

Local Development Plan / National Park Management Plan

Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report Consultation Draft

Non-Technical Summary

The following summary provides a non-technical overview of the Joint Scoping Report for the Sustainability Appraisal of the National Park Management Plan and Local Development Plan.

To ensure that the policy and proposals within the National Park Management Plan and Local Development Plan contribute to sustainable development, they will be subject to Sustainability Appraisal. This is a legal requirement of plan preparation.

Planning Policy Wales (10) defines Sustainable Development as

Sustainable Development means the process of improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales by taking action, in accordance with the sustainable development principle, aimed at achieving the well-being goals.

Acting in accordance with the sustainable development principle means that a body must act in a manner which seeks to ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

The first stage in this Sustainability Appraisal process is for the Authority to determine and publicise the scope of the Appraisal. In this instance when we refer to scope we mean the extent of the matters which the assessment will cover. To do this the Scoping Report aims to do three things:-

- Paint a picture through detailed analysis of evidence of the current state of the social, economic and environmental factors which make up the National Park and its communities
- Set objectives to ensure that the proposals of the NPMP and LDP consider the sustainability needs of the Brecon Beacons National Park in terms of their social, environmental and economic effects.
- Creates a clear framework by which future policy will be assessed against the defined objectives

The following sections summarise these three key elements of the current scoping report.

I. Identified Issues

Through the review of the baseline evidence, a number of critical issues relating to the sustainability of the area were identified. From these identified issues, the Authority has drafted objectives for future policy to meet, which seek to bring about a sustainable future for all.

Climate Change

The review of the baseline evidence paints a stark picture in terms of the global trends. UKCP09 projections show that by the 2050's, under a medium emissions scenario, all areas of the UK will become warmer. Moreover, Welsh people are still using more natural resources than can be sustained long term. Powys has one of the highest ecological footprints of Wales, probably linked to the very rural nature, the need to travel by private car to access the majority of services and facilities. In order to achieve sustainable development the NPMP and LDP need to develop policies which do not perpetuate these issues, and where possible start to re-dress the balance in the favour of living within environmental limits.

Biodiversity

The National Park is an ecologically rich and significantly geodiverse landscape. Whilst the data need improvement, the ecological status and condition of habitats, species and ecosystems is mainly unfavourable and frequently poor, for a variety of reasons. This accords with findings in the State of Nature reports, the Living Planet Index and SoNaRR, i.e., there's a negative national and international trend, made more urgent by the changing climate. The means to addressing this using land management include the National Park's Nature Recovery Action Plan, which aims to enlist more action by more organisations and individuals more of the time; maintaining and, where permitted, strengthening planning policy for biodiversity; being more business-minded with the management of the Authority's estate; and seeking wider involvement by researchers in building and using the evidence base. The largest scale improvements will be delivered through future government-led land management schemes, and the shift must be towards nature recovery; protection and conservation alone are not sufficient. Future NPMP/LDP policy will, therefore, aim to protect, enhance and recover the Park's nature for the benefit of future generations and this must be achieved by consensus.

Heritage

The landscape that makes up the National Park is manmade and testament to the interaction of man with his environment for millennia. This rich history is not only evident in the areas many archaeological remains and buildings of historical note, but in the language and lives of the people who have lived and loved this area for generations. The LDP and NPMP must work to ensure that cultural heritage is protected, celebrated and allowed to thrive for many generations to come.

People

The communities of the National Park are growing more slowly than in other areas of Wales but there is some growth. The population is mostly aging, with younger people leaving the area to live and work. In the future this might mean that there are less people to undertake jobs in the area as the number of retired individual's increases. It will also mean that there will be more pressure on social and medical services as people age. It is imperative that the policies in the plan do not perpetuate this issue, but rather focus on building mixed communities with plenty of provision of housing and jobs to retain younger people.

Deprivation

The evidence suggests that the area faces significant deprivation in relation to access to services. This could potentially have a knock on effect leading to deprivation in other critical areas such as health, education and community safety. It is therefore really important that the SA works to ensure that there will be no adverse impact on access to services as a result of the plans and policies of the LDP/NPMP.

