CYNGOR CEFN GWLAD CYMRU
COUNTRYSIDE COUNCIL FOR WALES

CORE MANAGEMENT PLAN

(INCLUDING CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES)

for

BRECON BEACONS SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST (SSSI) INCORPORATING BRECON BEACONS / BANNAU BRYCHEINIOG SPECIAL AREA OF CONSERVATION (SAC)

Date: 17 March 2008

Approved by: **David Mitchell**

More detailed maps of management units can be provided on request.
A Welsh version of all or part of this document can be made available on request.

Cyngor Cefn Gwlad Cymru
Countryside Council for Wales

NATURA 2000

Ramsar

Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government
CORFF NODDEDIG | SPONSORED BODY

CONTENTS

PREFACE

This document provides the main elements of CCW's management plan for the sites named. It sets out what needs to be achieved on the sites, the results of monitoring and advice on the action required. This document is made available through CCW's web site and may be revised in response to changing circumstances or new information. This is a technical document that supplements summary information on the web site.

One of the key functions of this document is to provide CCW's statement of the Conservation Objectives for the relevant Natura 2000 sites. This is required to implement the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994, as amended (Section 4). As a matter of Welsh Assembly Government Policy, the provisions of those regulations are also to be applied to Ramsar sites in Wales.

1. VISION FOR THE SITE

This is a descriptive overview of what needs to be achieved for conservation on the site. It brings together and summarises the Conservation Objectives (part 4) into a single, integrated statement about the site.

The Old Red Sandstone cliffs and screes are composed of acidic and more base-rich sandstone. These rocks provide ideal habitat for a wide range of plants, including lichens, mosses, liverworts and flowering plants. The cliffs, ledges and rocky slopes also provide a grazing free refuge that allows plants like serrated wintergreen, purple saxifrage and endemic hawkweeds to thrive. On ledges evidence of tall, un-grazed vegetation with species like great wood-rush and lady's-mantle is easily visible and flowering during the summer months.

Craig Cerrig-gleisiad and Fan Frynach and Y Gyrn support the main areas of dry heath. Mixtures of heather and bilberry are dominant here, along with crowberry, cowberry, mosses and lichens. The heathland has a varied age structure created by grazing, such that there is a mosaic young, mature and degenerate heath. Dense patches of bracken are generally absent from these areas and the dominance of purple moor-grass is under control.

The area of other habitats of particular interest, such as blanket bog and flushes are stable in the long term, their quality and range of typical species are maintained and the factors that may affect them are under control.

For each species of particular interest, the population is stable or increasing and is sustainable in the long term and the factors that affect the species or its habitat are under control.

The special geological features and landforms are available for continuing study.

2. SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Area and Designations Covered by this Plan

Grid reference(s): SO010200

Unitary authority(ies): Powys;
Brecon Beacons National Park Authority

Area (hectares): The SSSI extends to 4584 ha, of which 269.67 ha is SAC.

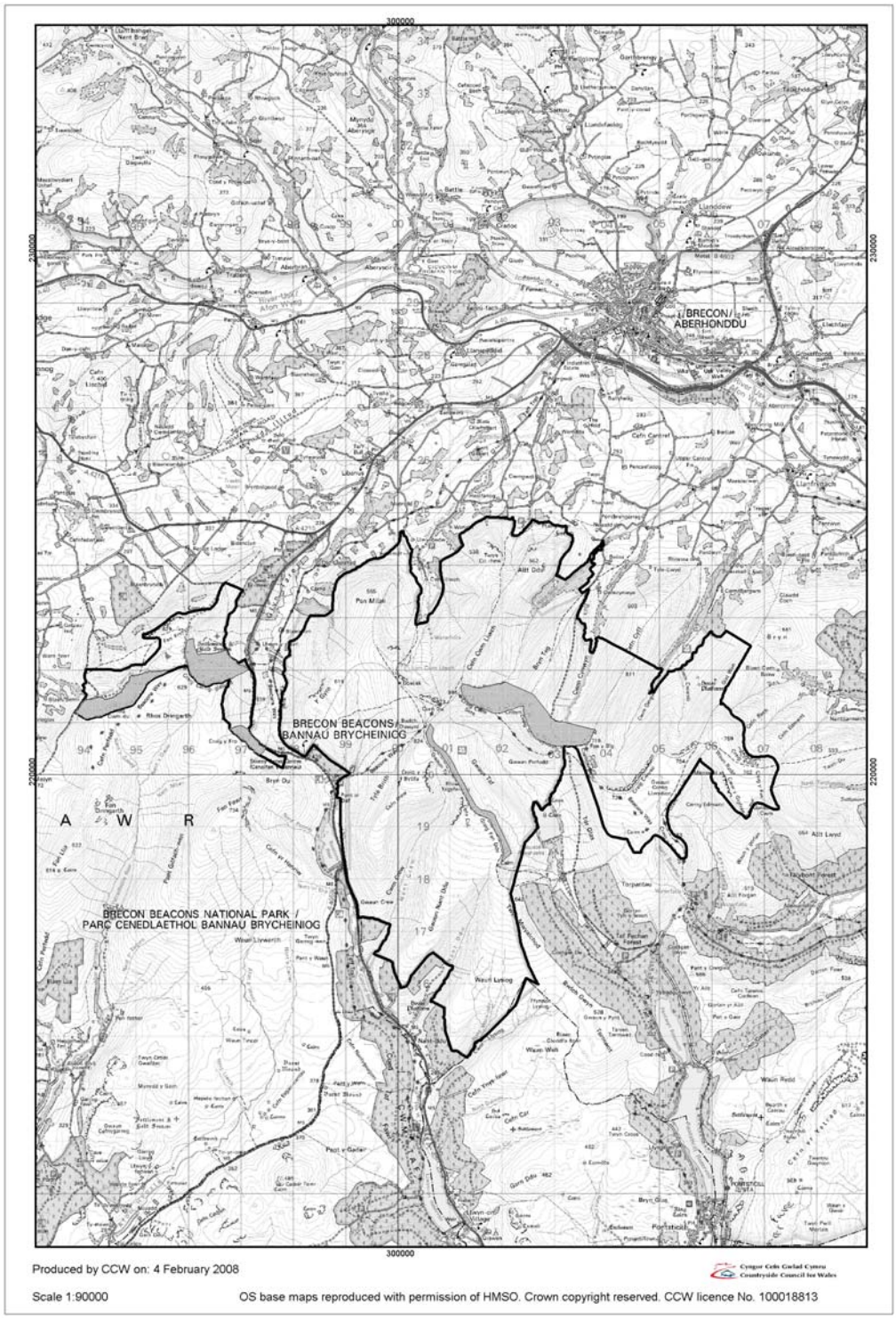
Designations covered: This plan covers the Brecon Beacons SSSI, within which smaller areas are designated as Brecon Beacons SAC. The separate block of land defined to the west of the A470 includes Craig Cerrig Gleisiad a Fan Frynach National Nature Reserve (NNR).

