



## Cairngorms National Park Plan 2007





## **Foreword**

Am fear nach seall roimhe  
Seallaidh e'na dheidh

The one who does not look forward  
Will look back

In this first National Park Plan we believe that we should all look forward with a collective sense of purpose. By working together we can achieve our ambitious vision for the future of the National Park. A world class Cairngorms National Park will deliver real benefits for the people who live and work in the area and indeed for all of Scotland and beyond – but this demands a new approach to managing the Park.

This is why the public bodies involved in the area have come together, represented in their logos opposite, in a working partnership to achieve all four of the Park's aims. But this plan does not sit in isolation, it seeks to build on the existing work of the public, private, voluntary sectors and communities within the Park. We can all play our part and act to look after and improve what we value about this wonderful area. But only by combining our efforts, by being creative and doing things in a different or better way can we really make that difference to benefit the people and places in the Park.

We need to know if we are making progress towards this vision so the Plan includes priorities for action between 2007 and 2012, and sets out clear five year outcomes. There is an exciting future stretching ahead of all of us and while we must be aspirational, we must also be realistic in what we will achieve over the first five years. However, commitment as we all know means sharing the responsibilities for the Park as well as reaping the benefits of the Park.

This is an area of strong communities combined with a special natural and cultural heritage which all deserve our respect. Change will happen, but if we can ensure as far as possible that this happens in a sustainable way, we can all look after the Cairngorms for those who come after us.

**David Green**  
**Convener, Cairngorms National Park Authority**

# Contents

<b>Foreword.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1. Vision.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>2. Introduction.....</b>	<b>8</b>
2.1 Purpose of the National Park Plan .....	8
2.2 Structure of the National Park Plan .....	8
2.3 Development of the National Park Plan.....	10
2.4 Relationship to Development Plans and Management .....	12
2.5 Relationship to Other Plans .....	12
<b>3. Context.....</b>	<b>14</b>
3.1 National Parks in Scotland.....	14
National Park Designation and Aims.....	14
An Integrated Approach and the Role of the National Park Authority.....	15
3.2 The Cairngorms National Park .....	16
International Context .....	16
National Context .....	17
Regional Context .....	18
The Special Qualities of the Cairngorms National Park.....	19
3.3 Managing the Park in a Changing Environment.....	22
Drivers of Change .....	22
Building on Experience.....	24
<b>4. Guiding Principles .....</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>5. Strategic Objectives .....</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>5.1 Conserving and Enhancing the Park .....</b>	<b>28</b>
5.1.1 Introduction – Conserving and Enhancing the Special Qualities .....	28
5.1.2 Conserving and Enhancing the Natural and Cultural Heritage.....	28
Landscape, Built and Historic Environment.....	28
Biodiversity.....	31
Geodiversity.....	35
Culture and Traditions .....	37
5.1.3 Sustainable Use of Resources .....	38
Energy .....	38
Water.....	39
Air .....	41
5.1.4 Integrated Land Management .....	42
Farming and Crofting.....	44
Forest and Woodland Management .....	46
Moorland Management.....	49
Deer Management.....	50
Fisheries Management .....	52

<b>5.2. Living and Working in the Park.....</b>	<b>54</b>
5.2.1 Introduction – Encouraging Sustainable Development .....	54
5.2.2 Sustainable Communities.....	54
5.2.3 Economy and Employment.....	56
5.2.4 Housing .....	59
5.2.5 Transport and Communications.....	60
5.2.6 Waste Management.....	62
<b>5.3 Enjoying and Understanding the Park .....</b>	<b>64</b>
5.3.1 Introduction – Creating a World-Class Experience .....	64
5.3.2 Sustainable Tourism.....	64
5.3.3 Outdoor Access and Recreation.....	68
5.3.4 Learning and Understanding.....	71
<b>6. Priorities for Action 2007-2012.....</b>	<b>74</b>
6.1 Conserving and Enhancing Biodiversity and Landscapes .....	75
6.2 Integrating Public Support for Land Management .....	81
6.3 Supporting Sustainable Deer Management.....	84
6.4 Providing High Quality Opportunities for Outdoor Access .....	87
6.5 Making Tourism and Business More Sustainable .....	92
6.6 Making Housing More Affordable and Sustainable .....	95
6.7 Raising Awareness and Understanding of the Park.....	98
<b>7. Implementation .....</b>	<b>102</b>
7.1 A Partnership Approach.....	102
7.2 Adding Value to Existing Work .....	103
7.3 National Park Investment Programme .....	104
7.4 National Park Research Programme .....	104
7.5 Role of the National Park Authority in Implementation.....	104
7.6 Implementation through Other Plans and Strategies .....	105
7.7 Challenges and Risks .....	105
<b>8. Monitoring and Review .....</b>	<b>107</b>
8.1 Annual Report on the Priorities for Action.....	107
8.2 Monitoring the State of the Park.....	107
8.3 Framework for Monitoring and Review .....	108
<b>9. Conclusion .....</b>	<b>110</b>

## **Annexes**

Annex I	Contributors to the National Park Plan
Annex II	IUCN Management Principles for Category V Protected Areas
Annex III	Glossary

## 1. Vision

**Imagine a world-class National Park – an outstanding environment in which the natural and cultural resources are cared for by the people who live there and visit; a renowned international destination with fantastic opportunities for all to enjoy its special places; an exemplar of sustainable development showing how people and place can thrive together. A National Park that makes a significant contribution to our local, regional and national identity.**

**This is our vision for the Cairngorms National Park in 2030.**

### Conserving and Enhancing the Park – 25 year outcomes

2006	2030
The Cairngorms <b>landscape</b> is a unique and diverse mix of mountains, straths, glens, forests and farmland forming a distinct character of national importance shaped by the interaction of natural processes and people.	The distinct character of the Cairngorms <b>landscape</b> and its diverse mix of mountains, straths, glens, forests and farmland will be conserved and enhanced, shaped by natural processes and positive management.
The montane areas of the Park are known for the experience of <b>wildness</b> enjoyed by many.	The sense of <b>wildness</b> , particularly in the high montane areas, will be enhanced and renowned as a particular special quality of the area that continues to be enjoyed by many.
The Park has a rich <b>biodiversity</b> including many habitats and species of national and international importance.	The Park will continue to have a rich <b>biodiversity</b> which will be better connected and able to adapt to a changing climate. Areas of national and international importance will be exemplars of good management, set within a broader network of well managed habitats.
The Park contains an internationally important record of <b>geodiversity</b> , particularly landforms associated with glaciation, but these are under-recorded and little known beyond specialists.	The important <b>geodiversity</b> record in the Park will be widely recognised and will be well managed and conserved.
Active <b>land management</b> shapes much of the landscape of the Park and its special qualities, but is facing significant changes in policy and economic conditions.	There will continue to be an <b>active and productive land management</b> sector that conserves and enhances the special qualities and is a significant economic asset.
There are distinctive patterns of local architecture and design in the area's <b>built heritage</b> and settlements, but new development in places detracts from the pattern and character of settlements.	The <b>built heritage</b> of the Park will be safeguarded and new buildings will complement or enhance their setting, including the settlement pattern and character.

There are widespread <b>archaeology and material records</b> providing evidence of previous generations living in the area, but there are significant gaps in recording, understanding and care to conserve this heritage.	The <b>archaeological evidence and material records</b> of previous generations will be well recorded and understood, actively cared for and safeguarded.
There are many <b>cultures and traditions</b> amongst the communities of the Park, but many are at risk of being lost over time.	The <b>cultures and traditions</b> associated with the people and communities of the Park will be well recognised and continue to evolve as part of a living culture that secures tomorrow's cultural heritage.
<b>Living and Working in the Park – 25 year outcomes</b>	
<b>2006</b>	<b>2030</b>
There are many <b>active communities</b> in the Park seeking ways to shape their own future, but current population trends challenge long-term sustainability.	There will be <b>thriving and sustainable communities</b> throughout the Park that are confident to share their ideas, experience and culture in actively shaping their own future and enjoying a sense of ownership of the National Park.
<b>Training and employment</b> opportunities are restricted to a few sectors, limiting the potential for many people in the Park to develop their skills.	There will be a wide range of opportunities for people in the National Park to develop their <b>skills and employment options</b> that will meet the needs of individuals and businesses.
<b>Businesses</b> are starting to identify opportunities associated with the National Park, but the wider value to the regional economy is yet to be realised.	The outstanding environment of the Park will stimulate economic activity, <b>businesses will thrive</b> , and the Park will be an economic asset to the wider regional economy.
Some business sectors, such as tourism and land management, are increasingly seeking to ensure <b>positive impacts</b> on the area's communities, environment and special qualities.	Delivering <b>economic, social and environmental sustainability</b> will be an integral part of every business. Businesses will manage their impacts to ensure a positive contribution to the area's communities, environment and special qualities.
Many, particularly young people, those on low incomes and those working in the Park, are unable to access <b>housing</b> that meets their needs. Housing is of variable quality and often inefficient in its use of resources.	People will be able to access <b>housing</b> that meets their needs through rent or purchase. Housing of all types will be of good quality and new development will implement sustainable design principles.
<b>Transport</b> infrastructure and provision does not fully meet the needs of residents, businesses or visitors and is heavily reliant on private car use. This constrains the development of sustainable communities and interaction with the wider regional economy.	The National Park will be a leader in <b>sustainable rural transport</b> . Infrastructure and provision will meet the needs of residents, businesses and visitors and strengthen the regional interaction of the Park. Barriers to transport and dependence on private car use will have reduced, helping to facilitate sustainable



	development.
There are significant pressures on infrastructure arising from <b>energy, water use and waste management</b> .	There will be a <b>vibrant renewable energy, recycling and waste sector</b> in the National Park together with greater awareness and action by individuals, businesses and organisations. This will result in more sustainable patterns of use, supply and management of energy, water and waste.
<b>Enjoying and Understanding the Park – 25 year outcomes</b>	
<b>2006</b>	<b>2030</b>
The Cairngorms National Park is a new entity and people are <b>uncertain</b> of what it means to be a National Park, and what they can expect of it.	The Cairngorms National Park will be <b>renowned</b> in Scotland and internationally and will make a significant positive contribution to Scotland’s national identity.
The area is already a popular <b>tourism destination</b> , although infrastructure, marketing and service provision are not yet co-ordinated to best effect.	The Cairngorms National Park will be an internationally recognised <b>world class sustainable tourism destination</b> that consistently exceeds residents’ and visitors’ expectations in terms of quality of environment, services and experience.
There is a good network of off-road paths and tracks to enjoy <b>outdoor access</b> in most areas of the Park.	There will be an excellent and integrated network of routes to enjoy <b>outdoor access</b> across the Park that meets the needs of residents and visitors.
There is an unusually wide and highly valued range of <b>outdoor recreation</b> activities available, both formal and informal.	There will be an even higher quality and increased range of <b>outdoor recreation</b> activities available and accessible to a wider range of people of all abilities to enjoy the Park.
The concept of <b>responsible behaviour</b> in terms of outdoor access is beginning to become established among those taking recreational access and those managing land.	There will be a high level of understanding and widespread practice of <b>responsible behaviour</b> in the Cairngorms. Outdoor access will be enjoyed and managed as an integral part of a broader recreational experience and in ways that promote enjoyment of the special qualities of the Park while conserving them.
There is a range of <b>interpretation</b> locations using various media across the Park focused on specific aspects, but the sense of collective interpretation to reveal and raise understanding of the National Park and its special qualities is yet to be realised.	<b>Interpretation</b> of the National Park will be of an internationally high standard revealing the significance and meaning of the National Park and its special qualities, helping people to understand and enjoy the area.
Many organisations use the Park as a resource for informal and formal <b>learning</b> , but the potential for contributing to national learning is yet to be realised.	The Park will be a significant <b>national learning resource</b> that raises understanding of the special qualities of the area and sustainable development, while also contributing to national objectives.



There is a wealth of **knowledge** about many of the special qualities and resources of the Park from existing research and previous work. However, there are significant gaps in knowledge in some natural heritage resources and many cultural heritage and socio-economic resources.

Key gaps in **knowledge** will have been addressed, and the National Park will lead the way in research on issues such as sustainable development and rural tourism. Information will be widely accessible and contribute fully to the knowledge economy of the region and Scotland.

## **2. Introduction**

### **2.1 Purpose of the National Park Plan**

The National Park Plan brings together all those involved in managing the area to set out a shared vision, a framework for management and priorities for action. It is a plan for the National Park as a whole, not just for the National Park Authority. It has therefore been developed and will be implemented through a wide range of partners and stakeholders. These include, for example, local authorities, public agencies, land managers, businesses, communities, non-governmental organisations, voluntary groups and other interest groups. All have a significant influence in managing the National Park and will be vital to delivering the plan.

The plan sets out how the four aims of the National Park (see Section 3.1) can be achieved in a collective and co-ordinated way by all sectors and interests working together. It seeks to add value to the existing work of many bodies in the public, private, community and voluntary sectors, to achieve the vision of a world-class National Park. The plan builds on the existing work of these sectors, focusing on new action required or areas where there is an opportunity to do things differently or better by working together.

### **2.2 Structure of the National Park Plan**

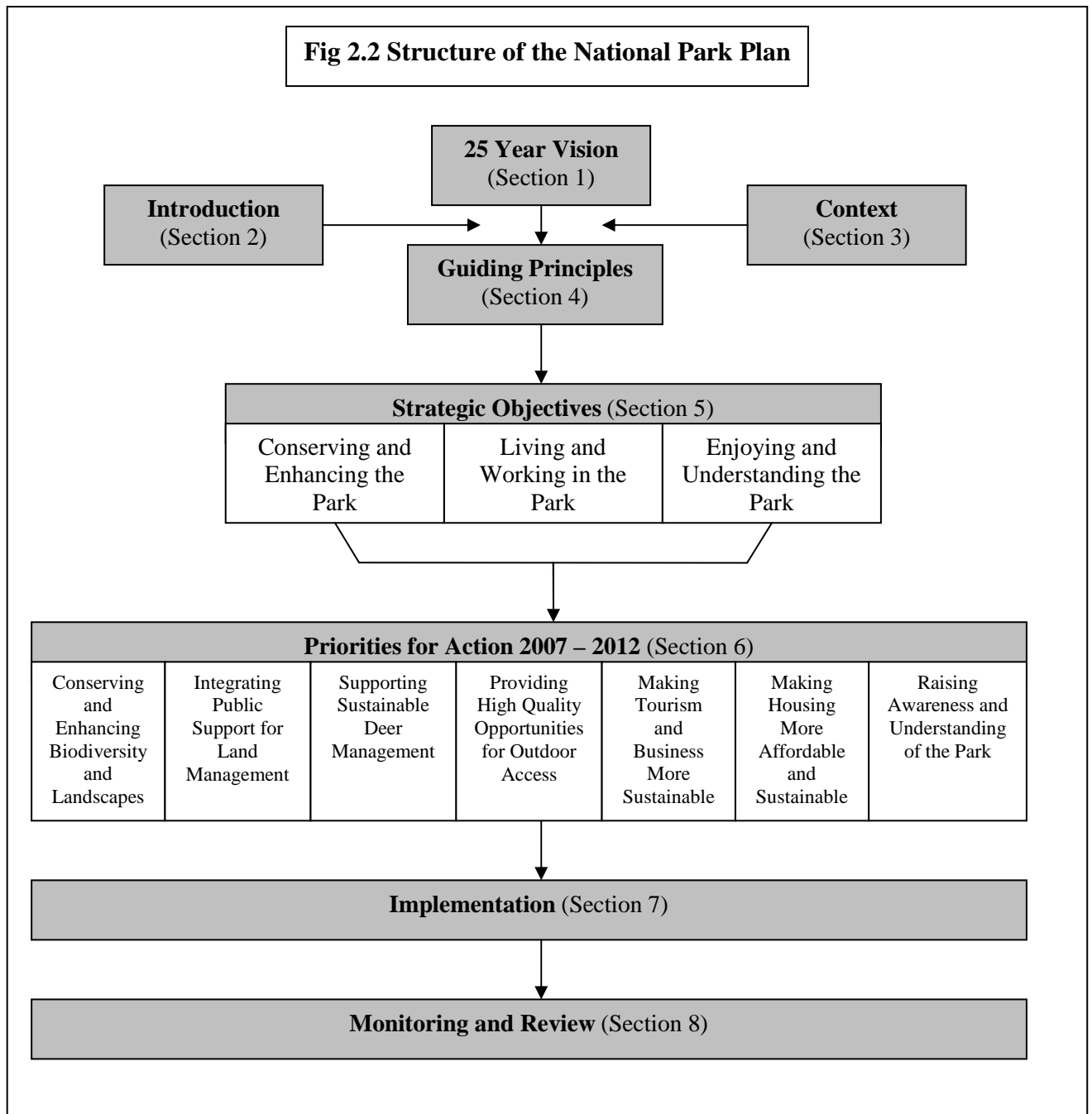
The National Park Plan is structured to be a plan for the Park as a whole and can be used by all sectors – public, private, community and voluntary – in working towards the aims of the National Park and a shared vision for its future.

The plan looks to two time horizons – the long-term (25 years) and the immediate future (5 years). Managing the resources and special qualities of the Park needs to take a long-term view, so the vision and strategic objectives of the Plan look 25 years ahead. However, we also need to know where to start to achieve this vision and where to direct our efforts in the immediate future. The Priorities for Action therefore identify seven areas of focus for the period 2007-2012, through which we can collectively make a significant start on working towards the long-term vision.

The National Park Plan has a particular role to join-up the work of public bodies which, under Section 14 of the National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000, have a duty to have regard to the plan in exercising functions so far as they affect the National Park. Through closer alignment of corporate and operational objectives and priorities within the area of the National Park, the public sector can deliver better outcomes targeted at agreed priorities and be in a better position to support other sectors in delivering the objectives of the plan.

But this is a plan for the National Park as a whole, not just the National Park Authority or the public sector. It is also a plan which the private, community and voluntary sectors play a key role in both shaping and delivering.

Figure 2.2 shows the structure of the National Park Plan.



The **Vision** for the National Park in 25 years’ time is set out at the start of this document. This is aspirational, but within reach. It identifies the end point towards which the strategic objectives and priorities of the plan are directed.

Section 2 sets out the **purpose** of the National Park Plan, its **structure**, as well as the process by which the plan has been developed and its relationship to other plans.

Section 3 then sets the context for the plan. It identifies what National Parks offer to Scotland and the **integrated approach** that is needed to deliver the aims collectively. It recognises the Park's **international, national and regional context** and describes the **special qualities** of the National Park, which are referred to throughout the plan. It also considers the **changing environment** in which we collectively manage the National Park.

Section 4 identifies five **Guiding Principles** that underpin the plan and should guide its implementation. These should be used as a checklist by everyone involved in implementing the plan, and in the broader work of all sectors in the Park. Some practical ways in which we can all live up to these principles are suggested.

The **Strategic Objectives** in Section 5 provide the framework for managing the National Park. These are not management prescriptions, but are instead objectives to which all sectors in the Park can actively contribute, and for which all sectors can take some responsibility. There is already a significant amount of work ongoing that is contributing to these objectives, which now provide a context for further work and a framework to guide our ongoing decisions and management.

Section 6 identifies the **Priorities for Action for 2007-2012**. These do not try to implement everything covered by the strategic objectives – to try to achieve everything in the first five years is unrealistic. They are therefore real priorities focused on specific management needs and opportunities in the next five years in which progress must be made. The priorities identify a series of **five year outcomes**, which make a significant contribution towards the longer-term strategic objectives, and a programme of actions with the key partners.

Section 7 sets out the methods of **implementation**, including some of the practical means by which the partnerships necessary to deliver the plan can come together, as well as consideration of the challenges and risks to delivery.

Section 8 sets out the framework for **monitoring and review**, in which all sectors have a role to monitor collective progress in management and wider changes to the state of the National Park.

### **2.3 Development of the National Park Plan**

A wide range of organisations and interests has helped to develop the National Park Plan. Its role as a plan for the Park as a whole, and the need for a wide range of organisations to work towards its successful delivery, means that their involvement in shaping it from the start has been crucial.

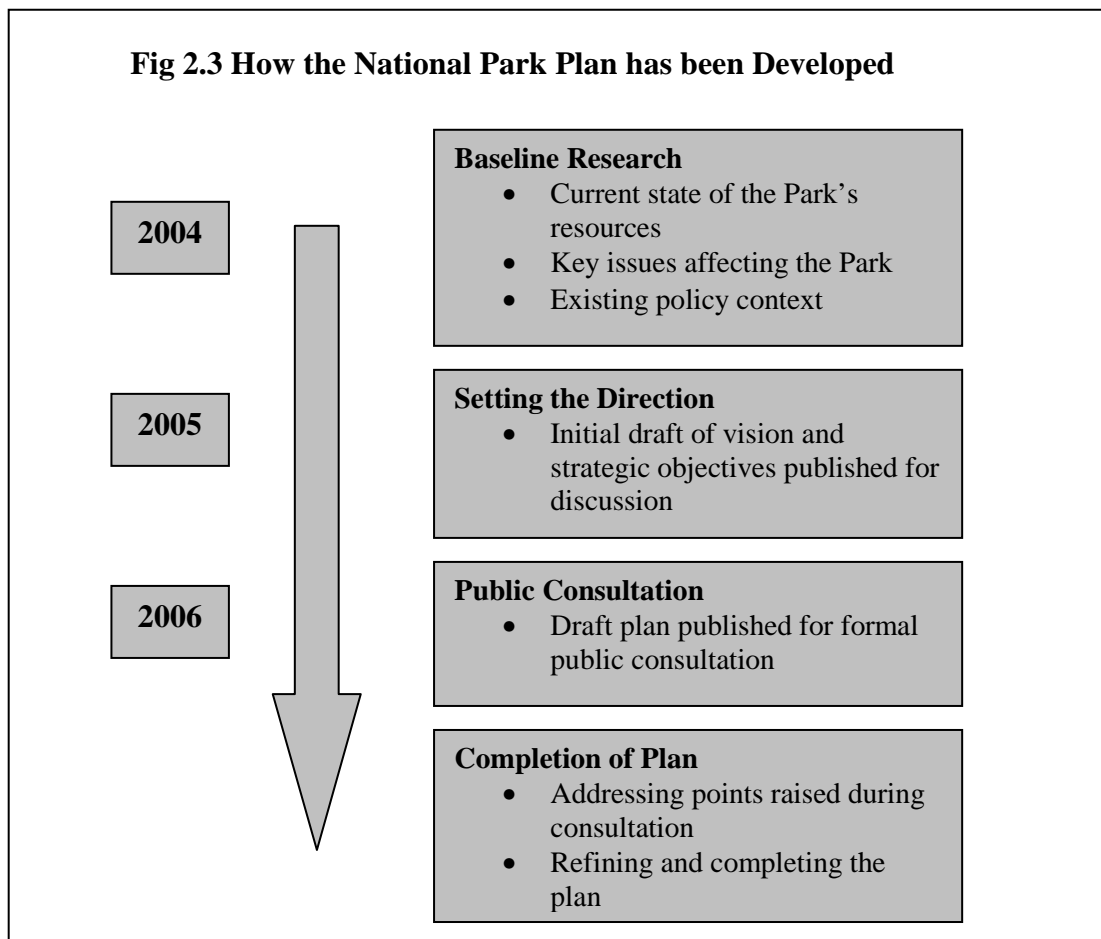
A public consultation was held from 31<sup>st</sup> March to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2006, and a Consultation Report is available accompanying publication of the plan. This summarises the process of consultation and includes the range of views expressed during the formal public consultation and how these have been addressed in completing the plan.

Development of the plan was also informed by a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). EC Directive 2001/42/EC and the Environmental Assessment of Plans and

Programmes (Scotland) Regulations 2004 require that plans of this nature are assessed to identify potentially significant environmental effects. These regulations have been superseded by the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005.

The SEA assesses the likely significant environmental effects of the plan. It identifies opportunities to strengthen the positive environmental effects of the plan and ensures environmental considerations are integrated throughout. An SEA Statement, summarising the process and how it has informed development of the plan accompanies the plan and is available separately in electronic format.

Figure 2.3 summarises the process of developing the National Park Plan.



## **State of the Park Report 2006**

The State of the Park Report 2006 (published April 2006) draws together a wide range of existing information about the Park covering:

- Natural resources;
- Cultural resources;
- Visitor and recreation resources;
- Socio-economic resources.

For each, it identifies as far as possible the current extent and state of resources, their relative value in local, national and international contexts, and the key trends affecting them. While it provides a significant amount of information about the Park, it also highlights areas where there is little information available. This will inform a programme of research.

The State of the Park Report will be updated at five yearly intervals and will be integrated with the monitoring programme for the Park.

## **2.4 Relationship to Development Plans and Management**

The National Park Authority shares responsibility for development planning and management with the four local authorities within the Park (Highland, Moray, Aberdeenshire and Angus). Planning applications are made to the local authorities in the first instance, but may be called-in and determined by the National Park Authority if it considers them to be of significance to the aims of the Park. The National Park Authority is responsible for preparing the Local Plan for the Park area.

The National Park Plan provides an overarching context for development planning and management within the National Park. The Local Plan will set out detailed policies to guide development in ways that contribute to the strategic objectives of the National Park Plan. The National Park Plan is a material consideration in planning authority decisions.

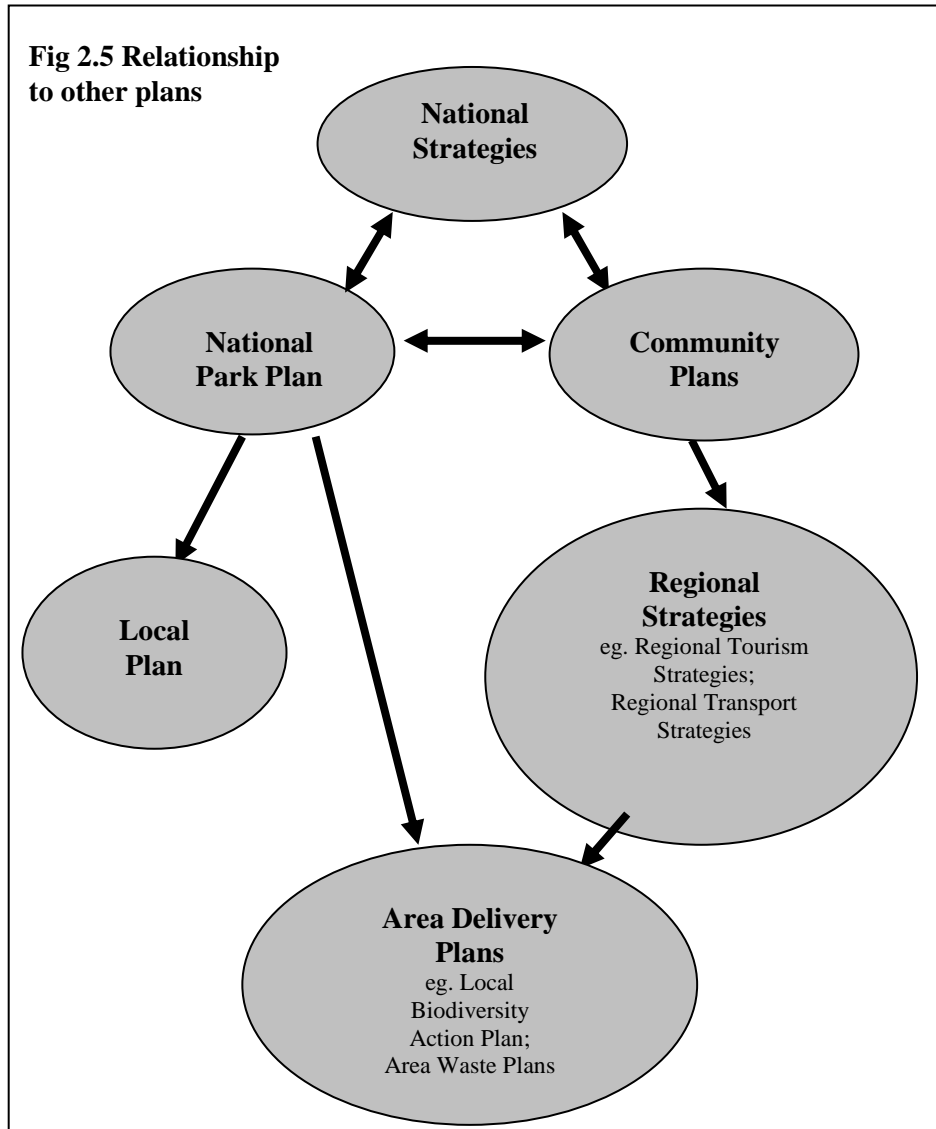
## **2.5 Relationship to Other Plans**

The National Park Plan is informed by, and in turn provides a context for, other plans affecting the National Park. The plan is set within the national policy context, and where appropriate sets out how we can collectively contribute to national objectives and add value to national policy within the National Park. In Section 5, the national policy context on which this plan builds is listed at the end of each section of strategic objectives. National policy is ever-changing and will be monitored to ensure the National Park Plan continues to deliver and add value to national policy.

