

# Managing Change Together



**Management Plan 2009 - 2014**

**Managing Change Together: Brecon Beacons National Park Draft Management Plan  
2009 – 2014**

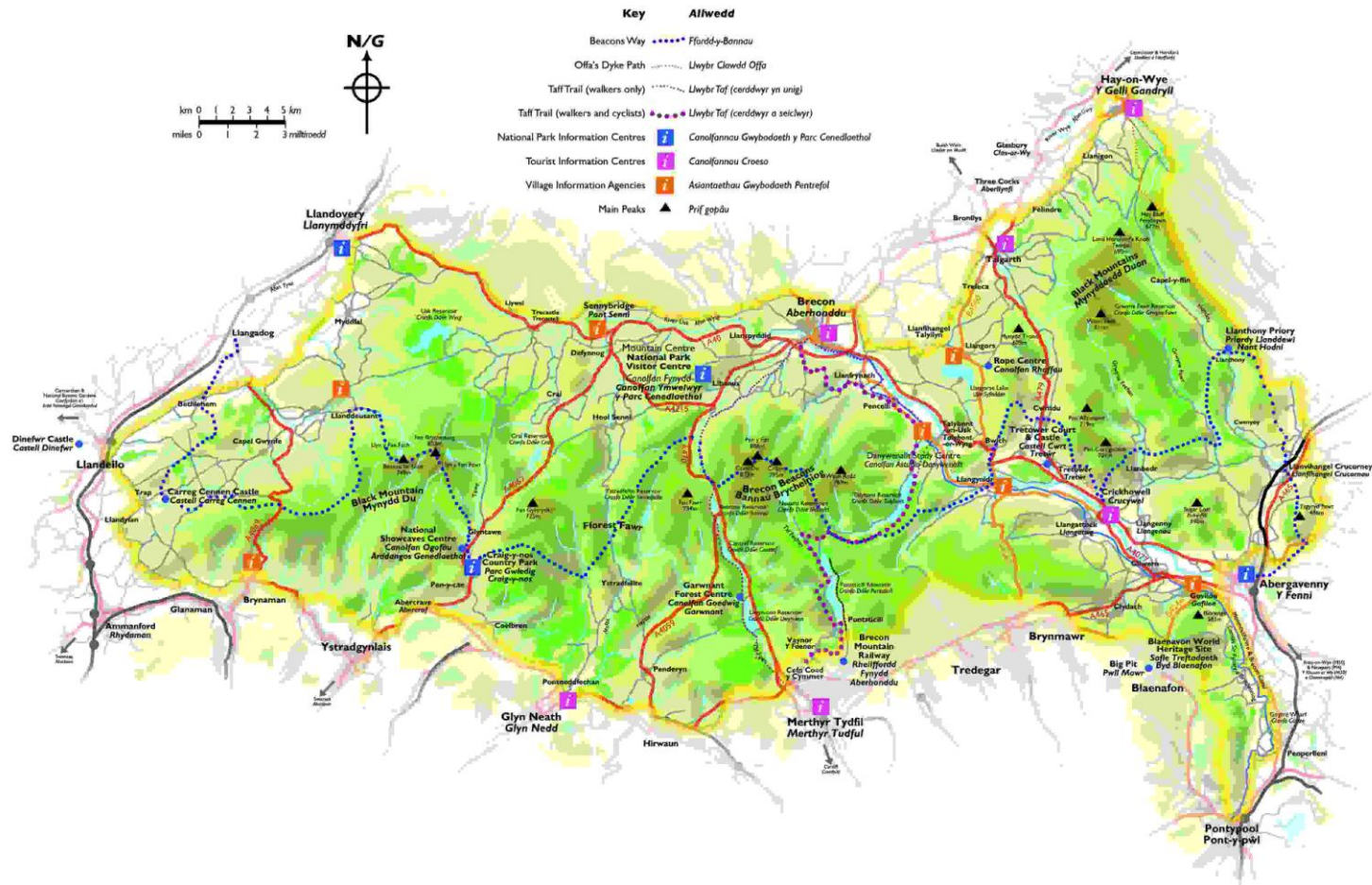
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# Contributing Partners

Partners (including BBNPA, FC, EAW, CCW, LAs, interest groups, etc.; page with partner logos and names)

# Brecon Beacons National Park and Surroundings [insert, two-page fold out]



# Consultation on the Draft Management Plan

Managing Change Together: Brecon Beacons Draft Management Plan 2009-2014 is the result of an extensive consultation process involving all those who have a stake in the future of the National Park. The consultation process officially began in October 2006 with a series of stakeholder workshops in which the vision for the Park and its special qualities were reviewed. Participants also identified key issues and potential impacts that may affect the future of the Park and explored ways of addressing these issues and impacts. National Park Authority (NPA) staff members then held similar workshops throughout the Park for local communities. Participating communities also commented on the Park's vision and special qualities and investigated key issues and possible solutions. Information obtained from the consultation process has been invaluable to the development of this draft Management Plan.

Consultation is an on-going process; NPA members and officers continue to engage interested stakeholders to improve the quality of the Management Plan and, ultimately, improve the management of the Brecon Beacons National Park.

Brecon Beacons National Park Authority and its partners are committed to promoting equal opportunities and tackling social exclusion. We are working to ensure that everyone has fair and equal access to our services. If you find that you or someone you know requires this document in an alternate format, please contact us and we will, within the resources available to use, provide you with a copy in a format appropriate to your needs.

The consultation period for this draft Plan begins on 31 March 2008 and concludes on 31 August 2008. Please share your comments with us so that we can continue to successfully manage this ever-changing landscape TOGETHER!

Please direct comments and inquiries to:

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# Foreword

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# I. Introduction

## I.1. Purpose of the Plan

The National Park Management Plan is the single most important document for the National Park. 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.

## I.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 sets out the Parks' **two purposes**:

- **Conservation and enhancement** - “to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, 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.”

## I.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 obvious conflict. In most cases, though, the two purposes are mutually supportive and share equal importance.

## **1.4. Statutory Duty**

The National Parks of Wales, Scotland, and England are Category V protected areas as defined by the World Conservation Union (IUCN) in the Guidelines of Protected Area Management Categories 1994. 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 (see Appendix 3 for management principles). 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 National Park Authority (NPA), 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; 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.

## **1.5. Who is the Plan for?**

Although the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority (NPA) has been given the statutory responsibility to prepare the Management Plan, it is a plan for the Park as a whole and not just for the NPA. 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.

## **1.6. Role of the National Park Authority**

The NPA 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 NPA’s role is to facilitate, coordinate, and add value to the work of others in the Park. It is not the responsibility of the NPA 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 NPA 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 NPA 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.

## **1.7. Formulating the Plan**

Plan preparation (Figure 1.1) involves active participation of key stakeholders and the wider community which encourages shared ownership of and support for the vision, aims, objectives, policies, and actions that each plan identifies<sup>1</sup>.

Between April 2006 and August 2007, a series of consultation events were convened to assist the development of the National Park Management Plan. Participants represented a wide range of interests and organisations, including NPA staff, statutory environmental bodies, other stakeholder and interest groups, members of the public, and local communities. At these workshops, participants identified issues of importance for the Plan and considered outcomes in relation to these if there were to be no Plan. They also generated management goals for each issue that have been used in developing the Management Plan itself, but that will also feed into the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA).

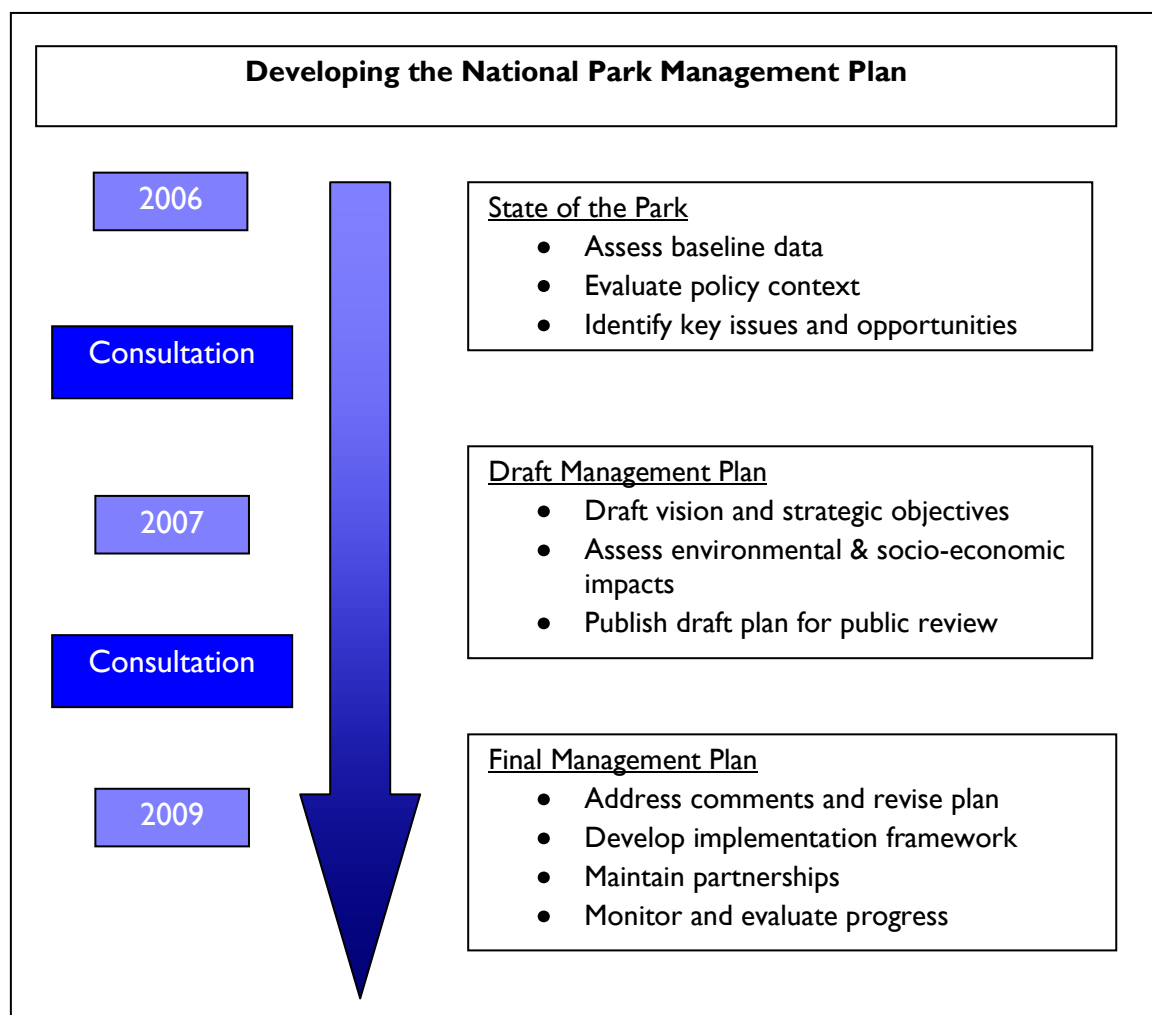
European Union Directive 2001/42/EC and the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes (Wales) Regulations (2004) require a formal SEA of all land use plans and programmes which are likely to have significant effects on the environment with a view to promoting sustainable development. As part of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

SEA is required to be undertaken alongside the preparation of the Plan to which it relates to allow strategic alternatives to be formally incorporated into the Plan at the earliest opportunity. This process, in conjunction with the requirements of the Sustainability Appraisal (which has a socio-economic focus), ensures that environmental, social, and economic implications are fully integrated into the Plan's emerging policies and strategies. Not only does this approach ensure the sustainability and environmental soundness of the Plan, but it also forges long-term partnerships vital to the delivery of the actions and policies outlined in the Plan.

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<sup>1</sup> Countryside Council for Wales. 2006. National Park Management Plans Guidance.

Figure I.1. Steps to developing the National Park Management Plan.



## I.8. 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 (Figure I.2). It ensures that the NPA, in cooperation with its partners, contributes and adds value to national policy objectives. As a result, the Plan sets the framework for more detailed Park strategies and programmes such as the Local Development Plan, the Local Biodiversity Action Plan, the Corporate Business Plan, and the Sustainable Tourism Strategy that assist in the delivery of the Plan. The Management Plan also aims to integrate local activities proposed by the NPA, communities, environmental bodies, and others across the entirety of the 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 assessing the state of the Park's resources.

The **State of the Park Report** (SOPR) 2006 gives an indication of trends across the Brecon Beacons National Park in relation to:

- the Park's special qualities, environment, and cultural assets,
- how well these are understood and enjoyed by the public, and
- the well-being of local communities.

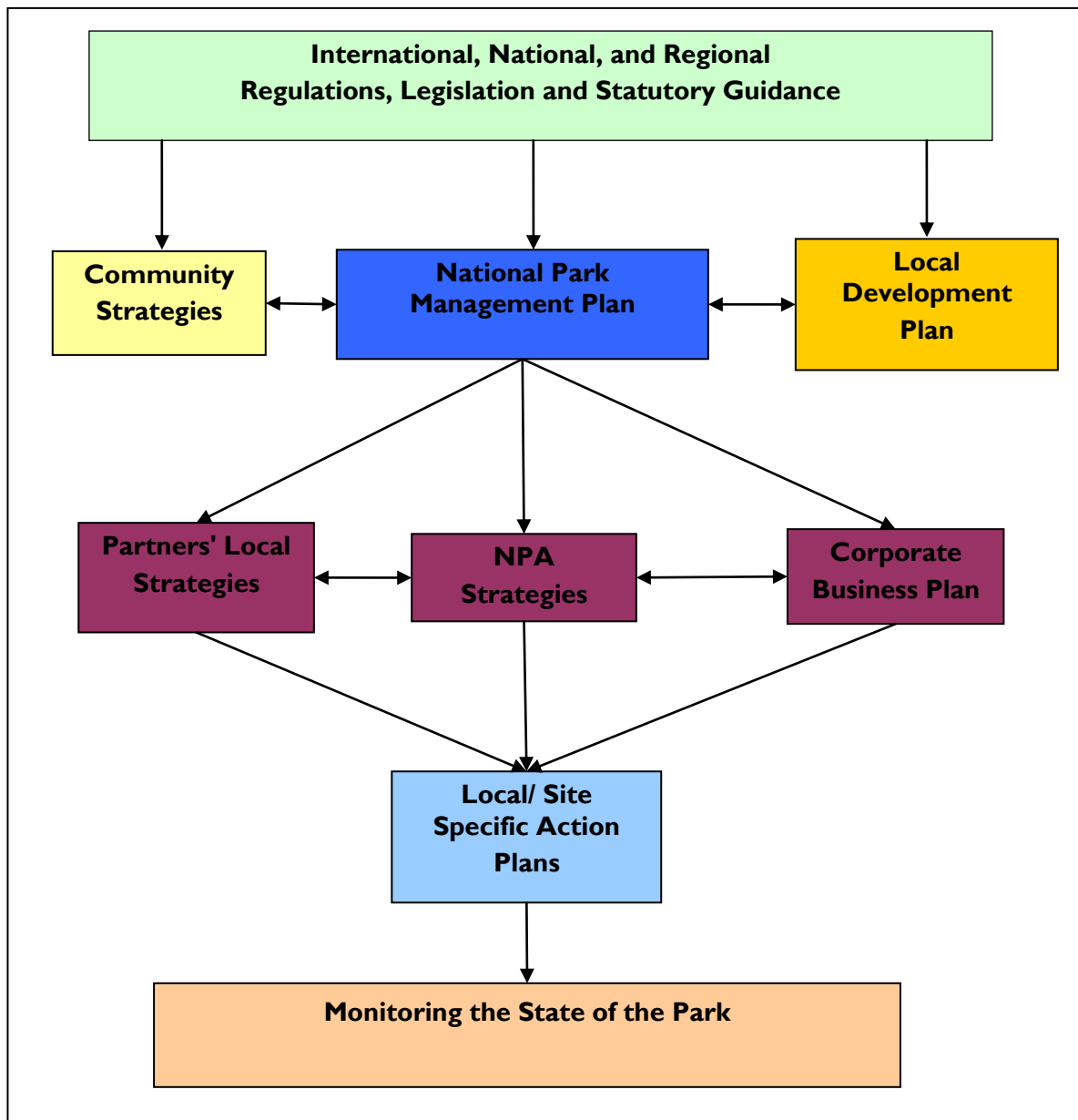
Like the Management Plan, the SOPR relates to the Park area and its people, not just to the work of the NPA. It contains 23 indicators carefully chosen from the available data to evaluate changes in the condition of the Park over time.

Long-term monitoring of trends from these indicators will:

- show whether the policies in the Management Plan are being effective,
- help identify key issues,
- highlight areas where more information and research are required,
- help target resources where they are most needed, and
- support bids for funding.

Hence, the SOPR is a critical component of the Management Plan process and will be updated periodically as part of its monitoring programme.

Figure 1.2. Relationship between the Management Plan and Other Policies.



## 1.9. Structure of the Plan

The Brecon Beacons National Park Management Plan is structured such that it becomes increasingly more specific as one delves further into the document. This is true for both the information presented and the time scale on which the Plan operates. The Plan is a strategic document; it must be, on the one hand, forward-thinking, setting long-term visions and aims for the Park 20-25 years into the future which the NPA and its partners will strive to achieve. It must, on the other hand, set 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 NPA and its partners and between the Management Plan and other relevant documents.

**Chapter 2** paints a general picture of the Park, including a description of 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.

**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 community well-being that the NPA and its partners are trying to maintain through effective and cooperative management.

**Chapter 4** sets forth the 20-year vision for the Brecon Beacons National Park. These are the collective aspirations toward which the Park Authority 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 the issues. 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 aims, goals, objectives and actions included in this Plan. These are the central threads running throughout the Management Plan tapestry 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 20-year aims (often referred to as strategic objectives) for the National Park. These aims are aspirational but are meant to be more realistic and achievable than the vision statement. The 20-year aims 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 aims and to predominant policies where appropriate.

**Chapter 8** outlines the action plan for the NPA and its partners for the next five years. This chapter does not include all possible actions and outcomes that could be pursued in the course of Park management. Instead, it recognizes that management resources (i.e., time, funding, personnel) are limited. Priorities, therefore, need to be set so that those responsible for Park management can realize tangible and meaningful outcomes in the next five years. In so doing, the individual disciplines or topics discussed in Chapter 7 are brought together under common management themes. This reflects the interdisciplinary and integrated nature of land management and land use planning. The importance of each theme as a priority is outlined, along with expected five-year outcomes, proposed actions and responsible parties, and links are made back to the 20-year aims presented in Chapter 7.

**Chapter 9** outlines an implementation framework for the priorities discussed in Chapter 8. This chapter describes the methods by which the priorities for action will be implemented and the issues that will need to be addressed to do so effectively and efficiently. Just as importantly, this chapter also attempts to identify key funding sources or other resources 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 Chapter 8. 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.

The **appendices** provide additional, useful information such as a list of acronyms, a glossary, a description of the management principles governing IUCN Category V landscapes, and a list of contributors to this Plan.

## **1.10. Pulling It All Together**

The National Park Management Plan is the principal vehicle for ensuring that the statutory provisions of the Environment Act 1995 are met<sup>2</sup>. The central role of the management plan, then, is to guide the delivery of the statutory purposes and duty, assisted by the NPA's statutory planning function. Successful implementation of the Management Plan is a task shared by all, and,

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<sup>2</sup> Countryside Council for Wales. 2006. National Park Management Plans Guidance.

therefore, requires active partnerships between the NPA and government agencies, local authorities, granting agencies, farmers, landowners, conservation groups, recreation groups, visitors, non-governmental organizations, local businesses, and local communities.

## 2. Context

### 2.1. Brecon Beacons National Park

The Brecon Beacons National Park contains some of the most spectacular and distinctive upland landforms in southern Britain. The highest point in the Park is Pen y Fan in the Brecon Beacons, at the centre of the National Park. Its distinctive table-topped summit stands at 886 metres, and it is climbed by hundreds of thousands of people each year.

The Park covers 1346 square kilometres (520 square miles) and lies between rural Mid Wales and the industrial South Wales Valleys. It is a diverse landscape, where sweeping uplands contrast with green valleys, with dramatic waterfalls, ancient woodland, caves, forests and reservoirs.

Despite its name, the National Park is much more than the Brecon Beacons. The bulk of the Park is underlain by Old Red Sandstone rocks of Devonian age. These form the characteristic north and north-east facing escarpments of Y Mynydd Du (The Black Mountain), Fforest Fawr (Great Forest), the Brecon Beacons, and Black Mountains, giving the Park its highest peaks.

The older Ordovician and Silurian rocks of Mid Wales cross into the north-western corner of the Park, giving a landscape of south west - north east trending ridges and valleys. In the south of the Park lie Carboniferous rocks, with limestone forming a conspicuous escarpment in some places. The Park's limestone pavements and cave systems are of European significance. South of this are Millstone Grit scarps and plateaux, while Coal Measures outcrop along the Park's southern boundary.

The Park was glaciated during the last Ice Age, as shown by the characteristic U shape of the valleys and the presence of moraines, kames, drumlins and outwash sand and gravels. The drainage pattern is generally north-south or *vice versa*, reflecting the dip of the strata, although the major rivers have west – east courses in the Park area. The broad valley of the River Usk, for instance, cuts across the Park's mountains, whilst the rivers Tywi and Wye border the Park.

The National Park has many rich habitats for wildlife, such as upland heaths, bogs, unimproved grasslands, hay meadows, ancient woodlands and watercourses. But no part of the Park is totally 'natural': more than 90% is agricultural land, including hedged fields and the upland commons, grazed mainly by sheep. Human influence can be seen everywhere, from Neolithic long cairns, Iron Age hill forts, Roman roads and Norman castles, to disused quarries and

ironworks, managed woods and forest plantations, former railways, a canal and reservoirs, as well as the many farmsteads, villages and small market towns.

National Park status does not mean that all the land within the Park is in public ownership. In fact, over 65% of Park lands are privately owned by estate owners, farmers, and householders, but there are several large public and charitable landowners too (Table 2.1). The NPA itself owns 14% of the Park, more than any other park authority in the UK. It is the single largest landowner in the National Park. NPA-owned lands comprise mainly upland common land purchased with the help of grants to conserve it for the benefit of the public.

Table 2.1. Area and percentage of National Park land by owner category.

<b>Land Owner</b>	<b>Landowner Area Owned (hectares)</b>	<b>% of the Park</b>
Privately owned	87598	65
Countryside Council for Wales	1049	0.8
Dwr Cymru Welsh Water	5197	3.9
Forestry Commission land*	6401	4.8
Forestry Commission forests**	9622	7.1
National Park Authority	19791	14.3
National Trust	4942	3.7
<b>Total area of Park</b>	<b>134600</b>	<b>100</b>

\*excludes land on long lease from Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water.

\*\*includes land on long lease from Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water.

The Park is home to 33,000 people, and has a strong Welsh heritage and rich economic, social, and cultural life. The largest settlement is the cathedral town of Brecon (population 7,900). Together with Brecon, the settlements of Crickhowell, Gilwern, Hay-on-wye, and Talgarth account for approximately 46% of the Park's inhabitants.

The western part of the Park supports many scattered farmsteads and just a handful of villages – Llanddeusant, Myddfai, Gwynfe, Bethlehem and Trapp. In the central and eastern part the population is mainly concentrated in the Usk Valley, the Hay/Talgarth area, the Hirwaun/Penderyn area, and the Clydach Gorge. These patterns arise from a mix of traditional farming areas, mineral extraction, and more recent commercial, administrative, and commuting areas.

### Brecon Beacons National Park Fast Facts

The Park covers 1346 square kilometres (520 square miles).	Fforest Fawr Geopark is the first European/ UNESCO Geopark in Wales and the first in a UK National Park.
33,000 people live in the Park.	19 geological SSSIs exist within or partly in the National Park, covering 12% of the Park's area.
Approximately 3.6 million people visit the Park each year.	64 biological SSSIs exist in the Park, covering 26047 hectares or 15% of the Park area.
The BBNPA owns more land (14%) than any other NPA in the UK.	There are 1711 listed buildings.
More than 200 farm holdings are in Tir Gofal (agriculture conservation) schemes, covering 15.6% of the Park.	There are 268 scheduled ancient monuments.
More than £126 million was spent in 2004 on tourism-related activities within the Park.	There are 5376 kilometres of hedgerows.
The Park contains 21 UK priority habitats and 48 UK priority species.	There are 1983 kilometres of public rights of way in the Park: 1415 kilometres footpaths, 367 kilometres bridleways and 200 kilometres byways and roads used as public paths.
There are 11 SACs covering 3,311 hectares or 2% of Park.	Approximately 35 local cultural events and food festivals are held in the Park each year.
The Park comprises 9 Unitary Authorities and 50 Community Councils.	The World Heritage Site at Blaenavon which commemorates landmarks of the Industrial Revolution lies partly within the Park's south-eastern boundary.
Four of the five longest caves/cave networks in the UK are in the National Park.	The deepest and third deepest caves in the UK are in the National Park.
The 'Main Entrance' to Porth yr Ogof is the largest cave entrance in Wales.	The greatest collection of waterfalls in one small area in the UK is around Ystradfellte/ Pontneddfechan.
Brecon Agricultural Show is believed to be the oldest of its kind in the UK, the Brecknock Agricultural Society having started in 1755.	The 2,400m long tunnel by which Hill's Tramway travelled under the mountain at Pwll-Du, north of Blaenavon, was the longest ever constructed for a horse-operated railway in Britain.
Llangorse Lake (Llyn Syfaddan) is the largest natural lake in South Wales.	Llyn y Fan Fawr is the highest natural lake in South Wales.

Public administration, education, and health professions account for 33% of the Park's employment opportunities, which is not surprising considering Brecon is an important administrative centre for Powys County Council, Dyfed Powys Police, the NPA, and the Ministry of Defence. Other significant employment sectors within the Park include: distribution, hotels, and restaurants (21%); manufacturing (11%); and banking, finance, and insurance (10.5%).

Over three and a half million people a year come to the Brecon Beacons National Park to enjoy this unforgettable landscape. The mountains, uplands and valleys are all excellent walking country, and other activities include horse riding, cycling and mountain biking and water-based activities. There are major tourist attractions such as the Dan-yr-ogof Showcaves, and festivals such as the Brecon Jazz Festival, the Hay Festival of Literature and celebrations of locally produced food.

## **2.2. Global Significance**

There are more than 100,000 protected areas worldwide. Each contributes in its own way to sustaining life on Earth, including the health and well-being of humans. Despite their significance, collectively they cover only 12 per cent of the Earth's land surface and 0.5 per cent of marine systems.<sup>3</sup> The continued provision of benefits and values to society and, indeed, our very survival, therefore, hinge upon the successful stewardship of a small but precious portion of our world. The urgency of this responsibility becomes infinitely more critical when we consider that natural areas are being lost or modified at an alarming rate across the globe.

Consequently, the Brecon Beacons National Park has national and international as well as local importance as a protected landscape. The Park's funding and specialist staff help it serve as a test-bed for sustainable and innovative development and management that may be applied in a broader context. Work performed locally can therefore have international, national, and regional benefits.

## **2.3. International Context**

Brecon Beacons National Park was established in 1957. With its designation as a UK national park, the Brecon Beacons joined a growing international family of protected areas. Protected areas fall into two general categories: those designated for the strict protection of the natural world and those designated for the purposes of maintaining sustainable relationships between humans and nature. National Parks of the UK belong to the latter category, otherwise classified as IUCN Category V Protected Landscapes.

IUCN Category V landscapes/seascapes are protected areas managed mainly for both conservation and recreation. Unlike IUCN Categories I-IV, this designation recognises and encourages active, sustainable human presence as part of the evolution and maintenance of the area. These ideals are embodied in the 12 fundamental principles which have been designed to guide management of these areas for the long-term benefit of the environment, society, culture, and the economy (see Appendix 3).

The National Park—via this Plan—also functions to deliver international policies and objectives. The Park must conform to European Union (EU) directives in relation to: Special Areas for Conservation (SACs), biodiversity, sustainable development, water quality, noise suppression, greenhouse gas emissions, and waste. Adherence to and delivery of these objectives present

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<sup>3</sup> G.L. Worboys and C. Winkler. 2006. Natural Heritage, in M. Lockwood, G.L. Worboys, and A. Kothari, eds. *Managing Protected Areas: A Global Guide*. Earthscan, London.

cascading benefits and challenges both regionally and locally. For example, Common Agricultural Policy reform will influence the Park's landscape, agriculture, biodiversity, and economy through farmers' compliance with it. Agricultural policy, in turn, must be reconciled along with enhancement and maintenance of SACs in and around the Park. Currently, there are 11 SACs in the Park covering 2% of its area. Most notable of these is the River Usk which runs nearly the length of the Park from East to West. Because its waters are fed by a large catchment of the Park, the Usk constantly reflects in its waters the activities which occur across the Park. As the Usk travels further downstream, these activities are realized outside the Park's boundaries.

In 2005 the Fforest Fawr (Great Forest) Geopark was established as the first European/ UNESCO Geopark in Wales and the first Geopark in any UK National Park. This international recognition acknowledges the area for its scientific quality, stunning landscapes, educational value, and historical or cultural interest. The area covers the western portion of the Brecon Beacons National Park, including the Brecon Beacons, Fforest Fawr, and Black Mountain. The main objective of the European Geopark Network is local economic development based on geo-tourism in local communities. Whereas the designation is international, the benefits are truly local.

The National Park Authority (NPA) also belong to the Federation of Nature and National Parks of Europe which is the European voice for national park conservation.

## **2.4. National Context**

The Brecon Beacons was the tenth National Park in Wales and England to be designated under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act of 1949. This action confirmed its importance nationally, conferring the UK's highest status for conservation of landscape and natural beauty. The Welsh Assembly Government has further emphasised the Park's importance in the national context through its vision for the Welsh National Parks in the 21<sup>st</sup> century:

*“The Welsh National Parks are protected landscapes of international importance which capture much of what is distinct and special about rural Wales, environmentally and culturally. Although predominantly rural in nature, the Parks contain a resident population of over 80,000, are close to important urban communities and have significant potential to enrich the lives of the people of, and visitors to, Wales and to contribute positively to public health and well-being and to the Welsh economy. They are living landscapes, moulded by their communities over thousands of years. They are places where sustainable development is promoted for the benefit of the environment, the economy and for Park communities. They are places that experiment with new approaches in sustainable development and environmental conservation, providing exemplars of best practice for wider Wales, and helping to shape and lead future rural policy and practice. They are also places where all who can influence the future of the*

*Parks work together to conserve and enhance their natural beauty, biodiversity and cultural identity, in line with sustainable development principles. Guided by the Park Authorities, these special areas are becoming progressively richer and more diverse in terms of landscape, wildlife and heritage and are enjoyed and cherished by a full cross-section of society.”<sup>4</sup>*

Working together with the other two Welsh National Parks (and sister parks in Scotland and England), the Brecon Beacons will pursue this vision through its contributions to such national objectives as:

- mitigating and adapting to climate change,
- conserving and enhancing Wales’ biodiversity,
- embracing integrated approaches to resource conservation and land management,
- supporting sustainable use of natural resources within the Park,
- ensuring that all sections of society have ample opportunities to enjoy and understand the Park’s special qualities,
- integrating sustainable development principles into all areas of Park management,
- encouraging socio-economic vitality, healthy lifestyles, and strong sense of place— inclusive of the Welsh language—across the communities in and surrounding the Park,
- engaging and working together more effectively with the Park’s local communities, and
- providing a high quality planning service which inspires confidence in the local communities and is efficient, effective, consistent, and sound.

Again, as an example, this National Park Management Plan—in conjunction with the Local Development Plan—helps deliver the outcomes of the Environment Strategy for Wales: integrating environmental considerations; providing environmental education and information; encouraging responsible behaviour; minimising greenhouse gas emissions; minimising waste generation, promoting reuse and recycling and providing for waste management; managing water resources; safeguarding soil; minimising the impact of mineral working. It does this in the context of the Wales Spatial Plan and the local community strategies.<sup>5</sup>

The English and Welsh NPAs also work together through the Association of National Park Authorities (ANPA) to strengthen the voice of the Parks nationally, raising awareness of issues, tackling widespread problems and sharing information. This work is supported by the Society of

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<sup>4</sup> Welsh Assembly Government. March 2007. Policy Statement for the National Parks and National Park Authorities in Wales: “Working together for Wales”.

<sup>5</sup> Welsh Assembly Government. March 2007. Policy Statement for the National Parks and National Park Authorities in Wales: “Working together for Wales”.



National Park Staff, and also by the Council for National Parks, an umbrella body for concerned voluntary organisations.

## **2.5. Regional Context**

Administratively, the Brecon Beacons National Park includes 50 Community Councils and nine Unitary Authorities comprising Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Carmarthenshire, Merthyr Tydfil, Monmouthshire, Neath/Port Talbot, Powys, Rhondda/Cynon/Taf, and Torfaen. Powys Council accounts for 66 per cent of the Park's area whilst Caerphilly and Neath/Port Talbot have such small holdings within the Park that they do not take up any direct involvement in the Authority. The National Park Authority (NPA) is the planning authority for the National Park area, whilst the constituent Unitary Authorities retain responsibility for all other local government services within their areas of the Park. The NPA therefore works in close partnership with these authorities and communities, who appoint members to serve on the Authority.

The Brecon Beacons National Park is the principle gateway between the populated and urbanized Welsh valleys and the more pastoral landscapes of Mid Wales. Residents, visitors and those seeking recreation, farmers, trades and business people, and members special interest organisations all live their lives and pursue their work or pleasure here. Likewise many public and voluntary organizations and statutory bodies also pursue their functions within the Park. Each has a key role to play in the Park's management. Much of the NPA's work also involves developing, coordinating, and maintaining partnerships with and among these groups. As it is a statutory duty for all of us to have regard to this Management Plan whilst carrying out various functions where they pertain to the National Park, it is hoped that this will be reflected in the collective endorsement of this Plan and in our actions thereafter.

The Unitary Authorities' Community Strategies have provided context for this Management Plan, and relevant aspects of these have been incorporated into it. Similarly relevant parts of other regional strategies have informed this Plan such as the Environment Agency's Catchment Abstraction Management Strategies, Flood Management, Soil Protection Strategy, and River Basin Management Plans. The strategic objectives from these plans are reflected in the twenty-year aims and priorities for action detailed herein.

