



National Park Management Plans Guidance

Noddir gan
Lywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
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Cyngor Cefn Gwlad Cymru
Countryside Council for Wales

The Countryside Council for Wales champions the environment and landscapes of Wales and its coastal waters as sources of natural and cultural riches, as a foundation for economic and social activity, and as a place for leisure and learning opportunities. We aim to make the environment a valued part of everyone's life in Wales.

National Park Management Plans – Guidance

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1. INTRODUCTION

WHO IS THIS GUIDANCE FOR?

- 1.1 This guidance is for National Park Authorities and for all who have an influence over the future of the National Parks of Wales.
- 1.2 Under Section 66(1) of the Environment Act 1995 each National Park Authority is required to prepare and publish a National Park Management Plan for their Park.
- 1.3 Although preparation of the Management Plan is the prime responsibility of the National Park Authority (NPA), its preparation needs actively to engage and gain the support of all key stakeholders who will assist in its delivery.

WHAT IS NEW IN THIS REVISED GUIDANCE?

- 1.4 This guidance replaces the earlier publication *National Park Management Plans Guidance* published by the Countryside Commission and the Countryside Council for Wales in 1997.
- 1.5 A review and update of the earlier guidance was one of the specific recommendations in the *Review of the National Park Authorities in Wales* (2004)¹.
- 1.6 Key elements in this update are:
 - strong emphasis on the **process** of Plan preparation as a means of engaging key stakeholders in the subsequent delivery of the Plan;
 - promotion of **integrated** thinking;
 - acceptance of a more flexible approach to Plan **content**;
 - the link to **State of the Park Reports**.
- 1.7 All National Park Management Plans prepared after 2004 require a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA).

¹ Land Use Consultants et al (2004) recommendation 8.2 'CCW should review the current guidance for the preparation and use of NPMPs in Wales ... giving greater emphasis to the process of plan preparation'

- 1.8 A key requirement of the new Local Development Plan system is that Local Development Plan (LDP) production is informed by Sustainability Appraisal incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment (SA/SEA). It is therefore important that within each NPA an integrated process is adopted for preparing National Park Management Plans and Local Development Plans to maximise benefits for the Management Plan and the National Park whilst minimising additional work.
- 1.9 This document provides specific guidance on the SEA of National Park Management Plans and how the process of Management Plan preparation and SEA can be combined. Detailed guidance on the LDP process is set out in the Local Development Plan Manual (2006).

CHANGES SINCE THE LAST GUIDANCE

- 1.10 Much has changed since the last Management Plan Guidance was produced. Devolved Government for Wales was introduced in 1999 with the creation of the Welsh Assembly Government. Uniquely amongst EU nations the Welsh Assembly Government has a binding legal duty, under Section 121 of the Government of Wales Act 1999, to pursue sustainable development in all that it does. The Sustainable Development Scheme and Action Plan 2004–2007 forms one of the high level strategic guidance 'building blocks' of the Welsh Assembly Government alongside *Wales: A Better Country* (setting out Government's four year agenda) and the Wales Spatial Plan which was adopted by the National Assembly for Wales on 17 November 2004.
- 1.11 The Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000 introduced open access land.
- 1.12 The EU Directive requiring the Strategic Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes was introduced in 2001, taking effect from July 2004. The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 introduced the new Local Development Plan system, together with a requirement that the body producing the Local Development Plan must exercise that

function with the objective of contributing to the achievement of sustainable development.

- 1.13 The reform of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) was agreed in 2003 and introduced in January 2005, de-coupling farm payments from agricultural production. The Single Payment Scheme (SPS) was implemented from January 2005, with all recipients required to comply with a range of Statutory Management Requirements and with Good Agricultural and Environmental Condition. The implications of SPS are not yet clear, though changes in the type of livestock kept and intensity of stocking may emerge and have impacts on land use. Tir Mynydd (which provides additional subsidy for farms in the Less Favoured Areas) is being reviewed and may change significantly in the next few years.
- 1.14 A new Rural Development Plan 2007–2013 for Wales ('Pillar 2' of CAP) is being developed and will guide a range of schemes over the funding period. The plan includes the agri-environment measures including Tir Gofal, and the new Tir Cynnal 'entry level scheme'. There will be a further review of agri-environment schemes in Wales in 2007-08.
- 1.15 The Assembly's Woodlands For Wales strategy was published in 2001 and sets out a vision and strategic objectives. The Woodland Strategy Advisory Panel is helping the Forestry Commission Wales implement the strategy. In 2006 the Forestry Commission Wales is officially launching its new grant scheme *Better Woodlands for Wales* which is based on the production of management plans and is compatible with the UK Woodland Assurance Scheme.

THE IMPORTANCE OF NATIONAL PARKS

- 1.16 National Parks contain the most beautiful, spectacular and dramatic areas of countryside in Wales. Along with Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) these are landscapes of national importance with designation conferring the highest status for the conservation of landscape and scenic beauty. Millions of visitors enjoy these qualities every year.



- 1.17 Their importance is reflected in the vision for the National Parks of Wales in the 21st century set out in the *Review of the National Park Authorities in Wales* (2004):

'The National Parks of Wales are landscapes of national importance that capture much of what is distinctive and special about rural Wales, environmentally and culturally. They lie at the heart of the identity of rural Wales, both for Welsh people and the wider world. They have huge potential to enrich the lives of people in Wales and further afield, and contribute importantly to the economy of the Nation. They are cultural landscapes, moulded by their communities over millennia, where the interaction of people and place is central to their character. They are the place where the very best of sustainable development practices are pursued for the benefit of the environment, and the economies and communities of the Parks – where all activities reinforce and cherish the special qualities of these important areas and aim to respect and improve local people's lives. They are places where ALL who can influence their future work together to conserve and enhance their natural beauty and cultural identity. They are places that experiment with new approaches in sustainable development and environmental conservation, providing exemplars of best practice for wider Wales, and helping to shape and lead future rural policy and practice.'

CULTURAL LANDSCAPES

1.18 Unlike the wilderness parks in some other countries, the National Parks of Wales are cultural landscapes, moulded by human influence over millennia. Most of the Parks' area is under private ownership and their landscapes are the product of human intervention with natural processes. It is for this reason that the National Parks are classified as Category V protected areas by IUCN – the World Conservation Union.

Box 1.1

Category V protected areas

Category V protected areas are defined in the 1994 Guidelines of Protected Area Management Categories (IUCN) as:

“An area of land, with coast and seas as appropriate, where the interaction of people and nature over time has produced an area of distinct character with significant aesthetic, ecological and/or cultural value, and often with high biological diversity. Safeguarding the integrity of this traditional interaction is vital to the protection, maintenance and evolution of such an area.”

1.19 It is inevitable and appropriate that these landscapes will continue to evolve but this needs to be in ways that supports their special qualities and the communities that support and manage them.

Box 1.2

Principles for the management of Category V protected areas

As part of the family of Category V protected areas the principles that should guide the management of the Welsh National Parks include²:

- ☐ Conserving landscape, biodiversity and cultural values as the central focus of the Category V protected area approach.
- ☐ Focusing management at the point of interaction between people and nature.
- ☐ Seeing people as stewards of the landscape.

- ☐ Undertaking management with and through local people.
- ☐ Management based on co-operative approaches.
- ☐ A political and economic environment that supports effective management.
- ☐ Management of the highest professional standard that is flexible and adaptive.
- ☐ Measurement of the success of management in environmental and social terms.

THE NATIONAL PARK PURPOSES

1.20 **Purposes:** The future of National Parks is guided by their two purposes as set out in Section 61 of the Environment Act 1995:

- (a) **Conservation and enhancement** ‘to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife, and cultural heritage of the National Parks’
- (b) **Understanding and enjoyment** ‘to promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities [of the Parks] by the public.’

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

1.22 Reflecting that the National Parks are cultural landscapes with a resident population, the NPAs also have a duty under Section 62(1) of the Environment Act, in taking forward the park purposes, to: ‘foster the economic and social well-being of local communities within the National Park...’. But this duty should be fulfilled within the context of the park purposes integrating social and economic objectives with the conservation and enhancement of the environmental qualities of the designated area.

1.23 To put this duty into practice, it is recognised that the NPAs need to work closely with those who have primary responsibility for these concerns, not least the local authorities and other public bodies.

² Phillips, A (2002) *Management Guidelines for IUCN category V Protected Areas Landscapes/Seascapes* IUCN. IUCN – The World Conservation Union.

THE ROLE OF THE NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITIES (NPAs)

- 1.24 The central role of the NPAs is to take the action needed to put into practice the purposes of the National Parks.
- 1.25 The central role of the Management Plan is to guide the delivery of the National Park purposes and Section 62(1) duty, assisted by the NPAs statutory planning function.

SECTION 62(2) DUTY

- 1.26 Importantly, in seeking to deliver the National Park purposes, the NPAs are not expected to work alone – this is a shared task for all. Under Section 62(2) of the Environment Act 1995, relevant authorities³ have a duty to “have regard to” the purposes of the National Parks when carrying out their work. This underlines that delivery of the park purposes through the National Park Management Plan needs to be undertaken in partnership with others – both key

policy makers and fund holders, including government agencies and local authorities - and with those whose day-to-day activities have been responsible for creating the landscape of today: the farmers, landowners, conservation groups and NGOs, local businesses and local communities of the Parks.

WHY ARE NATIONAL PARK MANAGEMENT PLANS SO IMPORTANT?

- 1.27 The National Park Management Plan is the single most important policy document for each National Park. It is a plan for the geographic area of the Park and not for any one authority. As a strategic over-arching document it co-ordinates and integrates other plans, strategies and actions in the National Park, where these affect the park purposes and duty. The National Park Management Plan is, therefore, the principal vehicle for ensuring that the statutory provisions of the Environment Act 1995 are met, including



³ Relevant authorities include:

- Any Minister of the Crown
- Any public body (including government agencies, local authorities and parish councils)
- Any statutory undertaker
- Any person holding public office

the duties imposed on all public bodies under Section 62(2).

WHO ARE NATIONAL PARK MANAGEMENT PLANS FOR?

1.28 National Park Management Plans are for all those who have an influence over the future of each National Park. No major decisions should be taken affecting the future of a Park without reference to its Management Plan. Preparation of the Plan should be central to cementing those partnerships that will be instrumental in helping to deliver the Plan's vision and objectives.

FREQUENCY OF PLAN REVIEW

1.29 Given the central importance of the National Park Management Plan it should be up to date and regularly reviewed, with NPAs legally required to review the Plan every five years, ideally in co-ordination with the Local Development Plan.

ROLES AND PURPOSES OF OTHER PLANS & STRATEGIES

1.30 The strategic framework for future planning and management in National Parks is influenced by two other planning processes: Community Strategies and Local Development Plans.

1.31 Outside National Parks, county/county borough councils are tasked with preparing community strategies in accordance with the Local Government Act 2000. A community strategy sets out a vision of how the county area, whether as a whole, specific parts of it or local communities, will develop in the next 10/15 years. It is intended to improve the quality of life for local people.

1.32 Within National Parks the National Park Management Plan assumes the function of a Community Strategy.

1.33 The land use planning dimension of the National Park Management Plan is put into effect through the statutory Local Development Plan for each National Park.

1.34 Development planning has a central role in maintaining the character of the Parks and fostering the social and economic well-being of park communities. Planning aims to place the right development in the right place to meet the needs of park communities and to support change that brings positive benefits to the National Park in line with the National Park purposes and the National Park Management Plan objectives. The National Park purposes and socio-economic duty, supported by the Sandford Principle and the Silkin Test⁴, set a clear statutory framework for development planning within the National Parks.