In turn, the plan provides a strategic context for other plans and policies affecting the National Park. These include other plans prepared by the National Park Authority such as the Local Plan and the Core Paths Plan, but also plans prepared by other bodies – it provides a common direction and context to inform future management planning. In particular, there are common interests between the National Park Plan

and Community Plans. Both seek to add value through partnerships and each is able to help deliver aspects of the other through better alignment of priorities and resources, and engagement with the private, community and voluntary sectors.

Figure 2.5 outlines the relationship between the different layers of plans affecting the National Park.





### 3. Context

#### 3.1 National Parks in Scotland

One of the first Acts of the Scottish Parliament in 2000 legislated for National Parks in Scotland. There are now two National Parks: Loch Lomond and the Trossachs, established in 2002, and the Cairngorms, established in 2003.

Scotland's National Parks are a distinctive model that combines conservation of the natural and cultural heritage, with sustainable use, enjoyment and development of the area's communities. Not only do National Parks seek to conserve and enhance the qualities that make these places special, they offer significant benefits to the people of Scotland. In particular, National Parks offer the following opportunities:

- **Delivering better outcomes** – National Parks, by more co-ordinated efforts of the public, private, community and voluntary sectors, can deliver more integrated and sustainable results in terms of environmental, economic and social benefits.
- **Developing solutions for rural Scotland** – National Parks provide the opportunity to develop and test innovative solutions to rural issues which can be applied to benefit other areas across Scotland. National Parks are an opportunity to develop and disseminate best practice that makes a difference to people living and working in rural Scotland.
- **Providing a Park for All** – National Parks offer excellent opportunities for people of all backgrounds, interests and abilities to enjoy, learn and benefit from these special places.
- **Promoting 'The Pride of Scotland'** – National Parks represent Scotland's most iconic landscapes and reflect the natural and cultural heritage that shapes that nation's identity. They are national assets and by showing how people and place can thrive together, National Parks can make a significant contribution to Scotland's national identity.

#### National Park Designation and Aims

The National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000 sets three conditions which an area designated as a National Park must satisfy:

- That the area is 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 designating the area as a National Park would meet the special needs of the area and would be the best means of ensuring that the National Park aims are collectively achieved in relation to the area in a co-ordinated way.

The Act also sets out four aims for National Parks in Scotland:

- To conserve and enhance the natural and cultural heritage of the area;
- To promote sustainable use of 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.

### **An Integrated Approach and the Role of the National Park Authority**

The four aims must be achieved collectively and in a co-ordinated way, and it is the statutory function of the National Park Authority to ensure this collective and co-ordinated approach. This makes Scotland's National Parks a new kind of National Park in the UK.

The long-term success of the National Park is dependent on this collective approach to all four aims. That is implicit in the principles of sustainable development and is the clear steer from the founding legislation for National Parks, summed up by the Minister for Transport and Environment during passage of the National Parks (Scotland) Act:

*“One of the critical elements of the aims is that they must operate together in a co-ordinated way and integrated way. We do not regard the aims as polar opposites. One of the challenges of the National Parks is to integrate these important aims.”*

The people, places and special qualities of the Cairngorms are already strongly connected and interdependent. The landscape, habitats and species that give the area its special character are actively shaped by land management and communities have evolved with close connections to local land-uses and landscapes. In turn, the landscape and natural environment are key attractions to visitors and form the basis of the tourism sector. Directly and indirectly, this accounts for a significant proportion of the local economy. The activities of any one sector can impact on many aspects of the Park. Its management must recognise these linkages, the mutual dependence and the opportunities that come from an integrated approach.

Achieving all four aims together therefore demands a new approach to managing the Park which draws together the wide range of public, private, community and voluntary interests. The National Park Authority is charged with leading and enabling the action and partnerships necessary to achieve all four aims together – to engender a collective sense of purpose. The Authority's role is to facilitate, co-ordinate and add value to the work of others within the Park. It is not here to duplicate work, or to assume responsibility for the work of others except where this is agreed to be appropriate for the Park. The Authority is charged with preparing the National Park Plan, one of the key ways of bringing together the partnerships needed to work towards the aims of the Park and articulate a shared vision.

The structure of the National Park Plan is designed to encourage a collective approach to the aims. For this reason, it takes an objective-led approach across the whole Park, rather than setting out prescriptions for different management zones. In this way it seeks to establish a positive management approach for which all involved can take responsibility and which can be sustained in the long-term.

In managing this integrated approach, there will be differing views on many matters. The starting point must always be to work towards all four aims collectively, rather than to assume they are not mutually achievable. If, after taking this approach, there appears to the National Park Authority to be a “conflict” between the first aim of the Park – to conserve and enhance the natural and cultural heritage – and the other three aims, Section 9(6) of the National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000 requires that greater weight be given to the first aim.

This approach is consistent with the long-term sustainability of the National Park and the ability to continue delivery of all four aims into the future. Integration between the aims is essential, but the natural and cultural resources which underpin the Park’s designation must be conserved and enhanced as a basis for the collective delivery of all four aims.

This principle has informed the development of the National Park Plan, in which the conservation and enhancement of the special qualities runs through all sections. The Strategic Environmental Assessment (see Section 2.3) is a mechanism to ensure that the likely significant environmental effects of the plan have been identified and to ensure that the strategic objectives and priorities for action are not only consistent with conserving and enhancing the special natural and cultural qualities, but that the plan takes an integrated approach designed to minimise the potential conflicts through management.

## **3.2 The Cairngorms National Park**

In setting out our aspirations for the Cairngorms National Park to become a truly *National* Park, we must all look beyond our boundaries and consider how we interact with, contribute to and benefit from the wider world.

### **International Context**

National Parks throughout the world vary significantly in their objectives and management. The IUCN (World Conservation Union) has classified protected areas into six categories, defined by their principal management objective. These vary from areas of strict unmanaged wilderness and scientific research to those of landscape and community interaction.

The Scottish National Parks fall within Category V, defined as:

*Protected Landscape/Seascape: Protected Area managed mainly for landscape/seascape conservation and recreation.*

*'Area of land, with coast and sea as appropriate, where the interaction of people and nature over time has produced an area of distinctive character with significant aesthetic, ecological and/or cultural value, and often with high biological diversity. Safeguarding the integrity of this traditional interaction is vital to the protection, maintenance and evolution of such an area.'*

This position in the international context recognises the important links in the Cairngorms between the outstanding natural environment and the people that live in, work in and enjoy the area. It reflects the interactions of people and place that must be addressed through an integrated approach to managing the National Park. The IUCN 'Management Guidelines for Category V Protected Areas' identify twelve principles that should guide management of such areas, which are shown in Annex II.

The National Park plays an important part in helping Scotland and the UK deliver international obligations, for example the European Landscape Convention, the UN Convention on Biological Diversity and the Bern Convention on Conservation of European Wildlife and Habitats.

By contrast to some international models of National Park, most of the land in the Cairngorms National Park (approximately 75 per cent) is privately owned, with a further 13 per cent being owned by the voluntary sector and only about 10 per cent being owned by state agencies. This reinforces the role of the private, voluntary and community sectors in managing the National Park.

### **National Context**

The Cairngorms National Park is a special part of Scotland, and while it clearly has an importance to the local economy, environment and communities, it has an essential role in delivering national objectives, set by the Scottish Executive and its agencies.

Some of the most important and relevant national objectives which this National Park Plan helps to deliver are:

- Conserving biodiversity for the health, enjoyment and wellbeing of the people of Scotland now and in the future;
- Increasing people's quality of life through confident participation in and enjoyment of responsible outdoor access in a welcoming countryside;
- Increasing tourism revenue that is sustainable;
- Ensuring all of Scotland's people have access to good quality, warm and affordable housing;
- Managing natural resources sustainably;
- Creating a Scotland where learning for sustainable development is a core function of the formal education system; there are lifelong opportunities to learn; and the sustainable development message is clear and easily understood; and

- Recognising that what we build now has a key role to play both in conserving and extending that which is of value in our built heritage and in achieving our objectives for a sustainable future.

The national policy context in which the plan is set is listed at the end of each section of strategic objectives (Section 5), and the national strategies and objectives to which the priorities for action will contribute are set out in Section 6.

### **Regional Context**

The Cairngorms National Park sits at a meeting point of many cultural and administrative boundaries. The National Park includes areas within four local authorities – The Highland Council, Aberdeenshire Council, Moray Council and Angus Council. Being centred on a mountain massif, communities within the National Park naturally look out to, and have strong links with, the surrounding areas. The transport and social links naturally tend to follow the major river systems.

The National Park therefore looks out to the four cities of Inverness, Aberdeen, Dundee and Perth as well as other regional centres such as Elgin. The major transport routes into the Park link to these cities and these links play an important part in the economic and social life of people in the area. Given this central position, the Cairngorms National Park has the potential to be a significant asset to the wider region.

*Insert location map*

### **Park Facts and Figures**

- The Park covers 3,800 sq km and about 5 per cent of Scotland's land area;
- Approximately 16,000 people live in the Park;
- Approximately 1.4 million people visit the Park each year;
- 39 per cent of the area of the Park is designated for nature conservation;
- 25 per cent of the area of the Park is designated as being of European importance for nature conservation;
- The Park is home to 25 per cent of the UK's rare and threatened species;
- Approximately 75 per cent of the land in the Park is privately owned.

The Park includes:

- Two National Scenic Areas;
- Extensive mountain areas including four of Scotland's five highest mountains and internationally renowned summer and winter climbing;
- Significant stretches of two of Scotland's major rivers, the Spey and Dee;
- Internationally important geological record and landforms;
- Most extensive area of arctic-alpine habitat in Britain;
- Most extensive area of Caledonian Forest in Britain;
- 424 listed buildings;
- 60 scheduled ancient monuments.

### **The Special Qualities of the Cairngorms National Park**

The Cairngorms is widely recognised and valued as an outstanding environment which people enjoy in many different ways. Everyone brings their own perceptions and interests to the Cairngorms, but there are some special qualities of the area that are commonly recognised and referred to. This section does not set out to describe all the characteristics of the National Park – much of that information can be found in the State of the Park Report – but it does seek to identify some of the natural and cultural qualities that combine to give the National Park its distinctive identity.

Some of these qualities are similar to those in other areas, some are unique. Only here in the Cairngorms do they come together to create the richness and diversity recognised by its designation as a National Park.

#### **Distinctive Landscape**

The combination of geology, glacial processes and subsequent climate has shaped the landscape into a unique mix of mountains, hills, glens and straths. The glacial deposits have formed the many lochs and allowed the rivers to create shingle beaches and braiding. The soils support a variety of vegetation according to richness and the prevailing climate. Onto this natural landscape people have applied complex management that has brought diversity as each generation has used the land according to its needs. The outstanding landscape of the Cairngorms is recognised as being of national importance.

### **Rich Biodiversity**

The interplay of the Park's natural resources with the typically low-intensity land management of the area has led to a rich mosaic of habitat types which, in turn, supports tremendous biodiversity. Of the UK's conservation priority species, 25 per cent are found in the Park area, and in many cases the Park supports much of their UK population. With the largest area of arctic-alpine habitat in the UK and 25 per cent of Scotland's native, semi-natural woodland, the biodiversity of the Park is recognised by numerous national and international conservation designations which cover almost 40 per cent of its area.

### **Mountains**

Of all the features of the Park the mountains make perhaps the strongest impression, rising in steps from the floors of the surrounding straths and glens, past the foothills and Corbets (summits above 2,500 feet), to the great expansive plateau that dominates the heart of the Park. The plateau is dissected by deep and steep sided glens and corries. The climate is arctic, and snow lies on the tops for much of the year. Here plants and animals survive these extremes in fragile communities unique in Britain. Here too, the visitor seeks out the wild land experience at its best.

### **Moorland**

Moorlands cover more than half the area of the Park. They have been formed by a combination of man and nature, managed to maintain a landscape for sporting and farming pursuits – a significant part of the culture and economy of the highlands. The moors have a special ecology, a fusion of native species and land management. The red and black grouse, red deer, short-eared owl and the golden eagle all benefit from this relationship. The purple bloom of the heather moor in summer with its mountainous backdrop is for many the epitome of the highland landscape.

### **Forests and Woodlands**

The great pine forests of Deeside and Strathspey are the western-most part of the European Boreal forest. They form the largest area of ancient and semi-natural woodland in Britain. The great pine woods spread from the straths up the sides of the mountain slopes, in a few places reaching the last remaining natural tree line in Britain. The aspen woodlands of Strathspey are a remnant of those more extensive woods that were among the first colonisers after the last ice age; many of the trees are clones that are over 2000 years old.

Though they have existed for millennia the forests have always been managed – in the history of the area timber production is one of the most important economic activities, from supplying timber for Nelson's fleet, drainpipes for London or packing crates for the shells of D-Day.

### **Straths and Farmland**

The low-ground around the rivers provides the most fertile agricultural land in the area, where a farmed landscape has evolved. Dominated by grassland, with small woodlands, the farmland provides a contrast to the dominance of mountains and forests. These areas are valuable not only for their landscape character, but for the important habitats and species that the low intensity agriculture creates and supports.



## **Rivers and Lochs**

The melting snow and rainfall of the mountains drain through the many streams and waterfalls around the plateau. As the streams merge they are occasionally dammed by glacial deposits into ponds, lochans and lochs. From these flow the great rivers of the National Park – the Spey, Dee, Don and A’an. In the straths, the rivers form flood plains, shingle beaches and braided streams. With a rich biodiversity, recognised as internationally important, they also provide recreation and employment and are a key part of the cultural identity of the area.

## **Recreation and Enjoyment**

The National Park offers outstanding opportunities for recreation and enjoyment. The wildness of the plateau has attracted visitors for centuries, each seeking the tranquillity, inspiration and spiritual renewal that the mountains provide. Despite the scale of the landscape, opportunities for most to experience wildness are relatively accessible. For many, the mountains, glens, forests and straths provide more active enjoyment. There is a strong history of mountaineering and skiing in the area, valued as a centre for the skills and culture associated with these activities, as well as renowned opportunities for ski mountaineering, rock and ice climbing and off-road cycling. The rivers too are enjoyed for kayaking and fishing, and the landscape provides opportunities for many fieldsports or simply quiet enjoyment.

## **The Built Environment**

The history of human settlement within the Park goes back thousands of years. The legacy of this activity is scattered across the landscape, though often more evident in the higher parts of isolated glens where more recent activity has not erased signs of past activity. Around the Park the cairns, shielings and townships can be seen in and among the hills and glens.

The new settlements of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were created to improve the local economy and the Park has several fine examples of planned villages in Tomintoul, Grantown-on-Spey, Ballater and Kingussie. Elsewhere, the Victorian sporting lodges and estate housing are fine examples of their kind. The traditional building materials of granite, blue whinstone, timber and corrugated metal have been used throughout the area and give strong coherency to its architecture, within which there are many local variations.

## **Culture and Traditions**

The archaeological record and Gaelic place names illuminate the history of the relationship between people and place in the Cairngorms. Place names give an insight into the culture, history and environment of the Park, which have all influenced the Gaelic names used for mountains, woodlands, lochs, rivers and settlements. The cultural heritage of the area is layered with material evidence and local traditions over time, from local Gaelic and Doric dialects and highland games, to the influence of the royal family’s connection with Deeside starting with Queen Victoria’s purchase of Balmoral in the 1800s. This shaped much of the landscape and culture of the area and remains part of its current identity.

### **3.3 Managing the Park in a Changing Environment**

The special qualities and resources of the National Park are part of a dynamic environment and the result of a long history of changing natural processes, management and perceptions. The qualities that we value today are a snap-shot in time of social, economic and environmental conditions that are continually evolving.

The designation of the National Park brings a particular focus to these qualities and a special responsibility for their management, but it does not halt the processes of change and evolution. The National Park sits within a much bigger picture and changes beyond its boundary – both positive and negative – will influence how we can collectively achieve the four aims of the Park. Management and objectives will need to adapt through time in response to global, national and regional trends.

#### **Drivers of Change**

In working towards the vision for the future of the Park, we must all actively consider how best to achieve the four aims in the light of the changing context. These changes will pose risks to delivery which are likely to require management to adapt over time. To inform this process, research and forward planning is vital to improving our understanding of likely changes and implications and to maximising the opportunities for the area.

#### **Climate change**

The climate of the area has always changed through time, evidenced by the glacial landscape, but more recent evidence of climate change as a result of global human activity is apparent. The average temperature in recent decades has risen by approximately a degree; there are fewer days with air or ground frost; precipitation has increased in spring, autumn and winter and decreased in the summer; and snow cover has declined. These changes have several impacts including more frequent and severe flooding, increased summer droughts, changes in the abundance and distribution of species and reduced snowsports. Other predicted impacts of particular relevance to the Cairngorms include the spread of ticks and further impacts on the snowsports industry.

Changes in climate will continue and will undoubtedly influence the delivery of the National Park Plan over time, influenced by the extent of global carbon emissions. In response to this, the plan includes efforts to adapt to change. These include objectives to develop stronger habitat networks and manage functioning natural floodplains, as well as mitigation efforts to reduce carbon emissions including more sustainable transport, renewable energy, sustainable building design and carbon sequestration in forestry.

#### **Population change**

Recent projections suggest that the population in the National Park (currently approximately 16,000) is likely to increase by a small amount (approximately 600 people) during the next 10 years. The population profile is also likely to age faster than the national average, with the number of people in the 65+ age group expected to increase from 20 per cent of the population in 2004 to 27 per cent in 2016 (an increase of about 1,370 people). In the same period, the number of children in the 0-15 age

group is expected to fall from around 17 per cent of the population in 2004 to 12 per cent in 2016 (a fall of about 750 children).

The greatest in-migration based on current trends is likely to be in the 40-60 age group. This group may be relatively affluent and economically active, but is less likely to bring children. It should be noted, however, that these projections are based on previous trends. The extent to which more recent in-migration of labour from overseas, particularly Eastern Europe, will impact upon future population figures is, as yet, unclear. These changes pose clear challenges to the long-term sustainability of communities. In response to this, the plan includes a series of objectives to encourage more young people to move to or remain in the area, and to strengthen the economy as a basis for sustainable communities.

### **Economic trends**

The National Park will be influenced by wider regional, national and international economic trends, which will affect the potential for business development and growth, employment opportunities, and the health of tourism and other economic sectors. They will also influence the pattern of population changes. Recent observations indicate a shift to a higher-value knowledge-based economy; for example there is a predicted expansion of the learning, science, technology, renewable energy and tourism sectors; and a shift in employment to these from the land management sectors.

Factors such as increasing globalisation and the growing use of technology and e-commerce will also be of great significance. As well as opening local businesses up to greater competition, these trends provide tremendous opportunities for them to expand their markets. Particularly important in the context of the Park is the growth of the environmental agenda within business. There are both increasing regulatory and cost pressures to improve environmental performance, while an increasing number of consumers are considering environmental issues when making purchase decisions.

In response to these changes, the plan seeks to assist business to diversify and identify new growth opportunities, and to establish a more sustainable basis in economic, environmental and social terms.

### **National and international policy**

Many areas of policy directly affecting the National Park are heavily influenced by national and European policy decisions. For example, the reform of the Common Agricultural Policy and the revised Rural Development Programme is likely to have a significant influence on many sectors of the Park, including and beyond land management. Changes in the direction of policy and the mechanisms through which it is implemented may create both new challenges and opportunities in working to deliver the objectives of the plan.

## **Building on Experience**

Many of the management issues addressed in this plan are not new, and this is not the first time in which people have come together to consider how best to care for and manage this special area.

For much of the twentieth century the Cairngorms area was identified as a potential National Park, although at that time, there were no National Parks in Scotland. In 1995, following the recommendations of the Cairngorms Working Party, the Cairngorms Partnership was established to bring a co-ordinated approach to managing the area. This approach succeeded in developing effective partnerships and taking forward action in a number of important areas.

These previous initiatives have resulted in a number of strategies for the area. These include a Forest and Woodland Framework, Catchment Management Plans, work on housing, tourism and research, all of which have helped to shape this plan. Work to ensure the success of the National Park will require further development of this partnership approach.

Beyond the formal partnerships, public bodies, businesses, communities, organisations and individuals have all played, and continue to play, vital roles in shaping the area and seeking ways to enhance it.

This recent history provides a wealth of experience and information amongst many people in the Park and beyond. The designation of the National Park brings a fresh opportunity to build on this work and a new impetus to the collective management of the issues facing the Cairngorms area.

## 4. Guiding Principles

To help meet the challenge of integration against a backdrop of continual change the following principles underpin the National Park Plan. They should guide management and decision-making in working towards all the objectives of the plan and should be used as a checklist by all involved in its implementation.

These principles are about **how** the plan is delivered, and are therefore relevant to us all. It is, however, easy to state a set of principles and more of a challenge to put these into action. This section therefore includes suggestions for positive actions we can take collectively to live up to these principles.

### 1. Sustainable Development – A National Park for today and for the future

The National Park should be managed in a way that balances the needs of the people living, working and enjoying the Park today with the need to conserve and enhance its natural and cultural resources, to ensure they can continue to be enjoyed by future generations. This can be encouraged by:

- Identifying and measuring specific indicators that will monitor the health of the Park's natural and cultural resources;
- Using sound science and information to underpin management;
- Taking a proactive approach to mitigating human induced climate change while adapting to the effects of current change.

### 2. Social Justice – A National Park for All

The benefits of the National Park and its resources should be accessible to all, regardless of economic, physical or social constraints. There should be a culture of inclusiveness that seeks to create opportunities for everyone in the National Park. This can be encouraged by:

- Raising awareness and understanding of the National Park and the opportunities to get involved with groups that may be excluded, particularly young people, people with disabilities and people on low incomes;
- Working with organisations that represent the interests of socially excluded groups to gain a better understanding of their needs;
- Addressing the barriers to inclusion, such as transport, service cost and physical access constraints;
- Developing social inclusion initiatives that appeal to excluded and equalities groups and encourage their participation.

### 3. People Participating in the Park – A National Park for people

People within and outside the Park should be actively involved in shaping the National Park and its management, building their capacity to do so and encouraging active citizenship. This can be encouraged by:

- Operating in an open, transparent and accessible environment where people can easily find any relevant information;
- Keeping people with an interest in the Park informed of progress made against the plan and opportunities to get involved;

- Developing mechanisms which allow local communities and communities of interest to influence and engage in the decision making process and management of the Park;
- Working with young people to engage them in shaping the future of the Park;
- Supporting local communities to encourage their active involvement in the management of the Park.

#### **4. Managing Change – A National Park open to ideas**

In an ever-changing environment, the management of the National Park should be informed by the best available information to identify and effect positive change, and prepare for and mitigate the potential negative consequences of change that cannot be influenced. This can be encouraged by:

- Sourcing information that can best inform the management of change and the potential consequences of various actions (for example, through scenario planning);
- Identifying potential change that will have the greatest impact on the Park and its special qualities (threats and opportunities) and preparing plans to influence positive change and minimise negative impacts;
- Sharing information and establishing mechanisms for debate and discussion to achieve the best possible solutions to manage change within the Park.
- Operating in an environment which is flexible, open and responsive to change and receptive to new ideas.

#### **5. Adding Value - A National Park that makes a difference**

The collective efforts of all sectors in managing the National Park should be focused on delivering positive and tangible outcomes for the people and places of the Park. This can be encouraged by:

- Establishing a clear understanding of the difference and benefits the plan's strategic objectives and priorities for action will achieve over the next 5-25 years and articulating how all sectors are contributing to these;
- Setting and presenting relevant work of all sectors within the context of the National Park;
- Co-ordinating our collective efforts to avoid duplication, optimise potential synergies and add value by making the most effective use of each other's knowledge, expertise and resources;
- Building trust and co-operation between different interests to establish the best way forward to achieve the Park aims;
- Learning from others at home and abroad by sharing information, knowledge and experience to establish best practice in managing a National Park;
- Piloting new initiatives to test the effectiveness of new practices in integrated and sustainable management which can benefit other areas of Scotland and beyond.

## 5. Strategic Objectives

Section 5 sets out strategic objectives that provide a long-term framework for managing the National Park and working towards the 25 year vision. The strategic objectives are set out under the three broad headings of the vision:

- 5.1 Conserving and Enhancing the Park;
- 5.2 Living and Working in the Park;
- 5.3 Enjoying and Understanding the Park.

These strategic objectives can be used by all sectors to guide ongoing management and decisions in working towards the vision. They provide a framework in which to plan activity and a context when reacting to new opportunities or issues. The strategic objectives take a long-term view, covering the 25 year timescale of the vision.

Following an introduction to each of the three sections, a series of sub-sections include the following details:

<b>Introductory paragraph</b>	To introduce the scope of the section and provide a brief context for the strategic objectives.
<b>Strategic objectives</b>	A series of strategic objectives with explanatory text.
<b>National policy context</b>	A list of national strategies and policies on which these strategic objectives build and to which they contribute.
<b>Cross-references</b>	Signposting to other sections of strategic objectives of particular relevance to this topic, which should be read together as an integrated approach.



## **5.1 Conserving and Enhancing the Park**

### **5.1.1 Introduction – Conserving and Enhancing the Special Qualities**

This section identifies strategic objectives specifically targeted at conserving and enhancing the special qualities of the National Park and ensuring the sustainable use of its natural and cultural resources. This is a theme which runs through the other sections of this Plan, whether considering the needs of communities, or recreation and enjoyment in the Park. Conserving and enhancing the qualities which underpin the National Park's importance and attraction, as well as much of its economy and communities, must form the basis of successful long-term management.

The strategic objectives set out an approach to managing the natural and cultural heritage of the Park that recognises the interdependence between the special qualities, management of the natural and cultural heritage, and the important links to the socio-economic viability of land management, businesses and communities.

### **5.1.2 Conserving and Enhancing the Natural and Cultural Heritage**

#### **Landscape, Built and Historic Environment**

The distinctive and varied landscape character of the Park derives from the combination of mountain plateaux, extensive forests, open moorlands, straths, lochs and rivers, together with the settlements, farmland and designed landscapes. It is one of the most distinctive special qualities of the Park, and its national importance is recognised by two National Scenic Areas and the subsequent designation of a wider area as a National Park.

The landscape is a product of both the natural environmental conditions and the history of land-use, expressing both the natural and cultural heritage of the Park. There is a rich built heritage and archaeology in the Park, including building traditions of estates, farms and country houses, military barracks, roads and bridges, designed landscapes, prehistoric remains and planned settlements. There are local traditions of design and materials across the Park that gives a distinctive local character to different areas.

All new development and management of the landscapes and settlements within the Park should be based on a sound understanding of this natural and cultural heritage. The conservation and enhancement of the landscape, historic and built environment will therefore be influenced by many different activities and processes, but should be guided by the following strategic objectives.

#### **Strategic Objectives for Landscape, Built and Historic Environment:**

- a) **Maintain and enhance the distinctive landscapes across the Park.**  
The distinctive landscape character is a result of the interaction of landforms, geophysical processes, habitats, species and land management. It is one of the prime reasons people enjoy the Park and is recognised as nationally important. The landscape character is also a product of the historic record of land-use and

the communities that have shaped it. Within the landscape there is dynamic change and evolution but management and development of the Park should retain and enhance the distinctive character and restore areas of degraded landscape.

The designation of the National Park has highlighted the national importance and coherence of the landscape qualities throughout its area. The Park contains two previously identified National Scenic Areas and an equivalent level of consideration will be given to landscape throughout the whole Park.

**b) Conserve and enhance the sense of wildness in the montane area and other parts of the Park.**

Large areas of the Park, not restricted to the montane area, are valued for their innate qualities and the experience of wildness that many people come to the area to enjoy. This sense of wildness and quiet enjoyment should be safeguarded from encroachment by human infrastructure, inappropriate activities or insensitive management and use. New tracks, paths, roads, structures, motorised access, aircraft and organised outdoor access events should seek to minimise effects on the experience of wildness. The removal of inappropriate vehicle tracks and the repair of badly eroded footpaths should be pursued where possible.

**c) Ensure development complements and enhances the landscape character of the Park.**

All new development and infrastructure, necessary to meet the needs of those living and working in the Park, should be designed to complement and enhance the landscape character of its setting. The potential impacts of public and private roads, masts, utilities, renewable energy developments (in and where relevant beyond the Park), road signs and all other man made artefacts will be assessed to ensure that designs and locations do not detract from the landscape character.

**d) New development in settlements and surrounding areas and the management of public spaces should complement and enhance the character, pattern and local identity of the built and historic environment.**

The existing settlements and their surroundings each have distinctive local character and identity. New development should demonstrate an understanding of this heritage and complement it. It should enhance the local identity, quality of public space and surrounding environment. High quality design should be a feature of all new developments.

**e) Understand and conserve the archaeological record, historic landscapes and historic built environment.**

The archaeological remains and historic landscapes of the Park are the best source of information about the development of the intimate relationship between the people and places of the area and the shaping of the modern landscape. A full understanding of this record and its value to the character of the area is vital to conserve the qualities that make the Park such a special place.

The rich built heritage of the Park includes fine examples of planned settlements, iconic Victorian estate architecture, military barracks, castles, roads, railways and bridges. Many of the buildings show local traditions in both workmanship and materials.

