



# SUMMARY

# Future Beacons

The Management Plan for the  
Brecon Beacons National Park  
2022-2027: Explained



October 2021

## FUTURE BEACONS

This is the summary of the consultation draft Management Plan for the Brecon Beacons National Park Management Plan.

The full consultation plan can be read [here](#)  
The evidence base that underpins it is published [here](#)

*Future Beacons* defines the 25 year vision for the future of the National Park. It is a really ambitious plan for the Brecon Beacons which aims to help address big issues like climate change and rural depopulation. It does this by concentrating on the power of people and nature working together. Decisive action is needed now if we are to make sure that the area is sustainable into the future.

This summary provides an overview of the plan and its vision  
We hope it inspires you to get involved in the future and make the park an amazing place now and forever.

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# FOREWORD



I am pleased to present this draft Management Plan - aptly christened *Future Beacons* by our newly formed Citizen's Assembly for the Park - to you for your thoughts and feedback.

By 2030 Welsh Government is committed to a reduction of 63% of total carbon emissions. The urgency of this target cannot be overemphasised. We are facing the twin threats a climate and biodiversity crisis. If we do not meet these targets and take urgent, radical action, we risk moving beyond the 1.5 degree warming threshold, which will lead to irreversible global instability. This is an existential risk, threatening lives and damage to our home, planet Earth which will be irreversible.

We are, of course, just one National Park of 520 square miles; but we are a special and unique living landscape and by accepting that we can and must act to tackle the twin threats we are facing, we hope that we can not only lead the way for our communities and partners, but also inspire others to act too.

This plan, once adopted, will run to 2027. It is therefore imperative that the objectives of this plan navigate us back to an existence which is in balance with the Earth's scarce resources. That is why the plan is unashamedly ambitious - it has to be. We are less than two planning cycles away from the key target dates for carbon reduction and simply cannot ignore the repeated warning siren of a system in collapse that is woven through the evidence base which underpins this draft plan.

When I came to the National Park as the new CEO just a few months ago, I was keen to ensure that the Park in my care was more than a museum of a landscape. My vision is for a Park which is a vibrant example of sustainability. A Park that is environmentally resilient, and economically prosperous; which embraces change, that is open and welcoming to all who seek out beauty and adventure.

I know that I am not alone in this vision. In my short time working here I have met, spoken with and visited many inspirational individuals and organisations who have reiterated to me the urgency and necessity of this plan, at this time, in guiding us towards that sustainable future. I have been inspired by the power, knowledge and passion of our newly formed Citizen's Assembly. I fully embrace their challenge for us to take greater leadership within the region, to help define a regenerative economy for the area where nature and people work together, not in opposition.

This challenge inspired a plan that seeks to capitalise on the value of nature connectedness in all that we do. This is our beacon of hope - that a better, more sustainable future is not only possible, but realisable if we work together, with nature, to make it so. Our position, as a living working landscape, where the power of people and nature combine, provides a unique opportunity to forge a path towards a more sustainable and prosperous future.

We hope this plan will be an inspiration to others around the world. I hope you enjoy reading this plan and that it might inspire you to get involved in our vision for the future.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Catherine Meulinc Jones'.

Chief Executive Officer  
Brecon Beacons National Park

# FUTURE BEACONS

## the Management Plan for the Brecon Beacons National Park



The Brecon Beacons National Park is one of a family of fifteen National Parks in the UK. These protected landscapes are managed sustainably for the quiet enjoyment of all.

The National Park Authority is the body which is charged by law to look after the rich and special landscapes of the National Park. The National Park Authority has 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 these purposes the Authority must also:

Seek to foster the economic and social well-being of local communities, within the National Park.

### What is the Management Plan

The law says that all National Park Authorities must write plans for their areas. These plans, called Management plans should set out how the purposes and duty will be delivered. The law also states that these plans should be kept up to date and authorities are expected to renew them every five years.

