Officer: For further information contact Audrey Oakley or Liz Lewis on 01874 624437

20.0 ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Members are asked to agree the following recommendation in relation to items 21.0 to 24.0 on the agenda.

Recommendation: That pursuant to the provisions of Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business (Items 21.0 – 24.0) on the grounds that there would be disclosure to them of exempt information under Paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A, to the Act.

The following exempt reports are attached at **Enclosure 11**(circulated to members only) for members to consider and make any recommendations therein.

EXEMPT ITEMS – FINANCE

There are no exempt items relating to Finance.

EXEMPT ITEMS - HUMAN RESOURCES

21.0 SICKNESS REPORT

NOT FOR PUBLICATION - This report contains exempt information as defined in paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

22.0 HEALTH AND SAFETY REPORT

NOT FOR PUBLICATION - This report contains exempt information as defined in paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

23.0 PROBATION REPORTS

NOT FOR PUBLICATION - This report contains exempt information as defined in paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

24.0 STRESS COUNSELLING REPORT

NOT FOR PUBLICATION - This report contains exempt information as defined in paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

HUMAN RESOURCES REPORT

25.0 STAFFING REPORT

Audrey M Oakley

A list of appointments and terminations since the last Corporate Resources Committee is attached at **Enclosure 12.**

- a) **Financial, Staffing and Improvement implications: No implications**
- b) **Equality Issues: No implications**
- c) **Sustainability Appraisal: No implications**
- d) **Human Rights: No implications**
- e) **Background Papers: None.**

Recommendation: That the contents of the report be considered and noted.

Contact Officer: For further information contact Audrey Oakley on 01874 624437.

26.0 LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT REPORT Audrey M Oakley

A monthly summary of formal training, which has taken place in November and December 2003 is attached at **Enclosure 13.**

- a) **Financial, Staffing and Improvement implications: No implications**
- b) **Equality Issues: No implications**
- c) **Sustainability Appraisal: No implications**
- d) **Human Rights: No implications**
- e) **Background Papers: None.**

Recommendation: That the contents of the report be considered and noted.

Contact Officer: For further information contact Audrey M Oakley on 01874 624437.

27.0 CHILD PROTECTION POLICY Audrey M Oakley

The Authority has been working on a child protection policy, which is attached, at **Enclosure 14.**

This policy has been developed in full consultation with Unison and staff.

- a) **Financial, Staffing and Improvement implications: No implications**
- b) **Equality Issues: No implications**
- c) **Sustainability Appraisal: No implications**

d) **Human Rights: Considered and incorporated**

e) **Background Papers: None.**

Recommendation: That the Child Protection policy be adopted

Contact Officer: For further information contact Audrey M Oakley or Hannah Payne on 01874 624437.

IMPROVEMENT ITEMS

28.0 CORPORATE PERFORMANCE REVIEW THIRD QUARTER 2002/03

Eric Bowles

28.9 Performance Review Group – 3rd meeting 7th January 2004

This third meeting of the Performance Review Group examined the cumulative work targets and Performance Indicators to the end of November 2003.

The group monitored the service area work targets and PIs, bringing a range of primarily operational recommendations to the notice of the Senior Management Team (SMT). The following issues from that action plan are highlighted as being of particular interest and importance for Members of the Corporate Resources Committee to note:

28.2 General points

Suggested improvement to the functioning of the Performance Review Group

- At the beginning of each month Section Heads should sit down with those responsible in their section for the collection of performance indicators and work targets to establish the progress of the previous month. Any problems to be reported by the section head to the next SMT meeting.
- Once a quarter two officers from each section to attend the Performance review group meeting, fully briefed to appraise the group of any notable issues.
- Chair of PRG to report to next SMT and prepare subsequent report to Corporate Resources Committee.

2004/05 Work Targets and Performance Indicators

At the earliest convenient moment a meeting of all staff involved in the production of work targets and performance indicators be arranged to review existing targets and indicators and produce revised ones for the coming financial year. Using the lessons learnt from the past years PRG.

