

BLAENAU GWENT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report To:	The Chair and Members of the Council
Report Subject:	Feedback/Information from Outside Bodies: Brecon Beacons National Park Authority
Report Author:	Councillor John Hill
Report Date:	16th September, 2019
Date of Meeting:	10th October, 2019
Date signed off by Monitoring Officer:	17th September, 2019
Date signed off by Section 151 Officer:	N/A
Date signed off by Chair:	26th September, 2019

Report Information Summary

1.	Purpose of Report
1.1	To provide feedback from the AGM, the last Planning, Access and Rights of Way Committee (PAROW) and the newly formed Policy Forum of the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority.
2.	Feedback Information
2.1	<p>The Brecon Beacons National Park is made up of 500 square miles of landscape and communities with 7 Unitary Authorities having land within the Park.</p> <p>The statutory purposes of the Authority is; To conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the National Park. To promote opportunities for public enjoyment and understanding of the special qualities of the National Park.</p> <p>The statutory duty of the Authority is; To foster the economic and social well being of communities living within the National Park.</p> <p>The Brecon Beacons National Park Authority is responsible for all planning decisions on the land that falls within its boundary.</p> <p>Governance The Park is governed by the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority and is made up of 24 members, 16 appointed by the Unitary Authorities and 8 recruited by the Welsh Government for their particular expertise.</p> <p>There are also 3 independent members that sit on the Standards Committee.</p> <p>The number of members each of the 7 Unitary Authorities have is based on the area of land they have in the Park. Powys have the most at 8, Carmarthenshire and Monmouthshire have 2 members and Merthyr Tydfil, Torfaen, Rhondda Cynon Taff and Blaenau Gwent have 1.</p> <p>It has been agreed in principle to reduce the number of members to 18, this proposal will be achieved by reducing the Welsh Government Membership and the Powys membership by 2 and</p>

the Carmarthenshire and Monmouthshire membership by 1.

Each Unitary Authority pays a levy to the Park. In 2018/19 Blaenau Gwent paid the second lowest at £28k. Powys the highest at £525k.

The 3 main committees that govern the Brecon Beacons National Park are:

1. The National Park Authority on which all members sit.
2. The Planning, Access and Rights of Way committee on which 21 members sit.
3. The Policy Forum on which all members sit.

The National Park Authority and the Planning, Access and Rights of Way Committee meetings are webcast and recorded.

The Policy Forum has an advisory role and make recommendations to the Authority in partnership with the Chief Executive and the Management Team. It does not have decision making powers. An important role in advising the Policy Forum on the development of Policy and its implementation are the 4 Key Work Area Working Groups. They are:

1. Biodiversity and Landscape
2. Heritage,
3. Resilient Communities and
4. Sustainable Economic Development.

The composition of the groups are:

The lead manager for the key work area who chairs the group,
Other officers as required for the business of the agenda,
Member Champion for the key work area,
Shadow Member Champion for the key work area

Role of Member on the Outside Body:-

As the Blaenau Gwent representative, I sit on the National Park Authority Committee, The Planning Access, Rights of Way Committee, the Policy Forum and on the Governance and Member Development Working Group. I am also the Shadow Heritage Champion.

Date of Meetings:-

28th June 2019 – National Park Authority AGM.

Councillor Gareth Ratcliffe, member representing Powys was elected Chair of the National Park Authority.

Mr. Edward Evans, Welsh Government member was elected Deputy Chair of the National Park Authority.

19th July 2019 – Policy Forum

At the AGM, Mr James Marsden, Welsh Government member was elected Chair of the Policy Forum.

Councillor Graham Thomas, member representing Rhondda Cynon Taff was elected Deputy Chair of the Policy Forum.

30th July 2019 – Planning, Access and Rights of Way (PAROW)

At the AGM, Mr. Julian Steadman, Welsh Government Member was re-elected Chair of Planning, Access and Rights of way.

Councillor Edwin Roderick member from Powys was re-elected Deputy Chair of Planning, Access and Rights of Way

Key Issues to feedback:-

With such a small area of the Park located in Blaenau Gwent very little arises in the business of the Park that affects Blaenau Gwent. Of late the only issue is the proposed 3G pitch at Brynmawr Foundation School.

An initial planning application was submitted in 2017 by the BGCBC Project team and later withdrawn due to the project team needing to address lighting design and ecology in line with objections raised by Natural Resources Wales (NRW) based on Bat Mitigation issues. The Project Team went on to address the recommendations highlighted by NRW via Brecon Beacons National Park, and took the decision to submit a pre app as part of the pre-application consultation process to Brecon Beacons

National Parks Planning Authority in July 2019. As a result of the pre-app submission a number of issues were raised.

These have now largely been addressed; however, in line with the new regulations relating to Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDs) the Project Team now have to address drainage requirements in order to obtain planning permission. The Project Team have commissioned a Ground Investigation survey and are awaiting feedback from Welsh Government and Costain re: drainage design. As soon as the Project Team have this information, they can proceed with the application. It is the intention of the Project Team to submit a full planning application by October.