

DRAFT NATIONAL PARK PLAN
FOR SUBMISSION TO BOARD MEETING
2ND DECEMBER 2005

FORWARD

1. INTRODUCTION	5
1.1 NATIONAL PARKS IN SCOTLAND	5
National Park Designation	5
National Park Aims	5
Purpose of the Park Authority	5
International Context	6
1.2 The Park Plan	7
Purpose of the Park Plan	7
How the Draft Park Plan has been Developed	7
Structure of the Draft Park Plan	9
Relationship to Planning and Development Control	9
Relationship to Other Plans	10
1.3 Strategic Environmental Assessment and Sustainability Appraisal	10
2. THE CAIRNGORMS- A SPECIAL PLACE	11
Why are the Cairngorms a National Park?	11
The Special Qualities of the Cairngorms	11
3. MANAGING THE PARK IN A CHANGING ENVIRONMENT	14
A Brief History of the Cairngorms	14
Responding to External Changes	15
An Integrated Approach	15
Managing Conflict	16
Diversity within the Park	16
Building on Experience	17
Guiding Principles	18
4. VISION- THE PARK IN 25 YEARS TIME	20
5. CONSERVING, ENHANCING AND MANAGING THE PARK	22
5.1 Introduction- conserving and enhancing the special qualities	22
5.2 Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Heritage	22
5.2.1 Landscape	22
5.2.2 Nature Conservation	25
5.3 Sustainable Use of Natural Resources	29
5.3.1 Soils	29
5.3.2 Water	30
5.3.3 Air	32
5.4 Integrated Land Management	33
5.4.1 Farming & Crofting	35
5.4.2 Forestry	36
5.4.3 Moorland Management	39
5.4.4 Deer Management	40
5.4.5 Fisheries Management	42
5.5 Conserving & Enhancing the Cultural Heritage	43
5.5.1 The Built and Historic Environment	43
5.5.2 Culture and Traditions	43

CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY
Paper 1 Annex 1 02/12/05

6. COMMUNITIES LIVING AND WORKING IN THE PARK.....	45
6.1 Introduction- encouraging sustainable development	45
6.2 Economy and Employment.....	45
6.3 Education and Training.....	47
6.4 Sustainable Tourism.....	48
6.5 Transport and Communications.....	50
6.6 Housing.....	51
6.7 Renewable Energy	52
6.8 Waste Management.....	53
6.9 Strengthening Communities.....	54
7. UNDERSTANDING AND ENJOYING THE PARK.....	56
7.1 Introduction- understanding and enjoying the special qualities of the Park.....	56
7.2 Outdoor Access and Recreation.....	56
7.3 Visitor Services.....	59
7.4 Learning and Understanding.....	61
8. PRIORITIES FOR ACTION.....	64
8.1 Identifying the Priorities for 2007-2012	64
8.2 Proposed Action Programmes- what should be achieved by 2012?	65
8.2.1 Conserving and Enhancing the Park’s Biodiversity and Landscapes.....	65
8.2.2 Developing More Sustainable Deer Management	68
8.2.3 Supporting More Integrated Land Management.....	69
8.2.4. Providing High Quality Outdoor Access Opportunities	71
8.2.5. Making Housing More Affordable and Sustainable	74
8.2.6. Making Tourism and Business More Sustainable	76
8.2.7 Increasing Awareness and Understanding of the Park	78
8.3 Timetable for Developing Action Programmes.....	81
8.4 What about other work required?	81
8.5 Implementing the Plan and its Priorities- A Partnership Approach.....	82
9. MONITORING AND REVIEW.....	83
9.1 Monitoring Delivery of the Plan.....	83
9.2 Monitoring the ‘Health’ of the Park.....	83
9.3 Proposed Health Indicators	84
9.4 Explanation of Proposed Indicator Themes.....	84
9.5 Review of the Park Plan.....	88
9.6 Interim Reporting and Review.....	89

ANNEXES

- Annex 1: List of organisations involved in developing the Draft Park Plan
- Annex 2: Management Guidelines for Category V Protected Areas
- Annex 3: Glossary

ACCOMPANYING DOCUMENTS

- State of the Park Report
- Strategic Environmental Assessment Report
- Sustainability Appraisal Report

FORWARD

By the Convenor

To be completed

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 NATIONAL PARKS IN SCOTLAND

One of the first Acts of the new Scottish Parliament in 2000 legislated for National Parks in Scotland. There are now two National Parks: Loch Lomond and the Trossachs, established in 2002 and the Cairngorms, established in 2003.

National Park Designation

The new legislation, the National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000, creates National Parks that are tailored to Scottish circumstances and distinct from National Parks elsewhere. Areas designated as a National Park in Scotland must satisfy three conditions:

- That the area is of outstanding national importance because of its natural heritage, or the combination of its natural and cultural heritage;
- That the area has a distinctive character and a coherent identity;
- That designating the area as a National Park will meet the special needs of the area.

Section 2 identifies some of the special natural and cultural qualities of the Cairngorms area which are of national importance and give it a distinctive and coherent character, underpinning the area's designation as a National Park.

National Park Aims

The National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000 also sets out four aims for Scottish National Parks:

- To conserve and enhance the natural and cultural heritage
- To promote the sustainable use of natural resources
- To promote understanding and enjoyment (including enjoyment in the form of recreation) of the Park's special qualities
- To promote the sustainable social and economic development of the Park's communities

Purpose of the Park Authority

The statutory purpose of the Park Authority is to ensure that all four aims of the Park are achieved collectively and in a co-ordinated way. However, if it appears to the Authority that there is a conflict between the conservation and enhancement of the natural and cultural heritage and the other National Park aims, then greater weight must be given to the first aim (Section 9(6) of the National Parks (Scotland) Act

2000). Section 3 sets out the approach needed to integrate the aims so that they can be achieved at the same time and minimise conflict between them.

The requirement to achieve the four aims collectively and in a co-ordinated way makes the Scottish National Parks a new kind of National Park in the UK and demands a new approach to managing the Park which draws together the wide range of public, private and community interests. The Park Authority's role is to co-ordinate and add value to the work of others within the Park rather than seek to assume responsibility for or duplicate their work. The development of this Park Plan is one of the key ways of bringing together the partnership needed to work towards the aims of the Park.

International Context

National Parks throughout the world vary significantly in their objectives and management. The IUCN (World Conservation Union) has classified protected areas into six categories, defined by their principal management objective. These vary from strict wilderness and scientific research areas to areas of landscape and community interaction.

The Scottish National Parks fall within Category V, defined as:

'Area of land, with coast and sea as appropriate, where the interaction of people and nature over time has produced an area of distinctive 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'

This position in the international context recognises the important links in the Cairngorms between the outstanding natural environment and the people that live in, work in and enjoy the area. It reflects the interactions of people and place that must be addressed through an integrated approach to managing the National Park.

In developing the Draft Park Plan, the Park Authority has referred to the IUCN 'Management Guidelines for Category V Protected Areas'. These guidelines identify twelve principles that should guide management of such areas (see Annex 2). The Draft Park Plan is consistent with these principles which emphasise conservation and enhancement of the special qualities through the interactions of people and place.

Insert map of Park

1.2 The Park Plan

Purpose of the Park Plan

To meet the challenge set by the four aims of the Park, this is a new type of plan which cuts across organisations and sectors. It is a plan for the Park as a whole, not just for the Park Authority. It brings together all those involved in managing the Park to agree a future direction and what we are all going to do to achieve it.

The Plan sets out a long-term vision for Park and strategic objectives to guide its management, looking at least 25 years ahead. Then it identifies the priorities for investment and action in the next 5 year period that will start to deliver this long-term vision.

How the Draft Park Plan has been Developed

A wide range of organisations have helped to develop the Draft Park Plan to this consultation stage. Its role as a Plan for the Park as a whole and the need for a wide range of organisations to work towards its successful delivery means that their involvement in shaping it from the start is important. The vision, strategic objectives and priorities for action are the result of discussions so far with partners and it is anticipated that these will continue to develop as a result of this consultation.

A full list of the organisations involved so far in discussions to develop the Draft Park Plan is given in Annex 1.

Background Research and Baseline

In a new National Park it is particularly important to collate information about the current state of the Park so that we know what we have, what condition it is in, and whether it is improving or getting worse. It also provides a baseline against which we can monitor change. The State of the Park Report draws together the information available to give a picture of the Park at the present time.

State of the Park Report

The State of the Park Report draws together a wide range of existing information about the Park covering:

- Natural resources
- Cultural resources
- Visitor resources
- Socio-economic resources

For each, it identifies as far as possible the current extent and state of resources, their relative value in local, national and international contexts, and the key trends affecting them. While it provides a significant amount of information about the Park, it also highlights areas where there is little information available, and this will inform a future programme of research.

The Draft State of the Park Report was available for review from July to September 2005. In order to ensure that the best available data was sourced and that it is presented as accurately as possible, the draft was circulated to organisations and individuals that have particular expertise or data for each section, and was publicly available for comment. The responses from the review were used to develop the final report for publication. The State of the Park Report is now published as a separate document to accompany the Draft Park Plan.

The State of the Park Report will be updated at 5 yearly intervals and will be integrated with the monitoring programme for the Park (see section 9)

In addition to identifying the current State of the Park, the Park Authority has worked with others to identify what existing plans, policies and legislation mean for the Park. We have also held many discussions with varied interests, including the Park's Advisory Forums, to identify the key issues facing each sector.

Taken together, this understanding of the existing policy context and the main issues facing the Park sets the agenda for this Park Plan.

Developing the Draft Vision, Strategic Objectives and Priorities for Action

The draft vision, strategic objectives and priorities for action are the result of extensive consultation with key interests in the Park, in line with the purpose of this plan to be for the Park as a whole and to deliver a co-ordinated approach to its management. An initial draft vision and set of objectives were first considered in a National Park Authority Board Paper in April 2005, and subsequently evolved through discussion with a wide range of interests. Over the same period the National Park Authority has met with the key public agencies, non-governmental organisations, private and community and voluntary interests to identify the priorities for action needed to deliver the Plan's objectives. This process included individual meetings, topic seminars and meetings with key interest groups.

Structure of the Draft Park Plan

Following this **introduction**, Section 2 identifies why the Cairngorms are a special area, looking at the **special qualities** that make it a National Park. Section 3 reviews the changing environment that will affect management of the Park and identifies **guiding principles** that will help us all to manage the Park within this changing environment.

Section 4 sets out the long-term **vision** for the Park, then Sections 5 to 7 set out more detailed **strategic objectives** that will help to realise this vision. Together, these sections make up the policy direction of the Park Plan, looking at least 25 years ahead.

The strategic objectives are divided into 3 broad themes:

Conserving, Enhancing and Managing the Park

Conserving and enhancing the special natural and cultural qualities of the Park that underpin its appeal and designation, promoting the sustainable use of its resources and integration of land management.

Communities Living and Working in the Park

Promoting the sustainable economic and social development of communities and businesses in the Park.

Understanding and Enjoying the Park

Understanding and enjoying the special qualities of the Park in ways that are consistent with their conservation and enhancement and promoting well-informed management.

Section 8 identifies the **priorities for action** in the next 5 years, setting out 7 programmes that will start to deliver the vision and objectives of the Park Plan.

Section 9 details the proposals for **monitoring** the performance of the Park Plan, the wider state of the Park as a whole and the future **review** of the Park Plan and State of the Park Report.

Relationship to Planning and Development Control

The National Park Authority shares responsibility for planning and development control with the four Local Authorities within the Park (Highland, Moray, Aberdeenshire and Angus). Planning applications are made to the Local Authorities in the first instance, but may be 'called-in' and determined by the Park Authority if it considers them to be of significance to the aims of the Park. The Park Authority is responsible for preparing a new Local Plan for the Park area.

The Park Plan provides a significant element of the strategic context for planning and development control within the National Park. Some of the objectives of the Park Plan will be delivered through the Local Plan, which will guide and control the

development and use of land at a detailed level within the Park. The Park Plan, and the aims of the Park, will be a material consideration in planning decisions.

The National Park Authority is preparing the new Local Plan for the Park area at the same time as the Park Plan, as the two are closely linked.

Relationship to Other Plans

Once approved, all public bodies have a duty to have regard to the Park Plan in exercising their functions in the National Park. The Park Plan therefore provides the strategic context for all plans and policies that affect the aims of the Park. This includes more detailed plans that the National Park Authority and other public bodies prepare, such as the Core Paths Plan and implementation strategies for subjects such as housing, woodlands or sustainable tourism. It also provides the context for plan and policies in the Park prepared by other public bodies.

1.3 Strategic Environmental Assessment and Sustainability Appraisal

To ensure best planning practice and comply with statutory obligations, the National Park Authority is carrying out a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) on the Park Plan. EC Directive 2001/42/EC and the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes (Scotland) Regulations 2004 require that plans of this nature are assessed to identify potentially significant environmental effects.

Given the purpose of the Park Plan, a key aim is to conserve and enhance the environmental qualities which underpin the designation of the Cairngorms as a National Park. The process of assessing potential impacts is therefore central to developing the Plan. All objectives and actions in the Draft Plan have been assessed during its preparation and the Draft Plan is accompanied by an Environmental Report.

The Environmental Report sets out the assessment process and results and is published for consultation alongside the Draft Park Plan. Changes to the Plan as a result of the consultation will be assessed and documented in the final Environmental Report.

As the National Park aims also relate to the social and economic health of the Park, the Park Authority is carrying out a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) in addition to SEA. This assesses the potential social and economic effects of the Plan in the same way as the SEA assesses the environmental effects. The SA Report also accompanies the Draft Plan.

Together, the SEA and SA provide a transparent framework to identify and consider the likely effects of the Plan on the environmental, economic and social health of the Park.

2. THE CAIRNGORMS- A SPECIAL PLACE

Why are the Cairngorms a National Park?

'The Cairngorms are regarded as the most important mountain system in the country and of international importance for nature conservation' (Nature Conservation Review 1977)

'The qualities of our area are those that any other area in the world would fight for, tooth and nail- the beauty, diversity and importance of our world-class environment, both natural and cultural, and our very accessible location' (Cairngorms Chamber of Commerce 2004)

Facts and Figures

- 39% of the area of the Park is designated for nature conservation
- 25% of the area of the Park is designated as being of European importance for nature conservation
- 2 National Scenic Areas
- 4 of Scotland's 5 highest mountains and 49 Munros
- Internationally important geological record and landforms
- Largest area of semi-natural woodland in Britain
- Only area of arctic-alpine habitat in Britain
- 424 Listed Buildings
- 60 Scheduled Ancient Monuments
- Approximately 16,000 people live in the Park

The Special Qualities of the Cairngorms

The Cairngorms area is recognised locally and internationally for its outstanding natural and cultural environment. While everyone who lives in or visits the Park will enjoy particular aspects, there are some special qualities of the area that are commonly expressed.

Many areas of Scotland can boast some of these qualities, but it is their particular combination in one area that makes the Cairngorms National Park truly distinctive and underpins its designation.

Distinctive Landscape

The distinctive combination of mountain plateaux, open moorland, extensive forests, rivers, lochs and farmland give the area a character recognised by visitors and residents alike, at a scale unique in the UK. The landscape offers a range of experiences including senses of wildness and tranquillity, adventure and inspiration, rest and reflection. As well as providing a record of the natural history of the area, the landscape provides a rich cultural history of human lives and land-use through the pattern of crofts, farms and estates, managed and designed landscapes.

Rich Biodiversity

The varied landscape and land management have given the Cairngorms an important and unique biodiversity, of local, national and international importance. The Park contains the largest areas of montane and semi-natural woodland habitats in Britain, together with high quality freshwater and farmland habitats. 25% of the UK's 'priority species' on the Government's biodiversity list are present in the Park, including the globally threatened freshwater pearl mussel, genetically distinct populations of arctic charr, and protected species such as capercaillie. The scale and connectivity of habitats in the Park are particularly unusual and valuable.

Mountains and Moorland

The mountains and moorland dominate the landscape of much of the Park. As well as providing important and fragile habitats supporting a unique biodiversity, the mountains form an extensive area with a wild and remote character. The surrounding moorlands create a transition from the more intensively managed straths and glens to open land which supports a number of uses including farming, sporting management and recreation.

Forests and Woodlands

The extensive areas of woodland in Strathspey and Deeside are particularly characteristic of the Cairngorms area and, set against the mountain background, form an iconic identity. The woodlands include the largest area of semi-natural woodland in Britain (25% of the Scottish resource) and the largest extent of Caledonian pine woodland, the western-most relict of the extensive northern European boreal forest.

Recreation and Enjoyment

The characteristic sense of wildness associated with the Cairngorms is combined with an accessibility to many areas that offers people unique opportunities for recreation. From activities such as those available at the three ski centres, mountaineering centres and mountain biking facilities, to the quiet enjoyment of informal walks, kayaking or exploring, to fieldsports and organised sport, the area gives many people a chance to enjoy an outstanding natural environment in many different ways.

Distinctive architecture and settlements

Within a common tradition of architectural style across the Park there is a wealth of local building styles that give each area a distinctive character. Traditional materials include granite, blue whinstone and timber, with roofs of slate or corrugated sheeting, their use being determined by local availability, weather patterns and craftsmanship. Planned settlements such as Grantown-on-Spey, Ballater and Tomintoul, together with traditional single-street settlements and the presence of country houses, farm and estate buildings combine to give the Park its distinct built character.

Communities

Clustered around the higher hills, the communities of the Park share many characteristics but have developed distinct identities. Common to all is a quality of life and connection to the area, through the influence of the past on the landscape and the present day land-use, sport and recreation. The area produces many mountaineers, snow-sports enthusiasts and others influenced by their natural environment.

(insert visual representation of special qualities)

3. MANAGING THE PARK IN A CHANGING ENVIRONMENT

The special qualities of the Park described in Section 2 are part of a dynamic environment and the result of a long history of changing natural processes, management, and perceptions. The qualities that we value today are a snap-shot in time of social and environmental conditions that are continually evolving.

The designation of the National Park brings a particular focus to these qualities and a special responsibility for their management, but it does not halt the processes of change and evolution. Landscapes evolve, species expand and contract as their habitats and environmental conditions change, and communities change in their size and profile.

In setting out to conserve and enhance the special qualities, we must recognise that changes do occur over time, that we cannot control all the factors which cause change, and that the implications of change can be both positive and negative in terms of the Park's objectives.

A Brief History of the Cairngorms

(insert visual time-line)

The National Park may be new, but the Cairngorm mountains and their surroundings are very old. In fact, their story begins over 400 million years ago when granite rock melted deep beneath the earth's crust. It gradually rose towards the surface until it solidified, over millions of years, below a covering of older rocks. Weathering and erosion gradually removed the older rock above the granite, until it was exposed at the surface.

About 50 million years ago, when the climate was much warmer and wetter than we know today, the shape of the Cairngorms that we now recognise started to form by deep weathering and erosion along lines of weakness in the rock.

Far more recently, during the last glaciation about 2.5 million years ago, the landscape was shaped by glaciers which carved deep troughs such as the Lairig Ghru and Glen Avon. Since then water and weathering has continued to shape the plateaux, straths and glens that we know and enjoy today, and will continue to shape them into the future.

As well as these impressive natural processes, the area has been shaped by human habitation and changing land-use over the last 3000 years. The ancient settlements and transport routes through the hills, the use of timber and introduction of grazing animals have all helped to shape the landscape. Most recently, in the last 500 years, the pattern of estates, farms and crofts that we recognise today has come into being. Agricultural improvement, changing forest management and the development of sheep farming and deer stalking have all led to the present landscape, and their ongoing management continues to actively shape it.

The land-uses and how society values the area have continually evolved through time. For example the forests of the Park have been used and managed by people for different objectives as times change. In the mid-eighteenth century, the forests were valued for their quality timber for ship-building, indeed the ship-building industry that developed at Speymouth relied on timber from Glenmore and Abernethy. In the nineteenth century, the forests became valued for their sporting opportunities, the same period during which deer stalking on the moorland became fashionable. The twentieth century saw the forests valued for their conservation and biodiversity value, and a broad range of recreational opportunities. These shifting public values will continue to develop into the future.

