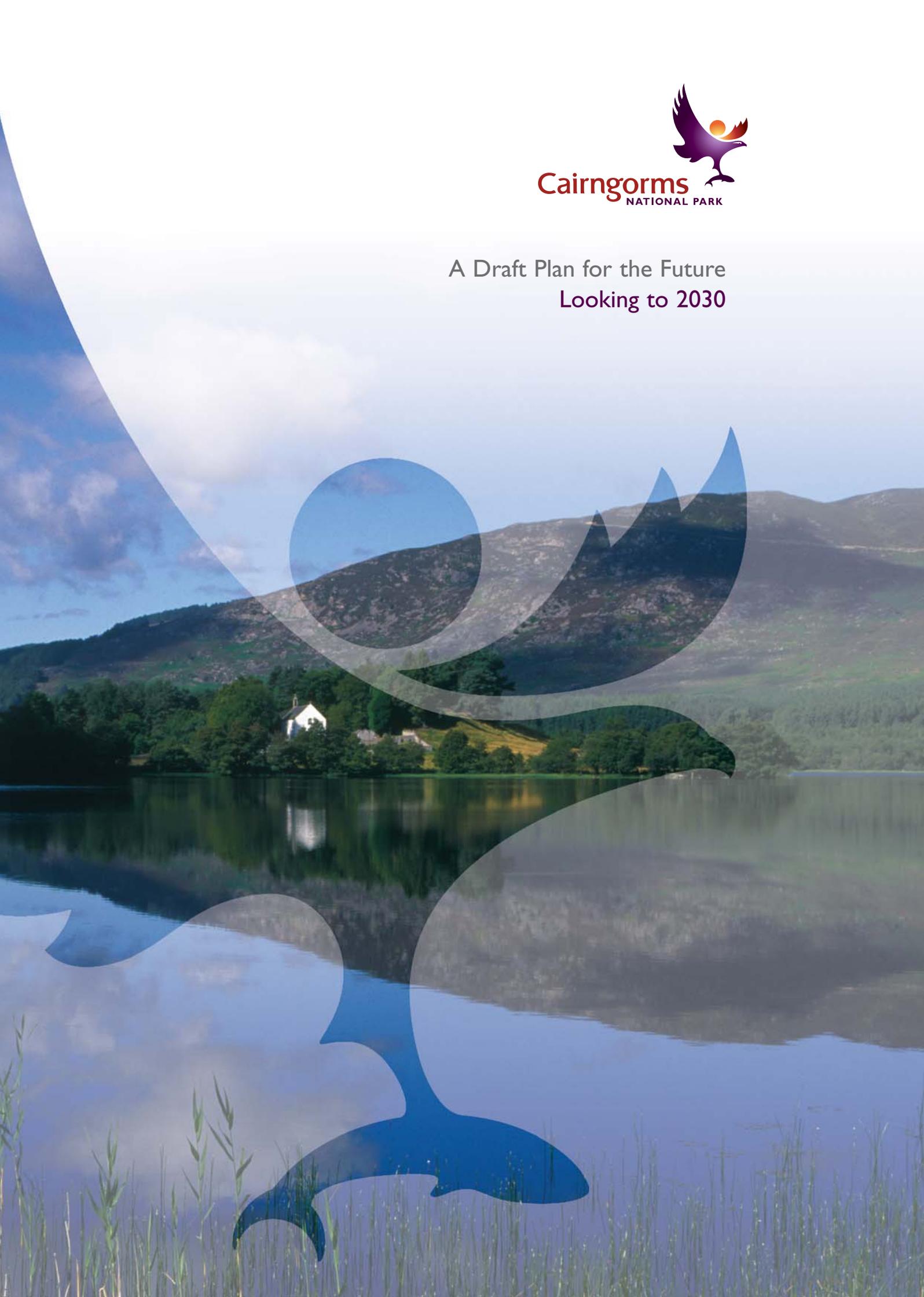




A Draft Plan for the Future
Looking to 2030



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.



Convener, Cairngorms National Park Authority
March 2006

Pàirc Nàiseanta a' Mhonaigh 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' Mhonaigh 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' Mhonaigh 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' Mhonaigh 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' Mhonaigh 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.

2. THE CAIRNGORMS – A SPECIAL PLACE



2. THE CAIRNGORMS – A SPECIAL PLACE

WHY is the Cairngorms a National Park?

‘The Cairngorms are regarded as the most important mountain system in the country and of international importance for nature conservation.’

(Nature Conservation Review 1977)

‘The qualities of our area are those that any other area in the world would fight for, tooth and nail – the beauty, diversity and importance of our world-class environment, both natural and cultural, and our very accessible location.’ *(Cairngorms Chamber of Commerce 2004)*



Photo: Paul Tomkins, VisitScotland/Scottish Viewpoint.



Photo: David Gowans.

The Special Qualities of the Cairngorms

The Cairngorms area is recognised locally and internationally for its outstanding natural and cultural environment. While everyone who lives in or visits the Park will enjoy particular aspects, there are some special qualities of the area that are commonly expressed.

Many areas of Scotland can boast some of these qualities, but it is their particular combination in one area that makes the Cairngorms National Park truly distinctive and underpins its designation.