1.35 In this respect the National Park Local Development Plan (LDP) is one of the key delivery mechanisms of the National Park Management Plan.

1.36 Detailed advice on the LDP preparation process, including SA/SEA, is contained in LDP Wales (2005) and the Local Development Plan Manual (2006). Where possible an integrated approach should be adopted to the process of preparing the National Park Management Plan and LDP, with the two plans being prepared in parallel.

⁴ The Silkin Test for major development asks 'is the development absolutely necessary in the national interest and is there no possible alternative solution, source or supply'

2. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- 2.1 It is recommended that National Park Management Plans should clearly distinguish between the ambitions for the Park, defined in a vision and supporting aims and objectives, and how the vision and objectives will be delivered, through policies and an Action Plan (explored further in Chapter 4).
- 2.2 Key principles that should guide the preparation and content of National Park Management Plans are:

Plan preparation

- They should be prepared with the active participation of key stakeholders and the wider community, encouraging shared ownership of and support for the objectives, policies and actions that each plan identifies (Chapter 3).
- Building on the above, partnership working will be an essential prerequisite in the plans' delivery, with the Section 62(2) duty providing the opportunity to encourage the proactive engagement of relevant authorities and others in the delivery of the National Park purposes and the socio-economic duty.
- They should be a means to an end and not an end in themselves – they must clearly lead to appropriate action, much of which will be through partnership. This underlines the importance of securing commitment to the implementation of relevant policies.

Plan content

- They should be ambitious, recognising the national importance of the Parks.
- They should focus on the delivery of the National Park purposes within the wider agenda of sustainable development. These should set the agenda for the contents of the plan. Thus socio-economic aspects (which clearly need addressing within the plan to reflect the Section 62(1) duty) should relate back to the delivery of the park purposes. Wherever possible win-win linkages should be sought, for example to demonstrate the contribution of National Parks to objectives for health and well being.

- They should identify and seek to protect and enhance the special qualities of the Park.
- They should promote the national and international importance of the National Parks, while reflecting local circumstances.
- Sustainable development should underpin the way in which the National Park purposes and socio-economic duty are delivered (considered further below).
- They should consider the appropriate responses to the likely effects of climate change on the Park and the local actions that can be taken to reduce the causes of climate change as exemplars of sustainable development (acting locally, thinking globally).
- They should show clear integration in thinking between different topic areas and between different forms of delivery to ensure that sustainable development is achieved in practice.
- They should link to international, national, regional and local policies and programmes, which in combination can assist in the delivery of the National Park purposes.
- They should influence and add value to existing and future plans and strategies prepared by others, such as the constituent local authorities of the Parks, ensuring that all activities within the Parks have a Park focus and rationale and are working to a commonly agreed agenda for the Park.
- They should look both backwards and forwards, learning from past trends and the effects of past actions and taking this knowledge into the future, looking at how anticipated future changes should be addressed within the National Park. For example, this is particularly important in the face of climate change and profound changes in agricultural support under the Common Agricultural Policy.
- Their objectives and policies should be based on clear evidence. Available datasets, where relevant, should be used, ensuring that they relate to the area within the National Park rather than an interpretation of the local authority areas that cross the Park and which collectively may have a very different

character to the Park. Unsubstantiated assumptions and assertions should be avoided. This underlines the importance of the interrelationship with datasets held by the National Park Authority and partners and the State of The Park Report (paras 3.16 – 3.20).

- They should be clearly monitored in terms of both the outputs against targets and milestones established in the Action Plan and outcomes associated with achievement of the Plan objectives. This should include having mechanisms in place to allow modification if monitoring suggests that alternative action should be pursued.
- Building on the above, they should provide the central Plan for the NPA, setting the framework, together with the LDP, for the more detailed strategies and programmes of the NPA including its annual business plan (Chapter 6).

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT WITHIN THE NATIONAL PARKS

- 2.3 As already noted, the Welsh Assembly Government has a binding legal duty under Section 121 of the Government of Wales Act 1999 to pursue sustainable development in all that it does.
- 2.4 The Welsh Assembly Government is required by law to make a Scheme stating how it will promote sustainable development in the exercise of its functions. The Assembly adopted a revised Sustainable Development Scheme *Starting to Live Differently* on 16th March 2004. This Scheme is being delivered through the Sustainable Development Action Plan of the Welsh Assembly Government 2004-2007 (October 2004).
- 2.5 This Action Plan forms part of the UK Strategic Framework for Sustainable Development⁵. Within this framework, the shared UK principles that will guide the achievement of sustainable development in the UK and have been agreed by the UK Government, Scottish Executive, Welsh Assembly Government and the Northern Ireland

Administration are:

- *Living Within Environmental Limits.* Respecting the limits of the planet's environment, resources and biodiversity – to improve our environment and ensure that the natural resources needed for life are unimpaired and remain so for future generations.
- *Ensuring a Strong, Healthy and Just Society.* Meeting the diverse needs of all people in existing and future communities, promoting personal well-being, social cohesion and inclusion, and creating equal opportunities for all.

In turn, the over-riding principles are underpinned by three further principles:

- **Achieving a Sustainable Economy.** Building a strong, stable and sustainable economy which provides prosperity and opportunities for all, and in which environmental and social costs fall on those who impose them (polluter pays), and efficient resource use is incentivised.
- **Promoting Good Governance.** Actively promoting effective participative systems of governance in all levels of society – engaging people's creativity, energy and diversity.
- **Sound Science Responsibly.** Ensuring policy is developed and implemented on the basis of strong scientific evidence, whilst taking into account scientific uncertainty (through the precautionary principle) as well as public attitudes and values.

- 2.6 Under these principles, caring for the environment is seen as a fundamental starting point. Living within environmental limits is a prerequisite for the future.
- 2.7 These principles are reflected in the Wales Spatial Plan 2005 which is structured according to five guiding themes:
 - Building sustainable communities
 - Promoting a sustainable economy

⁵ Set out in HM Government (2005) *Securing the Future: Delivering the UK Government Sustainable Development Strategy*.

- Valuing our environment
- Achieving sustainable accessibility
- Respecting distinctiveness

2.8 For rural areas, and National Parks in particular, the inclusion of the term ‘development’ in ‘sustainable development’ is potentially misleading. It implies that sustainable development is only about decisions affecting built development, whereas its remit is all-embracing, asking that all decisions affecting the future of an area view the environment, economy and community together to mutual benefit, with emphasis placed on win, win, win solutions.

2.9 What clearly distinguishes sustainable development within the National Parks from that in the wider countryside is that it is specifically concerned with helping to deliver the National Park purposes – reflecting the environmental pre-eminence of the designation. Thus the central concerns within the Parks of conserving and enhancing their landscape, biodiversity, cultural heritage and natural resources – sustainable land management - lie at the very heart of sustainable development within the Parks.

2.10 The social and economic aspirations of communities within the National Parks should be aligned closely with the park purposes since their special qualities are greatly influenced by human endeavour.

2.11 In Government guidance there is a clear expectation that the National Parks will make a strong contribution to sustainable development at all levels – nationally, in maintaining and enhancing their natural beauty, through to the local delivery of sustainable development and its wider promotion. This underlines the importance of ensuring that sustainable development lies at the heart of National Park Management Plans. This role is further underpinned at the international level by the expectations for Category V protected areas. The Snowdonia Declaration resulting from the EUROPARC 2002 conference begins with:

‘Protected areas have much to offer in the world’s quest for sustainable development... Europe’s Protected Landscapes have a

particularly important contribution to make. Bringing together the natural and the cultural, they exemplify the beauty, rich biodiversity and distinctive ‘sense of place’ that can result from the harmonious interaction of people and nature. They deliver growing economic and social, as well as environmental, benefits to the regions in which they are situated’.

2.12 It follows that partnership working is central to the delivery of sustainable development within the National Parks because of the range of interests that it convenes.

2.13 Many issues confront the National Parks – our most precious landscapes – as we seek a more sustainable way forward. These include:

■ **Future policies for agriculture and forestry.**

In the past these have had profound and often adverse effects on the character of the National Parks, focusing solely on production often at the expense of environmental conservation. Yet both are now refocusing, through reform of the Common Agricultural Policy and national policy, on the delivery of a range of public benefits, offering opportunities for more widespread sustainable land management.

■ **Tourism and leisure.** As evident during the Foot and Mouth Disease epidemic of 2001, tourism and recreation are now a central part of the local economy of the National Parks and can provide an economic justification for the sustainable management of land. But they can become unsustainable if the scale of the activity and supporting travel patterns destroy the qualities which provide the main visitor attraction.

■ **Transport issues.** The very rapid growth in car use in rural areas (largely as a result of increased commuting and leisure travel) contributes to global CO₂ levels and air pollution, and threatens the tranquillity of National Parks. With the daily exodus of households, it also undermines the provision of local services. At the same time, new road infrastructure can adversely impact on the physical fabric of the Parks.

- **Provision of affordable housing.** This is now one of the most acute issues for many communities including those of National Parks, as house prices are pushed out of the reach of local residents through a combination of purchase by commuters, those retiring, and the second home market, further exacerbated by the contraction of household size.
- **Minerals demand.** Mineral extraction reduces finite natural resources and has direct and indirect impacts on the local environment, but it can be a significant economic activity. In this context it is vital that ways forward are found that do not compromise the environmental quality of the Parks.
- **Waste generation and disposal.** Much more can be done to minimise the waste of Park communities and industries, and to re-use, recycle or dispose of it in ways that limit impacts on the environment.
- **Energy generation and water demand.** Given the environmental pre-eminence of National Parks, they are not the right location for meeting national or regional demands for electricity or water if this will compromise their environmental quality. On the other hand, bottom-up approaches to meeting local energy and natural resource needs, of a scale and type in keeping with their locality,

should be strongly encouraged. Indeed, an emphasis on self-sufficient communities as part of the sustainable development agenda of National Parks should be an important goal.

STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

- 2.14 National Park Management Plans are required to have a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). The process of SEA as it applies to National Park Management Plans is set out in Annexe 1 of this guidance. This Annexe also considers how the SEA of the National Park Management Plan interrelates with the appraisal of other plans and programmes, not least the SA/SEA of the National Park Local Development Plan.
- 2.15 How the processes of Plan preparation and SEA can work together for mutual benefit is considered in the following section. The relationship between the stages in Management Plan preparation and the stages in an SEA of the Management Plan are indicated in Figure 2.1, while Figure 2.2 shows the relationship between the preparation of the Local Development Plan and its Sustainability Appraisal. How all these stages interlink is shown separately in Figure 1 at the end of the Annexe to this guidance.

