

## CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

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### **FOR DECISION**

**Title: A Draft Priority Statement for Land Management  
Contracts in the Cairngorms National Park**

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### **Purpose**

The purpose of this paper is to seek comments from Board on a Draft Priority Statement for Land Management Contracts in the Cairngorms National Park. This is a short-term opportunity to influence the future of Land Management Contracts from 2007 and beyond.

### **Recommendations:**

- Board is asked to note the process in developing the Draft Priority Statement.
- Board is asked to comment on the Draft LMC Priority Statement, prior to its submission to the Scottish Executive.
- Board is asked to note the next steps.

### **Executive Summary**

The Cairngorms National Park Authority has a long-term aspiration to work towards integrated land management. This will provide a one-stop shop for public sector activity available to support land managers in their efforts to deliver the four aims of the Cairngorms National Park.

The development of a Cairngorms Draft Priority Statement is an exciting and immediate opportunity to influence the Scottish Executive's thinking on the future of Land Management Contracts from 2007. This paper describes the process undertaken during a very short time-scale to both gather stakeholders' opinions and integrate national and regional policies and plans into a Draft Priority Statement. Annex 1 contains the Draft Priority Statement. The paper also sets out the background to this work and identified the next steps.

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## **A Draft Priority Statement for Land Management Contracts in the Cairngorms National Park**

### **Introduction to integrated land management**

1. At the Board meeting in December 2004, the Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA) recognised that land managers have a major influence on the delivery of all four of the aims of the Cairngorms National Park (CNP). It was agreed that the CNPA has a major role in enabling land managers to deliver public benefits towards the four aims.
2. The long-term goal of this work is to integrate and co-ordinate the plethora of publicly funded support for land managers, which includes schemes such as the Less Favoured Area Support Scheme and Scottish Forestry Grant Scheme. The resulting integrated schemes and support will be transparently linked to delivering public benefit outcomes. The aim is to have a 'one-stop-shop' for land managers, and to co-ordinate activity between land management units.
3. A range of work has started on identifying public benefits to be produced, and to work with all the public sector bodies to start to deliver those benefits in a co-ordinated way. A paper will be brought to Board in November 2005 reporting on progress and setting out the next steps.

### **The short-term opportunity of developing a Draft Priority Statement for LMCs in the CNP**

4. We have been working closely with the Scottish Executive to look at opportunities for Land Management Contracts to deliver public benefits across the CNP. In July 2005, Board Members informally contributed to a policy paper on LMCs in the CNP. This is presented as Annex 2 of this paper. This sets out the requirements of a LMC scheme to deliver public benefits in the CNP.
5. It was agreed with the Scottish Executive that the next step would be to develop a Draft Priority Statement for LMCs in the CNP. The Scottish Executive is currently considering the future of LMCs in Scotland, for 2007 and beyond. No decisions will be made by the Scottish Executive until the end of 2005. The development of a Cairngorms Draft Priority Statement was seen as a useful process and opportunity to influence the Scottish Executive's thinking on LMCs.
6. There was a very short timescale to develop the Draft Cairngorms LMC Priority Statement; the Scottish Executive requires it for mid-October to inform decisions to be made by the end of 2005. It is essential that the Draft Priority Statement for the CNP identifies the most important public benefits that, from both a local and national perspective, should be delivered by land managers. The Draft Priority Statement must accurately reflect the special status of the Cairngorms National Park. There were two important aspects to developing the Draft Priority Statement:
  - a) capturing the views of stakeholders; and
  - b) considering the national and regional policy priorities, for example, those which have been identified through the development of the National Park Plan.

7. The views of stakeholders for the preparation of the Draft Priority Statement have been informed through a written consultation and through open meetings. The consultation of public benefits undertaken in spring 2005 was sent out to around 300 stakeholders, representing a broad range of interests, from Community Councils, non-governmental organisations, local and national interest groups and land managers within the National Park. They were invited to offer suggestions for priorities and to attend open public meetings specifically arranged to focus on the drafting of the Draft Priority Statement.
8. The two consultation meetings were advertised in the local press and held in Nethy Bridge and Ballater on 12<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> September. Following presentations by CNPA and SEERAD, attendees were asked to suggest and discuss the top three items they considered to be most worthy of public funding through LMCs in the CNP.
9. The national and regional policy priorities have also been incorporated into the Draft Priority Statement. These include the Forward Strategy for Scottish Agriculture, the Water Framework Directive, the Cairngorms Local Biodiversity Action Plan, the Spey Catchment Management Plan, the Sustainable Tourism Strategy and the Interpretative Framework.
10. The Cairngorms National Park Plan is currently being developed through an open consultative process. Work to date has included the policy framework, identification of special qualities, a vision and objectives and actions. This process has been used to inform the Draft Priority Statement.