Health

In general our communities benefit from better overall health than the Welsh national average. The value of the area to health and well-being both for visitors and for residents is clear, and future plans and programmes should seek to capitalise on the value of the area to health and well-being.

Economy

The evidence in relation to our economy paints a picture of an economically active area with high rates of self-employment and small businesses. The area is seeing a shift in the economic base from farming/fishing/forestry to service industry and retail businesses. Tourism is clearly a significant income generator for the area and there is a need to ensure that this remains sustainable

throughout the year without impacting on the qualities for which the NP is designated and valued. For both plans we need to ensure that we support the economy and enable its sustainable growth.

Transport

The private car dominates the transport network. People’s cars are their lifelines and often the only way to access service and facilities. The public transport network in the Park area is growing but still insufficient to meet the transport needs of the residents. Future policy should aim to address this imbalance and encourage sustainable transport modes where possible.

2. Define Objectives

Drawing on the identified issues the Scoping Report defines a series of Sustainability Appraisal Objectives. These have been developed to ensure that all policies and proposals within the emerging NPMP/LDP delivers sustainable development. These objectives are critical to the future scrutiny of emerging policy as it to these that the appraisal will look when considering the likely future impacts of the NPMP/LDP.

At present these objectives cover the whole scope of the NPMP/LDP however it must be stated that some may be scoped out for LDP assessment given its land use planning remit. The proposed objectives are set out below:-

SA/SEA Topic	SA/SEA Objective
Climatic Factors	1. Climate Change Proactively mitigate the Park’s contribution to climate change, and promote increased resilience and responsiveness adaptation measures.
	2. Renewable Energy Encourage energy efficiency and generation in all development.
	3. Flooding Minimise flood risk in all development through appropriate location and design.
Natural Resources: Air, Water and Soil	4. Natural Resources Ensure sustainable use of natural resources in all new development and maintenance of water, soil and air quality standards
	5. Geodiversity Protect and enhance the geological resources of the Park, including Fforest Fawr UNESCO Global Geopark.
Biodiversity	6. Biodiversity Conserve and enhance the rich and complex biodiversity of the National Park.
Cultural Heritage	7. Historic Landscape and Built Heritage Ensure that all development affecting the historic environment enhances the landscape and built heritage whilst also taking appropriate account of sustainable design requirements.
	8. Cultural Heritage

SA/SEA Topic	SA/SEA Objective
	Conserve and enhance the cultural heritage of the Park's communities including use of the Welsh language
Landscape and the Built Environment	9. Landscape Ensure that all new development protects and enhances the beautiful and varied character of the landscape.
	10. Special Qualities Conserve and enhance the special qualities of the National Park.
	11. Sustainable Use of Land Encourage development on previously developed land in preference to the development of greenfield land.
	12. Sustainable Design Improve the physical quality, energy efficiency, accessibility and sustainable design and construction of all development throughout the Park.
Material Assets	13. Infrastructure Ensure adequate provision of utilities for local communities and embrace opportunities for new technologies in all new development.
	14. Transport Encourage development, supported by active travel infrastructure, new evolving technologies (including electric car charging infrastructure) and sustainable transport initiatives that reduce the need for private fossil fuel-based transport.
	15. Waste Encourage local waste and recycling facilities and make sufficient land available to support innovative solutions.
	16. Minerals
	Protect the National Park against new mineral workings and extensions to existing mineral workings, whilst also safeguarding appropriate mineral resources from sterilisation and ensuring suitable aftercare for any redundant workings.
Population and Human Health	17. Housing Provide for the overall housing requirements, ensuring a mix of dwelling types and sizes, and catering for all identified needs to promote integrated, vibrant and viable communities.
	18. Affordable Housing Ensure that good quality, affordable housing of all types will be accessible to the Park's communities where there is an identified need
	19. Health and Wellbeing Promote sustainably managed opportunities for health and wellbeing.
	20. Location of Growth