Distinctive Landscape

The distinctive combination of mountain plateaux, open moorland, extensive forests, rivers, lochs and farmland give the area a character recognised by visitors and residents alike, at a scale unique in the UK. The landscape offers a range of experiences including senses of wildness and tranquillity, adventure and inspiration, rest and reflection. As well as providing a record of the natural history of the area, the landscape provides a rich cultural history of human lives and land-use through the pattern of crofts, farms and estates, managed and designed landscapes.

Facts and Figures

- 39 per cent of the area of the Park is designated as nationally important for nature conservation;
- 25 per cent of the area of the Park is designated as being of European importance for nature conservation;
- two National Scenic Areas;
- four of Scotland's five highest mountains and 49 Munros - mountains over 3,000ft (914m);
- home to 25 per cent of the UK's rare and threatened species;
- internationally important geological record and landforms;
- largest area of semi-natural woodland in Britain;
- only extensive area of arctic-alpine habitat in Britain;
- 424 listed buildings;
- 60 scheduled ancient monuments;
- approximately 16,000 people live in the Park.



Photo: David Gowans.



Photo: Jimmy Mitchell.

Rich Biodiversity

The varied landscape and land management have given the Cairngorms an important and unique biodiversity of local, national and international importance. The Park contains the largest areas of montane and semi-natural woodland habitats in Britain, together with high quality freshwater and farmland habitats. 25 per cent of the UK's 'priority species' on the Government's biodiversity list are present in the Park. These include the globally threatened freshwater pearl mussel, genetically distinct populations of arctic charr; and protected species such as capercaillie. The scale and connectivity of habitats in the Park are particularly unusual and valuable.



Photo: David Gowans.

2. THE CAIRNGORMS – A SPECIAL PLACE...cont

Mountains and Moorland

The mountains and moorland dominate the landscape of much of the Park. As well as providing important and fragile habitats supporting a unique biodiversity, the mountains form an extensive area with a wild and remote character. The surrounding moorlands create a transition from the more intensively managed straths and glens to open land which supports a number of uses. These include farming, sporting management and recreation activities.

Forests and Woodlands

The extensive areas of woodland in Strathspey and Deeside are particularly characteristic of the Cairngorms area. Set against the mountain background, these form an iconic identity. The woodlands include the largest area of semi-natural woodland in Britain (25 per cent of the Scottish resource) and the largest extent of Caledonian pine woodland, the western-most remaining part of the once extensive northern European boreal forest.

Rivers and Lochs

The extensive network of rivers and lochs is an important component of the landscape, particularly in the straths where there are extensive floodplains. Recognised as being of European importance for their biodiversity, the rivers are also an important cultural and economic resource. They provide fishing and recreation, and have influenced the development of settlements, land-use and many place names throughout the Park.

Recreation and Enjoyment

The characteristic sense of wildness associated with the Cairngorms is combined with an accessibility to many areas that offers people unique opportunities for recreation. From activities such as those available at the three ski centres, mountaineering centres and mountain biking facilities; to the quiet enjoyment of informal walks, kayaking or exploring; to fieldsports and organised sport; the area gives many people a chance to enjoy an outstanding natural environment, in many different ways.

Distinctive Architecture and Settlements

Within a common tradition of architectural style across the Park there is a wealth of local building styles that give each area a distinctive character. Traditional materials include granite, blue whinstone and timber, with roofs of slate or corrugated sheeting, their use being determined by local availability, weather patterns and craftsmanship. Planned settlements such as Grantown-on-Spey, Ballater and Tomintoul, together with traditional single-street settlements and the presence of country houses, farm and estate buildings combine to give the Park its distinct built character.

Communities

Clustered around the higher hills, the communities of the Park share many characteristics but have developed distinct identities. Common to all is a



quality of life and connection to the area, through the influence of the past on the landscape and the present day land-use, sport and recreation. The area produces many mountaineers, snow-sports enthusiasts and others influenced by their natural environment.

3. MANAGING THE PARK IN A CHANGING ENVIRONMENT



3. MANAGING THE PARK IN A CHANGING ENVIRONMENT

The special qualities of the Park described in Section 2 are part of a dynamic environment and the result of a long history of changing natural processes, management, and perceptions. The qualities that we value today are a snap-shot in time of social and environmental conditions that are continually evolving.

The designation of the National Park brings a particular focus to these qualities and a special responsibility for their management, but it does not halt the processes of change and evolution. Landscapes evolve, species expand and contract as their habitats and environmental conditions change, and communities change in their size and profile.

In setting out to conserve and enhance the special qualities, we must recognise that changes do occur over time, that we cannot control all the factors which cause change, and that the implications of change can be both positive and negative in terms of the Park's objectives.

A Brief History of the Cairngorms

The National Park may be new, but the Cairngorm mountains and their surroundings are very old. In fact, their story begins over 400 million years ago when granite rock melted deep beneath the earth's crust. It gradually rose towards the surface until it solidified, over millions of years, below a covering of older rocks. Weathering and erosion gradually removed the older rock above the granite, until it was exposed at the surface.

About 50 million years ago, when the climate was much warmer and wetter than we know today, the shape of the Cairngorms that we now recognise started to form by deep weathering and erosion along lines of weakness in the rock.

