


Corporate Plan 2021/2022

#BeTheChangeBreconBeacons
#BodYNewidBannauBrechieniog



Brecon Beacons
NATIONAL PARK

April 2021

A scenic landscape of Brecon Beacons National Park. The background shows rolling hills and mountains under a soft, hazy sky. In the foreground, there are dense evergreen forests on the left and a calm body of water reflecting the surrounding scenery on the right. The overall tone is peaceful and natural.

This is the annual Corporate Plan for the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority.

It sets out our route map as an organisation in delivering our purposes and duty for the coming 12 months, set in the context of developing our new National Park Management Plan for 2021–2026

As well as defining the work and projects we intend to undertake this is also a plan which seeks to improve our effectiveness as an organisation.

Foreword

Welcome to our corporate plan for the coming year.

2020 was a year of significant challenges for the Authority. We started the year embarking on a challenging programme of reorganisation only to quickly find our working worlds transformed over night. Not only did our staff have to deal with the personal difficulties of life in lockdown, but we were also forced overnight into operating our business from our collective kitchen tables. Not only was this hard enough but we also faced the heart-breaking task of closing our wonderful park to visitors. When we were able to embrace visitors in July, people flocked to our National Park. Our Wardens and seasonal staff had one of the busiest summers in living memory.

We are determined to apply the lessons from last year's challenges and to energise our staff to meet the challenges of 2021 and beyond. We aim to do this by refocusing our efforts on the collective development of our new Management Plan, to ensure it meets the challenges that are to come.

The Corporate Plan starts to take some of that thinking forward.



Cllr Gareth Ratcliffe
Chair of the
National
Park
Authority



Julian Atkins
Chief
Executive
Officer



Liz Davies
Deputy
Chair of the
Authority



Brecon Beacons National Park

A Landscape for Everyone

The Brecon Beacons National Park is one of a family of fifteen National Parks in the UK. Our collective task is to manage these special landscapes for public benefit and for future generations.

National Parks are in a true and full sense national. This does not mean that local interests are to be disregarded; the well-being of those who live and work within the National Park is always a first consideration. The architect of their creation in the UK, John Dower, said this in 1945 about their value for all of us: –

Few national purposes are more vital or more rich in promise of health and happiness than the provision of large, open and beautiful tracts of country in which holidays can be freely and inexpensively enjoyed.

National Parks are not for any privileged or otherwise restricted section of the population, but for all who care to refresh their minds and spirits and to exercise their bodies in a peaceful setting of natural beauty.

This founding ethos remains central to the work of the Authority and frames the objectives established within this plan.

The Brecon Beacons received formal designation as a National Park in 1957.

Our boundary covers some 520 square miles of beautiful countryside. Our border extends from the rural heartland of Mid Wales in the north to the post-industrial ex-mining communities of the South Wales Valleys while also spanning from the Marches in the east to the fringes of West Wales. We are currently home to about 33,000 people.



The National Park Authority is the body which is charged by law to look after the National Park. In doing so we are given two special purposes:-

To conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the National Park; and

To promote opportunities for the public understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the National Park

The law also states that in carrying out our purposes we must also

Seek to foster the economic and social wellbeing of local communities within the National Park.

We must carry out our duty without incurring significant cost and in partnership with key bodies.

The Authority is made up of 105 employees. Decisions are made by the Park Board which is comprised of 18 members, 12 of whom are local Authority councillors, and 6 of whom are appointed by the Welsh Government



Future challenges

2020 was a year like no other. It became the year in which the political, social and economic context underwent seismic shifts. As the world went into a series of lockdowns, we saw a clear articulation of renewed priorities. People started calling for a different kind of future, one which addressed the existential issues of climate change, biodiversity loss and fundamental rights of equality.

2020 was also the year that we published our latest State of the Park Report and this in places made for difficult reading.

It found that over half of the Park's Special Areas of Conservation are in unfavourable condition (56%); that only 10% of SSSIs are under appropriate management; that there had been a 20-30% decline in farmland birds during the monitoring period; only 50% of the Park's rivers were in good ecological status when the target is 100% and that there was a 50% decline in the numbers of red list species from 1995-2018.

