



Cairngorms
NATIONAL PARK

ViewPoint

to the future

Up for consultation

The plan for the future of the Park

**Looking
Ahead**

A snapshot of the vision for the Park

Natural High

**Why the Cairngorms
is such a special place**

**YOUR Park
YOUR Plan
YOUR View**

Get involved today!

Are these headlines what YOU want for the Cairngorms National Park in the future?

Cairngorms National Park comes out top in European quality of life survey.

Strong foundations now in place for housing in Cairngorms.

Cairngorms voted number 1 for sustainable tourism.

Cairngorms National Park singled out as a model for land management.

Cairngorms Fresh Water Pearl Mussel blue print to be rolled out across Scotland.

Business booming in Cairngorms.

Transport links go from strength to strength in National Park.

The story so far

ViewPoint to the future



The Cairngorms easily satisfies the three conditions for designation as a National Park:

- That the area be of outstanding national importance because of its natural heritage, or the combination of its natural and cultural heritage;
 - That the area has a distinctive character and a coherent identity;
 - That designation as a National Park meets the special needs of the area.
- There is no mistaking how essential it is that the Park be properly nurtured and guided in its development. Whilst the Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA) can be the catalyst for planned action, it cannot act alone.

Creating a joint sense of purpose

To some, these headlines may be too ambitious. To others they may not be ambitious enough. Some may be achievable now, whereas others may take a decade or longer to become reality.

Your help is needed at this vital stage to make sure the vision for the future of the Cairngorms National Park is the right one.

The Cairngorms National Park is a living, growing area of national and international importance. It demands direction and management for the short and long term. The National Park Plan aims to set out this direction.

That means action on the part of anyone and everyone who will be affected by how the National Park develops.

The National Park Authority is consulting on the Draft National Park Plan until 30 June 2006. After this date, its long term vision and priorities for action will be finalised and, following approval by the Scottish Executive, become working documents at the start of 2007.

This publication gives a flavour of the Draft National Park Plan, providing everyone with a concise and quick snapshot of it and acting as a signpost to the greater content of the Plan itself.

If your future is intertwined with that of the Cairngorms National Park, then this is your best opportunity to positively shape the Plan. Let us know what you think by responding using one of the methods listed on the back page. We look forward to hearing from you.

The role of the CNPA is to ensure collective and co-ordinated progress. The fulfilment of this role demands a new approach to managing the Park which draws together the wide range of public, private, community and individual interests.

The CNPA's determination to do this job well has brought it to a crucial stage with the creation of the Draft National Park Plan comprising two documents that together present a long term strategy – 'Looking to 2030' and more immediate 'Priorities for Action 2007-2012'.

In essence, these publications establish three core elements of our thinking: a vision for the Cairngorms and what it should be like in 2030; immediate plans for action over the five years from 2007-2012; and the fact that the vision and action can still be shaped by you.

Both publications mirror the uniqueness of the Cairngorms and give clear direction for the future of the area. However, they remain consultative drafts, open to fresh contributions.

For the first time in the National Park, a vision for where we want to be and how to get there is being

clearly mapped out. It is a new approach which reflects the determination of all the public bodies to work together in delivering on the needs of the Cairngorms.

We have demonstrated our belief in working in partnership by consulting with over 50 organisations and numerous individuals in arriving at this vital stage. We expect that number to rise and we are certain that the final plan for the National Park – because it will have wide ownership – will ultimately provide the right direction for the Cairngorms for years to come.

The final strategy and priorities for action are to be presented to the Scottish Executive by the end of 2006, incorporating all views and responses received during their creation.

We really are on the cusp of exciting times for the Cairngorms and now, like no other time, there is a real opportunity for us all to play a telling part in the area's future development.

The Draft National Park Plan is a means for people, businesses and organisations to join us in ensuring this opportunity is widely seized.

A time of opportunity



Photo: Jimmy Mitchell

There are many people with interests in the Cairngorms National Park. Individuals, businesses and organisations all have their own ideas on the way forward. The only way these interests can be represented in the vision for the Park, and the immediate priorities for action, is if we are aware of them.

For the CNPA, we recognise that while there is much agreement across the Park, some of the various interests involved do at times conflict.

So it's worth remembering we have to be guided in our actions by the four aims established for Scottish National Parks by the Scottish Parliament:

- to conserve and enhance the natural and cultural heritage of the area;
- to promote sustainable use of the natural resources of the area;
- to promote understanding and enjoyment (including enjoyment in the form of recreation) of the special qualities of the area by the public;
- to promote sustainable economic and social development of the area's communities.

Truth be told, there has been, and will continue to be, potential for conflict between these four aims. This is why a vision for the future and deciding the immediate priorities is so important.

