



Open Space

SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE
STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT



Strategic Environmental Assessment
Consultation May 2010

Supplementary Planning Guidance - Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

Public Consultation

Monday 24 May to Friday 24 September 2010

Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) sets out detailed advice to help people meet the requirements of the policies in the Cairngorms National Park Local Plan and the Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA) is presently developing a number of SPG documents. These will go out for a four month public consultation before publication – from Monday 24 May to Friday 24 September 2010.

This SEA Environmental Report is the result of an Strategic Environmental Assessment carried out on the supplementary planning guidance document of the same name, and it is also available for public consultation.

How to Comment

- A form is available on the following page. Comments *, which must include your name and address, should be returned to the CNPA by **Friday 24 September**, to the following address:

**FREEPOST (RSHS-BHKL-KXHS)
Cairngorms National Park Authority
Albert Memorial Hall, Station Square
Ballater AB35 5QB**

- You can download, or complete this form online, at www.cairngorms.co.uk/planning/localplan
- To discuss any aspect of the Supplementary Planning Guidance documents, or to arrange a

- meeting, please contact the CNPA's Ballater office.
- All SPG documents are available to view at the CNPA offices in Ballater and Grantown-on-Spey (see addresses below) and at a number of council offices within the Park. Comment forms will also be available at all these locations.

Albert Memorial Hall
Station Square
Ballater
Aberdeenshire AB35 5QB
Tel: 013397 53601
Fax: 013397 55334
Email: spg@cairngorms.co.uk

14 The Square
Grantown-on-Spey
Moray PH26 3HG
Tel: 01479 873535
Fax: 01479 873527
Email: spg@cairngorms.co.uk

Next Steps

The comments received about this report, and the accompanying SPG, will be considered by the CNPA. Once these have been reviewed, any appropriate changes will be made to the SPG which will then be prepared for formal approval at the end of 2010. At this point, an SEA post adoption statement will be produced, setting out the final details of the SEA assessment process

*Please note that all responses will be made public but will not be attributed to any named individual/organisation.

Data protection: These details will only be used for purposes associated with the Supplementary Planning Guidance consultation. You may request to see personal information held by the CNPA at any time.

For a large print version of this publication, please contact the Cairngorms National Park Authority on 01479 873535.

Cairngorms National Park Local Plan

Consultation on Supplementary Planning Guidance documents Monday 24 May – Friday 24 September 2010

Comments form

How to make a comment

- Please use a separate form for each of your comments.
- You must state which Supplementary Planning Guidance document, and which part of it, your comment relates to.
- You must indicate clearly your proposed changes, for example deletion of a proposal, deletion of a paragraph, amended wording, amendments to diagram/photograph.
- This form can be photocopied or further copies obtained from the CNPA offices.
- You can also complete the form online at www.cairngorms.co.uk/planning/localplan
- The deadline for submitting completed forms is **Friday 24 September 2010**.

1.

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone _____ Email _____

2.

If you are appointing someone to act as your agent, please give their details.

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone _____ Email _____

To which address should correspondence to be sent? Own

Agent

3.
Which Supplementary Planning Guidance document does your comment relate to? You must include the document title, the page number and the paragraph number where relevant.

4.
Please state clearly and fully your comment(s), continuing on additional sheets if necessary.

5.
If you are suggesting a specific change to the Supplementary Planning Guidance, please explain clearly what this is.

6.
Signature _____ Date _____

Please return completed forms, by **Friday 24 September 2010**, to:

FREEPOST (RSHS-BHKL-KXHS)
Cairngorms National Park Authority
Albert Memorial Hall, Station Square
Ballater AB35 5QB

Tel: 013397 53601
Fax: 013397 55334
Email: spg@cairngorms.co.uk

www.cairngorms.co.uk



Preface

The purpose of this Environmental Report is to assess the environmental impact of the Cairngorms National Park Open Space Supplementary Planning Guidance in accordance with the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005.

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Non-Technical Summary

Introduction

This is a non-technical summary of the Environmental Report of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the Open Space Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) for the Cairngorms National Park.

It explains:

- What the SEA is;
- Why it has been done;
- What effects the Open Space SPG would be likely to have on the environment.

This non-technical summary can be read on its own or as part of the full SEA Environmental Report.

Strategic Environmental Assessment, or SEA for short, is a way of making sure that environmental issues are carefully considered when a plan, policy or strategy (PPS) is made. This includes some supplementary planning guidance such as the Open Space in residential developments. In this instance the SEA is a formal part of the Open Space SPG preparation process and was determined to be required by a screening exercise carried out under the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005.

The idea behind SEA is that by making sure that environmental features such as plants and animals, air quality, human health and landscape are considered as the PPS is made then it is less likely that the PPS will harm them. SEA helps to make sure that environmental considerations are taken into account by the PPS in two main ways.

Firstly, the SEA predicts what effects the PPS is likely to have on the environment and whether they are considered significant. Secondly, if the SEA does predict 'significant effects', the PPS must be changed to introduce measures that will make the effects less harmful or serious. The end result should be a plan, policy or strategy that is less likely to lead to significant harm to the environment.

The SEA process is also about giving the public the information used to predict the effects and explaining how they were predicted. When the Environmental Report of the SEA process is published the public have an opportunity to comment on the SEA.

Summary of the SEA process

The SEA process can be broken down into a series of steps that happen as the Open Space SPG is being prepared. These can be summarised as:

1. Describe the condition of the environment at the moment and how it is changing or has changed in the past. Predict what the environment would be like in the future without the Open Space SPG.
2. Predict how different ways of making the Open Space SPG could have different environmental effects.

3. Predict what the effects of the principles and guidance in the Open Space SPG would have on the environment.
4. Decide on ways of reducing any harmful effects of the Open Space SPG on the environment.
5. Publish the Open Space SPG and the SEA Environmental Report, which explains what the SEA is and how it has been prepared, and make them available for consultation for people to comment on. This is the stage the Open Space SPG is at just now.
6. Take note of the comments on the Environmental Report and make appropriate changes to the Open Space SPG or SEA.
7. Adopt and publish the Open Space SPG with an up to date Environmental Report of the SEA. Write a formal statement of how the SEA was carried out with the Open Space SPG and how it affected the Open Space SPG.
8. Continue to measure what effects the Open Space SPG has on the environment when it is used so that changes can be made in the future if they are needed and so that it is possible to predict effects more accurately in future.

The Open Space supplementary planning guidance SEA should be seen within the hierarchy of other plans and their SEA's. The Open Space SPG is part of the Cairngorms National Park Local Plan. An SEA was carried out as part of the Local Plan process. A separate SEA was carried out for the Cairngorms National Park Plan. These assessments influence each other to ensure that environmental effects of all related plans are known and addressed.

Summary of the likely significant effects of the Open Space SPG

The two principles and associated guidance in the Open Space SPG have been assessed and the Environmental Report of the SEA prepared.

The principles of the Open Space SPG are considered likely to have positive effects on the environment. The Open Space SPG provides additional guidance on Local Plan policy. Many of the policies in the local Plan area designed to protect and improve the quality of the environment so that few harmful effects on the environment could be caused by development. The aim of the Open Space SPG is to set out the issues that must be considered for all residential developments that have an effect, or provide a need for open space provision.