### **Recommendation**

11. **Board is asked to note the process in developing the Draft Priority Statement.**

### **The Draft Land Management Contract Priority Statement**

12. The Draft LMC Priority Statement is found in annex 1. It includes priorities that are specific to the Cairngorms and part of what sets this place apart from other parts of Scotland, such as the native woodlands.
13. It also includes priorities that could be applied to many areas of upland Scotland, such as the improvement of infrastructure. These are included as part of the Cairngorms LMC priority statement as they are necessary for producing the special qualities of the area. For example, good farming infrastructure will enable more sustainable cattle production, which is vital for maintaining the highest density of breeding waders on the UK mainland, found in the Cairngorms.
14. Further aspects of the Cairngorms which make the place so special are the consultation and co-ordination between interests in land management. Over the last 10 years, there has been much consultation and sharing of information and ideas to inform the development of land management to develop public benefits. The CNPA offers an opportunity to co-ordinate activity between agencies, and to connect with the local communities and national communities who have an interest in how the land is managed.

15. There are several factors underpinning its content:
  - a) Our vision is for a thriving land management sector which makes money, has diversified and delivers public benefits. We are not just seeking land managers to act as park managers.
  - b) The Scottish Executive has not completed its thinking on the future structure and scope of LMCs. It is therefore labelled as a Draft Priority Statement. It is likely that we would wish to repeat and refine the exercise once more decisions are made about LMCs. We also wish to consider further how to improve stakeholder engagement. This is an important step in developing priorities for land management in the CNP, but not the end in the process.
  - c) As no decisions have yet been made about the scope of LMCs, either from 2007 or beyond, the Draft Priority Statement considers priorities for land management across all sectors and for all public benefits. For example, it is possible that LMCs may incorporate SNH's natural care scheme, and the priority statement has been written accordingly.
  - d) As the scope of LMCs is not yet decided, the Draft Priority Statement does not specify tier 2 and tier 3 measures – it focuses on **what** we want to deliver across through LMCs, not **how** it will be achieved.
  - e) The Draft Priority Statement covers all land management in the CNP. For example, this means that it applies to moorland, nature conservation and forestry managers, as well as farmers and crofters.
  - f) It is outcome based, and does not focus on process or policies. It does not explain how to deliver the outcomes, nor set any prescriptions. That comes later.
  - g) There were heavy time constraints in developing the Draft Priority Statement. To influence the Scottish Executive, it needs to be complete by mid-October, and this dictated the process followed.

### **Recommendation**

16. Board is asked to comment on the Draft LMC Priority Statement, prior to its submission to the Scottish Executive.

### **Next steps**

17. After discussion by Board, the paper will be completed and submitted to the Scottish Executive in mid-October. We will then continue to work closely with the Scottish Executive to develop LMCs which will deliver the four aims of the Cairngorms National Park. We will report on progress to Board as appropriate.
18. A further paper will be brought to Board in November 2005 considering the development of integrated land management to date and a work plan for the next few years. Meanwhile other work is ongoing to refine priorities. For example, priorities are being identified for delivery under the Local Biodiversity Action Plan. This is all part of an ongoing and long-term process.

**Recommendation**

**19. Board is asked to note these next steps**

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## **Annex 1 The Draft Priority Statement for Land Management Contracts in the CNP**

The CNPA wishes LMCs to support an actively managed, mixed mosaic landscape of farmland, livestock farming (including sheep and cattle across the landscape), cropping, woodlands, forestry, moorland and uplands which delivers a wide range of public benefits. The active land management will be undertaken by a stable, thriving, highly skilled and innovative work force, which builds on the long-established strengths of the range of Cairngorms' land managers, including family farms, estates and non-governmental organisations.

The draft priorities for these public benefits for the Cairngorms are as follows:

### **Biodiversity**

Foster the protection and enhancement of the four key habitats identified by The Cairngorms Local Biodiversity Action Plan:

1. Farmland and grassland habitats, with associated species such as breeding waders,
2. Montane, heath and bog, with associated species such as juniper, twinflower, dotterel, red grouse, and mountain hare
3. Wetland and water habitats, with associated species such as water vole, otter, osprey, Atlantic salmon, freshwater pearl mussel
4. Woodland habitats, with associated species such as Capercaillie, red squirrel, crested tit, narrow-headed woodant

### **Special sites**

- All our special sites (SSSIs, SPAs, SACs, NSAs, NNRs, Ramsar sites etc) to be kept or brought into favourable condition
- Enable a habitat network approach to managing our biodiversity and special sites, particularly for moorlands and woodlands.

