

# Theme 1:

## Managing Park Landscapes to Maximise Conservation and Public Benefits

Overall:

GOOD

The indicators representing this theme are:

- **Indicator 1:** Landscape Character Assessment
- **Indicator 2:** Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAM) and Listed Buildings at risk
- **Indicator 3:** Condition of Regionally Important Geodiversity Sites

The Landscape Character Assessment assesses 15 landscape character areas. As would be expected in a Category V protected landscape area, the overall condition for the majority of character areas is very good.

Built Heritage in the Park has improved considerably since 2006. The number of Scheduled Ancient Monuments and Listed Buildings in the Park that are at risk has decreased, while the total number of Scheduled Ancient Monuments and Listed Buildings in the Park has increased significantly. The condition of built heritage in the park is therefore good.

The numbers of designated, regionally important geodiversity sites in the Park have increased significantly since 2006. The condition of the sites is generally very good and an active group has been set up to monitor the sites to ensure their long term preservation and assist in their maintenance as required.

Using these three indicators to assess overall condition (Poor, Fair, Good or Excellent), the state of the park in the context of Management Plan Theme 1 is GOOD.



# Indicator I:

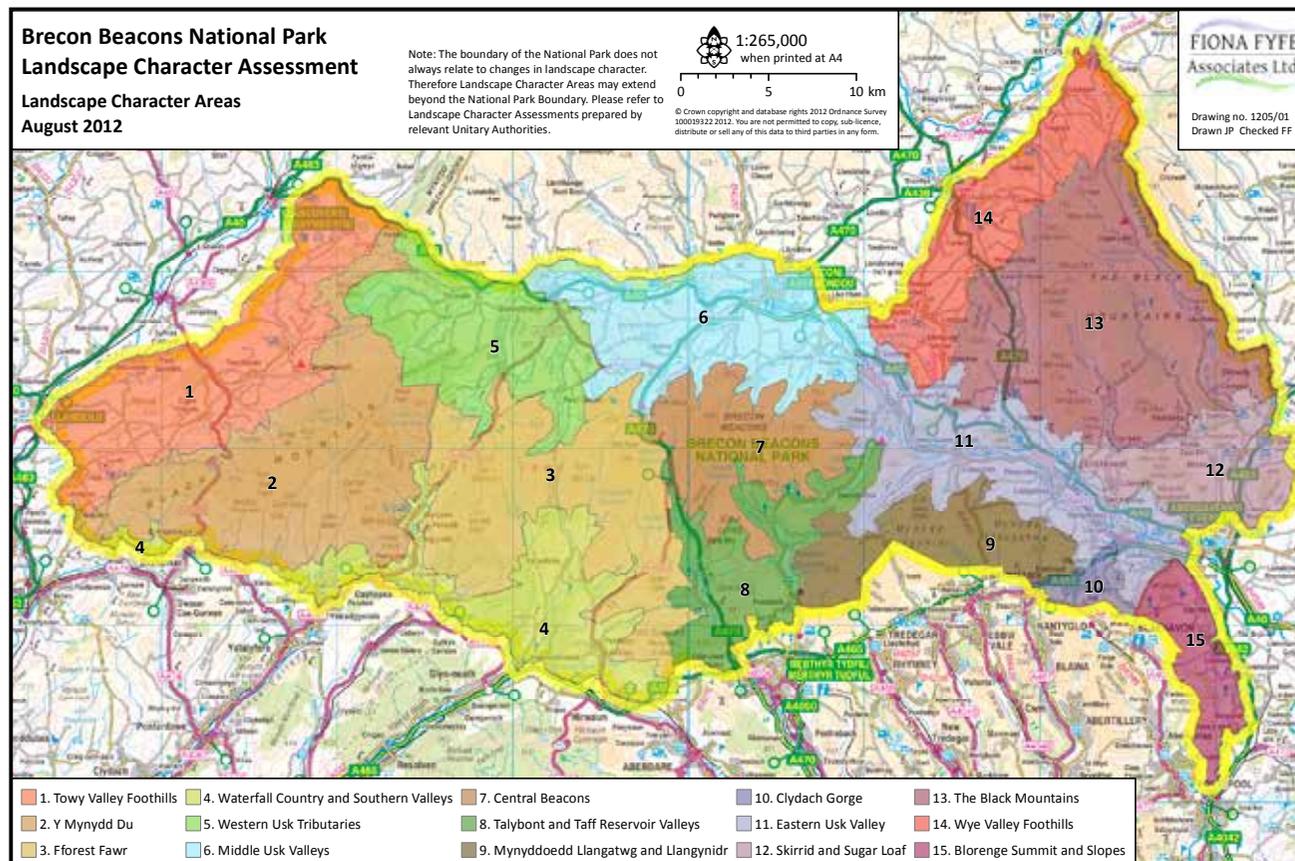
## Landscape Character Assessment

The primary objective of Category V protected landscapes is to protect and sustain important landscapes and the associated nature conservation and other values created by interactions with humans through traditional management practices.