Working towards the Park's aims will build on a clear set of principles:

Sustainable development – where resources are managed, used and enjoyed in ways that conserve and enhance them for future generations;

A Park for all – everyone, regardless of ability, wealth or background, should be able to enjoy the Park and have access to the benefits from the Park's resources;

A Park for the people and by the people – people within and outside the Park should be actively involved in its development and management;

Dealing with change – the world does not stand still – we must know what we can change and plan for it, and know what we can't change and prepare for it;

Effective management – managing the Park in a co-ordinated and efficient manner; tailored to the needs of the Park.

There will always be room for consultation and flexibility on behalf of the CNPA, but this is like no other time. Decisions will be made in 2006 which will have immediate and long-term implications for development, resources and direction.

If the Park is important to you in any way, you can't afford to miss this opportunity to have your say and express your point of view.

A special place

ViewPoint to the future

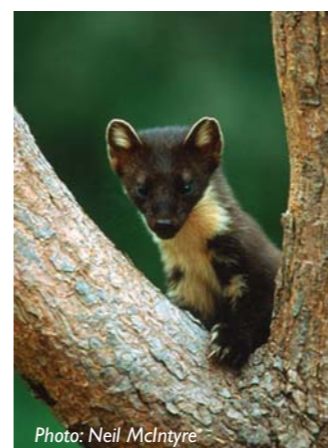


Photo: Neil McIntyre



Photo: David Gowans

"The Cairngorms is regarded as the most important mountain system in the country and of international importance for nature conservation."

(Nature Conservation Review 1977)

If this were all that was special about the Cairngorms then it would indeed be a unique place. But there is so much more to the Park.

The Cairngorms National Park conjures up many wonderful images for people right across the globe and that's not surprising. Consider this – as well as being home to 16,000 people, the Park can boast a long list of attractions which include:

- four of Scotland's five highest mountains;
- over 400 listed buildings;
- two extensive National Scenic Areas;
- 60 scheduled ancient monuments;
- 39 per cent of its area identified as being of national importance for nature conservation;
- home to 25 per cent of the UK's rare and threatened species.

And we still haven't listed all of its features! Quite rightly, the Cairngorms National Park is a treasured source of real Scottish pride.

It is nationally and internationally recognised for its outstanding natural and cultural environment. The scale and distinctive combination of mountain plateaux, open moorland, extensive forests, rivers, lochs and farmland, give the area a unique character.

Such a special place demands careful and innovative management. In setting out to conserve the remarkable qualities of the Cairngorms National Park, we must recognise that changes do occur over time and that we cannot control all of the factors that will come to bear.

However, we can be prepared for the future. Meeting the four aims of the Park and ensuring long-term success requires an understanding that all of us involved in its development have mutual interests and responsibilities.

Ultimately this means working together. If we achieve this, then the possibilities are virtually limitless. Our imaginations can allow us to release the full potential of the Cairngorms National Park in years to come.



Photo: Paul Tomkins/VisitScotland/Scottish Viewpoint

The Vision

So, what exactly is the vision for the Park in 25 years time?



Photo: David Gowans

First and foremost we want to ensure that the Park is recognised as a leading model for national parks and protected areas everywhere. It must do this by meeting the needs of its residents, its visitors, the people who care about it and its own environment.

We also want to see a National Park in which people share their experience in order to inform others, both at home and abroad.

Establishing the long-term vision for somewhere as vitally important as the Cairngorms represents a truly historical moment. The scope of this vision is wide-ranging and ultimately we have to deliver on three long-term themes.



Photo: CNPA

1. Conserving, enhancing and managing the Park

- The Park will increasingly be recognised around the world for its outstanding natural environment from high plateaux, corries and glens, to being home to a wide range of habitats and species.
- The distinctive landscape of the Park will be enhanced through improved management, including the extension of alpine scrub, improving woodland networks and restoring unsightly scars on the landscape. All this will be set within a productive mix of farming, forestry, game and wildlife management.
- There will be thriving populations of characteristic species from the high mountain tops, moorland and mires to forest, farmland, rivers and lochs.
- Distinctive local architecture will be protected, sustainable and innovative new buildings will promote good practice and the growth of settlements will safeguard the traditional pattern.
- Both the physical remains within the Park like cairns and drove roads and the less tangible evidence of traditions, stories and songs will be preserved, recorded and made as accessible as possible.
- Throughout the Park, residents, visitors, businesses and organisations will all contribute in some way to conserving and enhancing what is so special about their part of the Cairngorms.

2. Communities living and working in the Park

- Communities will play a key part in managing the Park and will support, and in turn make use of, the special natural and cultural qualities of the Cairngorms.
- The outstanding environment will stimulate rather than limit economic activity; and all people in the Park will be able to find housing, education, training, employment and services.
- Community involvement in policy development and implementation will be normal practice.

