

Corporate Plan 2021/2022

#BeTheChangeBreconBeacons
#ByddNewidBannauBrecheiniog



Brecon Beacons
NATIONAL PARK

April 2021

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

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

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

Foreword

Welcome to our Corporate Plan for the coming year.

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

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

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



Cllr Gareth Ratcliffe
Chair of the
National
Park
Authority



Julian Atkins
Chief
Executive
Officer



Liz Davis
Deputy
Chair of the
Authority



Brecon Beacons National Park

A Landscape for Everyone

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

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

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

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

”

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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



Future challenges

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

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

It found that over half of the Park's Special Areas of Conservation are in unfavourable condition (56%); that only 10% of SSSIs are under appropriate management; that there had been a 20-30% decline in farmland birds during the monitoring period; only 50% of the Park's rivers were in good ecological status when the target is 100% and that there was a 50% decline in the numbers of red list species from 1995-2018. Phosphate [compliance reports](#) published by NRW at the beginning of 2021 showed the devastating extent of phosphate pollution in protected rivers, signalling that our use of natural resources has exceeded environmental capacity.

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

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

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



Photo credit: Getty Images

Our vision and strategic priorities

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

Landscape and nature recovery

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

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

Community and rural enterprise

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

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



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

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

Inspiring People and Places

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

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

A resilient organisation

Implementing our vision

YEAR ZERO

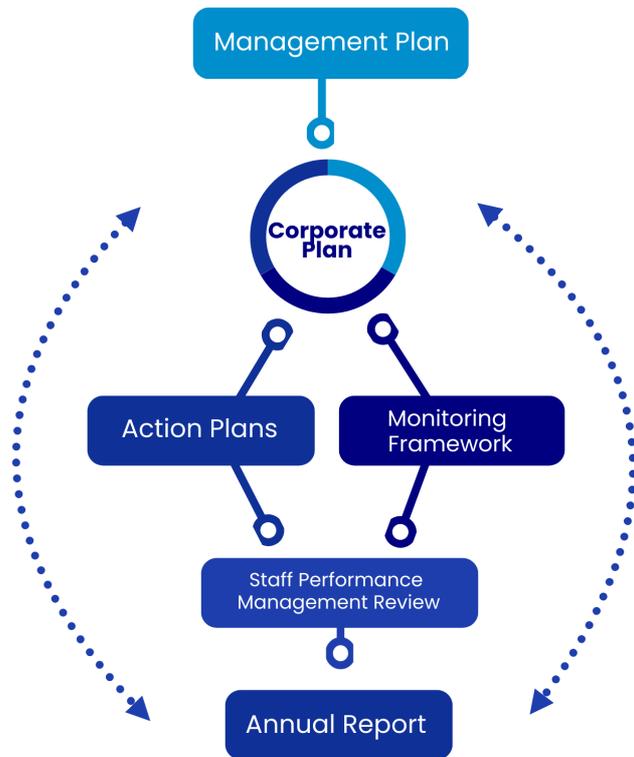
This Corporate Plan defines the key areas of work for our three strategic priorities and for our organisation for the coming year.

Our focus here is deliberately strategic, defining only those key work programmes and elements of core work which will form the frame around which we can build the detail of our day to day work.