Far more recently, during the last glaciation about 2.5 million years ago, the landscape was shaped by glaciers which carved deep troughs such as the Lairig Ghru and Glen Avon. Since then water and weathering has continued to shape the plateaux, straths and glens that we know and enjoy today, and will continue to shape them into the future.

As well as these impressive natural processes, the area has been shaped by human habitation and changing land-use over the last 3000 years. The ancient settlements and transport routes through the hills, the use of timber and introduction of grazing animals have all helped to shape the landscape. Most recently, in the last 500 years, the pattern of estates, farms and crofts that we recognise today has come into being. Agricultural improvement, changing forest management and the development of sheep farming and deer stalking have all led to the formation of the current landscape. Their ongoing management continues to actively shape it.

The land-uses, and how society values the area, have continually evolved through time. For example, the forests of the Park have been used and managed by people for different objectives as times change. In the mid-eighteenth century, the forests like those at Glenmore and Abernethy were valued for the quality of their timber for the ship-building industry that developed at Speymouth.

In the nineteenth century, the forests became valued for their sporting opportunities, the same period during which deer stalking on the moorland became fashionable. The twentieth century saw the forests valued for their conservation and biodiversity value, and a broad range of recreational opportunities. These shifting public values will continue to develop into the future.

Responding to External Changes

The National Park sits within a much bigger picture, and cannot isolate itself from changes that are taking place beyond the Park boundary. These changes will influence how we can achieve the four aims of the Park, and may require management and objectives to adapt through time. The Park will be affected by global and national trends including climate change, economic patterns, population change, social attitudes, work patterns, national and international policy and legislation.

Management of the Park cannot control these changes but it must respond to them, and continually consider how to achieve the four aims of the Park, and conserve and enhance its special qualities in the changing context. To help this process, research into the likely changes and impacts is an important part of forward planning.

Climate Change

Changes in climate will undoubtedly influence the natural heritage and recreation opportunities of the Cairngorms over time. The full extent of change cannot be predicted, but national trends indicate more storm events and a warmer climate. In the Cairngorms, trends including a reduction in snow-lie in recent years are already evident. A warming temperature would result in the range of montane species shrinking, and an expansion of some lower-ground habitats such as woodland to higher ground. If average temperatures continue to rise at the rate of the 1980s -1990s, then changes in species composition could be seen as early as 2010-2020.

An Integrated Approach

In this changing environment, the long-term success of the Park requires the management of its different aspects to be integrated into a coherent approach to meet the four aims collectively.

The people, places and special qualities of the Cairngorms are already strongly connected and interdependent. The landscape, habitats and species that give the area its special character are actively shaped by land management and the communities have evolved with close connections to local land-uses and landscapes. In turn, the landscape and natural environment are a key attraction to visitors and form the basis of the tourism sector. Directly and indirectly, this accounts for a significant proportion of the local economy.

The activities of any one sector can impact on many aspects of the Park. Its management must recognise these linkages, the mutual dependence and the opportunities that come from an integrated approach.

Managing Conflict

The purpose of the Park Authority and the Park Plan is to ensure the four aims of the Park are achieved collectively, which requires an integrated approach to the aims and objectives of the Plan and management of the Park. However, where there appears to the Park Authority to be a conflict between the first aim of the Park – to conserve and enhance the natural and cultural heritage – and the other three aims, section 9(6) of the National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000 requires that greater weight be given to the first aim.

This approach is consistent with the long-term sustainability of the Park and the ability to continue the delivery of its four aims into the future. Integration between the aims is vital, but the natural and cultural resources which underpin the Park's designation and importance must not be compromised. Given the interactions highlighted above, their conservation and, where possible, enhancement is vital to the Park's future and the delivery of the other three aims.

3. MANAGING THE PARK IN A CHANGING ENVIRONMENT...cont

For this reason, the theme of conserving and enhancing the special qualities runs through all sections of this plan. Whether it is objectives for land management, affordable housing, tourism or others, management must be consistent with conserving and enhancing the special qualities and prevent damage to them. This integrated approach should minimise the potential conflicts, through identifying them at the start of the planning and management process.

Where conflict does occur, greater weight will be given to the conservation and enhancement of the natural and cultural resources. The Strategic Environmental Assessment will assist in identifying significant effects on the natural and cultural resources and informing decisions where there may be potential conflict.

Diversity within the Park

There is a wide diversity of landscape, land-uses, management and community priorities across different parts of the Park. The Draft Park Plan recognises that this diversity is part of what creates the special qualities valued in the Park. Within the strategic approach set out in the Plan, there is scope for variation of implementation in different areas of the Park and at different times.

Spatial zoning is often used as a means to identify areas where different priorities or management regimes apply. In developing the Draft Park Plan, the Park Authority has considered the use of zoning as a tool to help achieve the aims and objectives of the Park Plan.

There is already a high degree of spatial zoning within the Park, that identifies particular management needs or priorities. For example, the range of natural heritage designations including Natura 2000 sites, Sites of Special Scientific Interest and National Nature Reserves identify areas where particular natural heritage objectives apply; and the Local Plan also uses zoning to identify areas most suited to future development.

The Draft Park Plan does not attempt to divide the Park further into separate zones within which different objectives apply. To do so would require a definitive split of objectives and management approach between areas that cannot necessarily be determined so discretely. It would weaken the integrated approach that is set out in the objectives, through which the special qualities of the Park are considered in all areas and in all sectors.