The Brecon Beacons National Park Authority is in the process of reviewing the Management Plan for the Brecon Beacons area, they have developed a draft version of their plan which they have called Future Beacons. This document summarises what the plan is about and how you can get involved.

### Why is the Management Plan important?

The plan is really important because it tells everyone who works within the National Park what should happen within the area. Because of the importance of the plan, the Authority knows that they cannot make some of those decisions by themselves - so the plan is written with the help of other organisations and community representatives.

### Your views are important.

Because of the importance of the plan for the area, it is crucial that everybody who is interested in the National Park gets an opportunity to have their say. The Authority is asking you for your views on the plan they have written.

They are also asking why the Park is important to you - this will help them write up the 'special qualities' of the area. You can learn more [here](#)

# WHAT MAKES THE PARK SPECIAL ?

One of the most important things the Management Plan does is describe those things which make the Brecon Beacons special. these are called the *special qualities*. It does this, so it can make sure they are protected for the benefit of current and future generations. The Authority worked with local writers to help describe the beauty of the Park and the way it makes people feel. The special qualities are split across four themes - we have summarised them below - we would love to know if you agree that we have captured the essence of the Park for you.

## SPECIAL LANDSCAPES



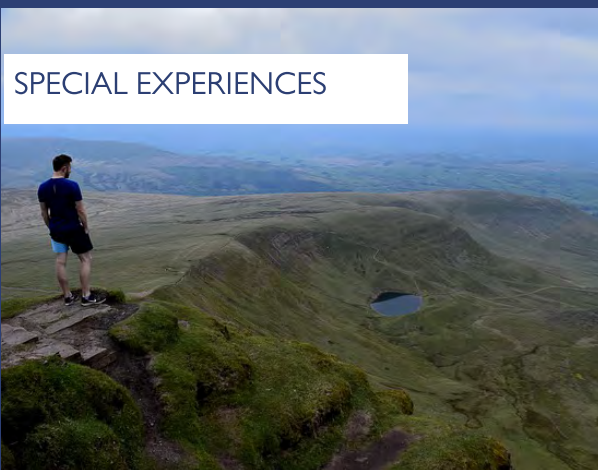
"At height, with uplifting local and distant views and away from busy walking routes, I feel privileged to have access to these liminal places of solitude and peace - borderlines between greener valleys where farmhouses stand within varied vegetation textures and more muted, undifferentiated heather and bilberry moorland facing up to the sky; fringes edging two worlds"

## SPECIAL PEOPLE



"The Beacons are my home, not just in terms of where I live and farm, its where my parents lived, where they farmed, If I have children I hope this is where they will choose to farm and in turn raise their families. This land cannot be separated from how I view myself, my heritage, my everything"

## SPECIAL EXPERIENCES



"When the world seems grim, this place puts it all in perspective"

