**Improvement Plan for 2013 to 2014**

# Introduction

Brecon Beacons National Park Authority is committed to securing continuous improvement in the delivery of its efficient and resourceful services. Our work has a direct impact on the people who access the services of the National Park and we want to tell them how we are performing and what our priorities are for the coming year.

This Improvement Plan incorporates the National Park Authority’s improvement objectives for 2013 – 2014 and sets out the National Park Authority’s approach to discharging its general duty, under the Welsh Government’s Local Government Measure legislation, to continually improve. The National Park Authority is required to publish its plan for improvement as soon as practicable after the 1st April each year. The National Park Authority is also required to publish its own assessment of how well it has performed by the 31st October each year.

Published 8 May 2013

**Statement of Responsibility**

Brecon Beacons National Park Authority is responsible for preparing the following

Improvement Plan, the information and the assessments laid out within it and the estimates

on which they are based.

The Authority is also responsible for managing its performance improvements and the

internal control measures from which the information and assessment in this Plan have been

produced.

The Authority is satisfied that the contents of the Plan are in all material respects accurate

and complete, realistic and achievable within the resources available.

# Our approach to improvement

We’re pleased to introduce Brecon Beacons National Park Authority’s Improvement Plan Objectives for 2013/2014.

As part of the Corporate Business Cycle, we annually review our corporate priorities and develop targets for the following year. Our Corporate Strategy, which is summarised in the table below, gives us direction for our endeavours and for the first time this year we have been able to align our Corporate Goals directly with the ones agreed for our National Park Management Plan

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| National Park Management Plan 2010-30 | Our strategic drivers for 20 years |
| Corporate Goals | Derived from the Plan, achieved over a 3-5 year period |
| Annual Objectives – including our improvement objectives | Derived from the corporate goals achieved over a 1-3 year period |
| Team and individual actions | How we will achieve the annual objectives |
| Performance indicators | How we will measure what we have done and assess whether we have achieved the objectives and what impact they have had. |

## What is the National Park Management Plan?

People are sometimes surprised to learn that National Park status does not mean that all the land in the Park is in public ownership. In fact over 65% of the land is privately owned and managed by estate owners, farmers and, to a lesser extent, householders. The National Park owns 14% of the National Park – mainly upland commons – and there are several other large public and charitable landowners too, including Natural Resources Wales, Dwr Cymru Welsh Water and the National Trust. The National Park Management Plan is a blueprint for everyone who shares responsibility for managing the area – land owners and managers alike. To produce the Plan, the Park Authority consulted as widely as possible. The consultation process was thorough and intensive and the views of all the stakeholders are reflected in the complexity and scope of the Plan. A summary of the process along with comments and responses is available online at [www.breconbeacons.org/the-authority/planning/strategy-and-policy/npmp](http://www.breconbeacons.org/the-authority/planning/strategy-and-policy/npmp). In the end the success of the Plan relies upon the cooperative interaction of all those who care for the Park and its future.

The National Park Management Plan is available to everyone. There is a summary and a full version – both in Welsh and English. The full version includes a vision for the National Park, long term strategies to achieve the desired outcomes and a five year action framework to implement positive change. The plan and the documents describing the actions arising from it and explaining who is responsible for each is available online at [www.breconbeacons.org/the-authority/planning/strategy-and-policy/npmp](http://www.breconbeacons.org/the-authority/planning/strategy-and-policy/npmp).

## How will the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority deliver improvement for 2013- 14?

The Authority delivers services via its three Directorates:

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| Chief Executive | Corporate support and services including  democratic services, human resources,  communications, IT, finance, legal and  administration services. |
| Countryside and Land Management | Conservation, land management, rights of way, sustainable tourism, sustainable communities, community development, warden and estate services, biodiversity and ecology, Fforest Fawr Geopark, property management, Visitor and Tourist Information Centres. |
| Planning | Planning services, development control,  enforcement, strategy and policy, built heritage. |

Continuous improvements and attention to the needs of those who use our services are important to us and we realise that in the light of financial cutbacks and savings in the public sector, these will be challenging.

