
CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

FOR DECISION

Title: National Park Plan Consultation Draft

Prepared by: Gavin Miles, National Park Plan Officer
Hamish Trench, Strategic Land Use Director

Purpose

To consider and approve the National Park Plan consultation draft for public consultation.

Recommendations

That the Board

- a) Considers and approves the National Park Plan draft for public consultation
- b) Agree the proposed public consultation period from 19th September to 9th December 2011
- c) delegates authority for the completion and approval of the reports of Strategic Environmental Assessment, Appropriate Assessment and Equalities Impact Assessment of the Plan to management team

Executive Summary

The Cairngorms National Park Authority has a statutory duty to prepare the National Park Plan as the way of delivering the four aims of the National Park in a collective and coordinated way. A draft National Park Plan has been prepared through engagement with partners and communities, building on the experience and strengths of the current National Park Plan. The draft National Park Plan is intended for public consultation and engagement in order to build an even more effective plan for the five years 2012-2017. We expect the consultation to lead to significant refinements and improvements that will be included in the final National Park Plan that will be submitted to Scottish Ministers in 2012.

The paper seeks board approval of the draft National Park Plan for formal consultation period of 19 September to 9 December 2011 and delegation of approval of the supporting assessments to the CNPA management team. It sets out the steps leading to the consultation period and notes the process after consultation to finalise the Plan.

NATIONAL PARK PLAN CONSULTATION DRAFT – FOR DECISION

1. The National Park Plan is the primary tool through which CNPA seeks to bring to life the ‘collective and co-ordinated’ approach needed to manage the Cairngorms National Park. Preparation of the plan is one of CNPA’s statutory duties, and the way in which we prepare the plan goes to the heart of our approach to managing the Park with and through others.
2. The National Park Plan is a statutory plan which must be approved by Ministers. The plan needs to provide a clear focus for collective action in the Park, provide sufficient policy direction to guide our decisions and the plans and decisions of others, and it needs to show how the National Park delivers for the wider region and Scotland.
3. The consultation draft is not a ‘draft version’ of the final plan; instead it seeks to engage people in the challenges, opportunities and options, while also giving enough sense of what the outcomes and priorities for work might be. In this way, we seek to engage people and organisations through the consultation period in shaping the priorities of the plan further, adding substance to the proposed programmes of work, and identifying what each of our partners will focus on delivering from 2012-17.
4. We expect the final plan to be significantly developed from the outline of outcomes and proposed work packages suggested in the consultation draft.

Consultation

5. The development of the plan to this draft stage is based on significant informal consultation with partner organisations and communities, reflecting on delivery of the first National Park Plan and looking ahead to the challenges to come.
6. A programme of engagement with communities in the Park over the last year has led to the development of a vision for each community, referenced in the draft plan. The substantial discussions behind those visions have also informed the issues, priorities and proposed packages of work set out in the draft.
7. Likewise, discussion through delivery teams and with individual partner organisations has led to the focus of the draft, which we think addresses the key issues and challenges being raised.
8. It is now time to take this work to a public consultation to seek a wider perspective on these proposals and to refine them further with relevant partners. The public consultation is scheduled to begin on 19th September and run for twelve weeks until 9th December 2011. During this time we will also be consulting on the Main Issues Report for the Local Development Plan alongside the National Park Plan.

Recommendation

9. **That the Board**

- a) **considers and approves the National Park Plan draft for public consultation**
- b) **Agree the proposed public consultation period from 19th September to 9th December 2011**

Publications

10. The package of consultation publications will comprise:
 - a) Summary of consultation on the National Park Plan and Main Issues Report (booklet to be sent to every household and business in the Park and for use with wider public and partners)
 - b) National Park Plan draft (web-based with print copy available)
 - c) Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Environmental Report
 - d) Habitats Regulations Appropriate Assessment
 - e) Equalities Impact Assessment (EQIA)
11. We will guide people to our website to make their responses, with the option of submission by email or letter.
12. The draft National Park Plan for consultation is included as Annex I to this paper. It will go through a proofing and design stage before publication.
13. The SEA, Appropriate Assessment and EQIA have informed the development of the draft National Park Plan. CNPA staff are completing the formal reports of each assessment and we recommend that the Board delegate responsibility for approval of these assessments to Management Team. The Board would be given the reports for information on August 5.

Recommendation

14. **That the Board delegates authority for the approval of the reports of SEA, Appropriate Assessment and EQIA of the Plan to management team.**

Analysis of consultation responses

15. We are currently tendering a contract to analyse and report on the responses to the consultation for both the National Park Plan and Main Issues Report. Seeking an external specialist company to provide this service will help to manage the workload within the capacity of the CNPA staff team and bring a clear level of robust and transparent process to the handling of responses. The outputs of this contract will include:
 - a) Detailed record of all responses (to specific questions and wider comments)
 - b) Summary of responses (to specific questions and wider comments)
 - c) Analysis of participation

Next Steps

16. Over the next two months, staff will be working with others to:
 - a) Proof, design and checking documents ready for print and web publication;
 - b) Further develop engagement plans, communications plans, partner meetings and public meetings;

- c) Prepare briefing and supporting material for staff, board and partners; leading to
 - d) The consultation launch with the Local Development Plan Main Issues Report on 19 September 2011
17. There will be a briefing session for board members on the evening of 4 August 2011. It will outline the roles of board members, tasks and allow board feedback on communications and engagement plans.
18. Following the consultation period, the CNPA will make changes to the draft Plan and develop a final plan with partners for submission to the Scottish ministers for approval. We currently expect to submit the final National Park Plan for approval by May 2012. However, the timescale for submission will depend both on the complexity of issues and realistic options raised by the consultation responses and ongoing discussions with partners.

Gavin Miles, National Park Plan Officer
Hamish Trench, Director of Strategic Land Use
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gavinmiles@cairngorms.co.uk
hamishtrench@cairngorms.co.uk