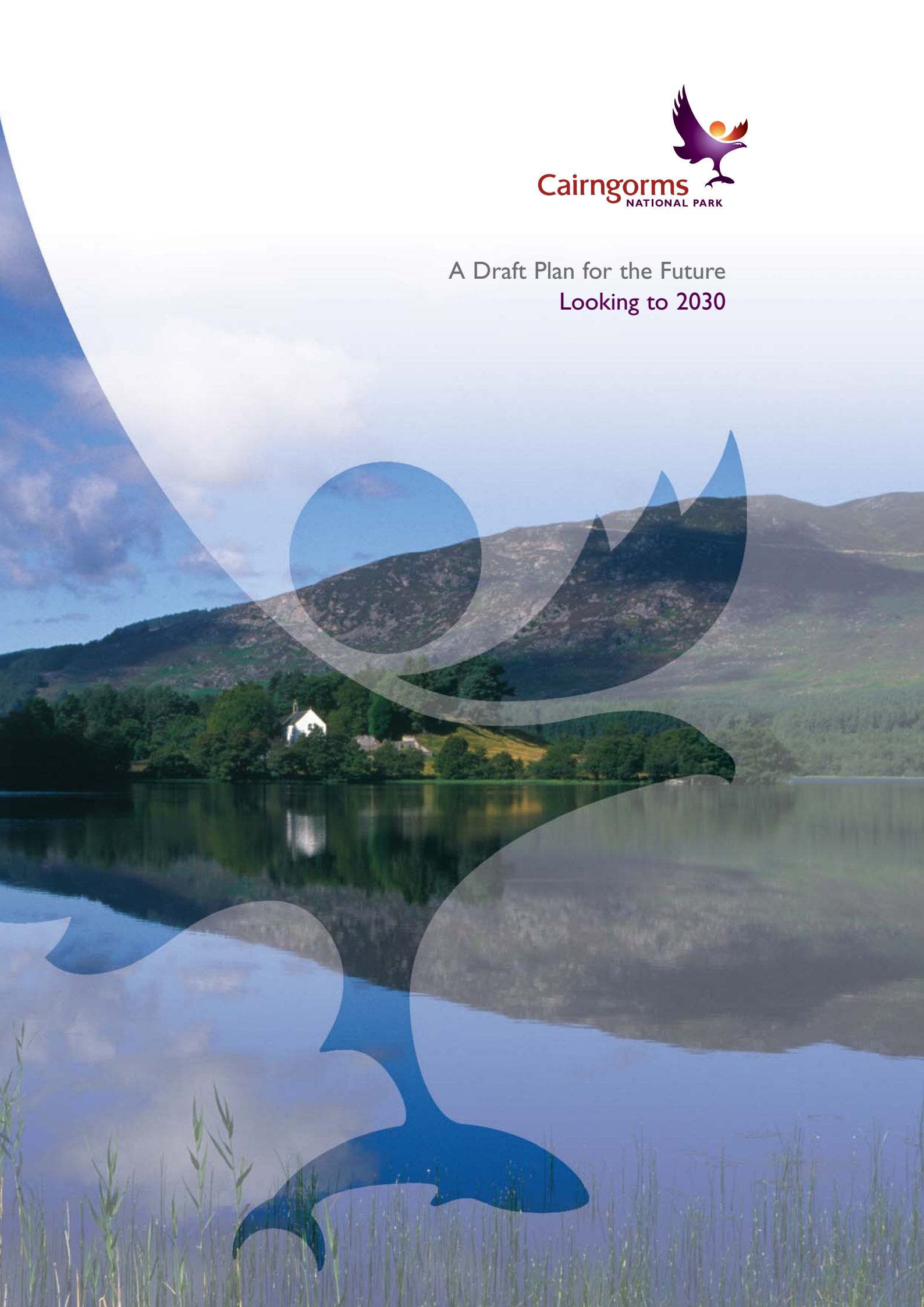




A Draft Plan for the Future
Looking to 2030



HOW TO COMMENT THE CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK – DRAFT PLAN FOR THE FUTURE

This document, entitled 'Looking to 2030', is published for public consultation alongside its sister document, 'Priorities for Action 2007-2012'. The consultation period for both runs to 30th June 2006.

**Comments are requested at any time before 30th June 2006
and should be sent to:**

National Park Plan Consultation
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Further copies of this document, along with an Environmental Report and its Non-Technical Summary, and a State of the Park report can be obtained from the same address.