## SPECIAL NATURE



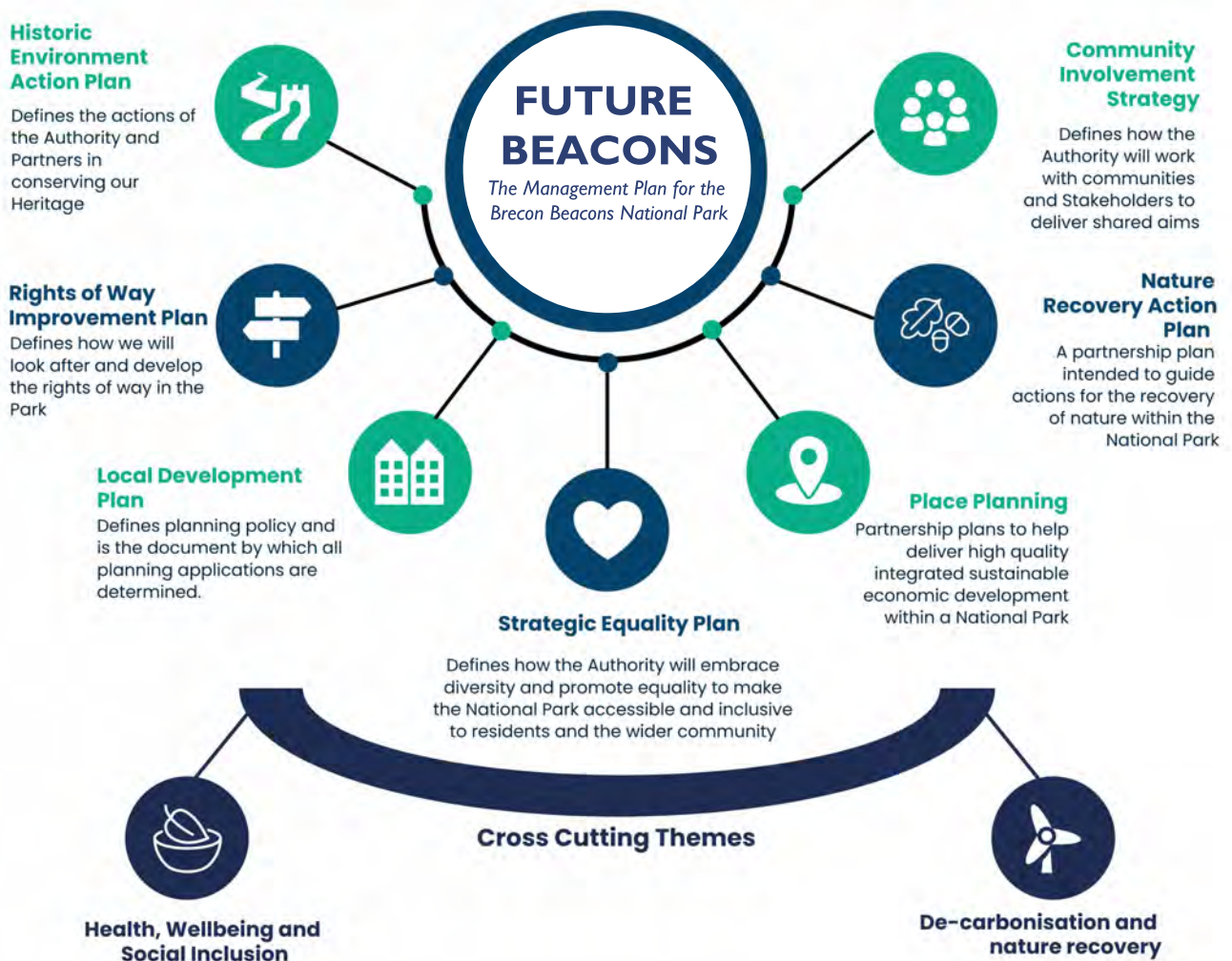
"The wildlife is amazing, the birds can bring joy to your heart even on a bad day"

# HOW WILL THE PLAN BE USED

*Future Beacons* is a strategic plan. That means that it is designed to achieve a long term overall aim for the geographic area that is the National Park. For *Future Beacons* that is a sustainable and resilient future for the park based on harnessing the power of nature



Although the plan sets out a general direction towards these aims, it mostly provides a vision for future action. Because the plan deals with a range of topics, it can't go into detail for every area it covers. For this reason we say that *Future Beacons* sits at the heart of a range of other plans for the area. It is these plans that provide the detail. The diagram below shows this in a bit more detail.



**\*** When we say **sustainable** we mean, that the environment and the important things it provides us with like water, and land to produce food, are kept healthy and properly functioning now and in the future. When we say **resilient**, we mean that the people and places of the park are able to withstand any stress placed upon them without harm and prosper into the future.

# SUSTAINABLE AND RESILIENT - THE PARK DOUGHNUT

To help explain how the National Park should be managed into the future, the Authority uses a model called 'the Park Doughnut'. A model is a way of taking complex ideas and simplifying them so they are more easily understood.

