

CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

FOR DECISION

Title: National Park Plan and Local Development Plan

Prepared by: Gavin Miles, National Park Plan Officer
Hamish Trench, Strategic Land Use Director

Purpose

To seek the Board's agreement on the vision and strategic objectives for the National Park Plan, the timetable for consultation and to update on progress.

Recommendations

- a) That the Board agree to consult on the Draft National Park Plan and Local Development Plan Main Issues Report for 12 weeks starting in August 2011;
- b) That the Board consider what the vision is for and whether to change the vision statement;
- c) That the Board consider and agree the strategic objectives.

Executive Summary

We recommend beginning the formal public consultation on the Draft National Park Plan and Local Development Plan Main Issues Report in August 2011, to allow sufficient time to discuss and address the key issues for both plans prior to consultation.

The vision and strategic objectives in the National Park Plan will also set the vision and direction for the Local Development Plan. The current National Park Plan vision and 25 year outcomes would stand without change, however, this is an opportunity to revisit that vision and consider other options.

Three strategic objectives are proposed to give a simple structure to the National Park Plan, providing a way to organised the 5 year outcomes and show how they will contribute to the 25 year outcomes and vision.

A series of further board discussions will consider the approach and content of the land use strategy, 5 year outcomes and targets that will be set out in the National Park Plan, and the main issues for the Local Development Plan.

NATIONAL PARK PLAN AND LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR DECISION

National Park Plan and Local Development Plan

1. The next National Park Plan (2012-17) and the Local Development Plan are being prepared in tandem. While informal engagement has been ongoing over the last year, the first formal step is a public consultation on the draft National Park Plan and the Main Issues Report together this year. The two plans are closely inter-connected, hence the decision taken by the board to consult on both together.
2. The National Park Plan sets the vision and direction that will guide both plans. In particular, the Land Use Strategy section of the National Park Plan will provide the key context and direction for the Local Development Plan, including the settlement strategy. There will be further informal board discussion sessions on the land use strategy and the main issues report, informed by the result of a pre-consultation reported in the accompanying information paper 7.

Timetable of National Park Plan and Local Development Plan Main Issues Report consultation

3. To date we have been working towards bringing the draft National Park Plan and the Main Issues Report of the Local Development Plan to the board for approval to consult on 13th May. We recommend extending that timescale to the board meeting on 8th July for two reasons:
 - a) To allow more staff time to develop both plans and the associated strategic environmental assessment and equalities impacts assessments;
 - b) To allow more time to engage the board and key partners in the content of the draft plan and issues report.
4. Developing both plans together is a significant stretch of a small staff team, but the benefits of being able to consult on both together, setting out the overall approach to managing the Park and minimising duplication mean that it is worth continuing on this basis. Allowing two additional months before approving the drafts for consultation will allow important time for the board to engage in some of the substantial issues that these plans must address, in particular our approach to development, housing and sustainable communities that lies at the heart of the Local Development Plan.
5. The revised timetable would allow for two additional board discussion sessions. Similarly, the two additional months would allow time to return to some of the key partners we have engaged so far to build support for the approaches in the drafts.
6. The revised timetable would work as follows:
 - a) 8th July 2011: approve draft NPP and Main Issues Report for consultation
 - b) August – November 2011: public consultation
 - c) December 2011: collation of consultation responses

Work on finalising the plan with partners would proceed from January 2012, though the precise end point will depend on the level and nature of consultation responses and the discussions needed with partners at that time. There is no firm deadline for submission to Ministers, but we continue to aim to submit in the first quarter of the 2012/13 financial year.

7. This has the added advantage of holding the consultation largely after the summer holiday period. Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Authority are also intending to take their National Park Plan to the board in July for approval to consult. Consultation on the two plans would therefore remain in parallel and still aim to be submitted to Ministers together.

Recommendation:

8. **That the Board agree to consult on the Draft National Park Plan and Main Issues Report for 12 weeks starting in August 2011.**

Structure and Presentation

9. Members agreed the working structure for the plan in January. Development of the draft so far has built on and refined this structure. The overall structure proposed is shown in Annex 1. This starts with a vision, then sets three strategic objectives that provide a framework for the whole plan. The Land Use Strategy then sets out how land use and built development will contribute to these strategic objectives and the vision. Three parallel sections then set out 5 year outcomes for each strategic objective, to show what difference this plan will make by 2017. Implementation is divided into priority programmes (headline areas of work) and 'better business as usual'. Finally the plan will conclude by setting out the monitoring and reporting arrangements.
10. It remains our intention to keep the plan short and straight-forward, and to seek the crystal mark for plain English. Once the policy substance of the plan is developed, we will consider options for presenting the plan in 'easy-read' ways for a variety of audiences.

