

**Sustainability Appraisal, Strategic Environmental
Assessment and Habitats Regulations Assessment**

of the

**Brecon Beacons National Park
Management Plan**

DRAFT SCOPING REPORT

September 2007

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I. Context

I.1 The Brecon Beacons National Park

The Brecon Beacons National Park contains some of the most spectacular and distinctive upland landforms in southern Britain. The Park covers 520 square miles (1344 square kilometres) and lies between rural Mid Wales and the industrial South Wales Valleys. It is a diverse landscape, where sweeping uplands contrast with green valleys, with dramatic waterfalls, ancient woodland, caves, forests and reservoirs. The highest point in the Park is Pen y Fan in the Brecon Beacons, at the centre of the National Park. Its distinctive table-topped summit stands at 886m, and it is climbed by hundreds of thousands of people each year.

The Park is home to 33,000 people, and has a strong Welsh heritage and rich economic, social and cultural life. The largest settlement is the cathedral town of Brecon with a population of approximately 7,500. Meanwhile, over 3 million people a year come to the Brecon Beacons National Park to enjoy the unforgettable landscape. The mountains, uplands and valleys are all excellent walking country. Others come to enjoy such activities as horse riding, cycling and mountain biking, and water-based recreation.

I.2 National Park Purposes and Duty

National Parks were designated under the 1949 National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act, but their current framework is the Environment Act 1995. Section 61 sets out their **two purposes**:

- **Conservation and enhancement** - *“to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife, and cultural heritage of the National Parks”*
- **Understanding and enjoyment** - *“to promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities [of the Parks] by the public.”*

These are underpinned by the Sandford Principle which asserts the primacy of the first purpose over the second in cases of obvious conflict.

The Parks have national and international importance as protected landscapes, and their funding and specialist staff help them serve as test-beds for sustainable and innovative development and management. Their work locally can therefore have national and global benefits.

The National Parks of Wales, Scotland, and England are Category V protected areas as defined by the World Conservation Union (IUCN) in the Guidelines of Protected Area Management Categories 1994. Category V protected areas are living and working landscapes with characteristic qualities, features, and services that have been moulded by the interplay of natural forces and human activities over the course of time. Consequently, careful regard must be given to the linkage between local communities and economies and environmental conservation in and around the National Parks. As such, the National Park Authority (NPA), in pursuit of the two statutory purposes, has a duty to:

- *“...seek to foster the economic and social well-being of local communities (within the National Park by working closely with the agencies and local authorities responsible for these matters).”*

Section 62(2) of the Environment Act 1995 imposes a duty on all public bodies to have regard to the two National Park purposes when making their decisions or carrying out activities in relation to or so as to affect land within a national park. The NPA leads the actions and facilitates the partnerships required to fulfil the Park purposes and duty, with the aim to foster a collective sense of purpose. In so doing, the NPA's role is to facilitate, coordinate, and add value to the work of others in the Park. It is not the responsibility of the NPA to duplicate work or assume others' responsibilities except where previously agreed. To this end, responsible stewardship of the National Park rests not only upon the shoulders of the National Park Authority and other public bodies but also upon the shoulders of all who reside, work, recreate, and/or have a vested interest in the Park.

The National Park Management Plan is the principal vehicle for ensuring that the statutory provisions of the Act are met¹. The central role of the management plan, then, is to guide the delivery of the statutory purposes and duty, assisted by the NPA's statutory planning function. Successful implementation of the management plan is a task shared by all, and, therefore, requires active partnerships between the NPA and government agencies, local authorities, granting agencies, farmers, landowners, conservation groups, recreation groups, visitors, non-governmental organizations, local businesses, and local communities.

The National Park Authority is the planning authority for the National Park area. The Brecon Beacons National Park, as an administrative area, covers parts of 9 of Wales' 22 Unitary Authorities, which further emphasizes the need to work together in a collaborative and cooperative fashion.

1.3 The National Park Management Plan

The National Park Management Plan is the single most important policy document for a National Park. It is the over-arching strategic document for the Park as a whole, in relation to delivery of the National Park purposes; it is not just for the work of the National Park Authority (NPA) but a plan for all who care about the Brecon Beacons National Park and its future. As such, it should integrate the strategies, plans, and actions of the NPA and other organisations where these affect the purposes of National Park designation and the NPA's duty towards local communities (see section 2.3 below). It also provides the strategic background for the NPA's Unitary Development Plan and forthcoming Local Development Plan.

Plan preparation should involve active participation of key stakeholders and the wider community, encouraging shared ownership of and support for the vision, goals, aims, objectives, policies, and actions that each plan identifies².

The NPA is required to review the National Park Management Plan (NPMP) every 5 years. The last Plan ran from 2000-2005 and was subject to a Sustainability Appraisal (SA).

¹ National Park Management Plans: Guidance. CCW (2006)

² National Park Management Plans Guidance. CCW (2006).