### **Views/Landscapes**

- Maintain the distinctive Cairngorms patchwork of woodland, farmland and moorland, and upland areas.
- Look after and rebuild our drystone dykes which are distinctive of many parts of the Cairngorms
- Maintain our historic and designed landscapes and enhance the landscape setting of settlements, for example, at Braemar
- Keep the landscape tidy by removing waste scrap and litter.

### **Cultural heritage**

- Maintain our historic sites in particular our Scheduled Ancient Monuments.
- Recognise the importance of keeping long-established place names.
- Support events such as agricultural shows and sheep dog trials which form an important part of the Cairngorms land management culture.

### **Floodplain and water/wetland management**

- Flood plain and flood management to protect downstream communities, and provide wider benefits for natural heritage and recreation, as already happens in some parts of the Cairngorms.
- The creation and maintenance of wetlands that form an important part of many Cairngorms Straths.
- Maintain high quality water which is so important for natural heritage and economic activities such as whisky distilling and fishing, and for domestic use.

### **Carbon storage**

- Support land management practices that help mitigate climate change, as part of the wider aspiration for sustainable Cairngorms.

### **Moorland & upland management**

- Encourage best practice moorland management, including tick management, for natural heritage, recreation and economic objectives.

### **Woodland and forestry management**

- Woodland management, for natural heritage, economic, and recreation objectives, with the emphasis on the regeneration of native species, typical of the Cairngorms such as pine, aspen and birch.
- Enable grazing in woodlands where appropriate to ensure the enhancement of valued landscapes, habitats and species diversity

### **Grazing Management**

- Implement Deer management plans which take account of public interests
- Encourage the continuation of shepherding and animal husbandry skills which enable enhancement of the land
- Enable flexibility in grazing management to ensure valued habitats and landscapes may be perpetuated and enhanced.

### **Wildland**

- Safeguarding and enhancing people's enjoyment of the Cairngorms which relates to their perceptions of its wild land qualities. These could be found in any part of the landscape.

### **Access**

- Support a co-ordinated approach to developing paths around settlements and entry points to core, to build on access work that already exists in some parts of the Cairngorms.
- Provide a co-ordinated provision of access opportunities to water bodies.
- Provide high quality infrastructure and information, suited to the Cairngorms as a quality destination.
- Mitigate measures to prevent dogs disturbing natural heritage interests and land management activities in the Cairngorms.

### **Business development/Diversification**

- Investment in tourism facilities/information as set out in the Cairngorms Sustainable tourism strategy
- Investment in other on-farm diversification activities, for example dog kennels
- Adding value to primary products to prevent leakage of value from the Cairngorms. This includes finishing stock, and maintaining the high quality of the produce.

### **Supply chain**

- Improve the integration in the supply chain for both the inputs into land management, and the outputs produced.

### **Infrastructure modernisation**

- Improve the infrastructure, for example, deer larders and farm buildings.

### **Animal health and welfare**

- Build on and maintain the high health quality of Cairngorms' livestock. A key factor for this high quality is the quality and skills of the land managers.

### **Housing**

- The provision of affordable housing is a key issue for the Cairngorms. Priorities will be to make better use of the housing stock that exists, and to ensure that there is adequate housing provision for land managers and others who live and work in the National Park. It is essential that housing be well sited and designed and energy efficient and making use of local resources.

### **Renewable energy**

- The growing of biomass and wood fuel are key opportunities to support natural heritage and landscape, and contribute to a sustainable CNP.

### **Skills and knowledge**

- Facilitate dissemination of local knowledge within the community fostering land management practices which combine long-established understanding with modern expertise.
- The Cairngorms has highly skilled and knowledgeable land managers. We wish to maintain the skills and knowledge and provide for all land managers to share and gain new skills, particularly as new demands arise on their management objectives.
- Facilitate local discussion groups.
- Offer opportunities for new entrants to gain skills.
- Ensure opportunities, particularly for young people to enter land management, so that the special qualities of the Cairngorms are maintained.

### **Collaborative working**

- The continuation and enhancement of collaborative working between land managers and between units is vital for delivering the Cairngorms' special qualities. For example, through deer management and habitat networks.