Copies of all these documents are also available to view at the National Park Authority offices in Grantown-on-Spey (14, The Square) and Ballater (Station Square); or at local libraries within the National Park.

The documents can also be downloaded from the Cairngorms National Park Authority website: www.cairngorms.co.uk

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

FOREWORD

Draft National Park Plan:

The National Park Plan is a unique and potentially very powerful opportunity. It will shape the direction of the National Park in the immediate future and for years to come. For the first time it will require the major public bodies operating in the area not only to talk with each other and cooperate together, but to plan openly – in advance and in a considerable degree of detail – how they will work collectively to achieve the aims of the National Park.



This consultative document is the first attempt at ever doing this in the Cairngorms National Park. It is very much a draft. To make the Plan clearer to understand, we have presented it over two timescales:

- 'Looking to 2030' – looking 25 years ahead, this proposes what we want to achieve in the longer term;
- 'Priorities for Action 2007-2012' – looking five years ahead, this proposes a targeted work programme for the public sector and others that addresses the most immediate challenges and opportunities.

The Cairngorms National Park Authority and all of its public sector partners are still on a learning curve with this process, and a steep one at that. We are looking for feedback on what is contained here – on content and on format. We want to know if you agree with our longer-term aspirations and what it is that the public agencies propose to do over the next five years. Are we clear and specific enough to ensure that everyone will know what will be done and what can be expected?

Please let us know your views on this. The Scottish Parliament created the Cairngorms National Park for the Scottish people. It is therefore vital that Scottish people understand and support what will now be done in their name.



Convenor, Cairngorms National Park Authority
March 2006

Pàirc Nàiseanta a' Mhonaidh Ruaidh – Dreach Phlana na h-Ama ri Teachd:

Dh'fhaodadh Plana na Pàirce Nàiseanta a bhith na chothrom sònraichte agus fìor chumhachdach. Bidh stiùireadh ann a thaobh na Pàirce Nàiseanta an ceartuair agus airson nam bliadhnan ri teachd. Airson a' chiad uair bidh iarraidh e gum bi chan e a-mhàin còmhraidh agus co-obrachadh eadar na prìomh bhuidhnean poblach a tha ag obrachadh san sgìre, ach planadh follaiseach – ro-làimh agus le mion-fhiosrachadh – air mar a bhios iad a' co-obrachadh gus amasan na Pàirce Nàiseanta a choileanadh.

'S e am pàipear co-chomhairleachaidh seo a' chiad oidhirp a-riamh air seo a dhèanamh ann am Pàirc Nàiseanta a' Mhonaidh Ruaidh. Chan eil ann ach dreach de phlana. Gus am Plana a dhèanamh nas fhasa a thuigsinn, bidh e thar dà raon-ama:

- A' coimhead ri 2030
A' coimhead air adhart 25 bliadhna, 's e seo na tha sin ag amas air a choileanadh san ùine fhada;
- Prìomh-amasan Gnìomha – 2007-2012
A' coimhead air adhart 5 bliadhna, 's e seo prògram obrach le amasan sònraichte don roinn phoblach agus roinnean eile a tha a' cur aghaidh air na dùbhlain agus cothroman as cudromaiche aig an àm seo.

Tha a' chùis seo ùr do Ùghdarras Pàirc Nàiseanta a' Mhonaidh Ruaidh agus a com-pàirtichean san roinn phoblach, agus chan e obair fhurasta a th' ann. Tha sinn ag iarraidh fiosrachadh air ais mun aithisg seo – air susbaint agus cruth. Bu toigh leinn cluinntinn a bheil sibh ag aontachadh ri ar miannan anns an ùine fhada agus dè tha na buidhnean poblach an dùil a dhèanamh thar nan còig bliadhna ri teachd. An tug sinn fiosrachadh soilleir agus sònraichte gu leòr gus dèanamh cinnteach gun tuig na h-uile dè bhios air a dhèanamh agus dè dh'fhaodar a shùileachadh?

Thoiribh dhuinn ur beachdan mun chùis seo. B' ann do shluagh na h-Alba a chruthaich Pàrlamaid na h-Alba Pàirc Nàiseanta a' Mhonaidh Ruaidh. Mar sin tha e ro-chudromach gum bi slugh na h-Alba a' tuigsinn na bhios a-nis air a dhèanamh air an son agus a' toirt taic dha.

