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Paul Davies  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1NA

Date: 2 February 2004  
Your Ref:  
Reply to: Christopher Gledhill  
Our Ref: PA10534

Dear Sirs

**Brecon Beacons National Park Authority Written Submission of Evidence to National Assembly Economic Development and Transport Committee policy review on Economic Inactivity**

**Re issues raised in Economic Development & Transport Paper 3 "Raising Levels of Economic Inactivity"**

National Park Authorities are charged with a duty to "further the economic & social wellbeing of the local community - without incurring significant expenditure". In addition to the statutory forward planning and development control functions, the NPA discharges this duty through leading, facilitating and participating in a range of partnership initiatives. The contribution some of these make to addressing economic inactivity is outlined here. (SDF refers to the Sustainable Development Fund administered by BBNPA (and other Welsh National Park and AONBs) to demonstrate innovative partnership approaches to sustainable development.)

**Skills**

SDF has supported several projects aiming to increase skills level -including amongst the economically inactive:

**SIREN:** working with young offenders to increase skills base utilising local timber- a job is the biggest deterrent to re-offending - the project is achieving success in moving participants into employment

**Hummungus Fungus-** successfully creating a model now rolling out to others to develop small scale businesses growing exotic edible fungi on timber wastes

**Brecknock Hill Cheviots;** increasing viability of holdings and involving other family members in upskilling in the marketing of lamb/ sheep products

### **Low skills**

BBNPA recently concluded an 18 month Beacons Opportunities project with Brecknock Wildlife Trust, utilising ESF Objective 3 ,SDF and a series of smaller funds. The project led by a Volunteer Coordinator, provided locally appropriate training opportunities in countryside skills for beneficiaries.

### **Local distinctiveness**

Local conditions contribute to local patterns of economic inactivity. For sustainability, it is important to use the individual strengths and distinctiveness of different parts of Wales to diversify the economy for competitive, social and environmental advantage. In the National Parks SDF has helped to facilitate sustainable projects that feature private/voluntary, and community led approaches that celebrate distinctiveness, and demonstrate diversity across the NP's and create employment opportunities. For example, in the first three years the SDF in the Brecon Beacons NP led to the creation of twenty seven new jobs, and supported numerous others to become more economically active by increasing business viability.

### **Seasonal Employment**

Is an issue in many rural areas - employment being tied to the farming calendar and to the tourist seasons. BBNPA works with partners in both areas on a project basis, for example:

#### **Farming**

BBNPA has supported the establishment of **Farmers Markets** (Brecon & Llandovery) which increase viability of holdings & frequently mean other family members become increasingly economically active throughout the year in the production of added value products. BBNPA organise an annual **Food Festival** showcasing local food products to a large audience. The benefit is beyond the day of the market/festival, creating consumer/producer links for purchasing by domestic and retail sectors.

#### **Tourism**

Addressing economic inactivity must mean creating sustainable economic and social change for jobs created to be available in the long term. For example, BBNPA aims to develop the contribution that tourism make to the local economy without adverse effects on the Park's environment. Its key foci are outdoor activity tourism (walking, cycling, riding), development of eco-friendly accommodation and the management of visitors through public transport schemes etc. In addition there are objectives that relate to helping businesses develop their skills base, lengthening the tourism season and empowering local communities.

The **Sustainable Tourism Strategy** 's relevance to economic inactivity is in:

- improving employment prospects, generally and through reducing seasonality
- skills development in the industry as a whole
- confidence building measures within local communities
- broadening the scope of the tourism economy by encouraging new types of business to develop (particularly within the activities sector) to enable a broader range of employees to find work within it

- improving the 'localism' of economic impact by developing themes such as local food procurement, use of pubs and post offices, developing the service element within self catering, etc leading to greater wealth creation locally, greater continuity of employment and the better safeguarding of local community resources.

I trust the above is helpful in your review on Economic Inactivity. If you require further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Gledhill', written in a cursive style.

Christopher Gledhill  
Chief Executive