The area covered by the SSSI is much larger than that of the SAC and it is notified for a wide range of biological and geological features. The SAC interests comprise the chasmophytic and ledge vegetation on the most extensive areas of cliff and associated heathland. In terms of the SAC habitats, it should be noted that these also occur elsewhere in the SSSI but outside the SAC boundary.

Detailed maps of the designated sites are available through CCW's web site: **http://www.ccw.gov.uk/interactive-maps/protected-areas-map.aspx**

A summary map showing the coverage of this document is shown below:

Brecon Beacons SSSI bounded by thick line, and grey shading shows SAC boundary



2.2 Outline Description

The Brecon Beacons SAC/SSSI is located to the south of the town of Brecon and the Old Red Sandstone cliffs and escarpment is typical of the upland scenery within the National Park. Pen y Fan is the highest peak in south Wales. The site is of particular interest for the arctic-alpine plants and plant communities growing on the sandstone rocks and ledges on its precipitous mostly north and east facing cliffs. The escarpments also support stands of dry heath vegetation.

The Old Red Sandstone cliffs of the Brecon Beacons support the most southerly representation of calcareous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation in the UK. The relatively high base status of the actively eroding rocks has resulted in a rich chasmophytic flora. Plants include purple saxifrage *Saxifraga oppositifolia* at its most southerly British location, green spleenwort *Asplenium viride*, brittle bladder-fern *Cystopteris fragilis* and several rare hawkweeds *Hieracium* spp. Nationally scarce moss and liverworts found here include *Plagiopus oederianus* and *Scapania aequiloba*.

These same cliffs and steeper rock outcrops also support siliceous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation where there is a lower base status. The more siliceous sites are often towards the top of the cliffs, where the calcareous cements have been leached out or where harder rocks are present, with a transition to more calcareous chasmophytic vegetation lower down the face. Species found in this habitat include fir clubmoss *Huperzia selago*, serrated wintergreen *Orthilia secunda* and bryophytes such as *Douinia ovata, Brachydontium trichodes* and *Rhabdoweisia crenulata.*

Hydrophilous tall herb communities occur on some of the ledges. This vegetation is scattered across the entire site where conditions are suitable, but is most visible on the higher cliffs of the main north and east facing slopes of Craig Cerrig Gleisiad and Craig Cwm-du, which form part of the Craig Cerrig Gleisiad a Fan Frynach National Nature Reserve (NNR) and Craig Cwm Sere.

Within the SAC boundary the only significant areas of dry heath are found on the steep slopes of the NNR. The heath is largely dominated by single species stands of heather *Calluna vulgaris* and bilberry *Vaccinium myrtillus*, although some stands have crowberry *Empetrum nigrum.* Heather and biberry also grow on the cliff ledges and are sometimes joined by cowberry (*Vaccinium vitis-idaea*). Here, there is some gradation into the other Annex I habitat types for which this SAC is designated. On the lower slopes, where grazing levels are higher, heath species become less dominant and are replaced by acid grassland. Bracken is locally abundant both on the steeper slopes, where it grows where the soil is slightly deeper, and on the lower slopes where it is sometimes mixed with scrub. Trees, including endemic whitebeams (*Sorbus*), and shrubs are an important element of the crag vegetation.

2.3 Outline of Past and Current Management

The majority of the site is upland commonland and is grazed mainly by sheep. The exceptions to this are enclosed land within management units 1, 2, 5 and 6 (see map below). All areas, with the exception of unit 6, are managed by livestock grazing. Units 1 and 2 are owned by CCW and managed as a National Nature Reserve (NNR). Sheep have historically grazed the NNR, but CCW has reduced sheep grazing and reintroduced cattle grazing, which allows better control of ranker grassland whilst allowing the heathland and cliff ledge communities to recover and develop. The extent of the heath seems to have increase already as a result of the changes in grazing management. Within the bowl at Craig Cerrig-gleisiad intensive cutting of large areas of bracken has been undertaken, which ultimately should increase the amount of heathland. Unit 5 is a large enclosed area of upland vegetation, where sheep numbers have

been reduced and pony numbers increased. Some shepherding occurs, which helps even out grazing and some of the tussocky, species-poor purple moor-grass is cut to increase the species-richness.

2.4 Management Units

The plan area has been divided into management units to enable practical communication about features, objectives, and management. This will also allow us to differentiate between the different designations where necessary. In this plan the management units have been based on the different designation and any common /private land boundaries.

See separate maps (1-3 and summary) showing the management units referred to in this plan.

The following table confirms the relationships between the management units and the designations covered:

Unit number	**SAC**	**SSSI**	**NNR CCW owned**
Brecon Beacons SSSI			
1	✔	✔	✔
2		✔	✔
3		✔	
4	✔	✔	
5		✔	
6		✔	
7		✔	
8	✔	✔	
9	✔	✔	
10		✔	

3. THE SPECIAL FEATURES

3.1 Confirmation of Special Features

Designated feature	***Relationships, nomenclature etc***	***Conservation Objective in part 4***
SAC features		
Annex I habitat that is a primary reason for selection of this site: **1. Calcareous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation**	**EU Habitat Code: 8210** Generally referred to as 'calcareous chasmophytic vegetation' throughout this document. This feature is part of a combined SSSI feature (combined with siliceous rocky slopes and tall herb vegetation) that supports assemblages of rare plants, bryophytes and lichens.	1

Annex I habitat that is a primary reason for selection of this site: **2. Siliceous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation**	**EU Habitat Code: 8220** Generally referred to as 'siliceous chasmophytic vegetation' throughout this document. This feature is part of a combined SSSI feature (combined with calcareous rocky slopes and tall herb vegetation) that supports assemblages of rare plants, bryophytes and lichens.	2
Annex I habitat present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for site selection: **3. European dry heaths**	**EU Habitat Code: 4030** Generally referred to as 'dry heath' throughout this document, and is also an SSSI feature, which extends beyond the SAC boundary. Definition of European dry heath in this site is: It includes the NVC communities H12, H18 and H8.	3
Annex I habitat present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for site selection: **4. Hydrophilous tall herb fringe communities of plains and of the montane to alpine levels**	**EU Habitat Code: 6430** Generally referred to as 'tall herb vegetation' throughout this document. This feature is part of a combined SSSI feature (combined with calcareous and siliceous rocky slopes) that supports assemblages of rare plants, bryophytes and lichens	4
SPA features		
Not applicable		
Ramsar features		
Not applicable		
SSSI features		
Not yet confirmed.		

3.2 Special Features and Management Units

This section sets out the relationship between the special features and each management unit. This is intended to provide a clear statement about what each unit should be managed for, taking into account the varied needs of the different special features. All special features are allocated to one of seven classes in each management unit. These classes are:

Key Features

KH - a 'Key Habitat' in the management unit, i.e. the habitat that is the main driver of management and focus of monitoring effort, perhaps because of the dependence of a key species (see KS below). There will usually only be one Key Habitat in a unit but there can be more, especially with large units.