2020 was also the year of storm Dennis - a weather event of such devastation, we are still dealing with the consequences over 12 months later. Climate scientists tell us that such events will only become more frequent and more intense if we do not take decisive action now on climate change. We have a legal obligation to reach net zero by 2050 but action needs to happen now.

And finally 2020 was also the year where the Park produced its newest Strategic Equality Plan for the Authority, which identified significant issues of equity facing the Authority and the Park, including a lack of diversity within our workforce, the lack of diversity within our visitors, the impact of nature deficit disorder on those without physical access to green space, and the intergenerational challenges facing the area as a result of Brexit and Climate change.

This corporate plan has been drafted from a position firmly rooted in our origins but also alive to these current challenges, and with a sense of urgency to act decisively now for the sake of the future.



Our vision and strategic priorities

Collectively these form our well-being objectives to be delivered through the five ways of working

Landscape and nature recovery

Objective To re-establish a connected network of species rich and resilient landscapes across the Brecon Beacons.

Outcome People will benefit from the Park's resilient landscapes, full of flourishing wildlife and valued heritage.

Community and rural enterprise

Objective To help people living and working in the Brecon Beacons benefit from sustainable livelihoods and green infrastructure.

Outcome People living and working in the Park will benefit from strong communities, sustainable livelihoods, healthy lifestyles and widespread decarbonisation.



Objective To help diverse groups of people access, enjoy and understand the heritage, places and special qualities of the Brecon Beacons.

Outcome People will be able to access, understand and enjoy what makes the park special .

Inspiring People and Places

Objective To develop a confident, secure and respected organisation able to embrace new challenges.

Outcome our staff are empowered and supported to deliver their potential governed by a confident, informed and engaged board.

A resilient organisation

Implementing our vision

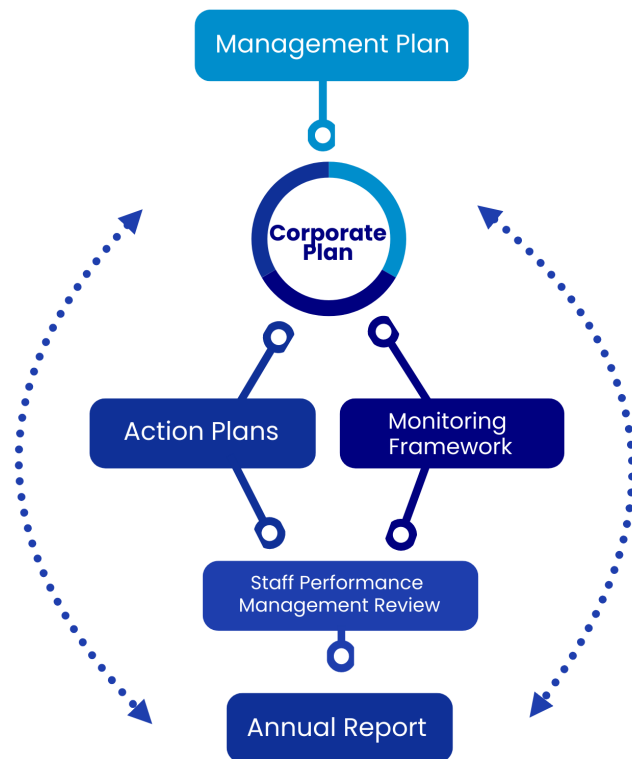
YEAR ZERO

This corporate plan defines the key areas of work for our three strategic priorities and for our organisation for the coming year. Our focus here is deliberately strategic, defining only those key work programmes and elements of core work which will form the frame around which we can build the detail of our day to day work.

Ordinarily we would take our lead for such strategic priorities from our Management Plan. However the Park's current Management Plan is over 10 years old, and the new Management Plan (NPMP21) is in production. Our Corporate Plan this year therefore focuses on mediating that transition between the two phases of Management Plans. As a result our aspirations are firmly focused in laying the ground work for implementing the new plan over the coming five year cycle of NPMP21. For the above reasons we view this Corporate Plan as the strategic direction for year zero in that cycle.

