
CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

FOR DECISION

Title: Local Development Plan Main Issues Report – for consultation

Prepared by: Karen Major, Development Plan Officer

Purpose

To seek the Board's approval of the Main Issues Report to the Local Development Plan, and endorsement of the supporting evidence base, for formal consultation

Recommendations

The Board is asked to:

- a) Endorse the Evidence Reports and Monitoring Report as being proportionate, appropriate and giving the necessary direction on which to base decisions on the Main Issues Report.
- b) Endorse the Strategic Environmental Assessment, interim Habitats Regulations Assessments and Equalities Impact Assessment as being adequate for consultation, and giving the necessary information and direction on which to base decisions on the Main Issues Report.
- c) Approve the Main Issues Report for public consultation from 19th September to 9th December 2011.

Executive Summary

Work has commenced on the production of the Local Development Plan, in line with planning reform measures introduced by the Scottish Government. The first phase of this work involved a pre consultation exercise involving key stakeholders. The second and key engagement stage is the preparation and consultation on the Main Issues Report and its supporting evidence base.

The Main Issues Report sets out a number of main issues and reasonable options to address them. It is not intended as a draft Plan, but is intended to inform the proposed Local Development Plan by seeking out comments on the main issues which will underpin it. It has been drawn up with information gained through pre-consultation with key stakeholders (CNPA Board Paper 18/03/2011), subsequent involvement with communities, stakeholders and partners, and the information provided by the evidence base.

The Main Issues Report is the first formal stage in the process of preparing the Local Development Plan which will set out the planning policy and proposals for the National Park for the future. It is a key stage of engagement and consultation, the results of which will influence the proposed Local Development Plan. The approval for consultation and the subsequent engagement with stakeholders, communities and others will provide pivotal information to take the work on planning policy for the National Park forward.

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN MAIN ISSUES REPORT – FOR CONSULTATION

Background

1. The Scottish Government has recently introduced a programme of modernisation affecting the planning system in Scotland. As part of this new system for development planning has been introduced. Planning Authorities are required to prepare a Local Development Plan as soon as practicable.
2. The first formal phase of preparing a Local Development Plan is to prepare and consult on a Main Issues Report (MIR). This document is intended to inform the Development Plan itself. It is not a draft plan. The Development Plan should be more spatial in its approach than previous Local Plan and must be aspirational but realistic. We should therefore take a similar stance with the Main Issues Report. It must set out the general proposals for development in the area, and must look at the main issues affecting the plan area. In doing so it must set out reasonable alternatives.

Legislative Requirements

3. Cairngorms National Park Authority must follow a number of steps in the preparation of its Local Development Plan, as set out in legislation regarding Development Planning.
4. We must prepare a development plan scheme at least annually. This sets out the programme for preparing and review the Local Development Plan and what is likely to be involved at each stage. The latest version was approved by planning committee on 1st April 2011 and is available on the CNPA website.
5. We must prepare at least one Local Development Plan to cover the whole of the authority's area. We must therefore include the part of Perth and Kinross introduced into the Park since the adoption of the current local plan. On completion of the Local Development Plan there will then be one plan covering the whole of the Park.
6. As an early part of the task, we must monitor changes in the principle physical, economic, social and environmental characteristics of the area; and the impact of the policies and proposals of the existing plans. The evidence base appended to this report provides this monitoring information. It is however important to note that the current local plan was adopted in October 2010 and the period of monitoring has therefore been brief. However there are interesting updates in the issues of housing and the economy, both of which are included in the evidence base.
7. We must also provide other evidence to inform the plan, justify its content and provide a baseline for later monitoring. The evidence is to be proportionate and should be presented in a way that is readily understood. The evidence appended has been drawn from a variety of sources into a suite of documents which is intended to provide the reader with the key pieces of information they will need to understand the content of the MIR and the LDP. It is not however exhaustive. We have not

reproduced documents published by other authorities and agencies which are readily available.

8. We must engage with key agencies, Scottish ministers, adjoining planning authorities and the relevant Strategic Development Planning Authority (TAYplan in our case). The key tool in this early engagement was with a pre consultation report. Members will recall the results of this engagement were reported in March 2011. The results of this work have influenced the development of the Main Issues Report and the options presented.

Further steps taken to date

9. We undertook a search for possible development sites in April 2010. The sites suggested, plus those sites included in the adopted local plan but as yet without a consent/pending consent were assessed, the results of which are appended to this report. This work has influenced the development of the MIR, and in particular the site specific allocations.
10. We have also undertaken a programme of community engagement which focused on communities thinking about their long term future. This work has influenced the draft National Park Plan and the Main Issues Report. The overall visions produced are included as part of the evidence, and appended to this report.

The relationship with the draft National Park Plan

11. The next National Park Plan (2012-17) and the Local Development Plan are being prepared in tandem. While informal engagement has been ongoing over the last year, the forthcoming public consultation on both the draft National Park Plan and the Main Issues Report is the first formal stage in the process. The two plans are closely inter-connected, hence the decision taken by the board to consult on both together.
12. The National Park Plan sets the vision and direction that will guide both plans. The Local Development Plan, and MIR will include these but they will not be the focus of consultation on the MIR. Of further note, the Land Use Strategy section of the National Park Plan will provide the key context and direction for the Local Development Plan, including the settlement strategy. This will however form one of the issues in the Main Issues Report, and comment on the detail of the approach will therefore be invited here.