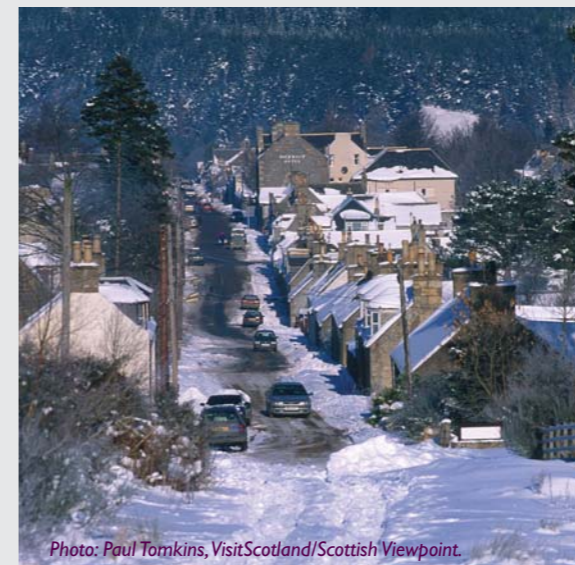


Photo: Paul Tomkins, VisitScotland/Scottish Viewpoint.

3. Understanding and enjoying the Park

- Residents and visitors will be able to enjoy, understand and support the special qualities of the Park. A wide range of outdoor access opportunities will be available and everyone will be encouraged to experience the varied landscape within the Park.
- Visitors will come to the Cairngorms all year round and be fully aware of what the Park has to offer, its conservation importance and be keen to support this.
- Residents will be well informed about the area and be keen to communicate their knowledge and the needs of those living, working and visiting the Park will be mutually respected.

In the future, wherever people in the world discuss national parks and protected areas, it should be impossible to do so without marvelling at the Cairngorms and what has been achieved here. Of course it's a huge challenge, but great things were never achieved with small expectations.

Contributing your thoughts to this process now will one day allow you to look at the worldwide success of the Cairngorms National Park and be able to say 'I helped create that'.



Photo: Neil McIntyre



Photo: Jimmy Mitchell



Photo: David Gowans

We believe the 25 year vision developed for the Park so far is realistic, achievable and appropriate. However, we're not starry-eyed idealists. We understand much hard work will have to take place and that every 1,000-mile march begins with a first step.

With the publication of the Draft National Park Plan we have made significant strides in working towards the vision. Now we are also in a position to state what we want to see delivered in the shorter term.

From 2007-2012 a particular set of priorities need to be acted upon. We haven't arrived at these priorities in a vacuum; consultation and real collaboration have all taken place. Individuals, communities, businesses and organisations have all given of their valuable time and effort in shaping our proposed agenda for action.

It simply isn't possible to determine a future for the Cairngorms without these important contributions. Consequently, whilst not excluding other areas of focus, we believe there to be seven priorities for action.

These seven priorities will give a focus to the effort and investment of the public sector in particular. Once refined and agreed then everyone involved will be able to plan for the resources needed during 2007-2012 to take a step forward towards achieving the long-term vision.

1. Conserving and enhancing the Park's biodiversity and landscapes

Why?

The biodiversity of habitats and species, as well as the landscapes of the Park are high amongst its special qualities. They are prized features, envied far and wide. It is vital that we ensure their value is retained through work to make them strong, robust and adaptable in order to face future changes. This is all the more urgent because of the impacts climate change may bring sooner, rather than later.

What will be different in 5 years?

Important habitats will be better connected, to give them a greater chance of survival and support more biodiversity. Threats to habitats and species will be identified and action to conserve them set in motion. Special conservation initiatives will support particularly important species such as water vole, capercaillie, black grouse and fresh water pearl mussels. We will have completed landscape studies of the Park to inform management plans and there will be more interpretation and viewpoints to help people understand and enjoy the special landscapes of the Park.

2. Developing sustainable deer management

Why?

Deer are one of the major ecological and economic resources of the Park. However, their management in recent years has been a subject for passionate debate amongst many and their impact on the biodiversity of the Park has the potential to be seriously damaging. Consequently, more co-ordinated deer management is essential on the one hand to ensure its continued value as a resource; and on the other, to prevent it damaging other equally important resources.

What will be different in 5 years?

A Cairngorms Deer Advisory Group will have been established, aiding deer management and communication between land managers, public agencies and communities. Deer populations will come more into balance with the ability of habitats to support them without damage. There will be an accessible database of Park deer management information and there will be co-ordinated marketing of deerstalking and venison.

3. Supporting integrated land management

Why?

It stands to reason that land management is of prime importance to the National Park – it shapes much of the landscapes and habitats that make the area special and provides important jobs and income. Helping land management to contribute to the aims of the Park will be a continuous process. However there is a particular opportunity in the next five years, as a result of changing European policy, to simplify the support and advice systems and tailor them to the needs of the National Park.

