

REPORT OF HEALTH, WELL-BEING, RECREATION AND TOURISM OFFICER

SUBJECT: 'NATIONAL PARKS WALES: "LANDSCAPES FOR EVERYONE" OUR APPROACH TO SOCIAL INCLUSION AND CHILD POVERTY'

Purpose of Report

To present 'National Parks Wales: "Landscapes For Everyone" Our Approach to Social Inclusion and Child Poverty' to Members.

Introduction/Background

The National Parks of Wales are 'Landscapes for Everyone'. National Parks Wales strive to connect people with the natural and cultural heritage of National Parks and through proactive engagement promote social inclusion, tackle social exclusion and reduce the negative impacts of poverty.

'Landscapes for Everyone' will replace the 2014-16 Social Inclusion and Child Poverty Strategy and Action Plan for National Parks in Wales.

This position statement and priority actions identify how National Parks Wales will deliver their core purposes and duty whilst meeting the requirements of Valued and Resilient

In order to deliver 'Landscapes for Everyone' it will be essential to continue to enhance and develop collaborative working in and across all National Park Authorities and for ongoing engagement and collaboration with stakeholders and beneficiaries in both statutory and non-statutory services and settings.

This position statement supplements 'National Parks Wales Together for Health and Well-being-Position Statement and Priority Actions 2018'.

Policy Context

Social inclusion and tackling the negative impacts of poverty are identified by the Welsh Government as essential factors in improving the well-being and quality life of people living in Wales. Social inclusion is an integral part of the Welsh Government's priorities linked to The Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. The Priorities for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and National Parks 2018 (valued and resilient) written statement notes under the section on "Landscapes for Everyone":

“While it is important for all sectors of society to experience these designated landscapes, particular focus should be given to children and young families from deprived areas. Action must be taken to help to tackle the inequalities that exist in health, education and economic outcomes amongst the poorest in society. This work will include enhanced outdoor education programmes and volunteering opportunities.

The AONB Partnerships and National Park Authorities should recognise the complex and multidimensional nature of social exclusion, seek to promote social inclusion in all AONB and National Park work, seek to foster the economic and social well-being of local communities and seek to reduce social exclusion in all its forms.”

Other key developments from Welsh Government include:

- Publication of its Child Poverty Strategy 2019 Progress report (<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2020-01/child-poverty-strategy-2019-progress-report.pdf>),
- The Welsh government has now confirmed that the Socio Economic Duty will be commenced this Senedd term, with a coming into force day of 31st March 2021. The overall aim of this duty is to deliver better outcomes for those who experience socio-economic disadvantage through encouraging better decision making. This duty will have implications for strategic decisions and plans that we make and the assessments carried out on them. <https://gov.wales/written-statement-more-equal-wales-commencing-socio-economic-duty-1>
- Welsh Government’s A more equal Wales: strengthening social partnership white paper: <https://gov.wales/more-equal-wales-strengthening-social-partnership-white-paper>

Financial considerations

‘Landscapes for Everyone’ will not come with any additional budgetary implications. However, it should define how we maximise the use of existing resources (including financial resources) to deliver social inclusion work effectively.

At present most of the Authority’s bespoke social inclusion work is project funded, for example the National Lottery supports the Pathways Project. Project funding of this type is always time limited and there is a need to consider how this type of work might be continued in the future. Whilst there continues to be a range of external funding opportunities and partnership possibilities available to support this work, the Authority might wish to increase its core funding to ensure the long-term success of our social inclusion work.

As a supplement to this work the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority has recruited specialist to deliver a review and recommendations for ‘Experiences for All’ with a report due autumn 2020. This work is supported by Welsh Government unfunded pressures funds.

Risk and Compliance Considerations

‘Landscapes for Everyone’ supports National Park purposes and PCNPA’s Well-being Objectives and Equality Plan and Outcomes. Failure to consider and deliver

outcomes related to social inclusion and child poverty will impact on the Authority's ability to meet its Well-being Objectives and comply with the Public Sector Equality Duties.

National Park Authority's will need to comply with the Socio Economic Duty once enacted when making Strategic Decisions and show that due regard has been given to the duty. Non-compliance could result in judicial review proceedings being taken against the Authority.

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought about unprecedented health, social and economic impacts that have been felt throughout society and will continue to well into the future. The priorities and actions in 'Landscapes for Everyone' will be reviewed so that they continue to remain relevant and able to promote inclusive national park. It is recognised that there will be a need for flexible and responsive to the wider social and economic context within which National Parks exist.