## **2.6. Setting the Framework**

The Brecon Beacons National Park is a special landscape, exhibiting qualities that collectively cannot be found elsewhere. The context described above provides the framework for defining these special qualities and has guided the formulation of our shared vision of the Park's future.

Our vision has been translated into 20-year aims to direct our management of the Park so that local strategies can be implemented to achieve our 5-year outcomes, actions, and policies in the short-term.

### 3. Special Qualities

The Brecon Beacons National Park covers a broad geographical area, encompassing an impressive diversity of natural and cultural landscapes within its boundaries. To the East, for example, the Park is more developed than in the West, offering a number of modern amenities to residents and visitors alike. The landscape here has been heavily influenced by Norman culture in the past, and the area is now largely anglicised. Its pastoral patterns and glaciated mountains are generally more accessible than areas to the West. Yet, the eastern part of the Park still offers opportunities to escape the “commercial bustle of everyday life in the UK.” In contrast, Welsh language and traditions are more predominate in the West of the Park, where people and culture are more deeply rooted. There is a sense that the mountains, farmlands, and lowlands here are remote and rugged. Yet this feeling is not without an accompanying sense of peace and tranquillity. The South and South-eastern areas of the Park are wholly different still; both the culture and sense of place are characteristic of the Welsh Valleys which have been shaped by the rise and decline of the industrial era. The air is more multicultural here than in other parts of the Park, reflecting the blend of many different walks of life who have settled here to make this their home. The Park as a whole provides a plethora of opportunities to enjoy its outstanding natural beauty, varied flora and fauna, and local flavour. Whilst pursuing these opportunities, one also gains a better understanding of the Park’s communities, their history and time-honoured traditions, and a sense of what it means to be Welsh.

It is the richness and variety of experiences that the Brecon Beacons have to offer that make it such a valued natural and cultural resource for so many people. There is something here for everyone. Though each individual’s impressions of the Park are forged by his or her own personal experiences here, there are commonalities that emerge from these experiences which are shared by a variety of audiences. These special qualities, as they are often referred to, are what we strive to conserve through our ongoing management of the Park’s resources so that present and future generations may continue to benefit from them.

The broad appeal of the Park’s diverse qualities is reflected in the comments we received from participants attending our consultation workshops. Residents, visitors, partners, government officials, representatives from non-governmental organizations and interest groups, and other stakeholders identified special qualities sharing several common threads. While the list below is not an exhaustive list of special qualities, it does capture the most common themes identified. With these special qualities in mind, there is no wonder why this marvellous place has been designated as a national park.

Table 3.1. Special Qualities of the Brecon Beacons National Park.

Special Qualities	Stakeholder Quotations
A National Park offering <b>peace and tranquillity</b> with opportunities for quiet enjoyment, relaxation, and spiritual renewal.	“Isolated from ‘commercial bustle’ of everyday life in the UK.”
<b>Cleanliness and healthiness</b> promoted by the Park’s fresh air, clean water, open land, and locally produced foods.	“A place that is relatively free from the roar of traffic and has ‘clean’ air.”
A sense of <b>cultural resonance and cultural identity</b> —“Welshness”—characterized by the indigenous Welsh language, religious and spiritual connections, unique customs and events, traditional foods and crafts, relatively unspoilt historic towns and villages, and continued practices of traditional skills developed by local inhabitants to live and earn a living here, such as commoning and grazing.	“Breathing space close to home for those who live in the Park and for those in the industrial valleys.”  “A sense of timelessness.”  “The back garden of the Valleys.”
The <b>mysterious and intriguing allure</b> of discovering the Park’s hidden secrets and stories such as genealogical histories, prehistoric ritual sites, relic medieval rural settlements, early industrial sites, local myths and legends, and geological treasures from time immemorial.	“A rich archaeological resource – still to be explored and understood.”  “A cultural landscape where history, people, culture, and activity are obviously linked.”
The Park’s <b>sweeping grandeur and outstanding natural beauty</b> , including marvellous gorges and waterfalls, classic karst geology with caves and sink holes, contrasting glacial landforms such as cliffs and broad valleys carved from old red sandstone, and prominent hilltops with long views in all directions.	“Stunning views!”  “Brecon Beacons National Park has great variety of beautiful geography in a compact area.”
A working, living “patchwork” of <b>contrasting patterns, colours, and textures</b> comprising farmed landscapes, open uplands, lakes and meandering rivers punctuated by small-scale woodlands, country lanes, hedgerows and stone walls, and scattered settlements.	“Outstanding landscapes and countryside and well-maintained agricultural land.”
<b>Easy access to the Park’s diversity of wildlife and richness of semi-natural habitats</b> , such as native woodlands, heathland and grassland, natural lakes and riparian habitats, ancient hedgerows, limestone pavement, and blanket bogs including those of international and national importance.	“The variety is special, particularly the vast difference between the park’s eastern and western areas.”
In the context of the UK, geographically <b>rugged, remote, and challenging</b> landscapes.	“Outstanding and beautiful natural environment to be treasured, respected, and preserved.”
<b>A source of inspiration</b> where innovative approaches to sustainable development are being explored for the benefit of the wider community, including renewable energy projects, waste reduction schemes, community regeneration ventures, and carbon conservation initiatives.	“A place where local people and visitors can learn about the environment.”
<b>Access to plenty of open country and the attraction of endless opportunities</b> for everyone to pursue walking, cycling, fishing, water-based activities, and other forms of sustainable recreation or relaxation.	“Opportunities for all ages to engage with the natural landscape.”
Vibrant, enterprising towns and villages that are comparatively safe (crime free), friendly, and retain an <b>intimate sense of community</b> .	“Seeing it stay as it is but accepting there may have to be change.”

## 4. Vision

### Managing Change Together

means in 2028 the Brecon Beacons National Park will be:

- ◆ Recognised internationally for its value as a protected area, whose character continues to be shaped by the long-standing interactions between people and the processes of nature.
- ◆ Widely acclaimed for its natural beauty, geodiversity, biodiversity, and cultural heritage which are being conserved and enhanced by its stakeholders through traditional and innovative means.
- ◆ A sought-after destination providing an outstanding variety of sustainable opportunities for all to understand and enjoy its tranquillity, rural character, Welsh way of life, sense of remoteness, and other special qualities.
- ◆ Resilient, open, and responsive to change—particularly climate change—and its stakeholders proactive in mitigating and adapting to the effects of undesirable change through local action.
- ◆ A living landscape where innovative approaches to sustainable development and renewable energy are encouraged and tested for the benefit of the environment, the economy, and local communities.
- ◆ Managed sustainably<sup>6</sup> through active partnerships among the Park's stakeholders so that it continues to be a source of inspiration and enjoyment for future generations.
- ◆ Monitored over the long term to improve future policy and management practice.

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<sup>6</sup> Sustainably: respecting the limits of the planet's natural resources, its environment and its biodiversity whilst having regard for social and economic concerns such that all actions taken to meet our needs today do not compromise the needs of future generations.

This vision will be achieved through pursuit of the following:

<b>Conserving and Enhancing the Natural and Cultural Heritage of the Park</b>		
<b>2028</b>		
	The beautiful and varied character of the landscape will continue to be well-managed and cared for. Landscape change will be encouraged to benefit the Park's biodiversity, geodiversity, and cultural heritage.	
	The upland commons will be managed for the benefit of habitat conservation, grazing productivity, archaeological features, public accessibility, and to the provision of vital ecosystem services.	
	Woodlands will be integrated with other aspects of countryside management. They will be extended and diversified where possible. They will be well-managed for their landscape, economic, ecological, and social values and as a renewable resource.	
	The Park's stakeholders will encourage biodiversity to flourish and adapt to climate change. Improved habitat connectivity and exemplary management of designated nature conservation sites will enhance the condition and diversity of species and habitats in the Park.	
	Experimentation with novel approaches to sustainable development and environmental conservation on NPA-owned lands will provide examples of best practice.	
	The traditional pattern of farmed land and its characteristic, historic features and habitats will be conserved and enhanced, providing the basis for a thriving agricultural economy.	
	Air, water, and soil resources will be used sustainably to integrate the needs of wildlife with the demands from human use. Their quality will be maintained at a high standard.	
	The Park's internationally-renowned geologic and geomorphologic features will be conserved.	
	The Park's historic settlement patterns and buildings will be conserved and enhanced. New development will adhere to sustainable design principles and complement the existing built heritage of the Park.	
	Historic landscapes and archaeological features will be protected, conserved, and enhanced.	
	Local traditions, community events, and the Welsh language will flourish and evolve as part of a living culture that cherishes the past and embraces the future.	

<b>Understanding and Enjoying the Special Qualities of the Park</b>		
<b>2028</b>		
	Everyone will have abundant opportunities to learn about and experience the Park’s special qualities. They will understand why the Park is an internationally important protected area and sustainable tourism destination.	
	The sense of tranquillity, peace, and remoteness experienced throughout the National Park will be conserved and enhanced.	
	People will better understand the contributions geodiversity makes to the landscape, economy, and environment.	
	Historic landscapes and archaeological features will be valued as important links among past, present, and future generations.	
	People will come to the Park to enjoy a range of sustainable activities. They will understand and practice responsible behaviour.	
	The facilities, information, and interpretation used to enhance peoples’ experiences of the Park will exceed their expectations. A full range of interpretation, education, and communication tools will be used.	
	The Park will be much-admired as a place to pursue healthy lifestyles, relaxation, and spiritual renewal as “One of Britain’s Breathing Spaces.”	
	The Park’s natural beauty, wildlife, and cultural heritage will be accessible to all via an integrated network of routes. Actual and perceived barriers to access amongst socially excluded groups will be removed. Public confidence as to where to recreate will be high.	

<b>Economic and Social-well Being of the Local Communities</b>		
<b>2028</b>		
	The Park's people, Welsh heritage, and rich economy will continue to thrive, supporting healthy communities and the environment whilst providing a welcome for visitors.	
	The Park's communities will have pride in their place and a sense of ownership of the Park.	
	Sustainable transport initiatives will enhance accessibility across the Park whilst reducing the reliance on private motor vehicles.	
	The Park will support a sustainable tourism industry which contributes to the public's enjoyment and to the local economy.	
	Good quality, affordable housing of all types will be accessible to the Park's communities.	
	A mixture of small rural businesses, traditional land-use businesses, local services, sustainable tourism industries, and agriculturalists will maximise the economic potential of the Park's special qualities whilst promoting resource conservation.	
	Individuals will have access to employment opportunities and modern amenities appropriate to the context of the Park's purposes and duty.	
	The contributions that historic landscapes, local distinctiveness, and vernacular buildings make to the economy and environment will be recognised and promoted.	
	Local communities and businesses will experiment with and adopt new approaches to waste reduction, localised food production through market gardens, effective recycling, reduced energy consumption and renewable energy generation and use.	
	Everyone will understand and appreciate how the planning process helps to achieve the Park's purposes and duty.	
	All those with an interest in the Brecon Beacons National Park will understand and embrace the vision of this special place and work together to sustain it.	



## **5. Managing for Change**

### **5.1. Climate Change**

Our climate has always changed on both local and global scales. In the past, change was predominantly a result of natural causes. The most recent changes, however, are proving to be the result of human impact, mainly from the emission of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), methane, and other greenhouse gases. There are now major concerns about future changes in our climate. Scientific evidence suggests a future increase in temperature especially in the summer when high temperatures are expected to become more frequent. South Wales is expected to have amongst the highest summer temperatures. The pattern of rainfall is also expected to change, with summers becoming drier and winters becoming wetter. Winter rainfall is also predicted to fall in more intense storm events than at present.

There is no doubt that climatic change will continue. However, the degree of change will be influenced by the level of global carbon emissions as demonstrated in the various scenarios developed by the UK Climate Impacts Programme (UKCIP). Climatic change will provide a serious challenge to the future and have implications for most aspects of life, from wildlife to planning decisions such as building development in flood plain areas.

As well as reacting to these challenges the National Park can also adopt proactive approaches to reducing the local “carbon footprint”. The Beacons Bus project is one way in which overall vehicle CO<sub>2</sub> emissions are reduced while encouraging enjoyment of the Park by visitors. Schemes such as the Talybont community’s hydroelectric scheme demonstrate how the use of these renewable resources need not adversely affect the special qualities of the National Park.

### **5.2. Biodiversity**

The National Park holds a rich diversity of flora and fauna and a wide range of associated habitats from the wetlands around Llangors Lake to the exposed open moors of the uplands. These habitats are predominantly a result of the land being managed over centuries rather than from an isolated natural development. Nevertheless they provide homes for thousands of species, some of which like Leys whitebeam, are found no where else on Earth.

There are, however, some management concerns about a number of economic and social activities that are placing pressure on the Park’s rich biodiversity. At a general level the effects of farming are well documented with, for example, high yielding grassland species replacing the

traditional species of rich hay meadows, and excessive sheep stocking eliminating upland biodiversity and compacting the soils. Coniferous plantations also, as well as having a visual impact, tend to suppress the flora and fauna underneath. Wetland drainage, too, can have a devastating impact on the biodiversity of an area, while intensive recreational use of areas such as the waterfalls area of the Park can negatively affect both flora and fauna.

The degree of change is often dependent on individual circumstances; the intensity to which farmers manage the land, for instance, will partly depend on their individual or family requirements. Changing lifestyles have also caused modifications to biodiversity, with many people no longer managing or making use of local resources. As an example, most rural dwellings had an orchard growing local apple varieties in the past, but today many orchards have disappeared while others are depleted or in poor condition resulting in the loss of varieties.

Managing the changing landscape to retain and perhaps enhance the biodiversity requires a sensitive approach. Much can be achieved at a local level with some effort and forethought through working with local people and communities and in partnership with relevant bodies. As an example, the Marcher Apple Network by offering assistance in identifying apples is awakening an interest in the old varieties of the area.

### **5.3. Upland Farming Practices**

The landscape of the Brecon Beacons is dominated by pastoralism--both enclosed lowland pastures and wide open uplands. It is an area that has been shaped by pastoralism over thousands of years. The wellbeing of the farming community is therefore fundamental to the future of the landscape and communities of the National Park. If livestock grazing were to decline, the uplands would scrub over in places, which would change the identity of the landscape without further intervention. Whilst the visual nature of the landscape would change, opportunities for improving both habitat diversity and grazing quality would arise.

Over time any changes that have take place have been influenced by personal circumstances and prevailing economic conditions. At present the livelihood of the farming community is under significant pressure from a number of challenges. Reform of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) has adjusted the money paid to farmers to enable farm businesses to respond better to market trends, whilst delivering more public benefits such as biodiversity conservation. Post 2013 it is probable that the CAP will be further adjusted with a major shift of emphasis from direct payments to farmers in favour of environmental or community based assistance and public benefits. Vital skills, difficult to replace, are being lost through farmers leaving or retiring from the industry. It is also difficult for new people to enter the farming business. This leaves an

ageing farming community that it is naturally risk-averse and less receptive to innovation, at a time when innovation is essential to survival in this changing economic and environmental climate. Some farm businesses are responding to the changes by buying up neighbouring farms, resulting in fewer but larger farms. Whilst this may be good business sense for the farm involved, it could be counter-productive within the National Park because small, family farms have characterised the farming community in the Park for generations; frequently it is these farms that support most biodiversity. Diversification has helped but it is not a solution for every farm.

Farming, the community, and the landscape are all interdependent. The challenge is to maintain a viable farming community to ensure the protection of the traditional landscape and communities. However, as mentioned in the report *Sustainable Farming and Environment: Action Towards 2020*, the need for change is easy to recognise but harder to deliver. Nevertheless, the need for sensitive land management must be a priority.

#### **5.4. Population Pressures**

Predictions indicate that the Park's population will increase in the foreseeable future. While there is an anticipated decline in the natural population, an overall increase is expected via in-migration. The intrinsic quality of the Park combined with easy access to the M4 corridor has made it a popular destination for commuting from and retirement to. This has increased the cost of housing in an area with an already high ratio of house price to income. This scenario has become a particularly difficult problem for young people wishing to remain living and working in the National Park. The housing problem is accentuated by the current trend towards more but smaller households. A key housing issue, then, is the provision of affordable, low environmental impact and energy efficient housing for local people with access to fundamental services. This can help maintain sustainable communities in high quality environments. Another challenge is the in-migration of retired people—one of the causes of the Park's above average ageing population and below average birth rate.

These pressures have a range of implications for the National Park, from energy consumption to planning to social services. Consideration of national planning guidance in concert with climate change predictions, for example, indicates that no further development should occur in the floodplain, the area in the Park where development has historically occurred. Where then should future development be located to meet population pressures, given the limited environmental capacity for development that exists in the National Park? A fine balance will obviously be required to meet population pressures, satisfy the Park purposes and address climate change scenarios.

## 5.5. Renewable and Non-renewable Energy

The world's supply of fossil fuels (i.e., non-renewable resources) will become economically depleted in the foreseeable future. A growing number of scientists believe that demand has already surpassed potential supplies for oil worldwide, for example, leading to depletion of supplies within the next 50 years. Although oil resources will never disappear completely, they will become too expensive or too difficult to recover, affecting fuel prices in the near term. At this point, we will have five choices: 1) recycle or reuse existing supplies, 2) waste less, 3) use less, 4) find a substitute, or 5) do without. We will need to consider these scenarios carefully as we plan future management options for the National Park.

The production of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) from conventional energy production has increased society's focus on the provision of renewable energy options. When the UK Government signed up to the Kyoto Protocol, it set itself a domestic target of a 20% reduction of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, below 1990 levels, by 2010. Locally the NPA has an important part to play both through a practical and an advisory role. Reducing the problem can be achieved through energy conservation and also through the production of alternative, renewable energy.

Reducing energy can be achieved in a number of ways. The NPA as a planning authority is in a unique position to assist through giving energy saving advice through the planning service as well as technical advice on installation capacity and feasibility. Policies can be designed to encourage renewable energy generation and energy conservation in old and new buildings and on a district and commercial scale. Assisting in reducing the amount of travelling carried out through schemes like the Beacons Bus or recycling schemes can also reduce energy requirements. One of our most promising means of reducing all transport is through more efficient and effective use of the internet and other forms of computer technology. These tools are currently underutilised, but their potential will be investigated and harnessed over the next 20 years.

## **Talybont-On-Usk Energy – Community Hydro Electric Turbine**

A feasibility study in 2001, undertaken for the Sustainable Development Fund backed “Three Parks Energy Project,” identified Talybont-on-Usk as a suitable location for a renewable energy project in the Brecon Beacons National Park and a project to restore hydroelectric generation from the compensation flow at Talybont Reservoir as a feasible community scheme.

Public meetings resulted in the formation of Talybont-on-Usk Energy, a limited company with charitable objects. The objects are:

- To advance the education of the public into renewable energy sources, uses of alternative energy, and related ecological and environmental issues;
- To promote renewable energy schemes in and for the benefit of the community of Talybont-on-Usk including provision and maintenance of a hydro-electric generating turbine at Talybont-on-Usk reservoir;
- To advance the relief of poverty and the preservation and protection of health, primarily but not exclusively in the Talybont-on-Usk Community Council Area, by promoting the efficient use of energy (including energy for heating purposes) and utilisation of renewable sources of energy.

### **Hydro Project**

The hydro project involves the re-installation of an electricity generating turbine, using the compensation flow from Talybont reservoir (water which is released to maintain the Caerfanell River ecosystem. This discharge varies over the year according to a schedule stipulated by the Environment Agency). The turbine and all the associated controls and meters are housed in the existing Turbine House below the dam, constructed at the time the dam itself was built by Newport Borough Council in the 1930s.

The new 36kw Valley Hydro crossflow turbine will produce an annual energy output in the region of 240Mwh valued at around £17,000. The electricity generated will be sold under the Renewables Obligation to a Public Electricity Supplier via the National Grid. Talybont-on-Usk Energy will re-invest the proceeds from the sale of the electricity in a range of further energy projects in the Talybont-on-Usk community council area. All this will be managed by and for local people, and has the potential to be a model for small-scale renewable energy generation.

### **Talybont-On-Usk Energy (continued)**

The project will result in greatly enhanced community awareness about energy efficiency and the benefits of generating energy from renewable sources. The hydro site will incorporate display materials – aimed at the local community, schools, and visitors. Panels will demonstrate the current and cumulative energy generation of the scheme over time, describe the history of the scheme, and illustrate how the hydro works.

The Sustainable Development Fund supported the initial feasibility study and awarded £14,548 towards the purchase of the new turbine.

Talybont recruited a development worker in June 2007, with the help of SDF, to take renewable energy, energy efficiency, and carbon footprinting to a higher level within the village. Talybont hopes to become the first carbon neutral village in Wales!

The Park can also assist through the promotion of alternative energy. Small scale renewable energy schemes will generally be accepted as long as they fit in with environmental and design factors. The NPA's Renewable Energy Assistance Programme (REAP) offers advice and grants for most forms of micro renewable energy sources including solar thermal, hydro-electric, wood-fuelled heat systems, heat pumps and wind. The hydro-electric scheme at Talybont illustrates a way forward to provide energy at a larger scale. It is less intrusive than wind farms, conserving the natural beauty of the landscape. Modern wood fuel heating systems can provide a highly efficient source of renewable energy. Fuel can be easily stored and produced locally, thereby reducing transport costs. Growing wood for fuel locally can also provide employment in the area and give local residents an opportunity to manage the land in a sound environmental way, whilst providing woodland habitat and better absorption of rainfall to reduce flooding. In some areas the production of crops for biofuels may also be an option for renewable energy generation. However, biofuels are not well-suited to the majority of the Park's landscape and soils. Large-scale biofuels production on the lowland areas would further reduce the biodiversity of the area, reduce the amount of land available for food production, require high energy inputs and continue to add to greenhouse gas emissions. For these reasons, wood fuel is preferable to the production of crops for biofuels.

## **5.6. Transport**

The transport infrastructure forms an important element in both the local economy and in the recreational use of the National Park. The dispersed pattern of the settlement of the Park has created a rather unsustainable network. While some parts of the area have reasonable service, most of the Park is not well served, increasing a dependence on private vehicles. The reduction of the number and length of journeys as well as the development of a more sustainable form of

transport would have a number of benefits. Reducing the number of car journeys in the Park would decrease its “carbon footprint” and improve the quality of the Park’s environs, thereby contributing to an improved visitor experience.

An integrated transport system could also encourage a more healthy and active lifestyle. Some improvement has been made with a new cross-Wales transport service and the NPA’s Beacons Bus, a summer Sunday and Bank Holiday service which enables people to visit the Park without a car. Ultimately, though, to be more sustainable, significant investments need to be made toward safe and efficient walking and cycling networks in the National Park.

## **5.7. Globalization**

Humans have a long history of altering the Earth’s environs to suit their needs. In fact there is no where in the world that cannot be reached through human ingenuity and no where that is free from human impact. People have driven to the North Pole, climbed Mount Everest, and flown to Antarctica. We can buy food in local supermarkets from anywhere in the world at any time of year. We can grow Chilean strawberries in our gardens in Wales.

But, our globetrotting and conveniences come with a price. Species and habitats are becoming less diverse on a global scale as a result of human activities, primarily through habitat fragmentation and destruction and introducing non-native species (most of which have been wilfully transplanted). Cultures, traditions, and economies, too, are becoming more uniform because of our global activities, with a loss of skills and knowhow the result. Even climate change is really a symptom of globalization of three escalating factors—population, affluence, and technology. Our influence on the world around us is so great that geologists and historians are dubbing the current period in Earth’s history the Anthropocene.<sup>7</sup>

There are over 6.7 billion people on this planet today. If all these people lived the lifestyle of the average Westerner, it would take the resources of three Planet Earths to support them.<sup>8</sup> Nonetheless, the United States and Western Europe continue to consume disproportionate amounts of resources. Simultaneously, the emerging economies of China and India, with 1.3 billion and 1.1 billion people each, respectively, continue to expand their rate of development (e.g., increasing coal-fired power plants, airports, automobiles, consumer goods) and will soon dominate global economic and political agendas.<sup>9</sup> How long the Earth can sustain this level of

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<sup>7</sup> The term “Anthropocene” implies that humans now shift more surface geology and affect the fate of more biodiversity than all other natural forces combined.

<sup>8</sup> Miller, G. T. 2002. *Living in the Environment: Principles, Connections, and Solutions*, 12<sup>th</sup> Ed. Thomson Learning, Inc., Belmont, CA, USA.

<sup>9</sup> Shenkar, O. 2006. *The Chinese Century: The Rising Chinese Economy and Its Impact on the Global Economy, the Balance of Power, and Your Job*. Wharton School Publishing, New York, USA.

consumption is uncertain. The message is that our planet cannot support current trends in global development; we must find innovative solutions to slow the momentum, reducing consumption and increasing self-sufficiency.

With respect to the Management Plan, the mantra “think globally; act locally” rings true now more than ever. The NPA and its partners must place the Park’s communities in the wider realm of global citizenry. In so doing, we must consider these trends as we plan for the management of the National Park twenty years hence, and act accordingly.



## **6. Guiding Principles**

### **6.1. Sustainability**

Adherence to the principle of sustainability ensures that all actions taken to meet our needs today do not compromise the needs of future generations. Sustainability is about respecting the limits of the planet's natural resources, its environment and its biodiversity whilst having regard for social and economic concerns. The two statutory purposes for which National Parks are designated—conserving and enhancing their natural beauty, wildlife, and cultural heritage, and promoting opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities by the public—are inextricably linked to the principle of sustainability. But, this relationship does not make the task of putting sustainability into practice in today's global society any less challenging. Broad-scale drivers of change such as global population growth, climate change, fossil fuel depletion, water pollution, and acid deposition exacerbate regional and local concerns. Closer to home issues such as changing agricultural policies and practices, social inclusion, farm diversification, affordable housing, alternative energy options, and disabled access to the countryside continue to weigh heavily on the minds of local people.

The Brecon Beacons National Park must be managed in such a way that promotes the essence of this idea of sustainability. Sustainability is key if we wish to enable the successful transition of the Brecon Beacons into the future and provide future generations with a National Park that can be at the very least equally enjoyed and utilised as we do today. In order to achieve this transition, the various needs of those enjoying, living and working in the Park must be integrated with the requirements of the National Park's special environments and resources.

A sustainable transition into the future means the NPMP will be in keeping with this sustainability concept. To facilitate this, the Management Plan is subject to appraisal in order to assess potential social, economic, and environmental impacts resulting from proposed aims, goals, policies, and actions. Every attempt is made to ensure a correct equilibrium exists between pressures and needs, conservation and enhancement, and opportunities and enjoyment.

### **6.2. Social Inclusion**

The WAG envisions that the three Welsh National Parks will be enjoyed and cherished by a full cross section of society. This requires the NPAs and their partners to engage more effectively with the socially and physically disadvantaged, ethnic minorities and other groups which have not traditionally enjoyed the Parks.

In 2005 the three Welsh National Park Authorities agreed to a strategy for furthering social inclusion in all aspects of their work. The strategy recognizes that NPAs can promote social inclusion only within the context of their statutory purposes and duty, and that detailed action plans will vary among parks. With these caveats in mind, the strategy outlines three key aims the NPAs can embrace to promote social inclusion in the exercise of their purposes, duty, and delivery of services. These are to:

- adopt a cross-cutting theme across all NPA activities that recognises the complex and multi-dimensional nature of social exclusion, and seeks to promote social inclusion in all the NPA's work.
- foster the economic and social well-being of local communities and seek to reduce social exclusion due to poverty, lack of employment, lack of services, poor health, disability, lack of education, psychological and cultural barriers, or other disadvantage and work specifically with excluded groups and with partner organisations to these ends;
- broaden access for the wider community of people of Wales the UK and beyond, who may be excluded from the understanding or enjoyment of the special qualities of the Parks as a result of the barriers listed above.

Further to these aims, the WAG emphasises an additional three points for the NPAs to consider in the context of social inclusion:

1. that the Parks are there for everyone to enjoy. While the Assembly Government wants the NPAs to reach out to a wider cross section of society, this should be undertaken on the basis that people from all walks of life should be encouraged and made to feel welcome in these special areas;
2. that the Parks' special conservation and other features mean that visitor numbers will need to be effectively managed. Not all parts of the Parks may therefore be equally accessible - or appropriate for recreational activities – throughout the year. The joint NPA/Visit Wales initiative on sustainable tourism can play a part here;
3. That, as noted in the vision, each of the Parks are close to important urban communities and have significant potential to enrich lives.<sup>10</sup>

These aspirations for social inclusion are reflected in the vision statement for Brecon Beacons National Park, and, consequently, social inclusion is one of the guiding principles underpinning the policies emanating from this Management Plan.

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<sup>10</sup> WAG. 2007. Policy Statement for the National Parks and National Park Authorities in Wales.

### **6.3. Integrated Management**

Traditionally, conservation and protected areas management have been carried out in a fragmented or isolated manner. Wildlife management often has been conducted without regard to soil and water conservation. Woodlands and wetlands have not been considered as vital components of agriculture. Interpretation and education have been seen merely as “add-ons” to resource conservation and planning services rather than integral to holistic resource management.

This disjointed approach to conservation and resource management is not sustainable. As John Muir (1869) said, "When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the universe." All the components of our natural and cultural environments are interdependent. Soil erosion in the BBNP uplands not only affects the immediate environment but also influences water quality and quantity in the South Wales Valleys, for example. Scenarios such as this have even greater implications for the Park and its surroundings in light of current climate change predictions.

The good news is that our view of the world is changing. The EU's Water Framework Directive requires European countries to take an integrated approach to river basin management. This system is more in tune with natural drivers of change, can be used to consider issues in addition to water and promotes active partnerships across political boundaries. Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 places public bodies, including the BBNPA, under a duty to have regard to conserving biodiversity in the exercise of their functions. For the National Park, this duty extends beyond nature conservation to include planning services, tourism, outdoor recreation, community well-being and other focal areas. Likewise, the WAG is taking steps to support integrated management through the Tir Gofal and Tir Cynnal agri-environment schemes, which assist the Park in achieving its overall conservation aims. Other international, national and regional policies and plans are following suit.

Local implementation of holistic management strategies can prove to be challenging, particularly since the political and economic infrastructure do not encourage this mindset. Integration, therefore, requires that partners work together more closely, think more holistically, manage functional components of the landscape (e.g., catchments) rather than political boundaries and foster active community participation in local resource issues.

The BBNPA is working closely with local authorities, statutory bodies and communities to facilitate more holistic and integrated management of the Park and its resources. This Plan is designed to promote these endeavours.

## **6.4. Cohesive Partnerships**

Sustainable management of the National Park involves a comprehensive understanding of ecology, landscapes, heritage, diffuse pollution, commercial production methods and the inter-relationships between these issues. No single entity, however, can become expert in all of these facets of Park management; nor can any one agency or organisation act individually without affecting the actions of others. Equally, the demands associated with international, national and local policy agendas continue to increase, whereas the resources (time, money and personnel) necessary to meet rising demands do not. Consequently, partnership working is essential to effective, long-term management of the National Park.

To ensure that the Park is managed sustainably and to facilitate delivery of the Park's statutory purposes and duty, its stakeholders must maintain close and effective partnerships. For this reason, Section 62 (2) of the Environment Act 1995 places a general duty on all relevant authorities to have regard to the statutory purposes of the Parks in taking decisions or in carrying out work within or near to the Park. The BBNPA's key partners include the Welsh Assembly Government, other national parks, CCW, Cadw, Environment Agency, local authorities, the Forestry Commission, farmers' unions, business and industry. Of course, the Park cannot be managed sustainably without active involvement from local communities and interest groups.

While the BBNPA already deliver much of their work in partnership with these interests, the WAG is keen for the effective application of the Section 62(2) duty to help underpin even stronger partnership working—recognising that the Park is a significant asset for Wales and the UK and not the sole responsibility of any one statutory body.

## **6.5. Community Engagement**

The Brecon Beacons National Park has been moulded through time by the interactions of people with their environment. This truism forms the basis of its designation as a Category V protected landscape. It also implies that local people and other stakeholders who derive benefits from the Park are essential to its future.

Indeed, Category V protected area management principles (see Annex 4) state that “management must be undertaken with and through local people, and mainly for and by them”.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Phillips, A. 2002. The World Conservation Union Management Guidelines for IUCN Category V Protected Areas: Protected Landscapes/Seascapes No. 9. World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA). IUCN, Gland, Switzerland and Cardiff University, UK.

Reference to local people here includes the wider community in and around the Park as well as others who have a keen interest in it. The BBNPA and other statutory or governing bodies have an obligation to facilitate local involvement in shaping management decisions. Likewise, local people have a responsibility to be actively involved in the management process, to take ownership of the Park. All stakeholders play an important role in delivering Park objectives.

This co-operative approach to managing the Brecon Beacons is reliant upon:

- informed stakeholders who are interested in the Park and wish to build their capacity to engage in decision making;
- providing opportunities for stakeholders to be involved in shaping management decisions and making them aware of these opportunities;
- keeping stakeholders informed of progress made against the Plan;
- working with a representative cross-section of stakeholders;
- continued encouragement and support to get local communities actively engaged in management of the Park;
- open, transparent procedures based on democratic principles.

This consultation document is a product of these principles in action.

## **6.6. Experimentation and Leading by Example**

## **6.7. Adding Value**

## **6.8. Resistance and Resilience**

## **6.9. Reaching Beyond Our Borders**

## 7. Twenty-year Aims

This chapter sets out the 20-year aims—or strategic objectives—for the Brecon Beacons National Park. These aims are the first steps toward achieving the long-term vision for the Park. They provide the framework which guides decision-making and management of the Park for the NPA and its partners. As such, the aims provide context for other Park plans and strategies designed to attain realistic outcomes over the short- to medium-term, including the five-year prioritised action plan (see Chapter 8).

Each of the 20-year aims is grouped into similar interdisciplinary resource management topics, for example Sustainable Tourism. Whilst considerable overlap among the disciplines exists when it comes to on-the-ground implementation, this grouping allows for a simplified explanation of each topic's relevance to park management. Related 20-year aims are cross-referenced where appropriate. Resource management topics are broadly organised according to their corresponding statutory purpose or duty. In this instance, the Park's purposes and duty have been abbreviated to provide titles for the major subdivisions of this chapter as follows:

- **Conserving and Enhancing the National Park**
- **Understanding and Enjoying the National Park, and**
- **Economic and Social Well-being of Local Communities.**

Each subsection includes a brief introduction to the topics, context and key issues, relevant 20-year aims with explanatory text, links to predominant international, national, and regional policies, and cross-references to other topics covering similar issues.