Photo: Jimmy Mitchell.

The Plan therefore identifies an agenda for the Park as a whole through a series of strategic objectives. The application of these objectives will vary across the Park in different areas and at different times. For some, implementation will require more detailed and area-specific strategies which will be developed. The key implementation strategies which will influence how the Plan's objectives are achieved in more detail are noted under the objectives of relevant sections. These are currently under development by the Park Authority and its partners, and will be informed by the consultation on this Draft Plan.

Building on Experience

Part of the long history of the Cairngorms is a legacy of research, discussion and debate over the management of the Cairngorms area. For much of the twentieth century it was identified as a potential National Park, although at that time, there were no National Parks in Scotland. In 1995, following the recommendations of the Cairngorms Working

Party, the Cairngorms Partnership was established to bring a co-ordinated approach to managing the area. This approach succeeded in developing effective partnerships and taking forward action in a number of important areas.

These previous initiatives have resulted in a number of strategies for the area. These include a Forest and Woodland Framework, Catchment Management Plans and work on housing, all of which has helped to shape this Draft Plan. Work to ensure the success of the National Park will require further development of this partnership approach.

This background provides a wealth of experience and information amongst many people in the Park and beyond. The designation of the National Park brings a fresh opportunity to build on this work and a new impetus to managing the issues facing the Cairngorms area. It places everyone at the start of an exciting new chapter in the long history of the Cairngorms.



Photo: Jimmy Mitchell

3. MANAGING THE PARK IN A CHANGING ENVIRONMENT...cont

Guiding Principles

To help meet the challenge of integration against a backdrop of continual change, the following principles underpin the Plan. They provide a guide to long-term management and decision-making in working towards the vision, objectives and priorities for action identified in the Plan. They should be used as a check by all when working towards the objectives of the Plan.

1. Sustainable Development

The Park's natural and cultural resources should be managed, used and enjoyed in ways that conserve and enhance them for future generations, while ensuring that those who currently live in, work in and visit the Park are able to use and enjoy them.

This means:

- Management of the Park should not compromise the special qualities of the area;
- The interactions between the economic, social and environmental resources should be actively identified, managed and developed;
- The impacts of management on economic, social and environmental resources both within the Park and beyond its boundary should be identified and managed.

2. Social Justice

Access to the benefits from the Park's resources in terms of living, working and enjoying the Park should be available to everyone regardless of economic, physical or social constraints.

This means:

- Everyone, regardless of physical or economic constraints should be able to enjoy the special qualities of the area by some means;
- Access to appropriate services and social infrastructure for everyone living in or visiting the Park.

3. People Participating in the Park

People within and outside the Park should be actively involved in shaping the Park and its management, and be well informed about the Park and its management.

This means:

- Communicating effectively between public, private, community and voluntary sectors, locally and nationally;

- Developing simple and accessible ways for local communities to engage in and influence the management of the Park, including community planning;
- Local communities taking responsibility for their role in the management of the Park;
- Encouraging national engagement with the National Park.

4. Managing Change

Management of the Park should recognise processes of change, actively consider potential future impacts and manage change in an informed way using best available information.

This means:

- Identifying likely changes over which everyone has little or no influence and planning accordingly;
- Identifying desirable changes and taking the necessary leadership roles to shape positive change;
- Thinking ahead to consider likely implications of change and sourcing the information needed to inform debate and decisions.

5. Effective Governance

The management structures in the Park should be co-ordinated and efficient, tailored to delivering positive and tangible outcomes for the Park.

This means:

- Effective co-ordination between public bodies at strategic and delivery levels;
- Effective partnerships of public, private, community and voluntary interests;
- Committing to transparency and adding value in managing the Park;
- Learning from other areas at home and abroad;
- Effective sharing of information and knowledge;
- Building trust and co-operation amongst different interests.

4. VISION



4. VISION

The Park in 25 Years Time

The Cairngorms National Park will be seen as an exemplar of integrated and sustainable management, and will share its experience to inform the management of other areas of Scotland and beyond.



Conserving, Enhancing and Managing the Park

The Park will be increasingly recognised around the world for its outstanding natural environment – the high plateaux; corries and glens; the extensive open moorland; the pine and birch woods; and the straths with farmland along the clean rivers, lochs and burns. These areas will continue to be home to a wide range of habitats and species. The network of habitats across the Park will be in good condition, including sites identified as being of national and international importance which will be exemplars of good management.

The distinctive landscape character of the Park will be enhanced through improved management. This includes the extension of alpine scrub, improved woodland networks, and restoration of the more unsightly landscape scars such as redundant vehicle tracks and eroded footpaths. It will still be a landscape shaped by active land-use and management as well as natural

processes. There will be a productive mix of farming, forestry, game and wildlife management.

There will be thriving populations of characteristic species such as dotterel, ptarmigan and mountain hare on the high tops; hen harrier and grouse on moorland; golden plover and dunlin on mires; black grouse and capercaillie in the forest; lapwings, oyster catchers and curlew on farmland; otter and salmon in the rivers; and osprey feeding in the lochs.

