

Cairngorms National Park Plan 2007

Summary

What will
the Park
look like in 2030?
Our Shared Vision

Priorities
for the Park
How will
they affect YOU?

How was the National Park Plan produced ?



Winter on Cairngorm

Welcome to this summary of the Cairngorms National Park Plan which summarises the background, vision and priorities for the future of the Cairngorms. The contents of the National Park Plan was agreed thanks to feedback, comments, discussion and agreement by both members of the public and a wide range of partners and organisations.

The plan itself is however only a starting point and the challenge for everyone involved in the National Park is to deliver our collective aspirations for the area in the future. Each year an annual report will be prepared by the Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA) to monitor and report on progress.

The 25 year **Vision** for the Cairngorms National Park is explained on pages 4 and 5 of this newsletter. It gives a snapshot of the outcomes and differences that will be made in the long term across the three themes of conserving and enhancing the Park, living and working in the Park, and enjoying and understanding the Park.

On pages 6-12 we turn our sights to the shorter term. Here the seven specific **Priorities for Action** over the five years 2007-2012 are summarised. A series of case studies help put each priority (listed across) into some perspective:

- 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.

Want to find out more?

We hope you find this newsletter provides a useful summary of the Cairngorms National Park Plan 2007. However, if you would like to find out more about the strategy and context of the Plan as well as specific information about what actions are planned and who is responsible for what, you can download the full 140 page version from www.cairngorms.co.uk or get a copy by contacting:

The Cairngorms National Park Authority
14 The Square
Grantown-on-Spey
Moray, PH26 3HG
T: 01479 873535
enquiries@cairngorms.co.uk

The publication is available in other formats on request including a large print version.



Pine marten



Bog moss

A blueprint for the future

Whether you're a Cairngorms householder or business; a potential or regular visitor to the area; or you are part of an organisation that is involved in managing the Park, the Cairngorms National Park Plan is the blueprint for how the Park will be managed over the next 25 years.

From employment, business and housing to recreation and conservation, the Park Plan covers a wide range of topics that will affect us all. Everyone involved in managing the Cairngorms National Park shares this collective vision – of making it a truly world class National Park.

By combining our efforts, being creative and doing things in a different or better way, we really can and will make that difference to benefit the people and places in the Park.

Aims of Scottish National Parks:

- 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.

Cairngorms National Park Facts and Figures

- Covers 3,800 sq km – 5 per cent of Scotland
- Approximately 16,000 residents
- 1.4million visitors each year
- Two National Scenic Areas
- Most extensive area of Caledonian Forest in Britain
- Most extensive area of arctic-alpine habitat in Britain
- Internationally important geology and landforms
- Home to 25 per cent of the UK's rare and threatened species
- 75 per cent of Park land is privately owned
- 39 per cent of the area is designated for nature conservation
- 25 per cent of the area is of European importance
- Four of Scotland's five highest mountains
- 424 listed buildings
- 60 scheduled ancient monuments



Highland Games

Vision



What will the Cairngorms National Park look like in 25 years time?

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

- The distinct character of the Cairngorms **landscape** and its diverse mix of mountains, straths, glens, forests and farmland will be conserved and enhanced, shaped by natural processes and positive management.
- The sense of **wildness**, 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 will continue to have a rich **biodiversity** 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 important **geodiversity** record in the Park will be widely recognised and will be well managed and conserved.
- There will continue to be an **active and productive land management** sector that conserves and enhances the special qualities and is a significant economic asset.

- The **built heritage** of the Park will be safeguarded and new buildings will complement or enhance their setting, including the settlement pattern and character.
- The **archaeological evidence and material records** of previous generations will be well recorded and understood, actively cared for and safeguarded.
- The **cultures and traditions** 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.

Living and Working in the Park 25 year outcomes

- There will be **thriving and sustainable communities** 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.
- There will be a wide range of opportunities for people in the National Park to develop their **skills and employment options** that will meet the needs of individuals and businesses.



- The outstanding environment of the Park will stimulate economic activity, **businesses will thrive**, and the Park will be an economic asset to the wider regional economy.
- Delivering **economic, social and environmental sustainability** 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.
- People will be able to access **housing** 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.
- The National Park will be a leader in **sustainable rural transport**. 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 will be a **vibrant renewable energy, recycling and waste sector** 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.
- There will be an excellent and integrated network of routes to enjoy **outdoor access** across the Park that meets the needs of residents and visitors.
- There will be an even higher quality and increased range of **outdoor recreation** activities available and accessible to a wider range of people of all abilities to enjoy the Park.
- There will be a high level of understanding and widespread practice of **responsible behaviour** 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.
- **Interpretation** 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.
- The Park will be a significant **national learning resource** that raises understanding of the special qualities of the area and sustainable development, while also contributing to national objectives.
- 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.

Enjoying and Understanding the Park 25 year outcomes

- The Cairngorms National Park will be **renowned** in Scotland and internationally and will make a significant positive contribution to Scotland's national identity.
- The Cairngorms National Park will be an internationally recognised **world class sustainable tourism destination** that consistently exceeds residents' and visitors' expectations in terms of quality of environment, services and experience.





Oystercatcher

Conserving and Enhancing Biodiversity and Landscapes

What difference will you see by 2012?

The geology, abundant wildlife, rich habitats, diverse landscapes and the deep rooted human history are outstanding special qualities that make the Cairngorms National Park the special place it is today.

The land has been extensively managed for centuries. In particular farming, crofting, forestry, sporting, recreation and nature conservation management have all played their part in creating today's magnificent landscapes. Safeguarding the integrity of this interaction is vital to the protection, maintenance, and evolution of the Park, especially where factors like climate change, biodiversity loss and policy changes pose potential threats.

By 2012, the importance of enhancing landscapes and maintaining a sense of wildness within the National Park will be more fully integrated into planning policy. New developments will be expected to make a positive contribution to the Park and the protection of species and habitats will be further improved.

Specific projects to enhance habitat networks and to ensure the continued vitality of threatened species will be undertaken. The condition of designated conservation sites will be improved upon. Habitat and the water quality of rivers and wetlands will be improved and rocks, minerals and landforms of international, national and regional value will also be safeguarded. Historic landscapes and archaeology will also benefit from more impetus for conservation management under this priority.

What does this mean for me?

Dr Kenny Taylor is chairman of the Cairngorms Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) project.



Kenny says: "Even though I've known the Cairngorms for a long time, the variety and scale of its natural elements, from riverbanks to the highest tops, can still take my breath away. Whether walking, skiing, biking or canoeing, or as a visitor, resident, campaigner and wildlife tour guide, there have been times when my spirit has soared at the beauty of the place.

"To me, key parts of the 'biodiversity' mix in the National Park are the sheer number of species worthy of conservation action; the scale of the havens where they can thrive; and the role of farmers, foresters and other local people in supporting wildlife.

"In the National Park, it's possible to think at a landscape scale about conserving and boosting natural assets. Within that bigger picture, it's also crucial to set realistic targets. That's why the strategic objectives for biodiversity within the Park Plan are so important. They flow from the landscape level to individual parts of the larger scene, and so combine broad vision and finer detail.

"Like the many others who care deeply about this very special part of the northern world, I look forward to seeing the fruits of the Plan's success, from the rivers to the mountains, in years and decades to come."



Integrating Public Support for Land Management

What difference will you see by 2012?

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.

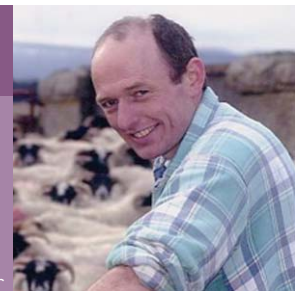
Many public benefits delivered by land managers depend on public sector intervention and support, in the form of regulation, advice, training and incentive schemes. Currently, these are the means by which society can influence management practices and so secure a range of public benefits which may not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

By 2012, 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 Cairngorms National Park.

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.

What does this mean for me?

Alastair MacLennan, is a local farmer, CNPA board member and chairman of the Integrated Land Management Advisory Forum.



Alastair says: "Agriculture can deliver a great deal for the Park and will play an essential part in the Park's success through the delivery of the Park Plan outcomes in the years ahead. We want to make environmental management by farmers easier to undertake and access so that an all encompassing approach to environmental management of landscape, forestry, nutrient budgets, waste management plans, recycling, energy saving and habitat management can be adopted.

"Spreading the base of the agricultural community by effective ideas, advice, help, direction and diversification strategies will help give young people a good reason to stay within farming and the Cairngorms. I would like to see a viable future for my farm and those of others in the area which contributes multiple benefits and products including the provision of high quality food to the local area and further afield.

"Farmers are well informed, held in high esteem and are respected for the job they do. There is a healthy number of ideally qualified young people who want to farm because it is a rewarding and economic business and I am confident the priorities for action for effective land management in the National Park Plan can go a long way towards addressing this vision."



Roe deer

Supporting Sustainable Deer Management

What difference will you see by 2012?

Native red and roe deer in the Park are important economically, supporting jobs and successful sporting estates as well as being part of our natural heritage. Their grazing is a vital part of the ecological process which shapes the landscape, influences habitats and at appropriate numbers grazing has a positive impact. However, excessive grazing can have a negative impact like preventing native woodlands from regenerating.

There is therefore a need to balance the benefits deer bring to the Park with the need to conserve and enhance all other special natural heritage qualities of the Park. This will require different deer densities in different parts of the Park. By supporting a sustainable approach to deer management, it is hoped an effective balance of interests can be achieved.

Some deer management groups within the Park have adopted an inclusive deer management planning process. Such a process is thought to be the best way to reduce conflict which often surrounds deer management.

Between 2007 and 2012 we will see an increasingly inclusive approach to deer management across the Park. Good communication will increase understanding between all involved in deer management including public agencies, local communities and land managers.

Effort will be made to enhance the economic value of deer and there will be more opportunities and fewer perceived barriers for a wider range of people to enjoy deer stalking.

What does this mean for me?

George Macdonald is a professional deer and wildlife estate manager who is a committee member of the Scottish Gamekeepers Association (SGA) mainly advising on deer issues. He represents the SGA on deer steering groups, committees and management groups around the country.



He says: "A sustainable approach to deer management has in the past and will in the future play a key part in fulfilling the objectives laid down in the Cairngorms National Park Plan. The investment in deer by landowners helps maintain and further develop the Park by bringing many economic benefits to its rural communities.

"Educating the general public on deer issues is very important and making information available that highlights the important works ongoing in the Park will increase public understanding of what has been created in the past and is being maintained and protected for the future.

"More collaboration and co-operation among private and public bodies involved with deer will also allow for the constructive development of sustainable deer management within the Park and a sensible approach should be adopted by everyone to ensure the right balance is struck between both negative and positive impacts as they arise."



Walkers, Loch an Eilean

Providing High Quality Opportunities for Outdoor Access

What difference will you see by 2012?

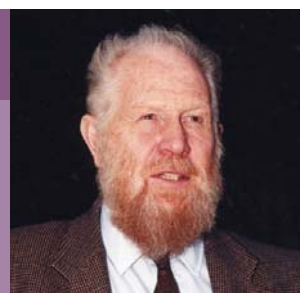
Scotland now enjoys some of the best access legislation in the world. By 2012 a wider range of people will have the opportunity to enjoy the outdoors and they, along with land managers, will have a better understanding of their respective rights and responsibilities. The path network will be of a higher quality, more extensive, well maintained and clearly promoted. This will help to maximise enjoyment and minimise motor vehicle reliance.

To enjoy and understand the Park, residents and visitors will need the existing network of land and water access to improve even further to bring it up to the standard expected of a National Park. This will help maximise people's enjoyment, health, learning and understanding, and will ensure the special qualities and distinctiveness of our natural and cultural heritage can be enjoyed by all.

Communities, land managers and visitors will all contribute to the management and maintenance of paths, and there will be more effective connections between public transport and recreation opportunities. The physical, mental and social health of residents and visitors will also be maximised by the emergence of locally based healthy walking groups and the active promotion of outdoor activity.

What does this mean for me?

Dick Balharry is the chairman of the Cairngorms Local Outdoor Access Forum (LOAF) which consists of people who represent community interests, land managers, recreational users and public agencies. The LOAF has been set up to advise the Cairngorms National Park Authority on matters concerning outdoor access rights.



Dick says: "Our forefathers of responsible access to the countryside and National Parks, James Bryce and John Muir would surely approve of the Cairngorms National Park designation which encourages people to enjoy and respect a most precious part of their national inheritance.

"From 2007 to 2012 people in the Park will see path conditions and quality improve and healthy lifestyles, sustainable transport, visitor information and responsible outdoor access and management increasingly promoted. These should provide a firm foundation for activity in the Park for years to come.

"Bryce and Muir in their different ways began a movement and left a legacy that is still inspirational. We can all help to ensure future generations will continue to enjoy, cherish and love this very special area of Scotland by providing high quality opportunities for outdoor access. The Park Plan starts that process off and I would encourage everyone to embrace it and what it stands for."

Priorities for action 2007 - 2012



Making Tourism and Business More Sustainable

What difference will you see by 2012?

A diverse and vibrant economy is one of the keys to the long-term sustainability of the National Park. By 2012, tourism, which currently employs over 5,000 people in the Park area, will support further economic growth, and encourage enjoyment of the Park as a special place to live, work and enjoy.

Other business opportunities, linked to the Park's special qualities include food and drink, land management, small-scale renewable energy and building design.

By 2012 an increasing proportion of economic activity in the Park will be based on its special qualities and a greater percentage of businesses will meet the quality and environmental standards associated with the Park brand and achieve business benefits by using it.

There will also be an increase in use of local suppliers and produce and communities will feel that their quality of life is improving.

The visitor experience will consistently exceed expectations; there will be a more even distribution of visitors throughout the year and a greater percentage of visitors will contribute to the conservation and enhancement of the Park.

What does this mean for me?

Duncan MacKellar is director of Grantown-on-Spey based MacKellar Sub-Sea, is a director of HIE Inverness and East Highland and is chairman of the Cairngorms Chamber of Commerce.



He says: "The business community needs to be fully involved in the future processes and delivery mechanisms identified in the Park Plan to ensure that it works well. Through strong private sector leadership, it has the potential to create a wide range of benefits for the economy of the Cairngorms National Park.

"From 2007 to 2012, the priorities for action identified in making tourism and business more sustainable have the potential to develop a multi-skilled workforce that will better meet the needs of local employers; help reduce the level of seasonal employment and strengthen the economy across all business sectors within the Park.

"Working in partnership, developing more effective co-operation and improving communication between the public and private sectors, as well as with destination management organisations is the key to delivering the objectives of the Park Plan in a sustainable and economical way through the provision of practical, workable and realistic outcomes."



Dinnet affordable housing

Making Housing More Affordable and Sustainable

What difference will you see by 2012?

The lack of affordable, good quality housing has been identified by many in the National Park as a key issue. Young people and those on low incomes have particular difficulty in securing suitable accommodation in the Park. Improving access to good quality, affordable housing between 2007 and 2012 will therefore help create and maintain sustainable communities in the long-term.

Demand for housing must also be managed to ensure high environmental and sustainability standards are met. Making sure that resources like water, energy and materials are used as responsibly as possible and ensuring housing provision conserves and enhances the area's special qualities are key to making this happen.

By 2012 there will therefore be a reduction in the gap between housing need and supply to meet community needs, and there will be a reduction in the number of businesses identifying housing as a barrier to staff recruitment and retention.

There will also be more good quality private rented accommodation available at affordable rents to meet local need and new housing will be of a more sustainable design.

What does this mean for me?

Susan Torrance is the chief executive of the Highland Housing Alliance (HHA) which was set up to ensure an increased supply of housing and affordable housing in the Highlands.



"Increasing the supply of good quality, new build, private and affordable housing in reasonable numbers in the Park between 2007 and 2012 is a high priority which will allow people the choice to live and work in the Park," she says.

"The provision of innovative infrastructure solutions to advance and overcome hurdles to community growth such as the lack of water and sewage capacity, or ageing and inadequate plant and pipes would also help.

"I would like to see communities developing with all agencies involved in planning a sustainable mix of houses and tenures and incorporating all the basic requirements for living in the 21st Century. There should also be early collaboration with local people and public agencies to ensure the development of housing and associated facilities such as schools and doctors surgeries is welcomed and seen as an opportunity to enhance the Park Plan at all levels.

"Bold and courageous allocating of land in the Park is particularly crucial. This should build on development briefs detailing the type, tenure and standards of housing required by planners."

Priorities for action 2007 - 2012



School children on a 'bug hunt'

Raising Awareness and Understanding of the Park

What difference will you see by 2012?

From 2007 to 2012, it is important that the Cairngorms National Park establishes itself locally, nationally and beyond and that the people of Scotland develop an increasing awareness of it and its special qualities.

Understanding why it is so special, why it is a national asset and that it has particular management and investment needs is pivotal to its success.

By 2012 more people across Scotland will be aware of the National Park and residents and visitors will appreciate the special qualities of the Park and understand more about their management needs.

What's more, everyone will know when they have arrived in the Cairngorms National Park and have a positive feeling about arriving in it.

More people who have visited the Park will have high quality experiences and will tell positive stories about the area and more people will become practically involved in caring for the Park and its special qualities.

There will also be more opportunities to learn about and enjoy the Park for everyone, especially young people, people with disabilities and those on low incomes.

What does this mean for me?

Alan Smith manages the John Muir Award for the Cairngorms. His role is to promote and develop the award as a way that engages people from all over Scotland in activities that will raise their awareness and understanding of the Cairngorms through direct first hand experiences.

Alan says: "Raising people's awareness of the special qualities of the Park will lead people to value, understand and protect them more. Their experiences of the Cairngorms can be inspirational and life changing and when people become aware and understand the issues facing the Park, they want to help.

"People who live and work here have a key role to tell others about the Cairngorms National Park. Visitors who feel that the Park is a special place will value the area and take that message home and share it with others.

"There will be many initiatives, projects and schemes stemming from the Park Plan that will be developed to help people become more aware of the Park in the years ahead. It is therefore crucial that these opportunities are available to everyone whatever their status, background or abilities."