### 7.1. Conserving and Enhancing the National Park

#### 7.1.1. Landscape

Landscape character is made up of many layers - geology, vegetation, field and settlement patterns, buildings, and historic and cultural associations. The landscape of the Brecon Beacons National Park comprises a patchwork of farmed countryside, prominent hilltops, lakes, canals, and meandering rivers punctuated by small-scale native woodlands, country lanes, hedgerows and stone walls, and scattered settlements. It is the tranquillity and natural beauty imparted by the Park's diverse landscape features that people most often come to

experience. In fact, the quality of the Park's landscape contributes to the quality of life of both residents and visitors.

The landscape and its constituent layers are constantly changing, under natural and human influence. Fewer farmers manage the countryside. The climate is changing. Rivers meander. Whilst change is inevitable, the government regards National Park designation as conferring the highest status of protection as far as landscape and scenic beauty are concerned.<sup>12</sup> The NPA, under the Wildlife and Countryside Acts, has prepared a Section 3 Conservation Map of mountain, moor, heath, and woodland that it considered particularly important to conserve. The Park's stakeholders, therefore, are presented with the challenge of encouraging desirable change and discouraging undesirable change where possible. Of course, this requires a clear distinction between desirable and undesirable forms of change. This Management Plan is designed to assist with this process, particularly through the pursuit of the following twenty-year aims.

### **Twenty-year Aims for Landscape**

1. **Conserve and enhance the sense of tranquillity, peace, and remoteness experienced throughout the National Park.** Peace and tranquillity and qualities of remoteness are consistently cited as the primary reason people come to visit and live in the Brecon Beacons National Park.<sup>13</sup> Yet, there are a variety of challenges to the Park's foremost set of special qualities, including: mechanised forms of recreation, military activity, low-flying airplanes, continued development, moderate increases in light pollution, increasing numbers of visitors and encroaching wind farms. These qualities are also difficult to measure and monitor, though tranquillity mapping has been conducted in England (CPRE, 2005). Data are lacking for the Park and will need to be obtained if we are to continue to manage the landscape with these special qualities in mind.
2. **Conserve and enhance the beautiful and varied character of the landscape via sustainable, integrated management.** Landscape change will be encouraged to benefit the Park's biodiversity, geodiversity, built environment, local economy, and cultural heritage. Links between landscape, biodiversity, history and culture are important, but the landscape is more than the sum of its parts. Its elements must be managed in a holistic way, recognising that landscape changes are linked to changes in a

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<sup>12</sup>WAG. *Planning Guidance (Wales) Planning Policy First Revision* para. 5.3.6.

<sup>13</sup> Participants from consultation workshops on Management Plans up to and including this one have consistently cited peace, tranquillity and remoteness as fundamental special qualities associated with the BBNP. This trend is captured in past Management Plans, consultation documents, visitor surveys, etc.

variety of management arenas, particularly agriculture, woodland, and upland management. Likewise, what may be considered an important management focus in one part of the Park may not be of concern in another. Change should be managed to conserve the landscape and special qualities of the Park without managing the Park as if it were a snapshot in time and space. It should be managed to the benefit of the processes which conserve and enhance its diversity of special qualities.

**3. Prevent degradation of the Park's landscape and enhance derelict land.**

Portions of the Park's landscape have been degraded by off-road vehicle use, litter and fly-tipping, abandonment of vehicles, non-development of brown field sites, the erosion of upland paths, and sometimes by road works and development. Measures should be taken to eliminate these types of activities where possible and improve sites where appropriate. However, enhancement work should not be at the expense of wildlife or industrial archaeological interests.

**4. Develop understanding and awareness of landscape's varied character and the processes that influence it.**

The Park's beautiful and diverse landscape is dependent upon the continued interaction of natural processes and human influences. The importance of this relationship is enshrined in the Park's designation as an IUCN Category V landscape. We not only need to carry out the management of the National Park with these interactions in mind but we also need to improve the public's understanding of this dynamic landscape so that they may better enjoy it and care for it. It is through the long-term support and active participation from the Park's stakeholders that the landscape will be conserved. This support requires people to understand their connection to the world around them and how they may influence it both positively and negatively. This understanding, of course, only comes from the continued engagement of the public by the NPA and its partners.

**5. Assess and monitor landscape change across the National Park.**

CCW has developed a landscape assessment and decision making methodology called LANDMAP, for use as a management tool and in preparing development plans. It involves evaluating and mapping history, cultural associations and visual and sensory aspects, as well as geology and landforms, vegetation and habitats. Together with modern GIS tools and aerial photography, LANDMAP could prove useful to assessing and monitoring landscape change across the Park, which, in turn, will inform management activities.

Data layers in LANDMAP are currently incomplete for the National Park. Additionally, data layers may have up to 10-year time lags between them for different segments of the



Park. During this period, significant changes have occurred across the Park, creating discrepancies in the quality and accuracy of information available. The NPA will continue to investigate possible landscape assessment tools.

### **Policy context**

- World Heritage Convention
- European Landscape Convention
- Sustainable Development Convention
- Biodiversity Convention
- Rural Development Plan Wales
- Farming for the Future
- Agri-environment schemes (Tir Gofal)
- Wales Environment Strategy – Wales Biodiversity Framework
- Countryside Rights of Way(CRoW) Act 2000
- Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006
- National Parks and Access to Countryside Act 1949
- Countryside Act 1968
- Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (1985)
- Commons Act
- Community Strategies (Local Authority)
- Wales Woodland Strategy (FCW)
- Environment Act 1990
- Town & Country Planning Act (+ Technical Advice Notes)

### **Cross-reference**

7.1.5 Built Environment

7.1.12 Agriculture

7.1.13 Woodland Management

7.1.14 Upland Management

7.1.15 Rivers and Wetlands

7.2.1 Outdoor Access and Recreation

7.2.2 Education

7.2.3 Interpretation

7.3.2 Sustainable Tourism

7.3.7 Military Use of the Park

### **7.1.2. Biodiversity**

The conservation of biodiversity is of critical importance to the Brecon Beacons National Park. While geological processes have sculpted the land forms around us, this is clothed with a mix of natural and semi-natural habitats that contribute to the landscape character of the Park. From the wide perspective of the open uplands to the tiny details of the ferns and mosses that cling to rocky stream sides, biodiversity binds together all that the Park is and how it is perceived, valued and enjoyed.

Within the National Park, a number of sites have been further designated for their important biodiversity. There are 76 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (including those designated for Earth Science features), 11 Special Areas of Conservation and seven National Nature Reserves. In some cases a site may have all three designations, though not necessarily with the same boundaries. These designated sites represent the best examples of habitats and species populations within the National Park. The biological resources contained in these sites and throughout the rest of the National Park are described more fully in the Park's Local Biodiversity Action Plan.

While these designated sites form a core network representing the best examples of both habitats and species, they cannot maintain important biodiversity in isolation. Loss of habitat and the fragmented distribution of remaining habitats are key challenges to address.

The natural environment is intimately linked together through the complex relationships that build ecosystems, and so a broad vision must be applied to the management of the biodiversity resource. This landscape-scale approach accommodates entire ecosystems and is essential to providing a robust and functional natural environment in which wildlife can thrive. This approach facilitates management of biodiversity, particularly the concept of habitat connectivity—removing barriers to species movements, expanding habitats and ensuring important sites are not isolated by increasing the opportunities for biodiversity to move and flourish within surrounding farmland, forestry and settlements.

A thriving biodiversity resource provides numerous benefits to the National Park. Agriculture relies on soil formation, water flow and pollination, all provided by functioning ecosystems. The uplands play a significant role in water storage and release, providing a natural defence against both drought and flood. Biodiversity also provides enjoyment and recreational opportunities. All of these services either contribute to the social and economic well being of the Park, or would otherwise be prohibitively expensive to replace.

## **Twenty-year Aims for Biodiversity**

- 1. Utilise a landscape-scale approach to biodiversity conservation, built on good management of soil, air, and water quality.** Soil, air, and water quality underpin functioning ecosystems. Poor quality of these basic natural resources will not only affect biodiversity but also agricultural production and human health. These processes operate across large areas of land and are intimately connected. A broad vision must be taken when managing these resources.
- 2. Deliver these twenty-year aims through partnerships or appropriate bodies including the NPA, local authorities, WAG, government bodies, community, agricultural and recreational groups.** The natural systems of the National Park are incredibly complex. With different organisations and individuals responsible for the management of different areas, a co-ordinated approach must be taken to ensure that the biodiversity resource is effectively managed. It is also clearly not possible for any one organisation to deliver these benefits in isolation. Effective partnerships and communication must be developed to ensure different organisations can work together to deliver a shared vision.
- 3. Maintain the extent of priority habitats and the range and/or population of priority species.** It is essential to recognise that the amount of natural or semi-natural habitat has been greatly reduced over the last century. We are fast approaching the point whereby what remains will no longer be sufficient to provide a sustainable future for both habitats and species. What remains today is only a fraction of what was here in the past. To ensure no further loss of biodiversity it will be essential to retain what we currently have. This includes priority habitats and species (i.e., habitats and species of principal importance to Wales).
- 4. Ensure that sustainable management of designated sites maintains habitats and species populations in favourable condition.** As examples of the best habitats and species within the National Park, it is critical to ensure designated sites (e.g., SSSIs, SACs, NNRs, etc.) are brought into, or remain, in favourable condition. The designations provide the means to ensure that these sites are managed with special regard to biodiversity conservation. However, these sites still need to be managed in a wider context, to be considered as the focal sites of developing functional ecosystems at a landscape scale. Their sustainable management can be a catalyst to achieving better habitat condition in the surrounding land.

5. **Ensure that the wider countryside also contains sufficient habitat in favourable condition to provide a high quality, interconnected landscape to conserve and enhance priority species.** It is important to remember that the designated sites were selected to represent the best examples of habitats or species populations. Additional areas exist across the landscape containing habitats and species populations that may be just as valuable to conservation efforts even though they have not been designated as such. Just as the designated sites form a network of the most important sites for biodiversity, the wider countryside within the farmed and forested landscape must support this network. Also, high quality, non-designated sites help to expand this network of biodiversity because they provide additional genetic diversity, safe sites, a wider home range, migration routes and buffers against disturbance and other drivers of change. Without considering biodiversity across the wider countryside, the biodiversity within the designated sites will decline or become prohibitively expensive to support, especially in a changing climate.
6. **Meet and, if possible, exceed the local biodiversity targets for the restoration and expansion of habitats and the expansion of species' distribution patterns and population sizes.** The UK has drawn up targets for the restoration and expansion of habitats and these also form targets for the Local Biodiversity Action Plan. This is to ensure that enough habitat remains to contribute to functional ecosystems and provide for sustainable species populations. The extent of key habitats needs to be expanded to help reduce fragmentation and restore the previous ranges and populations of target species. It must also be remembered that, whilst it is an objective to retain existing habitat, this may not always be possible given changes resulting from natural processes or essential development.
7. **Integrate effective biodiversity conservation into economically viable agricultural and arboricultural systems.** The drive to produce food and timber has given us a highly modified landscape mosaic but one that provides the economic, social and cultural core of the National Park and the landscape patterns for which the Park is renowned. Semi-natural habitats, particularly grasslands and heather moorland, are mainly by-products of farming and cannot be sustained without this productivity or without livestock grazing. Retaining grazing is not only sustainable but produces better wildlife habitats on many of the upland sites than would be achieved by machines alone. Economic viability of farming systems is essential to the local economy, to local food provision and to successful management of such a large area of land.

**8. To seek innovative solutions to environmental challenges which integrate biodiversity conservation with education, interpretation, other resource management priorities, and social, economic and cultural sustainability.**

There are very limited resources with which to conserve biodiversity. It is, therefore, essential to direct resources toward the causes rather than symptoms of biodiversity loss. For example, biodiversity loss may be the direct result of a lack of awareness or understanding of the issues involved in biodiversity conservation and measures required to sustain it. Investing in education and interpretation programmes aimed at preventing biodiversity loss can be highly beneficial and cost-effective in the long term. As our knowledge of natural processes increases, there are opportunities to develop new solutions. These solutions can often provide wider benefits beyond biodiversity gains, such as flood mitigation and retention of soil fertility, both of which have economic benefits. In essence, a collaborative, integrated approach to biodiversity conservation provides greater benefits to a wider audience more effectively and inexpensively.

**Policy context**

- Draft Climate Change Action Plan
- Water Framework Directive
- EC Soils Framework Directive [forthcoming]
- EC Habitats Directive
- Wales Environment Strategy – Wales Biodiversity Framework - LBAP
- Countryside Rights of Way(CRoW) Act 2000
- Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006
- National Parks and Access to Countryside Act 1949
- Countryside Act 1968
- Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (1985)
- Environment Strategy for Wales Action Plan
- Commons Act
- Community Strategies (Local Authority)
- Wales Woodland Strategy (FCW)
- Environment Act 1990
- Town & Country Planning Act (+ Technical Advice Notes)
- The Vision, Mission, Aims and Objectives of the Wildlife Trusts.
- Biodiversity in Trust: Biodiversity Strategy 2005 – 2010 (NT Wales, 2005)

## **Cross-reference**

7.1.1 Landscape

7.1.12 Agriculture

7.1.13 Woodland Management

7.2.1 Outdoor Access and Recreation

7.2.2 Education

7.2.3 Interpretation

7.3.1 Sustainable Communities

### **7.1.3. Geodiversity**

Geodiversity is the diversity of rocks (whether 'solid' or 'drift'), fossils, minerals and soils (see Minerals and Soil Resources), land forms, and geological processes that constitute the topography, landscape, and the underlying structure of the Earth.

The bulk of the Park is made up of Old Red Sandstone (ORS) rocks, mostly of Devonian age, which extend across its whole width and comprise its north-eastern and south-eastern tips. They form the north and north-east facing escarpments of Y Mynydd Du, Fforest Fawr, Brecon Beacons and the Black Mountains, giving the Park its highest peaks, and also the plateaux north and south of the scarps.

The older Ordovician and Silurian rocks of Mid Wales are found along the north-western boundary of the Park. These give a landscape of south west - north east trending ridges and valleys, and are rich in fossils in places. Overlying the Old Red Sandstone to the south, though usually at a lower altitude due to the dip of the strata, lie the Carboniferous rocks of the northern rim of the South Wales coalfield. Most prominent is a band of limestone, which in places forms a conspicuous escarpment. South of this are Millstone Grit scarps and plateaux, while Coal Measures crop out in places along the Park's southern boundary. The drainage pattern is generally north-south or *vice versa*, reflecting the dip of the strata, with exceptions relating to the major faults, and to the superimposed west - south east course of the Usk.

Other important geomorphological features include escarpments, waterfalls and gorges, often closely related to the underlying geology. Evidence of glaciation is widespread, including steep rock faces beneath the northern and eastern edges of the ORS plateau, sheets of till, bare striated rock, erratic boulders and the moraines both of large valley glaciers such as those of the Usk and Tawe and smaller glaciers that developed in the lee of

dip-slope plateaux. Post-glacial features include plateaux and dip-slopes blanketed with peat, river floodplains, landslides/rock slope failures and small alluvial fans.

The Park's limestone exhibits karst features of European significance, including limestone pavements, swarms of shakeholes and some of the longest cave systems in Britain. Some caves are of archaeological or historical significance, and some, along with other geological and geomorphological features, are protected as SSSIs, NNRs and SACs for their contributions to geodiversity and/or for their biological importance. Shakeholes are a common surface expression of cave development below ground, often spectacularly developed in areas where the limestone is overlain by Millstone Grit strata.

The geodiversity of the Brecon Beacons National Park has long been recognised—a situation more recently underlined with the designation of the western half of the Park as Fforest Fawr Geopark. A key element of this recognition is the interaction of man and nature over the last 7000 years as evidenced in archaeological and industrial archaeological remains across the Park. The post-industrial landscapes of the southern margins of the Park in particular bear considerable witness to the exploitation of natural mineral resources during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries which ensured that South Wales would become a powerhouse of the Industrial Revolution and a major contributor to the industrial growth of Britain. This story is represented at the Blaenavon Industrial Landscape World Heritage Site, part of which lies within the south-eastern boundary of the Park.

Abandoned quarries and restored sites may be used to the benefit of recreational activities such as climbing, biking, or fossil hunting, but these areas often succumb to unauthorised motor vehicle use and fly tipping. Collecting can have scientific and educational value, and codes of practice exist for these activities. However, fossil and mineral collecting can damage formations and cause the loss of scientific resources, especially when conducted for commercial gain. For example, similar activities have caused damage to limestone pavements, including their removal for garden decoration. Limestone pavements provide rare and important habitats in addition to being significant geologic formations.

### **Twenty-year Aims for Geodiversity**

1. **Conserve and enhance designated geological sites.** While some of the Park's geodiversity is very robust, other parts are more vulnerable to erosion, recreation pressure, mineral working, or other forms of use and development. Geodiversity is a significant contributor to the Park's biodiversity and is integral to the Park's landscape

and agriculture, which themselves contribute to the quality of life of both residents and visitors.

2. **Identify and protect other significant sites of geological importance.** Nineteen geological/ geomorphological SSSIs have been identified in the Park covering 15,808 hectares, but identification of second tier sites is less complete, including regionally important geological and geomorphological sites (RIGS).
3. **Protect and enhance nature conservation value of limestone pavements.** Limestone features are valuable for both geodiversity and biodiversity and are probably the most vulnerable of the Park's geodiversity features. Limestone pavements and caves can be damaged by plunder, quarrying, pollution, and recreation pressures. Shakeholes and sinkholes are often used for dumping.
4. **Improve the understanding and enjoyment of the Park's outstanding geodiversity.** The Park's geology and geomorphology create the landscape that so many people come to the Park to enjoy and for which it is nationally and internationally recognised. These geological resources and processes have also shaped, in part, our agricultural resources, the Park's biodiversity, the local economy, the built environment, its history, and the regional culture. But without an improved understanding of our connection to these resources and processes, we are likely to lose sight of their importance and, in turn, damage or destroy much of that which we depend on.

### **Policy context**

- Environment Strategy for Wales
- Sustainable Development Action Plan
- Fforest Fawr Geopark Management Plan (*to be formulated*)

### **Cross-references**

- 7.1.1 Landscape
- 7.1.2 Biodiversity
  - 7.1.12 Agriculture
  - 7.1.13 Woodland Management
  - 7.1.14 Upland Management
- 7.2.1 Outdoor Access and Recreation
- 7.2.2 Education
- 7.2.3 Interpretation



### 7.3.3 Fforest Fawr Geopark

#### **7.1.4. Archaeology and Historic Landscapes**

The Park's landscape comprises not only ecological components but also archaeology and historic landscapes, and the built environment. Archaeology and historic landscapes are the material remains of past ways of life. The present that we live in is the product of past events, and our understanding of that past is a key factor in understanding the present and managing for the future. The landscape as a whole is a product of past human activity. Patterns of field enclosure or land use, or transport systems like the canal and its associated tramways, are historic features in their own right, and the individual features - such as megaliths or mottes - which have been the focus of attention in the past are now seen as part of a wider whole. Accepting that the landscape is dynamic and cannot be fossilised, sustainability requires that the necessities of modern life are considered in conjunction with the protection of important historic landscapes and features.

The Park's historic landscapes are many and varied. Some, identified as being of outstanding interest in the Welsh context, with important prehistoric, medieval and industrial elements, are included in the Register of Landscapes of Outstanding or Special Historic Interest in Wales. Historic parks and gardens of national importance have been included by Cadw/ICOMOS on a separate register. More sites may be added to both registers. Other historic sites range from the Mesolithic period up to redundant industrial remains only a few decades old. Of over 3700 recorded sites, 268 are protected as Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAMs).

Cadw provides the main funding for conserving SAMs. Most of the NPA's conservation projects are on SAMs because of their importance and the availability of funding. RCAHMW keeps records and is the main surveying body. It funds upland survey work carried out by the NPA in partnership with the Archaeological Trusts. The latter also hold the detailed Sites and Monuments Records, and exchange data with the NPA. The NPA has an important role in preventing damage to features. Recorded sites can be protected through land management advice, development control and raising awareness through interpretation and education, as well as by practical conservation work. Educating and involving the public, both adults and school groups, is an important aspect of the NPA's work.

The management of the Park's archaeological heritage should be integrated with other important factors such as biodiversity and recreation activities. CCW's increasing

involvement in historic landscapes (as identified jointly with Cadw and ICOMOS), and the Archaeological Trusts' assessments of landscape areas will feed into this process.

### **Twenty-year Aims for Archaeology and Historic Landscapes**

1. **Work with other organisations to promote the formulation of a regional strategy, within a national framework, for protecting, managing and raising awareness of the historic environment.** A holistic view of the Park's historic landscape and the strategies for conserving and interpreting it is needed, in the context of a strategy for archaeology in Wales. Within the Park, there needs to be a unified framework for the management of historic landscapes, supported by the work of CCW and the Archaeological Trusts.
2. **Protect and manage historic landscapes, parks and gardens.** Effective management and protection require forward thinking. Thus, historic sites, parks, and gardens should have management plans which are being implemented. Historic parks and gardens are now being given due recognition and should continue to receive increased attention into the future. The historic garden at Craig-y-nos Castle is partly in the NPA's ownership.
3. **Protect and enhance scheduled and designated sites.** "Scheduling" is the process through which nationally important man-made sites and monuments are given legal protection by Cadw. The number of scheduled monuments reflects those that exist or are known. It does not indicate the state of the Park's cultural heritage. There are many other features in the Park which have not been granted the protection of scheduling.
4. **Seek to manage all sites appropriately, concentrating on threatened and neglected sites/types whilst involving local communities.** Given the large number of sites, the management of individual historical and traditional features must be prioritised, including those previously neglected such as the industrial heritage and redundant churches. Owners/occupiers can assist in meeting the demands of site management. They need to be encouraged to participate in schemes to improve the management of SAMs and to prevent the loss or deterioration of features. Local heritage audits can be used to encourage a sense of place and ownership within the local community. Further support can then be provided for small projects that result.
5. **Increase archaeological awareness through schools and community projects.** The NPA recognises the need for greater awareness of landscape history. The NPA's

ongoing work with schools teaches conservation and archaeological awareness as well as history, providing a long-term conservation tool. Similarly, there is a need to develop and implement a programme of public awareness and community outreach outside of school-aged audiences. Production of site-specific or area-specific leaflets relating to historic landscapes would assist this effort.

- 6. Improve data management and monitoring.** There is a need for an archaeology/buildings database compatible with the Archaeological Trusts' systems, which will require input, maintenance, and exchange. Data collection and the development of indicators are required for a State of the Park report. More detailed information will be needed if the condition of sites is to be kept under review. Resources will limit the amount that can be achieved. The Tir Gofal provides an opportunity to survey farms entering the scheme, if staffing is available.

### **Policy context**

- European Landscape Convention
- Environment Strategy for Wales
- Rural Development Plan
- Agri-environment schemes (Tir Gofal)
- Countryside Rights of Way(CRoW) Act 2000
- Community Strategies (Local Authority)
- Cultural Tourism Strategy for Wales
- Cultural Strategy for Wales
- TAN 12 Design
- Welsh Office Circulars 60/96 and 61/90
- Traffic Management in Historic Areas
- Overcoming the Barriers: Providing Access to Historic Buildings
- Wales Transport Strategy
- Wales Spatial Plan

### **Cross-reference**

7.1.1 Landscape

7.1.5 Built Environment

7.1.6 Culture and Traditions

7.2.1 Outdoor Access and Recreation

7.2.2 Education

### 7.2.3 Interpretation

#### **7.1.5. Built Environment**

The Park has a wide range of vernacular architecture: Norman castles and mediaeval farmhouses, concentrations of 17th and 18th century buildings within the main settlements, and a scatter of very fine rural buildings which often retain original features such as stone tiles, screens, and mullioned windows. There are a number of fine country houses on the better farmland in the Usk and Wye valleys, some set within parks and gardens of historical importance. The Park's ecclesiastical architecture is very rich, with Brecon Cathedral, many important mediaeval churches and some early Nonconformist chapels. Changes in building materials (mainly red sandstone and limestone) and differing styles give local distinctiveness to the Park's many farmsteads and cottages, whose original features may be masked by later adaptations.

The pattern of settlements and their character also vary across the Park, from valley to valley. In general, nucleated villages predominate in the east while a more dispersed pattern of isolated farms characterises the west. Industrialisation, particularly in the south of the Park, gave rise to 19th century workers' cottages, the canal, a range of mills and other features perhaps better considered as industrial archaeology.

Buildings are protected by being listed by Cadw, by being within one of the Park's four Conservation Areas, or through ownership by bodies such as the National Trust. There are 1711 listed buildings including 29 Grade I and 86 Grade II\* (January 2008). Cadw provides grant aid to safeguard outstanding buildings or for significant works in Conservation Areas but funding is not adequate to assist many listed or unlisted buildings. The NPA offers advice and some grant aid, supporting the use of traditional styles, techniques, and materials such as lime mortar, oak window frames, and authentic paint colours.

The character of the Park's built environment is threatened by the deterioration of listed buildings, small changes to existing buildings, the declining use of stone tiles and other traditional local materials, new developments in settlements and the countryside, and the loss of traditional uses for buildings such as stone barns. Low farm incomes mean that cash may not be available for repairs. Policies on use changes, barn conversions for example, are set out in the Local Development Plan (forthcoming).

It is part of the NPA's vision that the Park's irreplaceable historic settlement patterns and buildings are conserved. They represent a diminishing resource visually and culturally, and by their attraction for people, they contribute to the Park's economy. Sustainability implies

that the heritage of the past is balanced with the needs of present and future generations. In principle, this should involve communities in the design and development of their settlements and surroundings, including the exploration of sustainable methods of re-using or recycling building materials rather than acquiring or quarrying new building materials. The NPA's Sustainable Design Guide will assist these efforts, but a major injection of resources into buildings and settlement conservation and design is also needed.

### **Twenty-year Aims for the Built Environment**

1. **All buildings of listable quality should be listed.** All buildings of listable quality should be listed to help protect buildings of architectural or historic interest. This seemingly simple task presents a conundrum. Whilst resurveys have increased the number of listed buildings in the Park by over 400%, there is a lack of funding to protect them.
2. **All listed buildings and their settings should be conserved and their condition improved, concentrating on buildings at risk.** The NPA as a planning authority has a duty to conserve listed buildings but has no extra resources to do so. Grant aid from Cadw is of limited availability. Other funding must be targeted where it is most needed, giving priority to buildings at risk.
3. **Protect unlisted buildings that contribute to the Park's built heritage.** Protecting the Park's heritage includes the conservation and enhancement of vernacular buildings. Many buildings of lesser quality contribute to the character of the Park's built environment. The Local Development Plan will include policies designed to conserve this character, but additional innovative methods need to be sought to aid this conservation effort. Where alterations are to take place to significant buildings, they need to be recorded by RCAHMW or expert contractors if the Park's built heritage is not to be lost. This has cost implications.
4. **Conserve and enhance settlements and settlement patterns.** Settlement patterns need to be considered and reflected in new development so that greenfield development does not destroy village forms. Options are currently being investigated in the formulation of the most recent Local Development Plan. Within existing Conservation Areas, further improvements are required, perhaps related to village design statements, in partnership with local groups. Future designations are likely to be of small areas within settlements, so that scarce resources can be concentrated where they will have the best effect. Local communities and groups have a role in conserving

and enhancing the quality of settlements, through village enhancement schemes and village design statements, and by actively engaging in the LDP process. Inherent in this approach is the requirement of a sustainable settlement strategy that satisfies the economic, environmental and social aspects of sustainability.

5. **Promote built heritage education and awareness.** As with archaeology and historic landscapes, built heritage requires development and implementation of a programme of public awareness and community outreach to support sustainable management of this resource. The NPA and its partners can, for example, promote the use of traditional building materials and methods through education, outreach, training and financial assistance.
6. **Develop monitoring of built heritage.** It is difficult to prioritise the spending of limited funds and time without proper baseline and monitoring data. Information gathered from monitoring the condition of the Park's built heritage will be required for future State of the Park reports. Improved data availability, maintenance and exchange are therefore required.

### **Policy context**

- European Landscape Convention
- Environment Strategy for Wales
- Rural Development Plan
- Agri-environment schemes (Tir Gofal)
- Countryside Rights of Way(CRoW) Act 2000
- Community Strategies (Local Authority)
- Cultural Tourism Strategy for Wales
- Cultural Strategy for Wales
- TAN 12 Design
- Welsh Office Circulars 60/96 and 61/90
- Traffic Management in Historic Areas
- Overcoming the Barriers: Providing Access to Historic Buildings
- Wales Transport Strategy
- Wales Spatial Plan
- BBNP Unitary Development Plan
- BBNP Local Development Plan (forthcoming)

## **Cross-reference**

7.1.1 Landscape

7.1.6 Culture and Traditions

7.1.11 Energy

7.2.2 Education

7.2.3 Interpretation

7.3.1 Sustainable Communities

7.3.4 Planning and Development

### **7.1.6. Culture and Traditions**

The first purpose of National Park designation was expanded in the 1995 Environment Act to include for the first time the conservation and enhancement of the Park's cultural heritage. "Culture" includes everything that people make or do, and "heritage" comprises everything that was done or thought in the past and which remains today. Those aspects of cultural heritage that consist of built features are covered in the two preceding chapters. This section comprises the intangible aspects of culture: language, literature, music, religion, customs, folklore, crafts, art, people and ways of life.

There are close links between culture and the landscape. Landscape character is strongly influenced by the patterns and traditions of past and present agriculture and other land uses including commoning and grazing practices, and by social and industrial history. Commoning and grazing are significant traditions on a UK and international scale, as is the breeding of Semi-feral, Section A Welsh Mountain Ponies, for which the BBNP is now the epicentre.

Local distinctiveness is also affected by the associations it carries, through place names or with literature, politics or more personal connections. Together these qualities create the Park's "bro" (sense of place) and "cynefin" (a person's habitat) which are expressed uniquely through the medium of Welsh.

Sustainability implies that the importance of the heritage of the past should be acknowledged and handed down, integrating this with the needs and well-being of present and future generations. A lively culture and living traditions contribute to a healthy community. The Park's distinctive blend of cultures and traditions also are attractive to visitors and, in turn, contribute to a healthy local economy. It is part of the NPA's vision that the Park's strong Welsh heritage and rich cultural life should thrive and grow.

## **Twenty-year Aims for Culture and Traditions**

### **1. Develop partnerships with those concerned with cultural life and traditions.**

The Park's stakeholders need to develop effective and innovative ways in which they work together to conserve and enhance culture and traditions in the Park. Existing examples of effective partnerships include ongoing support of community events and festivals. The NPA also assist local organisations to obtain funding for cultural projects. The NPA could improve its promotion of cultural associations of its properties and organise traditional skills courses and competitions.

### **2. Support the Park's cultural life and traditions.**

Although the NPA is charged with conserving cultural heritage, this part of its statutory purposes is likely to be fulfilled mainly by other organisations and individuals. The National Park's communities have living cultures that thrive without NPA support. Nor does the NPA have a specific budget for it. However, there are important ways in which the NPA does contribute, for example in its commitment to the Welsh language and by supporting sustainable community initiatives and via the Sustainable Development Fund. In fact, most of projects and policies in the National Park relate to the conservation of culture and tradition in some way, as is evident throughout this Plan.

### **3. Record the Park's cultural heritage.**

The NPA should explore with partners the need to record and evaluate the cultural associations and influences that help to make each part of the Park distinctive. This would identify the potential for management actions related to culture and traditions, and ensure that what might be lost is recorded in the most appropriate way.

### **4. Promote the use of the Welsh language.**

The NPA and its partners play a key role in promoting the Park's and Wales' cultural heritage by developing the use of Welsh in their own work and by supporting local events and activities. The NPA's Welsh Language Scheme, for example, which is approved by the Welsh Language Board, will continue to be implemented, increasing the knowledge of Welsh among Park staff and its use in publications and other written material.

### **5. Promote cultural heritage as an attraction for people.**

Much of the NPA's work in support of the social and economic vitality of the Park involves making the most of the area's culture and heritage, its sense of place. To this end, the NPA and its partners should take full economic advantage of the Park's culture and traditions to promote



cultural heritage as an attraction and to support the lives and livelihoods of the people who live and work here, creating a richer experience for all.

6. **Develop understanding and awareness of cultural life and traditions.** Part of the challenge to promoting culture and traditions in the Park is developing an understanding of the value of the intangible aspects of cultural heritage, many of which can only be fully appreciated through the medium of Welsh. Social history and local culture are ever-changing facets of this heritage. The NPA needs to emphasise the value of cultural heritage in everyday life. The aim is to enable local communities to identify, record and share local history and culture via “toolkits,” community events and activities.
7. **Evaluate and monitor the Park’s cultural resources and traditions.** Monitoring the cultural health of the Park is not easy and certainly not something for the NPA to undertake alone. Consequently, the NPA will strive to develop partnerships and identify the various aspects of culture and tradition in the Park—defining a sense of place—to create a baseline for future monitoring, and to suggest suitable indicators. CCW is working on data sets to help classify cultural associations and influence. When it is completed for the National Park, LANDMAP would assist in establishing a baseline to evaluate cultural heritage resources.

### **Policy context**

- European Landscape Convention
- Rural Development Plan
- Community Strategies (Local Authority)
- Cultural Tourism Strategy for Wales
- Cultural Strategy for Wales
- Wales Spatial Plan

### **Cross-reference**

- 7.1.1 Landscape
- 7.1.4 Archaeology and Historic Landscapes
- 7.1.5 Built Environment
- 7.2.1 Outdoor Access and Recreation
- 7.2.2 Education
- 7.2.3 Interpretation

### **7.1.7. Air Resources**

“Fresh air” is one of the key qualities that bring people to the Brecon Beacons. High standards of air quality not only lead to increased life expectancy and quality of life, but they also contribute to improved habitat quality and enhance biodiversity.

Air quality in the Brecon Beacons is good, particularly compared to more heavily populated areas of South Wales. The outstanding air quality issue is acid rain, especially nitrate deposition, originating from outside the Park. This affects vegetation growth and water quality. EAW have also indicated that particulate matter and ozone may be of concern as well. Particulate matter and ozone have no exposure threshold levels below which adverse human health effects do not occur. Transport and delivery, power generation, and other heavy industries are the major contributors to poor air quality in the Park. The increasing focus on biofuels production also poses a threat to local air quality through increased concentrations of pollen from oilseed rape, a potential allergen.

