
CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

FOR DECISION

Title: Local Development Plan Main Issues Report – responses to consultation

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Purpose:

To update the Board on the responses received to the consultation on the Main Issues Report and establish the next stages in the process.

Recommendations

- a) That the Board accept and note the responses received to the consultation on the Main Issues Report, the summary report of these, and the next steps in the preparation of the proposed Local Development Plan.

Executive Summary

Public consultation on the Main Issues Report for the Local Development Plan was held from 19th September to 9th December 2011. This paper provides a summary of the response received, together with a copy in full of all responses and a short summary of each comment listed by the issue in question.

These 114 formal responses received raising 530 points, combined with the responses received at the ten community meetings held around the Park, give a clear steer to help influence the drafting of the proposed Local Development Plan.

The paper also sets out the next steps in the process of producing a proposed Local Development Plan.

Local Development Plan Main Issues Report – Responses to Consultation – For Decision

Background

1. Public consultation on both the draft Cairngorms National Park Plan and the Main Issues Report for the Local Development Plan was held from 19th September to 9th December 2011. This paper provides an update on the information received from all responses, and an explanation of the next steps in preparing the proposed Local Development Plan. Appended for information are the full responses and a shorter summary of the responses made to each question posed.

Results of consultation on the Draft Local Development Plan Main Issues Report

2. The consultation was widely publicised through press articles, statutory notices, the CNPA website, partners' publications, the 'Your View' leaflet sent to all households in the Park; and direct letter and face to face contact with partners and interest groups.
3. The responses have now been assessed and a final tally of 114 responses have been received to the Main Issues Report. Coming from members of the community, key stakeholders, and other interested parties, they have raised 530 individual issues. The following table sets out, numerically, the level of responses received.

Issue	Support for preferred option	Prefer an alternative or amended approach	Total
Special qualities of the Park	21	19	40
Resources	16	21	37
Supporting our communities	25	11	36
Affordable housing	10	55	65
Spatial Strategy	11	14	35
An Camas Mor	1	18	19
Aviemore	4	6	10
Ballater	4	24	28
Grantown-on-Spey	2	10	12
Kingussie	2	8	10
Newtonmore	3	7	10
Blair Atholl	4	13	17
Boat of Garten	2	15	17
Braemar	2	5	7
Bruar and Pitagowan	2	7	9
Carr-bridge	2	7	9
Cromdale	3	6	9
Dalwhinnie	3	3	6
Dinnet	2	6	8
Dulnain Bridge	3	3	6
Killiecrankie	2	4	6
Kincraig	2	6	8
Nethy Bridge	4	10	14

Issue	Support for preferred option	Prefer an alternative or amended approach	Total
Tomintoul	2	4	6
Support for rural areas	9	22	31
Connectivity and Communications	8	19	27
Other issues	5	22	27
Supplementary Guidance	4	17	21

4. Appended to this report are three appendices – 1) listing all respondees, 2) setting out the full response from each respondee, and 3), prepared by an independent consultant, providing a summary of those responses for each issue and question. The responses will be key to the development to the proposed plan, and will form the basis for all future Board discussions as we move forward in work to draft both policies and supplementary guidance. The summary report setting out the summary of the responses is particularly useful in gauging opinion on the issues set out in the Main Issues Report. However the detailed comments received will be used to ensure all points are properly considered and reflected in our discussions and the final proposed plan.

Summary of responses on each issue

5. **Issue 1 – Special Qualities** – the majority of respondees support the preferred approach which is to provide additional spatial information to better conserve and enhance designated sites. Of those seeking an alternative or amended approach opinion is split between those seeking further protection, and those seeking a more flexible approach. In moving forward CNPA must therefore be clear on the level of direction provided in the proposed LDP and be clear on how this information will be applied to guide appropriate development which conserves and enhances the special qualities.
6. **Issue 2 – Resources/reducing our consumption** – the majority of respondees seek an alternative or amended to approach to that proposed as our preferred option. This ranged from the need to clarify what we consider to be a resource, to how those resources can be used and protected to support the economy of the Park. In looking in detail at the responses, the general consensus seems to support the inclusion of additional clarity and information to amplify the preferred approach rather than a total change in direction.
7. **Issue 3 – Supporting our communities** – The majority of respondees support the preferred option which is to highlight opportunities for economic development that fit with key settlements and support our rural communities. With widespread support for an approach which recognises that one size does not fit all, in moving forward, CNPA must be clear on what will achieve this result, and provide sufficient clarity for developers and communities so that all can see how the proposed LDP works for them to provide the correct level of support.
8. **Issue 4 – Affordable housing** – the responses received show overwhelming support for the need to provide for 100% affordable housing. In moving forward