This cultural record is one of the most valued qualities of the Park. The physical heritage needs greater repair and maintenance to secure its long-term conservation and enhancement of both sites and their settings. Caring for these resources also requires the maintenance of traditional skills, many of which have declined.

**f) Raise awareness and understanding of the influences of natural processes, land management and culture on the landscape character.**

The relationships between the natural and cultural processes that shape the landscape should be explained and understood, to inform management and enhance enjoyment of the landscape. This will in part be encouraged by engagement with communities, visitors and national interests to identify how and why landscapes are valued.

The greater awareness of the range and value of the built and historic environment is important to underpin long-term conservation and enhancement and future development. An increased understanding will enhance the sense of community and belonging for residents and the sense of place for visitors.

*National policy context*

- European Landscape Convention
- Scotland's Scenic Heritage
- Historic Land-use Assessment
- Wildness in Scotland's Countryside, Policy Statement 02/03, Scottish Natural Heritage
- Landscape Character Assessments
- Scottish Rural Development Programme 2007-13
- Inventory of Historic Gardens and Designed Landscapes
- 'Passed to the Future', Historic Scotland Policy for Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment (2002)
- World Heritage Convention
- Memorandum of Guidance on Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas (1998)
- Planning (Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings)(Scotland) Act 1997
- Draft Scottish Historic Environment Policies 1/2/3
- Designing Places – a Policy Statement for Scotland
- Draft Scottish Forestry Strategy 2006
- Scottish Historic Environment Policy
- Choosing our Future – Scotland's Sustainable Development Strategy
- NPPG5 Archaeology and Planning
- NPPG14 Natural Heritage
- SPP15 Planning for Rural Development
- NPPG18 Planning and the Historic Environment
- PAN 42 Archaeology

- PAN60 Planning for Natural Heritage
- PAN71 Conservation Area Management

*Cross-reference*

*5.1.2 Conserving and Enhancing the Natural and Cultural Heritage; 5.1.3 Sustainable Use of Resources; 5.1.4 Integrated Land Management; 5.2.4 Housing; 5.3.2 Sustainable Tourism; 5.3.3 Outdoor Access and Recreation*

## **Biodiversity**

The Park's biodiversity is of national and international importance. The extent and scale of habitats including the native pine woodlands, mountain plateaux, rivers, moorlands, heathlands, farmlands and wetlands hold a rich biodiversity that includes many rare and threatened species. Approximately 39 per cent of the Park is designated for a particular nature conservation interest. Its future condition should be enhanced through a landscape-scale approach that brings all habitats in the wider countryside of the Park into good condition and increases the connectivity between them.

There are 31 areas of the Park (including the rivers Spey and Dee) that are currently designated as being of European importance for nature conservation through the Natura 2000 designations of Special Protection Areas and Special Areas of Conservation. A total of 46 sites are designated as part of a national network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest and a further six areas are designated as National Nature Reserves where management for nature conservation is given primacy.

These designations carry special responsibilities for public authorities, land managers and users. While these sites represent examples of the best of the natural heritage in the Park, they cannot be managed in isolation from the surrounding land and habitats.

Accordingly, their future condition should be enhanced through a landscape-scale approach that brings all habitats in the rest of the Park into good condition – it is not just designated sites that are of importance. This will be achieved through a strategic approach to management that targets habitat enhancement in key locations which will increase the viability of the designated areas by increasing the connectivity between them. It will also improve the extent of high quality habitats and associated native plant and animal communities that is already unparalleled in Britain.

The Scottish Biodiversity Strategy seeks to help meet the UK's international obligations under the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (1992), under which the European Union seeks to protect and restore the functioning of natural systems and to halt the loss of biodiversity by 2010. The National Park can make a valuable contribution to these efforts.

## **Natura 2000 – A Network of Special Sites**

Natura 2000 is a European network of protected sites which represent areas of the highest value for habitats and species of plants and animals which are rare, endangered or vulnerable in the European Community.

The network includes Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) which support valuable habitats and species (other than birds) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) which support significant numbers of rare and/or migratory wild birds and their habitats.

The network is established in response to the 1992 Habitats Directive and the 1979 Birds Directive, with the enabling legislation in the UK being provided by the Conservation (Natural Habitats &c.) Regulations 1994. Through these, Scotland has a responsibility to identify and protect SACs and SPAs. There are currently 19 SACs and 12 SPAs in the Park, which together with other nationally designated Sites of Scientific Interest must be protected and managed positively for their qualifying nature conservation interest.

The Park also has a number of wetlands of international importance listed under the Ramsar Convention. As a matter of policy, the government has chosen to afford these sites protection equivalent to Natura sites, although many have dual designation already.

The qualifying habitats in these designated areas usually extend outside the site boundaries. The objective of achieving favourable conservation status for them can only be secured in the long-term by safeguarding the habitats and protected species wherever they occur. This adds impetus to the need to manage all semi-natural habitats and native species in the Park to the highest standards. For Natura sites, there is an obligation in law to prevent any activities being undertaken which are likely to have an adverse impact on the qualifying features of interest, unless such impact would be caused by an activity that is in the overriding public interest and for which, there was no available alternative.

### **Strategic Objectives for Biodiversity:**

- a) **Conserve and enhance the condition and diversity of habitats and species present throughout the Park through a landscape-scale approach to habitat networks.**

The habitats and species throughout the Park are special qualities which underpin its designation as a National Park. Many are of national and international importance and their conservation, and where possible enhancement, is key. However, it is the existing scale and proximity of habitats, such as semi-natural woodland, rivers, moorland and montane areas that give the Park its particular importance. Nature conservation efforts should therefore seek to bring all habitats in the Park into good condition.

Management should take a strategic view to enhance the linkages between habitats and their scale and to minimise fragmentation. Extensive and inter-connected networks of montane ground, moorland, forest, wetlands and semi-natural farmland habitats should be maintained and enhanced, and protected from fragmentation. Robust networks will be vital to help many species adapt their range as a result of climate change.

**b) Ensure all designated nature conservation sites are in favourable condition.**

Within the network of habitats in the Park, some are designated as being of national or international importance for particular nature conservation features including biodiversity, geology and landforms. These sites should be exemplars of good management where the natural heritage interest is secure within a long-term management plan devised in partnership with land managers. Public support and resources should seek to engage managers, local communities and visitors in understanding and caring for these sites.

All public bodies have responsibility to ensure that they safeguard designated sites when carrying out their functions. The use of targeted incentives will ensure specific actions to maintain and enhance the interests of designated sites. These will be complemented by incentives that promote the positive management of the connecting habitats between them.

**c) Engage all sectors in meeting or exceeding international, national and local biodiversity targets.**

All partners in the Park have a key role to play in delivering aspects of European Union biodiversity objectives, the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy and the Cairngorms Local Biodiversity Action Plan.

The Cairngorms Local Biodiversity Action Plan identifies a range of management issues and opportunities to conserve and enhance the biodiversity of the area. Building on this, all sectors involved in managing, living and working in the Park should be engaged in helping to deliver the aims of the Local Biodiversity Action Plan, thereby conserving and enhancing the biodiversity qualities of the Park.

While biodiversity objectives apply to all native species and semi-natural habitats throughout the Park, some species require extra effort to protect and enhance them either because of their particular ecological requirements or because they are threatened with extinction. In the Park, species such as capercaillie, hen harrier, water vole, sea lamprey and freshwater pearl mussel, as well as a range of plants, require extra effort.

**d) Improve the long-term sustainability and restore the full range of montane habitats through managing pressures from grazing, other land management, recreation and development.**

The extent of montane habitats in the Park is unique in the UK and is one of the special qualities that make up the identity of the area. There are many pressures on the montane habitats, from a range of environmental and economic land management objectives as well as infrastructure for recreation

and development. These pressures should be addressed to conserve the montane habitats, ensure they are in robust condition in the face of climate change and that the montane area remains a national asset at the heart of the National Park.

**e) Ensure that populations of species given special protection under the Habitat Regulations, the Wildlife and Countryside Act, the Nature Conservation Act and European Directives are stable or, where appropriate, increasing.**

In addition to ensuring that the habitats necessary for those species given special protection are in good condition, a co-ordinated effort between public agencies, land managers, the police and public to address wildlife crime and irresponsible actions is required. These bodies need to develop partnerships with local communities to help prevent all forms of wildlife crime including poaching and illegal killing or taking of protected species. This will be supported by communications about the law, the nature of the species at risk and advice as to how everyone can help to safeguard them.

**f) Promote access to appropriate policy and funding mechanisms to support nature conservation.**

Public policy and support for nature conservation should be targeted at all interests that can contribute, including land managers, but also businesses, communities and visitors. The support should focus on the nature conservation interests and opportunities particularly relevant to the Park and should be accessible and easily understood. Public support should be based on compliance with good management practice.

**g) Identify, prioritise and take action to address non-native species that pose a threat to the natural heritage and land management of the Park.**

Non-native species can be introduced either deliberately or accidentally, and many have the potential to damage the existing species, habitats and ecosystems, as well as affecting the landscape and land management. Examples include non-native fish, sika deer and riparian and aquatic plants that currently pose a threat to river ecosystems and associated fisheries. Mink which threaten water voles, and grey squirrels which impact on red squirrel populations are also potential threats. To tackle these threats resources and incentives for implementation and monitoring are needed.

**h) Promote appropriate reintroduction of species and reinstatement of habitats and identify the likely ecological, economic and management impacts.**

Consideration will be given to the reintroduction of some species, which through human intervention are currently extinct or very localised in the area, as well as the reinstatement of certain habitats in key areas. These may include for example, freshwater pearl mussel (already being reintroduced into two sites), reinstatement of water vole habitat and the reintroduction of the species after mink control. Some plant communities in floodplain and sub-alpine areas should also be considered for reinstatement. Opportunities should also be taken to manage habitats to attract the recolonisation of species that have become extinct in the Park, such as corncrakes. Where these or other species

restoration measures are being considered, their potential impacts should be researched to inform decision making and mitigation measures.

- i) Develop awareness and understanding of the interactions of land-uses, tourism, outdoor access and nature conservation amongst all interests.**  
To ensure success in conserving and enhancing the natural heritage of the Park, all sectors need to be aware that their actions can impact – positively or negatively – on the natural heritage. Opportunities for interpretation, training or demonstration should encourage greater understanding of the interactions and mutual interests between nature conservation and the activities of managers, residents and visitors in the Park.
- j) Identify and carry out a research programme designed to provide the information and monitoring on the habitats, species and ecosystems required to guide future decision-making.**  
There is a specific need to address the monitoring and research in relation to the status of species, habitats and ecosystems as well as the key influences including climate change scenarios and recreational disturbance.

#### *National policy context*

- Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004
- Scottish Biodiversity Strategy
- Habitats Directive 1992
- Birds Directive 1979
- Deer (Scotland) Act 1996
- ‘Birds of Prey in a Changing Environment’ , Scottish Natural Heritage
- Scottish Historic Environment Policy
- Choosing our future: Scotland’s sustainable development strategy
- Scottish Forestry Strategy
- Natural Heritage Futures
- Making a difference for Scotland’s species: a framework for action
- Scottish Rural Development Programme 2007-2013

#### *Cross-reference*

*5.1.4 Integrated Land Management; 5.3.2 Sustainable Tourism; 5.3.3 Outdoor Access and Recreation*

### **Geodiversity**

The geological and geomorphological features of the National Park form an outstanding record of natural processes, in particular glaciation. As well as underlying the landscape and habitats of the area, the geodiversity forms a valuable part of the natural heritage in its own right. There are 30 sites recognised for their geological importance in the Geological Conservation Review. These designations carry special responsibilities for public authorities, land managers and users. While these sites represent examples of the best of the natural heritage in the Park, they cannot be managed in isolation from the surrounding land.



Soils, derived from geological conditions, are a component of natural systems influencing land-uses, biodiversity, industry and infrastructure. The Park is exceptional because of its unusually large extent of rare, undisturbed soils compared to other areas of Scotland, particularly soils associated with the Caledonian pine forests and the montane plateaux. The structure of soils is integral to the drainage and nutrient functions that underpin habitats and land-use. Organic soils also store carbon and as such are a valuable resource in mitigating the impacts of climate change.

### **Strategic Objectives for Geodiversity:**

- a) **Safeguard the geological and geomorphological features and associated processes that contribute to the landscape of the Park.**  
The physical evidence of geological and geomorphological features should be safeguarded as part of an approach that seeks to allow natural processes to continue, and seeks to minimise disturbance to important ground features.
- b) **Raise awareness of the outstanding geology and geomorphology in the Park.**  
The Park has an internationally important record of geology and geomorphology. To encourage its long-term conservation, together with understanding and enjoyment of geology and geomorphology as part of the Park's special qualities, greater effort is required in raising awareness through research, interpretation and education.
- c) **Prevent degradation and erosion of soils, particularly vulnerable montane and organic soils.**  
Soil movement is a natural process, but the structure and functionality of soils can be damaged as a result of drainage and inappropriate cultivation for forestry and agriculture; excessive grazing or trampling by domestic livestock and wild deer; trampling by walkers and off-track cyclists; tracking from motorised vehicles; the construction of tracks; and by burning. Receipt of public support for management should require compliance with good soil management appropriate to the land holding, for example through the requirement of Good Agricultural and Environmental Condition associated with rural development aid.  
  
Those soils which are particularly vulnerable, such as the montane and peat soils, should be conserved through management to ensure that the functioning structures are not lost. These soils can hold significantly more carbon than cultivated soils. Management of existing developments in the montane zone, such as the ski areas, will require soil conservation actions to safeguard against damage that can be caused as the result of the activities and supporting infrastructure. Management of outdoor access, recreation and farming, in addition to development through the Local Plan should also contribute to soil conservation.
- d) **Safeguard against large-scale extraction and removal of mineral resource from the National Park.**  
While small-scale mineral extraction for local use can be undertaken in appropriate places, large-scale commercial extraction for use beyond the

National Park is not appropriate. In particular, features of geological and geomorphological importance should be safeguarded from extraction.

*National policy context*

- Geological Conservation Review
- Scottish Historic Environment Policy
- SPP4 Planning for Minerals
- Choosing our future: Scotland's sustainable development strategy
- Scottish Rural Development Programme 2007-2013
- forthcoming Scottish Soils Strategy

**Culture and Traditions**

There is a wealth of culture and tradition associated with the long history of people living in the Park area. Many of these traditions and cultures remain a strong influence on the identity of the Park and its communities. The cultural traditions in the Park range from language, particularly Gaelic and Doric, to arts, sports and music. All express the connections between people and places and reflect the development of society in the Park.

**Strategic Objectives for Culture and Traditions:**

**a) Develop a sound knowledge and understanding of the cultural traditions associated with the Park's places and communities.**

Knowledge and understanding of the cultural traditions in the Park is often patchy, or specific to particular individuals, communities or places. There is a need to develop a sound knowledge of the cultural traditions of the Park in order to inform improved communication and co-operation between those involved in conserving and promoting cultural traditions. These include arts and crafts, language, folklore, music, dance, sport and other traditions.

**b) Support and promote the diverse cultural traditions of communities within the Park.**

The diversity of cultural traditions within the Park forms a key part of its identity. As well as being closely linked with community life, the cultural tradition of the Park is also one of the qualities visitors to the area can enjoy. The promotion of local cultural traditions and place names by communities and others should be supported.

*National policy context*

- UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (2001)
- National Cultural Strategy 'Creating Our Future... Minding Our Past'
- Cultural Policy Statement (Scottish Executive 2004)
- National Plan for Gaelic
- NPPG5 Archaeology and Planning
- NPPG18 Planning and the Historic Environment
- Scottish Rural Development Programme 2007-2013

*Cross reference*

## *5.2.2 Sustainable Communities*

### **5.1.3 Sustainable Use of Resources**

The special qualities that we value in the Park, together with the resources we use for much of our economy and communities, depend on the functioning natural systems which must be sustained. Many of the objectives set out in other sections of this plan will support effective management of these resources, but there are some objectives for sustainable resource use outlined here that should apply across all sectors.

#### **Strategic Objective for Sustainable Use of Resources:**

- a) **All management and development in the Park should seek to make the most sustainable use of natural resources, including water and energy.** All interests in the Park including households, land managers, visitors and businesses should seek to minimise their impact on natural resources and ensure their use is as sustainable as possible. New development and infrastructure should incorporate the most sustainable systems of energy, water, materials and other resources in order to minimise their impacts on natural processes.

#### **Energy**

There is currently no significant energy generation within the National Park, although the water catchments in the Park provide energy to several hydro-electric installations in surrounding areas. Settlements currently draw their energy needs from the National Grid. In pursuit of more sustainable development, there is a significant opportunity in the Park to develop renewable sources of energy (including heat) such as biomass, wind, hydro, geothermal and solar to serve communities and households. Large-scale wind farms are not appropriate in the National Park due to landscape and natural heritage impacts, but the development of domestic, business and community-scale facilities in a full range of energy options should be pursued in appropriate locations.

#### **Strategic Objectives for energy:**

- a) **Contribute to national targets for greater renewable production through increasing community, business and domestic-scale renewable energy schemes.** There is a need to raise awareness of the range of renewable energy sources available and to encourage the necessary supply chains and infrastructure. By supporting small-scale schemes within communities, in halls, houses, land-based industries and businesses, the Park can help Scotland achieve its national targets and work towards an efficient use of energy within the Park. There is a particular opportunity to develop the use of wood-fuel energy within the Park. The public sector should also take a lead in using renewable energy in its own facilities within the Park.

**b) Help communities, businesses and households to obtain the information, expertise and support they need to reduce energy consumption and increase renewable generation.**

There is a wide range of technology, expertise and information available on renewable energy technologies including biomass, wind and solar generation, together with measures to reduce energy consumption. The key to realising this potential is to provide communities, businesses and households with easily accessible support and guidance that links the process and organisations together.

*National policy context*

- UK Climate Change Programme
- Choosing Our Future: Scotland's Sustainable Development Strategy
- Securing a Renewable Future: Scotland's Renewable Energy
- Scottish Executive Green Jobs Strategy
- Scottish Rural Development Programme 2007-2013
- Changing our ways: Scotland's climate change programme

*Cross-reference*

*5.1.2 Conserving and Enhancing the Natural and Cultural Heritage; 5.2.2 Sustainable Communities; 5.2.3 Economy and Employment; 5.2.6 Waste Management*

**Water**

The watercourses and lochs of the Park generally have an excellent water quality, but there are pressures associated with settlement development and land management on both surface water and ground water. There can be extreme fluctuations in quantity arising particularly from heavy rain and snow-melt. As well as providing part of the essential infrastructure for living and working in the Park, the water resource is an important habitat for many species and a popular recreation resource.

The rivers Dee and Spey and their tributaries are among those classified as being of European importance for nature conservation, along with many other lochs, lochans and fens such as the Insh marshes. Other rivers, such as the Feshie, are also recognised for their fluvial geomorphological interest. Management of the water resource needs to account for these varied uses and benefits, focus on water quality, quantity, hydromorphology and ecology, and be closely integrated with surrounding land-uses.

The management of floodplains is one of the key issues in the Park, as parts of many rivers have been cut off from their river systems by flood walls. This results in flow being channelled in a much more intensive way than is natural, leading to erosion of river beds and loss of finer sediments. It also leads to the loss of wetland habitats that help to support the diversity and viability of the river systems. Flood waters that cannot spread out in the upper catchments can cause severe flooding downstream.

## **Catchment Management and The Water Framework Directive**

The Water Framework Directive 2000 establishes a new legal framework for the protection, improvement and sustainable use of surface and ground water. Its purpose includes:

- preventing further deterioration of, protect and enhance the status of aquatic ecosystems;
- promoting sustainable water use;
- reducing pollution;
- contributing to the mitigation of floods and droughts.

The Directive is implemented in Scotland through the Water Environment and Water Services (Scotland) Act 2004. This sets out an approach to River Basin Management Planning upon which water management in the Park should build, by taking a catchment and ecosystem scale approach to maintaining or improving water quality and resource management to the benefit of the Park's waterbodies and the species and functions they support.

### **Strategic Objectives for Water:**

**a) Maintain or where necessary enhance the existing high water quality and physical condition of waterbodies in the Park.**

The water quality in the Park's rivers and lochs is generally excellent. Management of the watercourses, neighbouring land management and the water and waste infrastructure should aim to maintain, and where possible enhance the quality and quantity of water to the benefit of landscape, biodiversity, geodiversity and human use including services, access and recreation. Causes of pollution should be tackled at source. Management should also aim to allow river processes such as erosion and deposition to operate unhindered wherever possible.

**b) Adopt a catchment-scale approach to water management that integrates land-use, nature conservation and flood management.**

By managing watercourses in the context of the catchment area, there are opportunities to co-ordinate its management with surrounding land-uses and account for the up and down-stream influences and impacts. This offers benefits to water quality and quantity, flood management, fisheries, biodiversity, access and recreation. The catchment management approach currently developed for the rivers Spey and Dee provides a good basis on which to develop this approach in the Park.

**c) Encourage more sustainable patterns of domestic, industrial, agricultural and recreational water use.**

Managing the demand for water could have as much, if not greater environmental impact as managing its supply. Water supply can be a significant constraint to the development of communities. Water used wastefully is water lost from the environment and energy is wasted in treating water that is surplus to requirements. All built development and activities

using water in the Park should seek to minimise wastage and implement sustainable systems of water use through efficient systems. Reducing both leakage from water supply networks and the demand for water should be encouraged.

**d) Promote sustainable flood management consistent with natural fluvial processes.**

Potential flooding should be managed through a process of identifying risks. As the implications of climate change become clearer, these should be taken into account. Until then, a precautionary approach should be adopted.

Opportunities to reduce flood risk should be taken, within and beyond the Park, such as modifying the flow through management of floodplains, wetland creation, sustainable urban drainage systems, surface flow and upstream activities. The Local Plan should ensure new development is free from the risk of flooding.

*National policy context*

- Water Environment and Water Services (Scotland) Act 2003
- Water Framework Directive 2000
- Water Environment Controlled Activities Regulations 2006
- River Basin Management Plan for Scotland
- Scottish Historic Environment Policy
- Forests and Water Guidelines 4<sup>th</sup> Edition
- Scottish Water Quality & Standards 3
- SPP7 Planning and Flooding
- Choosing our future: Scotland's sustainable development strategy
- Scottish Rural Development Programme 2007-2013

*Cross-reference*

**5.1.4 Integrated Land Management; 5.2.4 Housing; 5.3.3 Outdoor Access and Recreation**

**Air**

The air quality in the Cairngorms is high in comparison with many other areas of Scotland. The prevailing westerly maritime airflow and the absence of major industry in the area means there is little air pollution. As well as underpinning the natural heritage, the sense of fresh air, peace and quiet and lack of air pollution are qualities that people enjoy in the area.

**Strategic Objectives for Air:**

**a) Maintain, and where possible enhance, the existing high level of air quality.**

The air quality is a key part of the natural environment that people come to enjoy in the National Park, and helps to sustain many of the habitats and species as well as contributing to the quality of life. Emissions, particularly carbon dioxide, from transport, industry and settlements should be minimised.

- b) **Retain dark night skies and minimise light and noise pollution.**  
As well as the physical quality of the air, the low level of light pollution means the Park is one of the best areas in the UK for dark night skies. The tranquillity of the area is also a particular quality that should be retained and enhanced. The low noise and light pollution contributes significantly to the sense of wildness and to people's enjoyment and perceptions of the National Park. Transport and settlement planning in particular should seek to maintain and enhance these qualities.

*National policy context*

- Air Quality Framework Directive 1996
- UK Air Quality Strategy
- Air Quality (Scotland) Regulations 2003
- Scottish Historic Environment Policy

*Cross-reference*

*5.2.5 Transport and Communications*

### **5.1.4 Integrated Land Management**

Land and water management on farms, crofts, estates and reserves is a major influence on all four aims of the Park, and the landscape, natural and cultural heritage qualities of the Park. Land and water management creates and maintains many of the important habitats, as well as sustaining businesses and creating employment. The ongoing conservation and enhancement of the special qualities of the Park will rely on a profitable land management sector whose varied objectives contribute positively to the outstanding natural and cultural environment. Current economic trends and changing international policy pose significant challenges to land management businesses.

Integration is a familiar concept at a policy level across rural Scotland. The challenge and opportunity in the Park is to identify the practical ways in which both policy-makers and land managers can take a joined-up approach and work with others to the benefit of both land management and the aims of the National Park.

This section identifies strategic objectives for land management as a whole, aimed at ensuring an integrated approach across different activities. It then identifies further strategic objectives that are specific to the main productive land management sectors and resources. However, strategic objectives across several sections of this plan are relevant to land management, particularly biodiversity, geodiversity, economy and employment, sustainable tourism, outdoor access and recreation.

There are potential conflicts inherent in identifying objectives for the management of different land-uses across the Park. In particular, the application of these objectives at an individual site level will require choices to be made within this overall framework, but this is the essence of integrated management.

## **Strategic Objectives for All Land Management:**

- a) **Maintain and enhance a viable and productive land management sector that delivers private and public objectives and enhances the special qualities of the Park.**

The ongoing management of the land underpins many of the qualities for which the Park is valued. A vibrant land management sector that supports private enterprise and employment and provides active management is a key means to conserve and enhance the natural and cultural heritage of the Park and deliver other benefits for the public.

- b) **Integrate public support for all land and water management activities to deliver public benefits that conserve and enhance the special qualities of the Park.**

Land management can deliver many public benefits, such as access infrastructure, nature conservation and education. These are benefits that the public enjoy and use, but which have a cost attached to their provision and management. Currently there is a range of public support measures for land managers. In the future these should be targeted at delivering benefits that are relevant to the Park area, transparent in what they buy, straight-forward for managers to access and integrated across the varied land management sectors.

- c) **Develop and promote best practice in land and water management and its interactions with people and other land-uses.**

Land managers and public agencies should work together with local communities and other interests to ensure that land and water management in the Park is an example of best practice. It should take into account the range of objectives and the interactions of different land-uses, outdoor access and local communities.

- d) **Develop collaboration and communication between statutory agencies, land managers, non-governmental organisations, voluntary groups, communities and other interests.**

The interactions between land management, the natural heritage and the economy of the Park requires all sectors to work together, share information and be pro-active in developing understanding and best practice in land management. Agencies and land managers should share information and management plans with local communities and each other.

- e) **Develop local supply chains and markets for local produce.**

The local consumption and branding of local produce offers many benefits including enhanced viability of production, a greater share of the value captured for producers and businesses within the Park, a marketing advantage and a reduced need to transport goods over long distances. Currently there are weak links in the supply chains for local processing and marketing which need to be addressed.

- f) **Reduce waste, energy use and pollution from all land management activities.**



All land management activities should actively seek ways to minimise waste, energy use and pollution. Where pollution incidents do occur, managers should have the necessary plans and infrastructure to deal with them quickly and effectively and minimise adverse impacts.

### **Diverse Land Ownership and Management**

There is a wide diversity of land ownership across the National Park. The majority of land (about 75 per cent) is in diverse private ownership, with smaller areas owned by non-governmental organisations (about 13 per cent including the National Trust for Scotland and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds) and public organisations (about 10 per cent including the Forestry Commission and Scottish Natural Heritage). Some areas, particularly woodlands, are owned by community trusts (about 2 per cent).

Different owners and managers set varied objectives. For example, some land is managed primarily for nature conservation, whilst other areas are managed primarily for agricultural production, for sporting businesses or for recreation.

While the primary objective or context will vary, most land managers will be delivering several different objectives within one area. In managing this mosaic of uses, managers should therefore have regard to the objectives of their neighbours and potential implications beyond their own land holding.

As well as producing primary products, land in the National Park is also managed for biodiversity, tourism, outdoor access, recreation and community benefit. Any land holding is likely to be involved in several of these activities within the context of their own aims and objectives. The diversity of ownership and management across the area helps to support the varied landscape and special qualities that give the National Park its character. However, greater integration is also required to achieve the vision of the National Park.

### **Farming and Crofting**

With approximately 570 farm holdings and 105 crofts covering over 70 per cent of the Cairngorms area, agriculture has a significant influence on the landscape and natural heritage of the Park. Much of this area is rough grazing and moorland, with the improved grassland and arable production generally being restricted to the straths.

The following objectives promote and support sustainable forms of agriculture and crofting. These seek to produce good quality food and sustain businesses, as well as conserve and enhance semi-natural habitats and their associated wildlife; the landforms and landscapes; and the re-creation of features such as dykes and hedges that have diminished.

## **Strategic Objectives for Farming and Crofting:**

- a) **Manage agricultural production to be consistent with, and enhance, the special qualities of the Park.**  
The farmland of the Park supports many valuable habitats, for example for breeding waders such as lapwing and oyster catchers. Farming methods should be consistent with the conservation of habitats and species present. These should actively seek to maximise the opportunities to create and support habitat networks, enhance the landscape and contribute to the natural heritage of the Park. This includes features that have diminished such as dykes and scrub where appropriate.
- b) **Maintain a productive and viable agricultural sector.**  
A productive and viable agricultural sector underpins many of the public benefits that land management delivers, particularly some farmland habitats. As well as support for public benefits, it is important for long-term sustainability that agricultural businesses throughout the Park are producing a range of marketable goods and contributing to the economy and employment in the area.
- c) **Encourage the continued development of crofting.**  
Crofting tenure applies only to the Badenoch and Strathspey area within the Park, where it provides opportunities for small-scale and part-time land management and production, in addition to the mainstream farming sector. Crofting in this area helps to maintain people living in rural locations and forms a part of the land-use pattern, particularly around settlements. Outside Badenoch and Strathspey, similar small-scale agricultural activity that will contribute to supporting rural communities and local production should be encouraged.
- d) **Encourage access to land for those who wish to farm, particularly new-entrants.**  
The availability of land is a key constraint on the number of new people able to take up farming or crofting. This is the result of many factors including the viability of existing holdings, access to finance and the existing pattern of land holdings. Where possible, assistance in sourcing land for those wishing to farm should be encouraged in locations consistent with good management of the natural and cultural heritage and economic viability.