The Open Space SPG does not set environmental policy, nor does it allocate sites for development. This is the role of the Local Plan. The Open Space SPG provides guidance on Policy 36 in the Cairngorms National Park Deposit Local Plan and identifies issues that must be considered for all developments that have an effect, or provide a need for open space provision. As such it would be expected to have a positive impact in terms of the SEA.

The Open Space SPG will address what type and amount of open space is required for new developments and give guidance on design, location, quality, as well as proposals for maintenance and management. No significant negative environmental effects of the Open Space SPG were identified. Some principles will have a greater impact on certain environmental features.

The key to the Open Space SPG is that the two principles work together to ensure that environmental issues are addressed by development. The principles should therefore not be considered in isolation from each other.

Any significant effects that have been predicted from the principles are explained in Section 7 and Appendix 4 of the full Environmental Report. It is often difficult to predict exactly what effects a principle will have on the environment. The uncertainties of the assessment are also explained in the Environmental Report (Appendix 4, p32).

A summary of impacts is provided below:

Principle 1: Improve and maintain current provision of open space networks

Positive effects will be felt on a number of environmental features as the Open Space SPG supports a positive approach to consideration of landscape and settlement character as well as enhancing biodiversity whilst improving and maintaining the provision of open space networks. Improved open space networks will also create improved linkages to community facilities and encourage participation in recreation and physical activity.

Principle 2: Presume against development that would result in a loss of existing open space provision

The SPG aims to protect the existing open space provision. This will ensure that the existing landscape and settlement character is protected. It will also protect areas of open space which are important resources for biodiversity and used for recreation and physical activity.

The differences SEA has made to the Open Space SPG

Because the Open Space SPG has been written to improve and protect the local environment, it has avoided harming the environment. This means that no changes to the Open Space SPG have been made due to the SEA itself.

However, the SEA has helped provide a systematic method for assessing environmental factors that are important to the Open Space SPG and recording the predicted effects of it in a transparent way. In addition to this, clear links to the Local Plan and National Park Plan SEAs have enabled environmental issues to be considered consistently throughout the planning hierarchy.

I. Introduction

I.1 Purpose of this Environmental Report

As part of the preparation of the Open Space supplementary planning guidance (SPG), the Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA) is carrying out a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). SEA is a systematic method for considering the likely environmental effects of certain plans, policies 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.

SEA is a requirement of 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 done in consultation with Scottish Natural Heritage, the Scottish Environment Protection Agency, and Scottish Ministers (Historic Scotland);
- 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 considering the significant environmental effects of the implementation of the PPS;
- Monitoring: monitoring significant environmental effects in such a way that enables the responsible authority to identify any unforeseen adverse effects at an early stage and undertake appropriate remedial action.

The purpose of this Environmental Report is to:

- Provide information on the Open Space SPG;
- Identify, describe and evaluate the likely significant effects of the Open Space SPG and its reasonable alternatives;
- Provide an early and effective opportunity for the Consultation Authorities and the public to offer views on any aspect of this Environmental Report.

1.2 Key facts

The key facts relating to the Open Space SPG are set out below (Table 1).

Table 1: Key facts relating to the Open Space supplementary planning guidance

| | |
|--|---|
| Responsible Authority | Cairngorms National Park Authority |
| Title of plan, policy or strategy (PPS) | Open Space Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) |
| What prompted the PPS | The requirement for the SPG is set out as per Reporters Recommendations for Policy 36 'Other Open Space Provision' of the Cairngorms National Park Local Plan. |
| Subject covered by PPS | To aid the interpretation of Local Plan policy relating to open space provision, with particular focus on new residential developments. |
| Period covered by PPS | 2010 onwards |
| Frequency of updates | Uncertain – as and when required. |
| Area covered by PPS | 3816 sq kms This is the area covered by the Local Plan, and this guidance accompanies the Local Plan. |
| Purpose and / or objectives of PPS | <p>The Open Space guidance forms part of the suite of Supplementary Guidance that is being prepared to accompany the Cairngorms National Park Local Plan.</p> <p>It provides more detailed guidance in order to help applicants comply with policy 36 in the Cairngorms National Park Local Plan. It sets out the issues that must be considered for all developments that have an effect, or provide a need for open space provision. It will address what type and amount of open space is required for new developments, and give guidance on design, location, quality as well as proposals for maintenance and management.</p> |

1.3 Strategic Environmental Assessment activities to date

The consideration of environmental issues has been integral to the preparation of the Open Space SPG. This is explicitly reflected in the SEA activities throughout the preparation of the Open Space SPG.

Table 2 below indicates SEA activities which have been undertaken to date and activities which will be undertaken in the next stages of the Open Space SPG preparation and adoption.

Table 2: SEA activity relating to the Open Space supplementary planning guidance

| SEA activity / task | Open Space SPG activity / task | Timetable |
|---|---|------------------------------|
| Screening opinion sought from SEA Gateway | Commitment to prepare Open Space SPG contained in Draft Local Plan | August 2009 |
| Preparation of Scoping Report | Identification and research of key issues / topics | Nov 2008 – June 2009 |
| Consultation on Scoping Report 5 weeks | | December 2009 – January 2010 |
| Environmental assessment and preparation of the Environmental Report | Preparation of consultative draft Open Space SPG | February – April 2010 |
| Consultation on Environmental Report 10 weeks | Consultation on draft Open Space SPG | May 2010 – Sept 2010 |
| Analysis of consultation responses and revision of Environmental Report as required | Analysis of consultation responses and revision of Open Space SPG as required | Sept 2010- Oct 2010 |
| Preparation of Post-Adoption Statement | Preparation of finalised Open Space SPG | Nov 2010 |
| Submission of Post-Adoption Statement | Submission of finalised Open Space SPG to CNPA board for adoption | Dec 2010 |

Table 3 shows the opinions of the relevant consultation authorities from the screening opinion and whether they consider that the Open Space SPG is likely to have significant environmental effects.

Table 3: Summary comments from consultation authorities - screening

| Consultation Authority | Likelihood of significant environmental effects |
|---|---|
| Historic Scotland | no |
| Scottish Environment Protection Agency | yes |
| Scottish Natural Heritage | yes |
| Overall view on likelihood of significant environmental effects | yes |

Tables 4, 5 and 6 show the comments which were received from the consultation authorities on the scoping report.