Responding to External Changes

The National Park sits within a much bigger picture, and cannot isolate itself from changes that are taking place beyond the Park boundary. These changes will influence how we can achieve the four aims of the Park, and may require management and objectives to adapt through time. The Park will be affected by global and national trends including climate change, economic patterns, population change, social attitudes, work patterns, national and international policy and legislation.

Management of the Park cannot control these changes but it must respond to them, and continually consider how to achieve the four aims of the Park, and conserve and enhance its special qualities in the changing context. To help this process, research into the likely changes and impacts is an important part of forward planning.

Climate Change

Changes in climate will undoubtedly influence the natural heritage and recreation opportunities of the Cairngorms over time. The full extent of change cannot be predicted, but national trends indicate more storm events and a warmer climate. In the Cairngorms trends including a reduction in snow-lie in recent years are already evident. A warming temperature would result in the range of montane species shrinking, and an expansion of some lower-ground habitats such as woodland to higher ground. If average temperatures continue to rise at the rate of the 1980s-1990s, then changes in species composition could be seen as early as 2010-2020.

An Integrated Approach

In this changing environment, the long-term success of the Park requires the management of its different aspects to be integrated into a coherent approach to meet the four aims collectively.

The people, places and special qualities of the Cairngorms are already strongly connected and interdependent. The landscape, habitats and species that give the area its special character are actively shaped by land management and the communities have evolved with close connections to local land-uses and landscapes. In turn, the

landscape and natural environment are a key attraction to visitors and form the basis of the tourism sector which, directly and indirectly, accounts for a significant proportion of the local economy.

The activities of any one sector can impact on many aspects of the Park, and its management must recognise these linkages, the mutual dependence and the opportunities that come from an integrated approach.

Managing Conflict

The purpose of the Park Authority and the Park Plan is to ensure the four aims of the Park are achieved collectively, which requires an integrated approach to the aims and objectives of the Plan and management of the Park. However, where there appears to the Park Authority to be a conflict between the first aim of the Park, to conserve and enhance the natural and cultural heritage, and the other three aims, section 9(6) of the National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000 requires that greater weight be given to the first aim.

This approach is consistent with the long-term sustainability of the Park, and the ability to continue the delivery of its four aims into the future. Integration between the aims is vital, but the natural and cultural resources which underpin the Park's designation and importance must not be compromised. Given the interactions highlighted above, their conservation and, where possible, enhancement is vital to the Park's future and the delivery of the other three aims.

For this reason, the theme of conserving and enhancing the special qualities runs through all sections of this plan. Whether it is objectives for land management, affordable housing or tourism, for example, management must be consistent with conserving and enhancing the special qualities and prevent damage to them. This integrated approach should minimise the potential conflicts, through identifying them at the start of the planning and management process.

Where conflict does occur however, greater weight will be given to the conservation and enhancement of the natural and cultural resources. The Strategic Environmental Assessment and Sustainability Appraisal will assist in identifying significant effects on the natural and cultural resources and informing decisions where there may be potential conflict.

Diversity within the Park

There is a wide diversity of landscape, land-uses, management and community priorities across different parts of the Park. The Draft Park Plan recognises that this diversity is part of what creates the special qualities valued in the Park. Within the strategic approach set out in the Plan, there is scope for variation of implementation in different areas of the Park and at different times.

Spatial zoning is often used as a means to identify areas where different priorities or management regimes apply. In developing the Draft Park Plan, the Park Authority has considered the use of zoning as a tool to help achieve the aims and objectives of the Park Plan.

There is already a high degree of spatial zoning within the Park that identifies particular management needs or priorities. For example, the range of natural heritage designations including Natura 2000 sites, Sites of Special Scientific Interest and National Nature Reserves identify areas where particular natural heritage objectives apply; and the Local Plan also uses zoning to identify areas most suited to future development.

The Draft Park Plan does not attempt to divide the Park further into separate zones within which different objectives apply. To do so would require a definitive split of objectives and management approach between areas that cannot necessarily be determined so discretely. It would weaken the integrated approach that is set out in the objectives, through which the special qualities of the Park are considered in all areas and in all sectors

The Plan therefore identifies an agenda for the Park as a whole through a series of strategic objectives. The application of these objectives will vary across the Park in different areas and at different times and, for some, implementation will require more detailed and area-specific strategies which will be developed. The key implementation strategies which will show how the Plan's objectives should be achieved in more detail are noted under the objectives of relevant sections. These are currently under development by the Park Authority and its partners, and will be informed by the consultation on this Draft Plan.

Building on Experience

Part of the long history of the Cairngorms is a legacy of research, discussion and debate over the management of the Cairngorms area. For much of the twentieth century it was identified as a potential National Park, although at that time, there were no National Parks in Scotland. In 1995, following the recommendations of the Cairngorms Working Party, the Cairngorms Partnership was established to bring a co-ordinated approach to managing the area. This approach succeeded in developing effective partnerships and taking forward action in a number of important areas.

These previous initiatives have resulted in a number of strategies for the area such as a Forest and Woodland Framework, Catchment Management Plans and work on housing, all of which has helped to shape this Draft Plan. Work to ensure the success of the National Park will require further development of this partnership approach.

This background provides a wealth of experience and information amongst many people in the Park and beyond. The designation of the National Park brings a fresh opportunity to build on this work and a new impetus to managing the issues facing the Cairngorms area. It places us at the start of an exciting new chapter in the long history of the Cairngorms.

Guiding Principles

To help meet the challenge of integration against a backdrop of continual change, the following principles underpin the Plan. They provide a guide to long-term management and decision-making in working towards the vision, objectives and actions identified throughout the Plan. They should be used as a check by all when working towards the objectives of the Plan.

1. Sustainable Development

The Park's natural and cultural resources should be managed, used and enjoyed in ways that conserve and enhance them for future generations, while ensuring that those who currently live in, work in and visit the Park are able to use and enjoy them.

This means:

- Management of the Park should not compromise the special qualities of the area;
- The interactions between the economic, social and environmental resources should be actively identified, managed and developed;
- The impacts of management on economic, social and environmental resources both within the Park and beyond its boundary should be identified and managed.

2. Social Justice

Access to the benefits from the Park's resources in terms of living, working and enjoying the Park should be available to everyone regardless of economic, physical or social constraints.

This means:

- Everyone, regardless of physical or economic constraints should be able to enjoy the special qualities of the area by some means;
- Access to appropriate services and social infrastructure for all living in or visiting the Park.

3. People Participating in the Park

People within and outside the Park should be actively involved in shaping the Park and its management, and be well-informed about the Park and its management.

This means:

- Effective communication between public, private, community and voluntary sectors, locally and nationally;
- Simple and accessible ways for local communities to engage in and influence the management of the Park;
- Local communities take responsibility for their role in the management of the Park;
- Encouraging national engagement with the National Park.

4. Managing Change

Management of the Park should recognise processes of change, actively consider potential future impacts and manage change in an informed way using best-available information.

This means:

- Identifying likely changes over which we have little or no influence and planning accordingly;
- Identifying desirable changes and taking the necessary leadership roles to shape positive change;
- Thinking ahead to consider likely implications of change and sourcing the information needed to inform debate and decisions.

5. Effective Governance

The management structures in the Park should be co-ordinated and efficient, tailored to delivering positive and tangible outcomes for the Park.

This means:

- Co-ordination between public bodies at strategic and delivery levels;
- Effective partnerships of public, private, community and voluntary interests;
- Commitment to transparency and adding value in managing the Park;
- Learning from other areas at home and abroad;
- Building trust and co-operation amongst different interests.

4. VISION- THE PARK IN 25 YEARS TIME

Conserving, Enhancing and Managing the Park

The Cairngorms National Park will increasingly be recognised around the world for its outstanding natural environment – the high plateaux, corries and glens; the extensive open moorland; the pine and birch woods; and the straths with farmland along the clean rivers, lochs and burns. These areas will continue to be home to a wide range of habitats and species. The network of habitats across the Park will be in good condition, including sites identified as being of national and international importance which will be exemplars of good management.

The distinctive landscape character of the Park will be enhanced through improved management, including the extension of alpine scrub, improved woodland networks, and restoration of the more unsightly landscape scars such as redundant vehicle tracks and eroded footpaths. It will still be a landscape shaped by active land-use and management as well as natural processes. There will be a productive mix of farming, forestry, game and wildlife management.

There will be thriving populations of characteristic species such as dotterel, ptarmigan and mountain hare on the high tops, hen harrier and grouse on moorland, golden plover and dunlin on mires, black grouse and capercaillie in the forest, lapwings, oyster catchers and curlew on farmland, otter and salmon in the rivers, and osprey feeding in the lochs.

In the Park's towns, villages and farms, the best examples of distinctive local architecture will be protected. Sustainable and innovative new buildings will be exemplars of good practice. Growth of settlements will safeguard the traditional pattern and character of the built heritage.

The evidence of previous generations living in the area, both the physical remains such as cairns, stone circles, abandoned shielings, drove roads, and castles; and the less tangible evidence of traditions, stories and songs, will be well recorded, cared for, and accessible to understand and appreciate.

Throughout the Park, residents, visitors, businesses and organisations will all contribute in some way to conserving and enhancing what is so special about their part of the Cairngorms.

Communities Living and Working in the Park

Thriving and inclusive communities will sustain, and in turn be sustained by, the special natural and cultural qualities of the Cairngorms. The outstanding environment will stimulate economic activity rather than constrain it and diverse local businesses will flourish.

All people in the Park will be able to find housing, education and training, employment and services that meet their needs. There will be efficient transport

systems operating within and beyond the Park to meet the needs of communities and visitors. Businesses will feel they are a part of the Park, benefit from it, offer a high quality service and experience and be involved in environmental management.

Communities will play an active role in shaping the Park and will have the confidence to share their ideas, experience and culture. Community involvement in policy development and implementation will be normal practice.

Understanding and Enjoying the Park

Residents and visitors will enjoy, understand and support the special qualities of the Park in many different ways, through visitor and recreation experiences of the highest quality. There will be a wide range of outdoor access opportunities on both land and water available to all for responsible enjoyment, fun, spiritual rejuvenation, sport and healthy living. Everyone will be encouraged to experience the varied landscape of the Park, from the open uplands to the woodlands and rivers, in ways that respect the natural environment and cultural heritage of the area.

Visitors will come to the Park year-round to enjoy its fine landscapes, appreciate its wildlife and heritage, explore its character and take part in a range of activities. They will be fully aware of what the Park has to offer, understand the importance of conservation of the area and be keen to support this. Residents will be well-informed about the area and keen to communicate their knowledge and the needs of those living, working and visiting the Park will be mutually respected.

(Insert visual representations of vision)

5. CONSERVING, ENHANCING AND MANAGING THE PARK

5.1 Introduction- conserving and enhancing the special qualities

This section identifies objectives that are specifically targeted at conserving and enhancing the special qualities of the Park, and ensuring the sustainable use of its natural and cultural resources. This is a theme which runs through the other sections of this Plan, whether considering the needs of communities, or recreation and enjoyment in the Park. Conserving and enhancing the qualities which underpin the Park's importance and attraction, as well as much of its economy and communities, must form the basis of successful long-term management.

This section sets out an approach to managing the natural and cultural heritage of the Park that recognises the interdependence between the special qualities and its management, and the important links to the socio-economic viability of land management.

5.2 Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Heritage

5.2.1 Landscape

The distinctive landscape character of the Park derives from the combination of mountain plateaux, extensive forests, open moorlands, straths, lochs and rivers, together with settlements and designed landscapes around estate houses. It is one of the most distinctive special qualities of the Park. The landscape is a product of both the natural environmental conditions and the history of land-use, expressing both the natural and cultural heritage of the Park. Its conservation and enhancement will therefore be influenced by many different activities and processes, but should be guided by the following objectives.

Strategic Objectives:

a) Maintain and enhance the distinctive diversity of landscape character across the Park

The distinctive landscape character is closely connected with the landforms, land management, habitats and species found here and is one of the key reasons people enjoy the Park. The landscape character also contains a historic record of use and society. Within the landscape there will be dynamic change and evolution but management and development of the Park should retain, and where possible enhance, the distinctive character. While the Park contains two National Scenic Areas identified for their national significance, the designation of the National Park has highlighted the national importance and coherence of the landscape qualities throughout its area. Accordingly, landscape considerations will be included in all activities that could affect landscape character anywhere within the Park.

b) Ensure development complements, and where possible enhances, the landscape character of the Park

New development and infrastructure, necessary to meet the needs of those living and working in the Park, should be designed to fit and complement the landscape character of its setting, and where possible enhance that setting. The settlement

statements in the Local Plan should be informed by landscape capacity studies to ensure that location and design of any new development will complement and enhance the distinctive landscape character. The potential impacts of public and private roads, masts, utilities, renewable energy developments (in and where relevant beyond the Park), road signs and all other man made artefacts should be assessed to ensure they do not detract from the landscape character.

c) Conserve and enhance the wild characteristics of areas within the Park

Large areas of the Park, not restricted to the montane area, are valued for their innate qualities and the experience of wildness that many people come to the area to enjoy. This sense of wildness and quiet enjoyment should be safeguarded from encroachment by human infrastructure, inappropriate activities or insensitive management and use. New tracks, paths, roads, structures and motorised forms of recreation should not detract from the quiet enjoyment of the Park and restoration of vehicle tracks and eroded footpaths should be pursued.

d) Raise awareness and understanding of the influences of natural processes, land management and culture on the landscape character

The relationships between the natural and cultural processes that shape the landscape character, and the context of the historic landscape, should be explained and understood as part of the context for managing and enjoying the landscape of the Park. This will in part be encouraged by active engagement with communities to identify what it is about existing landscapes that makes them appreciated. It will also be encouraged by identifying and maintaining special view points and identifying popular views from roads.

Existing policy context:

- European Landscape Convention
- National Scenic Areas
- Historic Landscape Assessment
- National Planning Policy Guideline 14: Natural Heritage
- Wildness in Scotland's Countryside, Policy Statement 02/03, Scottish Natural Heritage
- Landscape Character Assessments
- NPPG 14 Natural Heritage

Key Implementation Strategies

- Cairngorms Local Plan
- Integrated Land Management Strategy
- Natural Heritage Strategy

Cross-Reference

- 5.5.1 Historic and Built Environment
- 6.7 Renewable Energy
- 7.2 Outdoor Access and Recreation

The Montane Area- a national asset at the heart of the Park

The Park contains the largest expanse of high montane ground above the potential treeline in Britain. It is recognised nationally and internationally for the quality and diversity of its geology and geomorphology, its habitats including dwarf shrub vegetation and arctic-alpine species, its wildness and landscape. It is also relatively accessible and is valued by many for the mountain recreation opportunities.

The conservation of these qualities and the enhancement of the understanding and experience of the montane area is a theme that runs throughout this Plan. Key issues affecting the montane area include climate change, grazing pressure and infrastructure development. The management of different land-uses, the natural resources, tourism, outdoor recreation and interpretation must all contribute to ensuring that the montane area is seen in the future as a national asset in excellent condition.

There are many objectives throughout this Plan that will influence the conservation and enhancement of the montane area, particularly those for nature conservation, land management, and outdoor access and recreation. The potential impacts on the special qualities of the montane area should be considered by all sectors in the Park in their policy, management and activities. In particular, application of these objectives in the montane area should:

- a) Improve long-term sustainability and restore the full range of montane habitats, through managing pressures from grazing, other land management and development;**
- b) Demonstrate the highest standards in managing the impacts of recreation on montane habitats, soils and natural processes through sensitive path repairs, targeted advice and encouragement of the long-walk-in;**
- c) Retain and enhance the sense of wildness in the montane area through restoration of high altitude vehicle tracks, removal of redundant infrastructure and minimising the negative impacts of motorised access, organised events, aircraft noise and commercial infrastructure.**

5.2.2 Nature Conservation

The Park's biodiversity, geology and landforms are of national and international importance. The extent and scale of habitats including the native pine woodlands, mountain plateaux, rivers, moorlands, heathlands, farmlands and wetlands hold a rich biodiversity that includes many rare and threatened species. Approximately 39% of the Park is designated for a particular nature conservation interest, and their future condition should be enhanced through a landscape-scale approach that brings all habitats in the wider countryside of the Park into good condition and increases the connectivity between them.

31 areas of the Park (including the rivers Spey and Dee) are currently designated as being of European importance for nature conservation through the Natura 2000 designations of Special Protection Areas and Special Areas of Conservation. A total of 46 sites are designated as part of a national suite of Sites of Special Scientific Interest, and a further 6 areas are designated as National Nature Reserves where management for nature conservation is given primacy. There are also 15 sites recognised for their geological importance in the Geological Conservation Review. These designations carry special responsibilities for public authorities, land managers and users. While these sites represent examples of the best of the natural heritage in the Park, they cannot be managed in isolation from the surrounding land and habitats.

Accordingly, their future condition should be enhanced through a landscape-scale approach that brings all habitats in the rest of the Park into good condition. This will be achieved through a strategic approach to management that targets habitats enhancement in key locations. This will increase the viability of the designated areas by increasing the connectivity between them, and will improve the extent of high quality habitats and associated native plant and animal communities that is already unparalleled in Britain.

Natura 2000- A Network of Special Sites

Natura 2000 is a European network of protected sites which represent areas of the highest value for natural habitats and species of plants and animals which are rare, endangered or vulnerable in the European Community.

The network includes Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) which support valuable habitats and species (other than birds) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) which support significant numbers of wild birds and their habitats.

The network is established through the 1992 Habitats Directive and the 1979 Birds Directive. Through these, Scotland has a responsibility to identify and protect SACs and SPAs. There are currently 19 SACs and 12 SPAs in the Park, which together with other designated sites must be protected and managed positively for their nature conservation interest. The Park also has a number of wetlands of international importance listed under the Ramsar Convention. The Government has chosen as a matter of policy to afford these sites protection equivalent to Natura sites, although many have dual designation already.

The qualifying habitats in these designated areas usually extend outside the site boundaries, and the objective of achieving favourable conservation status for them can only be secured in the long-term by safeguarding the habitats wherever they occur. This adds impetus to the need to manage all semi-natural habitats and native species in the Park to the highest standards.

Strategic Objectives:

a) Conserve and enhance the diversity of habitats and species present throughout the Park through a landscape-scale approach to habitat networks

The habitats and species throughout the Park are special qualities which underpin its designation as a National Park. Many are of national and international importance and their conservation, and where possible enhancement, is of key importance. However, it is the existing scale and proximity of habitats, such as semi-natural woodland, rivers, moorland and montane areas that give the Park its particular importance, and nature conservation efforts should therefore seek to bring all habitats in the Park into good condition. Management should take a strategic view to enhance the linkages between habitats and the scale of individual habitats, and minimise habitat fragmentation. Extensive and inter-connected networks of montane ground, moorland, forest, wetlands and semi-natural farmland habitats should be enhanced by spatial action plans, and protected from inappropriate actions that would detract from the network.

b) Ensure all designated nature conservation sites are in good condition

Within the network of habitats in the Park, some are designated as being of national or international importance for particular nature conservation features. These sites should be exemplars of good management where the natural heritage interest is secure within a long-term management plan, devised in partnership with land managers.

