

Brecon Beacons National Park Authority

Annual Report on the Business Improvement Plan 2014 - 2015

PART 2



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Foreword

This Business Improvement Plan sets out the improvement objectives for Brecon Beacons National Park Authority and describes how well we have achieved these during 2014-2015. In essence this plan takes us from vision to commitment whilst we continue to adapt to unparalleled financial pressures. This document describes in detail what the Authority set out to achieve in 2014-2015 and our measurable commitment under each heading. We welcome this as an opportunity to let everyone know what we set out to do, how our achievements may be assessed and outline our performance throughout the year. This is our measuring tool of assurance to the Welsh Government, the Wales Audit Office and the public in relation to the statutory duties we have as a National Park Authority, and any other actions we have set and agreed with them. This year we have had a demanding work programme, pursued industriously by officers, staff and volunteers in an acutely challenging financial environment. Despite this, our ambition for the Brecon Beacons has always been unwavering. This ambition is founded on a rich and deep understanding of our environment and its needs, its people and their needs, and a profound knowledge of the area which our staff, volunteers, residents and visitors have acquired over many years. I am pleased to report that this plan delivers robust and significant improvements, where in almost all areas we have exceeded our predicted targets. Along the way, Members of the Authority have been encouraged and reassured by the wide support of our communities, and by the energy and enthusiasm of genuine shared partnerships, which have provided a springboard for many of our achievements. Our work, more than ever before requires a strong alliance of willing partners both nationally and locally - requiring us to stand shoulder to shoulder - determined to deliver measurable and tangible benefits to our environment and our people. We hope you enjoy reading about our progress during 2014-2015 and we look forward to updating you further on these in the future.

Best wishes,

Melanie Doel

Chairman,

Brecon Beacons National Park Authority

Introduction

- 1.1** Brecon Beacons National Park Authority is pleased to publish part 2 of its Business Improvement Plan (BIP) for the year ending 31st March 2015. Part 1 of the report looks forward and outlines the Authority's improvement priorities for the new financial year. This was published in April 2014 and can be found at Appendix 1. The two reports should be read together as one document.
- 1.2** The Business Improvement Plan Part 2 looks backwards at the previous year. It considers the National Park Authority's progress against the improvement priorities identified in BIP1. The report also sets out the Authority's approach to discharging its general duty under the Welsh Government's Local Government Measure and its commitment to continuous improvement. The Authority is required to publish its Business Improvement Plan part 2 by no later than 31st October each year.
- 1.3** The Improvement Plan sits within an ambitious planning framework, the National Park Management Plan, which maps developments in the Park over the next fifteen years. Our experiences will continue to inform and influence work programmes, budgets and funding proposals as we strive to exceed our targets.
- 1.4** The National Park Management Plan sets the scene for all our strategic documents and was produced in consultation with stakeholders, landowners and communities throughout the Park. In 2011, the Authority aligned its Corporate Goals and objectives (which set the context for the Business Improvement Plan) with the 6 Management Plan themes. These are:

Management Plan Themes	
Theme 1: Managing Park Landscapes to Maximise Conservation and Public Benefits	1st Purpose
Theme 2: Conserving and Enhancing Biodiversity	
Theme 3: Provide Opportunities for Outdoor Access and Recreation	2nd Purpose
Theme 4: Raising Awareness and Understanding of the Park	
Theme 5: Building and Maintaining Sustainable Communities, Towns and Villages	Duty
Theme 6: Sustainable Economic Development	

- I.5** You can find out more information about the National Park Authority and download this report from our website at www.beacons-npa.gov.uk or you can ask for a paper copy by ringing 01874 620465 or emailing IT@beacons-npa.gov.uk.
- I.6** The National Park Authority publishes a report annually on its performance in relation to the Welsh Language Scheme, this report is available here:
<http://www.beacons-npa.gov.uk/the-authority/who-we-are/our-policies-and-procedures/welsh-language-scheme/monitoring-reports-for-the-welsh-language-scheme/>
- I.7** 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@beacons-npa.gov.uk.