Vision

11. The vision of the current National Park Plan is made up of a short statement followed by a set of 25 year outcomes (Annex 2). While it has served well over the last five years, we should consider whether we can improve the vision. The 25 year outcomes are a useful framework to articulate and guide long term management of the Park and, while they could be sharpened up, we would recommend retaining a similar format. The current vision statement that precedes the outcomes could be retained or changed. The advantage of changing it would be to use a shorter statement that would be more likely to strike a chord with people. Equally, there is advantage to retaining a long term vision that spans the five year periods of National Park Plans without significant change.
12. Shorter alternatives might be variations along these lines:

- a) A world class National Park rich in nature and culture, enjoyed and valued by everyone; or
- b) A special place rich in wildlife and valued by all where culture, people and nature thrive together; or
- c) The Cairngorms National Park – where people and place thrive together.

Recommendation:

13. **That the Board consider what the vision is for and whether to change the vision statement**

Strategic Objectives

14. We propose to set three strategic objectives that give a focus and sense of purpose to the plan. These objectives have emerged from discussions with partners as the three over-arching themes, within which several outcomes can be gathered. The five year outcomes and projects will flow from these, showing how the range of work will achieve these strategic objectives.
15. We recommend the strategic objectives are:
- a) To ensure the Cairngorms National Park continues to be a special place in which the natural and cultural heritage is conserved and enhanced;
 - b) To develop a green economy which supports thriving communities;
 - c) To establish the Cairngorms National Park as an internationally recognised sustainable tourism destination that delivers a world-class visitor experience.
16. These objectives give rise to three themes around which the plan can be organised:
- a) A Special Place
 - b) A Green Economy
 - c) A Sustainable Destination

Recommendation:

17. **That the Board consider and agree the strategic objectives.**

Land Use Strategy – for information

18. This section will set out how land use and built development should contribute to delivering the strategic objectives, vision and ultimately the aims of the Park. It is a significant part of the plan and sets a vital context for the Local Development Plan. This section will include:
- a) Key principle of delivering multiple benefits from land
 - b) The benefits derived and the threats and opportunities facing the key habitat types in the Park
 - c) The special qualities of the Cairngorms National Park
 - d) Objectives for land use
19. This section will be partly map based, setting out the spatial approach to managing the Park including maps of:

- a) Wildness
 - b) Habitat networks
 - c) Soils/carbon
 - d) Transport infrastructure including paths
 - e) Renewable energy opportunities
 - f) Areas of visitor management and recreation focus
 - g) Settlement strategy
20. The approach to the land use strategy will use ecosystems as a starting point to consider the issues and habitats of the Park, bringing this together with the special qualities of the National Park. The Scottish Government's Land Use Strategy, due to be published in March, is likely to identify National Park Plans as early opportunities to implement the national Land Use Strategy, including the ecosystems approach recommended within it. This approach is highly suitable for the National Park, given the need to look at the interactions and connections between the four aims rather than at individual issues.
21. There will be an informal discussion session on the land use strategy within the National Park Plan on the 1st April following the planning committee.

5 year Outcomes – for information

22. This section of the Plan will set out specific outcomes for each theme that are to be achieved by 2017. The outcomes are a way of expressing what effect a broad policy objective or aim will have. They are really an alternative way of expressing what are often called Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Timebound (S.M.A.R.T.) objectives in management and planning jargon. Their development is an iterative process. We can easily identify broad policy aims or objectives across the Park from the Park Aims, national and international policy and law, Scottish Government Outcomes, partner organisations objectives as well as the current National Park Plan. However, they require translation and refinement in order to create meaningful outcomes.
23. Our discussions as CNPA staff and with key partners have focussed on refining what we and partners can collectively do to pursue the three strategic objectives and three themes outlined in Annex I. Clearly, the three areas have almost limitless potential for things that it would be desirable to achieve for the Park. However, in reality the Park Plan must focus what people and organisations are willing to do and to use their resources on.
24. There will be an opportunity for informal discussion of the 5-year outcomes and targets within the National Park Plan on the 1st April following the planning committee. Discussion on developing them will continue with CNPA and partners throughout March and April.