KS – a 'Key Species' in the management unit, often driving both the selection and management of a Key Habitat.

Geo – an earth science feature that is the main driver of management and focus of monitoring effort in a unit.

Other Features

Sym - habitats, species and earth science features that are of importance in a unit but are not the main drivers of management or focus of monitoring. These features will benefit from management for the key feature(s) identified in the unit. These may be classed as 'Sym' features because:

a) they are present in the unit but may be of less conservation importance than the key feature; and/or
b) they are present in the unit but in small areas/numbers, with the bulk of the feature in other units of the site; and/or
c) their requirements are broader than and compatible with the management needs of the key feature(s), e.g. a mobile species that uses large parts of the site and surrounding areas.

Nm - an infrequently used category where features are at risk of decline within a unit as a result of meeting the management needs of the key feature(s), i.e. under Negative Management. These cases will usually be compensated for by management elsewhere in the plan, and can be used where minor occurrences of a feature would otherwise lead to apparent conflict with another key feature in a unit.

Mn - Management units that are essential for the management of features elsewhere on a site e.g. livestock over-wintering area included within designation boundaries, buffer zones around water bodies, etc.

x – Features not known to be present in the management unit.

The table below sets out the relationship between the special features and management units identified in this plan:

Brecon Beacons	**Management unit**									
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**
SAC	✔			✔				✔	✔	
SSSI	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
NNR/CCW owned	✔	✔								
SAC features										
1. Calcareous chasmophytic vegetation	**KH**	Sym	?	**KH**	x	x	Sym	**KH**	**KH**	Sym
2. Siliceous chasmophytic vegetation	**KH**	Sym	Sym	**KH**	?	x	Sym	**KH**	**KH**	Sym
3. Dry Heath	**KH**	KH	KH?	**KH**	KH	x	KH	Sym	Sym	KH
4. Tall Herb Ledge Vegetation	**KH**	x	x	**KH**	x	x	?	**KH**	**KH**	Sym
Additional SSSI Features										
Not yet confirmed.										

Unit 1 - SAC area within the CCW-owned land

Unit 2 - non-SAC land owned by CCW

Unit 3 - SSSI land (non-SAC) within Great Forest common land (CL50 Brecknock)

Unit 4 - SAC area within Great Forest common land (CL50 Brecknock)

Unit 5 - Enclosed area of National Trust land (Y Gyrn)

Unit 6 - Area of enclosed land, mainly woodland habitat

Unit 7 - Area of non-SAC National Trust common land (Brecon Beacons CL56 Brecknock)

Unit 8 - SAC area within National Trust common land (Brecon Beacons CL56 Brecknock)

Unit 9 - SAC area within Buckland Manor common (CL62 Brecknock)

Unit 10 - non-SAC land within Buckland Manor common (CL62 Brecknock)

4. CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES

Background to Conservation Objectives:

a. Outline of the legal context and purpose of conservation objectives.

Conservation objectives are required by the 1992 'Habitats' Directive (92/43/EEC). The aim of the Habitats Directives is the maintenance, or where appropriate the restoration of the 'favourable conservation status' of habitats and species features for which SACs and SPAs are designated (see Box 1).

In the broadest terms, 'favourable conservation status' means a feature is in satisfactory condition and all the things needed to keep it that way are in place for the foreseeable future. CCW considers that the concept of favourable conservation status provides a practical and legally robust basis for conservation objectives for Natura 2000 and Ramsar sites.

Box 1
Favourable conservation status as defined in Articles 1(e) and 1(i) of the Habitats Directive

"The conservation status of a natural habitat is the sum of the influences acting on it and its typical species that may affect its long-term natural distribution, structure and functions as well as the long term survival of its typical species. The conservation status of a natural habitat will be taken as favourable when:

- Its natural range and areas it covers within that range are stable or increasing, and
- The specific structure and functions which are necessary for its long-term maintenance exist and are likely to continue to exist for the foreseeable future, and
- The conservation status of its typical species is favourable.

The conservation status of a species is the sum of the influences acting on the species that may affect the long-term distribution and abundance of its populations. The conservation status will be taken as 'favourable' when:

- population dynamics data on the species indicate that it is maintaining itself on a long-term basis as a viable component of its natural habitats, and
- the natural range of the species is neither being reduced nor is likely to be reduced for the foreseeable future, and
- There is, and will probably continue to be, a sufficiently large habitat to maintain its populations on a long-term basis."

Achieving these objectives requires appropriate management and the control of factors that may cause deterioration of habitats or significant disturbance to species.

As well as the overall function of communication, Conservation objectives have a number of specific roles:

- Conservation planning and management.

  The conservation objectives guide management of sites, to maintain or restore the habitats and species in favourable condition.

- Assessing plans and projects.

  Article 6(3) of the 'Habitats' Directive requires appropriate assessment of proposed plans and projects against a site's conservation objectives. Subject to certain exceptions, plans or projects may not proceed unless it is established that they will not adversely affect the integrity of sites. This role for testing plans and projects also applies to the review of existing decisions and consents.

- Monitoring and reporting.

  The conservation objectives provide the basis for assessing the condition of a feature and the status of factors that affect it. CCW uses 'performance indicators' within the conservation objectives, as the basis for monitoring and reporting. Performance indicators are selected to provide useful information about the condition of a feature and the factors that affect it.

The conservation objectives in this document reflect CCW's current information and understanding of the site and its features and their importance in an international context. The conservation objectives are subject to review by CCW in light of new knowledge.

b. Format of the conservation objectives

There is one conservation objective for each feature listed in part 3. Each conservation objective is a composite statement representing a site-specific description of what is considered to be the favourable conservation status of the feature. These statements apply to a whole feature as it occurs within the whole plan area, although section 3.2 sets out their relevance to individual management units.

Each conservation objective consists of the following two elements:

1. Vision for the feature
2. Performance indicators

As a result of the general practice developed and agreed within the UK Conservation Agencies, conservation objectives include performance indicators, the selection of which should be informed by JNCC guidance on Common Standards Monitoring[1].

There is a critical need for clarity over the role of performance indicators within the conservation objectives. **A conservation objective, because it includes the vision for the feature, has meaning and substance independently of the performance indicators, and is more than the sum of the performance indicators**. The performance indicators are simply what make the conservation objectives measurable, and are thus part of, not a substitute for, the conservation objectives. Any feature attribute identified in the performance indicators should be represented in the vision for the feature, but not all elements of the vision for the feature will necessarily have corresponding performance indicators.

As well as describing the aspirations for the condition of the feature, the Vision section of each conservation objective contains a statement that the factors necessary to maintain those desired conditions are under control. Subject to technical, practical and resource constraints, factors which have an important influence on the condition of the feature are identified in the performance indicators.