The process for establishing future priorities and objectives has been advanced this year. In Autumn 2011 an officer task and finish group looked at how we could deliver the key actions within the NPMP more effectively and align Authority priorities and resources towards them. The group formulated recommendations and a Directors’ toolkit to do so. In Autumn 2012 a Scrutiny Review endorsed the need for the National Park’s Corporate Goals - which underpin all our work - to be aligned more closely with those of the National Park Management Plan. Members agreed this change which would enable the improvements already initiated to continue, while allowing the Authority to describe and prioritise its work and resources more closely in line with the themes described in the National Park Management Plan. On 17 December 2012 the National Park Authority approved the adoption of the six “Key Themes” within the National Park Management Plan as the six Corporate Goals for 2013/14 and for our future Objectives.

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| Our 6 Corporate Goals for 2013/2014 are the 6 themes: |
| Managing the National Park’s landscapes to maximise conservation and public benefits |
| Conserving and enhancing biodiversity |
| Providing everyone with opportunities for outdoor access and recreation |
| Raising awareness and understanding of the National Park |
| Building and maintaining sustainable communities, towns and villages |
| Sustainable economic development |

**How did we decide what our Improvement Objectives for 2013/2014 would be?**

Individuals and teams within the Authority decide which objectives they will set and how they will measure them in order to achieve the 6 new corporate goals. Some of these objectives are then identified as Improvement Objectives on which the Authority will present its progress.

This year the process for setting these objectives has included:

* In September 2012, discussions on priorities within the organisations’ three Directorates.
* At the Future Directions Forum on 5 October 2012 Members and many of the middle and senior managers of the organisation - known collectively as the Joint Management Team - agreed that the Corporate Goals should reflect the Key Themes of the National Park Management Plan and identified priorities for inclusion within objectives.
* Throughout October to mid-November 2012 workgroups took place to identify annual objectives and the resources required to achieve them.
* On 15November 2012 the Joint Management Team held workshops to agree annual objectives and the allocation of resources.
* The proposed Corporate Goals and Annual/Improvement Objectives were considered by the Audit and Scrutiny Committee on 7 December 2012 and National Park Authority on 17 December 2012.
* On 11 January 2013 a workshop was held between the Authority’s Members and its Officers to agree the Annual Objectives and select which of those should be our improvement objectives.
* These were again considered by Audit and Scrutiny on 25 January 2013 and approved by the Authority on 8 February 2013.

When objectives are agreed, the Authority continues to take an outcome focused approach to setting corporate objectives – looking at:

* Why we are focusing on this outcome
* What success will look like
* What we do
* How well we do it
* Whether anyone is anyone better off

**Scrutiny**

As well as external audits, National Park Authority conducts its own auditing process through a series of scrutiny reviews which are linked to improvement objectives. Two reviews are carried out each year, the first focuses on an improvement objective from the financial year (2012-13) and the second looks at progress on one the improvement objectives we have chosen for the current financial year 2013-14.

We are keen to involve the people who benefit from our services in these reviews and the public were able to vote on which improvement objective from the year ought to be the focus of the first scrutiny review. The Authority takes the final decision, but the public vote is a key part of their deliberations. When a subject has been selected members of the public are invited to take an active role in the scrutiny process and feed their views into the panel.

**Aligning resources with priorities**

The process for establishing corporate priorities this year has taken a significant step forward in aligning priorities against those in the National Park Management Plan. This year managers have provided details of what it will cost in terms of staff time and funding to achieve their objectives and the organisation has approved funding to meet these targets.

We still think we can improve though and in 2013 we expect that annual and improvement objectives will be agreed even sooner in the financial year after the Future Direction Forum which takes place in October. This earlier agreement will allow budget resources to be allocated against corporate priorities even more effectively.

# What are our Improvement Objectives for 2013-14?

We have identified annual objectives for each of the 6 themes and from these 4 objectives have been selected to be the Improvement Objectives for the Authority – these are listed below and followed by further information explaining why these are important and how we intend to measure them:

* **Improvement objective1:**

Theme 1 Managing Park Landscapes to maximise conservation and public benefits.

*Through effective partnership, facilitation, practical action and the planning function the Park’s historic environment and cultural heritage will be conserved, enhanced and promoted.*

* **Improvement objective 2:**

Theme 2: Conserving and enhancing biodiversity.