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

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

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



Our business planning and reporting framework



Photo Credit: Peter Fry ARPS

Strategic Priorities

Landscape and Nature Recovery



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



Our aspirations for this year

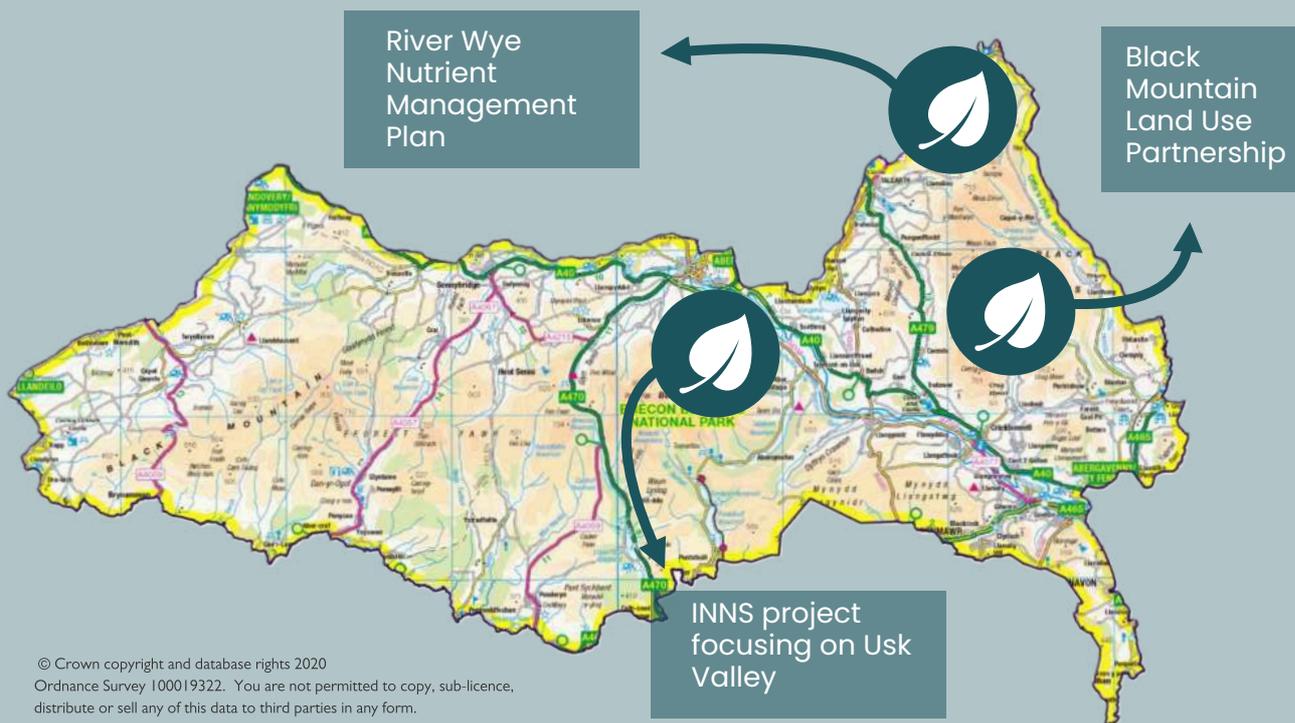
- We will have defined a strategy to increase woodland cover and have an informed policy target for NPMP21.
- We will have a prioritised action plan for working with partners to improve key features within the Park's SACs including riverine SACs and have an informed policy target for NPMP21
- We will have a prioritised action plan to restore the Park's peatland and have an informed policy target for NPMP21.
- We will implement the Nature Recovery Plan Work Programme.
- We will implement the ROWIP Work Programme for the year.

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

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

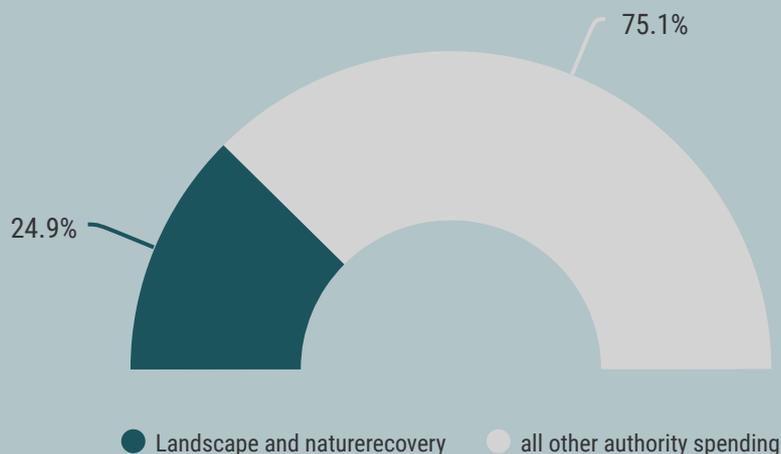
Core Work	We will
LNP	Continue to develop, support and be active partners in the Local Nature Partnership
NRAP	Implement the NRAP work programme
Habitat and species monitoring	Continue to monitor key indicator species and habitats within the Park to inform future policy making.