#### **Twenty-year Aims for Air Resources**

- 1. Maintain and, where possible, improve the Park’s air quality.** The UAs carry out Updating and Screening Assessments (USAs) to determine if there are 'hot spot' locations where there is potential for air quality objectives to be exceeded. The UAs' work shows that air quality is up to standard in the Park. However, increases in development, product delivery and traffic within the Park, or industry and power generation outside the Park, could increase air pollution above current standards. Policies will aim to reduce the negative effects of key pollution sources on the Park’s air quality. For example, the NPA and its partners can encourage cleaner alternatives to conventional modes of transport, power generation, and heavy industry. Policies can also be designed to reduce the need for travel to and within the National Park through appropriate siting of new developments and provision of public transport infrastructure.

#### **Policy context**

- EU Directive on Ambient Air Quality
- Wales Transport Strategy
- Wales Spatial Plan
- Environment Strategy for Wales
- UK Air Quality Strategy

## **Cross-reference**

7.3.4 Planning and Development

7.3.5 Transport

### **7.1.8. Water Resources**

More than 25 rivers and streams originate in or pass through the Brecon Beacons National Park. Additionally, there are more than 18 lakes and reservoirs scattered throughout the Park (Map 4). Several of these water bodies have been recognized for their scientific and ecological value, including the Rivers Usk and Wye and Llangorse Lake (Map 2). Along with ample groundwater supplies, these waters provide a vital resource to communities within and outside the Park whilst supporting its natural environment. The Park's waters are home to the likes of water voles, otters, salmon, trout, aquatic insects, and native crayfish. They sustain countless other species and habitats, including agricultural ecosystems. Humans use water for multiple reasons, including drinking, washing, heating, cooling, industrial processes, and transport. These water bodies also attract a growing number of avid outdoor enthusiasts interested in angling, boating, canoeing, nature study, and relaxation.

Despite plentiful rainfall in the region, the quality and quantity of these resources are burdened by society's growing demands. The majority of licensed abstractions are for public water supply, but water also serves industry, agriculture, and domestic use. Predicted shifts in precipitation associated with climate change are likely to put more strain on water resources, particularly during summer months. Water quality is general very good throughout the Park with only Grwyne Fawr and the Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal rated fair. Inappropriate agricultural conservation practices and the disposal of sheep dip throughout the Park are the primary concerns for water quality. Large-scale construction and development projects that are poorly monitored also have the potential to contribute significantly to the degradation of the Park's water quality.

Protection and sustainable use of the Park's water resources will require implementation of the EC Water Framework Directive (WFD). The WFD requires the integration of water resource management issues with other social, economic, and environmental concerns across entire watersheds or catchments. Issues, outcomes, and objectives will be linked via River Basin Management Plans for each major hydrologic unit. Environment Agency Wales are in the process of formulating these plans. The National Park Management Plan reflects this shift towards a holistic approach to managing our waters and associated resources and will continue to do so in the future. Planning policies by way of the Local Development Plan

will incorporate this approach as well, maximising sustainable drainage systems (SUDs) for all new development.

### **Twenty-year Aims for Water Resources**

1. **Maintain or improve the quality of the Park's groundwater, rivers, and lakes.**

The biological and chemical quality of water in the Park is generally high. The quality of some of the Park's waters and ecosystems are threatened by lack of sewerage capacity, industrial point sources, and diffuse pollution, from both urban and agricultural sources. Application of sheep dip poses a problem for water quality in most catchments within the Park. Management strategies should attempt to reduce and eliminate pollution episodes where possible and encourage farmers to use catchment-sensitive agricultural practices. EAW recommends monitoring point and non-point water pollution sources for specified catchments within the National Park to ensure that guidelines are met. Compatibility with the Water Framework Directive will complement these efforts.

2. **Ensure that water resources are used sustainably across all sectors in the National Park.** Although quantities of water are sufficient to meet current demand, climate change will alter the distribution and abundance of water through time and space. This may result in excess at times and severe limitations at other times of the year. Immigration to the area will also strain existing resources. Water will need to be used more efficiently to meet the needs of society without causing damage to the environment. Efforts should be made to restore and maintain water abstraction, run-off and recharge rates within the Park's carrying capacity (including future capacity).

### **Policy context**

- The Taff and Ely Catchment Abstraction Management Strategy June 2006
- The Wye Catchment Abstraction Management Strategy Consultation Draft February 2007
- The Usk Catchment Abstraction Management Strategy Consultation Draft August 2006
- River Basin Planning Guidance DEFRA and WAG 2006
- Water Framework Directive
- Wales Transport Strategy
- Wales Spatial Plan
- Environment Strategy for Wales

## **Cross-reference**

7.1.9 Soils

7.1.14 Upland Management

7.1.15 Rivers and Wetlands

7.3.4 Planning and Development

### **7.1.9. Soil Resources**

Together with air and water, soil serves as one of the Earth's fundamental life support systems. Soils and their biota maintain critical functions on a global scale, such as hydrologic, carbon, phosphorus and nitrogen cycling. For example, soils act as a carbon sink and are thus an important factor in controlling climate change. Soils are essential to agriculture, forestry, energy production and the textile and fibre industries, providing nutrients and making water available for plants and animals alike. Soil type, structure, and function—in conjunction with climatic factors—determine the location and quality of wildlife and their habitats. In fact, soils provide habitat for millions of organisms that dwell beneath their surface. Soils also serve as a medium in which many of our cultural artefacts have been preserved. They hold the record of our past and, quite literally, serve as the foundation for our built environment.

Because of these relationships, degradation or contamination of soils can have cascading and sometimes irreparable effects on biodiversity, economics, culture, and even global processes. It can take hundreds to thousands of years to form one centimetre of soil, making soils a non-renewable resource on a human time scale. Yet very little is known about soils despite our utter dependence upon them.

A firm understanding of soils is critical to management, especially in a park dominated by uplands and containing significant organic soil resources. Unfortunately, there is a lack of data for soils in the BBNP. We do know that there are no nitrate vulnerable zones and no contaminated sites in the Park. Soil erosion and impoverishment, particularly the loss of organic soils, are the most significant concern for healthy soils. Peat soils which play a significant role in carbon storage have eroded, succumbed to grazing pressures. To a lesser degree, agricultural practices are having detrimental effects on the Park's cultural and historical record. The Plans should provide for the conservation and enhancement of soils within and around the National Park.

## Twenty-year Aims for Soils Resources

- 1. Protect the Park's soils from degradation and erosion.** Soil erosion is of serious concern in the Park. Loss of soil quality, quantity or function will impair the soil's ability to support plants and animals, store carbon and provide other important ecosystem services. Vegetation cover and peat are easily removed from thin mountain soils and popular paths. Erosion can be exacerbated by weather, grazing pressures and some farm and forestry practices. Soils can also be damaged by the removal of turf, which includes the top layer of the soil, a subject of concern for local development as well as the recent gas pipeline project through the Park. Peat is being damaged by acidification and unmanaged burning; much of the Park's blanket peat is very degraded. Soil and peat damage can be reduced by minimising the sources of degradation and erosion where possible and by improved vegetation cover. Careful management of particularly vulnerable areas and long-term monitoring of restored sites are important steps toward successful protection of the Park's soil resources.
- 2. Take positive steps to implement the Brecon Beacons National Park upland erosion strategy.** The Rights of Way Improvement Plan states that positive steps should be taken to implement the BBNP upland erosion strategy. The Upland erosion strategy makes a number of recommendations, some of which are organizational (stage 1). The remainder (stage 2) relate to implementation of a practical programme of works. The recommendations within the draft upland erosion strategy are cross cutting in that they include access improvements, landscape protection and organisational changes.
- 3. Improve collaboration and cooperation among stakeholders managing soil and peat resources.** The NPA will work with commoners and other key stakeholders in the National Park to coordinate managed burns, improve grazing practices, restore degraded areas and adopt other management approaches that conserve and enhance soil and peat resources. A key component of this effort will be the provision of educational programmes and materials explaining the importance and details of best management practices.

## Policy Context

- River Basin Planning Guidance DEFRA and WAG 2006
- Water Framework Directive
- Wales Spatial Plan

- Environment Strategy for Wales

## **Cross-reference**

7.1.14 Upland Management

7.1.15 Rivers and Wetlands

7.3.4 Planning and Development

### **7.1.10. Minerals**

For many years, minerals have supplied construction materials for walls, buildings, roads, and other forms of development in and around the Park. Minerals are also the parent material for soils, providing nutrients and habitats utilised by a variety of plants and other wildlife. Through the ages, agriculturalists have taken advantage of the Park's mineral resources directly for crop production, in the form of burnt lime used to neutralise soil pH, and indirectly for the purposes of animal husbandry. Mineral extraction has been and, in isolated cases, continues to be a viable economic activity in the National Park. Consequently, the Park's minerals and soils are critically linked to its biodiversity and economics as well as its history and cultural heritage.

Mineral working inevitably interferes with our ability to conserve and enhance the Park's natural and cultural resources and to provide for the enjoyment of these by the public. Mineral extraction consumes limited resources. It not only damages the Park's biodiversity and geodiversity but also mars the Park's natural beauty. In some instances, however, it may reveal features of interest which might be threatened by quarry infilling or create new and unique forms of wildlife habitat. Additionally, abandoned quarries and restored sites often succumb to unauthorised use by mechanised recreational activities which may cause damage to the environment, result in personal injury and infringe on the quiet enjoyment had by others.

The Welsh Assembly Government aims to “prevent unacceptable aggregates extraction from areas of acknowledged landscape, cultural, nature and geological conservation and hydrological importance”.<sup>14</sup> This encompasses national parks, SSSIs, SACs, and historic sites, all of which are considered in the context of this Plan. Minerals applications in these areas must be subject to the most rigorous examination. The Quarry Products Association also has made a commitment to reduce development pressure in national parks, and this commitment is welcomed.

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<sup>14</sup> Welsh Assembly Government. 2004. Minerals Technical Advice Note (Wales) I: Aggregates.

## Twenty-year Aims for Minerals

1. **Reduce the damage done to the Park by mineral working whilst fulfilling the NPA's obligation as a Mineral Planning Authority.** The principles of sustainability require that the needs for minerals are met from as close to the demand as possible, to reduce the Park's carbon footprint via minimising transport of minerals. This would suggest that minerals required for development taking place in the BBNP should be quarried within it. However, WAG policy supports the NPA's view that national parks should not be required to contribute proportionally to the regional landbank of aggregates.<sup>15</sup> The draft Regional Technical Statement endorses this view, and further recommends exploring the possibility of a gradual transfer of production from the BBNP to other areas.<sup>16</sup> WAG has also supported the policies in the BBNP Unitary Development Plan (UDP) which state that the NPA will not identify in this UDP any safeguarded or preferred areas or areas of search for further aggregate mineral extraction within the National Park.<sup>17</sup> Similarly, "applications for new or extended mineral workings... will be subject to the most rigorous examination and will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances where it is demonstrated to be in the public interest..."<sup>18</sup> The NPA will continue to take part in the development of regional guidance through its membership of the South Wales Regional Aggregates Working Party.
  
2. **Apply WAG's policies against mineral working in national parks to the BBNP's identified sand and gravel deposits.** Minerals TAN 1 identifies deposits of glacial sand and gravel in the Park, and requires them to be safeguarded from other development, for possible future use. Currently these resources are of unknown quality and quantity and are too small-scale and distant from major markets to make their extraction economically viable. WAG considers that there may come a time when there is a demand for them, for reasons of sustainability or because finite resources have been depleted elsewhere. The NPA has refused to safeguard them in the UDP, and this policy has been supported by the Inspector's report. This stand has resulted in WAG's refusal to allow the UDP to be formally adopted. Consequently, the UDP has merely been approved by the NPA for development control use. Current NPA policy, backed by WAG guidance, does not support new mineral extraction in the Park. The NPA will be

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<sup>15</sup> Welsh Assembly Government. 2004. Minerals Technical Advice Note (Wales) I: Aggregates para. 49.

<sup>16</sup> South Wales Regional Aggregates Working Party. November 2007. Consultation Draft Regional Technical Statement.

<sup>17</sup> Brecon Beacons National Park. 2007. Unitary Development Plan: Part I Policy 6: Allocation for the Extraction of Aggregate Minerals.

<sup>18</sup> Brecon Beacons National Park. 2007. Unitary Development Plan: Part I Policy 7: Minerals Development



able to continue to resist extraction of sand and gravel from identified sites, at least until WAG considers that supplies from elsewhere have become so depleted that it is in the public interest to extract them.

3. **Explore more local and sustainable options to supplement or replace the need for mineral resources.** The Welsh national parks serve as exemplars of sustainability, experimenting with innovative development concepts whilst promoting environmental conservation through leadership. With respect to mineral extraction, there is a need for local sources of building stone for the repair of old buildings and walls and for limited use in new-builds. There are not enough sources of local building stone, and finding new ones would require exploration. Consequently, the NPA must identify alternatives that meet the demands for building materials whilst satisfying WAG's vision for the national parks. This can be accomplished through the use of secondary, recycled or waste materials, by using alternative building materials (e.g., wood, straw, mud), by finding alternative and sustainable sources of mineral aggregates, and/or through reduction in the demand for mineral resources, for example.

### **Policy context**

- MTAN I Aggregates
- Minerals Planning Policy Wales
- Wales Spatial Plan
- National Housing Strategy for Wales
- Rural Development Plan for Wales
- Environment Strategy for Wales
- Consultation Draft Regional Technical Statement

### **Cross-reference**

7.1.3 Geodiversity

7.3.1 Sustainable Communities

7.3.4 Planning and Development

#### **7.1.1.1. Energy**

More than 90% of Wales' energy supplies come from non-renewable resources, comprising oil, coal, and gas.<sup>19</sup> Continued reliance on these fossil fuels presents at least two undesirable environmental consequences for Wales and the Park. Firstly, the burning of fossil fuels emits

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<sup>19</sup> Department of Trade and Industry. 2007. Energy White Paper: Meeting the Energy Challenge.

substantial concentrations of greenhouse gases which are, in turn, altering climatic conditions across the globe. Transportation (35%) and domestic usage (26%) contribute significantly to unsustainable fossil fuel consumption and greenhouse gas emissions in Wales, whereas industries consume about 10% of the UK's energy supply.<sup>20</sup> Secondly, there is growing consensus that global oil production has or soon will peak whilst oil consumption continues to grow. Because our societal infrastructure is based on the consumption of fossil fuels, particularly petroleum, the impending peak in oil production relative to consumption (peak oil) has serious implications for every facet of daily life. Similar scenarios are envisaged for gas and coal resources, albeit further into the future.

Whilst these factors may seem insurmountable, local efforts to improve energy efficiency and promote the use of renewable energy can effectively reduce the Park's ecological footprint whilst contributing to the nation's commitments to the Kyoto Protocol.<sup>21</sup> Large-scale electricity generation and distribution, for example, is highly inefficient, but local generation of electricity is considerably more sustainable. Implementation of small-scale, local generation projects, then, can make great strides toward reducing the Park's ecological footprint. The end result is an increase in regional self-sufficiency, overcoming local reliance on external energy providers and improving community responsibility through shared resource management. The NPA and its partners will encourage a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by reducing energy use, improving energy conservation and supporting renewable energy production. This will be reflected in the LDP which will strive to maximise renewable energy output and energy efficiency from all new buildings and developments.

## **Twenty-year Aims for Energy**

- 1. Help achieve national targets for greater renewable production through community and domestic scale schemes.** The Welsh Assembly Government has set renewable energy targets for Wales of four terrawatt hours per annum by 2010 and seven terrawatt hours per annum by 2020.<sup>22</sup> Although large-scale renewable energy projects such as wind farms are not appropriate in the National Park due to undesirable impacts on landscape, natural, and cultural resources, WAG have charged the Parks with being exemplars of sustainability and centres of clean energy innovation. Microgeneration of renewable energy is, however, within the context of this vision.

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Welsh Assembly Government. 2005. Ministerial Interim Planning Policy Statement: Planning for Renewable Energy.

<sup>22</sup> Welsh Assembly Government. 2007. Policy Statement for the National Parks and National Park Authorities in Wales.

The Park's first community renewable energy scheme was approved in 2004. By the end of 2007, three hydropower, six photo-voltaic, 40 solar and five single turbine wind renewable energy schemes were in place in the National Park. The NPA and its partners will continue to encourage private or community renewable energy installations, through the Renewable Energy Assistance Programme (REAP) as well as projects on the NPA's own estate. In future, new dwellings or residential plans will be required to have on-site renewable energy schemes integrated into their permissions in accordance with the forthcoming Sustainable Design Guide.

2. **Reduce greenhouse gas emissions by minimising energy use.** The average ecological footprint for a person living in Wales is nearly three times that of the "average Earth share" of 1.8 area units.<sup>23</sup> In accordance with the Kyoto Protocol, the UK government agreed to a 12.5% reduction and set a domestic goal of reducing carbon dioxide emissions by 20% of 1990 levels by 2010.<sup>24</sup> Despite reductions in greenhouse gas emissions since 1990, UK targets for reducing them are not being met. More recent strategies urge the UK to "Power Down."<sup>25</sup> These strategies encourage commonsense approaches to reducing wasteful energy consumption practices, implementing modern energy management technologies, and adopting thrifty lifestyles. Powering Down does not mean going without, but it does require being more efficient and limiting carbon-intensive activities. The NPA and its partners will actively promote awareness of the issues and practices that help us "Power Down." The NPA will aim to be an exemplar of best practice through its working practices and management of NPA estate. The forthcoming BBNP Sustainable Design Guide will include policies and standards for new developments that will assist the NPA and its partners in meeting this aim. Examples of current initiatives in the Park can be found throughout this Plan.
3. **Assist the development of community energy initiatives.** By 2028, the aspiration is that most of the Park's towns and villages will have community renewable energy systems, greatly increasing efficiency and producing a more cost effective energy solution than at present. District heating schemes and combined heat and power systems that use biofuels will be realistic proposal for many of the Park's settlements. Similarly, community wind turbines and hydro facilities will be more practical as technology advances and public perceptions change. The NPA and its partners will assist the Park's towns and villages in making this transition.

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<sup>23</sup> Welsh Assembly Government. 2007. Sustainable Development Indicators for Wales 2007.

<sup>24</sup> Welsh Assembly Government. 2005. Ministerial Interim Planning Policy Statement: Planning for Renewable Energy.

<sup>25</sup> Centre for Alternative Technology. 2007. Zero Carbon Britain: An Alternative Energy Strategy.

4. **Develop the capacity for a localised energy grid.** Areas of the National Park already have the potential to produce all of their heat and electricity requirements on site, and not be a part of the national grid. As the effects of population pressures, climate change and fossil fuel depletion unfold, requirements for existing and new settlements to become energy self-sufficient are likely. Rather than viewing these scenarios as impediments to progress, they can be seen as opportunities to add environmental, social and economic value to the local community or social enterprise, reducing environmental impacts, promoting a sense of place and retaining all generated revenues.
  
5. **Integrate renewable energy into building and settlement design.** Whilst the WAG and UK governments aim for all new buildings to be carbon neutral by 2011 and 2015, respectively. To do so will require significant shifts in architectural practice and the planning process. Indeed, the character of buildings will need to be radically altered to increase efficiency. Renewable energy will need to be integrated in initial design stages rather than add-ons or last minute amendments. In a move away from traditional planning protocol, for example, it may be most efficient for the situation of new settlements and buildings to actually “chase the energy,” whereby developments are sited next to a useable water source that generates all heat and energy requirements, rather than opting for edge-of-town development that relies on traditional and inefficient solutions to energy delivery and consumption. The BBNP Sustainable Design Guide will assist in delivering this aim.

### **Policy context**

- TAN 8 Renewable Energy
- MIPPS Planning for Renewable Energy
- Energy White Paper: Meeting the Energy Challenge 2007
- UK Biomass Strategy 2007
- Zero Carbon Britain: An Alternative Energy Policy
- Policy Statement for the National Parks and National Park Authorities for Wales
- Wales Transport Strategy
- Wales Spatial Plan
- Environment Strategy for Wales
- Energy Route Map for Wales 2008
- BBNP Sustainable Design Guide (forthcoming)

## **Cross-reference**

7.3.1 Sustainable Communities

7.3.4 Planning and Development

7.3.5 Transport

### **7.1.12. Agriculture**

Farming is a key process that assists in maintaining many of the special qualities of the Park, including contributions to landscape, biodiversity, culture, and the socio-economic well-being of the local communities. Agriculture also has the potential to provide other public benefits, for example carbon sequestration and catchment management to reduce flood risk.

Agricultural holdings comprise 51% of the Park's land area; commons make up a further 38% of the Park, a proportion greater than many other national parks in the UK. Common land fulfils an important role within local farming systems and the continued use of traditional management practices has also allowed commons to retain significant conservation value whilst providing recreational opportunities via open access land. However, the economic viability of upland farming and grazing commons in particular is under threat because of recent changes within the agricultural sector.

Farms within the park are typically family run, utilising enclosed grasslands with commons providing supplementary summer grazing. Upland farming would traditionally have been based on keeping hardy beef cattle and sheep, supplemented by sales of Welsh Mountain ponies. The sale of stores and breeding stock demonstrates the interdependence with lowland farms. Climate, poor soils, and topography limit the agricultural potential of the land. Therefore for over 30 years, government policy has recognised the need to provide additional financial support to hill farmers received through the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). For many years, agricultural subsidies were targeted at increasing productivity, by providing minimum guaranteed prices for farm products, for example. These policies contributed towards a loss of environmental quality, for example through the agricultural improvement of semi-natural grasslands, over-grazing with sheep and the reduction in the number of cattle. Some policy reforms occurred in the early 1990s with greater use of quotas with payments linked to numbers of livestock or area of crop produced and a small increase in the amount of agri-environment grants available to achieve conservation objectives. In 2005 all subsidies linked to production finished. Farmers are currently paid a "Single Farm Payment" that in Wales is usually based upon the quantity of historic subsidies claimed by an individual farmer, subject to the land being maintained in good agricultural and environmental condition.

### **Brecknock Hill Cheviot Marketing**

The Brecknock Hill Cheviot Marketing Project was awarded Sustainable Development Fund funding in September 2001. The aim of the project was to develop a major marketing campaign for lamb, to develop branding and to secure a market for lamb for future years.

The project has been hugely successful with 45 businesses joining a scheme to supply Marks & Spencer (M&S) with Brecknock lamb; in excess of 10,000 lambs were sold last season. Brecknock Lamb appeared in the M&S Christmas brochure.

The sustainability gains of the project are:

**Economic:** Lamb sales to M&S have provided a much needed boost to the farming economy in the Central Beacons (especially post foot and mouth) and this helps to support the wider social economy.

**Social:** A successful marketing campaign has encouraged community cohesiveness and provided incentives for young people to continue farming traditions in the Brecon Beacons.

**Environment:** Producers have been trained in improved environmental management and stock rearing techniques.

**Cultural:** The Brecknock Hill Cheviot breed has been a key feature of the local landscape for 150 years – this initiative has helped to ensure that this cultural tradition continues in a more environmentally sustainable way.

Whilst there have been historic pressures on the profitability of upland farming, the current trends are particularly significant because of an increase in both pace and scale. Current issues include:

- Lower prices received for agricultural produce partially due to supermarket bargaining power and cheap food imports,
- Reduction in levels of agricultural support due to reforms of the CAP,
- High cost of rural housing with limited opportunities for new entrants,
- The cost of implementing increasing levels of regulation, for example livestock records and tagging,
- Impact of animal disease such as foot and mouth and
- Centralisation and loss of local agricultural processing industries, for example markets and slaughterhouses.

The changes in upland farming are so significant that there are likely to be fundamental changes in upland character and how the landscape is managed within a relatively short period of time. Upland farming requires specialist skills and knowledge, the fundamentals usually being passed down through family generations and matched to local conditions. An

example of this is the knowledge and skills of how sheep are hefted to particular parts of the hill. With the decline in the number of people employed within farming, an increase in the average age of the agricultural workforce and limited opportunities for young people to earn a reasonable living within farming, there is a risk that the skills and capacity needed to manage the upland landscape will be lost. Alternative approaches to uplands management would require a fundamental change in tenure systems, resource allocation, funding and training.

### **Twenty-year Aims for Agriculture**

- 1. Maintain and enhance viable and productive farming businesses within the uplands that are able to deliver private and public objectives to enhance the special qualities of the Park.** The primary reason for how land is managed varies, but it is likely that increasingly a number of objectives will be delivered from an individual piece of land requiring integrated approaches to management, covering biodiversity, outdoor access, recreation, food production, and community benefit.
- 2. Integrate and promote public support for sustainable farming.** The upland landscape is a critical asset both nationally and relative to the Park. The emphasis of policy is changing from encouraging agricultural and timber production to uplands being areas for recreational pursuits and the delivery of public benefits. However, the continued importance of livestock, particularly larger grazing animals, to the well being of the uplands needs to be communicated to the public as well as national and European levels of government.
- 3. Develop communications and collaboration among land managers, statutory agencies, non-governmental organisations, voluntary groups, communities and other interests.** Farming continues to be the most significant element of what needs to be a profitable land management industry. To be successful now and in the future, this will require increased collaboration, local empowerment and innovation among the stakeholders involved.
- 4. Encourage the development of local supply chains and landscape branded products.** Given the changing face of agricultural policy, economics and practice, farmers will need to maximise market opportunities by adding value to goods produced in rural areas, for example by niche marketing, branding and diversification. Farmers can add significant value to their products through marketing and promotion based on local and regional branding—such as the Beacons lamb. The aspiration must be that farmers

can benefit from being within a protected landscape and thereby continue to contribute to its management.

5. **Reduce waste, energy use, and pollution from all agricultural activities.**
  6. **Manage the Park's land to reduce both the scale and impacts of climate change, for example through carbon sequestration.**
  7. **Establish a new rural subsidy system based upon agri-environment and rural development programmes that pay people to provide public benefits in the countryside, particularly the delivery of environmental goods and services.**
- Enclosed land generally has a greater potential for agricultural productivity compared to commons, but this is still limited compared to more lowland parts of the country. It is likely that these areas will continue to need support if the farming systems that have helped create their special qualities are to be retained. Tir Gofal has provided some income to manage features such as hay meadows and field boundaries. However, insufficient resources have been allocated to allow the majority of farms to enter. A range of schemes is needed to suit different types of holdings, including common land. A limited number of simple prescriptions may be suitable for a relatively productive unit, for example, whereas a more bespoke scheme may be needed for holdings with higher levels of conservation interest and for landscape scale initiatives.

### **Policy context**

- Draft Climate Change Action Plan
- Water Framework Directive
- EC Soils Framework Directive [forthcoming]
- EC Habitats Directive
- Local Biodiversity Action Plan
- Countryside Rights of Way(CRoW) Act
- Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act
- Wales Biodiversity Strategy
- Environment Strategy for Wales Action Plan
- Commons Act
- Wales Rural Development Plan

### **Cross-reference**

7.1.1 Landscape



- 7.1.2 Biodiversity
- 7.1.13 Woodland Management
- 7.1.14 Upland Management
- 7.1.15 Rivers and Wetlands
- 7.3.1 Sustainable Communities

### **7.1.13. Woodland Management**

The woodlands are an integral part of the distinctive landscape and natural beauty of the Brecon Beacons National Park. Sustainable woodland and forest management positively contribute to the vision of the National Park by conserving and enhancing diverse habitats within and around the forest, creating and maintaining accessible locations for people and contributing to a vibrant rural economy. Additionally, woodlands can have a significantly greater carrying capacity for people than more open landscapes.

Forests and woodlands offer environmental benefits which include the expansion of native woodland, conservation of land within and adjacent to the SSSIs, SACs, and Scheduled Ancient Monuments, and the creation, restoration and expansion of valued habitat.

Woodlands offer a sense of welcoming to people travelling along the numerous scenic drives throughout the Park's valleys and to those who wish to explore the wilder aspects of the more mountainous terrain.

At the southern end of the National Park, the gateway to the National Park, and the Geo Park, the Forestry Commission invite visitors to the Garwnant Visitor Centre and Education Complex. Formal recreation is of increased interest as well, with the more active pursuits being sought, such as mountain biking, horse riding, and outdoor activity centres. As such this visitor centre provides an appropriate outlet for enjoyment of these activities.

In addition, the successful award of the Fforest Fawr Geo Park status within the National Park offers opportunities to expand on and experience the internationally recognised geological value the National Park and that which the forests can offer.

Woodlands also offer a sense of well being to the larger landscape and to the setting and structure of settlements. This benefit can be incorporated into future development, including residential housing and industrial commercial activities.

Woodland cover exists in the National Park as a combination of public sector forests and private woodland. Public sector forests managed by the Forestry Commission are in excess

of 10,000 hectares (or 25,000 acres) of land in the Park, whereas private woodland comprises a mosaic of much smaller, dispersed farm woodland holdings and some traditional estate managed forests. These different scales present different opportunities and challenges for woodland restoration and expansion or reversion to other priority habitats.

The *Woodland Strategy Vision* for Wales over the next 50 years is: "Wales will be known for high-quality woodlands that enhance the landscape, are appropriate to local conditions and have a diverse mixture of species and habitats that will provide real social and community benefits, support thriving woodland-based industries and contribute to a better quality environment throughout Wales."

*Better Woodlands for Wales* is the new Forestry Commission Wales (FCW) grant scheme designed to meet that vision. The scheme has been developed in consultation with woodland owners and their agents as well as our partner organisations. The new scheme places greater emphasis on good quality woodland management and offers grants specially designed for Welsh woodlands. Grant aid is now based upon an approved long-term management plan that meets the minimum standards under the UK Woodland Assurance Scheme.

Forest design is a planning tool for creating a future vision for new and existing forests. Forest design identifies the existing woodland structure, and shows how, by pro-active management of the land, the future forests and woodlands will contribute to an improved ecosystem, whilst maintaining a sustainable resource of both economic and conservation value. It considers both the effects on the wider landscape and issues surrounding climate change and species habitats, thereby contributing greatly to the conservation of nature, culture, and biodiversity in the National Park.

All woodlands and forests managed by the Forestry Commission have been assessed by forest design, and approved by the UK Woodland Assurance Standard (UKWAS). This process is also adopted by private woodland owners wishing to attract grant aid via the Welsh Assembly Governments *Better Woodland for Wales* scheme. Forest Design invites consultation from all interested parties, and the Park's stakeholders are active in creating the vision of our forests and woodlands for the future.

The Mynydd Ddu forest case study (below) is an example of a forest design plan near Abergavenny and within the north-eastern area of the National Park.

## **Twenty-year Aims for Woodland Management**

- 1. Capture the existing values of the lower valley native farm woodlands in the National Park and expand these habitats towards the higher slopes where existing forests lie.** This aim enhances the existing landscape and habitats whilst expanding native woodlands in these areas, encouraging the native woodland to migrate into the commercial coniferous forests. This native woodland expansion will improve habitat networks and connectivity, allowing species to migrate to higher or lower elevations, depending on the pressures of changing temperature and precipitation patterns that may arise in the future. Designing habitat connectivity into our forest plans is one important measure we can take now to safeguard the Park's species and habitats given the uncertainty of future climate change scenarios.
- 2. Manage forests at higher elevations to maintain a sound commercial presence as coniferous forests, contributing to the rural economy whilst offering the opportunity to improve landscape design and create new upland open space via felling.** This open space will contribute to the grandeur and sense of wildness associated with the National Park. Careful management of such creations of open space within a forest and woodland structure, with particular reference to the higher elevations, also can contribute to combating climate change, via creating carbon sinks through restoration of upland peat bogs and heath land. In addition, the opportunity will be taken to preserve and enhance the archaeological features.
- 3. Restore internationally recognised habitats, including upland bogs, heath land, and upland oak woods, where the viability and potential exists.** Examples of all of these habitats can be found within the FC managed forests within the National Park. Open space management within these forests not only offers opportunities to create a diverse landscape but also to create new habitat and restore disturbed habitats.
- 4. Practise continuous cover forestry in forests within the National Park where tree species, aspect, previous management, and soils allow.** Continuous cover forest practise is an integral management tool for foresters. It offers the maintenance of permanent tree cover within woodlands. It is the preferred mechanism to maintain landscape sensitive areas and convert plantation to native woodlands on previous ancient woodland sites.
- 5. Integrate woodland management into local development plans within the National Park.** Woodland management contributes to flood defence and to other

development-related issues. This is of particular importance within the context of the Park's Local Development Plan with respect to future housing demands and societal needs. Where applicable within water catchment areas, woodlands can offer flood defence mechanisms via the creation of new wet woodland habitats, and contribute to reducing the impact of higher water levels downstream and nearer those communities most at risk from flooding.

- 6. Consider and create new community woodlands within easy access of future and existing communities that contribute to the improved sense of health and well being.** The Forestry Commission forests and woodlands within the National Park invite quiet informal recreation for both tourists and the local residents. The forests provide a sense of public ownership and are an important contributor to the local economy through tourism activities they attract. Local communities also benefit from the forest through the improved health and well-being they provide to those who access these areas. They are recognised as valued assets for today's society.

#### **Policy context**

- Woodlands for Wales Strategy 2001
- Environment Strategy for Wales 2006
- Draft Climate Change Action Plan
- Water Framework Directive
- EC Habitats Directive
- Countryside Rights of Way(CRoW) Act
- Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act
- Wales Biodiversity Strategy
- Environment Strategy for Wales Action Plan

#### **Cross-reference**

7.1.1 Landscape

7.1.2 Biodiversity

7.1.14. Uplands Management

7.3.1 Sustainable Communities

## Mynydd Ddu Forest Design

Mynydd Ddu Forest lies on the eastern edge of the BBNP, near to the market town of Abergavenny. The forest is situated within a discreet valley, and adjacent to the majestic open hills of the Brecon Beacons. The forest covers an area of 1200 hectares, and is managed by the Forestry Commission Wales. The FC Wales estate covers in excess of 120,000 hectares, of which circa 35000 hectares is managed by the Llanymddyfri Forest District team, including Mynydd Ddu Forest.

Mynydd Ddu Forest is the largest forest in the National Park, which is managed under a combination of clearfell and continuous cover management, including native woodland and heath land restoration. Majestic trees tower over forest entrances throughout the valley, with broadleaf woodland expanding along the streams and tributaries to the Grwyne Fawr River. As the forest rises to the higher elevations, a combination of productive forest and heath land restoration exists.