*Through effective partnership, facilitation, practical action and the planning function Biodiversity will be conserved and enhanced.*

* **Improvement objective 3:**

Theme 5: Building and maintaining sustainable communities, towns and villages  
*Through effective partnership, facilitation, practical action and the planning function sustainable living, social resilience, and community pride will be enabled.*

* **Improvement objective 4:**

Theme 6: Sustainable Economic Development  
*Through effective partnership, facilitation, practical action and the planning function the use of sustainable transport by visitors will be encouraged and enhanced*

## Improvement Objective 1

Theme 1: Managing Park Landscapes to maximise conservation and public benefits.

***Through effective partnership, facilitation, practical action and the planning function the Park’s historic environment and cultural heritage will be conserved, enhanced and promoted.***

**Background**

Theme 1 of the National Park Management Plan outlines why it is important to manage the Park for the benefit of people and for conservation. National Park designation is the highest level of protection available for landscapes and areas of scenic beauty in the UK. This protection is described in the first purpose given to the National Park Authority; it means that local land managers have to conserve the landscape, along with its biodiversity and cultural heritage. This purpose gives the landscape a value in its own right. The landscape provides valuable benefits to local communities and visitors alike, looking after it ensures the prosperity and well-being of future generations. However, the National Park cannot be preserved unchanged. Managing the landscape means confronting change. This could be the impact of climate change or the challenge of balancing large numbers of visitors. It could be the result of the desires of residents, farmers and businesses to develop a buoyant and resilient local economy. Those managing the Park have to take into consideration all these different challenges while keeping in mind the overarching need to manage conservation.

**Managing the Historic Environment and Cultural Heritage**

The 1995 Environment Act expanded the first purpose of all National Parks to include the conservation and enhancement of their cultural heritage. Culture was defined as including everything that people make or do and heritage comprised of everything that was done, thought or built in the past and which remains today. Accordingly the National Park Authority has responsibility for helping manage the Brecon Beacons’ historic environment and cultural heritage.

The National Park has a wide and varied range of architecture and protected buildings. These range

from Norman castles, medieval farmhouses and churches, concentrations of 17th and 18th Century structures to very fine rural buildings which often retain many original features. The character of the National Park’s heritage and built environment, in common with the rest of Wales, is threatened by the neglect of listed buildings, incremental changes to buildings, unauthorised work to buildings, the declining use of original and traditional materials, new developments and the loss of traditional uses for buildings like stone barns.

The Authority is committed to protecting and improving the National Park’s built heritage by decreasing the number of buildings at risk. Currently, the Brecon Beacons National Park is home to 1,955 Listed Buildings – many of which are lovingly cared for and protected by their owners. However, as these buildings are privately owned the Authority needs to work hard with owners to raise awareness of their status by offering assistance and advice to help them maintain and look after their buildings. There are also grants available that the Authority can use to assist owners protect their buildings for generations to come.

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| Why are we focusing on this Improvement Objective | What we will do | How we will do it |
| We want to: | **We will:** | **By:** |
| Ensure that the National Park’s built heritage is maintained. | Reduce the number of buildings at risk | Providing grant aid to buildings in Brecon Conservation Area and to Buildings At Risk |
| Build public confidence and raise awareness and enjoyment of that special heritage | Raise awareness of the conservation of historic buildings | Organising a Heritage day and providing targeted advice to owners and agents  Producing Heritage Guidance Notes and keeping the web pages updated |
| Focus on our statutory duty to protect our built heritage | Establish a higher level of confidence in the service | Providing guidance to planners and enforcement officers on the requirements in conservation areas and listed buildings with the possibility of taking enforcement action if necessary. |

The Brecon Beacons National Park also contains some 358 Scheduled Ancient Monuments.

The Scheduled Ancient Monuments within the Brecon Beacons National Park represent human activity in the area from prehistoric times to World War II and may be above or below the surface of the land. These are nationally important sites, which are also afforded legal protection from unauthorised and unmanaged change in order to protect them for future generations to enjoy.

**How will we know if we have achieved conserving and enhancing the Park’s environment?**

There will be fewer buildings at risk.

There will be improved awareness and knowledge amongst owners and applicants of the importance of protecting and enhancing the special character of listed buildings, conservation areas and archaeology.

There will be fewer unauthorised works to historic buildings.