CNPA must therefore be clear on how the approach taken to provide affordable housing will secure what communities need. Delivery of affordable units in the current economic climate must be considered and we must therefore be clear in our explanations of why any land might be provided for open market housing. We must also ensure a framework which provides the right level of flexibility to allow developers to react to changes in the funding streams and economic prosperity to best serve the delivery of affordable units.

9. **Issue 5 – Spatial strategy** – the responses are split on the proposed approach to the spatial strategy. Whilst there is general support for the approach, many responses suggest an amendment to this, to remove An Camas Mor, to amend the position of certain settlements within the hierarchy, and to amend the sites included with specific reference going back to the sites which were suggested as part of the preliminary work prior to the publication of the Main Issues Report. In moving forward we must be clear on the role each settlement plays in the hierarchy, and how this fits into the overall strategy for growth in the future.
10. **Issue 6 – Support for Rural Areas** - although numerically it seems that the bulk of respondents do not support the preferred approach, most sought an amendment to that approach, rather than a complete change of direction. The key change focuses on the need for care in developing an approach which supports growth in rural communities when matched against conservation and enhancement of the natural and cultural heritage. In moving forward we must be clear on the level of protection which is provided, and the opportunities for development which will help support what rural communities need.
11. **Issue 7 – Connectivity and communications** – again, whilst numerically it seems that most support a different approach, when looked at in detail, the bulk support the approach but with some amendments, including a review of the approach to paths, hill tracks, A9, and other key routes across, into and out of the Park. Matched with this, the needs of wildlife and how it moves around is highlighted as a key concern.
12. **Other issues** – the general consensus is the need for a review of the existing policies and approaches in the adopted Local Plan to ensure that they are providing the right direction. Some additional topics are also suggested, including how we deal with battlefields which have been formally registered since the adoption of the current Local Plan. In moving forward we must therefore ensure that all policy approaches are revisited, and provide the right level of direction and protection to meet the needs of the National Park for the five years.
13. **Supplementary Guidance** – as with other issues, the consensus seeks a review of existing guidance to ensure it is current, clear and meets the needs of the Park for the forthcoming plan period.
14. **Settlements** – Over a third of all comments received were about individual settlements and the proposals suggested for housing and employment within them. Of this third, over 80% sought an alternative or amended approach to the proposed way forward. It is clear that communities feel strongly about the plans laid before them for the next 20 years, and we must therefore revisit these to ensure we

take the most pragmatic approach which best meets the needs of communities together with meeting the obligations placed on the Authority in terms of planning and other legislation. To best facilitate this further detailed engagement via community councils and community groups is suggested as the best way forward.

15. In addition to the formal responses, the information gathered from the ten community information sessions were during the consultation period are also information in assisting in proceeding with work on the proposed LDP. With nearly 400 people attending these sessions, they are a valuable source of informal information on topics which are particularly important to individual communities and a number of common issues emerged:
- a) Concern about scale of future housing development in many communities
 - b) Desire for housing that meets the needs of individual communities
 - c) Desire to see better design in new development
 - d) The need for better or any IT and mobile connections for communities and business
 - e) Pride in natural and cultural heritage
 - f) Economic fragility of communities and business and need for support and diversification
 - g) Opportunities for young people (particularly around skills and training)

Next steps in preparation of the proposed Local Development Plan

16. Work on the proposed Local Development Plan will follow the agreed timetable set out in the Local Development Plan Scheme, recently approved by Planning Committee (2 March 2011). Drafting of the document and its associated supplementary guidance will continue with a final decision by the Board planned for November 2012. The final documents will be informed by a number of informal discussions planned between now and October 2012. Consultation on the documents will then follow, in March 2013.

Recommendation

17. **That the Board accept and note the responses received to the consultation on the Main Issues Report, the summary report of these, and the next steps in the preparation of the proposed Local Development Plan.**

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5th March 2012

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Annexes

1: List of Respondees

2: Responses received in full (listed by respondee) – supplied on separate cd

3: Summary of responses received (listed by Issue) – supplied on separate cd