SA/SEA Topic	SA/SEA Objective
	Encourage development in locations that respect and contribute to National Park purposes, minimise unsustainable travel and contribute to the vibrancy and viability of local communities and their sustainable economic development.
Education and Skills	21. Strengthening skills Increase opportunities to build and improve the quality of the education and skills base
Achieving a Sustainable Economy	22. Economy Provide for a sustainable economy, supporting appropriate opportunities to enhance both local towns and rural economies.
	23. Employment Support and provide for sustainable employment opportunities within the National Park, recognising the strong links between local employment and housing supply.
	24. Tourism Support a sustainable tourism industry that contributes to National Park purposes and a vibrant local economy and community, and develop a visitor payback scheme within the Park.
	25. Farm Diversification Support the farming industry to develop sustainable diversification opportunities that contribute to National Park purposes and a vibrant and viable local economy.
	26. Retail & Town Centres Support evolution of town centres in the Park, promoting and enhancing their vibrancy and viability and responding to sustainable locally led place-based initiatives.
	27. Transport Promote development supported by active travel infrastructure, new evolving technologies (including electric car charging infrastructure) and sustainable transport initiatives that reduce the need for private fossil fuel-based transport

3. Assessment Framework

The key outcome from the Scoping work is the development of a framework which will be used in the future to assess the emerging policy and proposals of the NPMP and LDP.

The assessment comprises a series of questions set against each objective.

These questions aim to provide the mechanism by which it can be determined whether emerging policy delivers sustainable development. Where the assessment identifies issues, the Authority will have opportunity to review and amend the proposed policy to provide appropriate mitigation for any identified harm. This will ensure that the emerging LDP and NPMP provide a balanced approach to the delivery of sustainable development.

The following table sets out the assessment questions against each Objective including providing an overview of likely evidence sources which could assist in the assessment.

SA/SEA Topic	SA/SEA Assessment Framework
Climatic Factors	1. Climate Change Will the proposals in the plan....? ...reduce - where practical - vulnerability to the effects of climate change ... have compliance with the objectives within the Water Framework Directive ...assist WG to address some of the environmental pressures that land use planning grapples with through their new land use management schemes?
	2. Renewable Energy Will the proposals in the plan...? ...reduce greenhouse gas emissions? ...promote sequestration of carbon? ...maintain existing carbon stores (e.g., organic soils and broad-leaved forests)?
	3. Flooding Will the proposals in the plan...? ...mitigate against flooding, drainage problems or drought ...migrate development away from the floodplain where possible
Natural Resources: Air, Water and Soil	4. Natural Resources ...maintain or improve air quality? ...minimize emissions from residential and commercial sources? ...reduce emissions from transportation sources? ...maintain or improve water quality? ...restore and maintain water abstraction, run-off and recharge rates within the Park's carrying capacity (including future capacity)? ...promote the sustainable use of water? ...reduce the loss or impoverishment of soils? ...reduce compaction and sealing of soils?
	5. Geodiversity Will the proposals in the plan...? ...conserve geological and geomorphological features? ...promote the enjoyment and understanding of geodiversity?
Biodiversity	6. Biodiversity Will the proposals in the plan...? ...conserve and enhance the diversity of species?

SA/SEA Topic	SA/SEA Assessment Framework
	<p>...prevent the loss of NRAP target species and their habitats where possible?</p> <p>...reduce the richness and abundance of non-native species?</p> <p>...conserve and enhance the diversity of habitats?</p> <p>...create and/or improve condition of target habitats?</p> <p>...minimize disturbance to target habitats?</p> <p>...have no adverse effect on SACs?</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>...ensure that Forest Resource Plans for WVG coniferous plantations support nature recovery and the Park's special qualities?</p>
Cultural Heritage	<p>7. Historic Landscape and Built Heritage</p> <p>Will the proposals in the plan...?</p> <p>...reduce the number of Listed Buildings at risk?</p> <p>...conserve the character of buildings and the street scene in Conservation Areas, as well as surroundings?</p> <p>...promote high quality design based on local character and distinctiveness?</p> <p>...promote a sense of place?"</p> <p>...provide for the protection and management of historic landscapes</p>
	<p>8. Cultural Heritage</p> <p>Will the proposals in the plan...?</p> <p>...provide for the protection and conservation of cultural heritage</p> <p>...support the area's cultural traditions (i.e. Eisteddfodau)?</p> <p>...support the Welsh language (i.e. Adult learners; Welsh Speaking Nurseries)?</p>
Landscape and the Built Environment	<p>9. Landscape / 10. Special Qualities</p> <p>Will the proposals in the plan...?</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 large developments that can be seen from the Park?</p> <p>... conserve and enhance the special landscape qualities of the Brecon Beacons National Park?</p>
	<p>11. Sustainable Use of Land</p>