As well as being a period of transition in terms of policy, this plan also seeks to transition our organisation to a new way of working guided by a new management structure. We acknowledge that our staff body have found the past twelve months challenging and this year is the opportunity to focus on building back strength and trust within our organisation.

The corporate Plan is not a stand alone document. Each focal area is supported by a detailed action plan which sets out detailed work programmes for the coming year. Our Monitoring framework (including our integrated risk assurance framework) defines our targets and indicators of success for each work stream. Each year we report on our performance against our corporate plan in our Annual Report. The findings of which in turn influence our next year's Corporate Plan..



Our business planning and reporting framework



Photo Credit: Peter Fry ARPS

Strategic Priorities

Landscape and Nature Recovery



To re-establish a connected network of species rich and resilient landscape across the Brecon Beacons



Our aspirations for this year

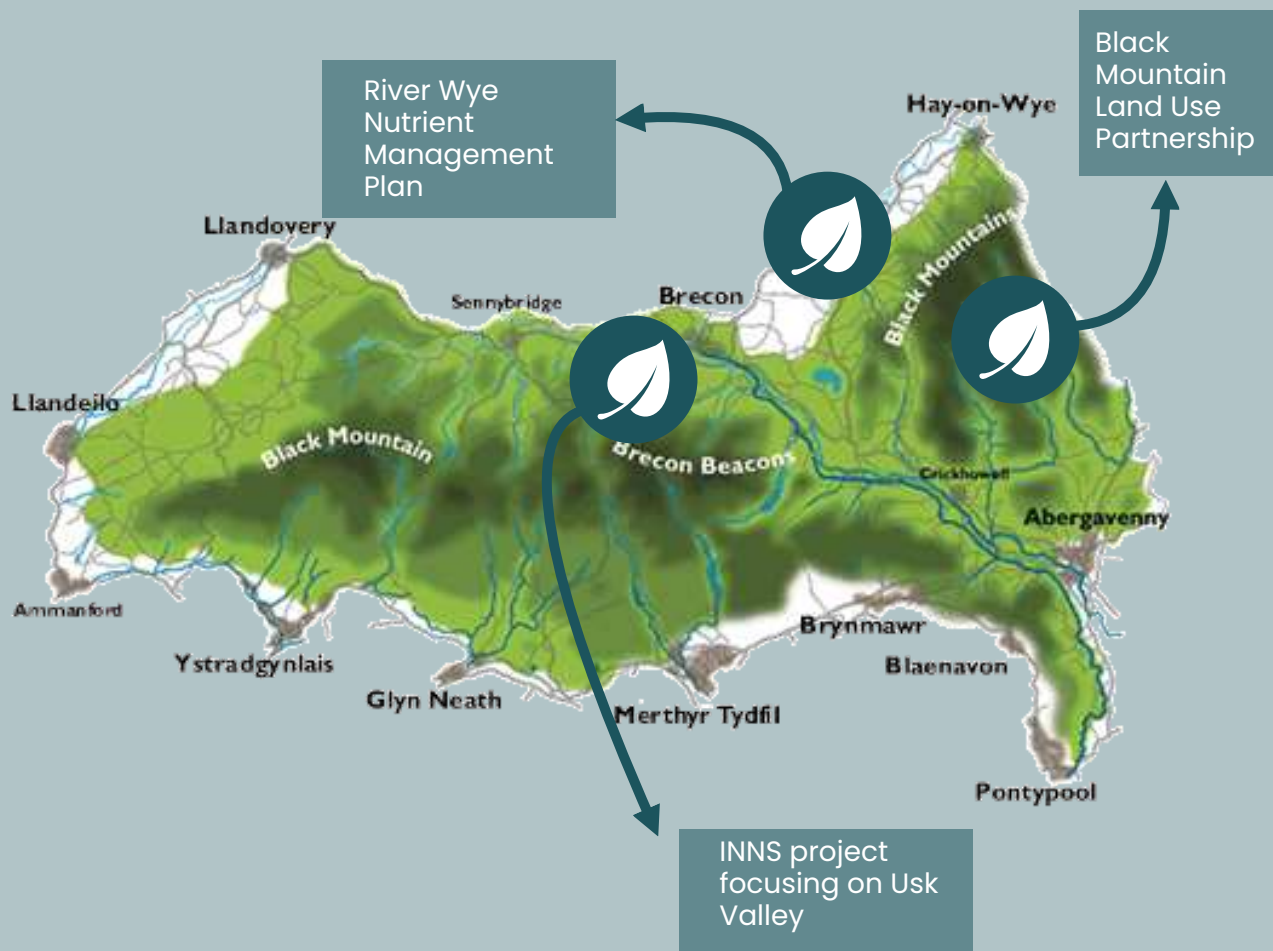
- We will have defined a strategy to increase woodland cover and have an informed policy target for NPMP21.
- We will have a prioritised action plan for working with partners to improve key features within the Park's SACs and have an informed policy target for NPMP21
- We will have a prioritised action plan to restore the Park's peatland and have an informed policy target for NPMP21.

Key priorities	We will
Nature Recovery	Deliver nature recovery by protecting and enhancing species diversity in all the work of the Authority.
Restoring Uplands and woodlands	We will work through our partnerships to increase woodland cover and improve the ecological quality of our uplands thereby enhancing habitats on a landscape scale
Enhancing lowland and freshwater environments	Work with partners to co-ordinate action to improve water quality in the Wye and Usk catchments

Projects	We will
INNS	Build our Invasive Non Native Species project into a long term programme.
Woodlands	Work with the Woodlands Trust, Coed Cymru, NRW and others to develop a woodland delivery for the Park
Networks	Continue our work on ecological networks mapping.
BMLUP	Support the Black Mountains Land Use Partnership in developing a sustainable future for the Partnership
Uplands	Work with NRW and others in contributing to the Peatlands Action Programme for Wales and develop an Upland Ecosystems Pilot proposal Participate in the Welsh Peatlands Research Network if funding is secured
Lowlands and Freshwater	Support the Beacons Water Group to develop project ideas Work with NRW, Herefordshire and Powys County Councils, the Wye and Usk Foundation, and others to develop solutions to water quality issues in our principal catchments
Monitoring	Invest in the Vital Signs project and seek further funding for it

Core Work	We will
LNP	Continue to develop, support and be active partners in the Local Nature Partnership
NRAP	Implement the NRAP work programme
Habitat and species monitoring	Continue to monitor key indicator species and habitats within the Park to inform future policy making.

Spatial focus and budget proportion



Proportion of total budget dedicated to landscape and nature recovery



● Landscape and naturerecovery



Strategic Priorities

Community and rural enterprise



To help people living and working in the Brecon Beacons benefit from sustainable livelihoods and green infrastructure