The forest design identifies the structure of the forest for the future. It captures the forest of today and influences how the evolution of the growing forest will change and adapt to the future. Forest design is a management tool and is recognised as a part of sustainable forest management. All Forestry Commission forests meet the UK Woodland Assurance Standard (UKWAS) which demonstrates forests and woodlands are being managed to a high standard.

**Sustainable forest management** is measured within three tiers: economics, environment, and social. Forest management considers all aspects of these three tiers, to ensure a sustainable forest exists in the future.

The **forest design vision** is identified by the following key issues which will effect the future regeneration management.

This forest is one of the larger forests in the area and is capable of growing a mix of tree species which will enhance the future timber markets whilst also considering the effects of climate change, and the potential for migration of species, through a habitat network within the forest. The forest design will enhance these demands by broadleaf riparian restoration, with mixed conifer and broadleaf species throughout the lower elevations of the forest. On the upper elevations, the forest will consist of open space managed to complement the adjacent open hill, whilst enhancing and restoring upland heath habitat to complement the wider landscape of this area. This will further enhance the woodland and forest edge to remove the harsh shapes adjacent to the forest boundary, and further complement the wider landscape of this area.

To ensure sustainable forest management the following specific issues are considered within the forest design process for each of the three tiers:

## Mynydd Ddu Forest Design (continued)

### Environment

- **Forest design** and subsequent forest management will enhance and protect the environment in accordance with relevant EU legislation, with a particular emphasis on recent habitat regulations (Aug 2007). This will include protecting and enhancing species and habitat, and consider future climate change by creation of habitat networks throughout the forest to allow for migration of species in the future.
- **Native woodland expansion** and increased broadleaf planting will feature prominent in the future forest. The current broadleaf woodland exists as 7% in this area, with a gradual expansion to 33% by a combination of felling and replanting, and natural regeneration management.
- **Landscape of the forest** must be considered in two factors: 1) the lower internal valley landscape, where continuous cover and broadleaf forest will exist to promote a sense of welcoming and habitat network creation alongside existing native woodland and stream sides;
- and 2) the upper landscape of the Brecon Beacons, where the forest complements the wider large-scale open landscape. The lower valley offers greater opportunity for species diversity, continuous cover management of the forest, and ancient woodland expansion due to better soils and stability. The upper forest area will complement the adjacent open hill of unimproved upland grazing by breaking up the harsh edge shapes, which exist as the current forest boundary. This will be done by open space management, and some scattering of natural regeneration throughout these areas, whilst offering the opportunity for habitat restoration of the traditional heathland.

### Economic

- Mynydd Ddu Forest will continue as an important commercial forest, whilst combining the diversity of species, both conifer and broadleaf, to complement existing, new, and emerging markets for the future.
- Current harvesting programmes are committed to the wood processing industry for the next five years through published production forecasts. This allows the industry to invest in the short and medium term with confidence, adding to a further sustainable industry. There is little or no change to planned and committed operations for the next five years.
- The forest design considers access requirements, and any subsequent road building in the forest. No new road requirements are identified for this period of review in this forest. Liaison with local highways departments, and the local community has identified a preferred compact forest operations period within each five-year programme, as opposed to a continual harvesting impact on the area. The timber marketing strategy has identified this preference.

## Mynydd Ddu Forest Design (continued)

### Social

- Mynydd Ddu Forest is managed by FC Wales, who invite the public to enjoy the forest as quiet informal recreation. Access is open on foot, cycle, and horse, and all visitors must be aware of other users of the forest, including ongoing forest operations.
- Car park facilities are present albeit as low key sites.
- Permissions exist within this forest for organised events, and interest in these activities is increasing. The FC considers this increased interest in the use of the forest, by these specialised activities, whilst still offering the quiet informal recreation throughout most of the year.
- The forest design focuses on the lower valley forest area to promote and enhance the visitor experience to Mynydd Ddu Forest by a combination of majestic conifer trees alongside the forest edge, continuous cover management, and the native woodland enhancement along the stream sides throughout the forest.

Forest design review is undertaken every 10 years for each forest area managed by the FC, with a five-year mid-term review. This allows for the existing plan to be considered in response to new policy changes, any major effects on the forest, such as catastrophic damage to the forest by climate, and stakeholder demands.

The forest design process has been evident in FC Wales' forest management structure since the early 1990s, and is an invaluable and robust tool for the forest manager to manage the forest for the future in a sustainable way. Mynydd Ddu Forest has undergone a forest design review during 2007 and early 2008.

### 7.1.14. Uplands Management

The Park's uplands provide a virtually continuous expanse of nationally important habitats, common land and open access stretching from east to west across the Park. They comprise the most obvious features of the Park's designated landscape and provide a barometer for the state of the Park's ecological, agricultural and economic health, provided that we can read the signals they give us.

The uplands are the core of the National Park's character and form the most southerly area of extensive uplands within Great Britain. They support a complex mixture of important habitats over a very extensive area and are framed by the ffridd/coedcae zone (sheep walk/wood pasture), the transition zone between the upland and lowland habitats.

The Park includes three of the four contiguous belts of unenclosed upland common of over 4000 hectares in Wales, whose owners include the Countryside Council for Wales, Dwr

Cymru, National Trust Wales, private estates, The Honourable Artillery Company and the BBNPA.

On the whole the Park's uplands are in poor agricultural and ecological condition. This has been caused by factors ranging from air pollution and acid rain deposition dating back to the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, trampling and heavy grazing pressure, repeated burning in certain locations, deforestation and the naturally slow rate of biological productivity that occurs in upland environments. In general, these can be summarised as an absence of integrated, co-operative management between the parties involved. Reversing this situation will rely upon a profitable farming and land management sector and an understanding on all sides of the needs of agriculture and biodiversity conservation, whose varied activities can contribute positively to managing an outstanding natural and cultural environment.

Air, soil, water, carbon and nitrogen are essential to human life, agriculture and biodiversity; they are the "life support" for the living world. They are increasingly prominent in environmental and rural policy and legislation. Each could be affected negatively by climate change. In the Park, sustainable management of these essential resources is dependent upon proper grazing, woodland, fire, water, recreation and access management.

Huge volumes of carbon are stored in soils and peat. Wales' organic soils contain about 410 million tonnes of carbon. Within the BBNP, a high proportion of upland habitats and organic soils are in poor condition and ecological restoration will be a slow process requiring long term commitments to achieve success. Without appropriate action the uplands will contribute increasing volumes of carbon into the atmosphere, thereby adding to the greenhouse effect and global warming. A loss of just 1% per year of soil carbon throughout Wales would increase Wales' overall carbon emissions by 25%, thereby eliminating the same volume of carbon savings made elsewhere. If the average annual temperature in Wales were to increase by just 1°C during the next 20 years, which is almost certain to occur, this sort of carbon loss is likely too.

There are some obvious measures to protect organic soil carbon such as maintaining a continuous cover of dwarf shrubs and grasses, avoidance of deep ploughing, avoiding overgrazing, preventing soil erosion and compaction, reversing land drainage and preventing uncontrolled moorland burns.

As the Welsh Assembly Government (2007) has noted, today's farmers—the trustees of this landscape—have a very difficult task ahead of them, to manage the land and its resources in our changing world. It will require conviction and innovative thinking to overcome the



uncertainty and risk set before them, particularly on the part of younger people who will have to bear the burden and the costs.

### **NPA-owned land**

The agricultural and upland common land owned or managed by the NPA comprises a very significant asset in terms of its ecological, archaeological and landscape value. Sites include some of the most popular and iconic locations across the Park: parts the Blorenge, the Hatterrall Hill, the Gwernyfed Commons, Henallt Common, Llangasty, Pen y Crug, Mynydd Illtyd, part of the Waterfalls Area and Gunpowder Works, Cefn Llechid, Manor Bach, Craig y Nos CP, Govilon disused railway line, Manor Mawr, Fforest Fawr, Mynydd Du, Mynydd Myddfai--Mynydd Bach Trecastell, Carreg Cennen Woodlands and Garn Goch.

These properties give the Authority its best chance of making a direct contribution to fulfilling Park purposes and to mitigating and adapting to the effects of climate change. By working in partnership with commoners and with the other upland landowners in the Park, action can be taken over large areas, benefiting not only the users of uplands and commons but also the areas adjacent to them.

### **Twenty-year Aims for Uplands Management**

#### **1. Identify priority areas for organic soil and wetland management.**

Understanding the volumes and extent of soil carbon losses is a first step to reversing this trend.

#### **2. Achieve sustainable farming and ecosystem management.** By 2020 we need to have developed good practice for managing soil carbon and water conservation in the uplands (Welsh Assembly Government 2007). This requires good practice to be supported by the landowners as well as the commoners. Through a good understanding and close working relationship with upland farmers and commoners, integrated upland management can accommodate the needs of biodiversity conservation, commons grazing, access, water management and soil carbon management whilst utilising and developing local skills and knowledge.

#### **3. Maximise the opportunities for diversifying the economy through integrated land management skills and services.** Economic opportunities are available from managing ecosystems and biodiversity in the uplands *and* lowlands. Integrated land management can provide additional training, employment, and service opportunities beyond the confines of agriculture and tourism. Employment potential exists within

surveying and monitoring, wildlife interpretation, habitat restoration, farm and estate management, carbon, soil, and water conservation and local grazing schemes. Whether alone or in combination with other “new” enterprises – wood fuels, fishing, local food production, renewable energy infrastructure, these opportunities all add up to a much more diverse economy whilst providing the right environment to attract suitable inward investment.

4. **Demonstrate integrated, sustainable landscape scale conservation on NPA-owned land by securing large scale, long term funded projects across the Park.** If Commons Councils are established under the Commons Act (Wales) 2006, this will affect the BBNPA directly, which owns a significant proportion of Wales’ upland commons. This presents opportunities to blend farming, conservation and non-farming expertise to achieve integrated management. The BBNPA can work with partners to demonstrate best practice management. Once success is demonstrated on NPA-owned lands, projects can be expanded to encompass lands owned and managed by partners. Collaborative landscape-scale schemes should be commonplace by 2020, with farm businesses comfortable with conserving water, soil carbon and landscape, supporting biodiversity and producing high quality, locally marketed food (Welsh Assembly Government 2007).
5. **Ensure that management of the uplands integrates the needs of agricultural production, biodiversity conservation, access, water management and soil condition whilst utilising and developing local skills and knowledge.** Whilst commons grazing is the dominant land use in terms of extent, the uplands have always been valued for more than extra grazing for upland farms, and this has recently been enshrined in national legislation. Most uplands in the Park are Open Access land and remain an important and valued recreational resource. They also support the most extensive range of priority habitats in the Park, though the ecological quality is mainly poor. The role of blanket bog and wet heath in water storage and release will become more critical as climate change affects the quantity and seasonal availability of water. These bogs are also important as carbon sinks and poorly managed areas may release significant quantities of carbon to the atmosphere. The Park’s upland commons have been traditionally managed by commoners exercising their rights, which has mainly been through the rights to graze livestock. This is not only a valued cultural tradition of the Park, it is vital to the viability of many farm enterprises. Frequently commoners retain the knowledge and skills required to manage the land effectively.

6. **Provide the right environment for nationally important populations of upland breeding birds such as merlin, hen harrier, red grouse, ring ouzel, golden plover, curlew, lapwing and snipe.** There is great scope for restoring biodiversity beyond designated sites, which is the best way to support biodiversity conservation within the sites and to provide interconnectivity between them. Healthy and extensive populations of upland breeding birds are a good indicator of success.

### **Policy context**

- Draft Climate Change Action Plan
- Water Framework Directive
- EC Soils Framework Directive [forthcoming]
- EC Habitats Directive
- Local Biodiversity Action Plan
- Countryside Rights of Way(CRoW) Act
- Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act
- Wales Biodiversity Strategy
- Environment Strategy for Wales Action Plan
- Commons Act
- National Parks Ecologists' joint statement: The Conservation of Landscapes in a Changing Climate - Action for Ecosystem Services

### **Cross-reference**

7.1.1 Landscape

7.1.2 Biodiversity

7.1.4 Agriculture

7.1.11 Energy

7.1.13 Woodland Management

7.1.15 Rivers and Wetlands

7.3.1 Sustainable Communities

7.3.7 Military Use of the Park

#### **7.1.15. Rivers and Wetlands**

The geology and geomorphology of the Park's mountains and hills are at first glance the dominant landscape features. However, the Park's rivers and streams have been equally influential in shaping the landscape, carving out gorges, valleys and floodplains which present contrast for the uplands. Whilst water courses continue to shape the face of the land, they

are also actively changing the subterranean world, particularly where limestone predominates along the Park's southern ridges. Here, water and geology interact to form sinkholes, seepages, lakes, caves, networks of passages, caverns, waterfalls and other features which provide habitat for a variety of unique species.

Streams and rivers have provided principal travel and settlement routes for humans throughout history, and the Park's wetlands have preserved archaeological artefacts and evidence of historic settlements and human activities. Wetlands have also preserved evidence of previous landscape change, including how surrounding ecosystems and their biodiversity have changed. Ancient human settlements relied heavily on wetlands. They would have been economically useful for food (fish, hunting), navigation, reeds, sedges, peat, bedding, grazing and trade routes. However, with a growing demand for more land for agriculture and development, wetlands have been progressively drained and in places effectively removed from the landscape. Paradoxically, this evidence usually only comes to light when wetlands are destroyed or heavily damaged.

The Park is the source for many significant river systems in south Wales, including the Usk which flows across the width of the Park from west to east. Rivers such as the Taf, Nedd, Hepste, Twrch, Tawe, Cynon, Rhymney and Ebbw flow south into the Welsh Valleys. The Rivers Usk and Wye are also Special Areas of Conservation (SACs). Both are designated for their fisheries, otter, native freshwater crayfish and plant communities.

Many of the Park's other designated wildlife areas such as National Nature Reserves (NNRs) and Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) are also wetland sites. They include wet woodlands, bogs and heath, fens, wet pasture, swamps and open water. Each of Llangorse Lake, Coed y Cerrig, Cwm Cadlan, Blaen Cynon, Coedydd Nedd a Mellte, Brecon Beacons and Usk Bat Sites are also SACs that include wetlands or whose features rely upon humid environments or high rainfall and a high water table. Other sites such as Traeth Bach (fen) and Traeth Mawr (raised bog and part of the Illtyd Pools SSSI) are amongst the best of their kind in Wales.

The high number of rivers in the Park highlights the fact that water supplies are very reliant on rainfall and surface water flows, with groundwater providing a much smaller proportion of overall demand. This means that water supplies are heavily influenced by weather patterns, which are changing as a consequence of human-induced climate change; water supplies are becoming increasingly vulnerable.

Being flat, relatively fertile and easily drained, floodplains have undergone intensive engineering and draining during the past 200 years. Great sums have been spent in removing water from the landscape in order to make way for towns, villages and agriculture. At the same time increasing national and personal prosperity has led to consumption of increasing quantities of available water supplies, to the point that parts of Britain now face significant water shortages. Demands on water supply and treatment infrastructure continue to increase. Reservoirs in the BBNP supply drinking water to south Wales, western and southern England but under current circumstances, by about 2030 – 2050 even Wales will be a country that is deficient in water.<sup>26</sup>

Drainage and clearance mean that wetlands have been removed from or marginalised within the Park's landscape. The loss of wetlands has increased the flood risk to settlements and agriculture both within and downstream from the Park, eliminating natural flood storage areas, reducing the rate of water infiltration into the soil and thereby increasing the volumes of rapid surface run off that give rise to floods. It has also reduced or reversed natural means of maintaining and improving water quality—sediments and pollutants picked up by the surface runoff are not removed or do not settle out unless there are roots and surface vegetation to catch them. Engineered solutions (more flood defences, more drainage schemes) only deflect the problems somewhere else, as well as add new, permanent maintenance costs to the taxpayer and insurance costs to the businesses and households involved.

A more long term, environmentally sustainable and cost-effective solution to floodplain management is to restore the wetlands in the uplands (blanket bogs, wet heaths, wet woodlands) and the lowland floodplains (wet woodlands, fens, swamps, wet meadows and seasonally flooded pastures). This approach can also improve soil condition (thereby helping to improve or restore the soil's carbon retention properties), provide nutrients, restore wetland biodiversity, improve water quality and retain water within the landscape, further reducing the risk of water shortages and empty reservoirs.

The condition of the Park's rivers and wetlands has been compromised further by acid deposition and nitrification. Most of the UK's upland waters have become acidified over the last 100 years since the Industrial Revolution.<sup>27</sup> As well as the acidifying effects of sulphur and nitrogen which remain in the atmosphere as a result of historic industrial pollution, nitrogen also enriches surface soils, having a fertilisation effect. This combination of

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<sup>26</sup> Environment Agency. 2005. *The Climate is Changing: Time to Get Ready*.

<sup>27</sup> Batterbee, R.W., C.J. Curtis, and H.A. Binney. 2004. *The Future of Britain's Upland Waters*. Proceedings of Meeting, 21 April 2004, Environmental Change Research Centre, University College, London.

acidification and fertilisation has damaged upland, aquatic and wetland ecosystems alike. Upland sites with thin mineral soils have proven to be particularly vulnerable. These effects were exacerbated by the heavy stocking of the hills with large ewe flocks in response to agricultural subsidies during the 1980s and 1990s.

Evidence is emerging that some recovery from acidification is occurring throughout the UK but more complete recovery is required. Current controls and policies can assist natural recovery processes so that the “good ecological status” required by the Water Framework Directive is achieved in due course.

The Water Framework Directive is being implemented in England and Wales under the Water Framework Regulations. The Directive requires an integrated approach to managing water resources. In practice an integrated approach means working with the grain of nature rather than against it. The aims of the Directive are to be achieved through the implementation of River Basin Management Plans, encouraging development away from floodplains and through designs that reduce water consumption and reduce or avoid land drainage requirements. The Brecon Beacons National Park falls mainly within the Severn River Basin District and the West Wales River Basin District. All of the wetland SACs within the BBNP are at risk from a range of pressures including abstraction, pollution, structural changes and invasive alien species (such as Himalayan balsam, giant hogweed and Japanese knotweed). Climate change will create additional pressures that must be addressed and their adverse impacts reversed in order to fulfil the Water Framework Directive.

Achieving the aims of the Water Framework Directive will also require a transition in management principles and attitudes. Management efforts will have to shift focus toward building resilience and adaptability into ecosystem restoration and enhancement projects. It also requires resource managers to be more holistic and forward-thinking in their approach to management and planning. Utilising these principles could:

- Help to restore the condition and function of existing wetlands,
- Identify where there are good economic and environmental reasons for reinstating former wetlands,
- Provide mutually beneficial outcomes from water management, such as water conservation for year-round evenness of supply, water quality improvements, reduced flood volumes and agricultural improvements and
- Where it is economically competitive, achieve mutually beneficial outcomes from woodland expansion within floodplains and on valley sides.

From a natural resource perspective, implementation of the Water Framework Directive approach requires specialist knowledge and understanding of the differences and interactions between the upstream, downstream and floodplain zones. Similarly, practical application of the Directive requires detailed comprehension of the planning process. Through the Local Development Plan, for example, new developments can be located outside areas of flood risk, and high design standards can ensure that maximum use is made of water recycling, porous surfaces for drainage and sustainable waste water treatment. Additionally, new wetlands can be integrated into the 'green infrastructure' of new developments.

### **Twenty-year Aims for Rivers and Wetlands**

- 1. Encourage a co-ordinated approach to national and regional policy so that the Environment Strategy for Wales, Climate Change Adaptation Action Plan, Spatial Development Plan, RDP Wales, Energy Route Map and agri-environment schemes are consistent and complimentary rather than conflicting.**
- 2. Reduce flooding, minimise soil erosion and stabilise carbon sinks through strategic management of upland, stream and wetland resources.**
- 3. Maximise water efficiency within the Park; eliminate wastage of water.**
- 4. Achieve sustainable conservation management of all existing wetlands, rivers and streams within the National Park.**
- 5. Maximise the Park's capacity for water storage, small scale hydroelectric power and irrigation of locally grown food.**
- 6. Under the Water Framework Directive, implement objectives within the River Basin Management Plans to achieve good ecological status for resilient aquatic ecosystems within the Park.**
- 7. Encourage sustainable building design that incorporates sustainable use of water resources.**
- 8. Develop public consensus for the re-introduction of European beaver (*Castor fiber*) to the Park.**
- 9. Halt the continued acidification of upland soils and waters within the Park.**

## **Policy context**

1995 Environment Act

2006 NERC Act

Conservation Regulations 1994 (as amended)

Habitats Directive

Environment Strategy for Wales

Planning Policy Wales

Rural Development Plan Wales

Wales Climate Change Adaptation Action Plan

Water Framework Directive (WFD) Regulations in England & Wales

Water Industry Acts

Water Resources Acts

## **Cross-reference**

7.1.2 Biodiversity

7.1.5 Built Environment

7.1.8 Water Resources

7.1.9 Soil Resources

7.1.12 Agriculture

7.1.13 Woodlands Management

7.1.14 Uplands Management

7.3.1 Sustainable Communities

7.3.4 Planning and Development

## **7.2. Understanding and Enjoying the National Park**

### **7.2.1. Outdoor Access and Recreation**

Outdoor access and recreation are an inherent part of the Park's second purpose—to promote opportunities for the enjoyment and understanding of its special qualities. The Brecon Beacons National Park offers opportunities for a wide range of recreational activities and the promotion of healthy lifestyles. The Park is after all a Park for the Nation. The challenge for all involved is to enable as many people as possible to enjoy them in appropriate and sustainable ways which do not conflict with the Park's first purpose—to conserve and enhance its natural beauty, wildlife, and cultural heritage.



All “open country” (which includes hills and mountains) and registered common land are now “access land” by virtue of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 which provides a right of access to the public on foot. In addition, the Forestry Commission Wales has dedicated its free hold estate as access land. There are 1983 kilometres of public rights of way in the Park consisting of footpaths, bridleways and restricted byways. The NPA has responsibility, delegated from the constituent unitary authorities, for the repair, maintenance, signing and protection of this network. It also has the delegated responsibility for keeping the definitive maps and statement (the legal register of public rights of way) of the unitary authority areas up to date and has the necessary powers to make changes to the map and statement itself.

The impacts of recreational activity vary greatly. Activities often seen as harmful can be benign if properly managed, whilst apparently harmless pursuits can be damaging if practiced on too large a scale or in the wrong setting. Serious recreational conflict is very rare in the Brecon Beacons National Park and has, in the past, been largely resolved through negotiation and compromise. Sustainable management of the National Park requires that both statutory purposes are executed in a balanced manner. In the event of obvious conflict, the needs of conservation take priority.

Table 7.2.1. Examples of recreational activities considered to be appropriate within BBNP.

<b>Category</b>	<b>Activities</b>
Land based activities	Walking, rambling, hill walking
	Rock climbing, mountaineering
	Orienteering
	Caving
	Cycling, mountain biking
	Horse riding, pony trekking, carriage driving
	Bird and wildlife watching
	Visiting historic sites, cultural activities
	Camping and caravanning
	Geocaching
Water based activities	Angling
	Sailing, board sailing
	Canoeing/kayaking
	Rowing
	Canal cruising
	Model boating
Air activities	Gliding
	Un-powered hang gliding, paragliding

Welsh Office circular 13/99 indicates that the NPA should promote the widest range of opportunities for recreation whilst respecting the Park’s special qualities and environmental capacity. Subject to their proper management, the recreational activities listed in Table 7.2.1 are examples of activities regarded by the NPA as being generally appropriate within the National Park. Circular 13/99 agrees that it is not appropriate for all forms of recreation to take place in all parts of the National Park and that some activities can cause unacceptable damage or disturbance. The NPA cannot exclude activities from the Park as a matter of principle, but there are a limited number, listed in Table 7.2.2, that it considers to have unacceptable impact on the Park’s special qualities and to be rarely appropriate within the National Park. Where these activities are legal, the NPA will seek to reduce their harmful effects by negotiation and through good management.

Table 7.2.2. Examples of recreational activities considered inappropriate within BBNP.

Category	Activities
Land based activities	Recreational use of motor vehicles off surfaced roads Motor rallies on roads
Water based activities	Speed boating, water skiing
Air activities	Microlite flying
	Powered hang gliding or paragliding
	Powered model aircraft flying
	Parascending from power boats

The NPA works with many local groups, including the Local Access Forum, that provide advice to the NPA and other organisations on the improvement of access. Disabled people are represented via the Disabled Access Steering Group through which the NPA can ascertain the needs of people with disabilities. The Regional and National Feedback Forums pioneered by the Mosaic Partnership work with the NPA, providing feedback from multicultural and urban based users of the Park. Many routes suitable for ‘access for all’ are available in the Park along with a publication providing details of them.

In June 2007 the NPA adopted its Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP). This statutory document is the means by which the Authority plans strategically for the development, better management, and promotion of existing local rights of way and, changes or additions to the rights of way network. The ROWIP provides a framework to identify, prioritise, and plan for improvements to the local rights of way network and in doing so improve provision for walkers, cyclists, equestrians, and people with mobility impairments. It has a life of 10 years and sets out the Authority’s proposed actions within that time scale.

The ROWIP also states that positive steps should be taken to implement the BBNP Upland Erosion Strategy. The recommendations within the draft Upland Erosion Strategy are cross cutting in that they include access improvements, landscape protection, and organisational changes. The Upland Erosion Strategy is discussed in the Section 7.1.9 Soil Resources of this Management Plan.

## **Twenty-year Aims for Outdoor Access and Recreation**

1. **Strategically manage the rights of way network.** The NPA's ROWIP covers a wide range of actions that encompass a variety of topics intended to improve the condition of the rights of way network in the long term. Actions range from increasing the extent of barrier-free routes to implementing circular routes in the network. As with all strategies, these actions will be implemented in accordance with priorities set forth in the ROWIP and based on the availability of appropriate resources.
2. **Improve the provision of information with regard to public access.** The ROWIP identifies several key areas where the provision of information could be improved, including the provision of information:
  - in a variety of accessible formats,
  - on routes for off-road vehicles on BBNPA website,
  - on position and extent of parking areas and associated facilities which support outdoor access in the countryside,
  - regarding public transport links to BBNPA promoted routes, and
  - better incorporated into Authority publications.

Whilst work has commenced on a number of these areas, the ROWIP's long-term action plan will continue to improve in these areas.

3. **Bring the Definitive Map and Statement up to date.** The Authority recognises that an accurate and up to date Definitive Map of the rights of way in the National Park underpins the management of the rights of way network. The Definitive Maps and Statements that cover the National Park need to be updated. The ROWIP has identified that this is a long-term task and outlines a number of actions required to achieve this task.
4. **Make the best use of external funding and resource opportunities to improve public access.** The Authority recognises that achieving all of the action in the ROWIP, the Upland Erosion Strategy, and other strategies that affect outdoor access and

recreation is a huge challenge. Finding the resources to implement these actions is equally daunting. The NPA and its partners must therefore make the best use of any opportunities to secure additional resources.

**5. Improve access to and on water.** The Welsh Assembly Government has commissioned the Environment Agency Wales to produce a water-related recreation strategy which should be published in Spring 2008. This strategy will make recommendations about the role of NPAs in Wales regarding water-based recreation. The BBNPA will implement recommendations made in the strategy provided that:

- they satisfy the requirements of Habitats Regulations Assessments,
- they are sympathetic to the Park's statutory purposes and duties and
- adequate funds are provided for implementation.

Implementation of this strategy's recommendations (relevant to BBNPA) will be subject to NPA members' approval.

**6. Work constructively with partners to reduce and resolve conflicts and improve access and recreation provision.** There is already a tremendous amount of partnership working between recreational groups, land owning interests, regulatory organisations and other stakeholders. Continuing co-operative and collaborative working can act to reduce and resolve conflicts in future.

### **Policy context**

- Countryside Rights of Way(CRoW) Act
- Climbing Higher
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act
- Environment Strategy for Wales
- Commons Act
- Highways Acts
- PROW delegation agreements

### **Cross-reference**

7.1.8 Water Resources

7.1.9 Soil Resources

7.1.14 Upland Management

7.2.4 Information and Visitor Services

7.3.2 Sustainable Tourism

7.3.7 Military Use of the Park

### **7.2.2. Education**

Education is one of a suite of tools including interpretation, communication, and information that can aid the Park in its efforts to communicate its purposes, efforts, decisions, results, and challenges to interested individuals. Education can be used to make the links among wider issues of management, the environment, and sustainability whilst empowering individuals to critically consider available options.

The National Park Education Service will work with partners across the Park to facilitate increased opportunities for learning and take account of developments in the Welsh and National curricula, and other policies that promote learning outside. The Education Service will do this through the provision of unique, Park-focused learning experiences that encourage people to work towards becoming future stewards of the National Park.

The United Nations has designated 2004 -2014 as the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development. WAG (2006) released its own document “Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship – A Strategy for Action”. These efforts emphasise education for and as sustainable development, encouraging behaviour change and more importantly the development of critical thinking skills. These concepts form the foundation of environmental education efforts in the National Park.

The future of the National Park depends on continued, active involvement from diverse individuals from across our society who understand and support the principles that underpin the Park’s designation as a protected area. Long-term success of the Park also requires that those who care for the Park are not only well-informed but are also critical in their decision-making. Consequently, when decisions need to be made about the protection, use, and purpose of this protected landscape, an engaged public will be skilled enough, capable, willing, and able to make appropriate decisions. In other words, the purpose of education about the environment “involves integrating knowledge with decision-making skills through learning”.<sup>28</sup> The National Park Education Service along with its partners will strive to attain this integration.

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<sup>28</sup> Scott, WAH and Oulton, C. 1999. Environmental education: arguing the case for multiple approaches. *Educational Studies* 25(1): 89-97.

## **Twenty-year Aims for Education**

- 1. Encourage awareness and understanding of the special qualities of BBNP and understanding of the special qualities of other Welsh National Parks and protected landscapes within and around the National Park.** Being aware of the National Park, understanding its special qualities, and learning how these relate to other protected landscapes within Wales are important pre-requisites for decision making. The BBNP Education Service will work towards providing learning experiences that encourage these skills. Additionally, the land within the Park may have other international, national, or local designations such as a Special Area of Conservation; understanding that these exist and the vital role they play in nature conservation is also important. There is also a role for education in promoting issues-based learning on topics related to sustainability (e.g., climate change and energy conservation).
- 2. Raise awareness and promote understanding of National Park purposes, policies, and activities.** The NPA does much work in the arena of care and management of the National Park's resources and its communities. This good practice and good work should be accessible and useable as a learning tool. The Park is an international, national, and regional asset, too, so people across Wales should have the opportunity to interact with the Park as a learning tool. Successfully raising awareness and developing a deeper understanding of the Park amongst future decision makers (both resident and non-resident) will be vital in delivering the vision for the Park.
- 3. Provide a unique, park-specific outdoor experience that is not available through any other source.** The Education Service will strive to provide a unique experience for learners and educators wanting to utilize the Park as a learning venue. Unique experiences are very important in developing a deeper understanding of, connection to, and caring ethic for the Park and the principles it represents.
- 4. Provide learners with the opportunity to have an experience relating to the National Park purposes face-to-face, in the Park, on-line, or through written or audio materials.** People learn in different ways. The UK as a whole has seen an increase in, for example, the numbers of students who are home-schooled. All people interested in learning about the Park or using the Park for learning should be aided to do this. They should have assistance accessing learning experiences in a way that suits their needs and allows the Park's key messages to be communicated.

- 5. Ensure the health and safety of all learners/participants, retaining the Adventurous Activities Licensing Authority (AALA) status as a minimum standard.** The efforts of carers/educators to get learners out of formal environments and into the outdoors are often hampered by the perceived risks associated with outdoor learning and the anticipated paperwork needed by educators/administrators to do so. The NPA holds an Adventurous Activities Licence and demonstrates best practice in the running of all its activities.
- 6. Provide learners with an enjoyable experience of the National Park.** Engendering long term support for the National Park means making it a place where learners and educators have enjoyable experiences and then return to their daily lives to share these positive experiences with others.
- 7. Create learning opportunities for all, including those who have not traditionally had such opportunities in the BBNP.** Traditionally the prime users of national parks have been mainly primary schools from more affluent areas and, with respect to residential study within the Park, certain groups from more affluent parts of England. In the development and focusing of learning opportunities, more socially excluded groups will be targeted (i.e., Communities First areas) and aided in learning in the Park. For residential study the Education Service will encourage more groups from across Wales to participate.
- 8. Demonstrate the principles of sustainability through learning materials and in practice, and by supporting Eco-Schools and attaining and maintaining Eco Centre status for NPA centres.** The Welsh Assembly Government has set targets for schools across Wales to gain Eco-School status as part of the Environment Strategy. The BBNPA and its partners will continue to support schools as they seek this status and also achieve the comparable Eco-Centre award for the Park's three learning centres: The National Park Visitor Centre, Craig y Nos Country Park, and YHA Danywenallt National Park Study Centre.
- 9. Work with internal and external partners to promote and implement the effective and safe use of the Brecon Beacons National Park for learning.** The National Park Education Service can only interact with a limited number of learners. Therefore it is important that the BBNPA partner with organizations such as the Association for the Heads of Outdoor Education Centres (AHOEC) to promote learning within the National Park, and to support their endeavours. Other partners

include the Youth Hostel Association (YHA) with whom we currently partner to provide residential opportunities.

- 10. Communicate to all people having a learning experience within the boundaries of the National Park that they are in the National Park and the significance this designation carries.** Although it may seem obvious to many that they are within a National Park, visitor research suggests that some people within the boundary of the National Park do not know that they are in a park. Ensuring that people having learning experiences realize they are within a protected area is important for garnering continued support for the national park ideal and for national parks in Wales as a whole.
- 11. Support the provision of learning opportunities in and about the Geopark.** A large proportion of the Park is also designated as a Geopark through membership of the European Geoparks Network. It will be important to further develop learning opportunities that focus on the wider geological heritage (cultural, industrial, scientific) of the National Park that is reflected in its Geopark status. Learning opportunities will focus on encouraging use of the Geopark and on basic geological heritage education, progressing to more self-guided learning opportunities (dependant on resources). The British Geological Survey (BGS) partners with the NPA in this venture. In partnership with Cardiff University, they will provide opportunities to learners and educators at the mid-secondary levels and upwards.
- 12. Meet the needs of learning providers (i.e., schools, colleges, outdoor education centres, public organisations, home educators, universities, youth groups, adult learners) through the development and provision of learning services, including those in Welsh.** There is currently a reasonable number of National Park staff involved in education provision who are able to deliver services through the medium of Welsh. Further improvements need to be made to the availability of written (print/web-based) media and for supporting staff to develop the skills to achieve this aim.
- 13. Enable educators to learn how to utilize the National Park as a place for learning (i.e., through training days).** Educators experience many barriers to bringing learners out of the classroom setting and into the outdoors. These barriers can be overcome through the provision of INSET days for teachers and training (familiarization) days for non-school based educators to highlight specific opportunities,



content, or safety aspects. The Education Service will continue to develop and deliver these services as part of an “educate the educator model”.

