

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 **28th JANUARY 2005** at **10.00AM** when your attendance is requested.

Yours sincerely

CHRISTOPHER GLEDHILL
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Cllr P Ashton
Cllr Mrs M Morris
Cllr E T Morgan
Cllr K Pathak
Cllr Mrs K Silk
Cllr Mrs M Tunnicliffe
Cllr A Breeze (Chairman)

Cllr A Carrington
Mrs J Horton McNichol
Mrs J Charlton (Deputy Chairman)
Mrs M Taylor
Mr J Suter
Mr M Thomas, MBE

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.***

FINANCIAL ITEMS

3.0 MINUTES

To receive and adopt the minutes of the Corporate Resources Committee meeting held on 26th November 2004, and authorise the Chairman to sign them as a true record. (**Enclosure 1**).

4.0 PUBLIC SPEAKING

To give opportunity for members of the public to address the Committee in accordance with the Authority's Public Speaking Scheme.

5.0 BUDGET REPORT 2004/2005

Audrey M Oakley

5.1 Capital Budget

The Capital expenditure shown at **Enclosure 2** is fully committed and will be spent by 31st March 2005.

The main works outstanding are the Brecon and Llandovery Tourist Information Centres but these will be completed before 31st March 2005.

However, there are a number of unresolved issues in relation to the Brecon Information Centre, which may have an impact on the revenue budget (see notes on revenue budget monitoring report).

5.2 Revenue Budget

The Revenue expenditure is shown at **Enclosure 3** for Members' consideration.

The projected underspend for 2004/05 currently stands at £77,761 excluding those amounts which we have identified as needing to be carried forward. This is due to a number of reasons:

| | |
|---------------|--|
| £ | |
| 25,000 | Grant underwriting provision not required |
| 8,500 | Translation costs are lower than expected |
| 7,780 | Over estimation of salaries during revised estimates |
| 5,000 | Adfywio grant shown in this year's income for Western Area Action Plan; this relates to expenditure in 2003/04 |
| 27,370 | Saving arising from vacancy for Head of Strategy and Policy |
| 18,000 | Expended underspend on democratic costs |
| -2,000 | Shortfall in income from the sale of stock |
| -12,498 | Expected overspend on photocopying and postages |
| 77,152 | |

However, subject to the projected underspend being correct, the Corporate Management Team has highlighted three areas of estimated expenditure required to improve performance across the organisation. These are as follows:

| | |
|----------------|--|
| £ | |
| 60,000 | For Development Control improvement issues |
| 26,000 | Set up costs to improve connections to both our HQ and outlying centres, which will save us £5,000 per annum |
| 18,000 | CCW have offered a 50% grant against eligible costs of £60,200 for improving accessibility of Access land. Matched funding of £30,100 is required to draw down this grant, of which £12,100 has been identified in the current budget requiring a balance of £18,000 |
| 104,000 | |

5.3 Request to carry forward budget

UDP

Currently there is £63,000 in the Revenue budget, part of which was committed for the public inquiry into the UDP and part for a programme officer.

It is hoped that the programme officer will be in post before the 31st March which will incur some expenditure, but the inquiry will not now take place until after April.

The Authority are therefore requested to authorise the carry forward of the balance of £63,000, less whatever is incurred in the appointment of a programme officer, to 2005/06.

National Park Management Plan

There is currently a projected underspend of £12,000 for the National Park Management Plan. This will be required in 2005/06 so Members are requested to authorise the carry forward of this £12,000 to 2005/06.

- a) **Financial, Staffing and Improvement implications: Revenue savings of £63,000, less costs of programme officer, needed in 2005/06 and £12,000 for the National Park Management Plan also to be carried forward to 2005/06.**
- b) **Equality Issues: No implications.**
- c) **Sustainability Appraisal: No implications.**
- d) **Human Rights: No implications.**
- e) **Background Papers: None**

Recommendations:

- a) **To consider and approve the reports at Enclosures 2 and 3.**
- b) **That Members authorise the carry forward of £63,000 less programme officer costs to 2005/06.**
- c) **That Members authorise the carry forward of £12,000 to 2005/06.**
- d) **That members authorize the new expenditure subject to the projected underspend being correct and a further report being brought to members on the new development control system tendering.**

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 31st December 2004 is shown at **Enclosure 4** for Members' attention.