Spatial focus and budget proportion



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Proportion of total budget dedicated to landscape and nature recovery





Strategic Priorities

Community and rural enterprise

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



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



Our Aspirations for this year

- We will have developed updated Place Plan Guidance for use with NPMP21 and LDP2.
- We will have developed a carbon reduction and education strategy and have an informed target for NPMP21 Policy.
- We will have developed policy and action supporting a just transition for farming
- We will have developed a work placement programme to support young people in the area.

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

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

Spatial focus and budget proportion

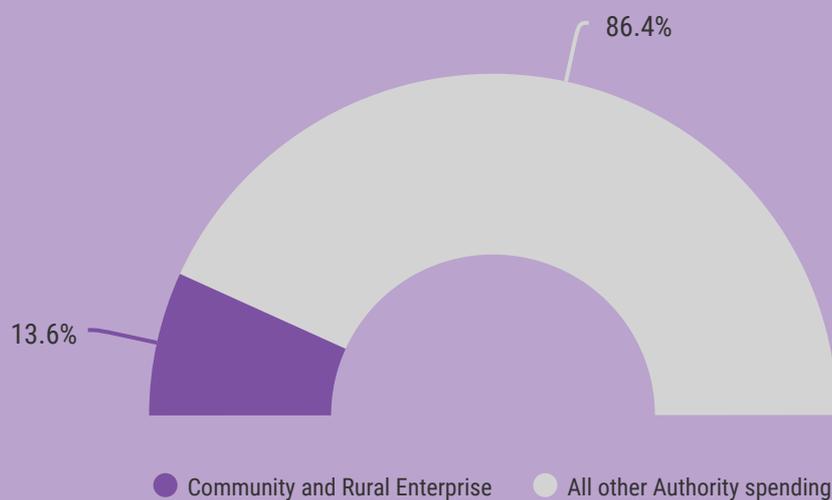


Taf Fechan
Landscape and
Community
Project



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Proportion of total budget dedicated to Community and Rural Enterprise



Strategic Priorities

Inspiring People and Places



Key Priorities	We will
Accessing the Park for health and well-being	Work with organisations to enable people to benefit from the natural environment and make positive contributions to nature recovery
Quality visitor experiences	Work with Visit Wales to build on their Year of Outdoors campaign and the Wales Way to enhance visitor experiences through the provision of high quality interpretation and information
Enhanced Historic Environment	Work with key partners to ensure that the condition and understanding of our Historic Environment is enhanced.
Awareness of Welsh Language and Culture	Develop the Ambassador programme to promote Welsh language and culture and complete the Atlantic Culturescape project