The Landscape Character Assessment identifies five broad landscape types and 15 Landscape Character Areas in the Brecon Beacons National Park<sup>7</sup>. The areas can be seen on Map LCA1.

Each Landscape Character Area is described in terms of its location and context, historical development, distinctive characteristics, settlements, key views, special qualities, sensitivities, contribution to ecosystem services and green infrastructure and forces for landscape change.

Each Landscape Character Area profile identifies aspect areas and ends with a management strategy and recommended management guidelines to protect and strengthen its landscape character.



**Map LCA1: Brecon Beacons National Park Landscape Character Areas**

Area	Score
Area 1 – Towy Valley Foothills (Lowlands)	2.8
Area 2 – Y Mynydd Du (Uplands)	3.7
Area 3 – Fforest Fawr (Uplands)	3.1
Area 4 – Waterfalls Country and Southern Valleys (Upland Valleys)	2.3
Area 5 – Western Usk Tributaries (Upland Valleys)	2.7
Area 6 – Middle Usk Valleys (Settled Valleys)	2.4
Area 7 – Central Beacons (Uplands)	4
Area 8 – Talybont and Taff Reservoir Valleys (Upland Valleys)	3
Area 9 – Mynyddoedd Llangatwg and Llangynidr (Uplands)	2.7
Area 10 – Clydach Gorge (Settled Valleys)	2.3
Area 11 – Eastern Usk Valleys (Settled Valleys)	2.9
Area 12 – Skirrid and Sugarloaf (Mountains and Valleys)	3.2
Area 13 – The Black Mountains (Mountains and Valleys)	3.3
Area 14 – Wye Valley Foothills (Lowlands)	3.1
Area 15 – Bloreng Hills and Slopes (Mountains and Valleys)	3.2

This is a new indicator for the 2014 State of the Park Report and uses LANDMAP Visual and Sensory data<sup>8</sup> taken from the Landscape Character Assessment, which ranks each aspect area using the following criteria:

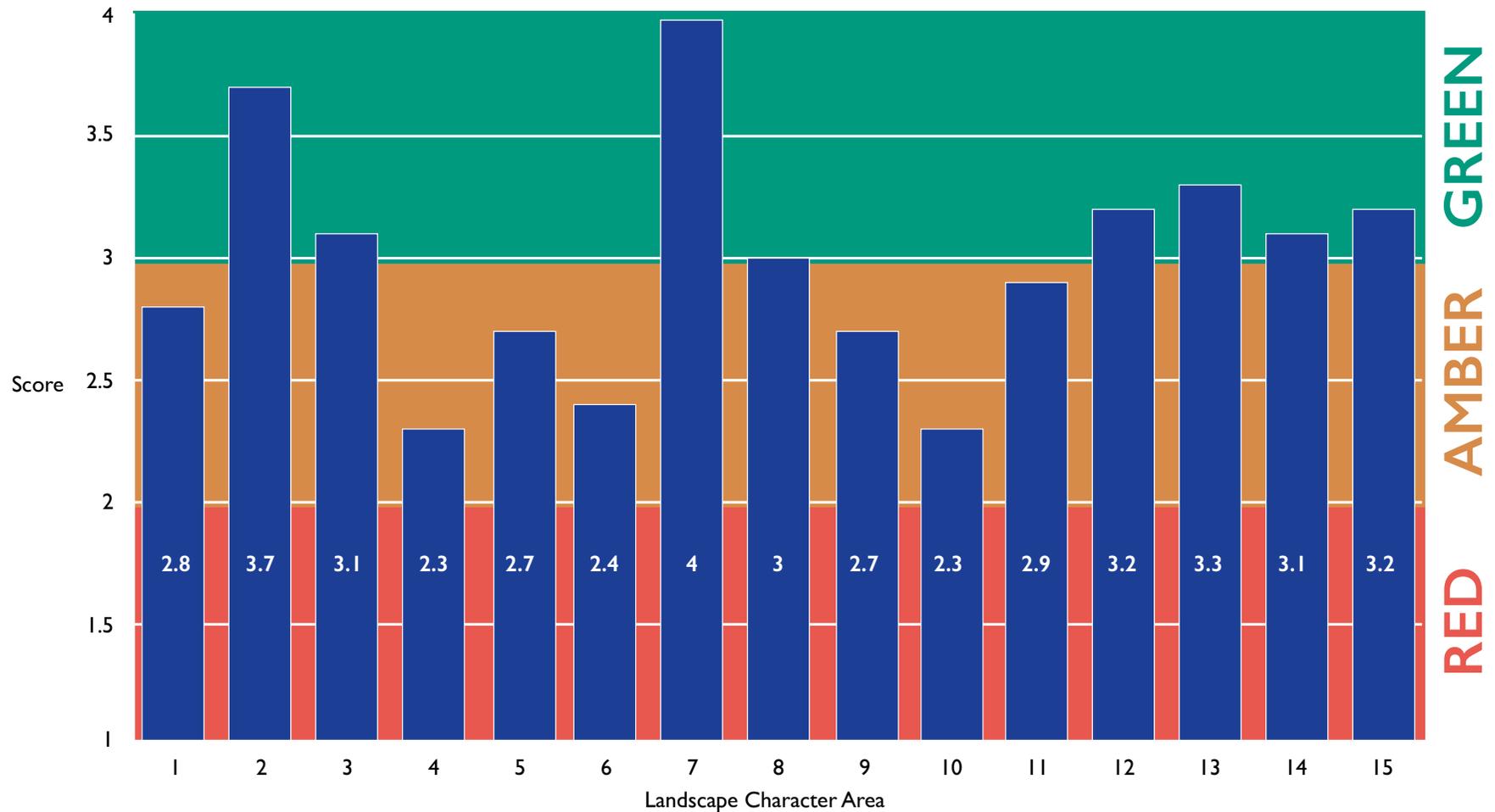
- O – Outstanding: of international importance
- H – High: of regional or county importance
- M – Moderate: of local importance
- L – Low: of little/no importance

This report ranks each aspect area as follows:

- O – 4 points
- H – 3 points
- M – 2 points
- L – 1 point

An average score is provided for each Landscape Character Area as demonstrated in Table 1.

**Table 1: Landscape Character Area and Score**



Graph I: Landscape Character Area and Traffic Light Ranking

Graph I shows the results in graphical form and superimposes a traffic light model over the graph.

A Landscape Character Area with a score of between

1 - 1.9 scores **RED**

2 - 2.9 scores **AMBER**

3 - 3.9 scores **GREEN**

Graph I shows that 8 Landscape Character Areas are green, 7 are amber and happily 0 are red. Encouragingly, the majority of areas fall within the green traffic light ranking.

The overall landscape score for the Brecon Beacons National Park is green because the Landscape Character Assessment details it as being in very good condition.

The management strategies identified in the Landscape Character Assessment will assist in maintaining it in this condition and should raise the individual scores attributed by the Visual and Sensory LANDMAP classification scheme, as seen in Table I above.

## Indicator 2:

### Built Heritage

The Brecon Beacons National Park has a long and colourful history and a rich and varied cultural heritage. While many would imagine that the landscape of the Brecon Beacons is unspoilt and natural, in fact people have shaped and changed this landscape over many thousands of years.

We can see the legacy that past peoples have left to us across the National Park in our rich archaeological heritage and our historic buildings and settlements.

## Scheduled Ancient Monuments

A Scheduled Ancient Monument is an archaeological site that is of national importance which is protected from unmanaged or unlicensed change. Scheduled Ancient Monuments sometimes referred to as SAMs, can survive as above ground archaeological remains such as earthworks or ruins, as entirely below ground archaeological remains, or as a mixture of both.