Public support and resources should seek to engage managers, local communities and visitors in understanding and caring for these sites. All public bodies have responsibility to ensure that they safeguard designated sites when carrying out their functions. The use of targeted incentives will ensure specific actions to maintain and enhance the interests of designated sites, and these will be complemented by incentives that promote the positive management of the connecting habitats between them.

c) Engage all sectors in implementing international, national and local biodiversity targets

All partners in the Park have a key role to play in delivering aspects of European Union biodiversity objectives, the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy and the Cairngorms Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP). The Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004 sets a target to halt the decline of biodiversity in Scotland by 2010. This target reinforces the aim of safeguarding the contribution that biodiversity makes to the special qualities of the Park. The Cairngorms LBAP, published in 2002, identifies a range of management issues and opportunities to conserve and enhance the biodiversity of the area. Building on this, all sectors involved in managing, living and working in the Park should be engaged in helping to deliver the aims of the Local Biodiversity Action Plan, thereby conserving and enhancing the biodiversity qualities of the Park. While biodiversity objectives apply to all native species and semi-natural habitats throughout the Park, some species require extra effort to protect and enhance them either because of their particular ecological requirements or because they are threatened with extinction. The Park has particular responsibilities for a number of such species including capercaillie, hen harrier, water voles, sea lampreys and freshwater pearl mussels, as well as a range of plants.

d) Ensure that populations of species given special protection under the Habitat Regulations, the Wildlife and Countryside Act and the Nature Conservation Act are stable or, where appropriate, increasing

In addition to ensuring that the habitats necessary for those species given special protection are in good condition, a co-ordinated effort between public agencies, land managers, the police and public to address wildlife crime and irresponsible actions is required. These bodies need to develop partnerships with local communities to help to prevent all forms of wildlife crime including poaching and illegal killing or taking of protected species. This will be supported by communications about the law, the nature of the species at risk, and advice as to how all can help to safeguard them.

e) Promote access to appropriate policy and funding mechanisms to support nature conservation

Public policy and support for nature conservation should be targeted at all interests that can contribute, including land managers, but also businesses, communities and visitors. The support should focus on the nature conservation interests and opportunities particularly relevant to the Park and should be accessible and easily understood. Public support should be based on compliance with good management practice.

f) Identify, prioritise and take action to address non-native species that pose a threat to the natural heritage and land management of the Park

Non-native species can be introduced either deliberately or accidentally, and many have the potential to damage the existing species, habitats and ecosystems, as well as affecting the landscape and land management. Examples include non-native fish, riparian and aquatic plants that currently pose a threat to the river ecosystems and the associated fisheries, as well as mink which threaten water voles, and grey squirrels which impact on red squirrel populations. Together, we need to identify key players and provide the necessary resources and incentives for implementation and monitoring.

g) Promote appropriate reintroductions of species and reinstatement of habitats and the likely impacts on existing species, habitats and ecosystems

Consideration will be given to reintroductions of some species or the reinstatement of some habitats in key areas of the Park. These may include for example, freshwater pearl mussel (already being reintroduced into 2 sites), reinstatement of water vole habitat and reintroduction of the species after controlling mink and some plant communities in floodplain areas. Opportunities should also be taken to manage habitats in particular ways that could attract the recolonisation of species that have become extinct in the Park, including corncrakes. Where these or other species introductions or reintroductions are being considered, their potential impacts should be researched to inform decision-making and mitigation measures.

h) Develop awareness and understanding of the interactions of land-uses, tourism, outdoor access and nature conservation amongst all interests

To ensure success in conserving and enhancing the natural heritage of the Park, all sectors need to be aware that their actions can impact, positively or negatively, on the natural heritage. Opportunities for interpretation, training or demonstration should encourage greater understanding of the interactions and mutual interests between nature conservation and the activities of managers, residents and visitors in the Park.

i) Identify and carry out a research programme designed to provide the information and monitoring on the habitats, species and ecosystems required to guide future decision-making

There is a specific need to address the monitoring and research on the status of species, habitats and ecosystems and the key influences including climate change scenarios and recreational disturbance.

j) Raise awareness of the outstanding geology and geomorphology in the Park

The Park has an internationally important record of geology and geomorphology. To encourage its long-term conservation, and understanding and enjoyment of geology and geomorphology as part of the Park's special qualities, greater effort is required in raising awareness through interpretation and education.

Existing policy context:

- Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004
- Scottish Biodiversity Strategy
- Habitats Directive 1992
- Birds Directive 1979
- Deer (Scotland) Act 1996
- Geological Conservation Review
- NPPG 4 Land for Mineral Working

Key Implementation Strategies

- Natural Heritage Strategy
- Integrated Land Management Strategy
- Local Biodiversity Action Plan
- Cairngorms Local Plan

Cross-Reference

- 7.2 Outdoor Access and Recreation
- 6.4 Sustainable Tourism

5.3 Sustainable Use of Natural Resources

The special qualities that we value in the Park, together with the resources we use for much of our economy and communities, depend on the functioning systems of soil, water and air, natural resources which must be sustained. Many of the objectives set out in other sections of this plan will affect these resources, but there are some objectives for sustainable resource use set out here that should apply across all sectors.

Strategic Objectives:

a) All management and development in the Park should seek to make the most sustainable use of natural resources, including water and energy

All interests in the Park including households, land managers, visitors and businesses should seek to minimise their impact on natural resources and ensure their use is as sustainable as possible. New development and infrastructure should incorporate the most sustainable systems of energy, water, materials and other resources in order to minimise its impacts on natural processes.

5.3.1 Soils

Soils, together with other factors such as climate, exert a strong influence on natural systems, land-uses, biodiversity, industry and infrastructure. The Park is exceptional because of its unusually large extent of rare, undisturbed soils compared to other areas of Scotland, particularly soils associated with the Caledonian pine forests and the montane plateaux. The structure of soils is key to the drainage and nutrient functions that underpin habitats and land-use, and broader functions such as carbon storage in peat and its role in regulating climate change. For example while peat lands have their own intrinsic importance for their habitats and species, they also have an important function in regulating water flows in catchments, and as long-term carbon stores.

Strategic Objectives:

a) Prevent degradation and erosion of vulnerable montane and organic soils, including peat

The structure and functionality of these soil types can be damaged as a result of excessive trampling by walkers and off-track cyclists, by tracking from motorised vehicles, by the construction of tracks, by burning, excessive grazing and trampling by domestic livestock and wild deer. Receipt of public support for management must require compliance with soil conservation measures appropriate to the land holding. Those soils which are particularly vulnerable, such as the montane and peat soils, should be conserved through management to ensure that the functioning structures are not lost. Management of existing developments in the montane zone, such as the ski areas, will require soil conservation actions to safeguard against damage that can be caused as the result of the activities and supporting infrastructure. Management of outdoor access, recreation and farming, in addition to development through the Local Plan should also contribute to soil conservation.

Key Implementation Strategies:

- Cairngorms Local Plan

5.3.2 Water

The watercourses and lochs of the Park generally have an excellent water quality, but there are pressures associated with settlement development and land management. There can be extreme fluctuations in quantity arising particularly from heavy rain and snow-melt. As well as providing part of the essential infrastructure for living and working in the Park, the water resource is an important habitat for many species and a popular recreation resource. The Rivers Dee and Spey are both classified as being of European importance for nature conservation and marshes, such as the Insh marshes, are also of international importance. Other rivers, such as the Feshie, are also recognised for their fluvial geomorphological interest. Management of the water resource needs to account for these varied uses and benefits, focus on water quality, quantity, hydromorphology and ecology, and be closely integrated with surrounding land-uses.

The management of floodplains is one of the key issues in the Park, as parts of many rivers have been cut off from their river systems by flood walls. This channels flow in a much more intensive way than is natural leading to erosion of river beds and loss of finer sediments. It also leads to the loss of wetland habitats that help to support the diversity and viability of the river systems, and flood waters that cannot spread out in the upper catchments can cause severe flooding downstream.

Catchment Management- The Water Framework Directive

The 2000 Water Framework Directive establishes a new legal framework for the protection, improvement and sustainable use of water, including surface and ground water. Its purpose is to:

- prevent deterioration and enhance status of aquatic ecosystems, including groundwater
- promote sustainable water use
- reduce pollution
- contribute to the mitigation of floods and droughts

The Directive is implemented in Scotland through the Water Environment and Water Services (Scotland) Act 2004, which sets out an approach to River Basin Management Planning on which water management in the Park should build, by taking a catchment and ecosystem scale approach to secure quality and quantity.

Strategic Objectives:

a) Maintain and enhance the existing high water quality environment in the Park

The water quality in the Park's rivers and lochs is generally excellent. Management of the watercourses, neighbouring land management and the water and waste infrastructure should aim to maintain, and, where possible, enhance further the quality and quantity of water to the benefit of landscape, biodiversity and human use including services, access and recreation.

b) Adopt a catchment-scale approach to water management that integrates land-use, nature conservation and flood management

By managing watercourses in the context of the catchment area there are opportunities to co-ordinate its management with surrounding land-uses and account for the up and down-stream influences and impacts. This offers benefits to water quality and quantity, flood management, fisheries, biodiversity, access and recreation. The catchment management approach currently developed for the Rivers Spey and the Dee provides a good basis on which to develop this approach in the Park.

c) Encourage more sustainable patterns of water-use by households, industry, agriculture and business

Managing the demand for water could have as much, if not greater environmental impact as managing its supply. Water supply can be a significant constraint to the development of communities. Water used wastefully is water lost from the environment and there is wasted energy in treating water that is surplus to requirements. All built development and activities using water in the Park should seek to minimise wastage and implement sustainable systems of water-use through efficient systems. Reducing both leakage from water supply networks and the demand for water should be encouraged.

d) Promote sustainable flood management consistent with natural fluvial processes

Potential flooding should be managed through a process of identifying risks. As the implications of climate change become clearer, these should be taken into account. Until then, a precautionary approach should be adopted. Opportunities to reduce flood risk should be taken, within and beyond the Park, such as modifying the flow through management of floodplains, wetland creation, sustainable urban drainage systems, surface flow and upstream activities. The Local Plan should minimise the risk of flooding affecting or resulting from new development.

Existing policy context:

- Water Framework Directive 2000
- SPP7 Planning and Flooding

Key Implementation Strategies

- Integrated Land Management Strategy
- Natural Heritage Strategy
- Cairngorms Local Plan
- Spey Catchment Management Plan

Cross-reference

- 5.4 Integrated Land Management
- 6.6 Housing and Infrastructure
- 7.2 Outdoor Access and Recreation

5.3.3 Air

The air quality in the Cairngorms is high in comparison with many other areas of Scotland. The prevailing westerly maritime airflow and the absence of major industry in the area means there is little air pollution. As well as underpinning the natural heritage, the sense of ‘fresh air’ and lack of air pollution is a key quality that people come to the area to enjoy.

a) Maintain, and where possible enhance, the existing high level of air quality

The air quality is a key part of the natural environment that people come to enjoy in the Park, and helps to sustain many of the habitats and species as well as contributing to the quality of life. Emissions from transport, industry and settlements should be minimised.

b) Retain dark night skies and minimise light and noise pollution

As well as the physical quality of the air, the low level of light pollution means the Park is one of the best areas in the UK for dark night skies. The tranquillity of the area is also a particular quality that should be retained and enhanced. The low noise and light pollution contributes significantly to the sense of wildness and to people’s enjoyment and perceptions of the Park.

Existing policy context:

- Air Quality Framework Directive 1996
- UK Air Quality Strategy

- Air Quality (Scotland) Regulations 2003

Cross-Reference

- 6.5 Transport and Communications

5.4 Integrated Land Management

Land and water management on farms, crofts, estates and reserves is a major influence on all four aims of the Park, and particularly the landscape, and the natural and cultural heritage qualities of the Park. It creates and maintains many of the important habitats, as well as sustaining businesses and creating employment. The ongoing conservation and enhancement of the special qualities of the Park will rely on a viable land management sector whose varied objectives contribute positively to the outstanding natural and cultural environment.

Integration is a familiar concept at a policy level across rural Scotland, but the challenge and opportunity in the Park is to identify the practical ways in which both policy-makers and land managers can take a joined-up approach and work with others to the benefit of both land management and the National Park.

This section identifies strategic objectives for all land management sectors, aimed at ensuring an integrated approach across different activities. It then identifies further strategic objectives that are specific to particular land management sectors and resources.

There are potential conflicts inherent in identifying objectives for the management of different land-uses across the Park. In particular, the application of these objectives at an individual site level will require choices to be made within this overall framework, but this is the essence of integrated management. More detailed spatial guidance will be developed where appropriate to help resolve conflicts and integration.

Strategic Objectives for all Land Management:

a) Maintain and enhance a viable land management sector that delivers private and public objectives and enhances the special qualities of the Park

The ongoing management of the land underpins many of the qualities for which the Park is valued. A vibrant land management sector that supports private enterprise and employment and provides active management is a key means to conserve and enhance the special qualities of the Park and deliver other benefits for the public.

b) Integrate support for all land and water management activities to deliver public benefits that conserve and enhance the special qualities of the Park

Land management can deliver many public benefits, such as access infrastructure, nature conservation or education. These are benefits that the public enjoy and use, but which have a cost attached to their provision and management. At present there is a range of public support measures for land managers. In the future these should be targeted at delivering benefits that are relevant to the Park area, transparent in what they buy, straight-forward for managers to access and integrated across the varied land management sectors.

c) Develop and promote best practice in land and water management and its interactions with people and other land-uses

Land managers and public agencies should work together, and with local communities and other interests, to ensure that land and water management in the Park is an example of best practice that takes into account a range of objectives and the interactions of different land-uses, outdoor access and local communities.

d) Develop collaboration and communication between statutory agencies, land managers, non-governmental organisations, voluntary groups, communities and other interests

The interactions between land management, the natural heritage and the economy of the Park requires all sectors to work together, share information and be pro-active in developing understanding and best practice in land management. Agencies and land managers should share information and management plans with local communities and each other.

e) Develop local supply chains and markets for local produce

The local consumption of local produce offers many benefits including enhanced viability of production, a greater share of the value captured for producers and businesses within the Park, and a reduced need to transport goods over long distances. At present there are weak links in the supply chains for local processing and marketing which need to be addressed.

f) Reduce waste, energy use and pollution from all land management activities

All land management activities should actively seek ways to minimise waste, energy use and pollution. Where pollution incidents do occur, managers should have the necessary plans and infrastructure to deal with them quickly and effectively and minimise adverse impacts.

Diverse land ownership and management

There is a wide diversity of land ownership across the Park. The majority of land is in diverse private ownership, with smaller areas owned by Non-Governmental Organisations (including the National Trust for Scotland and the RSPB) and public organisations (including the Forestry Commission and Scottish Natural Heritage).

Different owners and managers set varied objectives. For example, some land is managed primarily for nature conservation, other areas are managed primarily for agricultural production or sporting businesses and other areas for recreation. While the primary objective or context will vary, most land managers will be delivering several different objectives within one area. Therefore in managing this mosaic of uses, managers should have regard to the objectives of their neighbours and potential implications beyond their own land holding.

Sections 5.4.1 to 5.4.5 below set out the objectives for the main land-uses within the Park, but it is recognised that any one manager or land-holding is likely to be involved in several of these activities within the context of their own aims and objectives. The diversity of ownership and management across the Park helps to support the varied landscape and special qualities that give the Park its character, but integration is also required to achieve the vision of the Park.

5.4.1 Farming & Crofting

With approximately 570 farm holdings and 105 crofts covering over 70% of the Cairngorms area, agriculture has a significant influence on the landscape and natural heritage of the Park. Much of this area is rough grazing and moorland, with the improved grassland and arable production generally being restricted to the straths.

The following objectives promote and support sensitive and sustainable forms of agriculture and crofting that produce good quality food in association with the conservation and enhancement of semi-natural habitats and their associated wildlife, landforms and landscapes within farmed areas and the re-creation of features such as dykes and hedges that have been diminished.

Strategic Objectives:

a) Manage agricultural production to be consistent with and support the special qualities of the Park

The farmland of the Park supports many valuable habitats, for example for breeding waders such as lapwing and oyster catchers. Farming methods should be consistent with the conservation of habitats and species present, and should actively seek to maximise the opportunities to create and support habitat networks, enhance the

landscape and contribute to the natural heritage of the Park, including features that have diminished such as dykes and scrub where appropriate.

b) Maintain a productive and viable agricultural sector

A productive and viable agricultural sector underpins many of the public benefits that land management delivers, particularly some farmland habitats. As well as support for public benefits, it is important to long-term sustainability that agricultural businesses throughout the Park are producing a range of marketable goods.

c) Encourage the continued development of crofting

Crofting tenure applies only to the Badenoch and Strathspey area within the Park, where it provides opportunities for small-scale and part-time land management and production in addition to the mainstream farming sector. Crofting in this area helps to maintain people living in rural locations and forms a part of the land-use pattern, particularly around settlements. Outside Badenoch and Strathspey, similar small-scale agricultural activity should be encouraged that will contribute to supporting rural communities and local production.

d) Make available land for those who wish to farm, particularly new-entrants

The availability of land is a key constraint on the number of new people able to take up farming or crofting. This is the result of many factors including the viability of existing holdings, access to finance and the existing pattern of land holdings. Where possible, assistance in sourcing land for those wishing to farm should be encouraged, in locations consistent with good management of the natural and cultural heritage.

Existing policy context:

- Common Agricultural Policy Reform
- Forward Strategy for Scottish Agriculture
- Single Farm Payment Scheme
- Rural Development Regulation and Plan for Scotland
- Agricultural Environmental Impact Assessments

Key Implementation Strategies

- Integrated Land Management Strategy
- Cairngorms Local Plan

Cross-Reference

- 6.2 Economy and Employment

5.4.2 Forestry

The woodlands of Strathspey, Deeside, Donside and the Angus Glens form an extensive forest resource that is predominantly native, whether planted or self-sown, and renewable. The extent of this forest, together with the close proximity and connectivity of individual woodlands combines to form one of the most valuable ecological networks in Britain, and is one of the widely recognised special qualities of the Park.

The conservation and enhancement of this network and its predominantly native character is important and should be integrated with work to support the production, processing and local use of timber in pursuit of broader objectives, including sustainable design and construction and renewable energy. Public support and policy needs to encourage the wide range of benefits provided by forests, including timber production, landscape enhancement, nature conservation, sport, recreation and water management and carbon sequestration.

Strategic Objectives:

a) Maintain existing native woodland cover and expand to develop habitat networks that complement the landscape character of the Park

The existing native woodland is an important special quality of the Park, forming a distinctive part of the landscape and biodiversity. The existing native woods should be conserved and expanded, irrespective of whether or not they are listed on the Native pinewood register, as all make an important contribution to the Park's natural and cultural heritage.

Expansion should establish large-scale habitat networks that enhance their viability and help to encourage species that require large habitat areas in which to thrive. Networks will also enhance the landscape character and non-woodland habitats, and in the long-term could lead to links between the Spey and Dee. Where expansion is through planting rather than natural regeneration, seed of local origin should be used.

b) Support multi-objective woodland management that includes timber production, fuel wood, recreation and nature conservation

Woodlands can deliver many benefits for both managers and the wider community, ranging from the production of marketable timber to outdoor access and nature conservation. Management of woodlands in the Park should reflect this range of objectives and seek to deliver multiple benefits in each case. Public support for woodland management should focus on delivering these multiple benefits.

c) Encourage a mix of tree species, ages and woodland structure to complement the landscape character of the Park

The present ratio of native and non-native woodland (approximately 85:15) is a distinctive characteristic of the Park's landscape. There should continue to be a mix of species, age and woodland structure that can deliver the objectives of production, recreation and conservation. The use of locally sourced seed should be promoted. Woodland structure should include dead-wood, a valuable resource for biodiversity.

d) Encourage a gradation of tree and scrub cover from valley floor to tree-line in targeted areas and the re-development of woodland types that have decline

Woodland cover in the Cairngorms has generally retreated to a lower altitude than its previous natural extent. In targeted locations identified as part of a strategic approach to a habitat network, the upper tree-line, including scrub cover such as juniper should be encouraged to extend up to its natural altitudinal limit, bringing benefits to landscape and biodiversity. The broad leaved woodland community component of the forest has been much reduced, and where it still exists is often under pressure from domestic and wild grazing animals. Forestry strategy should promote the regeneration of remnants and replanting on suitable sites retaining appropriate soils and ground

flora and enhancing riparian woodlands. This objective requires particular integration with deer management objectives.

e) Support the development of local markets, processing and supply chains for forest products

The economic viability of forestry remains key to ensuring the varied benefits of woodlands in the long-term. Opportunities to link producers with processors and customers should be developed to ensure effective supply chains, and markets for timber and value-added products should be supported.

f) Promote community participation in woodland planning and management and an understanding of local woodland characteristics and distinctiveness

Many communities have woodland nearby which is used for informal recreation and valued for its amenity. Woodland management also offers potential economic and social benefits to communities through local contracting, use and marketing of timber products, and education and interpretation. Communities should also be able to inform forest policy development and contribute to the objectives and planning for forest policy in order to maximise the local benefits.