As the Socio Economic Duty will duty coming into force in March 2021 will have implications for strategic decisions and plans that we make and the assessments carried out on them, it is proposed that NPW will review this document in the spring of 2021

Human Rights/Equality issues

The priority actions identified in this document will be done in accordance with the Authority's commitment to Equality and Diversity and will contribute to the delivery of the Authority's Equality Objectives.

Biodiversity implications/Sustainability appraisal

'Landscapes for Everyone' contains no activity that is likely to result in a negative impact on biodiversity in the National Park. Broadly speaking delivering 'Landscapes for Everyone' will result in an increased awareness of biodiversity in Pembrokeshire and involve participants in positive actions which support biodiversity

Welsh Language statement

Any work developed by the Authority such as engaging communities will be done in accordance with the Authority's Welsh Language Standards.

Conclusion

'Landscapes for Everyone' builds upon previous commitments from National Parks Wales on social inclusion and poverty. It provides a clear and concise approach to this subject. If approved, Landscapes for Everyone will help inform all work across all National Parks in Wales and will help to demonstrate actions and impact as requested in Valued and Resilient.

Recommendation

Members are asked to support and adopt on 'National Parks Wales: Landscapes for Everyone' and approve a review in the spring of 2021.

Background Documents

1. Valued and Resilient <https://gov.wales/written-statement-valued-and-resilient-welsh-governments-priorities-areas-outstanding-natural>
2. National Parks in Wales Social Inclusion and Child Poverty Strategy 2014-16
3. <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2020-01/child-poverty-strategy-2019-progress-report.pdf>
4. National Parks Wales – Health and Well-being Position Statement and Priority Actions 2018 https://www.pembrokeshirecoast.wales/wp-content/uploads/archive/committee_operational_review_2018_march_7_02_18_health_wellbeing.pdf
5. <https://futuregenerations.wales/about-us/future-generations-act/>

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National Parks Wales: “Landscapes For Everyone”

Our Approach to Social Inclusion and Child Poverty



Responding to Covid-19

In March of 2020 National parks wales (NPW) alongside other public bodies and organisations responded to the COVID-19 pandemic by putting place measures to protect our staff, communities and the public we serve.

Although the priority areas and actions in Landscapes for All remain relevant, NPW recognise that there will be a need to be flexible and responsive to emerging needs. Evidence has consistently shown that those suffering the negative impacts of social exclusion and poverty are those groups who also suffer disproportionately from ill health and disease include COVID-19. It is also clear that the COVID-19 pandemic will disproportionately impact on those who are most vulnerable in society because of age and disability, however we also recognise that the impact of this pandemic will be far reaching and will have ongoing impacts to the economic and social well-being of our communities for some time after the direct threats of the virus to our health has passed. Our rural communities will be impacted by the economic downturn and also health and social inequalities will unfortunately increase, we will plan for and respond to these needs.

National Park Authorities will work closely with key partners to identify communities where targeted work may be of greatest benefit. We will work alongside others and work in accordance with the Welsh Government guidelines so that we can be responsive and effective in our approach, while ensuring that the safety of our staff, service users can be maintained. We will work alongside others to ensure our actions are able to support the renewal and recovery process for communities and businesses in and around our National Parks that have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. We will also continue to identify ways to support our partner public bodies in their work.



Cllr Paul Harries
Chair of National Parks Wales



National Parks Wales: “Landscapes For Everyone”

Our Approach to Social Inclusion and Child Poverty

Summary

The National Parks of Wales are ‘Landscapes for Everyone’. National Parks Wales strive through delivery of their purposes to connect people with their natural and cultural heritage and through proactive engagement promote social inclusion and reduce the negative impact of poverty on people’s ability to access and benefit from the National Parks.

This position statement and related actions, identify how National Parks Wales will deliver their core purposes and duty whilst meeting the requirements of the Welsh Government’s Valued and Resilient: the Welsh Governments priorities for designated landscapes.



Position Statement

The three National Parks in Wales strive to be exemplars for social inclusion and to promote the principles and practices of equality, ensuring they are landscapes for everyone.

We seek to contribute to a good quality of life and to make life better for all the people of Wales and beyond. We strive, through inclusive delivery of our purposes to address the barriers people face to living well in, visit and enjoy the National Parks of Wales.

