

## CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

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### FOR INFORMATION

**Title:** National Park Plan – Interim Consultation Report

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#### **Purpose**

To update Members on the public consultation on the Draft National Park Plan and publish a publicly available summary of responses.

#### **Recommendations**

That the Board note the content of the consultation report, and the key themes highlighted in this paper, and give consideration to these issues during forthcoming discussions to guide completion of the National Park Plan.

#### **Executive Summary**

This paper accompanies publication of the interim report on the public consultation on the Draft National Park Plan. The report provides a publicly available summary of responses to help inform completion of the plan. In addition to the report, the Park Authority and partners are using the original submissions and a more detailed analysis of comments to inform completion of the plan.

The consultation has provided a wide range of comments covering all sections of the draft plan and provides a constructive basis on which to complete the plan in collaboration with partners. This paper draws out the significant themes emerging which require consideration about how to address these issues in completing the plan. There is ongoing work with partners to address the broader range of detailed comments summarised in the consultation report.

The paper also sets out the schedule for future board meetings to guide completion of the plan by December 2006.

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## NATIONAL PARK PLAN – INTERIM CONSULTATION REPORT FOR INFORMATION

### Background

1. This paper brings to Members an interim report on the consultation on the Draft National Park Plan. This report records the consultation process and summarises the responses received, to serve as a publicly available summary of the consultation and inform completion of the plan.
2. The consultation report does not at this stage identify how the responses are being considered and addressed, and how the plan may change and develop as a result. The National Park Authority is currently working with partners to identify how best to address the issues raised in completing the plan. This information will be recorded as the plan is completed, and published in a full consultation report to accompany the completed National Park Plan that will show how the consultation has informed the plan.
3. Publication of this interim consultation report is a key milestone in the timetable Members have previously agreed (confirmed in the Board meeting of 11<sup>th</sup> August 2006), to complete the National Park Plan in December 2006.
4. This paper also identifies the significant issues arising from the consultation which the Board will need to consider in completing the plan, and confirms the process ahead.

### Consultation Responses

5. The consultation report summarises the methods of consultation and participation. It is worth highlighting that 124 formal responses were received, and discussions on an extensive range of topics across the plan were held in 31 consultation meetings. Overall, the quality of responses is high in terms of relevance to the draft plan and the issues included. Whilst there are many and sometimes divergent views expressed, there is a high number of constructive suggestions for developing the plan and making it more effective.
6. Most organisations responding have already been involved in informal discussions to shape the plan, and their responses reflect and develop a number of themes that have emerged from these discussions.

### Themes Emerging from Responses

7. Responses cover all sections of the draft plan, including both consultation documents 'Looking to 2030' and 'Priorities for Action 2007-2012'. There are many detailed comments on particular sections which are summarised in the report and

suggestions for redrafting which we are taking forward in discussion with our partners.

8. There are also a number of more significant themes that emerge from the responses on, to which we now draw attention for further consideration by the board during the informal and formal discussions scheduled over the next 3 months. These areas are drawn out as they could result in significant changes to the draft, over and above refinement of the existing text. In summary, these are as follows:

**a) Structure**

- i) A need for greater clarity and linkage between the long-term vision, strategic objectives and priorities for action, and a clearer sense of the purpose of selecting priorities for action;
- ii) A desire to see more clearly the links between the National Park Plan and other plans, particularly the Local Plan, and the future role of the National Park Plan. Connected to this is a wish to ensure that the plan consistently adds value over and above existing policy and activity;
- iii) A desire for greater clarity on implementation mechanisms and the monitoring and review process;
- iv) A desire for clarity on the role of, and opportunities for involvement of, the community, private and voluntary sectors;
- v) For all priorities for action, a need to set out clearly the desired outcomes – what exactly they seek to achieve;
- vi) A need to consider a wider range of partners to take forward many actions within the priorities and identify a lead partner; and
- vii) The role of the National Park Authority in implementation.