Our Aspirations for this year

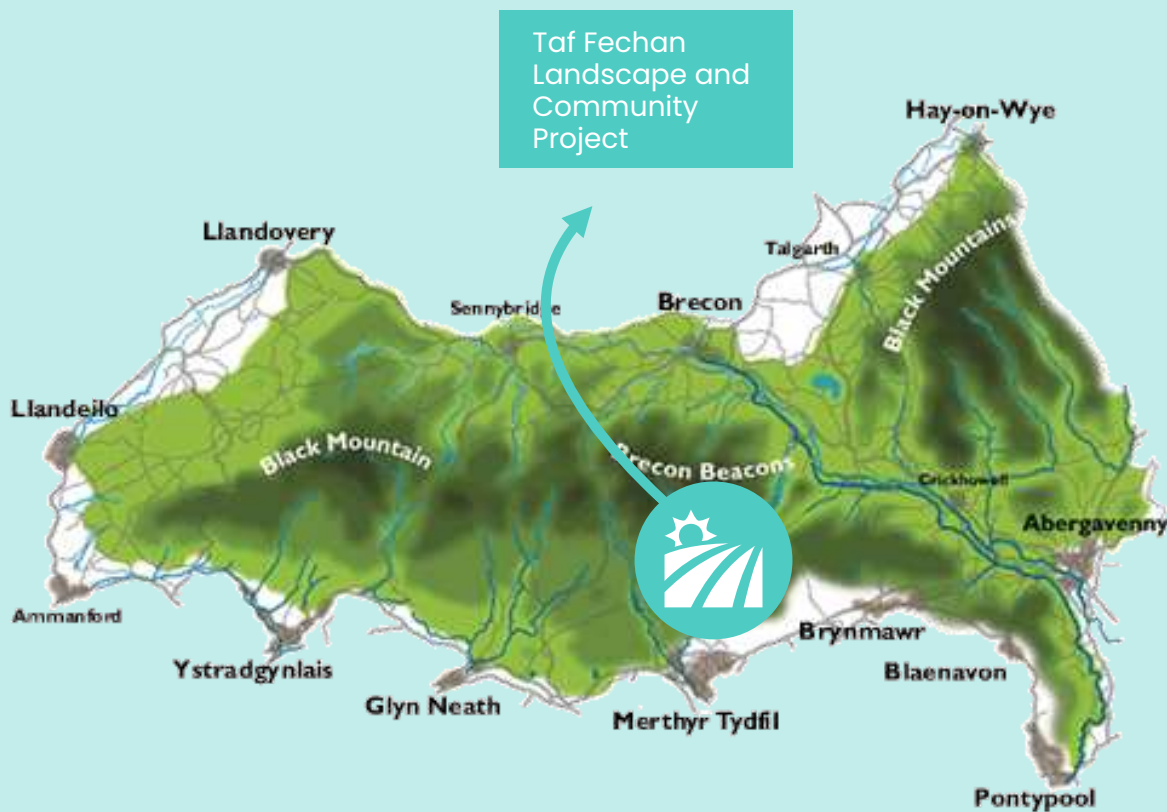
- We will have developed updated Place Plan Guidance for use with NPMP21 and LDP2.
- We will have developed a carbon reduction strategy and have an informed target for NPMP21 Policy.
- We will have developed a 'Supporting Farming in Transition' Position Statement to inform NPMP21 policy and action.

Key Priorities	We will
Decarbonisation	Establish a decarbonisation programme to reduce the carbon footprint of the Authority and support community decarbonisation initiatives.
Sustainable Farming	Supporting the development of local food production and the transition towards net zero farming.
Place Planning	Continue to work with communities to develop Place Planning.
Skills and Training	Support National and local training opportunities as part of Wales Green Recovery Programme
Sustainable Economy	Deliver a programme of actions to support Sustainable Tourism in line with our Sustainable Economy policy and working with the Destination Partnership

Projects	We will
Carbon Literacy	Design and deliver an Authority led Carbon Literacy programme to communities, schools and organisations across the National Park
Kickstart Scheme	Develop a work placement programme with the Authority for 6 young people (18-24) supporting the Kickstart scheme
The Brecon Beacons Food Project	Engage with the food, farming and tourism sectors to deliver a local food project if funding is approved
Brecon Beacons Mega Catchment	Supporting the implementation of the Taf Fechan Landscape & Community Project

Core Work	We will
SDF	Help communities to develop and implement carbon reducing projects, including financial support secured with green growth funding from the Welsh Government
LDP Policy	Develop enabling policy related to decarbonisation, community resilience and farm diversification
Community Development	Enabling communities to improve their environment through Place Plans, covering nature recovery, health and well-being, affordable housing and sustainable transport initiatives.