Why it Matters

Some communities in Wales have mortality rates among the highest in Europe. Wales has higher than average levels of physical inactivity and poor health in comparison to other European countries. Those most disadvantaged by poverty in our society experience disproportionate levels of ill health. Statistics show that, a third of Welsh children live in poverty.¹ National Park Authorities can address the barriers experienced by excluded communities and individuals (for e.g. transport, information or cultural barriers) so that they can access the benefits to well-being offered by the landscapes, connections to heritage and contact with nature found within the National Parks.

"The National Parks in Wales play an important role to get more people being passionate about the natural environment, to recognise the contribution it makes to the rural economy and the effect it has on the health and quality of life of the people who live in and visit."

Welsh Government Valued and Resilient (WG 2018)

1 End Child Poverty: <http://www.endchildpoverty.org.uk/poverty-in-your-area-2019/>

Our Obligations

<p>National Parks Statutory Purposes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage ✓ Promote opportunities for enjoyment and understanding of its special qualities. ✓ In pursuing the above purposes the Authority has a duty to foster economic and social well-being 								
<p>Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ To contribute through our Well-being Objectives to: <table border="1"> <tr> <td>A prosperous Wales</td> <td>A Wales of cohesive communities</td> </tr> <tr> <td>A resilient Wales</td> <td>A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh Language</td> </tr> <tr> <td>A healthier Wales</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>A more equal Wales</td> <td>A globally responsible Wales</td> </tr> </table> ✓ Act in accordance with the Sustainable Development Principle through the Five Ways of Working: Long Term, Prevention, Integration, Collaboration and Involvement. 	A prosperous Wales	A Wales of cohesive communities	A resilient Wales	A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh Language	A healthier Wales		A more equal Wales	A globally responsible Wales
A prosperous Wales	A Wales of cohesive communities								
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<p>Child Poverty and Equality Legislation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010 legislation has been amended to take account of Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. The Duty to have a Child Poverty strategy is now discharged through relevant Public Services Boards well-being plans. ✓ Public Sector Equality Duties including Welsh Specific Duties and the Socio Economic Duty (from April 1st 2020) under the Equality Act 2010. 								

Welsh Government’s Valued and Resilient Position Statement

National Parks in Wales need to

1. Be “Landscapes for everyone”
2. Reach out beyond traditional audiences
3. Engage a more diverse cross section of Welsh society so that they have a stake in the national landscapes

The statement notes :

“While it is important for all sectors of society to experience these designated landscapes, particular focus should be given to children and young families from deprived areas. Action must be taken to **help to tackle the inequalities that exist in health, education and economic outcomes amongst the poorest in society**. This work will include enhanced outdoor education programmes and volunteering opportunities.”

National Park Authorities in Wales (and AONBs):

- a. should recognise the complex and multidimensional nature of social exclusion,
- b. seek to promote social inclusion in all AONB and National Park work
- c. seek to foster the economic and social well-being of local communities
- d. seek to reduce social exclusion in all its forms.

Principles that guide our activities to support social inclusion and help reduce inequality and child poverty:

- 1. Engage stakeholders** with the inclusive opportunities available within National Parks that promote social inclusion and alleviate the negative impacts of poverty. Engagement and actions works best in collaborative partnerships that draw upon the skills, knowledge and lived experiences of all our communities and partners.
- 2. Demonstrate value** of National Parks to social inclusion and alleviation of the barriers posed poverty by identifying gathering and contributing towards evidence-based policy and practice. The experiences available within National Parks help reduce the negative impacts of poverty and improve opportunities for social inclusion and better health.
- 3. Maximise opportunities** for all people in Wales to benefit from the natural environment and landscape features of National Parks. Engaging people with their natural and cultural environments without compromising the special qualities and landscape of National Parks for future generations.

Priority Areas

- 1. Living in the park** - Working collaboratively with others to address affordable housing, access to services and, rural and coastal poverty
- 2. Access and opportunities** - Promoting and enhancing access to the outdoors, culture and heritage, opportunities for play, recreation and well-being
- 3. Learning and Work** - Working collaboratively with partners to promote employment opportunities, education and skills development



Where we can have an impact through our priorities

1. Living in the Park

1.1 Access to Affordable Housing

The Challenge



Comparing household prices with local income and earnings:

BBNP: Average price is 8 times the average income.

