
CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

FOR DECISION

Title: Adoption of Supplementary Planning Guidance

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Purpose

This paper seeks the Board's agreement to adopt a number of pieces of Supplementary Planning Guidance to accompany the Cairngorms National Park Local Plan.

Recommendation

That the Board;

- a) Adopt the following pieces of Supplementary Planning Guidance to accompany the Cairngorms National Park Local Plan:
 - i. Sustainable Design Guide
 - ii. Natural Heritage
 - iii. Water Resources
 - iv. Open Space
 - v. Housing Development in Rural Building Groups
 - vi. Conversion and Reuse of Existing Traditional and Vernacular Buildings
 - vii. Development Briefs for the following sites
 - Dulnain Bridge H1
 - Grantown on Spey H1
 - Kincraig H1
 - Newtonmore H1
 - Newtonmore H2
 - viii. Core Paths Plan.
- b) Note the update on progress on the Affordable Housing SPG.

Executive Summary

The Cairngorms National Park Authority has a duty to prepare a Local Plan for the Park and has been engaged in Local Plan preparation since September 2004. In order to provide further detail on a variety of topics, a suite of Supplementary Planning Guidance is also being prepared. The guidance assists applicants in understanding the requirements for their planning applications, and adds a level of detail inappropriate for the Local Plan. The guidance supports the adopted Local Plan, and forms a material consideration in the determination of planning applications, and at appeals.

A range of topics will be covered by Supplementary Planning Guidance, and this paper brings forward the first group for formal approval. Work is still ongoing on additional pieces of guidance, and this will be available for public consultation in the New Year.

ADOPTION OF SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE – FOR DECISION

Background

1. The board will be aware of the 4 month consultation period undertaken on these pieces of Supplementary Planning Guidance. The consultation ran from the 24 May to 24 September 2010 during which time draft documents were made available on the CNPA website, and the documents were also sent to all key stakeholders and partners, along with anyone who had been involved in the Local Plan process relating to these specific topics. Comments in support of the documents, criticising the approaches being set out, and suggesting changes, were received from various individuals and organisations.
2. Since the end of the consultation, all of the comments received have been fully considered. Every comment received has been carefully looked at by staff, and then decisions made on how to address the issues raised, and whether or not to make the changes suggested. It is unsurprising that some of the comments received were contradictory, and so a judgement has had to be made on which approach to take. Although not all of the suggestions made have been incorporated into the final documents, over three quarters of them have been taken on board in the revised documents.
3. The quality of the responses received was very high, and it is good to see so many individuals and organisations taking an interest in the guidance, and putting forward their views and suggestions as to how they could be improved.

Responses to the consultation

4. In general, the response to the draft documents has been positive, but there were a number of suggestions made for changes. These are summarised for each document in the following sections.

Sustainable Design Guide

5. Overall, a positive response, with comments approving the approach being advocated. Suggestions were made on a number of specific points, such as questioning some of the materials being suggested, links to other pieces of SPG being clearer, making more of the importance of reducing energy use, for example through insulation, and some technical changes to the sections on waste and water.
6. We also received feedback on the photos included in the guidance, suggesting that although it was good to include aspirational images, we needed to include examples of developments that were not so high tech, and beyond the reach of many. To this end, we are sourcing additional photos, and these will be included in the final version once adopted.

Natural Heritage

7. Again, a generally positive response. A number of detailed responses were made by a variety of organisations and individuals. The main points arising from this were the

need for more clarity on the way in which the principles will be applied, and how the guidance relates to designated sites and species.

Water Resources

8. Detailed responses were received from SEPA and SNH. The comments made were mainly technical, and suggested amendments to wording to clarify technical issues, and to make some statutory requirements clearer for the public.

Open Space

9. Comments received on this document were generally positive, although the relevance of guidance on open space in a National Park was questioned. This is a valid point, and the guidance has been revised to make its role, in a National Park, clearer for the reader. More detailed comments relating to the importance of open space for healthy living, and in relation to climate change adaptation were also taken on board.

Housing Development in Rural Building Groups

10. Comments received raised a few issues about how the guidance would actually be delivered, and how specific locations / settlements would be covered by the guidance. Feedback was also received on the way in which extant planning permissions would be dealt with in the delivery of this guidance. This has been clarified.

Conversion and Reuse of Existing Traditional and Vernacular Buildings

11. Comments received raised issues relating to the flexibility of the use of this guidance, and to the need for changes to be made to buildings to enable them to be developed with sustainable design in mind. These issues have been addressed in the revised guidance.

Development Brief - Dulnain Bridge HI

12. The only comment received on this related to the waste water capacity on the site, and appropriate changes have been made to address this.

Development Brief - Grantown on Spey HI

13. A number of comments were received on this, particularly from local residents, highlighting issues to be taken into account. These included access arrangements, the need to make more specific reference to the natural heritage interest on the site, and also suggesting specific changes, such as a reduction of the height of the houses being proposed for the site. The natural heritage information has been clarified, the height of the houses being proposed reduced, and the need for a transport impact assessment clarified.

Development Brief - Kincaig HI

14. A number of comments were received on this, mainly relating to the natural heritage interests on the site, and the drainage / water issues. Some of the wider comments made about Kincaig are issues that will be addressed in the new Local Development Plan.

Development Brief - Newtonmore H1

15. A number of comments were received on this, including the reference to the A86 bypass. Transport Scotland wanted to see the reference to this tightened up, and so this has been taken on board.

Development Brief - Newtonmore H2

16. A number of comments were received on this, including the reference to the A86 bypass. Transport Scotland wanted to see the reference to this tightened up, and so this has been taken on board.

Affordable Housing

17. This piece of guidance attracted a significant number of comments, from a wide range of developers, landowners, and individuals. In order to fully assess these comments, more time is being taken with this piece of guidance. Work is ongoing with this, and this piece of SPG will be brought back to you later in the year for your consideration.

Implementation of the Supplementary Planning Guidance

18. Once adopted, the Supplementary Planning Guidance will become a material consideration in the determination of applications. CNPA staff will work with the planning officers in the Local Authorities to ensure the guidance is applied consistently in decisions.

Conclusion

19. In conclusion, the completion of the first batch of Supplementary Planning Guidance is an important step closely related to the adoption of the Local Plan. It means that applicants now have a significant amount of additional guidance on how to comply with the Local Plan policies, and it is hoped this will lead to a better understanding of what is expected of proposals in the National Park, and what associated information is required to be submitted with any individual planning application.

Recommendation

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Implications

Financial Implications

21. The budget for publication and adoption of the Supplementary Planning Guidance is planned for in the agreed Operational Plan. The staff resources required to undertake this work will fit within existing work programmes.

Implications for Stakeholders

22. The constituent Local Authorities will use the adopted Local Plan, and all of the accompanying Supplementary Planning Guidance in determining those applications submitted in the Park but not called in by CNPA. Developers, key agencies, infrastructure undertakers, community groups and residents will also use the Local Plan and Supplementary Planning Guidance to guide and inform further development work in the Park. It will be a necessity to continue to work closely with all involved to ensure a clear and widespread understanding of the Local Plan and associated Supplementary Planning Guidance and how it is to be used once adopted.

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