Andrew Thin
Neach-gairm
Ùghdarras Pàirc Nàiseanta a' Mhonaidh Ruaidh
Am Màrt 2006

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Accompanying documents (available separately)

Priorities for Action 2007-2012

State of the Park Report 2006

Strategic Environmental Assessment Report

I. INTRODUCTION





I. INTRODUCTION

I.1 National Parks in Scotland

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

National Park Designation

The new legislation, the National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000, creates National Parks that are tailored to Scottish circumstances and are distinct from National Parks elsewhere. Areas designated as a National Park in Scotland must satisfy three conditions:

- **That the area is of outstanding national importance because of its natural heritage, or the combination of its natural and cultural heritage;**
- **That the area has a distinctive character and a coherent identity;**
- **That designating the area as a National Park will meet the special needs of the area.**

Section 2 identifies some of the special natural and cultural qualities of the Cairngorms area which are of national importance and give it a distinctive and coherent character; underpinning the area's designation as a National Park.

National Park Aims

The National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000 also sets out four aims for Scottish National Parks:

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

Purpose of the Park Authority

The statutory purpose of the Park Authority is to ensure that all four aims of the Park are achieved collectively and in a co-ordinated way. However, if it appears to the Authority that there is a conflict between the conservation and enhancement of the natural and cultural heritage and the other National Park aims, then greater weight must be given to the first aim (Section 9(6) of the National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000). Section 3 sets out the approach needed to integrate the aims so that they can be achieved at the same time and minimise conflict between them.

The requirement to achieve the four aims collectively and in a co-ordinated way makes the Scottish National Parks a new kind of National Park in the UK. This demands a new approach to managing the Park which draws together the wide range of public, private and community interests. The Park Authority's role is to co-ordinate and add value to the work of others within the Park rather than seek to assume responsibility for, or duplicate their work. The development of this Park Plan is one of the key ways of bringing together the partnership needed to work towards the aims of the Park.

International Context

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

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

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

This position in the international context recognises the important links in the Cairngorms between the outstanding natural environment and the people that live in, work in and enjoy the area. It reflects the interactions of people and place

that must be addressed through an integrated approach to managing the National Park.

In developing the Draft Park Plan, the Park Authority has referred to the IUCN ‘Management Guidelines for Category V Protected Areas’. These guidelines identify twelve principles that should guide management of such areas (see Annex 2). The Draft Park Plan is consistent with these principles which emphasise conservation and enhancement of the special qualities through the interactions of people and place.



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I. INTRODUCTION...cont

I.2 The Park Plan

Purpose of the Park Plan

This is a new type of plan which cuts across organisations and sectors to meet the challenge set by the four aims of the Park. It is a plan for the Park as a whole, not just for the Park Authority. It brings together all those involved in managing the Park to agree a future direction and how that is going to be achieved.

The Plan sets out a long-term 25 year vision for Park and strategic objectives to guide its management. Then it identifies the priorities for investment and action over the next five year period that will start to deliver this long-term vision.

How the Draft Park Plan has been Developed

A wide range of organisations has helped to develop the Draft Park Plan to this consultation stage. Its role as a Plan for the Park as a whole and the need for a wide range of organisations to work towards its successful delivery, means that their involvement in shaping it from the start is important. The vision, strategic objectives and priorities for action are the result of discussions with partners and it is anticipated that these will continue to develop as a result of this consultation.

A full list of the organisations involved in discussions to develop the Draft Park Plan is given in *Annex 1*.

Background Research and Baseline

In a new National Park it is particularly important to collate information about the current state of the Park. This helps gauge its condition and whether it is improving or getting worse. It also provides a baseline against which

change can be monitored. The State of the Park Report draws together the information available to give a current picture of the Park.

State of the Park Report 2006

The State of the Park Report draws together a wide range of existing information about the Park covering:

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

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

The Draft State of the Park Report was available for review from July to September 2005. To ensure the best available data was sourced and that it is presented as accurately as possible, the draft was circulated to organisations and individuals that have particular expertise or data for each section. It was also publicly available for comment. The responses from the review were used to develop the final report for publication. The State of the Park Report is now published as a separate document to accompany the Draft Park Plan.

The State of the Park Report will be updated at five yearly intervals and will be integrated with the monitoring programme for the Park (see Section 9).