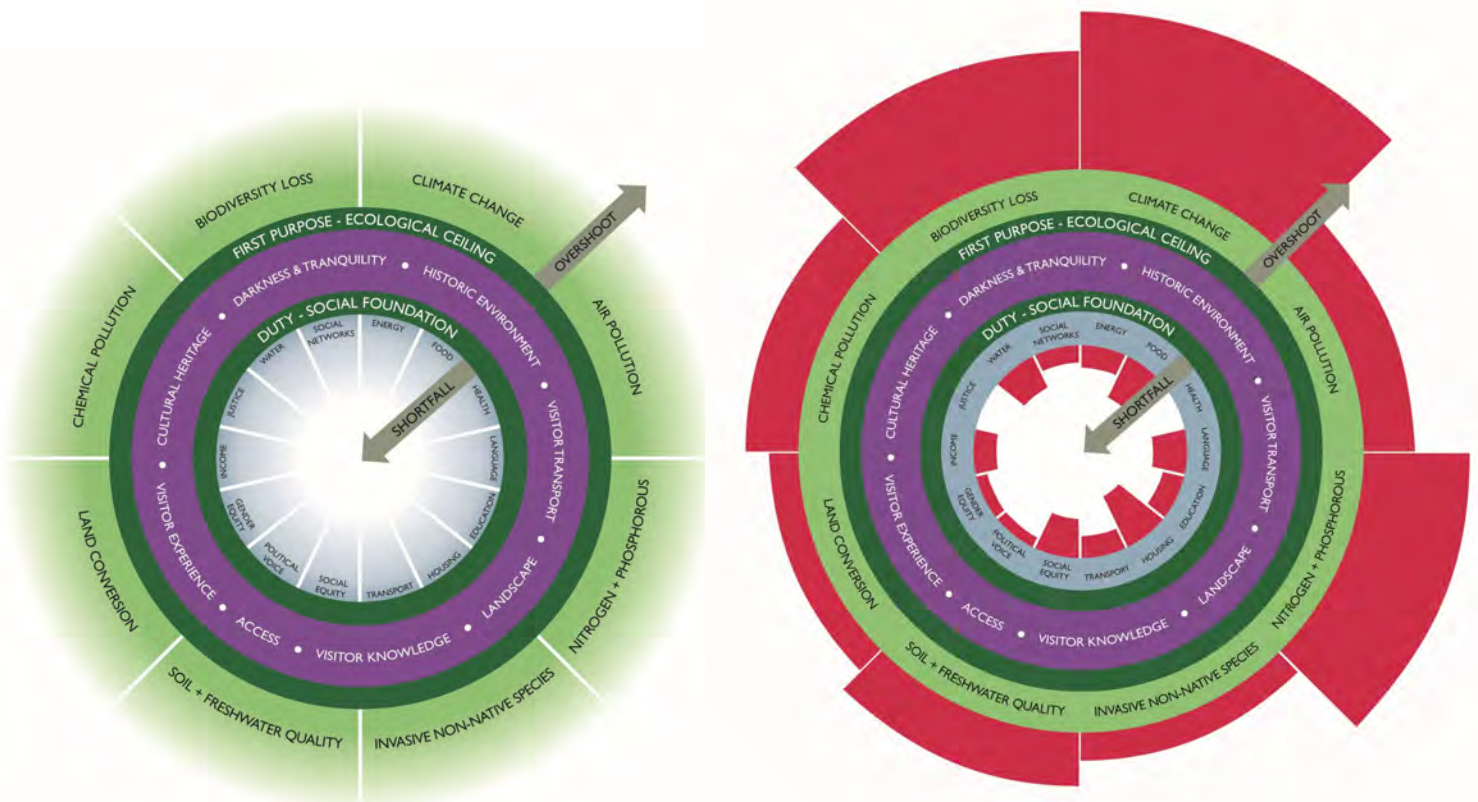
The National Park caters to a variety of needs, including those of the natural environment, culture and local communities. To do this we must balance the competing demands of our two purposes. It is no secret that human contact with nature often comes at a cost to our natural world. We must walk the line between our two purposes, finding a safe space in which people can enjoy thriving ecosystems without negative impact.