The Caledonian Pine Forest

Native pine woodlands of self-sown Scots pine are known as relicts of 'Caledonian Forest', and are the western-most link to the extensive boreal forest which formerly covered a much larger area of northern Europe. They usually also contain birch, juniper and other tree species and communities and provide a distinctive habitat that is home to several rare species, including capercaillie, crested tit and Scottish crossbill.

The Park includes the most extensive area of Caledonian pine forest in Scotland, one which is very important for biodiversity and a distinct feature of the Cairngorms. Native pine woods are a priority habitat in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan and Caledonian Forest is a notified feature in four Special Areas of Conservation within the Park.

The conservation of the existing Caledonian Forest through natural regeneration should be a key factor in guiding future expansion and habitat networks. This can reduce fragmentation, encourage regeneration and restore forest structure.

Existing policy context:

- Scottish Forestry Strategy
- Scottish Forestry Grant Scheme
- Scottish Forest Industries Cluster
- UK Forest Standard

Key Implementation Strategies

- Integrated Land Management Strategy
- Forestry and Woodland Framework
- Natural Heritage Strategy

- Cairngorms Local Plan

Cross-reference

- 6.2 Economy and Employment
- 6.7 Renewable Energy
- 6.9 Strengthening Communities
- 7.2 Outdoor Access and Recreation

5.4.3 Moorland Management

Just as woodlands are a characteristic part of the Park's landscape character, so are the extensive moorlands, defined here as the open areas below the montane zone, dominated by heather, juniper scrub, wet heath, blanket bog and semi-natural dry grasslands. This includes a significant area of lowland heath. Moorland covers approximately 40% of the Park so its management has a significant impact on the landscape and biodiversity resource, contributing to a number of the special qualities of the Park. Moorland management is closely connected with the cultural heritage of land-use in the Park and brings significant socio-economic investment.

Strategic Objectives:

a) Maintain extensive moorlands as a high value and sustainable resource for nature conservation, sport, agriculture, landscape and recreation

The grazing and trampling of deer and agricultural stock, combined with burning can have a significant impact on moorland vegetation, including heather regeneration. Through carefully planned grazing and muirburn regimes, the landscape, biodiversity and sporting benefits of moorland can be optimised. Active management of moorlands, including stock and game, disease and tick control, and infrastructure is needed to deliver the potential benefits which in turn support local communities and employment.

b) Demonstrate and enhance the links between moorland management and biodiversity

The moorland habitat is an internationally significant biodiversity resource. The profile of this resource amongst managers and the public should be increased, so that moorland management, and the understanding of it, can recognise and improve the opportunities to benefit biodiversity. Management for grouse should respect the full moorland ecosystem.

c) Manage the interaction of moorlands with surrounding land-uses to maintain the integrity of the moorland landscape, ecosystems and hydrology

Individual moorlands cannot be managed in isolation. The extent of ecosystems and hydrology associated with moorlands means that they need to be managed on a large scale, and integrated with neighbouring woodland edges and other habitat networks.

Existing policy context:

- Principles of Moorland Management (Scotland's Moorland Forum)

- The Muirburn Code

Key Implementation Strategies

- Integrated Land Management Strategy
- Natural Heritage Strategy

Cross-Reference

- 6.2 Economy and Employment
- 6.4 Sustainable Tourism
- 7.2 Outdoor Access and Recreation

Forestry and Moorlands- a network of habitats

In the Park as a whole, forestry and moorlands are both important components of the landscape, habitats and economy. In fact it is the particular combination of forests, moorlands and montane areas that contribute to the Park's special character. However, there are tensions between the objectives for each, not least because the two cannot occupy the same site. While the objectives give long-term encouragement to both land-uses, decisions on the appropriate places for each can only be made on a more detailed assessment by managers of the characteristics and opportunities of particular sites.

The expansion of native woodland should focus on areas which will give the best advantages in terms of habitat networks and links, particularly among and between the existing core areas of Strathspey and Deeside; the establishment of a full sequence of woodland types including oak/birch, pine/birch, and sub-alpine scrub; and the enhancement of the landscape character.

There are also places where it will be appropriate to fell woodland plantations and restore ground to moorland, particularly where inappropriate and unproductive forest planting has taken place in the past.

Overall, a mosaic of forest and open moorland is likely to deliver a valuable mix of benefits for biodiversity, land-use, recreation and landscape. Management decisions should be informed by the opportunities to develop a network that meets the needs of different land-uses and enhances the species valued as part of the special qualities of the Park. Spatial guidance to help target networks in the most effective locations will be developed.

5.4.4 Deer Management

Red, roe and sika deer are present in the Park. They are a valuable part of the natural and cultural heritage of the Park and contribute significantly to the economic viability of some communities. They are a feature of the natural heritage that visitors associate with the Park and wish to see. Deer can have a beneficial impact on some habitats, but there are areas within the Park where deer populations are currently having a

significant adverse impact on the natural heritage qualities which is a particular management issue to be addressed.

The management of deer populations interacts with a number of other land management activities, including moorland management, forestry and farming, and with the management of other habitats and species. While the management of deer will vary across the Park according to species, different land units and conditions, the following objectives set out a framework to address deer management consistently.

Strategic Objectives:

a) Manage deer populations at densities consistent with the special natural heritage qualities of the Park, particularly native woodland, montane and moorland habitats

Deer are an essential part in the functioning of many of the Park's habitats, and need to be present within the carrying capacity of the land. However, deer can have an adverse impact on some habitats through over-grazing and trampling. Management of deer populations should be based on regular assessments of habitat impact, co-ordinated at the level of biological populations and maintained at levels that do not cause significant adverse impact to habitats.

b) Encourage co-ordination of deer management across the Park

As deer move across ownership and management boundaries throughout the Park, their management needs to be co-ordinated. There are opportunities to develop the existing collaboration of Deer Management Groups to further co-ordinate the planning and implementation of management and address issues at a scale appropriate to deer populations.

c) Maintain and enhance the socio-economic sustainability of the deer resource

Deer management contributes significantly to the economy of the Park and provides employment, direct and indirect, often in the more remote areas. The skills and expertise of deer managers are important to the management of the Park and their roles often support communities in remote areas.

d) Research, make accessible and use the best available data on habitat impacts, population models and good practice to inform deer management planning

Deer management should be based as far as possible on sound data and evidence. Existing sources of data should be collated and be easily accessible to managers and others, to develop greater understanding of the issues and impacts of management, and promote informed debate.

e) Where deer fencing is considered appropriate, minimise the impacts on public safety, deer welfare, biodiversity, landscape, cultural heritage and recreation

Deer fencing can serve a useful purpose, but its potential negative impacts should be considered and minimised. Decisions on whether fencing is appropriate should refer to the Joint Agency Statement and Guidance on Deer Fencing adopted by public agencies in 2004 as a starting point. Fencing should only be used as part of a wider management plan and should remain in place only as long as necessary. Further guidance on appropriate use of fencing should be developed.

Existing policy context:

- Deer (Scotland) Act 1996
- Deer Commission for Scotland Long Term Strategy
- Deer Commission for Scotland Best Practice Guidance
- Joint Agency Statement and Guidance on Deer Fencing

Key Implementation Strategies

- Strategic Deer Plan
- Integrated Land Management Strategy
- Forestry and Woodland Framework

Cross-Reference

- 6.2 Economy and Employment
- 6.4 Sustainable Tourism
- 7.2 Outdoor Access and Recreation

5.4.5 Fisheries Management

Atlantic Salmon, Sea Trout and Brown Trout are the principal species for which river fisheries are managed in the Park. Significant lengths of the Spey, Dee, Don, North and South Esk are within the Park and make up an important fishery resource in the Scottish context. The surrounding land-uses, water abstraction and use, river engineering and interactions with non-native species all have a significant impact on the quality of the fishery resource.

a) Encourage co-ordination of fisheries management at river system and catchment level

The issues affecting river fisheries within the Park, including the proliferation of invasive weed species, non-native fish and the need for broader integration of fisheries management with the positive management of riparian habitats, surrounding land-uses and recreation requires co-ordination at the scale of catchments and river systems between river managers and with other interests. Building on the existing work of District Fishery Boards, management should support the implementation of Catchment Management Plans through regulation and incentive schemes, education, awareness and targeted initiatives for specific issues.

b) Encourage removal and minimisation of physical barriers that impede passage of fish and affect river flow

There are a number of barriers and physical deterrents to fish migration within rivers which can also alter the river habitat and structure through erosion and deposition. Where not required for current use, these barriers should be removed and their impact on the river flow minimised, in consultation with SEPA. Fisheries should be managed as a part of naturally functioning dynamic river systems.

Cross-Reference

- 5.2.2 Nature Conservation
- 5.3.2 Water

5.5 Conserving & Enhancing the Cultural Heritage

5.5.1 The Built and Historic Environment

There is a rich built heritage and archaeology in the Park, including building traditions in estates, farms and country houses, military barracks, roads and bridges, designed landscapes and planned settlements. Across the Park there are local traditions of design and materials that give a distinctive local character to different areas. The historic environment reflects the long interaction between people and place in the Park.

Strategic Objectives:

a) Develop a sound knowledge and understanding of the archaeological, historic and built environment resources

There is a wide range of archaeological and built heritage across the Park that contributes significantly to the cultural heritage and character of the Park, but knowledge of the range and state of these resources is patchy and is not easily available.

b) Conserve and enhance the resources of the archaeological, historic and built environment

The physical heritage needs greater repair and maintenance to secure its long-term conservation and enhancement.

c) Promote awareness and interpretation of the value of the archaeological, historic and built environment

A greater awareness of the range and value of the built and historic environment is important to underpin the long-term conservation and enhancement. It also plays an important role in understanding the history of the Park and how the qualities we value today came into being.

Existing policy context:

- World Heritage Convention
- 'Passed to the Future' Historic Scotland (2002)
- Memorandum of Guidance on Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas (1998)
- Planning (Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings)(Scotland) Act 1997

Key Implementation Strategies

- Cairngorms Local Plan

Cross-reference

- 5.2.1 Landscape

5.5.2 Culture and Traditions

There is a wealth of culture and tradition associated with the long history of people living in the Park area. Many of these traditions and cultures remain a strong

influence on the identity of the Park and its communities. The cultural traditions in the Park range from language and arts to sports and music. All express the connections between people and places and reflect the development of society in the Park.

Strategic Objectives:

a) Develop a sound knowledge and understanding of the cultural traditions associated with the Park's places and communities

Knowledge and understanding of the cultural heritage and traditions in the Park is often patchy, or specific to particular individuals, communities or places. There is a need to develop a sound knowledge of the cultural heritage of the Park, including arts and crafts, language, folklore, dance and other traditions in order to inform improved communication and co-operation between those involved in conserving and promoting cultural heritage in the Park.

b) Support and promote the diverse cultural traditions of communities within the Park

The diversity of cultural traditions within the Park forms a key part of its identity. As well as being closely linked with community life, the cultural heritage of the Park is also one of the qualities visitors to the area can enjoy. The promotion of local cultural heritage and traditions by communities and others should be supported.

Existing policy context:

- UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (2001)
- National Cultural Strategy 'Creating Our Future... Minding Our Past'
- Cultural Policy Statement (Scottish Executive 2004)
- National Plan for Gaelic

Cross Reference

- 6.9 Strengthening Communities

6. COMMUNITIES LIVING AND WORKING IN THE PARK

6.1 Introduction- encouraging sustainable development

As well as being a national asset and a place of recreation and enjoyment, the Park is a place of work and daily life for approximately 16,000 people. The economic and social needs and issues in the Park are similar to those throughout rural Scotland, but its designation as a National Park brings a new focus to finding solutions that are sustainable in the long-term.

The goal of sustainable development means that the basic resources and special qualities of the Park must be safeguarded, and in turn, these support the health and well-being and meet the needs of communities.

There is an opportunity in the Park to bring a renewed focus to sustainable development, building on the existing links between the economy, the natural environment and communities. The integration of these interests should ensure that economic development builds on the special qualities of the Park, is consistent with their conservation and enhancement, and meets the needs of the Park's communities.

The Park needs strong communities that are actively engaged in its management and shaping their own future. This section sets out strategic objectives to support and encourage the development of communities and the economy to help improve the well-being of those living and working in the Park and contribute to its long-term sustainability.

6.2 Economy and Employment

The economy of the Park is focused on a few key sectors, principally tourism, land management, public service and small-scale production such as brewing and distilling. The land management objectives in section 5 contribute significantly to supporting the economy and communities, through those sectors that are directly related to managing the resources of the Park. This section sets out objectives for the broader economy in the Park to strengthen its viability and ensure it contributes positively to all four aims of the Park.

Compared with Scotland as a whole, there is low unemployment and a high number of self-employed. However, many jobs in these sectors are highly seasonal with little long-term security. There is an opportunity to focus on developing the economy in ways which are consistent with the special qualities of the Park and help to sustain thriving communities.

Strategic Objectives:

a) Create conditions conducive to business growth and investment that are consistent with the special qualities of the Park

The special qualities and environment of the Park provide an opportunity to underpin business growth and investment in the area. The long-term management of the Park requires the development of the economy and communities to go hand-in-hand with the conservation and enhancement of the special qualities which give the Park its identity and provide many of its resources.

b) Encourage entrepreneurship, especially in young people and in sectors which complement the special qualities of the Park

Entrepreneurship is vital to encourage more business growth and raise income levels in the Park. Young people with good ideas need to be supported, whether through better vocational training or information from an early stage on how they can obtain the skills they seek. In particular, the opportunities associated with the sustainable use of the natural and cultural resources of the Park should be encouraged.

c) Promote 'green business' opportunities

As well as an area of outstanding conservation value, the Park is a place to work, and should be a place where businesses can thrive. Promoting green business means encouraging sectors that complement the Park's aims and do not adversely impact on the special qualities. Assisting with resource and energy efficiency, waste management, promoting green tourism accommodation, stewardship by land-based businesses and backing of research and development within the Park are all opportunities for support.

d) Promote diversity and equality of employment opportunities across all areas of the Park

Everyone living in the Park should have the same chance of developing to their full professional potential. This means ensuring that the Park encompasses a variety of sectors and does not rely on a narrow economic base. Specific groups need support to make certain that there is access for all in the jobs market, within and outside the Park.

e) Address barriers to employment uptake

There are presently a number of barriers to employment such as access to transport, seasonal demand for employment, childcare and the flexibility of working hours. Childcare is often inadequate to meet parents' needs, particularly in sparsely populated areas. Through Childcare Partnerships, childminder and nursery provision can be improved. Measures to address these barriers will encourage greater employment, contributing to more sustainable communities.

f) Raise the profile and excellence of local produce and services

Currently a relatively high proportion of the value of local products is taken out of the local economy through processing and sale elsewhere. Strengthening local supply chains, branding and marketing, and adding value through processing local produce can all help to retain a greater share of the economic value deriving from the resources in the Park.

g) Encourage a population level and mix in the Park that meets the present and future needs of its communities and businesses

Many of the objectives in this section of the Plan will influence and contribute to the population level and mix. However, at a time when the national population is expected to decline and age, it is an important aspiration to encourage a population in the Park that can continue to support thriving communities in the long-term.

Existing policy context:

- Framework for Economic Development in Scotland 2004
- Smart Successful Scotland 2005
- Highlands and Islands Special Transitional Programme
- European Union Objective 2 Programme

Key Implementation Strategies

- Sustainable Business Framework
- Education and Youth Strategy
- Cairngorms Local Plan

Cross-Reference

- 5.4 Integrated Land Management
- 6.4 Sustainable Tourism

6.3 Education and Training

The availability and quality of education and training for all is a key part of strengthening both the communities and the economy of the Park. There is a need to ensure training provision that meets the needs of the communities and businesses in the Park, together with education that equips people with the skills they need to reach their full potential. Formal education and training should seek to draw on the special qualities of the Park and use the Park as a context for learning. This section complements the broader objectives for informal learning and understanding set out in section 7.4.

Strategic Objectives:

a) Promote access to education and vocational training at all levels across the Park

Those wishing to study and train locally require more opportunities to do so. The provision of more trainers and modules delivered in the Park will assist local people to gain skills that will ensure long-term and year-round levels of better-paid work.

b) Develop educational resources that draw on the special qualities of the Park

There are opportunities to develop education at all levels that draw on, and in turn develop understanding of, the special qualities of the Park. These include the use of local examples, case studies and site visits within the school curriculum, and opportunities to build on the existing provision of outdoor education and tourism training provided within the Park. A focus on the educational resources the Park

offers will help to ensure relevant training for future business needs and develop a longer-term understanding of the Park.

c) Ensure a match between training provision and current/future skills needs

It is vital that the needs of local businesses and school leavers are met by local and national training and education schemes. Schemes should be both relevant and useful to local companies and young people.

d) Develop and support opportunities for volunteering

Some local schemes are already in place to help people volunteer across a range of areas. The opportunity exists to better co-ordinate volunteering in all sectors, particularly related to the special qualities of the Park and to develop more local initiatives to allow residents and visitors to take part in caring for the National Park.

Existing policy context:

- Education and Training (Scotland) Act 2000

Key Implementation Strategies

- Education and Youth Strategy
- Land-Based Business Training Project

Cross-Reference

- 7.4 Learning and Understanding

6.4 Sustainable Tourism

European Charter for Sustainable Tourism

In July 2005, the Cairngorms National Park was the first UK National Park to be awarded the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism by the EUROPARC Federation. The Charter recognises that the management of tourism in the Cairngorms National Park addresses the balance between the needs of visitors, the environment and the local communities. It emphasises the need to conserve and promote the special qualities of the Park as the basis of tourism and sets four key aims on which management is based:

- To conserve, enhance and gain value from the environment and heritage
- To increase economic and social benefits from tourism
- To protect and improve the quality of life of local people
- To engage in effective visitor management and enhance the quality of tourism offered

There are currently nineteen protected areas throughout Europe where sustainable tourism management is recognised by award of the Charter. The tourism and visitor management objectives of the Park Plan will be delivered partly through the Sustainable Tourism Strategy. This has been developed by a partnership of the tourism sector in the Park.

Strategic Objectives:

a) Maintain a high quality environment by encouraging sound environmental management and support for nature conservation by all those involved in tourism in the Park

The high quality environment forms the basis for tourism in the Park and is therefore one of the sector's most important assets. All involved in tourism should minimise negative impacts and support positive enhancement of the environment. This includes action for the landscape and habitat resources that underpin much of the visitor appeal as well as sound environmental management practice in individual tourist businesses. Those advising and supporting the development of new tourism businesses should ensure that high environmental standards are built into business development.

b) Raise awareness of the Park as a premier, year-round rural tourism destination in the UK, recognising its outstanding natural heritage and its National Park status

A co-ordinated approach to marketing the special qualities of the Cairngorms National Park can increase awareness, nationally and internationally, and encourage more visits to the Park. Many businesses are seeking more income throughout the year, and particularly to boost visits outside the current peak seasons. Marketing should be consistent with the good management of the special qualities that underpin the Park's appeal and bring together VisitScotland and private sector networks.

c) Ensure effective involvement by all stakeholders in the planning, development and management of tourism in the Park, and maintain good communication between them

Structures that bring together organisations and people with different interests to work in partnership are needed to deliver a sustainable approach to tourism. The interests of industry providers, visitors, land managers and communities need to come together to develop a mutual understanding and communication of each other's needs and priorities.

d) Strengthen and maintain the viability of the tourism industry in the Park and the contribution that it makes to the local economy

Despite the importance of tourism to the local economy, many individual businesses are relatively fragile and are seeking additional income to underpin their viability. In addition to the promotion and marketing of the Park, there is a need to support business development and increase the economic benefits generated in the local economy through strengthening local supply chains.

e) Improve and maintain the quality of experience in the Park for all visitors, communities and those working within the tourism industry

The quality of experience is key to the long-term sustainability of tourism. This includes the experience that visitors enjoy when they come to the Park, the experience of those working in the industry and the interactions between communities and local tourism providers. In all these, good practice should be recognised and become the benchmark for all involved in tourism across the Park.