In the Park's towns, villages and farms, the best examples of distinctive local architecture will be protected. Sustainable and innovative new buildings will be exemplars of good practice. Growth of settlements will safeguard the traditional pattern and character of the built heritage.

The evidence of previous generations living in the area, both the physical remains such as cairns, stone circles, abandoned shielings, drove roads, and castles; and the less tangible evidence of



Photo: Highlands and Islands Enterprise.



Photo: David Gowans.



Photo: Jimmy Mitchell

traditions, stories and songs, will be well recorded, cared for, and accessible to understand and appreciate.

Throughout the Park, residents, visitors, businesses and organisations will all contribute in some way to conserving and enhancing what is so special about their part of the Cairngorms.

Communities Living and Working in the Park

Thriving and inclusive communities will sustain, and in turn be sustained by, the special natural and cultural qualities of the Cairngorms. The outstanding environment will stimulate economic activity rather than constrain it and diverse local businesses will flourish.

All people in the Park will be able to find housing, education and training, employment and services that meet their needs. There will be efficient transport systems operating within and beyond

4. VISION...cont

the Park to meet the needs of communities and visitors. Businesses will feel they are a part of the Park, benefit from it, offer a high quality service and experience and be involved in environmental management.

Communities will play an active role in shaping the Park and will have the confidence to share their ideas, experience and culture. Community involvement in policy development and implementation will be normal practice.

Understanding and Enjoying the Park

Residents and visitors will enjoy, understand and support the special qualities of the Park in many different ways, through visitor and recreation experiences of the highest quality. A wide range of outdoor access opportunities on both land and

water will be available to everyone for responsible enjoyment, fun, spiritual rejuvenation, sport and healthy living. Everyone will be encouraged to experience the varied landscape of the Park, from the open uplands to the woodlands and rivers, in ways that respect the natural environment and cultural heritage of the area.

Visitors will come to the Park year-round to enjoy its fine landscapes, appreciate its wildlife and heritage, explore its character and take part in a range of activities. They will be fully aware of what the Park has to offer; understand the importance of conservation of the area and be keen to support this. Residents will be well-informed about the area and keen to communicate their knowledge and the needs of those living, working and visiting the Park will be mutually respected.



Photo: Neil McIntyre.

5. CONSERVING, ENHANCING AND MANAGING THE PARK



5. CONSERVING, ENHANCING AND MANAGING THE PARK

5.1 Introduction – Conserving and Enhancing the Special Qualities

This section identifies objectives that are specifically targeted at conserving and enhancing the special qualities of the Park, and ensuring the sustainable use of its natural and cultural resources. This is a theme which runs through the other sections of this Plan, whether considering the needs of communities, or recreation and enjoyment in the Park. Conserving and enhancing the qualities which underpin the Park's importance and attraction, as well as much of its economy and communities, must form the basis of successful long-term management.

This section sets out an approach to managing the natural and cultural heritage of the Park that recognises the interdependence between the special qualities and its management, and the important links to the socio-economic viability of land management.

5.2 Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Heritage

5.2.1 Landscape

The distinctive landscape character of the Park derives from the combination of mountain plateaux, extensive forests, open moorlands, straths, lochs and rivers, together with settlements and designed landscapes around estate houses. It is one of the most distinctive special qualities of the Park.

The landscape is a product of both the natural environmental conditions and the history of land-use, expressing both the natural and cultural heritage of the Park. Its conservation and enhancement will therefore be influenced by many different activities and processes, but should be guided by the following objectives.

Strategic Objectives:

a) **Maintain and enhance the distinctive diversity of landscape character across the Park.**

The distinctive landscape character is closely connected with the landforms, land management, habitats and species found here and is one of the key reasons people enjoy the Park. The landscape character also contains a historic record of use and society. Within the landscape there will be dynamic change and evolution but management and development of the Park should retain, and where possible enhance, the distinctive character.

While the Park contains two National Scenic Areas identified for their national significance, the designation of the National Park has highlighted the national importance and coherence of the landscape qualities throughout its area. Accordingly, landscape considerations will be included in all activities that could affect landscape character anywhere within the Park.

b) **Ensure development complements, and where possible enhances, the landscape character of the Park.**

New development and infrastructure, necessary to meet the needs of those living and working in the Park, should be designed to fit and complement the landscape character of its setting, and where possible enhance that setting. The settlement statements in the Local Plan should be informed by landscape capacity studies to ensure that location and design of any new development will complement and enhance the distinctive landscape character.

The potential impacts of public and private roads, masts, utilities, renewable energy developments (in and where relevant beyond the Park), road signs and all other man made artefacts should be assessed to ensure they do not detract from the landscape character.

c) Conserve and enhance the wild characteristics of areas within the Park.

Large areas of the Park, not restricted to the montane area, are valued for their innate qualities and the experience of wildness that many people come to the area to enjoy. This sense of wildness and quiet enjoyment should be safeguarded from encroachment by human infrastructure, inappropriate activities or insensitive management and use. New tracks, paths, roads, structures and motorised forms of recreation should not detract from the quiet enjoyment of the Park. Restoration of vehicle tracks and eroded footpaths should be pursued.

d) Raise awareness and understanding of the influences of natural processes, land management and culture on the landscape character.