Spatial focus and budget proportion



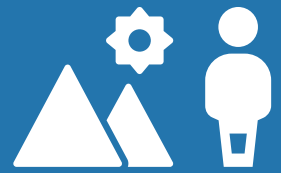
Proportion of total budget dedicated to Community and Rural Enterprise

To be determined following budget settlement

● Community and Rural Enterprise

Strategic Priorities

Inspiring People and Places



Key Priorities	We will
Accessing the Park for health and well-being	Work with organisations to enable people to benefit from the natural environment and make positive contributions to nature recovery
Quality visitor experiences	Work with Visit Wales to build on their Year of Outdoors campaign and the Wales Way to enhance visitor experiences through the provision of high quality interpretation and information
Enhanced Historic Environment	Work with key partners to ensure that the condition and understanding of our Historic Environment is enhanced.
Awareness of Welsh Language and Culture	Develop the Ambassador programme to promote Welsh language and culture and complete the Atlantic Culturescape project
Projects	We will
Waterfall Country	Address the multiple pressures within this visitor hotspot to improve outcomes for the visitor experience, nature and community wellbeing
Canals, Communities and Well-Being	Deliver access improvements, biodiversity enhancements and community engagement on the Brecon and Monmouthshire Canal for the partnership ENRaW project with Powys County Council and Canal and Rivers Trust
A470 corridor	Complete the first phase of feasibility work into a Park and Ride service for the A470 corridor
HEAP	Develop a partnership approach to the management of the Historic Environment culminating in an agreed action plan for the National Park
Core Work	We will
Covid-19	Secure additional resources to manage and absorb visitor pressures at our visitor hotspots. Deliver environmental, carbon and visitor management messages through social media, website, print and PR
Visitor Experiences	Enhance visitor experiences through the deployment of tools produced through the Atlantic Geoparks, Culturescape and Wales Way projects
SDF	Use our SDF fund to deliver the Heritage in Places grant together with other social inclusion and health & well-being projects



To help diverse groups of people access, enjoy and understand the heritage, places and special qualities of the National Park



Our aspirations for this year

- We will understand the feasibility of developing a Park and Ride for the A470 Corridor and have a plan in place to take recommendations forward.
- Our Historic Environment Partnership (HEP) will be established and key priorities for the NPMP21 developed. The Historic Environment Action Plan (HEAP) will be published for consultation.
- We will have created a steering group and framework for the Waterfalls Country Plan and have an agreed timescale for adoption.
- We will have progressed a programme of work to make the National Park more accessible for more people.

Spatial focus and budget proportion



Proportion of total budget dedicated to Inspiring People and Places



● Inspiring People and Places



Strategic Priorities

A resilient organisation.

Key Priorities	We will
Organisational Effectiveness	Undertake a Member Survey and implement a Member/Officer training programme & Implement the recommendations of Audit Wales' Resilience Audit.
Change Programme	Undertake a review of staff structures as appropriate following completion of the first phase of the Change Programme AND Complete the review of Planning Services
Stakeholder Engagement	Be building stronger relationships with stakeholders to achieve our ambitions

Projects	We will
Board Effectiveness	Complete and implement key findings of the review of Board Effectiveness
Project Boards	Implement the new Project Board structures and review how they are working after 6 months

Core Work	We will
LDP	Deliver a sound replacement LDP by December 2022
NPMP	Collaborate with partners on a replacement Management Plan for the period 2021-2026
Planning	Deliver a professional planning service, which delivers our policy objectives in a timely and efficient manner
Volunteer Service	Increase our capacity to support volunteering opportunities and co-ordinate the work they do
Tracking performance	Introduce a new and simpler Performance Reporting framework
Communications	We will review and align all of our brand and communications work
Education	We will deliver a service that supports the work of the Authority's main programmes of work/plans:
Diversity and Inclusion	work with partners and organisations to ensure equality of access to the National Park.



To develop a confident, secure and respected organisation empowered to embrace new challenges