Table 4: Summary scoping comments from consultation Authorities – Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH)

| Issue | Comment |
|------------------|--|
| General comments | SNH is content with the scope and level of detail proposed for the Environmental Report. We note that your consultation period is 6-12 weeks. A period of at least 8 weeks would be helpful to us. |
| Suggested change | We are content with the proposed scope of the environmental report, and the approach of grouping some of the SEA criteria. |
| Suggested change | As in previous comments, we suggest the following alterations (changes in italics): Biodiversity key trend ‘continued spread and introductions of non-native species’. |
| Suggested change | Consider adding an additional key issue for access and recreation ‘delivering the Government’s national target for increasing participation in outdoor recreation’. |
| General comment | Presumably the SEA will also take into account the relevant Planning Advice Notes and other national guidance. |
| Suggested change | We recommend the development of specific SEA criteria to replace the ‘key considerations’. These criteria could be selected from those used in the Local Plan Environmental Report. |
| Suggested change | We recommend the following addition to the SEA objectives and key considerations: ‘barriers to native species movement and habitat fragmentation’. |

| | |
|------------------|--|
| Suggested change | We recommend clarifying what is meant by 'priority' in 'loss of priority habitats and species' |
| Suggested change | We suggest that the key considerations could include planning for green networks/wildlife corridors that allow the movement of species, ie the planned retention of habitats as different developments proceed over time |
| Suggested change | Maintenance of hydrology – where this is important – could be added to the key considerations. |
| Suggested change | It may be worth considering adding a key consideration for strategic links to public facilities such as shops and schools. |
| Suggested change | Add a key consideration to 'enhance access opportunities for all'. |
| Suggested change | Omission: we recommend including an objective or 'key consideration' covering minimising damage or disturbance to key geodiversity interests. |
| General Comment | We are content with the proposed methodology for assessment. |
| General Comment | We are content with the proposed approach of monitoring the environmental effects of the supplementary open space guidance as part of monitoring the effects of the Local Plan. |

Table 5: Summary scoping comments from consultation authorities – Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA)

| Issue | Comment |
|----------------------------------|--|
| General Comments | The proposals outlined in the Scoping Report are acceptable to us, however to allow us to provide detailed advice it would have been helpful if some aspects had been expanded |
| Detailed Comments | |
| Scoping in/out of SEA objectives | We are satisfied with the proposed scoping of SEA receptors |
| Baseline information | We are aware that you prepared a State of the Park Report for the CNPA area for other SEA work and a summary of it is provided in Appendix I. The summary is very short so there is little specific comment we can make on this aspect apart from ensuring that the information is up-to-date. |

| | |
|--|---|
| Environmental problems | We note that the potential negative effects identified in the SEA of the Local Plan have been listed as environmental problems, with one of the aims of the Guidance being to address them. This seems reasonable. |
| Relationship with other Plans, Policies and Strategies (PPS) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited PPS are mentioned in the scoping report; we presume this work has still to be undertaken. We would expect the full range of possible international, national and local PPS to be considered. Your previous SEA work could provide a basis for this. • Additional sources and references are provided for other potential plans, policies and strategies which could be used relating to air, soil water, climate change and human health. |
| Methodology for assessing environmental effects | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are satisfied with the proposed SEA Objectives • The proposed recording template looks useful. We welcome the inclusion of 'key consideration' to help understand how the assessments have been made. In relation to the water SEA objective we would expect key considerations of the guidance should be to retain the functional flood plain, avoid watercourse engineering works and encourage sustainable drainage systems (SUDS). • Set out assumptions that are made during the assessment and difficulties and limitations encountered. • All aspects of the Guidance which could have significant effects should be addressed. • We would encourage you to use the assessment as a way to improve the environmental performance of individual aspects of the final option. Proposals for enhancement would also be supported. • We welcome the proposal to also include a summary matrix to help consider accumulative effects. |
| Mitigation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We remind you that if the assessment of the guidance results in negative effects then the clearest form of mitigation is to modify that aspect of the guidance. We would like the Environment Report to make clear how carrying out SEA informed the Guidance which is being consulted upon at the same time. • Where mitigation proposed does not relate to modifications to the guidance itself then it should be clear how the mitigation will be achieved and by whom. |
| Monitoring | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It would be helpful if the Environment Report included a description of the measures envisaged to monitor the significant environmental effects of the guidance. |

| | |
|--------------|---|
| Alternatives | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No information is provided on the consideration of alternatives. • Any reasonable alternatives identified during the preparation of the guidance should be assessed as part of the SEA process and the findings of the assessment should inform the choice of the preferred option. This should be documented in the Environment Report. |
| Next Steps | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are satisfied with the proposal for a 6 to 12 week consultation period for the Environment Report. |

Table 6: Summary scoping comments from consultation Authorities – Historic Scotland

| Issue | Comment |
|--|--|
| Scope of assessment and level of detail | Note that Historic Scotland has been scoped out of the assessment and are content |
| Consultation period for the Environmental Report | Content with the 6 to 12 week period proposed for consultation on the Environmental Report |

2. Background to this report

2.1 The Strategic Environmental Assessment context

The Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA) is carrying out a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the Open Space SPG which it is currently engaged in preparing. Once adopted, the Open Space SPG will be a material consideration for the CNPA and the four local authorities with responsibility for determining planning applications within the Park.

This report is an Environmental Report in terms of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005. The purpose of this report is to:

- describe the current condition of the environment and predict what the environment would be like in the future without the Open Space SPG;
- predict what effect the Open Space SPG will have on the environment;
- identify ways of reducing any harmful effects the Open Space SPG may have;
- explain what the SEA is and how it has been carried out; and
- to set out how comments on the SEA can be submitted to the CNPA.

The Environmental Report follows the initial screening and scoping consultations issued to the consultation authorities in August 2009 and December 2009 respectively. The views of the consultees have been taken into consideration in the preparation of this report.

The SEA of the Open Space SPG should be seen in the context of SEA work previously undertaken by the CNPA for the Park Plan and the Local Plan.

2.2 The Cairngorms National Park context

The Cairngorms National Park currently extends to 3,800 sq km and covers parts of four local authority areas (Highland, Moray, Aberdeenshire and Angus). The Park is centred on the Cairngorm mountains and extends to Grantown-on-Spey, Strathdon, Ballater, the heads of the Angus Glens, Dalwhinnie and Laggan.

The Cairngorms National Park was established in September 2003, on the basis of:

- the outstanding national importance of its natural and cultural heritage;
- the area's distinctive character and coherent identity; and
- the special management needs of the area.

The general purpose of the Cairngorms National Park Authority, as 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;
- to promote sustainable use of the natural resources;
- 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.

The Cairngorms National Park Authority must ensure that the four aims are achieved collectively. However, if there appears to be a conflict between the first aim and the other aims, greater weight must be given to the first aim (Section 9(6) of the National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000).

The CNPA is not a full planning authority, but shares planning powers in the Park with the four constituent local authorities. The Park Authority is responsible for preparing a Local Plan and supplementary planning guidance for the Park, but only operates the development management function on applications that are considered to be of significance to the aims of the Cairngorms National Park.

Development Management functions within the Cairngorms National Park are shared by the Park Authority and the four constituent local authorities. Planning applications are made to the local authorities in the first instance, and the CNPA has the power to 'call-in' applications to be determined by the Park Authority, where it considers they have some significance to the aims of the National Park. In practice, this has meant that, to date, the Park Authority has called-in around 16 per cent of the planning applications within the Cairngorms National Park for determination.

As supplementary planning guidance, the Open Space SPG will be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. The Open Space SPG is informed by the finalised

Local Plan for the Cairngorms National Park which replaces the four local plans which existed previously. The Local Plan takes its strategic context from the Cairngorms National Park Plan.