The relationships between the natural and cultural processes that shape the landscape character and the context of the historic landscape, should be explained and understood. This should inform management and help enjoyment of the landscape. This will in part be encouraged by engagement with communities to identify why landscapes are valued. It will also be encouraged by identifying and maintaining special view points and popular views from roads.

Existing policy context

- European Landscape Convention
- National Scenic Areas
- Historic Landscape Assessment
- National Planning Policy Guideline 14: Natural Heritage
- Wildness in Scotland's Countryside, Policy Statement 02/03, Scottish Natural Heritage
- Landscape Character Assessments
- NPPG 14 Natural Heritage

Key implementation strategies

- Cairngorms Local Plan
- Integrated Land Management Strategy
- Natural Heritage Strategy

Cross-reference

- 5.5.1 Built and Historic Environment
- 6.7 Renewable Energy
- 7.2 Outdoor Access and Recreation

5. CONSERVING, ENHANCING AND MANAGING THE PARK...cont

The Montane Area – a national asset at the heart of the Park

The Park contains the largest expanse of high montane ground above the potential treeline in Britain. It is recognised nationally and internationally for the quality and diversity of its geology and geomorphology; its habitats including dwarf shrub vegetation and arctic-alpine species; its wildness and landscape. It is also relatively accessible and is valued by many for the mountain recreation opportunities.

The conservation of these qualities and the enhancement of the understanding and experience of the montane area is a theme that runs throughout this Plan. Key issues affecting the montane area include climate change, grazing pressure and infrastructure development. The management of different land-uses, the natural resources, tourism, outdoor recreation and interpretation must all contribute to ensuring that the montane area is seen in the future as a national asset in excellent condition.

There are many objectives throughout this Plan that will influence the conservation and

enhancement of the montane area, particularly those for nature conservation, land management, and outdoor access and recreation. The potential impacts on the special qualities of the montane area should be considered by all sectors in the Park in their policy, management and activities. In particular, application of these objectives in the montane area should:

- a) Improve long-term sustainability and restore the full range of montane habitats, through managing pressures from grazing, other land management and development;
- b) Demonstrate the highest standards in managing the impacts of recreation on montane habitats, soils and natural processes through sensitive path repairs, targeted advice and encouragement of the long-walk-in;
- c) Retain and enhance the sense of wildness in the montane area through restoration of high altitude vehicle tracks, removal of redundant infrastructure and managing the impacts of motorised access, organised events, aircraft noise and commercial infrastructure.

5.2.2 Nature Conservation

The Park's biodiversity, geology and landforms are of national and international importance. The extent and scale of habitats including the native pine woodlands, mountain plateaux, rivers, moorlands, heathlands, farmlands and wetlands hold a rich biodiversity that includes many rare and threatened species. Approximately 39 per cent of the Park is designated for a particular nature conservation interest. Their future condition should be enhanced through a landscape-scale approach that brings all habitats in the wider countryside of the Park into good condition and increases the connectivity between them.

There are 31 areas of the Park (including the rivers Spey and Dee) that are currently designated as being of European importance for nature conservation through the Natura 2000 designations of Special Protection Areas and Special Areas of Conservation. A total of 46 sites are designated as part of a national suite of Sites of Special Scientific Interest, and a further six areas are designated as National Nature Reserves where management for nature conservation is given primacy. There are also 15 sites recognised for their geological importance in the Geological Conservation Review.

These designations carry special responsibilities for public authorities, land managers and users. While these sites represent examples of the best of the natural heritage in the Park, they cannot be managed in isolation from the surrounding land and habitats.

Accordingly, their future condition should be enhanced through a landscape-scale approach that

brings all habitats in the rest of the Park into good condition. This will be achieved through a strategic approach to management that targets habitat enhancement in key locations. This will increase the viability of the designated areas by increasing the connectivity between them. It will also improve the extent of high quality habitats and associated native plant and animal communities that is already unparalleled in Britain.

Natura 2000 – A Network of Special Sites

Natura 2000 is a European network of protected sites which represent areas of the highest value for natural habitats and species of plants and animals which are rare, endangered or vulnerable in the European Community.

The network includes Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) which support valuable habitats and species (other than birds) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) which support significant numbers of wild birds and their habitats.

The network is established through the 1992 Habitats Directive and the 1979 Birds Directive. Through these, Scotland has a responsibility to identify and protect SACs and SPAs. There are

currently 19 SACs and 12 SPAs in the Park, which together with other designated sites must be protected and managed positively for their nature conservation interest. The Park also has a number of wetlands of international importance listed under the Ramsar Convention. As a matter of policy, the government has chosen to afford these sites protection equivalent to Natura sites, although many have dual designation already.

The qualifying habitats in these designated areas usually extend outside the site boundaries. The objective of achieving favourable conservation status for them can only be secured in the long-term by safeguarding the habitats wherever they occur. This adds impetus to the need to manage all semi-natural habitats and native species in the Park to the highest standards.

Strategic Objectives:

a) **Conserve and enhance the diversity of habitats and species present throughout the Park through a landscape-scale approach to habitat networks.**

The habitats and species throughout the Park are special qualities which underpin its designation as a National Park. Many are of national and international importance and their conservation, and where possible enhancement, is key. However, it is the existing scale and proximity of habitats, such as semi-natural woodland, rivers, moorland and

montane areas that give the Park its particular importance. Nature conservation efforts should therefore seek to bring all habitats in the Park into good condition.