[1] Web link: http://www.jncc.gov.uk/page-2199

4.1 Conservation Objective for Feature 1: Calcareous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation

Vision for Feature 1

- The base-rich sandstone cliffs, including crevices, scree and associated patches of thin soil remains free from disturbance and support typical plants, including mosses and liverworts.
- A variety of rare and scarce plants thrive in these areas, including purple saxifrage, green spleenwort, Oeder's apple-moss, lesser rough earwort and several rare hawkweeds.
- Populations of these species are sufficiently large and widespread to be sustained into the future (currently some populations may be critically low).
- All factors affecting the achievement of the above conditions are under control.

Performance indicators for Feature 1

The performance indicators are part of the conservation objective, not a substitute for it. Assessment of plans and projects must be based on the entire conservation objective, not just the performance indicators. Although the focus of the objectives is the SAC habitats, it should be noted that these also occur in managements units within the SSSI but outside the SAC boundary. Where reference is made to units below, the non-SAC units are placed in parentheses.

Performance indicators for feature condition		
Attribute	***Attribute rationale and other comments***	***Specified limits***
A1. Extent and Distribution of the Habitat	The distribution of sandstone cliffs and scree has been mapped as a baseline (2006). However, it has not been possible to accurately map or measure the extent of the calcareous chasmophytic vegetation itself. The type of chasmophytic plant community present is dependent on the base-status of the rocks. The more acidic rocks are generally found near the top of the cliffs but there may be acidic strata and leached areas lower down, leading to a mosaic of calcareous and siliceous chasmophytic vegetation. Tall herb dominated vegetation is found wherever there are wider ledges with fairly base-rich soil that are inaccessible to livestock. Areas of deeper acidic soils on and around the cliffs support dry heathy vegetation. Consequently, the limits set apply to features 1 to 4 combined.	*Lower limits:* Chasmopyhtic and cliff ledge vegetation will occupy all of the key areas on or around the cliffs in units 1, (2), 4, (7), 8, 9, (10) (see maps in Annex 2 of the plan). There should be no measurable loss of the current (2006) extent.
A2. Condition	The attributes included within the performance indicators are based on those detailed in the Common Standards Monitoring guidance (JNCC). Many of the cliff areas are inaccessible; therefore it is reasonably certain that the communities are self-sustaining,	*Upper limits:* 1% vegetation cover of alien plants, such as cotoneasters. AND: 25% vegetation cover on the cliffs of brambles, nettles, bracken, ivy, trees and shrubs combined. *Lower limits:* 90% of areas capable of

	assuming that they are not at risk from tree and shrub invasion or ivy growing up from below. Elsewhere, the full extent and diversity of the typical vegetation may be limited by grazing stock, particularly in units 4, 8 & 9. The limits apply to all parts of the key areas mapped in units 1, (2), 4, (7), 8, 9, (10) (see Annex 2 of the plan) that are capable of supporting calcareous chasmophytic vegetation, although some attributes can only be sampled in accessible parts of the cliffs.	supporting calcareous chasmophytic vegetation should have at least four indicator plants present (see list below). AND: less than one third of leaves or shoots of indicator plants should show signs of being grazed.
Calcareous chasmophytic indicator plants: Black spleenwort; Wall-rue; Maidenhair spleenwort; Green spleenwort; Flea sedge; Rustyback fern; Brittle bladder-fern; Hawkweeds *Hieracium* spp.; Hard shield-fern; mossy saxifrage; Purple saxifrage; Biting stonecrop; Wild thyme; Mougeot's yoke moss *Amphidium mougeotii*; Summer-moss *Anoectangium aestivum*; Haller's apple-moss *Bartramia hallerana*; Chalk comb-moss *Ctenidium molluscum*; Fringed extinguisher-moss *Encalypta ciliata*; silky wall feather-moss *Homalothecium sericeum*; Crisped neckera *Neckera crispa*; Oeder's apple-moss *Plagiopus oederianus*; Recurved rock-bristle *Seligeria recurvata*; Frizzled crisp-moss *Tortella tortuosa*; Lesser rough earwort *Scapania aequiloba*. Rose root (*Sedum roseum)* and Rock Sedum (Sedum forsterianum) may also be typical of this habitat.		
Performance indicators for factors affecting the feature		
Factor	***Factor rationale and other comments***	***Operational Limits***
F1.Grazing	Heavy grazing limits the extent and diversity of calcareous chasmophytic vegetation. Upper limit is set in relation to the requirements for the management of dry heath.	*Upper limit:* 0.2 livestock units/ha/year. *Lower limit:* Sufficient to prevent the development of scrub within heathland/grassland of conservation interest and/ or spread of bracken and ivy. NB. Limits apply to units 1, (2), 4, (7), 8, 9, (10). One livestock unit is equivalent to 1 cow or horse. A sheep (with lamb) is equivalent to 0.15 livestock units.
F2. Erosion	Calcareous chasmophytic vegetation may be damaged by erosion caused by trampling by people and livestock, both directly and by smothering with material washed down from above. Natural rockfalls occur and allow some of the less competitive species to thrive.	*Upper limit:* No noticeable impacts from human or livestock induced erosion in units 1, (2), 4, (7), 8, 9, (10).
F3. Rock Climbing	Although most of the rocks at this site are too soft or unstable for climbing, intensive use can dislodge plants and disturb breeding birds. These impacts	No rock climbing in units 1, (2), (3), 4, (7), 8, 9, (10) without agreement**.**

	may be avoided if climbing is subject to specific agreements, which include a code of conduct.	
F4. Air Quality	Key attributes for measuring air pollution are nitrous oxides (NOx), sulphur dioxide (SO2), ammonia (NH3) and Ozone (O3). High levels of any of these are believed to be damaging, especially on dwarf shrubs mosses and lichens, and there may be combined effects. The Environment Agency has set critical levels for these pollutants in relation to various types of vegetation (Refer to the APIS database at *www.airquality.co.uk*). Monitoring station located at grid location: SN 96955 21909	*Upper limits:* No critical loads for acidic and nitrogen deposition are exceeded at relevant Environment Agency monitoring station in more than one year out of five: Sulphur dioxide – 20µg/m³ Nitrous Oxides – 30µg/m³ Ozone – 3000 ppb Ammonia – 1µg/m³ N – 10-20 kg/ha/yr acid – 0.35keq/ha/yr *Lower limits:* None.

4.2 Conservation Objective for Feature 2: Siliceous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation

Vision for feature 2

- The acidic sandstone rocks, including crevices and scree, remain free from disturbance to and support typical plants, including mosses, ferns and lichens.
- A variety of rare and scarce plants thrive in these areas, including fir clubmoss, dwarf willow, and greater streak-moss.
- Populations of these species are sufficiently large and widespread to be sustained into the future.
- All factors affecting the achievement of the above conditions are under control.

Performance indicators for Feature 2

The performance indicators are part of the conservation objective, not a substitute for it. Assessment of plans and projects must be based on the entire conservation objective, not just the performance indicators.