### **Communication**

- Site visits, open days, school visits, talks, websites, newsletters, information boards are all key ways to explain what happens on the land and why it is important. There is a strong culture of this already in the Cairngorms which we wish to build on through – a key action for the Sustainable Tourism Strategy.

### **Control grazing and predatory animals**

- This is an important part of active land management where animals impact on natural cultural and economic interests. These impacts could be positive or negative. For example, many grazing animals have positive impacts on the natural heritage.



## Annex 2 Land Management Contracts in the Cairngorms National Park July 2005

### **Purpose of the paper**

This paper is a starting point for establishing a programme of action to implement Land Management Contracts (LMCs) from 2007, to deliver the Cairngorms National Park aims. This paper assumes that from 2007, the Cairngorms LMC would be the only scheme available to farmers and crofters in the CNP. Tier 1 would remain the single farm payment, with cross compliance.

These proposals would involve us working closely with SEERAD, other public agencies such as SNH, and our wider stakeholders, including land managers. There are proposed timetables described in this paper; these would need to be amended to fit with other timetables such as the development of Scotland's Rural Development strategy.

This paper provides background to integrated land management and the Cairngorms National Park Authority, and our vision for LMCs. It then describes our proposals for an action programme which we wish to work up and deliver over the next 18 months, for implementation from 2007. These are:

- Adopting the Cairngorms National Park as an LMC region
- Engagement with stakeholders
- Objective and priority setting
- Prescriptiveness of management options
- Preferred uptake areas
- Land management planning
- Provision of information for land management planning
- Training and skills audit
- Advice
- Transfer of current schemes
- Links to other EU funding
- Integration with other landuses/public sector funding
- Monitoring and evaluation
- Funding

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## **1. Introduction**

### **1.1 The Cairngorms National Park**

The Cairngorms National Park (CNP), created in 2003 as Scotland's second National Park, has four aims:

- to conserve and enhance the natural and cultural heritage of the area;
- to promote sustainable use of the natural resources of the area;
- to promote understanding and enjoyment (including enjoyment in the form of recreation) of the special qualities of the area by the public; and
- to promote sustainable economic and social development of the area's communities.

Farmers and crofters across the Park contribute greatly to all 4 aims. The management undertaken by them creates the landscape and supports the wildlife that helps make this area so special. For example, the Park contains the highest density of breeding wading birds (such as lapwing and redshank) on the UK mainland. This is directly a result of the farming systems found here.

Agriculture contributes to the third aim as many people visit and live in the area because of this special landscape and wildlife. Agriculture also plays a direct role in the economic and social development of the area's communities, providing employment, housing and supporting many other industries such as suppliers. The contribution of agriculture to the special qualities of the area has been recognised in a variety of publications including the Spey Catchment Management Plan and the Local Biodiversity Action Plan.

Agriculture in the Park is under threat, from:

- low prices;
- an ageing farming and crofting community;
- difficulties for young entrants to start farming;
- an overburden of rules, regulations and paperwork;
- national schemes that do not fit local requirements;
- a lack of funding for environmental schemes; and
- a downturn in agricultural output.

Threats to agriculture have a knock-on effect on the contribution that farming and crofting make to the four aims of the CNP. This is the rationale for developing support for agriculture.

### **1.2 The Cairngorms National Park Authority**

The general purpose of the Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA) is to ensure that the National Park aims are collectively achieved in a co-ordinated way. Lord Sewel's Land Reform Policy Group proposed<sup>1</sup> that National Parks should be introduced in Scotland to ensure a more integrated approach to the management of areas of outstanding heritage value in support of sustainable development objectives

Our Board identified the development of integrated land management as an early priority for delivering the National Park aims in a co-ordinated way. It agreed that:

- we should work towards a long term vision for the area in which land is managed in an integrated manner in order to deliver a wide range of private and public interest management objectives in line with the aims for the CNP set down by government in the founding legislation.
- we should work with land managers and other interests in order to achieve an effective dialogue between all interests so as to agree management objectives for individual management units through an inclusive and transparent consultative process;
- to enable delivery of these management objectives, we should work with partner agencies and other interests in order to achieve effective publicly (and perhaps privately) funded support across all land use types in the CNP, including support schemes, and the provision of advice and training. This support should be streamlined, bureaucracy reduced and a more efficient government service provided.

Work has begun on developing integrated land management through two strands:

- Strategically, through identifying the public benefits to be delivered through ILM and then influencing public sector support; and
- Opportunistically, through influencing developments in public sector policies towards greater integration and transparency.