SA/SEA Topic	SA/SEA Assessment Framework
	<p>...direct development towards sustainable locations? ...promote the use of brownfield land over greenfield land?</p> <p>12. Sustainable Design</p> <p>Will the proposals in the plan...?</p> <p>...promote high quality design based on local character and distinctiveness? ...promote a sense of place? ...consider relevant design standards?</p>
Material Assets	<p>13. Infrastructure</p> <p>Will the proposals in the plan...?</p> <p>...provide capacity for community scale renewable energy or Community heat/power schemes ...promote connected sustainable sewerage solutions ...improve the affordability of rural living ...promote the development of local energy networks?</p>
	<p>14. Transport</p> <p>Will the proposals in the plan...</p> <p>...promote frequent and affordable sustainable modes of transport? ...reduce the requirement for use of the private car? ...Promote a sustainable settlement strategy and appropriate location of services and facilities? ...Improve the integration of non car transport modes and services? ...Promote the use of community transport? Improve accessibility to services, particularly for disadvantaged sections of society? ...change behaviour in relation to the attitudes of people towards travelling on public transport?</p>
	<p>15. Waste</p> <p>Will the proposals in the plan...?</p> <p>...contribute to the reduction, reuse and recycling of waste? ...contribute to making sufficient land available to support appropriate waste treatment and disposal? ...contribute to the promotion of sustainable waste management? Reduce waste production and promote reuse and recycling. ...Minimise the use of finite resources ...promote innovative solutions? ...promote deposit schemes ? ...promote the production of energy from waste within the park?</p>

SA/SEA Topic	SA/SEA Assessment Framework
	<p>...promote recycling opportunities within the Park (opening times and items which can be recycled)?</p> <p>...reduce litter and single use plastic containers in the Park and promote alternatives?</p> <p>16. Minerals</p> <p>Will the proposals in the plan...?</p> <p>...sterilise an existing minerals resource</p> <p>... increase the likelihood for future mineral working within the NP</p> <p>...promote the use of recycled materials</p>
<p>Population and Human Health</p>	<p>17. Housing</p> <p>Will the proposals in the plan...?</p> <p>...provide sufficient housing for the needs of the local communities?</p> <p>...ensure the population trends are considered in decision making processes, especially age.</p> <p>...promote the design of settlements that improve social fabric by removing barriers and creating opportunities for positive interactions.</p> <p>...promote community interactions that will improve social cohesion.</p> <p>...ensure the quality of the built environment</p> <p>...promote inclusion of disadvantaged and minority groups into society.</p> <p>...Provide sufficient community space within housing developments i.e. village halls/community space; playgrounds; natural spaces</p> <p>18. Affordable Housing</p> <p>Will the proposals in the plan...?</p> <p>...contribute to the provision of affordable housing within the plan</p> <p>...promote the retention of younger people.</p> <p>19. Health and Wellbeing</p> <p>Will the proposals in the plan...?</p> <p>...improve access to the Park and to its opportunities and facilities for all?</p> <p>...create new access opportunities where appropriate?</p> <p>... ensure that the Park is easily accessible and promoted through eco-tourism?</p> <p>...improve the quantity and quality of publicly accessible open space?</p> <p>... provide opportunities for people to come into contact with and appreciate the diversity of species, habitats, and ecosystems in the Park.</p> <p>...remove barriers and create opportunities for people to live healthier lifestyles;</p> <p>...encourage walking or cycling as an alternative means of transportation;</p> <p>...reduce the causes of accidents;</p>