Members will note that the reserves were £696,644 at 31st March 2004 and that due to commitments and provisions this will reduce to £328,121 at 31st March 2005.

- a) ***Financial, Staffing and Improvement implications: The view of the Section 151 officer has been to retain reserves between £200,000 - £250,000. The figure of £328,121 will give a £78,121 surplus over and above this.***
- 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

Audrey M Oakley

The Authority has been advised that the final revenue settlement for the three Welsh Parks is likely to be 3.81% and that the CAG formula may be used again 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 Committee meeting on 28th January 2005 in accordance with the National Park Authorities (Levies)(Wales) Regulations 1995, subject to ratification from the Welsh Assembly Government. These regulations state that the

levy shall be issued before 15th 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 will be tabled at the meeting.. The levy requires the Unitary Authorities to provide sums calculated in accordance with Section 72 levy requirement.

The regulations allow for a National Park 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:** *The levy to the Unitary's will be lower if the Assembly do not use the CCW formula.*
- b) **Equality Issues:** *No implications.*
- c) **Sustainability Appraisal:** *No implications.*
- d) **Human Rights:** *No implications.*
- e) **Background Papers:** *None.*

Recommendation: That the Chief Executive 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 Audrey Oakley, Elaine Standen or Alan Elliott on 01874 624437.

8.0 PRUDENTIAL CODE INDICATORS

Audrey M Oakley

The Authority is required to report on the Prudential code indicators each quarter. The monitoring report for the last quarter in 2004/05 is attached at **Enclosure 5**.

- 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: *Members are asked to note and approve the contents of the report.*

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

9.0 TRADING REPORT APRIL TO NOVEMBER 2004 *Ruth Nicholson*

Trading figures for the period April to November 2004 are attached at **Enclosure 6.**

9.1 National Park Visitor Centre

Overall the National Park Visitor Centre has reduced net expenditure by just under 7% to date compared to 2003/04. Trading patterns have mostly continued as expected with increased prices in the tea rooms contributing to increased takings.

The centre is also still awaiting receipt of grant money towards the Christmas Fair held in November which accounts for the higher cost in events.

Visitor numbers in November are lower than the previous year, largely due to weather conditions but visitor numbers overall have increased by nearly 20%.

9.2 Craig-y-Nos Country Park

As with the visitor centre, Craig-y-nos Country Park has seen an overall reduction in net expenditure of 4.5% compared to 2003/04. The Education Team has been carrying out a lot of work at the centre and therefore the education income has been attributed to their cost centre, explaining the reduction in income shown in the trading figures for Craig-y-nos Country Park.

Overall visitor numbers are down which can be mostly explained by the mixed weather and also due to limited marketing of the site.

9.3 Information Centres

Unfortunately it has not been possible to access the trading figures from Brecon Tourist Information Centre. The National Park Authority presence has now finished for the end of the season and it is hoped Powys County Council will be able to provide figures soon.

Trading at Abergavenny and Llandovery continues to do well. Overall these two centres have increased income by 14% along with a healthy increase in visitor numbers.

- a) **Financial, Staffing and Improvement implications:** *The Information 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 National Park Visitor Centre, has increased the pressure on water and electricity supplies.*
- d) **Human Rights:** *No implications.*
- e) **Background Papers:** *None.*

Recommendation: That the contents of the report be considered.

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

10.0 EXTERNAL FUNDING

Jane Davies

10.1 Modern Apprenticeship Scheme

Over the past few months research has been carried out into the possibility of setting up a Modern Apprenticeship Scheme within the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority and a number of meetings have already taken place between Coleg Powys, the External Funding Manager, the Western Area Manager and the Estates Work Supervisor concerning implementing such a scheme.