There will be improved knowledge of, and data on, Scheduled Ancient Monuments.

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| Measure of success | 2012-2013 target | 2012-13 actual | 2013-14 target |
| Reduce the number of buildings at risk. ¹ | 8 | 0 | 8 |
| Percentage % reduction in buildings at risk. | 6.2% | 0 | 6.2% |
| Number of conservation area guidance notes. | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Number of listed Buildings grant aided. | 5 | 7 | 8 |
| Number of conservation area appraisals completed. | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Percentage % increase in photo evidence for Scheduled Ancient Monuments.² | 20% | 44% | 65% |
| Percentage % of all grant funding available (£30,000 overall) which will be allocated to Buildings at Risk³ | 50% | 93% | 60% |
| Percentage % spend of available funding (£20,000) on Brecon Conservation Area Grant Scheme | - | 54% | 60% |
| Number of heritage days | New initiative | New initiative | 1 |
| Number of local lists approved by community | New initiative | New initiative | 4 |

¹ Our grants only contribute a small amount to the overall costs of a project and we had difficulties meeting the target in 2012-13. The financial climate is difficult and we found that people were reluctant to invest in structural repairs to properties.

² The outcome of this measure is volunteer dependant. Although we will make every effort through our partnership work with Cadw to photograph our Scheduled Ancient Monuments it will entirely depend on how successful we are in our volunteer recruitment uptake.

³Two streams of funding are available: £20,000 allocated to the Brecon Conservation Area and £10,000 to buildings at risk making a total of £30,000. It is possible to fund a Building at Risk in the Conservation Area which would increase the percentage of spend for both funds while meaning money was still available in one or the other which is why the targets are described in two separate measures. The intention is to ensure the funds available meet both priorities.

## Improvement Objective 2

Theme 2: Conserving and enhancing biodiversity  
***Through effective partnership, facilitation, practical action and the planning function Biodiversity will be conserved and enhanced.***

**Background**

Theme 2 of the National Park Management Plan explains why it is important to look after the communities of species and habitats in the National Park. Biodiversity encompasses all aspects of the living world. The loss of one particular species can lead to the demise of many others and potentially the loss of entire habitats. Every breath consumes oxygen produced by forests and seas; while every mouthful of food has at one time been living material nurtured by soil, microbes and sun. Diverse habitats support an enormous number of species and their value is becoming increasingly apparent - for example peat bogs help to store rainwater and carbon while reducing the risk of floods and drought.

Beyond all the purely practical benefits, interaction with the natural world provides the enjoyment, inspiration and spiritual benefits essential to physical and mental well-being.

The task facing National Park managers is to conserve our biological resources and enhance them where possible. National and international policies ensure that biodiversity is a prime consideration of all sectors of National Park management. Communities of species and the way they interact with their environments are termed as ecosystems. This task will not be easy given the uncertainties of climate change, which could make the impacts of other pressures on biodiversity even worse. The best way forward is to manage the whole landscape in order to protect its ecosystems and thus its biodiversity. Such an approach needs the co-operation of all of the National Park’s biodiversity partners to make sure that the needs of individual species and habitats are met. At the same time, managers can take a broader, integrated view of managing the National Park’s ecosystems by taking account of any habitat’s position in the landscape, the relationship between them and their interconnectedness.

**Conserving and enhancing biodiversity**

One of the key roles for any National Park then is conserving and enhancing its biodiversity. The Brecon Beacons has a substantial number of projects underway to deliver this objective. We are working across the National Park on projects we have initiated and on projects we are managing for others. We will further enhance the management of these projects in order to:

* Be able to determine that the actions being taken are having the positive impact intended
* Ensure that resources are being targeted appropriately
* Put in objectives and milestones which show we are achieving what we want to achieve.

We have also decided to try and maximise the resources available to deliver this important objective by putting in strategies which could be implemented with extra resource and then identifying and applying for grants and encouraging others to do so where we find they are available.

The scar left by the Natural Gas pipeline which was routed through the National Park is still a risk to the objective of conserving and enhancing biodiversity and accordingly the restoration work along the route of the pipeline remains an important objective for the Authority.