### *National policy context*

- Common Agricultural Policy Reform
- Forward Strategy for Scottish Agriculture: Next Steps
- Scottish Rural Development Programme 2007-13
- Structural Funds Policy
- Agricultural Environmental Impact Assessments
- Water Framework Directive
- National Waste Strategy
- National Waste Plan
- Area Waste Plans

- Scottish Historic Environment Policy
- General Permitted Development Orders
- SPP15 Planning for Rural Development
- Choosing our future: Scotland's sustainable development strategy
- National Strategy for farm business, advice and skills
- Scottish Biodiversity Strategy

*Cross-reference*

*5.1.2 Conserving and Enhancing the Natural and Cultural Heritage; 5.2.3 Economy and Employment*

## **Forest and Woodland Management**

The forests and woodlands of Strathspey, Strath Avon, Glenlivet, Donside, Deeside, and the Angus Glens form an extensive and predominantly native forest resource. While the native pine forests are the most renowned feature, the Park also contains the largest area of native birch woodland in Britain, and the most important stands of aspen woodland. The value of the Park's forest is increased further by the occurrence of smaller areas of oak, ash and riparian woodlands, and the occurrence of the only remaining natural example of an altitudinal forest tree line in the country. The extent of this forest, together with the close proximity and connectivity of individual woodlands combines to form one of the most valuable ecological networks in the country, and one of the widely recognised special qualities of the Park. It is also a valuable economic and tourism resource.

The conservation and enhancement of this network and its predominantly native character, whether self-sown or planted, is important. It should be integrated with work to support the production, processing and local use of timber in pursuit of broader objectives, including sustainable design, construction and renewable energy. Public support and policy needs to encourage the wide range of benefits provided by forests, including business and community development, timber production, landscape enhancement, nature conservation, sport, recreation, health, environmental quality and carbon sequestration.

### **Strategic Objectives for Forest and Woodland Management:**

- a) **Promote multi-objective forest and woodland management that delivers environmental, economic and social benefits.**

The forests and woodlands of the Park are a major asset because of the multiple objectives their management delivers, ranging from marketable timber, to biodiversity, wood fuel, recreation, tourism, and carbon sequestration.

- b) **Enhance the condition of existing woodland cover and expand to develop habitat networks that complement the landscape character and other land-uses.**

The existing native woodland is an important special quality of the Park and the current ratio of native to non-native species forms a distinctive part of the landscape and biodiversity. There should continue to be a mix of species, age and woodland structure that can deliver the objectives of production,

recreation and conservation. The condition of existing native woods should be conserved and enhanced, and woodland habitats currently in a poor or unfavourable condition should be restored.

Woodland cover should be expanded to increase the degree of connection between individual woodland sites to strengthen habitat networks. These should be planned to integrate with other habitats and land-uses (in particular moorland management), in order to enhance ecosystem viability and help to encourage species that require large habitat areas in which to thrive. In the long-term networks could lead to links between the rivers Spey, Dee and Don. Where expansion of native woodland is through planting rather than natural regeneration, seed of local origin should be used.

**c) Encourage a full range of forest ecosystems from valley floor to natural altitudinal tree-line in targeted areas and the re-development of woodland types that have declined.**

Woodland cover in the Cairngorms has generally retreated to a lower altitude than its previous natural extent. In targeted locations identified as part of a strategic approach to a habitat network, the upper tree-line, including scrub cover such as juniper and montane willows, should be encouraged to extend up to its natural altitudinal limit. This will bring benefits to landscape and biodiversity.

**d) Increase the value of timber and other local forest products, strengthen supply chains and develop new markets.**

The economic viability of forest management remains key to ensuring the wide range of benefits in the long-term. Active investment and management is needed to raise awareness of the quality of local forest products, make better links between producers, processors and customers and develop new and emerging markets such as wood fuel and biomass for energy.

**e) Promote the value of forests and woodlands as a major sustainable tourism asset, increasing the derived economic benefits to woodland owners and local communities.**

Forests and woodlands should continue to develop as a major asset to sustainable tourism, providing a range of accessible and high quality recreation opportunities and creating a resource that underpins the landscape character and identity of the National Park. Ways to help woodland owners and local communities realise and capture the economic benefits of forest-based tourism should be explored.

**f) Promote community participation in forest and woodland planning and management.**

Forests and woodlands form a significant part of the local and cultural identity for many communities within the Park and local woodlands are valued for their amenity and recreation opportunities. Woodland management also offers potential economic and social benefits to local communities through contracting, use and marketing of forest products, learning and interpretation. Communities should also be able to inform forest policy development and

contribute to the objectives and planning for forest management in order to maximise the benefits.

**g) Contribute to national efforts to address climate change.**

Forests and woodlands are an important resource in addressing climate change. The extensive forests of the National Park can make a significant contribution to National targets. Forests can help mitigate climate change by off-setting carbon emissions through carbon sequestration. They also play an important role in enabling biodiversity to adapt to the effects of climate change by providing dispersal routes through robust habitat networks. The forest resource will play an increasingly important role in the provision of wood fuel as a source of renewable energy.

### **The Caledonian Forest**

The Park contains the most extensive area of Caledonian Forest in Scotland. These native pine woodlands of predominantly self-sown Scots pine have regenerated from generation to generation and are now the western-most link to the extensive boreal forest which formerly covered a much larger area of northern Europe. Birch, juniper, holly and other tree and shrub species also occur according to the soil type and past management. This distinctive habitat is home to several rare species, including capercaillie, crested tit, Scottish crossbill, pine marten, wild cat, and a wide range of specialist invertebrates, flowering plants, mosses, liverworts, lichens and fungi.

The Caledonian Forest is very important for biodiversity and is also a distinctive part of the Cairngorms landscape. Native pine woods are a priority habitat in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan and Caledonian Forest is a notified feature in four Special Areas of Conservation within the Park.

The conservation of the remaining Caledonian Forest through natural regeneration should be a key factor in guiding future forest and woodland expansion and developing habitat networks. Management should aim to reduce fragmentation, encourage regeneration and restore forest structure. In so doing, the value of links with existing plantations of Scots pine and some areas of non-native species to diversity in the overall forest structure and should be recognised. Most of the plantations are on ancient native pine forest sites and are planted with stock of local genetic origin.

#### *National policy context*

- Scottish Forestry Strategy
- Scottish Forest Industries Cluster
- UK Forest Standard
- Forests and Water Guidelines 4<sup>th</sup> Edition
- UK Woodland Assurance Scheme
- National Cultural Heritage Strategy
- Scottish Rural Development Programme 2007-13

- Scottish Historic Environment Policy
- Choosing our future: Scotland's sustainable development strategy
- National Strategy for farm business, advice and skills
- Scottish Biodiversity Strategy

*Cross-reference*

*5.1.2 Conserving and Enhancing the Natural and Cultural Heritage; 5.1.3 Sustainable Use of Resources; 5.2.2 Sustainable Communities; 5.2.3 Economy and Employment; 5.3.3 Outdoor Access and Recreation*

## **Moorland Management**

Just as woodlands are a characteristic part of the Park's landscape character, so are the extensive moorlands, defined here as the open areas below the montane zone, dominated by heather, juniper scrub, wet heath, blanket bog and semi-natural dry grasslands. This includes a significant area of lowland heath.

Moorland covers approximately 40 per cent of the Park so its management has a significant impact on the landscape and biodiversity resource, contributing to a number of the special qualities of the Park. Moorland management in much of the Park is focused primarily on grouse shooting which has brought significant socio-economic investment and is closely connected with the cultural heritage of land-use in the area.

### **Strategic Objectives for Moorland Management:**

- a) **Enhance moorlands as a high value and sustainable resource for nature conservation, sport, agriculture, landscape and recreation.**  
Carefully planned grazing and muirburn regimes, can optimise the landscape, biodiversity and sporting values of moorlands, while excessive burning, grazing and trampling can have deleterious effects. Active management of moorlands, including stock and game, disease and tick control and infrastructure is needed to deliver the potential benefits which in turn support local communities and employment, while conserving the special qualities associated with moorlands. The conservation and restoration of the extensive blanket bogs associated with moorlands can enhance biodiversity, increase grouse productivity, and help to moderate precipitation runoff. Blanket bogs are also an extremely valuable carbon sink.
- b) **Demonstrate and enhance the delivery of biodiversity targets by moorland management.**  
The moorland habitat is an internationally significant biodiversity resource. The profile of this resource amongst managers and the public should be increased, so that moorland management and the understanding of it, can recognise and realise the opportunities to benefit biodiversity. Management for grouse should respect the full moorland ecosystem.
- c) **Manage the interaction of moorlands with surrounding land-uses to maintain and enhance the integrity of the moorland landscape, ecosystems, key habitat networks and hydrology.**

Individual moorlands cannot be managed in isolation. The extent of ecosystems and hydrology associated with moorlands means that they need to be managed on a large scale and integrated with neighbouring woodland edges through a habitat network approach.

*National policy context*

- Principles of Moorland Management (Scotland's Moorland Forum)
- The Muirburn Code
- Scottish Rural Development Programme 2007-13
- Scottish Historic Environment Policy
- Choosing our future: Scotland's sustainable development strategy
- National Strategy for farm business, advice and skills
- Scottish Biodiversity Strategy

*Cross-reference*

*5.1.2 Conserving and Enhancing the Natural and Cultural Heritage; 5.2.3 Economy and Employment; 5.3.2 Sustainable Tourism; 5.3.3 Outdoor Access and Recreation*

**Forests, Woodlands and Moorlands – a network of habitats**

In the Park as a whole, forestry and moorlands are both important components of the landscape, habitats and economy. In fact it is the particular combination of forests, woodlands, moorlands and montane areas that contribute to the Park's special character. However, there are tensions between the objectives for each, not least because the two cannot occupy the same site at the same time. While the objectives give long-term encouragement to both land-uses, decisions on the appropriate locations for each can only be made on a more detailed assessment by land managers of the characteristics and opportunities of particular sites.

The expansion of native woodland should focus on areas which will give the best advantages in terms of habitat networks and links, particularly among and between the existing core areas of Strathspey and Deeside. They should also seek to establish a full sequence of woodland types including riparian woods, oak/birch, pine/birch, and sub-alpine scrub; and the enhancement of the landscape character.

There are also places where it will be appropriate to fell woodland plantations and restore ground to moorland, particularly where inappropriate and unproductive forest planting has taken place in the past.

Overall, a large scale mosaic of forest and open moorland is likely to deliver a valuable mix of benefits for biodiversity, land-use, recreation and landscape. Management decisions should be informed by the opportunities to develop a network that meets the needs of different land-uses and enhances the species valued as part of the special qualities of the Park.

Red, roe and sika deer are present in the Park. Red and roe deer are a valuable part of the natural and cultural heritage of the Park and contribute significantly to the

economic viability of some communities, particularly through stalking and the sale of venison. They are a feature of the natural heritage that visitors associate with the area and wish to see. Deer can have a beneficial impact on some habitats, but there are areas within the Park where deer populations are currently having a significant adverse impact on the natural heritage qualities which is a particular management issue to be addressed.

The management of deer populations interacts with a number of other land management activities. These include moorland management, forestry and farming, and management of other habitats and species. While the management of deer will vary across the Park according to species, different land units and conditions, the following objectives set out a framework to address deer management consistently.

### **Strategic Objectives for Deer Management:**

- a) **Manage deer populations at densities consistent with maintaining and enhancing the special natural heritage qualities of the Park, particularly native woodland, montane and moorland habitats.**  
Deer are an essential part in the functioning of many of the Park's habitats and need to be present within the carrying capacity of the land. However, deer can have an adverse impact on some habitats through over-grazing and trampling. Management of deer populations should be based on regular assessments of habitat impact, co-ordinated at the level of biological populations and maintained at levels that do not cause significant adverse impact to habitats and allow restoration of habitats in poor or unfavourable condition.
- b) **Encourage co-ordination of deer management across the Park.**  
As deer move across ownership and management boundaries throughout the Park, their management needs to be co-ordinated. There are opportunities to develop the existing collaboration of Deer Management Groups to include managers, communities and public agencies, to further co-ordinate the planning and implementation of management and address issues at a scale appropriate to deer populations.
- c) **Maintain and enhance the socio-economic sustainability of the deer resource.**  
Deer management contributes significantly to the economy of the Park and provides employment, direct and indirect, often in the more remote areas. The skills and expertise of deer managers are important to the management of the Park and their roles often support communities in remote areas.
- d) **Make accessible, research and use the best available data on habitat impacts, population models and good practice to inform deer management planning.**  
Deer management should be based as far as possible on sound data and evidence. Existing sources of data should be collated and easily accessible to managers and others to develop greater understanding of the issues and impacts of management, and promote informed debate.



- e) **Where deer fencing is considered appropriate, minimise the impacts on public safety, deer welfare, biodiversity, landscape, cultural heritage and recreation.**

Deer fencing can serve a useful purpose for controlling deer, helping to achieve environmental objectives and preventing deer causing a public hazard, but the full range of options for control should be considered before fencing. Where it is considered appropriate, fences should be designed to minimise the impacts on public safety, deer welfare, biodiversity, landscape, cultural heritage and recreation. Decisions on whether fencing is appropriate should refer to the Joint Agency Statement and Guidance on Deer Fencing adopted by public agencies in 2004 as a starting point. Fencing should only be used as part of a wider management plan and should remain in place only as long as necessary.

#### *National policy context*

- Deer (Scotland) Act 1996
- Deer Commission for Scotland Long Term Strategy (under review)
- Deer Commission for Scotland Best Practice Guidance
- Joint Agency Statement and Guidance on Deer Fencing
- Scottish Rural Development Programme 2007-13
- Scottish Historic Environment Policy
- Choosing our future: Scotland's sustainable development strategy
- Deer Interagency Liaison Group Formal Joint Working Agreement
- Scottish Biodiversity Strategy

#### *Cross-reference*

**5.1.2** Conserving and Enhancing the Natural and Cultural Heritage; **5.2.3** Economy and Employment; **5.3.2** Sustainable Tourism; **5.3.3** Outdoor Access and Recreation

### **Fisheries Management**

Atlantic Salmon, Sea Trout and Brown Trout are the principal species for which river fisheries are managed in the Park. Significant lengths of the Spey, Dee, Don, North and South Esk are within the Park and make up an important fishery resource in the Scottish context. The surrounding land-uses, water abstraction and use, river engineering and interactions with non-native species, all have a significant impact on the quality of the fishery resource. The Park's rivers, particularly the Spey and Dee and their tributaries, are of national and international importance for biodiversity as well as being an integral part of the outstanding landscape of the Cairngorms.

#### **Strategic Objectives for Fisheries Management:**

- a) **Encourage co-ordination of fisheries management at river system and catchment level.**

The issues affecting river fisheries within the Park, including the proliferation of invasive weed species, non-native fish and the need for broader integration of fisheries management with the positive management of riparian habitats, surrounding land-uses and recreation, requires co-ordination at the scale of catchments and river systems between river managers and with other interests.

Building on the existing work of District Fishery Boards, management should support the implementation of Catchment Management Plans through regulation and incentive schemes, education, awareness and targeted initiatives for specific issues.

**b) Encourage removal and minimisation of artificial barriers that impede passage of fish and affect river flow.**

There are a number of artificial barriers and physical deterrents to fish migration within rivers which can also alter the river habitat and structure through erosion and deposition. Where not required for current use, these barriers should be removed and their impact on the river flow minimised, in consultation with the Scottish Environment Protection Agency. Fisheries should be managed as a part of naturally functioning dynamic river systems.

*National policy context*

- Scottish Rural Development Programme 2007-13
- Scottish Historic Environment Policy

*Cross-reference*

**5.1.2 Conserving and Enhancing the Natural and Cultural Heritage; 5.1.3 Sustainable Use of Resources**

## **5.2. Living and Working in the Park**

### **5.2.1 Introduction – Encouraging Sustainable Development**

As well as being a national asset and a place of recreation and enjoyment, the Park is a place of work and daily life for approximately 16,000 people. The economic and social needs and issues in the area are similar to those throughout rural Scotland, but its designation as a National Park brings a new focus to finding solutions that are sustainable in the long-term. As well as improving opportunities for people within the area, the National Park has the potential to contribute significantly to the well-being of the wider region.

Sustainable development means that the resources and special qualities of the National Park are used and enjoyed by current generations in such a way that future generations can continue to use and enjoy them.

There is an opportunity to bring a renewed focus to sustainable development in the area, building on the existing links between the economy, the natural environment and communities. The integration of these interests should ensure that economic development builds on the special qualities of the Park, is consistent with their conservation and enhancement, and helps to create and maintain sustainable communities.

### **5.2.2 Sustainable Communities**

The long-term vision for the National Park needs communities that are sustainable in social, economic and environmental terms. The current population of the Park (approximately 16,000) is concentrated in communities of varied size, spread across 23 community council areas. Current projections indicate that there is likely to be a small growth in population (approximately 600 people) between 2006 and 2016. The population in the Park is also expected to get older (at a higher rate than the national average) as a result of more young adults leaving the area than coming into it, with the greatest net in-migration being in the 40-60 age group.

These trends pose clear challenges to creating and maintaining sustainable communities, particularly in maintaining and enhancing economic activity and service provision.

The main settlements of the National Park, Aviemore, Grantown-on-Spey, Kingussie, Newtonmore and Ballater, all play a strategic role in the wider region. In particular, the transport links of the A9 (to Perth and Inverness) and A93 (to Aberdeen) mean that these settlements are home to those working elsewhere, as well as being centres for visitors coming into the Park. Aviemore is distinct in being a significant economic driver and a growth centre for the wider region and city of Inverness.

## **Strategic Objectives for Sustainable Communities:**

- a) Encourage a population level and mix in the Park that meets the current and future needs of its communities and businesses.**  
Many of the objectives in this section of the Plan will influence and contribute to the population level and mix. However, it is important to actively encourage a population in the National Park that can continue to support thriving communities in the long-term. In the short-term this means seeking to retain or attract more young people.
- b) Make proactive provision to focus settlement growth in the main settlements and plan for growth to meet community needs in other settlements.**  
The main settlements of the National Park have the greatest range of existing services and infrastructure which can best accommodate increased growth in a sustainable way. Other settlements in the National Park require growth that meets the communities' needs, but that also reflects the scale and qualities of the settlements, as well as the viability of services and infrastructure present.
- c) Promote provision of local services that meet the needs of communities through Community Planning and other community development initiatives.**  
The provision of services should contribute to thriving communities that have the appropriate facilities to meet their needs. Access to services, including schools, health care and social infrastructure such as shops, post offices, pubs and phone boxes, is key to the long-term sustainability of communities. New development should seek to reinforce the sustainability of communities and support the provision of services in settlements.
- d) Strengthen the capacity of local communities and encourage community development building on existing networks, expertise and experience.**  
Communities should be supported in building their confidence, skills, knowledge and resources to encourage development and activity within communities and effective engagement in shaping the National Park and public policy. Communities should be supported in developing effective community councils, associations and enterprises.
- e) Promote community involvement and more inclusive representation in the management of the National Park.**  
Local communities should be able to inform and participate in the management of the National Park and be well-informed about its management. Communities should be able to understand the role of public bodies and how they can contribute to and influence their work. Public bodies should have an understanding of the needs and issues at a community level and of how to engage effectively with communities.

## **Community Planning**

Community Planning is a process which helps public bodies work with communities to plan and deliver better services which make a difference to people's lives. It is a means for people to become involved in the planning and services for their area, and have a say in its future. The processes of Community Planning led by Local Authorities provide a good basis for people to influence many aspects of the future management and development of the National Park and their own communities.

The principles of Community Planning should be extended as a means to involve people in management planning across all aspects of this plan – it is only through active engagement that the knowledge, needs and ambitions of communities can be shared and realised.

### *National policy context*

- National Standards for Community Engagement
- Smart Successful Scotland
- Smart Successful Highlands and Islands
- Smart Successful Grampian
- Scottish Rural Development Programme 2007-2013

### *Cross-reference*

*5.1.2 Conserving and Enhancing the Natural and Cultural Heritage; 5.1.4 Integrated Land Management; 5.2.3 Economy and Employment; 5.2.4 Housing; 5.2.5 Transport and Communications*

## **5.2.3 Economy and Employment**

The economy of the National Park is interrelated with the major centres of population and growth located on the periphery of the Park. Inverness, Aberdeen, Dundee and Perth all contribute to and derive benefit from the Cairngorms National Park in a number of areas, such as business opportunities, movements of labour, and recreation. For example, the National Park is used as a 'pull factor' for new business and in recruiting staff for companies based both within and outwith the Park.

Employment in the Park is currently based primarily on the tourism, land management and food and drink sectors. Compared with Scotland as a whole, there is low unemployment and a high number of self-employed. However, many jobs in these sectors are highly seasonal with little long-term security and these figures may mask the fact that many have to look elsewhere or leave the area to find work. The sustainable growth of the economy is key to maintaining sustainable communities and to creating a strong and vibrant National Park which also stimulates and supports the wider regional economy.

Enterprise strategies for the area already include aspirations to maintain and increase the population, create new employment opportunities, raise income levels and be 'an international shop window for the best the country has to offer'. The National Park can make a full contribution to these aspirations and help communities in the area

progress the four Enterprise Network themes of communities, skills, businesses and global connections, while emphasising the core theme of sustainable development underpinning all activity.

The strategic objectives for land management in Section 5.1.4 contribute significantly to supporting the economy and communities, through those sectors that are directly related to managing the natural resources of the Park. This section sets out objectives for the broader economy in the Park to strengthen its sustainability and ensure it contributes positively to all four aims of the National Park.

### **Strategic Objectives for Economy and Employment:**

- a) **Create conditions conducive to business growth and investment that are consistent with the special qualities of the Park and its strategic location.**  
The special qualities and environment of the Park provide an opportunity to underpin business growth and investment in the area. The growth and diversification of the wider regional economy can be harnessed to reinforce and stimulate the economy within the Park, to benefit communities in the area and complement the conservation and enhancement of the special qualities, which give the Park its identity and provide many of its resources. It is important therefore to ensure that there is an appropriate framework in place to support business development through development planning and management.
- b) **Encourage entrepreneurship, especially in young people and in sectors which complement the special qualities of the Park.**  
Entrepreneurship is vital to encourage more business growth and raise income levels in the Park. Young people with good ideas need to be supported, whether through better vocational training or information from an early stage on how they can obtain the skills they seek. In particular, the opportunities associated with the sustainable use of the natural and cultural resources of the Park should be encouraged.
- c) **Promote ‘green business’ opportunities.**  
As well as being an area of outstanding conservation value, the Park is a place to work and should be a place where businesses can thrive. Promoting green business means encouraging sectors that complement the Park’s aims in ways that do not adversely impact on the special qualities. Particularly important sectors include tourism, food and drink and renewable energy.  
  
Improving the environmental performance of businesses more generally through, for example, resource and energy efficiency and waste management measures will also be encouraged. As well as being more environmentally sustainable, such action can help reduce operating costs and create marketing advantage with consumers looking at the ‘green’ credentials of businesses and their products/services.
- d) **Promote opportunities for economic diversification across all areas of the Park.**

The Park currently has a relatively narrow economic base, depending on a few key sectors for employment. Many of the jobs associated with these sectors are seasonal and/or part-time, and are relatively low waged. Supporting appropriate opportunities for economic diversification has the potential to create higher paid, more permanent employment. It also increases the resilience of the local economy to downturns within individual sectors.

**e) Address barriers to employment uptake.**

With relatively low unemployment, businesses can face difficulties in recruiting labour. On the other hand, there are a number of barriers to employment such as poor access to transport, seasonal demand for employment, lack of childcare and the inflexibility of working hours. Childcare is often inadequate to meet parents' needs, particularly in sparsely populated areas. Through childcare partnerships, childminder and nursery provision can be improved in some places. Measures to address these barriers will encourage greater employment, contributing to more sustainable communities.

**f) Raise the profile and excellence of local produce and services.**

A relatively high proportion of the value of local products is currently taken out of the local economy through processing and sale elsewhere. Strengthening local supply chains, branding and marketing and adding value through processing local produce, can all help to retain a greater share of the economic value deriving from resources in the Park.

**g) Promote access to education and vocational training at all levels across the Park.**

Those wishing to study and train locally require more opportunities to do so. The provision of more trainers, courses and modules delivered in the Park will assist local people to gain skills that will improve their earning potential while at the same time improving business productivity.

**h) Ensure a match between training provision and current/future skills needs.**

It is vital that the needs of local businesses and school leavers are met by local and national training and education schemes. Schemes should be both relevant and useful to local companies and young people.

*National policy context*

- Framework for Economic Development in Scotland 2004
- Smart Successful Scotland 2005
- Smart Successful Highlands and Islands
- Smart Successful Grampian
- Scottish Executive Green Jobs Strategy
- Highlands and Islands Special Transitional Programme
- European Union Objective 2 Programme
- Education and Training (Scotland) Act 2000
- National Plan for Gaelic
- National Priorities for Schools

- Choosing our future: Scotland's sustainable development strategy
- Scottish Rural Development Programme 2007-2013

*Cross-reference*

*5.1.4 Integrated Land Management; 5.2.2 Sustainable Communities; 5.3.2 Sustainable Tourism*

## **5.2.4 Housing**

The need to ensure greater access to affordable and good quality housing to help create and maintain sustainable communities is a key challenge in the National Park. This includes both owner-occupier properties and those rented through social and private landlords. The projected small increase in population, together with a trend to smaller household size, means that the demand for housing in the area is likely to increase between 2006 and 2016 by between 600 and 1,000 households, based on current trends.

Currently, 75 per cent of households in the National Park have an income that would not be sufficient to secure a mortgage great enough to purchase a house at the average 2005 price in the Park. While registered social landlords target housing provision at those in most need, and those on the highest incomes have a range of housing options, those in intermediate income brackets have difficulty in accessing the current housing market.

The quality and design of new housing should meet high standards of water and energy efficiency and sustainable design and be consistent with or enhance the special qualities of the Park through careful design and siting.

### **Strategic Objectives for Housing:**

**a) Increase the accessibility of rented and owned housing to meet the needs of communities throughout the Park.**

There is a need to ensure access to rented and low cost housing in perpetuity. This means identifying appropriate sites for housing and prioritising these in strategic planning as well as in funding programmes and making appropriate provision for land through the Local Plan.

Access to housing could be improved by increasing the supply of housing targeted at those who have difficulty entering the open housing market, widening the availability of existing properties, and using mechanisms such as section 75 planning agreements to ensure housing remains affordable to those who need it in the long-term.

**b) Promote effective co-ordination and co-operation between all public and private organisations involved in housing provision in the Park and the communities living there.**

To achieve all the housing objectives, there is a need for all organisations involved to work closely together and share information and good practice. This requires good communication between the public, private and voluntary sectors as well as within these sectors.



- c) **Improve the physical quality, energy efficiency and sustainable design of housing in all tenures throughout the Park.**  
Housing in the Park should aim to be an exemplar of good practice in energy and water efficiency and sustainable design. The lessons learned from different construction methods and approaches should be shared between partners to ensure a continuing improvement in quality and efficiency. The Local Plan and associated design guidance should promote appropriate locations, high quality design and efficiency.
- d) **Ensure there is effective land and investment for market and affordable housing to meet the economic and social needs of communities throughout the Park.**  
The availability of appropriate land and investment in infrastructure and services is key to the provision of housing. To ensure the availability of land and investment in the Park that is consistent with the special qualities of the area and avoids damage to important nature conservation sites and species, a long-term approach and partnership working are required.

*National policy context*

- The Housing (Scotland) Act 2006
- The Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003
- Homelessness etc (Scotland) Act 2003
- Crofters Acts 1993 and 1997
- Title Conditions (Scotland) Act 2003
- Agenda 21
- Strategic Housing Investment Framework
- Scottish Executive Policy on Architecture for Scotland
- SPP3 Planning for Housing
- SPP15 Planning for Rural Development
- SPP17 Transport and Planning
- PAN72 Housing in the Countryside
- PAN74 Affordable Housing
- Scottish Rural Development Programme 2007-2013

*Cross-reference*

*5.1.2 Conserving and Enhancing the Natural and Cultural Heritage; 5.2.2 Sustainable Communities; 5.2.3 Economy and Employment*

## **5.2.5 Transport and Communications**

Transport infrastructure is central to the future sustainability of communities and to meeting the aspiration to be a world-class sustainable tourism destination. The National Park sits at the centre of a national and regional transport network that provides good road and rail links to Inverness, Aberdeen and Perth. However, the transport links within the Park, particularly east-west, are less well developed.

