



For Decision

Title: Cairngorms National Park Local Development Plan – Development Plan Scheme 2023

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Purpose

1. This paper presents the Development Plan Scheme (2023) for the next Local Development Plan. The Development Plan Scheme is an important communications tool. It is key to supporting deliverable and people-focussed plans by letting stakeholders know when and how they can get involved in the preparation of the Local Development Plan and keep them informed of progress.
2. The Park Authority must publish, adopt and submit a Development Plan Scheme to Scottish Ministers each year. The Board is therefore being asked to adopt the Development Plan Scheme.

Recommendations

The Board is asked to:

- a) Adopt the Development Plan Scheme 2023

Strategic context

3. The Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 has brought numerous reforms to Scotland's development plan system, which are in the process of being implemented. A significant milestone in this was the adoption of National Planning Framework 4 by Scottish Ministers on 13 February 2023, following approval by the Scottish Parliament in January. National Planning Framework 4 replaced National Planning Framework 3 and Scottish Planning Policy, incorporating an updated Scottish Planning Policy, containing detailed national policy on a number of topics.
4. Unlike its predecessors, National Planning Framework 4 is part of the statutory development plan (Figure 1). This means that for any place in Scotland, the statutory development plan consists of National Planning Framework 4, which covers the whole country, and the Local Development Plan for the planning authority area where the place is.

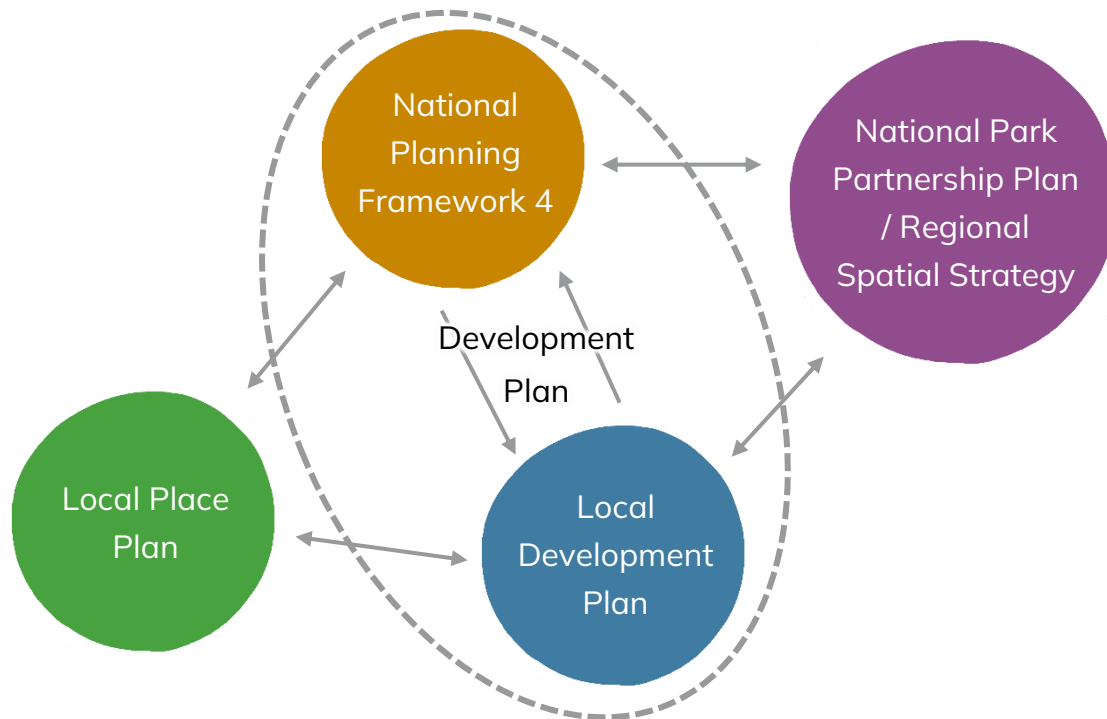


Figure 1 The Scottish Statutory Development Plan.

5. Strategic direction within the National Park is also provided by the Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan 2022. It sets out the vision and over-arching strategy for managing the National Park, as well as identifying priorities for action and an overall strategic policy framework. Furthermore, the Partnership Plan acts as the Regional Spatial Strategy for the National Park, which is intended to address strategic development and issues.
6. Scottish Government guidance states that Local Development Plans for National Parks should be consistent with the Partnership Plan and Regional Spatial Strategy. The Partnership Plan therefore provides the strategic context for the Local Development Plan, and the Local Development Plan will help to deliver a number of the Partnership Plan's policies and priorities.
7. At a local level the development plan may be influenced by Local Place Plans. These are community-led plans that focus on places within local authorities' areas, which may include particular neighbourhoods.
8. On 19 May 2023 The Town and Country Planning (Development Planning) (Scotland) Regulations came into force. All planning authorities have five years from



that date to replace their current Local Development Plan with a new style Local Development Plan. This means the Park Authority must prepare and adopt a new Local Development Plan by no later than May 2028.