Headline Programmes and Better Business as Usual – for information

25. The Board Paper on the National Park Plan of 21 January 2011 set out initial and emerging headline project ideas that partners were enthusiastic about participating in, and the areas of current work that would also be important to the management

of the Park. These are about how the headline activities that will help to deliver the outcomes. The lists below provide a slightly revised reminder of those topics for information. These are likely to evolve further and be reorganised into a few headings. We intend to use the draft to set out the potential scope for these and use the consultation to engage support, refine the focus and content, working up the final set of programmes.

Potential Headline Programmes

- a) Landscape-scale habitat enhancement
- b) Local Biodiversity Action Plan
- c) Cairngorms Catchments
- d) Low Carbon National Park
- e) Food for Life
- f) Sustainable Design
- g) Land management support
- h) Enhancing tourist routes
- i) Sustainable Tourism Strategy delivery
- j) Active Cairngorms
- k) Cairngorm, Rothiemurchus and Glenmore visitor management

Better Business as Usual

- a) Community Planning
- b) Planning service improvement and associated 'better regulation'
- c) Delivery of affordable housing
- d) Sustainable deer management – building on the successful focus of NPP I
- e) Core Paths management
- f) Developing the Cairngorms Business Partnership
- g) Management of designated sites
- h) Delivery of LEADER
- i) Co-ordination of research

Strategic Environmental Assessment and Equalities Impact Assessment

26. We are obliged to carry out a strategic environmental assessment (SEA) and an equalities impact assessment (EqIA) as an integral part of preparing the National Park Plan and Local Development Plan. To date we have completed the SEA scoping reports for both plans. We are using an ecosystems approach to frame the SEA which, although an innovative approach, has already made this assessment more useful and directly relevant to the National Park context. The SEA Environmental Reports and the EqIA report will be published alongside the draft National Park Plan and Main Issues Report for consultation.

Financial implications

There are no direct financial implications arising from this paper. Provision for the development and consultation costs for both plans are included within the operational plan for 2011/12.

Next Steps

27.

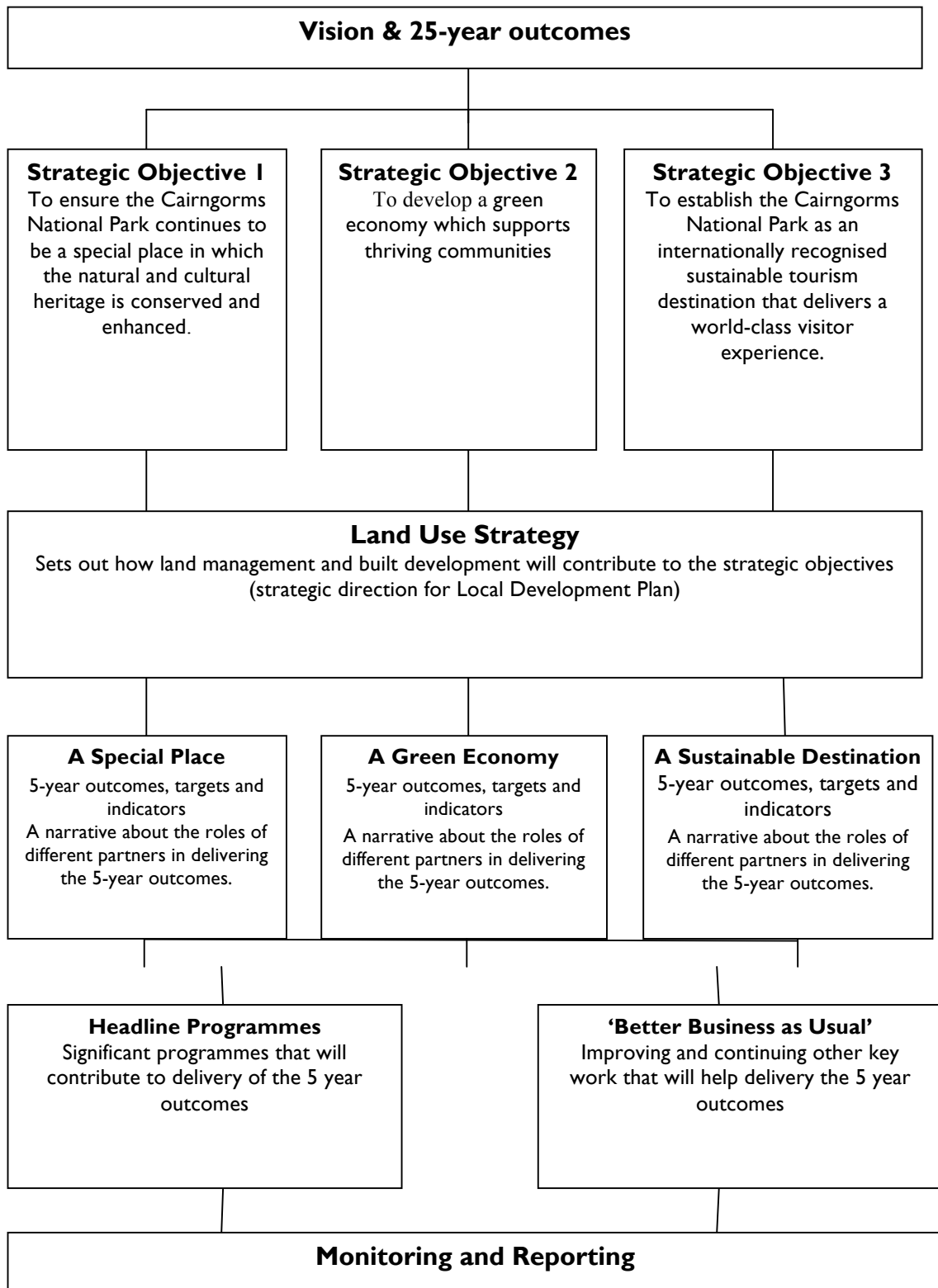
18 March 2011	Informal Board Discussion on Main Issues for the Local Development Plan (ref pre-consultation report for information)
1 April 2011	Informal Board Discussion on National Park Plan Land Use Strategy and 5-year outcomes
13 May	Informal Board Discussion on Local Development Plan Main

