

CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

FOR INFORMATION

Title: Local Development Plan Main Issues – Results of Pre Consultation

Prepared by: Karen Major, Development Plan Officer

Purpose

To inform the Board of the results of the pre-consultation on the Main Issues Report to the Local Development Plan

Recommendation

That the Board note the results of the pre-consultation exercise on the Main Issues to the Local Development Plan, the findings of which will help refine the Main Issues Report itself.

Executive Summary

Work has commenced on the production of the Local Development Plan, in line with planning reform measures introduced by the Scottish Government. The first phase of this work involved a pre consultation exercise involving key stakeholders. Stakeholders were asked their views on a series of strategic questions regarding the Main Issues Report, the Local Development Plan and its role and its relationship with the National Park Plan. They were also asked for any comments or views on the issues that should be contained in the Main Issues Report.

The consultation period has now closed and the results are appended. There is general support for the approach we are taking. In addition some useful thoughts have provided us with clarity on the evidence that we need to collect, and the issues that we need to address.

The next stage in the process will be to refine the Main Issues Report, taking on board the comments received and publish the report for full public consultation.

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN MAIN ISSUES – RESULTS OF PRE CONSULTATION - FOR INFORMATION

Background

1. The Scottish Government has recently introduced a programme of modernisation affecting the planning system in Scotland. As part of this a new a new system for development planning has been introduced. Planning Authorities are required to prepare a Local Development Plan as soon as practicable.
2. The first phase of preparing a Local Development Plan is to prepare and consult on a Main Issues Report (MIR). This document is intended to inform the Development Plan itself. It must set out the general proposals for development in the area, and must look at the main issues affecting the plan area. In doing so it must set out reasonable alternatives.
3. To help draw this MIR together it felt that early engagement with key stakeholders was essential to help inform our thinking and ensure we were taking the right approach.

MIR pre consultation findings

4. A short report (annex I) was sent to key agencies, Scottish ministers and adjoining planning authorities. Parties were asked to give comment on a number of posed questions and a list of issues which are considered important.
5. The consultation period closed on 18th February. The results can be summarises as follows:

Do you agree with our intention to consult on the draft National Park Plan and the Main Issues Report at the same time?

6. Generally consultees could see the benefit in this approach as it allows the strategic direction provided by the National Park Plan to be read alongside the Main Issues for the Local Development Plan. However we must be clear in presenting these documents for consultation, how they fit hierarchically, and what issues are addressed by which document.

Do you think we need to compile any additional evidence or information to help us draw up the Local Development Plan?

7. In addition to the list suggested, we must include further work on the impact of development on the transport network and consider options to improve the existing situation; we must build in information regarding planned infrastructure improvements including issues such as programmed road improvements; we must consider the cumulative impact of development, in general and also specifically how it affects water; we must have the necessary information available to consider the landscape impact of proposed development; we must ensure we have full information regarding water supply, flooding, and waste water disposal; we must also ensure we have full information available regarding waste.

8. The suggested additional sets of information can now be gathered, and will help inform the way we go about selecting development sites.

Do you agree that the right place to set out the vision for the National Park, its settlement strategy and its land use strategy is the National Park Plan?

9. Generally there is support for this approach, with the National Park Plan setting the strategic direction for the Local Development Plan. The development plan must then set out how this direction can be delivered.

Do you agree that we include realistic options for development sites in the MIR, but exclude 'non starters'?

10. The Scottish Government are clear that reasonable alternatives must be included. There is some agreement that to include all sites suggested would be confusing. It may imply that certain sites could be developed when, after assessment, they may be constrained in a way which would not allow this. In line with the comments received we will however make available our sifting methodology and results to ensure that the process of site selection is completely transparent.

Do you agree that we use the 4 aims of the Park to form the basis of the Main Issues Report?

11. There is general agreement that this is an acceptable way forward, and the Main Issues Report will continue to be framed in this way.

The questions we need to answer

12. In looking at the questions posed, a key question raised by a number of consultees is how we deal with sustainable resources. In refining our questions this point will therefore be specifically dealt with. Some detailed points were also made regarding water, flooding, waste, and energy from waste. These helpful comments will be addressed through refinement of the questions to be posed.

The Next Stages in the Process

13. CNPA must now consider the findings of the pre consultation exercise, and build the issues raised into the drafting of the Main Issues Report. This will also be informed by informal and formal consideration by the Board. Members will be aware of the timetable of events, due to lead to public consultation in August/September 2011.