A need has been identified to facilitate the training of young people in the skills associated with countryside management. When fully trained these young people would have a clear career path to follow within the Authority.

One of the main advantages to the National Park in running a Modern Apprenticeship Scheme would be that the trainees would develop all the relevant skills to enable them to work as part of either the Estate or the Area teams.

At present there are two systems in place supported by ELWa, the Welsh Assembly Government and Careers Wales;

1. Foundation Modern Apprenticeship (16-18 yrs) – with payment of £50 per week for the first year and £60 per week for the second year plus the supply of all protective clothing
2. Advance Modern Apprenticeship (18-20yrs) – Minimum wage)* plus a contract of employment

(*present rate for minimum wage is 18-21yrs - £3.80 per hour/ 22 and over - £4.50 per hour).

Further discussions have yet to take place to establish the framework for operating such a scheme in partnership with Coleg Powys but all the feedback seems to be extremely positive that this scheme should go ahead and therefore provision should be made in the new financial year to implement the Apprenticeship Scheme.

10.2 Big Lottery Fund – Mentro Allan Programme

On the 11th November 2004 the Mentro Allan Programme was launched in Cardiff, which will be distributed by the Big Lottery Fund. This fund brings together two National Lottery distributors: the Community Fund, which provides funding for charities and the voluntary and community sector and the New Opportunities Fund, which funds health, education and environment projects. It will also take over the Millennium Commission's role of supporting large scale regeneration projects.

A total of £6.5 million will be available over the next four years. There are very specific target groups and at least 60% of the funding will be allocated to the voluntary sector.

The programme has two stages, the first will involve a competitive process to establish a national partnership. The successful national partnership will then go on to develop 10 -15 projects across Wales at a second stage. The national partnership will consist of a number of partners working together, the managing partner will be entitled to apply for a Development and Evaluation Support Grant of up to £520,000 (no more than 8% of the total budget) this amount will be spread over the life of the programme and can be distributed to the other partners in the national partnership

according to their financial requirements (such as engaging a project manager to manage the relevant projects).

The most likely way of ensuring success in applying for any funds from this Programme will be if all three Welsh National Parks formed one of the partners within the national partnership. Pembrokeshire have expressed an interest in working with us to develop a Trans-Wales project but we are still to receive a commitment from Snowdonia National Park.

The concern with this programme is the commitment both in staff and time (4 years) required to implement and evaluate a project that will be beneficial to all involved. The intention is to submit a joint application with the other two Welsh National Parks to become one of the partners in the national partnership in the hope that we can deliver a project involving the voluntary sector that will benefit the relevant target groups from the residents of the three National Parks. A match funding commitment will be required – until the process is further developed it is not possible to estimate how much this is likely to be.

10.3 Review of the Proposed Financial Commitment over Next Three Years

| PROJECT | FINANCIAL YEAR | FINANCIAL YEAR | FINANCIAL YEAR | FINANCIAL YEAR |
|---|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| | 04/05 | 05/06 | 06/07 | 07/08 |
| Brecon Castle and Town Walls (Phase One) | £4972 | TBC | TBC | TBC |
| Crickhowell Enhancement Scheme | | £10,000 | £10,000 | £10,000 |
| Brecon Historic Town Partnership | | £10,000 | £10,000 | £10,000 |
| Central Beacons/Waterfalls Project (Phase One) | | £5,000 | TBC | TBC |
| Foundation Modern Apprenticeship Scheme (Changing to Advance MAS in Yr3)* | | £5000 | £5,500 | £10,000 |
| Fforest Fawr | | | | |

| | | | | |
|--|--|---------|-----|-----|
| Geopark – Membership of European Geopark Network* | | £10,000 | TBC | TBC |
|--|--|---------|-----|-----|

*The commitment to the Modern Apprenticeship Scheme (MAS) is dependent upon designing a suitable programme that satisfies the requirements of the student, the education provider and the training provider – the Countryside and Estates Section are keen to pursue this Scheme for the obvious benefits it will bring to the Authority as a whole.