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



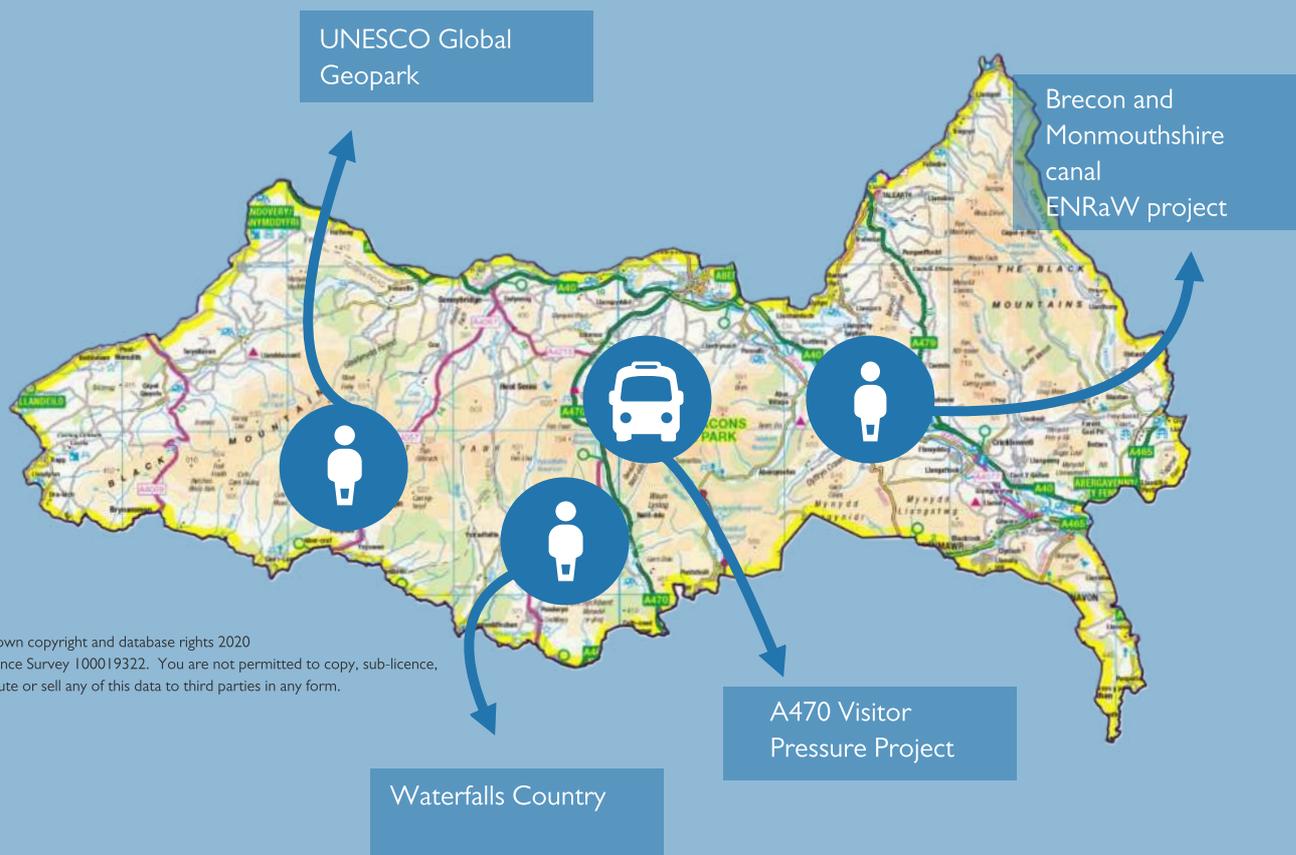
Our aspirations for this year

- We will understand the feasibility of developing a Park and Ride for the A470 Corridor and have a plan in place to take recommendations forward.
- Our Historic Environment Partnership (HEP) will be established and key priorities for the NPMP21 developed. The Historic Environment Action Plan (HEAP) will be published for consultation.
- We will engage the Waterfall Country Partnership to deliver priority projects related to improved visitor management, greater community benefit and support the move toward sustainable transport models.
- We will have progressed a programme of work to make the National Park more accessible for more people.