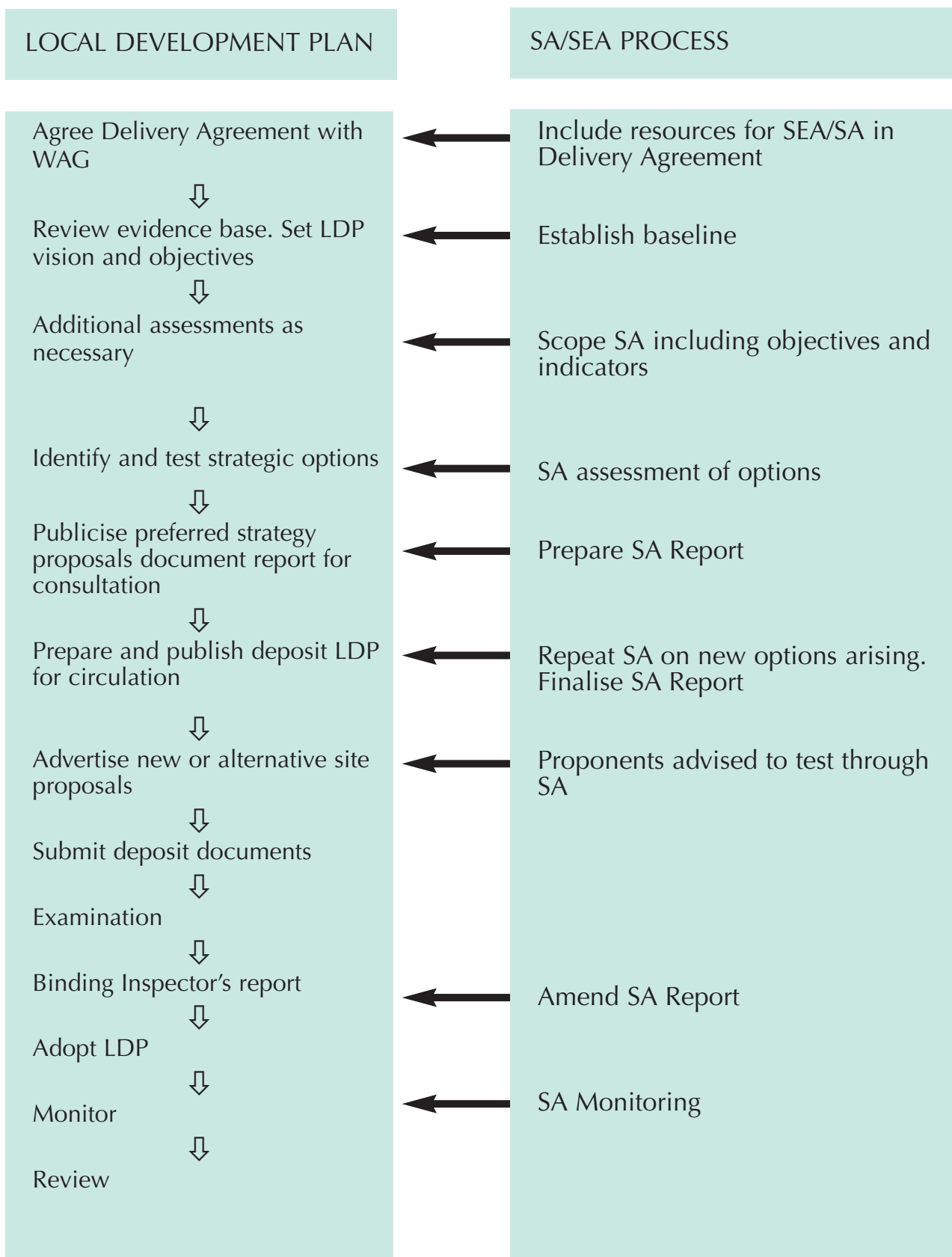
Figure 2.1: The process of preparing a National Park Management Plan and that associated with the SEA of the Management Plan

Management Plan

1. Establishing an understanding of the state of the Park
2. Engaging stakeholders and empowering local communities
3. Examining options for the National Park (scenario building)
4. Agreeing a vision for the National Park and management objectives
5. Agreeing the policies of the Plan
6. Agreeing and coordinating actions flowing from the Plan
7. Consulting on the Plan
8. Coordinating and sharing monitoring of the Plan
9. Reviewing the Plan

SEA	
STAGE A	SCOPING
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Confirming details of SEA methodology 2. Identifying key issues 3. Gathering baseline information 4. Predicting environmental trends in the absence of the NPMP 5. Confirming scope of the SEA 6. Considering relevant plans and policies 7. Setting environmental objectives 8. Setting sustainability objectives 9. Preparing Scoping Report 10. Considering of options 11. Consulting on the Scoping Report
STAGE B	ASSESSMENT
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 12. Environmental assessment 13. Sustainability appraisal
STAGE C	PREPARE REPORT
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 14. Preparation of Environmental Report
STAGE D	CONSULTATION
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 15. Consultation on Environmental Report 16. Environmental Report updated
STAGE E	MONITORING

Figure 2.2: The main stages in the Local Development Plan preparation and related Sustainability Appraisal (SA)



Adapted from LDP Manual Figure 3.1

3. THE PLAN PROCESS

- 3.1 The process of preparing a National Park Management Plan is as important as the Plan itself – it is the process of engendering support and commitment and ultimately ensuring shared implementation. It requires partnership working at all stages, with an emphasis on integrated thinking and sharing of views and perspectives. It requires a central understanding of the National Park purposes and special qualities, and how these can best be enjoyed and understood. It equally requires a shared view of how the well-being of Park communities can be assured in ways that help strengthen the delivery of the park purposes.
- 3.2 This guidance focuses on why and when engagement with partners and the wider community will be appropriate during Plan preparation. The methods of engagement will be for NPAs to decide, reflecting local circumstances and their current engagement with key partners and the wider community.
- 3.3 Ultimately National Park Management Plans must produce outputs and shared outcomes. Much of the success of the National Park Management Plan and its delivery depends on good working relationships between organisations and individuals.
- 3.4 The publication of the Plan therefore is not so much an event or an end in itself as part of an ongoing relationship between the NPA and all its partners, and between partners in delivering the National Park purposes and socio-economic duty. The National Park Management Plan should be owned by everyone whose decisions affect the National Park.

WHO IS INVOLVED?

- 3.5 Those who should be involved in the preparation of National Park Management Plans will vary depending both on local circumstances and on the emphasis of the Plan. Key stakeholders other than the National Park Authority and local communities include those indicated in Box 3.1. In addition, every attempt should be made to take account of the views of park visitors and to involve them in plan preparation where possible.

Key stakeholders

Box 3.1

Departments and Agencies

Countryside Council for Wales
Cadw
Coed Cymru
All departments of the Welsh Assembly Government and especially the Department for Environment, Planning and Countryside and the Department for Enterprise, Innovation and Networks
Welsh Spatial Plan Area Groups
Environment Agency Wales
Forestry Commission Wales
Sports Council for Wales
Welsh Development Agency
Welsh Tourist Board
South West Wales Tourism Partnership
North Wales Tourism
Capital Region Tourism
Mid Wales Tourism

Associations

One Voice Wales
Wales Association of National Park Authorities
Welsh Local Government Association

NGOs

Campaign for the Protection of Rural Wales
Council for National Parks
Country Land and Business Association
Farmers' Union of Wales
National Trust
National Farmers' Union Cymru
Ramblers Association
Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
Soil Association
Wales Biodiversity Partnership
Wales Council for Voluntary Action
Wales Environment Link
Wildlife Trusts
Woodland Trust

Local Government (other than the NPA)

Biological records centres
Community Councils
Local authority economic development departments;
Local authority housing departments; Local authority rights of way officers; Local highways authorities
Local biodiversity fora

Local communities, interest groups and commercial companies

Will depend on the National Park and may be wide ranging including access fora, local tourism groups, user groups, Chambers of Commerce, Community Councils, Friends of the Park and Park Societies, community groups, farmers' support groups, and public utilities.

Advisory services and institutions

Farming Connect; ELWa; GLASU; GwirFlas; and Food Groups

THE STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS FOR PREPARING NATIONAL PARK MANAGEMENT PLANS

- 3.6 The statutory requirements for the preparation of National Park Management Plans are set out in Box 3.2. These are the minimum requirements.

Box 3.2

The statutory requirements for preparing a National Park Management Plan (NPMP)

Section 66 of the Environment Act (1995) requires each National Park Authority to prepare and publish a National Park Management Plan for their Park, setting out policies for:

- ☐ managing the National Park
- ☐ carrying out NPA functions in relation to the National Park.

New NPAs must produce a National Park Management Plan within three years of being established and all Plans must be reviewed every five years.

In preparing the National Park Management Plan, NPAs are required to consult and take account of the observations of:

- ☐ every principal council wholly or partly within the National Park
- ☐ the Countryside Council for Wales

The NPAs are also obliged to set up arrangements to inform and consult Community Councils within the National Park about their work.

The Welsh Assembly Government must be sent a copy of any Plan and associated materials.

MEANINGFUL ENGAGEMENT AND EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT

- 3.7 The legislation requires NPAs as the primary authors of National Park Management Plans to consult and inform others. But the nature of National Park Management Plans, and the work they seek to orchestrate, means that their preparation and delivery needs much more than simple consultation. It requires the influencing and sharing of decisions by stakeholders within the clear parameters of the National Park purposes and duties – ‘Bounded Dialogue’ (Box 3.3).
- 3.8 In particular, this must include engagement with Government departments and agencies and with the constituent local authorities, whose policies and actions have such a strong influence over the future of each National Park.
- 3.9 It is also essential to engage with the communities of the National Parks, to understand their social and economic needs and the special qualities of the Parks that they cherish. These are partly defined by them and maintained by them.
- 3.10 If sustainable development is to be achieved it is vital that the debate as part of the management planning process is not seen as a series of trade-offs between different interests but is achieved through the identification and understanding of common goals. This necessitates the sharing of ideas to identify common ways forward.
- 3.11 It will be for individual National Park Authorities to decide on the best programme for engagement and who should be involved at each stage. But key aspects of the Plan which should be developed in dialogue with others are:
- identification of key issues
 - agreement on preferred option(s) and shared vision
 - development of plan objectives
 - development of plan policies
 - development of the Action Plan (see Box 3.4 overleaf).

Box 3.3: Types of engagement		
ENGAGEMENT	FEATURES	RESPONSES
Open dialogue	Decisions shared by stakeholders	Needs / aspirations ↑ Options ↓ Reactions
Bounded dialogue	Decisions influenced by stakeholders	
Consultation	Stakeholders have limited influence	
Information gathering	Stakeholders provide information to inform decisions – no influence	
Information giving	Stakeholders have opportunity to react	

Harris, Richard, ed. Why dialogue is different pp24 – 26. In *Stakeholder Dialogue Language*. Environment Council, London. After Armstein's Ladder of participation (1969)

PREPARING A NATIONAL PARK MANAGEMENT PLAN

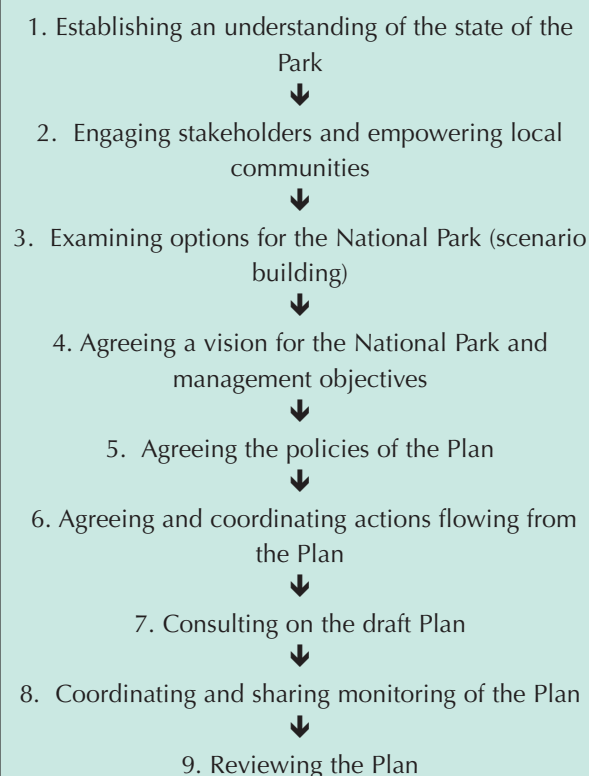
3.12 Preparation of a National Park Management Plan involves a number of stages (Box 3.4). Each NPA with its partners will develop the best way to prepare their National Park Management Plan, though sharing practice between NPAs will be important.