Archaeology does not have to be a particular age to be scheduled, and sites have been scheduled that come from the prehistoric period right through to examples from the Second World War. SAMs come in all different shapes and sizes from individual Bronze Age burial cairns to very large industrial complexes. Only the best example of each type of monument is scheduled, and sites are chosen based on criteria such as condition, rarity, extent of survival, vulnerability and group value.

Not all archaeological sites that are of national importance are scheduled, an archaeological site will only be scheduled if that is the best method of protecting the site. Most archaeological sites within the Brecon Beacons National Park are not scheduled. This does not mean that these sites are not important, and they need to be well understood, and carefully managed and conserved for current and future generations to enjoy.

SAMs have been monitored by Cadw since 1975. More information about Scheduled Ancient Monuments and how they are protected is available on <http://cadw.wales.gov.uk>. The status of the SAM relates to its change in condition since the last report<sup>9</sup>.

In 2006 there were 268 Scheduled Ancient Monuments in the Park. Of these, 95.9% were in either a stable or favourable condition (257). In 2014 there are 357 SAMs in the Park – an increase of 89 since 2006. Of the 357 SAMs in the Park, 95.5% are in a stable or favourable condition (341).

<sup>9</sup> **Improved condition** – visible improvement in condition since the last inspection, typically as a result of on-going management;

**Stable condition** – monument shows no sign of active deterioration either recent or mid-term

**Worsened condition** – monument deterioration as a result of on-going damage

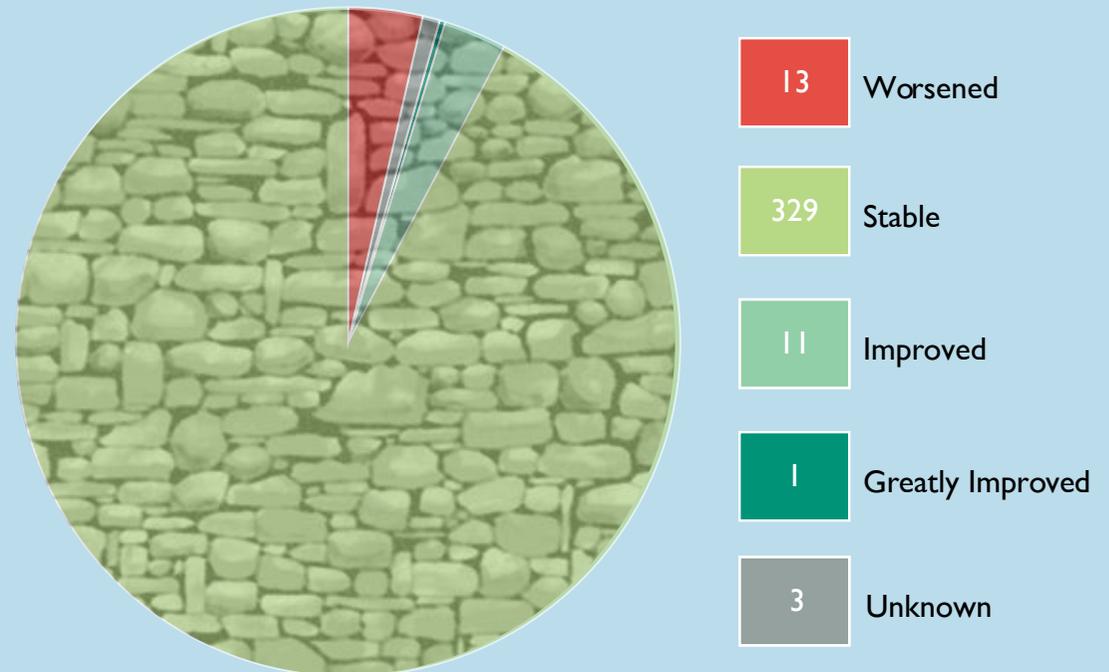
**Unknown condition** – Not possible to assess trend in condition of fabric as field assessment not made recently or is not known

Of the current 357 SAMs:

- 329 (92%) are in a 'Stable' condition
- 11 SAMs (3.0%) are in an 'Improved' condition
- 1 SAM (0.3%) is in a 'Greatly Improved' condition
- Therefore there are 341 SAMs (95.5%) in either stable or favourable condition
- There are 3 SAMs (0.8%) whose condition is currently unknown. This could be due to a variety of reasons which include poor weather hindering the ability to undertake a survey or even not being able to find the site.
- 13 SAMs (3.6%) are in a 'Worsened' condition

In 2014 there is a slightly smaller percentage (0.4%) of SAMs in stable or favourable condition. While this figure is not large, it is worth noting that 89 ancient monuments have been scheduled since 2006 which means there is now a greater total number of SAMs in either stable or favourable condition.

