
CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

FOR INFORMATION

Title: Update on the Preparation of the National Park Plan and Local Development Plan

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Purpose

To update the board on progress in preparing the National Park Plan and Local Development Plan following public consultation

Recommendations

- a) That the board note the interim report on the consultation and the next steps in plan preparation.
- b) That the board welcome and consider the final report of the Hutton Institute's study of the first National Park Plan and record thanks to the researchers involved.

Executive Summary

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 interim report, highlighting participation including:

- a) 92 formal responses to the draft National Park Plan
- b) 128 formal responses to the Main Issues Report
- c) Approximately 400 people attending ten community meetings around the Park.

A full analysis report of the consultation is being prepared for publication at the start of March. In the meantime we will be following up the responses with partners to help shape the final focus of the National Park Plan, and to prepare a Proposed Local Development Plan.

The paper also introduces the final report of a research project undertaken by the James Hutton Institute which followed the development and implementation of the first National Park Plan from 2006 to 2011. The project has provided a useful critical friend perspective which can inform our current plan preparation.

UPDATE ON THE PREPARATION OF THE NATIONAL PARK PLAN AND LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN - FOR INFORMATION

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 interim review of the consultation, pending preparation of a full consultation report which will be published in March.
2. The second part of the paper introduces a recently published summary of a five year study of the process to develop and implement the first National Park Plan undertaken by the James Hutton Institute (formerly Macaulay Institute).

Consultation on the Draft Cairngorms National Park Plan and Local Development Plan Main Issues Report

3. 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. Annex I provides a summary of the media campaign outputs.
4. We have received 92 formal responses to the Draft National Park Plan and 128 formal responses to the Main Issues Report. These numbers may change slightly as the responses are analysed in more detail and comments received on either document are applied to the other.
5. Ten community information sessions were held at locations across the Park to explain how people could respond to the consultation and highlight some of the content of the draft National Park Plan and the Main Issues Report. The meetings were arranged by the network of Community Liaison Officers and involved all the community councils and/or local community associations.
6. In total, nearly 400 people attended the community information sessions, and the Community Liaison officers worked hard to make sure a wide range of community groups and interests were represented at them. The sessions were intended to raise awareness of the consultation opportunity and how to respond to it. Notes of the points raised at the meetings were recorded and published on the CNPA website the following day. For the most part, this was not feedback on the detail of the either the draft National Park Plan or the Main Issues Report, but a reflection of the issues that those who attended the sessions considered to be most important. Clearly, many issues raised were specific to individual communities or to individual perspectives at the meetings. However, some 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)
7. The Board will receive a full report of the consultation responses and analysis on 16 March 2012. The analysis is being carried out on our behalf by an independent contractor. A report analysing the responses for each plan will be provided to inform the completion of the National Park Plan and the preparation of the Proposed Local Development Plan.

Next Steps in Plan Preparation

8. **National Park Plan**
- a) Work with partners to follow up responses and develop proposals for final plan;
 - b) Board consideration of consultation report and proposals for final plan 16th March;
 - c) Partnership meeting with National Park Plan partners 19th March to confirm focus of plan and seek partnership commitment;
 - d) Complete plan in May for submission to Ministers.
9. **Local Development Plan**
- a) Board consideration of consultation report and key issues emerging 16th March;
 - b) Use results of consultation to prepare a Proposed Local Development Plan (including supplementary guidance) for public consultation starting in late 2012.

Recommendation

10. **That the board note the interim report on the consultation and the next steps in plan preparation.**

Independent Review of the first National Park Plan Process

11. The process of developing and implementing the first National Park Plan (2007) has been supported by a research project of the James Hutton Institute between 2006 and 2011. The research gives an external perspective on the plan-making and implementation process and, most usefully for us, has allowed a two way dialogue between the researchers and the CNPA over that period including presentations to the board at key milestones. The project provided a useful 'critical friend' perspective over this period and the final summary provides useful reflections to inform our current plan preparation.
12. The collaborative research approach adopted helped develop CNPA's understanding of how others saw the process of developing and implementing the first Park Plan, informing our recent engagement on new plans. For the researchers, it also highlighted issues from a practical perspective that did always match theoretical models of practice.