In addition to identifying the current State of the Park, the Park Authority has worked with others to identify existing plans, policies and legislation and what these mean for the Park. It has also held many discussions with varied interests, including the Park's Advisory Forums, to identify the key issues facing each sector.

Taken together, this understanding of the existing policy context and the main issues facing the Park sets the agenda for this Park Plan.

Developing the Draft Vision, Strategic Objectives and Priorities for Action

The draft vision, strategic objectives and priorities for action are the result of extensive consultation with organisations and individuals with key interests in the Park. This approach supports the purpose of this plan, to be for the Park as a whole and to deliver a co-ordinated approach to its management.

An initial draft vision and set of objectives were first considered in a National Park Authority board paper in April 2005, and subsequently evolved through discussion with a wide range of interests. Over the same period, the National Park Authority has met with the key public agencies, non-governmental organisations, private, community and voluntary interests to identify the priorities for action needed to deliver the Plan's objectives. This process included individual meetings, topic seminars and meetings with key interest groups.

Structure of the Draft Park Plan

The Draft Park Plan comprises two documents – Looking to 2030 and the Priorities for Action 2007-2012. This document, Looking to 2030 looks 25 years ahead to set out the long-term vision and direction for the Park. It is accompanied by the second part of the Park Plan, the Priorities for Action, which identifies the priorities for the next five years.

Following this introduction, Section 2 identifies why the Cairngorms are a special area, looking at the special qualities that make it a National Park. Section 3 reviews the changing environment that will affect management of the Park and identifies guiding principles that will help everyone to manage the Park within this changing environment.

Section 4 sets out the long-term vision for the Park. Sections 5 to 7 set out more detailed strategic objectives that will help to realise this vision. Together, these sections make up the policy direction of the Park Plan, looking at least 25 years ahead.

The strategic objectives are divided into three broad themes:

Conserving, Enhancing and Managing the Park

Conserving and enhancing the special natural and cultural qualities of the Park that underpin its appeal and designation, promoting the sustainable use of its resources and integration of land management.

Communities Living and Working in the Park

Promoting the sustainable economic and social development of communities and businesses in the Park.

Understanding and Enjoying the Park

Understanding and enjoying the special qualities of the Park in ways that are consistent with their conservation and enhancement and promoting well informed management.

Section 8 describes how the Park Plan will be implemented, and the links between the long-term strategy and the Priorities for Action. Section 9 details the proposals for monitoring the performance of the Park Plan, the wider state of the Park as a whole and the future review of the Park Plan and State of the Park Report.

I. INTRODUCTION...cont

The Looking to 2030 document should be read with the accompanying Priorities for Action. Together, these make up the Park Plan.

Relationship to Planning and Development Control

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

The Park Plan provides a significant element of the strategic context for planning and development control within the National Park. Some of the objectives of the Park Plan will be delivered through the Local Plan, which will guide and control the development and use of land at a detailed level within the Park. The Park Plan, and the aims of the Park, will be a material consideration in planning decisions.

The National Park Authority is preparing the new Local Plan for the Park area at the same time as the Park Plan, as the two are closely linked.

Relationship to other Plans

Once approved, all public bodies have a duty to refer to the Park Plan in exercising their functions in the National Park. The Park Plan therefore provides the strategic context for all plans and policies that affect the aims of the Park. This includes more detailed plans that the National Park Authority prepares, such as the Core Paths Plan and implementation strategies for subjects such as housing, woodlands or

sustainable tourism. It also provides the context for plans and policies in the Park prepared by other public bodies.

I.3 Strategic Environmental Assessment

To ensure best planning practice and compliance with statutory obligations, the National Park Authority is carrying out a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) on the Park Plan. EC Directive 2001/42/EC and the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes (Scotland) Regulations 2004 require that plans of this nature are assessed to identify potentially significant environmental effects. These regulations have now been replaced by the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act.

Given the purpose of the Park Plan, a key aim is to conserve and enhance the environmental qualities which underpin the designation of the Cairngorms as a National Park. The process of assessing potential environmental impacts is therefore central to developing the Plan. All strategic objectives in the Draft Plan have been assessed during its preparation and the Draft Plan is accompanied by an Environmental Report.

The Environmental Report sets out the assessment process and results. It is published for consultation alongside the Draft Park Plan. Changes to the Plan as a result of the consultation will be assessed and documented in an updated Environmental Report.

The Strategic Environmental Assessment provides a transparent framework to identify and consider the likely effects of the Plan on the environmental health of the Park.