ICT

There is an immediate need to implement an Interim IT Strategy whilst the outcome of the full review is being decided, such a strategy to identify strategic work priorities. To relieve pressure on the IT staff that remain it is suggested that members of staff with IT queries should only approach the IT section via their help desk.

A Recommendation to Corporate Resources Committee: Approve the suggested improvements to the Performance Review Process, the setting up of a review of targets and indicators, and the need to establish an interim IT strategy.

28.3 Detailed issues

Access and Rights of Way

Kwt 6 Increase % of PROW network that is open and useable to 75%.

Highlighted issue: Cannot deliver this target due to resource constraint – one estate worker post frozen, another working light duties due to sickness.

B Recommendation to Corporate Resources Committee: To review the Estate Warden posts as part of the Area Action Plan Work Programme.

Kwt 10 Cross border initiative with CCW, BBNP and Herefordshire CC

Highlighted Issue: Partnership stalled due to negative attitude of Herefordshire.

C Recommendation to Corporate Resources Committee: Note that this initiative may no longer be possible

Kwt 16 Achieve access agreement for Hills Tram Road (World Heritage Site)

Highlighted Issue: Negotiations broken down due to refusal of landowner to accept District Valuer's valuation

D Recommendation to Corporate Resources Committee: Note that this access agreement may not be possible

Asbly 1: Have in place by Dec 2003 (a) efficient handling of access restrictions applications, and (b) assisting those wanting to dedicate their land for access and (c) completed an initial review of Park access forums

Highlighted Issue: BBNP have done all they can, now up to CCW as lead partner. (a) and (b), and WAG to provide guidance for Forums(c).

E Recommendation to Corporate Resources Committee: Note that progressing these indicators further is now dependent on other agencies.

Community Strategies

Highlighted issue: The Community Strategies that are the responsibility of the Unitary Authorities but which Officers and Members of this authority have been contributing to will be written up and published by March 2004. It is essential that the NPA continue to monitor the effect these strategies have on the National Park, as their importance will increase as they undergo further review.

F Recommendation to Corporate Resources Committee: Note the above need to monitor closely the effects of the Community Strategies on the National Park.

Development Control

Kwt 1 Improve access and quality of information to the DC committee, public and organisations

Highlighted issue Preliminary Enquiry service now withdrawn due to work load and loss of staff. This has started to cause an increase in enquiries to the development plan section with requests for site visits and advice.

G Recommendation to Corporate Resources Committee: Note the unforeseen consequences of withdrawing part of the DC service.

Kwt 2 Improving output of application decisions

Highlighted issue The gradual improvement seen over the last 8 months from 23% up to 30% is anticipated to fall back as the DC team copes with the increasing work load whilst waiting for the replacement of staff who have left.

H Recommendation to Corporate Resources Committee: Note the likely falling off of improvement to this target over the next quarter.

Kwt 7 Compliance monitoring

Highlighted issue Compliance monitoring was suspended for two months during the replacement of the last Condition Monitoring Officer.

I Recommendation to Corporate Resources Committee: Note that compliance monitoring has been set back by two months.

Information Centres

Kwt 2 Monitor use of EPOS tills to ensure improved stock-taking arrangements are in place.

Highlighted issue: Stock system not working properly and MC tills not functioning as they should.

J Recommendation to Corporate Resources Committee: Note delay in achieving this work target until IT system is improved

Kwt 3 Ensure e-mail links are installed at three centres.

Highlighted issue: e-mail links are not functioning properly for a variety of reasons

K Recommendation to Corporate Resources Committee: Note delay in achieving this work target until IT system is improved

Information and Interpretation

Kwt 6 Increase retail sales and cut costs at Waterfalls car park to achieve 20% reduction in net costs

Highlighted issue: Unlikely to be met as the only item on sale is the guide to the waterfalls area, and staff not trained in retailing.