9. The Development Plan Scheme is an important part of the Local Development preparation process. It is key to supporting deliverable and people-focussed plans by letting stakeholders know when and how they can get involved in the preparation of the next Local Development Plan and keep them informed of progress.
10. The Development Plan Scheme must be published, adopted and submitted to Scottish Ministers each year during the preparation of the Local Development Plan.

Scope of the Development Plan Scheme

11. The key components of the Development Plan Scheme 2023 are its timeline, Participation Statement and invitation for communities to prepare Local Place Plans.
12. The timetable must set out each stage of the Local Development preparation process, identifying the years and months in which each stage is expected to take place.
13. The Participation Statement sets out when consultation on the Local Development Plan is likely to take place, with whom and its likely form, and the steps to be taken to involve the public at large. The Park Authority has sought the views of community councils and associations and young people, via the Cairngorms Youth Action Team, on the content of the statement.
14. Before preparing a Local Development Plan, planning authorities must invite local communities to prepare Local Place Plans. The Development Plan Scheme therefore contains an invitation and will be sent out to community councils and associations. This is supported by an invitation in the July issue of Cairn magazine.

Strategic policy consideration

15. The Park Authority has a statutory duty to adopt and publish the Development Plan Scheme. The Development Plan Scheme in Annexe 1 was prepared in accordance with Scottish Government's Local development planning guidance, which was published in May 2023.



16. The Development Plan Scheme sets out the timeline for preparation on the next Local Development Plan and a Participation Statement that sets out how and when members of the public and stakeholders will be consulted and engaged. Board members are asked to consider these elements and whether they are reasonable, appropriate and proportionate.

Strategic risk management

17. While no risk is posed by the adoption of the Development Plan Scheme itself, it is recognised that there are risks to the Local Development Plan's timetable for preparation. In particular, the timescales for the gate check and the later examination, are not controlled by the National Park Authority. No planning authority has yet reached the gate check stage and therefore there is significant uncertainty about the length of time and resources this stage will take. Furthermore, many planning authorities are preparing their Local Development Plans on similar timescales to the Park Authority, which may result in a bottleneck at this stage if Scottish Government's Planning and Environmental Appeals Division lack the capacity to meet demand.
18. In addition, certain duties relating to the preparation of Local Development Plans fall outside the remit of the Park Authority to deliver. For example, Housing Need and Demand Assessments, Local Heat and Energy Strategies and Open Space Strategies are the responsibility of Local Authorities to prepare and deliver, but are needed by the Park Authority to inform the preparation of the Local Development Plan. While the Park Authority works closely with partners to help deliver these duties, it does not have any direct control over their management. Therefore, it is recognised that there could be an impact on the Local Development Plan's timetable should partners face difficulties in delivering these duties.
19. Any delay to the timetable places the target of an adopted Local Development Plan within five years of National Planning Framework 4's adoption at risk. The timeline presented in the Development Plan scheme estimates an adopted Local Development Plan in May 2027. There is therefore a margin of an additional twelve months in which the Local Development Plan could be adopted and still meet the statutory five-year requirement.
20. While a delay in the adoption of the Local Development Plan may impact on other areas of Park Authority work, for example, by preventing staff from working on other projects, the impact on planning decisions only arises if the effective housing land



supply within the National Park falls below five years. This could allow for the release of development sites which may not align with current Local Development Plan (e.g. they are outwith settlement boundaries) or Partnership Plan. However, the current Local Development Plan has sufficient land allocated for up to ten years (2031) and historically, the effective housing land supply has always been comfortably in excess of five years. The impact of the risk is therefore considered to be low, though annual monitoring will need to be carried out to assess the situation.

21. The Park Authority Board will be kept up-to-date on the progress of the Local Development Plan's preparation and the Development Plan Scheme will be updated and published annually.

Success measures

22. At the examination stage, before considering the Proposed Plan itself, the person appointed to carry out the examination will determine whether the consultation and public involvement in the preparation of the Local Development Plan has met or exceeded the requirements set out in the Participation Statement. The examination will not progress if the planning authority is deemed to have failed in this regard.
23. Following the examination, the measure of success is the adoption of the Local Development Plan by the Park Authority Board.

Next steps

24. Once the Development Plan Scheme is adopted by the Park Authority Board, the Park Authority will:
 - a) Publish it on the Park Authority website,
 - b) Place a copy in each public library or Local Authority office in the National Park,
 - c) Email copies to each Community Council or Association in the National Park,
 - d) Send two copies to Scottish Ministers.
25. An update to the Development Plan Scheme will be brought to Planning Committee in 2024.

Supporting information

Annex 1 - Draft Development Plan Scheme 2023