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# CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

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## FOR DECISION

**Title:** NATIONAL PARK PARTNERSHIP PLAN 2017-22

**Prepared by:** Hamish Trench, Director of Conservation and Visitor Experience

### **Purpose**

This paper seeks agreement on the approach to developing the next National Park Partnership Plan 2017-22.

### **Recommendation**

**The Board is asked to agree the approach to developing the next Partnership Plan including a main issues consultation in 2016.**

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## NATIONAL PARK PARTNERSHIP PLAN 2017-22 – FOR DECISION

### Strategic Context

1. The current Partnership Plan runs to 2017 and work on the next plan is required to start now. Board members have received six-monthly progress reports on delivery of the current plan and the next report is due in December 2015. The Partnership Plan is the overall management plan for the Park, approved by Ministers, which sets out the strategic direction for all partners. Its development is a statutory responsibility for CNPA and integral to our leadership role in the Park.
2. The current Partnership Plan identifies the strategic challenges for the Park including:
  - a) landscape scale habitat enhancement and species conservation;
  - b) economic fragility and infrastructure needs;
  - c) maintaining an effective population profile and provision of housing to meet local needs;
  - d) climate change mitigation and adaptation.
3. These remain relevant for the next plan, which should take the opportunity to update and refresh the strategic direction and focus. Some significant developments in the wider context include:
  - a) Rural Affairs, Food and Environment (RAFE) Delivery Board – a more structured approach to co-ordinating delivery across the rural affairs portfolio of public bodies;
  - b) Scottish Planning Policy and NPF3 – published in 2014, these brought significant changes in policy recognising National Parks. In particular SPP opens up the opportunity to review the overall housing strategy;
  - c) Community Empowerment – the combination of the Community Empowerment Act and Land Reform Bill sets out an agenda with implications for communities and many delivery partners;
  - d) Land Use Strategy – the national land use strategy will be reviewed over the next year. The Partnership Plan can provide a regional land use strategy for the National Park.
4. The plan is deliberately styled a 'Partnership Plan', emphasising it is an agreed plan for all partners working to deliver the aims of the Park. This has a particular significance for public bodies, given the Ministerial approval and expectation that it is delivered through partners' corporate plans, and it also brings together NGO, private and community sector partners. In developing the next plan, we have an opportunity to further reinforce the role of the Partnership in ensuring delivery.
5. The Partnership Plan sets the strategic direction for the Local Development Plan and we propose to make this more explicit in this plan. The Partnership Plan is the right level to address the strategic decisions on economic growth, housing strategy and spatial strategy and to secure partner agreement on these key issues. These will then determine the parameters for the next Local Development Plan.

## Proposed Approach

6. We propose to build on the direction of the current plan, further clarifying and focusing on the big challenges to be addressed. The Partnership Plan should provide the strategic direction on the big questions, not necessarily cover everything that partners will collaborate on.
  
7. Given the strategic context set out above, we propose the Partnership Plan should:
  - a) focus on the big issues that need cross-partner collaboration to deliver;
  - b) set clear priorities for action and investment;
  - c) set out how public bodies will deliver joined-up government tailored to the Cairngorms;
  - d) provide a clear spatial strategy;
  - e) show how publicly-owned land is being managed to deliver the aims of the Park.
  
8. We propose the following stages for development:
  - a) engagement with partners on main issues to be addressed and options for approach;
  - b) Public consultation setting out the main issues and proposed direction;
  - c) completion of plan with partner agreement for Ministerial approval.
  
9. A 'main issues' approach to the consultation should enable more meaningful engagement than producing a 'draft plan' for comment, and will help set the strategic context for the Local Development Plan 2 Main Issues Report which will follow.

## Timescale

10. Key stages of the proposed approach are:

<b>2015</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identification with partners of main issues to be addressed</li> <li>• Collation and review of evidence base</li> <li>• Discussions on strategic direction</li> <li>• Begin statutory assessments</li> </ul>
<b>2016</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public consultation on main issues</li> <li>• Development of plan with partners</li> <li>• Completion of statutory assessments</li> </ul>
<b>2017</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agreement of plan by partners</li> <li>• Approval by Ministers</li> <li>• Adoption by Board</li> </ul>

## Main Issues

11. We have begun discussions with partners on the main issues to be addressed. We have an established strategic delivery group which co-ordinates and monitors delivery of the plan and we have set up a sub-group focused on strategic planning to ensure key partners are taking a joined-up approach to developing both the next Partnership

Plan and Local Development Plan. The Terms of Reference for these groups are at Annex I.