2. Appraisal of the National Park Management Plan

2.1 Sustainability

Adherence to the principle of sustainability ensures that all actions taken to meet our needs today do not compromise the needs of future generations. Sustainability is about respecting the limits of the planet's natural resources, its environment, and its biodiversity. The two statutory purposes for which National Parks are designated—conserving and enhancing their natural beauty, wildlife, and cultural heritage, and promoting opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities by the public—are inextricably linked to the principle of sustainability. But, this relationship does not make the task of putting sustainability into practice in today's global society any less challenging. Broad-scale drivers of change such as global population growth, climate change, peak oil, water pollution, and acid deposition exacerbate regional and local concerns. Closer to home issues such as changing agricultural policies and practices, social inclusion, farm diversification, affordable housing, alternative energy options, and disabled access to the countryside continue to weigh heavily on the minds of local people. To ensure NPMPs will be in keeping with the sustainability principle, the plans are subject to appraisal to assess potential social, economic, and environmental impacts resulting from proposed aims, goals, policies, and actions.

2.2 Screening

The current NPMP review is the first since regulations relating to Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) came into force. An initial screening process resulted in the view that the NPMP will have a significant economic, social, and environmental impact on the National Park area and should therefore be subject to SA/SEA. The NPMP is also likely to have an effect on conservation sites of European importance, and therefore requires an appropriate assessment under the Habitats Regulations 1994 (i.e., Habitats Regulations Assessment or HRA) that implement Article 6(3) of the European Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC).

2.3 Sustainability Appraisal (SA)

Sustainability Appraisals are a process of evaluating the social, environmental, and economic implications of all emerging strategies, policies and plans. This process is intended to make certain that plans and their goals³ and policies are in accordance with the underlying principles of sustainable development. SA seeks to ensure that the five principles and four agreed priorities for sustainable development are addressed⁴:

Principles:

1. Living within environmental limits;
2. Ensuring a strong healthy and just society;
3. Achieving a sustainable economy;
4. Promoting good governance; and
5. Using sound science responsibly.

Priorities:

- Sustainable consumption and production;
- Climate change and energy;
- Natural resource protection and environmental enhancement; and
- Sustainable communities.

Protected areas should provide exemplars of best practice of sustainable development for wider Wales, so it will be particularly important to apply the process of SA to the production of the NPMP. The interpretation and weight given to the different strands of sustainability will need to take into account the statutory purposes of designation. Current guidance recommends that the Sustainability Appraisal be combined with the Strategic Environmental Assessment as one cohesive process.

³ Note that the term “objective” is used throughout this document in reference to SA/SEA/HRA objectives to be consistent with the vocabulary outlining these processes, despite the fact that they are not truly objectives. The terms “aim” and “goal” are used to refer to management ambitions in the context of the Park Management Plan. Aims and goals better reflect the level of specificity associated with the Management Plan.

⁴ As set out in “Securing the Future: Delivering a UK sustainable development strategy”, DEFRA 2005

2.4 Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

European Union Directive 2001/42/EC requires a formal Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of all plans and programmes which are likely to have significant effects on the environment. It aims:

“...to provide for a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes with a view to promoting sustainable development, by ensuring that, in accordance with this Directive, an environmental assessment is carried out of certain plans and programmes which are likely to have significant effects on the environment” (Article 1).

The directive defines environmental assessment as a procedure comprising:

- the preparation of an Environmental Report on the likely significant effects of the draft plan or programme;
- carrying out consultation on the draft plan or programme and the accompanying Environmental Report;
- taking into account the Environmental Report and the results of consultation in decision making; and
- providing information when the plan or programme is adopted showing how the results of the environmental assessment have been taken into account

SEA is required to be undertaken alongside the preparation of the plan to which it relates to allow strategic alternatives to be formally incorporated into it at the earliest opportunity. This process, in conjunction with the requirements of the SA, will ensure that the environmental, social, and economic implications are fully integrated into emerging policies and strategies.

This Scoping Report is an initial step in the SEA process. Other requirements are discussed further under Methodology (Section 3).

2.5 Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)

An “appropriate assessment” of measures in the National Park Management Plan is required under the terms of Regulation 48 of the Habitats Regulations 1994. The assessment must be made of any plan or programme likely to have a significant effect on the conservation objectives of sites designated under the EU Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC (Special Areas of Conservation or SACs) or the Wild Birds Directive 79/409/EEC (Special Protection Areas or SPAs.)

There are no SPAs in the Brecon Beacons National Park, but there are a number of SACs, many of which are also designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). Strategies in the NPMP are likely to affect these sites either directly or indirectly. An Appropriate Assessment under the Habitats Regulations will be carried out in parallel with the SEA process and formulation of the National Park Management Plan.

3. Methodology

3.1 Combined SA/ SEA Process

Despite the distinct requirements of the SA and SEA, the possibility remains to satisfy both in a single combined process. This can be achieved as the findings of the SEA (environmental focus) can be incorporated into the broader SA (includes socio-economic focus).

The NPA is committed to satisfying the requirements of SA and SEA in a combined appraisal (Figure 1). The process will be integrated into each of the NPMP preparation stages (Figure 2), thereby ensuring consistency between objectives, transparency in decision making, and a consistent level of rigour throughout the process. The SA/SEA process is therefore central to the process of developing the Management Plan itself.

This single process will subsequently inform monitoring of the effectiveness of the plan’s implementation and assist in any future revisions.

3.2 Stages of SA/SEA

The scoping report is produced at **SEA Stage A** as shown in Table I. It sets the context and scope of the SEA, establishes the baseline and prepares for consultation. It will be subject to formal scrutiny and public comment. Moreover, by involving stakeholders and experts along the way, a robust and fully integrated appraisal should develop.