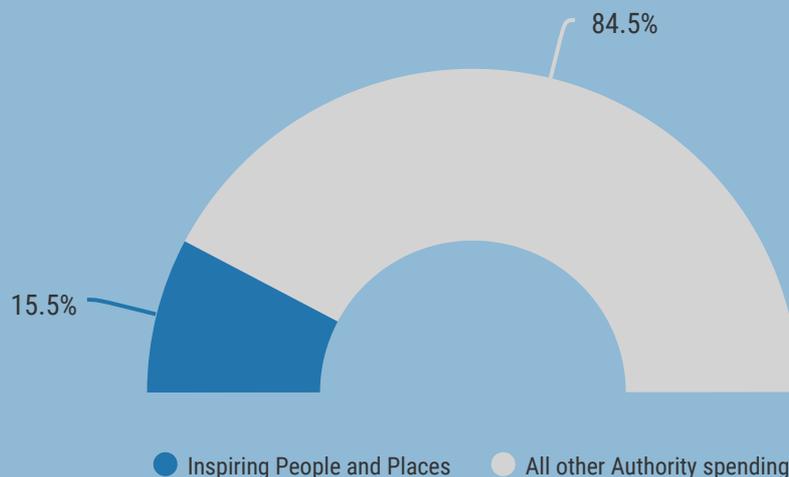
Projects	We will
Waterfall Country	Address the multiple pressures within this visitor hotspot to improve outcomes for the visitor experience, nature and community wellbeing
Canals, Communities and Well-Being	Deliver access improvements, biodiversity enhancements and community engagement on the Brecon and Monmouthshire Canal for the partnership ENRaW project with Powys County Council and Canal and Rivers Trust
A470 corridor	Complete the first phase of feasibility work into a Park and Ride service for the A470 corridor
HEAP	Develop a partnership approach to the management of the Historic Environment culminating in an agreed action plan for the National Park

Core Work	We will
Covid-19	Secure additional resources to manage and absorb visitor pressures at our visitor hotspots. Deliver environmental, carbon and visitor management messages through social media, website, print and PR
Visitor Experiences	Enhance visitor experiences through the deployment of tools produced through the Atlantic Geoparks, Culturescape and Wales Way projects
SDF	Use our SDF fund to deliver the Heritage in Places grant together with other social inclusion and health & well-being projects

Spatial focus and budget proportion



Proportion of total budget dedicated to Inspiring People and Places





Strategic Priorities

A resilient organisation.

Key Priorities	We will
Organisational Effectiveness	Use the outcomes from the Board Effectiveness Survey and the Audit Wales Report to make improvements to our governance
Change Programme	Recruit a new CEO and Senior Leadership Team to take the Authority forward
Stakeholder Engagement	Build stronger relationships with stakeholders to achieve our ambitions

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

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

Proportion of total budget dedicated to a resilient organisation



● A Resilient Organisation ● All other Authority spending



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

Our Aspirations for this year

- We will have made clear progress in delivering the objectives of the Change Programme.
- Project Boards structures for our key projects will be established and operational
- We will have implemented an action plan to address any issues arising from the Board Effectiveness Survey and the Audit Wales review.
- We will have developed our new reporting system to track performance.
- NPMP21 and LDP2 will progress in line with agreed timetables
- We will have improved our skill and capacity in relation to partnership working

Future Investment

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



Photo credit: Peter Fry ARPS

The Plan set out below assumes a 10% uplift in the core budget for 2021-22 and is based on funding from the following sources:

- £445k additional funding from Welsh Government to support work through to the end of 2021-22
- £377k increase to the National Park Grant Levy on constituent Local Authorities

The Plan provides additional resources to support the Authority's Work in the following areas during 2021/22:-

- Nature recovery and peatland restoration actions
- and Work to control Invasive Non Native Species
- Our National Park Management Plan and Local Development Plan reviews
- Our planning work in responding to water quality issues in the Wye and Usk river catchments
- Environmental monitoring
- Managing the anticipated high numbers of visitors in 2021/22
- Rights of Way and Access improvements
- Increased its support for our volunteers.
- Better management of our property and land assets