Bus services provide the main form of public transport within the Park, although there remain barriers to use including service routes and frequency. There is an opportunity

to improve the service provision to benefit residents, visitors and businesses and reduce the number of journeys by car. Walking and cycling are the most sustainable forms of transport and the integration of good transport provision with outdoor access is key to facilitating a more sustainable transport network.

Telecommunications are generally good in the main settlements of the Park, most of which are able to access broadband technology, although some remain without it.

### **Strategic Objectives for Transport and Communications:**

- a) **Encourage and support improvements to public transport quality and accessibility to better meet demand and increase use.**  
Use of public transport is currently limited by route provision, frequency and a lack of connectivity in places. Services should be targeted to meet the needs of residents and visitors, with a particular focus on integration between transport types and ticketing. Better timetable information for residents and visitors will increase ease of access and use.
- b) **Encourage improvements to the transport infrastructure to support socio-economic development.**  
Improvements to the transport infrastructure, including road and rail, to better serve the area's communities should be encouraged, subject to meeting high standards of environmental management.
- c) **Ensure transport and communications infrastructure is managed and developed in ways consistent with the special qualities of the Park.**  
The transport and communications infrastructure provides valuable benefits to the Park, but the potential negative impacts of it on the landscape, natural heritage and other special qualities should be minimised. The immediate surroundings of transport routes form an important part of the experience of the Park for both residents and visitors and should be managed to retain and enhance surrounding features and provide safe viewpoints.
- d) **Improve access to and encourage use of information technology, so creating opportunities for businesses and individuals to stay in, or locate to, the Park.**  
Most areas of Scotland have access to broadband. The expansion of its use can assist in attracting hi-tech businesses to the Park and in providing better support to home-workers and small or medium-scale enterprises.

#### *National policy context*

- Transport White Paper 2004 and emerging National Transport Strategy
- Scotland's Transport Future
- HITRANS Regional Transport Strategy
- Delivering a Modern Transport System', NESTRANS
- Scottish Executive Green Jobs Strategy
- SPP17 Planning for Transport
- PAN76 New Residential Streets
- Choosing our future: Scotland's sustainable development strategy
- Scottish Rural Development Programme 2007-2013

*Cross reference*

*5.2.2 Sustainable Communities; 5.2.3 Economy and Employment; 5.3.2 Sustainable Tourism; 5.3.3 Outdoor Access and Recreation*

## **5.2.6 Waste Management**

Current waste management schemes vary across local authority areas and include some kerbside provision and a number of recycling points. The long-term approach to waste management in the Park should be firstly to reduce the amount of waste to the minimum through careful use and re-use, then to ensure that there are easily accessible recycling facilities within communities.

### **Strategic Objectives for Waste Management:**

- a) **Minimise waste and encourage better waste management through community and domestic-scale recycling facilities.**  
Waste should be minimised, re-used or recycled and the necessary infrastructure to enable communities, individuals and businesses to minimise, re-use and recycle should be developed.
- b) **Increase awareness of the benefits of effective waste management through reducing, re-using and re-cycling.**  
Waste is a potential resource which can have economic and social benefits, but its inefficient processing, particularly through landfill, results in the loss of raw materials and further impacts on the environment. Through raising awareness of the impacts of producing and processing waste, communities, visitors and businesses can adapt systems to manage resources more efficiently through their life-cycle. Termed 'Zero Waste', this approach includes increasing the number of local composting, re-use and recycling projects, through partnerships between community initiatives, private waste companies and local authorities.
- c) **Reduce litter in the Park.**  
As a National Park with an outstanding natural environment and an important tourist industry, reducing the occurrence and presence of litter across the Park, particularly around roads, settlements and popular visitor attractions, will contribute significantly to the quality of life and experience in the Park. A 'zero tolerance' approach to litter should be encouraged.

### *National policy context*

- European Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive
- Water Framework Directive
- Landfill Directive
- Scottish Executive Green Jobs Strategy
- National Waste Strategy
- Area Waste Plans
- NPPG10 Planning and Waste Management
- Scottish Rural Development Programme 2007-2013

*Cross-reference*

**5.1.3 Sustainable Use of Resources**

## **5.3 Enjoying and Understanding the Park**

### **5.3.1 Introduction – Creating a World-Class Experience**

The Cairngorms National Park is known for its outstanding environment and outdoor recreation opportunities – the vision for the Park seeks to go further and develop a world-class destination which plays a significant part in the regional and national tourism economy. This requires a sustainable approach to developing tourism, an excellent quality provision of outdoor access and recreation opportunities and a significantly enhanced awareness and understanding of the National Park, its special qualities and management needs.

Visitors come from many different places, with different interests and levels of knowledge about the area. Enjoyment of the area is not only relevant to those people travelling to the Park, but is part of the everyday experience of those living in and around the area. References to visitors throughout the plan therefore include all these different groups – from those enjoying their local area to those who travel far to come here.

The experiences of residents and visitors enjoying the National Park should be of the highest quality. Part of the integration required in managing the Park is to promote the enjoyment of the area in ways that are not only consistent with the special qualities, but actively develop understanding about the Park and contribute to its conservation and enhancement.

The promotion and management of outdoor access, recreation and visitor services is an integral part of developing a sustainable approach to tourism, in line with the principles of the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism. It is also integral to land and water management, sustaining vibrant communities and conserving and enhancing the natural and cultural heritage.

The need to understand more about what makes the National Park so special and how it functions is relevant not only to visitors, but to residents, businesses, specialist interest groups and people elsewhere in Scotland and beyond. The National Park is a national asset and effective future management relies on informed debate and understanding of the Park, its national and international importance.

### **5.3.2 Sustainable Tourism**

The National Park is already a popular tourism area, attracting about 1.4 million visits from around the UK and overseas each year. Tourism accounts directly and indirectly for a significant part of the area's economy. The National Park has the potential to become a world-class destination with the highest standards of service, quality of experience and environmental performance. It is already an important asset and has the potential to make a significant contribution to the regional and national economy, helping to promote Scotland on a world stage.

In considering how sustainability principles relate to tourism, the following description by the World Tourism Organisation is useful:

*“Sustainability principles refer to the **environmental, economic and socio-cultural aspects** of tourism development, and a **suitable balance must be established** between these three dimensions to guarantee its long-term sustainability.*

*“Sustainable tourism development requires the **informed participation of all relevant stakeholders, as well as strong political leadership** to ensure wide participation and consensus building. Achieving sustainable tourism is a **continuous process** and it requires **constant monitoring of impacts**, introducing the necessary preventive and/or corrective measures whenever necessary.*

*“Sustainable tourism should also maintain a **high level of tourist satisfaction** and ensure a meaningful experience to the tourists, raising their awareness about sustainability issues and promoting sustainable tourism practices amongst them.”*

*World Tourism Organisation 2004*

In the National Park, tourism is everyone’s business. The experience of those visiting the Park is formed by everyone they have contact with and everywhere they go in the area. A collective commitment to high quality services and collaboration is therefore essential.

### **European Charter for Sustainable Tourism**

In July 2005 the Cairngorms National Park was the first UK National Park to be awarded the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism by the Europarc Federation. The Charter recognises that the management of tourism in the Cairngorms National Park addresses the balance between the needs of visitors, the environment and local communities. It emphasises the need to conserve and promote the special qualities of the Park as the basis of tourism.

There are currently over 30 protected areas throughout Europe where sustainable tourism management is recognised by award of the Charter.

### **Strategic Objectives for Sustainable Tourism:**

- a) **Raise awareness of the Park as a premier, year-round, rural tourism destination, recognising its outstanding natural heritage and its National Park status.**

A co-ordinated approach to marketing the special qualities of the Cairngorms National Park can increase awareness, nationally and internationally and encourage more visits to the Park. Many businesses are seeking to increase their income throughout the year, particularly by boosting visits outside the current peak seasons. Marketing should be consistent with the good management of the special qualities that underpin the Park’s appeal and bring together public and private sector networks.

- b) Improve and maintain the quality of experience in the Park for all visitors, communities and those working within the tourism industry.** Quality of experience is key to the long-term sustainability of tourism. This includes the experience that visitors enjoy when they come to the Park, the experience of those working in the industry and the interactions between communities and local tourism providers. In all these, good practice should be recognised and become the benchmark for everyone involved in tourism across the Park.
- c) Maintain a high quality environment by encouraging sound environmental management by all those involved in tourism in the Park.** The high quality environment forms the basis for tourism in the Park and is therefore one of the sector's most important assets. Everyone involved in tourism should minimise negative impacts and support positive enhancement of the environment. This includes action for the landscape and habitat resources that underpin much of the visitor appeal, as well as sound environmental management practice in individual tourist businesses. Those advising and supporting the development of new tourism businesses should ensure that high environmental standards are built into business development.
- d) Ensure effective involvement by all stakeholders in the planning, development and management of tourism in the Park and maintain good communication between them.** Structures that bring together organisations and people with different interests to work in partnership are needed to deliver a sustainable approach to tourism. The interests of industry providers, visitors, land managers and communities, both in the Park and in surrounding areas, need to come together to develop a mutual understanding and communication of each other's needs and priorities.
- e) Strengthen and maintain the viability of the tourism industry in the Park and the contribution that it makes to the local and regional economy.** Despite the importance of tourism to the local and regional economy, many individual businesses are relatively fragile and are seeking additional income to underpin their viability. In addition to the promotion and marketing of the Park, there is a need to support business development and increase the economic benefits generated in the local and regional economy through strengthening local supply chains. Investment in tourism infrastructure, including accommodation, is also needed in some areas of the Park and should be encouraged through a co-ordinated approach to development planning and management that contributes to all four aims of the Park.
- f) Develop and maintain a wide range of opportunities for visitors to experience and enjoy the special qualities, distinctiveness and natural and cultural heritage of the Park.** The special natural and cultural heritage qualities of the Park underpin its appeal and offer a distinctive visitor experience. Development of tourism products and services should help to develop discovery and understanding of the area through activities, events and products that draw on the special qualities of the Park. Focusing on this distinctiveness offers the potential for greater long-term sustainability in economic, environmental and social terms.

- g) Ensure that visitors to the Cairngorms are aware of the range of opportunities, places to visit and things to do throughout the Park and appreciate and respect its special qualities.**  
The transfer of information to visitors about the Park, its special qualities and ways in which they can be experienced is key to developing an appreciation and understanding of the area and what it offers. It is therefore an important process for managing tourism and encouraging greater exploration, longer stays, increased spending, responsible behaviour and repeat visits.
- h) Encourage an optimum flow and spread of visitors across the Park and minimise social and environmental impact including traffic generated by visitors and conflicts between different forms of recreation.**  
While tourism is a vital part of the local economy, its impacts on the environment and local communities need to be managed to ensure long-term sustainability. Certain attractions or areas may suffer damage to the habitats or species that people come to enjoy, or disruption and congestion in local communities. All these potential impacts should be taken into account in managing tourism and their negative effects minimised. It is also desirable to spread the benefits of tourism across different areas of the Park and throughout the year.
- i) Ensure that visitor information is targeted at specific audiences and encourages resource protection, responsible access, visitor safety, and the health benefits of regular outdoor exercise.**  
As well as promoting the special qualities of the Park, visitor information should promote an understanding of visitor impacts on the natural heritage and help people to take action that reduces their impact and ensures long-term resource protection. It should also help people to understand their impacts on other users, land or water management and communities as well as advise on responsible and safe ways to enjoy the Park. The health benefits of outdoor access and activities should also be promoted as part of a coherent approach to the benefits and responsibilities for visitors enjoying the Park.
- j) Ensure a cohesive Park-wide approach to ranger services which meets the needs of visitors, communities and land managers.**  
The ranger services in the Park are a valuable contact between visitors, communities and land managers and contribute to many other strategic objectives through their roles in promoting enjoyment and understanding and managing the interactions of visitors with the places and communities they come to see. To the visitor, ranger services are a popular point of contact for information about the National Park. A cohesive approach to service delivery, closely linked to the Park, is needed to maximise the impact of both local and Park-wide knowledge.
- k) Collate, analyse and use the best available information on visitor numbers, distribution, activities and perceptions to inform visitor management.**  
To deliver all objectives relating to visitor services and tourism, from the quality of experience to resource protection, requires up-to-date



information about visitor numbers, distribution, activities and perceptions. Although a wealth of information is currently collected, there are opportunities to put it to better use. Everyone involved in visitor services should seek to source and use the best available information in their planning and decision-making and the information should be widely available in a variety of forms.

#### *National policy context*

- Scottish Tourism: The Next Decade – A Tourism Framework for Change 2006
- European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas
- National Plan for Gaelic
- Highland Tourism Strategy
- NESTOUR Strategy
- Scottish Executive Green Jobs Strategy
- Choosing our future: Scotland's sustainable development strategy
- Scottish Rural Development Programme 2007-2013

#### *Cross-reference*

*5.1.2 Conserving and Enhancing the Natural and Cultural Heritage; 5.1.4 Integrated Land Management; 5.2.3 Economy and Employment; 5.2.5 Transport and Communications; 5.3.3 Outdoor Access and Recreation; 5.3.4 Learning and Understanding*

### **5.3.3 Outdoor Access and Recreation**

The National Park is internationally renowned for the exceptional range and quality of outdoor access and recreation opportunities. From challenging mountaineering and kayaking to quiet walking, cycling, horse-riding and paddling, and from organised sport and recreation to informal exploration, the area provides many people with the chance to enjoy this exceptional natural environment in many different ways.

The Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 gives Scotland what is probably the best system for outdoor access in the world. The legislation offers people fantastic opportunities to enjoy the special qualities of the National Park in a responsible way. The provision of outdoor access opportunities that are well managed can also contribute significantly to important public policy agendas including social inclusion, improving health and transport and improving overall quality of life.

As the Park has both significant recreational appeal as well as special habitats and species that may be vulnerable to damage or disturbance, a key challenge is to establish exemplary recreation management, building on the existing expertise already in the area. Much of the tourism industry is based on people having good opportunities to get out and about and enjoy the area and the wide range of sports and recreation enjoyed by many depends on responsible access to land and water.

It is therefore vital to many aspects of the National Park's environment, communities and economy that there is a range of high quality opportunities for people to enjoy the area in ways that conserve the special qualities and maximise the benefits to all sectors.

## **Strategic Objectives for Outdoor Access and Recreation:**

- a) Encourage people of all ages and abilities to enjoy and experience the outdoor environment.**  
People of all ages and abilities, regardless of social, economic or physical constraints, should be able to enjoy and experience the special qualities of the Cairngorms safely. This means that a range of opportunities should be available and promoted, from organised activities to informal exploration, from guided or way-marked routes through to unmarked routes, and from quiet enjoyment to adventure sports. The quality and co-ordination of outdoor access infrastructure, information and interpretation should be enhanced so as to be accessible and appropriate for a range of different users and appropriate to the landscape, natural and cultural heritage setting.
- b) Promote high standards of responsible enjoyment of the Park so that its special qualities are understood and appreciated, safeguarded now and for future generations to enjoy and the interests of others are respected.**  
The enjoyment of the special qualities of the Park must be accompanied by an understanding of responsibilities to other visitors, land managers, communities and the natural and cultural heritage. This should ensure that the very qualities people come to enjoy are safeguarded and enhance the quality of visitors' experiences. Those enjoying outdoor access should develop an understanding of their potential impacts and responsibilities and ensure that they help to maintain and enhance the special qualities of the Park.
- c) Develop a co-ordinated approach to the sustainable management of high quality outdoor access and recreation by the public, private, community and voluntary sectors.**  
To secure responsible outdoor access and recreation throughout the Park in the long-term requires co-ordination of the efforts of a wide range of interests to develop a mutual understanding and to communicate each other's needs and priorities. These include public agencies, land managers, tourism operators, communities, sports and access user groups.
- d) Plan for future outdoor recreation needs and opportunities in a co-ordinated way across sectors.**  
Recreation interests should actively plan to cater for changing trends in recreation and recreation opportunities and work with other sectors to plan and manage these opportunities to best advantage and in the context of the National Park.
- e) Support and encourage local community involvement in the planning and management of outdoor access throughout the Park.**  
People in communities have a particular interest in local outdoor access routes surrounding their homes. Often these provide access facilities for residents' recreation, dog-walking, routes to schools or shops, as well as being part of a wider access network used by others. Local routes can also form important attractions linked to local businesses and community interpretation facilities. It is therefore desirable that communities play a key role in developing and

managing the outdoor access routes around their homes to maximise the potential benefits.

**f) Develop a high standard of responsible management of outdoor access based on a common understanding of the needs of access managers and users.**

The strong links between land management, access and tourism in the Park, together with the presence of some vulnerable habitats, requires a pro-active and exemplary approach to managing outdoor access. Building on the approach to responsible management identified in the Scottish Outdoor Access Code, support should be given to land managers and access providers to share knowledge and experience in developing good practice in access management.

**g) Protect the more fragile areas of the Park from pressures arising from outdoor access and recreation.**

There are areas of the Park, particularly parts of the mountains, native woodlands and water, in which there are nationally and internationally important, but fragile, habitats or species. These are a key part of the Park's natural heritage and underpin its designation and attraction.

There are also many important sites of cultural and historic significance in the Park, some of which are vulnerable. These areas must be protected from the physical pressures arising from outdoor access and recreation and sites that are currently suffering from these pressures should be addressed through sound and unobtrusive management wherever possible. Protecting these areas does not mean that they cannot be enjoyed for recreation, but that access should be managed and enjoyed responsibly to avoid adverse impacts. Those enjoying the outdoors can also contribute to this protection through responsible behaviour and taking positive action to conserve these important interests.

*National policy context*

- Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003
- Scottish Outdoor Access Code
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- Scottish Physical Activity Strategy
- National Programme for Improving Mental Health and Well-being
- Scotland's Sport 21 2003-2007, The National Strategy for Sport – Shaping Scotland's Future
- Scotland's Transport Future
- Natural Futures, Scottish Natural Heritage
- Highland Tourism Strategy
- NESTOUR Strategy
- Choosing our future: Scotland's sustainable development strategy
- Scottish Rural Development Programme 2007-2013

*Cross-reference*

**5.1.2 Conserving and Enhancing the Natural and Cultural Heritage; 5.1.4 Integrated Land Management; 5.3.2 Sustainable Tourism**

### **Local Outdoor Access Forum**

The National Park Authority has established a Local Outdoor Access Forum to advise on the exercise of access rights, rights of way and development of a core paths plan for the Park. The National Park Authority has a statutory duty to establish this Forum and its membership brings together experienced people from a variety of different fields – land managers, recreational users and community representatives – interested in or affected by access rights.

The Forum advises the National Park Authority and others on:

- Strategic outdoor access issues;
- Preparation of an Outdoor Access Strategy;
- Preparation and adoption of a Core Paths Plan;
- Resolution of disputes concerning the exercise of access rights.

It also promotes responsible access and land management through the Scottish Outdoor Access Code, promotes discussion and sharing of good practice and supports the provision of appropriate infrastructure.

### **5.3.4 Learning and Understanding**

The National Park offers an opportunity to develop learning, understanding and experience for people of all ages, abilities and interests. The Park is both a location for learning and a focus for learning about sustainable development. It offers opportunities for both formal and informal education, for people living and working in the area, but also people from across Scotland and beyond, to help fulfil their potential.

Managing the particular challenges and needs of the Cairngorms also needs a renewed emphasis on bringing together people involved in all aspects of the Park, to strengthen their mutual understanding and capacity to address the sometimes difficult management challenges. Awareness of the Park, its special qualities and management needs is a necessary basis from which to influence future management and develop understanding about the connections between activities and the consequences of our collective actions.

As well as developing learning and understanding within the Park, it is important to raise awareness and understanding of the Park itself, its special qualities and its status as a national asset across Scotland and beyond. The lessons learned in other areas of the world should also be used in developing understanding of the Park in its Scottish and international context.

#### **Strategic Objectives for Learning and Understanding:**

- a) **Increase the awareness and understanding of the Park's special qualities and the management needed to sustain and enhance them.**  
Understanding the special qualities and management needs of the Park is vital to the enjoyment, sustainable development and long-term future of it. While

much is known about some special qualities, there are many gaps in our collective knowledge. Increasing awareness of the management needs across sectors will help the integrated approach needed to deliver the vision for the Park.

**b) Seek and share experience and knowledge from the management of other areas in Scotland and the world.**

There is a wide range of experience in managing protected areas around the world and managing other rural areas in Scotland. Many other areas face similar challenges to the Park and everyone involved in it should continually look to identify good practice. They should also learn from experience elsewhere in order to inform management tailored to the particular circumstances of the Park. The transfer of experience to and from the Park is vital in informing Scottish and international debate about resource management, land-use and rural development.

**c) Develop learning resources that draw on the special qualities of the Park.**

The National Park can be both a place and a focus for life-long learning. Opportunities to develop learning resources and materials that draw on the special qualities of the Park and its management should be pursued. These include the use of local examples, case studies and visits within formal learning and a wide range of informal learning opportunities building on the existing provision of outdoor education and training facilities and outreach work.

**d) Encourage people of all ages, abilities and walks of life to get outdoors frequently and experience the special natural and cultural qualities of the area at first hand.**

Understanding about the Park and its management is closely linked to experiencing its places and its special qualities at first hand. Formal and informal education should take every opportunity to use the Park as a learning resource and help people of all ages to explore and get to know it. More should be made of the opportunities to use creative approaches, including music, art and drama, to engage people in the outdoors.

**e) Develop and support opportunities for volunteering.**

Some local schemes are already in place to help people volunteer across a range of areas. The opportunity exists to better co-ordinate volunteering in all sectors, particularly related to the special qualities of the Park and to develop more local initiatives to allow residents, visitors and students to take part in caring for the National Park and to develop a greater awareness and understanding of the area.

**f) Capture knowledge and factual information about the Park in a range of appropriate ways so that it is easily accessible to anyone who wants to use it and can be passed on to future generations.**

Information about the Park, its special qualities and its management needs to be widely available and accessible to people with a wide spectrum of interest and specialist knowledge. There is a great deal of information held locally or by individuals that is not formally recorded, but that contributes greatly to our

understanding of the area's history, use and communities. Finding ways to capture and transfer both oral and written information is important in developing understanding about the Park and informing its future management.

**g) Ensure that the Park is a place where both scientific and traditional forms of knowledge about the land and its management are valued and put to good use in the long-term management of the area.**

There is a significant amount of scientific data on certain aspects of the Cairngorms and there is a wealth of knowledge amongst those who have lived and worked in the area. It is important that future management draws on the full range of this knowledge, using the best available information from scientific study and formal monitoring, together with the experience of people that have lived and worked in the area.

**h) Increase mutual understanding and trust amongst people interested in the Park through exchange of ideas, perspectives and knowledge.**

The successful management of the Park in the long-term relies on a mutual understanding of the needs and priorities of different interests and a trust between them in sharing information and working together to resolve potentially conflicting objectives. Communication and exchange of ideas, different perspectives and individual knowledge is the key to developing this understanding and trust and to ensuring that future management is based on well-informed and constructive debate. This will require, amongst other things, the formation of appropriate inter-disciplinary groups and skilled facilitation.

**i) Ensure that people across Scotland are aware of the Cairngorms National Park and understand why it is worth investing in.**

The Park is a national asset and information about the Park, its management and the opportunities for enjoying it should be widely available to everyone in Scotland and beyond. The Park has many important natural and cultural heritage qualities and it is important to develop understanding at a national level of its value, international status and management needs. In turn, management of the Park should be informed by national perspectives.

*National policy context*

- National Priorities for Schools: National Priority 4, Values and Citizenship
- Highland Tourism Strategy
- NESTOUR Strategy
- Choosing our future: Scotland's sustainable development strategy
- Scottish Rural Development Programme 2007-2013

*Cross-reference*

*5.1.3 Sustainable Use of Resources; 5.2.2 Sustainable Communities; 5.3.2 Sustainable Tourism*

## 6. Priorities for Action 2007-2012

In working towards all of the strategic objectives, all sectors in the National Park can make significant progress towards the vision. However, even a wide range of partners working together cannot immediately tackle all areas and try to achieve all objectives within the next five years. There is a need to prioritise where we collectively focus effort and resources in order to ensure that the most pressing issues are tackled and that we focus the collective resources available on making a difference in these areas.

The Priorities for Action identified here set out a programme of work in key areas for the next five years, 2007-2012. They do not try to plan for every action needed to deliver the strategic objectives – implementation is an ongoing process for all involved. Instead, they set out what difference we seek to make in these areas of priority over five years, and the headline actions that are needed to achieve this.

They are targeted at the most pressing issues and challenges that have been identified during consultation and preparation of the plan. There is either an important need to address the issue now, or a valuable opportunity which should be grasped. To support integration across sectors, the five year outcomes for each priority will contribute to strategic objectives across several sections. The relevant sections of strategic objectives to which the outcomes contribute are listed under each priority.

The Priorities for Action for 2007-2012 are:

- Conserving and Enhancing Biodiversity and Landscapes;
- Integrating Public Support for Land Management;
- Supporting Sustainable Deer Management;
- Providing High Quality Opportunities for Outdoor Access;
- Making Tourism and Business More Sustainable;
- Making Housing More Affordable and Sustainable;
- Raising Awareness and Understanding of the Park.

The following sections set out these details for each priority:

<b>Why is this a priority?</b>	A description of the need or opportunity to address this issue in the next five years.
<b>Outcomes for 2012</b>	What the priority seeks to achieve in five years.
<b>Contribution to the strategic objectives</b>	The strategic objectives of the plan to which these five year outcomes will contribute.
<b>Contribution to national strategies</b>	The key national strategies and their vision/policy aims/objectives to which these five year outcomes will contribute.
<b>Action programme 2007-2012</b>	The headline actions needed to achieve these outcomes and who is needed to deliver them.

For each action, the partners that need to deliver it are listed (in alphabetical order). These will form the basis of the delivery group for each priority. However, this list may not be exhaustive, and implementation of these priorities should involve all those necessary to achieve the outcomes most effectively. Section 7 describes the process for implementation in more detail.

## 6.1 Conserving and Enhancing Biodiversity and Landscapes

### Why is this a priority?

The biodiversity and landscapes of the Cairngorms National Park are prime reasons for its designation. The combination of biodiversity, geodiversity, landscape and the historic environment create an outstanding natural and cultural environment in the Park that is a combination of both natural processes as well as past and present management. These special qualities are prized by many for their innate value and are also of fundamental importance to land management and tourism, underpinning the wider economy. However, these qualities need active management to conserve and enhance them in a changing environment with many potential threats.

Climate change, biodiversity loss, policy changes and in some cases a lack of knowledge mean the conservation of these qualities is by no means guaranteed. These qualities need active management to maintain what we currently value and enhance the landscape, historic environment, biodiversity and geodiversity of the National Park.

This priority can make a significant contribution to Scotland's efforts to meet the UK's international obligations to protect and restore the functioning of natural systems and to halt the loss of biodiversity by 2010.

<b>Outcomes for 2012 – what does this seek to achieve in five years?</b>	
i.	A Landscape Plan for the Park will identify the natural, cultural and built landscape qualities, the factors influencing them and underpin actions for positive management.
ii.	The key areas for the experience of wild land qualities will be identified, protected and enhanced as a major source of enjoyment of the Park and wild land qualities throughout the rest of the Park will be safeguarded.
iii.	The location, scale, layout and design of all new development will make a positive contribution to the natural, cultural and built landscapes of the Park and the adverse impacts of some existing developments will be reduced.
iv.	Species and habitats identified as the highest priorities in the Cairngorms Local Biodiversity Action Plan, the UK and Scottish Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans and the Scottish Species Framework will be protected and under active conservation management.
v.	There will be enhanced connectivity within habitat networks through practical implementation of a planned, landscape-scale approach, with early emphasis on lowland agricultural habitat networks and forest networks.
vi.	All the designated nature conservation sites in the Park will be in favourable condition, or under positive management to bring them into favourable condition. This will be enhanced further by the appropriate management of the surrounding land to increase the ecological integrity and viability of these sites.
vii.	The habitat and water quality of rivers and wetlands will be enhanced through commencement of positive management initiatives guided by catchment management planning.
viii.	The diversity of rocks, minerals, landforms and soils of international, national and regional value will be safeguarded and more widely appreciated, together with the natural processes underpinning them.
ix.	An active programme will be underway to safeguard and manage priority historic landscapes and archaeology sites and to promote them to the public.



