

CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

FOR DECISION

**Title: LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN CONSULTATION:
MAIN ISSUES REPORT**

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Purpose

To seek the Board's agreement to publish the Main Issues Report for the next Local Development Plan for a period of public consultation.

Recommendation

**That the Board approve the publication of the Main Issues Report for
consultation purposes.**

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN CONSULTATION: MAIN ISSUES REPORT – FOR DECISION

Background and Strategic Context

1. All planning authorities in Scotland are required by law to publish a Local Development Plan (LDP) for their area. In line with current legislation, the LDP must be kept up-to-date and reviewed at least every five years.
2. The current LDP for the Cairngorms National Park was adopted in March 2015. The timetable for preparing the next LDP was approved by the Planning Committee in March 2017.
3. The new LDP will contain a series of maps, policies and site allocations to guide the use and development of land within the National Park during the period 2020-2025 and beyond. It will link closely with the recently approved National Park Partnership Plan 2017-2022, which provides a strategic context for the LDP. It will also take account of guidance in the National Planning Framework and Scottish Planning Policy.
4. The process for producing the new LDP is set out in planning legislation and includes a number of stages of consultation and engagement.
5. The first formal stage of public engagement is the Main Issues Report. This provides a summary of the key issues that the new LDP will seek to address and presents the planning authority's views on the potential options for tackling them (including both the preferred options and any other reasonable alternatives).

Proposed Main Issues Report (MIR)

6. The proposed MIR is attached at Annex I. In accordance with relevant legislation, the MIR content has been compiled following informal consultation with:
 - a) key agencies (e.g. Scottish Natural Heritage, Scottish Environment Protection Agency, Scottish Water etc.);
 - b) the Scottish Ministers; and
 - c) adjoining planning authorities
7. In addition, the proposed MIR takes account of feedback from discussions with Board Members which took place during late 2016, as well as in June 2017 and September 2017. Informal consultation with Community Councils and Community Associations has also been undertaken during May/June 2017 and this has been used alongside information taken from Community Action Plans to help identify issues and objectives for individual settlements.

8. The MIR also takes account of submissions to a 'call for sites and ideas' that was undertaken in late 2017 to seek suggestions from developers, land managers and community groups about areas that could be identified for development in the new LDP. This process resulted in just fewer than 100 site suggestions, which have all been assessed for appropriateness.
9. The proposed MIR comprises two key sections. The first considers Park-wide or 'over-arching' policy issues, whilst the second considers settlement-based issues. It is intended to be a document that promotes discussion, focussing on the main issues on which we want to seek views. It therefore does not try to address all of the topics that will eventually be included in the new LDP.

Next Steps and Consultation Process

10. Subject to Board approval, the MIR document will be subject to final graphic design works before being published for a period of public consultation.
11. It is proposed that the public consultation will last for a minimum period of 12 weeks beginning in late 2017. A VOiCE report has been prepared to ensure that the consultation will be as inclusive as possible and meet the National Standards for Engagement (see Annex 2). We have discussed the Plans for consultation with the Association of Cairngorms Communities, the Planning Representatives Network and the Developers Forum. Given limited available resources we intend to use our digital communication capabilities to best effect and encourage people to engage with the consultation online. However, we also intend to undertake a series of consultation events in communities across the National Park to promote the consultation process.
12. Responses to the MIR consultation will be reported back to the Board in due course and will be taken into account to help guide the subsequent development of the Proposed LDP. It is currently anticipated that the Proposed LDP will be published for a period of further public consultation in late 2018.

Supporting Information

13. A range of detailed supporting information and evidence studies will be published for consultation alongside the MIR. This includes the following supplementary reports and assessments:
 - a) Monitoring Statement
 - b) Strategic Flood Risk Assessment
 - c) Site Assessment Report
 - d) Conservation Evidence Report

- e) Visitor Experience Evidence Report
- f) Rural Development Evidence Report

Statutory Assessments

Strategic Environmental Assessment

To ensure that the new LDP does not have any significant adverse effects on the environment an initial Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the MIR document has been carried out. SEA is a systematic process, required under the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005, and the SEA Environmental Report will continue to evolve as the LDP is progressed. The SEA will be published for consultation alongside the MIR itself.

Habitats Regulations Appraisal

The MIR document has been subject to a preliminary assessment under the Habitats Regulations Appraisal (HRA) process taking account of initial advice from Scottish Natural Heritage. The purpose of the HRA process is to determine whether the emerging LDP would be likely to have a significant effect on any European site, either individually or in combination with other plans and projects. Again, the HRA is a systematic and iterative process, which will continue to evolve as the LDP is progressed. The HRA preliminary assessment will help to inform ongoing dialogue with the relevant statutory bodies in relation to the HRA process.

Equalities Impact Assessment

The MIR has been subject to the Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) process in accordance with the Equality Act (2010). An EqIA Screening Report has been produced, and this concludes that the LDP is not expected to have discriminatory or negative effects/impacts on any particular group or sector of the community or workforce.

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