3. The Open Space Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG)

3.1 Outline and objectives of the Open Space SPG

The purpose of the Open Space Supplementary Planning Guidance is to aid the interpretation of Local Plan policy 36 relating to open space provision, with particular focus on new residential developments. This aims to set out the issues that must be considered for all developments that have an effect, or provide a need for open space provision. It will address what type and amount of open space is required for new developments and give guidance on design, location, quality, as well as proposals for maintenance and management. It also sets out to protect against the loss of existing open space provision.

The principles of the Open Space guidance is to:

1. Improve and maintain current provision of open space networks;
2. Presume against development that would result in a loss of existing provision.

Table 7 shows the list of topics to be covered in the Open Space supplementary planning guidance.

Table 7 Principles of the Open Space SPG

| Principles | Issues to be addressed |
|--|--|
| <p>Improve and maintain current provision of open space networks</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional open space must complement existing landscape character • Additional open space is accessible to all • Provision made in the open space for children and wildlife • Integration of open space into the whole design of the development • Open space should be well managed and maintained |
| <p>Presume against development that would result in a loss of existing provision</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exception only where an open space audit demonstrates the development will not result in a deficit of open space provision to serve the affected community, and that no alternative sites are available • Compensatory provision is made elsewhere within the community area of at least equal size and quality, • A commuted sum is made towards future provision of an appropriate alternative |

3.2 The Open Space SPG's relationship with other plans and programmes

There are a wide range of plans, programmes and strategies (PPS) that are relevant to the Open Space SPG and help to influence its content and direction. A full list of relevant PPS can be found in Appendix I (see p25). Appendix I also identifies the key issues of these PPS which are relevant to the Open Space SPG.

In summary the Open Space SPG has a relationship with other PPS in the following categories:

- International and European;
- National;
- National planning guidance (SPP / PAN);
- Local statutory plans, for example the Parks constituent local authorities; and
- Cairngorms National Park specific.

The Cairngorms National Park Local Plan, together with the Park Plan, sets the planning policy context for the Park. The Open Space SPG provides further detailed guidance on Policy 36 of the Cairngorms National Park Local Plan.

The Park Plan was approved by the Minister on 15 March 2007. The finalised Local Plan is likely to be adopted by the end of 2010. Both the Park Plan and the Local Plan have been subject to SEA.

Other statutory local PPS include those prepared by or on behalf of the constituent local authorities and other public bodies which are active in the Park. This includes local authority Development Plans, Core Path Plans, Forestry Strategies, Housing Plans, Waste Management Plans etc.

The Scottish Government's consolidated SPP set the national planning context which is interpreted by local development plans.

National and international PPS may also set the context for how the planning system should interpret various policies set at European and International levels. European Directives are the most common example of this type of PPS.

4. Environmental perspectives and Strategic Environmental Assessment objectives

4.1 The State of the Park Report

SEA requires the collation of environmental baseline information. A State of the Park Report has been prepared by the CNPA. This report, which has been used in previous SEA work, draws together existing information on the Park's resources as a baseline to inform development and assessment of Park plans and policies. The report covers:

- natural resources
- cultural resources
- visitor resources
- economic and social resources

In each section the report identifies as far as possible:

- current extent of the resource
- relative importance of the resource
- current state of the resource
- key trends affecting the resource
- limitations on existing data and future research needs

The report provides the environmental baseline data against which the potential impacts of the Open Space SPG have been assessed and against which future implementation of such plans will be monitored. Further details can be found in Appendix 2 (see p25).

4.2 Existing environmental issues in the Cairngorms National Park

The State of the Park Report identified a number of current trends and key issues in relation to environmental resources in the Cairngorms. Further details of this can be found in Appendix 3 (see p30). These informed the SEA of the Park Plan and the Local Plan.

4.3 Strategic Environmental Assessment objectives

The policy context for the Open Space SPG is set by plans and policy higher up the planning hierarchy; principally the Cairngorms National Park Plan and the Cairngorms National Park Finalised Local Plan. Both of these plans were subject to SEA.

The Open Space SPG Scoping Report identified a set of objectives against which to assess the environmental impacts of the Open Space SPG. These objectives reflected the findings of the previous SEA's together with the comments received from the Consultation Authorities in response to the Open Space SPG Screening Report. These objectives were further refined as a result of comments received on the Scoping Report. The final SEA objectives used to assess the Open Space SPG are listed in Table 8 below.

Table 8: SEA Objectives

| SEA objective | | Key considerations |
|-------------------------------|--|---|
| Biodiversity, fauna and flora | To conserve and enhance the diversity of species, habitats and ecosystems. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • loss of priority species and habitats as defined by the Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) • disturbance to priority species and their habitats • barriers to native species movement and habitat fragmentation • continued spread and introductions of non-native species • planning for green networks/wildlife corridors that allow the movement of species |

| | | |
|-----------------------------|--|---|
| Water | To conserve and enhance the water environment. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • maintenance of hydrology • retain the functional flood plain • avoid watercourse engineering works • encourage sustainable drainage systems (SUDS) |
| Material assets | To use material assets in a sustainable way. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • minimise need for travel by private car • access networks, open space, new and safe access opportunities • enhance strategic links to public facilities such as shops and schools • enhance access opportunities for all |
| Climatic factors | To minimise contributions to climate change | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • climate-proof new development • reduce air pollution |
| Soil | Maintain or improve soil and peat quality and avoid exacerbating pollution | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • conserve mineral resources • conserve soil resources • minimise soil and peat disturbance |
| Population and human health | To maintain a sustainable and healthy population | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure access to services for communities |
| Landscape | To maintain and enhance the distinctive landscape character of the Park | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • existing landscape character • settlement character • setting of towns and villages • minimise the damage or disturbance to key geodiversity interests. |

4.4 Likely evolution of the environment without the Open Space supplementary planning guidance

The Directive requires the likely evolution of the environment without the plan, policy or strategy to be considered. The trends identified in the State of the Park Report are expected to continue in the absence of new policy or actions to address them. The underlying purpose of the National Park designation is to integrate the management of different sectors and areas within the Park in order to take a co-ordinated approach to addressing these issues and delivering the Park aims.

The Local Plan is the main tool for influencing development planning in the Park. The Local Plan sets out the requirement for the Open Space SPG. In the absence of the Open Space SPG it is likely that the issue of protecting and developing new open space provision would continue to be undertaken on an ad hoc basis and would therefore fail to achieve significant improvement in the amenity of the built environment of the Park and could lead to valuable open space being developed on to the detriment of the local communities with the loss of biodiversity and less open space areas suitable for recreation and physical activity.

5. Summary of assessment findings

5.1 Assessment of the Open Space SPG principles

The Open Space SPG contains two principles and associated guidance. Environmental issues were considered throughout the development of the principles contained within the Open Space SPG. The principles contained in the Open Space SPG are specifically intended to provide support to Local Plan (particularly Policy 36 Other Open Space Provision).

Table 9 shows a summary of the predicted significant environmental effects of the principles contained in the Open Space SPG. The full assessment results can be found in Appendix 4 (see p32).

