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## CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

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### FOR DECISION

**Title: PLANNING SERVICE PRIORITIES 2020/21**

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#### **Purpose of Report**

To review progress over the last year and to ask the Planning Committee to consider and approve the proposed planning service priorities for 2020/21.

#### **Summary**

The Planning Committee considers a set of planning service priorities to be delivered each year as part of our pro-active approach to performance improvement. During 2019/20 the planning service completed three of the six priorities that had been identified for the year, partly because some critical staff shortages and other significant work. For the year ahead, 6 service priorities are proposed in addition to the core service delivery targets including the analysis of responses to the LDP consultation and subsequent LDP examination. Once approved, these will be included in individual staff work programmes for 2020/21.

#### **Recommendation**

**That the Planning Committee consider and approve the proposed planning service priorities for 2020/21.**

#### **Background and Context**

1. In April 2019, the Planning Committee approved planning service improvement priorities for 2019/20. These improvement priorities have informed the work of the planning service during 2019/20 and are an important part of the CNPA's annual Planning Performance Framework (PPF) report. The planning service is now in the process of identifying improvement priorities to steer work over the coming year. The proposed improvement priorities outlined in this report are intended to complement and enhance the core planning services that the CNPA delivers (development plan preparation and delivery, development management, monitoring and enforcement). They are not a substitute for that work, but are about doing it in better ways to deliver better outcomes for customers and the CNPA.

## Review of Service Priorities from 2019/20

2. The six proposed service improvements agreed by the Planning Committee in April 2019 are shown in Table I below, along with a brief progress report on delivery.

Table I 2019/20 Service Priorities		Complete?
1	<p>Simplify mechanisms for securing planning obligations and reduce the need for planning agreements – Establishing simpler, cheaper and faster ways of securing necessary planning obligations.</p> <p><i>Limited progress, with Non-statutory guidance produced but not yet consulted on. Consultation to take place in 2020 with adoption taking place alongside the next LDP.</i></p>	Partially
2	<p>Develop and deliver a schools engagement / involvement programme – As part of the CNPA's approach to involving young people during the year of young people</p> <p><i>An event was organised for March 2020 but was cancelled due to COVID-19 Lockdown and it is still not yet possible to hold the planned event. Consequently a new youth engagement programme is being designed. It will be possible to take the carryout the new programme completely online if necessary ensuring that further disruption does not prevent engagement taking place.</i></p>	Partially
3	<p>Plan and deliver a workshop on natural heritage with SNH, SEPA and Local Authorities – Sharing good practice and ensuring consistent application of policy and practice across the National Park.</p> <p><i>An online event has been held and was attended by just over 70 individuals from across the UK.</i></p>	Yes
4	<p>•Undertake a monitoring scheme on holiday and second home ownership, changes of use from residential property and impacts on communities – The development of the LDP has increased awareness of the changes in use of residential property to short term holiday letting property. The data available through council tax and non-domestic rates records requires some ground trothing for accuracy and the CNPA will undertake some additional monitoring of newly completed housing developments. We will also publish a Planning Advice Note to explain the rules on use and changes of use.</p> <p><i>Monitoring of second and empty homes takes place annually. The CNPA have also commissioned Inside AirBnB to deliver data on short-term lets. This work is still underway.</i></p>	Partially

<b>Table 1</b>		<b>Complete?</b>
<b>2019/20 Service Priorities</b>		
5	<p>Increase our monitoring of hill tracks development and awareness of policy amongst estates and land managers – Our monitoring and enforcement of unauthorised hill tracks has increased over the past three years. During 2019/20 we will complete a monitoring project using aerial photography and will provide further guidance for estates and land managers.</p> <p><i>Hill tracks within the Cairngorms National Park have been mapped and landowners have been consulted on the results. Work to publicise will take place in 2020/21.</i></p>	Yes
6	<p>Consolidate past improvements and procedures – Over the past few years, the planning team has set ambitious service improvement priorities. At a time when we have also recruited a number of new staff, embedding changes requires consistent work and effort.</p> <p><i>This improvement is an essential part of the planning team’s work. We continue to embed past procedures and look to enhance previous improvements.</i></p>	Yes

### Service Priorities for 2020/21

- The proposed planning service improvements for 2020/21 are shown in Table 2. These further improvements have been discussed within the staff team and also aim to respond to general feedback received from stakeholders, including through the Planning Representatives Network and the Developers Forum. The proposed priorities build upon the progress that has been made in previous years. We delayed bringing these service priorities to the Planning Committee during the first months of 2020/21 in order to get a better understanding of how Covid-19 would affect our ability to deliver work.

<b>Table 2</b>	
<b>Proposed 2020/21 Planning Service Improvements</b>	
1	<p><b>Simplify mechanisms for securing planning obligations and reduce need for planning agreements.</b></p> <p>Establishing simpler, cheaper and faster ways of securing necessary planning obligations</p>
2	<p><b>Improve Monitoring of Planning Applications</b></p> <p>Improve data on existing consents to aid with monitoring and delivery of LDP</p>
3	<p><b>Develop and deliver a youth engagement / involvement programme</b></p> <p>Roll out a program of work to engage young people, including the involvement of the Cairngorms Youth Action Group, in the planning system.</p>

<b>Table 2 Proposed 2020/21 Planning Service Improvements</b>	
<b>4</b>	<p><b>Make the planning process more accessible</b></p> <p>Use digital technology to provide better access to planning committee enabling more people to engage with the decision making process.</p>
<b>5</b>	<p><b>Undertake a monitoring scheme on holiday and second home ownership, changes of use from residential property and impacts on communities</b></p> <p>The development of the LDP has increased awareness of the changes in use of residential property to short term holiday letting property. The data available through council tax and non-domestic rates records requires some ground trothing for accuracy and the CNPA will undertake some additional monitoring of newly completed housing developments. We will also publish a Planning Advice Note to explain the rules on use and changes of use.</p>
<b>6</b>	<p><b>Develop the Cairngorms National Park's approach to a Regional Spatial Strategy</b></p> <p>Building on the existing strategic framework provided by the National Park Partnership Plan.</p>
<b>7</b>	<p><b>Consolidate past improvements and procedures</b></p> <p>Over the past few years, the planning team has set ambitious service improvement priorities. At a time when we have also recruited a number of new staff, embedding changes requires consistent work and effort.</p>

### Next Steps

4. Once the service improvements are approved, staff will incorporate them into the Planning Service Unit Plan for the year and into individual's work plans. The Planning Committee will continue to receive regular updates on planning service performance.
5. The Planning Committee Training Programme for 2020/21 is being drawn together now. The training programme will include sessions on:
  - a) Trees, woodland and planning
  - b) Use of bonds/insurance guarantees
  - c) Good design and placemaking
  - d) Field trips (or virtual visits) to developments completed or in progress
  - e) Planning Committee self-reflection session

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