Recommendation

14. **It is recommended that the Board note the results of the pre consultation on the Main Issues report.**

Policy Context

15. The Main Issues Report is the first formal stage in the process of preparing the Local Development Plan which will set out the planning policy and proposals for the National Park for the future.

Delivering Sustainability

16. The Local Development Plan will be informed by the National Park Plan which has at its heart the need for sustainability in all things affecting the Park.

Delivering A Park for All

17. The Local Development Plan will be informed by the National Park Plan which sets out the way in which the Park should be developed for the benefit of all.

Delivering Economy, Effectiveness and Efficiency

18. The Local Development Plan will be informed by the National Park Plan which promotes this aim, and will also take direction from government policy which has at its heart sustainable economic growth.

Implications

Financial Implications

19. The work associated with the development of the Main Issues Report and the Local Development Plan is programmed in the ongoing budgets set by the Authority.

Presentational Implications

20. The development of the Main Issues Report will culminate in a process of full public engagement. Care is needed at that stage to ensure that as wide a cross section of the communities found in the Park, together with external partners, agencies and interested parties are involved and engage fully in the process.

Implications for Stakeholders

21. Stakeholders must feel they are contributing to the emerging Local Development Plan, and the work of community liaison officers will play a key role in this.

Next Steps

22. Work will proceed on the development of the Main Issues Report and members will be aware of forthcoming discussion sessions to help inform this work. Formal approval of the Main Issues Report for consultation will be sought in July 2011.

Karen Major
Development Plan Officer
February 2011

Annex 1: The pre consultation document sent to key agencies

CONSULTATION

What is the purpose of the pre consultation?

The Cairngorms National Park Authority has started work to review the recently adopted Local Plan. As part of this, we are thinking about the issues to bring into the next Local Development Plan, learning from our recent experiences on the Local Plan, and taking into account the new direction from the Scottish Government in regard to land use planning. We are keen to hear your thoughts on our initial work, which will then be refined to produce the Main Issues Report, which is due to be published for full consultation in May/June next year.

We are therefore asking key stakeholders for their thoughts on the issues they would like to see addressed in the Main Issues Report and the subsequent Local Development Plan.

How will it feed into the Main Issues Report Timetable?

Although we have only recently adopted the Cairngorms Local Plan (Oct 2010) we are keen to bring our plan in line with Governments direction for plans to be succinct and ambitious in their long term visioning for the area. We will publish a new draft National Park Plan for the period 2012-17 for consultation in May/June 2011 with the aim of adopting a revised National Park Plan by Spring 2012. It seems logical, bearing in mind the close relationship between the National park Plan and the Local Development Plan that we produce our Main Issues Report at the same time as the draft National Park Plan. This will allow consultees to consider the strategic direction and long term vision together with the specific issues through which the Local Development Plan will help deliver the aims of the National Park. Consultation on both documents will run throughout next summer, and the results will feed into a finalised National Park Plan and draft Local Development Plan.



Do you agree with our intention to consult on the draft National Park Plan and the Main Issues Report at the same time?

THE MAIN ISSUES REPORT AND THE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

What we have learned from the Local Plan process.

Our recent experience as a result of the Reporters Report into the Inquiry on the Local Plan has given us significant clarity on the role of the National Park Plan. The National Park Plan sets the strategic direction and context within which the Local Development Plan sets out how development can contribute to the aims of the National Park. This requires the National Park to contain a sufficiently explicit strategic direction for settlement strategy and development.

It has also clarified the role of the aims of the Park and the wording contained within them. We have a duty to ensure that what happens across the Park conserves AND enhances the natural and cultural heritage, and that a neutral effect will not be sufficient.

We have identified the need for a step change in the quality of design in the Park. We are also clear that we need to revisit some of our thinking on the way we engage with people, and the new process of delivering the Local Plan will allow us to review our methods of engagements.

Evidence base to support the Main Issues Report

We have been monitoring the use of the Local Plan policies and land allocations since July 2010. We have also been compiling a variety of evidence and research to support the Local Development Plan and the National Park Plan. We will produce a comprehensive set of evidence to accompany the MIR and allow the reader to understand what information has been used to refine our thinking.

THE EVIDENCE

- the monitoring of policies and land allocations
- land audits for housing and employment land
- research on the options to deliver housing to meet local needs
- population information principally from GRO
- housing need and demand assessments compiled by the local housing authorities which will feed into a park wide assessment of the need for new housing development
- information on house completions to allow an assessment of future needs
- research on the need and demand for land for employment development
- town centre health checks to provide a baseline set of data on the state of our town centres
- community discussions and assessments to clarify where they see themselves in the future

Do you think we need to compile any additional evidence or information to help us draw up the Local Development Plan?