12. The annual Partnership meeting chaired by the Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform is scheduled for 14<sup>th</sup> September and provides an opportunity to set the agenda with partners for the main issues for the next plan, as well as reviewing current delivery.
13. Discussions so far are identifying the following as key issues to be addressed and developed in the plan:

<b>Conservation</b>	<b>Visitor Experience</b>	<b>Rural Development</b>
Cairngorms Nature/Scottish biodiversity targets	Active Cairngorms participation	Community capacity and empowerment
Landscape-scale habitat enhancement	Outdoor Learning	Development and housing strategy
Moorland and deer management	Visitor welcome and information	Transport and communications infrastructure
Engaging people	Visitor infrastructure	Economic Development

14. We will hold further discussions with partners and board during 2015 to refine and agree the main issues to be addressed. These will then form the focus for the public consultation in spring/summer 2016. We anticipate developing a consultation report setting out the main issues, strategic direction and proposed approach.

### **Strategic Risk Management**

15. Development of a new Partnership Plan is an opportunity to address those risks identified in our risk register relating to the commitment and delivery by partners. In refreshing the strategic direction and delivery focus, we can ensure the plan a) takes account of the up to date context for public bodies and b) is well positioned to influence other plans, strategies and delivery.

### **Implications**

16. The resource implications are primarily staff time. Development of the Plan will be led by Management Team, and will require input from each service group within the organisation. The time input is planned within the existing operational plan. The development of the plan is a complex project, which needs to be fully integrated with the development of the next Local Development Plan. We have established a single project board to oversee both projects, each of which requires a full project plan.
17. There are significant communications implications to be addressed through the development period, including a formal public consultation. A communications plan is currently being developed as part of the project plan.

### **Recommendation**

- 18. The Board is asked to agree the approach to developing the next Partnership Plan including a main issues consultation in 2016.**

### **Future Board engagement**

19. Given the strategic significance of the Partnership Plan we anticipate allocating regular board time at key stages of its development over the next 2 years. At present the outline programme is:

<b>2015</b>	18 September	Discussion session – main issues: rural development
	16 October	Discussion session – main issues: conservation and visitor experience
<b>2016</b>	29 January	Discussion session – consultation report
	March	Formal approval of consultation report
	September	Report on consultation responses
	December	Consideration of proposed plan
<b>2017</b>	March	Approval of plan for submission to Ministers

**Hamish Trench**

**12 June 2015**

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## ANNEX I

### Cairngorms National Park Strategic Delivery Group

#### Purpose:

To draw together a small and focused group of individuals in key positions to influence delivery, share information, issues and solutions between sectors, shape new opportunities, advise each other on delivery priorities and approaches and communicate collective progress. This is a sub-group of the National Park Partnership which is responsible for the delivery of the Partnership Plan. The Delivery Group provides information that is used by CNPA staff for monitoring and reporting on progress to the CNPA Board, the National Park Partnership and Ministers.

#### Membership:

Grant Moir (Chair)	Cairngorms National Park Authority (CEO)
Anne Anderson	Scottish Environmental Protection Agency
George Hogg	Scottish Natural Heritage
George Hamilton	The Highland Council
Janelle Clark	Aberdeenshire Council
Scott Armstrong	VisitScotland
Graeme Prest	Forestry Commission Scotland
Drew McFarlane Slack	Scottish Land and Estates
Roger Clegg	Association of Cairngorms Communities
Kevin Roach	Cairngorms Business Partnership
Martin Johnson	Highlands and Islands Enterprise
Dougie Baird	Cairngorms Outdoor Access Trust
Hamish Trench	CNPA (Director of Conservation and Visitor Experience)
Murray Ferguson	CNPA (Director of Planning and Rural Development)
Gavin Miles	CNPA (Planning Manager)

#### Meets:

Twice a year to coincide with reporting cycles (March/Sept)

## Cairngorms National Park Strategic Planning Sub-Group

### Purpose:

A Sub-group of the Cairngorms National Park Strategic Delivery Group which aims to:

1. support the coordination and implementation of the Cairngorms Local Development Plan; and
2. help develop and coordinate the strategic land-use planning elements of the next National Park Partnership Plan and Local Development Plan for the National Park.

### Membership:

Grant Moir (Chair)	Cairngorms National Park Authority (CEO)
Anne Anderson	Scottish Environmental Protection Agency
George Hogg	Scottish Natural Heritage
Malcolm MacLeod	The Highland Council
Martin Johnson	Highlands and Islands Enterprise
Janelle Clark	Aberdeenshire Council
David Anderson	Transport Scotland
(tbc)	Scottish Water
Hamish Trench	CNPA (Director of Conservation & Visitor Experience)
Murray Ferguson	CNPA (Director of Planning & Rural Development)
Gavin Miles	CNPA (Planning Manager)

### Meets:

At key stages of NPPP and LDP project plan.