Table 9: Summary of assessment findings

| Principle 1: Improve and maintain current provision of open space networks | |
|--|---|
| <p>Outcome: The protection and enhancement of existing open space networks is a key objective of the Open Space SPG. There will be benefits from this improved open space to biodiversity and providing area for recreation and physical activity</p> | <p>Assessment summary: Generally a strongly positive or positive impact on the SEA criteria.</p> |

| Principle 2: Presume against development that would result in a loss of existing open space provision | |
|--|---|
| <p>Outcome: Developments which results in a loss of existing open space will not be supported. This will ensure that existing open space continues to provide important areas for protecting biodiversity and areas for recreation and physical activity.</p> | <p>Assessment summary: Generally a strongly positive or positive impact on the SEA criteria.</p> |

The aim of the Open Space SPG is to have a positive effect on a number of environmental issues. The two principles are shown overall to have a strong positive impact on the SEA objectives. This is shown in Table 6 below. The full detailed results can be found in Appendix 4 (see p32).

Local Plan policies support all the SEA objectives, as demonstrated in the Local Plan SEA. The Open Space SPG should be seen within this wider context of supplementary topic-based guidance. Following the SEA process from the Cairngorms National Park Plan, through the Local Plan and down to topic based supplementary planning guidance ensures that all SEA objectives are addressed within the overall land-use planning activity for the Park.

5.2 Alternative/options considered

Although alternatives to the Open Space SPG are limited – two alternatives have been considered. Alternatives are outlined here in order to set the context for this report.

Alternative 1 - do nothing

Not having the guidance may be a feasible option with open space requirements for each residential development considered on its merits. This would continue the current process of providing open space in residential development on an ad hoc basis resulting in less than optimum benefits.

Alternative 2 - do optimum and develop supplementary planning guidance on Open Space in new residential developments

This option allows for a more consistent approach to requiring open space in development proposals. It enables open space to be a key focus within the application process and gives the developers a clear steer on the design, quality and quantity of open space they will be required to provide as part of a new residential development.

5.3 Scoping in/out of SEA issues

In accordance with the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005, the Cairngorms National Park Authority has considered whether the environmental effects (positive and negative) of supplementary planning guidance on Open Space in residential developments are likely to be significant. At the scoping stage, we considered that the SPG was likely to have significant environmental effects on several environmental issues. The results of the scoping are shown in Table 10 with reasons why environmental issues have been scoped out.

Table 10 Scoping in/out of SEA issues

| SEA Issue | Scoped in, Scoped out (If scoped out, why) | Comments |
|-----------------------------|--|--|
| Biodiversity, flora, fauna | Yes | |
| Population and Human health | Yes | |
| Soil | Yes | |
| Water | Yes | |
| Climatic factors | Yes | |
| Material assets | Yes | |
| Cultural Heritage | No | Historic Scotland, in their response to the screening report, concluded that the SPG will have any significant effects on the historic environment |
| Landscape | Yes | |

5.4 Cumulative and synergistic effects

No significant cumulative or synergistic effects of the principles are considered likely. The principles are both aimed at ensuring residential development both protects and enhances open space. In addition to this, the protective policies in the Local Plan also apply and would avoid, minimise or mitigate the negative effects.

5.5 Summary of environmental impacts

Shown in table 11 is a summary of the environmental impacts the Open Space in residential development SPG is likely to have.

Table 11: Summary of environmental impacts

| | SEA Objectives | | | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|--|--|---|--|
| Open Space SPG Principles | 1. To conserve and enhance the diversity of species, habitats and ecosystems | 2. To conserve and enhance the water environment | 3. To use material assets in a sustainable way | 4. To minimise contributions to climate change | 5. To maintain or improve soil and peat quality and avoid creating or exacerbating pollution | 6. To maintain a sustainable and healthy population | 7. To maintain and enhance the distinctive landscape character of the Park |
| Principle 1: Improve and maintain current provision of open space networks | + | + | ++ | + | = | ++ | + |
| Principle 2: Presume against development that would result in a loss of existing open space provision | + | + | ++ | + | + | ++ | + |

+ Positive impact ++ Strongly positive impact = Neutral impact

6. Monitoring

The SEA of the Open Space SPG sits within the hierarchy of plans and SEA's as identified above. In addition to this it also sits within the monitoring framework for the National Park Plan, the Cairngorms National Park Local Plan, and other associated plans and strategies and guidance prepared for the Park.

Monitoring of the effects of the implementation of these various plans, programmes and strategies (including the Open Space SPG) will be undertaken and will influence the shape of future plans and policies for the Park.

7. Next Steps

The Open Space SPG and this Environmental Report will be available for public consultation for four months from May 2010

Once the consultation period has ended, the next steps and estimated timescale will be:

- Assess comments and make any necessary amendments to the Open Space SPG
- Prepare the finalised Open space SPG
- Update the Environmental Report to reflect any comments as required.
- Prepare a post adoption statement setting out how the SEA process has informed the Open space SPG, the reasons for the decisions made and framework for future assessment in line with local plan and park plan monitoring schemes.
- Adopt and publish the Open space SPG.

Appendix I: Relationship with other plans

| International / European PPS | Key issues addressed |
|---|--|
| Directive on the Assessment and Management of Flood Risks (EC Directive 2007/60/EC) | Aims to reduce and manage the risks floods posed to human health, the environment, cultural heritage and economic activity. |
| EC Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds 79/409/EEC 1979 | Requires Member States to sustain populations of naturally occurring wild birds by sustaining areas of habitats to maintain ecologically and scientifically sound levels. |
| EC Directive on the Conservation of Natural Habitats of Wild Fauna and Flora 92/42/EEC 1992 | Requires Member States to sustain populations of naturally occurring flora & fauna by sustaining areas of habitats to maintain ecologically and scientifically sound levels. |
| UN Framework Convention on Climate Change | Aims to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases in order to combat global warming |
| Directive 2000/60/EC The Water Framework Directive | Requires Member States to achieve good ecological status of inland water bodies. |
| Directive 1966/62/EC on ambient air quality and management | Establishes standards for air quality and sets limits for various pollutants. |
| Convention on Biodiversity 1992 | The convention is aimed at the conservation of biodiversity |
| European Biodiversity Strategy 1998 | The strategy aims to anticipate, prevent and attack the causes of significant reduction or loss of biodiversity at the source |

| National PPS | Issues relevance to Open Space SPG |
|---|---|
| UK Biodiversity Action Plan and Scottish Biodiversity Strategy | Biodiversity |
| Nature Conservation Bill (Scotland) 2004 | Biodiversity. |
| UK Climate Change Programme (2006) | Reduction of carbon emissions. |
| Changing our Ways – Scotland's Climate Change Programme (2006) | National interpretation of global climate change challenge. |
| Second European Climate Change Programme (currently in preparation) | Notes the work identified in the first programme is being undertaken to plan but states that further measures will be required in order to meet EU's commitments under Kyoto agreement. |