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| Why are we are focusing on this improvement objective. | What we will do | How we will do it |
| We want to: | **We will** | **By** |
| Ensure that the resources we invest in conservation projects are delivering the best outputs possible for the National Park. | Review our projects to better assess what they are delivering and if necessary re-target resources | The team tasked to manage and deliver site management projects will assess them against a set of criteria and agree milestones and objectives to ensure effective delivery. This process will produce a list of priorities for targeting resources. We will prioritise the project we are running at Llangasty and Caeau Ty Mawr to show the kind of improvements we intend to make in all our projects |
| Enhance the biodiversity of our Uplands | Seek and win substantial resources for investment to enhance the National Park’s uplands for biodiversity. | Developing an engagement strategy and using it as the basis for a bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund by May 2014 If we are successful in our bid we will manage the strategy to deliver these resources |
| Work with partners to conserve the biodiversity at Mynydd Du | Assist graziers to get more resources to help them deliver more and better ouputs for grazing and conservation. | To assist the graziers at Mynydd Du to apply to the Glastir Advanced scheme potentially offers up to £200K submission by Dec 2013 |
| Help mitigate negative impact from the installation of the Gas pipline | Maintain a watching and consultative brief with National Grid plc re the 1220mm natural gas pipeline and aftercare works. | The Authority help to ensure that Natural Grid plc contractors maintain their presence on the site in order to complete tasks in line with conditions of consent. |

**How will we know if we have conserved and enhanced Biodiversity?**

In the long term these projects will enable:

* The Authority to demonstrate the positive impact our interventions are having.
* The conservation and enhancement of the Uplands through the delivery of a substantial programme funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund
* An improvement in the standard of grazing and the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity at Mynedd Du.
* The restoration of the pipeline scar to the satisfaction of Natural Resources Wales and Brecon Beacons National Park Authority

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| Measure of success | 2012-13 target | 2012-2013 actual | 2013 – 14 target |
| Our site conservation projects will have been assessed and priority sites will be identified by end of the financial year | - | - | New initiative: 100% of all sites assessed and priorities agreed |
| Establishment of a site management steering group for Llangasty-Caeau Ty Mawr: involving leaseholders/ farmers, land owners and key parties from Llangorse Steering Group review draft management plan and review of leasehold agreements | - | - | New initiative: Steering group established. Review of management plan and leasehold agreements completed, milestones and objectives agreed and monitoring begun. |
| A bid for the Upland Management Project is prepared and agreed with partners in a timely manner for for submission to Heritage Lottery Fund in May 2014. | - | - | New initiative: Consultations with partners concluded. Bid prepared in line with Heritage Lottery Fund guidelines by 31 March 2013. |
| Assist the graziers at Mynydd Du to make applications to the Glastir Advanced scheme for potential funding from Welsh Government by the deadline Dec 2013 | - | - | New initiative: Four applications submitted in line with Glastir Advanced Scheme guidelines ahead of Dec 2013 deadline. |
| Natural Gas plc contractors maintain their presence on site in order to complete tasks in line with conditions of consent | Adhere to all conditions of consent, in particular the requirements to continue working on the restoration until CCW sign off. |  | Natural Gas plc are required to adhere to all conditions of their consent, in particular the requirements to continue working on the restoration until Natural Resource Wales signs off. |

## Improvement Objective 3

Theme 5: Building and maintaining sustainable communities, towns and villages***Through effective partnership, facilitation, practical action and the planning function, sustainable living, social resilience, and community pride will be enabled.***

**Background**

Theme 5 explains why it is important for the Authority to work with the communities in the Park. National Park Authorities in the UK have a duty to foster the economic and social well-being of their local communities. They also recognise that these places are living landscapes where people live, work and farm. They are special and protected places with limits put on the use of natural resources and on the development which is accepted within them. The National Park Authority is the planning authority for all the communities within a National Park boundary. The delivery of the Authority’s services is affected by overriding issues like climate change, fossil fuel depletion, the need for affordable housing and the economic decline. The people living and working within their boundaries also have a role as custodians of the environment.