Performance indicators for feature condition		
Attribute	***Attribute rationale and other comments***	***Specified limits***
A1. and Distribution of the Habitat	The distribution of sandstone cliffs and scree has been mapped as a baseline (2006). However, it has not been possible to accurately map or measure the extent of the siliceous chasmophytic vegetation itself. The type of chasmophytic plant community present is dependent on the base-status of the rocks. The more acidic rocks are generally found near the top of the cliffs but there may be acidic strata and leached areas lower down, leading to a mosaic of calcareous and siliceous chasmophytic vegetation. Tall herb dominated vegetation is found wherever there are wider ledges with fairly base-rich soil that are inaccessible to livestock. Areas of deeper acidic soils on and around the cliffs support dry heathy vegetation. Consequently, the limits set apply to features 1 to 4 combined.	*Lower limits:* Chasmopyhtic and cliff ledge vegetation and dry heath will occupy all of the key areas on or around the cliffs in units 1, (2), (3), 4, (7), 8, 9, (10) (see maps in Annex 2 of the plan). There should be no measurable loss of the current (2006) extent.
A2. Condition	The attributes included within the performance indicators are based on those detailed in the Common Standards Monitoring guidance (JNCC). Siliceous chasmophytic vegetation is largely made up of mosses, liverworts and lichens (further work is required to assess which lichen species or assemblages need to be targetted) that are fairly tolerant of grazing stock and it is accepted that the more sensitive plants, such as serrated wintergreen and	*Upper limits:* 1% vegetation cover of alien plants, such as cotoneasters. AND: 25% vegetation cover on the cliffs of brambles, nettles, bracken, ivy, trees and shrubs combined. *Lower limit:* 50% of vegetation in areas with more acidic rock is composed of typical plants (see list below).

	dwarf willow, will remain confined to areas that are naturally inaccessible to livestock. The limits apply to all parts of the key areas mapped in units 1, (2), (3), 4, (7), 8, 9, (10) (see Annex 2 of the plan) that are capable of supporting siliceous chasmophytic vegetation, although some attributes can only be sampled in accessible parts of the cliffs.	
Typical plants found on acidic sandstone rocks: Wavy hair-grass; Fir clubmoss; Dwarf willow; Bilberry; Rusty swan-neck moss *Campylopus flexuosus*; Rock-moss *Andraea* species, Fringe-mosses *Racomitrium* spp.; Greater streak-moss *Rhabdoweisia crenulata*; Waxy Earwort (*Douinia ovata*), White earwort *Diplophyllum albicans;* Lichens (all species).		
Performance indicators for factors affecting the feature		
Factor	***Factor rationale and other comments***	***Operational Limits***
F1. Grazing	see 4.1 above	see 4.1 above
F2. Erosion	see 4.1 above	See 4.1 above.
F3. Climbing	see 4.1 above	See 4.1 above
F4. Air Quality	see 4.1 above	See 4.1 above

4.3 Conservation Objective for Feature 3: European dry heaths

Rationale for the selection of attributes:

Only a small part of the heathland feature within the SSSI as a whole actually occurs within the SAC boundary, as the main reasons for the designation are the cliff communities. In terms of the whole SSSI, the heathland feature requires further consideration. Most of the recent monitoring has focussed on the SAC area and much of the following, therefore reflects this fact.

Burning is not used as a management tool within the SAC, but may be an accidental activity anywhere on the site. This is reflected in the performance indicators. This and any other activities that affect the heath and create areas of erosion e.g. use of motorcycles, creation of tracks, large scale poaching etc. should be identified and the locations affected should be mapped during routine visits to this site.

A lot of the dry heathland within the SAC (units 1, 4, 8 & 9) occurs in cliff areas that are naturally inaccessible to grazing stock, elsewhere the extent and condition of this habitat may be limited by heavy grazing.

Under-grazing on the other hand is not considered to be so much of an issue and it may be desirable to increase in the amount of trees and scrub on the slopes. However, without good shepherding, some areas would continue to be more heavily grazed than others. The general 25% limits set in 4.1 & 4.2 for the cliff areas in units 1, 4, 8 & 9 apply to all of the habitats present. In reality, there is likely to be a greater tree and scrub cover in areas of slightly deeper soil that tend to support dry heath. However, typical plants here can tolerate a fair amount of shading. As a result, trees and scrub have not been included as negative attributes for dry heath.

Vision for Feature 3

- The extent, quality and diversity of heath vegetation are maintained and, where possible, degraded heath is restored to good condition.
- The main heathland areas within the SAC and SSSI have a varied age structure with a mosaic of young heath, mature heath and degenerate heath.
- All factors affecting the achievement of these conditions are under control.

Performance indicators for Feature 3

The performance indicators are part of the conservation objective, not a substitute for it. Assessment of plans and projects must be based on the entire conservation objective, not just the performance indicators.

Performance indicators for feature condition		
Attribute	***Attribute rationale and other comments***	***Specified limits***
A1. Extent and Distribution of the Habitat	The condition map produced in November 2006 is the baseline for the extent of good condition heath within the NNR (units 1 & 2); the extent of good condition dry heath will be assessed against this. These maps and fixed-point photographs will be used to monitor the extent of bracken across the crags and for surveillance purposes will be used to provide a record of the distribution and extent of trees and scrub over the crags. Further work will be required to define what is required elsewhere in the SSSI. Therefore these objectives only apply to the SAC and NNR at the present time.	*Upper limit*: None set. Constrained by edaphic factors. The extent and distribution of the dry heath will not affect the condition of the other three Annex I habitats found on these crags nor the distribution of any of the rare plants. *Lower limits:* For units 1, 4, 8 & 9 see 4.1/4.2 above. AND: The extent of good condition heath outside the SAC is as mapped in November 2006. This limit may need to be adjusted later in order to allow for restoration of degraded heath (work to indicate the actual areas of good condition heath and degraded heath is in progress).
A2. Condition	The attributes included within the performance indicators are based on those detailed in the Common Standards Monitoring guidance for Upland Heath (October 2006). The limits apply to all parts of the key areas within the SAC part of the site mapped in units 1, 4, 8 & 9 (see Annex 2 of the plan) that are capable of supporting dry heath vegetation, although some attributes can only be sampled in accessible parts of the cliffs.	Less 1% of the feature is mapped as damaged and there is no evidence of burning within the site; AND: • Dwarf shrubs (including western gorse) make up at least 50% of the vegetation cover. Western gorse should not provide more than 50% of the cover and at least 25% should be heather, bilberry, heath (*Erica*), crowberry and cowberry. • At least two of the above species should be present. • Less than 1% cover of non-native and weedy species, such as thistles, large docks (excluding common sorrel, creeping buttercup and nettles.