| | |
|--|--|
| Tomorrow's Climate, Today's Challenge: UK Climate Change Programme (2006) | Sets out measures to reduce emissions target every sector of the economy |
| Draft River Basin Management Plan for Scotland Draft Local Area Management Plans | Describes impact of human activity on surface waters and groundwaters, identifies water bodies at risk and measures for improvement. |
| Water Environment (Controlled Activities) (Scotland) Regulations 2005 | Regulates discharges. |
| Scottish Water Strategic Asset Capacity and Development Plan | Sets out service and investment intentions. |
| SEPA Policy 55 – Provision of waste water drainage in settlements | SEPA's position on provision of strategic foul drainage. |
| Air Quality Strategy for England, Scotland, Wales & NI: Working Together for Clean Air | Sets out objectives for 8 main air pollutants to protect health. |
| Zero Waste Scotland | Sets policy and targets on waste management. |
| National Waste Plan (2003) | Sets out action for moving towards more sustainable waste management practices |

| SPP / NPPG / PAN | Issues relevant to Open Space SPG |
|--|---|
| Scottish Planning Policy (February 2010 consolidated document) | Sets out the purpose of planning and overarching role of planning authorities. Includes specific policies on Open Space, Flooding and Natural Heritage. |
| PAN 44: Fitting New Housing Development into the Landscape | National advice to support SPP |
| PAN 52: Planning for Small Towns | National advice to support SPP |
| PAN 60: Planning for Natural Heritage | National advice to support SPP |
| PAN 61: Planning and SUDS | National advice to support SPP |
| PAN 76: New Residential Streets | National advice to support SPP |
| PAN 77: Designing Safer Places | National advice to support SPP |
| PAN 78: Inclusive Design | National advice to support SPP |
| PAN 84: Reducing Carbon Emissions in New Development | National advice to support SPP |
| Designing Places | Follow principles of Designing Places and use these to promote the design of open space |

| | |
|--|---|
| Lets Make Scotland More Active | Encourage people to become more active by delivering high quality open spaces to use |
| PAN 65: Planning and Open Space | National advice to support SPP |
| SNH Natural Heritage Futures - Settlements | Encourage greater consideration of the natural heritage around new residential developments and the potential contribution any new open space may have on it. |

| Local PPS | Relevance to Open Space SPG |
|---|---|
| Structure Plans | The Highland, Moray, Aberdeenshire and Angus Council Structure Plan's set out the strategic framework for the CNPA area. |
| Community Plans | The Highland, Moray, Aberdeenshire and Angus Council Community Plan's, set out how public services will be planned and delivered, through consultation and co-operation (among all public bodies, and with community bodies). |
| River Spey Management Plan and River Dee Catchment Management Plan. | Water quality and quantity, flood risk, conserving and enhancing biodiversity, pollution prevention, waste water treatment, private water supplies. |
| Cairngorms Local Biodiversity Action Plan Project | A long-term initiative that seeks to initiate actions for biodiversity across the whole Cairngorms area and raise the awareness of protecting, enhancing and appreciating the biodiversity of the Park area. |
| Core Paths Plans | Take into consideration the Core Paths Network and look at how green networks can be created/maintained using these core paths |

Appendix 2: Environmental Baseline

| Resource | Key facts |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| Biodiversity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 25% of UK's threatened species present • 12.5% of Scotland's semi-natural woodland cover • Habitat types present include: montane; dwarf shrub heath; conifer woodland; broadleaved and mixed woodland; acid grassland; fen, marsh and swamp; standing water; rivers and streams. • UK Biodiversity Action Plan species include: upland oak and birch woodland; bog woodland (largest extent in Scotland); juniper; capercaillie; black grouse; Scottish crossbill. • Habitats listed under Annex I of EU Habitats Directive include: dry heaths; alpine and boreal heaths; sub-arctic willow scrub; siliceous alpine and boreal grasslands, Nardus grasslands; calcareous flushes • Close proximity of lowground, woodland, water, upland and montane habitats |
| Designated Nature Conservation Sites | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 39% of Park designated for natural heritage • 19 SAC sites • 12 SPA sites • 46 SSSIs (some of which are of geological importance) • 3 Ramsar Sites • 6 National Nature Reserves |
| Soils | <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 |
| Population | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2001 Census: 16,024 people • Population density 0.04 people/Ha (lower than Scottish average) • 25.8% of population over 60 (higher than Scottish average) • Average health index in top 25% of Scotland (based on deprivation indices) |
| Historic Environment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 designated Historic Gardens and Designed Landscapes • 60 Scheduled Ancient Monuments • 424 listed buildings • 3 Conservation Areas • 4778 records in National Monuments Record of Scotland (NMRS) • large number of historic landscapes • Potential for survival of many unknown remains in upland areas |

| | |
|--|--|
| Earth Heritage Landforms and Landscape | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 National Scenic Areas • 30 Geolgocial Conservation Review (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. • Landscapes of a distinctive character that are an integral part of the outstanding national importance and value of the Park. • Land-use cover: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 42% dwarf shrub heath • 28% montane habitats • 11% coniferous woodland • 2% broadleaved/mixed woodland • 3% improved grassland • 0.4% built areas |
| Water | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3,362km of running water habitat • 81% of streams classified as excellent (A1) or good (A2) (SEPA 2003) • 20 sq km standing waters • Catchments of 6 major rivers |
| Air | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relatively low atmospheric pollution |
| Climate | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 |
| Access | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public right of responsible access • 49 munros including 5 summits over 4000 feet • 3 ski centres • National Cycle Network Route 7 • 1 Long Distance Route (Speyside Way) • 179 Rights of Way • Around 40 promoted path networks |
| Energy and Infrastructure | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No significant energy generation within the Park |
| Built Environment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 Conservation Areas • Distinctive local vernacular architecture |

Appendix 3: Key trends and issues in the Cairngorms National Park

| Resource | Key trends | Key issues |
|--------------------------------------|---|---|
| Biodiversity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some continued habitat loss, fragmentation and deterioration • Vegetation limited by grazing pressure • Continued spread and introductions of non-native species • Increase in native woodland cover | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ecosystem integrity and connectivity • Impact of non-native species • Impact of climate change • impact of recreation • Impact of development • Incomplete data |
| Designated Nature Conservation Sites | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing account of external impacts to sites (Nature Conservation Act 2004) • Recent expansion of Natura 2000 designations • Review of NNR designations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management practices • Long-term security of management objectives • integration with wider land-use |
| Population | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ageing population | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implications for community dynamics • Implications for development patterns • Implications for human resources |
| Historic Environment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land-use change | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact of new development • Extension of forest cover • Impact of visitors |
| Landforms and Landscape | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in woodland cover • Decline in heather moorland cover • Increase in research on landscape • Decrease in area with wildland attributes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact of development • Recreation pressure and impacts of tracks and footpaths • Impact • Connectivity of land cover • Impact of transport infrastructure • Impact of renewable energy developments, energy transmission and telecommunications infrastructure • Perceptions of 'wildness' • Impact of forest design and management |

| | | |
|-------------------------|---|---|
| Soil | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soil erosion on higher slopes and plateaux | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impacts of recreation • Lack of information on soil use and development • Trampling and grazing by herbivores |
| Water | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acidification (atmospheric) • Decline in native fish stocks | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diffuse pollution from agricultural ground • River modification • Catchment processes and flood management • Availability for consumption • Impact of recreation • Impact of water abstraction |
| Air | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate change- increasing temperature and precipitation expected. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Atmospheric pollution • Flood management |
| Access & Recreation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing range of outdoor recreation activities • New public right of responsible access • More managed path networks • Increased level of upland path provision and repair • Diversification of ski centres into summer activities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development increasing or reducing access opportunities • Impact of access on habitats and species • Landscape impact of access infrastructure • Accessibility of environment for all |
| Energy & Infrastructure | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing demand for renewable (particularly windfarm) sites | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential impact of transmission pylons and windfarm developments • Use of non-renewable energy sources |
| Built Environment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abandonment or conversion of farm steadings • Significant demand for new housing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decay of listed buildings • Impact of development on settlement character |