How will we shape the policies?

The new approach to development planning places a focus of attention on a framework for development which is spatial rather than topic based. It should be map based and focus on the main proposals for up to 10 years in the future, with a look also to the following 10 years beyond that. There is a clear move away from text heavy documents. The policies and the Plan itself therefore need to be expressed spatially.

How will we use Supplementary Guidance?

Supplementary guidance can be used to support the development plan, dealing with minor proposals and detailed policies, particularly where there is to be little change from the adopted plan.

Our current raft of supplementary guidance covers a wide range of topics. We must revisit all the guidance and ensure that it is fit for purpose to support the development plan. We will also introduce additional guidance where necessary to cover detail currently contained within the adopted plan. All this guidance will also be subject to full consultation and will hold greater weight in the decision making process in the future.

THE VISION

The role of the NPP and its strategic objectives

Outside Strategic Development Plan areas it is part of the role of the Development Plan to set a vision for the area for the future. Although the legislation does not clarify the position of National Park Plans it is clear that they provide equivalent strategic context as SDPs. They are intended to be management plans covering all relevant aspects of the National Park, including development and wider land use planning, setting a clear strategic direction. The National Park Plan is an opportunity to ensure that development planning is an integral part of the wider management approach to deliver the aims of the Park.

We intend to set out the vision in the draft National Park Plan, where we will also set out how the principles of the Scottish Government's Land Use Strategy will be applied in the National Park. The LDP will then take the spatial aspects of this and clarify how the vision can be achieved on the ground. To influence this vision, a comprehensive programme of engagement has taken place during the autumn of 2010 with every community in the Park. This work focused on helping each community think about where they see themselves in the next 25 years, and draw up a community vision. The National Park Plan and the LDP will show how aspects of these visions can be achieved.

Do you agree that the right place to set out the vision for the National park, its settlement strategy and its lands use strategy is the National Park Plan?

CALL FOR SITES

To start the ball rolling, we asked land owners, developers etc to suggest sites for development in the future. These sites have all been surveyed for their suitability and will form part of the Main Issues Report. We intend to clarify in the Main Issues Report our preferred sites for the development in the next 10 years, and an indication for the following 10 years after that. In line with the current guidance we will include options to our preferred sites. We will not however include all the sites that were suggested to us. Some were for minor developments which would be dealt with through general policies, and some for sites which, following initial survey work are considered inappropriate for the proposed nature of development, non starters as it were, which we intend to make public but not as a formal part of the Main Issues Report.

Do you agree that we include realistic options for development sites in the MIR, but exclude ‘non starters’?

HOW WE HAVE ORGANISED THE ISSUES

The issues to be contained within the MIR will fall into 4 broad headings which reflect the 4 aims of the Park.

- To conserve and enhance the natural and cultural heritage of the area;
- To promote sustainable use of natural resources of the area;
- To promote understanding and enjoyment (including enjoyment in the form of recreation) of the special qualities of the area by the public;
- To promote sustainable economic and social development of the area’s communities.

The National Parks (Scotland) Act requires that these aims be delivered collectively and in a co-ordinated way. The National Park Plan will set out how they can be achieved collectively, but taken individually the form a useful framework in which to consider the issues. This pre-consultation phase will help inform the final approach taken in the Main Issues Report.

Do you agree that we use the 4 aims of the Park to form the basis of the Main Issues Report?

The Key Questions we need to answer

1. How do we achieve development that conserves AND enhances the natural and cultural heritage of the Park?
2. How can we better conserve AND enhance cultural heritage in particular through the planning system?
3. How do we balance development against our duty of care to the biodiversity of the Park?

Natural and Cultural Heritage

1. How do we promote sustainable patterns of development?
2. How do we meet our duty of care to make the best use of finite resources?
3. What impact will development have on water, carbon and air?
4. To what extent should we seek to generate energy in the Park?
5. How do we reduce energy use?

Sustainable use of resources

1. How can we enhance the understanding of the special qualities and the nature of the National Park designation
2. How can spatial planning help deliver the principles of the highest standards of tourism, access and recreation set out in the Europarc Charter?

Understand and Enjoy

Sustainable development of communities

1. How do we achieve sustainable and thriving communities?
2. What levels of growth are needed to maintain active and vibrant communities?
3. Where should be put this development?
4. How do we respond to wider regional and national pressures and aspirations?

