

CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

FOR DECISION

Title: Scottish Planning Policy and National Planning Framework consultation

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Purpose:

For members to agree the key issues for CNPA's response to the Scottish Government consultation

Recommendation:

That the committee agree the key issues that CNPA wish the review of SPP and NPF3 to address

Executive Summary

The Government is currently consulting on revising the Scottish Planning Policy and National Planning Framework. This is a key opportunity to set out how national policy can provide greater clarity on the role of National Parks in the national planning context, and how planning can help to make the most of National Parks for Scotland. This paper sets out key issues that we propose CNPA's response should address.

Background

- I. The Government is currently consulting on revising the Scottish Planning Policy and National Planning Framework. This covering paper sets out a brief explanation of each and the annex proposes key issues that CNPA's response should cover.

Scottish Planning Policy (SPP)

2. Scottish Planning Policy is the overarching statement of Scottish Government policy on land use planning and informs:
 - The content of local development plans
 - Decisions on planning applications
 - How proposals are developed
3. Ministers announced a review of the policy on 18 September 2012 with the following purpose:
 - *To bring it up to date: most of the policy was written before the economic downturn;*
 - *To focus the policy on sustainable economic growth: to ensure the policy gives appropriate weight to the viability and delivery of development;*
 - *To emphasise place-making: delivering good quality, successful and sustainable places requires maintaining and improving the built and natural environment of Scotland.*
4. The Government is seeking views on the priorities for change by 11th January 2013, following which a draft policy will be published in Spring 2013 for consultation.

National Planning Framework (NPF3)

5. The National Planning Framework (NPF) sets the context for development planning in Scotland and provides a framework for the spatial development of Scotland as a whole. It can have implications for the way the National Park and wider region develops over the next 30 years, including future Local Development Plans and how planning decisions are made.
6. National Planning Framework 2 (NPF2) was published in 2009. It sets the spatial strategy for Scotland's development to 2030, and designates 14 national developments of strategic importance to Scotland. .
7. The Scottish Government recently announced that work has begun on the third National Planning Framework (NPF3). NPF3 will identify a number of 'national developments', establishing the need for them in the national interest. The Scottish Government is therefore requesting the submission of proposals for national developments as well as views on other key issues which will shape how Scotland will change by 14 December 2012.
8. The Scottish government state that national developments must make a significant contribution to Scotland's sustainable economic growth; must be of more than regional significance and should make a significant contribution towards one or more of the following:
 - An 80% reduction in emissions by 2050;
 - Achieving the aims of the Zero Waste Plan;
 - The Scottish Government's Renewable Energy Targets;
 - Skills development, reducing unemployment and job creation;
 - Strengthening Scotland's links with the rest of the world;
 - Improving our digital, transport, utilities or green infrastructure networks.

Key issues for the Cairngorms National Park

9. The review of both SPP and NPF3 is a good opportunity to embed National Parks more firmly in the national planning policy context and address a range of issues that have emerged through experience to date. Together, these planning documents provide a good opportunity to seek a clear statement from Government on the role on National Parks as national assets, and the role of the planning system to make the most of National Parks.
10. In developing our proposed response, we have met with Scottish Government planners, Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Authority, Scottish Natural Heritage and partner planning authorities in a Highlands and Islands group. In particular, there is an opportunity for both National Park Authorities to seek the same clarity in relation to the National Park designation in the planning system.
11. We propose our response should cover the following key issues:
 - a. **National Parks as national assets**

We would like to see both SPP and NPF3 identify National Parks as national assets, to both the economy and environment, in which planning plays a positive role in delivering sustainable rural development.
 - b. **The National Park designation**

We would like to see SPP set out a policy basis for considering and safeguarding the integrity of the National Park designation and the special qualities which underpin designation, including the landscape qualities.
 - c. **Planning for Tourism**

We suggest that SPP and NPF3 address the role that planning plays in enhancing the tourism infrastructure in support of the national tourism strategy. Specifically, we would welcome recognition that National Parks are national tourism assets which can benefit Scotland as a whole, in which high quality tourism infrastructure is required to meet visitor expectations.
 - d. **Connectivity**

SPP and NPF3 can help to support better physical and digital connectivity. We propose that the improvements to the A9 should be a national development in order to support the co-ordinated approach to delivering a high quality route essential to the Highlands and Islands economy and tourism experience. We also propose a focus on developing national scenic routes. SPP and NPF3 can also show how new development should help deliver government commitments on digital connectivity, including broadband access in remote areas.
 - e. **Energy**

The monitoring statement for NPF2 made specific reference to the renewable energy agendas being delivered in Scotland's National Parks. We would welcome specific reference to the opportunity for the National Parks to contribute appropriately to renewable energy targets alongside recognition of the agreed

policy of both National Park Partnership Plans that large scale commercial wind turbines are not appropriate in National Parks.

f. **National Developments**

Alongside Highland and Perth and Kinross Councils, we propose that the A9 improvements are classified as a national development in order to help ensure the co-ordination and focus on high quality design and implementation required.

12. The working draft at Annex I sets out in more detail a proposed response, which we propose to submit following input from the committee and final discussions with partners, subject to final agreement of the planning committee convenor and deputy convenor.

Recommendation

13. **That the committee agree the key issues that CNPA wish the review of SPP and NPF3 to address**

**Hamish Trench
November 2012**