Existing policy context:

- European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas
- New Strategy for Scottish Tourism 2000
- Tourism Framework for Action 2002
- Scottish Tourism Environment Forum

Key Implementation Strategies

- Sustainable Tourism Strategy

Cross-Reference

- 5.2.2 Nature Conservation
- 6.2 Economy and Employment
- 7.2 Outdoor Access and Recreation
- 7.3 Visitor Services
- 7.4 Learning and Understanding

6.5 Transport and Communications

Although the Park is relatively well served by road and rail transport links to outside centres such as Inverness, Aberdeen and Perth, links within the Park, particularly east-west, are less well developed. Bus services provide the main form of public transport within the Park, and provide an opportunity to expand the service provision to benefit residents, visitors and reduce the number of journeys by car. Telecommunications is generally good in the main settlements of the Park and all are expected to be able to handle broadband traffic by the end of 2005.

The A9 and A93 are significant transport and transmission corridors within the Park and their future development and impacts need to be managed with reference to the aims of the Park and minimising adverse effects on the special qualities.

Strategic Objectives:

a) Encourage and support improvements to public transport quality and accessibility to better meet demand and increase use

Use of public transport is presently limited by route provision, frequency and a lack of connectivity in places. Services should be targeted to meet the needs of residents and visitors, with a particular focus on integration between transport types. Better information for residents and visitors on timetables will increase ease of access and use.

b) Ensure transport and communications infrastructure is managed and developed in ways consistent with the special qualities of the Park

The transport and communications infrastructure provides valuable benefits to the Park, but the potential negative impacts of it on the landscape, natural heritage and other special qualities should be minimised. The immediate surroundings of transport routes form an important part of the experience of the Park for both residents and visitors and should be managed to retain and enhance features such as walls and hedges and provide safe viewpoints.

c) Improve access to and encourage use of information technology, so creating opportunities for businesses and individuals to stay in, or locate to, the Park

All areas of Scotland are expected to be covered by Broadband by the end of 2005. The expansion of its use can assist in attracting hi-tech businesses to the Park, and better support home-workers and small or medium scale enterprises.

Existing policy context:

- Transport White Paper 2004
- Scotland's Transport Future
- HITRANS Regional Transport Strategy
- NESTRANS 'Delivering a Modern Transport System'

Key Implementation Strategies

- Cairngorms Local Plan

Cross Reference

- 6.2 Economy and Employment
- 7.3 Visitor Services

6.6 Housing

The main housing challenge within the Park is the need to ensure greater access to affordable and good quality housing to meet the needs of the Park's communities. This includes both owner-occupier properties and those rented through social and private landlords.

New supply of housing should be consistent with the special qualities of the Park, use local materials where possible and meet the highest standards of water and energy efficiency and sustainable design.

Strategic Objectives:

a) Increase the accessibility of rented and owned housing to meet the needs of communities throughout the Park

There is a need to ensure access to rented and low cost housing in perpetuity. This means identifying appropriate sites for housing and prioritising these with our partners in their strategic planning as well as in their funding programmes, and making appropriate provision for land through the Local Plan. Access to housing could be increased by looking at new and existing properties, along with different mechanisms for housing, such as the use of local letting initiatives and the use of the rural housing burden to keep rented and home ownership affordable in the long term.

b) Promote effective co-ordination and co-operation between all public and private organisations involved in housing provision in the Park and the communities living there

To achieve all the housing objectives, there is a need for all organisations involved to work closely together in developing the Housing Action Plan, sharing information and

good practice and shaping future policy. This requires good communication between the public and private sectors as well as within the public sector.

c) Improve the physical quality, energy efficiency and sustainable design of housing in all tenures throughout the Park

Housing in the Park should aim to be an exemplar of good practice in energy and water efficiency and sustainable design. The lessons learned from different construction methods and approaches should be shared between partners to ensure a continuing improvement in quality and efficiency. The Local Plan and associated design guidance should promote high quality design and efficiency.

d) Ensure there is effective land and investment for market and affordable housing to meet the economic and social needs of communities throughout the Park

The availability of appropriate land and investment in infrastructure and services is key to the provision of housing. To ensure the availability of land and investment in the Park that is consistent with the special qualities of the area and avoids damage to designated nature conservation sites and species a long-term strategy and partnership is required.

Existing policy context:

- The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001.
- The Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003.
- Homelessness etc (Scotland) Act 2003.
- Crofters Acts (1993 and 1997).

Key Implementation Strategies

- Housing Action Plan
- Cairngorms Local Plan

Cross-Reference

- 6.2 Economy and Employment
- 6.9 Strengthening Communities

6.7 Renewable Energy

There is currently no significant energy generation within the Park, and settlements draw their energy needs from the National Grid. In pursuit of more sustainable development, there is a significant opportunity in the Park to develop renewable sources of energy (including heat) such as biomass, wind and solar to serve communities and households. While large-scale commercial energy installations such as wind farms are not considered appropriate in the Park, the development of domestic and community-scale facilities should be pursued in appropriate locations.

Strategic Objectives:

a) Help achieve national targets for greater renewable production through community and domestic-scale schemes

There is a need to raise the awareness of the range of renewable energy sources available and to encourage the necessary supply chains and infrastructure. By supporting small-scale schemes within communities, in halls, houses, land-based industries and small businesses, the Park can help Scotland achieve its national targets and work towards an efficient use of energy within the Park. There is a particular opportunity to develop the use of wood-fuel energy within the Park. The public sector should take a lead in using renewable energy in its own facilities within the Park.

b) Help communities and households to obtain the information, expertise and support they need to reduce energy consumption and increase renewable generation

There is a wide range of technology, expertise and information available on renewable energy technologies including biomass, wind and solar generation, together with measures to reduce energy consumption. The key to realising this potential is to provide communities and householders with easily accessible support and guidance that links the process and organisations together.

c) Support research into renewable energies in the Park

As a rural area with low energy generation levels, the area has to import much of its power and technological know-how. By promoting the Park as a suitable place to develop renewable energy research and development, we can help Scotland take a lead in finding alternative energy sources, while contributing to the aims of the Park.

Existing policy context:

- UK Climate Change Programme
- Securing a Renewable Future: Scotland's Renewable Energy

Key Implementation Strategies

- Cairngorms Local Plan

Cross-Reference

- 5.2.1 Landscape
- 5.3 Sustainable Use of Natural Resources
- 6.2 Economy and Employment
- 6.9 Strengthening Communities

6.8 Waste Management

Current waste management schemes vary across Local Authority areas and include some kerbside provision and a number of recycling points. The long-term approach to waste management in the Park must be first to reduce the amount of waste to the minimum through careful use and re-use, then to ensure that there are easily accessible recycling facilities within communities.

Strategic Objectives:

a) Exceed national targets for better waste management through community and domestic-scale schemes

Management of waste should exceed national targets. Waste should be minimised, re-used or recycled and the necessary infrastructure to enable communities, individuals and businesses to re-use and recycle should be developed.

b) Increase awareness of the benefits of effective waste management through reducing, re-using and re-cycling

Waste is a potential resource which can have economic and social benefits, but its inefficient processing, particularly through landfill, results in the loss of raw materials and further impact on the environment. Through raising awareness of the impacts of producing and processing waste, communities and businesses can adapt systems to manage resources more efficiently through their life-cycle. Termed Zero Waste, this approach includes increasing the number of local composting, re-use and recycling projects, through partnerships of community initiatives, private waste companies and local authorities.

c) Encourage provision of waste management infrastructure at domestic and commercial scale

Greater provision at the domestic and commercial scale should be developed to ensure that it is easier to re-use and recycle waste.

d) Reduce litter in the Park

As a National Park with an outstanding natural environment and an important tourist industry, reducing the presence of litter across the Park, particularly around roads, settlements and popular visitor attractions, will contribute significantly to the quality of life and experience in the Park.

Existing policy context:

- National Waste Strategy
- Area Waste Plans
- NPPG 10
- Landfill Directive

Key Implementation Strategies:

- Cairngorms Local Plan

6.9 Strengthening Communities

The Park's population (16,024 in 2001 census) is focused in communities of varied size, spread across 23 community council areas. Key to fulfilling the over-arching principle of community participation in the Park's management as set out at the start of this Plan is the need to support communities in this role. The stronger the capacity, knowledge and resources of communities, the more effective will be their role in shaping the future of the Park.

Strategic Objectives:

a) Strengthen the capacity of local communities and encourage community development

Communities should be supported in building their capacity, knowledge and resources to encourage development and activity within individual communities, and effective engagement with shaping the Park and other public policy.

b) Promote provision of local services that meet the needs of communities

The provision of services should contribute to thriving communities that have the appropriate facilities to meet their needs. Access to services including schools, health care and social infrastructure such as shops, post offices, pubs and phone boxes is key to the long-term sustainability of communities. New development should seek to reinforce the sustainability of communities and support the provision of services in settlements.

c) Promote community involvement and wider representation in the management of the Park

Local communities should be able to inform and participate in the management of the Park, and be well-informed about its management. Communities should be able to understand the role of public bodies and how they can contribute to and influence their work, and public bodies should have an understanding of the needs and issues at a community level, and how to engage effectively with communities.

Existing Policy Context:

- National Standards for Community Engagement

Key Implementation Strategies:

- Cairngorms Local Plan

Cross-Reference

- 5.4 Integrated Land Management
- 5.5.2 Culture and Traditions
- 7.2 Outdoor Access and Recreation

7. UNDERSTANDING AND ENJOYING THE PARK

7.1 Introduction- understanding and enjoying the special qualities of the Park

Combined with the outstanding natural environment and cultural heritage, the range of outdoor activities and visitor attractions in the Park make it a place that both residents and visitors enjoy. The experiences of residents and visitors enjoying the Park should be of the highest quality. Part of the integration required in managing the Park is to promote understanding and enjoyment, including recreation, in ways that are not only consistent with the special qualities, but actively develop understanding about the Park and contribute to its conservation and enhancement.

The promotion and management of outdoor access and visitor services is an integral part of developing a sustainable approach to tourism, in line with the principles of the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism (see section 6.4). The right of responsible access to land and water, supported by the Scottish Outdoor Access Code, provides the starting point. The Park however, has an opportunity to build on this context and help those enjoying the countryside and those managing it to understand the others' needs and ensure that outdoor access contributes to all four aims of the Park.

The need to understand what makes the Park so special and how it functions does not just apply to visitors, but includes residents, businesses, specialist interest groups and people elsewhere in Scotland. The Park is a national asset, and effective future management relies on informed debate and understanding of the Park, and its national and international importance.

7.2 Outdoor Access and Recreation

Many people enjoy outdoor access in the Park in a wide variety of forms, whether as part of their everyday routine, regular visits or occasional holidays. It offers an exceptional range of recreation opportunities for people of varied interests.

The Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 and Scottish Outdoor Access Code provide for a right of responsible access to land and water. It is important to note that the responsibility lies with both those taking recreation and land managers. The interaction between those taking access, land management and the natural heritage is key to the integrated approach required in the Park. The challenge within the Park is to establish a positive approach to managing and taking access that not only safeguards, but also enhances the special qualities and improves people's understanding of the Park.

Strategic Objectives:

a) Encourage people of all ages and abilities to enjoy and experience the outdoor environment

People of all ages and abilities, regardless of social, economic or physical constraints, should be able to enjoy and experience the special qualities of the Cairngorms safely.

This means that a range of opportunities should be available, from organised activities to informal exploration, from guided or way-marked routes through to unmarked routes, from quiet enjoyment to adventure sports. The quality of outdoor access infrastructure, for example the paths, should be enhanced so as to be accessible and appropriate for a range of different users and appropriate to the landscape and natural heritage setting.

b) Encourage responsible enjoyment of the Park so that its special qualities are understood and appreciated, and safeguarded now and for future generations to enjoy

The enjoyment of the special qualities of the Park must be accompanied by an understanding of responsibilities to other visitors, land managers, communities and the natural and cultural heritage to ensure that the very qualities people come to enjoy are safeguarded. Those enjoying outdoor access should develop an understanding of their potential impacts and responsibilities and ensure that they help to maintain the special qualities of the Park.

c) Co-ordinate the effort of key public, private and voluntary sector interests in the sustainable management of outdoor access throughout the Park

To secure responsible outdoor access throughout the Park in the long-term requires co-ordination of the efforts of a wide range of interests, to develop a mutual understanding and to communicate each other's needs and priorities. This includes public agencies, land managers, tourism operators, communities, sports and access user groups.

d) Support and encourage local community involvement in management of outdoor access throughout the Park

People in communities have a particular interest in local outdoor access routes surrounding their homes. Often these provide access facilities for residents' recreation, dog-walking, routes to schools or shops, as well as being part of a wider access network used by others. Local routes can also form important attractions linked to local businesses and community interpretation facilities. It is therefore desirable that communities play a key role in developing and managing the outdoor access routes around their homes, to maximise the potential benefits.

e) Encourage responsible management of outdoor access and develop a common understanding of the needs of managers and users

The strong links between land management, access and tourism in the Park, together with the presence of some vulnerable habitats, requires a pro-active approach to managing outdoor access. Building on the approach to responsible management identified in the Scottish Outdoor Access Code, support should be given to land managers and access providers to share knowledge and experience in developing good practice in access management.

f) Protect the more fragile areas of the Park from pressures arising from outdoor access and recreation

There are areas of the Park, particularly parts of the mountains, native woodlands and water, in which there are nationally and internationally important, but fragile, habitats or species present. These are a key part of the Park's natural heritage and underpin its designation and attraction. There are also many important sites of cultural and historic

significance in the Park, some of which are vulnerable. These areas must be protected from the physical pressures arising from outdoor access and recreation and sites that are currently suffering from these pressures should be addressed. Those enjoying the outdoors can contribute to this protection through responsible behaviour and taking positive action to conserve these important interests.

Existing policy context:

- Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003
- Scottish Outdoor Access Code
- Scotland's Transport Future

Key Implementation Strategies

- Outdoor Access Strategy
- Sustainable Tourism Strategy
- Integrated Land Management Strategy
- Interpretation Framework
- Cairngorms Local Plan

Cross-Reference

- 5.2.2 Nature Conservation
- 5.4 Integrated Land Management
- 6.4 Sustainable Tourism
- 7.3 Visitor Services

Local Outdoor Access Forum

The Park Authority has established a Local Outdoor Access Forum to advise on the exercise of access rights, rights of way and development of a core paths plan for the Park. The Park Authority has a statutory duty to establish this Forum, and its membership brings together experienced people from a variety of different fields - land managers, recreational users and community representatives - interested in or affected by access rights.

The Forum advises the Park Authority and others on:

- Strategic outdoor access issues
- Preparation of an Outdoor Access Strategy
- Preparation and adoption of a Core Paths Plan
- Resolution of disputes concerning the exercise of access rights

It also promotes responsible access and land management through the Scottish Outdoor Access Code, promotes discussion and sharing of good practice and supports the provision of appropriate infrastructure.

7.3 Visitor Services

The visitor experience in the Park should be of the highest quality and be renowned internationally as a well managed area that not only meets the needs of visitors, but gives them an understanding of the Park and allows them to contribute positively to its conservation and enhancement.

The services provided to visitors will have a significant impact on their understanding and enjoyment of the Park. The definition of visitors in this Plan includes all those who take access in and enjoy the Park, irrespective of whether they live within or outside the Park. Good quality information needs to be targeted at specific audiences, drawing out key themes and messages. The provision of information in different forms, before, during and after visits, is an important part of developing awareness and understanding, but face-to-face contact with people, such as accommodation providers and ranger services, is also important.

The impacts of visitors must also be managed so that the natural and cultural heritage qualities which underpin the Park's attraction are conserved and enhanced. Good information will help visitors to safeguard the special qualities and contribute positively to the Park. There is space within the Park to accommodate many different forms of recreation without impinging unduly on each other or other interests, but this requires active management to spread the benefits of visitors, and to encourage visitors to experience different parts of the Park.

Strategic Objectives:

a) Develop and maintain a wide range of opportunities for visitors to experience and enjoy the special qualities, distinctiveness and natural and cultural heritage of the Park

The special natural and cultural heritage qualities of the Park underpin its appeal and offer a distinctive visitor experience. Development of tourism products and services should help to develop discovery and understanding of the area through activities, events and products that draw on the special qualities of the Park. Focusing on this distinctiveness offers the potential for greater long-term sustainability in economic, environmental and social terms.

b) Ensure that visitors to the Cairngorms are aware of the range of opportunities, places to visit and things to do throughout the Park, and appreciate and respect its special qualities

The transfer of information to visitors about the Park, its special qualities and ways in which they can be experienced is key to developing an appreciation and understanding of the area and what it offers. It is therefore an important process for managing tourism and encouraging greater exploration, longer stays, increased spending, responsible behaviour and repeat visits.

c) Encourage an optimum flow and spread of visitors across the Park and minimise social and environmental impact including traffic generated by visitors and conflicts between different forms of recreation

While tourism is a vital part of the local economy, its impacts on the environment and local communities need to be managed to ensure long-term sustainability. Certain

attractions or areas may suffer damage to the habitats or species that people come to enjoy, disruption or congestion in local communities or more general traffic congestion. All these potential impacts should be taken into account in managing tourism, and their negative effects minimised. It is also desirable to spread the benefits of tourism across different areas of the Park and throughout the year.

d) Ensure that visitor information is targeted at specific audiences and encourages resource protection, responsible access, visitor safety, and the health benefits of regular outdoor exercise

As well as promoting the special qualities of the Park, visitor information should promote an understanding of visitor impacts on the natural heritage and help people to take action that reduces their impact and ensures long-term resource protection. It should also help people to understand their impacts on other users, land or water management and communities and advise on responsible and safe ways to enjoy the Park. The health benefits of outdoor access and activities should also be promoted as part of a coherent approach to the benefits and responsibilities for visitors enjoying the Park.

e) Ensure a cohesive Park-wide approach to ranger services which meets the needs of visitors, communities and land managers

The ranger services in the Park are a valuable contact between visitors, communities and land managers, and contribute to many other strategic objectives through their roles in promoting enjoyment and understanding and managing the interactions of visitors with the places and communities they come to see. To the visitor, ranger services are a popular point of contact for information about the National Park. A cohesive approach to service delivery, closely linked to the Park, is needed to maximise the opportunities of both local and Park-wide knowledge.

f) Collate, analyse and use the best available information on visitor numbers, distribution, activities and perceptions to inform visitor management

To deliver all objectives relating to visitor management and tourism, from the quality of experience to resource protection, requires up-to-date information about visitor numbers, distribution, activities and perceptions. Although a wealth of information is currently collected, there are opportunities to put it to better use. All involved in visitor management should seek to source and use the best available information in their planning and decision making, and the information should be widely available in a variety of forms.

Existing policy context:

- New Strategy for Scottish Tourism, 2000
- Tourism Framework for Action 2002
- Scottish Tourism Environment Forum
- European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas

Key Implementation Strategies

- Sustainable Tourism Strategy
- Outdoor Access Strategy
- Interpretation Framework

Cross-Reference

- 5.4 Integrated Land Management
- 6.4 Sustainable Tourism
- 6.5 Transport and Communications
- 7.2 Outdoor Access and Recreation

7.4 Learning and Understanding

Resolving the special management challenges that led to the area's designation as a National Park is complex. Many approaches have been tried over the years with varying success. It is clear that a renewed emphasis on bringing together the people involved in all aspects of the Park is needed, to strengthen their mutual understanding and capacity to tackle the sometimes conflicting challenges. Awareness of the Park and its special qualities is a necessary basis on which to develop understanding about the connections between activities and the consequences of our collective actions, and therefore influence future management.

