



Case study pro-forma

Case Study Title	Developing a Town & Community Council Charter in the Brecon Beacons
Partner Organisation (s)	One Voice Wales, Town & Community Councils
Key words	Intermediary, partnerships, town and community councils, National Park authority, charter

1. Brief Introduction

Brecon Beacons National Park Authority (BBNPA) worked with Town and Community Councils across the National Park (50 Councils) to develop a Community Council/National Park Authority Charter and Action Plan to detail and guide better ways of working together (within respective remits) to benefit local people.

2. Details of the issue addressed

Town & Community Councillors represent their local communities. They engage with BBNPA in this role in many ways: commenting on planning applications, contributing to the development of the Local Development Plan, contributing to consultation on other BBNPA plans (e.g. the National Park Management Plan- the overarching plan for the Park and many thematic plans under this), liaising with specialist Park officers to develop projects and services in a range of areas: tourism, rights of way, community facilities, events and festivals and more.

In addition to liaison on these specifics, BBNPA has over the years sought to retain an overarching dialogue with the Councils across the Park. This has taken the form of liaison meetings. A clustering approach has been taken to enable the exchange of ideas with representatives of several Councils at one time, and to enable efficient involvement of NP specialist officers in areas of current topical interest to Councils. The optimum size of cluster and locations and timings of meetings is difficult to identify given the very rural nature of the area, travelling distances involved and the many demands on the time of Town & Community Councillors, including the demands of the farming calendar for many,

In addition, the CEO, Directors and other BBNPA staff attend individual Councils meetings, but scope for regular attendance at 50 Councils is clearly limited.

These liaisons are productive, however it has been apparent that in several areas of work there are common repeating issues raised by both Councils and the NPA, including common understanding of the workings of the Development Control Planning system, and the consultation time window required for Councils to respond to a range of consultations.

3. Actions/approach taken

The model Charter (produced by One Voice Wales, WLGA and Welsh Government) was discussed with Councils in the Park as a possible effective innovation. The idea of developing a NPA specific Charter was widely supported, and most Councils also favoured an annual action plan accompanying the Charter to progress areas of interest.



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A Charter -based on the specific remit of a NPA- and accompanying action plan was developed and delivered over 2011/12. In March 2012 all Councils were invited to a central meeting to review progress and develop a Charter and action plan for 2012/13. One Voice Wales were instrumental as partners in the success of this approach, and Community Councillor and Development Officer representatives of One Voice Wales formed a working group to progress development with BBNPA. The resulting Charter was signed to by all the One Voice Wales Area committees covering the Park area. A Charter launch included signing by the National Chair of One Voice Wales and BBNPA Chair and Town & Community Councils from across the Park.

4. Benefits such as: improvements to service, improved dialogue about funding and service planning between third sector organisations and local authorities, in-kind support arrangements etc.

In addition to enhancing dialogue and developing common understanding of NPA and Council roles and commitments across the range of areas of interest covered by the Charter, the Action Plan has led to some specific improvements including:

- Well attended Planning training for Community Councils
- Community Council awareness of opportunities for appointment to the NPA
- Community Council/One Voice Wales role in Scrutiny Review of BBNPA Improvement Objective

5. Sustaining and or building on the benefits realised

Sustaining the benefit realised will depend on the ongoing commitment of BBNPA, One Voice Wales and the Town and Community Councils involved to participating in dialogues, furthering actions and identifying future actions to together help all to better deliver, within their respective remits, for local communities

6. How do you feel the approach met the National Principles for Public Engagement in Wales?

Well - as below. engagement through the Charter has made a difference to both BBNPA and the Councils- evidenced by Councils participation in meetings and signing up to the Charter

7. How would you rate your approach to the project against the National Principles for Public Engagement in Wales?

Evaluation

1= very poor: 2 = poor: 3 = average: 4 = good: 5 = excellent

Principle	Evaluation
Engagement is effectively designed to make a difference	4
Encourage and enable everyone affected to be involved, if they so choose	5
Engagement is planned and delivered in a timely and appropriate way	4
Work with relevant partner organisations	5



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The information provided will be jargon free, appropriate and understandable	4
Make it easier for people to take part	4
Enable people to take part effectively	4
Engagement is given the right resources and support to be effective	4
People are told the impact of their contribution	4
Learn and share lessons to improve the process of engagement	4

Contact details

Name: Clare Parsons

Title/role: Sustainable Communities Manager

Organisation: Brecon Beacons National Park Authority

E-mail: clare.parsons@breconbeacons.org

Telephone: 01874 620434