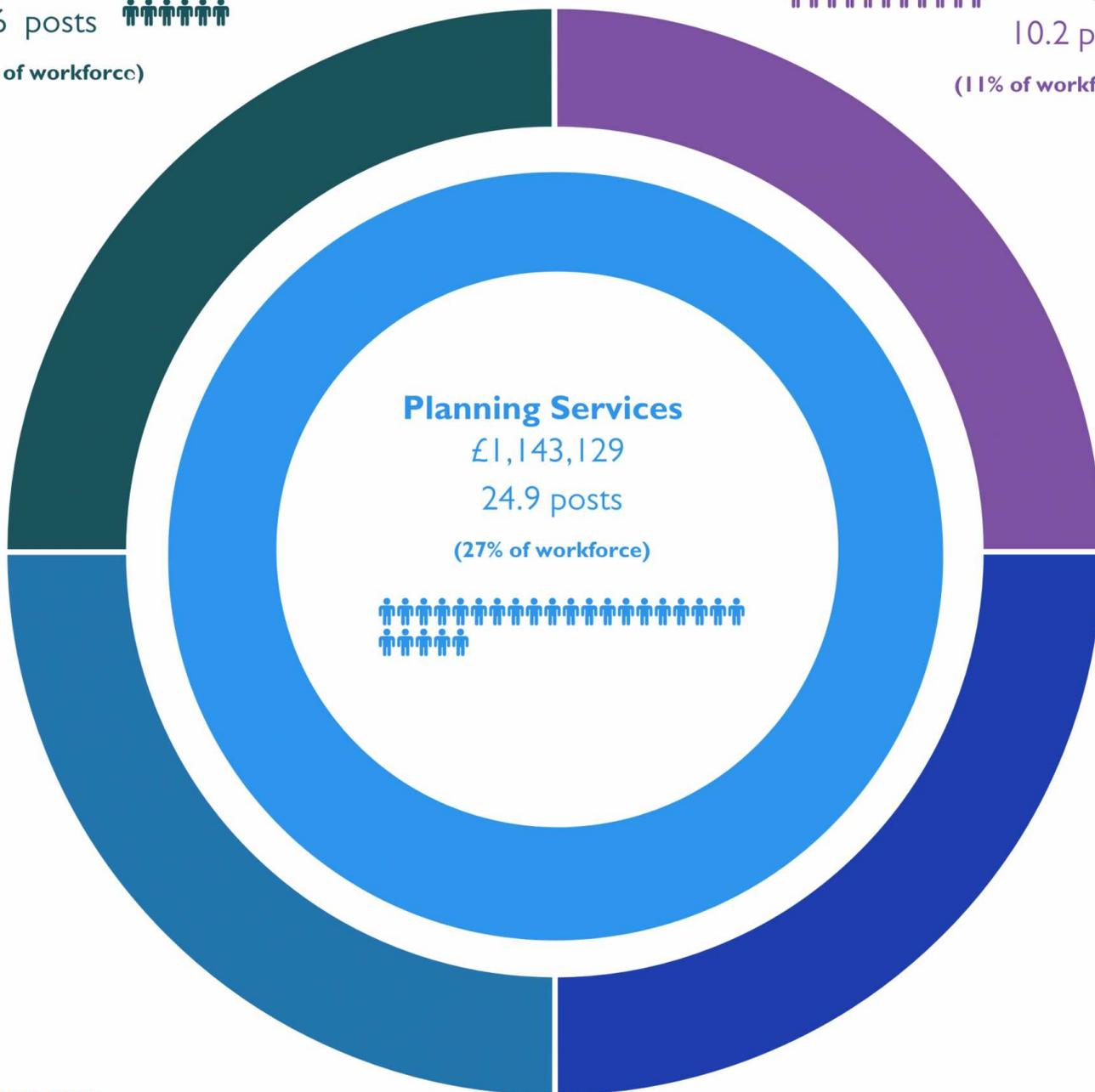
	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Landscape & Nature Recovery	£/K	£/K	£/K
Increased project staff capacity	107	135	135
Project funding	166	217	162
Monitoring	50	50	50
Community and Rural Enterprise			
Increased project staff capacity- volunteer co-ordination	30	30	30
Inspiring People and Places			
Increased project staff capacity	46	112	112
Post-Covid pressures	92		
Rights of Way & Access improvements projects	152	180	180
Historic Environment Action Plan implementation		50	50
Resilient Organisation			
Information Technology & Digital Transformation	27	27	27
Post Covid-19 Communications	26		
Planning staff capacity	56	56	56
Property Management	49	49	49
TOTALS	801	906	851