3.13 Wherever possible the process of preparing the National Park Management Plan and its SEA should dovetail with that of preparing the National Park Local Development Plan and its SA/SEA, to ensure integration between the two plans and processes.

3.14 Both processes will require a high level Steering Group to coordinate activity. To maximise the opportunities for integration between the National Park Management Plan and the National Park Local Development Plan, there will be great benefit in the same Steering Group guiding both processes.

3.15 The need for a Steering Group recognises that these processes, especially if they build on existing and on-going liaison with partners, have the potential to be quite dispersed. It is important therefore that there is a core group, made up of NPA officers and members and key partners, that is steering the process, ensuring integration between different aspects of engagement and pushing the parallel processes forward through clearly defined stages.

Stages in the preparation of National Park Management Plans Box 3.4



These stages incorporate the needs of SEA (Box 2.1 and Annexe 1)

1) Establishing an understanding of the state of the Park

3.16 At the outset of the management planning process it is important to start identifying the key issues that are affecting (positively and

negatively) the achievement of the park purposes and section 62(1) duty. These are likely to be informed by stakeholder involvement and the review of baseline information. This is also the essential first step in the SEA of the Management Plan.

- 3.17 Individual National Park Authorities have their own very extensive databanks. As a consequence, the gathering of base data in support of the Management Plan and its SEA (Annexe 1) should not impose too much of a burden. At present it can be difficult to isolate data relating to areas within and outside the National Park since spatial information is often collected for different administrative areas. This can be a problem when seeking to draw conclusions about conditions within each National Park. Nevertheless, wherever possible, it will be important to identify data specifically relevant to the Park and the spatial distribution of issues within the Park, recognising that some issues will have a particular geographic focus within the Park.
- 3.18 The evidence brought together in support of the Management Plan and its SEA provides a means of verifying key pressures and identifying their magnitude.
- 3.19 As the Management Plan and its SEA develops, it will be very important to develop a common set of indicators, linked to the environmental baseline, that monitor trends in identified issues, and allow measurement of both the Plan objectives (para 4.17) and the SEA objectives (Annexe 1(19)). The measurement of these indicators over time should form the core of the State of the Park Report. Therefore the aim should be to develop a seamless link, through identified indicators, between the State of the Park Report, the Management Plan objectives, the SEA objectives and potentially aspects of the annual monitoring report for the Local Development Plan of the National Park.
- 3.20 Many of the relevant data sets used to monitor key indicators will be held by partner organisations. Under the Section 62(2) duty, there should be a clear understanding amongst partners that data relevant to National Parks should be collected, analysed and updated by Park area.

2) Engaging stakeholders and empowering local communities

- 3.21 The process of engaging different stakeholders in the preparation of the National Park Management Plan is likely to vary:
 - For government departments and agencies, NGOs and local authorities, partnerships will, in many cases, already be in place and involvement in Plan preparation may be achieved through the fine-tuning of existing relationships. There will also be economies in co-ordinating liaison arrangements between different plans affecting the National Park and their SEAs (Annexe 1(46)).
 - For National Park communities the processes must be clearly engaging and of obvious benefit to those involved, recognising that Park communities are often difficult to reach. They must also be careful not to duplicate other forms of community liaison. In the future, use of the web may allow more distant communities to participate in the process of preparing the Plan, with the evolving stages of the Plan appearing on a regularly updated website.
 - For National Park visitors methods of engagement may be different, again potentially involving surveys or focus groups and / or use of the web.
- 3.22 In taking forward the engagement of partners and the empowerment of local communities, there are four things that are particularly important to bear in mind:
 - The programme of engagement should be transparent and carefully planned from the outset. This programme should be closely linked to the different stages in the Plan's development and that of its SEA, with potentially different stakeholders having most to contribute at different stages. In turn, these stages should directly link to the production of different parts of the Plan so that the Plan clearly evolves out of the process of engagement.
 - Whatever methods of engagement are used it is vital that integration between different viewpoints is built into the overall process. This may not necessarily mean large

meetings but rather open debate about particular issues, and the transfer of these concerns to other groups so that a common way forward can be developed.

■ The above places heavy emphasis on good facilitation throughout the process. This facilitation needs to be impartial. There can be merit in using an independent facilitator during the Management Plan preparation. At the same time, clear summaries must be prepared as the Plan develops so that each stage of stakeholder involvement logically builds on the last.

■ As far as possible and practicable it will be sensible to combine consultation processes on the Management Plan and its SEA. Two critical stages will be: (a) consultation on the vision and emerging objectives of the Management Plan and the Management Plan SEA Scoping Report; and (b) formal consultation on the Draft Management Plan and the Environmental Report of the SEA of the Management Plan (Annexe 1 (37)).

3) Examining options for the Management Plan (Scenario development)

- 3.23 With ongoing reform of the Common Agricultural Policy, combined with the profound implications of climate change, and the changing lifestyles of rural communities, consideration should be given to the different scenarios or options for the Parks' future. The profound challenges and opportunities now facing National Parks need to be grasped from the outset.
- 3.24 Review of alternative scenarios and agreement on the preferred way(s) forward should inform the Plan's vision. Thereafter, it is likely that different options will be debated as the Plan develops around the choice of objectives, policies and actions. This is entirely appropriate and a necessary part of an inclusive process.
- 3.25 NPAs will need to lead most areas of scenario development and debate around different options, while partners will logically contribute most to the areas of closest interest to them.

4) Agreeing a vision for the National Park and management objectives

- 3.26 The vision (para 4.16) and objectives (paras 4.18 – 4.21) of the National Park Management Plan, which set out the ambitions for the National Park, should be the result of shared and transparent processes. Nevertheless, it is essential that these processes focus on raising ambitions rather than reaching compromises that reflect the lowest common denominator.

5) Agreeing the policies of the Plan

- 3.27 The policies and Action Plan of the National Park Management Plan should deliver the vision and objectives (para 4.22 - 4.25).
- 3.28 Again it is important that policies are developed in partnership as their implementation will be heavily dependent on the contribution of all stakeholders.

6) Agreeing and coordinating actions flowing from the Plan

- 3.29 In the same way, actions should be agreed together. Indeed this is critical for the delivery of the Plan, with each action clearly assigned to a lead partner.

7) Consulting on the draft Plan

- 3.30 Consultation on the draft Plan is a standard component of all statutory Plan preparation and a requirement of Strategic Environmental Assessment, involving a standard consultation period during which consultees have an opportunity to respond in writing to the draft Plan. Potentially the most important aspects of this stage are:
- keeping a complete and documented record of all comments received;
 - allowing time to ensure that consultees do not feel rushed but not so much that they lose interest;
 - indicating to consultees how their views will be incorporated in the final Plan or, if not, the rationale for this. This can be captured in a short report of consultation.
- 3.31 It is at this stage that the Steering Group for the Management Plan will have a particularly

important role to play in deciding the extent to which the Plan needs to be modified to meet issues raised through the consultation.

- 3.32 Nevertheless, if the process of Plan preparation has been inclusive, this period of formal consultation should not introduce any surprises. Indeed, it should be seen as a very positive opportunity for making the Plan even better. This has certainly been the experience of those who have adopted an inclusive approach to Plan development.

8) Coordinating and sharing monitoring of the plan

- 3.33 Completion of the Plan will be just one stage in the ongoing task of managing the Park. The emphasis must move on swiftly to the delivery of the Action Plan and monitoring the results of the Plan in partnership (Chapter 5).

9) Reviewing the Plan

- 3.34 Review of the Plan completes the cycle.

THE OVERALL APPROACH TO THE NATIONAL PARK MANAGEMENT PLAN

- 3.35 National Parks are special places. They are places where special approaches, policy and action should be promoted.
- 3.36 Circumstances may occur in National Parks which do not occur elsewhere, requiring unusual solutions. Parks are also expected to offer an environment where innovative policy, particularly with regard to sustainable development, should be spearheaded and tested. An important part of the testbed role is that successful policies and work can be passed on to the wider countryside.
- 3.37 National Park management should therefore expect to break new ground. Keynote projects have a clear role to play. Innovative research will often be needed to help build better evidence and NPAs have the opportunity to demonstrate the very best of partnership in practice.



4. COMPONENTS OF THE PLAN

- 4.1 Having looked at the process of Plan development, this Chapter sets out the main components of the Plan, providing a framework within which each National Park Management Plan can take its own form.

KEY COMPONENTS OF NATIONAL PARK MANAGEMENT PLANS

- 4.2 A National Park Management Plan should have the following key components:
- a description of the role of the National Park Management Plan and the National Park purposes and socio-economic duty that set the prime focus of the Plan (Chapter 1);
 - identification of the special qualities of the National Park;
 - description of the issues facing the National Park and associated trends as they relate to the park purposes and special qualities;
 - identification of the ambition for the National Park - vision and objectives;
 - identification of the means of delivering the ambition – policies and an Action Plan.
- 4.3 The distinction between Ambition and Delivery is an important one. In the past there has been confusion between the role of objectives and policies within Management Plans. Most recent National Park Management Plans have adopted an objective-led approach. In other words, they have set out their ambitions for the National Park (as articulated through their vision and objectives) and then set out how these objectives will be delivered through a range of policies and actions.
- 4.4 This is the approach supported in this guidance, with a very clear distinction drawn between the Ambition for the National Park (where you want to get to – the vision and the objectives) and how you propose to get there (through consistent application and implementation of policies).
- 4.5 The vision should be enduring, representing the point of arrival which should not change significantly over time, unless changes in

national policy suggest that a very different direction of travel should be instigated. The objectives (para 4.16 - 4.17), which should be measurable, represent steps towards achievement of the vision. On the other hand, the policies will (and should) be more responsive to change, needing to respond to issues as they are identified and the results of monitoring. They need to ensure that the actions taken are still on course to deliver the identified vision and objectives, potentially against a background of changing external policy.

SPECIAL QUALITIES

- 4.6 The Plan should highlight the national significance of the Park.
- 4.7 It should also describe the Park's special qualities. While the National Park will be very familiar to officers and members of the National Park Authority, it may not be familiar to all those who it is anticipated might and should read the Management Plan. For many the vision and objectives for the Park will make little sense if they are not set within some basic understanding of place.
- 4.8 An impression should be given within the Management Plan of what makes the National Park special and unique – what are its defining special qualities to which all who read the Plan can relate - and how the landscape, wildlife and cultural heritage varies across the National Park to create particular localities.
- 4.9 The Plan should describe the opportunities offered for the enjoyment and understanding of these special qualities.
- 4.10 It should also provide a basic understanding of the local economy and communities and how they interlink with the management of the National Park, reflecting the socio-economic duty.
- 4.11 Information from LANDMAP and biodiversity action plans can help in painting a picture of the National Park, as can recreation studies and tourism profiles. They can also help in defining the different geographical areas of the Park with their own sense of identity.
- 4.12 The socio-economic character of the National Park should be informed by statistics specific to the Park area. Those generated from an amalgam of the local authority areas that make up the Park

are likely to significantly misrepresent the character of the Park because of the very distinct population differences within and outside the Parks – with Park boundaries often excluding towns around their periphery.

