



The Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal

Introduction

1.1. Purpose of the Plan

The National Park Management Plan is the single most important policy document for the National Park area and all those who have an influence over its future - not just the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority (BBNPA). The Plan coordinates and integrates other plans, strategies and actions in the National Park that affect the two Park purposes and its duty. No major decisions should be taken affecting the future of the Park without reference to the Management Plan.

The Plan sets a vision for the future of the Park (20 years hence) and specifies actions and outcomes to pursue in the next five years to bring the Park closer to this shared vision. The Plan promotes coordinated implementation, monitoring and evaluation of these activities collectively across a wide range of partners and stakeholders. In essence, it creates a framework for Park management, guiding decision-making and developing priorities for everyone involved.

1.2. Statutory Purposes

National Parks were designated under the 1949 National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act, but their current framework is the Environment Act 1995. Section 61 of this act which sets out the Parks' two purposes:

- **Conservation and enhancement:**
"to conserve and enhance the natural beauty,¹ wildlife and cultural heritage of the National Parks."
- **Understanding and enjoyment:**
"to promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities (of the Parks) by the public."

1. See Annex 6 for the definition of "natural beauty."

1.3. Sandford Principle

The two purposes of the National Parks are underpinned by the Sandford Principle which states that enjoyment of the National Parks *"shall be in a manner and by such means as will leave their natural beauty unimpaired for the enjoyment of this and future generations."* It asserts the primacy of the first purpose over the second in cases of irreconcilable conflict. In many cases the two purposes are mutually supportive and share equal importance. In cases with more intractable conflicts the best balance will need to be found.

1.4. The Silkin Principle

The UK National Park designation also protects these areas of natural beauty from the detrimental impacts that may result from major developments. The Silkin Principle² (also known as the Silkin Test) states that *"(m)ajor developments should not take place in these designated areas, except in exceptional circumstances."* All such developments must be assessed by the most rigorous criteria, particularly:

"(i) the need for the development, including in terms of any national considerations, and the impact of permitting it, or refusing it, upon the local economy;

(ii) the cost of, and scope for, developing elsewhere outside the designated area, or meeting the need for it in some other way; and

(iii) any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities, and the extent to which that could be moderated."

1.5. Statutory Duty

The National Parks of Wales, Scotland, and England are Category V protected areas as defined by the World

2. Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas.

Conservation Union (IUCN) in the Guidelines of Protected Area Management Categories 1994 (see **Annex 4 for management principles**). Category V protected areas are living and working landscapes with characteristic qualities, features and services that have been moulded by the interplay of natural forces and human activities over the course of time. The Park and its communities are integrally linked, but people cannot be actively involved in the Park's management if their well-being is in question. Ensuring the vitality of local communities therefore is tantamount with the conservation and enhancement of the Park and its resources. Consequently, careful regard must be given to the linkage between local communities and economies and environmental conservation in and around the National Parks. As such, the BBNPA, in pursuit of the two statutory purposes, has a duty to:

"...seek to foster the economic and social well-being of local communities (within the National Park by working closely with the agencies and local authorities responsible for these matters)."

The Park's statutory duty should be carried out with the Park's purposes in mind as set out by the Environment Act 1995; policies and actions designed to promote social and economic well-being should also aim to conserve and enhance the natural and cultural heritage of the Park and promote opportunities for the public enjoyment and understanding of its special qualities.

1.6. Who is the Plan for?

Although the BBNPA has been given the statutory responsibility to prepare the Management Plan, it is a plan for the Park area and not just for the BBNPA. The success of the Management Plan relies upon the cooperative interaction of all those who care for the Park and its future.

More explicitly, Section 62(2) of the Environment Act 1995 imposes a duty on all public bodies to have regard to the two National Park purposes when making their decisions or carrying out activities in relation to or so as to affect land within a National Park.



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1.7. Role of the National Park Authority

The BBNPA leads the actions and facilitates the partnerships required to fulfil the Park purposes and duty, with the aim to foster a collective sense of purpose. In so doing, the BBNPA's role is to facilitate, coordinate and add value to the work of others in the Park whilst delivering its own programme of work. It is not the responsibility of the BBNPA to duplicate work or assume others' responsibilities except where previously agreed. To this end, responsible stewardship of the National Park rests not only upon the shoulders of the BBNPA and other public bodies but also upon the shoulders of all who reside, work, recreate and/or otherwise have a vested interest in the Park.