13. Annex 2 to this paper is a summary report of the research for the Board by Kirsty Blackstock, Liz Dinnie and Rachel Dilley of the Hutton Institute. In reading it you should remember that it is written from the perspective of an academic critical friend. There is not a right or wrong approach to the issues that the research raises and the CNPA's approach has changed over time in response to many of the challenges identified. We are an example of adaptive management and will continue to learn from our experiences. Many of the issues raised in the research will be ones the Board are familiar with and are ones that we continue to try to address through the review of the National Park Plan. Some particular conclusions in the summary worth highlighting include:
- a) the concept of the National Park has been difficult to embed (page 5);
 - b) showing that the Park is a special place and should be treated differently from other places can create tensions for partners who also operate outside its boundary (page 5);
 - c) integrating and coordinating collective delivery, scrutinising it, and providing accountability are a challenge with the tools available (page 6);
 - d) that the Park Plan and the CNPA operate at a number of different levels from strategic, to tactical, to operational. It can be difficult to demonstrate how each layer is connected to others (page 6-7);
 - e) the role of the Scottish Government in delivering the current Park Plan is unclear and there is potential for more explicit support and action (page 12);
 - f) the adaptive management already shown by the CNPA and the Park Plan and the changes to procedures, structures and practices we have made over time to improve or respond to challenges (page 13);
 - g) the ongoing tension of 'transparency and inclusion versus delivering through a close knit and trusted group of partners remains' (page 14)
14. The Cairngorms Local Outdoor Access Forum (LOAF) has been the subject of a similar long term research project led by Katrina Brown of the James Hutton Institute. There are no formal reports of the research yet, but Katrina has presented some of the research findings to the LOAF in November 2011. The research has shown that the Cairngorms LOAF has been very successful and effective forum: learning from experience; with a high demand for places on it; sharing a rich source of knowledge and experience; and being well resourced by an efficient and forward thinking access authority (the CNPA).

Recommendation

15. **That the board welcome and consider the final report of the Hutton Institute's study of the first National Park Plan and record thanks to the researchers involved.**

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6th January 2012**

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ANNEX I

National Park Plan and Local Development Plan Consultations – Media Campaign Outputs

1. The consultations on the National Park Plan and Local Development Plan Main Issues Report and associated awareness raising/information events were covered in local and national press, the internet, partner websites, newsletters, twitter and facebook through a targeted campaign.

Press Releases:

2. From the week of the start of the consultations on 19th September 2011 to the close on 9th December 2011, five press releases were issued to local and national media and put on the CNPA website. A press briefing was held before the start of the consultations, attended by the Strathy.

News in Brief:

3. Short copy for use in partner/interested organisations' publications/websites to promote the consultations taking place in both National Parks was issued by the CNPA press office on behalf of both CNPA and LLTNPA (12 recipients). Separate copy for partners/organisations within the Cairngorms National Park was also issued (11 recipients).

Targeted Audiences:

4. Specialist audiences were also targeted through magazines/websites. The National Trust for Scotland carried a paragraph about the consultation as part of an article about Golden Eagles at Mar Lodge Estate and the John Muir Trust's Wild Land Journal highlighted that "wildness" was one of the priorities in the Park Plan we wanted views on.

A sample of where information appeared:

Press: Badenoch & Strathspey Herald, Press & Journal, The Herald, Forfar Dispatch

Broadcast: BBC Radio Scotland Highlands & Islands News, BBC Radio Scotland Out of Doors, MFR What's On.

Websites: BBC News Highlands & Islands, Association for the Protection of Rural Scotland (APRS), Sport Scotland, UKHillwalking.com, Angus Council, The Highland Council, Go Outdoors.co.uk, Rural Gateway.org.uk (Scotland: National Rural Network), Scottish Land & Estates, Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park, Dundas & Wilson Planning Update November 2011, Scottish Gamekeepers Association, Carr-bridge News, North East Mountain Trust, Rural Housing Scotland

eNewsletters: CNPA eBulletin, VisitScotland monthly eUpdate Sep/Oct/Nov/Dec, Sport Scotland, Moray Community Planning Partnership

Twitter/Facebook: CNPA staff, Rural Gateway (Scotland: National Rural Network)

Publications: Scotland Outdoors Autumn/Winter 2011, NTS Scotland In Trust Magazine, JMT Wild Land Journal

Intranet/Staff Newsletter: Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Moray Council