SNP: Average price is 7 times the average income

Pembrokeshire: Property price ratio to earnings was 7.16 in 2018 compared to 3.36 in 1997 (ONS).

Our Role: Through our planning decisions and Local Development Plans we support the provision of affordable housing on suitable sites within Park areas.

£47,000 of PCNPA Sustainable Development Fund contributed towards Western Solar Ltd to design and construct a working prototype of an affordable eco-home

1.2 Access to Services and Responding to Rural and Coastal Poverty

The Challenge



Rural access to service: 47 areas (or areas partly within the National Park Boundary) within the 10% most deprived areas in Wales in terms of access to services according to the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation:

BBNP: 12 areas

PCNP: 18 areas

SNP: 17 areas

Our Role: We work in collaboration with other public bodies, third sector, local businesses and communities to develop and support projects and schemes that help address challenges associated with access to services in rural areas. We fund and deliver community based projects and volunteering opportunities and act collaboratively with others to remove barriers people may face to accessing these opportunities in rural areas.

- ✓ The Snowdon Sherpa is a unique bus service that travels around the foot of Snowdon, creating a valuable link between the six main routes that travel up Snowdon, as well as the main car parks, villages and tourist attractions in the area. The volume of use by visitors ensures that this much needed rural service continues to operate.
- ✓ BBNPA Sustainable Development Fund has supported many projects improving access to services, including the Black Mountain Centre Brynaman, providing a one stop shop for library, doctor, police surgery, Credit Union, IT, a fuel club and much more
- ✓ The PCNPA Pathways volunteering project, helps people aged 16 and above to improve their health and wellbeing as they gain new experiences and skills through practical activity outdoors. The project activity also supports the development of skills and knowledge for education and employment. Target groups for the project include young people and those who have mental health issues.

2. Access and Opportunities

2.1 Increasing access to outdoor play

The Challenge



National Survey for Wales 2017-

18: Levels of satisfaction with places for children aged 1-10 to play vary by the economic status of the parent. 60% of parents not in material deprivation were satisfied with places for children to play, compared with 40% of parents in material deprivation.

Our Role: We work in collaboration with others to develop and deliver projects and schemes that increase opportunities for children and young people to access outdoor play opportunities. We use our Local Development Plans to protect green community space for outdoor play.

- ✓ As planning authorities all National Park Authorities must conduct an open space assessment that includes a review of all open spaces that can be accessed by the public as well as privately owned space such as school grounds. This includes recreation and play grounds. National Planning Policy requires that these spaces are protected from inappropriate development.
- ✓ PCNPA is a partner in Pembrokeshire Outdoor Schools (PODS), the partnerships aim is to encourage children to become fully engaged with, and confident in their local environment. PCNPA also supports local schools to develop wildlife gardens and bug hotels and other outdoor learning environments in their school grounds.

2.2 Increasing access to recreation opportunities in the Park

The Challenge



Access to Paths: 5,645 km of open and accessible Public Rights of Way across the three National Parks. 184km of paths within the National Park are classed as 'access for all' paths.

Our Role: We work in collaboration with others to develop, deliver and fund access schemes and projects that remove barriers to people being able to access recreation opportunities in the Park areas. We work to promote and improve Public Rights of Way in Park area where feasible for users who are currently unable to access the paths.

- ✓ SNPA has carried out work to improve the Dol Idris Access for All routes at the foot of Cadair Idris as well as developing the Snowdon circular multi-user trail. Visitors can also use the National Park owned off-road tramper to explore these trails.
- ✓ PCNPA beach wheelchairs are specially designed and manufactured to be used on sandy beaches. Working with local businesses and organisations they are available for hire at a number of outlets in the National Park, enabling people to gain access to some of the Park's finest beaches.
- ✓ The BBNPA Miles Without Stiles project has recently worked with local users, Town Councils and land owners around Brecon, Talgarth and Crickhowell to identify suitable routes where stiles and other barriers have been replaced with new self-closing gates.

2.3 Increasing Access to Health and Well-being opportunities in the Park

The Challenge



National Survey for Wales 2017-18: 34% of adults were inactive (active less than 30 minutes the previous week). Inactivity was highest among older adults and adults in more deprived areas. 24% of those in material deprivation have a mental health disorder, compared with 6% of those not in material deprivation. 37% of those in material deprivation reported being lonely compared with 12% of those not in material deprivation.