*Geopark membership will require an ongoing commitment. It is anticipated that substantial external funds will be drawn down for continuing the Geopark programme.

- a) **Financial, Staffing and Improvement implications:** Financial implications are as set out in the table above and have yet to be agreed as part of 2005/06 estimates. Staffing will be met within existing levels, improvement implications are obvious both to staff and for the communities involved
- 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.

11.0 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FUND

Helen Roderick/Jonathan Cook

11.1 Grant Awards Update

No further grants have been awarded since the last report.

11.2 Programme Spend 2003/04

The SDF financial spreadsheet is attached at **Enclosure 7**. Of the £250,000 available in the current financial year, £241,479 has already been allocated. The following funds are available for new projects during the remaining two years of the current three-year programme:

- 2004/05 - £8,521
- 2005/06 - £66,312

Continuation of funding of the SDF programme for a further two years beyond 2005/06 appeared in the Welsh Assembly's provisional budget, but this is yet to be confirmed.

- 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: No implications.**
- 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.

12.0 ESTIMATES 2005/2006

12.1 Background

This report summarises the budgetary position of the Authority. A baseline budget for 2005/06 is calculated by removing the project and non-recurring expenditure from the 2004/05 budget, then applying inflation and adding in unavoidable cost increases. To this 2005/06 baseline is then added the project and non-recurring additional expenditure planned for 2005/06.

The budget for 2005/06 as currently drafted exceeds the funding available by £58,890. Further project and non-recurring expenditure priorities which have previously been identified and agreed for 2005/06 are £150,000 for Area Action Plans and £70,000 for additional planning staffing, which would take the total potential shortfall to £278,890. The Corporate Management Team are currently working on strategies to fund the deficit and a paper will be brought to the next meeting of the Authority.

12.2 Budget Summary

Members are reminded that the 2004/05 budget includes projects such as the new Area Action Plans and one-off expenditure financed from reserves. The total call on general and earmarked reserves in 2004/05 is £368,523. This use of reserves cannot be maintained in the longer term.

In order to place the budget on a sustainable footing the Authority should ensure that its core expenditure is well within the settlement provided by WAG, allowing a comfortable margin to fund project expenditure. In a context of declining growth in the settlement, any increases in base budget commitments should be minimised.

The Authority's draft revenue budget is shown at **Enclosure 8**. The following calculation summarises the development of the 2005/06 budget from the 2004/05 revised estimate.

| | £ | £ |
|--|----------|-----------|
| | | |
| Revised budget 2004/05 | | 4,426,025 |
| | | |
| Less non-recurring items and projects in 2004/05 principally the area action plans, planning improvements, UDP consultation and Local Biodiversity Action Plan implementation. | -485,530 | |
| | | |
| Baseline budget 2004/05 | | 3,940,495 |
| | | |
| Plus unavoidable cost increases for 2005/06; principally the pay award, higher employers' contributions to the pension fund and inflation | 218,095 | |
| | | |
| Inflated baseline budget 2005/06 | | 4,158,590 |
| | | |
| Changes to the baseline budget in 2005/06; | -51,610 | |

| | | |
|---|-----------|------------------|
| mainly budget cuts and increased income. | | |
| Amended baseline budget 2005/06 | | 4,106,980 |
| Plus non-recurring items and projects in 2005/06: principally planning improvements, the capital 2005/06, and building conservation projects. | 165,290 | |
| 2005/06 Budget | | 4,272,270 |
| Funding available: | | |
| National Park Grant | 3,105,830 | |
| Levy on constituent Authorities | 1,035,280 | |
| Special planning grant | 68,000 | |
| Transfer from earmarked reserves | 4,270 | |
| Transfer from general reserve | 0 | |
| | | 4,213,380 |
| Shortfall in draft 2005/06 budget | | 58,890 |
| Plus Area Action Plans | | 150,000 |
| Plus Additional Development Control staffing | | 70,000 |
| | | 278,890 |