Brecon Beacons National Park is home to approximately 33,000 people, and has a strong Welsh heritage along with a rich economic, social and cultural life. The largest settlement is the cathedral town of Brecon. Together with Brecon, the settlements of Crickhowell, Gilwern, Hay-on-Wye and Talgarth account for approximately 46% of the Park’s inhabitants. Other larger settlements like Abergavenny, Merthyr Tydfil, Llandeilo and Llandovery lie on the border of the Park. Living in a striking landscape such as the National Park conveys considerable positive benefits including a sense of well being from access to for example clean air, space, tranquillity, opportunities to see the stars at night and an abundant array of biodiversity. There are business opportunities from the considerable numbers of visitors who specifically come to this protected area to enjoy recreational and tourism related activities.

The Welsh Assembly Government’s vision for the Welsh National Parks encourages National Park Authorities to work closely with their communities to explore new and innovative ways to live. These options should encourage the vitality and viability of the National Park’s communities, towns and villages with sustainable development as the end result. Simultaneously the characteristics that provide the National Park’s communities with their cultural identity must be conserved and enhanced.

**Enabling sustainable living, social resilience, and community pride**

The National Park Authority is committed to enabling robust communities to be proud to live sustainably in a National Park.

The Authority offers real support to community projects, for example we administer a local Sustainable Development Fund on behalf of the Welsh Government. This £200, 000 fund contributes a percentage of the cost for local projects which improve the quality of life for local communities in the National Park. One of the positive advantages from living within the Park is the opportunity to apply for skills training from the Authority. This training is for local people from excluded groups in skills related to countryside management – if completed successfully these programmes result in participants receiving a credit from Agored Cymru (Wales’ national organisation for developing accreditation).

The National Park Authority has committed substantial resources to communicating better and working more closely with town and community councils and One Voice Wales (the leading representative body) to deliver a Community Council Charter and Action Plan to identify ways to work better together for local communities. Councils have taken an encouragingly active role in working with the Authority on this project and this work is continuing across the National Park.

All planning authorities in the UK produce Local Development Plans which are widely consulted on and eventually agreed with Welsh Government. Local Development Plans try to describe the long term impact of development on the Park’s communities and landscape. They contain a strategy which seeks to manage the development of land and buildings in a way which fits with the purposes of the National Park and with the wider principles of sustainability. When they are agreed, Local Development Plans will be used by planning officers and the Planning Committee to decide whether planning applications should be approved. The Plan is one of the vital tools the Authority has for helping establish where and how communities could grow and for agreeing where new affordable housing should be built. The Local Development Plan for the Brecon Beacons National Park is now being examined by an Inspector from the Welsh Government. In the future the Authority will work with Community and Town Councils to explore the development of Village Plans for their communities.

The Authority is actively supporting community led initiatives which are proactive in making communities more sustainable. The highest profile of these is the Green Valleys, a community interest company which looks for individual, local solutions aimed at supporting increasingly sustainable communities.

The National Park Authority recognizes the vital role that tourism can have in keeping local businesses alive – particularly those of community importance like pubs and post offices. It supports a vibrancy within the local area which is partially economic but is also cultural. Thus festivals and concerts, arts events and male voice choirs, all are encouraged and supported by a strong tourism market. Lastly it is also a means of helping protect and enhance the local environment – enabling local resources to be valued and protected for sound economic reasons. Accordingly the Authority is lead partner for a€10 million European Funded Interreg programme – Rural Alliances - to help communities and the businesses in them work more closely together in co-ordinating a response to tourism and improving their local offer for tourists.

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| Why we are focusing on this improvement objective | What we will do | How we will do it |
| We want to | **We will** | **By** |
| Establish a base line which shows how our residents experience living in the National Park now so that we can work out what impact any changes have. | Find out as much as we can about the views of residents. | Conducting a survey of all the households within the National Park . |
| Support sustainable living and social resilience through delivering sustainable building projects and affordable housing | Work to deliver planning including affordable housing in line with local plans. | Completing each stage for the Local Development Plan as laid out in the Delivery Agreement |
| Support communities who want to take an active role in planning development. | Enable communities who are interested in developing Village Plans to work with the Authority to develop them. | Developing a framework and facilitating a workshop with Town and Community Councils to identify the level of interest in and support for Village Plans. |
| Help communities take an active and informed role | Work with Community and Town Councils to identify what we can do better. | Delivering the Town and Community Council Charter Action Plan. |
| Offer practical support to help communities develop their tourism offer. | Use funding to help the formation of alliances which will strengthen how appealing a community is to tourists | Facilitate and support the formation of Alliances through Rural Alliances funding. |
| Work with communities to help them become more resilient and sustainable. | Support initiatives aimed at achieving sustainable communities | Working with groups including The Green Valleys. |