L Recommendation to Corporate Resources Committee: Note it is unlikely that this ambitious target will be met.

Bbpu 1 Number of participants on guided walks -target 1300

Highlighted issue: Unlikely to be met as cumulative total in 8 months was only 301

M Recommendation to Corporate Resources Committee: Note it is unlikely that this target will be met.

Strategy and Policy

Bbsp 4 Rate of development: Stock of implement able planning permissions against percentage progress through plan period.

Highlighted issue: with only 20% of the plan period completed, 42% of the expected total dwellings have already been granted permission. This reflects the demand for development and may cause us to have to review the housing allocations in the UDP at an earlier date than anticipated

N Recommendation to Corporate Resources Committee: Note the implications of granting planning permissions at the rate they have been coming into the authority.

BBSP5. Location of housing development in relation to settlement hierarchy -% of units permitted in each tier: Countryside Target 5%

Highlighted issue: Cumulative figure now running at 29%. This reflects the high demand for barn conversions which are allowed for in the Local Plan, but goes against the attempts to concentrate development in the settlements as per the hierarchy. This trend is likely to grow without the additional problem of precedents being set at DC committee with ruins that fall outside of policy being granted consent. There is a need to look at the implication these conflicting objectives urgently.

O Recommendation to Corporate Resources Committee: An investigation into the implications of these issues be undertaken ASAP by Consultants and paid for from the WAG Planning Improvement Grant.

- a) **Financial, Staffing and Improvement implications: All of the recommendations are about Improvement to the Authority's performance.**
- b) **Equality issues: No implications**
- c) **Sustainability Appraisal: No implications**
- d) **Background papers: None**
- e) **Human Rights: No implications**

Recommendation: Members are asked to give consideration to the above recommendations numbered A to O.

Contact Officer: For further information contact Audrey Oakley or Eric Bowles on 01874 624437.

29.0 WHOLE AUTHORITY ANALYSIS: BBNP ACTION PLAN

Chris Gledhill

The Whole Authority Analysis action plan is attached at **Enclosure 15** and highlights progress to date.

Members and Officers of the Whole Authority Analysis Task and Finish Group met on 8th May 2003 and considered the progress on the Action Plan. In considering the progress made it was also agreed to identify those actions completed and or achieved. (ii) projects still ongoing, (iii) projects/actions that should have been started and or completed but not yet started. This latter category could be interpreted as a perceived risk.

Members' attention is drawn to the good progress being made, this despite the ANPA 2003 Conference last October which utilised significant staff and members time.

29.1 Areas of concern

These can be summarised as follows:

- (i) National Park Authority decision database (Audit Commission in Wales [ACIW] 6). This will not be achievable until the new IT strategy and systems are in place.

- (ii) Lack of Corporate Health and Safety Documents and Policies (Risk O18). This is of concern and the new Human Resources Manager is progressing with this. It is drawn to Members' attention that we have been granted a licence from the Adventure Activity Licence Authority and this was achieved by June 2003.
- (iii) Communication Strategy (AC.W11). While this is highlighted as a risk, the draft strategy will be presented to the National Park Authority for their consideration in January 2004.
- (iv) Low public awareness of Brecon Beacons National Park Authority by residents (Risk S7). This is linked to AC.W6 see (i) above. Decisions about the Out and About Newspaper are dependent on consideration of the draft revenue estimates. The Abergavenny Chronicle now has a regular column.
- (v) Lack of Final Risk Assessments (Risk O13). This review is ongoing and is being carried out by the Health and Safety Group and key managers. As it is not completed it must be viewed as a high risk area of operations.
- (vi) Lack of continuity planning for Brecon Beacons National Park Authority buildings (Risk O14). No progress has been made due to lack of resources from the Assembly Government for Asset Management and particularly due to the review of the IT services. The National Park Authority does have Emergency Management Procedures in place and does have insurance for business disruption.
- (vii) Lack of Criminal Records Bureau Vetting for Volunteers (Risk O17). This is a medium risk and not able to progress due to the high volume of work currently being undertaken by our Human Resources staff.
- (viii) Lack of adequate building security (Risk H30). This has been partially resolved due to the move to Plas y Ffynnon, however we are in discussions with our new landlords over emergency panic buttons and keypad entry into the building. Currently staff have a mobile personal alarm.

