

Aviemore

Monday 24 October 2011, 7pm

Cairngorm hotel, Aviemore

Main points from the National Park Plan
(Main bullet points taken from the discussion)

Outcome 9

The Park's communities will be more empowered and able to develop their own models of sustainability

- Developers can still provide some affordable housing
- Communities should have a say on who gets affordable housing in their area
- Alternative ways of building housing should be thought about for example self build cooperatives
- Sorting out housing problems is crucial to the delivery of outcome 6 too
- Links between housing and transport – lack of housing can lead to people having to travel further to jobs etc
- Communities should have more say in what can be built and where
- Power should be put back into communities through resource ownership, so communities have wealth and power
- What can be done to help communities move towards 'transition models' to enable them to be more sustainable in the broadest sense, for example funding, training, expertise, resources
- Question about indicator / outcome set out – does income generation really show community sustainability, should it not be the number of projects taking place?
- Community projects are very good and we should celebrate what we already have and do – Community Transport scheme - BUT it must be recognised that they take a lot of work and there is a limit to what a limited number of people in any one community can achieve
- Need to ensure there are realistic expectations as to what communities can achieve

Outcome 6

The economy of the Park will have grown and diversified drawing on the Park's special qualities

- Can layers of red tape for businesses be streamlined without losing the protection for the environment

- Many of the outcomes set out are dependent on business success and business development – in order to achieve this businesses need to be profitable
- How is this outcome going to be achieved? Who is going to make it happen?
- Different focus and different priorities in different parts of the Park must be recognised
- Importance of reliable fast broadband – for everyone at all times
- More work needed to get the message out that the Park is a special place to visit and a good place to invest in – people shy away at the moment due to red tape
- Need to be aware of reality of situation regarding investment in businesses by banks
- Should we be developing more locally focused business opportunities? Are there things we have to travel outside the Park to get that could be provided more locally?
- Importance of a diversified economy – helps to make Aviemore more resilient to changes, also helps with choices for young people, and moves way from having all eggs in one (tourism) basket
- Aviemore is already a good brand, but need to encourage people to visit attractions and to stay in accommodation in surrounding communities if Aviemore busy
- The diversity of the Park and the special qualities are both a challenge and a strength
- Question about the priority given to the Park in the minds of other organisations with wider geographical areas to cover
- Need good value for money accommodation
- Businesses need to be profitable to be able to invest in themselves – businesses know the market, but other support from the public sector is needed
- Confidence in an area / product will lead to investment

Outcome 10

The Parks' recreation opportunities will have improved the health and enjoyment of residents and visitors

- Talk about cycling / biking and not just mountain biking – more inclusive and people are increasingly looking for a safe road type experience (Old logging way)
- Frustration expressed at time taken to move the Speyside way forward
- Importance of purpose built facilities for winter sports
- The success and continued development of these facilities should be measured? But this needs more than words, How is this going to be achieved?
- Park Plan needs to recognise the importance of the wide range of winter sports
- Linked to this is the importance of providing indoor sports facilities and wet weather recreation opportunities
- Need specific work packages relating to winter sports and cycling – links to health and economic issues and benefits
- All weather – all the year round opportunities
- But also encourage people to get out and about all year round and in all weathers – what's wrong with being out in the rain
- Importance of social networks that grow up around recreation – more so for residents than for visitors – creates a social resource, many formal and informal groups. Links back to community development issues and problems with fatigue within communities

- Problems of lack of outdoor education at local schools, therefore who is going to help children get outdoor skills
- Not as many recreation opportunities as there were in the past – ice rinks, swimming pools

Main Points from the Local Development Plan (Main Issues Report) (Main bullet points taken from discussion)

Issue 7

Connectivity and Communications: *How can we help people move around the Park – local access, tourist, people travelling through the Park?*

- Ensure nothing prevents improvement to Broadband infrastructure
- Consider where are best places for masts to improve mobile phone coverage
- Duelling of the rail link through the Park – give more weight to help increase public transport use
- All modes of transport – walking, cycling, cars and public transport should be considered
- Potential to improve public transport within the Park – good to the park, but not within in
- Problem of travelling between attractions

Issue 3

Supporting our Communities: *How and where can we make sure communities have what they need – jobs, tourism options, facilities etc?*

- Areas need to be designated for public uses / no development – particularly within settlements
- Opportunities for a mix of business and residential uses – people increasingly hold a number of jobs, or run businesses from home – marginal costs of small businesses can be helped if can work from home – only one phone line to pay for etc
- Mixed us good, but must ensure business compatible with residential use – noise, traffic etc
- Need for very small offices / business facilities to help small businesses . business start ups – people may only need the opportunity to rent one room
- Links to opportunities for young people and apprenticeships
- Opportunities for more flexible retail space for smaller businesses
- Resilience – area better with a number of different businesses, rather than relying on one large employer - facilitate this
- Stop building on agricultural land and build on marginal land – can't turn the clock back