**14. Incorporate national and international education efforts (e.g., UNESCO decade for ESD, Curriculum Cymreig 2007/8) into the education strategy as they arise.** The current Education Strategy runs 2007-2014 inline with the UN Decade on Education for Sustainable Development. This strategy is an iterative document that aims to be flexible and forward thinking in order to adapt to and include the knowledge and expertise and ideas generated for the benefit of creating great learning experiences in the National Park.

#### **Policy context**

- WAG Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship – A Strategy for Action
- WAG The Sustainable Development Action Plan 2004 – 2007
- Environment Strategy for Wales
- Wales: A Better Country 2003
- Starting to Live Differently 2004
- The UK National Curriculum
- Curriculum Cymreig (2007/8) Draft
- UNESCO: UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development 2005–2014

#### **Cross-reference**

7.2.3 Interpretation

7.2.4 Information and Visitor Services

7.3.1 Sustainable Communities

## **Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship**

In 2007 National Park Education Service was awarded a grant by the Countryside Council for Wales (CCW) to develop Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship materials. The 3 year project (2007-2010) entitled "Learning through experience in the Brecon Beacons National Park" will focus on encouraging learning in the Park.

This project consists of a programme to develop and deliver Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship (ESDGC) activities within and around the Brecon Beacons National Park targeted at Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 (11-15 year olds).

The programme will develop ESDGC courses that are led by National Park Educators and also that can be led by teachers, develop mobile learning materials for Wales Biodiversity Week, and deliver ESDGC teacher training days. Courses developed cover the following subject/topic areas:

1. Development and conservation.
2. National Park Case Studies-
  - a. Biodiversity.
  - b. Managing a protected landscape.
  - c. Sustainable communities.
3. Ecotourism in the National Park.

As a result of this project the following outcomes are anticipated:

- Increased understanding of National Parks and countryside in relation to ESDGC.
- Increased understanding and opportunities for global citizenship.
- Increased understanding of biodiversity and CCW Biodiversity week.
- Increased use of National Parks by teachers to provide learning experience for their students.

The granting organization, CCW, is the Government's statutory advisor on sustaining natural beauty, wildlife and the opportunity for outdoor enjoyment in Wales and its inshore waters. CCW champions the environment and landscapes of Wales and its coastal waters as sources of natural and cultural riches, as a foundation for economic and social activity, and as a place for leisure and learning opportunities. They aim to make the environment a valued part of everyone's life in Wales.

### 7.2.3. Interpretation

Interpretation is the process of communicating to people the significance of a place or object, so that they may enjoy it more, understand their heritage and environment better, and develop a positive attitude to conservation.<sup>29</sup> Interpretation is an incredibly powerful tool to help deliver the National Park's statutory purposes as it can facilitate understanding and appreciation of the National Park which can ultimately influence behaviour resulting in increased support and conservation.

There is often confusion between information (e.g., opening hours, location of facilities, orientation within a site) and interpretation. Although interpretation does include information, it has three core principles which make it distinctive:

Provoke	Essentially what makes interpretation different from information is that it should provoke thought, new ideas, curiosity, interest and even discussion.
Relate	To be effective interpretation must relate to the everyday lives of the audience, or it will be meaningless.
Reveal	It's the revelation that separates interpretation from other communication. Interpretation should reveal a new insight into what makes a place or object special. <sup>30</sup>

Interpretation can take a variety of formats including guided walks, graphic panels, art, re-creations, events, audio, publications, websites, and exhibits.

The BBNP Interpretation Strategy (2007) identifies the following issues:

- Limited coordination between the statutory bodies, charities, organisations, communities, clubs and societies, etc. delivering interpretation within the National Park resulting in duplication, wasted resources, and uncoordinated visitor information.
- Little understanding of the value of the interpretative planning process amongst those delivering interpretation.
- A traditional approach to interpretation with a heavy reliance on panels and leaflets which are the least effective media.
- A focus on end product rather than process which can also be a great way to engage traditionally excluded audiences.
- Limited use of thematic story lines which will result in non-memorable interpretative messages that are less likely to result in our anticipated behavioural outcomes.

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<sup>29</sup> Association of Heritage Interpretation.

<sup>30</sup> Tilden, F. 1977 *Interpreting our Heritage*. Third edition. The University of North Carolina Press.

- Limited research and evaluation of the visitor experience and the effectiveness of the Interpretative media.
- Limited maintenance budgets resulting in out of date and/or broken interpretation.
- Limited use of sustainable materials, local artists, and crafts people to develop green, innovative and locally distinctive interpretation.

The NPA's Interpretation Strategy (2007) was developed to help address these issues. The following twenty-year aims support these strategic efforts across the Park:

### **Twenty-year Aims for Interpretation**

1. **Encourage partnership working between those involved in interpreting the National Park to ensure greater co-ordination and better use of limited resources.** Interpretation is delivered by a wide variety of statutory bodies, charities, organisations, communities, clubs and societies within the Brecon Beacons National Park. By working together we can ensure that we create a high quality seamless visitor experience that raises awareness of the areas special qualities.
2. **Raise the profile of interpretation and the promotion of good practice to improve its quality and effectiveness within the National Park.** The Interpretation Strategy identifies a tendency for interpretation within the National Park to take a traditional approach with an emphasis on panels and leaflets. The proactive promotion of good practice, especially the role of interpretative planning, to National Park Authority staff, partner organisations, and communities together will be an important step in achieving more creative, innovative, and effective interpretation.
3. **Encourage a thematic approach to interpretation based on the key themes outlined in the Authority's Interpretative Strategy.** Themes are the one thing we want visitors to remember; they are the take home message, the moral of the story. Themes can turn the communication of unconnected facts into a memorable story, they ensure that the interpreter has thought about what they want the audience to understand and they can help organize ideas and edit content. Themes are beliefs and beliefs are the building blocks of attitude and behaviour and if we want to influence these in the National Park our themes need to be strong and compelling.<sup>31</sup>
4. **Increase awareness and understanding of the National Park and the qualities that merit its protected landscape designation to encourage sustainable**

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<sup>31</sup> Ham, S. 2004. Making meaning: some thoughts on goals, objectives and themes IN *Dehongli Cymru/Interpret Wales*, Spring 2004, Issue 1.

**behaviour.** Interpretation is a communication process that promotes awareness and understanding, which can ultimately influence behaviour. Firstly we need to facilitate those living in and visiting the National Park to appreciate why the area is worthy of conservation. This should encourage them to behave in a ‘sustainable’ manner that will conserve and enhance the National Park for future generations.

5. **Provide interpretative services that are enjoyable and will greatly enhance the quality of a visit to the National Park.** As with any communication, interpretation is most effective if it is enjoyable. When the majority of people visit the National Park they are not there for an interpretative experience but because they perceive it to be an enjoyable day out or a chance to take part in recreational activities.<sup>32</sup> Furthermore when we consider that people remember only about 10% of what they hear, 30% of what they read, 50% of what they see and 90% of what they do.<sup>33</sup> To be successful in communicating to visitors we need to embed our messages in fun, enjoyable activities, in which the learning element is subtle.
6. **Enable and support local communities in defining and presenting their cultural heritage stories.** In recent years there has been an increase in community-led interpretation projects within the National Park. The process of developing an interpretation project (i.e. the historical research, the collection of stories, photos, partnership working, etc.) is often as important a process for helping communities develop a wider feeling of stewardship for their environment—a sense of place, as the final product.
7. **Provide a carefully structured hierarchy of interpretive provision that gives visitors the confidence to explore the National Park safely.** Before visitors are receptive to interpretative messages, it is essential that they have their basic needs met (e.g., know the location of the nearest shop or toilet, how far the walk will take them, how difficult the terrain is). Therefore the provision of orientation and visitor information at appropriate locations is a key component of the visitor experience. If done well this can not only enhance the visit but can encourage visitors to explore a wider range of sites, thus encouraging longer stays and higher spending to benefit the local economy.
8. **Promote the use of interpretation that uses sustainable materials, local skills, and which is sympathetic to the landscape.** The use of local crafts and skills

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<sup>32</sup> Veverka, J. A. 1998. *Interpretative Master Planning*. Acorn Naturalists, Tustin, California.

<sup>33</sup> Lewis, William J. 1998. *Interpreting for Park Visitors*. Eastern national Park & Monument Association. PA.

and/or locally sourced materials can sometimes communicate more about the special qualities of an area than other, more traditional forms of interpretation, whilst supporting local businesses and promoting a sense of place.

9. **Develop socially inclusive interpretation that is accessible to the intended audiences.** Not all visitors to the National Park are the same. Understanding their varied needs, interests, and aspirations is fundamental to effective interpretation. Projects that aim to involve “excluded” groups, such as youth groups in the creation of a sculpture can foster a feeling of stewardship and hence reduce vandalism. Maximising accessibility is about much more than just ensuring that minimum text sizes are used; accessibility needs to be considered at the project inception stage rather than as an afterthought.

### **Policy context**

- Wales: A Better Country 2003
- Environment Strategy for Wales

### **Cross-reference**

- 7.2.1 Outdoor Access and Recreation
- 7.2.2 Education
- 7.2.4 Information and Visitor Services
- 7.3.1 Sustainable Communities

## **Bringing the Life and Works of Henry Vaughan to Life**

An exciting historic literary project in the Talybont valley

The Henry Vaughan walk was a successful partnership project involving the Community, the NPA as well as local experts, craftsmen, and artists. The idea for the walk was put forward by residents of Talybont-on-Usk under the auspices of the Community Council. It brought together the desire to commemorate the Vaughan brothers who lived in the Usk valley in the 17<sup>th</sup> century and a need to improve access on a popular local route.

The National Park Interpretation Officer worked closely with the community to bring the fascinating story of the Vaughan Brothers to life so that it was relevant and interesting to modern visitors. This was done with a combination of media including interpretation panels, interactive poetry posts and a leaflet. The Wardens also played a pivotal role by liaising with contractors and landowners to arrange for the installation of new benches, styles, and way markings to improve access. In addition the Community team assisting with the grant received funding from the Sustainable Village Enhancement Scheme, Sustainable Development Fund, and Article 33 (Powys Council and WAG DEIN).

As a result of this project the following outcomes are realised:

- Successful partnership with the National Park Authority supporting a local community to define and present their cultural heritage which will increase peoples appreciation of the area leading to a wider feeling of stewardship.
- A pro-active approach to interpretation planning enabled a creative and innovative approach to be taken which also promotes good practice.
- An enjoyable walking route in which the learning element is subtle but a clear understandable message is communicated helping to creating a sense of place.
- The majority of the work was carried out by local experts, craftsmen, and artists thus supporting the local economy and reducing transportation costs and emissions.
- A well promoted and waymarked route to help give people confidence to explore the National Park safely. As well as physical access to the route, intellectual access to the local heritage was also maximised.

The experience gained from this project has led to the development of a Walking and Interpretation Toolkit that can be downloaded from the National Park Authority website.

#### **7.2.4. Information and Visitor Services**

The NPA's provision of information and visitor services contributes to the fulfilment of both the Park's statutory purposes and its duty. These services contribute to people's understanding and enjoyment of the Park's landscape, wildlife, and cultural heritage. They also assist in explaining the Park's purposes whilst contributing to the understanding of the policies and work carried out by the NPA and its partners. Such an understanding is important in encouraging people to care for and conserve the Park. The NPA's provision for information and visitor services can also be used as a tool for visitor management, helping to protect areas that are over-used or sensitive to visitor pressure.

The NPA's information and visitor services are thus contributing to the sustainable management of the Park. Likewise, they contribute to sustainability objectives by purchasing catering and other supplies and services locally, providing a market place for locally produced craft items, hosting produce fairs and other events, and making the centres available as venues for community groups.

The NPA runs the National Park Visitor Centre (Mountain Centre) and Craig-y-nos Country Park, visitor attractions in themselves with interpretive displays, talks and events, and opportunities for informal recreation. Their staff, and those of the NPA's networked information centres in Abergavenny, Llandovery and Pontneddfechan, provide comprehensive information about the National Park and Fforest Fawr Geopark. Advice is available to visitors on where to go, what to see, and how best to enjoy their visit without harming themselves or the landscape. The information centres are Wales Tourist Board approved.

The information centres are operated jointly by the NPA and the UA, the latter running the tourist Information side with its bed-booking service. Independent, local information centres based in settlements within the National Park are run by local partnerships to provide a service to local businesses and information to visitors about the locality as well as the wider National Park. The NPA has also set up ten village information agencies in small shops across the Park, to provide a more comprehensive network of information points for visitors and increase the benefits of tourism locally. It also has a purpose-built mobile trailer to provide interpretation at local shows and events.

The NPA produces a range of publications to promote understanding of various aspects of the Park, or to help people enjoy their visit. These are mainly marketed through the visitor



and information centres, which also sell other relevant literature. They are promoted to retail outlets in and around the Park and to tourist accommodation. The development of the internet and information technology has increased our ability to communicate information about the National Park to a global audience. Development of new information, interpretation, and education materials on the website to widen access will continue and evolve to meet the needs of all our audiences.

The NPA has many other ways of communicating with the local and visiting public to explain its activities, put across the conservation message, and support local communities. These include its guided walks programme, a range of organised events, attendance at local shows, and the giving of talks to local groups on request. The NPA's Warden Service delivers many of these functions throughout the Park, whilst the NPA's Interpretation and Education Services develop materials and offer ongoing support to Park communication efforts. Press releases, editorials, and advertisements in the local and national press and other media such as local radio also have an important role to play in raising the profile of the National Park and stimulating interest, discussion, and visits to the Park. The NPA undertakes this work on its own and in partnership with others. The NPA's Welsh Language Scheme includes producing as much of this material as possible bilingually.

### **Twenty-year Aims for Information and Visitor Services**

1. **Provide a first class welcome to anyone interacting with and enjoying the National Park and its special qualities.** High quality information and visitor services will be delivered through the National Park Visitor Centre, Craig-y-nos Country Park, through the National Parks Information Centres, and the Village Information Network to ensure all visitors have a sound orientation to the Park and understanding of its special qualities.

The NPA will work with all information providers in the Park to ensure everyone who interacts with this landscape receives a first class welcome. The NPA will also work to ensure that everyone receives a good orientation to all opportunities on offer and how they can access these sustainably. The NPA will develop facilities as well as offer training opportunities to ensure this occurs.

2. **Provide a range of information on the National Park, its recreational opportunities, and its special qualities to provide a holistic understanding to a range of audiences.** From electronic media through to printed publications and interpretative panels, the NPA will provide a range of targeted information to support

those who want to understand and enjoy the National Park. All information will contain important messages about not only what makes this area special, but also about the fragile nature of the landscape and how everyone can play a role in its future conservation and enhancement. Information will promote sustainable and responsible behaviour.

3. **Develop the National Park Visitor Centre into a key interpretative centre for all to learn how they can enjoy and understand the National Park.** The National Park Visitor Centre will be developed to become the main interpretative centre for the National Park showcasing the special qualities of the uplands and the work of those involved in managing the Park, with the long term aim of encouraging support for this work.
4. **Ensure that the Park is accessible to all and eliminate any elements which deliberately or inadvertently exclude people.** The Park is a national and international resource and therefore has a huge audience range. Providing opportunities for everyone to enjoy the Park and learn from its rich resources will be a priority. This work shouldn't be necessarily seen as tackling social exclusion but ensuring that all services are inclusive. This includes the information we produce either electronically or through print, our interpretative media as well as access to our centres, our land, and our sites.
5. **Information, interpretation, and education will be at the heart of all projects undertaken by the National Park Authority to ensure that long term support is gained for all partners' efforts in helping conserve and enhance the National Park.** The work of those involved in helping to protect, conserve, and enhance the National Park needs to be promoted to gain long term support for it. Effective communication will also give everyone a greater understanding of what is required to keep this area special and why it is important. Communication of our work should be built into all areas and projects to ensure this occurs. This is especially important in relation to the local population and those who work in the Park as they have the largest interaction with the landscape and will be involved with the future funding for our organisations and their work. It is vital that we gain their understanding, commitment, and support.
6. **Increase awareness of sustainability issues to influence behaviour.** For visitors to enjoy the Park in a sustainable way, they need information such as timetables and maps so that they can use public transport, guides to interesting places and activities,

details of places selling local produce and so on. It is possible to have some influence over what people see and do, and where they go in the interests of visitor management and enjoyment. In order for this to be successful, tourism organisations must work together to promote the most sustainable use of Park's resources.

**7. Connect the special qualities of the National Park, including landscape features and cultural heritage, to the economy.** This will be achieved through:

- the publication of walking routes starting and/or finishing in local villages and towns,
- continuing to host food festivals in Brecon and Hay and the summer fayre at the National Park Visitor Centre, Libanus, and
- increasing the profile of the area as a green destination in partnership with tourism and marketing organisations (e.g., Brecon Beacons Tourism Association, Tourism Partnership Mid Wales, local producers, Green Dragon, and through the National Park's own initiatives such as the Beacons Bus).

**Cross-reference**

7.2.1 Outdoor Access and Recreation

7.2.2 Education

7.2.3 Interpretation

7.3.1 Sustainable Communities

## **7.3. Economic and Social Well-being of Local Communities**

### **7.3.1. Sustainable Communities**

The Brecon Beacons National Park has a population of about 33,000, concentrated in the Usk valley between Brecon and Gilwern, and in the Clydach Gorge between Gilwern and Brynmawr. The main settlements are Brecon (pop. 7,900), Gilwern, Hay-on-Wye, Crickhowell, Talgarth and Sennybridge. There are many smaller villages, hamlets, and scattered farms.

Although agriculture has long been the basis of the Park's economy, only a tenth of the working population are now directly employed in it. Public, financial and other services are the main employers of Park residents, followed by distribution and catering. As with all rural areas, the centralisation of shopping and other services and reduction in public transport have radically affected the way of life. These factors have exacerbated the volume of commuting from the Park to urban centres and into the Park from areas of lower cost housing.

The vision for the National Park includes healthy and socially inclusive communities and a sustainable, thriving economic, social, and cultural life. The NPA and its partners in pursuing its two statutory purposes must "seek to foster the economic and social well-being of local communities." Both affordable housing and employment issues have been raised as central issues related to local community needs. The NPA does not have a primary responsibility for economic development and does not function as a housing authority, but it is an important catalyst in its role as Local Planning Authority, allocating land for development and community needs. Major components of the local economy, especially agriculture and tourism, are directly related to the Park's statutory purposes, while the position of the National Park close to industrial South Wales is important in attracting industry. Thus the NPA's work makes a direct contribution to economic life.

The NPA's approach to this duty is rooted in its commitment to sustainability. Sustainability as it applies to community development implies that people devise their own strategies to make their community, environment and economy healthy and vibrant for the long term. The government's priorities for sustainable communities include climate change, economy, health, education and social exclusion.

The long-term sustainability of NPA policies is dependent on good working relationships with other agencies and with local people. With this end in mind, the three Welsh NPAs will:

- involve local people in the development of appropriate policies and recognise the strength and value of local aspirations and skills as well as the importance of national designations and approaches;
- seek to ensure that all sectors of the local population have an opportunity to participate in this process;
- assist local communities to meet the obligations of and realise the opportunities provided by sustainable development despite any handicaps resulting from remoteness or a narrow economic base.

Community councils represent local democracy at the grassroots and the NPA has a statutory responsibility to consult with them over development control issues. In addition, a close working relationship with the 50 councils in the Park is of mutual benefit in achieving the NPMP's objectives and improving the quality of life locally.

### **Twenty-year Aims for Sustainable Communities**

1. **Prepare the National Park communities for climate change and fossil fuel depletion by building resilience to ensure minimised economic and social impact.** Climate change predictions are uncertain at a local scale but forecast a range of effects at a broad scale which will alter the future way of life for the Park's communities, including: extreme weather events, hot, dry summers, wetter winters, agricultural changes, and ultimately demographic changes as UK and world populations migrate. Predictions of the effects of peak oil vary, though the potential impacts may be just as significant. A decline in oil production given continued growth in consumption will most likely reduce the affordability and availability of fuel for personal and commercial transport, for instance, which may in turn significantly increase living costs (e.g., for food production and transport).
2. **Reduce direct and indirect production of greenhouse gases by the National Park's communities.** Everyone needs to reduce the production of greenhouse gases if we are to limit the potential impacts associated with human-induced climate change. The communities within the Park are expected to play their part in achieving national targets designed to mitigate climate change. Where possible, the Park's communities should also demonstrate innovative means for achieving these targets. These efforts will

require integrated actions across all sectors of the Park to reduce the its communities' contributions to greenhouse gas emissions.

**3. Support and enhance local production and local economic supply chains.**

There are widely recognised benefits in strengthening local supply chains. Economically, the multiplier effect of local purchasing means more money is retained in the community. Socially, local links are strengthened and social enterprises help deliver multiple benefits. Environmentally, greenhouse gas emissions, particularly carbon dioxide production, associated with transporting goods, services, and customers are reduced. To achieve this aim, the NPA and its partners will need to: strengthen local production of goods (e.g., food and added valued food products), strengthen local production of services (e.g., recycling, energy production), strengthen social enterprise, and support and enable local purchasing. The NPA, with other bodies, is able to use its contacts and expertise to help communities retain, provide and improve facilities and amenities. This in turn can help communities to remain viable, in line with the vision for the Park.

**4. Address and breakdown actual and perceptual barriers experienced by socially excluded groups.**

An Audit of Social Inclusion in the three Welsh Parks highlighted a range of actual and perceptual barriers to accessing the Park amongst excluded groups from within and beyond the Park boundary. It is implicit in the Park's second purpose that enjoyment and understanding of the National Park is for all. It is the responsibility of the NPA and its partners then to ensure that, where practicable, barriers are addressed.

**5. Ensure that all sectors of the Park's communities are able to contribute to development of, appreciate the benefits of, and play a part in the delivery of NPMP objectives.**

Development and delivery of the National Park Management Plan involves careful consideration of community aspirations. Integration of the NPMP with Community Strategies facilitates this process, reflecting community aspirations for economic, social and environmental wellbeing. Successful integration requires the NPA to actively pursue partnership opportunities. By the same token, integration requires commitment on behalf of communities as well as voluntary, private and public sectors to delivering the NPMP objectives. Consequently, the NPA have and will continue to involve key stakeholders from all sectors across all the unitary authority areas in the Park.

## **Policy context**

- Welsh Commitment to Address Climate Change
- Rural Development Plan for Wales 2007-13
- Sustainable Development Action Plan for Wales
- UK Government Sustainable Development Strategy
- Sustainable Farming and Environment: Action Towards 2020
- Making the Connections: Delivering Better Services for Wales
- Local Vision – Preparing Community Strategies (forthcoming)
- A Winning Wales- the National Economic Development Strategy
- Wales a Better Country
- UK Energy White Paper: Our Energy Future
- Energy Wales Route Map

## **Cross-reference**

7.1.5. Built Environment

7.1.11 Energy

7.3.4 Planning and Development

## **Sustainable Development Fund (SDF)**

### **Aim**

Through partnership, to develop and test ways of achieving a more sustainable way of living in a countryside of great natural beauty and diversity in which the local characteristics of culture, wildlife, landscape, land use and community are conserved and enhanced.

### **Objectives**

- To explore ways of meeting concurrently the 4 principles of sustainability\* and of breaking down barriers that can act as obstacles to sustainability
- To develop models for the sustainable management of the countryside that could be applied more widely in Wales
- To generate greater awareness and understanding of sustainability.

#### **Four principles:**

- Social progress which recognises the needs of everyone;
- Effective protection of the environment
- Prudent use of natural resources
- Maintenance of high & stable economic growth & employment.

### **Eligibility**

Projects will have to:

- Be sustainable – link social, environmental, cultural and economic issues through public participation;
- Demonstrate genuine support or involvement of communities within the Park;
- Support one or more of the objectives of the scheme;
- Be complementary to key local and national strategies;
- Bring organisations together in partnership to tackle problems;
- Be compliant with the principle of treating the English and Welsh languages on a basis of equality in dealings with the public (e.g., publicity literature and signage) as set out in the Welsh Assembly Government's Welsh Language Scheme.



### **Sustainable Development Fund (continued)**

Priority will be given to projects that:

- Overcome institutional arrangements, relationships and cultures that may be creating barriers to sustainability;
- Demonstrate innovation or best practice;
- Involve young people;
- Support community based sustainable transport initiatives designed to reduce their carbon footprint;
- Support sustainable visitor transport initiatives, including access to visitor “hot spots”;
- Support sustainable food marketing and the promotion and consumption of local produce;
- Promote the sustainable use of water resources, through the support of projects designed to promote access to water;
- For which no other resources exist;
- Which lever in contributions from other sources (in cash or kind);
- Promote wider understanding of sustainability;
- Add value or new dimensions to existing sustainability projects;
- Support local disadvantage and disabled groups;
- Derive support from and provide support to local businesses;
- Encourage social inclusion.

#### **Projects Outside Park/AONB Boundaries**

While projects are designed to support communities within Park and AONB boundaries, there is flexibility to support projects in communities immediately adjacent to Park and AONB boundaries to encourage closer links between those communities and Park and AONBs.

#### **Transferability**

Where appropriate, SDF Officers should discuss with applicants the possibility of supporting projects which can be replicated elsewhere.

#### **Grants**

The scheme will provide project grants, management grants (to support staff costs) and development grants (to provide a catalyst for new action or partnerships). Grant rates will normally be set at 50%, plus an appropriate element for overheads (10%), but up to 100% will be available in exceptional circumstances.

### **7.3.2. Sustainable Tourism**

Tourism is the industry that encourages people to enjoy the National Park and which provides facilities and services for them. It is an essential component of the economy of this

National Park which hosts over 3.6 million visitors each year. Tourists, in turn, have a significant effect on sustainability in the Park. They may create pressures that effect the environment and the lives of Park residents, through their use of private cars for transport to and within the Park for instance. Simultaneously, the industry is itself dependent on the Park's healthy environment, special qualities, and attractions. A sustainable approach to tourism is, therefore, beneficial to visitors, local communities, and the Park as a whole.

Tourism supports a wide range of businesses including the accommodation sector and its suppliers, canal boat hire, and attractions such as the Show Caves, historic buildings and activity centres. It can make a very positive contribution to sustainable development. Tourism builds strong links with agriculture which can be developed to mutual benefit, and it supports the many rural shops and businesses which contribute to the vitality of local communities dependent upon visitor income.

In 2006 the Brecon Beacons Sustainable Tourism Partnership approved a Sustainable Tourism Strategy for the BBNP as a destination. The Partnership involves a wide variety of stakeholders, from private businesses to local authorities and tourism bodies.

The strategy was developed over 18 months of intensive consultation and discussions. It is for all partners to implement and is based on the sustainable management of the destination as a whole – not just the development of tourism as such but the management of that tourism and the impacts it has so as to protect the environment on which it is based (see Figure 7.3.1).

The vision for the Tourism Strategy is:

*“By 2020 the area will be an exemplar of sustainable tourism development in protected areas, building on: a strong sense of place, the indigenous natural and cultural heritage of the Brecon Beacons, and a reputation for quality built upon communities, public sector and business interests working closely together to exceed the expectations of visitors.”*

The Strategy was submitted to the Europarc Federation in February 2007 as part of an application for the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas which was subsequently awarded to the BBNP in Cesky Krumlov (Czech Republic) in September 2007.

### **European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas**

The Brecon Beacons National Park was awarded the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas in 2007, providing innumerable benefits to the Park and its communities. By subscribing to the Charter, the Park “chooses to adopt tourism development that is compatible with the principles of sustainable development. It agrees to favour a coherent approach to projects within its own area and to take a long term view of the management of the area” (Europarc Federation 2007). In so doing, the Park will prioritise co-operation and the sharing of responsibilities in order to improve the effectiveness of its mission to protect the environment.

The Charter requires that a strategy be prepared for the Park that will:

- Protect and enhance the natural and cultural heritage,
- Improve the quality of the tourism experience,
- Raise public awareness of the Park’s special qualities,
- Develop tourism specific to the area,
- Support training programmes for staff and other target groups,
- Protect and support the quality of life for local residents,
- Increase benefits from tourism to the local economy, and
- Monitor and control visitor numbers.

These same principles are at the core of the guiding principles underpinning this Management Plan (Chapter 6) and reinforce the statutory purposes and duty that are the foundation of the Park’s designation. Pursuit of the Charter’s principles in tandem with those of the Management Plan can only serve to benefit the National Park, its visitors and the people who reside here.

The Visit Wales, regional tourism councils and UAs also have strategies for tourism. The WTB is responsible for developing tourism in Wales, and its strategy document, *Tourism 2000*, endorses the partnership approach adopted by the NPA. The NPA sees its role as maintaining co-ordination and dialogue between the players within the Park. Its tourism strategy aims to increase sustainability by ensuring social, economic and environmental benefits.

### **Twenty-year Aims for Sustainable Tourism**

1. **Invest in well researched, planned and coordinated product development based on the natural strengths and culture of the area.** Tourism is considered to be a key priority for sustainable development in rural areas such as the Brecon Beacons National Park. It is an industry particularly sensitive to sustainable objectives both because it is the environment that is its key resource and because the key markets for its products are themselves sensitive to these messages. Under the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism model, local communities are involved in guiding the development of tourism in their area and an aim of the Strategy is to encourage them to

undertake tourism in their own right. The model ensures that tourism must be implemented through a partnership approach based upon piloting new ideas, defining clear roles and responsibilities, and committing to sustainable tourism principles.

2. **Continue to improve the understanding of tourism trends, market behaviour and the business of tourism in and around the National Park.** Knowledge of the state and trends associated with a resource is the cornerstone to successful management. Tourism is no exception to this principle. The Tourism Strategy relies mainly on private operators to provide facilities, goods, and services. The demand for these in relation to the supply needs to be identified. While there may be no shortage of accommodation for visitors, some sectors such as cyclists may be less well catered for. Unfortunately, there are few data sets available for tourism activities that are Park-specific; most data cover individual local authorities or broad regions and do not accurately represent trends in the National Park. A coordinated approach to research will greatly improve our understanding of local tourism. Profitable investigations include: visitor satisfaction surveys, economic baseline data, visitor carrying capacity, and monitoring of agreed sustainable tourism indicators.
3. **Refine the tourism organisational structure to help create a stronger partnership approach involving all key stakeholders.** The Brecon Beacons as a National Park and tourism destination sits on the intersection of a wide variety of administrative boundaries. Not only are there nine local authorities with land inside the Park boundary, but authorities outside the boundary are impacted upon by the Park's tourism activity. In addition, three WAG regions cross the Park. Even at a national level, the needs of England, particularly in the shape of Herefordshire which borders the Park, have to be taken into account. Consequently, there is a need to form a functional organisational structure through which tourism bodies can continue to improve communications and consultations, and the delivery of strategies/ programmes/ actions.
4. **Encourage collaborative marketing activities based upon the Brecon Beacons brand.** The BBNP Tourism Strategy aims to harmonise the promotional activities of partners and enhance the economic benefits of tourism. Tourism supports agriculture and the economy by providing both additional income and a market for local produce and services, for example. A national park has a strong "brand" image which can be used in the promotion of sustainable tourism. Use of this brand image can also capitalise on opportunities created by being a member of the family of national parks, as well as those created by being part of tourism in Wales.

5. **Enhance the National Park experience for all people, residents and visitors alike.** A sustainable approach to a better National Park experience requires integration with other activities, strategies, policies and activities throughout the Park. Developing an integrated approach to the delivery of a high quality experience within the National Park is based upon a collaborative and coordinated approach to encourage people to stay longer, spend more money and to have a greater appreciation of the special qualities of the National Park. People who come to appreciate the National Park are more likely to care for and protect it and its resources.
6. **Manage the impacts of tourism.** Sustainable tourism helps visitors appreciate the need for conservation; with good management, more visitors can be welcomed to the Park with fewer adverse effects. However, inappropriate development, lack of management, or excessive visitor numbers can degrade the environment and long-term economic and community benefits. In the context of managing a protected area, Section 62 of the Environment Act states that public agencies such as VisitWales are constrained to ensure that their actions do not adversely affect the integrity of the National Park's special qualities. The Sustainable Tourism Strategy was therefore developed in an effort to integrate various strategic objectives related to tourism and visitor management. The Strategy's course of action commands wide support across the broad strategic arena. It is this exercise in integration that formed the basis for the award of the European Charter. The Charter requires that impacts associated with tourism activities are monitored and subsequent management actions are taken to reduce adverse impacts on Park resources.
7. **Promote the National Park as an exemplar of sustainable living.** In the next twenty years, the National Park will be home to self-sufficient communities that, amongst other achievements, produce food locally, generate a high proportion of their energy needs from renewable sources, exhibit highly efficient building designs, have developed sustainable and effective means of meeting transport needs and have enhanced biodiversity. The tourism industry will capitalise on these models for sustainable living.

### **Policy context**

- WAG Tourism Strategy—Achieving Our Potential
- Regional Tourism Strategies
- Community Strategies

## **Cross-references**

7.2.1 Outdoor Access and Recreation

7.2.2 Education

7.2.3 Interpretation

7.2.4 Information and Visitor Services

7.3.1 Sustainable Communities

7.3.3 Fforest Fawr Geopark

7.3.5 Transport

### **7.3.3. Fforest Fawr Geopark**

Fforest Fawr Geopark was established in 2005 in the western part of the National Park. The Geopark's overarching purpose is to work at a landscape scale to safeguard and enhance geodiversity, biodiversity and related cultural heritage through local partnerships, enabling communities and businesses to understand its importance and take economic advantage of its special qualities in pursuit of sustainable development. The key to the Geopark's success is the engagement of local communities and local businesses. It is Wales' first such designated area and the only one within a national park in the UK to date. It is a member of the European Geopark Network (EGN) and Global Geopark Network (GGN).

Fforest Fawr Geopark is run by a Partnership Board involving key partners at a senior level working with a Management Group that coordinates and develops partner activity on the ground. The success of the Geopark is ensured through efficient and effective partnership working and by interfacing with other parts of this Management Plan.