I. Did we deliver what we set out to achieve in 2014/2015?

2.1 The Business Improvement Plan Part I 2014/2015 (BIP1) identifies how we decided on our Improvement Priorities for the year. These are listed below:

- **Improvement Priority 1** (Management Plan 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 Priority 2** (Management Plan Theme 2 - Conserving and enhancing biodiversity):
 - *Through effective partnership, facilitation, practical action and the planning function **Biodiversity** will be conserved and enhanced*
- **Improvement Priority 3** (Management Plan 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 Priority 4** (Management Plan 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*

2.2 The following describes how we have performed against these Improvement Priorities.

Improvement Priority 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.*

2.3 In BIPI 2014/2015, we said that we would know if we had achieved '**Conserving and enhancing the Park's environment**' as:

- We will have undertaken positive conservation measures on at least 2 Scheduled Ancient Monuments
- We will have removed 6 buildings from the 'Buildings at Risk' register.

2.4 What did we actually achieve?

ID	Measure of success	2013-2014 Target	2013-2014 Actual	2014-15 Target	2014-15 Actual
1	Undertake positive conservation measures on Scheduled Ancient Monuments	n/a	n/a	2	2
2	Reduce the amount of buildings on the Buildings at Risk register	8	0	6	23

2.5 In 2014/2015 we met our target for undertaking positive conservation measures on Scheduled Ancient Monuments and we exceeded the target for reducing the number of buildings on the Buildings at Risk register. A number of major at risk buildings have been the subject of applications to bring them back into use. We also commenced a review of structures at risk, which has so far resulted in a large number being reclassified to 'monitoring' rather than 'action required'. A full review will be completed by Spring 2016.

2.6 We are very happy with our performance in this Improvement Priority.

Improvement Priority 2: Conserving and enhancing biodiversity

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

2.7 In BIPI 2014/2015, we said that we would know if we had ‘conserved and enhanced biodiversity’ as the long term nature of projects identified within this Improvement Priority would enable:

- A steering group to have been established and at least 1 meeting of the steering group to have been held. This is necessary to achieve our ultimate aim of achieving 'Favourable Conservation Status' for Llangasty Caeau Ty Mawr (European Union's Habitats Directive) by delivering specific actions within the draft Management Plan, which will develop into measures under this priority in years to come.
- At least 1 application will be made to the Glastir Advanced Scheme. Ultimately we will develop targets based upon the area of habitat affected in the Park and measures based upon how the target has been achieved (including the SSSI). Success will be based upon implementation of the Glastir Common Land Element.

2.8 What did we actually achieve?

ID	Measure of success	2013-2014 target	2013-2014 actual	2014-15 Target	2014-15 Actual
3	Establishment of a site management steering group for Llangasty – Caeau Ty Mawr Special Area of Conservation	New initiative: Steering group established. Review of management plan and leasehold agreements completed, milestones and objectives agreed and monitoring begun.	Steering group, mp review, leaseholds, milestones + objectives completed in 13/14. Monitoring began in June 14	A working draft of the Llangasty-Caeau Ty Mawr Management Plan is approved by the Steering Group by the end of the fiscal year[1]	Management Plan approved January 2015

4	Assist the graziers at Mynydd Du to make applications to the Glastir Advanced scheme	Applications submitted in line with Glastir Advanced Scheme guidelines ahead of Dec 2013 deadline	Four applications submitted	Facilitate the implementation of one Glastir Capital Works Agreement in partnership with one Mynydd Du grazing association	Glastir projects implemented on time for at least one association, with approval from WG
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[1] Subsequent BIP reports can demonstrate progress against actions within this plan

2.9 In 2014/2015 we achieved both of the agreed measures and we also submitted a successful bid to the Welsh Government's Nature Recovery Fund to develop a continuous improvement programme to restore heathland, peat bogs and other habitats in the Black Mountains.

2.10 We are very happy with progress we have made in this area. We continue to seek collaboration with universities and research institutions that are willing and able to develop applied research and teaching programmes to assist us and the Park's communities to meet the challenges we face. We continue to make significant progress on developing research agendas with Cardiff University and the University of Wales Trinity Saint David.

