**Habitats Regulations Assessment of the draft National Park Management Plan.**

The Brecon Beacons National Park Authority is a competent authority under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), commonly referred to as the Habitats Regulations and must assess the Plan, before it is put into effect, as a matter of law (Regulation 63).

This assessment is generally referred to as a ‘Habitats Regulations Assessment’ or ‘HRA’ and the regulations set out a clearly defined stepwise process which must be followed.

Under the regulations, HRA is required in respect of both ‘plans’ and ‘projects. Where a project is subject to assessment, there is generally sufficiently detailed project specific information against which to make a comprehensive assessment.

However, a plan-based assessment is different; The Plan sets out broad intentions and lacking information which is available when a detailed projects are developed (this may not be until after the Plan has been published).

As such, the HRA of a ‘plan’ is recognised to require a different approach to that of a ‘project’ and is tailored to the plan being assessed; assessments are made to the extent possible on the basis of the precision of the plan, but such an assessment cannot do more than the level of detail of the plan at that stage permits.

Although plans are capable of significantly affecting Special Areas of Conservation (“SAC”) and therefore the National Sites Network (formerly ‘European sites’), elements of a plan that are no more than general policy statements or which express the general political will of an authority cannot, generally, be likely to have a significant effect on a site.

Having identified the longlist of sites considered by this assessment (where at least part of the SAC (Special Area of Conservation) is within 15km of the National Park boundary) and examined the issues, all sites outside the National Park were omitted from the short list of sites potentially affected. The only hypothetical pathway identified was *Air Pollution: Nitrogen Deposition* for which there is no credible evidence of a real link between the Plan and the sites.

Twelve sites were shortlisted as potentially affected by the draft National Park Management Plan:

* Blaen Cynon SAC
* Brecon Beacons SAC
* Coedydd Nedd a Mellte SAC
* Coed y Cerrig SAC
* Cwm Cadlan SAC
* Cwm Clydach Woodlands SAC
* Llangorse Lake/ Llyn Syfaddan SAC
* River Usk SAC
* River Wye SAC
* Sugar Loaf Woodlands SAC
* Usk Bat Sites SAC
* River Tywi SAC

Following a preliminary screening, all aspects of the plan were screened as having no likely significant effect, either alone or in combination against these sites. The Plan will have no adverse effect on the integrity of any SAC identified on the shortlist of sites identified as potentially being affected.