Appendix 4: Full assessment results

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| <p>OPEN SPACE SPG Principle 1: Improve and maintain current provision of open space networks.</p> | <p>SEA criteria: Biodiversity, fauna and flora</p> <p>SEA objective: To conserve and enhance the diversity of species, habitats and ecosystems.</p> <p>Key considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid loss of priority species and habitats. • Avoid disturbance to priority species and their habitats. • Avoid barriers to native species movement and habitat fragmentation. • Avoid continued spread and introductions of non-native species. • Planning for green networks/wildlife corridors that allow the movement of species <p>Impact on SEA objective</p> <p style="text-align: center;">+</p> <p>Commentary: This principle is likely to have a positive impact on biodiversity, fauna and flora as it aims to ensure that the existing open space provision is improved and maintained. The natural environment forms an important part of existing open spaces within the settlements and the principle encourages the improvement of the current provision of open space networks.</p> <p>Key factors for success, mitigation and monitoring: The Open Space SPG acknowledges the contribution open space makes to biodiversity throughout the SPG.</p> <p>The following Local Plan policies aim to ensure the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity; 2: Natura 2000 sites; 3: National Natural Heritage Designations; 4: Other Important Natural and Earth Heritage Sites and Interests; 5: Protected Species; 6: Biodiversity.</p> <p>The SPG on Natural Heritage provides further background information on implementing this principle.</p> |
|--|--|

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|--|--|---|--|
| <p>OPEN SPACE SPG Principle 1: Improve and maintain current provision of open space networks.</p> | <p>SEA criteria: Water</p> | <p>SEA objective: To conserve and enhance the water environment.</p> <p>Key considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintenance of hydrology • Ensure use of SUDS • Avoid development on floodplains • Avoid physical modifications to the water environment | <p>Impact on SEA objective</p> <p style="text-align: center;">+</p> |
| | <p>Commentary: This principle is likely to have a positive impact on the water environment as improving open space can help in the provision of SUDs schemes in new residential developments and also open space can aid natural drainage</p> | <p>Key factors for success, mitigation and monitoring: The SEA objective is implicitly addressed throughout the SPG.</p> <p>The SPG on Water Resources provides further background information.</p> | |

| | | | |
|---|--|---|--|
| <p>OPEN SPACE SPG Principle 1 Improve and maintain current provision of open space networks.</p> | <p>SEA criteria: Landscape</p> | <p>SEA objective: To maintain and enhance the distinctive landscape character of the Park, including the historic environment.</p> <p>Key considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain and enhance where appropriate existing landscape character including designed landscapes. • Maintain and enhance where appropriate settlement character and the setting of towns and villages. | <p>Impact on SEA objective</p> <p>+</p> |
| | <p>Commentary: This principle is likely to have a positive impact on landscape as it aims to ensure that the open spaces within the settlements of the Park are protected and enhanced. This SPG will seek to ensure consideration of landscape at an early stage in the development process.</p> | <p>Key factors for success, mitigation and monitoring: The SEA objective is referred to throughout the guidance, including seeking to incorporate existing landscape features wherever possible</p> <p>The following Local Plan policies aim to protect and where appropriate enhance the landscape character and the historic environment: 7: Landscape; 8: Gardens and Designed Landscapes; 12: The Local and Wider Cultural Heritage of the Park.</p> <p>The SPG's on Natural Heritage and Landscape Character provide further background information on implementing this principle.</p> | |

| | | | |
|--|--|--|---|
| <p>OPEN SPACE SPG Principle 1: Improve and maintain current provision of open space networks.</p> | <p>SEA criteria: Material assets</p> | <p>SEA objective: To use material assets in a sustainable way.</p> <p>Key considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote and/or establish access networks, open space, new and safe access opportunities. • Minimise need for travel by private car • Enhance strategic links to public facilities such as shops and schools • Enhance access opportunities for all • Minimise the damage or disturbance to key geodiversity interests. | <p>Impact on SEA objective</p> <p>++</p> |
| | <p>Commentary: This principle is likely to have a positive impact on material assets. Open space networks will be located in accessible locations and will promote links from new development to the wider countryside and to other communities as well as creating strategic links to public facilities.</p> | <p>Key factors for success, mitigation and monitoring: This SEA objective is explicitly dealt with throughout the SPG and further guidance on access networks can be found in the Cairngorms National Park Core Paths Plan</p> | |

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|--|---|--|--|
| <p>OPEN SPACE SPG Principle 1: Improve and maintain current provision of open space networks.</p> | <p>SEA criteria: Air and climatic factors</p> | <p>SEA objective: To minimise contributions to climate change.</p> <p>Key considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce air pollution • Climate proof new development | <p>Impact on SEA objective</p> <p style="text-align: center;">+</p> |
| | <p>Commentary:</p> <p>This principle is likely to have a positive impact on air and climatic factors as it aims to ensure that the design and location of open space networks maximise opportunities for people to access them by foot or cycle. Greater use of foot and cycle to access open space could have a positive implication on air and climatic factors.</p> | <p>Key factors for success, mitigation and monitoring:</p> <p>The SEA objective is implicitly addressed throughout the Open Space SPG.</p> <p>The following Local Plan policies aim to reduce emissions which contribute to climate change and to address the challenges presented by the impacts of climate change: 18: Design Standards for Development; 19: Reducing Carbon Emissions in Development; 32: Waste Management; 31: Integrated and Sustainable Transport Network; 29: Conversion and Re-use of Existing Traditional and Vernacular Buildings; 17: Improvements to Settlements; 28: Retail Development; 34: Outdoor Access.</p> <p>The SPG on Reducing Carbon Emissions provides additional background information.</p> | |

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|---|--|
| <p>OPEN SPACE SPG Principle 1 Improve and maintain current provision of open space networks.</p> | <p>SEA criteria: Soil</p> <p>SEA objective: To maintain or improve soil and peat quality and avoid creating or exacerbating pollution.</p> <p>Key considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conserve mineral resources • Conserve soil resources • Minimise soil and peat disturbance <p>Commentary: This principle is likely to have a neutral impact on the soil environment. It is unlikely that the provision of open space would have an impact on the soil with protected open space provision resulting in the minimisation of the need for soil disturbance.</p> <p>Key factors for success, mitigation and monitoring: This SEA objective is considered throughout the SPG</p> |
| | <p>Impact on SEA objective</p> <p>=</p> |