The BBNPA is also the planning authority for the National Park area. The Brecon Beacons National Park, as an administrative area, covers parts of 9 of Wales' 22 Unitary Authorities (**see Map 1**), which further emphasizes the need to work together in a collaborative and cooperative fashion.

1.8. Formulating the Plan

The Plan is prepared (**see Figure 1.1**) with the active participation of key stakeholders and the wider community to foster shared ownership of and support for the vision, aims, objectives, policies and actions that each plan identifies.³

Between April 2006 and August 2007, a series of consultation events were convened to assist the development of the National Park Management Plan. A wide range of interests and organisations were represented, ranging from statutory environmental bodies to local communities. At these workshops, participants identified issues of importance for the Plan and considered potential outcomes in relation to these in both the presence and the absence of a Plan. Participants also generated management goals for each

issue. These have been used to develop the Management Plan itself and to conduct the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). Recent consultation events have explored the Plan in more detail and have been used to draft priority actions for 2010 to 2015.

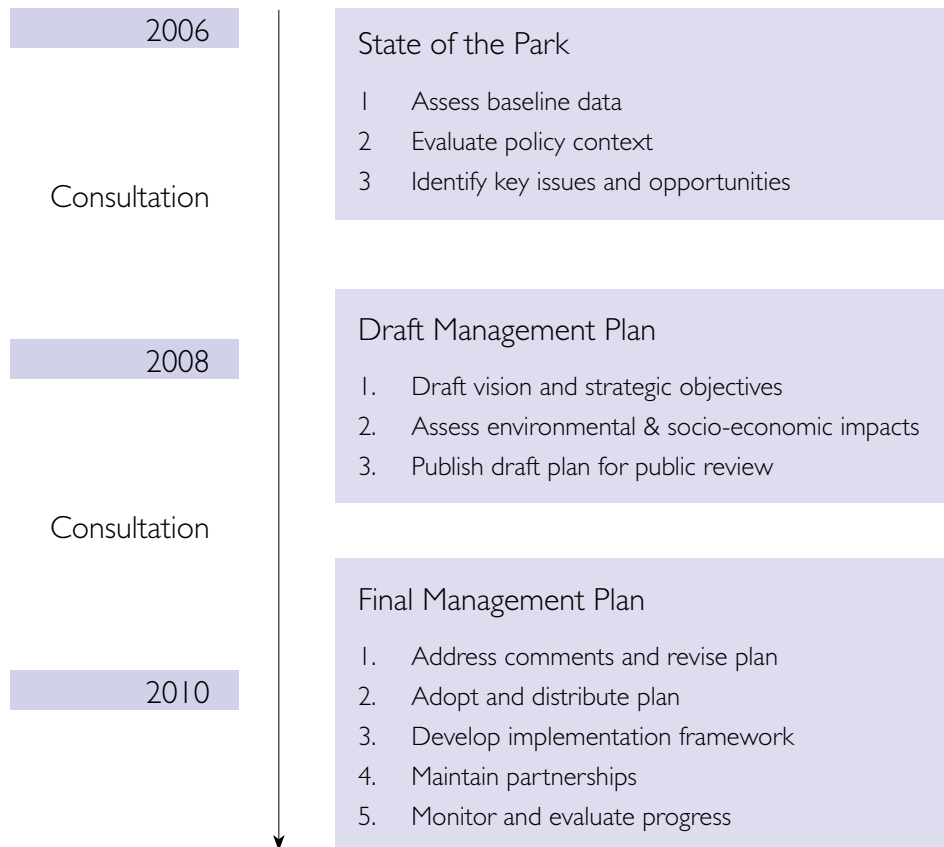
European Union Directive 2001/42/EC and the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes (Wales) Regulations (2004) require a formal SEA of all land use plans and programmes which are likely to have significant effects on the environment with a view to promoting sustainable development. As part of this assessment, SEA requires the BBNPA to carry out consultation on the draft Plan and the accompanying Sustainability Appraisal Report, taking into account the results of consultation in the decision making process.