Currently (2008) a new Geopark Action Plan is under development. Whilst the vision and objectives have not yet been finalised, they are at an advanced stage of preparation and will have been determined by the time the NPMP is approved. Indeed the consultation on the NPMP will form part of the feedback required to inform the decision making on the Geopark Action Plan.

### **Twenty-year Aims for Fforest Fawr Geopark**

**I. Retain, develop and promote active membership of the European Geopark Network and Global Geopark Network.** EGN is the key coordination mechanism for Geoparks at a European level and forms the entry into GGN. Both are valuable benchmarking groups which validate the work done locally. Fforest Fawr Geopark

should be fully engaged at the transnational level and contribute towards the work of those bodies.

- 2. Develop landscape-scale conservation of geodiversity, bio-diversity and related cultural heritage.** Conservation is a key priority for sustainable development. With the Geopark designation, there is the opportunity of applying landscape scale programmes in concert with work being undertaken as part of other sections of this plan. Whilst geodiversity conservation is clearly important, it is not the exclusive priority; bio-diversity and cultural conservation are equally parts of this programme.
- 3. Improve the visitor experience, particularly by developing information and interpretation of its special qualities.** A key to enabling sustainable development is providing opportunities for people to enjoy and benefit from the designation. In this way their experience of the area is deepened by understanding it in more detail. They are also more likely to return if they have had an enjoyable time. Public, private and voluntary sector organisations all have significant roles to play in improving the visitor experience. The private sector contributes, for instance, by offering opportunities to experience the landscape through outdoor activities, commercially run attractions or other activities. An emphasis on developing and utilising the area's Sense of Place is vital to this process.
- 4. Support sustainable tourism and other forms of sustainable economic development.** Tourism is the most obvious way in which a designation like Geopark can benefit the area. The work of the partnership should be focused on improving the public and private tourism infrastructure in concert with tourism development elsewhere in the National Park. Enhancing the sustainability of the tourism industry and the visitor experience is of critical importance again in all sectors. In addition the Geopark will explore other ways in which sustainable economic development can be supported through its work.
- 5. Act as a focus for environmental/earth education and research.** Developing understanding, particularly amongst local people, of the Geopark and its special qualities by working with youth groups, schools, colleges and universities is important. Equally engaging young visitors is an important aspect of the Geopark's work. Lastly supporting and enabling scientific, particularly geological, research increases understanding of the processes that underpin the special qualities and enables both scientific and educational objectives to be met.

- 6. Engage local communities in new ways of working towards sustainable development.** Ultimately the Geopark designation and its sustainable development aims are focused on improving the long term viability of local communities. It is therefore important to involve local communities, their residents and businesses in the development of Geopark initiatives in their locality and to encourage them to undertake their own projects as part of the Geopark's development. New ways of working will be explored and developed with communications being seen as the key priority.
- 7. Seek to include all sectors of society in developing its work.** The Geopark must not be seen as being the exclusive preserve of any sector of society whether in host local communities or visitors. Active steps will be taken to encourage minority groups to visit by ensuring their special needs are met.
- 8. Use its heritage to encourage partners, visitors, businesses and communities to address the challenges of climate change.** The story of geological development can inform our understanding of current climate change issues. By incorporating this theme into Geopark development it is hoped that both understanding and awareness of local issues will be raised through a better understanding of global issues, leading to real world actions on behalf of all stakeholders.
- 9. Monitor impacts of the Geopark on economy, environment and community well-being.** Geopark development will be monitored to assess its impact on sustainable development.

### **Policy context**

- Sustainable Development Action Plan
- Fforest Fawr Geopark Management Plan (*to be formulated*)

### **Cross-references**

- 7.2.1 Outdoor Access and Recreation
- 7.2.2 Education
- 7.2.3 Interpretation
- 7.2.4 Information and Visitor Services
- 7.3.1 Sustainable Communities
- 7.3.2 Sustainable Tourism



#### **7.3.4. Planning and Development**

Planning is the principal process for achieving sustainable development in the National Park. The BBNPA is the local planning authority (LPA) for the area of the Park. It has the statutory functions of controlling development and producing a development plan for the Park. The NPA works with neighbouring LPAs to draw up strategic planning guidance. Because of its location, it is represented on three of Wales' four sub-regional planning groups. The NPA is currently consulting on and will publish a new Local Development Plan (LDP) within the lifespan of this Management Plan.

In fulfilling their planning roles, the NPA and other LPAs are subject to planning legislation, government guidance, and regulations. In most cases, these apply in the same way both inside and outside National Parks, for example in planning for residential development whilst protecting countryside for its own sake. In addition, government planning guidance for Wales requires NPAs to give great weight to the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty within the Park. It states that developments which are of more (UK) national rather than local significance will not be permitted in the National Park save in those exceptional circumstances where it can be demonstrated that overriding public need, and severe detriment to the local economy, outweigh the National Park designation.

The NPA uses its planning function to help achieve its wider aims and objectives. Planning is a means of integrating appropriate development with the landscape and existing settlements, integrating development with transport, allowing for recreational facilities and providing housing and employment for local people. It is a way to encourage sustainable living whilst providing public benefits now and with an eye to the future. The NPA sets standards and policies via the LDP to promote innovative solutions to complex societal issues, such as affordable housing, potential impacts associated with climate change or fossil fuel depletion. Thus many of the objectives in this Management Plan involve an action to include relevant policies in the LDP. Land use and transport planning will be linked through the Regional Transport Plans.

Development in the Park must be sustainable. Its role as LPA gives the NPA many opportunities to apply the principles of sustainability, particularly in light of climatic uncertainty. Sustainability involves ensuring a better future for the planet's environment and people by conserving resources and involving local people in decision-making. The NPA is developing its land allocations, policies, and design guidance so as to save energy and reduce waste, pollution, and the need to travel. As it is formulated, the NPA will involve Park residents in both strategic and local aspects of the Local Development Plan.

## **Twenty-year Aims for Planning and Development**

1. **Prepare an LDP which is responsive to drivers of change and enables development to meet identified needs.** The Authority is required to prepare an LDP which will guide all future development in the National Park over the next 15 years. The LDP will address the unique economic, environmental, and social characteristics, opportunities and issues of the Area. It is based on the vision, objectives, and priorities contained in this National Park Management Plan. The LDP will address the land use aspects of the NPMP. NPA will prepare an LDP which is resilient and responsive to drivers of change and which is proactive in mitigating the effects of climate change where possible.
2. **Provide a first class planning service.** The NPA has statutory functions of controlling development and producing a development plan for the Park. The NPA's role as LPA gives it a high profile in the local community, and it seeks to involve the public as much as possible in the development of planning policy. The Planning Services Charter sets out how the NPA aims to make development control and all its planning services user-friendly. The planning system is complex, and the NPA has a role in explaining it to community councils and others. In order to make its services first class, the NPA will strive to improve consistency of decision making, increase public engagement in, understanding of, and satisfaction with the NPA's planning service, and improve relationships with partner organisations.
3. **Ensure that there is sufficient land for market and affordable housing to meet the identified need.** The NPA is not a housing authority; this is the role of the unitary authorities. Nonetheless the NPA works closely with the relevant Housing Authorities in the preparation of the Local Housing Market Assessments and Local Housing Strategies. By way of the LDP, the NPA sets out policies for the provision of land for housing, including affordable housing. This provision not only requires the identification of appropriate sites for housing but also requires prioritising these in strategic planning as well as in funding programmes. There is expressed need for access to affordable housing across the Park's communities. Trends for the National Park indicate that this need is likely to be long term. The NPA has been working with relevant stakeholders – including the unitary authorities and developers – to identify opportunities to deliver more affordable housing and will continue to do so as it formulates the Local Development Plan.

- 4. Allocate sufficient land for the provision of a variety and mix of employment opportunities to encourage a better link between the provision of employment and housing.** In terms of securing the social and economic well being of the Park's communities, appropriate and affordable housing provision are clearly vital ingredients. Just as important to the sustainability and viability of local communities is the provision of employment opportunities that provide for the livelihood of the Park's residents. Although the NPA is not the lead economic development or community development agency, WAG encourage the NPA to foster partnerships that retain and promote local employment opportunities that are in keeping with rural development objectives. Consideration must therefore be given to the availability of appropriate land and investment in infrastructure and services that promote sustainable communities. The NPA and its partners will ensure the availability of land and investment in the Park is consistent with the special qualities of the area and avoids damage to important nature conservation sites and species.
- 5. Maintain and encourage the vitality and viability of the Park's communities and town centres.** The overriding principle behind the NPA's planning policies is that of sustainable development; development must be appropriate to the Park's statutory purposes and its rural situation. Inherent in this principle are the concepts of sense of place, social inclusion, community health and well-being, and local empowerment. From the standpoint of local communities, this means that the NPA and its partners should encourage development which contributes to the creation of sustainable places, promotes integrated communities, with opportunities for living, working and socialising for all, and enables development that encourages a healthy and safe lifestyle and promotes well being.
- 6. Improve the physical quality, energy efficiency, accessibility and sustainable design and construction of all development throughout the park.** Building styles from different centuries are represented across the Park. These need to be conserved and appropriate elements reflected in the designs for new developments. Guidance for applicants is also needed on maximising the energy efficiency of their proposals, and reducing the materials used and waste produced. In keeping with the National Park's commitments to sustainability and the climate change agenda, the NPA is producing up-to-date guidance on sustainable building design and materials in the National Park. This Sustainable Design Guide will become an exemplar in sustainable design.

7. **Minimise light and noise pollution.** Despite its proximity to urban centres such as Cardiff, Bristol, and Swansea, the Park boasts a dark night sky year round where, on clear nights, a plethora of stars can be seen. Similarly, its low population density and lack of major motorways limit light and noise pollution. These factors contribute significantly to the sense of tranquillity and remoteness so often cited as a key special quality of the Brecon Beacons National Park. The NPA and its partners will seek to maintain and enhance these attributes.

### **Policy context**

- Planning Policy Wales 2002, including Technical Advice Notes, Ministerial Interim Planning Policy Statements, Circulars (various)
- Minerals Planning Wales 2000
- Wales Spatial Plan 2004
- Regional Transport Plans (various)
- Regional Waste Plans (various)
- Aggregates Regional Technical Statements (various)

### **Cross-references**

- 7.1.1 Landscape
- 7.1.5 Built Environment
- 7.1.8 Water Resources
- 7.1.10 Minerals
- 7.1.11 Energy
- 7.1.15 Rivers and Wetlands
- 7.3.1 Sustainable Communities
- 7.3.4 Transport
- 7.3.5 Waste

#### **7.3.5. Transport**

Transport is necessary for most journeys to and within the National Park, for both residents and visitors. The Park is particularly dependent on road transport for both people and goods. There is no railway station, and the Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal is at present restricted to pleasure use. Cycling and horse riding are primarily recreational activities, and outside Brecon public transport is inadequate to serve most needs. Private vehicles are therefore essential to residents, visitors, businesses, and agriculture in the Park.

Additionally, there are those both in and outside the Park whose mobility is limited by a lack of transport, and there is an unmet demand for access via public transport to destinations either side of the Park boundary. Promoting access for all to the Park and ensuring that residents have access to services and facilities are important objectives for the NPA.

Detailed information on traffic movements around the Park is difficult to obtain as there are many roads of various grades under the control of WAG and seven Unitary Authorities. The most accessible traffic data sets come from STEAM and relates to tourist traffic. Between 2003 and 2004, the number of tourist cars on the road rose 4%. However, the amount of tourist traffic decreased between 2000 and 2004, with numbers not having reached those recorded prior to the Foot and Mouth Disease outbreak in 2001. This goes against the trend of an overall increase in vehicles on the roads in Wales for the same period, as reported in the Welsh Transport Statistics 2004. A special data collection exercise would be required to determine the trends in all traffic across the Park.

The impact of transporting people into and around the National Park is likely to be the highest contribution of all to the area's carbon footprint. Alleviating this contribution was identified in the Sustainable Tourism Strategy as a high priority task. Equally it is probably one of the most difficult tasks to address in view of the dispersed nature of the centres of population/tourism attractions and the natural propensity of visitors to use car-based transport.

The NPA is very concerned with transport issues because of their effect on sustainability, the environment and communities, and their importance for tourism and visitors. However, its influence is limited; the NPA is not the Highway Authority (HA) for the Park. The relevant powers and resources rest with the National Assembly and HAs, which must have regard to National Park purposes and "ensure mutual co-operation across Park boundaries, particularly in planning and highway matters."

### **Beacons Bus Project**

The primary involvement historically of the NPA with visitor transport has been the development of the Beacons Bus project. The summer Sunday and Bank Holiday network operates by bringing day visitors from across South Wales into and around the National Park. It has grown significantly since its inception in 1999 and now provides nearly 10,000 passenger journeys per year. It is run by a partnership of the NPA together with 14 other public and voluntary bodies and is seen as being highly successful. It has achieved significant modal shift, delivers high quality social inclusion objectives, and enables interpretive work to be undertaken with guides on the buses.

In addition, some work has been done to make it easier for those keen to do so, to use public transport. Actions have been to publish a guide to using public transport, an annual timetable of all services in the National Park and to incorporate public transport messages and information within appropriate publications and websites.

HAs are required to set out their transport strategy in five-year Local Transport Plans (LTPs), with the aim of providing an integrated transport system. There must be local targets for tackling pollution and congestion, more traffic management, road safety, public transport and alternative modes of transport. There will be more certainty of funding for initiatives, wider public consultation, and powers to charge for road use and parking. HAs will also be expected to draw up regional statements on transportation strategy within which LTPs can be developed. LTPs must also be consistent and integrated with the land use strategy contained in LDPs. Regional transport plans are currently being developed.

Furthering this, the County Surveyors' Society, National Park Officers' Group, Countryside Commission and CCW have published a *Joint Statement on Traffic and Transport Policy and Practice in National Parks (1996)*. It comprises a commitment to work together to deliver good design and sustainable traffic and transport systems which support National Park purposes, meet the needs of local communities, and are fully integrated with land use and management strategies. The consultations on this Management Plan are part of this process, and the NPA has made a start with its Beacons Bus partnership.

### **Twenty-year Aims for Transport**

- 1. Reduce the need for travel by controlling the location and design of development.** The NPA itself is not a Highway Authority but is responsible for strategic land use planning and for determining applications for highway works which require planning permission. The NPA works closely with highway authorities in the

production of integrated transport and land-use strategies and will be considering these factors as part of the development of the Park's forthcoming Local Plan.

2. **Provide an integrated transport system that encourages healthy and active lifestyles, and supports local communities.** The need to travel should be reduced, and the attractiveness of public transport increased, without adversely affecting the overall quality of people's lives. Better links between public transport, recreational travel, and access to the countryside would benefit tourists and residents alike.
3. **Maintain and develop Beacons Bus as key delivery mechanism for visitor transport.** The project should continue to grow in time and space with the aim of covering as much of the summer season as possible and increasing routes to meet demand.
4. **Encourage and support use of the weekday service network.** Achievable only by partnership working, this process needs to ensure that best use is made of existing services by ensuring that journeys are made easier for visitors with high quality marketing, information, and service provision including excellent customer care from transport operators.
5. **Encourage the development of new services aimed at the visitor market.** Partnership working to develop and market services with the needs of visitors in mind to provide transport to those attractions and outdoor activity locations that would especially benefit.
6. **Facilitate sustainable long distance transport to the National Park.** The National Park has a role in retaining holiday visits within the UK and avoiding the impact of air based transport to destinations like the Mediterranean. This also improves the retention of finance in the country. However this in no way diminishes the need for action to be taken to encourage visitors to use non-car based transport for travelling to and within the area. The key to this process is integration with a need for rail/coach/bus interchanges to work efficiently for visitors.
7. **Work with Transport Generators on Green Travel Plans.** Public and private sector attractions, festivals, tourism businesses, and other organisations can minimise their impacts through the adoption of Green Travel Plans.
8. **Support working practices and behaviour change initiatives that reduce the Park's greenhouse gas emissions and reduce people's dependency on fossil**

**fuels for transport.** This aim will require an investment in raising people's awareness about climate change concerns and about the declining production of fossil fuels, particularly petroleum.

9. **Develop Sustainable Travel Marketing.** Whatever mechanisms are adopted, it is essential that they are attractively and consistently marketed to the visiting public.

### **Policy context**

- Section 62 of the Environment Act
- This Common Inheritance: Britain's Environmental Strategy (HMSO)
- Planning Policy Wales (PPW) & Technical Advice Note (TAN) 18: Transport
- Wales Spatial Plan
- Regional Transport (Wales) Act 2006
- SEWTA Transport Plan
- SWITCH Transport Plan
- Mid-Wales Transport Plan
- Brecon Beacons National Park Unitary Development Plan

### **Cross-references**

7.1.7 Air Resources

7.1.11 Energy

7.2.4 Information and Visitor Services

7.3.1 Sustainable Communities

7.3.2 Sustainable Tourism

7.3.4 Planning and Development

#### **7.3.6. Waste Management**

Wales has an estimated five years of landfill space available based on current estimates.<sup>34</sup>

The amount of waste generated in Wales continues to increase, straining an already limited resource. The good news is that the rate of waste generation across Wales has begun to slow whilst the percentage of waste recycled or composted has increased significantly.

Powys, which has the largest proportion of land inside the National Park, recycles 37% of its

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<sup>34</sup> Environment Agency Wales. 2004. Waste Data Update.



waste—more than any other UA in Wales.<sup>35</sup> Several of the Park's other UAs are also recycling more than the national average.

Although the WAG does not condone the allocation of landfills, incinerators, or other waste disposal sites in the Welsh National Parks, the Park's residents and visitors still produce waste which must be dealt with outside Park boundaries. As this approach is unsustainable, the residents and visitors have a responsibility to reduce the regional waste load, reusing and recycling materials where possible. The NPA and its partners in their efforts to achieve sustainability, therefore, share the responsibility of waste management.

The NPA's role in waste issues takes two forms: in its role as LPA, and in the promotion of sustainable waste management ideology throughout the Park (i.e., the reduction of waste generation across the Park and the promotion of reuse and recycling). Both of these roles require close liaison with the UAs, which are responsible for waste collection, and the EA, which regulates waste disposal. As such the NPA will be required to address waste management in developing the LDP.

### **Twenty-year Aims for Waste Management**

- 1. Promote the waste hierarchy of reduce, reuse, and recycle across all sectors of the National Park.** The NPA and its partners should seek to minimize the production of waste and seek to contribute to sustainable waste solutions. Plans and strategies should contribute to the South West and South East Wales Regional Waste Plans. The NPA in particular can play a key role in public outreach, through education, interpretation, information, and by serving as an exemplar for sustainable waste management through its own practices.

### **Policy context**

- TAN 21 Waste
- South East Wales Regional Waste Plan
- South West Wales Regional Waste Plan
- Wise About Waste: The National Waste Strategy for Wales
- Rural Development Plan for Wales
- Wales Spatial Plan
- Environment Strategy for Wales

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<sup>35</sup> Welsh Assembly Government. 2007. Key Environmental Statistics for Wales.

## **Cross-reference**

7.3.1 Sustainable Communities

7.3.4 Planning and Development

### **7.3.7. Military Use of the Park**

The Brecon area has a long history of military connections, and the Army headquarters for units based in Wales remains situated in the Barracks. While the MOD no longer owns any significant training areas in the Park, it has substantial areas just outside the boundary. The military uses the Park's open country and air space for adventurous pursuits and training. These activities affect several aspects of the life and work of the Park, and thus are the concern of the NPA.

The MOD does own some land in the Park. This includes the camp at Sennybridge, base for the Sennybridge Training Area north of the Park; in Brecon the Dering Lines training camp and sports fields, the Barracks, headquarters of I60 (Wales) Brigade, and a small training area near Brynich; and a small area of land above Trecastle. Two small outdoor pursuits centres in the Park are owned by the Navy.

Military training takes place on the MOD's own bases, and there is considerable movement of vehicles to and from Brecon and Sennybridge, on route to the Sennybridge Training Area. Helicopters are used both for moving personnel and for training. Jets and Hercules aircraft use the Park's airspace for low flying training. Services personnel use the hills and rights of way for military and tactical training in uniform with packs and weapons, and for adventurous pursuits such as hill walking and rock climbing. Canoeing, caving, and hang-gliding are also undertaken.

The military presence in the Park is part of the area's history, culture, and economy. Brecon Barracks were the home of the South Wales Borderers Regiment, whose museum there is open to the public. The various establishments offer employment to local civilians and use local services, an important contribution to the economy. The permanent staff and their families, including a Gurkha company, add diversity to Brecon's cultural life. Staff housing at Brecon and Sennybridge is significant in planning terms.

The Park benefits from the help of military units training in the Park through Exercise Dipper, under which the skills, manpower, and helicopters of visiting units are employed to build footbridges, repair paths, and other such tasks. The NPA maintains liaison with Defence Estates, the land managing arm of the MOD, and with HQ I60 (W) Bde for the

control of units using NPA common land for training. As a public body, the MOD must under the 1995 Environment Act take account of National Park purposes in carrying out its activities.

### **Twenty-year Aims for Military Use of the Park**

1. **Reduce adverse effects on the Park's landscape, biodiversity and historic interest and on others' enjoyment caused by military exercises and adventurous training.** One of the Park's special qualities is peace and tranquillity, which can be severely affected by the noise from low flying training aircraft and helicopters. The concern generated by this issue varies with training schedules, but it is not open to influence by the NPA, the UAs, or concerned local organisations.
2. **Educate service users on responsible, sustainable and appropriate use of the Park.** The military use of the Park for exercises and adventurous training has effects similar to those caused by organised outdoor pursuits groups. If poorly managed or overdone, these can include traffic on narrow lanes, disturbance to stock, erosion of paths, litter, and inconvenience to farmers through occasional damage to walls and fences. An additional factor is the effect on enjoyment for some of the sight of armed troops in uniform. Where relevant, adventurous events will be covered by the NPA's developing policy on sporting and challenge events.
3. **Maximise the benefits of military activity in and around the Park.** Liaison between the NPA and MOD continues to improve. Exercise Dipper gives visiting units an opportunity to contribute to the Park, and provides ongoing benefit to the Park, its communities, and its resources. The NPA will seek to maintain this relationship.
4. **Manage MOD's rural land in and affecting the Park to support Park purposes.** The MOD strategy takes appropriate account of stakeholders' concerns, consulting with them on detailed codes of practice relating to its management objectives and implementation activities. The MOD owns little rural land in the Park, but any changes to the use of the Sennybridge Ranges might be significant. The MOD needs planning clearance rather than planning permission to carry out development on Crown land. The NPA will apply the same design criteria as elsewhere in making comments, and the National Assembly for Wales will arbitrate in any dispute.

### **Cross-references**

7.1.1 Landscape

7.1.14 Uplands Management

7.2.1 Outdoor Access and Recreation

## 8. Priorities for Action

The risk of setting priorities is that it may send the message that other issues and management concerns are not a priority. Nothing could be further from the truth. In fact, setting priorities commits to a focus for management, for research, for leveraging funding to deliver outcomes. Other business, by necessity, must still be conducted. Priorities, however, create a unified set of targets on which to focus efforts in the Park rather than taking a scatter-gun approach which ultimately risks accomplishing very little for a broad spectrum of issues.

During the consultation period for this draft Management Plan, we will have a series of discussions to formulate our (including key stakeholders) priorities for action for the next five years. These will include a series of outcomes and related actions that will be accomplished in the next five years that ultimately put us on track with achieving the twenty-year aims and the vision. The Priorities for Action document will also be sent out for public consultation.

### 8.1. **Enhancing Biodiversity** (hypothetical example)

8.1.1. **Why is this a priority?**

8.1.2. **What outcomes will be achieved in the next five years?**

8.1.3. **What strategic objectives does it fulfil?**

8.1.4. **What contributions does it make to international, national, and regional objectives?**

8.1.5. **Action plan** (action, responsible parties, measures of success)

### 8.2. **Enhancing Upland Management** (hypothetical example)

8.2.1. **Why is this a priority?**

8.2.2. **What outcomes will be achieved in the next five years?**

8.2.3. **What strategic objectives does it fulfil?**

8.2.4. **What contributions does it make to international, national, and regional objectives?**

8.2.5. **Action plan** (action, responsible parties, measures of success)

### **8.3. Delivering a First-class Planning Service** (example)

**8.3.1. Why is this a priority?**

**8.3.2. What outcomes will be achieved in the next five years?**

**8.3.3. What strategic objectives does it fulfil?**

**8.3.4. What contributions does it make to international, national, and regional objectives?**

**8.3.5. Action plan** (action, responsible parties, measures of success)

### **8.4. Enhancing Outdoor Access and Recreation Opportunities**

(example)

**8.4.1. Why is this a priority?**

**8.4.2. What outcomes will be achieved in the next five years?**

**8.4.3. What strategic objectives does it fulfil?**

**8.4.4. What contributions does it make to international, national, and regional objectives?**

**8.4.5. Action plan** (action, responsible parties, measures of success)S

## **9. Implementation**

The content of this section will be based on the results of the consultation process on this Draft Management Plan and the development of priorities for action (Chapter 8), and will be completed as part of the Final Management Plan.

## **10. Research, Monitoring, and Evaluation**

The content of this section will be based on the results of the consultation process on this Draft Management Plan and the development of priorities for action (Chapter 8), and will be completed as part of the Final Management Plan.

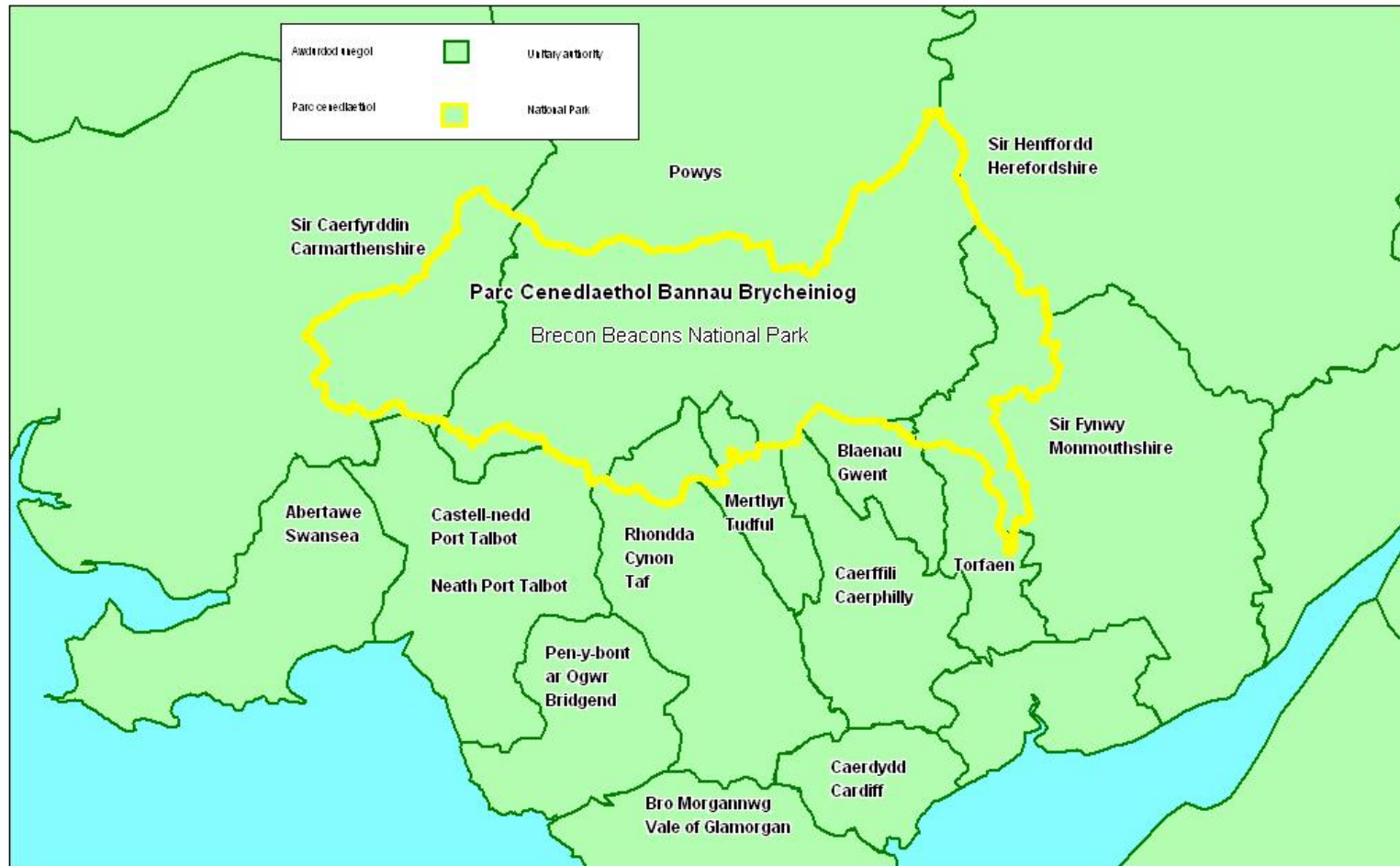


## **11. Conclusion/Summary**

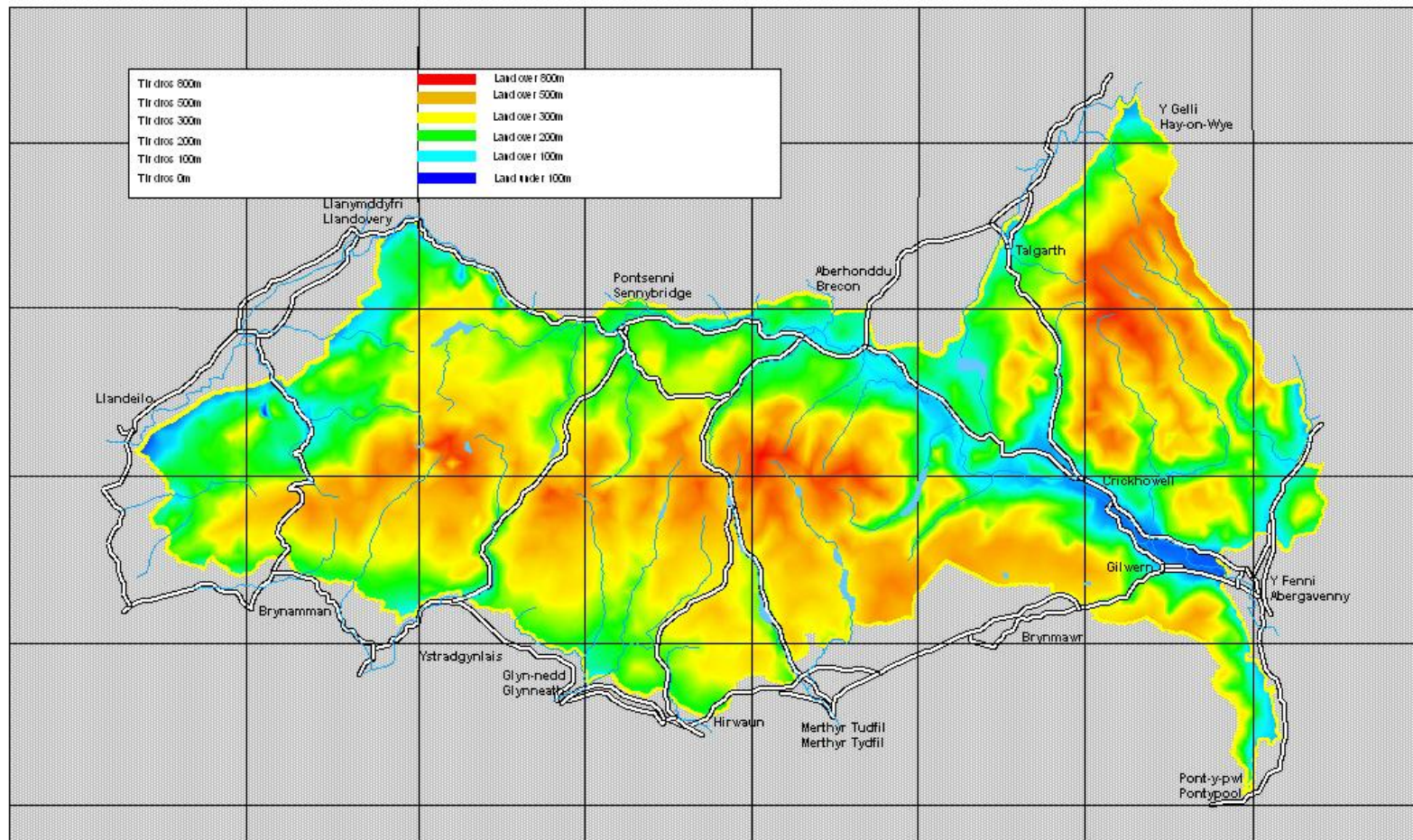
The content of this section will be based on the results of the consultation process on this Draft Management Plan and the development of priorities for action (Chapter 8), and will be completed as part of the Final Management Plan.