Table I: The Five Stage Approach to SA/ SEA ⁵

Stages	Actions	Date	Consultation Stages
Stage A	Scoping: key issues, environmental and sustainability baseline, predicting trends without a plan, relevant plans and policies, setting environmental and sustainability objectives, preliminary consideration of options, preparing the Scoping Report.	Jan 2006 – August 2007	Consultation on Scoping Report Sept – Nov 2007
Stage B	Assessment: developing and refining provisional options and assessing effects	Oct 2006 – Feb 2008	
Stage C	Preparing the draft Environmental Report	Jan 2008 – May 2008	
Stage D	Consultation on draft Environmental Report Update Environmental Report	June – Aug 2008	Consultation on Environmental Report May – July 2008
Stage E	Monitoring the implementation of the plan.	Annually	

Following the Scoping Report, Plan objectives will be assessed against the SA, SEA, and HRA as they are developed. It is envisaged that these processes will highlight the synergies and the incompatibilities at the preferred options stage (**Stage B**). Additional mitigation measures will be proposed where necessary. However, it is important to point out that the process is iterative and cyclic rather than sequential. For example, issues, aims, goals, and objectives will inevitably become revised as understanding improves through the various stages.

⁵ National Park Management Plans: Guidance. CCW (2006)

Building on the results of **Stage B**, the Environmental Report (**Stage C**) will highlight any significant effects of implementing the NPMP aims and goals by assessing them against a set of relevant sustainability and environmental objectives. This process will be conducted using a set of matrices to facilitate comparison. The Environmental Report also will include a commentary on likely significant effects, where appropriate, to show how environmental, social, and economic considerations have been incorporated within the NPMP. Again this report is subject to consultation (**Stage D**) before production of the final SA/ SEA report. The Draft NPMP will be out for consultation at approximately the same time as the Environmental Report, and both will be updated before publication by the end of 2008.

The published NPMP will be accompanied by a statement confirming how the sustainability and environmental considerations arising from the whole process, including the consultation responses, have been taken into account.

A scheme for monitoring its implementation (**Stage E**) will be included in the final NPMP. SEA objectives will include a set of indicators and relevant targets that can be used for long term monitoring of environmental, social, and economic trends and impacts.

3.3 Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)

It is likely that some of the objectives and policies proposed in the draft NPMP will directly or indirectly affect the Park's SACs. However, until the plan is developed, it cannot be seen what the impacts will be. An Appropriate Assessment as required for the production of the HRA will be integrated into the SA/SEA process as management aims and goals are developed. The Brecon Beacons NPA and its partners are currently in the process of formulating strategic management goals for the plan; therefore initial evaluation of the Plan's strategic goals from an HRA context will commence shortly and in parallel with procedures pursuant with Stage B of the SEA/SA process.

3.4 Integration of SA/SEA and HRA into the Plan Preparation Process

To derive most benefit from both processes, and limit pressures on consultees, the NPA will ensure that the consultations required by the SA/SEA and HRA processes are integrated into the plan making process as fully as possible. Both the SA/SEA and HRA will provide input at each stage of the plan preparation that involve decision making. The fact that the issues that the plan will address are similar to those covered by SA/SEA makes the process easier in some ways, although it is also a source of potential confusion between the two processes.

SEA/SA/HRA	2006												2007												2008												2009											
Stages/Tasks	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
A. Scoping																																																
Establish a Steering Group including key partners; conform methodology.	[Completed]																								[Ongoing]																							
Consider relevant plans and policies.	[Completed]												[Completed]												[Ongoing]												[Ongoing]											
Gather and analyse baseline information.	[Completed]												[Completed]												[Ongoing]												[Ongoing]											
Identify key issues.	[Completed]												[Completed]												[Ongoing]												[Ongoing]											
Set environmental and sustainability objectives and indicators.	[Completed]												[Completed]												[Ongoing]												[Ongoing]											
Predict trends without NPMP.	[Completed]												[Completed]												[Ongoing]												[Ongoing]											
B. Assessment																																																
Predict and evaluate the effects of the options produced by stakeholders, groups, and the public, and consider mitigation.	[Completed]												[Completed]												[Ongoing]												[Ongoing]											
Prepare Scoping Report.	[Completed]												[Completed]												[Ongoing]												[Ongoing]											
Distribute Scoping Report to stakeholders.	[Completed]												[Completed]												[Ongoing]												[Ongoing]											
Set meetings with key stakeholders and BBNPA staff members.	[Completed]												[Completed]												[Ongoing]												[Ongoing]											
Post Scoping Report to website and contact workshop participants.	[Completed]												[Completed]												[Ongoing]												[Ongoing]											
Consult on Scoping Report.	[Completed]												[Completed]												[Ongoing]												[Ongoing]											
C. Preparation of the Environmental																																																
Prepare draft Environmental Report and Sustainability Appraisal.	[Completed]												[Completed]												[Ongoing]												[Ongoing]											
HRA--initial screening (based on available data)	[Completed]												[Completed]												[Ongoing]												[Ongoing]											
HRA analysis--draft report.	[Completed]												[Completed]												[Ongoing]												[Ongoing]											
NPA approval draft Environmental Report	[Completed]												[Completed]												[Ongoing]												[Ongoing]											
D. Consultation																																																
Consult on Environmental Report/Sustainability Appraisal.	[Completed]												[Completed]												[Ongoing]												[Ongoing]											
Modifications of Environmental Report/SA following consultation.	[Completed]												[Completed]												[Ongoing]												[Ongoing]											
NPA report of the final Environmental Report.	[Completed]												[Completed]												[Ongoing]												[Ongoing]											
Publication of final Environmental Report/SA, including statement of how SA/SEA influenced the NPMP.	[Completed]												[Completed]												[Ongoing]												[Ongoing]											
E. Monitoring																																																
Develop aims and methods for monitoring.	[Completed]												[Completed]												[Ongoing]												[Ongoing]											
Respond to adverse effects.	[Completed]												[Completed]												[Ongoing]												[Ongoing]											
Review SEA/SA.	[Completed]												[Completed]												[Ongoing]												[Ongoing]											

Figure 1. Approximate time line for the SEA/SA/HRA tasks associated with preparation of the National Park Management Plan.