Improvement Priority 3: 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*

2.11 In BIPI 2014/2015, we said that we would know if we had enabled communities to live sustainably and achieve social resilience and community pride as:

- We will have reached a target of 26 beneficiaries
- We will have achieved a minimum ratio of 2:1 match funding against the Sustainable Development Fund
- We will have supported 50 National Park related Community Projects by way of development advice and/or funding
- We will have developed 52 policy targets and indicators to inform detailed understanding of the application of the Local Development Plan
- We will have adopted 1 village plan

2.12 What did we actually achieve?

ID	Measure of success	2013-2014 target	2013-2014 actual	2014-15 Target	2014-15 Actual
5	Individuals registering, undertaking training and receiving accreditation	26 (previously 'No. of beneficiaries from skills programmes')	27	26 beneficiaries	31
6	Actual funding ratio per annum (2)	2:1	2.23:1	A minimum ratio of 2:1	2.91:1

7	Number of National Park related Community Projects supported by way of development advice and/or funding	n/a	n/a	50 Projects supported	94
8	Develop policy targets and indicators to inform detailed understanding of the application of the Local Development Plan	n/a	n/a	52 policy targets and indicators	52 policy targets and indicators – Local Development Plan Monitoring
9	Development of an approved process for the methods of place based plan production	New initiative - Framework developed and workshop held	Achieved - Framework developed and workshop held	Adopt 1 Village Plan	0

The 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

- 2.13** We met our targets in four of the five measures and exceeded the targets within three measures. Although a village plan has not been adopted, there has been significant progress in the development of a Hay on Wye Town Plan, while a second village plan is also being progressed.
- 2.14** We undertook a Scrutiny Study within this Improvement Priority (Social Resilience) which comprised of a panel of National Park Members together with representatives from a range of outside bodies. The reference for the study is 02/2014 and the recommendations can be seen at Appendix 2.
- 2.15** We are very pleased with progress we have made in this area.

Improvement Objective 4: 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***

2.16 In BIPI 2014/2015, we said that we would know if we have encouraged and enhanced the use of sustainable transport by visitors if:

- We will have trained 24 people within the private sector on sustainable transport
- We will have produced and distributed 30,000 bus timetable leaflets for visitors

2.17 What did we actually achieve?

ID	Measure of success	2013-2014 target	2013-2014 actual	2014-15 Target	2014-15 Actual
10	Number of transport training courses organised for the private sector	20	21 people trained over 5 training courses organised	24 people trained	52
11	Number of bus timetable leaflets produced for visitors	30,000	30,000	30,000	30,000

2.18 We achieved our targets in both of the agreed measures and exceeded the target for the amount of people trained in the private sector on transport training courses. We also undertook a Scrutiny Study within this Improvement Priority (Sustainable Transport) which comprised of a panel of National Park Members together with representatives from a range of outside bodies. The reference for the study is No: 02/2014 and the recommendations can be seen at Appendix 2.

2.19 We are very happy with the progress we have made within this Improvement Priority.

2. Conclusion

- 3.1 We have continued to make good progress in all 4 of the Improvement Priorities.
- 3.2 Following advice from the Welsh Audit Office, 2014-2015 saw the Authority take further steps forward in terms of developing Improvement Priorities that are results based and outcome focused while continuing to be derived from the priorities contained within the National Park Management Plan.
- 3.3 The Business Improvement Plan continues to develop, linking improvement priorities to Management Plan objectives for 2015-2016.

Statement of Responsibility

Brecon Beacons National Park Authority is responsible for preparing the 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.

Appendices

Appendix I: Business Improvement Plan Part I 2014/2015

[Business Improvement Plan Part I \(2014-15\)](#)

Appendix 2:

Recommendations from the Sustainable Transport Scrutiny Study 02/2014:

1. The Authority is asked to look at the possibility of a cycling strategy and to investigate the feasibility of a grant fund towards promoting cycling in the National Park for residents rather than off road cycling.
2. When managers are carrying out Performance Management Reviews to consider the opportunity for staff to experience public transport throughout the National Park.
3. To ask the Visitor Transport Officer to liaise with the TICs in relation to promotion of public transport initiatives and improvements for leaflet distribution

