

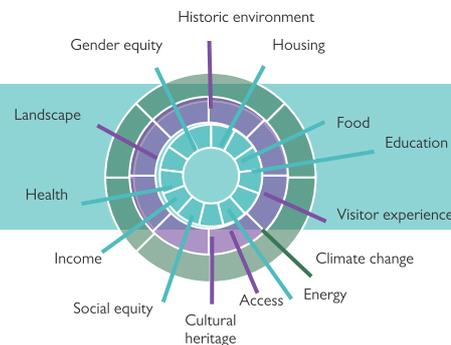
A group of people, including children and adults, are working on a stone wall in a rural landscape. They are wearing gloves and using tools to lay stones. The background shows rolling hills and a clear sky.

We will ensure that rural skills are maintained, retained and enhanced within the Brecon Beacons. We will create active partnerships in the development of a green workforce training scheme which utilises rural skills to take action against the climate and biodiversity crises.

'Rural skills' is a broad term that encompasses a range of practical and managerial jobs, specific to the rural context.

Small family farms are the heart of the Park, their longevity is testament to a knowledge of land management which has been handed down through generation after generation. Ensuring that there are mechanisms to continue this knowledge transfer into the future will go a long way to conserving the landscape and culture of the Park for future generations.

Although intrinsically linked to farming, rural skills are also increasingly important in meeting land based measures for mitigating climate change such as tree planting and habitat restoration.



Why this is important

The National Park as a living, working landscape has been manipulated by human intervention for millennia. Many of the landscape features that are valued such as hedgerows and drystone walls have biodiversity value and cultural significance which require skilled maintenance if they are to continue to be enjoyed by future generations.

The skills necessary to support our landscape are being lost to the detriment of our environment and heritage. Demographic trends show that our young people move away from the area, often only returning in retirement if at all. This loss of wage-earning members of the community is challenging for our local economy, and creates significant skill shortages in labour to maintain our environment. Upskilling our young people provides opportunity to retain them within the community, providing viable future careers.

We know there is also a pressing need to reverse the impacts of the climate and biodiversity crises. This will require development of a skilled workforce that can work on the ground implementing programmes of habitat creation and tree planting, as well as facilitating local seed banks and nurseries. This in turn will create jobs that contribute positively to the local economy.

How the policy will be implemented

The National Park has hosted a number of projects aimed at improving rural skills, and the NPA will continue to take a leading role, developing and providing on the job work experience around conservation and land management.

Much more could be achieved through a partnership of training providers such as the Black Mountain College, Skill Sector Council, LANTRA, Young Farmers and Farming Connect to increase depth and numbers needed to support a land based green recovery. This Plan advocates for the development of such a partnership. A key outcome of such a partnership will be the development of apprentices and traineeships with a range of employers within the locality

What success looks like

We have helped train a new green workforce who are knowledgeable and adept at traditional skills, are forward thinking and able at taking on the ground action to build a more resilient landscape for the National Park.

How we will measure progress

Progress towards this objective will be measured using qualitative and quantitative measures.

We will recognise progress via analysis of demographic data for the Park with the objective of seeing more even-age distributed demographic pyramids.

Progress will also be recognised within employment data analysis with the number of residents employed within land-based jobs increasing.

We will also recognise progress where we see increases in the number of students enrolled on relevant training courses.

Qualitative data will be gathered via school leavers surveys to better understand motivations for further study