Pie Chart BH 1 below shows the number and condition of SAMs in the Park in 2014.

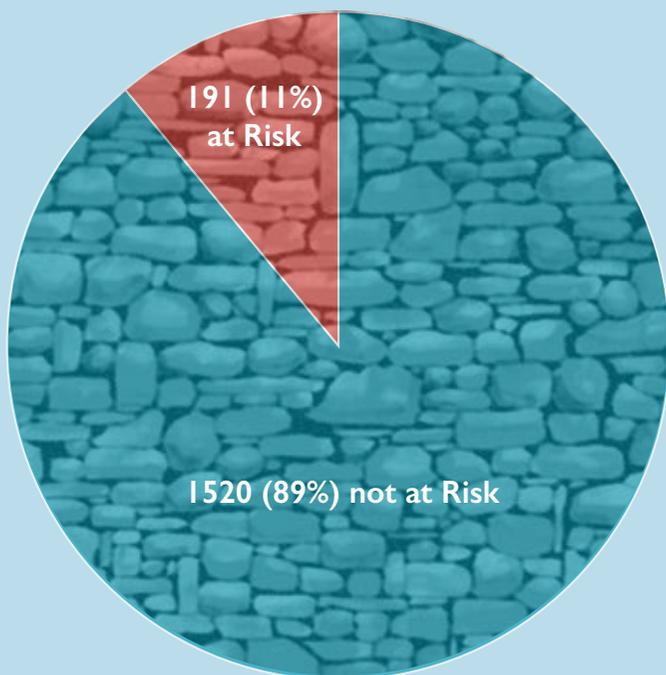


Pie Chart BH 1: Condition of Scheduled Ancient Monuments in the National Park in 2014

## Listed Buildings

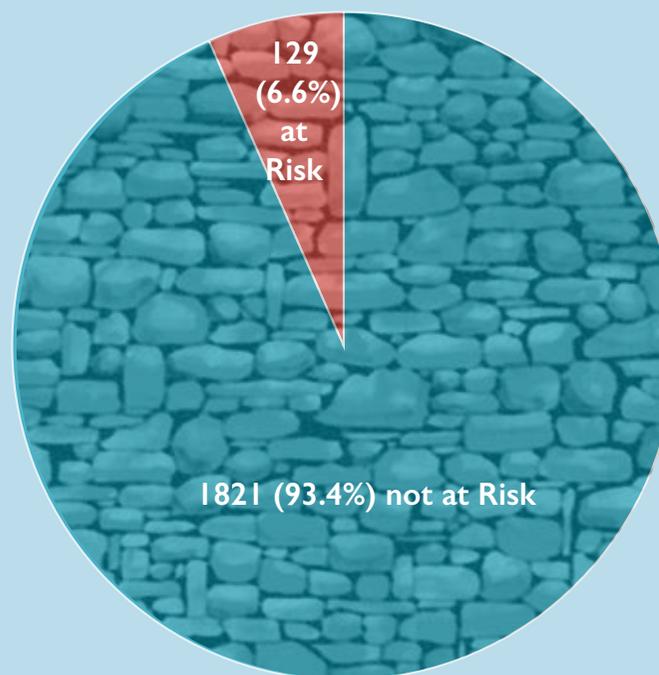
A listed building is a building that has been placed on the Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest. These buildings can only be demolished, extended, or altered with special permission from the local planning authority. In order to decide whether permission should be granted the relevant planning authority typically consults the appropriate central government agency – in the case of Brecon Beacons National Park this is Cadw. Most structures appearing on the lists are buildings, though many other types of structure can be listed – such as bridges, monuments, sculptures, war memorials and even milestones and mileposts.

Pie Chart BH 2 shows that in 2006 there were 1,711 listed buildings. Of these 1,520 were not at risk, and 191 were at risk (11%).



