
CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

FOR INFORMATION

Title: LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2 UPDATE

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Purpose of Report

To brief the Planning Committee on the evidence that will be collated to inform the second Local Development Plan for the Cairngorms National Park and the programme of pre-Main Issues Report consultation that will be undertaken with key stakeholders.

Background

1. All planning authorities in Scotland are required by law to publish a Local Development Plan (LDP) for their area. The LDP must be kept up to date and reviewed at least every five years.
2. The current LDP for the Cairngorms National Park was adopted in 2015. The timetable for preparing the next LDP, which was approved by the Planning Committee in April 2016, works towards having the new LDP adopted by 2020. This will ensure that the statutory requirement for reviewing the LDP every five years will be met. The timetable is also linked to the preparation of the new National Park Partnership Plan (NPPP3) in 2017, as this will set the strategic context for the next LDP.

Supporting Evidence

3. A range of evidence is required to support the plan-making process. This is necessary both to inform the content of the next LDP and to provide a baseline for later monitoring. In particular, a robust evidence base will be critical in order to justify the content of the LDP at any subsequent Examination.
4. The Issues Papers¹ that have been prepared to support the current 'Big 9' consultation on NPPP3 provide a useful starting point as evidence for the next LDP. In particular, the issues papers on Flood Management, Visitor Infrastructure & Information, Housing, and Economic Development help to identify some of the key planning issues that the next LDP will need to address. They also help to identify geographic areas that are likely to require specific policy approaches within the LDP (e.g. spatial priority areas for regeneration and tourism development, key infrastructure investment projects etc.).

¹Available online at <http://cairngorms.co.uk/authority/publication/395/>

5. However, it will be necessary to supplement these issues papers with a range of specific supporting evidence for the LDP. An overview of the further supporting evidence that is expected to be prepared in support of the LDP is provided below:

Monitoring Statement

This will provide a summary of the physical, economic, social and environmental characteristics of the National Park in order to help identify any particular issues that need to be addressed in the next LDP. It will also analyse the impact of the policies in the current LDP to help identify any areas where policy change may be necessary.

Housing Evidence Report

This will supplement the housing evidence gathered for NPPP3 and, in particular, will be used to help establish the amount of housing land that needs to be allocated for development within the next LDP.

Infrastructure for Sites / Site Effectiveness Review

This review is identified as one of the planning service priorities for 2016/17, as agreed by the Planning Committee in April 2016. It will examine the effectiveness and deliverability of each of the sites that are allocated for development in the existing LDP. Sites that are not deemed effective or deliverable may be considered for removal from the next LDP.

Town Centre Health Checks

Again identified as a planning service priority for 2016/17, this assessment will examine the vitality and viability of the existing town centres within the National Park. It will particularly help to inform the next LDP's policies on retail and town centre development.

Strategic Flood Risk Assessment

This will provide an overview of flood risk management issues within the plan area. It will help to inform the LDP strategy by identifying areas that are not likely to be appropriate for development due to flood risk.

Minerals Audit

This audit is being led by the Highland Council, and will provide a more detailed understanding of the mineral sites that are currently operating within the Highland Council's area and the markets they serve. It will help to inform the LDP's policies on future mineral developments.

Strategic Environmental Assessment

This is a statutory requirement. It will identify, describe and evaluate the likely significant effect on the environment of the implementation of the LDP, and any reasonable alternatives.

Habitats Regulations Appraisal

This is a statutory requirement. The appraisal will be used to ensure that the LDP's policies and proposals will not adversely affect the integrity of any European protected site.

Equalities Impact Assessment

Also a statutory requirement, this assessment will ensure that the LDP's policies and proposals will not discriminate against particular groups or sectors of the community based on their race, disability, gender, age, religion or beliefs, or sexuality.

6. In addition to the above, further evidence may be required to support the next LDP's policies on matters such as transport, developer obligations and open space provision. The evidence base will be kept under review throughout the production of the LDP.