<b>Contribution to Strategic Objectives</b>	
<p>These five year outcomes will be important milestones in working towards the longer term strategic objectives in the following sections:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5.1.2 Conserving and Enhancing the Natural and Cultural Heritage;</li> <li>• 5.1.4 Integrated Land Management;</li> <li>• 5.2.3 Economy and Employment;</li> <li>• 5.3.2 Sustainable Tourism;</li> <li>• 5.3.3 Outdoor Access and Recreation;</li> <li>• 5.3.4 Learning and Understanding.</li> </ul>	
<b>Contribution to National Strategies</b>	
<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Aim/Objective</b>
Scottish Biodiversity Strategy	Species and Habitats: To halt the loss of biodiversity and continue to reverse previous losses through targeted action for habitats and species.
	People: To increase awareness, understanding and enjoyment of biodiversity and engage many more people in conservation and enhancement.
	Landscapes and Ecosystems: To restore and enhance biodiversity in all our urban, rural and marine environments through better planning, design and practise.
	Integration and Co-ordination: To develop an effective management framework that ensures biodiversity is taken into account in all decision making.
	Knowledge: To ensure that the best new and existing knowledge on biodiversity is available to all policy makers and practitioners.
Scottish Rural Development Programme 2007-2013	To safeguard and enhance the distinct identity, the diverse character and special qualities of Scotland's landscapes.
	The distinct cultural and historic identify of each area is recognised, valued and safeguarded.
	To support the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity through measures that halt and reverse loss and deterioration.
Passed to the Future: Policy for Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment	Key Principles: Recognising value; good stewardship; assessing impact; working together.

<b>ACTION PROGRAMME 2007-2012: Conserving and Enhancing Biodiversity and Landscapes</b>		
<b>To achieve the five year outcomes the following actions are needed:</b>		
<b>Ref</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Who?</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Landscape</b>	
1a	Prepare a Landscape Management Plan based on a systematic review of the existing natural, historic and cultural landscape character assessments, which will form the basis of decisions related to planning control, land management and enhancement actions.	CNPA, HS, RCAHMS, SNH
1b	As part of the formulation of the Landscape Management Plan, identify core areas of the Park where wild land experiences are especially significant and quantify the levels of wild land experience throughout the rest of the Park.	CNPA, Land Managers, NGOs, SNH
1c	Identify detractors from wild land qualities and begin a programme of action to mitigate their impacts including down-grading of unnecessary vehicle tracks to paths, upland path repairs and extending control over the construction of new developments including telecommunication masts, electricity lines and construction or upgrading of vehicle tracks.	CNPA, Land Managers, NGOs, SNH
1d	Ensure that all approved developments are based on a site design plan to make a positive contribution to their local natural and cultural landscape setting and character.	CNPA, LAs
1e	Provide guidance on design and encouragement for innovative design to enhance landscapes and townscapes as part of a Sustainable Design Guide.	CNPA, HS, LAs, SNH
1f	Identify existing detractors from natural and cultural landscape qualities through the systematic update of the Landscape Character and Historic Land-use Assessments and begin a programme of action to mitigate them.	CNPA, HS, LAs, SNH
<b>2</b>	<b>Historic Environment</b>	
2a	Carry out an audit of significant historical, cultural and archaeological landscape features within the Park, such as Designed Landscapes and Historic Gardens, battlefields, field systems, townships, farmsteads, mills, drove roads, village squares.	CNPA, Communities, LAs, Land Managers, Local Cultural Heritage Groups, NTS, RCAHMS, SCT
2b	Assess the vulnerability and management requirements of the historic environment resource and prepare and implement management plans to conserve and further research as appropriate.	CNPA, Communities, LAs, Land Managers, Local Cultural Heritage Groups, NTS, RCAHMS, SCT
2c	Provide a central point of information on the archaeological interest that will be readily available to all interested parties and underpins active promotion, awareness and enjoyment of the archaeology of the Park.	CNPA, HS, LAs, RCAHMS, SCT
2d	Safeguard the features and landscapes of archaeological, historical and cultural interest through planning and development control including design guidance and identification of buildings at risk.	CNPA, HS, LAs, SCT

<b>3</b>	<b>Biodiversity</b>	
3a	Develop a programme, to be shared between a wide range of bodies, setting out priorities for biodiversity research addressing significant gaps in knowledge of the threats to the ecology and the distribution of priority LBAP species and habitats that prevent effective conservation management. (drawn from Local Biodiversity Action Plan list).	CEH, CNPA, LBAP Group LLTNPA, MLURI, SAC, SEERAD, SNH, Universities
3b	Establish a central biological recording system for the National Park which collates and manages all species and habitat records for the Park, is linked to the national biodiversity network and is readily accessible to all.	CNPA, Communities, FCS, LAs, LBAP Group, NESBReC, NGOs
3c	Complete gaps in survey requirements for prioritised species and habitats, including completion of surveys of in-bye farmland grasslands and fens, montane willows.	CNPA, Communities, LAs, LBAP Group, NESBReC, NGOs, SNH
3d	The Local Plan and development control procedures will ensure that all approved developments protect the Park's special habitat and species qualities and site design plans for development will make a positive contribution to biodiversity as appropriate to their location.	CNPA, Communities, LAs, NGOs
3e	Establish or continue, as appropriate, conservation projects to undertake active management targeted at prioritised species and habitats, including water voles, capercaillie, black grouse, red squirrel, breeding waders, wild cat, semi-natural grasslands.	CNPA, Communities, FCS, GCT, LAs, Land Managers, LBAP Group, NGOs, SNH, SEERAD
3f	Develop a system for effective action to control or remove invasive non-native species such as mink, grey squirrel, giant hogweed, Japanese knotweed and water crowfoot, and to prevent the introduction of other potential problem species not native to the Park.	CNPA, FCS, GCT, LAs, Land Managers, LBAP Group, NGOs, SEERAD, SNH
3g	Identify and encourage realisation of economic benefits from the Park's diversity of habitats and species for land managers, communities and local businesses.	BASC, Businesses, CNPA, Communities, GCT, Land Managers, NGOs, SNH
3h	Extend the Raptor Watch project across the Park to increase the populations of native raptors on productive grouse moorlands and other habitats through the active collaboration of land managers, public agencies, NGOs and communities to manage and resolve the conflict between raptors and sporting and other land management interests. Within this initiative, increase the golden eagle population so that it reoccupies its historic range and realises its potential high levels of productivity.	CNPA, Communities, LAs, Land Managers, NGOs, Police, SEBG, SGA, SNH, SRPBA
3i	Establish partnerships across the Park to combat and reduce all forms of wildlife crime including game poaching, salmon	CNPA, Communities,

	poaching, fresh water pearl mussel fishing and egg stealing.	LAs, Land Managers, LBAP Group, NGOs, Police, SEBG, SGA, SNH, SRPBA
3j	From the Local Biodiversity Action Plan identify species that have suffered serious decline or local extinction in the Park and which could be subject to reintroduction or translocations to boost populations such as fresh water pearl mussels and alpine saw-wort.	CNPA, LAs, LBAP Group, NGOs, SNH
3k	In the context of national initiatives, identify and address the likely land management and other issues that may arise from the reintroduction of extinct native species that could have broad ecological and economic benefits for the Park.	CNPA, Communities, FCS, Land Managers, LBAP Group, NGOs, SEERAD, SEPA, SGA, SNH, SRPBA
3l	Develop a programme of survey to fill gaps in knowledge of existing habitat networks such as woodland, moorland, juniper scrub, blanket bog, wetlands and grasslands together with an assessment of condition. The results to inform the application of land management incentives and other support mechanisms.	CNPA, DCS, FCS, SEERAD, SNH
3m	Use maps of existing habitat networks to target incentives for enhancing networks through favourable management or new linkages, as a means of improving habitat viability and to make them more able to cope with the impacts of climate change.	CNPA, DCS, FCS, SEERAD, SNH
3n	By agreement with land managers, implement a programme to reinstate selected wetland areas, including a reconnection between sections of rivers and their flood plains, to enhance natural river processes, increase riparian wetlands and reduce catastrophic flood pressures downstream.	Fishery Boards, LAs, Land Managers, SEPA, SRPBA, SW
3o	Identify existing in-stream and bank-side engineering works/structures that are detrimental to river processes, species and habitats, and undertake a prioritised programme to remedy them.	CNPA, Fishery Boards, LAs, SEPA
3p	Collate and publicise the results of ongoing climate change monitoring and research in the Cairngorms to help increase awareness of this issue and its impacts upon the Park and wider environment.	Climate Change Network, CNPA, SNH
3q	Promote the active involvement and training of volunteers from all sections of society to assist in survey, monitoring and practical management of the Park's special natural and cultural heritage.	BTCV, CNPA, NGOs, Ranger Services, SNH
<b>4</b>	<b>Geodiversity</b>	
4a	Based on existing information sources and bespoke survey as appropriate, prepare a comprehensive Geodiversity Audit and Action Plan for the Park. Include links between geodiversity and biodiversity and the role of geodiversity in environmental management.	BGS, CNPA, SNH, LAs, Land Managers, Ranger Services
4b	Increase education and interpretation initiatives which raise	BGS, CNPA,

	awareness and enjoyment of the Park's geodiversity.	SNH, LAs, Land Managers, Ranger Services
4c	Safeguard the Park's geodiversity and the natural processes underpinning them through planning policies and development and control.	BGS, CNPA, LAs, SEPA, SNH
4d	Land management support will be applied to safeguard and protect the geodiversity of the Park and the natural processes underpinning it.	BGS, FCS, SEERAD, SNH
4e	Promote management for soil protection and enhancement within the Park including prevention of degradation and erosion of organic soils; prevention of soil acidification and eutrophication; and mitigation of climate change impacts on soil functionality.	NFUS, SEERAD, SEPA, SNH
4f	Ensure geodiversity issues are included at all levels of planning, land management, and water management within the Park and that all management is carried out in ways compatible with conservation and enhancement of geodiversity.	CNPA, NFUS, SNH, SRPBA

**Key**

**BASC** British Association for Shooting and Conservation **BGS** British Geological Survey **BTCV** British Trust for Conservation Volunteers **CEH** Centre for Ecology and Hydrology **CNPA** Cairngorms National Park Authority **DCS** Deer Commission for Scotland **FCS** Forestry Commission Scotland **GCT** Game Conservancy Trust **HS** Historic Scotland **LAs** Local Authorities **LBAP** Group Local Biodiversity Action Plan Group **LLTNPA** Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Authority **NESBRc** North-East Scotland Biological Records Centre **NTS** National Trust for Scotland **MLURI** Macaulay Landuse Research Institute **NFUS** National Farmers Union of Scotland **NGOs** Non-Governmental Organisations **RCAHMS** Royal Commission on Ancient and Historic Monuments in Scotland **SAC** Scottish Agricultural College **SCT** Scottish Civic Trust **SEBG** Scottish Estates Business Group **SEERAD** Scottish Executive Environment and Rural Affairs Department **SEPA** Scottish Environment Protection Agency **SGA** Scottish Gamekeepers Association **SNH** Scottish Natural Heritage **SRPBA** Scottish Rural Property and Business Association **SW** Scottish Water

## 6.2 Integrating Public Support for Land Management

### Why is this a priority?

The management of land for food, timber, sport, tourism, recreation and conservation is one of the principal influences on and providers of the special qualities of the Park. The qualities that are valued today result from a combination of past management practices. Land management is also a significant part of the economy and employment in the area. It is important for the future of the Park to maintain and develop a profitable land management sector that not only continues to contribute to the economy by producing high quality food, timber and other primary products, but also maintains and enhances the Park's special qualities and their enjoyment by the public.

To this end, land managers should be supported by the public sector, the business sector and others in their efforts to grow their businesses, and deliver public benefits. Innovation plays an important role in shaping future forms of diversification within land management and should seek to address the sector's current economic disadvantages. Relevant actions to support this are also contained in the priority for action 'Making Tourism and Business More Sustainable' (6.5). Actions to raise awareness of how the special qualities are managed are incorporated in 'Raising Awareness and Understanding of the Park' (6.7).

Many public benefits delivered by land managers depend on public sector intervention and support, in the form of regulation, advice, training and incentive schemes. Currently, these are the means by which society can influence management practices and so secure a range of public benefits which may not otherwise be achieved through the private objectives of land management alone.

Changes in European and Scottish rural policy in the coming years herald a period of uncertainty with some concern that benefits associated with current support and management systems may not be built upon, or indeed could be lost. There is an opportunity to move to a simpler system of support that is more integrated across sectors, more clearly linked to delivery of tangible public benefits and more closely tailored to the needs and priorities in the National Park. This is a current opportunity for all involved in land management within the National Park to grasp and make significant progress in the next five years towards the strategic objectives for land management and, by extension, many other objectives in the plan that are influenced by land management. It is therefore a priority for action in the period 2007-2012.

<b>Outcomes for 2012 – what does this seek to achieve in five years?</b>	
i.	A diverse, viable and productive land management sector will continue to provide high quality primary produce such as food and timber, whilst delivering public benefits which are compatible with the Park's special qualities and will make a growing contribution to employment and the local economy.
ii.	Public support for land management will be better integrated and directed at delivering tangible public benefits.
iii.	The public benefits which land managers are asked to deliver with public sector support in the Park will be informed by sound information and determined through an open process involving land managers, communities and other stakeholders.

<b>Contribution to Strategic Objectives</b>	
<p>These five year outcomes will be important milestones in working towards the longer term strategic objectives in the following sections:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5.1.2 Conserving and Enhancing the Natural and Cultural Heritage;</li> <li>• 5.1.3 Sustainable Use of Resources;</li> <li>• 5.1.4 Integrated Land Management;</li> <li>• 5.2.3 Economy and Employment;</li> <li>• 5.3.2 Sustainable Tourism;</li> <li>• 5.3.3 Outdoor Access and Recreation;</li> <li>• 5.3.4 Learning and Understanding.</li> </ul>	
<b>Contribution to National Strategies</b>	
<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Aim/Objective</b>
Scottish Rural Development Programme 2007-2013	To create a rural development policy that capitalises on the assets of rural Scotland – its resourceful people and its outstanding landscapes and natural heritage.

<b>ACTION PROGRAMME 2007-2012: Integrating Public Support for Land Management</b>		
<b>To achieve the five year outcomes the following actions are needed:</b>		
<b>Ref</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Who?</b>
1a	Identify the various public benefits that are priorities in the National Park and tailor public support mechanisms to deliver them.	CC, CNPA, Communities, DCS, FCS, LECs, Land Managers, NFUS, NGOs, SCF, SEBG, SEERAD, SEPA, SNH, SRPBA
1b	Move towards public support for land management that is based on specified outcomes and the delivery of high quality public benefits appropriate to the land through simplifying current mechanisms, for example through a single contract that draws together a range of objectives and funding sources.	CC, CNPA, Communities, DCS, FCS, LECs, Land Managers, NFUS, NGOs, SCF, SEBG, SEERAD, SEPA, SNH, SRPBA
1c	Establish a landscape scale approach to targeting support for public benefits, so that the varying priorities in different parts of the Park are recognised.	CC, CNPA, Communities, DCS, FCS, LECs, Land Managers, NFUS, NGOs, SCF, SEBG, SEERAD, SEPA, SNH, SRPBA
1d	Find ways to recognise and capture the ‘non-market’ value of the special qualities created and maintained by land managers.	CC, CNPA, Communities, DCS, FCS, LECs, Land Managers, NFUS, NGOs, SCF, SEBG, SEERAD, SEPA, SNH, SRPBA
1e	As part of the landscape scale approach, encourage whole unit and collaborative land management planning in order to realise benefits that are most effectively achieved across neighbouring land holdings, such as habitat connectivity, species management, access and recreation.	CC, CNPA, Communities, DCS, FCS, LECs, Land Managers, NFUS, NGOs, SCF, SEBG, SEERAD, SEPA, SNH, SRPBA
1f	Establish an effective advisory mechanism to support land managers to deliver priority public benefits. This mechanism will include clear guidance about the	CC, CNPA, Communities, DCS, FCS, LECs, Land Managers, NFUS, NGOs,

	priorities and their implementation as appropriate to location and environmental conditions and the provision of training courses to provide support to land managers in delivering the priorities.	SCF, SEBG, SEERAD, SEPA, SNH, SRPBA
1g	Make assistance available to facilitate improved communication between land managers, peer groups, local communities, public agencies and other interest groups about management objectives and practices and to inform the evolution of priorities and support requirements.	CC, CNPA, Communities, DCS, FCS, LECs, Land Managers, NFUS, NGOs, SCF, SEBG, SEERAD, SEPA, SNH, SRPBA
1h	Work together to monitor the delivery of the priority public benefits by land managers and use this as a basis to feedback and review priorities, the advisory network, unit management plans and practices.	CC, CNPA, Communities, DCS, FCS, LECs, Land Managers, NFUS, NGOs, SCF, SEBG, SEERAD, SEPA, SNH, SRPBA

**Key**

*CC Crofters Commission CNPA Cairngorms National Park Authority DCS Deer Commission for Scotland FCS Forestry Commission Scotland LECs Local Enterprise Companies NFUS National Farmers Union of Scotland NGOs Non-Governmental Organisations SCF Scottish Crofting Foundation SEBG Scottish Estates Business Group SEERAD Scottish Executive Environment and Rural Affairs Department SEPA Scottish Environment Protection Agency SNH Scottish Natural Heritage SRPBA Scottish Rural Property and Business Association*



## 6.3 Supporting Sustainable Deer Management

### Why is this a priority?

Native red and roe deer are valuable natural assets within the National Park. They are an important part of our natural heritage and bring economic and employment benefits. Grazing is a vital ecological process which shapes the landscape of the Cairngorms and influences the condition of many habitats and associated features. Red deer are the dominant grazing animal throughout much of the Park and at appropriate levels grazing has a positive management effect, but excessive grazing in some places can prevent native woodlands from regenerating and can obstruct the achievement of other natural heritage objectives.

Deer management has long been the subject of debate amongst deer managers, public agencies and the wider public leading to specific legislation, currently the Deer (Scotland) Act 1996. Red deer are managed for a range of objectives within the Park and deer population densities vary depending on those objectives. Objectives range from the regeneration of unfenced native woodland, which usually requires densities of less than 5 deer per km<sup>2</sup>, to commercial deer stalking which typically requires 10-20 deer per km<sup>2</sup>. This mix of natural heritage and socio-economic objectives creates a patchwork of red deer densities within the National Park. The current patchwork of red deer densities can cause conflict in some places between natural heritage and socio-economic objectives, particularly on sites designated for nature conservation.

Although hill sheep numbers have declined significantly in recent years owing to changes in support systems, they are still an important grazer in parts of the Park. In some areas sheep are returning to the hill as a management tool to reduce ticks on grouse moors. Like deer, sheep grazing can influence moorland vegetation and woodland dynamics and deer and sheep often graze the same range. Where they do, there is a need to understand and manage their combined impact on natural heritage features and to consider the impacts of sheep grazing in deer management plans.

The delivery of sustainable deer management throughout the Cairngorms needs to focus on reducing conflict between socio-economic and natural heritage objectives. This must build on the existing work of Deer Management Groups and public agencies to develop a high quality deer management planning process, which involves the range of relevant stakeholders and seeks agreement on a large-scale patchwork of densities to meet a range of objectives appropriate to different parts of the Park. In particular, while deer management should continue to contribute to socio-economic development, sustainable deer management requires populations to be managed at levels which conserve and enhance the special natural heritage qualities of the National Park.

Reconciling these objectives through supporting a sustainable approach to deer management is therefore a priority for action.

<b>Outcomes for 2012 – what does this seek to achieve in five years?</b>	
i.	There will be a large-scale patchwork of deer densities across the National Park underpinned by an inclusive deer management planning process.
ii.	Designated sites will be protected and enhanced and the deer range throughout the Park will be managed to a good environmental standard appropriate to the management unit. This standard will be agreed as an integral part of the deer management planning process.
iii.	There will be good communication and understanding between all sectors involved in deer management including public agencies, local communities and other interest groups. Better understanding of objectives, requirements and deer management activities should reduce conflict between different sectors.
iv.	The economic value of the deer resource will be enhanced.
v.	There will be more opportunities and fewer perceived barriers for a wider range of people to enjoy stalking.

<b>Contribution to Strategic Objectives</b>	
These five year outcomes will be important milestones in working towards the longer term strategic objectives in the following sections:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5.1.2 Conserving and Enhancing the Natural and Cultural Heritage;</li> <li>• 5.1.4 Integrated Land Management;</li> <li>• 5.2.3 Economy and Employment;</li> <li>• 5.3.2 Sustainable Tourism;</li> <li>• 5.3.3 Outdoor Access and Recreation;</li> <li>• 5.3.4 Learning and Understanding.</li> </ul>	
<b>Contribution to National Strategies</b>	
<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Aim/Objective</b>
Choosing Our Future: Scotland's Sustainable Development Strategy	A Scotland where biodiversity loss has been halted; natural resources are managed sustainably; and the environment is protected effectively on the basis of evidence and using the best available science.

<b>ACTION PROGRAMME 2007-2012: Supporting Sustainable Deer Management</b>		
<b>To achieve the five year outcomes the following actions are needed:</b>		
<b>Ref</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Who?</b>
1a	Exchange information and advice on deer management through the Cairngorms Deer Advisory Group and use the group as a forum to improve communication between managers, public agencies and communities.	ADMG, CNPA, Communities, DCS, DMGs, FCS, Land Managers, NGOs, SEERAD, SGA, SNH
1b	Develop and implement an inclusive deer management planning process that underpins a large-scale patchwork of deer densities across the Park to meet a range of natural heritage and socio-economic objectives.	ADMG, CNPA, DCS, DMGs, FCS, Land Managers, NGOs, SEERAD, SGA, SNH
1c	Where relevant, take account of the combined grazing impact of deer and sheep in deer management planning.	ADMG, CNPA, Communities, DCS, DMGs, FCS, Land Managers, NGOs, SEERAD, SGA, SNH
1d	Work to prevent populations of muntjac and fallow deer	ADMG, CNPA,

	becoming established in the Park and to prevent the further spread of sika deer.	DCS, DMGs, FCS, Land Managers, NGOs, SEERAD, SGA, SNH
1e	Investigate opportunities to increase the socio-economic value of deer will be explored including greater co-operation in marketing of sport and venison and increased opportunities for people to learn about and take part in deer stalking.	ADMG, DCS, DMGs, Land Managers, LECs
1f	Ensure regular access to good practice demonstration events for those involved in all aspects of deer management within the Park.	ADMG, CNPA, DCS, DMGs, FCS, Land Managers, SGA, SNH

**Key**

**ADMG** Association of Deer Management Groups **CNPA** Cairngorms National Park Authority **DCS** Deer Commission for Scotland **DMGs** Deer Management Groups **FCS** Forestry Commission Scotland **LECs** Local Enterprise Companies **NGOs** Non-Governmental Organisations **SEERAD** Scottish Executive Environment and Rural Affairs Department **SGA** Scottish Gamekeepers Association **SNH** Scottish Natural Heritage

## 6.4 Providing High Quality Opportunities for Outdoor Access

### Why is this a priority?

To enjoy and understand the Park residents and visitors of all ages, abilities and interests need to be able to get outside and enjoy the countryside. There is a good existing network of land and water access in many places, but more work is needed to bring the opportunities for access up to the excellent standard that is expected in a National Park. Improving these opportunities can make a significant contribution to people's enjoyment, health, learning and understanding.

The designation of the National Park brings an opportunity to integrate access management across different areas and sectors within the Cairngorms. The relatively new right of responsible access under the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 gives Scotland some of the best access legislation in the world. It now creates a need for all access takers and access managers to develop an effective understanding of responsible access and access management and to provide excellent access and recreation opportunities in the National Park.

<b>Outcomes for 2012 – what does this seek to achieve in five years?</b>	
i.	A wider range of people will have the opportunity to enjoy the outdoors.
ii.	Land managers and those enjoying the outdoors will have a better understanding of their respective rights and responsibilities which will positively influence behaviour and enable all to enjoy the special qualities of the National Park.
iii.	There will be a more extensive, high quality, well maintained and clearly promoted path network so that everyone can enjoy the outdoors and move around the Park in a way that minimises reliance on motor vehicles.
iv.	There will be greater involvement of communities, land managers and visitors in the management and maintenance of paths.
v.	There will be more effective connections between public transport and places with outdoor access opportunities.
vi.	There will be locally based healthy walking groups throughout the National Park and active promotion of outdoor activity by health professionals in order to contribute positively to the physical, mental and social health of residents and visitors.

<b>Contribution to Strategic Objectives</b>	
These five year outcomes will be important milestones in working towards the longer term strategic objectives in the following sections:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5.1.2 Conserving and Enhancing the Natural and Cultural Heritage;</li> <li>• 5.1.4 Integrated Land Management;</li> <li>• 5.2.5 Transport and Communications;</li> <li>• 5.3.2 Sustainable Tourism;</li> <li>• 5.3.3 Outdoor Access and Recreation;</li> <li>• 5.3.4 Learning and Understanding.</li> </ul>	
<b>Contribution to National Strategies</b>	
<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Aim/Objective</b>
A Strategy for Physical Activity	To increase and maintain the proportion of physically active people in Scotland.
Scottish Rural Development Programme	To increase people's quality of life through confident participation in and enjoyment of responsible outdoor

access in a welcoming countryside.

<b>ACTION PROGRAMME 2007-2012: Providing High Quality Opportunities for Outdoor Access</b>		
<b>To achieve the five year outcomes the following actions are needed:</b>		
<b>Ref</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Who?</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Improving path condition and quality</b>	
1a	Submit the draft Core Paths Plan to Ministers for approval by February 2008 and implement the actions arising from it (including actions relating to the wider path network).	CNPA, Land Managers, Recreation Users
1b	Complete Park-wide survey of upland paths and popular setting-off points, using both field survey and stakeholder input, to develop targeted repair and maintenance programmes.	CNPA, Land Managers, Recreation Users, SNH
1c	Review the different approaches and techniques to path repair and maintenance in the uplands to improve performance and agree standards, techniques and styles for the future.	CNPA, Land Managers, Recreation Users, SNH
1d	Establish a Park-wide Trust or similar mechanism to improve and maintain path condition and quality and provide information about access opportunities.	CNPA, Land Managers, Recreation Users, SNH
1e	Improve/extend strategic routes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Extension of Speyside Way to Newtonmore;</li> <li>o Ensure Speyside Way is more suitable for widest possible variety of users;</li> <li>o Complete Aviemore to Glenmore off-road route;</li> <li>o Complete Deeside Way to Ballater.</li> </ul>	CNPA, FCS, LAs, Land Managers, LECs, Recreation Users, SNH
1f	Review opportunities for people of all abilities against the relevant policy in the Outdoor Access Strategy and put plans in place to promote existing opportunities and address shortcomings.	CNPA, FCS, Land Managers, Recreation Users, SNH, VS
1g	Identify and remove physical barriers that unnecessarily restrict opportunities for outdoor access or make appropriate modifications to encourage greater access.	CNPA, Land Managers, Recreation Users
1h	Improve provision for horse riders through removal of unnecessary barriers and specific marketing initiatives to promote opportunities.	CNPA, Land Managers, LECs, Recreation Users, VS
1i	Provide more cycling opportunities through provision of off-road facilities, removal of unnecessary barriers and by developing specific marketing initiatives.	CNPA, LAs, Land Managers, LECs, Recreation Users
1j	Improve access opportunities to water by providing low-key, appropriately sited infrastructure at popular access and egress points.	CNPA, Land Managers, Recreation Users, SS
1k	Improve availability and use of functional walking and cycling routes, especially near schools and work places.	CNPA, LAs, Land Managers, Recreation Users
1l	Develop use of electronic maps system (CAMS) for path management throughout the National Park.	CNPA
1m	Promote community involvement in path development and maintenance through grant schemes, training and capacity building, sponsorship and other support.	CNPA, Communities, FCS, LAs, LECs, SNH
1n	Encourage feedback from residents and visitors about path condition and about outdoor access opportunities generally with a view to improving opportunities in future.	ACCC, CNPA, Communities, DMOs, Land Managers, Recreation Users

1o	Collect and collate better information on the economic, social and environmental value of paths (and outdoor access opportunities more generally) and the benefits of their active management.	ACCC, CCC, CNPA, DMOs, LAs, LECs
<b>2</b>	<b>Promoting responsible outdoor access and management.</b>	
2a	Promote and distribute the Scottish Outdoor Access Code (and the specially targeted versions of it) to ensure all key audiences are aware of its contents.	CCC, CNPA, Communities, DMOs, LAs, Land Managers, LOAF, SNH, VS
2b	Develop programmes of promotional activity about responsible behaviour targeted at specific groups and reviewed on an annual basis.	CNPA, LAs, Land Managers, Recreation Users, SNH
2c	Encourage all parties to report problems related to outdoor access to CNPA who will investigate, assist with resolution and regularly feed back.	CNPA, FCS, Land Managers, Recreation Users, SNH, VS
2d	Further develop and promote the Local Outdoor Access Forum as a valuable source of advice and expertise for CNPA and others.	CNPA, Communities, FCS, Land Managers, Recreation Users, SNH, SS
2e	Develop groups to share good practice about management of outdoor access across the National Park (based on the model of the Deeside Access Group).	CNPA, Communities, FCS, LAs, Land Managers, Recreation Users, SNH, SRPBA,
2f	Promote regular exchanges of experience and communication between land managers and recreational users and encourage each group to promote good practice amongst their peers.	CNPA, Land Managers, Recreation Users, SRPBA
2g	Provide feedback about the implementation of the Scottish Outdoor Access Code for future review.	CNPA, Communities, FCS, Land Managers, Recreation Users, SNH, SRPBA
2h	Promote best practice in the use of signs for management of outdoor access.	CNPA, FCS, Land Managers, SNH, SRPBA
2i	Promote the Park-wide policy on organised outdoor access events and develop further specific guidelines for event organisers.	CNPA, DMOs, FCS, Land Managers, SNH, SS, VS
2j	Discourage camping alongside public roads at un-managed sites and improve provision of managed campsites in the National Park.	CNPA, LAs, Land Managers, LECs, VS
2k	Promote the policy on car-park charging in the National Park and encourage its adoption by land managers.	CNPA, FCS, Land Managers, SNH, VS
2l	Enhance the role of ranger services, tourist information centre staff and other key professional groups who have contact with public in the promotion of responsible behaviour.	CNPA, FCS, Ranger Services, SNH, SS, VS
<b>3</b>	<b>Promoting visitor information about outdoor access opportunities</b>	
3a	Develop and promote a hierarchy of visitor information about outdoor access opportunities – with general information about opportunities at Park-wide level and more specific information available about opportunities in parts of the National Park.	CNPA, DMOs, LAs, Ranger Services, SNH, VS
3b	Develop and promote technical guidance for way-marking of paths in line with Park-wide policy.	CNPA, FCS, SNH, SS, VS
3c	Promote Core Paths and other paths with appropriate visitor information and marketing to encourage their use.	CNPA, FCS, Land Managers, SNH, VS