SEA has to be undertaken alongside the preparation of the Plan to which it relates. This allows strategic alternatives to be incorporated into the Plan at the earliest opportunity. A Sustainability Appraisal is also undertaken at the same time which has a socio-economic focus. Together these assessments ensure that environmental, social and economic implications are fully integrated into the Plan's emerging policies and strategies. Not only does this combined approach ensure that the Plan is sustainable and environmentally sound, but it also forges long-term partnerships vital to the delivery of the actions and policies outlined in it.

Similarly, European Directive (92/43/EEC) on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and Wild Flora and Fauna (aka the Habitats Directive, or HRA) under UK law (in Part IVA of the Habitats Regulations 2007) requires an evaluation of the potential impacts of all land use plans against the conservation objectives of a European protected site to ascertain whether it would adversely affect the site, either alone or in combination with the effects of other plans and projects. These sites, referred to as Natura 2000 (N2K) sites, comprise Special Areas of Conservation (SACs),

3. Countryside Council for Wales. 2006. National Park Management Plans Guidance.

Figure 1.1. Steps to developing the National Park Management Plan



Special Protection Areas (SPAs), and, in Wales, Ramsar sites (internationally important wetland sites). Where significant negative effects are identified, alternative options, avoidance and/or mitigation measures should be examined to remove any potential damaging effects. The scope of the HRA is dependent on the location, size and significance of the proposed plan or project and the sensitivities and nature of the features of the European sites under consideration.

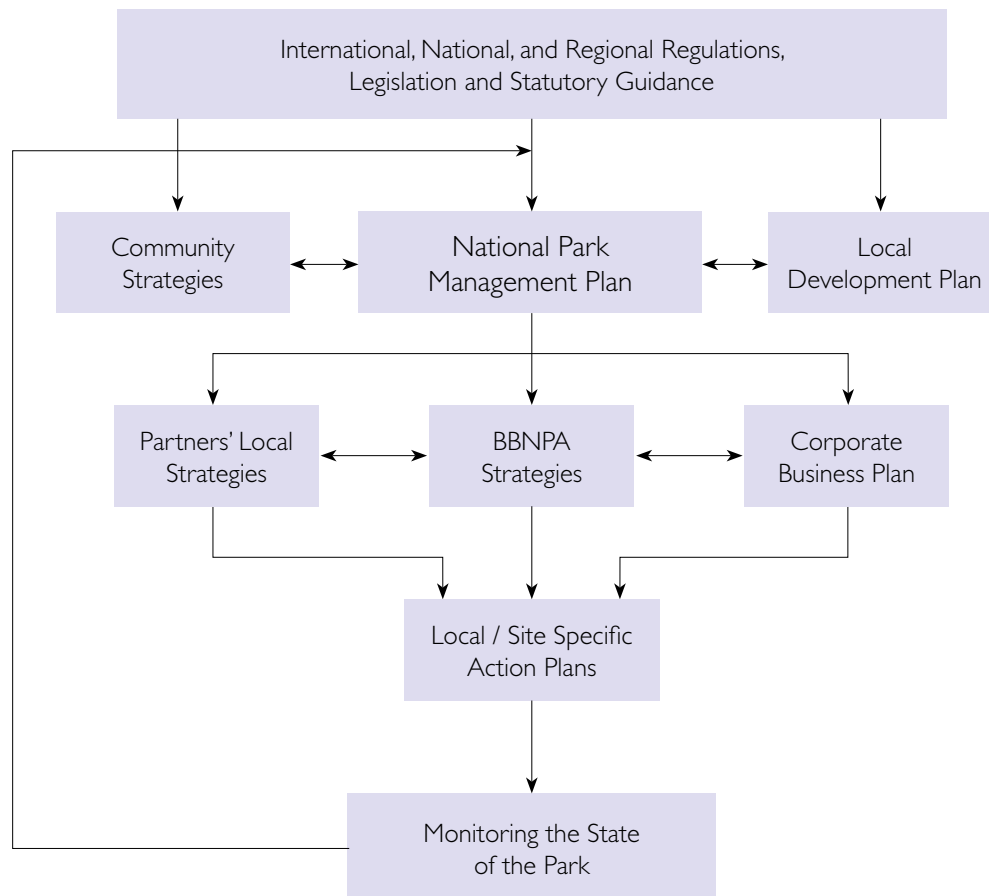
The HRA is a necessary part of the land use planning process. Future iterations of the National Park Management Plan and its policies will be subject to further assessment. The results of both the SEA and HRA are available for review on the BBNPA's website.