	Issues – identifying preferred options
27 May	Informal Board discussion on National Park Plan 5-year outcomes and headline projects/programmes
8 July	Board Meeting – formal approval to consult on <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Draft National Park Plan and• Local Development Plan Main Issues Report
August - November	Public consultation on draft National Park Plan and Local Development Plan Main Issues Report

Gavin Miles
Hamish Trench
March 2011

gavinmiles@ Cairngorms.co.uk
hamishtrench@ Cairngorms.co.uk

Annex I National Park Plan Structure Diagram



ANNEX 2: Current National Park Plan Vision

<p>I. Vision</p> <p>Imagine a world-class National Park – an outstanding environment in which the natural and cultural resources are cared for by the people who live there and visit; a renowned international destination with fantastic opportunities for all to enjoy its special places; an exemplar of sustainable development showing how people and place can thrive together. A National Park that makes a significant contribution to our local, regional and national identity.</p> <p>This is our vision for the Cairngorms National Park in 2030.</p>	
<p>Conserving and Enhancing the Park – 25 year outcomes</p>	
<p>2006</p>	<p>2030</p>
<p>The Cairngorms landscape is a unique and diverse mix of mountains, straths, glens, forests and farmland forming a distinct character of national importance shaped by the interaction of natural processes and people.</p>	<p>The distinct character of the Cairngorms landscape and its diverse mix of mountains, straths, glens, forests and farmland will be conserved and enhanced, shaped by natural processes and positive management.</p>
<p>The montane areas of the Park are known for the experience of wildness enjoyed by many.</p>	<p>The sense of wildness, particularly in the high montane areas, will be enhanced and renowned as a particular special quality of the area that continues to be enjoyed by many.</p>
<p>The Park has a rich biodiversity including many habitats and species of national and international importance.</p>	<p>The Park will continue to have a rich biodiversity which will be better connected and able to adapt to a changing climate. Areas of national and international importance will be exemplars of good management, set within a broader network of well managed habitats.</p>
<p>The Park contains an internationally important record of geodiversity, particularly landforms associated with glaciation, but these are under-recorded and little known beyond specialists.</p>	<p>The important geodiversity record in the Park will be widely recognised and will be well managed and conserved.</p>
<p>Active land management shapes much of the landscape of the Park and its special qualities, but is facing significant changes in policy and economic conditions.</p>	<p>There will continue to be an active and productive land management sector that conserves and enhances the special qualities and is a significant economic asset.</p>
<p>There are distinctive patterns of local architecture and design in the area's built heritage and settlements, but new development in places detracts from the pattern and character of settlements.</p>	<p>The built heritage of the Park will be safeguarded and new buildings will complement or enhance their setting, including the settlement pattern and character.</p>
<p>There are widespread archaeology and material records providing evidence of previous generations living in the area, but there are significant gaps in recording, understanding and care to conserve this heritage.</p>	<p>The archaeological evidence and material records of previous generations will be well recorded and understood, actively cared for and safeguarded.</p>
<p>There are many cultures and traditions amongst the communities of the Park, but many are at risk of being lost over time.</p>	<p>The cultures and traditions associated with the people and communities of the Park will be well recognised and continue to evolve as part of a living culture that secures</p>