ISSUES FACING THE NATIONAL PARK

4.13 As noted in the introduction to this guidance, the National Park Management Plan is the over-arching policy document for the National Park. The Management Plan will be supported by the Local Development Plan and it will be important to ensure that the responses to the issues exposed in the preparation of both documents are fully integrated.

4.14 The issues facing the National Park (threats and opportunities) will be critical in framing the vision and objectives for the Park in the National Park Management Plan. After all, it is these issues that should guide policy development. These issues are likely to relate to both current trends and forces for change and should be identified in relation to the National Park purposes and the well-being of Park communities. They are likely to be of six main types:

- Issues relating to climate change. It is clear that few management plans have fully engaged with the implications of climate change and its likely effects on landscape, biodiversity, and the natural resources of air, soil and water of the National Parks, or its implications for leisure patterns. Information still remains poor on predicting the full effects of climate change and how quickly it is happening but it cannot afford to be ignored as an important driver of the Management Plan.

- Issues relating to the delivery of international, national, regional and local policies within the National Park, and the potential for conflict between these policy areas if not orchestrated and filtered through the National Park Management Plan. Examination of the policy context also forms an important part of the Scoping Report for the SEA of the Management Plan (Annexe 1(15 -17)). Fundamental to these will be reform of the Common Agricultural Policy and implementation of European Directives including the Habitats Directive (Annexe 1

(16)) and Water Framework Directive. But practically every aspect of policy has the potential to affect the Parks, from future water resource proposals and policies for renewable energy at the national and regional level, to transport and economic development policies which may not necessarily take full account of the purposes for which the National Parks were designated.

- Issues raised by the review of evidence in support of the Management Plan preparation and SEA (paras 3.16 - 3.20). These issues will include both trends in issues already identified through previous Management Plans and new issues identified for the first time.

- Issues arising from the monitoring of the National Park Management Plan and key indicators set out in the State of the Park Report (para 3.19).

- Issues identified through other relevant plans and strategies, which should be highlighted by partners during the process of plan preparation. Such other plans and strategies may include Local Biodiversity Action Plans, Landscape Character Assessments and Landscape Strategies, Rights of Way Improvement Plans, Tourism Strategies, and local authority plans for affordable housing and economic development, to name but a few.

- Issues identified through participation of stakeholders and National Park communities and visitors in the preparation of the Plan. In some cases these may set the agenda for future monitoring in the *State of the Parks Report* but anecdotal information, especially that coming from local communities, may provide important context that might otherwise be missed.

AMBITION FOR THE NATIONAL PARK (VISION AND OBJECTIVES)

4.15 As already argued, National Park Management Plans should make a clear distinction between the Ambitions for the National Park (the vision

and objectives) and the means of delivering these (the policies and Action Plan).

- 4.16 The vision should provide a statement of what the National Park should be like in 20 – 30 years. It should be clear, aspirational, ambitious but realistic. It should be particular to that Park

and clearly recognisable as relating specifically to that Park. It should develop links between the National Park purposes and the socio-economic duty. In other words, the principles of sustainable development should lie at its heart.

Example vision taken from the Lake District National Park Management Plan Box 4.1

A Vision for the Lake District National Park - Lake District National Park Management Plan (Consultation Draft) 2004

We want to see a place where: Everyone living in, working in, and visiting the Lake District National Park takes pride in it. People understand the purposes of National Parks, and actively contribute towards them. The especial qualities of the Lake District National Park continue to set it apart, to ensure that it remains England's finest landscape. Those who manage it, or use its resources, consider the impact of their activities on people and places, both inside and outside the National Park. We continue to test innovative ideas and initiatives for sustainable development.

The use of traditional livestock breeds, like the Herdwick sheep, is encouraged. The water quality of our lakes and rivers continues to improve. Our fells are open and uncluttered with modern structures. We prevent and remove damaging land use changes that harm the area's special qualities. We celebrate the relationship between people and the land, supporting traditional farming systems and the management of our extensive commons. We conserve the rich legacy of the past including our stone circles, forts and other archaeological sites.

We want to see a place where: The widest range of people who seek out the special qualities of the National Park, including those often excluded for physical, social or financial reasons, have access to it. There continue to be opportunities for a wide range of outdoor sporting and recreational activities. It is possible to find peace and tranquillity, a place to unwind and relax, without traveling far or climbing high.

We want to see a place where: National Park residents enjoy a high quality of life and have good access to services and facilities which are appropriate to the area. There is a clearly defined role for towns and villages, with key settlements and service centres supported and strengthened. There are affordable homes for local people. More local materials and finishes, such as slate and lime wash are used. Local skills, including upland footpath repair and dry stone walling, are developed. More local produce, including that from Cumbrian-reared livestock, is sold and local culture and traditions widely supported, especially through the valley shows.

We want to see a place where: There is a wide variety of opportunities for employment. We recognise the importance of prosperity in farming, and a buoyant and sustainable tourism sector, and the links between them. We acknowledge that other industries also play a role in the National Park's vitality. We are not over-reliant on any one industry. Economic development is compatible with National Park purposes, and sustains and enhances the area's special qualities: in the long term, this will give it an economic advantage as a desirable place to live and work.

We want to see a place where: Carefully sited and designed development, enhancing the special qualities of the National Park, is positively promoted. The significant contribution of settlements to landscape character is acknowledged. Energy efficiency and improved environmental performance are encouraged in all development. The amount of waste produced, and the pollution of water, land and air, are minimised, including pollution by noise and light. Sustainable travel, and new means of communication that reduce the need to travel, are encouraged. We have a better, more accessible and reliable public transport network, and make greater use of lake transport.

4.17 The objectives should underpin and articulate the different aspects of the vision. They should set out clear expectations. In current National Park Management Plans these objectives are variously described as aims or objectives.

4.18 In future Management Plans it is strongly recommended that a clear distinction is drawn between:

- aims which are general statements of intent, for example, “To increase understanding of the National Park to encourage a commitment to park purposes and the conservation of the Park’s special qualities.”; and
- objectives which, wherever possible, should be SMART (Box 4.2), ensuring that they have a clear focus and are challenging but realistic, both for the National Park Authority and its partners.

The SMART Principle

Box 4.2

Objectives should be:

- ☐ **Specific** (i.e. clearly targeted and defined)
- ☐ **Measurable** (through the use of appropriate indicators)
- ☐ **Achievable**
- ☐ **Relevant** (to the National Park)
- ☐ **Time-bound** (achievable within a set timescale)

Example of SMART objectives

Box 4.3

- ☐ To ensure that all SSSIs and Wildlife Sites within the National Park are in favourable or unfavourable recovering condition by...
- ☐ To ensure that all rivers within the National Park meet x water quality objectives by...
- ☐ To ensure that 90% of common land within the National Park is under a scheme of management by...

4.19 The Plan should avoid being discredited by having too many unachievable objectives.

4.20 As noted in para 3.19, it will be very important to identify a clear set of indicators for the measurement of the objectives. However, the focus of the objectives must be on reflecting the vision rather than on the availability of datasets that allow measurement. Where data is not easily available to measure the achievement of objectives, the emphasis should be on the development of proxy indicators (para 5.6).

4.21 In existing National Park Management Plans objectives are usually grouped under specific themes that collectively make up the vision, with the policies that are delivering the objectives likewise grouped within the same themes. This is appropriate. However, in developing the objectives it will be very important to ensure that those under one theme do not conflict with those under another theme. This emphasises the need for integrated thinking as the Plan is developed - thinking through the likely implications of meeting one objective on the achievement of other objectives in the Plan. The SEA of the Management Plan will also ensure that there is no conflict between different objectives (Annexe 1(18)).

DELIVERY OF THE AMBITION (POLICIES AND ACTIONS)

4.22 The policies and Action Plan should set out HOW the vision and objectives for the National Park will be delivered. Policies should be relevant for the life of the Plan (five years) while the Action Plan may only have a life of one or two years before it requires updating, with a fuller revision at the five-year Management Plan review.

4.23 The inclusion of policies within National Park Management Plans is essential, not least because this is the specific requirement of the Environment Act 1995:

66. “...every National Park authority shall.....prepare and publish a plan.....which formulates its policy for the management of the relevant Park and for the carrying out of its functions in relation to that Park.”

4.24 Reflecting the emphasis on delivery, policies within Management Plans are likely to be of two types:

- a simple code identifying the key parameters that should guide future delivery of the objectives, such as “To prevent further damage to statutory nature conservation sites” ; and

- positive and pro-active policies indicating the means by which the objectives will be delivered “To develop management plans for key areas under recreation pressure, seeking multiple benefits for natural beauty, enjoyment, local people and the local economy”.

4.25 **Action Plan:** The Action Plan should prioritise actions with a clear timetable, milestones and agreed targets or outputs (against which the action can be measured (para 5. 4), with a lead organisation identified, through agreement, for each action.

4.26 Both the Action Plan and contents of the Management Plan (as set out in paragraphs 4.34 to 4.45) are likely to have direct links to the Local Development Plan, and these linkages should be reviewed as the plans are developed. Government is providing new guidance on planning policies that need to be covered by Local Development Plans (see Planning Policy Wales Companion Guide, WAG, June 2006).

AUDIT TRAIL

4.27 There should be a clear audit trail between the issues, objectives, and policies:

- the identified issues should be addressed through the combination of Plan objectives and policies;

- the objectives in combination should be able to make significant steps towards achieving the vision;

- the policies and supporting Action Plan should clearly be able to deliver the identified objectives.

4.28 There should also be clear links between the Action Plan and sections of the SEA dealing with the environmental baseline, objectives, targets and monitoring.

4.29 **Integration:** In the interests of sustainable development it is important that the Management Plan develops clear links between the first and second purpose and the socio-economic duty.

CHECKLIST OF TOPICS

4.30 Potential topics that may be addressed by a National Park Management Plan are:

Over-arching topics

4.31 **Sustainable development:** The principles of sustainable development clearly need to permeate all aspects of the Plan (paras. 2.3 – 2.11).

4.32 **Climate change:** This is one of the biggest issues facing the future of the National Parks. The concern for National Park Authorities is not only to keep up to date with predictions of climate change but to consider what the likely effects will be on the Park. Such changes may be many and include potential changes in semi-natural vegetation and habitats; loss and gain of individual species; changes in agricultural crops, forestry and land uses; changes in the natural water cycle; changes in soil structure and erosion; sea level rise; changes in leisure patterns and so on.

4.33 The Management Plan needs to consider how to respond to these changes, both to mitigate the effects of climate change and to achieve sustainable, efficient ways of managing resources and energy.

The First Purpose: Conserving and enhancing natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage

4.34 Topics that may be considered collectively or individually under the first purpose include:

- **Landscape character** and key characteristics informed by LANDMAP, recognising that National Parks have been designated for their Natural Beauty.

- **Wildlife / biodiversity** (habitats and species) informed by LANDMAP and national and local Biodiversity Action Plans and targets including targets for SSSIs.