**b) Vision**

- i) A desire for the plan to take a more outward looking approach and be more ambitious in setting out the role and contribution of the Park in the wider regional and national context – this is something that comments on several sections of the plan highlight.

**c) Guiding Principles**

- i) A need to develop the idea of the guiding principles, and find ways to embed these throughout the plan and show practical suggestions as to how we can collectively live up to these principles.

**d) Content**

- i) A strong desire to give a higher profile to the wild land qualities of areas in the Park, and set out a more proactive approach to conserving and enhancing these qualities in the long term and within the next five years;
- ii) A need to consider the Park's role in the wider economy, in particular in relation to economic development, transport and tourism;
- iii) A need to consider economic diversification opportunities beyond tourism;
- iv) A need to consider whether deer management should be a stand-alone priority for action, or whether it should be set in a broader context such as grazing management;
- v) A desire to ensure cultural heritage has a higher profile within the plan; and

- vi) A need to consider further the implications of the 'Preferred Strategic Direction for Affordable Housing' (to be addressed through separate discussions and development of the Local Plan).

### Process to Complete the Plan

9. We are currently using the responses received and working with partners to complete the plan. There are many suggestions to improve and clarify the text made in the responses that will be incorporated into redrafting. There are also a number of points on which we are having further discussions with partners to identify the best way to address them in completing the plan.
10. There is therefore an ongoing process to revise and complete the text for the start of December, which will include informal and formal sessions for the Board to consider the issues raised, and any other aspects to guide completion. These meetings are set out in the table below.

Date	Meeting and purpose
22 <sup>nd</sup> September	Informal Board discussion on the issues emerging from the consultation and ways to address these, to inform redrafting.
20 <sup>th</sup> October	Informal Board discussion to review progress on revision and consider matters of implementation and monitoring.
3 <sup>rd</sup> November	Formal Board meeting to agree main areas of change and update members on progress with partner engagement and the communications plan.
1 <sup>st</sup> December	Formal Board meeting to approve completed text of the plan.
December tba	Advisory Panel on Joined-up Government – to seek confirmation of collective commitment to the completed plan

11. While the meetings will focus on the significant areas of change in which the guidance of the Board is needed, revisions of the full text will also be circulated so that members may contribute to any aspect as the plan moves towards completion. A working draft of the revised text will be circulated as sections are prepared during October and November.

### Consultation

12. The consultation report that accompanies this paper includes a list of respondents to the National Park Plan consultation. Work to complete the plan is being carried out in collaboration with other stakeholders.

### Policy Context

13. The National Park Plan is a key output for the 2005-08 Corporate Plan. This consultation report is a key stage of feedback to inform completion of the National Park Plan within the timetable previously agreed by the Board.

*Delivering Sustainability*

14. Sustainability is an important outcome for the National Park Plan, which identifies sustainable development as one of its guiding principles.

*Delivering a Park for All*

15. A Park for All is also an important outcome for the plan, which includes social justice as one of its guiding principles.

*Delivering Economy, Effectiveness and Efficiency*

16. The process for completing the plan, including publication of the consultation report seeks to ensure an efficient approach to delivering the plan within the agreed timetable while ensuring effective engagement and support of other stakeholders.

**Implications***Financial Implications*

17. There are no financial implications arising from this paper.

*Presentational Implications*

18. The consultation report is a key output in the process to complete the National Park Plan within the agreed timescale. It serves as a public summary of the consultation responses and will be made available on the CNPA website, or by hard copy on request.
19. A letter has already been sent to all consultation respondents informing them that the report will be published and made available. A further update will now be sent to respondents to draw their attention to the report and invite them to let us know at this stage if they feel that a particular aspect of responses is not sufficiently recognised or acknowledged in the report.

*Implications for Stakeholders*

20. This is a key stage of feedback to stakeholders, particularly those that submitted responses to the Draft National Park Plan. We are already engaged in discussions with stakeholders to use these responses in completion of the plan, and have previously informed stakeholders of the timetable for completion of the plan.

**Next Steps**

21. The next steps are set out in the process noted above.

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