3.5 The Scoping Report

This Scoping Report is a key part of the SA/SEA process. It provides an early consultation opportunity on the scope of the SA/SEA for those authorities, bodies and individuals who are concerned about the effects of the implementation of the Plan. It will form the basis for the formal SA/SEA appraisal of the Plan.

4. BBNP State of the Park

4.1 Baseline Data

It is fundamental to both the SA and SEA that baseline information is collected to assist in the identification of sustainability and environmental issues/opportunities in the Park area. Baseline data are also required to establish the present state of the National Park and will be used subsequently for comparative purposes when monitoring and evaluating management policies, local action plans, or the future state of the Park.

Baseline data sets have been collected from various international, national, regional, and local sources (Appendix I). These data sets span the range of issues associated with the Park's two statutory purposes and its duty, and simultaneously address sustainability and environmental issues pertinent to both the SA and the SEA. Several of these data sets have been used to inform the most recent BBNP State of the Park Report (2006). Additional or alternate data sets may be analysed and used as indicators for future state of the Park reports. It is worth noting that this initial baseline data report will expand and improve as new data sets become available. In fact, the NPA is in the process of receiving new and updated data sets from the Environment Agency which cover air-, soil-, water-, and waste-related issues.

4.2 Key Issues and Trends

The 2006 Brecon Beacons National Park State of the Park Report summarizes trends for a subset of data obtained from the Baseline Data Report. These data are presented in

graphic format as indicators exhibiting relevant trends as related to key management issues or opportunities within the Park. The State of the Park Report 2006 can be accessed at <http://www.breconbeacons.org/content/the-authority/planning/strategy-and-policy/npmp/sopre>.

A more detailed review of the state of the National Park can be found in the Baseline Data Report (Appendix 1). The Baseline Data Report is divided into sections based on three of the principles of sustainability as they apply to NPMP via the SA and SEA processes. These principles are: living within environmental limits, ensuring a strong, healthy, and just society, and achieving a sustainable economy. The Baseline Data Report includes data, trends and their significance for the Park, and how the NPMP (and LDP) should deal with them. There have been difficulties in obtaining Park-specific data due to the fact that much information is collected for Unitary Authority areas. The Park straddles nine UAs. Data relevant to the Park are often amalgamated within larger data sets for areas or conditions not representative of the Park. Consequently, resulting trends from these broader data sets do not always accurately portray conditions or trends within the Park. Separating data relevant to the Park from the broader data sets presents logistical and financial challenges. But, some of these challenges are worth engaging to better characterize the state of the Park and manage it in the future. The same baseline data will be used for the NPA's forthcoming Local Development Plan, with the addition of more information on matters relevant to the Local Development Plan, such as housing provision. Also note that for many potential indicators identified in Table 2, data sets may be unavailable or of poor quality. Efforts will be made in the future to acquire appropriate data sets as and when resources become available to do so.

The key sustainability and environmental issues affecting the National Park identified in the Baseline Data Report have been included in the SEA framework set out in Section 7 below.

5. Review of Policies, Plans, and Programmes

5.1 Approach of BBNPA

The SEA process requires authorities to review the requirements of policies, plans and programmes (PPPs) relevant to the content of the Plan. A detailed review can be found in Appendix 2. This information will be regularly updated as new PPPs are produced.

5.2 Key Issues

The key issues and opportunities identified for the NPMP in our review of policies, plans, and programmes include:

International and European context: The Plan must conform to EU directives in relation to: SACs, water quality, greenhouse gas emissions, and waste. There are no SPAs in the Park. The thresholds for noise based on noise maps and plans have not been exceeded. The Common Agricultural Policy reform will influence the Park's landscape, agriculture, biodiversity, and economy through farmers' compliance with it.

UK national context: The Plan must conform to UK environmental, human rights and disability legislation. Among other elements, the NPMP should contribute to the reduction in CO₂ emissions. It will also require Disability Equality Impact Assessment. The Countryside and Rights of Way Act will form an important context for the Plan's policies for public enjoyment of the Park.

Welsh national context: The Plan should be prepared in accordance with the NPA's Welsh Language Scheme, prepared under the Welsh Language Act, and must conform to Welsh planning guidance, although this is more relevant to the LDP than the NPMP.

The Plan should help deliver the outcomes of the Environment Strategy for Wales: integrating environmental considerations; providing environmental education and information; encouraging responsible behaviour; minimising greenhouse gas emissions; minimising waste generation, promoting reuse and recycling and providing for waste

management; managing water resources; safeguarding soil; minimising the impact of mineral working – all in the context of the Wales Spatial Plan.