- **Geodiversity** informed by records held by CCW and UKRIGS for Regionally Important Geological and Geomorphological Sites.
- **Woodlands** – commercial, amenity and semi-natural - potentially informed by the National Assembly for Wales's Strategy Woodlands for Wales.
- Management of **common land** especially in the light of anticipated forthcoming legislation aimed at securing the long term protection of all commons, overcoming unsustainable uses and providing a fairer and more effective system of registration and management of common land.
- **Remoteness and tranquillity** and the senses of peace and quiet, potentially informed by LANDMAP reflecting that tranquillity is not just a measure of noise but also of intrusive developments such as pylons, aerials, and wind generation. Linked to this, the conservation and enhancement of dark night skies.
- **Natural resources** of air, soil and water (including rivers and freshwaters) informed by the work of the Environment Agency and delivery of the Water Framework Directive, considering soil erosion; air, soil and water pollution; water resources; and coastal and riverine flooding. Also linking to waste management.
- **Coastal management** and links to Integrated Coastal Zone Management.
- **Settlement pattern and built heritage**, reflecting the structure and evolution of settlements and their setting and local vernacular styles, informed by Conservation Area Statements.
- **Archaeology and historic landscapes** more generally, as informed by the Register of Historic Landscapes, and more specifically the distribution of Scheduled Monuments and listed buildings, battlefields and historic designed landscapes.
- **Social history / customs and traditions** as expressed in past and living cultures, informed by LANDMAP.

- **Association with the arts** – the National Park in music, art and literature.

4.35 Questions that may need to be addressed in developing the Management Plan in relation to the first purpose include:

- How should the Management Plan respond to climate change (see above)?
- What special qualities, features and characteristics need to be conserved at all costs to retain the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the National Park, and which have the potential to be increased in area / number / quality, and how?
- Is change appropriate and if so in what direction?
- What is the potential for mainstreaming sustainable land management into all aspects of agricultural practices?
- What is the potential for achieving multi-benefit farming and forestry in the face of reform of the Common Agricultural Policy and national policy change? Does commercial forestry continue to have a role to play within the National Park – where and in what form?
- Should water resource management and diffuse pollution of air, water and soil become more central concerns of the Management Plan?

The Second Purpose: Promoting understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the National Parks

4.36 Topics that may be considered collectively or individually under the second purpose include:

- **Awareness raising** amongst partners and stakeholders, local communities and wider Wales, about the National Park, its special qualities, the opportunities that it offers, the threats facing it, and its fragility.
- **Interpretation and education** focusing on increasing understanding of the special qualities of the National Park.

■ **Recreation provision** and the opportunities for quiet enjoyment offered by the rights of way network and open countryside, as well as opportunities for other sports and recreational pursuits.

■ **Visitor patterns and management** including trends in visitor use and the addressing of management issues.

■ **Tourism** trends, markets, accommodation and attractions as informed by regional and more local tourism surveys and strategies, including those for the National Park, and the opportunities for promoting sustainable tourism that help underpin the first purpose.

■ **Social inclusion** and opportunities for enjoyment of the National Park by the less able and socially excluded, from both within and outside the Park, reflecting the Assembly Government's social inclusion agenda and, for example, the findings of the Mosaic project of the Council for National Parks.

■ **Accessing** the National Park and associated transport issues, especially for those who do not have access to a private car.

4.37 Questions that may need to be considered in developing the Management Plan in relation to the second purpose include:

■ How to ensure that there is a common promotion strategy for the National Park, recognising that the National Park Authority is only one of a number of organisations that will be promoting the Park to the wider world?

■ How should the National Park Authority integrate its recreation services with other providers within the National Park?

■ How can management increase recreational opportunities and enjoyment and the quality of experience within the National Park? Who should be the target audience?

■ What are the recreation activities that should be encouraged across the National Park without conflict with other activities?



■ Which recreation activities have special requirements and characteristics and have the potential to conflict with other uses within the National Park and therefore require specific management?

■ Is there a need to site some recreational activities in areas beyond the Park boundaries?

■ How can sustainable tourism be promoted as the mainstay of the tourism industry within the National Park, with an emphasis on supporting the local economy and helping underpin the special qualities of the Park?

4.38 Transport is likely to be a particular issue within the National Parks, recognising that the vast majority of visitors travel to the Parks by private car. It is equally an issue in relation to the resident population with a rapid increase in car commuting and declining public transport

services, resulting in further isolation of the socially excluded within the Parks.

4.39 These trends make the management of traffic and the promotion of public transport an important issue which impacts on local people, visitors and the overall management of the National Parks, not least in terms of meeting a sustainable development agenda and the needs of the socially excluded, both within the Parks and those seeking to access them from a distance. Traffic also has profound implications for the achievement of the first purpose, especially in relation to tranquillity.

4.40 Particular issues to consider are:

- Providing links, other than by car, from the wider hinterland into the National Park.
- Seeking to integrate different modes of transport, including cycle routes and cycle hire schemes.
- Providing public transport provision that meets the needs of both visitors and local communities.
- Consideration of traffic calming measures and the safe recreational use of minor roads.
- Building on existing transport schemes, developing new innovative approaches, and adopting already tested ones.

Economic and social well-being of local communities

4.41 Topics that may be considered collectively or individually under the Section 62(1) socio-economic duty include:

- Reform of the Common Agricultural Policy and its implication for the viability of farming and its contribution to the local economy.
- Diversification of the agricultural economy to assist in the maintenance of farm viability, considering those aspects of farm diversification that will be most appropriate in the context of the National Park purposes.
- The central role of sustainable tourism in developing the local economy in ways that support the first National Park purpose. This recognises that tourism is the most important economic driver within the National Parks.

- Reflecting on the character of the wider rural economy within the Park and its fit with the delivery of the National Park purposes and maintenance of the economic and social well-being of local communities.

- The retention of social capital – that is, the networks of mutual support and reciprocity that provide the glue that hold communities together and gives them the resilience to withstand change. This is a particularly important feature of close-knit rural communities which have retained a strong element of self-reliance.

- The provision of local services and facilities – dovetailing with the findings of the Community Strategies.

- Addressing the need for affordable housing, which is now of fundamental concern in many rural communities.

- Promoting the role of market towns within the Parks as sustainable communities with opportunities for sustainable business development that can help support the economic / social well-being of the Park, while not necessarily being obviously rural in character.

- Renewable energy and self-sufficiency with support for bottom-up approaches to meeting local energy and natural resource needs, of a scale and type appropriate to their locality. Indeed the emphasis on self-sufficient communities as part of the sustainable development agenda for National Parks should be an important goal.

- Promotion of rural skills and training that link to the delivery of the National Park purposes.

4.42 Particular issues to consider are:

- How to respond to the changing nature of rural economies and communities with only a small proportion of local communities actively engaged in traditional rural industries?
- How to support local micro-businesses that directly link to the delivery of the park purposes?

- How to keep money recycling in the local economy, especially in ways that help support the delivery of the park purposes?
- How to maintain and strengthen those networks and mutual support systems that are so essential to the vitality and survival of rural communities?
- How to raise understanding of the major economic contribution made by the National Park to the region in which it sits?

Development planning

- 4.43 Mention of planning within the Management Plan is only necessary where it concerns setting the policy context in which the Local Development Plan will operate. The Local Development Plan will be one of the mechanisms through which the objectives of the Management Plan will be delivered.

LINKING TO OTHER PLANS AND STRATEGIES

- 4.44 National Parks are a national designation, established in legislation, and defined by the National Park purposes. Section 62(2) of the Environment Act 1995 requires all relevant authorities to have regard to the National Park purposes in all their work in the Parks.
- 4.45 Taken together these two factors mean that the National Park Management Plan is of national importance. National Park Management Plan objectives and policies therefore prevail over regional and local policy as it is delivered in the National Parks. Indeed the imperatives of the National Park purposes should be reflected in these other Plans, including the Local Development Plan.

5. MONITORING AND REVIEW

REVIEW

- 5.1 Monitoring and review is an essential part of Management Planning, with each successive review of the Plan building on the results of the monitoring of the previous Plan – what has and has not been achieved – as well as reflecting changes in the Park and changes in the policy context. Successive Plans should learn from each other.
- 5.2 Monitoring is also a key component of the Strategic Environmental Assessment of the Plan (Annexe 1(40)).

ASSESSING THE SUCCESS OF THE PLAN - MONITORING

- 5.3 At a basic level a distinction needs to be drawn between:

- Monitoring, which is the process of collecting data to describe condition and, when collected over time, change.
- Indicators, which are the elements of data that are collected during a monitoring programme to focus the monitoring activity and measure change.
- Evaluation, which is the consideration and use of the collected data to assess the effectiveness of the Plan and its delivery in meeting its objectives and vision.

- 5.4 For monitoring the success of the Plan, three questions need to be answered:

- What aspects of the Plan should be monitored?
- What types of indicator should be monitored?
- How many indicators should be monitored?

- 5.5 In answer to these questions it is suggested that:

- Monitoring should focus on the delivery of the Action Plan and achievement of the Management Plan objectives and the SEA

objectives (Annexe 1 (18 – 21)). This monitoring should link to the National Park Performance Plan.

- In the case of the Action Plan the emphasis should be on the measurement of outputs or activities i.e. monitoring the extent to which the targets in the Action Plan are achieved. These are likely to be largely expressed as outputs such as data collection, the development of partnerships and the achievement of specific projects. These are best monitored as on-going assessments of activity which can be reported in annual Business Plans.

- In the case of monitoring the objectives the emphasis, wherever possible, should be on monitoring indicators of outcomes, such as the extent and condition of habitats or the number of rights of way in good condition. These are the most important indicators as they focus on whether the quality of the National Park is being maintained and improved.

- Whilst it is suggested that each objective should be capable of measurement, where there are many objectives, monitoring may need to be selective to avoid monitoring overload.

- 5.6 Indicators to measure outcomes need to be selected with care. The emphasis should be on reliable indicators of quality as well as quantity. In some cases 'proxy' indicators may need to be selected i.e. measures that do not directly measure condition but from which judgements about condition can be inferred. An example might be the number of farms entered into agri-environment schemes, as a proxy indicator of the management of semi-natural habitats.

- 5.7 Particular factors that should guide the choice of indicators are that:

- they should capture the special qualities of the National Park and clearly measure the delivery of the management objectives;
- monitoring should be kept simple and straightforward;
- use should be made of those indicators that are already being monitored as part of the

State of the Park Report or are already being collected by others as part of other monitoring programmes;

- there should be the potential to share some key indicators between Parks to allow comparisons to be made.

- 5.8 It should be remembered that indicators cannot paint a full picture. Nor can indicators anticipate the unexpected.
- 5.9 Monitoring of the Management Plan will be a shared task with, ideally, allocation of responsibility to those organisations with the greatest interest in particular sets of indicators.
- 5.10 Regular and accessible reporting on the results of monitoring – the progress of the Action Plan and the achievement of the Park objectives as reported through the State of the Park Report – is an important means of ensuring the continued engagement of stakeholders.

PLAN REVIEW

- 5.11 In Chapter 4 it has been argued that National Park Management Plans should be objective-led. These objectives set the justification for the policies and actions identified in the Management Plan. This organising structure means that the review, and the response to monitoring and any unexpected changes, can be systematic and transparent. Thus necessary change in objectives can be made and its impact then traced down through the policies and Action Plan without the need to reassess the policy set as a whole (Annexe 1(2)).

6. FORMAT

6.1 There is no set format that National Park Management Plans should follow. The format will need to reflect local circumstances. But care must be taken to ensure that the Plan:

- remains strategic;
- is a clearly defined entity;
- is suitable for a wide readership;
- is easy to understand;
- ensures integration between different topic areas to maximise the public benefits delivered and minimise potential conflicts
- allows regular updating of the Action Plan which will normally require review every one or two years.

Plan might be reviewed on different timescales, and would be particularly useful in ensuring that important information linked to the Plan could be kept up to date.

6.4 For the foreseeable future though, there will need to be a printed overview of the Plan which pulls out its key threads and makes it accessible to as wide an audience as possible (recognising the current lack of Broadband access in rural areas).