Our Role: We work in collaboration with health providers and others to develop and deliver projects and schemes that help people access and benefit from the health and well-being Opportunities in Park areas. This includes promoting access to supported walking and volunteering opportunities.

- ✓ Linking in with the wider social prescribing agenda, Park Authorities deliver supported walking opportunities that help people overcome barriers to accessing health benefits of walking in the Park. SNPA has a 'Walking to health' club in Bala. PCNPA's Walkability project provides supported walking sessions as well as providing advice and training to help set up local walking groups and BBNPA's Active ageing project provides free guided walk opportunities to older people as a form of social prescribing.
- ✓ SNPA are part of the Let Get Moving Partnership North Wales and the new National park Management Plan - Cynllun Eryri - sets out detailed actions for expanding work with this group and increasing opportunities for socially excluded groups. PCNPA are part of the Let's Walk Pembrokeshire initiative, both encouraging people to take up walking opportunities within their communities.
- ✓ BBNPA's Small Steps action research project works with the Health Board Psychology department to provide a beneficial programme of activity for patients in secondary care for mental health conditions.

3. Learning and Work

3.1 Access to employment opportunities in the Park

The Challenge



EHRC – Is Wales Fairer 2018: In 2016/17 10.4% of employees and self-employed people aged 16 and over in Wales were in insecure employment. This means that they were either employed in temporary or agency employment, or were self-employed and working in caring, leisure, other service occupations, as process, plant or machine operatives, or in elementary occupations (for example, cleaners or catering assistants).

Our Role: Through our planning decisions and Local Development Plans we support sustainable economic developments. Through grants such as the Sustainable Development Funds, concession opportunities, local procurement and other opportunities we support local businesses. We are a rural employer and provide employment opportunities for people living in and around Park areas.

- ✓ PCNPA hosts fairs at its centres that provide opportunities for local businesses to have a stall and access the footfall of people that attend these events.
- ✓ BBNPA provides a venue for local craft sales at the National Park Visitor Centre, and has supported Farmers Markets to establish and to support a circular economy.

3.2 Increasing access to education offer

The Challenge



Well-being in Wales 2018:

28% of children in Wales were living in relative income poverty after housing costs were paid, Children are the population group most likely to be in relative income poverty. Socio-economic disadvantage remains a key inequality indicator for some outcomes such as educational attainment.

Our Role: We work collaboratively with others to develop opportunities to ensure our education offer is accessible to children from schools in areas of higher material deprivation and to provide opportunities in the outdoors for children with additional needs.

- ✓ In SNPA, a grant is offered for transport costs to school groups which is utilised extensively, with many schools stating that they would be unable to participate without this assistance.
- ✓ BBNPA's Fair Play scheme has offered schools with over 20% of children eligible for free school meals funding to cover transport costs for educational visits. Our education programme delivers against curriculum priorities and will support Successful Futures (new curriculum).
- ✓ PCNPA's Oriol Y Parc centre's Art Council Wales funded Criw Celf project has provided free outreach workshops for less advantaged schools that don't normally take part in the project.

3.3 Providing skills development opportunities

The Challenge



Well-being in Wales 2018:

Skill and qualification levels are the biggest single influence on people's chances of being in employment and on their incomes. The skill and qualification level of the population in an area is also the single most important factor in the economic success of that area.

Our Role: We work in collaboration with others to develop and support projects and schemes that provide opportunities for people to develop skills and gain experience in the workplace, opening up their wider employment opportunities.

- ✓ In SNPA, the Dolgellau THI project has thus far provided craftsmanship training to over 70 individuals, therefore providing high level skills to enable individuals to develop wider employment opportunities
- ✓ The Get Into the Brecon Beacons was a Rural Skills programme run by BBNPA and Prince's Trust Cymru aimed at engaging young people who are currently Not in Employment Education or Training (NEET). It provided them with a chance to experience and understand the opportunities available in the local environmental heritage sector and gain skills for work.

Addressing these issues:

These priorities will be addressed through each Authority's:

- ✓ National Park Management Plans
- ✓ Corporate Plans
- ✓ Equality Plan

Each Authority will monitor progress through relevant measures and actions within their performance reports to committees and their Annual Report on Meeting Well-being Objectives (Improvement Plan Part 2).

This position statement supplements the National Parks Wales Together for Health and Well-being Position Statement and Priority Actions 2016