In May 2005, we published *Land Management and Public benefits in the Cairngorms National Park*. This reports on meetings with a range of stakeholders, including land managers, local communities, NGOs, public agencies and other communities of interest. These meetings began the process of identifying public benefits that land managers currently produce, and could produce in the future. We

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<sup>1</sup> The Scottish Office (1999). Land Reform Policy Group: Recommendations for Action.

are now reflecting on outcomes, and starting the process of analysing how the public benefits identified are currently supported, or not, and also the process of stakeholder engagement.

Meanwhile, we have been working with public sector partners to influence key public sector policies, such as the future of the Cairngorms National Nature Reserve and the development of SNH's Natural Care schemes. The development of Land Management Contracts provided a major opportunity for developing integrated land management. Although these are currently planned to provide support for the agricultural sector, our vision is that they are the starting point for integrating all land management.

### **1.3 Our vision for land management contracts in the CNP**

Our vision is for a CNP where land managers run private businesses that also produce public benefits, for which they are supported. Land managers are not park rangers or nature reserve managers, but undertake management for public benefits and the special qualities of the CNP.

The priority objectives for public benefits to be delivered across the CNP are identified and agreed through an inclusive process, which involves a range of stakeholders and implements all four aims.

The land manager agrees a voluntary, individual, Land Management Contract between him/herself and the public through the single authority administering the scheme, which identifies what will be delivered, and for what reward. The plan describes the management options which deliver the priority objective to be achieved, rather than inflexible prescriptions. The plan is for the whole land management unit, includes all public support and replaces all other plans.

The land manager receives training and is able to get advice on developing and delivering the plan from a project officer. The project officer, a generalist, can get support from specialists. The land manager and project officer have easy access to digital information about the key priorities for the unit. The land manager revisits and develops the plan with the project officer at least once a year.

Monitoring and evaluation is an essential part of LMCs. Monitoring of uptake of management priorities is a key priority. Monitoring the state of the priorities is also undertaken. Red tape is reduced through minimising the current high number of different monitoring visits to land managers. A wide range of stakeholders are involved in advising on the results of monitoring to ensure a better scheme.

**Our overriding principles for LMCs are that they should be voluntary, transparent, offer value for money, supported by advice and training, reduce red tape and bureaucracy, work with the practicalities of land management and be based on sound research.**

### **1.4 Process of developing this paper**

This paper has been prepared by staff at the CNPA, with input from Board through an informal meeting. Its contents reflect discussions on integrated land management with many stakeholders over the last 18 months, including the recent consultations on public benefits and land management in the CNP.

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## **2. Proposals for developing the Cairngorms LMC**

## **2.1 Adopting the CNP as an LMC region**

We propose that to implement the proposals contained in this report, it is essential that the Park is an LMC region. Designating the National Park as a region for LMCs would have multiple benefits and should be done for the following reasons:

- We are uniquely placed as a public agency to act as a co-ordinating body. This would become particularly important as other schemes are integrated into LMCs.
- The principle of an integrated approach is embedded in the CNPA.
- we are well placed to deliver a wide range of public goods, and can provide excellent value for money. This flows from our duty to deliver the four aims in a co-ordinated way, and our policy of working to reduce duplication and waste in the public sector. We do not wish to become an extra layer of bureaucracy, but to ease the red tape.
- integration of land management schemes is underway (for example, the Cairngorms Moorland Project, which has developed management plans for sporting and agricultural tenants on 2 moors. The plans deliver multiple public benefits);
- we have been working with local communities and communities of interest, and can build on these structures to act as a facilitator for wider engagement on land management;
- there is a strong record of collaboration through the Cairngorms Partnership to be built upon;
- identification of economic, environment and social priorities has started for example, through the public benefits work.

We do not propose administering the LMC scheme. Our primary purpose would be to ensure it is developed and delivered to meet the needs of land managers and other stakeholders in the CNP.

## **2.2 Engagement with stakeholders, including local communities**

We propose that one public agency is responsible for administering LMCs. The agency would be formal decision-making body, and would enter the legal contract with the land manager. This public agency would employ the project officers who would develop the plans with land managers, and co-ordinate the monitoring.

### **2.2.1 The LMC Local Advisory Group**

A Local Advisory Group (LAG) would be established to provide advice to the public agency running the LMCs. It would not make the decisions about individual LMCs, or the general scheme. It would not make decisions on behalf of land managers. Introducing a LAG to advise on LMCs is quite a change from the current system, and would have to be planned and handled sensitively.