As well as developing learning and understanding within the Park, it is important to raise awareness and understanding of the Park, its special qualities and its status as a national asset across Scotland and beyond. The lessons learned in other areas of the world should also be used in developing understanding of the Park in its Scottish and international context.

Strategic Objectives:

a) Encourage learning about sustainable development in ways that are related to people's everyday lives and focus on the special character and distinctive identity of the Park, and the management required to conserve and enhance it

The concept of sustainable development can best be explained and understood through reference to the interactions of the special qualities of the Park, their management and the use of resources and energy in everyday contexts. The challenge is to bring the concept to life in ways that are rooted in people's everyday experiences and the places they know.

b) Encourage people of all ages, abilities and walks of life to get outdoors frequently and experience the special natural and cultural qualities of the area at first hand

Understanding about the Park and its management goes hand-in-hand with experiencing its places and its special qualities at first-hand. Formal and informal education should take every opportunity to use the Park as a learning resource and help people of all ages to explore and get to know it. More should be made of the opportunities to use creative approaches to engage people in the outdoors including music, art and drama.

c) Capture knowledge and factual information about the Park in a range of appropriate ways so that it is easily available to anyone who wants to use it and can be passed on to future generations

Information about the Park, its special qualities and its management needs to be widely available and accessible to people with a wide spectrum of interest and specialist knowledge. There is a great deal of information held locally or by individuals that is not formally recorded, but that contributes greatly to our understanding of the area's history, use and communities. Finding ways to capture and transfer both oral and written information is important to developing understanding about the Park and informing its future management.

d) Ensure that the Park is a place where both scientific and traditional forms of knowledge about the land and its management are valued and put to good use in the long-term management of the area

There is a significant amount of scientific data on certain aspects of the Cairngorms, and there is a wealth of knowledge amongst those who have lived and worked in the area. It is important that the future management draws on the full range of this knowledge, using the best available information from scientific study and formal monitoring, together with the experience of people that have lived and worked in the area.

e) Increase mutual understanding and trust amongst people interested in the Park through exchange of ideas, perspectives and knowledge

The successful management of the Park in the long-term relies on a mutual understanding of the needs and priorities of different interests, and a trust between them in sharing information and working together to resolve potentially conflicting objectives. Communication and exchange of ideas, different perspectives and individual knowledge is the key to developing this understanding and trust and to ensuring that future management is based on well-informed and constructive debate. This will require, amongst other things, the formation of appropriate inter-disciplinary groups and skilled facilitation.

f) Seek and share experience and knowledge from the management of other areas in Scotland and the world

There is a wide range of experience in managing protected areas around the world, and managing other rural areas in Scotland. Many other areas face similar challenges to the Park and all involved in the Park should continually look to identify good practice and learn from experience elsewhere in order to inform management tailored to the particular circumstances of the Park. The transfer of experience to and from the Park is vital to informing Scottish and international debate about resource management, land-use and rural development.

g) Ensure that people across Scotland are aware of the Cairngorms National Park and understand why it is worth investing in

The Park is a national asset and information about the Park, its management and the opportunities for enjoying it should be widely available to all in Scotland and beyond. The Cairngorms have many important natural and cultural heritage qualities and it is important to develop understanding at a national level of the value of the Cairngorms, its international status and management needs. In turn, management of the Park should be informed by national perspectives.

Existing policy context:

- National Priorities for Schools: National Priority 4, Values and Citizenship

Key Implementation Strategies

- Sustainable Tourism Strategy
- Education and Youth Strategy
- Outdoor Access Strategy
- Interpretation Framework

Cross-Reference

- 6.3 Education and Training
- 6.4 Sustainable Tourism

8. PRIORITIES FOR ACTION

8.1 Identifying the Priorities for 2007-2012

The sections of the Plan above set out the long-term policy context and direction for managing the Park. The objectives will direct the strategic planning and day-to-day working of all organisations in the Park, and provide a clear agenda to pursue.

Work towards these objectives will form part of day-to-day good management and governance for all public bodies and others involved in managing the Park. The partnership approach required for this is described further in Section 8.5.

However, given the breadth of the Park Plan, particular focus is required to ensure that the varied partners combine and co-ordinate resources effectively and over the same timescale to ensure that we tackle the most pressing issues and challenges.

This section sets out 7 priority areas in which we need to focus our resources and effort over the next 5 years, over and above our on-going work. The Park Authority considers these to be priorities because there is either an important need to address the issue now, or because there is a valuable opportunity which we should grasp.

The priorities identified are:

- Conserving and Enhancing the Park's Biodiversity and Landscapes
- Developing More Sustainable Deer Management
- Supporting More Integrated Land Management
- Providing High Quality Opportunities for Outdoor Access
- Making Housing More Affordable and Sustainable
- Making Business and Tourism More Sustainable
- Developing Awareness and Understanding of the Park

These priorities will give a focus to the effort and investment of the public sector in particular; and once they have been refined and agreed then all partners will be able to plan for the resources needed through their corporate planning processes for the period 2007-2012.

The key partners identified for each priority have begun to develop a detailed 5-year action programme, based on the outlines in section 8.2 below. These programmes will be informed by the consultation and will set out who will do what, the timetable and a monitoring and review framework to assess progress.

The detailed programmes will be completed following the consultation and included in the Final Park Plan, due to be submitted to Ministers by the end of 2006. At this stage, the National Park Authority is consulting on whether these are the right priorities to pursue, and on what each should expect to achieve by 2012.

The selection of these priorities has been informed by the wide range of discussions held with partners and other organisations to develop the Draft Park Plan including local communities within the Park.

These priorities address objectives across several topic areas of the Plan, and relate to many of the management sectors in the Park. They provide a practical basis for delivering the integrated approach described in Section 3. The proposed action programmes will contribute to achieving many of the Plan's objectives across different sectors, while consistently achieving the conservation and enhancement of the special qualities of the Park.

Section 8.2 below outlines what the proposed action programme under each priority is expected to achieve by 2012.

8.2 Proposed Action Programmes- what should be achieved by 2012?

8.2.1 Conserving and Enhancing the Park's Biodiversity and Landscapes

Why is this a priority?

The biodiversity of habitats and species, and landscapes of the Park are two of the most valued special qualities. They are prized for their own innate value and as the basis for many of the Park's socio-economic resources. Their conservation and enhancement is very much interdependent with land-use, relying to a large extent on the maintenance of land management systems supporting them.

This is a long-term commitment, but additional action is required to tackle specific issues in order to ensure the Park's biodiversity and landscapes are as strong and robust as possible to adapt to future changes. This will enable their value to be retained and enhanced now and for the future, and for the benefit of local and national interests.

One of the major changes that will affect biodiversity is climate change – the range and diversity of species and habitats, and the landscapes associated with them, will alter as temperatures and rainfall change. Although the full effects cannot be predicted, positive management can ensure that species and habitats are in good and robust condition to adapt to changes, and plans for mitigating some likely changes can be put in place. Extensive habitat networks strengthen the ability of species to adapt to change and survive by supporting more robust populations and the ecological processes underpinning them. They also present opportunities for migration in response to changing conditions. In a national context, the scale and connectivity of habitats in the Cairngorms gives the Park a particular opportunity and responsibility to manage its biodiversity for the long-term benefit of the nation. The recent Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act provides an impetus for all public bodies to play a part in conserving biodiversity and halt the loss of biodiversity.

Work within this priority includes:

CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY
Paper 1 Annex 1 02/12/05

- Enhancing the Park’s Landscapes
- Identifying and Enhancing Habitat Networks
- Enhancing the Condition of Designated Sites within Networks
- Protecting Biodiversity

This priority will contribute directly to the Plan’s objectives under:

- 5.2 Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Heritage
- 5.3 Sustainable Use of Natural Resources
- 5.4 Integrated Land Management

OUTLINE ACTION PROGRAMME		
THEME	WHAT WILL THIS ACHIEVE IN 5 YEARS?	KEY PARTNERS
Enhancing the Park’s landscapes	Landscape Character Assessments of the Park used to identify the specific natural, cultural and historic landscapes that are especially appreciated by various interest groups. This will be combined with collation of information on, and assessment of, the management practices sustaining them to inform targeted landscape management plans	SNH, CNPA, HS
	Landscape capacity studies to inform development planning	SNH, CNPA, HS
	Management plans for designed landscapes	SNH, CNPA, HS
	Provision of landscape interpretation at viewpoints that show the diverse Cairngorms landscapes	SNH, CNPA, HS
Identifying and enhancing habitat networks	Existing information on the distribution and condition of montane habitats collated and supplemented by additional surveys to fill gaps. Key threats identified in areas where condition is unfavourable or declining, with plans and supporting incentives in place to bring the area into favourable condition.	SNH, DCS, CNPA, Land Managers, SEERAD, LBAP Group
	Existing habitats and networks eg. of woodland, juniper scrub, moorland, blanket bog, wetlands, and grassland identified and mapped, together with an assessment of ongoing management and resultant condition.	SNH, FCS, CNPA, SEERAD, Land managers, LBAP Group, SEPA

CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY
Paper 1 Annex 1 02/12/05

	The above information used to identify areas for targeting incentives to promote maintenance, or introduction of, favourable management systems and new habitat linkages and networks. This will include identification of 'Preferred Uptake Areas' for support schemes such as Land Management Contracts.	SNH, FCS, CNPA, SEERAD, Land Managers, Communities, NGOs, LBAP Group.
	Public support for land management tailored to promote expansion of habitat networks and target sites identified	SEERAD, SNH, FCS, DCS, CNPA, SRPBA, SEBG, SCF, NFUS, CC, SEPA
Enhancing the condition of designated sites within networks	All designated nature conservation sites in favourable condition, or under active management to reach favourable condition	SNH, FCS, DCS, CNPA, land managers
	Effective monitoring regimes for designated sites	SEERAD, SNH, CNPA, land managers
Protecting biodiversity	Effective Partnerships Against Wildlife Crime established targeted at raptor persecution, fresh water pearl mussel fishing, and game poaching.	CNPA, SNH, Police, LAs, SRPBA, SEBG, NFUS, SCF, SGA
	Information about wildlife law, policy and management widely available	
	Cairngorms Local Biodiversity Action Plan used to identify all priority species for conservation action in the Park. The key areas for and the main factors affecting these species will be identified mapped and recorded as the basis for development and implementation of targeted action plans. Priority will be given to species that need special conservation initiatives over and above general land management, such as water vole, capercaillie, black grouse, fresh water pearl mussels.	LBAP Group

ADMG Association of Deer Management Groups
CC Crofters Commission
CNPA Cairngorms National Park Authority
DCS Deer Commission for Scotland
FCS Forestry Commission Scotland
HS Historic Scotland
LBAP Group Local Biodiversity Action Plan Group

<i>NFUS</i>	<i>National Farmers Union of Scotland</i>
<i>NGOs</i>	<i>Non-Governmental Organisations</i>
<i>SCF</i>	<i>Scottish Crofting Foundation</i>
<i>SEBG</i>	<i>Scottish Estates Business Group</i>
<i>SEERAD</i>	<i>Scottish Executive Environment and Rural Affairs Department</i>
<i>SEPA</i>	<i>Scottish Environment Protection Agency</i>
<i>SGA</i>	<i>Scottish Gamekeepers Association</i>
<i>SNH</i>	<i>Scottish Natural Heritage</i>
<i>SRPBA</i>	<i>Scottish Rural Property and Business Association</i>

8.2.2 Developing More Sustainable Deer Management

Why is this a priority?

Deer are a major ecological and economic resource in the Park, and their management has in recent years been the subject of passionate debate amongst managers, public agencies and the people of Scotland as a whole. Deer populations are an essential part of the Park’s biodiversity, but where they are too high, they can cause serious damage on important habitats. Due to the significant impact deer populations can have on the natural heritage qualities and socio-economic conditions of the Park, there is a particular management need to address the complex issues facing deer management in the Park. This must build on the existing work of Deer Management Groups and public agencies, and make best use of voluntary agreements and statutory powers.

More sustainable deer management requires populations to be managed at levels which do not have a significant negative impact on the natural heritage qualities of the Park. In so doing, they will contribute to an integrated approach to delivering land management objectives.

Work within this priority includes:

- Collaborative Deer Management
- Improving Information

This priority will contribute directly to the Plan’s objectives under:

- 5.2 Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Heritage
- 5.4 Integrated Land Management
- 6.2 Economy and Employment
- 6.4 Sustainable Tourism
- 7.4 Learning and Understanding

OUTLINE ACTION PROGRAMME		
THEME	WHAT WILL THIS ACHIEVE IN 5 YEARS?	KEY PARTNERS
Collaborative Deer Management	Cairngorms Deer Advisory Group established to advise on deer management issues and communication between managers, public agencies and communities	ADMG, CNPA, DCS, SNH, FCS, NGOs, SGA, land managers, SE, communities

CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY
Paper 1 Annex 1 02/12/05

	Collaboration between deer managers and public agencies strengthened at management planning and implementation levels in order to bring all deer populations into balance with the ability of habitats to support them without being damaged.	DCS, CNPA, ADMG, SGA, SNH, FCS, SE, land managers,
	A Strategic Deer Management Plan for the Park identifying and addressing key management issues and forming a useful framework for managers	ADMG, CNPA, DCS, SNH, FCS, SGA, NGOs, land managers
	Greater co-operation in marketing of sport and venison and wider take-up	DCS, LECs, ADMG, land managers
	Support for deer management as a part of integrated habitat management	SE, SNH, CNPA, ADMG, DCS, FCS
Improving Information	An accessible database for deer management data and information in the Park	DCS, CNPA, ADMG, SNH, land managers
	Good practice demonstration events regularly held in the Park	DCS, SGA, ADMG, CNPA, SNH, FCS, land managers

- ADMG* *Association of Deer Management Groups*
CNPA *Cairngorms National Park Authority*
DCS *Deer Commission for Scotland*
FCS *Forestry Commission Scotland*
NGOs *Non-Governmental Organisations*
SE *Scottish Executive*
SGA *Scottish Gamekeepers Association*
SNH *Scottish Natural Heritage*

8.2.3 Supporting More Integrated Land Management

Why is this a priority?

Land management is one of the principal influences in creating and enhancing many of the special qualities of the Park, including landscape, habitats and species, access and recreation. Public support, in the form of grant schemes, advice and training plays an important role in shaping management and provides an opportunity to encourage management that delivers a range of benefits for the public.

To help land management contribute to all four of the Park's aims, a more joined-up and simpler system of public support is needed. There is a particular opportunity in the next five years arising from changes in European and Scottish rural policy which emphasise delivery of public benefits, more integrated policy, cross-compliance and a greater recognition of local priorities. We need to make the most of this opportunity which could make progress towards many of the objectives.

CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY
Paper 1 Annex 1 02/12/05

Work within this priority includes:

- Identifying the public benefits land managers should deliver
- Joining-up public support
- Improving communication

This priority will contribute directly to the Plan's objectives under:

- 5.2 Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Heritage
- 5.3 Sustainable Use of Natural Resources
- 5.4 Integrated Land Management
- 5.5 Conserving and Enhancing the Cultural Heritage
- 6.2 Economy and Employment
- 6.4 Sustainable Tourism
- 7.2 Outdoor Access and Recreation

OUTLINE ACTION PROGRAMME		
THEME	WHAT WILL THIS ACHIEVE IN 5 YEARS?	KEY PARTNERS
Identifying the public benefits land managers should deliver	Prioritised public benefits identified with support for their delivery	CNPA, CC, FCS, SNH, DCS, SEERAD, SRPBA, SEBG, NFUS, NGOs, land managers, communities
	Pilot 'whole-unit' support system to deliver public benefits	CNPA, FCS, SNH, DCS, SEERAD, land managers
	Updated Cairngorms Forestry and Woodlands Framework providing a strategy for woodland in the Park	CNPA, FCS, SNH, DCS, land managers
Joining-up public support	Land management support schemes, including catchment management, moving into a single contract tailored with clearly defined public benefits, following review of effectiveness of current and past schemes	FCS, SNH, DCS, CC, NFUS, SRPBA, SEBG, SCF, SEERAD, SEPA, CNPA, land managers
	Mechanisms for upland management support to deliver public benefits	SNH, CNPA, SEERAD
	Increased support for food marketing and processing	LECs, CNPA, land managers
	Whole-unit land management plans established as a basis for public support	SEERAD, SNH, CNPA, land managers

	More co-ordinated advice and training to assist delivery of public benefits	SEERAD, SNH, DCS, FCS, CNPA, FWAG, SAC, land managers
Improving communication	Grant scheme to assist land managers to communicate with local communities and interest groups about management objectives and practices	CNPA, SRPBA, SEBG, NFUS, SCF
	Advice and information networks to promote good practice and support management	CNPA, SEERAD, SNH, FCS, DCS, land managers
	Good practice demonstration events regularly held in the Park	All agencies, land managers

<i>CC</i>	<i>Crofters Commission</i>
<i>CNPA</i>	<i>Cairngorms National Park Authority</i>
<i>DCS</i>	<i>Deer Commission for Scotland</i>
<i>FCS</i>	<i>Forestry Commission Scotland</i>
<i>LECs</i>	<i>Local Enterprise Companies</i>
<i>NFUS</i>	<i>National Farmers Union of Scotland</i>
<i>SCF</i>	<i>Scottish Crofting Foundation</i>
<i>SEBG</i>	<i>Scottish Estates Business Group</i>
<i>SEERAD</i>	<i>Scottish Executive Environment and Rural Affairs Department</i>
<i>SEPA</i>	<i>Scottish Environment Protection Agency</i>
<i>SNH</i>	<i>Scottish Natural Heritage</i>
<i>SRPBA</i>	<i>Scottish Rural Property and Business Association</i>

8.2.4. Providing High Quality Outdoor Access Opportunities

Why is this a priority?

To understand and enjoy the Park, residents and visitors of all ages, abilities and interests need to be able to get outside and enjoy the countryside. There is an existing network of access routes, but more work is needed to bring the opportunities for access up to the excellent standard that is expected in a National Park, and achieve the objectives for outdoor access, recreation, learning and understanding set out in the Plan. For the first time, the Park's designation brings an opportunity to integrate access management across different areas and sectors in the Cairngorms.

The relatively new right of responsible access under the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 gives Scotland some of the most permissive access legislation in the world. It now creates a need to work with all access users and land managers to develop an effective understanding of responsible access and management in the context of the National Park, consistent with all four aims and the special qualities.