6.5 Beyond this, there is clear potential to use the Plan, through its web site, as a directory to the work of the NPA and its partners in fulfilling the National Park purposes and socio-economic duty. This has not been done yet but, given the crucial importance of effective partnership, is worth considering.

ELECTRONIC FORMATS

6.2 To date National Park Management Plans, in common with most documents of their type, have been produced in printed form and are increasingly available on the web in pdf format. There will always be a need for paper copies but electronic equivalents, for example as a web site, are increasingly important, offering:

- greater flexibility and allowing the Plan to be used in different ways;
- greater scope to increase integration between different parts of the Plan;
- greatly improved opportunities for dissemination;
- great potential for giving geographical focus through the use of GIS which will also allow users to investigate information spatially.

6.3 Web sites potentially also offer the user of the Plan more functionality, principally through the ability to set up links within the Plan itself and also to other documents, information, examples, best practice, networks and contacts and so on outside the Plan. Their inherent flexibility is also very friendly to the idea that different parts of the

ANNEXE 1: STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT (SEA) OF NATIONAL PARK MANAGEMENT PLANS

THE NEED FOR SEA

1. Article 4 of the SEA Directive (2001/42 EC) requires that a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is undertaken of all land use plans and programmes where such plans and programmes are likely to have significant environmental effects. The criteria for determining likely significant effects are set out in Annexe II(2) and include “effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, community or international protection status”. The Directive is transposed into law by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes (Wales) Regulations (2004). By their very nature, National Park Management Plans are designed to protect and enhance the environment of the National Parks and it is axiomatic that they will have significant beneficial effects.
2. It is clear therefore that all new or major revisions of National Park Management Plans produced after 2004 will require an SEA. In the future, a decision on whether minor revisions of Plans that have already had the benefit of an SEA, require a further SEA, will rest with the National Park Authority. Nevertheless, if the advice in this guidance is followed, National Park Management Plans will, in future, be closely linked to the preparation of State of the Park Reports and monitoring of environmental condition. The SEA should therefore become an integral part of the management planning process.

THE NEED FOR GUIDANCE ON SEA OF NATIONAL PARK MANAGEMENT PLANS

3. National Park Management Plans are prepared in accordance with the Environment Act 1995 rather than the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act, 2004 (which introduced the new

spatial planning system). Management Plans are therefore distinct from Local Development Plans and require a different approach to SEA reflecting the purposes of the National Park Management Plan. However, wherever possible, an integrated approach should be adopted towards the preparation of the National Park Management Plan and the Local Development Plan.

4. Specifically, the Management Plan, and therefore its SEA, has a primary focus on delivering the National Park purposes. Thus the section 62(1) duty concerned with sustaining the social and economic well-being of communities within National Parks will be within this context (para 2.2 above).

THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF SEA OF NATIONAL PARK MANAGEMENT PLANS

5. In the case of National Park Management Plans, which have a clear focus on the environment and the delivery of the park purposes, appraisals should clearly focus on environmental effects. Thus the emphasis must be on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). Nevertheless, the SEA will need to reflect the section 62(1) duty and the wider emphasis on sustainable development.
6. As a consequence, the SEA of National Park Management Plans should be undertaken within the framework of a primary list of environmental objectives and indicators and a secondary list of wider sustainability objectives and indicators. This approach will ensure that the assessment of the National Park Management Plan meets the full requirements of the SEA Directive AND sustainable development principles. This is consistent with the view of the Welsh Assembly Government that it is possible to satisfy the requirements of both Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and SEA through a single appraisal (Local Development Plan Manual, 2006).

PROCESS OF PREPARING SEAs OF NATIONAL PARK MANAGEMENT PLANS

7. In the interests of consistency, this advice follows the basic steps for preparing an SEA that are set out in the ODPM Guidance⁶, with five basic stages. More detailed technical description of the stages is set out in other guidance:

Stage A Scoping (Key Issues, Environmental Baseline, Predicting Trends, Relevant Plans and Policies, Objectives, Consideration of Options, Scoping Report, Consultation)

Stage B Assessment (Developing and refining options and assessing effects)

Stage C Preparation of Environmental Report

Stage D Consultation and Review

Stage E Monitoring

Stage A Scoping

8. SEA is essentially an iterative process and some inputs may need to be revisited as more information and new issues are identified through the assessment. Below a range of activities are grouped together under the heading of Scoping to distinguish them from the actual task of assessment.

Confirming details of SEA methodology

9. As an SEA proceeds it may be appropriate to revise the order of individual steps or to include additional activities to meet local circumstances. This should be done in consultation with other interest groups and stakeholders.

Identifying key issues

10. Members and staff of the National Park Authorities are already well aware of the pressures affecting the environment of each Park and the opportunities for improving existing

conditions. These topics need to be captured as part of the management planning process, but there is also the need for those undertaking the SEA to carry out an independent review of key issues. This process involves considering cause and effect and is closely bound up with reviewing baseline environmental information (below).

Gathering baseline information

11. Gathering baseline information forms an essential part of the management planning process and is therefore a shared task that will assist the Management Plan, the SEA of the Management Plan and the preparation of the Local Development Plan and its SA. For both the Management Plan and the SEA of the Management Plan it will be important to select data that is relevant to the key issues, and that can be used effectively in future monitoring. The selection of data should in turn both inform and be informed by the choice of appropriate SEA objectives and indicators.
12. The collation of baseline information will be greatly assisted by State of the Park Reports.

Predicting environmental trends

13. An important step in assessing the significant effects of National Park Management Plans on the environment is to understand what is likely to happen to environmental conditions in the absence of any planned intervention. Invariably this will be a case of projecting past trends into the future; such as estimating the increase in tourist numbers and anticipating recreation impacts on key habitats. Commentary on the likely changes in environmental conditions should cover the full Management Plan period although, given a time horizon of 20-25 years, comments will be subjective and based on judgement rather than detailed modelling.

Considering relevant plans and policies

14. This review should indicate what the Management Plan is there to do – i.e. deliver the National Park purposes and section 61(1) duty – and how the Management Plan relates to other relevant plans, policies and programmes. This review should indicate the hierarchy of relevant plans and programmes that are referred to and include reference, as appropriate, to other EU

⁶ ODPM/SE/WAG/DOE (2005) *Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive*
ODPM (September 2005) *Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive*
CCW et al (May 2004) *Strategic Environmental Assessment and Climate Change: Guidance for practitioners*

Directives, national plans and programmes and local documents. Where higher level plans or programmes have already been subject to SEA this information may be drawn on to help prepare the Environmental Report (Article 4 (3) and Article 5 (2) and (3)) for the SEA of the Management Plan.

15. The SEA Directive also identifies the need to assess whether or not the outcome of the Plan is likely to affect environmental objectives set by other EU Directives, including the EIA and Habitats Directives (92/43/EEC). The latter is a particularly important consideration where the Management Plan is likely to have significant effects on protected habitats and species which it covers. In these circumstances the SEA needs to incorporate, or include reference to, an appropriate assessment.
16. As part of the Scoping exercise for the SEA of the National Park Management Plan, therefore, it is important that all SACs and SPAs are identified and any issues relating to their current and projected environmental condition and the threats to them are clearly noted. The effect of the plan proposals or policies on these protected habitats or other sensitive areas can then be evaluated in Stage B: Assessment of the SEA.

Setting environmental objectives

17. Preparation of the National Park Management Plan requires the development of a vision for the future of each National Park, arrived at through scenario building and consultation on options (para 3.23 - 3.25). The vision and related plan objectives determine the detailed plan content in terms of policies and actions. This process should result in plan objectives that are fully harmonised with environmental objectives, but there may be occasions when plan objectives are in conflict with each other. It is part of the role of SEA to minimise conflict and improve synergies between different elements of the Management Plan. The SEA therefore provides a useful cross-check.
18. In order to assess and monitor the likely effectiveness of the National Park Management Plan in dealing with particular environmental problems and opportunities, a set of environmental objectives should be determined

independently, linked to baseline information (i.e. without reference to the plan objectives).

Box 1 provides an indicative list based on the environmental criteria cited in the SEA Directive. This list is provided as a starting point and should be modified or extended as appropriate.

Box 1: Indicative list of environmental objectives

1. To protect and enhance landscape
2. To protect and where practical enhance biodiversity (habitats)
3. To protect and enhance fauna and flora (individual species)
4. To protect and enhance soil quality
5. To protect water
6. To protect air and climate
7. To maintain cultural heritage (including architectural and archaeological heritage)
8. To protect material assets including natural resources
9. To ensure no adverse effect arises on population (i.e. demographic balance)
10. To safeguard human health
11. To avoid any significant adverse effects prompted by interrelationships between the above.

19. The purpose behind identifying environmental objectives is to ensure that the policies and actions proposed in the National Park Management Plan can be systematically reviewed against possible significant environmental effects arising from the Plan.
20. To aid subsequent monitoring of environmental effects, it is vital that these objectives are supported by a set of measurable indicators. These indicators can then be shared with those used to measure the achievement of the Management Plan objectives (para 3.19). It is the monitoring of these indicators over time that will be reported through the State of the Park Report.

Setting other sustainability objectives

21. The SEA Directive stresses the need to integrate environmental protection measures with other community policies and activities, in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development.
22. It is therefore appropriate to consider a wider set of sustainability objectives which covers the full spectrum of the UK sustainable development strategy. Box 2 provides an illustration of the categories and types of objective that can be considered. Preparation of the list of such objectives is usually a product of analysis of other related SA/SEAs, internal officer review, and discussion with stakeholders. However, these objectives also need to be tested for compatibility against the environmental objectives. For example, the concept of increasing the contribution of renewable energy is highly desirable within National Parks, providing this can be done in ways that are not incompatible with park purposes. This may well restrict choices of renewable energy generation in the interests of protecting landscapes, biodiversity and cultural heritage.
23. In considering the role of other sustainability objectives, the first step must be to ensure that the Management Plan policies and actions are fully in accord with the SEA environmental objectives. Once this has been ascertained the secondary set of wider sustainability objectives can be employed.

Consideration of Alternatives (Options)

24. The SEA Directive requires that 'alternatives' to the chosen course of action are considered where there are realistic choices. It is much easier to consider alternatives in the formative stage of the Management Plan and in the scoping phase of the SEA, rather than to introduce them once the vision and objectives have been determined. Such alternatives should be referred to in the Scoping Report. Opportunities to explore fundamentally different scenarios will be confined to the early stages of management planning, but different ways of delivering the agreed vision and objectives are still likely to arise in later stages and these should be reported in the full environmental report.

Box 2: Examples of other sustainability objectives

- S1. To create more vibrant, cohesive, safe and mixed communities [by providing everyone with a decent home; by supporting the development of community services; by building safety into design; by providing a variety of housing to cater for local need; by redressing demographic and socio-economic imbalances] .
Note: 'vibrant', 'cohesive', 'safe' and 'mixed' communities may not be mutually supportive and it will be important to identify priorities for Park communities within a local context.
- S2. To protect the quality and character of individual settlements and communities [by promoting high standards of building design that is in-keeping with the character of surrounding developments; by using local materials; by promoting local design guidance (especially where traditional local building materials are no longer available); and by supporting local services].
- S4. To protect the environment, people and properties from flood risk.
- S5. To reduce the need and desire to travel by car [by improving telecommunications; by concentrating new development within or adjacent to existing settlements where (a) there is a high self-containment for work and services or (b) public transport is provided and well-used to access employment and service centres].
- S6. To promote healthy lifestyles [by providing adequate open space, sports and recreational facilities to meet local needs; by increasing access to and public enjoyment of the countryside].
- S7. To raise standards of education and training and promote employment skills.
- S8. To promote the development of an economy that supports social and environmental objectives [by supporting businesses that contribute to or have low impact on the environment; by supporting businesses that reduce socio-economic inequalities].
- S9. To promote good governance.

