

CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

FOR DISCUSSION

**Title: NATIONAL PARK PARTNERSHIP PLAN
CONSULTATION REPORT**

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Purpose

To provide the Board with an analysis of the consultation responses to the National Park Partnership Plan 2017-2022 and to enable a discussion on the key issues that were raised during the consultation.

Recommendation

That the Board note the Consultation Report for the National Park Partnership Plan 2017-2022 and consider the issues raised during the consultation.

Strategic Context

1. The next National Park Partnership Plan is for the period 2017-2022. The Partnership Plan is the management plan for the Cairngorms National Park and sets out how all those with a responsibility for the Park will co-ordinate their work to tackle the most important issues. The Partnership Plan provides important strategic direction for the next Local Development Plan, sets out the land use strategy for the National Park and identifies the priorities for partner collaboration.
2. We aim to have the National Park Partnership Plan 2017-2022 ready to submit to Ministers in April 2017.

NATIONAL PARK PARTNERSHIP PLAN CONSULTATION REPORT – FOR DISCUSSION

Consultation Overview

3. In order to inform the development of the new Partnership Plan, a consultation document was produced to seek views on:
 - the big challenges we should be addressing and the issues we need to tackle;
 - what would make the biggest difference to tackling these; and
 - the proposed policy direction.
4. The consultation document did not aim to cover everything relevant to the Park, but instead outlined nine big issues (the 'Big 9') on which views were particularly sought. The public consultation was undertaken over a 14 week period from 27 June – 30 September 2016.
5. A programme of events was undertaken during this time period, with more than 250 people attending specific meetings and seminars based around the Big 9 issues. Board members also gave a presentation to all the community councils within the National park during the consultation period. Extensive use was also made of CNPA's website and social media channels to promote the consultation. The consultation homepage was viewed over 4,400 times during the consultation period and a series of video clips, which were designed to provide easy to access background information on the Big 9 issues, were viewed over 1,100 times. A total of 1,780 people also engaged and interacted with the consultation through Twitter using #BigParkBigQuestions.
6. A total of 319 formal responses were received to the consultation from a range of organisations and private individuals. The majority of these (72%) were submitted online.
7. A Consultation Report, which provides a full analysis of the formal responses, is included at Annex I. Copies of the individual consultation responses have also been provided to Board Members on request.

Key Issues from the Consultation

8. Overall, the consultation has shown significant support for key elements of the Partnership Plan. In particular, the majority of respondents expressed support for the proposed vision and long term outcomes, and for the big conservation, visitor experience and rural development challenges identified in the consultation document.

9. There is a wide range of responses across the issues which we will use in shaping the final plan. There are, however, a number of areas where respondents expressed polarised views. These relate to Issue 1 (Landscape Scale Conservation), Issue 2 (Deer and Moorland Management) and Issue 7 (Housing). Further detailed consideration will be required to determine how the final Partnership Plan should address to these issues most effectively.
10. There is general support for the principle for addressing conservation at a landscape scale and recognition of the nature conservation value of the National Park. However, in relation to woodland expansion, deer and moorland management, responses show a split of opinion on the appropriate extent of woodland expansion, and how best to integrate deer and moorland management with wider habitat and species enhancement objectives. On the one hand, there are calls for significant changes to current upland management practices, whilst on the other there is support to maintain current management approaches.
11. In relation to housing, whilst there is consensus that housing affordability is an issue within the National Park, there are differences of opinion about how best to address this. Some groups appear to be calling simply for more housing development land; whereas others are supportive of more smaller-scale community led housing initiatives. There are also clear differences of opinion on the issue of second homes, with some arguing for tighter controls on second home ownership and others arguing against the aim to reduce the proportion of second homes within the Park.
12. There was general consensus that the 9 Big Issues are the key issues in the Park. However, transport was also highlighted as a major issue that should be addressed in the final plan submitted to Ministers.

Next Steps

- December '16 – February '17: Discussions with partners and board on key issues/topics;
- March '17: Review emerging plan with partners and updated SEA consultation;
- April '17: Board consideration of final Partnership Plan and submission to Ministers.

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