***NB** Pending confirmation of the exact amount of the settlement by WAG, the NPG and Levy amounts above have been calculated by inflating the 2004/05 settlement by 3.8% to reflect year one of the three-year expenditure plan produced by WAG for the three Welsh Parks in aggregate. The maximum amount that can be raised in the Levy is 25% of the settlement amount. The settlement announcement will be made too late to be incorporated into this report and an updated budget summary and levy statement will be tabled at the meeting for Members' consideration.*

- a) **Financial, Staffing and Improvement implications: funding shortfall of £278,890**
- b) **Equality Issues: No implications**
- c) **Sustainability Appraisal: No implications**
- d) **Human Rights: No implications**
- e) **Background Papers: None**

Recommendation: that members agree the 2005/06 base budget and that a further report be brought to the next meeting of the Authority on the funding of the shortfall of £278,890.

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

13.0 EMAIL POLICY

Audrey Oakley

A draft email policy is brought before Member for their consideration and is attached at **Enclosure 9**.

- a) **Financial, Staffing and Improvement implications: No implications.**
- b) **Equality Issues: The policy applies to all electronic mail services provided or used by the Authority to all users and users of such services.**
- c) **Sustainability Appraisal: No implications..**
- d) **Human Rights: No implications.**
- e) **Background Papers: None**

Recommendation: That Members consider and approve the draft email policy at Enclosure 9.

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

14.0 ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Members are asked to agree the following recommendation in relation to items 15.0 – 20.0 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 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 10 (circulated to members only) for members to consider and make any recommendations therein.

EXEMPT ITEMS – FINANCE

No Items.

EXEMPT ITEMS - HUMAN RESOURCES

15.0 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.

16.0 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.

17.0 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.

18.0 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.

19.0 HONORARIUM

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.

20.0 UNPAID LEAVE

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

21.0 STAFFING REPORT

Audrey M Oakley

A list of appointments and terminations since the last Corporate Resources Committee on 26th November is attached at **Enclosure 11**. Members will note that the Development Control Administrative Assistant (Customer Service) appointed on 23rd August left the Authority on 31st December to take up a full time career in Ecology. However we were able to recruit for this post at the same time as the Planning Technical Clerk so did not incur any further recruitment costs. This will however affect the performance of the Development Control Administration front desk as time will be needed to train this new employee.

- a) ***Financial, Staffing and Improvement implications: Performance will be affected whilst training is being undertaken.***
- 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.

22.0 LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT REPORT

Audrey M Oakley

A monthly summary of formal training, which has taken place between November and December and training which is due to take place in January is attached at **Enclosure 12**.

Members should note that the Welsh at Work courses are now taking place and are proving very popular.

The research for the Management Development Training Programme is still being undertaken and is unlikely to be completed before mid February. This will mean that £15,000 set aside for this training will not be spent and Members are requested to authorise this amount to be carried forward to 2005/2006.

- a) **Financial, Staffing and Improvement implications: £15,000 for Management Development Training to be carried forward to 2005/2006 with Members authorization.**
- b) **Equality Issues: All staff regardless of hours worked are offered training including volunteers where appropriate.**
- c) **Sustainability Appraisal: No implications.**
- d) **Human Rights: No implications.**
- e) **Background Papers: None**

Recommendation: That Members consider the report and approve the carry forward of £15,000 to 2005/2006 for the Management Development Training Programme.

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

23.0 HUMAN RESOURCES POLICIES

Audrey Oakley

A number of Human Resources policies have been updated, reviewed and put into the new format to be added to the new Human Resources Manual which went live in December 2004.

Members are asked to consider and approve the following policies which are attached at **Enclosure 13**.

All the policies have been through a full consultation process with the Corporate Management team and the Union.

The policies for consideration and approval are:-

- 1.4 Sickness absence management.
- 1.5 Capability procedure.
- 1.8 Smoking policy.
- 1.9 Long service award.
- 1.10 Job security.
- 1.13 Initial period of service
- 3.2 Job evaluation.
- 5.1 Mobile phones.