29.2 Member Champion/Lead Members

Members will recall that the Action Plan has a recommendation for the appointment of Lead Members as "Champions". Already we have

appointed Cllr Ivy Lewis in the role of Champion of Human Rights. Other areas that Members may wish to consider are:

- Equal opportunities.
- Education
- Visitor centres
- Sustainable development
- Social inclusion
- Agricultural reform and land management
- Historical and cultural heritage (including Welsh language)

Ultimately it may be logical to have a Lead Member for each of our SIDs.

The role of a "Lead Member" would be outlined during training to ensure that these areas are considered when issues come before the Authority and its Committees. Members would represent a strategic overview rather than becoming involved in operational detail.

To progress the Lead Member concept, views are sought as to the proposed areas above.

- Financial, Staffing and Improvement implications: The action plan will be monitored to ensure continued improvement.***
- Equality Issues: No implications***
- Sustainability Appraisal: No implications***
- Human Rights: Lead member already identified.***
- Background Papers: Whole Authority Analysis Action Plan.***

Recommendations:

- That members consider the areas of concern and agree that these areas still constitute a risk to the Authority***
- That Members' views are sought on the areas suggested for Lead Members.***

Contact Officer: For further information contact Christopher Gledhill on 01874 624437.

30.0 WHOLE AUTHORITY ANALYSIS: CORPORATE ACTION PLAN

Audrey M Oakley

The Whole Authority Analysis action plan for the three Parks is attached at **Enclosure 16** and highlights progress to date.

- a) **Financial, Staffing and Improvement implications: No implications**
- b) **Equality Issues: No implications.**
- c) **Sustainability Appraisal: No implications.**
- d) **Human Rights: No implications.**
- e) **Background Papers: None.**

Recommendation: To note the contents of the report.

Contact Officer: For further information contact Audrey Oakley on 01874 624437.

31.0 PARKIN REPORT UPDATE

Chris Ledbury

31.1 Education

Negotiations with the Youth Hostel Association (YHA) have progressed well and it is anticipated that the YHA will assume responsibility for operation of the Centre from 1st May 2004. The Centre will be branded as YHA Danywenallt National Park Study Centre. A detailed report on the proposed terms and conditions of the Agreement with the YHA will be brought to the next meeting of the Committee.

The post of Education Manager has been advertised and this will be followed by recruitment for the two Education Officers and the part-time temporary Activity Leaders. A revised strategy to cover the education work of the Authority has been prepared and will be brought to the next meeting of this Committee.

31.2 Information

The post of Information Officer has been advertised. Negotiations with Powys County Council on the future management of the Brecon Tourist Information Centre are continuing and a meeting of the Officer Member Steering Group will be convened in the near future.

31.3 Interpretation

The post of Interpretation Officer has been advertised.

The financial implications of these developments have been built into the budget for 2004/05 following the agreements in principle at the last meeting of the Committee.

a) **Financial, Staffing and Improvement implications: As outlined in the previous confidential report**

b) **Equality Issues: As above**

c) **Sustainability Appraisal: As above**

d) **Human Rights: As above**

e) **Background Papers: As above**

Recommendation: That the report be noted.

Contact Officer: For further information contact Chris Ledbury on 01874 624437.

32.0 OTHER BUSINESS

Such other business as is, in the opinion of the Chairman of such urgency as to warrant consideration.

SCHEDULE OF CORRESPONDENCE

1. To receive apologies for absence
2. Such other correspondence as, in the opinion of the Chairman, is of such urgency as to warrant consideration.