Evidence base

13. The Main Issues Report and future Local development Plan must be based on evidence which justifies our approach and the content of the Plan. A series of evidence reports have therefore been prepared, and are appended to this report.
 - a) Background Evidence Report 1 – Housing and Population
 - b) Background Evidence Report 2 – The Economy
 - c) Background Evidence Report 3 – Monitoring Report
 - d) Background Evidence Report 4 – Other Information
 - e) Background Evidence Report 5 – Site analysis

14. This evidence informs both the issues raised in this report and its appendix, but also will inform the future Local Development Plan. While this evidence will be kept up to date as we move through the various stages involved in reaching an adopted Local Development Plan, it is intended to set out at this stage the best information available to inform the process.

Recommendation

- 15. The Board is asked to endorse the Evidence Reports and Monitoring Report, as being proportionate, appropriate and giving the necessary direction on which to base decisions on the Main Issues Report.**

The Issues raised in the MIR

16. The Main Issues Report sets out a series of Issues and options to address these issues. 8 issues are identified, each dealing with a different aspect of development planning in the National Park.
- a) Special Qualities of the Park
 - b) Resources/reducing our consumption
 - c) Support for our communities
 - d) Housing/affordable housing
 - e) Spatial strategy (which includes site specific allocations by settlement)
 - f) Support for our rural areas
 - g) Connectivity and communications
 - h) Other issues (issues which are not considered main, and where the direction from the current Local Plan will be carried forward into the proposed Development Plan).
 - i) Each issue is accompanied by a series of reasonable options to address the issue raised.
17. It is important to remember that the adopted local plan is very recent. Many of the issues raised here are therefore very similar to those raised in that Plan. The options however try to meet the requirement for more spatial guidance in the new Plan and try to address some of the limitations of the current Plan.

Recommendation

- 18. The Board is asked to approve the Main Issues Report for public consultation from 19th September to 9th December 2011.**

Formal Assessments

19. We are obliged to carry out a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA), a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and an Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) as an integral part of preparing the Main Issues Report, and later, the Local Development Plan. We are using an ecosystems approach to frame the SEA which, although an innovative approach, has already made this assessment more useful and directly relevant to the National Park context. These assessments will be published alongside the Main Issues Report for consultation.

Recommendation

- 20. The Board is asked to endorse the Strategic Environmental Assessment, interim Habitats Regulations Assessment and the Equalities Impact Assessment as being adequate, and giving the necessary information and direction on which to base decisions on the Main Issues Report.**

Next steps

21. The documents including the Main Issues Report and the evidence base will be scrutinised for minor errors. Minor amendments and final design work will then be completed.
22. The next steps are summarised:

5 August 2011	Board Meeting – formal approval to consult on Main Issues Report, Monitoring Statement and Assessments
19 th September – 9 th December 2011	Public consultation on draft National Park Plan and Main Issues Report , Monitoring Statement and Assessments
December 2011 – August 2012	Consider representations Prepare proposed Local Development Plan and Action Programme
September – November 2012	Public consultation on Proposed Local Development Plan, Action Programme and associated assessments
December 2012 – March 2013	Consider responses
March 2013	Submit the proposed Local Development Plan, Action Programme and Report of Conformity to Scottish Ministers
April 2013 – Sept 2013	An Examination will be held where there are any unresolved representations, conducted by the Scottish Government’s Directorate for Planning and Environmental Appeals. A report will then be published.
December 2013	Having considered the Report, make modifications to Proposed Plan as necessary which must be published.
2014	Advertise intention to adopt Plan, and send to ministers.

23. A detailed timetable of the process is set out in Planning Circular I/09: Development Planning.
24. The consultation on the Main Issues Report, the Monitoring Statement and the Evidence base will be placed on the CNP web site. Using the Scottish Government’s Eplanning programme the Main Issues Report including its maps will be available using the Online Local Development Plan programme. This allows the reader to

view the maps in greater detail, searching down into settlements and sites in a more detailed way than is available on a paper map. It is also intended that there will be an option to make comments and representations online.

Policy Context

25. The Main Issues Report is the first formal stage in the process of preparing the Local Development Plan which will set out the planning policy and proposals for the National Park for the future.

Delivering Sustainability

26. The Local Development Plan will be informed by the National Park Plan which has at its heart the need for sustainability in all things affecting the Park.

Delivering A Park for All

27. The Local Development Plan will be informed by the National Park Plan which sets out the way in which the Park should be developed for the benefit of all.

Delivering Economy, Effectiveness and Efficiency

28. The Local Development Plan will be informed by the National Park Plan which promotes this aim, and will also take direction from government policy which has at its heart sustainable economic growth.

Implications

Financial Implications

29. The work associated with the development of the Main Issues Report and the Local Development Plan is programmed in the ongoing budgets set by the Authority.

Presentational Implications

30. The development of the Main Issues Report and the National Park Plan is a complex process which has resulted in the production of two interlinked but separate documents. Both require full public engagement. Care is needed to ensure that as wide a cross section of the communities found in the Park, together with external partners, agencies and interested parties are involved and engage fully in the process.

Implications for Stakeholders

31. Stakeholders must feel they are contributing to the emerging Local Development Plan, and the work of community liaison officers will play a key role in this.

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19th July 2011

(If you would like a hard copy of some or all of the evidence information please contact Karen at the Ballater office)

Appendix I: The Main Issues Report

Appendix 2 - The Evidence Base and Supporting Information
(Copies supplied as CD)

Background Evidence Report 1 Housing and Population

Background Evidence Report 2 The Economy

Background Evidence Report 3 Monitoring Report

Background Evidence Report 4 Other information

Background Evidence Report 5 Site Analysis

Strategic Environmental Assessment Environmental Report

Habitats Regulation Assessment

Equalities Impact Assessment