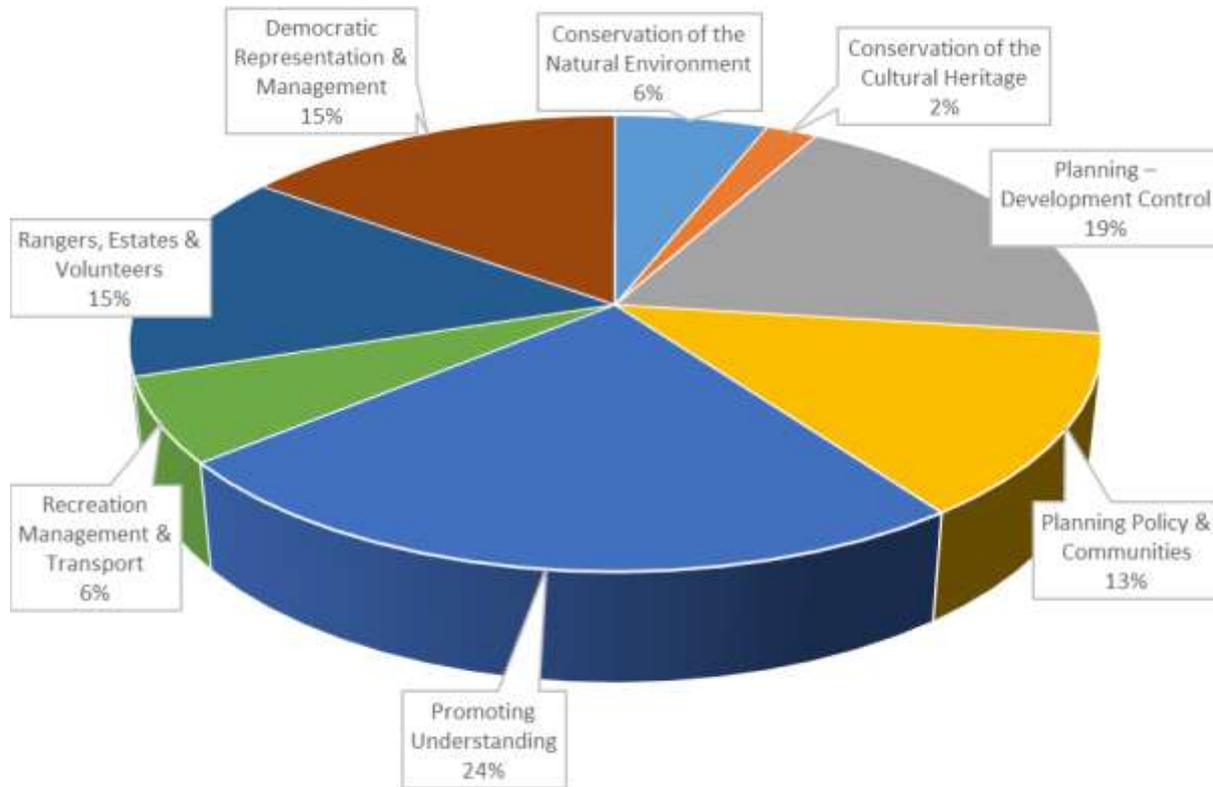
Recommendations from the Social Resilience Scrutiny Study 02/2014:

1. Officers need to take responsibility for recognising that where they may not have direct KPIs, that they do have relevant data to demonstrate delivery of an objective.
2. That the Authority incorporates the following processes into its work in supporting communities to increase social resilience within the National Park communities:
 - a. Building a relationship foundation through key spokespersons who already have a good relationship with Planning, and are well recognised and respected by local authorities and residents
 - b. Identifying and understanding the key faults and triggers that motivate residents, town and community councils and local authorities to feel disconnected, and setting a plan to address such disconnects
 - c. Building an atmosphere of respect for the views and presence of local authorities and residents through a more effective communication strategy
 - d. Building on our active “open door” policy to increase inclusivity through an ‘invitation for citizens to provide feedback or to make comments on’ our work where possible. Our residents, town and community councils and local authorities need to believe that they are being listened to, heard, involved and are instrumental in the Authority’s decision process;
3. That the Authority looks at how it can implement the following:
 - a. Encourage officers across the National Park Authority to provide the Communications team with more information to use as posts – ideally and most effectively with a photograph
 - b. Continue to offer community groups the opportunity to take up their concerns directly with senior officers