Work within this priority includes:

- Improving route provision and promotion
- Supporting responsible outdoor access and management

CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY
Paper 1 Annex 1 02/12/05

This priority will contribute directly to the Plan's objectives under:

- 5.2 Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Heritage
- 5.4 Integrated Land Management
- 6.4 Sustainable Tourism
- 6.5 Transport and Communications
- 7.2 Outdoor Access and Recreation
- 7.3 Visitor Services
- 7.4 Learning and Understanding

OUTLINE ACTION PROGRAMME		
THEME	WHAT WILL THIS ACHIEVE IN 5 YEARS?	KEY PARTNERS
Improving route provision and promotion	Improved provision of functional walking and cycling routes to serve schools and work places where appropriate	CNPA, LAs, Land Managers, NGOs, NGBs, SNH, SE
	Strategic routes completed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Extension of Speyside Way ○ Ensure Speyside Way is suitable for multi-use ○ Completion of Aviemore to Glenmore Off-road Route ○ Completion of Deeside Way to Ballater 	CNPA, SNH, FCS, Land Managers, LAs, NGOs, NGBs, SE
	A Trust or similar mechanism established to allow partners to contribute towards agreed priority work programmes	CNPA, Ranger Services, Community Paths Groups, LAs
	Core Paths Plan completed by February 2008	CNPA, Local Communities, Land Managers, NGOs, NGBs
	Core Paths Plans for each community used as the basis of planning and managing future work	CNPA, Local Communities, NGOs, NGBs
	Continued production of the Cairngorms Explorer public transport timetable	CNPA, LAs, NESTRANS, HITRANS
	Pilot service for a cross-Park bus service commissioned if viable	CNPA, LAs
	Current and latent demand for public transport routes within and to/out of the Park assessed	CNPA, LAs
	Itineraries and promotional initiatives linking visitor sites and public transport	CNPA, LAs
	Cycle carriage provision on public transport and associated promotion	RTPs, LAs, Cycle Scotland, CNPA

CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY
Paper 1 Annex 1 02/12/05

	Good understanding of visitor profiles (numbers, trends, distribution, attitudes, perceptions, etc) through visitor monitoring	CNPA, VS, Ranger Services
	High quality and dynamic visitor information, both pre- and post-arrival, available through new visitor information website, leaflets and people	CNPA, Ranger Services, VS
	Programmes to encourage people to habitually exercise in the Park	LAs, Health Promotion Groups
Supporting responsible outdoor access and management	A series of 'Sharing Good Practice Groups' for practitioners in the Park (based on model of Deeside Access Group)	CNPA, Access groups, land managers, NGBs, SNH
	Mechanism for integrated management of strategic routes, including integration of the Speyside Way Long Distance Route and River Spey	Partners in Speyside Way Management Group
	Systems for land managers to report access problems/issues	CNPA, SRPBA, SEBG, NFUS, SCF, SNH
	Systems for residents and visitors to report problems on paths and signs and any outdoor access issue	CNPA, SNH, Local Communities, NGBs
	Adoption of sponsorship schemes for paths	CNPA, SNH
	Potential visitor payback schemes including car-parking and menu/accommodation surcharges investigated and pursued where appropriate	CNPA, SNH, CCC,, Land Managers, NGOs, NGBs
	System to encourage adoption and maintenance of low-ground paths by local community path groups	CNPA, SNH, Local Communities, land managers
	A proactive plan to publicise the Scottish Outdoor Access Code and promote understanding and awareness of it, based on agreed target groups	Outdoor Access Forum, CNPA
	A scheme to promote compliance with the Scottish Outdoor Access Code on a whole land management unit basis	Outdoor Access Forum, CNPA, SNH, SRPBA, SEBG, SCF, NFUS, land managers
	Regular exchanges of experience and communication between land managers and recreational interests	CNPA, SNH, SRPBA, SEBG, NFUS, SCF, NGOs, NGBs, land managers

	Annual workshop for land managers on responsible use in relation to access	CNPA, Land Managers
--	--	---------------------

<i>CCC</i>	<i>Cairngorms Chamber of Commerce</i>
<i>CNPA</i>	<i>Cairngorms National Park Authority</i>
<i>FCS</i>	<i>Forestry Commission Scotland</i>
<i>LAs</i>	<i>Local Authorities</i>
<i>LECs</i>	<i>Local Enterprise Companies</i>
<i>NFUS</i>	<i>National Farmers Union of Scotland</i>
<i>NGBs</i>	<i>National Governing Bodies</i>
<i>NGO</i>	<i>Non-Governmental Organisations</i>
<i>SCF</i>	<i>Scottish Crofting Foundation</i>
<i>SE</i>	<i>Scottish Executive</i>
<i>SEBG</i>	<i>Scottish Estates Business Group</i>
<i>SNH</i>	<i>Scottish Natural Heritage</i>
<i>SRPBA</i>	<i>Scottish Rural Property and Business Association</i>

8.2.5. Making Housing More Affordable and Sustainable

Why is this a priority?

The lack of access to affordable and good quality housing has been identified by many communities as a key issue facing the Park. Young people and those on low incomes in particular have difficulty in securing suitable accommodation in their communities. The popularity of the area leads to high demand for housing, including second homes, which increases prices beyond the range of many and places pressures on the special qualities of the Park. This has long-term implications for the communities, as well as the wider environmental, social and economic health of the Park.

The high demand for housing therefore creates a particular need to ensure that housing provision is managed to provide affordable homes for people in the Park, and that it does not detract from the special qualities of the Park. Further, action is needed to ensure that housing meets high environmental and sustainability standards that are consistent with the area's status as a National Park and the first aim of the Park, to conserve and enhance the natural and cultural heritage.

Work within this priority includes:

- Increasing Supply and Accessibility
- Promoting Effective Co-ordination and Co-operation
- Improving the Quality and Sustainability of Design

This priority will contribute directly to the Plan's objectives under:

- 5.3 Sustainable Use of Natural Resources
- 6.2 Economy and Employment
- 6.6 Housing
- 6.9 Strengthening Communities

CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY
Paper 1 Annex 1 02/12/05

OUTLINE ACTION PROGRAMME		
THEME	WHAT WILL THIS ACHIEVE IN 5 YEARS?	KEY PARTNERS
Increasing supply and accessibility	Planned and prioritised affordable housing development projects with Local Authorities Development Forums	CNPA, LAs, CS, RSLs
	Assessment of potential benefits and feasibility of introducing a local lettings initiative to ensure lettings contribute to balanced local communities	HAs, CNPA
	Role of the private rented sector in providing good quality affordable housing is fully realised by engaging with private landlords and increasing supply of quality affordable rented accommodation	SRPBA, CS, LAs
	Available schemes to bring non-effective stock back into use (eg rural leasing scheme) promoted	LAs, CNPA
	Low-cost home ownership developments using mechanisms to ensure housing remains affordable in perpetuity	CNPA, CS, LAs, Housing providers
	Impact of holiday and second homes reviewed and any additional agreed action required to complement to Local Authority amendments to council tax payments put in place	CS, CNPA
	Support for Local Authorities who wish to apply for pressured area status	CNPA, LAs
	Local Authority information assessed for coverage and consistency and additional information incorporated as appropriate	CNPA, LAs
	Provision of effective land in the Local Plan for housing	CNPA
	Alternative mechanisms to secure funding, land and procurement for housing development, including private/public partnerships, investigated	CNPA, FCS, CC, SRPBA
	Private developers wishing to develop affordable housing in the Park identified	CNPA
	Effectiveness of the introduction of Rural Housing Burdens on delivering affordable housing in the Park monitored	CS, CNPA, LAs, HSCHT
Promoting effective co-ordination and co-operation	Cairngorms Housing Group established to provide co-ordination and remit and effectiveness reviewed annually	CNPA
	Impact of lack of housing supply on business monitored	CNPA, HIE, SE, CS, CCC
	Current information gaps in Local Housing Strategies addressed by research	CNPA
	Information needed to monitor the operation of the housing system in the Park identified and provision by relevant organisations agreed	CNPA
	Full profile of housing needs in the Park prepared	CNPA, LAs, CS

Improving the quality and sustainability of design	A sustainable design guide to encourage new development to complement the built and landscape character of the Park and meet high standards of energy efficiency and sustainable design	CNPA
	Planning guidance on building design and infrastructure to complement the landscape character	CNPA
	Programme of innovative activities to promote and increase awareness and understanding of sustainable and energy efficient design	CNPA, LAs
	Agreement secured with Scottish Water and SEPA on infrastructure requirements to enable future developments	CNPA, SW, SEPA, LAs, CS
	A private landlord accreditation scheme and targeted assistance to improve house condition and management by accredited landlords	CNPA, SRPBA, LAs, CS

<i>CNPA</i>	<i>Cairngorms National Park Authority</i>
<i>CC</i>	<i>Crofters Commission</i>
<i>CCC</i>	<i>Cairngorms Chamber of Commerce</i>
<i>CS</i>	<i>Communities Scotland</i>
<i>FCS</i>	<i>Forestry Commission Scotland</i>
<i>HAs</i>	<i>Housing Associations</i>
<i>HIE</i>	<i>Highlands and Islands Enterprise</i>
<i>LAs</i>	<i>Local Authorities</i>
<i>RSLs</i>	<i>Registered Social Landlords</i>
<i>SE</i>	<i>Scottish Executive</i>
<i>SEPA</i>	<i>Scottish Environment Protection Agency</i>
<i>SRPBA</i>	<i>Scottish Rural Property and Business Association</i>
<i>SW</i>	<i>Scottish Water</i>
<i>HSCHT</i>	<i>Highlands Small Communities Housing Trust</i>

8.2.6. Making Tourism and Business More Sustainable

Why is this a priority?

The long-term sustainability of the Park requires a vibrant tourism and business sector that underpins the economy, but also contributes to conserving and enhancing the special qualities and does not damage them. Tourism is one of the principal economic sectors in the Park and it has the potential to impact on the special qualities of the Park and its communities to a significant extent. There is therefore a need to ensure that tourism and business development in the Park takes place in a sustainable way, consistent with conserving and enhancing the natural and cultural heritage, while encouraging use and enjoyment of the special qualities and supporting economic activity.

Work within this priority includes:

- Supporting Strong Businesses with High Quality Standards
- Managing the Impacts of Tourism and Business
- Improving Environmental Performance

CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY
Paper 1 Annex 1 02/12/05

- Supporting Entrepreneurship and Business Development

This priority will contribute directly to the Plan's objectives under:

- 5.2 Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Heritage
- 5.3 Sustainable Use of Natural Resources
- 5.5 Conserving and Enhancing the Cultural Heritage
- 6.2 Economy and Employment
- 6.4 Sustainable Tourism
- 7.3 Visitor Services

OUTLINE ACTION PROGRAMME		
THEME	WHAT WILL THIS ACHIEVE IN 5 YEARS?	KEY PARTNERS
Supporting strong businesses with high quality standards	Annual open tourism industry meeting	CNPA
	Effective mechanisms for two-way communication with business stakeholders	CNPA, CCC
	Up to date knowledge of industry performance and needs through a regular 'how's business' check	CCC
	Omnibus tourism enterprise survey	CNPA, CCC
	Co-ordinated delivery of small business support and training	LECs, CNPA
	An accessible pool of experts to provide advice on sustainable tourism to businesses	LECs
	Potential for more diversification of land-based businesses into tourism, and the support required, investigated	LECs
	Strengthened awareness and spending on local crafts and produce through research on producers, branding, and visitor information	LECs, CNPA
	Improved availability of local labour supply matching business needs	LECs, CNPA
	Pilot Youth Apprenticeship Scheme	CNPA, HIE, SE, LECs, CCC
	A strengthened Chamber of Commerce and network of Business Associations	CCC, LECs, CNPA, BAs
Effective and appropriate use of Park brand linked to accreditation	Brand Management Committee, LECs, LAs	
Managing the impacts of tourism	Specific management policies in relation to recreational intensity in different parts of Park	CNPA
	Information on specific resource protection issues available to managers and users	CNPA
	Policy on organised events in fragile areas	CNPA, SNH, CCC
	'Least negative option' approach for outdoor access developed, understood and applied to make sure special qualities can be appreciated by people of all abilities	CNPA, Ranger Services, SNH

	A spatial strategy in place relating to visitor volumes, visitor spreads and flows across the Park to protect fragile areas and spread the benefits	CNPA, SNH, visitor attractions, Ranger Services
	Regular monitoring of visitor and traffic volumes and movements	CNPA, LAs
	Park wide information on visitor numbers (vehicle counters, car park usage, visitor attraction numbers and people counters) collated and regularly disseminated.	SNH, LAs, Tourism Businesses
Improving environmental performance		
	Increased use of environmental management plans and accreditation by businesses	LECs, CCC
	Biodiversity conservation schemes for non land-based businesses	CCC, SNH, LBAP Group
	Information on reducing energy and resource use widely available to businesses	LECs

- BAs* *Business Associations*
CNPA *Cairngorms National Park Authority*
CCC *Cairngorms Chamber of Commerce*
LAs *Local Authorities*
LBAP Group *Local Biodiversity Action Plan Group*
LECs *Local Enterprise Companies*
HIE *Highlands and Islands Enterprise*
HITRANS *Highlands and Islands Regional Transport Forum*
NESTRANS *North-East Scotland Regional Transport Forum*
RTPs *Regional Transport Partnerships*
SE *Scottish Enterprise*
SNH *Scottish Natural Heritage*
VS *VisitScotland*

8.2.7 Increasing Awareness and Understanding of the Park

Why is this a priority?

As a new National Park, the next five years are a critical time for the Cairngorms National Park to establish itself locally, nationally and beyond. It is important that people locally and across Scotland develop an increasing awareness of the Park, why it is a special place, and why it is a national asset that has particular management and investment needs.

Promoting a strong sense of place is crucial to so much of what we want to happen in the Park. It is important to the vitality of the communities within the Park, to attracting visitors and marketing, to reinforcing the need for responsible behaviour in the countryside, and to effective communication and participation in its management.

CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY
Paper 1 Annex 1 02/12/05

Work within this priority includes:

- Park Signage
- Understanding the special natural and cultural qualities
- Establishing the brand identity of the Park
- Raising national awareness and increasing people's engagement

This priority will contribute directly to the Plan's objectives under:

- 5.2 Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Heritage
- 5.5 Conserving and Enhancing the Cultural Heritage
- 6.3 Education and Training
- 6.4 Sustainable Tourism
- 6.9 Strengthening Communities
- 7.3 Visitor Services
- 7.4 Learning and Understanding

OUTLINE ACTION PROGRAMME		
THEME	WHAT WILL THIS ACHIEVE IN 5 YEARS?	KEY PARTNERS
Raising national awareness & increasing people's engagement	National Park website to be a user-friendly portal for visitor enquiries	CNPA
	Strategic marketing campaigns to promote specific themes of the National Park	VS, Private Sector
	A series of illustrated talks about the Park in Scotland's major centres of population	CNPA
	National outreach programme targeting young people, schools and excluded communities	CNPA, CS, SYHA, BTCV, Big Issue, MCoS, JMT
	Participation by community interests in policy development and operational decision-making (building on Community Planning)	LAs, LECs, CS,, CNPA, ACCC, CVs, Local Development Trusts, Land Managers, Businesses
	Effective community councils in the Park	Community Councils
Understanding the special natural and cultural qualities	A range of initiatives to encourage visitors to use the ranger services as an accessible source of specialist information about the Park	CNPA, SNH, Ranger Services
	A cohesive approach to the management of rangers services that meets the needs of visitors, land managers and communities	CNPA, SNH, Ranger Services
	National Nature Reserves used to full potential to raise awareness and understanding of the special natural heritage of the Park and its management	SNH, CNPA, land managers
	Training on the special qualities (natural and cultural heritage) of the Park for those working with visitors	CNPA, SNH, local associations, Ranger Services, land managers

CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY
Paper 1 Annex 1 02/12/05

	Information on biodiversity and the natural heritage shared between public bodies, land managers and others to inform management	SNH, CNPA, land managers, NGOs, SSERAD, research institutions
	An audit of the Park's built heritage and archaeology to identify its character, distribution and condition	LAs, HS, RCAHMS, HEACS, SCT
	An accessible Historic Environment Record for the Park	LAs, HS, RCAHMS, HEACS, SCT, Universities, Local Societies, heritage organisations
	Interpretation in every community telling the story about their place in the Park	CNPA, Community Councils
	Mechanisms for the protection and support for the historic environment	HS, LA's, Communities, CNPA
	Listed building survey for the park	HS
	People's experiences of changes in the Park recorded through an oral history project	Elphinstone Institute, CNPA, communities
	Training and information on the historic environment and archaeology for land manager and communities	RCAHMS, HRSG, HS, Communities
	Educational materials based on the Park's special qualities linked to the national curriculum	LAs, CNPA
	Entitlement for every school child in the National Park to undertake the John Muir Award	LAs, JMT
	Public sector workers in the Park undertaking the John Muir Award	All public bodies
	Grant scheme to support community research and interpret local natural and cultural heritage	CNPA, Communities
	Events linking people to the land, its working practices and traditions	Rangers services, Communities
	Regular visiting groups from other protected areas meeting a wide range of people living and working in the Cairngorms and sharing their knowledge	CNPA, all
Establishing the brand identity of the Park	Effective presence for the Park within the new VisitScotland network	VS, CNPA
	Strong links with local tourism associations and other networks	CCC, VS, CNPA
	National Park brand applied to appropriate Park print and internet sites	CNPA
	Guidelines on the use of the brand for tourism and business	Brand Management Committee
	Copy and images of the Park available to tourism businesses for their marketing	CNPA, VS, SNH
	A strong National Park presence in destination marketing, especially area guides	VS, Private Sector, CNPA
	A strong National Park presence on visitscotland.com	VS, CNPA
Park signage	Point of entry markers at all road and rail entries to the Park	CNPA

CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY
Paper 1 Annex 1 02/12/05

	Pre-arrival signs on principal routes to the Park	CNPA
	Steps towards an integrated system of signage for outdoor access	CNPA
	A co-ordinated system of visitor signage on roads to key attractions and places within the Park	CNPA

<i>ACCC</i>	<i>Association of Cairngorms Community Councils</i>
<i>BTCV</i>	<i>British Trust for Conservation Volunteers</i>
<i>CCC</i>	<i>Cairngorms Chamber of Commerce</i>
<i>CNPA</i>	<i>Cairngorms National Park Authority</i>
<i>CS</i>	<i>Communities Scotland</i>
<i>CVs</i>	<i>Community Volunteers</i>
<i>FCS</i>	<i>Forestry Commission Scotland</i>
<i>HEACS</i>	<i>Historic Environment Advisory Council for Scotland</i>
<i>HRSG</i>	<i>Historic Rural Settlement Group</i>
<i>HS</i>	<i>Historic Scotland</i>
<i>JMT</i>	<i>John Muir Trust</i>
<i>LAs</i>	<i>Local Authorities</i>
<i>LECs</i>	<i>Local Enterprise Companies</i>
<i>MCoS</i>	<i>Mountaineering Council of Scotland</i>
<i>NGOs</i>	<i>Non-Governmental Organisations</i>
<i>RCAHMS</i>	<i>Royal Commission for Ancient and Historical Monuments in Scotland</i>
<i>SEERAD</i>	<i>Scottish Executive Environment and Rural Affairs Department</i>
<i>SCT</i>	<i>Scottish Civic Trust</i>
<i>SNH</i>	<i>Scottish Natural Heritage</i>
<i>SYHA</i>	<i>Scottish Youth Hostels Association</i>
<i>VS</i>	<i>VisitScotland</i>

8.3 Timetable for Developing Action Programmes

The key partners identified in the outline programmes above are working together to prepare a detailed action programme for each priority, informed by the public consultation. The programmes will detail who will be responsible for actions, how they will be taken forward, the timescale for each and the proposals for monitoring the delivery of the actions and their impact on the Park.

The programmes will be completed for the final Park Plan, drawing on the information and views obtained during the public consultation. They will then form a part of the finalised Park Plan that will be submitted to Ministers towards the end of 2006 and implemented from 2007 onwards.

8.4 What about other work required?

The priorities for action identified above do not preclude other work towards all objectives of the Plan. Instead, they give a focus to activity that is needed if all partners in the Park are to make a tangible difference to important issues, but they are over and above ongoing good management and governance in the Park. All public bodies have a duty to have regard to the Park Plan in full in carrying out their duties,

and it also provides a framework for the private, community and voluntary sectors to pursue their objectives in the context of the Park.

This means, for example, that in carrying out its function as a planning authority, the National Park Authority will be guided by the relevant objectives of the Plan such as landscape, nature conservation and housing, and these will shape the detailed policies of the Local Plan. It also means that the Park Authority and all other public bodies will ensure that the way they go about their day-to-day business is consistent with the objectives, for example in terms of community engagement or protecting the natural heritage.

8.5 Implementing the Plan and its Priorities- A Partnership Approach

The Park Plan identifies a series of strategic objectives and priorities for action which have been developed in partnership with a diverse range of organisations involved in managing the Park (see Annex 1). The implementation of these objectives and priorities relies equally on this diverse range of organisations. The agenda set out by the Park Plan has a scope beyond the remit of any one organisation, including the Park Authority, and the Plan sets out the co-ordinated approach needed across a range of organisations.

