
CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

FOR INFORMATION

Title: CAIRNGORM ESTATE MASTERPLAN

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Purpose

1. To update the Board about the approval of a masterplan for the Cairngorm Estate by Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE).

Recommendation

That the Board:

- a) **Note that HIE has prepared and launched a masterplan for Cairngorm Estate (see link below) which provides a welcome sense of direction for their management of the area.**

Background

2. Board members will recall that:
 - a) HIE embarked on preparation of masterplan for the whole of Cairngorm Estate some time ago. CNPA welcomed the work to prepare such a plan so as to give clarity about management intent in this important area of publicly-owned land in the medium to long term.
 - b) The process has involved two phases of public consultation. CNPA provided formal comments on a previous version of the Masterplan in August 2020.
 - c) CNPA agreed Working Principles to guide work in this area and these are on our website at <https://cairngorms.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Cairngorm-Mountain-CNPA-Working-Principles-converted.pdf>
 - d) Officers from HIE attended a business meeting with the Board in March 2021 and were given further points of advice to assist in finalising the masterplan.

3. The full document is available online at www.hie.co.uk/cairngorm. In launching the masterplan, HIE said:

“A set of 10 strategies to shape development of the publicly-owned Cairngorm Estate over the next 25 years has been published by Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE). The 3,500-acre estate (1,418 hectares) includes footpaths and trails offering access to wild areas that provide habitat for rare mountain flora and fauna, in addition to the well-known snowsports centre and funicular railway.

The development agency has prepared the [Cairngorm Estate Masterplan](#) following widespread consultation that included local community and business groups, sporting and nature conservation organisations, and public bodies with an interest in the mountain estate. In addition, more than 2,100 people took up a public invitation to complete detailed online questionnaires and submit views directly to HIE.

The outcome is an overarching vision for the estate as: ‘a world-class mountain environment where nature thrives and people of all ages and abilities enjoy access to outdoor sport, recreation and education opportunities in every season of the year’. The masterplan will act as a framework to help inform future development plans and support delivery of a suite of strategies that focus on 10 inter-related topics. These are:

- an all-year sustainable operating model*
- cohesive ecology and habitat restoration*
- promoting active travel and sustainable transport*
- a mountain for all*
- Scottish Centre for the Mountain Environment*
- excellent visitor experience*
- mountain biking*
- decarbonising the mountain*
- access from the Ptarmigan building*
- monitoring implementation of new activities”*

Planning Context

4. The Cairngorms Local Development Plan 2021, approved in March, provides the planning context where it says, in the supporting text for Policy 2 on Supporting Economic Growth (see para 4.39 on page 35 on our [website](#)):

“There are three ski centres in the National Park and these play an important role in the local economy. They face challenges and pressures in continuing to provide the modern infrastructure and facilities that visitors expect, as well as responding to climate change and considering ways of increasing summer visits and revenues. The Plan will support appropriate development and enhancement of these facilities.

Planning applications in these locations should be supported by a masterplan or similar document which outlines the longer term development strategy for the centre and explains how the proposal fits within this.”

5. Please note that all planning applications will be made in accordance with the Local Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The masterplan will be a material consideration.

Next steps

6. Early priorities for HIE itself over the next two years include stabilising the present operating company, Cairngorm Mountain (Scotland) Ltd and reviewing options for future ownership and operating models.
7. Other areas of focus within the same timescale include ecology; sustainable transport; creating a plan for mountain biking; relocating the snow factory and electrifying snow cannons, and facilities development, including options for new chairlift in Coire Cas.
8. CNPA looks forward to working with HIE and other partners to ensure the successful delivery of the masterplan over the next few years.

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