3d	Promote awareness and encourage use of shorter or easier outdoor access opportunities, especially around communities, within the National Park.	CNPA, LAs, Ranger Services, SS, VS
3e	Specifically market the outdoor access opportunities that have good links to public transport.	CNPA, LAs, VS
<b>4</b>	<b>Promoting sustainable transport for enjoyment of the National Park</b>	
4a	Identify and address gaps in public transport provision in the Park.	CNPA, DMOs, Hitrans, LAs, Nestrans, Transport Operators
4b	Work towards universal cycle carriage and provision for other outdoor recreation equipment such as skis, snowboards and rucksacks on public transport and greater use of environmentally friendly fuel options.	CNPA, CTC, Cycling Scotland, DMOs, Hitrans, LAs, Land Managers, Nestrans, Sustrans, Transport Scotland
4c	Promote better provision of public transport to link with popular start and finish points for outdoor recreation routes.	Accommodation Providers, Activity Providers, CNPA, DMOs, LAs, Land Managers
4d	Develop more integrated ticketing between different transport modes in association with activity/visitor attractions.	Accommodation Providers, Activity Providers, CNPA, DMOs, LAs, Land Managers
4e	Provide more safe routes to school in communities.	CNPA, Cycling Scotland, LAs, Sustrans
4f	Identify roads with low traffic volume and associated off-road routes and promote them to residents and visitors for both recreational and functional use.	CNPA, Cycling Scotland, LAs, Sustrans, VS
4g	Manage car parks, through both charging regimes and provision of information, to encourage longer stays and to fit with other more sustainable modes of transport.	Activity Providers, CNPA, LAs, Land Managers, Transport Operators
<b>5</b>	<b>Promoting healthy lifestyles</b>	
5a	Provide local 'Paths to Health' type schemes to encourage people in all communities to get active within the National Park, where possible working with local walking groups.	ACCC, CNPA, Paths to Health, RA, SS
5b	Highlight the 'green gym' opportunities the National Park provides and extend the use of active referrals by GPs and other health professionals.	CNPA, NHS, SS
5c	Review the Physical Activity Directory for Badenoch and Strathspey with a view to coverage of the whole Park.	CNPA, LAs, NHS
5d	Promote messages about the National Park as a destination for healthy activity as part of the overall marketing approach, particularly identifying opportunities for young people, disabled people and people on low incomes.	CNPA, VS
5e	Broaden the range of activities included in physical education strategies in schools to include outdoor activity, working with Active Schools Co-ordinators and Outdoor Education teams to identify outdoor opportunities in the National Park.	CNPA, LAs, SS

**Key**

**ACCC** Association of Cairngorms Community Councils **CCC** Cairngorms Chamber of Commerce  
**CNPA** Cairngorms National Park Authority **CTC** National Cyclists Organisation **DMOs** Destination  
Management Organisations **FCS** Forestry Commission Scotland **HITRANS** Highlands and Islands  
Transport Forum **LAs** Local Authorities **LECs** Local Enterprise Companies **LOAF** Local Outdoor  
access Forum **NESTRANS** North-East Scotland Transport Forum **NHS** National Health Service **RA**  
Ramblers Association Scotland **SNH** Scottish Natural Heritage **SRPBA** Scottish Rural Property and  
Business Association **SS** SportScotland **Sustrans** Sustainable Transport Charity **VS** VisitScotland



## 6.5 Making Tourism and Business More Sustainable

### Why is this a priority?

The long-term sustainability of the National Park requires a diverse and vibrant economy, an economy that is based on, and actively works to conserve and enhance, the special qualities of this area and one that involves and benefits local communities.

Tourism generates £169million across the Park, creating jobs for over 5000 people. Nearly 1.5million people visit the Park each year for a wide range of business and leisure trips. Tourism has a key role to play in supporting economic growth, encouraging enjoyment and understanding of this special area and in helping to promote Scotland on a world stage as a place to live, work and enjoy.

The National Park Authority, with partners, is committed to the national tourism ambition to grow tourism revenues by 50 per cent in a sustainable manner by 2015. Tourism is ‘everyone’s business’ and more needs to be done to embed this thinking across the whole National Park.

In addition to tourism there is a wide range of other business opportunities, linked to the special qualities of the area such as building design, food and drink, land management and small-scale renewable energy. There is a need to encourage and support a range of interested parties to make the most of these opportunities.

<b>Outcomes for 2012 – what does this seek to achieve in five years?</b>	
i.	An increasing proportion of economic activity will be based on the special qualities of the Park.
ii.	The visitor experience in the National Park will consistently exceed expectations and will drive repeat visits/more business opportunities. The Park will compare well against the rest of Scotland and other National Parks.
iii.	There will be a more even distribution of visitor numbers throughout the year.
iv.	A greater percentage of visitors will contribute to the conservation and enhancement of the Park.
v.	A greater percentage of businesses will meet the quality standards and environmental management criteria of the Park brand and achieve commercial advantage through its use.
vi.	There will be an increase in use of local suppliers and produce.
vii.	Communities will feel that quality of life is improving and that they are able to influence the direction of economic growth within the Park.

<b>Contribution to the Strategic Objectives</b>	
These five year outcomes will be important milestones in working towards the longer term strategic objectives in the following sections:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5.1.2 Conserving and Enhancing the Natural and Cultural Heritage;</li> <li>• 5.1.3 Sustainable Use of Resources;</li> <li>• 5.2.3 Economy and Employment;</li> <li>• 5.3.2 Sustainable Tourism.</li> </ul>	
<b>Contribution to National Strategies</b>	
<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Aim/Objective</b>
The Next Decade: A Tourism Framework for Change	A 50 per cent increase in tourism revenue by 2015 that is sustainable.

	Increased membership of the Green Tourism Business Scheme.
	The proportion of businesses in the VisitScotland accommodation quality assurance schemes increased to 90 per cent.
Smart Successful Scotland	Growing businesses; global connections; learning and skills.
Green Jobs Strategy	To seize the business opportunities and advantages arising from our belief in, and commitment to, sustainable development.
Scottish Rural Development Programme 2007-2013	Increased diversification and capacity to add value to primary products.
Forward Strategy for Scottish Agriculture: Next steps	Scottish food producers, food processors, retailers and the food service sector should work together to identify, inform and meet market demand, drawing on business advice and sharing resources and experience to control costs and increase incomes.

<b>ACTION PROGRAMME 2007-2012: Making Tourism and Business More Sustainable</b>		
<b>To achieve the five year outcomes the following actions are needed:</b>		
<b>Ref</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Who?</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Making tourism everyone's business</b>	
1a	Support annual tourism industry meeting to share good practice.	CCC, CNPA
1b	Develop and support effective mechanisms for two-way communication with business stakeholders.	CCC, CNPA, DMOs
1c	Conduct omnibus tourism enterprise survey.	CCC, CNPA, VS
1d	Explore opportunities for getting a range of people involved in understanding and contributing to enhancement of the special qualities of the Park through visitor payback.	CNPA, DMOs
1e	Develop stronger links between tourism and transport, land management, food and drink, retail and other key sectors.	CNPA, LAs, LECs, VS
1f	Ensure communities are represented in tourism planning and are able to generate positive benefits from the tourism industry.	ACCC, CNPA, LECs, VS
<b>2</b>	<b>Encouraging business excellence and quality</b>	
2a	Promote economic opportunities created by National Park status and ensure expert advice is available in relation to sustainable development.	CNPA, LECs, VS
2b	Increase use of environmental management plans and accreditation by businesses.	CCC, CNPA, LECs, VS
2c	Strengthen awareness and spending on local crafts and produce by carrying out research on producers, branding and visitor information.	CNPA, DMOs, LECs, VS
2d	Develop training and other measures to better support the vocational skills requirements of businesses and residents in the Park.	CCC, CNPA, HIE, LECs, SE, Springboard Scotland
2e	Strengthen Chamber of Commerce and network of Business	BAs, CCC,

	Associations.	CNPA, LECs
2f	Encourage businesses to collaborate and network through groups such as Creative Cairngorms.	CNPA, LECs
2g	Encourage benchmarking of performance to improve quality of customer experience.	CNPA, DMOs, LECs, VS
2h	Provide more advice and support for business development, including the marketing and processing of primary produce and add further value through appropriate use of the Cairngorms brand.	CNPA, Land Managers, LECs, Scottish Food and Drink
2i	Develop innovative schemes to assist land management units develop their economic and environmental sustainability.	CNPA, Land Managers, LECs, NFUS, SEBG, SRPBA
<b>3</b>	<b>Promoting sustainable enjoyment of the Park</b>	
3a	Work with partners to promote the National Parks as a key part of Scotland's tourism product.	CNPA, LLTNPA, VS
3b	Work with industry to provide additional high quality experiences (including events and festivals) outwith peak season.	CNPA, DMOs, Tourism Groups, VS
3c	Collate Park-wide information on visitor numbers (vehicle counters, car park usage, visitor attraction numbers and people counters) and regularly disseminate.	LAs, SNH, Tourism Businesses, VS
3d	Make information on specific resource protection issues available to managers and users.	CNPA, SEPA, SNH

**Key**

*ACCC Association of Cairngorms Community Councils **BAs** Business Associations **CCC** Cairngorms Chamber of Commerce **CNPA** Cairngorms National Park Authority **DMOs** Destination Management Organisations **HIE** Highlands and Islands Enterprise **LAs** Local Authorities **LECs** Local Enterprise Companies **LLTNPA** Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Authority **NFUS** National Farmers Union of Scotland **SE** Scottish Enterprise **SEBG** Scottish Estates Business Group **SEPA** Scottish Environment Protection Agency **SNH** Scottish Natural Heritage **SRPBA** Scottish Rural Property and Business Association **VS** VisitScotland*

## 6.6 Making Housing More Affordable and Sustainable

### Why is this a priority?

The lack of access to affordable and good quality housing has been identified by many communities as a key issue facing the National Park. Young people and those on low incomes in particular have difficulty in securing suitable accommodation in their communities. The lack of access to good quality affordable housing is one of the key challenges to creating and maintaining sustainable communities in the long-term, so it is a priority to address now.

The demand for housing must also be managed to ensure high environmental and sustainability standards. Provision must be consistent with conserving and enhancing the area's special qualities, but should also seek more sustainable use of resources including water, energy and materials.

<b>Outcomes for 2012 – what does this seek to achieve in five years?</b>	
i.	There will be a reduction in the gap between housing need and supply in the Park to meet community needs.
ii.	There will be a reduction in the number of businesses identifying housing as a barrier to staff recruitment and retention.
iii.	There will be more good quality private rented sector accommodation available at affordable rents to meet local need.
iv.	New housing will be of a more sustainable design.

<b>Contribution to Strategic Objectives</b>	
<p>These five year outcomes will be important milestones in working towards the longer term strategic objectives in the following sections:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5.1.3 Sustainable Use of Resources;</li> <li>• 5.2.2 Sustainable Communities;</li> <li>• 5.2.3 Economy and Employment;</li> <li>• 5.2.4 Housing.</li> </ul>	
<b>Contribution to National Strategies</b>	
<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Aim/Objective</b>
Homes for Scotland's People (A Scottish Housing Policy Statement 2005)	Promote low-cost home ownership schemes to help first-time buyers get a foot on the property ladder.
	Public investment along with private finance will provide over 16,500 social rented homes and nearly 5,000 low cost homes in Scotland.
	An increase in government investment in affordable housing in rural areas.
A Policy on Architecture for Scotland	Principle: What we build now has a key role to play both in conserving and extending that which is of value in our built heritage and in achieving our objectives for a sustainable future.

<b>ACTION PROGRAMME 2007-2012: Making Housing More Affordable and Sustainable</b>		
<b>To achieve the five year outcomes the following actions are needed:</b>		
<b>Ref</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Who?</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Increasing supply and accessibility</b>	
1a	Record local communities/housing market preferences in a consistent and comparable manner, for example through Local Authority and Housing Association allocation policies and Common Housing Registers.	ACCC, CNPA, CPPs, HAs, HSCHT, LAs
1b	Increase the supply of quality, affordable private rented properties and privately owned housing for rent (for example through a rural leasing scheme).	CNPA, CS, HAs, LAs, Mortgage Lenders, Private Developers, Private Landlords, SRPBA
1c	Use the full range of low cost home ownership mechanisms to increase the level of affordable housing that remains affordable in perpetuity.	CNPA, CS, LAs, Low Cost Home Ownership Housing Providers (public or private), Mortgage Lenders
1d	Review the impact of second and holiday homes and put into place any additional agreed action required.	CNPA, Communities, CS, LAs
1e	Continue support for Local Authorities who are considering or re-applying for pressured area status.	CNPA, Communities, LAs
<b>2</b>	<b>Effective co-operation and co-ordination</b>	
2a	Co-ordinate work on housing within the Park and share information through the Cairngorms Housing Group.	ACCC, CNPA, CS, HAs, HIE, Highlands & Grampian Residents Association, Homes for Scotland, HSCHT, LAs, LECs, SRPBA
2b	Agree and introduce a consistent and comparable approach and set of indicators for tracking housing system trends, housing needs and other housing issues across the National Park.	CNPA, Communities, CS, HAs, LAs, Private Rented Sector
2c	Agree a planned and prioritised affordable housing programme with Local Authority Development Forums taking into account the development of the Strategic Investment Framework.	CNPA, Communities, CS, HAs, LAs, Private Rented Sector
2d	Undertake research on the impact of lack of housing supply on businesses in the Park.	CCC, CNPA, CS, HIE, LAs, Scottish Executive, SRPBA
<b>3</b>	<b>Improving quality and sustainability</b>	
3a	Prepare a sustainable design guide to encourage new development and infrastructure to complement the built and landscape character of the Park and meet high standards of energy efficiency and sustainable design.	CNPA, Communities, CS, LAs, Private Developers, SEPA, SNH
3b	Introduce a programme of innovative activities to promote and increase awareness and understanding of sustainable and energy efficient design.	CNPA, Communities, CS, LAs, Private Developers
3c	Introduce measures to improve house condition and management practices.	CNPA, CS, LAs, Private Landlords, SRPBA
<b>4</b>	<b>Effective land and infrastructure</b>	
4a	Make provision for effective land and policies for	CNPA

	housing in the Local Plan and regularly review.	
4b	Increase supply and accessibility of infrastructure for future developments through agreement with Scottish Water and SEPA.	CS, LAs, SEPA, SW
4c	Monitor effectiveness of the introduction of Rural Housing Burdens (Titles Condition (Scotland) Act 2003) on delivering affordable housing in the Park and devise alternative method of valuation for rural housing burden to better reflect market value (not going to open market value).	CNPA, CS, HSCHT, LAs, Other Designated Bodies under the Titles Conditions (Scotland) Act 2003
4d	Identify land and means of procurement for housing development, including private/public partnership.	CNPA, FCS, LAs, Land Managers, Other Public Bodies, SRPBA

**Key**

**ACCC** Association of Cairngorms Community Councils **CNPA** Cairngorms National Park Authority  
**CCC** Cairngorms Chamber of Commerce **CPPs** Community Planning Partnerships **CS** Communities  
Scotland **FCS** Forestry Commission Scotland **HAs** Housing Associations **HIE** Highlands and Islands  
Enterprise **HSCHT** Highlands Small Communities Housing Trust **LAs** Local Authorities **LECs** Local  
Enterprise Companies **SEPA** Scottish Environment Protection Agency **SRPBA** Scottish Rural Property  
and Business Association **SNH** Scottish Natural Heritage **SW** Scottish Water

## 6.7 Raising Awareness and Understanding of the Park

### Why is this a priority?

As a new National Park, the next five years are a critical time for the Cairngorms National Park to establish itself locally, nationally and beyond. It is important that people locally and across Scotland develop an increasing awareness of the National Park, why it is a special place and why it is a national asset that has particular management and investment needs.

Promoting a strong sense of place is crucial to much of what is in the National Park Plan. It is important to the vitality of communities, the attraction to visitors, and to the need for good communication and information in managing the area. Developing this sense of place is therefore a priority for the next five years.

<b>Outcomes for 2012 – what does this seek to achieve in five years?</b>	
i.	More people across Scotland will be more aware of the National Park, what makes it special and the opportunities it offers them.
ii.	Residents and visitors will appreciate the special qualities of the Park and understand more about their special management needs.
iii.	Everyone will know when they have arrived in the National Park and have a positive feeling about arriving in a special place.
iv.	More people who have visited the Park will have high quality experiences and will tell positive stories about the area.
v.	There will be more opportunities for people to become practically involved in caring for the Park and its special qualities.
vi.	There will be more opportunities to learn about and enjoy the Park and its special qualities – especially for young people, people with disabilities and people on low incomes.
vii.	There will be more comprehensive and detailed information about the special qualities available in order to provide a better basis for conserving and enhancing them in the future.

<b>Contribution to Strategic Objectives</b>	
<p>These five year outcomes will be important milestones in working towards the longer term strategic objectives in the following sections:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5.1.2 Conserving and Enhancing the Natural and Cultural Heritage;</li> <li>• 5.1.3 Sustainable Use of Resources;</li> <li>• 5.3.2 Sustainable Tourism;</li> <li>• 5.3.4 Learning and Understanding.</li> </ul>	
<b>Contribution to National Strategies</b>	
<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Aim/Objective</b>
Choosing Our Future: Scotland's Sustainable Development Strategy	A Scotland where learning for sustainable development is a core function of the formal education system; there are lifelong opportunities to learn; and the sustainable development message is clear and easily understood.
Scottish Rural Development Programme	To raise awareness, respect and understanding of our countryside, food and farming through 'first hand' experience.

<b>ACTION PROGRAMME 2007-2012: Raising Awareness and Understanding of the Park</b>		
<b>To achieve the five year outcomes the following actions are needed:</b>		
<b>Ref</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Who?</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Signage</b>	
1a	Install point of entry markers on all remaining roads entering the National Park.	CNPA, LAs, LECs
1b	Install pre-arrival signage for the National Park on key roads to the National Park.	CNPA, LAs, LECs, SE, VS
1c	Use the National Park brand image to signpost some natural features and attractions, and to encourage responsible behaviour.	CNPA, LAs, Scottish Executive, SNH
1d	Produce guidance to raise standards and consistency of business and community sign-posting and reduce the risk of proliferation of signs.	ACCC, CCC, CNPA, LAs, VS
<b>2</b>	<b>Key places for information transfer and interpretation</b>	
2a	Support the existing Tourist Information Centres, visitor centres and ranger bases as some of the key places to get information about the Park and visibly link these places to the Park in a significant way.	CNPA, DMOs, LAs, Ranger Services, SNH, VS
2b	Identify the other key places in and around the Park where there is a need or opportunity to get messages across and then make suitable modifications.	CCC, CNPA, DMOs, LECs, Visitor Attractions, VS
2c	Publish guidance, based on the Interpretation Framework and in a popular format, for use by funders and interpreters and establish mechanism for ongoing implementation of interpretation.	CNPA, DMOs, FCS, HS, LAs, Land Managers, NTS, RSPB, SNH, VS
2d	Install visitor information and Park-wide interpretation at key entry points to Park.	CNPA, Communities, LAs, Land Managers, LECs
2e	Promote and interpret the suite of National Nature Reserves as being best suited for the experience of special natural qualities in the Park.	CNPA, Land Managers, SNH
2f	Identify and promote a suite of themes to be integrated with the Interpretation Framework which will best exemplify, allow access to and interpret the influence of man on the National Park.	CNPA, Communities, HS, LAs, RCAHMS, SCT
2g	Make information available about the key, easily accessed features in the Park that best represent the special qualities of the area.	CNPA, DMOs, FCS, Land Managers, Ranger Services, SNH, VS
2h	Communities tell and present their stories about their place in the Park.	ACCC, Community Councils and Associations, CNPA, DMOs, SNH
<b>3</b>	<b>People and the Park</b>	
3a	Develop a cohesive approach to management of ranger services that meets needs of visitors, land managers and communities and of the National Park.	CNPA, Land Managers, Ranger Services, SNH, VS
3b	Provide opportunities to share good practice and for land	ACCC, CNPA, Land



	managers, communities and service providers to raise awareness and understanding of the special qualities and promote the benefits of looking after and enjoying them.	Managers, LECs
3c	Develop a programme of practical volunteering opportunities that link people to the special qualities of the Park.	BCTV, CNPA, Local Interest Groups (community and voluntary sector), SNH, VDS
3d	Extend the use of the John Muir Award to encourage more people to experience a sense of wildness in the Park and to share their experiences.	CNPA, LAs, JMT, Outdoor Activity Providers, SNH
3e	Develop a programme of activity to encourage people to become ambassadors for the Park, promoting messages about care, active enjoyment and wise use.	ACCC, CNPA, HS, LAs, Ranger Services, SNH, Social Inclusion Groups, VS
3f	Work with residents and visitors to identify and capture what is special for them about the Park and how these qualities change over time – for example through an oral history project.	ACCC, CNPA, HS, LAs, SNH
3g	Develop the Park-wide programme of events run by ranger services and others to interpret the special qualities.	CNPA, DMOs, Ranger Services, SNH, VS
3h	Develop an outreach programme of activity that encourages people throughout Scotland, regardless of age or background, to engage with the National Park.	CNPA, CS, JMT, LAs, LLTNPA, SNH, Social Inclusion Groups, SYHA
3i	Make greater use of the formal education sector and the ‘Curriculum for Excellence’ and other mechanisms as a path to enthusing Scotland’s young people about the Cairngorms National Park and involving them in its future development.	CNPA, Colleges, LAs, SEERAD, SQA
<b>4</b>	<b>Print and web resources</b>	
4a	Develop a customer-oriented website about the Park that meets needs of visitors, residents and others, acting as an entry level portal to other websites.	ACCC, CCC, CNPA, LAs, LECs, VS
4b	Use other significant websites to provide high quality information that is high profile and easily searchable in the context of the National Park.	ACCC, CCC, CNPA, DMOs, FCS, LAs, SNH, VS
4c	Develop a suite of publications about the special qualities of the National Park and how to enjoy them responsibly.	CNPA, Communities, DMOs, HS, RCAHMS, SCT, SNH, VS
4d	Co-ordinate print and web material about the National Park to meet visitors’ information needs, from pre-arrival through to their destination.	CCC, CNPA, DMOs, LAs, VS
4e	Provide specific information to meet needs of people who find it difficult to access the Park – especially young people, people with disabilities and people living on low incomes.	CNPA, DMOs, HS, LAs, SNH, VS
4f	Develop style/design templates that can be used on different series of publications to promote the overall identity of the Park.	ACCC, CNPA, DMOs, LAs, VS
4g	Develop a range of educational resources based on the Park’s special qualities, linked to the Curriculum for Excellence and other appropriate learning frameworks.	CNPA, HS, LAs, SNH
<b>5</b>	<b>Marketing the National Park</b>	

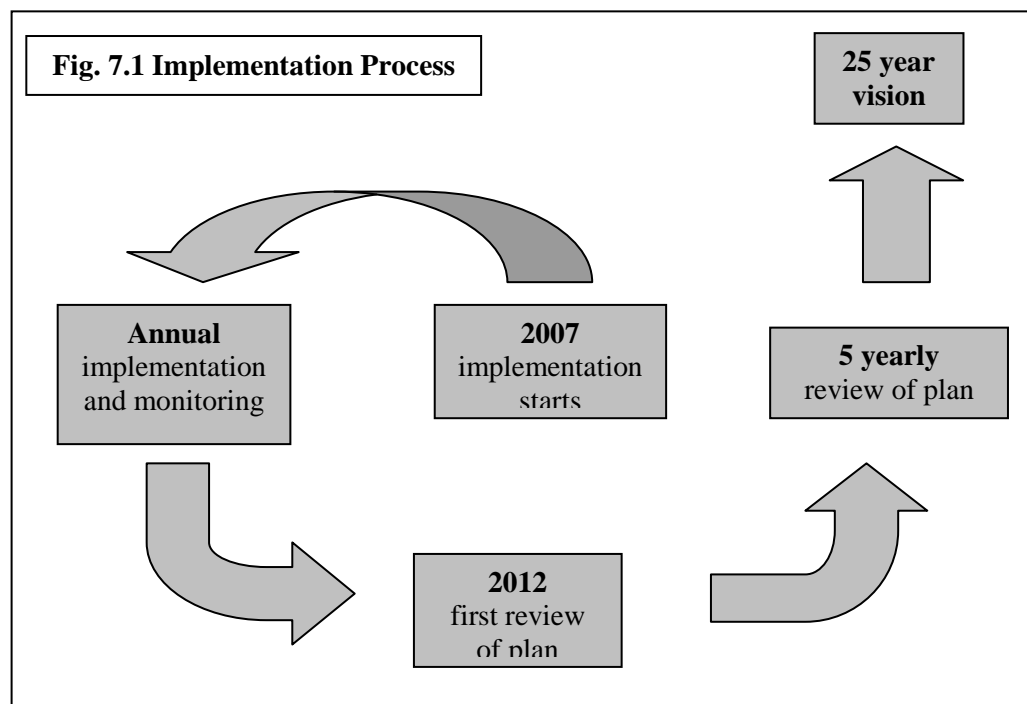
5a	Provide a co-ordinated and collective approach to marketing and promoting the identity of the Park using the brand image, marketing materials and campaigns.	ACCC, CCC, CNPA, FCS, SNH, VS
5b	Roll out the use of the National Park brand image on appropriate publications, signs and visitor information for use by businesses, community associations and other sectors in order to promote the overall identity of the Park, encourage high quality standards and environmentally sound practices.	ACCC, CCC, CNPA, DMOs, VS
5c	Market the attractions, places or areas in the Park in a way that promotes the overall identity and integrity of the National Park.	CCC, CNPA, DMOs, VS
<b>6</b>	<b>Developing our collective understanding of the special qualities</b>	
6a	Address key gaps in baseline information identified in the State of the Park Report 2006.	CNPA
6b	Promote the Park as a case study and pilot area for research and educational projects and as a destination for visiting special interest groups.	All
6c	Understand more about the special qualities of the Park and how these are valued and share information about the special qualities between public bodies, land managers, businesses, communities and others with an interest.	All
6d	Find new ways to make the information, data and collective knowledge about the Park available for everyone to use.	All

**Key**

*ACCC Association of Cairngorms Community Councils **BTCV** British Trust for Conservation Volunteers **CCC** Cairngorms Chamber of Commerce **CNPA** Cairngorms National Park Authority **CS** Communities Scotland **DMOs** Destination Management Organisations **FCS** Forestry Commission Scotland **HS** Historic Scotland **JMT** John Muir Trust **LAs** Local Authorities **LECs** Local Enterprise Companies **LLTNPA** Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Authority **NTS** National Trust for Scotland **RCAHMS** Royal Commission on Ancient and Historic Monuments of Scotland **RSPB** Royal Society for the Protection of Birds **SCT** Scottish Civic Trust **SEERAD** Scottish Executive Environment and Rural Affairs Department **SNH** Scottish Natural Heritage **SQA** Scottish Qualifications Authority **SYHA** Scottish Youth Hostels Association **VDS** Volunteer Development Scotland **VS** VisitScotland*

## 7. Implementation

Implementation of the plan begins at the start of the 2007-08 financial year and runs for a five year period until 2012 when the plan will be reviewed for the next five year period. Figure 7.1 summarises the ongoing process of implementation.



### 7.1 A Partnership Approach

The National Park Plan has been developed in partnership with a diverse range of organisations and interests involved in managing the Park (see Annex I). Implementation of the plan and realisation of the vision rely equally on this diverse range of partners. The agenda set out by the National Park Plan has a scope beyond the remit of any one organisation, including the National Park Authority. It sets out the co-ordinated approach needed across sectors to work towards the aims of the Park.

The public, private, community and voluntary sectors, as well as individuals, all play a role in shaping the Park. Implementation of the plan will rely on further development of partnerships between these sectors, together with a shared sense of responsibility for the Park.