The illustration below sets out where this safe space exists and where the safety parameters have been exceeded. We call it 'the Park Doughnut'.

The purple ring represents our safe space; the green ring illustrates the impacts on our local ecology; and the grey ring illustrates the human needs within the Park.

**The Doughnut is a famous model developed by the economist Kate Raworth. Her aim was to show how you can meet the needs of all people within the needs of the planet. If you are interested in the background to the doughnut model you might like these [videos](#) or [easy guide](#) she produced to support the concept.**

We use the Park Doughnut to show the current state of the Park. Each dimension is measured where possible against a series of indicators. The distance each of these red wedges stretches from the purple ring tells us the severity of the situation in the Park. In a perfect world, there would be no red in this image. Sadly this is not the case... but it is what we aspire to achieve.





# THE PARK OF THE FUTURE

In thinking about what Future Beacons attempts to achieve we have worked with a local illustrator to draw a picture of what the future park might look like.

This landscape is one where nature and farming work together to create a resilient biodiverse landscape. A sustainable future for the National Park will embrace nature recovery, nature based solutions to climate change, green growth including job creation, and transitioning our communities to low carbon living that is accessible to all.

We hope others will be inspired to action and that our visitors will benefit and learn from closer contact with this nature rich world. This is the driving force of our vision that we are inviting all partners to share with us.

We believe that this is an imperative that must be acted upon now, and where possible collaboratively with everyone who has a stake in the continued viability of the Park for people and nature.

It is this image of the future park which inspires our vision for the future



# OUR VISION

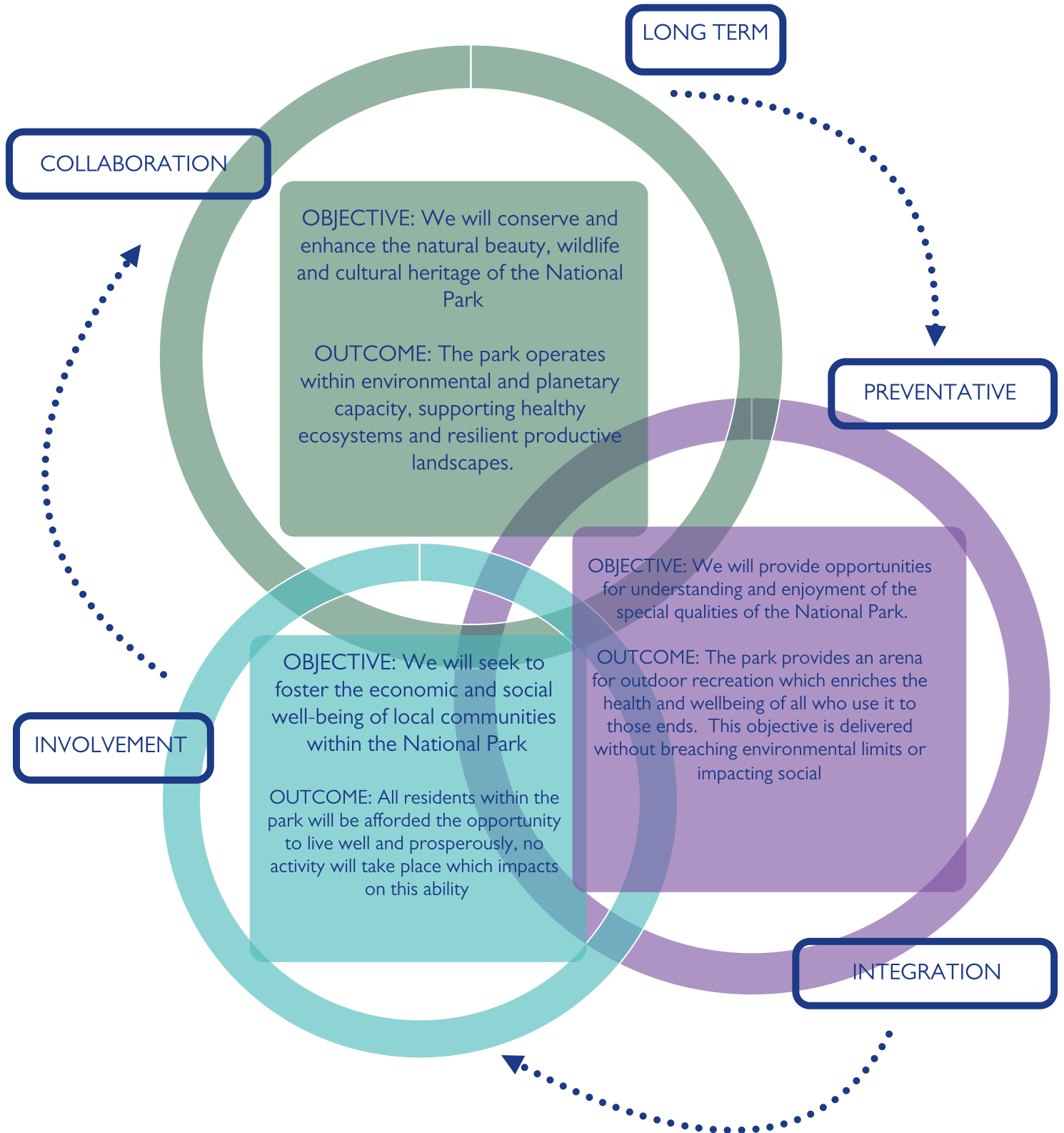
**Our National Park will be a beacon of inspiration, driving action for a vibrant and sustainable future.**