The group would meet quarterly and have the following functions:

- To advise on the priorities for LMCs
- To advise on the management objectives of LMCs (including payment rates)
- To advise on preferred uptake areas for LMCs
- To advise on the administration of LMCs, including advice and training.
- To monitor the uptake of LMCs and make recommendations for changes
- To monitor the impact of LMCs on the special qualities of the CNP
- To communicate about LMCs to a wider audience.

We would provide secretariat for the LAG. This group would be based on the Leader Plus model, which the CNPA currently hosts and manages. The membership would include land managers, local communities, public agencies and communities of interest such as NGOs. Members would be expected to have a high level of knowledge in their area, and would be provided with training on the practical aspects of land management. No changes to any aspects of LMCs would be made without consultation with the steering group.

*We would set up the LAG early in 2006, before the scheme starts in 2007, to advise on its development. We would consult with stakeholders over the terms of reference and methods of selecting members for the group over the next few months.*

### **2.2.2 Other methods for engaging with stakeholders**

In addition to, and in consultation with the LAG, we would develop other mechanisms to engage with a wide range of stakeholders. We would manage these mechanisms, and jointly implement them with members of the LAG. These mechanisms could include:

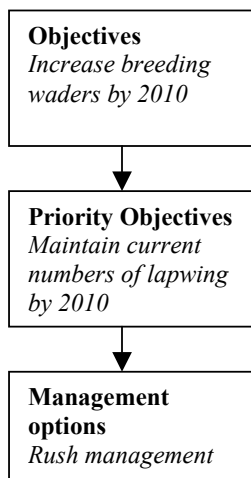
- Consultation on the priority objectives and management options for public benefits
- Consultation on the administration of LMCs.
- Information on LMCs would be placed on a website and in public places such as libraries.
- A communications plan to explain the benefits that land management brings to the area, and opportunities to influence LMCs
- Community newsletters could be used to explain the scheme and provide contacts for further information
- A suggestions point for the scheme.

*We would develop and implement a communication and consultation plan for LMCs, with the LAG and other stakeholders, from early 2006.*

### **2.3 Objective and priority setting**

We would adopt an objective lead approach for LMCs, which clearly define what we are trying to achieve through public support. We propose that we use the following model. First, a broad set of objectives would be identified. This would then be developed into priority objectives, identifying the most important achievements to be delivered by LMCs. These priority objectives would then be broken down into management options necessary for achieving the priority objective.

For example, an objective may be to increase numbers of breeding waders by 2010. However, a priority may be to stem the current declines in lapwing. Rush management would be one of the options to enable this.



Funding would be a key factor in deciding how many priority objectives we can fund, and whether we can also fund non-priority objectives.

We expect that these management options would include management under previous schemes such as the ESA and RSS. The management options may be delivered through the single farm payment cross-compliance, which would be tier 1 of the LMCs. Currently, the national LMC scheme is expected to have at 3 tiers, with tier 2 simple measures open to all and tier 3 more specialised management. We may find it difficult to reconcile our aspirations for an objective lead scheme with these 3 tiers, and therefore may only have two tiers – the single farm payment, and other management options.

We recently undertook a consultation on land management and public benefits in the CNP. This is the first step towards identifying what we want LMCs to deliver.

*We plan now to develop that work into objectives, and then work with the LAG and others to identify priority objectives, and management options.*

### **2.3.1 Prescriptiveness of management options**

One recommendation often made to improve current schemes, is to change the way prescriptions are set. Prescriptions are currently ‘prescriptive’ and inflexible. They focus on the management required rather than the output required. There are many variations in climate, geography and land management which mean that an over-prescriptive approach may not work. For example, rather than specifying dates when stock are excluded from areas, it may be more helpful to specify the length of vegetation required. Output lead prescriptions appeal to the entrepreneurial nature of land managers.

The management options in the Cairngorms LMC would be output focused, rather than specifying the management needed to achieve the outputs. This change requires more support and advice to be available to land managers. Where possible, this advice should be based on sound research. We would need to develop a programme of research to fill the gaps in our knowledge. While waiting for the results, management options should be implemented through the best available knowledge. That is, we should not wait for research to be completed, before implementing management options. The proposals for monitoring and evaluation should mean that advances in research should be implemented in LMCs.

*We would plan a programme of research to help implement the management options*

### **2.3.2 Preferred uptake areas**

An important principle is that all support for LMCs is voluntary and all management options would open to all in the National Park. Nevertheless, there may be some management options that we wish to target to certain areas, particularly positive work for designations, for the core path network or for management for species that require management across several land units.