Annex 2: Summary of the results received

	<i>Do you agree with our intention to consult on the draft National Park Plan and the Main Issues Report at the same time?</i>	<i>Do you think we need to compile any additional evidence or information to help us draw up the Local Development Plan?</i>	<i>Do you agree that the right place to set out the vision for the National Park, its settlement strategy and its land use strategy is the National Park Plan?</i>	<i>Do you agree that we include realistic options for development sites in the MIR, but exclude 'non starters'?</i>	<i>Do you agree that we use the 4 aims of the Park to form the basis of the Main Issues Report?</i>	<i>Other comments</i>
Scottish Water	No issues with running both in parallel	No specific requirements for evidence	Since the NPP & LDP will function in parallel, as long as there is clear referencing and links between the 2 docs, SW have no preference as to which doc contains the strategy as long as its easily comprehensive	Reasonable to focus on sites with a robust prospect of being delivered. However clarification on why sites did not meet this standard would be helpful. SW would not consider water or waste water constraints to put sites into the 'non-starter' bracket. SW would prefer all sites be contained along with their prospective viability.	Yes	
Aberdeenshire Council	This matches the twin tracking of LDPs and SDPs. With the reporters clarity on the role of the NPP this would be reasonable	no	The vision should be in the NPP, and should set the context for the settlement and land use strategy. Concerned that if the settlement and land use strategies are in the NPP there	The preference is to show all sites and mark those 'non starters' as not preferred. This allowed clarity and debate on why they were not preferred options.	Yes	Believe it would be useful to have a similar affordable housing policy in both authorities. Differences put pressure on settlements closest to the boundary of the area with the more lenient approach.

	Do you agree with our intention to consult on the draft National Park Plan and the Main Issues Report at the same time?	Do you think we need to compile any additional evidence or information to help us draw up the Local Development Plan?	Do you agree that the right place to set out the vision for the National Park, its settlement strategy and its land use strategy is the National Park Plan?	Do you agree that we include realistic options for development sites in the MIR, but exclude 'non starters'?	Do you agree that we use the 4 aims of the Park to form the basis of the Main Issues Report?	Other comments
	(assuming that moving forward the LDP used the NPP as an SDP and was amended to reflect it, and that the draft LDP was not published until the NPP was finalised. (para 33 of cir 1/09)		will be limited opportunity to consider alternatives.			
Historic Scotland	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Additional information supplied to assist in baseline info for SEA and in supporting evidence for LDP
TAYplan						Consultation on TAYplan due to end 1 Aug 2011. Sustainable use of resources should also pose question on quality of development, beyond patterns of development.
Nestrans	Allows strategic direction and long term vision to be considered at	Consider the impact of development on the transport network and the	NPP should set strategic vision, taking on the role of a SDP. Preparation of both	Acceptable as long as the reasons for not including sites is included somewhere	Yes as long as the aims of the plan are not likely to alter	

	<i>Do you agree with our intention to consult on the draft National Park Plan and the Main Issues Report at the same time?</i>	<i>Do you think we need to compile any additional evidence or information to help us draw up the Local Development Plan?</i>	<i>Do you agree that the right place to set out the vision for the National Park, its settlement strategy and its land use strategy is the National Park Plan?</i>	<i>Do you agree that we include realistic options for development sites in the MIR, but exclude 'non starters'?</i>	<i>Do you agree that we use the 4 aims of the Park to form the basis of the Main Issues Report?</i>	<i>Other comments</i>
	same time as LDP issues thus giving a clear link between the 2 docs. However the clear hierarchy of the 2 docs must be maintained.	implications of accessibility and encouraging use of public transport, cycling, walking. Evidence on travel patterns and needs of residents and visitors to the park would be helpful to understand opps for improvement.	docs must allow for the NPP to influence and guide the development of the LDP.			
Transport Scotland	Parallel consultations can cause confusion therefore it must be clear what people are being consulted on.	Info on the strategic transport network should be compiled to properly assess the potential impact on the performance and safety of the strategic transport network. Also should include programmed transport projects – list provided including info on 20	Refer to previous comments on need for clarity on the way consultations are handled and the role of each document.	Evidence to explain why sites are omitted is needed for clarity.	yes	