	tomorrow's cultural heritage.
Living and Working in the Park – 25 year outcomes	
2006	2030
There are many active communities in the Park seeking ways to shape their own future, but current population trends challenge long-term sustainability.	There will be thriving and sustainable communities throughout the Park that are confident to share their ideas, experience and culture in actively shaping their own future and enjoying a sense of ownership of the National Park.
Training and employment opportunities are restricted to a few sectors, limiting the potential for many people in the Park to develop their skills.	There will be a wide range of opportunities for people in the National Park to develop their skills and employment options that will meet the needs of individuals and businesses.
Businesses are starting to identify opportunities associated with the National Park, but the wider value to the regional economy is yet to be realised.	The outstanding environment of the Park will stimulate economic activity, businesses will thrive , and the Park will be an economic asset to the wider regional economy.
Some business sectors, such as tourism and land management, are increasingly seeking to ensure positive impacts on the area's communities, environment and special qualities.	Delivering economic, social and environmental sustainability will be an integral part of every business. Businesses will manage their impacts to ensure a positive contribution to the area's communities, environment and special qualities.
Many, particularly young people, those on low incomes and those working in the Park, are unable to access housing that meets their needs. Housing is of variable quality and often inefficient in its use of resources.	People will be able to access housing that meets their needs through rent or purchase. Housing of all types will be of good quality and new development will implement sustainable design principles.
Transport infrastructure and provision does not fully meet the needs of residents, businesses or visitors and is heavily reliant on private car use. This constrains the development of sustainable communities and interaction with the wider regional economy.	The National Park will be a leader in sustainable rural transport . Infrastructure and provision will meet the needs of residents, businesses and visitors and strengthen the regional interaction of the Park. Barriers to transport and dependence on private car use will have reduced, helping to facilitate sustainable development.
There are significant pressures on infrastructure arising from energy, water use and waste management .	There will be a vibrant renewable energy, recycling and waste sector in the National Park together with greater awareness and action by individuals, businesses and organisations. This will result in more sustainable patterns of use, supply and management of energy, water and waste.
Enjoying and Understanding the Park – 25 year outcomes	
2006	2030
The Cairngorms National Park is a new entity and people are uncertain of what it means to be a National Park, and what they can expect of it.	The Cairngorms National Park will be renowned in Scotland and internationally and will make a significant positive contribution to Scotland's national identity.
The area is already a popular tourism destination , although infrastructure, marketing and service provision are not yet co-ordinated to best effect.	The Cairngorms National Park will be an internationally recognised world class sustainable tourism destination that consistently exceeds residents' and visitors' expectations in terms of quality of environment, services and experience.
There is a good network of off-road paths and tracks to enjoy outdoor access in most areas of the Park.	There will be an excellent and integrated network of routes to enjoy outdoor access across the Park that meets the needs of residents and visitors.
There is an unusually wide and highly valued range	There will be an even higher quality and increased range of

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<p>of outdoor recreation activities available, both formal and informal.</p>	<p>outdoor recreation activities available and accessible to a wider range of people of all abilities to enjoy the Park.</p>
<p>The concept of responsible behaviour in terms of outdoor access is beginning to become established among those taking recreational access and those managing land.</p>	<p>There will be a high level of understanding and widespread practice of responsible behaviour in the Cairngorms. Outdoor access will be enjoyed and managed as an integral part of a broader recreational experience and in ways that promote enjoyment of the special qualities of the Park while conserving them.</p>
<p>There is a range of interpretation locations using various media across the Park focused on specific aspects, but the sense of collective interpretation to reveal and raise understanding of the National Park and its special qualities is yet to be realised.</p>	<p>Interpretation of the National Park will be of an internationally high standard revealing the significance and meaning of the National Park and its special qualities, helping people to understand and enjoy the area.</p>
<p>Many organisations use the Park as a resource for informal and formal learning, but the potential for contributing to national learning is yet to be realised.</p>	<p>The Park will be a significant national learning resource that raises understanding of the special qualities of the area and sustainable development, while also contributing to national objectives.</p>
<p>There is a wealth of knowledge about many of the special qualities and resources of the Park from existing research and previous work. However, there are significant gaps in knowledge in some natural heritage resources and many cultural heritage and socio-economic resources.</p>	<p>Key gaps in knowledge will have been addressed, and the National Park will lead the way in research on issues such as sustainable development and rural tourism. Information will be widely accessible and contribute fully to the knowledge economy of the region and Scotland.</p>