Regional and local strategies: the Unitary Authorities' Community Strategies will form a context for the Plan, and relevant aspects will be incorporated into it. So will relevant parts of the Environment Agency's Catchment Abstraction Management Strategies, Flood Management and River Basin Management Plans.

6. SA/SEA Scoping Workshops

6.1 Internal Scoping Workshop

On 5th April 2006, an internal workshop of NPA staff was held to consider objectives for the SEA. The participants comprised:

- Strategy and Policy team
- Head of Conservation and Community
- Head of Countryside
- Head of the Business Unit
- Community Development Officer
- Ecologist.

The outcomes of this workshop have been incorporated into this Scoping Report.

6.2 Stakeholders Workshops

Between 13th and 20th October 2006 a series of three workshops for key stakeholders was held. At these workshops, participants identified issues of importance for the SA/SEA and the Plan, and considered outcomes in relation to these if there were to be no Plan. They also generated management goals for each issue that will be used in developing the NPMP itself, but that will also feed into the SA/SEA.

It was not considered helpful to hold external consultation workshops for the SA/SEA and for the NPMP separately because - due to the nature of the NPMP - any SA/SEA objectives generated were likely to be very similar to those of the NPMP itself. Holding two sets of

workshops would therefore have been too confusing to those involved and an inefficient use of time for participants and facilitators.

7. Environmental and Sustainability Issues, and Proposed SA/SEA/HRA Framework

7.1 Identifying Environmental and Sustainability Issues

The purpose of the framework for the SA/SEA/HRA, set out in Table 2, is to provide a way in which the effects of the plan can be described, analysed, and compared. This process involves considering the content of the NPMP against identified SA/SEA and HRA objectives.

The SEA Directive requires the identification of existing environmental issues which are relevant to the Plan. As the NPMP relates to ‘the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage’ (the first purpose of designation) with regard to the entire Park, most environmental matters are relevant to it.

Sustainability appraisal is not such a prescribed process as SEA, and it normally relates to emerging strategies and policies within plans. However, as the SA and SEA are being carried out as one process for the NPMP, it makes sense to include non-environmental (i.e., socio-economic) sustainability issues here as well. HRA is also included, via reference to the effect of proposals on SACs under the Biodiversity heading.

The environmental and sustainability issues set out in Table 2 have been identified in the National Park area, through the following means:

- Government and CCW guidance
- Review of other policies, plans, and programmes
- Analysis of the baseline information that is currently available for the Park
- A workshop with key NPA staff
- Consultation with the Consultation Bodies and

- Workshops with stakeholders.

7.2 Environmental and Sustainability Objectives

The objectives in Table 2 were identified from the same sources as the issues. Due to the nature of the NPMP, no distinction was made at the stakeholder workshops between issues for use in the SA/SEA process and those for the NPMP itself. The stakeholders therefore identified some issues that do not relate to the SA/SEA/HRA process. These may be included in the NPMP, and the SA/SEA/HRA questions will be applied to them, but they do not form part of the framework.

7.3 Appraising the Effects of NPMP Proposals on Environmental and Sustainability Objectives and on SACs

The third aspect of the framework consists of the questions that need to be asked in order to assess the effects of the NPMP on the environment, sustainability, and SACs. These are set out in column 3 of Table 2.

The issues headings in Table 2 are taken from the SEA Directive (re-ordered to follow the likely layout of the NPMP), with the addition of sustainability issues which are not otherwise covered, and of reference to SACs for Habitats Regulations Assessment purposes.

7.4 Monitoring

Potential indicators to use in monitoring are set out in column 4 of Table 2.

Table 2. The SEA/SA and HRA framework: issues, objectives and questions

ISSUES	I. SEA/SA/HRA OBJECTIVES	2. TRENDS without a Plan	3. QUESTIONS: will the proposals in the plan...?	4. INDICATORS (source of data)
Climatic factors				
Effects of climate change.	1. Reduce - where practical - vulnerability to the effects of climate change	<p>The whole character of the park could change, including traditional farming, with loss of upland flora.</p> <p>Climate change will exacerbate flooding and drainage problems. Human lives may be lost. Buildings, businesses, and communities will be negatively affected by increased flooding associated with more severe storms and rain events.</p>	<p>...reduce - where practical - vulnerability to the effects of climate change?</p> <p>...mitigate against flooding, or drainage problems?</p> <p>...migrate development away from the floodplain where possible?</p>	<p>Range contraction/expansion of species in SSSIs (CCW)</p> <p>Incidence and severity of flooding in the Park (EAW)</p> <p>Flood risk (EAW)</p> <p>No. of planning permissions issued in the floodplain (NPA)</p> <p>Area of greenfield land and area of land liable to flooding allocated for development (NPA)</p> <p>No. of planning permissions granted incorporating drainage control schemes (NPA)</p>
Greenhouse gas emissions	2. Reduce greenhouse gas emissions	<p>The whole character of the park could change, including traditional farming, with loss of upland flora.</p>	<p>...reduce greenhouse gas emissions?</p> <p>...promote sequestration of carbon?</p> <p>...maintain existing carbon stores (e.g., organic soils and broad-leaved forests)?</p>	<p>Park's carbon footprint (NPA, CCW, EAW)</p> <p>Electric, gas, coal, and oil use (utilities, NPA)</p> <p>Key Environment Statistics for Wales re greenhouse gases (WAG, DEFRA)</p> <p>Soil carbon release from land use (NPA, CCW, EAW)</p>