	<i>Do you agree with our intention to consult on the draft National Park Plan and the Main Issues Report at the same time?</i>	<i>Do you think we need to compile any additional evidence or information to help us draw up the Local Development Plan?</i>	<i>Do you agree that the right place to set out the vision for the National Park, its settlement strategy and its land use strategy is the National Park Plan?</i>	<i>Do you agree that we include realistic options for development sites in the MIR, but exclude 'non starters'?</i>	<i>Do you agree that we use the 4 aims of the Park to form the basis of the Main Issues Report?</i>	<i>Other comments</i>
		year investment projects.				
Tactran	yes	Information on accessibility of existing settlements and services together with development locations should be considered. Model is available.	yes	Approach is reasonable but should allow flexibility	yes	<p>Questions posed:</p> <p>Natural heritage – key is to promote sustainable development. Development should be located where the need to travel is reduced and where there are alternatives to the private car.</p> <p>Sustainable resources – as above. Suggest use of model to help with this. Issue also regarding rural filling stations and ensuring sufficient local provision.</p> <p>Understanding etc – visitors must be aware of non-car options for travel</p> <p>Sustainable development – development should be focused where car use is minimised.</p>
SNH	Yes	Cumulative effects of development on	Yes but as the NPP is not under the planning	Yes but need to explain why sites have been	Yes but it must also be shaped	Questions posed: answers to the questions given rather

	<i>Do you agree with our intention to consult on the draft National Park Plan and the Main Issues Report at the same time?</i>	<i>Do you think we need to compile any additional evidence or information to help us draw up the Local Development Plan?</i>	<i>Do you agree that the right place to set out the vision for the National Park, its settlement strategy and its land use strategy is the National Park Plan?</i>	<i>Do you agree that we include realistic options for development sites in the MIR, but exclude 'non starters'?</i>	<i>Do you agree that we use the 4 aims of the Park to form the basis of the Main Issues Report?</i>	<i>Other comments</i>
		water supply and quality; map peatland and carbon rich soils; update landscape capacity work previously done; outputs of landscape scenario project; special landscape qualities report; joint working on mapping wildness; green networks	act, the weight accorded to the LDP must not be diminished by the absence of material setting this out. perhaps simply dealt with by cross referencing.	excluded. The SEA should also be informed by this consideration of options.	by the vision and spatial strategy.	than alternatives. Additional suggestions - Natural heritage – farm steadings, species loss, and invasive species. Sustainable resources – multifunctional spaces; green networks; list of things for spg; proper use of the SEA to address issues on water, soil etc; better information as basis for decision making Understanding etc – use special qualities of the park report Sustainable communities – national tree targets shown by preferred areas for planting
SEPA	yes	Detailed list of SEPA info that should be referred to regarding flooding, RBMPs and waste. Map carbon rich soils	LDP must set out how the vision and settlement strategy will be delivered	Support the promotion of sites that can be developed.	yes	Additional things to be addressed –protection of people, property and infrastructure from risk of flooding; protection of the water environment; climate change and energy;

	<i>Do you agree with our intention to consult on the draft National Park Plan and the Main Issues Report at the same time?</i>	<i>Do you think we need to compile any additional evidence or information to help us draw up the Local Development Plan?</i>	<i>Do you agree that the right place to set out the vision for the National Park, its settlement strategy and its land use strategy is the National Park Plan?</i>	<i>Do you agree that we include realistic options for development sites in the MIR, but exclude 'non starters'?</i>	<i>Do you agree that we use the 4 aims of the Park to form the basis of the Main Issues Report?</i>	Other comments
						promotion of sustainable waste management. Waste should be covered in the sustainable use of resources section.
Scottish Government	Yes – must ensure the MIR is sufficiently worked up with alternatives to meaningfully engage stakeholders and communities	In addition consider transport appraisals, strategic flood risk assessment, heat demand assessments/heat mapping, SEA, zero waste plan	Yes, although both vision and spatial strategy will need to be expressed in the proposed LDP	Yes – the SEA should capture issues such as transport, landscape, natural heritage and flooding. If there is no realistic prospect of development the site should be excluded from the MIR	Yes, but the MIR needs to be about place more than policy. The MIR should pose spatial questions – how and where can we meet housing need and demand etc. The MIR and LDP should consider as important topics, in addition to the aims of the Park, climate change, meeting	The questions posed are more for the authority to answer rather than questions to make explicit in the MIR itself. The MIR will need to go beyond these so that preferred policy, spatial and site specific responses can be exposed.

	<i>Do you agree with our intention to consult on the draft National Park Plan and the Main Issues Report at the same time?</i>	<i>Do you think we need to compile any additional evidence or information to help us draw up the Local Development Plan?</i>	<i>Do you agree that the right place to set out the vision for the National Park, its settlement strategy and its land use strategy is the National Park Plan?</i>	<i>Do you agree that we include realistic options for development sites in the MIR, but exclude 'non starters'?</i>	<i>Do you agree that we use the 4 aims of the Park to form the basis of the Main Issues Report?</i>	Other comments
					housing need and demand, and sustainable Economic growth	