SA/SEA Topic	SA/SEA Assessment Framework
	<p>...encourage integration of health issues into planning activities. ...tackle specifically isolation issues? Problems for isolated farmers/elderly etc ...positively impact communities both inside and outside of the Park</p> <p>20. Location of Growth</p> <p>Will the proposals in the plan...?</p> <p>Will the proposals contribute to the viability of rural services</p> <p>...Will the proposal contribute to the development of social networks within the community</p> <p>...will the proposal limit the necessity to travel to essential services and facilities</p> <p>...promote the design of settlements that improve social fabric by removing barriers and creating opportunities for positive interactions.</p> <p>...reduce inequality and provide access to all facilities and services;</p>
<p>Education and Skills</p>	<p>21. Strengthening skills</p> <p>Will the proposals in the plan...?</p> <p>...promote providing the best start in life for children both inside and outside of the park?</p> <p>...promote appropriate education provision for supporting 16-19 year olds?</p> <p>...promote enrolment in further and higher education institutions?</p> <p>...increase levels of literacy (in English and Welsh) and numeracy?</p> <p>...promote lifelong learning?</p> <p>...promote the retention of appropriate skills in the Park for future skills?</p> <p>...provide accessible educational and training facilities which meet the future needs of the area?</p> <p>...cover and support 5 – 16 year olds?</p> <p>...address the needs of marginalised groups? eg people with learning disabilities/physical/mental disabilities through training and skills?</p> <p>...promote real employment opportunities to use skills gained leading on from training/education within the Park? eg apprenticeships</p> <p>...does the National Park inspire people to learn and access relevant measures?</p>
<p>Achieving a Sustainable Economy</p>	<p>22. Economy</p> <p>Will the proposals in the plan...?</p> <p>...promote a sustainable agricultural economy in the Park?</p> <p>...support a thriving, locally-based economy in the Park?</p> <p>...support a flourishing and sustainable tourism industry in the Park?</p> <p>...encourage use of local products and services?</p> <p>...help provide good quality employment opportunities for all sections of the population?</p> <p>...promote sustainable businesses in the Park?</p>

SA/SEA Topic	SA/SEA Assessment Framework
	<p>...promote home working?</p> <p>...improve environmental performance</p>
	<p>23. Employment</p> <p>Will the proposals in the plan...?</p> <p>promote sustainable businesses in the Park?</p> <p>...help provide good quality employment opportunities for all sections of the population?</p> <p>...promote a sustainable agricultural economy in the Park?</p> <p>...support a thriving, locally-based economy in the Park?</p> <p>...support a flourishing and sustainable tourism industry in the Park?</p> <p>...improve environmental performance</p> <p>...promote entrepreneurship and innovation</p> <p>...develop ICT skill sets</p>
	<p>24. Tourism</p> <p>Will the proposals in the plan...?</p> <p>...support a flourishing and sustainable tourism industry in the Park?</p> <p>...ensure that the tourism sector and attractions provide access by a choice of travel other than private means?</p> <p>...improve access to the Park and to its opportunities and facilities for all?</p> <p>... ensure that the Park is easily accessible and promoted through tourism?</p>
	<p>25. Farm Diversification</p> <p>Will the proposals in the plan...?</p> <p>... support the sustainable environmental diversification of farms in the National Park?</p>
	<p>26. Retail & Town Centres</p> <p>Will the proposals in the plan...?</p> <p>... encourage use of local products and services?</p> <p>... support and promote the evolution of town centres in the National Park?</p>
	<p>27. Transport</p> <p>Will the proposals in the plan...?</p> <p>...promote home working?</p> <p>...promote sustainable businesses in the Park?</p> <p>... ensure that the Park is easily accessible through tourism?</p> <p>... promote the installation of innovative transport technologies?</p>

Legislation requires that the Scoping Report is provided to the Welsh Government, Natural Resources Wales and Cadw for a statutory period of consultation lasting no less than 5 weeks.

In the interest of openness the NPA has published the Scoping Report for general consultation and would welcome any comment on its contents.

Comments should be made in writing either electronically or by post.

strategy@beacons-npa.gov.uk

Strategy and Policy
Brecon Beacons National Park Authority
Plas y Ffynnon
Brecon
LD3 7HP