ISSUES	I. SEA/SA/HRA OBJECTIVES	2. TRENDS without a Plan	3. QUESTIONS: will the proposals in the plan...?	4. INDICATORS (source of data)
<u>Natural resources: air, water and land</u>				
Air pollution	3. Maintain or improve air quality.	Negative effects on health of humans, wildlife and habitats, water and soil quality, and damage to the historic and built environment.	...maintain or improve air quality? ...minimize emissions from residential and commercial sources? ...reduce emissions from transportation sources?	Ozone concentrations (EAW) Acid and nutrient deposition (EAW) Particulates concentration (EAW)
Water pollution	4. Maintain or improve water quality.	Negative effect on health of humans, wildlife, habitats, and aquatic ecosystems; tourism and fishing devalued.	...maintain or improve water quality?	Chemical and biological water quality measures (EAW) Sewerage capacity, industrial point sources and diffuse pollution indicators (EAW)
Limitations on water quantity	5. Restore and maintain water abstraction, run-off and recharge rates within the Park's carrying capacity (including future capacity).	Climate change will impact the distribution and abundance of water through time and space. This may result in excess at times and severe limitations at other times of the year. Immigration to the area will strain existing resources.	...restore and maintain water abstraction, run-off and recharge rates within the Park's carrying capacity (including future capacity).	Water use by sector (Welsh Water, EAW) Hydrologic information for streams, rivers, and catchments (EAW) CAMs/abstractions (EAW)
Unsustainable use of mineral resources	6. Sustainable use of mineral resources.	Generally destructive landscape change and loss of mineral resources.	...promote the sustainable use of mineral resources?	Area covered by planning permission for aggregates working (NPA) Distance travelled to and from source materials (NPA)

ISSUES	I. SEA/SA/HRA OBJECTIVES	2. TRENDS without a Plan	3. QUESTIONS: will the proposals in the plan...?	4. INDICATORS (source of data)
Soil erosion and impoverishment	7. Reduce the loss and impoverishment of soils.	Reduction in soil quantity and quality; reduction in viability of farming; erosion, affecting water quality and biodiversity. Reduction in carbon stores.	...reduce the loss or impoverishment of soils?	Percent of uplands in favourable condition (CCW, NPA) Annual crop production per unit area (Farmers' Unions, LAs, NPA) Turbidity of local streams and rivers (BGS, WAG, EAW, CCW) Pesticide concentrations and nutrient loads in water bodies (EAW) Local sales of pesticides and fertilizers (NPA, LAs)
Unsustainable waste management	8. Reduce waste production and promote reuse and recycling.	Depletion of resources world-wide; loss of land to landfill; fines from EU.	...contribute to the reduction, reuse and recycling of waste? ...contribute to appropriate waste treatment and disposal?	No. of businesses/organisations in Green Dragon (Arena Network) % of waste disposed of in landfills (EAW, LAs, NPA) Take up and efficiency of household recycling schemes (EAW, CCW, LAs, NPA) Destination for recycled materials (EAW, CCW, LAs, NPA)
Loss or impairment of geodiversity	9. Conserve geodiversity.	Loss or impairment of the Park's geological and geomorphological features as a result of erosion, recreation pressures, development or mineral extraction.	...conserve geological and geomorphological features? ...promote the enjoyment and understanding of geodiversity?	No. and condition of sites of geological importance in favourable condition (BGS, NPA, Geopark) No. of visitors attending Geopark functions (BGS, NPA, Geopark). No. of visitors exploring caves and other karst formations (BGS, NPA, Geopark) .

ISSUES	I. SEA/SA/HRA OBJECTIVES	2. TRENDS without a Plan	3. QUESTIONS: will the proposals in the plan...?	4. INDICATORS (source of data)
Biodiversity				
Threats to biodiversity from habitat loss and the anticipated effects of climate and agricultural change.	I0. Conserve and enhance the diversity of species.	Decline or loss of target species and their habitats. Increased prevalence of non-native and invasive species. Loss of species as a result of building redevelopments.	...conserve and enhance the diversity of species? ...prevent the loss of LBAP target species and their habitats where possible? ...reduce the richness and abundance of non-native species?	Status and trends for Biodiversity Action Plan target species (NPA, CCW) Richness and abundance of non-native species (EAW)
Threats to biodiversity from habitat loss and the anticipated effects of climate and agricultural change.	I1. Conserve and enhance the diversity of habitats.	Decline or loss of habitats. Fragmentation of habitats, loss of connectivity between habitats, loss or lack of buffer zones around protected areas. SACs adversely affected.	...conserve and enhance the diversity of habitats? ...create and/or improve condition of LBAP target habitats? ...minimize disturbance to LBAP target habitats? ...have no adverse effect on SACs?	No. of Tir Gofal schemes including provision for wildlife (WAG, CCW) Status and trends for Biodiversity Action Plan target habitats (NPA, CCW) ESA/EIA regulations and contraventions (CCW, WAG, EAW, NPA) No. of proposals adversely affecting SACs (CCW) No. of sites in favourable condition (CCW)