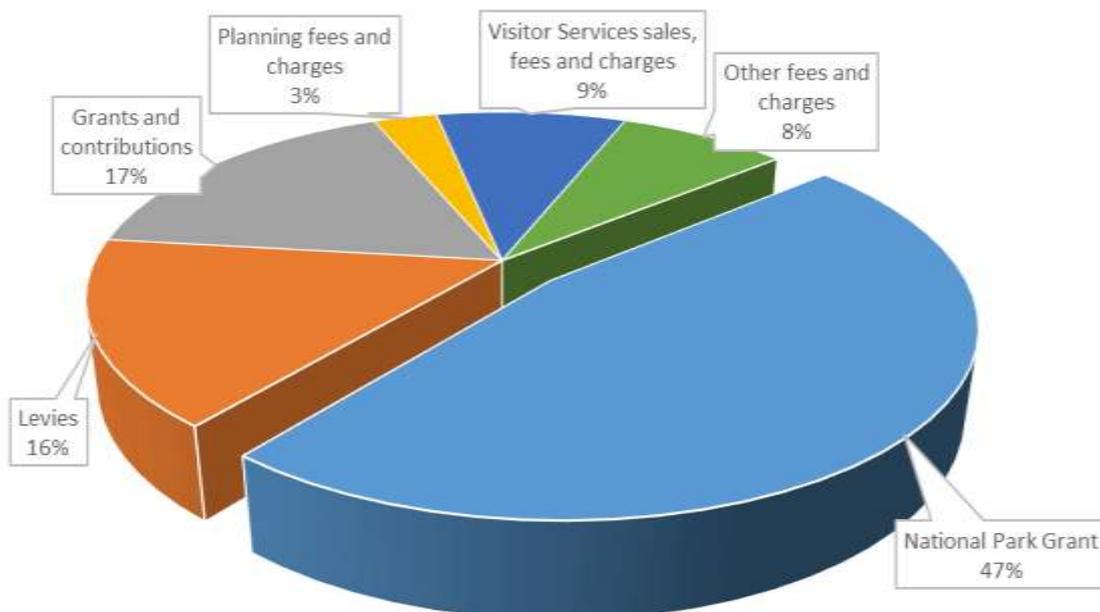
- c. Renew case studies on Sustainable Development Fund on Authority website pages
 - d. Explore the most appropriate method to put information about the positive work of the Authority before members of the Welsh Government – possibly a regular newsletter
4. As the Sustainable Development Fund continues to be recognised as a fundamental mechanism for investment into our communities, the SDF budget is protected:
 - a. A review of the SD Fund should be undertaken to ensure that projects that contribute to social resilience receive greater priorities to help us deliver our purposes and duties within the WG remit for the Fund.
 - b. The possibilities of using / adapting a loan model (Powys model or another model relevant to enabling community led sustainability initiatives) should be investigated.
5. When time and resources permit, a study be undertaken to look at the correlation between responses to consultations and subsequent engagement in the Local Development Plan and planning processes.
6. The work within the Rural Alliances Programme and the development of the LAND project should take into account the work being undertaken Brecon Beacons National Park Authority Social Resilience – Scrutiny Report 35 as part of the Nature Fund project to develop future partnerships and groupings.
7. The value of seconding officers into strategic key community organisations is recognised and maintained as a mechanism for delivering services.
8. The Planning Department looks at how it might provide a focussed set of simple planning guidance specifically targeted for the farming community to include what is and what is not permitted development.
9. That the Authority continues to liaise and build on relationships with Town and Community Councils to work together within respective remits to support local communities.
10. That the Authority works with Town and Community Councils, including through the development of Village Plans, to support their work in community resilience, including during the transfer of public sector services.