We will harness the power of nature and people working in balance to help us address the multiple problems of climate change, biodiversity decline, post covid economic recovery and the health and social care crisis.

In 2045 the Brecon Beacons will be more ecologically diverse and we will be less carbon reliant. Our communities will be connected, collaborative and thriving. The culture, landscape and environment of the Park will have brought inspiration and joy to all who live and visit here.

# OUR OBJECTIVES

We use our purposes and duty (the three rings of the *doughnut*) to frame the future objectives of the Plan. Each objectives is supported by a series of topic based policies which seek to define a route map to delivery. Delivering these objectives will require a shift in working practice to ensure collaboration and co-operation is at the heart of all that we do.



# BRINGING THE PARK WITHIN ENVIRONMENTAL LIMITS

To make sure that the future of the National Park only uses its fair share of natural resources, *Future Beacons* contains six key policies which aim to ensure that the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage as expressed within the living working landscape is conserved and enhanced into the future. The policies are summarised below. If you want to read more the pictures are hyperlinked to the relevant policy statement.

## CLIMATE CHANGE



Policy intended to set a carbon budget for the Park area - the policy seeks to get all organisations and individuals working in the park to drastically cut their green house gas emissions for the sake of the planet.

## TREESCAPES



It is a principle objective to increase the numbers of trees within the Park. This policy sets out how we aim to achieve this without harming the special qualities of the Park.

## LANDSCAPE



The landscape defines the Beacons, this policy aims to guide future change in the landscape so that the specialness of the Park isn't negatively affected.

## PEATLAND



Upland peat bog is a key habitat within the Beacons that has been degraded over many years. We aim to reverse this to sequester carbon, and improve the ecological health of the Park

## NATURE RECOVERY



This policy recognises the importance of biodiversity and seeks to develop resilient ecological networks which are bigger, better and more joined up.

## WATER



The park is home to some of the most iconic rivers in Wales, protected for their wildlife value. Recent evidence shows they are suffering and this is not acceptable. This policy sets out a pathway to help build back water quality for human and ecological wellbeing.