- a) **Financial, Staffing and Improvement implications: Training for managers and staff will be carried out.**
- b) **Equality Issues: These Human Resources policies should improve equally for all staff.**
- c) **Sustainability Appraisal: No implications.**
- d) **Human Rights: All Human Resources policies comply with the Human Rights Act.**
- e) **Background Papers: None**

Recommendation: Members are requested to consider and approve the attached Human Resource policies.

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

24.0 PENSIONS

The office of the Deputy Prime Minister has made a number of changes to the Local Government Pension Scheme, which will be implemented from 1st April 2005.

The principal changes are as follows

Redundancy/Efficiency/Voluntary Early Retirements

- The age from which retirement benefits may be paid (other than on ill health grounds) will be raised from 50 to 55.
- There will be protection for active members aged at least 50 and in the scheme on 31st March 2005.

The 85 Year Rule

- The 85 year rule is dropped for service accrued after 31st March 2005. Where an employee retires voluntarily before their normal retiring date and where they would currently have satisfied the 85 year rule and suffered no reduction to benefits, they will in future suffer a reduction to benefits in respect of benefits arising from service accrued after 31st March 2005.
- There will be protection for active members who attain age 60 at 31st March 2013 and who will satisfy the current 85 year rule at some point before or at the point of retirement.

Exercise of Compassion

- Where an employee waives the actuarial reductions to a member's benefits on compassionate grounds, the employer must pay over the appropriate sum to the Pension Fund within one month of making the decision.

Pension Fund Strain

- When an employee has been made redundant it has been current practice for the Authority to pay the Pension Fund Strain Capital Costs. This is to become statutory on 1st April 2005.

Unison are currently in the process of balloting their members to take strike action against these changes but in particular to the two changes regarding the raising of age from 50 to 55 and the abolition of the 85 year rule.

This is a national issue and therefore our Unison members could potentially take strike action.

The Authority currently has 32 Unison members across the Authority and the result of the ballot will not be known before the end of January.

- a) **Financial, Staffing and Improvement implications: Staffing and service delivery issues may arise if strike action is taken.**
- b) **Equality Issues: None**
- c) **Sustainability Appraisal: None**
- d) **Human Rights: None**
- e) **Background Papers: None**

Recommendation: That the contents of the report be noted.

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

IMPROVEMENT ITEMS

25.0 CORPORATE PERFORMANCE REVIEW APRIL – NOVEMBER 2004/2005 Wayne Evans

The Performance Management Group met in December to review strategic and detailed work targets for the period April to November 2004/05 alongside the Performance indicators.

From that meeting the five strategic work targets which were highlighted are:

- Access to online financial information.

The system basics are now in place however its needs to be piloted with service managers before being fully implemented.

- Adoption of Crime and Disorder Policy.

The draft policy is now ready for final consideration by Senior Management.

- Plan and implement a project based methodology.

CEO and Senior Managers will consider appointing a 'Champion' from within the staff to facilitate the introduction of this new approach.

- Implementation of Business Continuity Planning.

Disaster recovery cannot be completed for ICT whilst new systems are in flux but will be progressed by ICT Manager. A model for facilities continuity management is being developed as a matter of urgency.

- Replace or review outdated and poorly supported planning system. Allow full use of new digitising system via document management.

Head of Conservation and Community is now making progress with the performance improvements required to secure additional WAG funding for the introduction of a quality digitised document management system.

Most of the Performance Indicators targets are currently being progressed as planned. However the following PIs are below target.

These are:

- Percentage of applications determined within 8 weeks – currently at 26%.

Recently introduced changes within the development control section should result in improvement once the backlog of applications have been cleared.

- Average number of planning applications assigned to a Planning Advisor at any one time.

This is currently exceeding the target of 35 and is being addressed by the Head of Conservation and Community.

- Number of working days/shifts per Full Time Equivalent lost due to sickness absence.

This is currently exceeding target of 7.44 days (3%) as four officers have been on long-term sick leave however this is now down to two so the situation should improve.

- Percentage of letters replied to or acknowledged within 5 working days of receipt.