		• Bracken is at low cover (less than 10%) AND: Less than one third of shoots of all mature dwarf shrub plants collectively showing signs of browsing.
Performance indicators for factors affecting the feature		
Factor	***Factor rationale and other comments***	***Operational Limits***
F1. Grazing	See 4.1 above	See 4.1 above. No heather growth forms indicative of heavy grazing should be present (e.g. carpet, topiary and drumstick heather)
F2. Burning	Areas burnt may be measured by aerial photography.	*Upper limits:* There is no evidence of burning within the boundaries of the site. *Lower limit:* N/A
F3. Erosion/Bare Ground	Is generally caused by uncontrolled fires (see above) or heavy trampling. Some natural land-slippage and rockfalls will occur, which allows some species to colonise.	See 4.1 above.
F4. Air Quality	See 4.1 above.	See 4.1 above.

4.4 Conservation Objective for Feature 4: Hydrophilous tall herb fringe communities of plains and montane to alpine levels

Vision for feature 4

- The cliff ledges with less acidic soil remain largely free from grazing, such that the typical flowering plants can flourish and flower freely.
- Several uncommon plants thrive in these areas, including serrated wintergreen and rare hawkweeds.
- The populations of these plants are sufficiently large and widespread to be sustained into the future.
- All factors affecting the achievement of the above conditions are under control.

Performance indicators for Feature 4

The performance indicators are part of the conservation objective, not a substitute for it. Assessment of plans and projects must be based on the entire conservation objective, not just the performance indicators.

Performance indicators for feature condition		
Attribute	***Attribute rationale and other comments***	***Specified limits***
A1. Extent and Distribution of the Habitat	The distribution of sandstone cliffs where this vegetation occurs has been mapped as a baseline (2006). However, it has not been possible to accurately	*Lower limits:* Chasmopyhtic and cliff ledge vegetation and dry heath will occupy all of the key areas on or around the cliffs in units 1, 4, (7?), 8, 9,

	map or measure the extent of the tall herb vegetation itself. The type of plant community present on cliff ledges is dependent on the relative acidity of the soils. The more acidic soils generally support heathy vegetation but plants such as bilberry can still be quite prominent in less acidic areas. In reality there is gradation from dominance by tall herbs to dominance by dwarf shrubs, with chasmophytic vegetation on the rocks themselves and areas of thinner soil. Consequently, the limits set apply to features 1 to 4 combined.	(10) (see maps in Annex 2 of the plan).
A2. Condition	The attributes included within the performance indicators are based on those detailed in the Common Standards Monitoring guidance (JNCC). Many of the cliff areas are inaccessible to grazing stock. Therefore it is reasonably certain that the communities are self-sustaining. Elsewhere, the full extent and diversity of the typical vegetation may be limited by grazing stock, particularly in units 8 & 9. Cover of trees and scrub is not considered to be a relevant attribute, as many of the typical plants can tolerate shading. The limits apply to all parts of the key areas mapped in units 1, 4, (7?), 8, 9, (10) (see Annex 2 of the plan) that are capable of supporting tall herb ledge vegetation, although some attributes can only be sampled in accessible parts of the cliffs.	*Upper limits:* 1% cover of non-native plants or weeds (see 4.3 above). AND: less than one third of live flowering shoots of tall herb and dwarf shrub indicators showing signs of grazing. *Lower limits:* One dwarf shrub and one fern species (not bracken) present. OR: One indicator plant (see list below), excluding dwarf shrubs and great woodrush, present. AND: 50% of the vegetation made up of indicator plants (see list below) AND: 50% of tall herb stems greater than 20cm tall.
Typical plants comprising tall herb vegetation: Lady's mantles; Wild angelica; Heather; Harebell; Opposite-leaved golden-saxifrage; Tufted hair-grass; Ferns (excluding bracken); Meadowsweet; Northern bedstraw; Water avens; Hogweed; Hawkweeds; St.John's-worts; Oxeye daisy; Great woodrush; Dog's-mercury; Early purple-orchid; Serrated wintergreen; Wood sorrel; Burnet-saxifrage; Primrose; Meadow buttercup; Common sorrel; Goldenrod; Devil's-bit scabious; Lesser Meadow-rue; Common valerian; Bilberry.		
Performance indicators for factors affecting the feature		
Factor	***Factor rationale and other comments***	***Operational Limits***
F1.Grazing	The tall herb communities are most susceptible to grazing damage and they are largely confined to ledges that cannot easily be reached by sheep. Reduced grazing pressure should	See 4.1 above.

	encourage the spread of this type of vegetation in unit 4, (7), 8, 9, (10).	
F2. Erosion	See 4.1 above.	See 4.1 above.
F3. Rock Climbing	See 4.1 above.	See 4.1 above.

5. ASSESSMENT OF CONSERVATION STATUS AND MANAGEMENT REQUIREMENTS

This part of the document provides:

- A summary of the assessment of the conservation status of each feature.
- A summary of the management issues that need to be addressed to maintain or restore each feature.

5.1 Conservation Status and Management Requirements of Feature 1: Calcareous chasmophytic vegetation (EU Habitat Code: 8210)

Conservation Status of Feature 1:

The conservation status of the feature within the site is **Un-favourable** (2005).

The current condition (July 2005) of this feature within the site as a whole is considered to be un-favourable. This is based on a visit to the cliffs in Unit 8 & 9 during the summer to inspect all features associated with these cliffs. This confirmed that extent and quality of this type of vegetation was being adversely affected by sheep grazing, this probably applies to units 4, (7), 9, (10) as well. With reduced grazing, or less sheep grazing, this community would be more widespread. There are still some problems with rock and soil being washed down from eroded areas on the cliffs above in units 8 & 9. The feature in Units 1 and (2) is subject to lower grazing levels, particularly by sheep, and there may be less public access to the cliffs here. Therefore, the habitat in these units is likely to be in favourable, maintained condition.

Management Requirements of Feature 1:

Grazing

Many of the interesting plants on the cliffs are intolerant of grazing and are confined to areas less accessible to stock. Reduced grazing levels on the main escarpment would allow these plants to spread out from their craggy refuges.

Sheep tend to graze any lime-rich grassland preferentially at certain times of year and can cause localised damage in these areas, but there are some areas they will never be able to access on vertical or unstable slopes. However, some light grazing of slopes may help to prevent encroachment by coarse vegetation, trees and scrub.

Those areas currently ungrazed are not likely to be accessible to stock types currently grazing the land, therefore core areas of the feature are currently safe. Potential changes in the type of grazing animals, such as goats, which would be better suited to climbing, will be monitored and appropriate action taken to remove them.

Management action can be summarised as establishing a grazing regime that allows for an expansion of the habitat in units 4, (7), 8, 9 & 10 whilst ensuring the areas supporting this habitat throughout the site do not become overgrown by coarse vegetation, trees and scrub.

Erosion

This continues to be a problem in units 1, (7), 8 & 9 where footpath erosion is causing rock and soil to wash down over the sensitive plant communities below. There are also eroded paths on the cliffs themselves, which are created by people and sheep. Stabilisation of official paths and persuading visitors to keep to the paths will help reduce erosion, as will a general reduction in sheep numbers.