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|--|--|--|--|
| <p>OPEN SPACE SPG Principle 1: Improve and maintain current provision of open space networks.</p> | <p>SEA criteria: Population and human health</p> | <p>SEA objective: To maintain a sustainable and healthy population.</p> <p>Key considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure access to services for communities | <p>Impact on SEA objective</p> <p>++</p> |
| | <p>Commentary: This principle is likely to have a positive impact on population and human health by enabling people to use the open space networks to walk to local services.</p> | | <p>Key factors for success, mitigation and monitoring: This SEA objective is explicitly reflected in the open space spg which highlights the role open space has in improving physical well being and for providing recreation and encouraging physical activity.</p> |

| | | | |
|---|--|--|--|
| <p>OPEN SPACE SPG Principle 2: Presume against development that would result in a loss of existing open space provision.</p> | <p>SEA criteria: Biodiversity, fauna and flora</p> | <p>SEA objective: To conserve and enhance the diversity of species, habitats and ecosystems.</p> <p>Key considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid loss of priority species and habitats. • Avoid disturbance to priority species and their habitats. • Avoid barriers to native species movement and habitat fragmentation. • Avoid continued spread and introductions of non-native species. • Planning for green networks/wildlife corridors that allow the movement of species. | <p>Impact on SEA objective</p> <p style="text-align: center;">+</p> |
| | <p>Commentary: This principle is likely to have a positive impact on biodiversity, fauna and flora as existing open space will be protected from development and will safeguard the existing open space provision</p> | <p>Key factors for success, mitigation and monitoring: The Open Space SPG acknowledges the contribution open space makes to biodiversity throughout the SPG</p> <p>The following Local Plan policies aim to ensure the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity; 2: Natura 2000 sites; 3: National Natural Heritage Designations, 4: Other Important Natural and Earth Heritage Sites and Interests; 5 Protected Species; 6: Biodiversity.</p> <p>The SPG on Natural Heritage provides further background information.</p> | |

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|---|--|---|--|
| <p>OPEN SPACE SPG Principle 2: Presume against development that would result in a loss of existing open space provision.</p> | <p>SEA criteria: Water</p> | <p>SEA objective: To conserve and enhance the water environment.</p> <p>Key considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintenance of hydrology • Ensure use of SUDS • Avoid development on floodplains • Avoid physical modifications to the water environment | <p>Impact on SEA objective</p> <p style="text-align: center;">+</p> |
| | <p>Commentary: This principle is likely to have a positive impact on the water environment as it can ensure that development is not carried out on the floodplains.</p> | <p>Key factors for success, mitigation and monitoring:</p> <p>The SEA objective is addressed throughout the SPG</p> <p>The SPG on Water Resources provides further background information.</p> | |

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| <p>SEA criteria: Landscape</p> | <p>SEA objective: To maintain and enhance the distinctive landscape character of the Park, including the historic environment.</p> <p>Key considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain and enhance where appropriate existing landscape character including designed landscapes. • Maintain and enhance where appropriate settlement character and the setting of towns and villages. | <p>Impact on SEA objective</p> <p style="text-align: center;">+</p> |
| <p>Open Space SPG Principle 2: Presume against development that would result in a loss of existing open space provision.</p> | | |
| <p>Commentary: This principle is likely to have a positive impact on landscape ensuring that the existing open spaces are protected and no development will occur which may be detrimental to the landscape.</p> | | |
| <p>Key factors for success, mitigation and monitoring: The SEA objective is considered throughout the guidance, including seeking to incorporate existing landscape features wherever possible</p> <p>The following Local Plan policies aim to protect and where appropriate enhance the landscape character and the historic environment: 7: Landscape; 8: Gardens and Designated Landscapes; 12: The Local and Wider Cultural Heritage of the Park.</p> <p>The SPG's on Natural Heritage and Landscape Character provide further background information on this</p> | | |

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| <p>OPEN SPACE SPG Principle 2: Presume against development that would result in a loss of existing open space provision.</p> | <p>SEA criteria: Material assets</p> <p>SEA objective: To use material assets in a sustainable way.</p> <p>Key considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote and/or establish access networks, open space, new and safe access opportunities. • Minimise need for travel by private car • Enhance strategic links to public facilities such as shops and schools • Enhance access opportunities for all • Minimise the damage or disturbance to key geodiversity interests. <p>Commentary: This principle is likely to have a positive impact on material assets. Open space networks will be located in accessible locations and will promote links from new development to the wider countryside and to other communities as well as creating strategic links to public facilities.</p> <p>Key factors for success, mitigation and monitoring: The SEA objective is addressed throughout the SPG and further guidance on access networks can be found in the Cairngorms National Park Core Paths Plan.</p> <p>Impact on SEA objective ++</p> |
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| <p>OPEN SPACE SPG Principle 2: Presume against development that would result in a loss of existing open space provision.</p> | <p>SEA criteria: Air and climatic factors</p> | <p>SEA objective: To minimise contributions to climate change.</p> <p>Key considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce air pollution • Climate-proof new development | <p>Impact on SEA objective</p> <p style="text-align: center;">+</p> |
| | <p>Commentary: This principle is likely to have a positive impact on air and climatic factors as it aims to ensure that the design and location of open space networks maximise opportunities for people to access them by foot or cycle. Greater use of foot and cycle to access open space could have a positive implication on air and climatic factors</p> | <p>Key factors for success, mitigation and monitoring:</p> <p>The SEA objective is implicitly addressed throughout the Open Space SPG.</p> <p>The following Local Plan policies aim to reduce emissions which contribute to climate change and to address the challenges presented by the impacts of climate change: 18: Design Standards for Development; 19: Reducing Carbon Emissions in Development; 32: Waste Management; 31: Integrated and Sustainable Transport Network; 29: Conversion and Re-use of Existing Traditional and Vernacular Buildings; 17: Improvements to Settlements; 28: Retail Development; 34: Outdoor Access.</p> <p>The SPG on Reducing Carbon Emissions provides additional background information.</p> | |

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| <p>OPEN SPACE SPG Principle 2: Presume against development that would result in a loss of existing open space provision.</p> | <p>SEA criteria: Soil</p> <p>SEA objective: To maintain or improve soil and peat quality and avoid creating or exacerbating pollution.</p> <p>Key considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conserve mineral resources • Conserve soil resources • Minimise soil and peat disturbance • Avoid development on prime agricultural land <p>Impact on SEA objective</p> <p style="text-align: center;">+</p> <p>Commentary: This principle is likely to have a slightly positive impact on the soil environment. By maintaining the current provision of open space this will result in minimising soil disturbance and will ensure the existing mineral and soil resources are conserved.</p> <p>Key factors for success, mitigation and monitoring: The SEA objective is considered throughout the SPG.</p> |
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| <p>OPEN SPACE SPG Principle 2: Presume against development that would result in a loss of existing open space provision.</p> | <p>SEA criteria: Population and human health</p> | <p>SEA objective: To maintain a sustainable and healthy population.</p> <p>Key considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure access to services for communities | <p>Impact on SEA objective</p> <p>++</p> |
| | <p>Commentary: This principle is likely to have a positive impact on population and human health by enabling people to use the open space networks to walk to local services</p> | <p>Key factors for success, mitigation and monitoring:</p> <p>The SEA objective is explicitly reflected in the open space spg which highlights the role open space has in improving physical well being and for providing recreation and encouraging physical activity</p> | |