Management should take a strategic view to enhance the linkages between habitats, their scale and minimise fragmentation. Extensive and inter-connected networks of montane ground, moorland, forest, wetlands and semi-natural farmland habitats should be enhanced by spatial action plans, and protected from inappropriate actions that would detract from the network.

5. CONSERVING, ENHANCING AND MANAGING THE PARK...cont

b) **Ensure all designated nature conservation sites are in good condition.**

Within the network of habitats in the Park, some are designated as being of national or international importance for particular nature conservation features including biodiversity, geology and landforms. These sites should be exemplars of good management where the natural heritage interest is secure within a long-term management plan, devised in partnership with land managers. Public support and resources should seek to engage managers, local communities and visitors in understanding and caring for these sites.

All public bodies have responsibility to ensure that they safeguard designated sites when carrying out their functions. The use of targeted incentives will ensure specific actions to maintain and enhance the interests of designated sites. These will be complemented by incentives that promote the positive management of the connecting habitats between them.

c) **Engage all sectors in implementing international, national and local biodiversity targets.**

All partners in the Park have a key role to play in delivering aspects of European Union biodiversity objectives, the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy and the Cairngorms Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP).

The Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004 sets a target to halt the decline of biodiversity in Scotland by 2010. This target reinforces the aim of safeguarding the contribution that biodiversity makes to the special qualities of the Park. The Cairngorms LBAP, published in 2002, identifies a range of management issues and opportunities to conserve and enhance the biodiversity of the area.

Building on this, all sectors involved in managing, living and working in the Park should be engaged in helping to deliver the aims of the Local Biodiversity Action Plan, thereby conserving and enhancing the biodiversity qualities of the Park.

While biodiversity objectives apply to all native species and semi-natural habitats throughout the Park, some species require extra effort to protect and enhance them either because of their particular ecological requirements or because they are threatened with extinction. In the Park, species such as capercaillie, hen harrier, water voles, sea lampreys and freshwater pearl mussels, as well as a range of plants, require extra effort.

d) **Ensure that populations of species given special protection under the Habitat Regulations, the Wildlife and Countryside Act and the Nature Conservation Act are stable or, where appropriate, increasing.**

In addition to ensuring that the habitats necessary for those species given special protection are in good condition, a co-ordinated effort between public agencies, land managers, the police and public to address wildlife crime and irresponsible actions is required. These bodies need to develop partnerships with local communities to help prevent all forms of wildlife crime including poaching and illegal killing or taking of protected species. This will be supported by communications about the law, the nature of the species at risk, and advice as to how everyone can help to safeguard them.

e) **Promote access to appropriate policy and funding mechanisms to support nature conservation.**

Public policy and support for nature conservation should be targeted at all interests that can contribute, including land

managers, but also businesses, communities and visitors. The support should focus on the nature conservation interests and opportunities particularly relevant to the Park and should be accessible and easily understood. Public support should be based on compliance with good management practice.

f) Identify, prioritise and take action to address non-native species that pose a threat to the natural heritage and land management of the Park.

Non-native species can be introduced either deliberately or accidentally, and many have the potential to damage the existing species, habitats and ecosystems, as well as affecting the landscape and land management. Examples include non-native fish, riparian and aquatic plants that currently pose a threat to the river ecosystems and the associated fisheries. Mink which threaten water voles, and grey squirrels which impact on red squirrel populations are also potential threats. To tackle these threats resources and incentives for implementation and monitoring are needed.

g) Promote appropriate reintroductions of species and reinstatement of habitats and identify the likely impacts on existing species, habitats and ecosystems.

Consideration will be given to reintroductions of some species or the reinstatement of some habitats in key areas of the Park. These may include for example, freshwater pearl mussel (already being reintroduced into two sites), reinstatement of water vole habitat and reintroduction of the species after controlling mink. Some plant communities in floodplain areas should also be considered for reinstatement. Opportunities should also be taken to manage habitats to attract the recolonisation of species that have become extinct in the Park, including corncrakes. Where these or other species introductions or reintroductions are being considered, their potential impacts should be researched to inform decision making and mitigation measures.

h) Develop awareness and understanding of the interactions of land-uses, tourism, outdoor access and nature conservation amongst all interests.

To ensure success in conserving and enhancing the natural heritage of the Park, all sectors need to be aware that their actions can impact – positively or negatively – on the natural heritage. Opportunities for interpretation, training or demonstration should encourage greater understanding of the interactions and mutual interests between nature conservation and the activities of managers, residents and visitors in the Park.

i) Identify and carry out a research programme designed to provide the information and monitoring on the habitats, species and ecosystems required to guide future decision-making.

There is a specific need to address the monitoring and research on the status of species, habitats and ecosystems and the key influences including climate change scenarios and recreational disturbance.

j) Raise awareness of the outstanding geology and geomorphology in the Park.

The Park has an internationally important record of geology and geomorphology. To encourage its long-term conservation, and understanding and enjoyment of geology and geomorphology as part of the Park's special qualities, greater effort is required in raising awareness through interpretation and education.