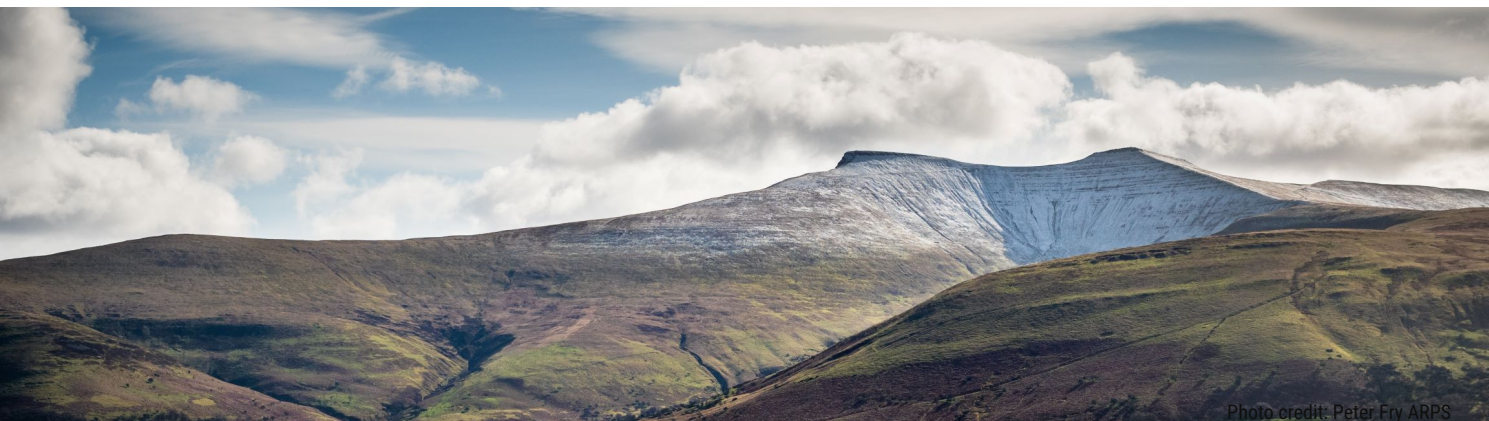
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Our Aspirations for this year

- We will have made clear progress in delivering the objectives of the Change Programme.
- Project Boards structures for our key projects will be established and operational
- We will have conducted a staff and member survey and developed an action plan to address any identified issues.
- We will have developed our new reporting system to track performance.
- NPMP21 will have been adopted and LDP2 will have been submitted to Welsh Government for examination.

To be determined following budget settlement

Future Investment

Implementation of this Corporate Plan requires the Authority to invest more resources to enable it to move to the new way of working envisioned by the Change Programme.



The Plan set out below assumes a standstill budget for 2021-22 and is based on funding from the following sources:

- £444k additional funding from Welsh Government to support work through to the end of 2021-22
- £300k from the Authority's General Reserve

The Plan provides additional resources to support the Authority's Nature Recovery work and Invasive Non Native Species project to continue. It provides additional resources to enable the Authority to welcome visitors back to the Park in similar numbers to 2020. And it enables the Authority to increase its support for our volunteers.

To be determined following budget settlement	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Landscape & Nature Recovery	£/k	£/k	£/k
Increased project staff capacity	108	45	45
Project funding	75	25	25
Monitoring	20	20	20
Community and Rural Enterprise			
Increased project staff capacity	30	30	30
Inspiring People and Places			
Increased project staff capacity	30	30	30
Post-Covid pressures	75		
Access for All	50		
Resilient Organisation			
Information Technology & Digital Transformation	30		
Communications	26		
TOTALS	444	150	150

Risk to implementation of Corporate Plan 21/22

Significant risk

**COVID resurgence
and continued
uncertainty**

**Lack of clarity over our budget
for 2021-22**

**Policy change as a result of
Welsh Government Elections in
May 2021**

**Loss of Strategic Planning
function if Corporate Joint
Committees are formed under
new legislation.**

Manageable
risk

**Reduction in staff resources as a
result of further budget pressures**

Lack of buy in from partners

**Impact of Climate Change events on
planned work programmes**

Ode to The Peaks

At home I learnt religion,
Nature's landscape of is my faith.

The rocks, holy relics,
From the wood the root of our prayer.

The birds sing God's verse,
A gentle hymn, balm to my ears.

The red kite is the statue above,
The cross above my church.

My baptism is like velvet,
In the lakes or in the streams.

Annual flowers, their miracles,
Discernible resurrection.

I will praise and adore,
The saints of the hills around me.

Father and Son and Holy Spirit,
Cribyn, Corn Du, Pen y Fan.

Rhys Jones
Translated from the original Cynghanedd