# NATIONAL PARK POLICY GOALS

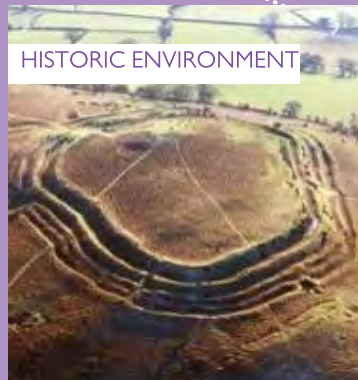
These policies are aimed at providing opportunities for enjoyment and understanding of the National Park without taking more than a fair and sustainable share of natural resources, or impacting on the ability of our communities to thrive and prosper. These are our core policy goals, the tasty bit. The six policies are summarised below, clicking on the picture will take you to the full policy statement if you want to know more.

## SUSTAINABLE TOURISM



The park is a popular tourist destination, something that makes us proud. But tourism that takes too much or impacts too far is a bad thing for the area. This policy seeks to control these impacts. Keeping tourism firmly in the rings of the doughnut

## HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT



The park's environment is the result of human interaction. This is to be celebrated, this policy seeks to protect these heritage assets and help people better understand their significance.

## BUSY PLACES



Anyone who knows the Park knows that there are a few honeypot sites which can be dangerous and unpleasant places to visit at times. This policy seeks to transform access to these places to ensure a quality visitor experience.

## GEPARK



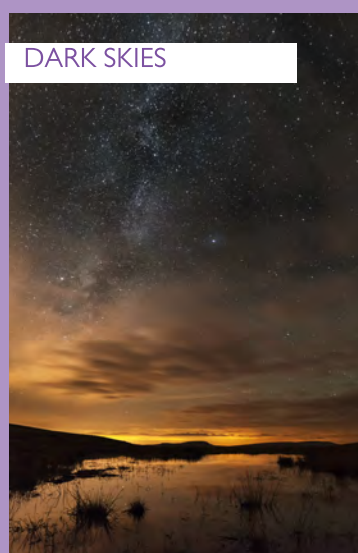
The geopark is an international designation awarded to the area for its outstanding geological features and the way these have shaped the lives and livelihoods of the area. This policy seeks to make more of the designation to benefit deprived areas on our southern fringes.

## RIGHTS OF WAY



Our rights of way network is extensive. This policy sets out an objective to make this network as accessible as possible to as many different types of users as possible. From horses to mobility scooters, bikes to hikes. This policy aims to make sure we can accommodate them all.

## DARK SKIES



One of our special qualities, the darkness of our skies is one feature of the Park we are truly proud of. This policy seeks to support the International Dark Sky Reserve status awarded to the area and to ensure the preservation of our dark skies now and into the future.

# ENSURING OUR COMMUNITIES LIVE ABOVE THE SOCIAL FOUNDATION

To seek to foster the social and economic wellbeing of our communities, *Future Beacons* contains eight key policies which aim to ensure that the issues that are preventing the people of the park both (resident and visitors) living prosperously and thriving are dealt with head on. As before the pictures link to the full policy statements.



This policy seeks to capitalise on the health and wellbeing benefits the park can bring by working with health professionals to promote the park.



Inspired by on the ground action, this policy seeks to increase horticultural production in the park by harnessing and supporting a new generation of food producers.



Our communities make the park what it is. Too many of them are being challenged by the loss of young people and the growth of holiday homes. A difficult issue that this policy seeks to address.



Rural skills are in danger of being lost from the area. These are crucial to the management of our landscape. Here the policy seeks to both provide opportunities to retain young people whilst supporting cultural heritage.



A policy intended to work with our peripheral communities to improve access by removing real and perceptual barriers.



Payments for ecosystem services provide financial investment in nature recovery. This policy sets out how we will capitalise on these to benefit the Park's economy and people.



A policy area that was championed by our citizen's assembly, this policy seeks to embed the principle of a regenerative economy into the Park to support post-covid recovery in a manner appropriate to the special landscape and environment of the Park.



