



## Brecon Beacons National Park

# Landscape Character Assessment

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## 1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Landscape Character Assessment was commissioned by the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority in March 2012. It has been prepared by Fiona Fyfe Associates, with Julie Martin Associates, Alison Farmer Associates and Countryside, between March and August 2012.

The spatial approach of the Landscape Character Assessment provides a clear geographic reference for landscape character, special qualities and issues of landscape change across the National Park. It is intended for use in a number of ways, including:

- Assessing the qualities of wildness, tranquillity and remoteness across the National Park to develop a policy related to the impacts of recreation and development on these qualities.
- Contributing to the development of policies with regard to large-scale developments on the fringes of the National Park.
- Use as Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG), supporting emerging policies in the Local Development Plan which aim to protect the special qualities of the National Park.
- Forming baseline evidence in the development of a visitor management strategy, as referenced in the Environment Minister's Strategic Grant Letter to the Welsh National Parks (29<sup>th</sup> March 2011).

In addition it will inform community development, village plans, Glastir-targeted elements, countryside priorities, education and information through its contribution to understanding of sense of place.

The methodology (comprising desk studies, fieldwork, consultation and writing-up) is in accordance with the current best practice guidelines for Landscape Character Assessment, and also utilises the Welsh LANDMAP landscape database. It reflects the holistic approach to landscape set out in the European Landscape Convention, and considers the natural, cultural and perceptual factors which together comprise the landscape.

The Brecon Beacons National Park was designated in 1957 on the grounds of its natural beauty and the opportunities it offers for open air recreation. Its varied landscapes are the result of its natural geology and topography, superimposed by thousands of years of human activity and management of the land. The landscapes of the National Park therefore contain a record of their evolutionary processes over millennia. The development of landscape is a dynamic process, and many forces for change continue to act on the landscape today.

There are five broad landscape types within the National Park: Uplands, Upland Valleys, Settled Valleys, Lowlands and Mountains and Valleys. Within these landscape types, fifteen Landscape Character Areas were identified. Each one has its own character, identity and 'sense of place' derived from the particular combinations of natural and cultural elements within it.

Each Landscape Character Area is described in terms of its location and context; historical development; distinctive characteristics; LANDMAP components; settlements; key views; special qualities; sensitivities; contribution to ecosystem services and Green Infrastructure and forces for landscape change. Each Landscape Character Area profile ends with a management strategy and recommended management guidelines to protect and strengthen its landscape character.