We would target certain areas of the CNP for priority objectives. These preferred uptake areas would be identified through consultation, and targeted through advisors, or through enhanced payment rates. Using the previous example, taking a priority objective of maintaining current numbers of lapwing by 2010. The most important sites for rush management for lapwing in the CNP would be identified and mapped as preferred uptake areas. Any land manager could undertake rush management for lapwing. Those in the preferred uptake areas however, would be targeted by the project officers, and an enhanced payment rate offered. Designated sites would also qualify as preferred uptake areas and would attract an increased payment rate.

*We would work with the LAG to assess the priority objectives that require preferred uptake areas, and identify and promote them.*

## **2.4 Land management planning**

We propose to introduce land management planning across the unit, so that a land manager would have a single plan to refer to. The unit would be considered as a whole, and long term planning for public benefits would be encouraged. This plan would supersede all other plans to reduce red tape and bureaucracy.

Information technology (IT) would be used and this plan would then be easily accessible for others, whether adjacent land managers or the public. Information from the plan would be used for monitoring and evaluation of the scheme. The plan would also act as a development plan for the business, as we expect that economic objectives would be included in LMC. We would avoid one deadline per year for plans to be submitted.

*We would develop the IT for land management planning to produce a simple user friendly system.*

### **2.5 Provision of information for land management planning**

To support land managers and advisors, we would use IT to provide information about public benefits on a land management unit. This could include archaeological information, wildlife surveys and access opportunities. This would then inform the land management planning processes, and the identification of preferred uptake areas.

To achieve this, it would be necessary to develop IT, which draws together all this information, and is accessible to the land manager, public agencies and advisors. We also propose to make this information available to the general public.

*We would work with our partners to draw together information and using IT, make it easily available.*

### **2.6 Training and skills audit**

We manage the Cairngorms Land Based Businesses Training Project. This has been extremely successful in engaging land based businesses in the building of skills and sharing experiences and expertise. Courses are locally run and locally relevant. It has been successful as it is voluntary, there is close liaison with clients and trainers to identify and deliver their needs and it provides easy access to training, and the opportunity for land managers to network with each other.

We propose that training would be an essential ingredient to the success of LMCs. The training would involve a skills audit to identify priorities for training. Training would need to be in several areas:

- To provide information about the scheme and help land managers to engage with it, and develop their plans
- To provide information to implement and develop the management objectives
- To help develop the business.

*We would work with the LBBTP and other partners to develop a full training programme to support the implementation of LMCs.*

### **2.7 Advice**

Advice is also an important aspect to the success of a programme. We propose providing several kinds of advice on LMCs in the Cairngorms, including easy access to written information on the scheme and mechanisms for promptly responding to queries about the scheme. We also wish to make available access to written advice on implementing the management options.

The highest priority would be to build a system of providing free one-to-one personal advice for LMCs. This would build on the current work done through the Whole Farm Review Scheme and the accreditation of advisors. Our vision is that each land manager would have access to and build a

relationship with a project officer, who would act as first point of contact, draw up initial schemes, be available for queries, and annually review the scheme. This project officer would be a generalist and would need support from other, specialist advisors. The project officer would need to undertake a programme of training and skills development. By reducing the prescriptiveness of management options (see below), we expect there to be a much increased need for advice.

*We would work with advisors and other partners build on the Whole Farm Review Scheme into the one-to-one advice we suggest. Through the communications plan, we would include easy access to written advice, and a general enquiries line.*

### **2.8 Transfer of current schemes**

We propose that land managers who are in current schemes such as ESA, or the tier 2 LMC menu scheme have the choice of continuing the scheme, or transferring to the Cairngorms LMC scheme.

### **2.9 Links to other EU funding, including structural funds and LIFE funding**

European Union funding, including that through Structural and LIFE programmes have brought many benefits to the Cairngorms. We are contributing to debates on their future, which may include amalgamation with Rural Development Regulation funding. As well as hosting the Cairngorms Leader Plus project; we also are involved in LIFE projects which bring great benefits to the CNP.

We propose that the Cairngorms be used as a paper exercise to work through opportunities for the future of other EU support, with the aim of maintaining current benefits, and enhancing them where possible.

*We would work with the Scottish Executive and others to consider how future for RDR, structural funds and LIFE funding.*

### **2.10 Integration with other landuses/sectors**

This paper has concentrated on possibilities for implementing support for agriculture through LMCs in the Cairngorms. However, this is just one part of developing integrated land management in the CNP. Our vision is that all support for land managers would be delivered through a one-stop shop, and that LMCs could provide a suitable policy framework for this.