ISSUES	I. SEA/SA/HRA OBJECTIVES	2. TRENDS without a Plan	3. QUESTIONS: will the proposals in the plan...?	4. INDICATORS (source of data)
Threats to biodiversity from habitat loss and the anticipated effects of climate and agricultural change.	12. Conserve and enhance the integrity of ecosystems.	<p>As an example, abandonment of upland and marginal land farming could mean loss of upland flora, fragmentation of biodiversity. Intensification of farming could adversely affect wildlife habitats.</p> <p>Ecosystems fail to provide self-perpetuating functions and therefore do not provide ecosystem services (e.g., crop production, flood abatement, etc.) for humans).</p>	<p>...conserve and enhance the integrity of ecosystems?</p> <p>...prevent fragmentation of habitats?</p> <p>...ensure development does not create barriers to species movement?</p> <p>...promote ecological connectivity and habitat networks?</p>	<p>Connectivity and fragmentation of habitats (NPA, CCW)</p> <p>Status and trends of ecological functions (e.g., peat formation, biomass production, water retention) (NPA, CCW, partners)</p> <p>No./percentage of developments with biodiversity gain (NPA, CCW).</p> <p>No. of wetland habitats being restored (CCW, NPA)</p>
Limited understanding and appreciating the Park's biodiversity.	13. Provide opportunities for people to come into contact with and appreciate the diversity of species, habitats, and ecosystems in the Park.	Visitors and residents become disconnected and disassociated from the world they live in and depend upon, leading to continued losses of biodiversity.	...provide opportunities for people to come into contact with and appreciate the diversity of species, habitats, and ecosystems in the Park?	<p>Visitor and residential surveys (NPA)</p> <p>No. and catchment of schools visiting the Park (NPA)</p> <p>No. of trips lead by outdoor pursuits industry per year (NPA, LAs)</p>
<u>Landscape, cultural heritage and the built environment</u>				
Lack of management of historic landscapes, scheduled ancient monuments and other archaeological features.	14. Protect and manage historic landscapes, scheduled ancient monuments and other archaeological features appropriately.	<p>Cultural impoverishment, negative impact on tourism and economy.</p> <p>Landscapes: loss of sense of place and distinctiveness.</p> <p>Features: destruction or deterioration of irreplaceable resources; loss of local character.</p>	...provide for the protection and management of historic landscapes, including the canal, scheduled ancient monuments and other archaeological features?	<p>No. of Tir Gofal schemes including provision for management of historic landscapes and features (WAG)</p> <p>No. of Listed Buildings at risk (NPA)</p>

ISSUES	I. SEA/SA/HRA OBJECTIVES	2. TRENDS without a Plan	3. QUESTIONS: will the proposals in the plan...?	4. INDICATORS (source of data)
Adverse effects of changes in agricultural and rural development on the Park's landscape character and features.	15. Maintain and enhance the Park's landscape character and its associated features.	<p>Abandonment or reduction of hill farming would change the character of the Park's uplands, woods and grasslands.</p> <p>Woodlands becoming derelict; regeneration prevented by grazing.</p> <p>Hedgerows and walls becoming derelict if not maintained.</p> <p>Visual impact from wind farms and large developments.</p>	<p>...reduce or mitigate the adverse effects of agricultural change on the landscape?</p> <p>...ensure development is sited and designed with the landscape character in mind?</p> <p>...improve woodland management?</p> <p>...protect and enhance hedgerows and drystone walls?</p> <p>...reduce the visual impact of wind farms and large developments that can be seen from the Park?</p>	<p>No. of grazing agreements on common land (NPA)</p> <p>Agri-environment scheme uptake (WAG, NPA)</p> <p>Percentage change in farming businesses (LAs, NPA, CCW, WAG)</p> <p>Headage per acre (WAG, CCW, Farmers' Unions, LAs)</p> <p>Area of woodland protected under Tir Gofal (WAG)</p> <p>No. of woodland management schemes endorsed by Forestry Commission (FC)</p> <p>Length of hedgerows and drystone walls protected under Tir Gofal (WAG)</p> <p>No. of wind farms and large developments that are visible from inside the Park boundary (NPA)</p>
Impoverishment of the quality and character of the built environment	16. Maintain and enhance the quality of the built environment	<p>Loss of Listed Buildings.</p> <p>Lack of conservation of most Conservation Areas resulting in a loss of sense of place.</p>	<p>...reduce the number of Listed Buildings at risk.?</p> <p>...conserve the character of buildings and the street scene in Conservation Areas?</p> <p>...promote a standard of quality in new building design?</p>	<p>No. of Listed Buildings at risk (NPA)</p> <p>No. of Conservation Areas with town schemes or other conservation projects (NPA)</p> <p>Amount of green space available local communities (NPA)</p>