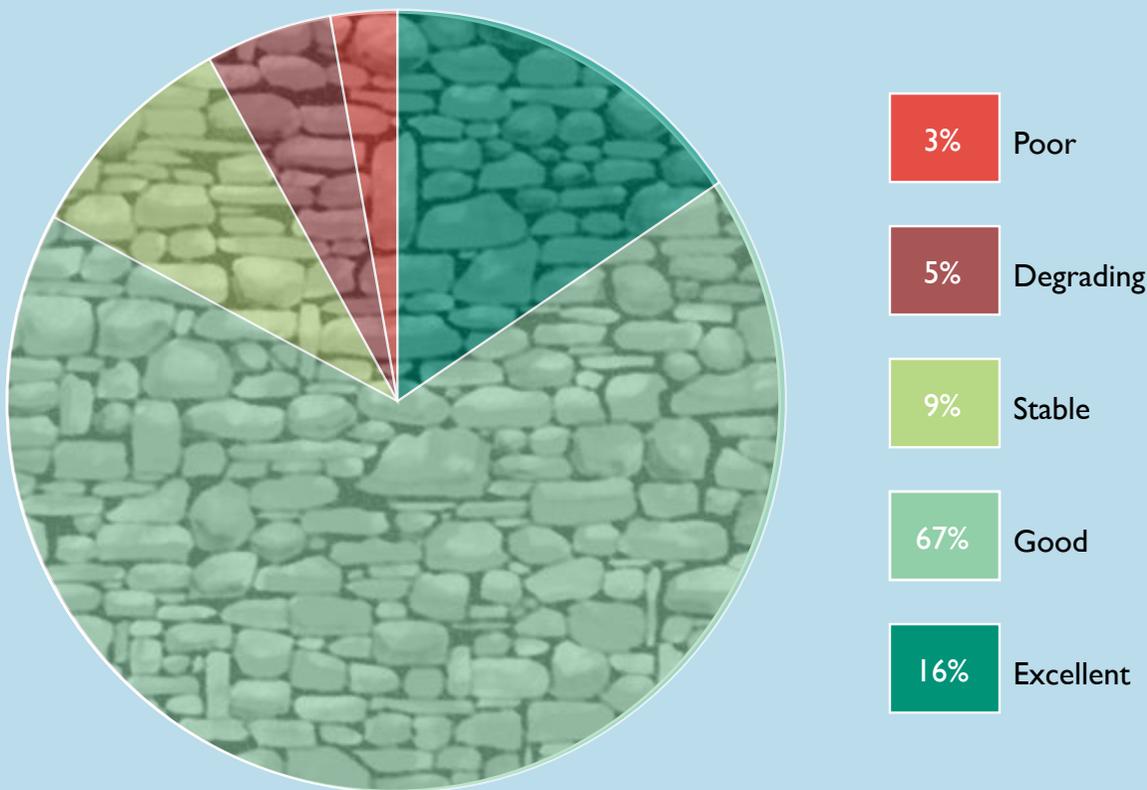
Pie Chart BH 2: Listed Buildings that were at Risk in the Brecon Beacons National Park in 2006

Pie Chart BH 3 shows that in 2014 there are 1,950 Listed Buildings. Of these 1821 are not at risk and 129 (6.6%) are at risk. Therefore in 2014 there are 239 more listed buildings than there were in 2006 however, the number of listed buildings at risk has reduced by 62 since 2006.



Pie Chart BH 3: Listed Buildings that are currently at Risk in the Brecon Beacons National Park

# Indicator 3: Geological Heritage



Pie Chart GH 1: Regionally Important Geodiversity sites condition (2014)

