
CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

FOR DECISION

Title: NATIONAL PARK PARTNERSHIP PLAN 2012-17 –
APPROVAL FOR SUBMISSION TO MINISTERS

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Purpose

To seek Board approval of the National Park Partnership Plan 2012-17 for submission to Ministers

Recommendation

That the Board approve the National Park Partnership Plan 2012-17 for submission to Ministers.

Executive Summary

The National Park Partnership Plan has been prepared through consultation and engagement with partner organisations, communities, the public and interested groups. This included: engagement before a draft plan was prepared; consultation on a draft plan; and latterly, discussions on the detailed content of the final National Park Partnership Plan 2012-2017.

The final stage of its preparation is to submit the plan to Ministers for their approval, following which the National Park Authority can formally adopt the plan. The Plan sets out the vision, direction and priorities for the collective management of the National Park for the next five years, building on the progress delivered through the first National Park Plan. In recognition of the wide range of partners committing to contribute to deliver, the plan is called the National Park Partnership Plan.

The Plan has also been subject to formal assessment and appraisal to identify any effects on the environment, European designated sites and equalities interests. The board should have regard to these assessments in considering the plan and in their decision to approve the Plan for submission to the Scottish Ministers.

NATIONAL PARK PARTNERSHIP PLAN 2012-17 – APPROVAL FOR SUBMISSION TO MINISTERS - FOR DECISION

Background

1. The National Park Partnership Plan has been prepared through consultation and engagement with partner organisations, communities, the public and interested groups. The final stage of its preparation is to submit the plan to Ministers for their approval, following which the National Park Authority can formally adopt the plan.

The National Park Partnership Plan 2012-17

2. The National Park Partnership Plan 2012-17 (Annex 1) is the management plan for the National Park that brings together the public, private and voluntary sector partnership needed to deliver the aims of the National Park. It is the National Park Plan as required by section 11 of the National Parks (Scotland) act 2000, 'to ensure that the National Park aims are collectively achieved in a co-ordinated way'.
3. In particular, the National Park Partnership Plan:
 - a) Sets out the vision and over-arching strategy for managing the Park;
 - b) Provides focus and priorities at a time of limited financial resources;
 - c) Provides a strategic context for the Local Development Plan;
 - d) Shows how the four aims of the National Park can be achieved together, benefiting people and place.
4. Developing the plan and co-ordinating its implementation lies at the heart of the National Park Authority's role to develop a shared vision for the Cairngorms and to lead the partnership required to deliver it.
5. The National Park Partnership Plan is structured around delivering three long term outcomes, from which all the policies and programmes flow:



Delivery of the Plan

6. Delivery will be focused on achieving a set of five-year outcomes by 2017:
 - a) The economy of the Park will have grown and diversified, drawing on the Park's special qualities
 - b) Businesses and communities will be successfully adapting to a low carbon economy
 - c) Communities will be more empowered and able to develop their own models of sustainability
 - d) The quality and connectivity of habitats is enhanced.
 - e) The species for which CNP is most important are in better conservation status
 - f) The special landscape qualities, including wildness, are conserved and enhanced
 - g) Settlements and built development will retain and enhance the distinct sense of place and identity in the Park
 - h) More people will enjoy, learn about and help to conserve and enhance the Park
 - i) The expectations of visitors are met or exceeded
 - j) The Park's recreation opportunities have improved the health and enjoyment of residents and visitors

7. The Cairngorms National Park Authority's role in delivering the Plan is set out in our new corporate plan. Our role comprises three strands:
 - a) Providing leadership and co-ordination;
 - b) Supporting partners in their work to deliver the plan;
 - c) Delivering some actions ourselves where we are best-placed to do so.

Consultation and Engagement

8. The Plan has been developed through three stages of consultation and engagement:
 - a) Informal engagement with partner organisations and communities in 2010 to identify the issues the plan should address;
 - b) Formal public consultation on a draft plan including community meetings and liaison with partner organisations for three months October – December 2011;
 - c) Follow-up engagement with partner organisations to review consultation responses, consider direction and priorities January – April 2012.

9. The independent report of the public consultation is available at:
<http://www.cairngorms.co.uk/park-authority/national-park-plan/cairngorms-national-park-plan-2012-2017/>

10. The board paper of 16th March 2012 set out the independent report on the public consultation and considered the significant issues emerging, the options to address

them and the direction for completing the plan. Since then we have worked with partner organisations to agree the final focus of the plan and the headline actions partners commit to delivering.

11. The Partnership Meeting on 19th March 2012 brought together the range of partners committing to work together to deliver the plan, to agree the focus and collaboration needed.

Impact Assessments

12. The following assessments of the plan have been carried out and the Board should consider and have regard to these assessments in considering how the plan meets our statutory obligations and approving the plan for submission to Ministers.

Environmental Report of Strategic Environmental Assessment (Annex 2, electronic copy provided)

13. The Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is required under the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes (Scotland) Regulations 2004. It considers the likely environmental effects of the plan on a range of environmental objectives relevant to the Cairngorms National Park. An Environmental Report of the draft Plan was published for consultation at the same time as the draft Plan and an updated Environmental Report has been prepared to accompany the National Park Partnership Plan.
14. The SEA process helps to make sure that relevant environmental considerations are taken into account during the preparation of the Plan. Comments on the draft Plan and Environmental Report from consultation helped to inform the more comprehensive policy framework of the National Park Partnership Plan and to ensure that the plan should have a range of positive environmental effects. Further SEA is required for other plans, programmes and strategies prepared by the public sector.

Record of Habitats Regulations Appraisal (Annex 3, electronic copy provided)

15. The Habitats Regulations Appraisal (HRA) is required under the Habitats Regulations and considers whether the plan is likely to have a significant effect on the integrity of European sites (Special Protection Areas and Special Areas of Conservation as well as Ramsar sites). The Plan can only be adopted if it is concluded that it will not adversely affect the integrity of any European sites.
16. The conclusion of The HRA process is that the plan will not adversely affect the integrity of any European sites. The HRA process has led to some alterations to policy statements and one work package in order ensure this outcome.
17. Together, the Habitats Regulations Assessment and the Strategic Environmental Assessment are tools to ensure that the National Park Partnership Plan is consistent with section 9(6) of the National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000. The Plan itself sets out the policy framework to ensure that the management of the Park is consistent with Section 9(6), in the context of the general purpose and function set out in section 9 of the Act.

Equalities Impact Assessment (Annex 4, electronic copy provided)

18. The Equalities Impact Assessment is required under the Race Equality Duty (2002), the Disability Equality Duty (2006) and the Gender Equality Duty (2007). Age, sexuality, religion and belief are also considered in the EQIA process. Screening of plan did not identify any negative impacts on any equalities groups and did identify some positive effects on equalities groups. 'Parks for All' is one of the joint principles of both National Parks, and the principle will guide the delivery of projects and other plans.

Next Steps

19. The National Park Partnership Plan will be submitted to Ministers for their approval as required by the National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000. The consultation and assessment reports will be submitted alongside the plan.
20. Once approved by Ministers the National Park Authority is required to formally adopt the National Park Plan as approved and make it available. We are required to review the plan within five years.
21. A communications plan is in place to keep partner organisations up to date with progress of the plan's approval and, when it is approved, to communicate and engage people with what it means for the future direction and priorities in the National Park.

Recommendation

22. **That the Board approve the National Park Partnership Plan 2012-17 for submission to Ministers.**

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