Landscape and nature recovery

£1,426,663 
 23.6 posts 
 (25% of workforce)

Community and rural enterprise

 £780,174
 10.2 posts
 (11% of workforce)



Planning Services

£1,143,129

24.9 posts

(27% of workforce)



£888,087
 13.3 posts 
 (14% of workforce)

Inspiring People and Places

 £1,498,251
 21.1 posts
 (23% of workforce)

A resilient organisation

Risk to implementation of Corporate Plan 21/22

Significant risk

**COVID resurgence
and continued
uncertainty**

**Our budget is not yet confirmed
for 2021-22**

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

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

Manageable
risk

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

Lack of buy in from partners

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



Annex I

Key Performance Indicators



Aspiration	Actions by when	Who is accountable
We will have defined a strategy to increase woodland cover and have an informed policy target for NPMP21.	<p>Q2 Expert grouping established as advisory body for woodland policy development</p> <p>Q3 Woodland policy targets researched and defined with all relevant partners</p> <p>Q4 Draft Strategy produced</p>	Policy Officers Group; Landscape and Nature Recovery
We will have a prioritised action plan for working with partners to improve key features within the Park's SACs including riverine SACs and have an informed policy target for NPMP21	<p>Q1 Priority areas identified and partnership feasibility undertaken</p> <p>Q2 Policy targets researched and reviewed with all relevant partners</p> <p>Q3 Action planning phase for partnerships</p> <p>Q4 draft action plans produced</p>	Landscape and Nature Recovery; Policy Officers Group; Planning Services
We will have a prioritised action plan to restore the Park's peatland and have an informed policy target for NPMP21.	<p>Q2 Work with the Welsh Peatlands Action Group and Welsh Peatlands Project to agree priorities</p> <p>Q3 Dependent upon available funding, commission works</p> <p>Q4 Dependent upon available funding, commission works</p>	Landscape and Nature Recovery
We will implement the ROWIP Work Programme	<p>Q3 We will have commenced work to restore 1500 meters of upland paths to appropriate standards</p> <p>Q4 We will have completed the restoration of 1500 meters of upland paths to appropriate standards</p>	Rights of way team working with the Local Area Access Forum
We will implement the Nature Recovery Work Programme	<p>Q1 Secure funding plan for Vital Signs Project and manage the completion of the ecological mapping project.</p> <p>Q3 Funding applications VS submitted submitted as opportunities arise. We will demonstrate the ecological mapping tool and share lessons learnt with LNP network in Wales.</p>	Ecology Team working with the Local Nature Partnership



Aspiration	Actions by when	Who is accountable
We will have developed updated Place Plan Guidance for use with NPMP21 and LDP2.	Q1 - Complete consultation on principles of 20 minute communities Q3 Submit Draft guidance to Policy Forum Q4 Guidance to NPA for agreement as part of LDP2 consultation.	Policy Officers Group reporting to NPMP Project Board
We will have developed a carbon reduction and education strategy and have an informed target for NPMP21 Policy.	Q1 - Carbon literacy Programme Developed Q2 - Green technologies event held Q3 - Carbon budget and policies defined Q4 - Delivered 10 carbon literacy training events with communities & schools	People & Communities Team and POG
We will have developed a work placement programme to support young people in the area	Q1 - Establish Gateway provider for Kickstart scheme and initiate recruitment Q2 - Recruit and train participants Q3 - 6 kick start participants trained and employed Q4 - Identify and seek funding for further training/placement programmes	People & Communities Team
We will have developed policy and action supporting a just transition for farming	Q1 - Position statement on farming transition drafted and adopted. Q2 - Initiation of ABC for Sheep and Tourism Project (subject to re-evaluation) Q4 - 2 Feasibility Studies undertaken on food, farming and tourism	Policy Officers Group - People & Communities Team