What will be different in 5 years?

There will be simpler, more transparent and better co-ordinated ways for land managers to support and enhance the special qualities of the Park and help meet the needs of communities and visitors. In particular, there will be better support for upland management, food marketing and training and advice. There will be greater opportunity to secure benefits for conservation, public access and community use that are tailored to local circumstances.



4. Providing high quality opportunities for outdoor access

Q Why?
A For the first time, the Park's designation brings an opportunity to integrate management of outdoor access across different areas and sectors of the Cairngorms. We're intending to bring access up to the excellent standard demanded of such a unique place. People living in the Park and visitors of all ages, abilities and interest need to be able to understand and enjoy all that the Cairngorms has to offer.

Q What will be different in 5 years?
A There will be a plethora of changes. A mere flavour includes a higher quality and well promoted network of routes for residents and visitors to enjoy the Park, including walking and cycling routes to serve schools and workplaces. There will be extensions of strategic routes such as The Speyside Way and a cross-park bus service. High quality visitor information will be available through a wide range of places. In a nutshell, better opportunities for access, better information, and better capacity to enjoy more of what the Park provides.

5. Making housing affordable and sustainable

Q Why?
A Here and now we already know that affordable housing of good quality is a key issue for many of the Park's communities. Like our other identified priorities, this demands immediate action. Young people and those on low incomes in particular have to be given better opportunities to secure homes in their communities that are the lifeblood of the Cairngorms. The impacts of development have to be managed along with the other needs of the Park but advances in this area will be a high priority.

Q What will be different in 5 years?
A There will be provision of effective land in the Local Plan for housing; alternative ways to secure funding and land for housing development including private/public partnerships will be established; and the supply of quality, affordable, rented accommodation will be increased. This is a crucial priority and overall, we will see increased supply and accessibility; more effective co-ordination of resources; wider co-operation of all interested parties; and improvements in the quality and sustainability of design.

6. Making tourism and businesses sustainable

Q Why?
A As well as homes for people living in the Cairngorms, we need thriving businesses and vibrant tourism. Together they bring jobs and underpin the economy. The importance of tourism cannot be overstated and a delicate balance will need to be maintained to ensure its economic, social and environmental impacts are all positive.

Q What will be different in 5 years?
A There will be strengthened small business support and training; potential for diversification of more land-based businesses into tourism; a Youth Apprenticeship scheme; a strengthened Chamber of Commerce; park-wide information on visitor numbers; and guidance on improving the environmental performance of businesses. We will have recognition of the importance of business and collaboration to ensure our economy can thrive whilst conserving the value of the Park.



7. Developing awareness and understanding of the Park

Q Why?
A Of course we are a new National Park. The next five years will prove critical in establishing the credentials of the Park locally, nationally and across the world. We all have to get across the message that this is a special place; that it is a national asset; and that it has particular management and investment needs. If we do that, more people will be able to enjoy the National Park and understand how we should care for it into the future.

Q What will be different in 5 years?
A We will raise awareness of the Park and deliver marketing campaigns which promote specific themes of the Cairngorms; and we will take the message of the Park out to Scotland's major cities. We will audit our built heritage and archaeology; better train those who work with visitors; and widen access to information through the ranger services. We will come to better understand the natural and cultural resources we have and provide interpretation in communities telling the story of their place in the National Park. The result will be far greater awareness of the Park, successful marketing on a number of levels to a variety of target audiences and above all, a widening realisation of just how exciting and special the Cairngorms National Park is.



How to get involved

We have consulted in depth, far and wide, to get to this stage. However, we want to make this very clear – the Draft National Park Plan represents a real opportunity for all those who live, work or have an interest in the Park to get involved.

We all have it within our grasp to play an active role in developing the Park and shaping its history. The Cairngorms National Park will be here for years and generations to come. We invite your full participation in ensuring it is a Park for all the people, all of the

time – today and in the future. If you have comments to make, please respond using one of the methods detailed below.

This summary is elaborated on in a number of publications. These include the document 'Looking to 2030' which explains the 25 year vision in detail and a separate look at the five year 'Priorities for Action'. Much of the data and information that has informed these publications can be found in the State of the Park Report.

Copies of all these publications are available at local libraries or by contacting The Cairngorms National Park Authority by post, telephone or by email using the details contained opposite.

Alternatively they can be downloaded from The Cairngorms National Park Authority website at www.cairngorms.co.uk and clicking on 'National Park Plan' on the home page.

During the consultation, further opportunities and information will be available to help people contribute their views including public information meetings and advertising in the media. Please look out for these and come along or respond accordingly.

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Park Authority on tel: 01479 873535**