The principal role of the Park Authority is to lead the partnerships required and co-ordinate delivery of the action programmes under each priority, in which a range of organisations have responsibility to take action.

The Park Authority and all public bodies prepare corporate plans which set out the priorities for the organisation over a three to five year period, guide their allocation of resources and determine their operational activities. The Park Authority's corporate plan will in future be shaped by the objectives and priorities set out in the Park Plan. Similarly, the corporate plans of other public bodies will reflect the objectives and priorities of the Park Plan, so far as their work affects the aims of the Park.

This co-ordination will be overseen by the National Park's Advisory Panel on Joined-up Government, which brings together senior representatives of public agencies. Its role is to ensure sufficient co-ordination across the public sector to deliver the Plan effectively and efficiently.

9. MONITORING AND REVIEW

There are two distinct strands to the monitoring and review process. Firstly, we will monitor what our actions are achieving. Secondly, we will consider the impact of all our work on the Park as a whole, and the extent to which the four aims of the Park are being achieved collectively.

The first monitors work on the ground; and the second looks at its impact on the Park. Both will feed into a review of the Plan over time.

9.1 Monitoring Delivery of the Plan

Work programmes for delivery of the Plan's priorities for action will be monitored to assess whether they are being delivered. These work programmes will include actions that are the responsibility of several different organisations operating within the Park.

Under each of the priorities for action, detailed monitoring and review frameworks will be developed in conjunction with key partners as a part of working-up the full work programme for 2007-2012, and will be included in the finalised Park Plan.

9.2 Monitoring the 'Health' of the Park

The Plan sets out a number of strategic objectives which seek to achieve the four aims of the Park. As well as detailed monitoring of actions which flow from these objectives, it is important to assess whether the aims and strategic objectives of the Park as a whole are being achieved. Key questions that we will need to be able to answer in the future include:

- Are the four aims being achieved collectively?
- Is the Park as a whole going in the right direction?
- Are the special qualities of the Park being conserved, enhanced and enjoyed?

To answer these questions, a set of indicators are proposed to provide a snapshot of the overall 'health' of the Park at any given time and to feed into a review of the cumulative impact of the Plan on the Park. The proposed themes for health indicators are detailed below as part of this consultation.

Monitoring the state of the Park will be an ongoing process, but the information will be formally collated and published at five-yearly intervals in an update to the State of the Park Report. This will also draw together updated information on the Park's resources deriving from the Park's ongoing research programme and other sources.

9.3 Proposed Health Indicators

The table below proposes indicator themes that together will provide a snapshot of the state of the Park at any given time. We intend to develop indicators for each of these themes in conjunction with partners as part of the consultation on the Draft Park Plan. The agreed indicators will be included in the finalised Park Plan.

A monitoring regime will be established for the agreed indicators and will inform the interim reporting on the Park Plan and State of the Park, and its review at five-year intervals

The table below summarises the proposed indicator themes and identifies their relevance to the four aims of the Park (see Section 1.1)

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED INDICATOR THEMES					
No	Indicator Theme	Relevance to Park Aims			
		Aim 1	Aim 2	Aim 3	Aim 4
1.	Landscape Change	√	√	√	√
2.	Affordable Housing	√	√		√
3.	Population Profile			√	√
4.	Seasonal Employment Rates by Sector				√
5.	Agricultural Activity	√	√	√	√
6.	Biodiversity	√	√	√	√
7.	Water Quality	√	√	√	√
8.	Traffic Volumes and Modes	√	√	√	√
9.	Education and Learning	√	√	√	√
10.	Waste	√	√		√
11.	Visitor Enjoyment of the Park	√	√	√	√
12.	Cultural Heritage	√	√	√	√
13.	Business Health				√
14.	Geographical Availability of Services				√
15.	Community Vibrancy	√		√	√

9.4 Explanation of Proposed Indicator Themes

9.4.1 Landscape Change

The distinctive landscape character of the Park has been identified as one of its most recognised special qualities. The landscape is a product of many different influences including natural processes, land management and the composition of habitats and species. Monitoring the landscape change over time will therefore give an insight into the cumulative impacts of several different processes influencing the Park.

Potential indicators include:

- Land-use cover change
- Change in field boundary features (hedges and dykes)

9.4.2 Affordable Housing

Access to affordable housing is an essential component of sustainable economic and social development and influences whether people in lower income brackets are able to live and work in the Park. The affordability of housing is influenced by the demand for housing, proportion of second homes, income levels, the supply of housing and co-ordination of housing needs and supply. Monitoring the affordability of housing therefore gives an indication of the health of communities

Potential indicators include:

- Housing affordability ratio (income : house price)
- Affordable housing units as % of Park households

9.4.3 Population Profile

The population profile of the Park gives an insight into the structure and vitality of communities, the economic health, and the skills and labour necessary for long-term sustainability. Changes in population profile may have long-term implications for the Park's communities and economy, and the services required to meet the needs of communities.

Potential indicators include:

- Proportion of population of working age

9.4.4 Seasonal Employment Rates by Sector

Employment enables people to meet their needs and improve their living standard and addresses the problems of poverty and social exclusion. Monitoring employment, unemployment and vacancy levels, therefore gives an indication of the health of communities and society in the Park as well as the health of the economy. In the particular context of the Park, monitoring seasonal , full-time and part-time employment would be of value.

Potential indicators include:

- Employment rates by sector (full-time, part-time and seasonal)

9.4.5 Agricultural Activity

Agriculture is one of the main land uses within the Park, which has a significant influence on the special qualities and contributes to employment and the economy. Monitoring the extent of agricultural activity and its viability will therefore give an insight into the economy and culture of the area, and potential implications for the Park's management and its special qualities.

Potential indicators include:

- Total income from farming
- Number and area of active farm units

9.4.6 Biodiversity

Biodiversity is valued as one of the special qualities of the Park, and it is influenced by a range of physical conditions such as climate and pollution, and by human activity, including land management, recreation and development. Monitoring elements of biodiversity therefore offer a good insight into the cumulative effect of a number of different factors on the state of the Park.

Potential indicators include:

- Wild Bird Populations
- % of Local Biodiversity Action Plan Species in favourable condition
- % of Local Biodiversity Action Plan Habitats in favourable condition

9.4.7 Water Quality

Water quality is a key indicator of impacts on the environment from pollution, land-use, development, waste management and other natural and human processes. It is also a key resource for many of the Park's special qualities of biodiversity, for human infrastructure and drinking water. Monitoring its quality will therefore give an insight into the impacts of a variety of factors on the state of the Park.

Potential indicators include:

- River water quality
- Groundwater quality

9.4.8 Traffic Volumes and Modes

Traffic volumes in the Park may be affected by the popularity of the Park as a visitor destination and by the effectiveness of public transport within the Park. They have a significant impact on the environmental quality of the Park and on the sustainability of the communities and economy. Monitoring the modal split, ie: the use of different transport types, will give an insight into the ease with which people can get around, the effectiveness of public transport, and ultimately the sustainability of transport in the Park.

Potential indicators include:

- Traffic volumes by modal split on selected routes
- Levels of use of public transport

9.4.9 Education and Learning

Opportunities for education and learning enable individuals to achieve their full potential by contributing to a successful working life and promoting understanding and active citizenship. They are also key to the long-term success of the Park through developing understanding about the Park, its special qualities and management needs. Monitoring the uptake of education and training related to the Park will therefore give an indication of understanding about the needs of the Park.

Potential indicators include:

- Number and % uptake of available outdoor education places

- Number of participants in the Land-Based Business Training Programme
- Number of participants in the John Muir Award

9.4.10 Waste

Effective management of waste produced by households, commerce and industry is important if the Park is to improve resource efficiency. Monitoring waste arisings and the percentage of recycled and landfilled waste will indicate the Park's performance in terms of the sustainable use of resources.

Potential indicators include:

- Total waste arisings
- % waste recycled
- Access to kerbside recycling facilities

9.4.11 Visitor Enjoyment of the Park

The Park is a valuable leisure and recreational resource, offering a range of active pursuits in a setting of exceptional natural and cultural heritage. The experience of visitors in the Park will be influenced by a wide range of factors including service levels, quality of facilities, quality of information and interpretation. Monitoring the satisfaction levels of visitor experiences in the Park will therefore give an insight into this range of factors and into the state of an industry that contributes significantly to the economy of the Park.

Potential indicators include:

- Visitor numbers
- Visitor spend
- % visitors satisfied with their visit

9.4.12 Cultural Heritage

The cultural heritage of the Park is one of its valued special qualities and includes the built and historic environment as well as culture and traditions. The built heritage is influenced by development, land management and pressure from visitors and recreation. The culture and traditions of the area are influenced by population trends, the vitality of communities and the skills and informal learning opportunities available. Monitoring the state of the cultural heritage will therefore give an insight into these areas as well as the health of one of the Park's special qualities.

Potential indicators include:

- % of Listed Buildings and Scheduled Ancient Monuments at risk
- Number of community heritage groups/museums
- Number of cultural heritage events

9.4.13 Business Health

Sustainable economic and social development of the Park will depend on the number, type (including self-employed) and stability of businesses within the Park and the

number and range of employment opportunities they offer. Monitoring the turnover of businesses and number of registered businesses will provide an indication of the sustainability of economic development within the Park and its benefits for the communities.

Potential indicators include:

- Average turnover of businesses by type
- Number of businesses as proportion of population

9.4.14 Geographical Availability of Services

Providing easily accessible services is key to tackling social disadvantage within the Park and promoting sustainable communities. The availability of services is a function of the service locations, public transport and health of communities. Monitoring the distance of households from key services (post offices, primary schools, general store/supermarket, doctor's surgery, bank/cashline machine) will provide an insight into accessibility of current service provision.

Potential indicators include:

- Distance of services from households
- Time taken to reach key services

9.4.15 Community Vibrancy

Local community activity promotes vibrant and socially inclusive communities. It is an indication of how residents value their locality and identify with it, the number of active people within communities and the skills that they have.

Potential indicators include:

- Levels of use of community meeting places
- Levels of volunteering
- Levels of participation in community council elections

9.5 Review of the Park Plan

The information collected during the monitoring process will be used not only to update the State of the Park Report, but also to feed into a review of the impact of the Plan on the Park and of the extent to which the four aims of the Park are being achieved collectively.

The Park Plan will be reviewed formally at five-yearly intervals, with the first review being due in 2012. The purpose of review will be:

- to review whether the Plan has successfully taken the Park towards achieving its four aims collectively;
- to review what changes to the strategic direction of the Plan are necessary;
- to review what the priorities for action in the next five year period should be.

The review of the Plan will be accompanied by a review of the State of the Park Report, which will inform consideration of the changes needed in the Plan.

It is anticipated that the vision and strategic objectives, which set out the long-term strategic direction, should remain relatively constant but will be updated in the light of changing circumstances. The priorities for action will be fully reviewed to consider which of the previous action programmes have been superseded by new issues requiring priority action within the next five-year period.

9.6 Interim Reporting and Review

If within the five-year period there is a significant change in national policy or circumstances in the Park, then the relevant sections of the Park Plan will be updated to reflect any changes to the management approach in the Park that may prove necessary or desirable. It is important that the Plan remains an active process to guide management of the Park, rather than simply a formal document that is reviewed every five years.

In addition to the formal, five-yearly review, interim reviews of the performance of the Park Plan in delivering its four aims will be conducted every two years. To inform this process, the monitoring and review frameworks for each priority and associated strategies will report on a two-yearly basis.

ANNEX 1

The following organisations and groups have been involved in discussions to develop the Draft Park Plan:

Aberdeenshire Council
Angus Council
Association of Cairngorms Community Councils
Association of Deer Management Groups

Badenoch and Strathspey Conservation Group

Cairngorms Campaign
Cairngorms Chamber of Commerce
Cairngorms Housing Group
Cairngorms Local Biodiversity Group
Cairngorms Local Outdoor Access Forum
Cairngorms Moorland Project Steering Group
Cairngorms National Park Economic and Social Development Forum
Cairngorms National Park Integrated Land Management Forum
Cairngorms National Park ViSIT Forum
Communities Scotland
Crofters Commission

Deer Commission for Scotland

Elphinstone Institute, University of Aberdeen

Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group
Forestry Commission Scotland
Forest Enterprise

Highland Council
Highlands and Islands Enterprise
Historic Scotland

Inverness, Nairn, Badenoch and Strathspey Enterprise

John Muir Trust

Moray Enterprise
Moray Council

National Farmers Union of Scotland
National Trust for Scotland
North East Mountain Trust

Ramblers Association
Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historic Monuments of Scotland
Royal Society for the Protection of Birds

Royal Zoological Society

Scottish Agricultural College

Scottish Civic Trust

Scottish Countryside Rangers Association

Scottish Crofting Foundation

Scottish Estates Business Group

Scottish Enterprise Grampian

Scottish Enterprise Tayside

Scottish Environment Link

Scottish Environment Protection Agency

Scottish Executive Environment and Rural Affairs Department

Scottish Native Woods

Scottish Natural Heritage

Scottish Rural Property and Business Association

Scottish Water

Scottish Wild Land Group

Scottish Wildlife Trust

SportScotland

VisitScotland

ANNEX 2: IUCN Management Principles for Category V Protected Areas

Principle 1:

Conserving landscape, biodiversity and cultural values are at the Category V protected area approach. Though much emphasis is placed in this guidance on economic and social considerations, Category V is a conservation approach which should reflect the over-arching objectives of all protected areas as indicated in the definition in Section 2.2.3 above. It is therefore about managing change in such a way that environmental and cultural values endure: change should take place within limits that will not disrupt those values.

Principle 2:

*The focus of management should be on the **point of interaction** between people and nature.* To recall part of the definition used in the 1994 Guidelines: “Safeguarding the integrity of (the) traditional interaction is vital to the protection, maintenance and evolution of area” (IUCN, 1994, p.22). Thus, whereas in many other kinds of protected areas it is nature itself that is the main focus of management, what distinguishes Category V is that management primarily addresses the **linkage** between people and nature.

Principle 3:

People should be seen as stewards of the landscape. As the occupants of lived-in, working landscapes that are of great value to society as whole, the people living within Category V protected areas should be supported in their role as stewards of the landscape. They are the architects of much we value in the landscape, and their support is needed to ensure its survival. Ideally, they help to shape and care for the environment with the traditions of the past, but with an eye to the future. In that sense, they may more correctly be described as ‘the managers’ of Protected Landscapes than the professionals who are employed with that formal title: good managers in the professional sense will therefore see their role as ‘facilitators’ and negotiators’.

Principle 4:

*Management must be undertaken **with and through** local people, and mainly **for and by** them.* This principle recognises that the full involvement of local people is essential, and that Category V protected areas should never be planned **against** their long-term interests. It also recognises that local communities should play an important role in delivering protected area objectives and be among the principal beneficiaries of these. But note that local people are not the only source of expertise. Moreover, there are other stakeholders who can derive benefits from protected landscapes: for example, visitors from nearby urban areas or further afield, resource users from afar (e.g. consumers of water supplies downstream), or the wider community interested in biodiversity or landscape protection.

Principle 5:

Management should be based on co-operative approaches, such as co-management and multi-stakeholder equity. It follows from Principles 2-4 that structures and processes are needed to ensure that people are involved fully in shaping management decisions and come to see the protected area as theirs. This will require the operation of open, transparent procedures based on democratic principles. Co-management approaches may be particularly appropriate to Category V protected areas (see Box 29).

Principle 6:

Effective management required a supportive political and economic environment. The foregoing principles cannot be followed unless broader governance structures and practices in society at large are committed to certain standards. The management of Protected Landscapes will be easier to achieve if the government recognises the need for a quality of life perspective, follows democratic processes, and engages willingly in participatory planning based upon a fair and equitable approach to all groups and respect for a plurality of cultures. It will also be greatly helped by a top-level national commitment to sustainability, the alleviation of poverty, addressing the root causes of in-equality, promoting gender equity and supporting civil society.

Principle 7:

Management of Category V protected areas should not only be concerned with protection but also enhancement. Because Category V protected areas are lived-in landscapes, the environment will have been manipulated more than is the case with the other categories of protected areas. It follows that a more active role for management is appropriate, not only in the protection but also in restoration of natural or cultural values that have been eroded or lost. It may on occasion also include the creation of new environmental and social assets which are ecologically or culturally appropriate: examples would be a new woodland or forested areas established on degraded soils, and the development of a new market for goods produced by local people.

Principle 8:

When there is irreconcilable conflict between the objectives of management, priority should be given to retaining the special qualities of the area. Because Protected Landscapes have important social as well as environmental objectives, there is considerable potential for conflict between objectives. As far as possible, management should seek to reconcile such conflicts. In the last analysis there need to be clear rules about what would have priority in such a situation. This principle states that when this happens, priority should be given to protecting the qualities that make the area special (what economists sometimes call 'critical environmental capital'). Because such a claim is likely to be contested, the principle may need to be embodied in legislation.

Principle 9:

Economic activities that do not need to take place within the Protected Landscape should be located outside it. As a lived-in, working landscape, a Category V protected area will contain a variety of economic activities and land uses, such as agriculture, forestry, tourism and some forms of industry, commerce and retailing, as well as residential areas, some infrastructure, etc. The tests for whether such an activity or use is acceptable within the protected area, are strong reasons for it to be located within it. Where the proposed activity fails these tests, it should either be totally re-designed to fit Category V objectives or located outside the area altogether.

Principle 10:

Management should be business-like and of the highest professional standard. Notwithstanding the strong social and environmental emphasis in the management of Protected Landscapes, the operation of management should be business-like, and hard headed if necessary. It requires effective marketing of conservation approaches too. While this may be difficult to achieve in the short term, financial sustainability should be an aim, rather than 100% reliance on public finding¹. Procedures should be put in place to ensure that public, private and voluntary funds and other resources are used with due regard to economy, effective and effectiveness. And all decision-making concerning the use of resources should be transparent and accountable.

Principle 11:

Management should be flexible and adaptive. Like protected area management in general, that of Category V protected areas needs to be capable of adjustment over time in light of experience and changing circumstances – but since its scope embraces both natural and human systems, the need for flexibility is all the greater. Management of Protected Landscapes should also be flexible and adaptive in the sense that it should respond to the very different social, cultural and economic situations in which it takes place: it should always be culturally appropriate and economically relevant.

Principle 12:

*The success of management should be measured in environmental **and** social terms.* Though absolutely central, biodiversity measures are only one of several indicators: others include social and economic welfare and the quality of life for local and other people, other environmental considerations such as energy efficiency or natural resource management, and measures relating to the conservation of the cultural environment. An aim should be to demonstrate the maximum social and economic benefits for the local community with the minimum environmental impact. The setting of objectives, also allocation of resources and monitoring of effectiveness should all be undertaken with this breadth of interest in mind.

ANNEX 3: GLOSSARY *(to be completed)*

Arctic-alpine habitat
Affordable Housing

Biodiversity
Biomass
Boreal Forest
Cairngorms Partnership
Cairngorms Working Group
Cairngorms Local Plan
Carrying Capacity

Caledonian Forest

Ecosystem
European Charter for
Sustainable Tourism

Geological Conservation
Review
Geomorphology

Habitat network
Hydrology
Hydromorphology
IUCN (World Conservation
Union)
Landscape Capacity Studies
Landscape Character
Assessments
Listed Buildings
Montane
Munros
National Nature Reserves
Natura 2000
National Planning Policy
Guidance (NPPG)
Priority Species
Public benefits
Ramsar Sites
Rural Housing Burden
Scheduled Ancient Monuments
Semi-natural
Sites of Special Scientific
Interest
Special Areas of Conservation
(SAC)
Special Protection Areas (SPA)
Special Qualities
Strategic Environmental
Assessment (SEA)
Sustainability Appraisal (SA)
Supply chains

