

## Consultation Response Form – Sir Gar/Carmarthenshire

### What do you think?

We would welcome your comments on the proposal in this document. We would particularly welcome your responses to the following questions:

**Question 1:** What are your views on the proposal to reduce the membership of the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority from 24 to 18?

Carmarthenshire has no objection to reducing the membership of the Brecon Beacons National Park from 24, but considers, based on the proportion of Carmarthenshire land located within the park, that Carmarthenshire's representation should be unchanged..

Carmarthenshire has the second highest proportion of land located within the BBNP (16.7%) based on Unitary Authority boundaries. It is strongly felt that reducing Carmarthenshire's membership to 1 member is disproportionate. It places Carmarthenshire with one sole representative alongside the Unitary Authority areas of Torfaen, Blaenau Gwent, Myrthyr Tydfil, Rhondda Cynon Taf and Monmouthshire who have a combined percentage of 17.1% of area within the Brecon Beacons National Park.

Carmarthenshire suggest that as an alternative, Authorities who have less than 1% of the park area within their boundaries should nominate 1 representative between them. This suggestion is based on figures obtained from the basic facts leaflet issued by the National Park, and confirmed by the NPA as being up-to-date.

<http://www.beacons-npa.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/basic-facts-about-the-brecon-beacons-national-park.pdf>

<b>Unitary Authority</b>	<b>% of Park area</b>
Powys	66.1
Carmarthenshire	16.7
Monmouthshire	11.1
Rhondda Cynon Taff	3.9
Merthyr Tydfil	1.8
Blaenau Gwent	0.2
Torfaen	0.1
Neath Port Talbot	negligible
Caerphilly	negligible

**Question 2:** What are your views on the proposed distribution of members of the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority between the seven principal authorities and the Welsh Ministers as set out in Table 3?

We feel that the proposed distribution of seats is disproportionate and WG should look at alternative proposals to better reflect each Authority's land proportion within the BBNP, as detailed in answer 1 above.

We also note from the basic facts leaflet that, Blaenau Gwent and Torfaen only have 0.2% of the national park population between them and similarly Rhondda Cynon Taf and Merthyr a combined population of 4% between them, we ask the question is it correct that these authorities have 1 member each whilst it is proposed to cut Carmarthenshire’s membership to 1.

**Question 3:** We would like to know your views on the effects that reducing the membership of the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority would have on the Welsh language, specifically on

- i) opportunities for people to use Welsh and
- ii) on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than English.

What effects do you think there would be? How could positive effects be increased, or negative effects be mitigated?

Carmarthenshire has the highest proportion of Welsh Speakers of all the Authorities represented on the BBNPA, as can be seen from figures obtained from the *Stats Wales website as detailed below:-*

	Percentage able to speak Welsh
Powys	18.6
Carmarthenshire	43.9
Neath Port Talbot	15.3
Rhondda, Cynon, Taff	12.3
Merthyr Tydfil	8.9
Blaenau Gwent	7.8
Torfaen	9.8
Monmouthshire	9.9

*Percentage based on Welsh speakers by local authority, gender and detailed age groups, 2011 Census*

There is a danger that a reduction in our membership on the Park Authority also reduces the Linguistic skills of the Authority’s membership, at a time when a great deal of emphasis is placed on the Welsh language. . Retaining the existing Carmarthenshire representations will ensure that the BBNPA and its membership is aware and supportive of the principles of the Welsh Language and the responsibilities of the Park in promoting the use of Welsh and ensuring that the language is being considered in strategic planning for the economic and social well-being of the area. In the same way, we need to ensure that Members are able to communicate bilingually with the public and promote the use of Welsh at meetings. We are confident that representatives of Carmarthenshire are fully aware of those responsibilities, and will ensure that there are opportunities for all residents in Wales to use the Welsh Language and to be treated no less favourably than English and the importance of the Welsh workforce and service planning.

We also feel that the concept of community remains valid in rural areas, our representatives are committed to strengthening the work of supporting these communities from a linguistic and cultural perspective.

There are currently only 4 members of the BBNPA who speak Welsh (50% from Carmarthenshire) it is important that this bilingual representation is maintained or enhanced. One of the electoral wards within Carmarthenshire has a Welsh Speaking population of over 68% and it is important that the Welsh speaking population is represented on the Park's membership.

**Question 4:** Please also explain how you believe the proposed actions could be formulated or changed so as to have

i) positive effects or increased positive effects on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language, and

ii) no adverse effects on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language.

We feel that retaining Carmarthenshire's 2 representatives will safeguard bilingual communities and ensure that the BBNPA has adequate bilingual representation which in turn increases opportunities for Welsh language services. Fewer Welsh speakers on the BBNPA will have an adverse effect on the promotion of the language and opportunities for people to use Welsh.

Carmarthenshire is a County with a strong bilingual background and an awareness of the importance of a bilingual society. Our Members will promote bilingualism and ensure that the park discharges its responsibilities in treating Welsh no less favourably than the English Language.

**Question 5:** We have asked two specific questions. If you have any related issues which we have not specifically addressed, please use this space to report them:

We are aware that the BBNPA has recently been promoting the western area of the Park, namely Carmarthenshire. As an authority it is important that Carmarthenshire continues its representation on the park to ensure that schemes such as the Fforest Fawr UNESCO Global Geopark, the separate Hydro scheme both of which are exciting programmes and other ongoing tourism proposals continue to be promoted and developed, reducing the number of members from Carmarthenshire could have an adverse impact on the ongoing development and proposals for the Western Area.

Responses to consultations are likely to be made public, on the internet or in a report. If you would prefer your response to remain anonymous, please tick here: