
MANAGEMENT PLANS

Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan 2012-2017

Strategic Environmental Assessment
Environmental Report

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Contents

Non Technical Summary	4
1. Introduction and key facts about the Plan	7
2. Context for the Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan 2012-2017	11
3. Assessment of environmental effects and measures envisaged for prevention, reduction and offsetting any significant effects	38
4. Monitoring	44
5. Next steps	45
Appendix 1 – Other plans, programmes and strategies (PPS) and environmental objectives	46
Appendix 2 – Assessment recording forms	57
Appendix 3 – Using the ecosystems approach in the SEA	89

Non-Technical Summary

This is a non-technical summary of the Environmental Report, part of a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan 20012-17. It explains:

- What the SEA is
- How it has been carried out
- What effects the National Park Partnership Plan is likely to have on the environment
- How the SEA has influenced the Plan
- Next steps.

What is the SEA?

SEA is a way of making sure that the environmental effects of a plan are thought about carefully as it is made. The point of doing it is make sure that the plan has as few bad effects on the environment as possible and has as many good effects as possible. It is also undertaken to help the consultation on the plan by giving the public information about the effects it could have. It is a legal requirement for public sector bodies to do an SEA on plans they produce.

How has the SEA been carried out?

The Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan helps to deliver the four aims of the National Park:

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

It is a plan to help co-ordinate the management of the National Park and gives more detail about how those aims will be delivered. Much of the plan is meant to support the environment of the Park, but some parts might also harm it. The SEA helps make the plan a good one.

The SEA:

- summarises what state the environment is in just now; how it has changed, is expected to change; and the big issues facing it;
- looks at how the environment might change without the Plan;
- picks out the things that are most important in the environment of the Park that are relevant to the Plan and need to be thought about while it is prepared;
- tests the different parts of the Plan against those points to predict what effects it might have on them;
- makes the Plan change to avoid bad effects or to have better effects on the environment;
- records the results of this assessment;

- picks out what information needs to be used in future so that we can see what effects the Plan has on the environment as it is delivered.

For this SEA, the Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA) used the idea of ecosystems to help choose what the assessment should test the plan against. The idea of ecosystems helps people to understand some of the complicated links between different parts of the environment. Using it has helped us ask questions that are most relevant to the environmental issues in the Park.

What effect is the Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan likely to have on the environment?

The assessment shows that the Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan should have many good effects on the environment and is unlikely have bad effects. This is because:

1. Much of the Plan is meant to support the environment of the Park.
2. The Plan is supposed be delivered together. Although a particular part of it might have a bad effect if it was the only part to be delivered, other parts of Plan balance it or prevent the bad effect.
3. Comments on the draft Plan and its SEA (that were consulted on in 2011) have helped to improve it.
4. The Plan now has many policies that help provide certainty about how things should happen in future or that protect different bits of the environment.

Most of the Plan is quite general about what things will happen, when and where. It gives a direction for other plans and strategies or work to follow and to plan in more detail. That means that the assessment is of the general points in the Plan. It does not try to predict how specific changes could happen on the ground unless the Plan will lead to that change itself. Other assessments of other plans or strategies can look at particular issues in more detail.

How has the SEA influenced the Plan?

Because so much of the Plan is about supporting the environment of the Park, many of the possible bad effects are simply avoided by careful policy development.

The assessment has helped to test how well the Plan considers the environment and to improve the way that policies are developed or that outcomes should be delivered. The assessment of the draft Plan picked out some possible bad effects of the Plan on the environment and these have been used to improve the policies of the Plan and avoid those bad effects.

What are the next steps?

The Plan is now complete. The CNPA will prepare a statement showing how the SEA process has informed the completed Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan once it is adopted; will co-ordinate the delivery of the Plan; and monitor its delivery and its environmental effects.

I Introduction

Purpose of this Environmental Report

1.1 As part of the preparation of the Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan 2012-2017¹, the Cairngorms National Park Authority is carrying out a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). SEA is a systematic method for considering the likely environmental effects of certain plans, programmes and strategies (PPS). SEA aims to:

- integrate environmental factors into PPS preparation and decision-making;
- improve PPS and enhance environmental protection;
- increase public participation in decision making; and
- facilitate openness and transparency of decision-making.

1.2 SEA is required by the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005. The key SEA stages are:

Screening	Determining whether the PPS is likely to have significant environmental effects and whether an SEA is required.
Scoping	Deciding on the scope and level of detail of the Environmental Report, and the consultation period for the report – this is carried out in consultation with Scottish Natural Heritage, The Scottish Ministers (Historic Scotland) and the Scottish Environment Protection Agency.
Environmental Report	Publishing an Environmental Report on the PPS and its environmental effects, and consulting on that report
Adoption	Providing information on: the adopted PPS; how consultation comments have been taken into account; and methods for monitoring the significant environmental effects of the implementation of the PPS.
Monitoring	Monitoring significant environmental effects in such a manner so as to also enable the Responsible Authority to identify any unforeseen adverse effects at an early stage and undertake appropriate remedial action.

¹ The National Park Partnership Plan is the National Park Plan required under section 11 of the National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000

I.3 An Environmental Report was published for consultation at the same time as the Draft Cairngorms National Park Plan 2012-2017 between September and December 2011. Comments on the draft Plan and the Environmental Report helped to refine and to finalise the Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan 2012-2017.

I.4 The purpose of this Environmental Report is to:

- provide information on the Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan 2012-2017; and
- identify, describe and evaluate the likely significant effects of the PPS and its reasonable alternatives; in this case updating the Environmental Report of the SEA.

Key facts about the Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan 2012-2017

I.5 The Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA) is required to prepare a National Park Plan for the Cairngorms National Park and to review it every five years under the National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000. The Act requires the Plan to set out the National Park Authority's policy for:

- managing the National Park; and
- co-ordinating the exercise of
 - i. the authority's functions in relation to the National Park, and
 - ii. the functions of other public bodies and office holders so far as affecting the National Park.

I.6 The general purpose of the National Park Authority set out in the National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000 is to ensure that the National Park aims are collectively achieved in a co-ordinated way. The Park Authority is therefore an enabling organisation that must work with and through other bodies to bring added value to the management of the Park, to achieve the four aims.

The aims of the National Park are:

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

- 1.7 The first Cairngorms National Park Plan was approved by the Minister in 2007 and operated from 2007 to 2012. The CNPA reviewed the National Park Plan so that a new version can be submitted to the Minister for approval in 2012. The Draft National Park Plan 2012-2017 and an Environmental Report were consulted on between 19 September 2011 and 9 December 2011 in order to develop the National Park Partnership Plan for the period 2012-2017.
- 1.8 The National Park Partnership Plan falls under the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005. The Plan has potential to generate significant environmental effects and so this Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) has been undertaken.
- 1.9 The key facts relating to the Draft Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan 2012-2017 are set out in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Key facts about the Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan 2012-2017	
Responsible Authority	Cairngorms National Park Authority
Title of PPS	Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan 2012-2017
Purpose of PPS	To deliver the collective and co-ordinated delivery of the four aims of the National Park.
What prompted the PPS	The National Park Plan is a requirement of the National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000. The current National Park Plan runs from 2007-2012.
Subject (eg transport)	Management of the National Park and the collective and co-ordinated delivery of the National Park aims.
Period covered by PPS	2012-2017 in detail, with a vision for 25 years and consideration of longer term issues.
Frequency of updates	5 years
Area covered by PPS	Cairngorms National Park
Summary of nature and content of PPS	<p>The National Park Partnership Plan is a plan for the Park and for the co-ordinated delivery of the four National Park aims. It is prepared by the National Park Authority and other public agencies must have regard to it. The potential scope of the Plan is almost unlimited – almost anything related to the Cairngorms National Park could be considered by it.</p> <p>However, it is limited by the resources available to deliver it, and an obvious need to focus those resources on the issues that are most pressing or where most change can be delivered. For the Park Plan to be effective at managing or creating change, both public agencies and other organisations and individuals from a range of sectors need to ‘buy in’ to what it seeks to achieve.</p> <p>The Plan does not deliver significant change in its own right. It is a strategic plan within a hierarchy and sets the context for other plans programmes and strategies that actively deliver the changes it seeks. It provides an explicit context for the Local Development Plan and a land use strategy for the Park.</p>

	The Plan sets 10 five-year outcomes to be achieved in the Park by 2017 together with indicators and targets for delivery and an indication of the programmes of work that should deliver them. It also sets out a policy framework for the management of land and activities in the Park.
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SEA activities to date

- 1.10 SEA has been undertaken at different stages and levels of detail throughout the development of the National Park Partnership Plan 2012-2017. Many of the Plan's five-year outcomes and the policy directions are intended to provide a framework for dealing with environmental problems and issues in the Cairngorms National Park as well as delivering the aims of the National Park and other national objectives.
- 1.11 Table 2 summarises the SEA activities to date in relation to the Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan 2012-2017.

Table 2: SEA activity to date		
SEA Action/Activity	When carried out	Notes
Screening to determine whether the PPS is likely to have significant environmental effects	<i>Jul-Aug 2010</i>	
Scoping the consultation periods and the level of detail to be included in the Environmental Report	<i>Mar-Apr 2011</i>	Led to changes in assessment methodology
Outline and objectives of the PPS	<i>2010</i>	
Relationship with other PPS and environmental objectives	<i>2010-2011</i>	
Environmental baseline established	<i>2010-2011</i>	
Environmental problems identified	<i>2010-2011</i>	
Assessment of future of area without the PPS	<i>2010-2011</i>	
Alternatives considered	<i>2010-2011</i>	Alternatives have been considered throughout the process. Consultation on the Draft National Park Plan 2010-2017 may raise other alternatives.
Environmental assessment methods established	<i>Apr 2011</i>	
Selection of PPS alternatives to be included in the environmental assessment		No reasonable alternatives have been identified for assessment
Identification of environmental problems that may persist after implementation and measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and offset any significant adverse effects	<i>Mar-June 2011</i>	
Monitoring methods proposed	<i>Mar-June 2011</i>	
Consultation timescales	<i>July 2011</i>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • timescale for consultation authorities • timescale for public 		
Notification/publicity action	<i>Sep-Dec 2011</i>	
Analysis of Consultation Responses	<i>Jan-Mar 2012</i>	
Review of PPS and environmental problems	<i>Jan – Apr 2012</i>	The review of consultation comments to both the draft Plan and Environmental Report have helped refine and improve the National Park Partnership Plan and Assessment.

2 Context for the Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan 2012-2017

Outline and objectives of the Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan 2012-2017

- 2.1 The Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan is the statutory Plan by which the Cairngorms National Park Authority delivers its role in ensuring the collective and co-ordinated delivery of the four National Park Aims. It is a strategic management plan for the National Park that is delivered by many public, private and voluntary organisations.
- 2.2 In order to make a plan that is effective and can be used by the many organisations needed, it needs to provide a clear framework for action and management, with flexibility in how it is delivered by different partners in different ways, places and times. This means that it necessarily leaves the detailed planning of programmes and projects to deliver it to the most appropriate organisations and partners.
- 2.3 The National Park Plan has a five-year time frame but includes a vision for the longer term. In the Draft National Park Plan 2012-2017, this is supported by three long-term outcomes to provide a sense of direction for the five-year period; by a range of policy priorities that support delivery of those long-term outcomes; and ten five-year outcomes to focus delivery and action.
- 2.4 Tables 3 to 5 below outline the Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan's:
- vision and long-term outcomes;
 - policy priorities that support the delivery of the Plan and deliver multiple benefits for the Park; and
 - five-year outcomes.
- 2.5 All have been assessed through the SEA and have been informed by the environmental issues facing the Cairngorms National Park. The Plan also identifies work programmes and packages to focus the partners' activities in delivering the Plan and that will be developed by those partners. Those programmes and work packages have not been assessed here but will be subject to the necessary assessment when required. Some work packages incorporate other PPSs and they should use this assessment to help scope and refine any environmental assessment required of their detail.

Table 3: The Plan's vision and strategic objectives

Vision	An outstanding National Park, enjoyed and valued by everyone, where nature and people thrive together
Long-term Outcome 1	A sustainable economy supporting thriving businesses and communities
Long-term Outcome 2	A special place for people and nature with natural and cultural heritage enhanced
Long-term Outcome 3	People enjoying the Park through outstanding visitor and learning experiences

Table 4: The Plan's policy priorities

Ref	Policy
I.1	<p>Grow the economy of the Park by strengthening existing business sectors, supporting business start-ups and diversification, and increasing the number of workers employed in the Park through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) supporting the diversification of existing land-based businesses; b) encouraging growth of business sectors that draw on the special qualities of the Park such as sustainable tourism and food and drink; c) broadening the economic base of the Park into sectors such as creative industries, renewable energy, and making stronger links with higher and further education; d) increased provision for business land where there is an identified need and demand; and to support the use of land for small business, particularly within settlements; e) slowing outward migration of young people; to encourage their return; and the inward migration of workers to the Park to meet business and community needs. pProvision of a housing land supply that meets identified need and demand², supports migration of young people and workers to the Park, and maintains vibrant communities.
I.2	<p>Enable sustainable patterns of settlement growth, infrastructure and communications by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) consolidating the role of the existing main settlements of Aviemore, Ballater, Grantown-on-Spey, Kingussie and Newtonmore, as well as the proposed new community of An Camas Mòr, as the most sustainable places for future growth and the focus for housing land supply while maintaining the integrity of designated sites; b) providing any additional flexibility in future land supply for housing at small sites around a wider range of settlements; c) supporting sensitively designed improvements to the A9 and other trunk roads and main railway line as an integral part of enhancing the connectivity of the Highlands; d) planning and improving integrated and sustainable local transport networks that allow for safe travel off-road and link with public transport; e) planning and supporting improvements to the information technology network; f) planning and supporting improvements to the mobile communications network that improve access to new generation technology and minimise the need for visually intrusive infrastructure.
I.3	<p>Support development of a low carbon economy, with a particular focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) increasing renewable energy generation, especially biomass and hydro, that is compatible with conserving the special qualities of the National Park and maintaining the integrity of designated sites. Large-scale commercial wind turbines³ are not compatible with the special qualities of the National Park and

² Housing Need & Demand Assessments are prepared by Local Authorities as Housing Authorities

³ Defined as more than one turbine and more than 30m in height

	<p>are not considered to be appropriate within the National Park or where outside the Park they affect its landscape setting;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) supporting businesses and communities to use less energy, reduce emissions, generate low impact renewable energy and plan for a changing climate; b) maximise the benefits to communities through direct use of locally generated energy or where sold to the grid, reinvesting income to support community development; c) promote high standards of sustainable design and efficient use of energy and materials in construction.
1.4	<p>Support and build the capacity of communities to deliver their aspirations, with a particular focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) supporting communities to plan for their own futures, develop and implement projects, engage the support of partners and share good practice; b) supporting innovative approaches to providing affordable housing to meet local needs; c) aligning community planning processes to simplify support to communities; d) engaging communities effectively in the long-term management of the National Park and in projects or programmes that affect them.
2.1	<p>The management and use of land should deliver multiple benefits – delivering the best possible combination of the National Park Plan’s long-term outcomes, always ensuring that the integrity of designated sites is maintained; and that the special qualities are conserved and, where possible, enhanced. This will be supported by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) a long-term planned approach by land-based businesses to delivering environmental, economic and social benefits; b) support for land managers to plan and deliver environmental and social benefits underpinned by sound economic businesses; c) research to support an ecosystems approach to management.
2.2	<p>Enhance the resilience of habitats, species and land use to climate change with a particular focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) collaborating on land use and flood management through river catchment management plans; b) enhancing the health and connectivity of habitats; c) securing effective management of peat and carbon-rich soils.
2.3	<p>Conserve and enhance the special landscape qualities with a particular focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) conserving and enhancing wildness qualities; b) maintaining and promoting dark skies; c) enhancements that also deliver habitat improvements; d) enhancing opportunities to enjoy and experience the landscapes of the Park.
2.4	<p>Conserve and enhance habitat quality and connectivity, with a particular focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) woodland enhancement and expansion, especially montane, farm and riparian woodlands; b) wetland enhancement; c) delivering a combination of ecosystem services including flood management, carbon sequestration and storage, timber and food production.
2.5	<p>Conserve and enhance the species for which the Cairngorms National Park is most important, with a particular focus on:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) species whose conservation status is in decline or at risk; b) tackling and reducing the impacts of invasive non-native species; c) engaging people on species that are important in the Cairngorms National Park.
2.6	<p>Support collaboration across ownership boundaries and between interests to reduce conflicts in species and wildlife management including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) deer management; b) wildlife crime; c) species reintroductions.
2.7	<p>Conserve and enhance the cultural heritage that helps to create the sense of place and identity of communities within the Park by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) protecting archaeological sites and their settings and promoting understanding of their significance; b) ensuring appropriate advice and investigation for archaeology is used to inform proposals for land use change; c) protecting and enhancing the built heritage and designed landscapes; d) promoting opportunities to enjoy and celebrate the cultural heritage of the Park.
2.8	<p>Enhance the design and sense of place in new development and existing settlements, in particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) enabling new development which contributes positively to the sense of place; b) promoting a high standard of sustainable design, energy efficiency, sustainably sourced materials and construction in new development; c) supporting the retention and enhancement of local character; d) facilitating the rehabilitation of redundant rural buildings and recycling of resources; e) ensuring road upgrades and improvements respond to local landscape character.
3.1	<p>Provide a welcoming and high quality National Park experience for all by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) delivering a visitor/customer experience that spans organisational boundaries; b) providing high quality co-ordinated information setting visitor experiences in the context of the National Park; c) supporting the network of ranger services in the National Park; d) building on the Cairngorms brand and the promise it delivers.
3.2	<p>Promote sustainable tourism management with a particular focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) co-ordinated promotion and management of the Cairngorms National Park as a visitor destination; b) ensuring high quality facilities and infrastructure designed to manage the effects of visitor pressures on the natural heritage and communities; c) implementing and reviewing the Strategy and Action Plan for Sustainable Tourism
3.3	<p>Provide high quality opportunities for access and recreation, with a particular focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) ensuring a high quality functional network of core paths and long distance routes; b) promoting the health benefits of outdoor recreation; c) identifying areas where particular management measures are needed in relation to delivering a high quality visitor experience, safeguarding sensitive environments and maintaining the integrity of designated sites; d) promoting responsible behaviour in taking and managing access.
3.4	<p>Provide opportunities for inspiration, learning and understanding through engaging with people, with a particular focus on:</p>

	<p>a) young people; b) opportunities to deliver the curriculum for excellence; c) promoting a sense of shared ownership and responsibility towards Scotland's National Parks and rural environment.</p>
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Table 5: The Plan's five-year outcomes

1	The economy of the Park will have grown and diversified, drawing on the Park's special qualities
2	Businesses and communities will be successfully adapting to a low carbon economy
3	Communities will be more empowered and able to develop their own models of sustainability
4	The quality and connectivity of habitats is enhanced
5	The species for which Cairngorms National Park is most important are in better conservation status
6	The special landscape qualities, including wildness, are conserved and enhanced
7	Settlements and built development will retain and enhance the distinct sense of place and identity in the Park
8	More people will enjoy, learn about and help to conserve and enhance the Park
9	The expectations of visitors are met or exceeded
10	The Park's recreation opportunities have improved the health and enjoyment of residents and visitors

Changes to the Plan and the SEA as a result of consultation

2.6 The Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan has been developed from the Draft Cairngorms National Park Plan. Comments on the draft Plan and the Environmental Report that accompanied it helped to refine and improve the Plan. The most substantial changes to the Plan, that have also affected the assessment of potential environmental effects and this Environmental Report are:

- a more comprehensive policy framework to provide better and clearer guidance, and to include measures that avoid or mitigate potential negative environmental effects raised by the assessment of the draft Plan;
- refinement of the Plan's five-year outcomes.

Relationship with other plans, programmes and strategies (PPS) and environmental objectives

2.7 Schedule 3 of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 requires that the Environmental Report includes an outline of the PPS relationships with other relevant PPS, and how environmental protection objectives have been taken into account in the PPS preparation. This section covers these issues and describes the policy context within which the PPS operates.

- 2.8 The National Park Partnership Plan must have appropriate regard to a wide range of national and international laws, policy and strategy. For example, the Habitats and Birds Directives, Water Framework Directive, Scottish Climate Change Strategy, Biodiversity Strategy, National Planning Framework and Scottish Land Use Strategy all provide a context and direction for the National Park Partnership Plan.
- 2.9 The National Park Partnership Plan provides the strategic context for the Local Development Plan in the Park, and can affect as well as be influenced by local housing strategies, local transport strategies, the Scotland Rural Development Programme (SRDP), and Cairngorms LEADER.
- 2.10 The CNPA has prepared plans and strategies that are intended to provide more detail on how parts of the Plan will be implemented. In the past, these have included an Outdoor Access Strategy, Forest and Woodland Framework and Sustainable Tourism Strategy. It is anticipated that a revised Sustainable Tourism Strategy for the Park, recently endorsed by the CNPA board, will provide a way of delivering some of the outcomes in the next Plan. The CNPA expects to prepare a Landscape Framework to help manage landscape change in the Park as well as a revised Outdoor Access Strategy to help manage outdoor access, and these too will help deliver outcomes within the Plan.
- 2.11 The full range of relevant environmental objectives is extensive and often duplicated between PPS at the same level or different levels. Appendix I to this Environmental Report summarises the main PPS, environmental objectives and relationships with the National Park Plan in more detail. Table 6 below summarises the main points related to SEA issues.

Table 6: The points for the Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan from other PPSs

SEA Issues	Main points for the Cairngorms National Park Plan 2012-2017
Biodiversity, flora, fauna	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conserve and enhance biodiversity, particularly the nationally and internationally rare and threatened species and habitats • Help species and habitats adapt to the effects of climate change
Population and human health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain and improve health (particularly through outdoor recreation and exercise) • Adapt to the effects of climate change and avoid hazards as a result of extreme weather events
Soil	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain productive capacity of soils • Prevent erosion of soils • Maintain or improve carbon storage of soils and peat
Water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain and improve water quality • Encourage natural processes, particularly natural flood management and catchment processes • Conserve water

Air and climatic factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce emissions of greenhouse gases • Adapt to the effects of climate change • Increase sequestration of carbon
Material assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conserve landscapes of the Park (as one of the attractions for visitors) • Help settlement adapt to the effects of climate change • Maintain and increase the supply of timber and woodfuel for local use • Minimise energy use and encourage development of renewable energy • Minimise waste
Cultural heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conserve, preserve and record architectural and archaeological heritage
Landscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conserve and enhance the special and distinct landscape character and qualities of the Park
Inter-relationships between issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain and improve the health of ecosystems and natural systems (which cut across all issues)

Relevant aspects of the current state of the environment

- 2.12 Schedule 3 of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 requires that the Environmental Report includes a description of “the relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan or programme”, and “the environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected”. This section aims to describe the environmental context within which the PPS operates and the constraints and targets that this context imposes on the PPS.
- 2.13 The CNPA has adopted an ecosystems approach to the SEA of the National Park Partnership Plan (and also the Main Issues Report for the Local Development Plan). The ecosystems approach should provide a clearer strategic context for the SEA by focusing on the services that ecosystems provide, their importance to the health of the ecosystem (in the National Park and beyond), and the products or benefits that people get from them. The approach drew on the work of the National Ecosystems Assessment (NEA) <http://uknea.unep-wcmc.org/Home/tabid/38/Default.aspx>
- 2.14 The ecosystems approach is one that fits well with the National Park Partnership Plan as a tool for managing the National Park and for delivering the four National Park aims. It also has potential to improve future plans, programmes and strategies (PPS), and their SEAs, in the Park by providing a common understanding of the important issues and interactions between systems.

Building the ecosystems approach into SEA

2.15 Ecosystem services are one way of defining the things in the natural environment that benefit people. They range from things like the ways soils are formed, clean water to drink, air to breath, plants and animals we eat, to the pleasure we take from skiing on hills or looking at landscapes and wildlife. The Millenium Ecosystem Assessment (MA) identifies four broad categories of ecosystem services that were also used for the NEA and have become an accepted way of identifying and categorising them:

- **Provisioning Services** – the products we get from ecosystems such as food, fibre and water.
- **Regulating Services** – the benefits we get from the regulation of ecosystem process such as the regulation of pollination, the climate, noise and water.
- **Cultural Services** – the non-material benefits we get from ecosystems such as spiritual enrichment, inspiration for art, recreation, cultural heritage, tourism and simple aesthetic experience. The way that people value nature can also be a cultural service, for example, iconic or rare species may not be critical to an ecosystem, yet are protected because people would like them to be a self sustaining part of it.
- **Supporting Services** – functions of the ecosystem that are essential for the production of all other ecosystem services such as soil formation, the cycling of nutrients, water cycling, production of atmospheric oxygen and provision of habitat.

2.16 The ecosystem approach has been extended to place value on different ecosystems services and to estimate the economic value of different services to human society. The argument for placing economic value on ecosystems services is that it can help policy makers take account of the costs and benefits of policy options on the natural environment. Although placing economic value on ecosystems services from the Cairngorms National Park could be a useful extension of the concept, and may be explored through the life of the National Park Partnership Plan, it will not be carried out for the SEA. Instead, a simpler categorisation of the importance of different ecosystem services using a high to low scale will be used to indicate relative value.

Environmental baseline

2.17 The NEA identifies eight broad habitats in the UK that can be associated with ecosystems:

- Enclosed farmlands
- Woodlands
- Semi-natural grasslands
- Open waters (rivers, lochs, wetlands and floodplains)
- Mountains moor and heathland
- Coastal margins
- Marine
- Urban

2.18 Five of those broad habitats are significant in the Cairngorms National Park.

- **Enclosed farmlands** – mainly confined to the straths of the Park. Although very little of the farmland of the Park is classed as prime quality (the highest productive capacity), they are a local source of food for the population of the Park. The farmlands are close to many of the rivers and tributaries, and in some cases are part of the functional floodplains of the Park. They can affect the water quality and function of those water bodies, and are an important habitat for wading birds – both for breeding and feeding.
- **Woodlands** – the Cairngorms National Park has a wide variety of forests and woodland, including many rare or threatened woodland habitats and associated species. Many woodlands are designated for nature conservation. Many woodlands are important as a source of timber and woodfuel. Woodlands play an important role in the water cycling by slowing the discharge of water towards rivers, preventing erosion of soils and landslides. They are also important to local climates – riparian woodland can slow or prevent water temperature increases by shading, and woodland provides shelter from strong winds.
- **Open waters (rivers, lochs, wetlands and floodplains)** – the Cairngorms National Park has the headwaters of three of Scotland’s major rivers as well as many smaller ones. Many are designated for nature conservation. It also has an intricate network of high level and lower level wetlands and open water bodies, including valley flood plains. As well as providing water for the habitats and people in the National Park, rivers from the Park provide water to other parts of Scotland.
- **Mountains, moor and heathland** – much of the Cairngorms National Park falls into this broad habitat, and large areas are designated for habitat or species conservation. The Park is internationally famous and valued for these habitats, and it would be appropriate to make a distinction between mountains and moorland as major habitats in their own rights in the Park. Moorlands in the Cairngorms National Park are also associated with moorlands which tend to be managed for grouse shooting but overlap with areas of upland wetland and blanket bog. The peat deposits of moorlands are a significant store of carbon.
- **Semi-natural grasslands** – mainly in the form of acid grassland are often associated with moorlands in the Park. Acid grasslands are not a dominant habitat in their own right in the Park and tend to occur where moorland is used for rough grazing by sheep or cattle, or are present where deer graze heavily. In some locations in the Park, both moorland and acid grassland habitats are used for grazing by sheep and cattle at the margins of farmland and as an integral part of upland farming – the semi natural grasslands form a transition between farmland in valleys and lower slopes to moorland on the upper slopes and hill tops.
- **Urban** – only a small part of the land area of the Cairngorms National Park is urban (around 13.5 square km or about a third of 1 per cent of the total land area of the Park). However, it’s in urban areas where most of the Park’s 17,500 residents live, and in and between urban areas where most human activity takes place.

2.19 So, for the Cairngorms National Park, seven broad habitats can be identified:

- Enclosed farmlands
- Woodlands
- Open waters (rivers, lochs, wetlands and floodplains)
- Mountains
- Moorland
- Semi-natural grasslands
- Urban

2.20 Each of those habitats has a range of ecosystems services. Appendix 3 of the Environmental Report provides a more detailed explanation of how and why ecosystems services are relevant to the National Park and to the SEA. It also provides a more detailed description of the environmental baseline by habitat types and ecosystems services.

2.21 A more conventional summary of the environmental baseline is shown in Table 7.

Table 7: Conventional summary description of environmental baseline	
Biodiversity, flora, fauna	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 25% of UK's threatened species present and is the UK stronghold for many species • 51% of Park designated for natural heritage conservation (48% of international importance and 26% of national importance) – 74.5% of the designated features of these sites are in favourable condition (at December 2010).
Population and human health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Population of c17,500 • 25.8% of population over 60 (higher than Scottish average) • Average health index in top 25% of Scotland (based on deprivation indices) • Extensive core paths network • 55 Munros including 5 summits over 4000 feet • 3 ski centres • National Cycle Network Route 7 • 1 Long Distance Route (Speyside Way)
Soil	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8 SSSIs with soils of international importance • 12 SSSIs with soils of national importance • High proportion of undisturbed soils (only 2% cultivated) • Podzols form 50% of soil cover including internationally significant alpine podzols on the plateau • Peat forms 13% of soil cover • Significant Scottish carbon store in soils and peat.
Water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 81% of streams classified as excellent (A1) or good (A2) (SEPA 2003) • 20 sq km standing waters • Catchments of 6 major rivers
Air and climatic factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relatively low atmospheric pollution • Annual precipitation over 2250mm on summits and under 900mm in straths • Average annual snow cover 200 days on summits and 50 days on low-ground • Prevailing winds from south-west

Table 7: Conventional summary description of environmental baseline

Material assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outstanding geological heritage • High quality timber from productive native woodlands • Local woodfuel sources • Potential for small scale micro renewables
Cultural heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 11 designated Historic Gardens & Designed Landscapes • 110 Scheduled Ancient Monuments • 741 listed buildings • 3 Conservation Areas • 2 Inventory Battlefield sites (Killiecrankie and Cromdale) • Numerous records in NMRS • Large number of historic landscapes • Potential for survival of many unknown remains in upland areas • 3 Conservation Areas • Distinctive local vernacular architecture • Cultural landscapes and associations with landscapes and land uses
Landscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30 GCR sites (of which some are part or all SSSI) • Granite massif and plateau • Internationally important landform record • Coherent identity of landscape across Park from landform and landcover • Extensive areas where the special quality of wildness can be experienced • Understanding and appreciation of the special landscape qualities of the Park

Environmental problems

2.22 Schedule 3 paragraph 4 of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 requires that the Environmental Report includes a description of existing environmental problems, in particular those relating to any areas of particular environmental importance. The purpose of this section is to explain how existing environmental problems will affect or be affected by the Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan and whether the PPS is likely to aggravate, reduce or otherwise affect existing environmental problems.

2.23 Table 8 (p18) summarises the key trends and environmental issues associated with the broad habitats of the Park.

Likely evolution of the environment without the Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan 2012-2017

2.24 The Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan will not resolve any of the environmental problems in the Park in its own right. Its purpose is to deliver the aims of the Park in a collective and co-ordinated way, improving the co-ordination of management of the park. Whilst it is a statutory plan, it does not lead to statutory requirements on people or organisations to do anything it proposes.

- 2.25 Without the Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan, it is likely that fewer environmental issues in the Cairngorms National Park would be tackled as affectively because there would not be a co-ordinating plan to deal with them. However, many of the environmental problems would be tackled by other PPSs, and other statutory frameworks. The Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan should improve the overall effectiveness of these mechanisms.
- 2.26 In short, without the Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan, it is considered likely that more of the current environmental problems facing, and trends in, the Park would persist for longer or worsen, and that there would be less coordinated work to enhance the environment of the Park.

Table 8: Summary of main environmental issues in the habitats of the Cairngorms National Park

Habitat	Ecosystems services or benefits that this habitat is most important for	Main drivers of change	Threats/problems	Opportunities	Key environmental objectives for this habitat in the Cairngorms National Park
Enclosed Farmlands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • food • soil quality • storage of carbon in soils • water quality • pollination of crops • landscape • patterns of settlement • sense of place, history and tradition • living culture and identity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • agricultural and environmental policy • economic viability • climate change effects • planting of woodland 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • loss of productive land to other uses • loss of edge habitats • loss of iconic wild bird species • effects of extreme weather events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • protecting productive land from other uses • potential diversification of produce in different climatic conditions • Enhancement of habitat networks • build resilience to extreme weather events • maximise carbon storage capacity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to maintain or improve the productive capacity of farmland • to maintain or improve the carbon storage capacity • increase the resilience to climate change effects • conserve or enhance the value for distinctive wild species and habitats • maintain or enhance special landscape qualities • maintain capacity for learning and enjoyment of history and culture
Woodlands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • timber as a material and as fuel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • forestry and environmental policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • disease risks • loss to other land uses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • enhancement of woodland networks including montane and riparian woodland 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • maintain or increase timber and woodfuel production

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Habitat	Ecosystems services or benefits that this habitat is most important for	Main drivers of change	Threats/problems	Opportunities	Key environmental objectives for this habitat in the Cairngorms National Park
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> rich and diverse habitats and species stability of soils storage of carbon shelter soil & water quality pollination of woodland species ecological knowledge recreation landscape Patterns of settlement sense of place, tradition living culture and identity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> recreational uses economic viability climate change effects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> fragmentation of native and ancient woodland sites recreational disturbance to key iconic species effects of extreme weather events and changes in climate disturbance of archaeological remains in existing or new woodland 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> increased use of locally grown timber for construction and fuel woodland creation and management to build resilience to extreme weather events increased recreational use of woodland management of recreational use to avoid disturbance to key species promoting responsible recreation and dog management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> conserve or enhance the value for distinctive wild species and habitats to maintain or improve the carbon storage capacity increase resilience to climate change effects maintain recreational value maintain or enhance special landscape qualities maintain capacity for learning and enjoyment of history and culture
Open Water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> fresh water groundwater 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> environmental policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> point source and diffuse pollution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> enhancement of functioning wetlands and floodplains 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> conserve or enhance the value for

Table 8: Summary of main environmental issues in the habitats of the Cairngorms National Park

Habitat	Ecosystems services or benefits that this habitat is most important for	Main drivers of change	Threats/problems	Opportunities	Key environmental objectives for this habitat in the Cairngorms National Park
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • important wild species and rich habitats • local climate regulation • regulation of flooding • water quality • ecological knowledge • recreation • landscape • patterns of settlement • sense of place • tradition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • climate change effects • hydro energy schemes • invasive non-native species 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • water abstraction • erosion and sediment • effects of extreme weather events and changes in climate to the physical processes, chemistry and distinctive habitats/species of open water systems • invasive non-native species 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • adoption and extension of natural flood management techniques • reduction in pollution sources • minimisation of unnecessary water abstraction – reducing water loss following abstraction, more efficient use of water 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> distinctive wild species and habitats • maintain or improve water quality • minimise unnecessary use of water • maintain or increase ability to store water • increase resilience to climate change effects • maintain recreational value • maintain or enhance special landscape qualities • maintain capacity for learning and enjoyment of history and culture
Mountains	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • rare and fragile species and habitats • climate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • nature conservation policy • climate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • climate change effects on marginal arctic-alpine habitats 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • enhancing the sense of wildness • manage changes in habitats, eg towards montane scrub 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • conserve or enhance the value for distinctive wild species and habitats

Table 8: Summary of main environmental issues in the habitats of the Cairngorms National Park

Habitat	Ecosystems services or benefits that this habitat is most important for	Main drivers of change	Threats/problems	Opportunities	Key environmental objectives for this habitat in the Cairngorms National Park
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> regulation • soil quality • water quality • seed dispersal and pollination of mountain plant species • ecological and geological knowledge • recreation • landscape • sense of place, history and tradition • living culture and identity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> change effects • grazing pressures and changes • disturbance to species and habitats from recreation • the setting of and views from mountains due to renewable energy or other large developments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> and species • inappropriate grazing by stock or wild mammals • erosion (natural process and human induced) and potential changes brought about by extreme weather events • reduced sense of wildness as a result of visual impact of development • recreational disturbance to sensitive birds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • maintain patchwork of grazing densities for habitat resilience • promoting responsible recreation and dog management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increase resilience to climate change effects • maintain recreational value to maintain or improve the carbon storage capacity • maintain sense of wildness • maintain or enhance special landscape qualities • maintain capacity for learning and enjoyment of history and culture
Moorland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • climate regulation as stores of carbon • soil quality • water quality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • nature conservation and environmental policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • loss to other uses • inappropriate grazing by stock or wild mammals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • protecting and enhancing carbon storage capacity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • conserve or enhance the value for distinctive wild species and habitats • conserve or enhance

Table 8: Summary of main environmental issues in the habitats of the Cairngorms National Park

Habitat	Ecosystems services or benefits that this habitat is most important for	Main drivers of change	Threats/problems	Opportunities	Key environmental objectives for this habitat in the Cairngorms National Park
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pollination of moorland plant species • ecological and geological knowledge • recreation • landscape • sense of place, tradition and history • living culture and identity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • land ownership and management objectives • climate change effects • planting of woodland 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • disease and pest risks to iconic species (heather and grouse) • loss of stored carbon • illegal killing of protected species especially raptors 		<p>the distinctive wild species and habitats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to maintain or improve the carbon storage capacity • increase resilience to climate change effects • maintain recreational value • maintain or enhance special landscape qualities • maintain sense of wildness • maintain capacity for learning and enjoyment of history and culture
Semi-natural grasslands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provision of food where used for livestock grazing • some distinctive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • grazing regimes • succession to moorland, scrub, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss to other uses • Changes in grazing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify most diverse semi natural grasslands for management • identify areas suitable for woodland expansion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • conserve or enhance the value for distinctive wild species and habitats • Maintain productive

Table 8: Summary of main environmental issues in the habitats of the Cairngorms National Park

Habitat	Ecosystems services or benefits that this habitat is most important for	Main drivers of change	Threats/problems	Opportunities	Key environmental objectives for this habitat in the Cairngorms National Park
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • wild species and habitats • soil quality and storage of carbon • knowledge • recreation • landscape • sense of place, tradition history 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • woodland, wetland • planting of woodland 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use to promote cultural heritage of Park 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • capacity of soils • to maintain or improve the carbon storage capacity • maintain or enhance landscape character • maintain capacity for learning and enjoyment of history and culture
Urban	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • contribution to climate change through release of carbon • sources of noise and air pollution • introduction of invasive species • recreation • patterns of settlement, urban forms and landscape 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • economic changes • population changes • climate change – the effects of it and public policy to minimise carbon emissions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • loss of urban green spaces • fragmentation of green networks within towns and villages • changes in character and setting of towns and villages through new development. • dispersed rural settlements rely 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • consolidate and enhance character of settlements through design of new developments • improve the energy efficiency of existing and new buildings • conserve and enhance urban green spaces and networks, linking with wider habitat networks • use urban areas to increase local food production 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • conserve or enhance the value for distinctive wild species and habitats • maximise energy efficiency and minimise energy waste • maintain or enhance landscape character • maintain capacity for learning and enjoyment of history and culture

Table 8: Summary of main environmental issues in the habitats of the Cairngorms National Park

Habitat	Ecosystems services or benefits that this habitat is most important for	Main drivers of change	Threats/problems	Opportunities	Key environmental objectives for this habitat in the Cairngorms National Park
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> sense of place, tradition, history and identity 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> heavily on transport by private car flooding due to extreme weather events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> support communities to develop more efficient rural transport links improve communications and IT infrastructure to reduce need to travel to work locations 	

SEA Objectives

2.27 Table 9 sets out 9 objectives, phrased as questions that are a basis for the SEA. They build on the environmental objectives identified in table 8 and have been formulated for the purpose of the SEA of the development of the National Park Partnership Plan. They therefore necessarily cover a wide range of potential issues across all the habitats of the National Park. Because the National Park Partnership Plan is a strategic management plan – providing context and direction for other PPSs, it does not consider the detail of many issues. However, the future SEAs of other PPSs in the National Park could relate to a smaller set of ecosystems services applying to fewer habitats.

Table 9: SEA questions		
SEA question	Rationale for question	Environmental Objective
1. Will the Plan maintain or improve the ability of farmland in the Park to produce high quality local and seasonal food sustainably?	Local food has potential to be of high quality and with a low carbon footprint from transport. The nutritional values of local fresh food are likely to be greater than from food stored and transported from far away. Management of farmland affects native species; the management of soils; release of greenhouse gases; the quality of the water environment; the material cultural heritage and non-material cultural heritage of tradition and history; the appearance of the landscape; as well as the material value of farmland as a natural resource.	To maintain or improve the productive capacity of farmland
2. Will the Plan maintain or increase the sustainable production of timber and woodfuel in the Park?	Timber from woodland is an important material with many uses. Local wood as a source of fuel can be a low carbon alternative to fossil fuels. While many woodlands in the Park are managed for the conservation of distinctive species and habitats, many are also managed to provide economic benefits.	To maintain or increase sustainable timber and woodfuel production

Table 9: SEA questions		
SEA question	Rationale for question	Environmental Objective
<p>3. Will the Plan maintain or improve the Park's ability to provide a high quality supply of fresh water in and from the Park, including the ability of river catchments to store water?</p>	<p>Water that falls in the Park makes its way through a range of habitats towards the streams and rivers that flow out of the Park. It is taken from ground water sources, rivers and lochs in the Park for use by the human population of it as well as providing an important habitat in its own right for a range of rare and distinctive species such as salmon, lamprey and fresh water pearl mussel. Waste water from humans is also returned to the main rivers of the Park, and other products such as fertilisers and pesticides, road salt and some industrial waste may enter water courses and affect water quality. The rivers that leave the Park provide water for other parts of Scotland and are a corridor for many species to use for travel.</p> <p>Rivers and wetlands store water, helping river catchments to cope with extreme weather events such as storms, sudden snow melt and drought. The ability of rivers to flood naturally along their length allows them to avoid sudden and unexpected flooding in other areas. It is likely that we will experience more frequent extreme weather events as our climate changes, so the ability of river systems and wetlands to behave naturally will affect how severely humans experience the events. The natural cycle of flooding also provides diverse habitats that support many important species. Other habitats (particularly woodland) in a river catchment also help to store water, slow its movement downstream, and help prevent erosion from water.</p>	<p>To maintain or improve water quality</p> <p>To minimise unnecessary use of water</p> <p>To maintain or increase ability to store water</p> <p>To increase the resilience to climate change effects</p>
<p>4. Will the Plan conserve and enhance the viability and diversity of distinctive species and habitats in the Park?</p>	<p>The Cairngorms National Park has 25% of the UK's rare and threatened species and large areas of habitat that is rare or infrequent. 51% of the Park is designated for nature conservation and 48% is designated as being of European importance for nature conservation. The distinctive species and habitats recognised in these designations, and others in the Cairngorms Local Biodiversity Action Plan, rely on both the designated sites as well as a wider network of habitats across the Park. The viability of many species is linked to the appropriate management of habitats and connections between them irrespective of whether the land is designated for them. As well as providing a range of habitats that are important in their own right, the diversity and extent of these habitats helps species adapt to changes or other pressures such as changes in climate.</p>	<p>To conserve or enhance the value for distinctive wild species and habitats</p> <p>To increase the resilience to climate change effects</p>

Table 9: SEA questions		
SEA question	Rationale for question	Environmental Objective
5. Will the Plan maintain or improve the storage of greenhouse gases in peat, soils and woodland in the Park.	The National Park stores carbon in peat, in soils and in plants, particularly woodland. Disturbance of peatland and carbon-rich soils can release carbon to the atmosphere. Conservation of these area can secure can secure long term storage of carbon.	To maintain or improve the carbon storage capacity
6. Will the Plan increase energy efficiency and reduce energy waste?	Living in or visiting a relatively remote part of Scotland requires more energy for day to day life, business and travel. Reducing the need to travel by car, improving the energy efficiency of buildings and processes will reduce the need for energy and the need to use fossil fuels.	To maximise energy efficiency and minimise energy waste To increase the resilience to climate change effects
7. Will the Plan maintain the opportunities for people to enjoy physical recreation and healthy lifestyles ?	There are many factors that contribute to a healthy lifestyle. The National Park provides particular opportunities for physical recreation that can benefit physical and mental health. It also provides less tangible opportunities to enjoy and appreciate the nature and landscapes of the Park that can help to contribute to mental health and wellbeing.	To maintain recreational value
8. Will the Plan conserve and enhance the distinctive landscape character and experience of the Park?	The landscapes of the National Park are distinctive and are valued by the people who live in and visit the Park. This is partly reflected in the categorization of the Park as an IUCN Category V Protected Landscape. The landscapes of the Park will all change subtly over time, and can change suddenly in extreme events or with major changes in the use of land. Managing changes in the landscape to maintain and enhance the distinctive character and the ways that people experience it are important to the long term management of the Park.	To maintain or enhance landscape character To maintain sense of wildness

Table 9: SEA questions		
SEA question	Rationale for question	Environmental Objective
9. Will the Plan maintain or improve opportunities to experience, learn about and share the cultural heritage of the Park.	The material cultural heritage of the Park – the buildings, archaeological remains, and landscapes, together with the knowledge they provide, are enhanced and enriched by the stories, history, traditions, and communities of the Park. Wherever possible, the built heritage and archaeological remains are preserved or recorded. However, they become a living part of our cultural heritage when they are linked to the lives of people today through shared stories, history and tradition.	To maintain capacity for learning and enjoyment of history and culture

2.28 Table 10 shows how each SEA question is relevant to a number of the SEA topics.

Table 10: SEA questions and relevant SEA topics	Biodiversity, flora and fauna	Population and human health	Soil	Climatic factors	Water	Air	Cultural heritage	Landscape	Material assets
1. Will the Plan maintain or improve the ability of farmland in the Park to produce high quality local and seasonal food sustainably?									
2. Will the Plan maintain or increase the sustainable production of timber and woodfuel in the Park?									
3. Will the Plan maintain or improve the Park's ability to provide a high quality supply of fresh water in and from the Park, including the ability of river catchments to store water?									
4. Will the Plan conserve and enhance the viability and diversity of distinctive species and habitats in the Park?									
5. Will the Plan maintain or improve the storage of greenhouse gases in peat, soils and woodland in the Park?									
6. Will the Plan increase energy efficiency and reduce energy waste?									
7. Will the Plan maintain the opportunities for people to enjoy physical recreation and healthy lifestyles?									
8. Will the Plan conserve and enhance the distinctive landscape character and experience of the Park?									
9. Will the Plan maintain or improve opportunities to experience, learn about and share the cultural heritage of the Park?									

2.29 Table 11 shows the SEA questions with appropriate SEA assessment criteria and proposed indicators for each SEA question. The indicators are based on the availability of data, have been chosen to be consistent with other monitoring of the National Park Partnership Plan, and are intended to be relatively easily understood by the public.

Table 11: SEA questions with assessment criteria and proposed indicators		
SEA question	Assessment criteria	Proposed indicators
1. Will the Plan maintain or improve the ability of farmland in the Park to produce high quality local and seasonal food sustainably?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What effect will the Plan have on the productive capacity of agricultural land? • What effect will the Plan have on the function and quality of agricultural soils? 	The annual economic value of agriculture in the Park. (Estimated at c £40 million p.a. between 2003-2006)
2. Will the Plan maintain or increase the sustainable production of timber and woodfuel in the Park?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What effect will the Plan have on the production of commercial timber? • What effect will the Plan have on the supply of wood for woodfuel? • Will the plan affect the supply of any other timber products? 	The annual economic value of the forest sector in the Park. (Estimated at c. £8.2 million p.a. in 2006)
3. Will the Plan maintain or improve the Park's ability to provide a high quality supply of fresh water in and from the Park, including the ability of river catchments to store water?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What effect will the Plan have on abstraction of water? • Will the Plan minimise the use of water? • What effect will the Plan have on water quality as a result of waste waters and agricultural run-off? • What effect will the Plan have on sediment loading as a result of erosion • What effect will the Plan have on the flow of water downstream – will it slow water through woodland planting, floodplain management or Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS)? 	The ecological status of water bodies in the Park. Area of land given public subsidy for wetland and flood management.
4. Will the Plan conserve and enhance the viability and diversity of distinctive species and habitats in the Park?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What effect will the Plan have on the features of designated sites? • What effect will the Plan have on habitats and species in the Cairngorms LBAP? • What effect will the Plan have on the resilience of habitats and species to climate change, including the connectivity of habitats? • What effect will the Plan have on invasive non-native species? 	The condition of the features of designated sites. The ecological status of water bodies in the Park.

Table 11: SEA questions with assessment criteria and proposed indicators		
SEA question	Assessment criteria	Proposed indicators
5. Will the Plan maintain or improve the storage of greenhouse gases in peat, soils and woodland in the Park?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What effect will the Plan have on the ability of peatland to store carbon? • What effect will the Plan have on carbon rich soils? • What effect will the Plan have on the total carbon stored in peat, soils and vegetation? 	The land area given public subsidy for carbon management.
6. Will the Plan increase energy efficiency and reduce energy waste?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What effect will the plan have on the need for oil-based energy? • What effect will the Plan have on the energy efficiency of new development and existing development? • What effect will the Plan have on patterns of travel? • What effect will the Plan have on modes of transport in and to the Park? • What effect will the Plan have on opportunities to travel by foot, cycle, horse etc? • What effect will the Plan have on the generation and management of waste? • What effect will the Plan have on the resilience of society to climate change effects? 	<p>Reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from the Park or sectors of activity in the Park.</p> <p>The number of properties that are retro-fitted to improve insulation and energy efficiency.</p>
7. Will the Plan maintain the opportunities for people to enjoy physical recreation and healthy lifestyles?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What effect will the Plan have on opportunities for physical exercise? • What effect will the Plan have on the availability of high quality local food? • What effect will the Plan have on people's understanding and interest in maintaining healthy lifestyles? 	The numbers of people participating in 'Health Walks' programmes.
8. Will the Plan conserve and enhance the distinctive landscape character and experience of the Park?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What effect will the Plan have on changes in landscape character in the Park? • What effect will the Plan have on the qualities of wildness that people experience in the Park? • What effect will the Plan have on the character and setting of towns and villages in the Park? • What effect will the Plan have on people's understanding of the historical and current processes and management of the Park that give it its distinctive character? 	Area of land with multiple wildness qualities.

Table 11: SEA questions with assessment criteria and proposed indicators		
SEA question	Assessment criteria	Proposed indicators
9. Will the Plan maintain or improve opportunities to experience, learn about and share the cultural heritage of the Park?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What effect will the Plan have on designated archaeological sites listed buildings? • What effect will the Plan have on wider archaeological remains and built heritage in the landscapes of the Park? • What effect will the Plan have on communities' and visitor's knowledge and appreciation of archaeological remains and built heritage? 	The number of community heritage projects that celebrate local culture and tradition.

Consideration of reasonable alternatives

2.30 The Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 requires that reasonable alternatives to the Plan are considered as part of the SEA. This presents a challenge for the National Park Partnership Plan as it does not deliver changes itself, but is intended to co-ordinate and focus the delivery of a wide range of other PPSs and work that do deliver change. The process of developing the National Park Partnership Plan involves interpreting the National Park aims and other national policy objectives to the Park in order to make the most of those PPSs. On the one hand there are therefore potentially endless alternatives, but in practice there are few reasonable alternatives of substance that could reasonably be assessed.

2.31 The exception to this is where the National Park Partnership Plan sets the context for the Local Development Plan and in particular provides a context for the future development of land in the Park. However, there are a number of areas where hypothetical alternatives exist but where for practical reasons none are considered reasonable:

- The upgrading of both the A9 road that travels through the Park and the Perth to Inverness Rail line will be major projects that have a range of environmental impacts and will be controversial. However, both are stated policy objectives of the Scottish Government. The National Park Partnership Plan notes that the planning of these projects would need to minimise and avoid negative environmental impacts.
-
- There will be a need for new housing in the Park in the future to meet the needs of communities and to accommodate any growth. The Local Development Plan considers the need and how to meet it in detail. Hypothetically, the National Park Partnership Plan could set a low target or constrain future growth. However, the National Park has a consented land supply that is likely to last around 20 years into the future. We must assume that those consented sites will be built so there is no reasonable alternative.
-
- The National Park Partnership Plan supports the existing settlement hierarchy within the Park – using the existing larger settlements as the main service centres

because they are the places where most people live and have the widest range of existing services. To adopt an alternative would lead to substantial changes in the character of other settlements, threaten the viability of others and increase the need for people to travel. It would not be a reasonable alternative.

3 Assessment of environmental effects and measures envisaged for prevention, reduction and offsetting any significant adverse effects

Assessment methods

- 3.1 Because the National Park Partnership Plan is a strategic plan, mainly co-ordinating other subsidiary PPSs and projects across the National Park, its assessment is relatively simple. It sets desirable outcomes for other PPSs and projects to work towards, but is not prescriptive about how that should happen. In many cases those other PPS or projects require an appropriate level of assessment with their more detailed planning.
- 3.2 The assessment of the Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan 2012-2017 has been undertaken by answering the nine questions identified in Tables 9-11 for each substantial component on the Plan. The assessment criteria shown in Table 11 were used as prompts in the assessment. The assessment methods, SEA objectives, questions and criteria were modified and simplified following the response of consultation authorities on the SEA scoping report.
- 3.3 The assessment was recorded in a similar form to the example shown in Table 12, using a simple visual five-colour scale of effects to provide a summary of effects. Where effects were predicted, the nature of those effects was explained in more detail and any mitigation measures required to avoid, reduce, or offset them were also recorded. Potential cumulative and/or synergistic effects were assessed simply with the help of a summary matrix of individual assessments.

Table 12: Example of assessment recording form

Table 12: Example of assessment recording form			
Plan Objective/outcome	I		
Summary of effect at scale of:	Park	Scotland	Commentary on assessment
SEA Question 1			
SEA Question 2			
SEA Question 3			
SEA Question 4			
SEA Question 5			
SEA Question 6			
SEA Question 7			
SEA Question 8			
SEA Question 9			
Mitigation measures:	•		
Duration of effects: L=long-term, M=medium-term, S=short-term			
positive effect	no effect or negligible effect	negative effect	not applicable
uncertain effect/effect cannot be predicted/or both positive and negative effects			

Summary of effects of the Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan 2012-2017

3.4 The Plan was assessed using the framework described earlier. A summary of the assessment findings is shown in Table 13 and the full findings are shown in Appendix 2.

Table 13: Summary matrix of potential effects									
SEA Objectives:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Cumulative/synergistic effects	SML	SML	SML	SML	SML	SML	SML	SML	SML
Vision	L	L	L	L			L	L	L
Strategic objective 1	SML	SML	SML	SML	SML	SML	SML	ML	SML
Strategic objective 2	SML	SML	SML	SML	L			SML	SML
Strategic objective 3				SML			SML	ML	SML
Five-year outcome 1	SML	SML							
Five-year outcome 2	M	M	ML		ML	M	SML		
Five-year outcome 3	SML	SML	SML			SML	SML		SML
Five-year outcome 4			SML	SML	SML			ML	
Five-year outcome 5			SML	SML				ML	
Five-year outcome 6				ML				ML	ML
Five-year outcome 7						ML	ML	ML	ML
Five-year outcome 8				SML			SML	ML	SML
Five-year outcome 9	SML			SML			SML	ML	SML
Five-year outcome 10							SML		SML
Policy 1.1	SML	SML			SML	SML	SML		
Policy 1.2						ML	ML		
Policy 1.3	ML	ML				ML	ML		
Policy 1.4	ML	ML					ML		ML
Policy 2.1	ML	ML	ML	ML	ML	ML	ML	ML	ML
Policy 2.2	ML	ML	ML	ML	ML			ML	
Policy 2.3				ML			ML	ML	ML
Policy 2.4	SML	SML	SML	SML	SML			SML	
Policy 2.5			SML	SML				SML	
Policy 2.6		ML	ML	ML					
Policy 2.7								SML	SML
Policy 2.8						SML		SML	SML
Policy 3.1				SML			SML	SML	SML
Policy 3.2				SML		SML	SML	SML	SML
Policy 3.3			SML	SML	SML	SML	SML	SML	SML
Policy 3.4	SML	SML	ML	ML	ML	ML	SML	ML	SML
Duration of effects: L=long-term, M=medium-term, S=short-term									
positive effect	no effect or negligible effect		negative effect			not applicable			
uncertain effect/ effect cannot be predicted/ or both positive and negative effects									

3.5 The summary of effects is as follows:

Vision: sets a positive contribution towards all but two SEA objectives on which it has no effect. However, the vision is so general that its impact will depend almost entirely on how it is implemented.

Long-term outcome 1: is a general one that, combined with other policy statements in the Plan, is considered likely to have a positive impact on all the SEA objectives.

Long-term outcome 2: sets out an explicit objective to have a positive impact on the natural and cultural heritage of the Park, and is therefore likely to have a positive effect on SEA objectives with the exception of 6 and 7.

Long-term outcome 3: is likely to have a positive effect on SEA objectives 4,7,8 and 9 due to the close relationship between the management and appreciation of the special qualities and recreation opportunities.

Five-year outcomes:

1: A positive effect is likely on SEA objectives 1 and 2 because of the economic significance of food and timber/woodfuel. The outcome has potential to have negative effects on some other objectives, but these are safeguarded by other outcomes or policy statements in the Plan.

2: A positive effect is likely on SEA objectives 1-3 and 5-7 because of their links to a low carbon economy and the likely adaptation measures required.

3: A positive effect is likely on SEA objectives 1-3 and 6, 7 and 9 because of the likelihood of communities choosing to define sustainability around actions that affect them. In the draft Plan, the effects were considered to be uncertain for all SEA objectives, but the refined policy framework of the National Park Partnership Plan provides safeguards and protection for them.

4: A positive effect is likely on SEA objectives 3-5 and 8 because the outcome is about improving habitat quality and connectivity as well as landscape enhancements. In the draft Plan, the effects were considered to be negative for SEA objective and uncertain for a number of others. The refined policy framework of the National Park Partnership Plan provides safeguards and protection for them. A comment on the draft Plan and SEA was that there was potential for the destruction of archaeological remains by woodland expansion. Policy 2.7 of the national Park Partnership Plan now provides explicit protection.

5: A positive effect is likely on SEA objectives 3,4 and 8 because the outcome is about improving the conservation status of species that the Cairngorms National Park is important for.

6: A positive effect is likely on SEA objectives 4, 8 and 9 because the outcome is about conserving and enhancing the special landscape qualities. There was uncertainty in the assessment of the draft Plan about whether an outcome about wildness could hinder sustainable timber production. The revised outcome and refined policy framework of

the National Park Partnership Plan means this is no longer considered to be a potential impact.

7: This outcome is likely to have a positive effect on SEA objectives 6, 7, 8 and 9 by improving the quality of design and ensuring that settlements contribute to the sense of place, conserving the special qualities.

8: A positive effect is likely on SEA objectives 4,7,8 and 9 due to the focus of increased learning, care for and enjoyment of the special qualities.

9: This outcome is likely to have a positive effect on SEA objectives 1, 4, 7, 8 and 9 by meeting or exceeding the expectations of visitors.

10: This outcome is likely to have a positive effect on SEA objectives 7 and 9 through its focus on providing recreation opportunities, benefitting active lifestyles and opportunities to enjoy and understand the special qualities. There was uncertainty in the assessment of the draft Plan about whether the outcome could affect sensitive habitats or species on increase energy use through people using cars to travel to places of recreation. The refined policy framework of the National Park Partnership Plan means these are no longer considered to be potential effects.

Policy directions:

Policy direction 1.1: This policy is likely to have a positive effect on SEA objectives 1, 2, 5, 6 and 7 because these SEA objectives are all also associated with economic opportunity in the Park. Although the policy could lead to negative effects on these and other objectives if used in isolation, the other policy statements in the National Park Partnership Plan provide safeguards and protection.

Policy direction 1.2: This policy is likely to have a positive effect on SEA objectives 6 and 7 because these SEA objectives are linked to improving energy efficiency and to opportunities for healthy lifestyles. The policy supports measures that increase energy efficiency. The policy could lead to negative effects on these and other objectives if used in isolation, the other policy statements in the National Park Partnership Plan provide safeguards and protection.

Policy direction 1.3: This policy is likely to have a positive effect on SEA objectives 1, 2, 6 and 7 because it is intended to increase energy efficiency, reduce energy waste, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and increase generation of renewable energy that is compatible with the special qualities of the National Park.

Policy direction 1.4: This policy is likely to have a positive effect on SEA objectives 1, 2, 7 and 9 because they are objectives that are likely to be priorities that communities want to deliver. Other policy statements in the National Park Partnership Plan also support them and provide safeguards and protection for other SEA objectives.

Policy direction 2.1: This policy is likely to have a positive effects on all SEA objectives because it is about delivering multiple benefits and the best combination of the Plans long term outcomes.

Policy direction 2.2: This policy is likely to have a positive effect on SEA objectives 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 8 by ensuring that habitats, species and land use are resilient to the effects of climate change.

Policy direction 2.3: This policy is likely to have a positive effect on SEA objectives 4, 7, 8 and 9 by conserving and enhancing the special landscape qualities.

Policy direction 2.4: This policy is likely to have a positive effect on SEA objectives 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 8 by conserving and enhancing habitat quality and connectivity as well as delivering a combination of ecosystem services including flood management, carbon sequestration and storage, timber and food production.

Policy direction 2.5: This policy is likely to have a positive effect on SEA objectives 3, 4 and 8 by conserving and enhancing the species that the CNP is most important for.

Policy direction 2.6: This policy is likely to have a positive effect on SEA objectives 2, 3 and 4 by supporting collaboration to reduce conflict in species and wildlife management.

Policy direction 2.7: This policy is likely to have a positive effect on SEA objectives 8 and 9 conserving and enhancing cultural heritage in the Park, including the protection of archaeological sites and their setting and promoting understanding of their significance.

Policy direction 2.8: This policy is likely to have a positive effect on SEA objectives 6, 8 and 9 by improving design and sense of place through new development and redevelopment and encouraging more energy efficient design.

Policy direction 3.1: This policy is likely to have a positive effect on SEA objectives 4, 7, 8 and 9 because it is about delivering a high quality visitor experience. In the Cairngorms National Park, this experience is associated with the experience or awareness of the distinctive species and habitats, landscape character, cultural heritage and recreation opportunities. Although visitors have potential to cause negative effects on some SEA objectives, other policy statements in the National Park Partnership Plan provide safeguards and protection.

Policy direction 3.2: This policy is likely to have a positive effect on SEA objectives 4, 6, 7, 8 and 9 because it is about promoting sustainable tourism management, co-ordinated promotion and management, and tackling the effects of visitor pressure on natural heritage. Although visitors have potential to cause negative effects some SEA objectives, this policy is intended to reduce and minimise pressures and other policy statements in the National Park Partnership Plan provide further safeguards and protection.

Policy Direction 3.3: This policy is likely to have a positive effect on SEA objectives 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 because it is about high quality opportunities for outdoor recreation to help deliver health benefits and about safeguarding sensitive places in the Park from recreation pressure through appropriate management.

Policy Direction 3.4: This policy is likely to have a positive effect on all SEA objectives because it is about providing people with opportunities to learn about and understand the Park, including developing a shared sense of ownership and responsibility for the Park and its environment.

Cumulative and/or synergistic effects of the Plan

3.6 The cumulative effects across the SEA objectives are found to be positive, due to the mitigation already built into the plan, including the recognition that a wide range of policy priorities may be delivered through changes in the Park. The outcomes and policy priorities are intended to be delivered in a co-ordinated way, and the proposals for their delivery already set out parameters and ways in which this integration should occur.

3.7 The assessment has not identified any significant synergistic effects beyond the individual assessment effects and cumulative effects because most of the outcomes and policy priorities provide very general rather than site specific direction; and given that the plan is intended to be delivered together, it would be irrational to assume that any parts would be pursued in isolation or without consideration of the Plan together.

Mitigation

3.8 Mitigation has been built into the development of the Plan, given the need to integrate the four aims and comply with section 9(6) of the National Parks (Scotland) Act. In this way, a number of potentially negative effects are avoided through parameters set on how outcomes should be delivered.

3.9 Specific mitigation measures that were identified during the assessment of the draft Plan have been incorporated into, or superseded by, the more comprehensive policy framework of the Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan. No additional mitigation measures are considered necessary.

4 Monitoring

- 4.1 Monitoring of the environmental effects of the National Park Partnership Plan and of environmental change in the Park is an integral part of the overall monitoring of the Plan. In addition to the indicators SEA objectives (see Table 14 below), the Plan proposes indicators associated with the five-year outcomes. The CNPA will also be publishing a set of National Park 'Health' Indicators associated with the long term delivery of the aims of the National Park. There will be overlap between some indicators that are used to show change or progress for a range of purposes.
- 4.2 Wherever possible monitoring data will be updated annually and published on the CNPA section of www.cairngorms.co.uk

Table 14: SEA monitoring indicators

SEA question	Proposed Indicators
1. Will the Plan maintain or improve the ability of farmland in the Park to produce high quality local and seasonal food sustainably?	The annual economic value of agriculture in the Park. (Estimated at c £40 million p.a. between 2003-2006)
2. Will the Plan maintain or increase the sustainable production of timber and woodfuel in the Park?	The annual economic value of the forest sector in the Park. (Estimated at c £8.2 million p.a. in 2006)
3. Will the Plan maintain or improve the Park's ability to provide a high quality supply of fresh water in and from the Park, including the ability of river catchments to store water?	The ecological status of water bodies in the Park. Area of land given public subsidy for wetland and flood management.
4. Will the Plan conserve and enhance the viability and diversity of distinctive species and habitats in the Park?	The condition of the features of designated sites. The ecological status of water bodies in the Park.
5. Will the Plan maintain or improve the storage of greenhouse gases in peat, soils and woodland in the Park?	The land area given public subsidy for carbon management.
6. Will the Plan increase energy efficiency and reduce energy waste?	Reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from the Park or sectors of activity in the Park. The number of properties that are retro-fitted to improve insulation and energy efficiency.
7. Will the Plan maintain the opportunities for people to enjoy physical recreation and healthy lifestyles?	The numbers of people participating in 'health walks' programmes.
8. Will the Plan conserve and enhance the distinctive landscape character and experience of the Park?	Area of land with multiple wildness qualities.
9. Will the Plan maintain or improve opportunities to experience, learn about and share the cultural heritage of the Park.	The number of community heritage projects that celebrate local culture and tradition

5 Next Steps

5.1 The Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan 2012-2017 is now complete for submission to Ministers in May 2012 with this revised Environmental Report. Following approval and any modifications by Ministers, the CNPA will:

- formally adopt the Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan 2012-2017;
- prepare a post-adoption SEA statement showing how the SEA process has informed the completed National Park Plan; and
- co-ordinate delivery of the Plan; monitor its delivery and its environmental effects.

Appendix I

Other programmes, plans and strategies (PPSs) and environmental objectives

Relevant PPS	Relevant objectives/purpose	SEA issue	Relationship between the policy and the Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan 2012-2017
International Directives			
SEA Directive 2001/42/EC (European Union, 2001)	Requires Strategic Environmental Assessments to be undertaken for plans, programmes and strategies with significant environmental effects.	All SEA Issues listed in Schedule 2 of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005	Enables significant environmental effects of the Park Plan to be identified and addressed.
Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance 1971	Requires conservation and wise use of wetlands.	Biodiversity Water Landscape	Park Plan can require the protection and enhancement of wetlands through policies and targets.
Directive 2009/147/EC: the Conservation of Wild Birds 1979	Requires member states to sustain populations of naturally occurring wild birds by sustaining areas of habitats to maintain ecologically and scientifically sound levels.	Biodiversity Water Landscape Woodlands and forests	Park Plan should support protection and enhancement of bird habitat through policies and targets.
Directive 92/42EEC: The Conservation of Natural Habitats of Wild Fauna and Flora 1992	Requires member states to sustain populations of naturally occurring flora and fauna by sustaining areas of habitats to maintain ecologically and scientifically sound levels.	Biodiversity Water Landscape Woodlands and Forests	Park Plan must ensure protection and enhancement of Natura Sites.
EU Flood Risk Directive 2007/60/EC	Aims to reduce and manage the risks that floods pose to human health, the environment, cultural heritage and economic activity.	Water Climatic factors	Park Plan should reduce and manage flood risk encouraging natural flood management approaches.
Directive 2000/60 EC: The Water Framework Directive	Requires member states to achieve good ecological status of inland water bodies, and develop integrated catchment management and river basin management plans.	Water Biodiversity Landscape	Park Plan should support protection and enhancement of the water environment.
Directive 96/62 EC: Ambient Air Quality and Management	Establishes standards for air quality and sets limits for various pollutants.	Air Human health	Park Plan should support measures that would improve air quality.

Relevant PPS	Relevant objectives/purpose	SEA issue	Relationship between the policy and the Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan 2012-2017
EU Common Agricultural Policy	Sets policy for agricultural support with increased emphasis on rural development support.	Land Landscape Population	Park Plan should recognise and provide for rural diversification of economic activities.
UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (the Rio Earth Summit) 1992	Treaty aimed at reducing global emissions of greenhouse gases to combat global warming.	Climatic factors Air	Park Plan should aim to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
Kyoto Protocol (UNFCCC, 1997)	Protocol to the international Framework Convention on Climate Change Framework with the objective of reducing Greenhouse gases which cause climate change.	Climatic factors Air	Park Plan should support measures that will reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
Taking Sustainable Use of Resources Forward: A thematic Strategy on the prevention and recycling of waste (EU, 2005)	A sector based strategy produced under the Environmental Action Programme	Climatic factors Air	Park Plan can minimise waste.
National Legislation			
Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005	Requires Strategic Environmental Assessments to be completed for plans, programmes and strategies likely to have significant environmental effects.	All SEA Issues listed in Schedule 2 of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005	Enables significant environmental effects of the Park Plan to be identified and addressed.
Water Environment and Water Services (Scotland) Act 2003	Transposes the Water Framework Directive into Scots law.	Water Biodiversity Landscape	Park Plan should encourage improvements to the water environment and support measures for more efficient use of water.
Environmental Impact Assessment (Scotland) Regulations 2011	Requires environmental impact assessment of site specific projects and specifically requires consideration of Sensitive Areas including National	Climatic factors Soils Air Biodiversity Water Landscape	The Park Plan can be a material consideration for planning applications requiring Environmental Impact Assessments.

Relevant PPS	Relevant objectives/purpose	SEA issue	Relationship between the policy and the Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan 2012-2017
	Parks.	Human health Cultural heritage	
Environmental Impact Assessment (Forestry) (Scotland) Regulations 1999	Requires environmental impact assessments for certain forestry projects.	Climatic factors Soils Air Biodiversity Water Landscape Human health Cultural heritage	Park Plan can be a material consideration for planning applications requiring Environmental Impact Assessments.
Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003	Establishes right of responsible access to land and water.	Biodiversity Water Land Human health	Park Plan can provide for and support responsible access.
Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981	Requires certain species to be protected.	Biodiversity	Park Plan should support protected species.
Nature Conservation Act (Scotland) 2004	Act places duties on public bodies for conserving biodiversity, increases protection for Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), amends legislation on Nature Conservation Orders, provides for Land Management Orders for SSSIs and associated land, strengthens wildlife enforcement legislation, and requires the preparation of a Scottish Fossil Code.	Biodiversity Land Water	Park Plan should support conservation and enhancement of biodiversity.
National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000	Specifies what a Park Authority can do and how it should be run, including a requirement to produce a National Park Plan.	All SEA Issues listed in Schedule 2 of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005	Establishes the aims of National Parks. Provides direction on the functions and role of the National Park Authority.
Flood Risk Management Act (Scotland) Act 2009	Establishes roles, responsibilities and requirements for sustainable flood management.	Water Climatic factors	Park Plan should support flood management, particularly natural flood management.
Climate Change	Outlines emission	Climatic factors	Park Plan should support

Relevant PPS	Relevant objectives/purpose	SEA issue	Relationship between the policy and the Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan 2012-2017
(Scotland) Act 2009	reduction targets, adaptation measures, and establishes duties on public bodies.	Soil Water Biodiversity Human health Population	climate change adaptation and mitigation measures.
Wildlife and Natural Environment (Scotland) Act 2011	Amends Wildlife Consultation Act 1981, and seeks to modernise game law; abolish the designation 'areas of special protection'; improve snaring practice; regulate invasive non-native species; change the licensing system for protected species; amend current arrangements for deer management and deer stalking; strengthen protection of badgers; change how muirburn can be practised; and make operational changes to the management of Sites of Scientific Interest; game law, use of shores, and invasive species legislation.	Climatic factors Soil Water Biodiversity	Park Plan should support provisions of the Act.
National Policy			
Scottish Government Purpose	The Scottish Government's purpose is to secure sustainable economic growth for Scotland. All the public sector should be working to the purpose.	Air Soil Water Population Human health Biodiversity Climatic factors Material assets Cultural heritage Landscape	The Park Plan should support the delivery of sustainable economic growth in the context of the Park and its special qualities and management needs.
Scottish Government National Outcomes	The Scottish Government has 16 National Outcomes that the public sector must collectively deliver.	Air Soil Water Population Human health Biodiversity	The Park Plan should identify and contribute to delivery of the outcomes that are most appropriate in the Park.

Relevant PPS	Relevant objectives/purpose	SEA issue	Relationship between the policy and the Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan 2012-2017
		Climatic factors Material assets Cultural heritage Landscape	
National Planning Framework for Scotland 2 (2009)	National framework to guide spatial development.	All SEA Issues listed in Schedule 2 of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005	Provides strategic context for future regional change around the Park.
Scottish Planning Policy Guidance	SPP covering a range of topics relevant to the Local Development Plan.	All SEA Issues listed in Schedule 2 of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005	Provides guidance for developing policies to address specific issues in the Local Development Plan, an implementation Plan for the Park Plan.
Planning Advice Notes (including PAN 42)	Scottish Executive good practice advice.	All SEA Issues listed in Schedule 2 of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005	Provides guidance for developing policies to address specific issues in the Local Development Plan, an implementation Plan for the Park Plan.
Scotland River Basin Management Plan	Fulfils a requirement under the EU Water Framework Directive.	Water Biodiversity Soil	Includes management objectives for water bodies in the National Park which the Park Plan must take account of.
Land Use Strategy for Scotland	Outlines strategy for achieving sustainable land use across Scotland and getting the best from the land of Scotland.	Soil Water Biodiversity Landscape Population	Park Plan can provide more specific direction on the National Land Use Strategy and can be implemented at a regional level.
Scottish Forestry Strategy	Outlines strategic priorities for forestry including management, planting and environmental stewardship.	Water Soils Biodiversity Landscape	Provides strategic direction for forestry policy.
Scotland Rural	Sets goals for sustainable	Water	Park Plan can provide

Relevant PPS	Relevant objectives/purpose	SEA issue	Relationship between the policy and the Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan 2012-2017
Development Programme	rural development and the types of support available.	Biodiversity Landscape Soil	more specific direction on how rural development and diversification should be supported in the Park.
Climate Change: The UK Programme	Goal to reduce carbon emissions in the UK by 60% by 2050.	Climatic factors Air Soil	Park Plan should encourage reductions in emissions through a range of measures.
Changing Our Ways: Scotland's Climate Change Programme	Demonstrates how Scotland will deliver carbon savings from devolved policy measures and reduce its vulnerability to the changing climate.	Climatic factors Air Soil	Park Plan should encourage reductions in emissions through a range of measures.
Climate Change Adaptation Framework (2009)	Establishes a framework by which Scotland will adapt to Climate Change.	Climatic factors Soil Air Water Human health	Park Plan should include measures that help the Park adapt to climate change.
Air Quality Strategy for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland	Sets out objectives for eight air pollutants.	Air Soil Climatic factors	Park Plan should encourage reductions in emissions through a range of measures.
UK Biodiversity Action Plan	Identifies UK priority species and habitats where action to conserve is required.	Biodiversity Water Soil	Park Plan should support delivery of the UKBAP and significant Park species through support for Cairngorms LBAP.
Scottish Biodiversity Strategy	Identifies Scottish biodiversity priorities and lead partners for taking action.	Biodiversity Water Soil	Park Plan should support delivery of the UKBAP and significant Park species through support for Cairngorms LBAP.
Choosing our future: Scotland's Sustainable Development Strategy	Outlines a strategic framework for the Scottish Government's strategies on climate change, transport, renewable energy, energy efficiency, green jobs and biodiversity.	All SEA issues listed in Schedule 2 of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005	Park Plan should help deliver sustainable development.
The Diversity of Scottish Soil	Scottish Government Guidance	Soil	Park Plan supports this.

Relevant PPS	Relevant objectives/purpose	SEA issue	Relationship between the policy and the Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan 2012-2017
Scotland's Zero Waste Plan (2010)	Sets out the Scottish Government's vision for a zero waste society in Scotland.	Material assets Soil Water Air Climatic factors Population	Park Plan should minimise waste.
A Policy Statement for Scotland – Designing Places	Provides the policy context for important areas of planning policy and design guidance.	Landscape Cultural heritage Population Human health	Park Plan should support good design.
A Policy on Architecture for Scotland (2001 updated in 2006)	Scottish Government Guidance 2001.	Landscape Cultural heritage Population Human health	Park Plan should support good design.
Scotland's National Transport Strategy 2006	Scottish Government - National Strategy for reducing transport emissions by 80%.	Population Human health Air Climatic factors	Park Plan should support reductions in emissions from transport.
Scottish Tourism: The Next Decade – a Tourism Framework for Change (2006)	Scottish Government's ambitions for growth in tourism revenues by 50% by 2015.	Population Land Human health	Park Plan should support development of sustainable tourism to contribute to national targets for tourism growth.
Scottish Historic Environment (SHEP)	Outlines Scottish Ministers' policies on the historic environment, and supersedes the policy elements in Passed to the Future.	Cultural heritage Landscape	Guidance for policy development on the management of the historic environment.
Managing Change in the Historic Environment Guidance Notes	Series of guidance notes which are designed to support the Scottish Historic Environment Policy (SHEP) and Scottish Planning Policy.	Cultural heritage Landscape	Guidance for policy development on the management of the historic environment.
The Special Qualities of Scotland's National Scenic Areas 2010 report No 374	Scottish Natural Heritage Guidance for identification.	Cultural heritage Land form and land use Authenticity and integrity Visual experience	Guidance and support.

Relevant PPS	Relevant objectives/purpose	SEA issue	Relationship between the policy and the Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan 2012-2017
		Wildlife	
Scotland's physical activity strategy 'Let's make Scotland more active' (2003)	Sets out how the Scottish Government aims to increase and maintain the proportion of physically active people in Scotland.	Population Human health	Park Plan should support physical activity.
Local Plans and Strategies			
Cairngorms National Park Plan 2007-2012	The first National Park Plan for the Cairngorms National Park.	All SEA Issues listed in Schedule 2 of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005	Park Plan 2012-2017 should build on experience of delivering the first Cairngorms National Park Plan.
Mid-term Review of the Cairngorms National Park Plan 2009	Mid-point review of five-year Plan to assess achievements to date and to assess actions to achieve vision for 2030.	All SEA Issues listed in Schedule 2 of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005	Park Plan 2012-2017 should build on experience of delivering the first Cairngorms National Park Plan.
Cairngorms National Park Local Plan 2010	Establishes development and settlement strategy for the Park, allocates specific development sites, and provides policies for managing development in the Park.	All SEA Issues listed in Schedule 2 of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005	Park Plan provides strategic context for development in the Park.
Local Authority Single Outcome Agreements	Strategic documents outlining priorities across communities in the National Park.	All SEA issues listed in Schedule 2 of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2006	Park Plan can help deliver community priorities and SOAs can help to deliver National Park Plan.
Community Plans	Plans set out how public services will be planned and delivered, through consultation and co-operation.	All SEA Issues listed in Schedule 2 of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005	Park Plan can support parts of Community Plans and Community Plans can help deliver parts of Park Plan.
Community Visions and Local Community	Statements from communities in the Park	Population Human health	Park Plan can support communities in developing

Relevant PPS	Relevant objectives/purpose	SEA issue	Relationship between the policy and the Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan 2012-2017
Action or development Plans	about how they would like to change or develop in future, sometimes with plans on how to get there.	Biodiversity Cultural heritage	their own plans and capacity.
Local Housing Strategies (prepared by local authorities as housing authorities for each council area)	Required by the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001. Sets out how housing authorities will provide for housing needs and demands in their area.	Population Human health	Park Plan provides additional context for housing strategies as they apply to the Park.
Housing Need and Demand Assessments (prepared by local authorities as housing authorities for each council area)	Assess housing need and demand in each local authority area, and identify likely future need and demand to inform housing strategies and development plans.	Population Human health	HNDAs inform housing requirement of Local Development Plan and provide context for Park Plan.
Regional and Local Transport Strategies	Set out how to maintain and improve infrastructure.	Air Climatic factors Human health Population	Park Plan should support sustainable transport solutions and encourage lower carbon forms of transport.
Area Waste Plans	Strategies for waste management, minimisation and recycling for each local authority area.	Soil Water Air Material assets Population	Park Plan should support minimisation of waste.
Economic Development Strategies	Priority areas for economic development.	Soil Material Assets Population	Park Plan should encourage economic development that does not adversely affect the special qualities of the Park.
Strategy and Action Plan for Sustainable Tourism in the Cairngorms	Identifies measures to support and develop sustainable management of tourism in the Park in line with the Europarc Federation of Protected Areas Charter.	Population Biodiversity Landscape Water Air Material Assets	Park Plan supports the implementation of the Sustainable Tourism Strategy
Cairngorms Local Biodiversity Action Plan	Priorities and actions for biodiversity in the National Park .	Biodiversity Soil Water Material Assets	Park Plan supports implementation and review of Cairngorms LBAP.

Relevant PPS	Relevant objectives/purpose	SEA issue	Relationship between the policy and the Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan 2012-2017
Cairngorms Outdoor Access Strategy	Provides a framework for managing outdoor access in the Park	Human health Biodiversity Landscape Air Climatic factors	Park Plan can support and promote responsible outdoor access.
Cairngorms National Park Core Paths Plan	Identifies a network of core paths throughout the Park.	Human health Biodiversity	Park Plan supports promotion and development of core paths.
Cairngorms Landscape Framework	A framework for managing landscape change in the Cairngorms to maintain and enhance the special landscape qualities and character.	Landscape	The Landscape Framework will help to ensure that the special landscape qualities of the Park are conserved and enhanced.
Catchment Management Plans for rivers Dee, South Esk and Spey	Catchment Management Plans bring together all the people and organisations who affect or are affected by the river catchment to manage in ways that maintain and improves the quality of water and overall health of the catchment.	Water Air Soils Biodiversity Climatic factors Human health Material assets	The Park Plan supports integrated catchment management as a way of improving water quality and the health of natural systems.

Appendix 2

Assessment recording forms

SEA of Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan 2012-2017			
Assessment recording form			
Plan objective/outcome		Vision	
An outstanding National Park, enjoyed and valued by everyone, where nature and people thrive together			
Summary of effect at scale of:		Park	Scotland
SEA question:		Commentary on assessment	
1. Will the Plan maintain or improve the ability of farmland in the Park to produce high quality local and seasonal food?	L		The vision implies that through nature and people thriving together, that farmland of the Park will continue to produce high quality local and seasonal food. This is a likely positive effect of the Plan at the Park scale, though not significant at the national scale.
2. Will the Plan maintain or increase the sustainable production of timber and woodfuel in the Park?	L		The vision implies that through nature and people thriving together, the Park will continue to produce timber and woodfuel. This is a likely positive effect of the Plan at the Park scale, though not significant at the national scale.
3. Will the Plan maintain or improve the Park's ability to provide a high quality supply of fresh water in and from the Park, including the ability of river catchments to store water?	L	L	The vision implies that through nature and people thriving together, the Park will continue to supply and store high quality fresh water. This is a likely positive effect of the Plan at the Park scale, and a benefit to areas outside the Park in Scotland.
4. Will the Plan conserve and enhance the viability and diversity of distinctive species and habitats in the Park?	L		The vision implies that through nature and people thriving together, the Park will conserve and enhance the viability and diversity of species and habitats.
5. Will the Plan maintain or improve the storage of greenhouse gases in peat, soils and woodland in the Park?			It could be argued that the vision implies through nature and people thriving together, that careful management of the land and storage of greenhouse gases are obvious objectives. However the vision does not explicitly say so.
6. Will the Plan increase energy efficiency and reduce energy waste?			It could be argued that the vision implies through nature and people thriving together that increasing energy efficiency and reducing energy waste loss are obvious objectives. However the vision does not explicitly say so.
7. Will the Plan maintain the opportunities for people to enjoy physical recreation and healthy lifestyles ?	L	L	The vision explicitly supports enjoyment of the Park and implies through thriving people, that physical recreation and healthy lifestyles are supported.
8. Will the Plan conserve and enhance the distinctive landscape character and experience of the Park?	L		The vision implies support for this objective by its references to people enjoying and valuing the Park, and through nature and people thriving together.
9. Will the Plan maintain or improve opportunities to experience, learn about and share the cultural heritage of the Park.	L		The vision explicitly supports enjoyment of the Park and this implies support for this objective.
Mitigation measures:	•		
Duration of effects: L=long-term, M=medium-term, S=short-term			
positive effect	no effect or negligible effect	negative effect	not applicable
uncertain effect/effect cannot be predicted/or both positive and negative effects			

SEA of Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan 2012-2017			
Assessment recording form			
Plan objective/outcome		Long-term outcome I	
A sustainable economy supporting thriving business and communities.			
Summary of effect at scale of:		Park	Scotland
SEA question:		Commentary on assessment	
1. Will the Plan maintain or improve the ability of farmland in the Park to produce high quality local and seasonal food sustainably?	SML		This long-term outcome is likely to support this environmental objective by encouraging the production high quality local and seasonal food.
2. Will the Plan maintain or increase the sustainable production of timber and woodfuel in the Park?	SML		This long-term outcome is likely to support this environmental objective by encouraging the production of timber and woodfuel.
3. Will the Plan maintain or improve the Park's ability to provide a high quality supply of fresh water in and from the Park, including the ability of river catchments to store water?	SML		This long-term outcome is likely to support this environmental objective by recognising the importance of healthy river catchments to the economy of the Park and ability of business and communities to adapt to the effects of climate change.
4. Will the Plan conserve and enhance the viability and diversity of distinctive species and habitats in the Park?	SML		This long-term outcome is likely to support this environmental objective because the distinctive species and habitats of the Park underpin the tourism economy.
5. Will the Plan maintain or improve the storage of greenhouse gases in peat, soils and woodland in the Park?	SML		This long-term outcome is likely to support this environmental objective by encouraging carbon management.
6. Will the Plan increase energy efficiency and reduce energy waste?	SML		This long-term outcome is likely to support this environmental objective by encouraging energy efficiency.
7. Will the Plan maintain the opportunities for people to enjoy physical recreation and healthy lifestyles?	SML		This long-term outcome is likely to support this environmental objective because many businesses are based on helping people enjoy physical recreation and healthy lifestyles, and those opportunities help to attract workers and keep employees.
8. Will the Plan conserve and enhance the distinctive landscape character and experience of the Park?	ML		This long-term outcome is likely to support this environmental objective because the distinctive landscape character and experience of the Park underpin the tourism economy.
9. Will the Plan maintain or improve opportunities to experience, learn about and share the cultural heritage of the Park?	SML		This long-term outcome is likely to support this environmental objective because the cultural heritage of the Park is part of the tourism product, as well as being celebrated and shared by communities.
Mitigation measures:			
Duration of effects: L=long-term, M=medium-term, S=short-term			
positive effect	no effect or negligible effect	negative effect	not applicable
uncertain effect/effect cannot be predicted/or both positive and negative effects			

SEA of Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan 2012-2017			
Assessment recording form			
Plan objective/outcome		Long-term outcome 2	
A special place for people and nature with natural and cultural heritage enhanced.			
Summary of effect at scale of:		Park	Scotland
Commentary on assessment			
SEA Question:			
1. Will the Plan maintain or improve the ability of farmland in the Park to produce high quality local and seasonal food sustainably?	SML		Farmlands in the Park are important for natural and cultural heritage so this plan objective provides some support for this environmental objective.
2. Will the Plan maintain or increase the sustainable production of timber and woodfuel in the Park?	SML		Woodland and forestry are a very important part of the natural and cultural heritage of the Park. They provide timber and woodfuel as well as supporting important species. This Plan objective is likely to support this environmental objective.
3. Will the Plan maintain or improve the Park's ability to provide a high quality supply of fresh water in and from the Park, including the ability of river catchments to store water?	SML		This Plan objective is unlikely to have any significant effects on this environmental objective.
4. Will the Plan conserve and enhance the viability and diversity of distinctive species and habitats in the Park?	SML	ML	This Plan objective is intended to conserve and enhance natural heritage.
5. Will the Plan maintain or improve the storage of greenhouse gases in peat, soils and woodland in the Park?	L		This Plan objective is likely to have a positive effect where peatland, woodland and carbon rich soil habitats are conserved and enhanced.
6. Will the Plan increase energy efficiency and reduce energy waste?			This Plan objective is unlikely to have any significant effects on this environmental objective.
7. Will the Plan maintain the opportunities for people to enjoy physical recreation and healthy lifestyles?			The outcome is about keeping the Park as a special place for both people and nature. Although some management for species or habitats may involve managing people away from sensitive sites, this does not need to reduce nearby or overall opportunities for recreation.
8. Will the Plan conserve and enhance the distinctive landscape character and experience of the Park?	SML	SML	This plan objective is intended to conserve and enhance natural heritage.
9. Will the Plan maintain or improve opportunities to experience, learn about and share the cultural heritage of the Park?	SML		Conservation and enhancement of cultural heritage will support this environmental objective.
Mitigation measures:			
Duration of effects: L=long-term, M=medium-term, S=short-term			
positive effect	no effect or negligible effect	negative effect	not applicable
uncertain effect/effect cannot be predicted/or both positive and negative effects			

SEA of Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan 2012-2017			
Assessment recording form			
Plan objective/outcome		Long-term outcome 3	
People enjoying the Park through outstanding visitor and learning experiences			
Summary of effect at scale of:		Park	Scotland
SEA Question:		Commentary on assessment	
1. Will the Plan maintain or improve the ability of farmland in the Park to produce high quality local and seasonal food sustainably?			
2. Will the Plan maintain or increase the sustainable production of timber and woodfuel in the Park?			
3. Will the Plan maintain or improve the Park's ability to provide a high quality supply of fresh water in and from the Park, including the ability of river catchments to store water?			
4. Will the Plan conserve and enhance the viability and diversity of distinctive species and habitats in the Park?	SML	SML	This Plan objective should support this environmental objective because the outstanding visitor and learning experiences of the Park are linked to the conservation and enhancement of distinctive species and habitats of the Park.
5. Will the Plan maintain or improve the storage of greenhouse gases in peat, soils and woodland in the Park?			
6. Will the Plan increase energy efficiency and reduce energy waste?			
7. Will the Plan maintain the opportunities for people to enjoy physical recreation and healthy lifestyles?	SML	SML	This Plan objective should support this environmental objective because the outstanding visitor and learning experiences of the Park are linked to opportunities for physical recreation in the Park.
8. Will the Plan conserve and enhance the distinctive landscape character and experience of the Park?	ML		This Plan objective should support this environmental objective because the outstanding visitor and learning experiences of the Park are linked to distinctive character and experience of the Park.
9. Will the Plan maintain or improve opportunities to experience, learn about and share the cultural heritage of the Park?	SML		This Plan objective should support this environmental objective because the outstanding visitor and learning experiences of the Park are linked to opportunities to learn about and experience the cultural heritage of the Park.
Mitigation measures:			
Duration of effects: L=long-term, M=medium-term, S=short-term			
positive effect	no effect or negligible effect	negative effect	Not applicable
uncertain effect/effect cannot be predicted/or both positive and negative effects			

SEA of Draft Cairngorms National Park Plan 2012-2017			
Assessment recording form			
Plan objective/outcome		Five-year outcome I	
The economy of the Park will have grown and diversified, drawing on the Park's special qualities			
Summary of effect at scale of:		Park	Scotland
		Commentary on assessment	
SEA question:			
1. Will the Plan maintain or improve the ability of farmland in the Park to produce high quality local and seasonal food sustainably?	SML		This Plan outcome could have positive effects on this environmental objective by increasing demand for local food. It could also have negative effects by increasing competition for land leading to a loss of productive land for other uses.
2. Will the Plan maintain or increase the sustainable production of timber and woodfuel in the Park?	SML		This Plan outcome is likely to have positive effects on this environmental objective by increasing demand for local timber and wood products. It could also have negative effects by increasing competition for land leading to a loss of forestry and woodland to other uses.
3. Will the Plan maintain or improve the Park's ability to provide a high quality supply of fresh water in and from the Park, including the ability of river catchments to store water?			This Plan outcome is could have negative effects on this environmental objective by increasing demand for water use, abstraction and water waste. There are safeguards in place through the planning system and water regulation systems, and other policies in the Plan also safeguard river catchments.
4. Will the Plan conserve and enhance the viability and diversity of distinctive species and habitats in the Park?			This Plan outcome has potential to have negative effects on the environmental objective, but other outcomes and policies in the Plan provide protection and support for this objective
5. Will the Plan maintain or improve the storage of greenhouse gases in peat, soils and woodland in the Park?			This Plan outcome has potential to have negative effects on the environmental objective, but other outcomes and policies in the Plan provide protection and support for this objective
6. Will the Plan increase energy efficiency and reduce energy waste?			This Plan outcome could increase demand for energy and transport, however, other outcomes and policies in Plan seek to reduce energy use and increase energy efficiency.
7. Will the Plan maintain the opportunities for people to enjoy physical recreation and healthy lifestyles?			
8. Will the Plan conserve and enhance the distinctive landscape character and experience of the Park?			This Plan outcome has potential for both positive and negative effects on this environmental objective. One of the reasons the Park is an attractive place for business is that it has a distinctive character and experience, so many businesses will want to conserve that asset. On the other hand, new development could erode those qualities. Safeguards are in place to prevent the potential negative effects through other outcomes and policies in the Plan and in the Cairngorms Local Plan.
9. Will the Plan maintain or improve opportunities to experience, learn about and share the cultural heritage of the Park.			
Mitigation measures:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure most productive agricultural land is not lost to other uses • Ensure economic development does not have negative effects on water quality and supply 		
Duration of effects: L=long-term, M=medium-term, S=short-term			
positive effect	no effect or negligible effect	negative effect	not applicable
uncertain effect/effect cannot be predicted/or both positive and negative effects			

SEA of Draft Cairngorms National Park Plan 2012-2017			
Assessment recording form			
Plan objective/outcome		Five-year outcome 2	
Business and communities will be successfully adapting to a low carbon economy			
Summary of effect at scale of:		Park	Scotland
		Commentary on assessment	
SEA Question:			
1. Will the Plan maintain or improve the ability of farmland in the Park to produce high quality local and seasonal food sustainably?	M		This Plan outcome should support the production of local food.
2. Will the Plan maintain or increase the sustainable production of timber and woodfuel in the Park?	M		This Plan outcome should increase the use of local timber and the management of woodland for timber and fuel.
3. Will the Plan maintain or improve the Park's ability to provide a high quality supply of fresh water in and from the Park, including the ability of river catchments to store water?	ML		This Plan outcome should increase management within catchments to store water and reduce flood risks.
4. Will the Plan conserve and enhance the viability and diversity of distinctive species and habitats in the Park?			
5. Will the Plan maintain or improve the storage of greenhouse gases in peat, soils and woodland in the Park.	ML	ML	This Plan outcome should increase the active management of land for carbon storage and sequestration.
6. Will the Plan increase energy efficiency and reduce energy waste?	M		This Plan outcome should increase energy efficiency and reduce energy waste.
7. Will the Plan maintain the opportunities for people to enjoy physical recreation and healthy lifestyles ?	SML	SML	This Plan outcome should support and encourage active travel, increasing opportunities for people to exercise.
8. Will the Plan conserve and enhance the distinctive landscape character and experience of the Park?			Lower carbon design, energy efficient design, renewable energy generating infrastructure and land use change could have negative effects on the character and experience of the Park unless they are carefully sited and designed avoid and minimise effects. Other outcomes and policies in the Plan provide support and the Cairngorms Local Plan provides safeguards through the planning system.
9. Will the Plan maintain or improve opportunities to experience, learn about and share the cultural heritage of the Park?			
Mitigation measures:			
Duration of effects: L=long-term, M=medium-term, S=short-term			
positive effect	no effect or negligible effect	negative effect	not applicable
uncertain effect/effect cannot be predicted/or both positive and negative effects			

SEA of Draft Cairngorms National Park Plan 2012-2017			
Assessment recording form			
Plan objective/outcome		Five-year outcome 3	
The Park's communities will be more empowered and able to develop their own models of sustainability			
Summary of effect at scale of:		Park	Scotland
		Commentary on assessment	
SEA question:			
1. Will the Plan maintain or improve the ability of farmland in the Park to produce high quality local and seasonal food sustainably?	SML		This Plan outcome is about helping communities develop in sustainable ways. It has potential to lead to positive effects on this outcome if a community wanted, and other outcomes and policies in the Plan support or safeguard this objective.
2. Will the Plan maintain or increase the sustainable production of timber and woodfuel in the Park?	SML		This plan outcome is about helping communities develop in sustainable ways. It has potential to lead to positive effects on this outcome if a community wanted, and other outcomes and policies in the Plan support or safeguard this objective.
3. Will the Plan maintain or improve the Park's ability to provide a high quality supply of fresh water in and from the Park, including the ability of river catchments to store water?	SML		This plan outcome is about helping communities develop in sustainable ways. It has potential to lead to positive effects on this outcome if a community wanted, and other outcomes and policies in the Plan support or safeguard this objective.
4. Will the Plan conserve and enhance the viability and diversity of distinctive species and habitats in the Park?			
5. Will the Plan maintain or improve the storage of greenhouse gases in peat, soils and woodland in the Park?			
6. Will the Plan increase energy efficiency and reduce energy waste?	SML		This plan outcome is about helping communities develop in sustainable ways. It has potential to lead to positive effects on this outcome if a community wanted, and other outcomes and policies in the Plan support or safeguard this objective.
7. Will the Plan maintain the opportunities for people to enjoy physical recreation and healthy lifestyles?	SML		This plan outcome is about helping communities develop in sustainable ways. It has potential to lead to positive effects on this outcome if a community wanted, and other outcomes and policies in the Plan support or safeguard this objective.
8. Will the Plan conserve and enhance the distinctive landscape character and experience of the Park?			Although there is potential for a community to want to do something that would have an effect landscape character (eg a community wind power development), other outcomes and policies in the plan provide support and protection for landscape character.
9. Will the Plan maintain or improve opportunities to experience, learn about and share the cultural heritage of the Park?	SML		This plan outcome is about helping communities develop in sustainable ways. It has potential to lead to positive effects on this outcome if a community wanted, and other outcomes and policies in the Plan support or safeguard this objective.
Mitigation measures:			
Duration of effects: L=long-term, M=medium-term, S=short-term			
positive effect	no effect or negligible effect	negative effect	not applicable
uncertain effect/effect cannot be predicted/or both positive and negative effects			

SEA of Draft Cairngorms National Park Plan 2012-2017			
Assessment recording form			
Plan objective/outcome Five-year outcome 4			
The quality and connectivity of habitats will have improved, enhancing the landscape at a Park scale.			
Summary of effect at scale of:	Park	Scotland	Commentary on assessment
SEA question:			
1. Will the Plan maintain or improve the ability of farmland in the Park to produce high quality local and seasonal food sustainably?			This Plan outcome has potential to reduce the ability of farmland to produce local and seasonal food if the best quality farmland is lost to woodland expansion. However, other policies in the Plan set out that the best combination of benefits (including social and economic ones) are required from land management.
2. Will the Plan maintain or increase the sustainable production of timber and woodfuel in the Park?			This Plan outcome could have both positive and negative effects on timber and woodfuel production depending on the productivity of woodlands. However, other policies in the Plan set out that the best combination of benefits (including social and economic ones) are required from land management, and that biomass (mainly from woodfuel) is an important benefit.
3. Will the Plan maintain or improve the Park's ability to provide a high quality supply of fresh water in and from the Park, including the ability of river catchments to store water?	ML	ML	This Plan outcome should have a positive effect on water quality and the ability of catchments to store water.
4. Will the Plan conserve and enhance the viability and diversity of distinctive species and habitats in the Park?	ML	ML	This Plan outcome should have a positive effect on distinctive habitats and species in the Park.
5. Will the Plan maintain or improve the storage of greenhouse gases in peat, soils and woodland in the Park?	ML		This outcome should have positive effects improving storage of carbon. Other policies in the Plan secure the effective management of peat and carbon rich soils.
6. Will the Plan increase energy efficiency and reduce energy waste?			
7. Will the Plan maintain the opportunities for people to enjoy physical recreation and healthy lifestyles ?			
8. Will the Plan conserve and enhance the distinctive landscape character and experience of the Park?	ML	ML	The Plan outcome is intended to have positive effects on this environmental objective.
9. Will the Plan maintain or improve opportunities to experience, learn about and share the cultural heritage of the Park?			There is potential for woodland expansion to destroy archaeological remains, but Policy 2.7 of the Plan provides protection for archaeological sites, promotion of opportunities and the use of advice and investigation to inform proposals for land use change.
Mitigation measures:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure woodland expansion doesn't happen at expense of best quality farmland • Ensure that woodland expansion maintains or increases timber and woodfuel production • Ensure woodland expansion does not increase carbon release over longer-term 		
Duration of effects: L=long-term, M=medium-term, S=short-term			
positive effect	no effect or negligible effect	negative effect	not applicable
uncertain effect/effect cannot be predicted/or both positive and negative effects			

SEA of Draft Cairngorms National Park Plan 2012-2017			
Assessment recording form			
Plan objective/outcome		Five-year outcome 5	
The species for which the Cairngorms National Park is most important will be in better conservation status in the Park.			
Summary of effect at scale of:		Park	Scotland
		Commentary on assessment	
SEA question:			
1. Will the Plan maintain or improve the ability of farmland in the Park to produce high quality local and seasonal food sustainably?			
2. Will the Plan maintain or increase the sustainable production of timber and woodfuel in the Park?			
3. Will the Plan maintain or improve the Park's ability to provide a high quality supply of fresh water in and from the Park, including the ability of river catchments to store water?	SML	SML	This Plan outcome should have positive effects on the viability and diversity of distinctive species of the Cairngorms National Park, many of which rely on good water quality and healthy river catchments.
4. Will the Plan conserve and enhance the viability and diversity of distinctive species and habitats in the Park?	SML	SML	This Plan outcome should have positive effects on the viability and diversity of distinctive species of the Cairngorms National Park.
5. Will the Plan maintain or improve the storage of greenhouse gases in peat, soils and woodland in the Park?			
6. Will the Plan increase energy efficiency and reduce energy waste?			
7. Will the Plan maintain the opportunities for people to enjoy physical recreation and healthy lifestyles?			
8. Will the Plan conserve and enhance the distinctive landscape character and experience of the Park?	ML	ML	This Plan outcome should have positive effects on the distinctive character and experience of the Park where rare and threatened species are helped.
9. Will the Plan maintain or improve opportunities to experience, learn about and share the cultural heritage of the Park?			
Mitigation measures:			
Duration of effects: L=long-term, M=medium-term, S=short-term			
positive effect	no effect or negligible effect	negative effect	not applicable
uncertain effect/effect cannot be predicted/or both positive and negative effects			

SEA of Draft Cairngorms National Park Plan 2012-2017			
Assessment recording form			
Plan objective/outcome		Five-year outcome 6	
The special landscape qualities, including wildness, are conserved and enhanced			
Summary of effect at scale of:		Park	Scotland
		Commentary on assessment	
SEA question:			
1. Will the Plan maintain or improve the ability of farmland in the Park to produce high quality local and seasonal food sustainably?			
2. Will the Plan maintain or increase the sustainable production of timber and woodfuel in the Park?			
3. Will the Plan maintain or improve the Park's ability to provide a high quality supply of fresh water in and from the Park, including the ability of river catchments to store water?			
4. Will the Plan conserve and enhance the viability and diversity of distinctive species and habitats in the Park?	ML	ML	This outcome should support this objective where the distinctive species and habitats are associated with the special landscape qualities.
5. Will the Plan maintain or improve the storage of greenhouse gases in peat, soils and woodland in the Park?			
6. Will the Plan increase energy efficiency and reduce energy waste?			
7. Will the Plan maintain the opportunities for people to enjoy physical recreation and healthy lifestyles?			
8. Will the Plan conserve and enhance the distinctive landscape character and experience of the Park?	ML	ML	This outcome should support this objective because it is intended to conserve and enhance the special landscape qualities.
9. Will the Plan maintain or improve opportunities to experience, learn about and share the cultural heritage of the Park?	ML	ML	This Plan outcome should support this environmental objective because the cultural heritage of the Park is an integral part of the special landscape qualities.
Mitigation measures:			
Duration of effects: L=long-term, M=medium-term, S=short-term			
positive effect	no effect or negligible effect	negative effect	not applicable
uncertain effect/effect cannot be predicted/or both positive and negative effects			

SEA of Draft Cairngorms National Park Plan 2012-2017			
Assessment recording form			
Plan objective/outcome		Five-year outcome 7	
Settlements and built development will retain and enhance the distinct sense of place and identity within the landscapes of the Park			
Summary of effect at scale of:		Park	Scotland
		Commentary on assessment	
SEA question:			
1. Will the Plan maintain or improve the ability of farmland in the Park to produce high quality local and seasonal food sustainably?			
2. Will the Plan maintain or increase the sustainable production of timber and woodfuel in the Park?			
3. Will the Plan maintain or improve the Park's ability to provide a high quality supply of fresh water in and from the Park, including the ability of river catchments to store water?			This Plan outcome is unlikely to have significant effects on this outcome, though implementing Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) on new and existing developments could lead to small improvements in the ability of catchments to store water.
4. Will the Plan conserve and enhance the viability and diversity of distinctive species and habitats in the Park?			
5. Will the Plan maintain or improve the storage of greenhouse gases in peat, soils and woodland in the Park?			
6. Will the Plan increase energy efficiency and reduce energy waste?	ML		This Plan outcome should have a positive effect on this environmental objective by encouraging energy efficient design of development.
7. Will the Plan maintain the opportunities for people to enjoy physical recreation and healthy lifestyles?	ML		This Plan outcome should have a positive effect on this environmental objective by incorporating recreation opportunities in the design of development.
8. Will the Plan conserve and enhance the distinctive landscape character and experience of the Park?	ML	ML	This Plan outcome should have a positive effect on this environmental objective by ensuring settlements and built development make a positive contribution to the distinctive character and sense of place in the Park.
9. Will the Plan maintain or improve opportunities to experience, learn about and share the cultural heritage of the Park?	SML		This Plan outcome should have a positive effect on this environmental objective by ensuring settlements and built development make a positive contribution to the distinctive character and sense of place in the Park.
Mitigation measures:			
Duration of effects: L=long-term, M=medium-term, S=short-term			
positive effect	no effect or negligible effect	negative effect	not applicable
uncertain effect/effect cannot be predicted/or both positive and negative effects			

SEA of Draft Cairngorms National Park Plan 2012-2017
Assessment recording form

Plan objective/outcome		Five-year outcome 8		Commentary on assessment
More people will learn about, enjoy, and help to conserve and enhance the special natural and cultural qualities of the Park.				
Summary of effect at scale of:		Park	Scotland	
SEA question:				
1. Will the Plan maintain or improve the ability of farmland in the Park to produce high quality local and seasonal food sustainably?				
2. Will the Plan maintain or increase the sustainable production of timber and woodfuel in the Park?				
3. Will the Plan maintain or improve the Park's ability to provide a high quality supply of fresh water in and from the Park, including the ability of river catchments to store water?				
4. Will the Plan conserve and enhance the viability and diversity of distinctive species and habitats in the Park?		SML		This Plan outcome should support this environmental objective where volunteering supports distinctive species and habitats.
5. Will the Plan maintain or improve the storage of greenhouse gases in peat, soils and woodland in the Park?				
6. Will the Plan increase energy efficiency and reduce energy waste?				
7. Will the Plan maintain the opportunities for people to enjoy physical recreation and healthy lifestyles?		SML		This Plan outcome should support this environmental objective by helping people do physical volunteering and learn about opportunities in the Park.
8. Will the Plan conserve and enhance the distinctive landscape character and experience of the Park?		ML		This Plan outcome should support this environmental objective where volunteering supports special landscape qualities of the Park.
9. Will the Plan maintain or improve opportunities to experience, learn about and share the cultural heritage of the Park?		SML		This Plan outcome should support this environmental objective by helping people find out more about the cultural heritage of the Park.
Mitigation measures:				
Duration of effects: L=long-term, M=medium-term, S=short-term				
positive effect	no effect or negligible effect	negative effect	not applicable	
uncertain effect/effect cannot be predicted/or both positive and negative effects				

SEA of Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan 2012-2017			
Assessment recording form			
Plan objective/outcome		Five-year outcome 9	
Expectations of visitors are met or exceeded			
Summary of effect at scale of:		Park	Scotland
		Commentary on assessment	
SEA Question:			
1. Will the Plan maintain or improve the ability of farmland in the Park to produce high quality local and seasonal food sustainably?	SM		There is evidence that visitors to the Park expect to be able to consume and purchase high quality local food. Where that demand exists, there should be a market incentive for farmers and food producers to supply it.
2. Will the Plan maintain or increase the sustainable production of timber and woodfuel in the Park?			
3. Will the Plan maintain or improve the Park's ability to provide a high quality supply of fresh water in and from the Park, including the ability of river catchments to store water?			
4. Will the Plan conserve and enhance the viability and diversity of distinctive species and habitats in the Park?	SML	SML	Many visitors to the Park come here to experience the distinctive species and habitats of the Park. Most opportunities to experience them are provided through guiding by visitor management people and materials that help visitors understand the conservation needs of them, increasing awareness and support for those needs.
5. Will the Plan maintain or improve the storage of greenhouse gases in peat, soils and woodland in the Park?			
6. Will the Plan increase energy efficiency and reduce energy waste?			
7. Will the Plan maintain the opportunities for people to enjoy physical recreation and healthy lifestyles?	SML		Many visitors to the Park come here to enjoy physical recreation and expect information and infrastructure that allows them to do so. Managing that infrastructure and information helps to meet their expectations as well as support healthy lifestyles.
8. Will the Plan conserve and enhance the distinctive landscape character and experience of the Park?	ML		Many visitors to the Park come here to experience the distinctive landscapes and special landscape qualities. Conserving and enhancing those qualities is necessary to maintain the visitor product.
9. Will the Plan maintain or improve opportunities to experience, learn about and share the cultural heritage of the Park?	SML		Visitors to the Park expect to find out about both the natural and cultural heritage of the Park. Providing opportunities to do so is part of the visitor product.
Mitigation measures:			
Duration of effects: L=long-term, M=medium-term, S=short-term			
positive effect	no effect or negligible effect	negative effect	not applicable
uncertain effect/effect cannot be predicted/or both positive and negative effects			

SEA of Draft Cairngorms National Park Plan 2012-2017			
Assessment recording form			
Plan objective/outcome		Five-year outcome 10	
The Park's recreation opportunities will have improved the health and enjoyment of residents and visitors			
Summary of effect at scale of:	Park	Scotland	Commentary on assessment
SEA Question:			
1. Will the Plan maintain or improve the ability of farmland in the Park to produce high quality local and seasonal food sustainably?			
2. Will the Plan maintain or increase the sustainable production of timber and woodfuel in the Park?			
3. Will the Plan maintain or improve the Park's ability to provide a high quality supply of fresh water in and from the Park, including the ability of river catchments to store water?			
4. Will the Plan conserve and enhance the viability and diversity of distinctive species and habitats in the Park?			There is potential for recreation activities to have negative effects on this outcome if those activities are not undertaken responsibly and if it is unmanaged. However, recreation activities are managed and planned for the most part to avoid negative effects. Only more detailed site based assessments can predict effects accurately.
5. Will the Plan maintain or improve the storage of greenhouse gases in peat, soils and woodland in the Park?			
6. Will the Plan increase energy efficiency and reduce energy waste?			This Plan outcome should have a small positive effect on this outcome because it focuses on increasing use of paths for active travel.
7. Will the Plan maintain the opportunities for people to enjoy physical recreation and healthy lifestyles?	SML	SML	This Plan outcome should have positive effects on this environmental objective by increasing opportunities for and information about healthy recreation.
8. Will the Plan conserve and enhance the distinctive landscape character and experience of the Park?			
9. Will the Plan maintain or improve opportunities to experience, learn about and share the cultural heritage of the Park?	SML		This Plan outcome should have positive effects on this plan outcome because most outdoor recreation opportunities also provide opportunities to experience cultural heritage of the Park – either with formal information and interpretation of simply within the landscapes of the Park.
Mitigation measures:			
Duration of effects: L=long-term, M=medium-term, S=short-term			
positive effect	no effect or negligible effect	negative effect	not applicable
uncertain effect/effect cannot be predicted/or both positive and negative effects			

SEA of Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan 2012-2017			
Assessment recording form			
Plan objective/outcome		Policy I.1	
Grow the economy of the Park by strengthening existing business sectors, supporting business start-ups and diversification, and increasing the number of workers employed in the Park through:			
a) supporting the diversification of existing land-based businesses;			
b) encouraging growth of business sectors that draw on the special qualities of the Park such as sustainable tourism and food and drink;			
c) broadening the economic base of the Park into sectors such as creative industries, renewable energy, and making stronger links with higher and further education;			
d) increased provision for business land where there is an identified need and demand; and to support the use of land for small business, particularly within settlements;			
e) slowing outward migration of young people; to encourage their return; and the inward migration of workers to the Park to meet business and community needs;			
f) provision of a housing land supply that meets identified need and demand, supports migration of young people and workers to the Park, and maintains vibrant communities.			
Summary of effect at scale of:		Park	Scotland
		Commentary on assessment	
SEA question:			
1. Will the Plan maintain or improve the ability of farmland in the Park to produce high quality local and seasonal food sustainably?	SML		Farming and food production is an existing sector within the economy and this policy supports its growth and diversification.
2. Will the Plan maintain or increase the sustainable production of timber and woodfuel in the Park?	SML		Forest products and timber production are an existing part of the economy that this policy is intended to support.
3. Will the Plan maintain or improve the Park's ability to provide a high quality supply of fresh water in and from the Park, including the ability of river catchments to store water?			On its own, the policy could have negative impacts on water supplies and river catchments if it led to change that harmed them. However, other policies in the Plan, (2.1 - 2.6) provide protection.
4. Will the Plan conserve and enhance the viability and diversity of distinctive species and habitats in the Park?			On its own, the policy could have negative impacts on species and habitats if it led to change that harmed them. However, other policies in the Plan, (2.1 and 2.2 in particular) provide protection.
5. Will the Plan maintain or improve the storage of greenhouse gases in peat, soils and woodland in the Park?	SML		It is likely that this policy will support carbon management and storage through business diversification.
6. Will the Plan increase energy efficiency and reduce energy waste?	SML		It is likely that this policy will support energy efficiency and support measures to minimise waste in order to grow and support business.
7. Will the Plan maintain the opportunities for people to enjoy physical recreation and healthy lifestyles?	SML		This policy should support this objective because the infrastructure that supports healthy lifestyles is also part of the sustainable tourism product of the Park.
8. Will the Plan conserve and enhance the distinctive landscape character and experience of the Park?			On its own, the policy could have negative impacts on landscape character if it led to change that harmed it. However, other policies in the Plan, (2.1 and 2.3, 2.7 and 2.8, in particular) provide protection.
9. Will the Plan maintain or improve opportunities to experience, learn about and share the cultural heritage of the Park?			
Mitigation measures:			
Duration of effects: L=long-term, M=medium-term, S=short-term			
positive effect	no effect or negligible effect	negative effect	not applicable
uncertain effect/effect cannot be predicted/or both positive and negative effects			

SEA of Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan 2012-2017

Assessment recording form

Plan Objective/outcome Policy I.2

Enable sustainable patterns of settlement growth, infrastructure and communications by:

- consolidating the role of the existing main settlements of Aviemore, Ballater, Grantown-on-Spey, Kingussie and Newtonmore, as well as the proposed new community of An Camas Mòr, as the most sustainable places for future growth and the focus for housing land supply while maintaining the integrity of designated sites;
- providing any additional flexibility in future land supply for housing at small sites around a wider range of settlements;
- supporting sensitively designed improvements to the A9 and other trunk roads and main railway line as an integral part of enhancing the connectivity of the Highlands;
- planning and improving integrated and sustainable local transport networks that allow for safe travel off road and link with public transport;
- planning and supporting improvements to the information technology network;
- planning and supporting improvements to the mobile communications network that improve access to new generation technology and minimise the need for visually intrusive infrastructure.

Summary of effect at scale of: Park Scotland Commentary on assessment

SEA question:	Park	Scotland	Commentary on assessment
1. Will the Plan maintain or improve the ability of farmland in the Park to produce high quality local and seasonal food sustainably?			It is likely that some farmland will be lost to development around settlements. However, the farmland area lost is likely to be a small proportion of the total available area, and will not affect the productivity or use of other land.
2. Will the Plan maintain or increase the sustainable production of timber and woodfuel in the Park?			
3. Will the Plan maintain or improve the Park's ability to provide a high quality supply of fresh water in and from the Park, including the ability of river catchments to store water?			On its own, the policy could have negative impacts on water supplies and river catchments if it led to change that harmed them. However, other policies in the Plan, (2.1 - 2.6) provide protection, Catchment Management Plans are intended to improve water quality and river catchment health, and the Local Plan and Local Development Plan provide more detail and assessment.
4. Will the Plan conserve and enhance the viability and diversity of distinctive species and habitats in the Park?			On its own, the policy could have negative impacts on species and habitats if it led to change that harmed them. However, other policies in the Plan, (2.1 - 2.6) provide protection.
5. Will the Plan maintain or improve the storage of greenhouse gases in peat, soils and woodland in the Park?			
6. Will the Plan increase energy efficiency and reduce energy waste?	ML		This policy is intended to improve energy efficiency and minimise energy waste by providing the most efficient locations for future development and improving infrastructure to increase efficiency as well as reducing the need to travel. Policy I.3 provides further support.
7. Will the Plan maintain the opportunities for people to enjoy physical recreation and healthy lifestyles?	ML		This policy is intended to support healthy lifestyles by providing for off road functional travel.
8. Will the Plan conserve and enhance the distinctive landscape character and experience of the Park?			On its own, the policy could have negative impacts on landscape character if it led to change that harmed it. However, other policies in the Plan, (2.1 - 2.5, 2.7 and 2.8) provide further protection.
9. Will the Plan maintain or improve opportunities to experience, learn about and share the cultural heritage of the Park?			
Mitigation measures:			
Duration of effects: L=long-term, M=medium-term, S=short-term			
positive effect	no effect or negligible effect	negative effect	not applicable

SEA of Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan 2012-2017			
Assessment recording form			
Plan Objective/outcome Policy 1.2			
Enable sustainable patterns of settlement growth, infrastructure and communications by:			
a) consolidating the role of the existing main settlements of Aviemore, Ballater, Grantown-on-Spey, Kingussie and Newtonmore, as well as the proposed new community of An Camas Mòr, as the most sustainable places for future growth and the focus for housing land supply while maintaining the integrity of designated sites;			
b) providing any additional flexibility in future land supply for housing at small sites around a wider range of settlements;			
c) supporting sensitively designed improvements to the A9 and other trunk roads and main railway line as an integral part of enhancing the connectivity of the Highlands;			
d) planning and improving integrated and sustainable local transport networks that allow for safe travel off road and link with public transport;			
e) planning and supporting improvements to the information technology network;			
f) planning and supporting improvements to the mobile communications network that improve access to new generation technology and minimise the need for visually intrusive infrastructure.			
Summary of effect at scale of:	Park	Scotland	Commentary on assessment
SEA question:			
1. Will the Plan maintain or improve the ability of farmland in the Park to produce high quality local and seasonal food sustainably?			It is likely that some farmland will be lost to development around settlements. However, the farmland area lost is likely to be a small proportion of the total available area, and will not affect the productivity or use of other land.
2. Will the Plan maintain or increase the sustainable production of timber and woodfuel in the Park?			
3. Will the Plan maintain or improve the Park's ability to provide a high quality supply of fresh water in and from the Park, including the ability of river catchments to store water?			On its own, the policy could have negative impacts on water supplies and river catchments if it led to change that harmed them. However, other policies in the Plan, (2.1 - 2.6) provide protection, Catchment Management Plans are intended to improve water quality and river catchment health, and the Local Plan and Local Development Plan provide more detail and assessment.
4. Will the Plan conserve and enhance the viability and diversity of distinctive species and habitats in the Park?			On its own, the policy could have negative impacts on species and habitats if it led to change that harmed them. However, other policies in the Plan, (2.1 - 2.6) provide protection.
5. Will the Plan maintain or improve the storage of greenhouse gases in peat, soils and woodland in the Park?			
6. Will the Plan increase energy efficiency and reduce energy waste?	ML		This policy is intended to improve energy efficiency and minimise energy waste by providing the most efficient locations for future development and improving infrastructure to increase efficiency as well as reducing the need to travel. Policy 1.3 provides further support.
7. Will the Plan maintain the opportunities for people to enjoy physical recreation and healthy lifestyles?	ML		This policy is intended to support healthy lifestyles by providing for off road functional travel.
8. Will the Plan conserve and enhance the distinctive landscape character and experience of the Park?			On its own, the policy could have negative impacts on landscape character if it led to change that harmed it. However, other policies in the Plan, (2.1 - 2.5, 2.7 and 2.8) provide further protection.
9. Will the Plan maintain or improve opportunities to experience, learn about and share the cultural heritage of the Park?			
Mitigation measures:			
Duration of effects: L=long-term, M=medium-term, S=short-term			
uncertain effect/ effect cannot be predicted/ or both positive and negative effects			

SEA of Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan 2012-2017			
Assessment recording form			
Plan objective/outcome Policy 1.3			
Support development of a low carbon economy, with a particular focus on:			
a) increasing renewable energy generation, especially biomass and hydro, that is compatible with conserving the special qualities of the National Park and maintaining the integrity of designated sites. Large-scale commercial wind turbines ⁴ are not compatible with the special qualities of the National Park and are not considered to be appropriate within the National Park or where outside the Park they affect its landscape setting;			
b) supporting businesses and communities to use less energy, reduce emissions, generate low impact renewable energy and plan for a changing climate;			
c) maximise the benefits to communities through direct use of locally generated energy or where sold to the grid, reinvesting income to support community development;			
d) promote high standards of sustainable design and efficient use of energy and materials in construction.			
Summary of effect at scale of:	Park	Scotland	Commentary on assessment
SEA question:			
1. Will the Plan maintain or improve the ability of farmland in the Park to produce high quality local and seasonal food sustainably?	ML		This policy should support this objective by helping farm business become more energy efficient, and plan for a changing climate.
2. Will the Plan maintain or increase the sustainable production of timber and woodfuel in the Park?	ML		This policy should support this objective by encouraging sustainable woodfuel production.
3. Will the Plan maintain or improve the Park's ability to provide a high quality supply of fresh water in and from the Park, including the ability of river catchments to store water?			On its own, the policy could have negative impacts on water supplies and river catchments if it led to hydro power schemes that would harm water supplies or river catchments. Other policies in the Plan, (2.1 - 2.5) provide protection.
4. Will the Plan conserve and enhance the viability and diversity of distinctive species and habitats in the Park?			On its own, the policy could have negative impacts on species and habitats if it led to change that harmed them. However, other policies in the Plan, (2.1 - 2.6) provide protection
5. Will the Plan maintain or improve the storage of greenhouse gases in peat, soils and woodland in the Park.			On its own, the policy could have negative impacts on species and habitats if it led to change that harmed them. However, other policies in the Plan, (2.1 - 2.6) provide protection, and the policy is intended to replace carbon intensive energy sources with lower carbon ones.
6. Will the Plan increase energy efficiency and reduce energy waste?	ML		This policy is intended to improve energy efficiency and minimise energy waste.
7. Will the Plan maintain the opportunities for people to enjoy physical recreation and healthy lifestyles?	ML		This policy should support this objective by reducing use of energy and by implication, increasing opportunities for travel by foot or cycle etc.
8. Will the Plan conserve and enhance the distinctive landscape character and experience of the Park?			On its own, the policy could have negative impacts on landscape character if it led to change that harmed it, for example through renewable energy development. However, other policies in the Plan, (2.1 - 2.5, 2.7 & 2.8) provide further protection.
9. Will the Plan maintain or improve opportunities to experience, learn about and share the cultural heritage of the Park.			The policy may provide some support for this objective where traditional design and local materials are used in construction.
Mitigation measures:			
Duration of effects: L=long-term, M=medium-term, S=short-term			
positive effect	no effect or negligible effect	negative effect	not applicable

⁴ Defined as more than one turbine and more than 30m in height

SEA of Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan 2012-2017			
Assessment recording form			
Plan Objective/outcome Policy 1.4			
Support and build the capacity of communities to deliver their aspirations, with particular focus on:			
e) supporting communities to plan for their own futures, develop and implement projects, engage the support of partners and share good practice;			
f) supporting innovative approaches to providing affordable housing to meet local needs;			
g) aligning community planning processes to simplify support to communities;			
h) engaging communities effectively in the long-term management of the National Park and in projects or programmes that affect them.			
Summary of effect at scale of:	Park	Scotland	Commentary on assessment
SEA question:			
1. Will the Plan maintain or improve the ability of farmland in the Park to produce high quality local and seasonal food sustainably?	ML		This policy could support this objective if communities decide they want to produce more local and seasonal food, for example through allotments or community growing spaces.
2. Will the Plan maintain or increase the sustainable production of timber and woodfuel in the Park?	ML		This policy could support this objective if communities decide they want to produce more timber or woodfuel.
3. Will the Plan maintain or improve the Park's ability to provide a high quality supply of fresh water in and from the Park, including the ability of river catchments to store water?			
4. Will the Plan conserve and enhance the viability and diversity of distinctive species and habitats in the Park?			On its own, the policy could have both positive and negative impacts on species and habitats. However, other policies in the Plan, (2.1 - 2.6) provide protection.
5. Will the Plan maintain or improve the storage of greenhouse gases in peat, soils and woodland in the Park.			
6. Will the Plan increase energy efficiency and reduce energy waste?			
7. Will the Plan maintain the opportunities for people to enjoy physical recreation and healthy lifestyles?	ML		It is likely that this policy will support this objective because communities value the recreational opportunities for all members.
8. Will the Plan conserve and enhance the distinctive landscape character and experience of the Park?			
9. Will the Plan maintain or improve opportunities to experience, learn about and share the cultural heritage of the Park?	ML		It is likely that this policy will support this objective because communities value their cultural heritage.
Mitigation measures:			
Duration of effects: L=long-term, M=medium-term, S=short-term			
positive effect	no effect or negligible effect	negative effect	not applicable
uncertain effect/effect cannot be predicted/or both positive and negative effects			

SEA of Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan 2012-2017

Assessment recording form

Plan objective/outcome Policy 2.1

The management and use of land should deliver multiple benefits – delivering the best possible combination of the National Park Plan’s long-term outcomes, always ensuring that the integrity of designated sites is maintained and that the special qualities are conserved and, where possible, enhanced. This will be supported by:

- a) a long-term planned approach by land-based businesses to delivering environmental, economic and social benefits;
- b) support for land managers to plan and deliver environmental and social benefits underpinned by sound economic businesses;
- c) research to support an ecosystems approach to management.

Summary of effect at scale of: Park Scotland **Commentary on assessment**

SEA question:	Park	Scotland	Commentary on assessment
1. Will the Plan maintain or improve the ability of farmland in the Park to produce high quality local and seasonal food sustainably?	ML		This policy supports this objective by delivering multiple benefits.
2. Will the Plan maintain or increase the sustainable production of timber and woodfuel in the Park?	ML		This policy supports this objective by delivering multiple benefits.
3. Will the Plan maintain or improve the Park’s ability to provide a high quality supply of fresh water in and from the Park, including the ability of river catchments to store water?	ML		This policy supports this objective by delivering multiple benefits.
4. Will the Plan conserve and enhance the viability and diversity of distinctive species and habitats in the Park?	ML		This policy supports this objective by delivering multiple benefits.
5. Will the Plan maintain or improve the storage of greenhouse gases in peat, soils and woodland in the Park.	ML		This policy supports this objective by delivering multiple benefits.
6. Will the Plan increase energy efficiency and reduce energy waste?	ML		This policy supports this objective by delivering multiple benefits.
7. Will the Plan maintain the opportunities for people to enjoy physical recreation and healthy lifestyles?	ML		This policy supports this objective by delivering multiple benefits.
8. Will the Plan conserve and enhance the distinctive landscape character and experience of the Park?	ML		This policy supports this objective by delivering multiple benefits.
9. Will the Plan maintain or improve opportunities to experience, learn about and share the cultural heritage of the Park?	ML		This policy supports this objective by delivering multiple benefits.
Mitigation measures:			
Duration of effects: L=long-term, M=medium-term, S=short-term			
positive effect	no effect or negligible effect	negative effect	not applicable
uncertain effect/effect cannot be predicted/or both positive and negative effects			

SEA of Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan 2012-2017			
Assessment recording form			
Plan objective/outcome Policy 2.2			
Enhance the resilience of habitats, species and land use to climate change with a particular focus on:			
d) collaborating on land use and flood management through river catchment management plans;			
e) enhancing the health and connectivity of habitats;			
f) securing effective management of peat and carbon-rich soils.			
Summary of effect at scale of:		Park	Scotland
SEA question:		Commentary on assessment	
1. Will the Plan maintain or improve the ability of farmland in the Park to produce high quality local and seasonal food sustainably?		ML	
2. Will the Plan maintain or increase the sustainable production of timber and woodfuel in the Park?		ML	
3. Will the Plan maintain or improve the Park's ability to provide a high quality supply of fresh water in and from the Park, including the ability of river catchments to store water?		ML	ML
4. Will the Plan conserve and enhance the viability and diversity of distinctive species and habitats in the Park?		ML	ML
5. Will the Plan maintain or improve the storage of greenhouse gases in peat, soils and woodland in the Park?		ML	
6. Will the Plan increase energy efficiency and reduce energy waste?			
7. Will the Plan maintain the opportunities for people to enjoy physical recreation and healthy lifestyles?			
8. Will the Plan conserve and enhance the distinctive landscape character and experience of the Park?		ML	
9. Will the Plan maintain or improve opportunities to experience, learn about and share the cultural heritage of the Park?			
Mitigation measures:			
Duration of effects: L=long-term, M=medium-term, S=short-term			
positive effect	no effect or negligible effect	negative effect	not applicable
uncertain effect/effect cannot be predicted/or both positive and negative effects			

SEA of Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan 2012-2017				
Assessment recording form				
Plan objective/outcome Policy 2.3				
Conserve and enhance the special landscape qualities with a particular focus on:				
e) conserving and enhancing wildness qualities;				
f) maintaining and promoting dark skies;				
g) enhancements that also deliver habitat improvements;				
h) enhancing opportunities to enjoy and experience the landscapes of the Park.				
Summary of effect at scale of:		Park	Scotland	Commentary on assessment
SEA question:				
1. Will the Plan maintain or improve the ability of farmland in the Park to produce high quality local and seasonal food sustainably?				
2. Will the Plan maintain or increase the sustainable production of timber and woodfuel in the Park?				
3. Will the Plan maintain or improve the Park's ability to provide a high quality supply of fresh water in and from the Park, including the ability of river catchments to store water?				
4. Will the Plan conserve and enhance the viability and diversity of distinctive species and habitats in the Park?	ML			The distinctive species and habitats of the Park help contribute to the special landscape qualities of the Park.
5. Will the Plan maintain or improve the storage of greenhouse gases in peat, soils and woodland in the Park?				
6. Will the Plan increase energy efficiency and reduce energy waste?				
7. Will the Plan maintain the opportunities for people to enjoy physical recreation and healthy lifestyles?	ML			Many of the opportunities to enjoy and experience the landscapes of the Park involve physical recreation and so this policy supports this objective.
8. Will the Plan conserve and enhance the distinctive landscape character and experience of the Park?	ML	ML		The policy explicitly supports this objective. The National Park is a designated landscape so this policy should have effects of national significance for this objective.
9. Will the Plan maintain or improve opportunities to experience, learn about and share the cultural heritage of the Park?	ML			Cultural heritage plays an important role in the landscapes of the Park, so this policy supports this objective.
Mitigation measures:				
Duration of effects: L=long-term, M=medium-term, S=short-term				
positive effect	no effect or negligible effect	negative effect	not applicable	
uncertain effect/effect cannot be predicted/or both positive and negative effects				

SEA of Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan 2012-2017			
Assessment recording form			
Plan objective/outcome Policy 2.4			
Conserve and enhance habitat quality and connectivity, with a particular focus on:			
a) woodland enhancement and expansion, especially montane, farm and riparian woodlands;			
b) wetland enhancement ;			
c) delivering a combination of ecosystem services including flood management, carbon sequestration and storage, timber and food production.			
Summary of effect at scale of:	Park	Scotland	Commentary on assessment
SEA question:			
1. Will the Plan maintain or improve the ability of farmland in the Park to produce high quality local and seasonal food sustainably?	SML		This policy supports this objective.
2. Will the Plan maintain or increase the sustainable production of timber and woodfuel in the Park?	SML		This policy supports this objective.
3. Will the Plan maintain or improve the Park's ability to provide a high quality supply of fresh water in and from the Park, including the ability of river catchments to store water?	SML	ML	This policy supports this objective. The number of national and international designated nature conservation sites, including water bodies and wetlands, as well as sites that influence them means that this policy may have effects that are significant at a Scottish level.
4. Will the Plan conserve and enhance the viability and diversity of distinctive species and habitats in the Park?	SML	ML	This policy supports this objective. The number of national and international designated nature conservation sites, for habitats and species that are distinctive to the Park means that this policy may have effects that are significant at a Scottish level.
5. Will the Plan maintain or improve the storage of greenhouse gases in peat, soils and woodland in the Park?	SML		This policy supports this objective.
6. Will the Plan increase energy efficiency and reduce energy waste?			
7. Will the Plan maintain the opportunities for people to enjoy physical recreation and healthy lifestyles?			
8. Will the Plan conserve and enhance the distinctive landscape character and experience of the Park?	SML		The policy implicitly supports this objective by enhancing habitats that contribute to landscape character.
9. Will the Plan maintain or improve opportunities to experience, learn about and share the cultural heritage of the Park?			There is potential for woodland expansion to destroy archaeological remains, but Policy 2.7 of the Plan provides protection for archaeological sites.
Mitigation measures:			
Duration of effects: L=long-term, M=medium-term, S=short-term			
positive effect	no effect or negligible effect	negative effect	not applicable
uncertain effect/effect cannot be predicted/or both positive and negative effects			

SEA of Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan 2012-2017			
Assessment recording form			
Plan objective/outcome Policy 2.5			
Conserve and enhance the species for which the Cairngorms National Park is most important, with a particular focus on:			
d) species whose conservation status is in decline or at risk;			
e) tackling and reducing the impacts of invasive non-native species;			
f) engaging people in species characteristic of the Cairngorms.			
Summary of effect at scale of:	Park	Scotland	Commentary on assessment
SEA question:			
1. Will the Plan maintain or improve the ability of farmland in the Park to produce high quality local and seasonal food sustainably?			
2. Will the Plan maintain or increase the sustainable production of timber and woodfuel in the Park?			
3. Will the Plan maintain or improve the Park's ability to provide a high quality supply of fresh water in and from the Park, including the ability of river catchments to store water?	SML	ML	This policy supports this objective because many of the species that the Park is important for are associated with water bodies and require healthy water bodies to thrive. The number of national and international designated nature conservation sites, including water bodies and wetlands, as well as sites that influence them means that this policy may have effects that are significant at a Scottish level.
4. Will the Plan conserve and enhance the viability and diversity of distinctive species and habitats in the Park?	SML	ML	This policy supports this objective. The number of national and international designated nature conservation sites for species that are distinctive to the Park means that this policy may have effects that are significant at a Scottish level.
5. Will the Plan maintain or improve the storage of greenhouse gases in peat, soils and woodland in the Park?			
6. Will the Plan increase energy efficiency and reduce energy waste?			
7. Will the Plan maintain the opportunities for people to enjoy physical recreation and healthy lifestyles?			
8. Will the Plan conserve and enhance the distinctive landscape character and experience of the Park?	SML		The policy implicitly supports this objective where species play a significant role in maintaining landscape character.
9. Will the Plan maintain or improve opportunities to experience, learn about and share the cultural heritage of the Park?			The policy could have some small positive effects on this objective where there is potential to combine engagement with people in species characteristic of the Park and in the cultural heritage of the area linked to those species.
Mitigation measures:			
Duration of effects: L=long-term, M=medium-term, S=short-term			
positive effect	no effect or negligible effect	negative effect	not applicable
uncertain effect/effect cannot be predicted/or both positive and negative effects			

SEA of Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan 2012-2017			
Assessment recording form			
Plan objective/outcome Policy 2.6			
Support collaboration across ownership boundaries and between interests to reduce conflicts in species and wildlife management including:			
d) deer management;			
e) wildlife crime;			
f) species reintroductions.			
Summary of effect at scale of:	Park	Scotland	Commentary on assessment
SEA question:			
1. Will the Plan maintain or improve the ability of farmland in the Park to produce high quality local and seasonal food sustainably?			
2. Will the Plan maintain or increase the sustainable production of timber and woodfuel in the Park?	ML		This policy supports this objective by supporting collaboration across boundaries for deer management in particular, but the principle would also apply to sustainable timber and woodfuel production.
3. Will the Plan maintain or improve the Park's ability to provide a high quality supply of fresh water in and from the Park, including the ability of river catchments to store water?	ML		This policy supports this objective by supporting collaboration across ownership boundaries.
4. Will the Plan conserve and enhance the viability and diversity of distinctive species and habitats in the Park?	ML		This policy supports this objective by supporting collaboration across ownership boundaries to reduce conflicts in species and wildlife management.
5. Will the Plan maintain or improve the storage of greenhouse gases in peat, soils and woodland in the Park?			
6. Will the Plan increase energy efficiency and reduce energy waste?			
7. Will the Plan maintain the opportunities for people to enjoy physical recreation and healthy lifestyles?			
8. Will the Plan conserve and enhance the distinctive landscape character and experience of the Park?			
9. Will the Plan maintain or improve opportunities to experience, learn about and share the cultural heritage of the Park?			
Mitigation measures:			
Duration of effects: L=long-term, M=medium-term, S=short-term			
positive effect	no effect or negligible effect	negative effect	not applicable
uncertain effect/effect cannot be predicted/or both positive and negative effects			

SEA of Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan 2012-2017			
Assessment recording form			
Plan objective/outcome Policy 2.7			
Conserve and enhance the cultural heritage that helps to create the sense of place and identity of communities within the Park by:			
e) protecting archaeological sites and their settings and promoting understanding of their significance;			
f) ensuring appropriate advice and investigation for archaeology is used to inform proposals for land use change;			
g) protecting and enhancing the built heritage and designed landscapes;			
h) promoting opportunities to enjoy and celebrate the cultural heritage of the Park.			
Summary of effect at scale of:	Park	Scotland	Commentary on assessment
SEA question:			
1. Will the Plan maintain or improve the ability of farmland in the Park to produce high quality local and seasonal food sustainably?			
2. Will the Plan maintain or increase the sustainable production of timber and woodfuel in the Park?			
3. Will the Plan maintain or improve the Park's ability to provide a high quality supply of fresh water in and from the Park, including the ability of river catchments to store water?			
4. Will the Plan conserve and enhance the viability and diversity of distinctive species and habitats in the Park?			
5. Will the Plan maintain or improve the storage of greenhouse gases in peat, soils and woodland in the Park?			
6. Will the Plan increase energy efficiency and reduce energy waste?			
7. Will the Plan maintain the opportunities for people to enjoy physical recreation and healthy lifestyles?			
8. Will the Plan conserve and enhance the distinctive landscape character and experience of the Park?	SML		The policy provides implicit support for this objective because cultural heritage is an integral part of the distinctive landscape character of the Park.
9. Will the Plan maintain or improve opportunities to experience, learn about and share the cultural heritage of the Park?	SML		The policy supports this objective.
Mitigation measures:			
Duration of effects: L=long-term, M=medium-term, S=short-term			
positive effect	no effect or negligible effect	negative effect	not applicable
uncertain effect/effect cannot be predicted/or both positive and negative effects			

SEA of Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan 2012-2017			
Assessment recording form			
Plan objective/outcome		Policy 2.8	
Enhance the design and sense of place in new development and existing settlements, in particular:			
e) enabling new development which contributes positively to the sense of place			
f) promoting a high standard of sustainable design, energy efficiency, sustainably sourced materials and construction in new development.			
g) supporting the retention and enhancement of local character.			
h) facilitating the rehabilitation of redundant rural buildings and recycling of resources.			
i) ensuring road upgrades and improvements respond to local landscape character.			
Summary of effect at scale of:		Park	Scotland
		Commentary on assessment	
SEA question:			
1. Will the Plan maintain or improve the ability of farmland in the Park to produce high quality local and seasonal food sustainably?			
2. Will the Plan maintain or increase the sustainable production of timber and woodfuel in the Park?			
3. Will the Plan maintain or improve the Park's ability to provide a high quality supply of fresh water in and from the Park, including the ability of river catchments to store water?			
4. Will the Plan conserve and enhance the viability and diversity of distinctive species and habitats in the Park?			
5. Will the Plan maintain or improve the storage of greenhouse gases in peat, soils and woodland in the Park?			
6. Will the Plan increase energy efficiency and reduce energy waste?	SML		The policy supports this objective by encouraging sustainable design and energy efficiency.
7. Will the Plan maintain the opportunities for people to enjoy physical recreation and healthy lifestyles?			
8. Will the Plan conserve and enhance the distinctive landscape character and experience of the Park?	SML		The policy supports this objective by enhancing sense of place and local character.
9. Will the Plan maintain or improve opportunities to experience, learn about and share the cultural heritage of the Park?	SML		The policy supports this objective by enhancing sense of place and local character as well as facilitating rehabilitation of rural buildings.
Mitigation measures:			
Duration of effects: L=long-term, M=medium-term, S=short-term			
positive effect	no effect or negligible effect	negative effect	not applicable
uncertain effect/effect cannot be predicted/or both positive and negative effects			

SEA of Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan 2012-2017			
Assessment recording form			
Plan objective/outcome		Policy 3.1	
Provide a welcoming and high quality National Park experience for all by:			
e) delivering a visitor/customer experience that spans organisational boundaries;			
f) providing high quality co-ordinated information setting visitor experiences in the context of the National Park;			
g) supporting the network of ranger services in the National Park;			
h) building on the Cairngorms National Park brand and the promise it delivers.			
Summary of effect at scale of:		Park	Scotland
SEA question:		Commentary on assessment	
1. Will the Plan maintain or improve the ability of farmland in the Park to produce high quality local and seasonal food sustainably?			The opportunity to consume and to purchase high quality local and seasonal food is an important part of the visitor experience. The policy should support this objective by encouraging market demand for local and seasonal food products.
2. Will the Plan maintain or increase the sustainable production of timber and woodfuel in the Park?			
3. Will the Plan maintain or improve the Park's ability to provide a high quality supply of fresh water in and from the Park, including the ability of river catchments to store water?			
4. Will the Plan conserve and enhance the viability and diversity of distinctive species and habitats in the Park?	SML		Part of the visitor experience is the knowledge that there are distinctive species and habitats in the area. By supporting ranger services, information and interpretation about the Park, the policy helps inform and gain support from visitors for work that conserves and enhances species and habitats.
5. Will the Plan maintain or improve the storage of greenhouse gases in peat, soils and woodland in the Park?			
6. Will the Plan increase energy efficiency and reduce energy waste?			
7. Will the Plan maintain the opportunities for people to enjoy physical recreation and healthy lifestyles?	SML		Part of the visitor experience is the opportunity to take part in physical recreation and to pursue healthy lifestyles. By supporting ranger services, information and interpretation about the Park, the policy should help people enjoy recreation opportunities and healthy lifestyles.
8. Will the Plan conserve and enhance the distinctive landscape character and experience of the Park?	SML		The distinctive landscape character of the area is an important part of the visitor experience. By supporting ranger services, information and interpretation about the Park, the policy may help inform and gain support from visitors for work that conserves and enhances the distinctive landscape character of the Park.
9. Will the Plan maintain or improve opportunities to experience, learn about and share the cultural heritage of the Park?	SML		The cultural heritage of the Park is an important part of the visitor experience. By supporting ranger services, information and interpretation about the Park, the policy may improve opportunities to experience and learn about the cultural heritage of the Park.
Mitigation measures:			
Duration of effects: L=long-term, M=medium-term, S=short-term			
positive effect	no effect or negligible effect	negative effect	not applicable
uncertain effect/effect cannot be predicted/or both positive and negative effects			

SEA of Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan 2012-2017			
Assessment recording form			
Plan objective/outcome		Policy 3.2	
Promote sustainable tourism management with a particular focus on:			
d) co-ordinated promotion and management of the Cairngorms National Park as a visitor destination;			
e) ensuring high quality facilities and infrastructure designed to manage the effects of visitor pressures on the natural heritage and communities;			
f) implementing and reviewing the Strategy and Action Plan for Sustainable Tourism.			
Summary of effect at scale of:	Park	Scotland	Commentary on assessment
SEA question:			
1. Will the Plan maintain or improve the ability of farmland in the Park to produce high quality local and seasonal food sustainably?			
2. Will the Plan maintain or increase the sustainable production of timber and woodfuel in the Park?			
3. Will the Plan maintain or improve the Park's ability to provide a high quality supply of fresh water in and from the Park, including the ability of river catchments to store water?			
4. Will the Plan conserve and enhance the viability and diversity of distinctive species and habitats in the Park?	SML		The policy should support this objective by managing the effects of visitor pressures on natural heritage and co-ordinating promotion and management.
5. Will the Plan maintain or improve the storage of greenhouse gases in peat, soils and woodland in the Park?			
6. Will the Plan increase energy efficiency and reduce energy waste?	SML		The policy should support this outcome by promoting sustainable tourism – encouraging visitors to minimise energy use and waste in travelling to the Park and around the Park.
7. Will the Plan maintain the opportunities for people to enjoy physical recreation and healthy lifestyles?	SML		Part of the visitor experience is the opportunity to take part in physical recreation and to pursue healthy lifestyles. The visitor management infrastructure of supports physical recreation and healthy lifestyles.
8. Will the Plan conserve and enhance the distinctive landscape character and experience of the Park?	SML		The policy should support this objective by managing the effects of visitor pressures on natural heritage and coordinating promotion and management.
9. Will the Plan maintain or improve opportunities to experience, learn about and share the cultural heritage of the Park?	SML		The policy should support this objective by co-ordinating promotion and management of visitors.
Mitigation measures:			
Duration of effects: L=long-term, M=medium-term, S=short-term			
positive effect	no effect or negligible effect	negative effect	not applicable
uncertain effect/effect cannot be predicted/or both positive and negative effects			

SEA of Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan 2012-2017			
Assessment recording form			
Plan objective/outcome Policy 3.3			
Provide high quality opportunities for access and recreation, with a particular focus on:			
a) ensuring a high quality functional network of core paths and long distance routes;			
b) promoting the health benefits of outdoor recreation;			
c) identifying areas where particular management measures are needed in relation to delivering a high quality visitor experience, safeguarding sensitive environments and maintaining the integrity of designated sites;			
d) promoting responsible behaviour in taking and managing access.			
Summary of effect at scale of:		Park	Scotland
SEA question:		Commentary on assessment	
1. Will the Plan maintain or improve the ability of farmland in the Park to produce high quality local and seasonal food sustainably?			
2. Will the Plan maintain or increase the sustainable production of timber and woodfuel in the Park?			
3. Will the Plan maintain or improve the Park's ability to provide a high quality supply of fresh water in and from the Park, including the ability of river catchments to store water?		SML	The policy should support this objective by safeguarding sensitive environments.
4. Will the Plan conserve and enhance the viability and diversity of distinctive species and habitats in the Park?		SML	The policy should support this objective by safeguarding sensitive environments.
5. Will the Plan maintain or improve the storage of greenhouse gases in peat, soils and woodland in the Park?		SML	The policy should support this objective by safeguarding sensitive environments.
6. Will the Plan increase energy efficiency and reduce energy waste?		SML	The policy should support this outcome by helping to provide opportunities for off road travel by foot, cycle etc.
7. Will the Plan maintain the opportunities for people to enjoy physical recreation and healthy lifestyles?		SML	The policy should support this outcome by helping to provide outdoor access opportunities and promoting the health benefits of outdoor recreation.
8. Will the Plan conserve and enhance the distinctive landscape character and experience of the Park?		SML	The policy should support this objective by safeguarding sensitive environments.
9. Will the Plan maintain or improve opportunities to experience, learn about and share the cultural heritage of the Park?		SML	The policy should support this objective by providing outdoor access opportunities and also delivering a high quality visitor experience – that includes the cultural heritage of the area.
Mitigation measures:			
Duration of effects: L=long-term, M=medium-term, S=short-term			
positive effect	no effect or negligible effect	negative effect	not applicable
uncertain effect/effect cannot be predicted/or both positive and negative effects			

SEA of Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan 2012-2017			
Assessment recording form			
Plan Objective/outcome Policy 3.4			
Provide opportunities for inspiration, learning and understanding through engaging with people, with a particular focus on:			
d) young people;			
e) opportunities to deliver the curriculum for excellence;			
f) promoting a sense of shared ownership and responsibility towards Scotland's National Parks and rural environment.			
Summary of effect at scale of:	Park	Scotland	Commentary on assessment
SEA Question:			
1. Will the Plan maintain or improve the ability of farmland in the Park to produce high quality local and seasonal food sustainably?	SML		The policy should support this objective by promoting a shared sense of ownership and responsibility towards the Park and rural environment.
2. Will the Plan maintain or increase the sustainable production of timber and woodfuel in the Park?	SML		The policy should support this objective by promoting a shared sense of ownership and responsibility towards the Park and rural environment.
3. Will the Plan maintain or improve the Park's ability to provide a high quality supply of fresh water in and from the Park, including the ability of river catchments to store water?	ML		The policy should support this objective by promoting a shared sense of ownership and responsibility towards the Park and rural environment.
4. Will the Plan conserve and enhance the viability and diversity of distinctive species and habitats in the Park?	ML		The policy should support this objective by promoting a shared sense of ownership and responsibility towards the Park and rural environment.
5. Will the Plan maintain or improve the storage of greenhouse gases in peat, soils and woodland in the Park?	ML		The policy should support this objective by promoting a shared sense of ownership and responsibility towards the Park and rural environment.
6. Will the Plan increase energy efficiency and reduce energy waste?	ML		The policy should support this objective by promoting a shared sense of ownership and responsibility towards the Park and rural environment.
7. Will the Plan maintain the opportunities for people to enjoy physical recreation and healthy lifestyles?	SML		The policy should support this objective by promoting a shared sense of ownership and responsibility towards the Park and rural environment.
8. Will the Plan conserve and enhance the distinctive landscape character and experience of the Park?	ML		The policy should support this objective by promoting a shared sense of ownership and responsibility towards the Park and rural environment.
9. Will the Plan maintain or improve opportunities to experience, learn about and share the cultural heritage of the Park?	SML		The policy should support this objective by providing opportunities for learning and understanding of cultural heritage and promoting a shared sense of ownership and responsibility towards the Park and rural environment.
Mitigation measures:			
Duration of effects: L=long-term, M=medium-term, S=short-term			
positive effect	no effect or negligible effect	negative effect	not applicable
uncertain effect/effect cannot be predicted/or both positive and negative effects			

Appendix 3

Using the ecosystems approach in the SEA

Building the ecosystems approach into the SEA

1. Ecosystems are a natural unit of living things and their physical environment. The living parts and non-living parts work together as an independent system. An impact on one part of the system can lead to impacts on other parts of the system. The earth is made up of many ecosystems at many scales and there is often overlap between ecosystems. The Cairngorms National Park contains and is part of many ecosystems. It therefore makes sense to consider the Park and how it is managed in terms of its ecosystems.
2. Table I below identifies the main broad ecosystems services that are likely to be important in the Cairngorms National Park. It draws on and extends the work of the National Ecosystems Assessment.

Table I – Ecosystems Services in the Cairngorms National Park	
<p>Provisioning services: The products obtained from ecosystems. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • food (crops and livestock) • fibre (crops, trees, wool, etc) • fuel • fresh water • distinctive wild species 	<p>Regulating services: The benefits obtained from the regulation of ecosystem processes. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • climate regulation(local temperature regulation, emission and storage of greenhouse gases) • hazard regulation (eg flooding, landslides, wildfire) • disease and pest regulation • soil quality • water quality • seed dispersal • air quality and noise • pollination
<p>Cultural services: The non-material benefits people obtain from ecosystems.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • knowledge - ecological and geological • recreation - enjoyment, physical and mental health • patterns and forms of settlement • aesthetic experience of landscape • sense of place • tradition • awareness and appreciation of the historic environment • spiritual and personal association or connection with place, history and tradition • spiritual and personal association or connection with nature • societal identity and pride 	<p>Supporting services: Ecosystem services that are necessary for the production of all other ecosystem services. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • biodiversity • biomass production • atmospheric oxygen production • natural weathering processes • erosion • soil formation and retention • nutrient cycling • water cycling • river processes • provisioning of habitat • provision of rock/minerals and landforms • photosynthesis • evolutionary processes

3. Clearly, not all ecosystems services will be as important in all the broad habitats of the National Park. Nor will they all benefit the same people in the same way. Some will benefit people who live or work in the Park, some those who visit, and some will be important for people outside the Park. A scoping or sifting exercise can help tell us what ecosystems services are important in each habitat.
4. Table 2 summarises the importance of different ecosystems services from different habitats in the Cairngorms National Park. It also shows that there are some differences in the services or benefits that we take or get from the different habitats of the National Park. There are two points about the table that are worth highlighting. Firstly, the supporting ecosystems services are all, by their nature important. Secondly, the habitats of the National Park are linked to and important for many cultural ecosystems services – partly reflecting the value that society places on the National Park as a special place.
5. The ecosystems services identified can be linked to SEA topics. Table 3 shows how SEA topics are relevant to the different ecosystems services. Because the ecosystems services are derived from complex and interacting systems, most services are linked to many of the formal SEA issues.
6. However, not all ecosystems services are things that are likely to be affected by the National Park Plan at a National Park scale. In particular, many supporting ecosystems services are linked to natural processes that are unlikely to be significantly influenced by humans.
7. For example, supporting services such as the provision of rocks and landforms rely on geological processes operating over thousands and millions of years. Humans have little influence over such processes. Similarly, photosynthesis is a process that's vital to most terrestrial life, yet its function or the potential for it to function will not be significantly influenced by the National Park Plan
8. The cultural ecosystems services provided by the Park are some of the most significant of all the ecosystems services provided by the Park's habitats. They reflect the way society experiences and values its special qualities, recognising that many of the benefits of the Park are nationally important.

Table 2: The importance of ecosystems services in broad habitats of the Park.

Importance of the ecosystems service	High							
	Medium-High	Enclosed farmland	Woodland	Open waters	Moorland	Semi-natural grasslands	Mountains	Urban
MediumLow	Low							
Provisioning ecosystems services	food (crops and livestock)	Medium-High	Low	Low	Medium-High	Medium-High	Low	Low
	fibre (crops. Trees, wool etc)	Medium-High	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low
	fuel	Low	Medium-High	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low
	fresh water	Low	Low	High	Low	Low	Medium-High	Low
	distinctive wild species	Medium-High	Low	Low	Medium-High	Medium-High	Low	Low
Regulating ecosystems services	climate regulation (local temperature regulation, emission and storage of greenhouse gases)	Medium-High	Medium-High	Low	Low	Medium-High	Low	Low
	hazard regulation (eg flooding, landslides, wildfire)	Medium-High	Low	Low	Medium-High	Medium-High	Medium-High	Medium-High
	disease and pest regulation	Medium-High	Medium-High	Medium-High	Medium-High	Medium-High	Medium-High	Medium-High
	soil quality	Medium-High	Low	Medium-High	Low	Low	Low	Medium-High
	water quality	Low	Low	Low	Low	Medium-High	Low	Medium-High
	seed dispersal	Low	Low	Low	Medium-High	Low	Low	Medium-High
	air quality and noise	Low	Medium-High	Medium-High	Medium-High	Low	Medium-High	Low
	pollination	Low	Low	Medium-High	Low	Low	Low	Medium-High
Cultural ecosystems services	knowledge - ecological and geological	Medium-High	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low
	recreation - enjoyment, physical and mental health	Medium-High	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Medium-High
	patterns and forms of settlement	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low
	aesthetic experience of landscape	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low
	sense of place	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low
	tradition	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low
	awareness and appreciation of the historic environment	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low
	spiritual and personal association or connection with place, history and tradition	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low
	spiritual and personal association or connection with nature	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Medium-High
societal identity and pride	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	
Supporting ecosystems services	biodiversity	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low
	biomass production	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low
	atmospheric oxygen production	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low
	natural weathering processes	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low
	erosion	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low
	soil formation and retention	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low
	nutrient cycling	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low
	water cycling	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low
	river processes	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low
	provisioning of habitat	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low
	provision of rock/minerals	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low
	provision of landform	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low
	photosynthesis	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low
evolutionary processes	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	

Table 3: Ecosystems services and SEA topics

		Biodiversity, Flora and fauna	Population and human health	Soil	Climatic factors	Water	Air	Cultural heritage	Landscape	Material assets
Provisioning Ecosystems Services	food (crops and livestock)									
	fibre (crops, tree, wool etc)									
	fuel									
	fresh water									
	distinctive wild species									
Regulating Ecosystems Services	climate regulation (local temperature regulation, emission and storage of greenhouse gases)									
	hazard regulation (eg flooding, disease and pest regulation)									
	soil quality									
	water quality									
	seed dispersal									
	air quality and noise									
	pollination									
Cultural Ecosystems Services	knowledge - ecological and geological									
	recreation - enjoyment, physical and patterns and forms of settlement									
	aesthetic experience of landscape									
	sense of place									
	tradition									
	awareness and appreciation of the historic environment									
	spiritual and personal association or connection with place, history and tradition									
	spiritual and personal association or connection with nature									
	societal identity and pride									
Supporting Ecosystems Services	biodiversity									
	biomass production									
	atmospheric oxygen production									
	natural weathering processes									
	erosion									
	soil formation and retention									
	nutrient cycling									
	water cycling									
	river processes									
	provisioning of habitat									
	provision of rock/minerals									
	provision of landforms									
	photosynthesis									
evolutionary processes										

The environmental baseline

9. This section sets out the current state of the environment in the Cairngorms National Park. In using an ecosystems approach to inform the assessment, the information is presented by the seven broad habitats of the Park. The information supplements information in the State of the Park Report of 2006, and other publications of the CNPA. Table 2 summarises the ecosystems services that different habitats provide. We have made an assumption that with the exception of urban habitats, all the habitat types are important in their own right for providing supporting ecosystem services

Enclosed farmlands

10. It is estimated that around 7 per cent of the Park is enclosed farmland, confined to the straths of the Park. Most of that is enclosed pasture, with less than 1 per cent of the Park used for crops. The Park has seen a steady reduction in the area of enclosed farmlands, partly because of the history of small scale and marginal upland farming that has been becoming steadily less economical. There has been a trend towards loss of the enclosed pasture to more marginal rough grazing as well as a growth in farm woodlands⁵. The majority of agricultural production in the Park is linked to beef and lamb. The long-term trend in these sectors has been one of declining numbers of stock, again linked to the marginal economics of farming in much of the Park.
11. Historically, the farmlands of the straths of the Park have provided important habitat for wading birds. They continue to be important (the Strathspey area is one of Scotland's most significant areas for breeding waders) though populations have been in decline. The relationship of farmlands in the Park with water and wetlands is significant, partly because much farmland is within the functional or constrained floodplains of the main rivers. In some places the farmland has been drained and protected from flooding, but many areas continue to flood.
12. Farmland provides an important link to our cultural heritage, with historical remains and landscapes, active tradition and stories of the past. It is an integral part of the landscape in the valleys and straths of the Park.

Drivers of change

13. Changes in farmland management have been for economic and policy reasons. The marginal nature of much farming in the Park means that some farm units are not viable businesses. It also means that most farming is reliant on subsidy in order to be economically viable, and the policy objectives of the subsidies drive farming practice.
14. Much agricultural land is managed for a range of public benefits including biodiversity, public access, and flood management as well as food. Climate change may increase the potential productivity of some farmland in the Park in the future. However, the need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions as well as adapt to potential extreme weather events are becoming stronger drivers of public policy. It is likely that more management will be based on the management of carbon-rich soils and the improved function of floodplains in the

⁵ The Economic and Social Health of the Cairngorms National Park Report, 2010
www.cairngorms.co.uk/parkauthority/publications/

future. The national target for increasing Scotland's trees cover to 25 per cent may result in woodland replacing some areas of farmland.

Woodlands

15. Woodlands are the Park's richest and most diverse habitats. Woodland covers about 20 per cent of the Park, with around half being semi-natural woodland and half planted woodland⁶. The semi natural woodlands in particular are important with ancient pine woods, and important areas of birch woodland, aspen and oak. Woodland supports some of the Cairngorms most iconic and distinctive species such as capercaillie, pine marten, crossbill, crested tit and red squirrel. They are also important for a wide range of plant, fungi and lichen species that only survive in particular woodland habitats. Many areas of woodland are protected by Natura designations and SSSI designations, and there are a number of woodland National Nature Reserves in the Park.
16. Woodland plays an important local role in the regulation of climate in the Park by providing shelter from wind and from sunlight. Woodland on floodplains and throughout catchments can improve their ability to store and slow the release of water, protect against erosion of slopes and the release of sediment into water courses. Woodland can also have the capacity to store atmospheric carbon. Woodlands in the Park are an important recreation resource providing many marked routes for people to follow and potential to absorb many people without obvious impact. Nevertheless some woodland habitats and some species are sensitive to disturbance by people and by dogs. Woodlands are an intrinsic part of the landscape of the Park, and provide strong links with historic environment and cultural heritage of the Park.
17. Woodland cover in the Park has been increasing for the past 50 years or so, initially through planting for commercial timber and latterly through planting and natural regeneration of native species. The Park has a significant industry based around the management of woodland for timber and timber products, for recreation, for biodiversity, and for woodfuel.
18. Semi natural and native woodland is expanding in the Park, but there has been loss of some area of ancient semi natural woodland to growth of settlements in Badenoch and Strathspey. Almost all settlements in Badenoch and Strathspey have at some point during the past 20 years expanded over areas of ancient semi natural woodland. Although there remain contentious sites for housing development within the planning system (either as planning applications or sites zoned for potential future development), no significant new areas of ancient semi-natural woodland have been identified for development in development plans since the National Park was established.

Drivers of change

19. Most woodland management is influenced by public policy through designation and through financial support. A continued emphasis on management for biodiversity and for recreation as well as timber and woodfuel production and management of carbon is likely to remain. The effects of climate change on the species that inhabit woodland is not fully understood.

⁶ Cairngorms National Park Forest and Woodland Framework, 2008.
<http://www.cairngorms.co.uk/parkauthority/publications/>

The national target for increasing Scotland's trees cover to 25 per cent may result in more woodland replacing other habitats.

Open waters

20. The Cairngorms National Park has the headwaters of three of Scotland's major rivers as well as many smaller ones. Many of the rivers and their tributaries as well as lochs and wetlands are designated as Natura sites and SSSIs. The rivers in particular provide water for society in the National Park, and for people outside the Park as they flow downstream towards the sea.
21. The open waters cut across many of the habitats of the Park and receive water from them. Each habitat plays a role in the quality of the water, sometimes removing chemicals or materials and sometimes adding them to the water system. The open waters themselves provide further changes to the qualities of the water. As well as providing fresh drinking water, the rivers are used to remove waste. Treated sewage normally flows back to the river system, and waste from farmland and industries such as whisky distilling often re-enters the rivers. River processes of erosion and deposition, turbulence, flooding all contribute to the water quality and the function of the river systems. Changes in a river or water systems can affect it downstream and upstream.
22. Open waters play an important role in recreation for water sports and for angling and are an integral part of the landscape of the Park. Because of their importance to human society, they have long historical connections of use and change, providing an important link with the Park's cultural heritage.

Drivers of change

23. Open waters are subject to a regulatory system to ensure their continued high quality, and this manages many human activities that could effect open waters. However, because of the connections with so many other habitats, open waters can be sensitive to a number of pressures. Climate change has already increased the temperature of many water bodies, so much so that some species, such as salmon, that rely on a specific temperature range to spawn successfully may be effected by small increases in future. The temperature of water also effects the chemical composition and the ways that nutrients and chemical are processed. The pollutants that fall with rain can also change with changes in climate.
24. Extreme weather events such as rainstorms and sudden snow melt increase the runoff from other habitats to open waters. The runoff can contain large volumes of chemicals and materials that the open waters are not used to, and the extra volume of water is either stored through flooding or runs downstream faster, increasing the likelihood of destructive erosion and flooding downstream. Invasive non-native species of plant and animal can have a destructive effect on wetland habitats.
25. The development of small-scale hydro energy schemes has potential to change water courses. Water is abstracted, used and returned as waste water by humans for land management and business activities as well as domestic uses. With projected increases in households and new developments of housing, this has potential to change the demand for water and discharge of waste water.

Mountains

26. Mountains form a large and iconic part of the Cairngorms National Park. They are a backdrop to most views of the National Park; are a distinguishing part of the landscape character of the Park; have a range of iconic species, habitats and geological and geomorphological features; and significant resource for recreation. The height and mass of the Cairngorms themselves provide a range of habitats and associated species that are rare or unique in the British Isles. Large areas of the mountains of the Park are designated as Natura sites, SSSIs, and NNRs for their species, habitats and geological importance. The mountains provide a focus for precipitation and an important starting point for the buffering of pollutants in precipitation as they move towards open waters.
27. Mountains are amongst the least intensively managed parts of the Park, with deer stalking and management for a few other game species as well as recreation management and management for biodiversity being the main objectives. The habitats of the mountains can be very sensitive to the level of grazing by herbivore such as deer, sheep and hare. The mountains are particularly important as a recreation resource for hillwalking, rock climbing in summer and winter climbing as well as skiing. The mountains have a long cultural history of use and exploration that is well documented and shared. They contain material evidence of past ways of life that is well preserved, and have numerous associations with stories, songs and art.

Drivers of change

28. Because so many species and habitats of the mountain occupy a particular niche of temperature range and precipitation that is not present elsewhere in the UK, they are particularly sensitive to changes in climate. Increases in temperature and changes in snowfall or the length of time snow remains have already changed the nature of habitats and the composition of species, and will continue to do so in future. The deposition of chemicals on the mountains is also slowly changing the chemical composition of soils, making them more fertile in some cases, but also allowing different plant species to grow in place of others. Soils and surfaces on mountains are often less stable than in other habitats and can be more likely to slip and slide during and after heavy rainfall or snow melt.
29. Different parts of the mountains are important for different habitats. Some species and habitats can cope with grazing by deer and sheep while others die back. Managing the numbers of deer and sheep and their grazing pressure to support a range of species and habitats is a driver of public policy on designated areas.
30. People enjoying the mountain for recreation can also effect the habitats and species. Human feet can cause erosion of vegetation and soils; people can disturb birds and animals, and dogs can disturb and kill birds and animals even when people do not. However, work to maintain paths and reinstate damaged ground has proved effective in the past and is likely to be effective in the future. Few people who recreate in the mountains do so with the intention of disturbing wildlife, so improving peoples understanding of the sensitive species and habitats is likely to reduce disturbance.

Moorland

31. Moorland habitats in the Cairngorms National Park run between the mountains and woodland and farmland. The moorlands of the Park are a distinctive and iconic habitat and landscape that is internationally famous. Moorlands tend to be managed for red grouse shooting but are also important for black grouse near woodland margins.
32. Moorland frequently overlaps areas of upland wetland and blanket bog and is also associated with a mosaic semi-natural acid grassland on drier ground, by water courses and where heavily grazed by sheep, cattle or deer. The use of moorland for rough grazing by sheep and cattle is an integral part of upland farming. The peat deposits of moorlands are a significant store of carbon. They also play an important role in maintaining water quality by buffering some pollutants.
33. Moorland's role in recreation is significant, partly because the network of tracks and paths that provides easy access, and partly because most mountain habitats are accessed via moorland habitats. Moorland often preserves archaeological remains and evidence of past environments that tells us about historical life and culture of human society as well as what the land was like before humans managed it. In common with many other habitats of the Cairngorms, there is a recorded history, stories and tradition linked to moorland that enriches our cultural heritage.

Drivers of change

34. Moorland management relies on muirburn or cutting to promote new heather growth and maintain a habitat that supports as many red grouse as possible. Without this active management, moorland would change as heather grows rank and scrub or woodland may succeed it. Similarly, the level of grazing by sheep, cattle and deer effects the habitat. The habitat is more sensitive to extreme events than some others. For example, periods of very low humidity and low temperature can kill heather, and infestations of the Heather Beetle will similarly effect the growth of heather.
35. Intensive management for grouse can reduce or remove populations of other species such as deer and mountain hare, and illegal persecution of raptors is often associated with moorland management.
36. The conditions for the formation of peat require a particular temperature and precipitation range that may be influenced by climate change. As an important store of carbon, it is likely that future public support for the management of moorland will seek to secure the long-term storage and management of the carbon in peat and soils. Changes in climate can lead to erosion of peat from sudden weather events and may also play a role in the success of species such as ticks and the diseases they can carry.
37. The national target for increasing Scotland's trees cover to 25 per cent may result in woodland replacing some areas of moorland.

Semi-natural grasslands

38. Semi-natural grassland habitats are mostly associated with the margins between farmland and moorland and an area of rough grazing, or in a mosaic of semi-natural acid grassland and

moorland on drier ground, by water courses and where heavily grazed by sheep cattle or deer. They are frequently on areas of ground that were previously farmed and have since been abandoned. This means they often provide clear physical remains of past uses, ways of life and communities.

Drivers of change

39. Most grasslands are maintained by grazing. Changes to semi natural grasslands are therefore mostly associated with changes in the grazing regime. This may occur through changes in management of livestock or deer by fencing or removal. Woodland planting will change a grassland over time and will also normally be accompanied by a reduction in grazing. Where semi natural grasslands occur on abandoned farmland, heather moorland, scrub woodland and wetland areas may also develop. The national target for increasing Scotland's trees cover to 25 per cent may result in woodland replacing some areas of semi-natural grassland.

Urban

40. About a third of 1 per cent of the Cairngorms National Park's area is within a settlement boundary in the Cairngorms National Park Local Plan. Perhaps as much land is covered by other buildings, roads and human development. These areas are important because it is in them that most human activity takes place. Urban habitats are diverse, with a range of buildings, garden and open spaces and unique micro climates. They require energy to function, create waste energy, pollution to the air, water and soil, noise and light.

41. The urban areas of the Park are the established way of living for most of its human population. The quality of accommodation, services and resources available in urban areas play a vital role in the health and wellbeing of the population. They also have a long cultural history, with a distinctive built heritage and a focus for cultural celebrations. The streetscapes and views with urban areas are a distinctive part of their character, and views of the straths and valleys of the Park are linked by the settlements and their connecting routes.

42. All urban areas within the Park provide some opportunities for recreation within them, or are connected to a network of paths and tracks and open areas around them and linking to other habitats of the Park. They are a significant place for visitors to the Park, both as a place of shelter, food and drink, but also as a place to get information about opportunities to experience, enjoy and learn about the Park.

43. The design of our urban areas has changed over time. New developments should now incorporate sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDS) and other measures to minimise their impacts on natural systems.

Drivers of change

44. Urban areas in the Park are linked to people's ability to live there and for most people therefore linked to economic opportunity or availability of money. Changes in the wider Scottish economy may affect the ability of people to live in the Park.

45. Migration to the Park has been slightly higher than migration from the Park since 2003, and this has led to a slow increase in the population. Allied to the increasing population, changes in the composition of households (a trend towards a greater number of smaller households)

mean a requirement for more house units to hold the same population. Current allocations of land for future housing development are expected to provide 20-25 years of housing land supply if the population continues to increase at its recent rates. However, constraints to the supply of new housing, such as the slow-down in bank lending to house builders of the past 2 years will also slow or stop increases in population. Nevertheless, new development can change the character and appearance of existing settlements and other areas.

46. Life in the Cairngorms National Park is currently heavily reliant on oil for energy. Much of the built fabric of the Park is old and requires a lot of energy to heat. The remote location of the Park increases transport costs. Without action to improve the energy efficiency of buildings and ways of life, reduce energy consumption, and use lower carbon energy sources, life in the Park could become economically unviable for many of the working population.