There is no single model of partnership that applies to all aspects of the plan – the partners involved will vary, as will those responsible for taking the lead. However, the starting point must be to add value over and above the activities of each individual partner. A significant amount can be achieved through combining and better co-ordinating existing resources through the National Park Plan.

Some formal mechanisms to bring partners together for both delivery and ongoing advisory functions are necessary. In establishing these groups, it is important to ensure cross-sectoral representation, but also to minimise the additional burden on partners.

The National Park Authority will co-ordinate a series of mechanisms to bring the necessary partnerships together based on the following framework.

<b>Implementation Framework</b>		
<b>Mechanism</b>	<b>Role</b>	<b>Who?</b>
<b>Priority for Action Delivery Groups</b>	To deliver and report progress on the actions necessary to achieve the five year outcomes for each priority for action.	The partners taking action to deliver the priority.
<b>National Park Advisory Forums</b>	To advise and communicate on ongoing implementation of the three plan themes of Conserving and Enhancing the Park, Living and Working in the Park and Enjoying and Understanding the Park.	Representation from across the public, private, community and voluntary sectors.
<b>Advisory Panel on Joined-up-Government</b>	To co-ordinate the work of the public sector in achieving the aims of the Park.	Senior representatives of public bodies.
<b>Forward Strategy Group</b>	To look ahead and beyond the National Park Plan, monitor the State of the Park, identify and advise on drivers of change, strategic research and forward planning.	Expertise from across the public, private, community and voluntary sectors.

The role of the present Advisory Forums, which have made a significant contribution to developing the National Park Plan, will be reviewed as part of the process to establish the most effective means of engagement to inform ongoing implementation.

The necessary groups and their detailed remit and membership will be developed by the National Park Authority in discussion with partners to achieve the most effective and efficient ways of working.

## **7.2 Adding Value to Existing Work**

There is much ongoing work carried out by the public, private, community and voluntary sectors that is already contributing to the strategic objectives and aims of the Park. The National Park Plan provides a context for this activity to continue and a means of improving the integration and co-ordination.

Above all, the purpose of the National Park Plan is to add value to the existing activity and policy context within the Park. It can do this through increasing the integration and co-ordination of activities and policies and through identifying new areas of work to deliver more for the people and places of the Park.

Within the public sector, added value can be achieved through greater alignment of corporate plans, objectives and priorities in the National Park. The National Park Plan is a starting point for closer integration of both public policy and its implementation.

More broadly, added value can be achieved through greater co-operation between and within sectors to combine effort and resources around the needs of the people and places of the Park and by working towards a shared vision.

### **7.3 National Park Investment Programme**

There are many organisations currently investing in work and projects in the National Park that will contribute towards the strategic objectives of the National Park Plan. Several public bodies in the area facilitate activity through grant schemes which draw funding from a variety of sources.

Greater co-ordination of this public investment between bodies and around the aims of the National Park has the potential to facilitate a significant contribution towards the National Park Plan. The National Park Authority will lead a process to achieve greater co-ordination and better value from public investment. This will include seeking to draw additional funding sources into the National Park, for example through a Landscape Partnership that could deliver actions across several of the priorities for action.

### **7.4 National Park Research Programme**

Research is a key tool in delivering the National Park Plan, managing change and understanding more about the management needs of the Park. The National Park Authority will lead a process to identify and prioritise research needs associated with the National Park Plan and share the information that results from this research. There are many organisations that carry out relevant research in and around the Park. Greater co-ordination will maximise the value of research to a range of partners and make the results easily accessible to all with an interest.

There are some particular research needs identified in the strategic objectives and priorities for action which are required to take the plan forward. The research programme should also look beyond these horizons to improve our understanding of some of the drivers of change affecting the Park (Section 3.3) and help to develop innovative approaches that will inform future management.

### **7.5 Role of the National Park Authority in Implementation**

The role of the National Park Authority is to lead and co-ordinate implementation of the plan. In seeking to add value, the Authority will always promote the most effective and efficient means to achieve the objectives and aims of the Park. The key question regarding leadership should be ‘who is best placed to deliver in the interests of the National Park?’

In many cases this will be other bodies in the public sector, the private sector, communities or voluntary groups. In some cases the National Park Authority will also

take a direct role in delivering actions as one of the partners. The National Park Authority will therefore act to facilitate, support, influence and deliver as appropriate to achieve the objectives of the plan. It is also the role of the National Park Authority to ensure the necessary linkages and communications between delivery and advisory groups and to ensure ongoing feedback between groups to inform implementation and review.

The National Park Authority will co-ordinate reporting on implementation and take a lead in ensuring a continuing focus on the National Park, including publication of an annual review of progress in implementing the priorities for action (see Section 8).

## **7.6 Implementation through Other Plans and Strategies**

The plans and strategies of many other organisations, public, private, community and voluntary, will have a significant influence on the delivery of the strategic objectives of the National Park Plan. The plan provides a framework through which other plans and strategies can contribute to the aims of the National Park.

Where there is a need for further policy or guidance, subsidiary plans and strategies should provide this. For example, the National Park Authority, with its partners, has prepared the Outdoor Access Strategy and the Forest and Woodland Framework, both of which provide more detailed guidance on working towards some of the strategic objectives of the National Park Plan.

The National Park Authority is also responsible for the preparation of the Local Plan for the area, setting out detailed policies to manage the spatial planning and built development of the National Park. The policies of the Local Plan set out the means by which built development will contribute to the strategic objectives of the National Park Plan.

The plans and strategies of other groups in the area will also implement aspects of the plan, as appropriate to their area. For example, the Cairngorm, Rothern and Glenmore Group (CRAGG) has already considered a strategy to co-ordinate management of their area which shows how many of the objectives and priorities of the National Park Plan can be implemented at a more detailed and local level.

Community Plans are particularly relevant to the delivery of many aspects of the National Park Plan. Community Plans provide an existing mechanism which brings together a partnership of relevant interests and provides a means for community engagement in implementing the National Park Plan. In these areas of common interest, the partners involved should use existing opportunities and mechanisms as far as possible.

## **7.7 Challenges and Risks**

A strategic plan covering such a wide range of objectives cannot in itself ensure delivery over the coming years. There are a number of challenges and risks that we face in terms of our collective ability to deliver the plan and realise the vision for the future of the Cairngorms National Park.

There are a number of essential requirements to ensure the successful delivery of the National Park Plan:

- Genuine commitment by all partners involved to actively pursue the National Park Plan (aims, strategic objectives, priorities for action and outcomes) and to actively set work in the context of the National Park;
- Trust and co-operation between partners to ensure the National Park Plan is delivered as efficiently and effectively as possible;
- Clarity as to who is responsible for delivering different aspects of the National Park Plan, a willingness to take responsibility and the allocation of resources to do so;
- Access to the required information, skills and expertise to allow effective decision making and delivery of action plans; and
- Regular communication with all interested parties on progress being made, opportunities to get involved and managing expectations as to what can be delivered within the available resources and timescales.

In addition, there are a number of risks to the successful delivery of the plan:

- New legislation or political priorities which divert public sector resources to other activities;
- A reduction in external funding resources (such as the Rural Development Regulation, LEADER+, European Funds);
- Environmental change that results in different conditions such as climate change or catastrophic events such as extreme weather, disease; and
- Social and economic change influenced by national or international trends (such as ageing population, international tourism trends, cost of living).

## **8. Monitoring and Review**

The National Park Plan will be reviewed at five year intervals. There are two strands to monitoring and review of the plan:

- Annual Report on the Priorities for Action;
- Monitoring the State of the Park.

### **8.1 Annual Report on the Priorities for Action**

An annual report will be prepared by the National Park Authority to monitor progress in the priorities for action. This will monitor the collective efforts of all partners in implementation and will be separate from the National Park Authority's own organisational annual report.

The report will monitor whether the National Park Authority and partners are taking the actions set out in the five year action programmes, essentially monitoring inputs and activities. It will also monitor progress towards the five year outcomes that are set out for each priority for action. This is about monitoring whether the management interventions being made are having the desired effects and whether we are collectively achieving the five year outcomes as a step on the way to the longer term vision.

For each five year outcome, a measurable indicator will be identified against which progress within the five year period will be monitored. At the end of the five year period, the effectiveness of management responses will be judged against the same indicator. This will inform the review of the National Park Plan at that stage. It will help to determine whether sufficient progress towards the long-term vision has been made in the priorities and therefore whether they still require a particular focus within the next five year period. The priorities for action will change if the issue is no longer considered pressing.

### **8.2 Monitoring the State of the Park**

The annual report will only monitor whether progress is made in those areas that have been identified as priorities for the next five years. There remain many other aspects of the National Park that may change over that period and in the long-term priorities for action will come and go as circumstances change.

Monitoring must also look to the longer term and identify changes in the National Park. This is about monitoring the ongoing state of the Park.

Changes to the state of the Park are likely to occur for a number of reasons. Some changes will be the result of management actions – change may be actively sought or may also be an unanticipated effect. Others will be the result of external drivers of change influencing the National Park (see Section 3.3).



To monitor changes in the state of the Park, a set of indicators will be identified reflecting the aims of the Park. These indicators will cover the four broad themes of the State of the Park Report:

- Natural resources
- Cultural resources
- Visitor and recreation resources
- Socio-economic resources

Within each theme, a number of headline indicators will be identified to give a snapshot of the state of the Park. These can only indicate the key relationships of interest – they are not intended to give a comprehensive survey of all aspects of the National Park. They will give an insight into the changing relationships between the pressures affecting the Park, the state of its resources and the impacts on the resources and special qualities of the Park.

Over time, these indicators will help to guide management. The information will be collated and reported at five-yearly intervals, in an update to the State of the Park Report and will inform the five-yearly review of the National Park Plan. As well as informing a review of the long-term objectives, this information will also inform a review of what the priorities for action should be over the next five year period, as these may have changed.

Consultation on proposed indicators in the Draft National Park Plan identified many organisations that are already involved in monitoring relevant aspects and many that wish to contribute to developing the most appropriate indicators to monitor the State of the Park. The National Park Authority therefore concluded that selection of indicators should be a collective process involving several stakeholders. This will take place during 2007 in order to establish a monitoring regime that can inform the first review of the plan in 2012.

### **8.3 Framework for Monitoring and Review**

The two strands are drawn together into a framework for monitoring and review that will give an insight into the relationships between the state of the Park, drivers of change and management actions. This framework identifies:

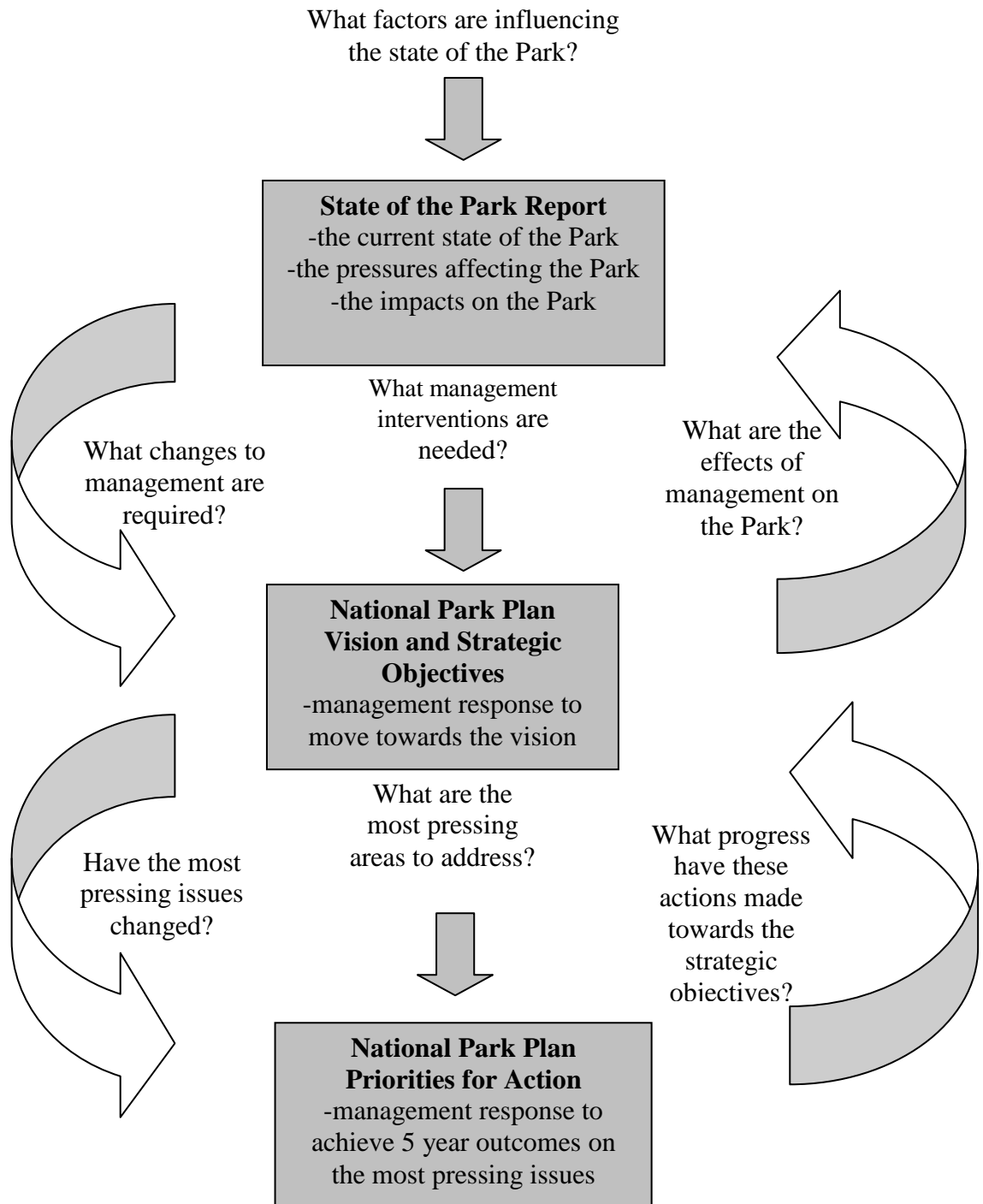
- **Pressures** affecting the Park;
- The current **state** of the Park's resources;
- **Impacts** on the Park; and
- The management **responses**.

This framework is known as the 'Pressure – State – Impact – Response' model.

The State of the Park Report identifies significant information about the current state of resources, the pressures affecting the Park and the associated impacts on its special qualities. In turn, the management responses to these pressures, states and impacts are set out in the National Park Plan. In particular, the Priorities for Action set out responses to the most pressing issues.

The relationship between these elements is set out in Figure 8.3.

**Fig. 8.3 The Monitoring and Review Process**



## **9. Conclusion**

The National Park Plan sets out the long-term vision and management framework for the National Park, as well as identifying priorities for action for the five years from 2007-2012. The plan itself is only the starting point and the challenge for everyone involved in the National Park is to deliver our collective aspirations for the area.

The vision of a truly world-class National Park is an ambitious one and this is only the first of a series of National Park Plans that will shape the Cairngorms in the future. It cannot and will not deliver everything in the first five years – but a collective effort will make significant progress in this period.

This is a plan for the National Park as a whole, in which the public, private, community and voluntary sectors are all vital to success. It is critical that all interests continue to come together and build on the communications and partnerships that have already been established to deliver the outcomes identified in the plan.

## **ANNEX I: Contributors to the National Park Plan**

**The following organisations and groups have contributed to the development of the National Park Plan through the public consultation and discussions:**

Aberdeen City and Shire Economic Forum  
Aberdeenshire Council  
Aboyne Academy  
Alford Academy  
Alvie and Dalraddy Estates  
An Camus Mor  
Angus Council  
Association of Cairngorms Community Councils  
Association of Deer Management Groups  
Aviemore and the Cairngorms Destination Management Organisation

Badenoch and Strathspey Conservation Group  
Ballater and Crathie Community Council  
Bòrd na Gàidhlig  
Braemar Community Council  
Brechin High School  
British Association for Shooting and Conservation  
British Deer Society  
British Geological Survey  
Built Environment Forum Scotland

Cairngorm, Rothiemurchus and Glenmore Group  
The Cairngorm Club  
Cairngorms Campaign  
Cairngorms Chamber of Commerce  
Cairngorms Housing Group  
Cairngorms Local Biodiversity Action Plan Group  
Cairngorms Local Outdoor Access Forum  
Cairngorms Moorland Project Steering Group  
Cairngorms National Park Economic and Social Development Forum  
Cairngorms National Park Integrated Land Management Forum  
Cairngorms National Park Visitor Services, Information and Tourism Forum  
Canoe Scotland  
Comunn na Gàidhlig  
Communities Scotland  
Community Recycling Network for Scotland  
Confederation of Forest Industries  
Council for Scottish Archaeology  
Crofters Commission  
The Crown Estate  
CTC-RTR Aberdeenshire

Dalwhinnie Community Council  
Deer Commission for Scotland

East Grampian Deer Management Group  
Elphinstone Institute, University of Aberdeen

Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group Scotland  
Finzean Community Council  
Forests Trees and Livelihoods  
Forestry and Timber Association  
Forestry Commission Scotland  
Forest Enterprise Scotland

Grantown Grammar School

Highland Council  
Highlands and Islands Enterprise  
HIE Inverness and East Highland  
HIE Moray  
Historic Scotland  
HITRANS

Invercauld Estate

John Muir Trust

Kincraig and Vicinity Community Council  
Kingussie High School

Marr Area Partnership  
Moray Council  
The Moray Society

National Farmers Union of Scotland  
National Trust for Scotland  
North East Mountain Trust

Ramblers Association  
Rothiemurchus and Glenmore Community Association  
Rothiemurchus Estate  
Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historic Monuments of Scotland  
Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors  
Royal Society for the Protection of Birds  
Royal Zoological Society

Scottish Agricultural College  
Scottish Canoe Association  
Scottish Civic Trust  
Scottish Council for National Parks  
Scottish Countryside Rangers Association  
Scottish Crofting Foundation  
Scottish Estates Business Group  
Scottish Enterprise Grampian

Scottish Enterprise Tayside  
Scottish Environment Link  
Scottish Environment Protection Agency  
Scottish Executive Environment and Rural Affairs Department  
Scottish Native Woods  
Scottish Natural Heritage  
Scottish Raptor Study Group  
Scottish Rural Property and Business Association  
Scottish Water  
Scottish Wild Land Group  
Scottish Wildlife Trust  
Speyside High School  
SportScotland  
SUSTRANS

VisitScotland

Webster High School  
Woodland Trust for Scotland

During the public consultation a total of 31 consultation meetings were held with communities and special interest groups. A total of 61 individuals also submitted written comments during the public consultation.

## ANNEX II: IUCN Management Principles for Category V Protected Areas

(Taken from 'Management Guidelines for IUCN Category V Protected Areas', World Commission on Protected Areas Best Practice Guidelines Series No 9, 2002)

### Principle 1:

*Conserving landscape, biodiversity and cultural values are at the heart of the Category V protected area approach.* Though much emphasis is placed in this guidance on economic and social considerations, Category V is a conservation approach which should reflect the over-arching objectives of all protected areas. It is therefore about managing change in such a way that environmental and cultural values endure: change should take place within limits that will not disrupt those values.

### Principle 2:

*The focus of management should be on the **point of interaction** between people and nature.* To recall part of the definition used in the 1994 Guidelines: "Safeguarding the integrity of (the) traditional interaction is vital to the protection, maintenance and evolution of the area" (IUCN, 1994, p.22). Thus, whereas in many other kinds of protected areas it is nature itself that is the main focus of management, what distinguishes Category V is that management primarily addresses the **linkage** between people and nature.

### Principle 3:

*People should be seen as stewards of the landscape.* As the occupants of lived-in, working landscapes that are of great value to society as whole, the people living within Category V protected areas should be supported in their role as stewards of the landscape. They are the architects of much we value in the landscape, and their support is needed to ensure its survival. Ideally, they help to shape and care for the environment with the traditions of the past, but with an eye to the future. In that sense, they may more correctly be described as 'the managers' of Protected Landscapes than the professionals who are employed with that formal title: good managers in the professional sense will therefore see their role as 'facilitators' and 'negotiators'.

### Principle 4:

*Management must be undertaken **with** and **through** local people, and mainly **for** and **by** them.* This principle recognises that the full involvement of local people is essential, and that Category V protected areas should never be planned **against** their long-term interests. It also recognises that local communities should play an important role in delivering protected area objectives and be among the principal beneficiaries of these. But note that local people are not the only source of expertise. Moreover, there are other stakeholders who can derive benefits from protected landscapes: for example, visitors from nearby urban areas or further afield, resource users from afar (e.g. consumers of water supplies downstream), or the wider community interested in biodiversity or landscape protection.

**Principle 5:**

*Management should be based on co-operative approaches, such as co-management and multi-stakeholder equity.* It follows from Principles 2-4 that structures and processes are needed to ensure that people are involved fully in shaping management decisions and come to see the protected area as theirs. This will require the operation of open, transparent procedures based on democratic principles. Co-management approaches may be particularly appropriate to Category V protected areas.

**Principle 6:**

*Effective management requires a supportive political and economic environment.* The foregoing principles cannot be followed unless broader governance structures and practices in society at large are committed to certain standards. The management of Protected Landscapes will be easier to achieve if the government recognises the need for a quality of life perspective, follows democratic processes, and engages willingly in participatory planning based upon a fair and equitable approach to all groups and respect for a plurality of cultures. It will also be greatly helped by a top-level national commitment to sustainability, the alleviation of poverty, addressing the root causes of inequality, promoting gender equity and supporting civil society.

**Principle 7:**

*Management of Category V protected areas should not only be concerned with protection but also enhancement.* Because Category V protected areas are lived-in landscapes, the environment will have been manipulated more than is the case with the other categories of protected areas. It follows that a more active role for management is appropriate, not only in the protection but also in restoration of natural or cultural values that have been eroded or lost. It may on occasion also include the creation of new environmental and social assets which are ecologically or culturally appropriate: examples would be a new woodland or forested areas established on degraded soils, and the development of a new market for goods produced by local people.

**Principle 8:**

*When there is irreconcilable conflict between the objectives of management, priority should be given to retaining the special qualities of the area.* Because Protected Landscapes have important social as well as environmental objectives, there is considerable potential for conflict between objectives. As far as possible, management should seek to reconcile such conflicts. In the last analysis there need to be clear rules about what would have priority in such a situation. This principle states that when this happens, priority should be given to protecting the qualities that make the area special (what economists sometimes call 'critical environmental capital'). Because such a claim is likely to be contested, the principle may need to be embodied in legislation.

**Principle 9:**



*Economic activities that do not need to take place within the Protected Landscape should be located outside it.* As a lived in, working landscape, a Category V protected area will contain a variety of economic activities and land-uses, such as agriculture, forestry, tourism and some forms of industry, commerce and retailing, as well as residential areas, some infrastructure, etc. The tests for whether such an activity or use is acceptable within the protected area, are whether (i) it is sustainable, (ii) it contributes to the aims of the area and (iii) there are strong reasons for it to be located within it. Where the proposed activity fails these tests, it should either be totally re-designed to fit Category V objectives or located outside the area altogether.

**Principle 10:**

*Management should be business-like and of the highest professional standard.* Notwithstanding the strong social and environmental emphasis in the management of Protected Landscapes, the operation of management should be business-like, and hard headed if necessary. It requires effective marketing of conservation approaches too. While this may be difficult to achieve in the short term, financial sustainability should be an aim, rather than 100% reliance on public funding. Procedures should be put in place to ensure that public, private and voluntary funds and other resources are used with due regard to economy, efficiency and effectiveness. All decision-making concerning the use of resources should be transparent and accountable.

**Principle 11:**

*Management should be flexible and adaptive.* Like protected area management in general, that of Category V protected areas needs to be capable of adjustment over time in light of experience and changing circumstances – but since its scope embraces both natural and human systems, the need for flexibility is all the greater. Management of Protected Landscapes should also be flexible and adaptive in the sense that it should respond to the very different social, cultural and economic situations in which it takes place: it should always be culturally appropriate and economically relevant.

**Principle 12:**

*The success of management should be measured in environmental **and** social terms.* Though absolutely central, biodiversity measures are only one of several indicators: others include social and economic welfare and the quality of life for local and other people, other environmental considerations such as energy efficiency or natural resource management, and measures relating to the conservation of the cultural environment. An aim should be to demonstrate the maximum social and economic benefits for the local community with the minimum environmental impact. The setting of objectives, also allocation of resources and monitoring of effectiveness should all be undertaken with this breadth of interest in mind.

## ANNEX III: Glossary

Arctic-alpine habitat	Vegetation communities characteristic of high mountain environments.
Biodiversity	The variety of all living organisms.
Biomass	Material derived from plant or animal matter including agricultural and forestry residues that can be used for fuel.
Boreal Forest	The once extensive forest of northern Europe.
Cairngorms Partnership	A Partnership Board operational from 1995 to 2003 tasked with developing a coherent management strategy for the Cairngorms area.
Cairngorms Working Party	A working party which in 1992 recommended the establishment of the Cairngorms Partnership.
Cairngorms Local Plan	The Local Plan prepared by the Park Authority to guide planning and development control within the Park.
Caledonian Forest	Native Scots pine forest that has regenerated from generation to generation from the extensive boreal forest that once covered larger areas of northern Europe.
Community Planning	A process which helps public bodies work with communities to plan and deliver better services.
Core Paths	Those routes seen to be the main routes which are needed to provide people with reasonable access throughout their area. The National Park Authority has a duty to prepare a Core Paths Plan by February 2008.
Crofting	A system of land tenure currently regulated by the Crofters (Scotland) Act 1993.
Designed Landscape	Grounds laid out for architectural effect and amenity. Those of national importance are listed in Historic Scotland's Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes.
Ecosystem	The functioning system of habitats, species and natural processes that supports biodiversity.
European Charter for Sustainable Tourism	A charter developed by the Europarc Federation of Protected Areas to recognise and encourage the sustainable management of tourism.
Favourable Condition	Refers to the condition of notified interests within sites designated under statutory provisions for nature conservation.
Geological Conservation Review	A non-statutory list of sites identified as being of national importance for their geology, palaeontology, mineralogy or geomorphology.
Geodiversity	The natural diversity of geological, landform and soil features and processes.
Geomorphology	The landforms and features resulting from geological processes.
Habitat network	The interconnected pattern of habitats.
Historic Environment	The imprint of past generations in the countryside, buildings, settlements and archaeology.
Hydrology	Study of water processes.
Hydromorphology	The landforms and features created by water processes.
IUCN (World Conservation Union)	The IUCN brings together 900 states, government agencies and other organisations in a partnership to promote the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources.
Landscape Capacity Studies	Analysis of the landscape's ability to absorb development and the implications for landscape character.
Landscape Character Assessments	A process designed to bring a consistent approach to describing and characterising landscapes.
Listed Buildings	Buildings listed as being of special architectural or historic interest and therefore requiring special protection.
Local Plan	A plan that provides the policy and locational framework for development in the area, forming part of the statutory planning framework.
Montane	Areas of high ground above the natural tree-line.
Munros	Mountains in Scotland over 3000 feet (914 metres) in height.
Natura 2000	A European Union network of nature conservation sites representing

	the best examples of the range of habitats found in the EU, comprising Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas.
National Nature Reserves	A suite of sites containing examples of some of the most important natural and semi-natural ecosystems in the UK. They are managed to conserve their habitats or provide opportunities for scientific study.
National Scenic Areas	Areas of land considered to be of national significance for their outstanding scenic interest, which must be conserved as part of Scotland's natural heritage.
National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG)	Statements of Scottish Executive policy on nationally important land use and planning matters. They are being superceded by the Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) series.
Priority Species	Species that are qualifying criteria of Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas; listed in Annex I, II, IV or V of the EC Habitats Directive; listed in Schedules 1,5 or 8 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981; or listed in the UK and Local Biodiversity Action Plan.
Public benefits	The benefits enjoyed by the public and the nation that result from land management or business practices.
Ramsar Sites	Sites designated as globally important wetlands to meet the UK's commitments under the Ramsar Convention.
Registered Social Landlords	Not-for-profit organisations providing homes for people in housing need regulated by Communities Scotland.
Rural Housing Burden	A mechanism under the Title Conditions (Scotland) Act 2003 obliging an owner to offer the house back to the Rural Housing Body on sale to ensure the property remains in the affordable stock.
Scheduled Ancient Monuments	Archaeological features recorded and protected by Historic Scotland
Scottish Outdoor Access Code	Guidance on how the access rights and responsibilities under the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 should be exercised. It details responsibilities when taking access or managing land and water.
Section 75 Planning Agreements	A legal provision to apply conditions of use or occupancy to a grant of planning consent.
Sites of Special Scientific Interest	A national suite of nature conservation sites protected as examples of the UK's flora, fauna, geological or physiographical features.
Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)	Part of the Natura 2000 network, SACs are protected areas representative of the range of habitats and (non-bird) species of the European Union.
Special Protection Areas (SPA)	Part of the Natura 2000 network, SPAs are protected areas that are important habitats for rare and migratory birds in the European Union.
Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)	A process to ensure that the significant environmental effects of plans, policies and programmes are identified, assessed, consulted on, mitigated and monitored.
Sustainable	A way of living and working which uses and manages environmental, social and economic resources in such a way that future generations will also be able to enjoy them.