**How will we know if we have enabled communities to live sustainably and achieve social resilience, and community pride?**

* Communities will successfully deliver projects using access to training and grants to help them.
* Sustainable development will take place across the National Park supporting resilient communities
* Communities will take an active role in ensuring the National Park Authority is aware of their needs and is responding to them.
* Communities will work with businesses to encourage tourism which meets local needs.
* Communities will develop local responses to make them more sustainable and independent.

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| Measure of success | 2012-13 target | 2012-2013 actual | 2013 – 14 target |
| Use the report on the Park wide residents survey to inform future improvement through activity and allocation of resources | - | - | New initiative: Complete survey with statistical relevance. Disseminate report on findings. |
| Number of beneficiaries from Skills programmes | 26 | 29 | 26 |
| Achieve or exceed 1:1 match funding ratio with Sustainable Development Fund grands¹ | 1:1 | 4:1 | 2:1 |
| Deliver the stages for the Local Development Plan process on time as laid out in the Delivery Agreement | Submit for examination | Submitted for examination | Adoption |
| Developing a framework and facilitating a workshop with Town and Community Councils to identify the level of interest in and support for Village Plans. | - | - | New initiative -Framework developed and workshop held |
| Deliver the Community Council Charter Action Plan | Detail in action plan | Actions in plan delivered or progressed if ongoing | Achieve participation from 25 Councils in delivering targets from the action plan |
| Rural alliances active across the Park | 8 | 8 | 10 active alliances |
| Achieve targets from The Green Valleys Service Level Agreement. | Targets in action plan to be achieved within year | 75% achieved | 100% of targets including: work with community groups to:   * Manage 70Ha woodland. * Produce 90 cu m wood fuel * Produce 700kg charcoal. |
| Deliver the action plan arising from the Scrutiny Review of Inspiration and benefit conveyed by living in the National Park | - | - | New initiative: produce an agreed action plan and act on 7 recommendations, deliver targets for this financial year. |

¹The ratio the Sustainable Development Fund achieves in any given year can be significantly raised if the Fund contributes to even one very large project.  Project quality and its contribution are the primary award criteria

## Improvement Objective 4

Theme 6: Sustainable Economic Development  
***Through effective partnership, facilitation, practical action and the planning function the use of sustainable transport by visitors will be encouraged and enhanced.***

**Background**

Theme 6 explains why it is important to support tourism businesses in the Park to become more sustainable. The National Park is home to a variety of businesses. Many of these are interested in how they can reduce their impact on the environment, not only to protect the National Park and to attract a discerning public, but also in response to climate change impacts like soaring fuel prices.

Tourism is essential to the local economy - the Park hosts 3.6 million visitors each year and according to the most recent STEAM (Scarborough Tourism Economic Activity Monitor) report commissioned by the National Park Authority, tourism bought £205.9m into the Brecon Beacons National Park in 2010, supporting in the region of 27,500 jobs. The Park’s tourism businesses and activity providers will work to maximise benefits locally. Land managers may need to minimise the negative impacts of tourism such as eroding footpaths or increased car traffic. Local tourism businesses already work with the National Park Authority and the Fforest Fawr Geopark and have been making great strides in developing sustainable transport networks, creating local supply chains while promoting local producers, investing in local communities and promoting sustainable economic development.

**Encouraging and enhancing the use of sustainable transport by Visitors**

There is a tension between the economic advantages derived from encouraging tourists to visit the area and the negative impact in terms of increased carbon footprint and pollution from individuals travelling long distances by car or even plane to reach a remote rural destination with limited public transport infrastructure. The National Park Authority has been wrestling with this and a number of creative and innovative solutions have been introduced. We are engaged in promoting bus routes and itineraries for activity which can be reached on the bus. The Authority has been working closely with Sustainable Tourism Powys on an action plan which outlines a number of initiatives and the measures we have proposed for this year relate to delivering outcomes against this plan.