Priority actions include: Completing maintenance of the paths to the major summits and along the ridge from Pen y Fan to Fan y Big in stone, Erecting information boards at key access points east of the A470 and using provisions of the CroW Act to restrict access where necessary.

Climbing

Uncommon plants on the cliffs and ledges may be dislodged by climbers and people scrambling up the steeper slopes and some breeding birds are particularly sensitive to disturbance during the nesting season. The cliffs below the main summits (units 8 & 9) are very unstable and are generally avoided by climbers. Climbing is not permitted in the NNR (units 1 & 2) and the cliffs at Craig y Fro (unit 3 & 4) and elsewhere do not appear to be used. Some areas may sometimes be used for ice climbing in winter but there appears to be minimal damage to the cliff vegetation from these activities.

Air Quality

Several widespread ongoing human-induced processes are changing the environmental and ecological conditions and are causing concern at the Brecon Beacons and in other upland areas in Britain. These include acidification of rain and soils, due to atmospheric pollution, and nutrient enrichment (especially increased nitrogen and phosphorus), through a combination of atmospheric pollution, excessive dunging/urination in areas where stock preferentially graze and other inputs from diffuse sources. Mosses, liverworts and lichens are particularly vulnerable to pollution from atmospheric sources.

Much of this atmospheric pollution comes from distant, diffuse sources, such as traffic and domestic emissions, but some can be attributed to large point sources, such as major power stations or industrial processes. The impact of the industrialisation of the south Wales valleys in the nineteenth century has

had a lasting effect on upland vegetation. If particularly damaging, current point sources (or groups of point sources) can be identified, then emissions should be regulated to reduce the impacts. However, it will also be very important for wider measures to be taken, at Government and international levels, to reduce air pollution.

5.2 Conservation Status and Management Requirements of Feature 2: Siliceous chasmophytic vegetation (EU Habitat Code: 8220)

Conservation Status of Feature 2:

The conservation status of the feature within the site is **Un-favourable** (2005).

The current condition of this feature within the site is un-favourable, un-classified (July 2005). This is based on a visit to the cliffs in Units 8 and 9 during the summer to inspect all features associated with these cliffs. The siliceous chasmophytic vegetation appeared to be in reasonable condition but the Environment Agency has reported that critical loads for air pollutants are still being exceeded, which is likely to be having an adverse impact on the vegetation.

Management Requirements of Feature 2:

Uncommon plants on the cliffs and ledges may be dislodged by climbers and people scrambling up the steeper slopes and some breeding birds are particularly sensitive to disturbance during the nesting season. However, the soft nature of much of the sandstone rocks do not lend themselves to rock climbing at this site, At present all that needs to happen is that this activity should be monitored to see if it is causing problems.

Those areas currently ungrazed are not likely to be accessible to stock types currently grazing the land; therefore core areas of the feature are currently safe. Potential changes in the type of grazing animals, such as goats, which would be better suited to climbing, will be monitored and appropriate action taken to remove them.

Within the NNR an expansion in dry heath and tree cover needs to be balanced against the needs of maintaining the rocky screes at the base of the cliff, which can provide a valuable habitat for some of the rarer flowering plants.

Management action can be summarised as to maintain grazing at a level that allows for an expansion of the habitat on occasions whilst ensuring the areas do not become overgrown by a total cover of grasses more typical of acid grassland.

Erosion

See 5.1 above.

Air quality

see 5.1 above

5.3 Conservation Status and Management Requirements of Feature 3: Dry heath (EU Habitat Code: 4030)

Conservation Status of Feature 3:

The conservation status of the feature within the site is **Un-favourable** (2006).

The European dry heath feature is considered to be in un-favourable (no change) condition within the SSSI and SAC as a whole, largely because grazing levels in units 4, 8, 9, are suppressing the development of heath on the slightly deeper acidic soils. Within the NNR (units 1 & 2) stocking rates are lower and the slopes are generally steep, with a bias towards cattle, which ensures grazing levels are low. The condition attributes are satisfied in both units 1 & 2 (November 2006). Within the remainder of the SSSI, feature condition is thought to be favourable, maintained in unit 5 but un-favourable, no-change in units 3, 7, 10 as result of grazing pressure.

Management Requirements of Feature 3:

Grazing

See 5.1 above. Stock reductions on the common land would also benefit remaining stands of dry heathland in the non-SAC parts of these areas.

Bracken control

Control could be considered in areas where there has been significant spread within the dry heath areas (or other habitats of high conservation value). However, aerial spraying would be unsuitable over much of the site due to the presence of habitats supporting sensitive species such as the rarer ferns which would also be affected by the spray, therefore other methods, such as cutting or targeted knapsack spraying, would have to be considered in certain areas. On flatter areas, rolling with heavy machinery would be an alternative and this has already occurred within the NNR in Unit 1.

Air quality

See 5.1 above.

5.4 Conservation Status and Management Requirements of Feature 4: Tall herb vegetation (EU Habitat Code: 6430)

Conservation Status of Feature 4:

The conservation status of the feature within the site is **Un-favourable?** (2005).

The current condition of this feature is un-favourable (July 2005). This is based on a visit to the cliffs in Units 8 and 9 during the summer to inspect all features associated with these cliffs. Although the vegetation appeared to be thriving in areas that are naturally in-accessible to grazing stock, it is likely that the feature would be more widespread in some of the units within commonland (units 4, 7?, 10) if the grazing pressure was reduced. The part of this feature in Unit 1 is subject to lower grazing levels and there is considered to be in a favourable, maintained condition.

An example of an ungrazed ledge on the east side of the Cribyn within the SAC

Management Requirements of Feature 4:

Grazing

See 5.1 above.

Erosion

See 5.1 above.

Climbing

See 5.1 above.

Air Quality

See 5.1 above

6. ACTION PLAN: SUMMARY

This section takes the management requirements outlined in Section 5 a stage further, assessing the specific management actions required on each management unit. This information is a summary of that held in CCW's Actions Database for sites, and the database will be used by CCW and partner organisations to plan future work to meet the Wales Environment Strategy targets for sites.

Unit Number	CCW Database Number	Unit Name	Summary of Conservation Management Issues	Action needed?
1	000305	Unit 1	Craig Cwm Du and Craig Cerrig- gleisiad cliifs - part of the NNR: Public access may be having an impact on the cliffs and bracken encroachment is a threat to the dry heath. Air pollution may be having an impact, particularly on the lichens and heather.	Yes

Unit Number	CCW Database Number	Unit Name	Summary of Conservation Management Issues	Action needed?
4	000308	Unit 4	SAC area within Great Forest Common (Brecknock CL50): Heavy grazing is having an impact on the dry heath and is probably restricting the distribution of cliff vegetation. Air pollution may also be having an impact.	Yes
8	000312	Unit 8	SAC cliffs within Brecon Beacons Common (Brecknock CL56): Heavy grazing and human erosion are having an impact on the cliffs and air pollution may also be a problem.	Yes
9	000313	Unit 9	SAC cliffs within Buckland Manor Common (Brecknock CL62): Heavy grazing and human erosion are having an impact on the cliffs and air pollution may also be a problem.	Yes

7. GLOSSARY

This glossary defines the some of the terms used in this **Core Management Plan**. Some of the definitions are based on definitions contained in other documents, including legislation and other publications of CCW and the UK nature conservation agencies. None of these definitions is legally definitive.