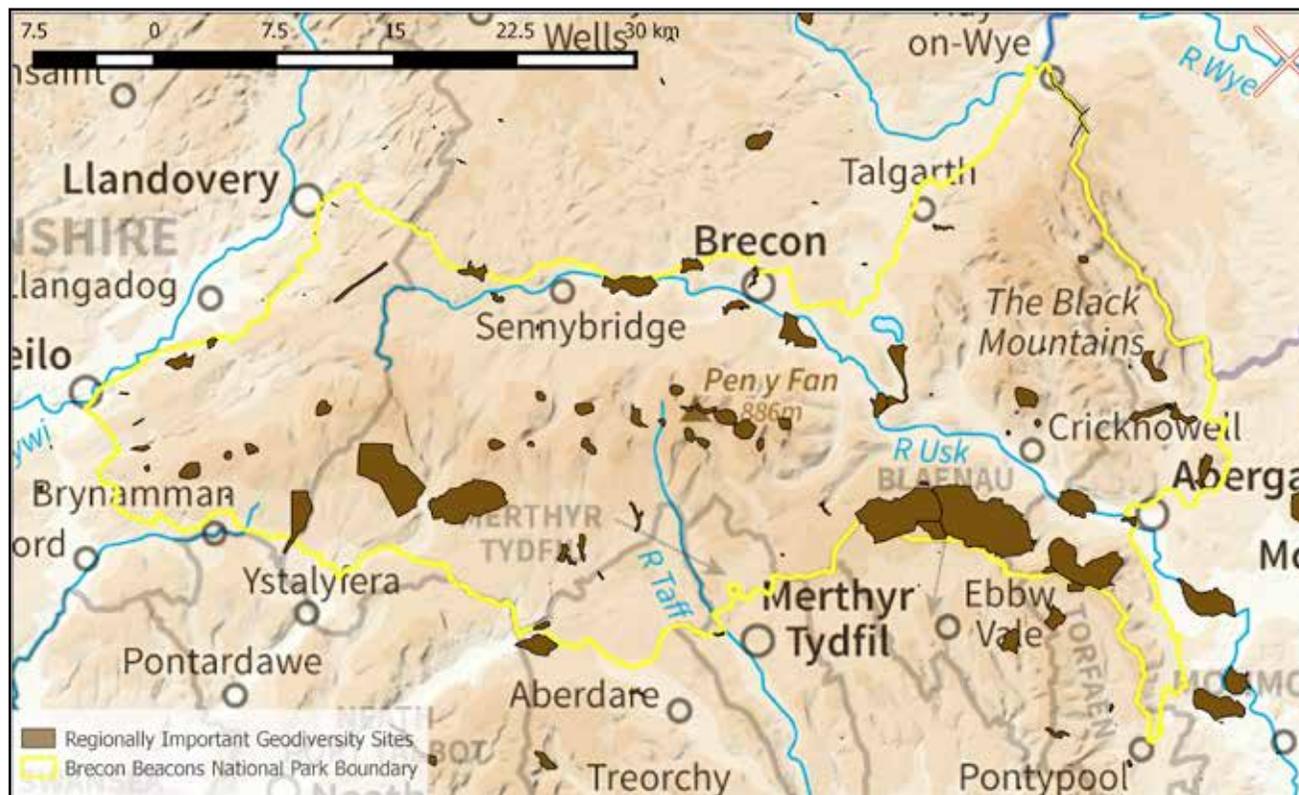
Regionally Important Geodiversity Sites are locally designated sites of local, national and regional importance for geodiversity (geology and geomorphology). There are a total of 76 Regionally Important Geodiversity Sites in the Park, which has increased from 11 in 2006. The designation process has been facilitated by the establishment of the Fforest Fawr Geopark.

The majority of sites are in good condition (67%), with 83% of sites in either good or excellent condition. 92% of sites are at least in a stable condition and 8% of sites are in either poor or degrading condition. Pie Chart GHI provides a visual breakdown of the condition of these sites.

Regionally Important Geodiversity Sites condition data 2006:

Excellent	0
Good	11
Stable	0
Degrading	0
Poor	0

NB: All 11 Regionally Important Geodiversity Sites identified in 2006 in the National Park remain in 'Good' condition in 2014.



Map GEO 1: Regionally Important Geodiversity Sites in the National Park

The data, which was commissioned by the Welsh Government through the Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund for Wales, represents a baseline on the state of the identified Regionally Important Geodiversity Sites at the time of survey (2011 - 2012). It is intended that in the near future, the South-east Wales Regionally Important Geodiversity Sites group will be in a position to undertake a rolling programme of monitoring Regionally Important Geodiversity Sites to ensure their long term preservation and assist in their maintenance should that monitoring identify any potential issues.

As an active process, additional geodiversity sites may also come to the Regionally Important Geodiversity Sites group's attention and these could result in the designation of further Regionally Important Geodiversity Sites within the National Park area.

Map GEO 1 below shows the location of all Regionally Important Geodiversity Sites in the National Park. Appendix 2 identifies all of the sites and their current condition.