Active travel seeks to transform our car based lifestyles to more sustainable and healthy patterns of travel. This is a huge challenge in rural places like the park, however given the impact on our carbon emissions from private car use - its vital that we provide mechanisms for people to have choices about the mode of travel they chose to take.



A policy aimed at celebrating and promoting the Welsh Language for its significance to the culture and identity of the Park.

## WAYS OF WORKING

One of the Key purposes of a Management Plan like *Future Beacons* is to bring together all those who have a stake in the development of a sustainable future for the National Park to work together. This is why it is really important that the Plan defines how we will all work together to deliver on our collective objectives. These ways of working are about how the NPA interacts with all the stakeholders in the Park to create long lasting and mutually beneficial relationships.

### PARTNERSHIPS



Partnership working is vital to the implementation of *Future Beacons*. Many actions and areas of work are the responsibility of other agencies but are essential to the future sustainability of the park. We define a partnership as an ongoing collaborative relationship between or among organisations aligning interest around a common vision whilst combining complimentary resources and competencies.

### VOLUNTEERING



The National Park Authority has a long and fruitful history of working with volunteers. Volunteers are individuals who willingly give their services without pay to help the National Park Authority deliver on a range of projects and services. In this transaction the volunteer gains experiences and skills supported by a network of like minded people, whilst the Authority gains valuable assistance to deliver on its objectives. This policy seeks to enhance volunteering and expand it to all partners delivering *Future Beacons*.

### HUMAN CAPITAL



Human capital relates to skills, knowledge and experience possessed by an individual, community or organisation and the value this brings to individual and societal wellbeing. Having a Park rich in human capital is vital if we are to meet the challenges of the 21st Century. In this policy we set out our ambition to raise and retain the human capital of the park. The policy defines a way of working that embeds learning in all our activity, ensuring that as this plan is implemented it creates a range of opportunities to develop the skills and talent of our communities.

# YOUR PARK

We know that the National Park is bigger than just the Authority. Our role is often that of co-ordinator - bringing together all the people with an interest in a specific topic or a specific place to work collectively for best outcomes. This is why we say that the Management Plan is not our Plan but the Plan of the entire Park as a geographic entity, for everyone who has a stake in its future. Your views are therefore central in how we develop this plan together.

There are a number of ways you can get involved in next steps towards the adoption of Future Beacons and these are set out below.



## Write to us about the future vision

You can respond to this consultation in writing to set out how you see the future vision and policies.

Every comment will be read and responded to often resulting in changes or amendments to our thinking and expression. Given our current working arrangements it would be easiest for us if you email your responses. The email address to use is:

NPMP21@beacons-npa.gov.uk

Please use the subject line **Future Beacons**

( If you can't email we still love a good old fashioned letter use our authority address)

## If you are an individual join our citizen panels

If you prefer talking to writing you can sign up to be part of one of our independent citizen panels. A citizen panel is a grouping of individuals who have an interest in the future Management of the National Park. Our panel first met in July and has already been instrumental in *Future Beacons* development. The process has been rewarding for all involved, if you want to sign up for a future panel use the form on our website [here](#).

If you are reading this because you are part of an organisation or group that works in the Park you could elect to join our Stakeholder Reference Panel. The Stakeholder Reference Panel acts as a working group to develop areas of *Future Beacons*. The Panel reports to the Board but also has a role in implementation. You can tell us that you want to contribute to this panel, but if you do be prepared to commit to active work in the Park in implementing the Plan. More details in our [Partnership Policy](#).

## #FutureBeacons

If social media is more your thing you can tweet us your key thoughts using the above hashtag, you could use text, images or video. You can also use it on Instagram Facebook or any of the platforms that you use in your everyday life. You can tweet us [@BreconBeaconsNP](#).

## Become a volunteer

One of the biggest ways you can contribute to the future management of the Park is by volunteering to do practical work in the Park to improve outcomes for nature, our heritage, access and interpretation. This is a way that you can really make a difference. More details are available [here](#).