Appendix 3: Financial Summary 2014-2015

Expenditure 2014-2015



Income 2014-2015



Appendix 4: Statutory Performance Indicators 2014-2015

No.	Data	SNPA 2014/15 Results	BBNPA 2014/15 Results	PCNPA 2014/15 Results
PLA/ 002	The percentage of applications for development during the year that were approved.	90%	90%	95%
PLA/ 003	a) The number of appeals that were determined during the year, in relation to: i) Planning application decisions ii) Enforcement notices b) The percentage of these determined appeals that upheld the authority's decision, in relation to: i) Planning application decisions ii) Enforcement notices	13 1 77% 100%	9 2 44% 100%	14 0 79% 100%
PLA/ 004	a) The percentage of major planning applications determined during the year within 13 weeks b) The percentage of minor planning applications determined during the year within 8 weeks c) The percentage of householder planning applications determined during the year within 8 weeks d) The percentage of all other planning applications determined during the year within 8 weeks.	50% 70% 87% 70%	*80% 87% 93% 90%	22% 78% 93% 87%
PLA/ 005	The percentage of enforcement cases resolved during the year within 12			

	weeks of receipt.	64%	**85%	68%
PLA/ 006	The number of new affordable housing units provided during the year as a percentage of all new housing units provided during the year.	51%	16%	60%
PLA/ 007	The number of new housing units provided during the year on previously developed land as a percentage of all new housing units provided during the year.	59%	***1%	Not yet available
CHR/ 001	The percentage of employees who leave the employment of the authority, whether on a voluntary or involuntary basis.	13.1%	16.46%	13.6%
CHR/ 002	The number of working days/ shifts per full time equivalent (FTE) authority employees lost due to sickness absence.	9.3 days	13.72 days	8.1 days
CFH/ 006	The percentage of undisputed invoices which were paid within 30 days of such invoices being received by the authority.	96%	96.02%	97.6%
CAM/ 001	a) The % of gross internal area of the authority's buildings in condition categories: i) A ii) B iii) C iv) D b) The % of total value of required maintenance for the authority's buildings assigned to works of priority level: i) 1 ii) 2 iii) 3	A: 42.5% B: 46.5% C: 11% D: 0% 1: 11% 2: 78.8% 3: 10.2%	2.5% 95.6% 1.8% 0%**** Data not collected for this indicator	Not collected
CHR/ 001	The percentage of authority employees from minority			

004	ethnic communities.	0%	1.6%	0%
CHR/ 005	The percentage of authority employees declaring that they are disabled under the terms of the Disability Discrimination Act.	0.1%	8.5%	n/a

* WG Statutory Return request the percentage of major planning applications determined during the year within U16 weeks

** WG Statutory Return request the percentage of enforcement cases resolved during the year within 180 days or fewer

*** The number of new housing units provided during the year on previously developed land as a percentage of all new housing units provided during the year, this figure is for 2014 only as figures for January to March 2015 are not available.

**** The figures are based on the report compiled by Bruton Knowles in 2013 (We cannot afford to repeat the condition surveys each year). The figures exclude HQ which is leased. Note for CAM 001/b we would have to repeat the survey to request data in this format.

Appendix 5: National Parks Wales Comparative Performance Indicators 2014-2015

No.	Data	SNPA 2014/15 Results	BBNPA 2014/15 Results	PCNPA 2014/15 Results
LPI3	Number of complaints to the Ombudsman classed as maladministration.	0	0	0
CL4	Number of complaints received and recorded centrally	15	25	12
CL5	Number of training sessions made available to individual members.	9.32 days	4.89	n/a
CL6	Average percentage of members attending training	49.3%	75%	71%
CL7	Average number of training days per member of staff	2.2 days	3.4 days	n/a
LPI2	Number of listed buildings at risk rescued through NPA action during the year, as a % of the total number of listed buildings at risk in the National Park	2.66%	20%	5%
LPI1	% of all planning applications determined within 8 weeks	74%	90%	85%

Appendix 6: Glossary of terms

BBNPA	Brecon Beacons National Park Authority
BIP	Business Improvement Plan
LDP	Local Development Plan
NPA	National Park Authority
NPMP	National Park Management Plan
NRW	National Resources Wales (Combination of FCW, CCW and EAW)
NT	National Trust
PCNPA	Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority
ROW	Rights of Way
SAM	Scheduled Ancient Monument
SDF	Sustainable Development Fund
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest
SAC	Special Area of Conservation
SNPA	Snowdonia National Park Authority
WG	Welsh Government