## **Annex I Document Maps**

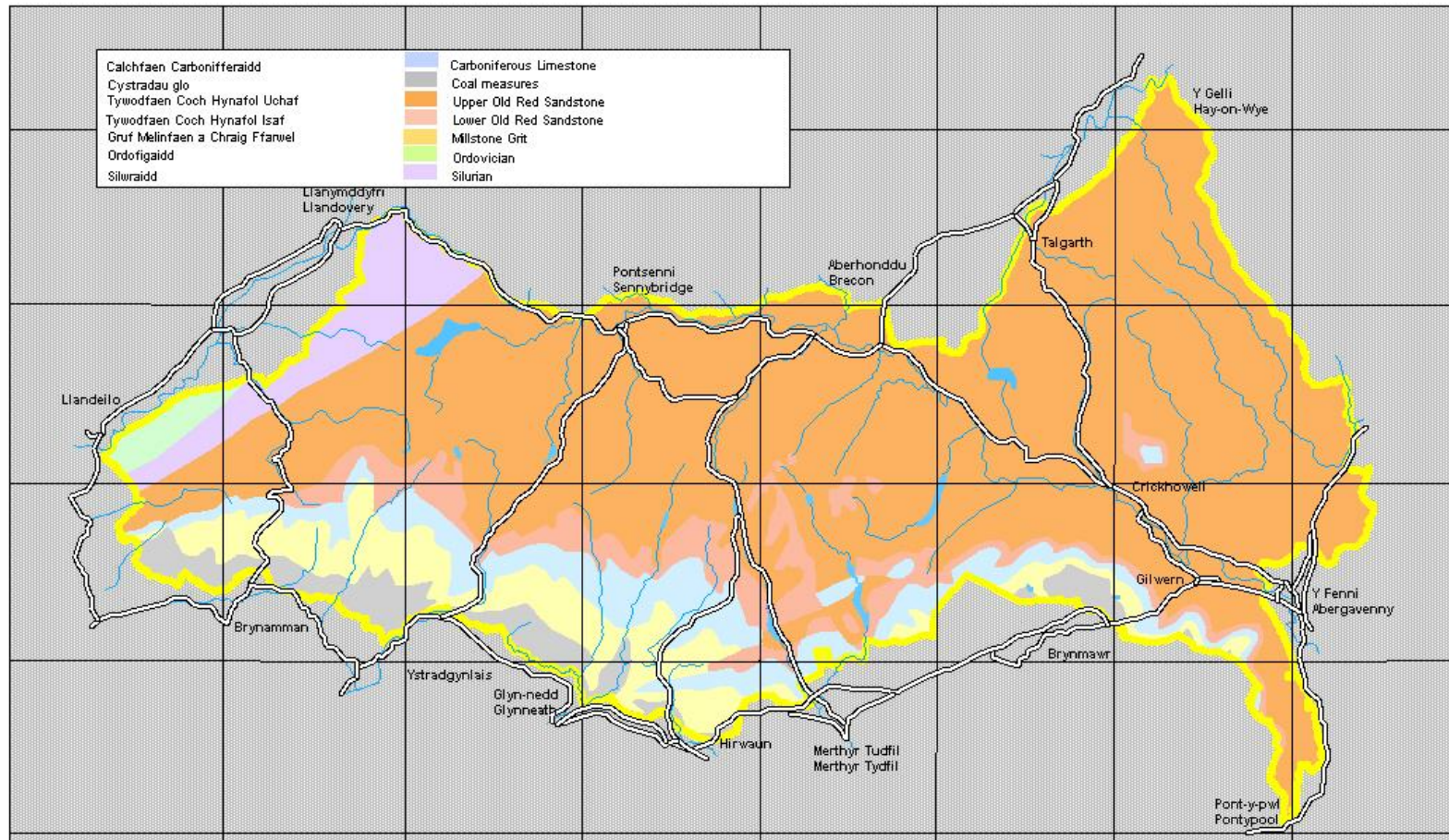
The following maps are to be inserted throughout the Final National Park Management Plan in relevant locations to aid in the illustration of the Park's key features and issues.



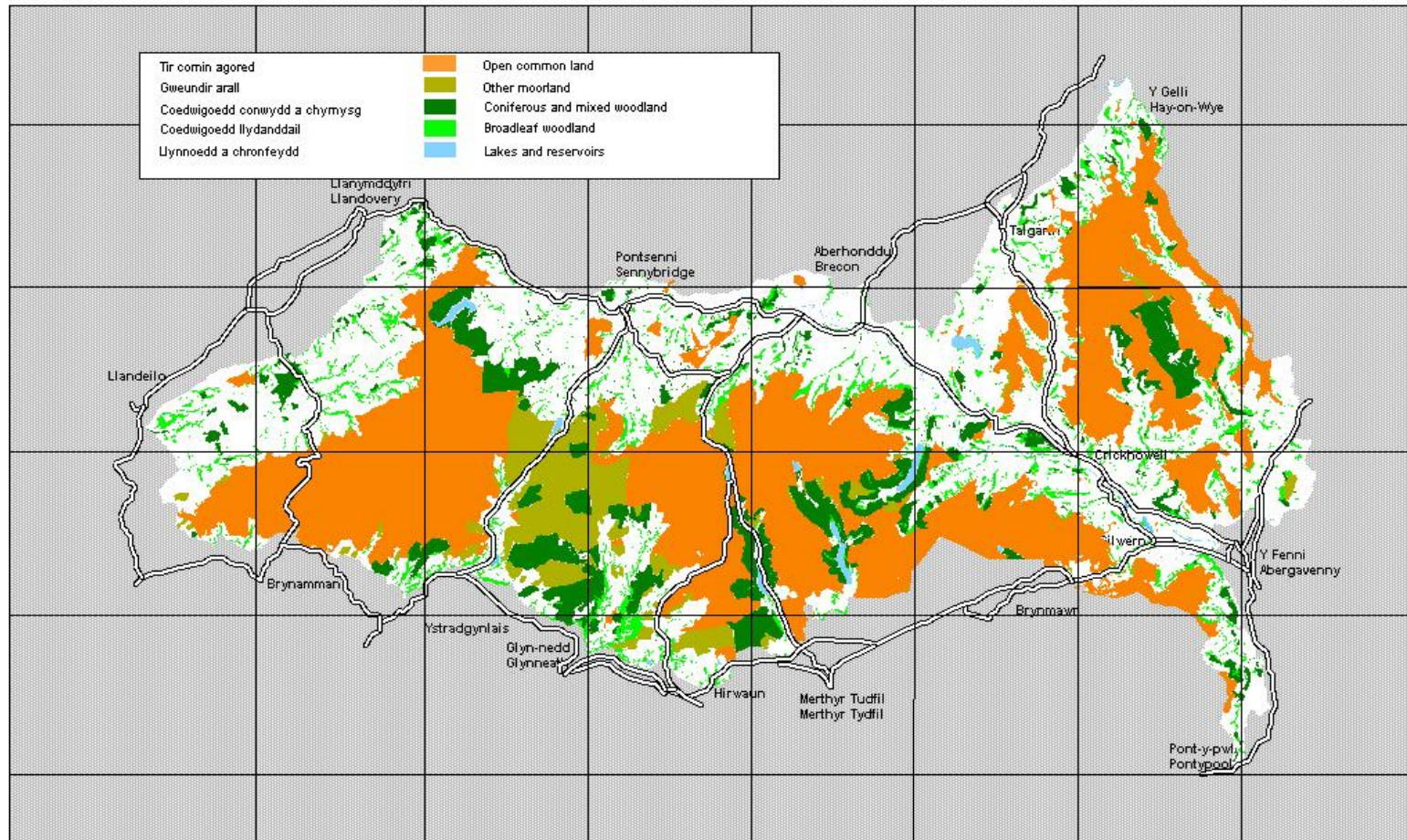
Map I: Regional Setting



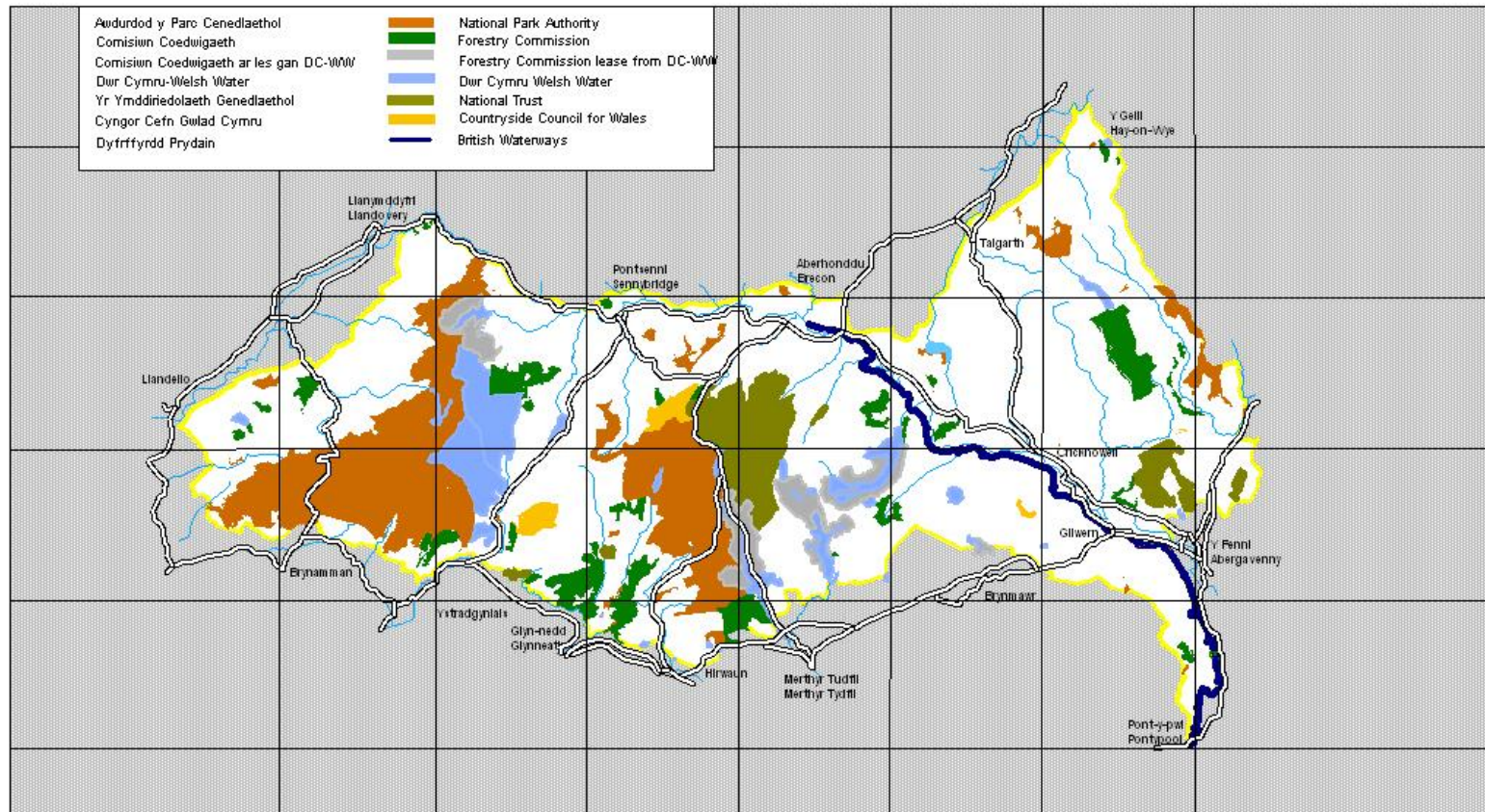
Map 2: Brecon Beacons National Park Relief



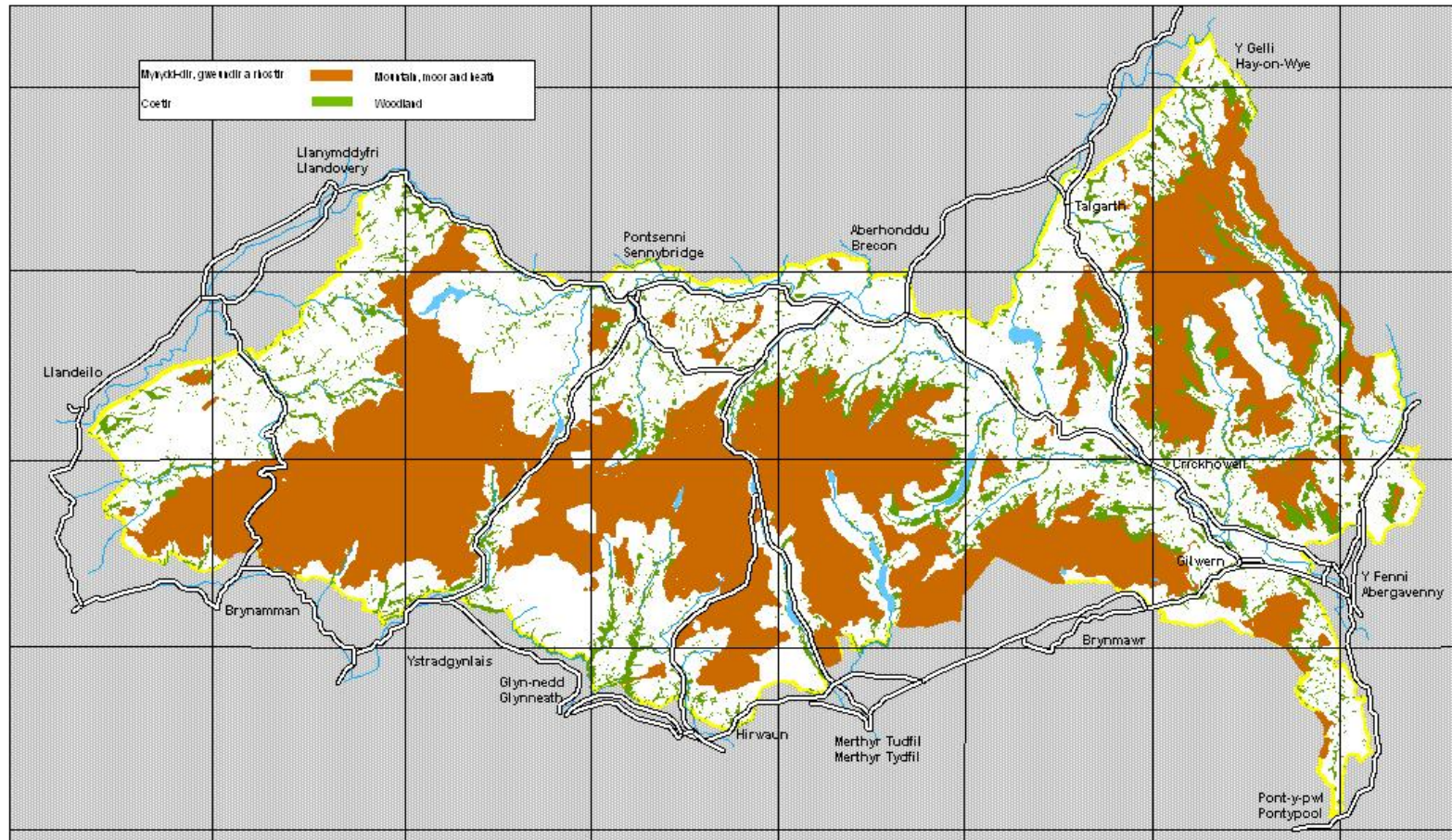
Map 3: Geology



Map 4: Land Use

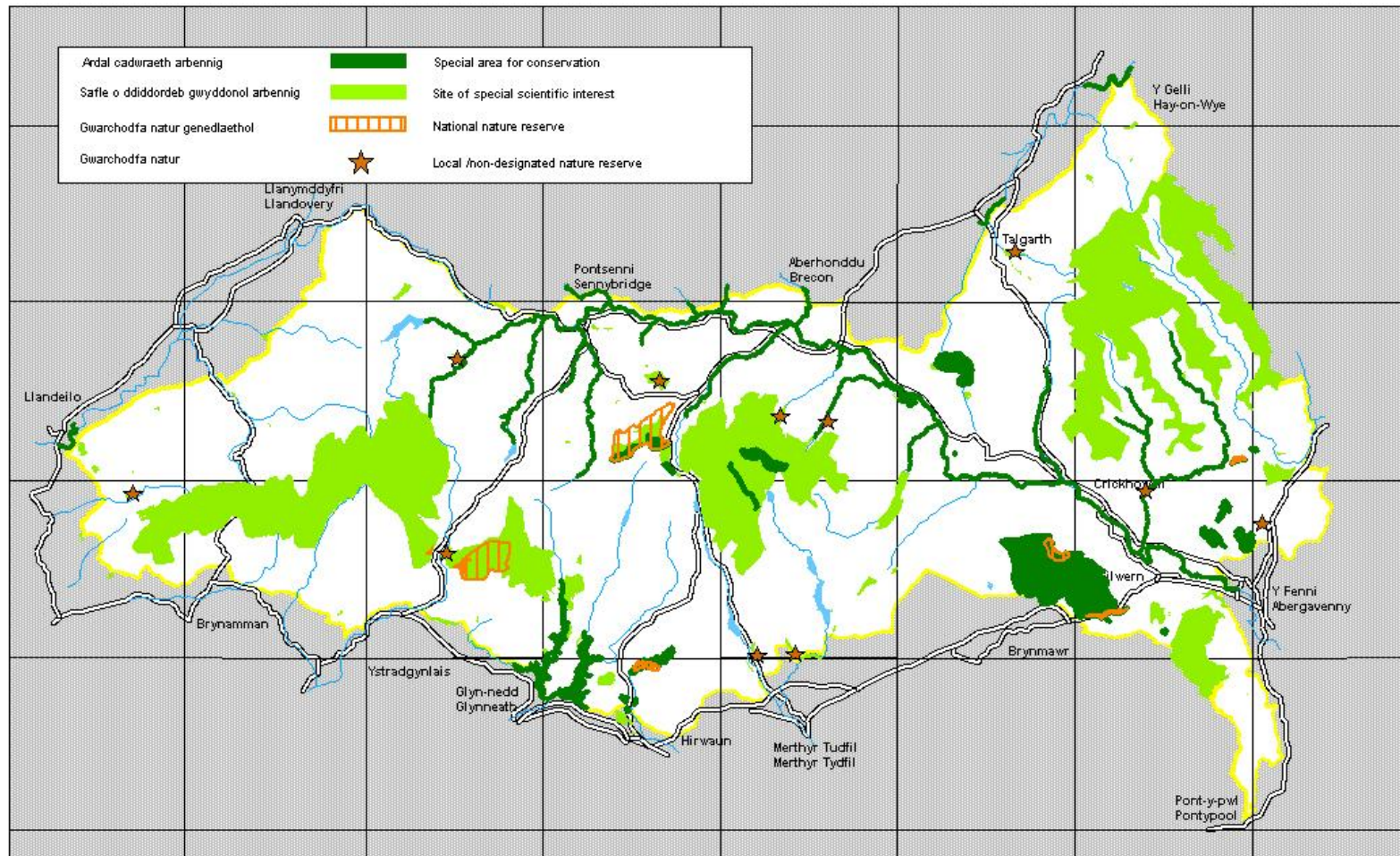


Map 5: Land Ownership

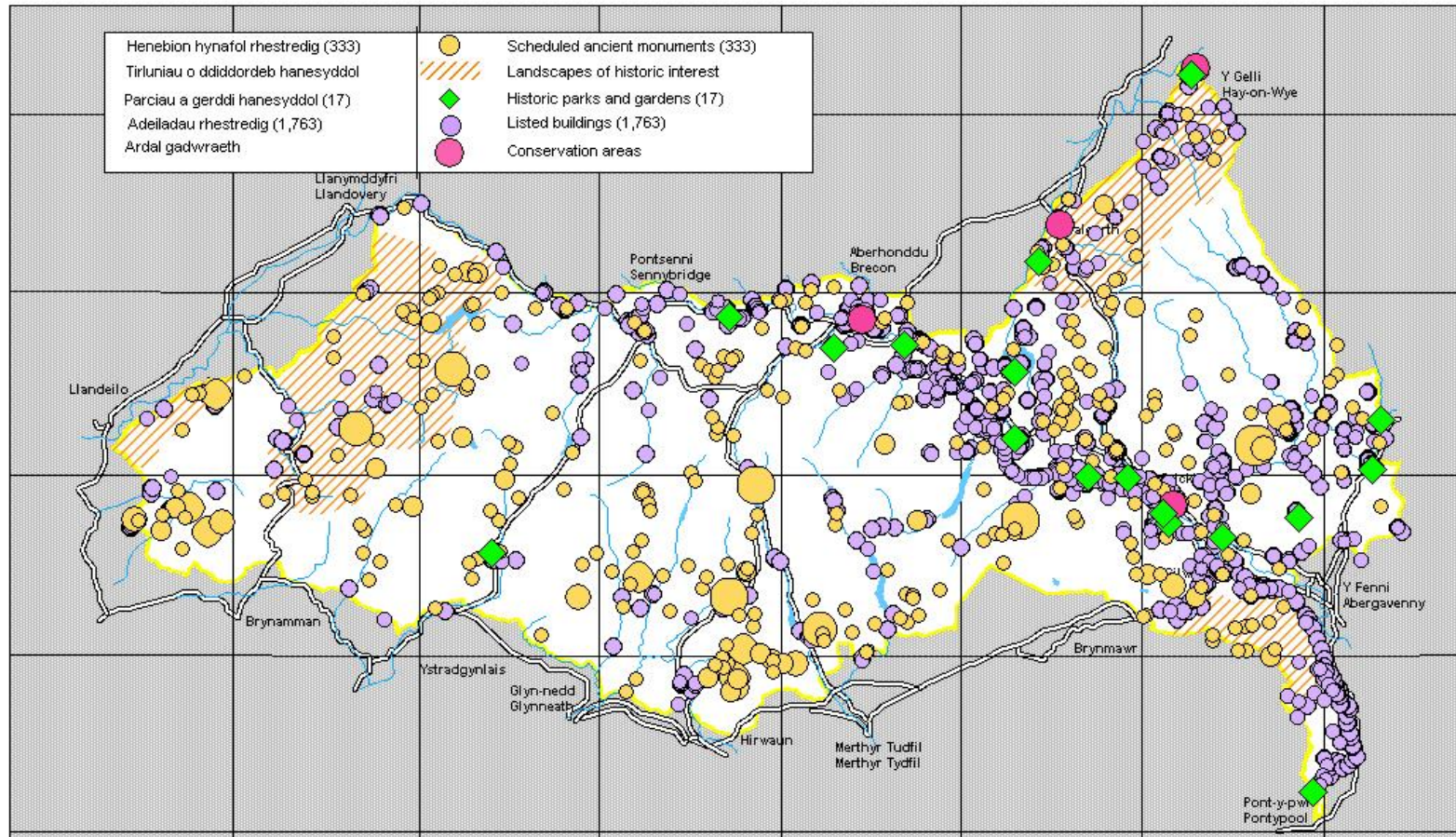


Map 6: Section 3- Conservation Map

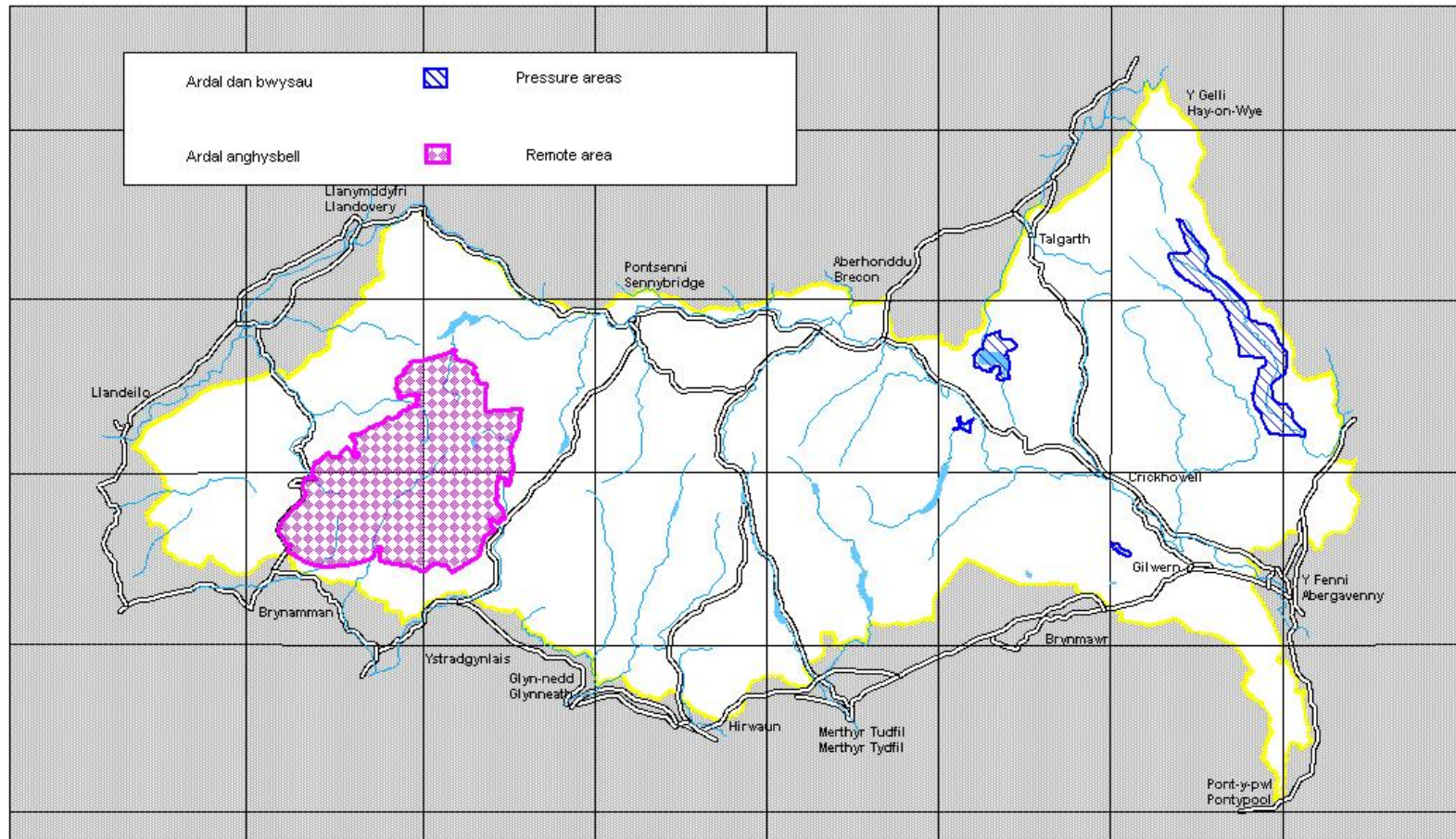




Map 7: SSSIs and Nature Reserves



Map 8: Historic and Built Environment



Map 9: Pressure and Remote Areas

## Annex 2 List of Acronyms

ACT	Action for Community Tourism
AHOEC	Association of Heads of Outdoor Education Centres
AMP	Area Management Plan
ANPA	Association of National Park Authorities
ARAG	Access and Recreation Advisory Group
ASNW	Ancient semi-natural woodland
AT	Archaeological Trust
BBNP(A)	Brecon Beacons National Park (Authority)
BHS	British Horse Society
CCC	Cambrian Caving Council
CCW	Countryside Council for Wales
DC-WW	Dŵr Cymru-Welsh Water
CROW	Countryside and Rights of Way Act
EA(W)	Environment Agency (Wales)
EU	European Union
FC(W)	Forestry Commission (Wales)
FE	Forest Enterprise
FRCA	Farming and Rural Conservation Agency
GIS	Geographical information system (computer based mapping)
HA	Highway Authority
ICOMOS	International Council on Monuments and Sites
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature (World conservation Union)
LBAP	Local Biodiversity Action Plan
LDP	Local Development Plan
LEAP	Local Environment Agency Plan
LNR	Local Nature Reserve
LPA	Local Planning Authority
MM	Meithrin Mynydd
MOD	Ministry of Defence
MPA	Mineral Planning Authority
NAWAD	National Assembly for Wales Agriculture Department
NNR	National Nature Reserve
NPA	National Park Authority
NPMP	National Park Management Plan
NT	National Trust
OEC	Outdoor education centre
OSS	Open Spaces Society
P&VAs	'Pressure' and 'vulnerable areas'
PCC	Powys County Council
PROW	Public right of way
QPA	Quarry Products Association
RA	Ramblers Association
RAC	Royal Automobile Club
RCAHMW	Royal Commission on Ancient and Historical Monuments in Wales
RIGS	Regionally important geological and geomorphological sites
RSPB	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
RTP	Regional Transport Plan
RUPP	Road used as public path
S3 Map	Section 3 Conservation Map of mountain, moor, heath and woodland

SAC	Special Area for Conservation
SAM	Scheduled Ancient Monument
SCW	Sports Council for Wales
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
SPA	Special Protection Area
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest
TAG	Tourism Action Group
UA	Unitary Authority
UDP	Unitary Development Plan
UN	United Nations
WAG	Welsh Assembly Government
WDA	Welsh Development Agency
WSP	Wales Spatial Plan
WT	Woodland Trust
WTs	Wildlife Trusts
WTB	Wales Tourist Board

## **Annex 3 Glossary**

## Annex 4 IUCN Management Principles for Category V Landscapes/Seascapes

Category V Protected Landscapes/Seascapes have been defined by the World Conservation Union (IUCN) as:

“an area of land, with coast and seas as appropriate, where the interaction of people and nature over time has produced an area of distinct character with significant aesthetic, ecological and/or cultural values, and often with high biological diversity. Safeguarding the integrity of this traditional interaction is vital to the protection, maintenance and evolution of such an area.”<sup>36</sup>

According to 2002 World Conservation Union guidance, management of IUCN Category V landscapes/seascapes should be conducted with the following principles in mind<sup>37</sup>:

### Principle 1:

*Conserving landscape, biodiversity and cultural values are at the heart of the Category V protected area approach.* Though much emphasis is placed in this guidance on economic and social considerations, Category V is a conservation approach which should reflect the over-arching objectives of all protected areas. It is therefore about managing change in such a way that environmental and cultural values endure: change should take place within limits that will not disrupt those values.

### Principle 2:

*The focus of management should be on the **point of interaction** between people and nature.* To recall part of the definition used in the 1994 Guidelines: “Safeguarding the integrity of (the) traditional interaction is vital to the protection, maintenance and evolution of the area” (IUCN, 1994, p.22). Thus, whereas in many other kinds of protected areas it is nature itself that is the main focus of management, what distinguishes Category V is that management primarily addresses the **linkage** between people and nature.

### Principle 3:

*People should be seen as stewards of the landscape.* As the occupants of lived-in, working landscapes that are of great value to society as whole, the people living within Category V protected areas should be supported in their role as stewards of the landscape. They are the architects of much that

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<sup>36</sup> International Union for the Conservation of Nature 1994. *Guidelines of Protected Area Management Categories*.

<sup>37</sup> Adapted from Phillips, A. 2002. *Management Guidelines for IUCN Category V Protected Areas Landscapes/Seascapes* IUCN. IUCN—World Conservation Union.

we value in the landscape, and their support is needed to ensure its survival. Ideally, they help to shape and care for the environment with the traditions of the past, but with an eye to the future. In that sense, they may more correctly be described as ‘the managers’ of Protected Landscapes than the professionals who are employed with that formal title: good managers in the professional sense will therefore see their role as ‘facilitators’ and negotiators’.

**Principle 4:**

*Management must be undertaken **with** and **through** local people, and mainly **for** and **by** them.* This principle recognises that the full involvement of local people is essential, and that Category V protected areas should never be planned **against** their long-term interests. It also recognises that local communities should play an important role in delivering protected area objectives and be among the principal beneficiaries of these. But note that local people are not the only source of expertise. Moreover, there are other stakeholders who can derive benefits from protected landscapes: for example, visitors from nearby urban areas or further afield, resource users from afar (e.g. consumers of water supplies downstream), or the wider community interested in biodiversity or landscape protection.

**Principle 5:**

*Management should be based on co-operative approaches, such as co-management and multi-stakeholder equity.* It follows from Principles 2–4 that structures and processes are needed to ensure that people are involved fully in shaping management decisions and come to see the protected area as theirs. This will require the operation of open, transparent procedures based on democratic principles. Co-management approaches may be particularly appropriate to Category V protected areas.

**Principle 6:**

*Effective management requires a supportive political and economic environment.* The foregoing principles cannot be followed unless broader governance structures and practices in society at large are committed to certain standards. The management of Protected Landscapes will be easier to achieve if the government recognises the need for a quality of life perspective, follows democratic processes, and engages willingly in participatory planning based upon a fair and equitable approach to all groups and respect for a plurality of cultures. It will also be greatly helped by a top-level national commitment to sustainability, the alleviation of poverty, addressing the root causes of inequality, promoting gender equity and supporting civil society.



**Principle 7:**

*Management of Category V protected areas should not only be concerned with protection but also enhancement.* Because Category V protected areas are lived-in landscapes, the environment will have been manipulated more than is the case with other categories of protected areas. It follows that a more active role for management is appropriate, not only in the protection but also in restoration of natural or cultural values that have been eroded or lost. It may on occasion also include the creation of new environmental and social assets which are ecologically or culturally appropriate: examples would be a new woodland or forested areas established on degraded soils, and the development of a new market for goods produced by local people.

**Principle 8:**

*When there is an irreconcilable conflict between the objectives of management, priority should be given to retaining the special qualities of the area.* Because Protected Landscapes have important social as well as environmental objectives, there is considerable potential for conflict between objectives. As far as possible, management should seek to reconcile such conflicts. In the last analysis there need to be clear rules about what would have priority in such a situation. This principle states that when this happens, priority should be given to protecting the qualities that make the area special (what economists sometimes call 'critical environmental capital'). Because such a claim is likely to be contested, the principle may need to be embodied in legislation.

**Principle 9:**

*Economic activities that do not need to take place within the Protected Landscape should be located outside it.* As a lived-in, working landscape, a Category V protected area will contain a variety of economic activities and land uses, such as agriculture, forestry, tourism and some forms of industry, commerce and retailing, as well as residential areas, some infrastructure, etc. The tests for whether such an activity or use is acceptable within the protected area, are whether (i) it is sustainable, (ii) it contributes to the aims of the area, and (iii) there are strong reasons for it to be located within it. Where the proposed activity fails these tests, it should either be totally re-designed to fit Category V objectives or located outside the area altogether.

**Principle 10:**

*Management should be business-like and of the highest professional standard.* Notwithstanding the strong social and environmental emphasis in the management of Protected Landscapes, the operation of management should be business-like, and hard-headed if necessary. It requires effective marketing of conservation approaches too. While this may be difficult to achieve in the short term, financial

sustainability should be an aim, rather than 100% reliance on public funding<sup>1</sup>. Procedures should be put in place to ensure that public, private and voluntary funds and other resources are used with due regard to economy, efficiency and effectiveness. And all decision-making concerning the use of resources should be transparent and accountable.

**Principle 11:**

*Management should be flexible and adaptive.* Like protected area management in general, that of Category V protected areas needs to be capable of adjustment over time in light of experience and changing circumstances – but since its scope embraces both natural and human systems, the need for flexibility is all the greater. Management of Protected Landscapes should also be flexible and adaptive in the sense that it should respond to the very different social, cultural and economic situations in which it takes place: it should always be culturally appropriate and economically relevant.

**Principle 12:**

*The success of management should be measured in environmental **and** social terms.* Though absolutely central, biodiversity measures are only one of several indicators: others include social and economic welfare and the quality of life for local and other people, other environmental considerations such as energy efficiency or natural resource management, and measures relating to the conservation of the cultural environment. An aim should be to demonstrate the maximum social and economic benefits for the local community with the minimum environmental impact. The setting of objectives, allocation of resources and monitoring of effectiveness should all be undertaken with this breadth of interest in mind.

## **Annex 5 Contributors to the NPMP**