We propose exploring the opportunity to integrate LMC support with that for land uses. Our priority would be to explore priorities for integration with moorland management. Moorlands cover 40% of the CNP, and currently there are limited opportunities for support for public benefits. We would wish to build on work started by Scotland's Moorland Forum, SNH's Natural Care and National Nature Reserve programme, and the Cairngorms Moorland Project (which provides integrated support for agriculture and sporting management on two demonstration moors). The outcome of this integration would be that for moorland, agriculture and sporting management would have individual and complementary LMCs.

*We would discuss with partners opportunities for integrating with other landuses, with Moorlands the priority*

### **2.11 Monitoring and evaluation**

A key aspiration for LMCs in the Cairngorms is that they would be developed over time. We propose that the advisor discusses and amends the plan with the land manager annually. Key considerations for the annual review would be:



- Comments/suggestions from the land manager, public agencies or local communities or others
- Practicalities of land management
- New information about public benefits and management practices.

Processes for reconciling external suggestions and the land managers' aspirations would need to be developed, although it is hoped that solutions could be found through negotiation.

A system for ensuring wise use of public money would need to be developed. The aim would be to reduce the current high number of inspection visits for different purposes.

Monitoring and evaluation on the uptake and distribution of management options would also need to be undertaken. The LAG would receive an annual report on this, and make recommendation for changing payment rates/preferred uptake areas etc.

The final monitoring need is to measure the impacts on the public benefits that we are trying to deliver. We propose that a monitoring programme be developed before the scheme is introduced, to include a baseline. The monitoring results would then be used to develop management objectives and possibly identify research needs. This monitoring should complement the CNP indicators programme.

*We would undertake baseline monitoring in 2006, and put in place mechanisms for monitoring uptake and delivery of management objectives.*

## **2.12 Funding**

### **2.12.1 Funding for land managers**

It is essential that public support for land management is fair, transparent and offers value for money. Experience suggests that some current payment rates are not appropriate for the Cairngorms, for example the transfer of those who were in the upland grain project from a local scheme to the RSS.

We would welcome the opportunity to consider mechanisms other than income forgone for calculating payment rates. We wish to encourage long-term stewardship of the land, and reward land managers for the public benefits they produce.

LMCs would be funded by SEERAD, as with LMCs across Scotland. There is a strong case for making enhanced public support available to land managers in the CNP. The Cairngorms have been designated as a special place, and require adequate support to conserve and enhance the special qualities produced by land managers. Public investment is able to purchase substantial public benefits and offer value for money. We would ensure that the farmers and crofters in the Cairngorms are not compromised through involvement in a regional rather than national scheme.

It would be important to have a clear understanding of the amount of funding on offer, and important decisions would need to be made about how this is made available to land management units. Options include:

- An allocation for each land management unit reflecting its size
- An allocation for each land management unit reflecting its opportunities to deliver priority objectives.
- An allocation for each land management unit for Tier 2 management options
- Allocations for each objective, which land managers then bid for (the 'Challenge Fund' approach),
- Amounts related to the modulated funds from each land management unit.

Decisions on the funding available on offer and how it should be allocated would need to be undertaken early as it would directly impact on the proposals for land management planning and priority setting.

We wish to integrate other landuses into LMCs. This would have to be supported by extra funds. That is, we do not wish to see a decrease in the amount of funding available for farmers and crofters to deliver public benefits.

*We would work with SEERAD to identify the funding available for LMCs for agriculture in the CNP.  
We would undertake a study to investigate methods of calculating payment rates.  
We would identify with the LAG the fairest way to distribute the funds, which supports the delivery of public benefits.*

### **2.12.2 Funding for developing and administering the LMC scheme**

This paper contains many aspirations for administering LMCs which would require funding from the public purse. We would undertake a study to assess how much is currently being spent on administering agricultural funds in the CNP. This would be used as a benchmark. One of our important principles is that the new scheme should offer better value for money, and this includes its administration.

We would be able to offer some funding for developing and implementing the administration of the scheme, such as the provision of advice, information and training. We would also work with other partners to access other funding and resources, which may be non-financial. This may involve the re-allocation of resources, for example through the Scottish Executive's *On The Ground* project.

*We would undertake a study to assess how much is currently being spent on administering agricultural funds in the CNP.  
We would work with partners to fund the development and administration of the LMC scheme.*

### **3. Conclusion**

This paper describes a set of actions that we have identified as essential to ensure the successful delivery of LMCs in the CNP from 2007.

The next step is to discuss it with the SEERAD LMC team on 13 July. We would then start engaging with relevant partners about implementing the proposals.