This remains below target but is showing improvement. Head of Corporate Services and Head of Departments will continue to monitor.

- Percentage of complaints that receive a full written response within 20 working days.

This remains below target but is showing improvement. Head of Corporate Services and HoDs will continue to monitor.

- Location of housing development in relation to settlement hierarchy
% of units permitted in open countryside:

This is well in excess of the 5% target mostly through the granting of consent for development of redundant agricultural buildings, often the only development opportunity available.

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

Recommendation: That the report on performance for the period April-November 2004 be considered.

Contact Officer: For further information contact Wayne Evans on 01874 624036 or Audrey Oakley on 01874 624437.

26.0 THREE PARK WHOLE AUTHORITY ACTION PLAN 2004/2005

Audrey Oakley

The Corporate Action Plan has been updated and is attached for Members' perusal at **Enclosure 14**.

- a) **Financial, Staffing and Improvement implications: Efficiency should occur with the three greater Parks working closely together.**

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

Recommendation: Members to consider progress on the Three Park Whole Authority Action Plan 2004/2005.

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

27.0 WHOLE AUTHORITY ANALYSIS ACTION PLAN 2004/2005

Members' attention is drawn to the progress being made with the Whole Authority Analysis Action Plan (**Enclosure 15**). The responsibility for updating this plan falls to a Members/Officers Working Group, which last met on 6th January 2005. Members attention is drawn to those areas identified as being either high risk or priority.

ACiW1 – Corporate Governance. To what extent do members understand Future Directions.

S4 – Lack of State of the Park Report. It is hoped that the newly appointed National Park Management Plan Working Group will progress this so that the draft report can be presented to Committee in the Autumn.

ACiW3 – To note the actions and the progress and monitor the continued commitment to staff training and development.

ACiW16/F23 – Credit cards have been issued to senior officers and discussions are underway to review standing orders.

O18 – Work is currently progressing on reviewing Health and Safety policies.

ACiW10 – This is an area of work which will be helped by the new guidance to relevant bodies on S62(2) responsibilities.

ACiW13 – Significant progress is being made with the new strategy being fully implemented. We will need to revisit the ranking of this action.

O8 – Members' views are sought on this action.

O13 – The benefits of utilising our staff to act as trainers is proving beneficial and cost effective.

H27 – This continuous to be an area of high risk. Work is underway to prepare a draft for March 2005. There are interim arrangements in place for relocation of essential staff and a clear Crisis Management and Emergency Planning procedure.

H28 – Will be put in place once the new IT system is fully operational.

H30 – This work has been promised by the Police Authority.

The Whole Authority Analysis Action Plan ensures that issues identified both by the ACiW and our risk management consultants Marsh, are being carried out and/or resolved. As stated Members' views are sought on the above.

- a) **Financial, Staffing and Improvement implications: The Whole Authority Analysis Action Plan aims to make improvements to the Authority's procedures.**
- b) **Equality Issues: No implications**
- c) **Sustainability Appraisal: No implications**
- d) **Human Rights: No implications**
- e) **Background Papers: Action Plan at Enclosure 15.**

Recommendation: Members' views are sought on the progress being made on the Whole Authority Analysis Action Plan.

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

28.0 CORPORATE IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2005/2006

The strategic priority objectives for 2005/2006 which have been commented on by the Audit Commission in Wales will be presented to Members at the Strategy and Policy Committee being held on 21st January 2005.

Once these have been agreed an updated paper will be submitted to Corporate Resources Committee in order that they may consider and approve these to progress the Corporate Improvement Plan for 2005/2008.

- a) **Financial, Staffing and Improvement implications: No implications at this stage. Estimates are being prepared with these objectives in mind.**
- b) **Equality Issues: No implications.**
- c) **Sustainability Appraisal: No implications.**
- d) **Human Rights: No implications.**
- e) **Background Papers: None.**

Recommendation: That Corporate Resources Committee approve the strategic objectives for 2005/2006 which have been tabled.

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

29.0 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.