1.9. Relationship to Other Plans

The National Park Management Plan is the primary conduit between broad-scale international and national policies, and Park-specific decision-making processes (see Figure 1.2). It ensures that the BBNPA, in cooperation with its partners, contributes and adds value to national policy objectives. As a result, the Plan sets the framework for the Corporate Business Plan and for more detailed Park strategies and programmes, including the Local Biodiversity Action Plan, the Sustainable Tourism Strategy and other Park-related strategies.

The land use planning dimension of the National Park Management Plan is delivered through the Local Development Plan (LDP). Whilst the Management Plan provides the

Figure 1.2. Relationship between the Management Plan and other policies



broad-scale policy context for the LDP, consultation on and formulation of the LDP influences development of the Management Plan (see Figure 1.2).

The Management Plan aims to integrate local activities across the entire National Park. It functions as the Community Strategy for communities within the Park boundary and therefore must reflect the policies of the relevant strategies for the Park area.⁴

A measure before the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG)

4. Countryside Council for Wales. 2006. National Park Management Plans Guidance. p. 5.

Environment Minister recommends “that a Community Strategy that relates to a National Park should have to take into account, and embrace, the policies of the National Park Management Plan.” If enacted this requirement will become a statutory obligation on County Councils, and so embed National Park Management Plan policies (and their statutory purposes and duty), to the benefit of each Welsh National Park.

The Plan serves as a mechanism by which priorities are set, actions are monitored and outcomes are evaluated. To this end, the Management Plan provides a firm foundation for

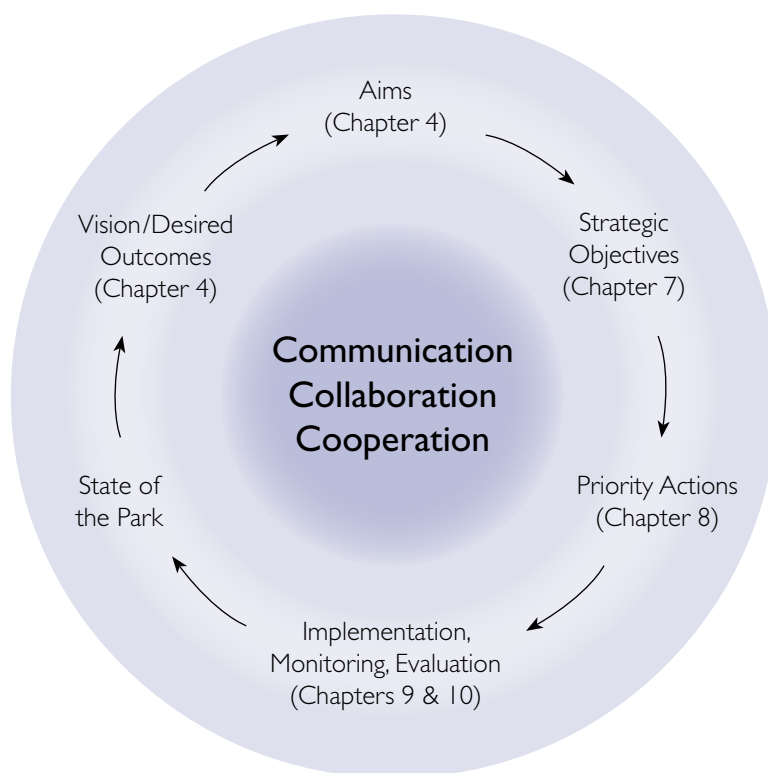


Figure 1.3. National Park Management Plan cycle

assessing the state of the Park's resources. These assessments are summarised in the State of the Park Report (see **Chapter 10**).

Formulation of the National Park Management Plan is an iterative process. Knowledge gained from evaluating the Plan's progress and through monitoring the state of the Park informs the Plan's future policies and priorities.