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| Why we are focusing on this improvement objective | What we will do | How we will do it |
| We want to | **We will** | **By** |
| Encourage visitors to use sustainable transport both to get here and in the area. | Promote the sustainable options available. | Working with Sustainable Tourism Powys to deliver the aspects of the Action Plan we can influence as we identify resources. |
| Get as many visitors as we can to use buses. | Work with partners to deliver and promote the Bus services within the Park . | Organising and promoting the Beacons Bus on weekends and bank holidays in the Summer season.  Promoting the T4 service |
| Ensure that visitors are receiving our key messages about sustainable transport while they are in the National Park. | Help Tourism businesses to promote sustainable transport | Offer training and support to individuals running businesses in the National Park including information on what is available online. |
| Make visitors aware of the opportunities to use electric cars and Twizzies during their stay | Work with partners to support and promote the electric charging network and Twizzie hire scheme | Actively promoting initiatives |

**How will we know if we have encouraged and enhanced the use of sustainable transport by Visitors?**

More visitors will use sustainable transport more often.

Businesses will be able to give information to visitors on accessing public transport.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Measure of success | 2012-13 target | 2012-2013 actual | 2013 – 14 target |
| Increase the number of passenger journeys on Beacons Bus | 10 000 | 10 776 | 11 000 |
| Businesses will receive training on sustainable transport | 15 People trained | 24 people trained | 24 people\* trained |
| Promote the T4 route between Cardiff and Newtown | - | - | New initiative: promotional plan includes production of a video promoting the route to be shown on websites and other buses |
| Produce and distribute a pocket bus timetable guide | 30, 000 | 30, 000 | 30, 000 |

# We were happy to achieve 24 last year but feel we may not be able to achieve this amount again, however have put it as an overall target

# Monitoring Performance

These details will be measured, recorded and assessed in our Performance Management System called ‘Ffynnon’ and will provide the basis for reporting our performance. The information uploaded into Ffynnon comprises of core data on statutory performance indicators and local performance indicators which shows each Directorate’s work in context by showing workload, cases, figures, numbers and targets. Ffynnon reports are generated quarterly and presented to the National Park Authority Committee highlighting the areas that have improved or areas that require attention.

In order to monitor effectiveness and efficiency, progress reports will also be delivered to the Audit and Scrutiny Committee every quarter on one selected improvement objective. In addition to this, the Authority will continue to benchmark its performance with the other National Parks of Wales and these details will also be presented to the National Park Authority Committee when available.

The improvements will be evidenced in a variety of ways including:

* Performance indicators (which include those that are national and statutory ones and those
* that are local)
* Consultation with stakeholders and service users through surveys and other means.
* Internal assessment
* Inspection by the Welsh Audit Office
* Benchmarking and meeting targets

We have strong corporate governance and internal measures to manage the conduct of the Authority. We have adopted a model Code supported by Guidance from the Public Service Ombudsman for Wales. The Code is based on seven principles of public life, first set out in the Committee on Standards in Public Life (the Nolan Committee) and most recently defined in Wales in a Statutory Instrument as:

1. Selflessness

2. Honesty

3. Integrity and Propriety

4. Duty to Uphold the Law

5. Stewardship

6. Objectivity in Decision-making

7. Equality and Respect

8. Openness

9. Accountability

10. Leadership

<http://www.ombudsman-wales.org.uk/en/publications/?pID=254>

A range of policies have been adopted within the Authority to achieve these principles. They are supported by the Members, Officers, the Audit and Scrutiny Committee, the Standards Committee, the Monitoring Officer, the Solicitors of the Authority, the Complaints Procedure and the Freedom of Information Act. We will ensure that we apply these principals to our decision making and our commitment to improve our services.

This Improvement Plan sits within an ambitious planning framework, the National Park Management Plan, which maps developments in the Park over the next twenty years. Our experiences will continue to inform and influence work programmes, budgets and funding proposals as we strive to exceed our targets. If you would like any additional information on the Improvement Plan or would like to suggest areas of work where we require improvement please write to Mr John Cook, Chief Executive, Brecon Beacons National Park Authority, Plas y Ffynnon, Cambrian Way, Brecon LD3 7HP, Powys or email [improvements@breconbeacons.org](mailto:improvements@breconbeacons.org)