
CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

FOR DECISION

Title: CAIRNGORM AND GLENMORE STRATEGY

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Purpose

To seek the Board's approval of the Cairngorm and Glenmore Strategy.

Recommendation

That the Board approve the strategy for Cairngorm and Glenmore and CNPA's role in implementation.

Strategic Context

1. The current National Park Partnership Plan sets out a focus on the future strategy for this area of the Park. The Cairngorm and Glenmore Partnership was formed in 2014 comprising CNPA, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Forest Enterprise Scotland, Scottish Natural Heritage and the Highland Council. The purpose of the Partnership is to co-ordinate future management of the land in public ownership at Cairngorm and Glenmore, and a long term strategy is the first step in developing a more co-ordinated approach. CNPA is leading development of the strategy on behalf of the Partnership.

Consultation

2. CNPA co-ordinated a public consultation from 1st December 2015 to 8th March 2016 and the Board considered the consultation report on 24th June 2016. In summary there were 60 formal responses (17 organisations and 43 individuals), 50 people attended a community drop-in event in Aviemore, 35 people attended a Cairngorms Business Partnership consultation event and we received 28 completed visitor questionnaires from on-site businesses. We also held follow up meetings to discuss the consultation results with on-site businesses (10th May) and NGOs (9th June).

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The Strategy

3. The final strategy attached as Annex I has been completed by the partnership project team. It seeks to address a number of points arising from the public consultation including:
 - A simpler structure and more clarity on long term direction and short term actions;
 - Setting out more clearly how this strategy contributes to the wider National Park Partnership Plan;
 - Being clearer about the approach to managing the interaction of conservation and visitor experience; and
 - Clearer articulation of the conservation value of the area;
4. The Strategy is intended to provide clarity about the overall direction, principles for management and prompts for short-term action that will enhance the area.
5. The Strategy does not include detailed actions that were set out in the consultation document for the Glenmore Visitor Improvement Plan, or for the Cairngorm Mountain masterplan, both of which remain in development, informed by the consultation responses. We expect these spatial plans to be completed in the next year and they will set out the detailed plans for enhancing visitor facilities, car parking, path networks etc.
6. The strategy has been agreed by the Partnership Board representing each partner organisation. It is now being approved through internal processes in each of the other organisations and will be published shortly once all partners have confirmed approval.

Implementation

7. The Strategy sets out the project structures through which it will be implemented, including two new working groups to deliver work on transport and visitor services. Conservation actions will be delivered through existing partnerships and plans.
8. The strategy identifies the likely timescale for implementation. Within the actions scheduled for 1-2 years partners are also prioritising quick wins that can be delivered on the ground including improvements to signage and key views. These are alongside completing the more detailed planning work on spatial plans, action plan for enhancing the appearance of the ski area and transport feasibility study.
9. CNPA's role in implementation will continue to include:

- Co-ordination of the partnership, project management and reporting;
- Contributing to delivery of actions;
- Carrying out our statutory functions as planning authority

Strategic Risk Management

10. The significance of this partnership means The Cairngorm and Glenmore Strategy is identified in CNPA's strategic risk register: (VI) Partnerships: competing priorities act to prevent or delay delivery of Cairngorm and Glenmore Strategy and Active Cairngorms Strategy.
11. Ongoing project management structures that continue to bring the partners together mitigate this as far as possible. But reduced organisational capacity and resources among all partners remains a significant risk to delivery. There is no current budget allocation for many of the actions identified and partners will need to co-ordinate resources and identify potential funding options.

Supporting Information

Cairngorm Mountain

Natural Retreats continue to develop their proposed masterplan for Cairngorm Mountain. CNPA has provided initial advice and we expect to see the proposed plans and subsequent planning applications coming forward. Alongside improvements to the visitor facilities, partners have agreed the importance of clarity on winter sports improvements and progressing actions in the strategy on a clean-up of disused equipment in the ski area and continuing to expand montane woodland, improving the appearance of the area.

Glenmore

Forest Enterprise Scotland will be taking forward the spatial plan for Glenmore (Glenmore Action Plan) informed by the consultation responses. Following the consultation FES has already taken the decision not to prioritise a new visitor centre, but to continue to improve the existing facility in its current location. FES remain in discussion with the Scottish Youth Hostel Association and Highlife Highland about options to renew the Youth Hostel and improve learning facilities.

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