Action A recognisable and individually described act, undertaking or **project** of any kind, specified in section 6 of a **Core Management Plan** or **Management Plan**, as being required for the **conservation management** of a site.

Attribute A quantifiable and monitorable characteristic of a **feature** that, in combination with other such attributes, describes its **condition**.

Common Standards Monitoring A set of principles developed jointly by the UK conservation agencies to help ensure a consistent approach to **monitoring** and reporting on the **features** of sites designated for nature conservation, supported by guidance on identification of **attributes** and monitoring methodologies.

Condition A description of the state of a feature in terms of qualities or **attributes** that are relevant in a nature conservation context. For example the condition of a habitat usually includes its extent and species composition and might also include aspects of its ecological functioning, spatial distribution and so on. The condition of a species population usually includes its total size and might also include its age structure, productivity, relationship to other populations and spatial distribution. Aspects of the habitat(s) on which a species population depends may also be considered as attributes of its condition.

Condition assessment The process of characterising the **condition** of a **feature** with particular reference to whether the aspirations for its condition, as expressed in its **conservation objective**, are being met.

Condition categories The **condition** of **feature** can be categorised, following **condition assessment** as one of the following[2]:

[2] See JNCC guidance on Common Standards Monitoring http://www.jncc.gov.uk/page-2272

Favourable: maintained;
Favourable: recovered;
Favourable: un-classified
Unfavourable: recovering;
Unfavourable: no change;
Unfavourable: declining;
Unfavourable: un-classified
Partially destroyed;
Destroyed.

Conservation management Acts or undertaking of all kinds, including but not necessarily limited to **actions,** taken with the aim of achieving the **conservation objectives** of a site. Conservation management includes the taking of statutory and non-statutory measures, it can include the acts of any party and it may take place outside site boundaries as well as within sites. Conservation management may also be embedded within other frameworks for land/sea management carried out for purposes other than achieving the conservation objectives.

Conservation objective The expression of the desired **conservation status** of a **feature,** expressed as a **vision for the feature** and a series of **performance indicators**. The conservation objective for a feature is thus a composite statement, and each feature has one conservation objective.

Conservation status A description of the state of a **feature** that comprises both its **condition** and the state of the **factors** affecting or likely to affect it. Conservation status is thus a characterisation of both the current state of a feature and its future prospects.

Conservation status assessment The process of characterising the **conservation status** of a **feature** with particular reference to whether the aspirations for it, as expressed in its **conservation objective**, are being met. The results of conservation status assessment can be summarised either as 'favourable' (i.e. conservation objectives are met) or unfavourable (i.e. conservation objectives are not met). However the value of conservation status assessment in terms of supporting decisions about **conservation management**, lies mainly in the details of the assessment of feature **condition**, **factors** and trend information derived from comparisons between current and previous conservation status assessments and condition assessments.

Core Management Plan A CCW document containing the conservation objectives for a site and a summary of other information contained in a full site **Management Plan**.

Factor Anything that has influenced, is influencing or may influence the **condition** of a **feature**. Factors can be natural processes, human activities or effects arising from natural process or human activities, They can be positive or negative in terms of their influence on features, and they can arise within a site or from outside the site.

Physical, socio-economic or legal constraints on **conservation management** can also be considered as factors.

Favourable condition See **condition** and **condition assessment**

Favourable conservation status See **conservation status** and **conservation status assessment.**[3]

Feature **The species population, habitat type or other entity for which a site is designated. The ecological or geological interest which justifies the designation of a site and which is the focus of conservation management.**

Integrity See **site integrity**

Key Feature The habitat or species population within a **management unit** that is the primary focus of **conservation management** and **monitoring** in that unit.

Management Plan The full expression of a designated site's legal status, **vision**, **features**, **conservation objectives**, **performance indicators** and management requirements. A complete management plan may not reside in a single document, but may be contained in a number of documents (including in particular **the Core Management Plan**) and sets of electronically stored information.

Management Unit An area within a site, defined according to one or more of a range of criteria, such as topography, location of **features**, tenure, patterns of land/sea use. The key characteristic of management units is to reflect the spatial scale at which **conservation management** and **monitoring** can be most effectively organised. They are used as the primary basis for differentiating priorities for conservation management and monitoring in different parts of a site, and for facilitating communication with those responsible for management of different parts of a site.

Monitoring An intermittent (regular or irregular) series of observations in time, carried out to show the extent of compliance with a formulated standard or degree of deviation from an expected norm. In **Common Standards Monitoring**, the formulated standard is the quantified expression of favourable **condition** based on **attributes**.

Operational limits The levels or values within which a **factor** is considered to be acceptable in terms of its influence on a **feature**. A factor may have both upper and lower operational limits, or only an upper limit or lower limit. For some factors an upper limit may be zero.

Performance indicators The **attributes** and their associated **specified limits**, together with **factors** and their associated **operational limits,** which provide the standard against which information from **monitoring** and other sources is used to determine the degree to which the **conservation objectives** for a **feature** are being met. Performance indicators are part of, not the same as, conservation objectives. See also **vision for the feature**.

[3] A full definition of favourable conservation status is given in Section 4.

Plan or project **Project:** Any form of construction work, installation, development or other intervention in the environment, the carrying out or continuance of which is subject to a decision by any public body or statutory undertaker.
Plan: a document prepared or adopted by a public body or statutory undertaker, intended to influence decisions on the carrying out of **projects.** Decisions on plans and projects which affect Natura 2000 and Ramsar sites are subject to specific legal and policy procedures.

Site integrity The coherence of a site's ecological structure and function, across its whole area, that enables it to sustain the habitat, complex of habitats and/or the levels of populations of the species for which it is designated.

Site Management Statement (SMS) The document containing CCW's views about the management of a site issued as part of the legal notification of an SSSI under section 28(4) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as substituted.

Special Feature See **feature**.

Specified limit The levels or values for an **attribute** which define the degree to which the attribute can fluctuate without creating cause for concern about the **condition** of the **feature**. The range within the limits corresponds to favourable, the range outside the limits corresponds to unfavourable. Attributes may have lower specified limits, upper specified limits, or both.

Unit See **management unit.**

Vision for the feature The expression, within a **conservation objective**, of the aspirations for the **feature** concerned. See also **performance indicators.**

Vision Statement The statement conveying an impression of the whole site in the state that is intended to be the product of its **conservation management.** A 'pen portrait' outlining the **conditions** that should prevail when all the **conservation objectives** are met. A description of the site as it would be when all the **features** are in **favourable condition**.