1.10. Structure of the Plan

The Brecon Beacons National Park Management Plan is written to become increasingly more specific. Thus the opening chapters are general and the closing chapters are particular. This is true for both the information presented and the time scale on which the Plan operates. The Plan is a strategic document; on one hand it must be forward-thinking, setting long-term visions and aims for the Park 20-25 years

into the future which the BBNPA and its partners will strive to achieve. On the other hand it sets targets that are more realistic and achievable in the short term. Consequently, the Plan also outlines desired outcomes and actions to be completed over the course of the next five years, at which time the Plan will be reviewed and revised as required. The general contents of each of the Plan's chapters are highlighted below.

Chapter 1 introduces the Plan, its purpose, how it has been developed and its structure. With respect to Park management, it also establishes the relationship between the BBNPA and its partners and between the Management Plan and other relevant documents.

Chapter 2 describes the landscape and the Park's natural resources as well as basic facts about the Park's people and communities. This chapter also sets the international, national and regional context of the Park.



Wild pony in the Black Mountains



Talybont Reservoir

Chapter 3 describes the special qualities of the Brecon Beacons National Park. These are the characteristics and attributes that in concert define the “sense of place” that is inherent and unique to the Brecon Beacons National Park. These are the qualities of natural beauty, cultural heritage and communities that the BBNPA and its partners are trying to maintain through effective and cooperative management.

Chapter 4 sets forth the 20-year vision and aims for the Brecon Beacons National Park. These are the collective aspirations toward which the BBNPA and its partners are aiming.

Chapter 5 identifies cross-cutting issues and drivers of change (e.g., climate change, biodiversity and agricultural policies) that affect or are likely to affect the National Park. This chapter is not a comprehensive review of all the challenges. Rather, it summarizes the key implications associated with the sustainable management of the Park’s resources, special qualities and communities.

Chapter 6 presents a series of guiding principles that have been fundamental to the development of the vision, aims, strategic objectives and actions included in this Plan. These are the central threads running throughout the Management

Plan that bind it together. These guiding principles should be reflected in the delivery of the outcomes detailed herein. They address the delivery process just as much as they do the proposed outcomes.

Chapter 7 identifies the strategic objectives for the National Park. Strategic objectives operate on a twenty-year time scale. Broadly stated, they are the means to achieve the vision and aims. The strategic objectives are organized according to traditionally recognized disciplines and/or topics under each statutory purpose and duty, respectively. This approach allows for a simplified explanation of each topic’s relevance to park management, although it is recognized that there is considerable overlap among the disciplines when it comes to on-the-ground implementation. Links are made to other strategic objectives and to predominant policies where appropriate.

Chapter 8 summarises a series of high level actions for the next five years that will assist the BBNPA and its partners in taking positive steps toward the vision and aims. A separate Action Plan describes these actions in greater detail.

Chapter 9 outlines the steps required to develop a framework for implementing the priorities discussed in

Chapter 8. This framework will be used to create a plan which details the methods for implementation, key funding sources, research needs and collaborative strategies that will be required to implement the proposed actions and achieve the desired outcomes.

Chapter 10 provides a framework for monitoring and evaluating progress toward achieving the outcomes described in the priorities for action described in the Action Plan. All partners associated with the delivery of the priority actions in this Management Plan have a role to play in monitoring progress and the state of the Park. This chapter summarizes how this can be done most effectively.

Case Studies are used throughout the Plan to provide snapshots of exemplary efforts occurring across the National Park that capture the essence of what the Management Plan is designed to achieve and what the Park has to offer.

The **annexes** provide additional, useful information such as maps, a list of acronyms, a glossary and a description of the management principles governing IUCN Category V landscapes.

1.11. Delivering the Plan

The National Park Management Plan is the principal vehicle for ensuring that the statutory provisions of the Environment Act 1995 are met.⁵ The central role of the management plan, then, is to guide the delivery of the statutory purposes and duty, assisted by the BBNPA's statutory planning function. Successful implementation of the Management Plan is a task shared by all, and, therefore, requires active partnerships between all those involved or with an interest in - often referred to as "stakeholders" - the Brecon Beacons National Park.

5. Countryside Council for Wales. 2006. National Park Management Plans Guidance.



Brecon



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