Aspiration	Actions by when	Who is accountable
We will understand the feasibility of developing a Park and Ride for the A470 Corridor and have a plan in place to take recommendations forward.	Q1 Feasibility Study Complete Q3 Produce an action in response to findings.	Sian Shakespear
Our Historic Environment Partnership (HEP) will be established and key priorities for the NPMP21 developed. The Historic Environment Action Plan (HEAP) will be published for consultation.	Q1 The core group for the HEP will be defined and operational Q2 Vision and objectives for the HEAP defined by the core group Q3 Consultation on vision and objectives of HEAP with wider partnership Q4 Draft action plan published for consultation.	Policy Officers Group
We will engage the Waterfall Country partnership to deliver priority projects related to improved visitor management, greater community benefit and to encourage the move toward sustainable transport models.	Q4 Reduction of Visitor pressure at honeypot locations, trial shuttle bus service, support the delivery of emerging CIO projects.	Waterfall partnership
We will have progressed a programme of work to make the National Park more accessible for more people.	Q3 Develop programmes with four mental health organisations to increase use of the park for health and wellbeing. Q4 6 courses undertaken with tourism businesses across the year. Deliver 'Local' Ambassador training to communities across the southern fringe. Extend 'Geotour' app to new sites (see also ROWIP aspiration)	People and Communities Team

A Resilient Organisation



Aspiration	Actions by when	Who is accountable
We will have made clear progress in delivering the objectives of the Change Programme.	Q2 Leadership team including new CEO is in place Q4 Stakeholder exercise to review planning services	Recruitment panel and Head of Planning Services.
Project Boards structures for our key projects will be established and operational	Q3 Review effectiveness of trial Project Boards and define future model	Leadership team and Policy Officers Group
We will have implemented an action plan to address any issues arising from the Board Effectiveness Survey and the Audit Wales review.	Q1-4 Implement an action plan to address Audit Wales Report recommendations and implement a programme of monitoring	Leadership team reporting to Audit and Scrutiny Committee
We will have developed our new reporting system to track performance.	Q1 New performance management system in place Q2 Implement programme of monitoring	Leadership team to appoint responsible officer
NPMP21 will have been adopted and LDP2 will have been submitted to Welsh Government for examination.	Q1 Agreement of Delivery Agreement LDP2 & Consultation on Vision and Objectives NPMP2 Q2 - Consultation on Reviewed Preferred Strategy & Consultation on Draft NPMP21 Q3 Adoption of NPMP21 Q4 Consultation on Deposit LDP2	Planning services reporting to NPMP Project Board
Increase capacity to support volunteer opportunities	Q1 - Recruit Volunteer Development Officer Q2 - Recruit volunteers for the Invasive non-native species project, Peat and Park Society heritage projects Q3 - undertake volunteer training *20 volunteers trained Q4 - Develop a youth volunteer programme	People and Communities
We will have improved our skill and capacity in relation to partnership working	Q1 - support existing partnerships (including BMLUP transition) undertake lessons learnt exercise Q2 - Cross departmental project to determine protocol for future partnership working including establishment and resourcing Q3 - Identification of current and future partnerships essential to NPMP (and sub plan) implementation Q4 - Partnership reporting to NPA	All departments - lead via Policy Officers Group

Waiting for the mountains

Out there
I want to be out there
Out with the mountains,
with the rivers,
with the views.

I want to climb until my lungs and legs burn
Until I'm on the top of the world
But I can't be there now.

The world has changed,
but the mountains are constant
The mountains will be there forever

I love nature and its freedom
Sitting on the grass,
feeling the sun and the wind,
Looking at the towns from another, better place.
Before the world changed, I went to the Beacons,
But one visit wasn't enough to capture my imagination
I must return.

Rachel Bedwin
Translated from Welsh Original