



For decision

Title: Integrated Wildfire Management Plan

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Strategic context

1. National Park Partnership Plan section A7. Fire Management contains an action to develop an Integrated Wildfire Management Plan (IWMP) by 2027.

Background

2. In a report by the James Hutton Institute (2024) climate change observations and predictions for the National Park all demonstrate a pattern of continuing wetter winters and drier summers. All areas of the Park are projected to experience increases in mean monthly maximum and minimum temperature, large sections of the Park will become drier between April through to September, and there will be a substantial increase in the number of dry days and of consecutive dry days. This will increase the risk of drier soils and vegetation, with consequences on ecological functions and fire danger.
3. Fuel loads vary across the National Park according to land management objectives. National policy and National Park Partnership Plan objectives to reduce herbivore pressure, increase structural and species diversity on moorlands and expand woodland, particularly through natural regeneration, whilst bringing multiple benefits and ultimately creating more resilient landscapes, will increase fuel loads in the intervening period.
4. The Integrated Wildfire Management Plan aims to provide support and guidance to all land managers in developing robust approaches to reducing the risk of ignition, improving the efficacy of wildfire fighting, and building resilience into the landscape in the context of different land management objectives across the Park.



Purpose

5. This Board Paper presents a draft Integrated Wildfire Management Plan to go out for a formal consultation period of six weeks during February and March 2025.

Recommendation

6. The Board is asked to:
 - a) Approve the draft Integrated Wildfire Management Plan for consultation.

Stakeholders

7. The draft for consultation has been prepared with input and advice from the Cairngorms Upland Advisory Group, the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, Deer Management Groups, the Land Managers' Forum, Cairngorms Connect, East Cairngorms Moorland Partnership and individual landowners in the National Park.

Implications

8. Resource allocations to deliver wildfire and responsible behaviour signage and communications are included in the draft operational plan budget for approval by Board in March 2025. There is sufficient staff resource allocated in the draft operational plan to support patrolling and communications by the Park Authority ranger service.
9. The implementation of the plan will be monitored by the Cairngorms Upland Advisory Group with updates to the Park Authority Performance Committee on an annual basis.

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