ISSUES	1. SEA/SA/HRA OBJECTIVES	2. TRENDS without a Plan	3. QUESTIONS: will the proposals in the plan...?	4. INDICATORS (source of data)
Loss of cultural traditions.	17. Conserve and enhance the area's cultural traditions and promote the Welsh language.	Loss of traditional skills; loss of local character and distinctiveness. Welsh language does not flourish.	...support the area's cultural traditions? ...support the Welsh language? ...encourage use of local products?	No. of local cultural events (NPA) No. of attendees at local cultural events (NPA, LAs) Increased % of Park's population having some knowledge of Welsh by 2011 (Census data) Sales of local products (LAs, NPA)
<u>Population and human health; ensuring a strong, healthy and just society</u>				
Threats to the Park's communities from agricultural changes and the lack of affordable housing.	18. Promote thriving communities within and around the Park.	Loss of social cohesion; diminishing feelings of belonging and responsibility for community and environment. Loss of young people and age range imbalance; internal migration creating high house prices.	...provide sufficient housing for the needs of the local communities? ...provide for and access to community services? ...encourage healthy lifestyles?	Proportion of identified need for affordable housing that is met (Housing Authorities)
Limited access for many social groups to the Park and to its opportunities and facilities.	19. Promote and improve accessibility to the Park and to its opportunities and facilities.	Certain groups excluded from Park (e.g. disabled, non-drivers, elderly, young people, minority groups).	...improve access to the Park and to its opportunities and facilities for all? ...create new access opportunities where appropriate?	No. of groups brought to the Park by Community Champions (NPA) Amount of access land available (NPA)
<u>Achieving a sustainable economy</u>				
Unsustainable or declining tourism industry in the Park.	21. Promote a flourishing and environmentally sustainable tourism industry within the Park.	Fewer visitors – less income – economic decline. Increase in traffic and parking problems. Environment would stay more as it is	...support a flourishing and sustainable tourism industry in the Park?	% occupancy of beds in holiday accommodation throughout the year (NPA/STEAM) Tourist spending (NPA/STEAM)

ISSUES	I. SEA/SA/HRA OBJECTIVES	2. TRENDS without a Plan	3. QUESTIONS: will the proposals in the plan...?	4. INDICATORS (source of data)
Declining local economy	20. Promote a thriving, locally-based economy.	Loss of economic base; loss of skills. Loss of local agriculture and subsequently the landscape character. Increased food and trade miles; increased car use and commuting.	...promote a sustainable agricultural economy in the Park? ...support a thriving, locally-based economy in the Park? ...encourage use of local products and services?	No. of farms and farmers (WAG) No. of farmers markets and local farm shops (NPA) Income and business generated locally (NPA) No. of entrepreneurship in the park (NPA)
Unsustainable energy use	22. Improve sustainable energy efficiency.	Continued or increasing contributions to greenhouse gases and climate change; continued or increased reliance on non-renewable energy resources leading to depleted resources.	...improve sustainable energy efficiency? ...promote sustainable transport?	No. of planning permissions granted for renewable energy production (NPA) Distances travelled per person per year by mode of transport (NPA, LAs, TAs) Public transport routes in the Park (NPA)
<p>BBNP(A)=Brecon Beacons National Park (Authority); BGS=British Geological Survey; CCW=Countryside Council for Wales; CROWA=Countryside and Rights of Way Act; EA(W)=Environment Agency (Wales); EU=European Union; FCW=Forestry Commission Wales; HRA=Habitats Regulations Assessment; IUCN=International Union for the Conservation of Nature; LA=Local Authority; LBAP=Local Biodiversity Action Plan; LDP=Local Development Plan; NPA=National Park Authority; NPMP=National Park Management Plan; PPP=Plan, policies and programmes; SAC=Special Area for Conservation; SEA=Strategic Environmental Assessment; SPA=Special Protection Area; SSSI=Site of Special Scientific Interest; STEAM= Scarborough Tourism Economic Activity Model; TA=Transportation Authority; UN=United Nations; WAG=Welsh Assembly Government; WSP=Wales Spatial Plan.</p>				

8. Compatibility Testing of SA, SEA and HRA Objectives with Each Other and with NPMP Objectives

8.1 Compatibility Scoring Hierarchy

The NPA will use the scoring hierarchy shown in Table 3 to evaluate the sustainability and environmental ramifications of the NPMP goals, once these have been developed. This evaluation will take the form of a matrix that compares the suitability of each NPMP goal directly with each SA/SEA objective by way of the scoring hierarchy below. A commentary on likely significant effects, cumulative and synergistic effects, and proposed mitigation or modifications will follow the matrix to expound upon these comparisons where necessary. It is assumed that a level of uncertainty will accompany this assessment process. The results will be published in the Environmental Report.

Table 3: NPMP Policy/Option Scoring Hierarchy

+ 2	Considerably assists the SA/SEA/HRA Objectives
+ 1	On balance assists the SA/SEA/HRA Objectives
0	No effect on the SA/SEA/HRA Objectives
- 1	On balance conflicts with the SA/SEA/HRA Objectives
- 2	Conflicts considerably with the SA/SEA/HRA Objectives
?	Unclear relationship to the SA/SEA/HRA Objectives

9. Summary and Next Steps

9.1 Summary

This Scoping Report has reviewed the relevant policies, plans and programmes that will potentially influence the Brecon Beacons NPMP. It has identified the state of the Park in the form of a State of the Park Report, a Baseline Data Report (Appendix 1), and the relevant plans, policies and programmes (Appendix 2). Stakeholder and public workshops

have also informed this report, and collectively this information has enabled the identification of key issues and objectives in the National Park area.

This information is being brought together in a SA/SEA and HRA Framework within which the environmental, social, and economic impacts of the Plan can be assessed.

9.2 Next Steps

The next steps in the SA/SEA and HRA process will be to: 1) continue to formulate and refine NPMP goals and 2) assess these goals and alternatives that emerge as the plan preparation process progresses against the framework of potential impacts they may have on the environment and sustainability. The results of the assessments will be set out in a report which will include the Sustainability Appraisal, SEA Environmental Report, and the Appropriate Assessment. This will be published for public consultation following release of the draft NPMP.

The draft NPMP is scheduled to be submitted to the Welsh Assembly Government on 31 March 2008; the final plan is scheduled for release in November 2008.