

The Llanfrynach Community Council would like to respond to the National Park Management Plan Review as follows:

The Management Plan for the Brecon Beacons National Park 2015 -2025 succeeds in one of its objectives of “putting well-being at the heart of managing the landscape”; it fails to address the BBNPA’s duty to foster economic and social well-being.

What has been produced by the BBNPA, in 101 pages, is a self-congratulatory document which is both repetitive and platitudinous.

The area now covered by the national park has “continued to be home to communities and industry for thousands of years and the BBNPA has a duty under S62 (1) of the Environment Act 1995 :-

“In taking forward the national park purposes, (to) seek to foster economic and social wellbeing of local communities within the national park”.

Whilst accepting that the national park has thousands of years of communities and industry which have been allowed to evolve, the Management Plan would appear to maintain a “golden age” image; an image where the rural idyll does not and should not change.

Themes 1 – 4 focus very much on maintaining and enhancing the landscape and the objectives set out are generally conducive to achieving that goal.

Where the Management Plan fails is by not accepting that certain major objectives given in the plan,

- Growth and sustainable jobs essential to the delivery of local needs
- Building and maintaining sustainable communities, towns and villages
- Sustainable economic development
- Affordable housing provisions

can be met by simply accepting the status quo :-

“this Management Plan does not propose any significant alterations to the previous plan, Managing Change Together 2010 – 2015.”

The BBNPA in “focusing on reviewing the policies” is, de facto, preventing or is even contemplating any significant development in the National Park for the 15 year period.

Since low cost housing and economic development are such important issues for the future sustainability of the area we believe the updated (sic) management plan should have clearer proactive actions to address these issues in Sections 2.5 and 2.6 (such as making specific efforts to apply its planning policies for affordable housing in a workable manner to address the challenge identified in para 140).

In order to create a “vibrant and sustainable community” it is essential to encourage forms of employment other than agriculture and tourism, both of which rely on relative low wages to maintain their viability. With the increase in broadband speeds, opportunities to encourage the introduction of low environmental impact industries, such as R & D, software development and internet services would help to halt the migration of young, qualified people from the communities.

Theme 6 para 155 states:

Rapid changes in the international economy (globalization, communications, transport and non-farm activities in rural areas which comprise the majority of the national park) presents rural areas with obvious threats on the one hand, but also with significant opportunity on the other. One way that the Authority hopes to support this is through the LAND program. This would see established Rural Alliances (see case study on Rural Alliances) develop their relationships with the farming community with the aim of creating groups that work together to produce an action plan for visitor management and tourism development in their area.”

Although the Plan simply mentions globalisation and communications the only outcome, which is merely a hope of the BBNPA, is to build on farming and tourism.

In conclusion we feel that the BBNPA while able to say that there is no need for change or development when it comes to managing park landscapes, conserving biodiversity, provide for outdoor activities and raise awareness and understanding of the park, the Authority has missed an opportunity to address the difficult issues within the park of building and maintain communities and encouraging economic development. Although the plan promotes a time period for certain activities there no measurable objectives given for the building of affordable houses, encouragement of new industries and so there can be no means for monitoring the success, or otherwise, of such ventures.

Regards

*Bronwyn Fox*

Clerk to Llanfrynach Community Council