Pre-MIR Engagement

7. The process for producing an LDP is set out in planning legislation and includes a number of stages of public engagement and consultation. The first formal stage of public engagement is known as the Main Issues Report (MIR). This will provide a summary of the key issues that the LDP will need to address and present the planning authority's views on the potential options for tackling them (including both the preferred options and other reasonable alternatives). Anyone with an interest in the plan will be able to comment on the MIR, and their comments will be taken into account when the LDP is subsequently produced.
8. However, legislation states that in compiling the MIR (i.e. before its publication) planning authorities must consult with and have regard to any views expressed by:
 - the key agencies²;
 - the Scottish Ministers; and
 - any adjoining planning authority (including Strategic Development Planning Authorities where relevant)
9. In order to satisfy these requirements, it is proposed to write to all relevant key agencies, adjoining planning authorities and the Scottish Ministers to seek their views on the implementation of the existing LDP and the issues that the next LDP should address. Meetings will be arranged with these stakeholders where it is necessary to discuss particular issues and themes in more detail. The majority of the key agencies are represented on CNPA's Planning Delivery Group, which has been established specifically to discuss the LDP and its implementation. This forum will therefore also be used to discuss the emerging MIR with key agencies.

² Scottish Natural Heritage, the Scottish Environment Protection Agency, Scottish Water, Scottish Enterprise, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, any relevant Regional Transport Partnership, the Crofters Commission, and any relevant Health Board

10. In addition to the minimum statutory requirements, it is proposed to seek early views from a wider range of interest groups as part of the pre-MIR engagement. In particular, it is proposed to use existing groups and forums such as the Developers Forum, the Community Planning Representatives Network, and the Cairngorms Business Partnership to seek views on potential key issues for the next LDP. It is also proposed to contact all Community Councils to provide information on the process and timescales for producing the next LDP and to seek input to inform the MIR.
11. Finally, it is proposed to undertake a programme of youth engagement through secondary schools within the National Park. An initial pilot of this engagement activity was undertaken in Grantown Grammar School during May 2016. This involved 40 Secondary 1 pupils (age 11-12) and comprised a mix of activities including presentations, practical exercises and discussions. The activities were aimed at raising awareness and understanding of planning processes in the National Park and encouraging young people to be more actively involved in planning decision making. In particular, the final activity allowed the pupils to comment on what they like about the communities they live in and what could be improved. Subject to timetable constraints, it is proposed to run similar sessions within the other secondary schools serving the Park area, with the feedback being used to inform the settlement specific guidance within the next LDP.
12. In addition to the engagement activity described above, it is also proposed to undertake a targeted 'call for sites'. The call for sites will include criteria for sites that will be considered and information needed to support them as well as criteria that the CNPA would use to exclude sites. This will allow landowners, businesses, prospective developers and communities to put forward sites which they wish to see allocated for development in the next LDP.
13. All submitted sites will then be assessed for suitability, and the site assessments will form part of the consultation material at the MIR stage. Should there be a need for additional sites to be identified for development within the next LDP, this process will enable preferred development sites to be identified. It is currently anticipated that the call for sites will commence in October 2016.

Next Steps

14. The supporting evidence reports and pre-MIR engagement activity will be undertaken to inform the production of the MIR and proposed Local Development Plan. Further reports will be presented to the Planning Committee for informal discussion as key issues begin to emerge, and these discussions will also guide the content of the MIR. The MIR will be presented to Planning Committee for approval in early 2017, before being subject to a period of formal public consultation and engagement.
15. It is also possible that the Scottish Government will make changes to the planning system that would change the future requirements for Development Plans and for Main Issues Reports. While it is unlikely that any changes will be made in the next few months, officers will be ready to adapt the process and make any changes to the process in response to Scottish Government proposals. The Planning Committee will

be kept informed of any likely changes and asked to approve any significant changes to process.

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