Box 2: Examples of other sustainability objectives (cont)

S10. To minimise the consumption of natural resources including fossil fuels, minerals, land-take and water [in transport – by reducing the need to travel; promoting walking and cycling; promoting the use of public transport
in waste management – by reducing industrial, commercial and domestic waste production; increasing reuse and recycling; recovering energy from waste
in electricity and gas consumption – by reducing consumption; improving energy efficiency; increasing the contribution of renewable energy
of minerals - by reducing the demand for primary minerals; by increasing the use of secondary minerals
of water consumption - for agricultural, industrial and domestic purposes
of land take – by increasing the density of development; by developing on brownfield land]

Preparing a scoping report

25. The SEA Directive requires that the content of the Environmental Report is discussed and agreed with the statutory environmental bodies. It is therefore good practice to prepare a Scoping Report that sets out all of the relevant information gathered during Stage A of the SEA and explaining how this will be used to shape the Environmental Report. In accordance with the Regulations⁷, the Environmental Consultees have five weeks to comment on the Scoping Report. Following receipt of comments from the Environmental Consultees, the National Park Authority must show clearly, in the Environmental Report, how these views have been taken into account. Box 3 contains a suggested contents list for the Scoping Report.

Box 3: Suggested contents of the scoping report

1. Summary of Management Plan objectives and timetable
2. Description of the SEA methodology and timetable
3. Statement of Key Issues
4. Summary of environmental baseline
5. Predicted environmental trends in the absence of Management Plan interventions
6. Review of relevant Plans and Policies
7. Identification of SEA environmental objectives
8. Identification of other sustainability objectives
9. Preliminary review of options

Consultation

26. Completion of the SEA Scoping Report represents an appropriate point in the process to organise a preliminary consultation with local communities and other Stakeholders in addition to the statutory consultation with Environmental consultees. This exercise should be combined, where practical, with the parallel process of preparing the Management Plan and work on the Local Development Plan as noted below.

Stage B: Assessment

27. This part of the SEA involves the systematic analysis of the potential effects of each Management Plan objective, policy, proposal or action in relation to the environmental (Box 1) and other sustainability objectives (Box 2).

Environmental assessment

28. The approach to environmental assessment needs to reflect the specific requirements of the SEA Directive in terms of measuring significance. A simple table or matrix can be used to record potential environmental effects in terms of:

- Beneficial or adverse,
- Magnitude, and extent,
- Duration (short term, medium term or long term),

⁷ Wales Statutory Instrument 2004/1656 'The environmental assessment of certain plans and programmes on the environment' (2001/42/EC)

■ Reversible or irreversible (scope for mitigation)

■ Likely synergistic and cumulative effects.

This summary presentation should be supported by more detailed comment explaining the grounds on which the assessment has been made.

29. The assessment should cover the whole area of the National Park and include consideration of the wider setting where issues like transport, housing, and water supply cross the park boundary. It is also important to consider adjacent areas that may be affected by the Management Plan policies (for example land used for over-wintering livestock). Finally the assessment should pay special attention to any areas covered by the Habitats Directive. This analysis will provide the basic information from which to prepare an appropriate assessment.

Sustainability appraisal

30. The SEA Directive cites Article 6 of the European Community Treaty, which provides that environmental protection measures are to be integrated into the definition of Community policies and activities, in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development. It is appropriate, therefore, to consider the wider sustainability issues raised by the content of the Management Plan.
31. Sustainability appraisal techniques are similar to those employed in environmental assessment and involve the use of matrices to record levels of sustainability.
32. In considering both the environmental and sustainability objectives it is important to note the statutory obligations on all public bodies to have regard to National Park purposes, as set out in Section 62(2) of the Environment Act, 1995. Section 62(2) also states that if it appears that there is a conflict between the purposes, any relevant authority shall attach greater weight to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the National Park.
33. This legislative framework gives clear guidance in terms of the importance that needs to be attached to environmental objectives, and reinforces the requirements of the SEA Directive. It is, therefore, important that the first sieve of

Management Plan policies should determine whether or not they are likely to have significant effects on the environmental assets of the National Park. In practice, most if not all Management Plan policies should have a significant beneficial effect and where this is the case it should be clearly reported. Any adverse consequences must also be described and, as far as possible, overcome or minimised through development of alternative courses of action or the introduction of mitigation measures.

34. Having developed or refined the Management Plan to ensure that all of the policies and activities support the (SEA) environmental objectives, it is then appropriate to apply the second tier sustainability objectives. This will indicate the level of sustainability being achieved and will provide further opportunity for enhancement or mitigation. However, where policies are refined to improve their performance against sustainability objectives a check must be made to ensure that the environment is not adversely affected.

Stage C: Preparation of the Environmental Report

35. Box 4 sets out the requirements of the SEA Directive in terms of the subject matter to be contained in the Environmental Report. In order to incorporate the findings of sustainability appraisal it is recommended that this is included in a separate chapter. A suggested structure for the Environmental Report is shown in Box 5.

Box 4: Subject matter of the Environmental Report

Summary of Management Plan objectives and timetable

- a) An outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan or programme and the relationship with other relevant plans or programmes;
- b) the relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan or programme;
- c) the environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected;
- d) any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan or programme including, in particular, those relating to any area of particular environmental importance such as areas designated pursuant to Directives 79/409/EEC and 92/43/EEC. Where the Management Plan or other plans and programmes could have significant effects on such areas, or on protected species, the results of an appropriate assessment should be reported together with assessment of any alternative plans/ policies designed to avoid such effects;
- e) the environmental protection objectives, established at international, Community or Member State level, which are relevant to the plan or programme and the way those objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account during its preparation;

a description of the measures envisaged concerning monitoring in accordance with Article 10; a non-technical summary of the information provided under the above headings.

- f) the likely significant effects on the environment, including on issues such as biodiversity, population, human health, flora, fauna, soil, water, air climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between such factors;
- g) the measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and, as fully as possible, offset any significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the plan or programme;
- h) an outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with, and a description of how the assessment was undertaken including any difficulties (such as technical deficiencies or lack of know-how) encountered in compiling the required information;
- i) a description of the measures envisaged concerning monitoring in accordance with Article 10;
- j) a non-technical summary of the information provided under the above headings.



Box 5: Suggested Contents of the Environmental Report	
Chapter	Topic
1	CONTEXT Introduction (contents, description of the assessment process, main objectives of the plan, relationship to other plans and strategies), including international protection objectives
2	BASELINE Description of the state of environment and current trends, character of the National Park and relevant environmental problems
3	ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT Assessment techniques, compatibility of plan objectives and environmental objectives, assessment of individual policies and proposed actions, scope for mitigation, review of alternative policies / actions
4	SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL Review of policies and proposed actions against other sustainability objectives
5	MONITORING Use of indicators and targets, relationship to state of the environment report.
6	TECHNICAL REVIEW Gaps in information, technical deficiencies, scope for new research
7	APPENDICES Tables and Matrices

Stage D: Consultation

36. It is a formal requirement under the SEA Directive that the draft Environmental Report is made available to the Statutory Environmental Bodies and to the Public. The most appropriate time for this to occur will be in parallel with equivalent consultations on the Draft National Park Management Plan. A period of four weeks must be allowed for consultation bodies to consider the Environmental Report and forward their conclusions.
37. Comments submitted during the consultation period must be carefully considered and taken into account in amending both the draft National Park Management Plan and the accompanying Environmental Report.
38. Once the Management Plan is adopted, the National Park Authority should publicise its decision and issue a statement confirming how the environmental considerations arising from

the SEA, the Environmental Report and consultation responses have been taken into account.

Stage E: Monitoring

39. The National Park Authority and partners will need to monitor the effectiveness of the Management Plan to demonstrate that the Plan objectives are being achieved. But the NPA and partners are also required to monitor whether the Management Plan is having a direct effect on the environment as predicted in the SEA. This will require the establishment of a monitoring programme that monitors the indicators identified for the individual objectives. The results of this monitoring will be reported through the State of the Park Report which will need to be regularly updated for this purpose (para. 20).

INTEGRATING SEA OF NATIONAL PARK MANAGEMENT PLANS WITH THE APPRAISAL OF OTHER PLANS AND PROGRAMMES

40. Each National Park Authority has its own timetable for preparing the National Park Management Plan and delivering its Local Development Plan. They also have different numbers of local authorities and other stakeholder interests to liaise with. This means that each Park will need to consider how best to manage programming and consultation on its Management Plan and accompanying SEA, in ways which avoid duplication and help the public to understand the relationships between these documents, the community strategy, its

own and other Local Development Plans (LDPs) and Sustainability Appraisals. Figure 1 shows a suggested programme for integrating the Management Plan and LDP processes.

Links between National Park Management Plans and Community Strategies

41. Community strategies produced by other authorities already exist within parts of each National Park, although some are being updated and expanded. These documents provide helpful background information, particularly regarding social and economic aspects as part of the SEA scoping study. However, as stated in the Local Development Plan Manual, National Park



Management Plans provide the overarching strategy and coordinate and integrate all other plans, strategies and actions where these affect the Park purposes. The Assembly is publishing guidance on which WAG planning policies need to be included within LDPs which will help clarify the relationship between these plans. (Planning Policy Wales Companion Guide, June 2006).

42. Where Community Strategies are produced within parts of the National Parks by other authorities during or after the preparation of the Management Plan and its accompanying SEA, the option of applying the SEA assessment objectives to the respective Community Strategies should be considered.

Links between National Park Management Plans and Local Development Plans

43. The SEA/SA of the National Park LDP will begin by considering the same environmental objectives used in the SEA of the Management Plan, and their relationship to the primary purposes of the National Park. It should also adopt the same 'headline' sustainability objectives used in the Management Plan SEA. However, in order to deliver the wider remit of sustainability appraisal it will be appropriate to add more detailed sustainability 'sub-objectives' to the SEA/SA of the Local Development Plan.
44. Guidance on the appraisal of Local Development Plans is set out in the Local Development Plan Manual (2006) prepared by Arup on behalf of the Welsh Assembly Government. It outlines how to implement a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) in the appraisal of Local Development Plans as required by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, with SEA as an integral part of the process. In other words, it sees environmental considerations relevant to the SEA being considered within the context of a wider Sustainability Appraisal that includes economic and social considerations. It refers to the detailed ODPM guidance set out in the Sustainability Appraisal of Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Frameworks (October 2005).
45. Much of the information required for the National Park Management Plan and LDP will be

common to both processes and it may be advantageous to link the scoping stage of the SEA for the Management Plan and the Sustainability Appraisal of the LDP. This has the advantage of allowing a parallel consultation process.

However, should this be impractical due to different timetables it may still be possible to draw on the same body of information for separate scoping reports. Although the scoping stage of the SEA of the National Park Management Plan can precede the Sustainability Appraisal of the LDP, it is not desirable for the reverse situation to apply.

46. Both the SEA of the National Park Management Plan and the Sustainability Appraisal of the LDP involve the same basic stages which, in theory, allows for parallel consultation programmes. However, the formal steps for consultation on the LDP, including the need to consult on options and the deposit draft - coupled with the need for independent examination – means that the LDP and accompanying Sustainability Appraisal will take longer to reach its ultimate conclusion.