5. CONSERVING, ENHANCING AND MANAGING THE PARK...cont

Existing policy context

- Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004
- Scottish Biodiversity Strategy
- Habitats Directive 1992
- Birds Directive 1979
- Deer (Scotland) Act 1996
- Geological Conservation Review
- NPPG 4 Land for Mineral Working

Key implementation strategies

- Natural Heritage Strategy
- Integrated Land Management Strategy
- Local Biodiversity Action Plan
- Cairngorms Local Plan

Cross-reference

- 7.2 Outdoor Access and Recreation
- 6.4 Sustainable Tourism

5.3 Sustainable Use of Natural Resources

The special qualities that we value in the Park, together with the resources we use for much of our economy and communities, depend on the functioning systems of soil, water and air; natural resources which must be sustained. Many of the objectives set out in other sections of this plan will affect these resources, but there are some objectives for sustainable resource use outlined here that should apply across all sectors.

Strategic Objective:

- a) **All management and development in the Park should seek to make the most sustainable use of natural resources, including water and energy.**

All interests in the Park including households, land managers, visitors and businesses should seek to minimise their impact on natural resources and ensure their use is as sustainable as possible. New development and infrastructure should incorporate the most sustainable systems of energy, water, materials and other resources in order to minimise its impacts on natural processes.

5.3.1 Soils

Soils, together with other factors such as climate, exert a strong influence on natural systems, land-uses, biodiversity, industry and infrastructure. The Park is exceptional because of its unusually large extent of rare, undisturbed soils compared to other areas of Scotland, particularly soils associated with the Caledonian pine forests and the montane plateaux.

The structure of soils is key to the drainage and nutrient functions that underpin habitats and land-use, and broader functions such as carbon storage in peat and its role in regulating climate change. For example while peat lands have their own intrinsic importance for their habitats and species, they also have an important function in regulating water flows in catchments, and as long-term carbon stores.

Strategic Objective:

- a) **Prevent degradation and erosion of vulnerable montane and organic soils, including peat.**

The structure and functionality of these soil types can be damaged as a result of excessive trampling by walkers and off-track cyclists; by tracking from motorised vehicles; by the construction of tracks; and by burning, excessive grazing and trampling by domestic livestock and wild deer. Receipt of public support for management must require compliance with soil conservation measures appropriate to the land holding.

Those soils which are particularly vulnerable, such as the montane and peat soils, should be conserved through management to ensure that the functioning structures are not lost. Management of existing developments in the montane zone, such as the ski areas, will require soil conservation actions to safeguard

against damage that can be caused as the result of the activities and supporting infrastructure. Management of outdoor access, recreation and farming, in addition to development through the Local Plan should also contribute to soil conservation.

5.3.2 Water

The watercourses and lochs of the Park generally have an excellent water quality, but there are pressures associated with settlement development and land management. There can be extreme fluctuations in quantity arising particularly from heavy rain and snow-melt. As well as providing part of the essential infrastructure for living and working in the Park, the water resource is an important habitat for many species and a popular recreation resource.

The rivers Dee and Spey are both classified as being of European importance for nature conservation and marshes, such as the Insh marshes, are also of international importance. Other rivers, such as the Feshie, are also recognised for their fluvial geomorphological interest. Management of the water resource needs to account for these varied uses and benefits, focus on water quality, quantity, hydromorphology and ecology, and be closely integrated with surrounding land-uses.

The management of floodplains is one of the key issues in the Park, as parts of many rivers have been cut off from their river systems by flood walls. This channels flow in a much more intensive way than is natural, leading to erosion of river beds and loss of finer sediments. It also leads to the loss of wetland habitats that help to support the diversity and viability of the river systems. Flood waters that cannot spread out in the upper catchments can cause severe flooding downstream.

Catchment Management – The Water Framework Directive

The 2000 Water Framework Directive establishes a new legal framework for the protection, improvement and sustainable use of water, including surface and ground water. Its purpose is to:

- prevent deterioration and enhance status of aquatic ecosystems, including groundwater;
- promote sustainable water use;
- reduce pollution;
- contribute to the mitigation of floods and droughts.

The Directive is implemented in Scotland through the Water Environment and Water Services (Scotland) Act 2004. This sets out an approach to River Basin Management Planning on which water management in the Park should build, by taking a catchment and ecosystem scale approach to secure quality and quantity.

Strategic Objectives:

a) Maintain and enhance the existing high water quality environment in the Park.

The water quality in the Park's rivers and lochs is generally excellent. Management of the watercourses, neighbouring land management and the water and waste infrastructure should aim to maintain, and where possible, enhance the quality and quantity of water to the benefit of landscape, biodiversity and human use including services, access and recreation.

b) Adopt a catchment-scale approach to water management that integrates land-use, nature conservation and flood management.

By managing watercourses in the context of the catchment area, there are opportunities to co-ordinate its management with surrounding land-uses and account for the up and down-stream influences and impacts. This offers benefits to water quality and quantity,

5. CONSERVING, ENHANCING AND MANAGING THE PARK...cont

flood management, fisheries, biodiversity, access and recreation. The catchment management approach currently developed for the rivers Spey and Dee provides a good basis on which to develop this approach in the Park.

c) **Encourage more sustainable patterns of water use by households, industry, agriculture and business.**

Managing the demand for water could have as much, if not greater environmental impact as managing its supply. Water supply can be a significant constraint to the development of communities. Water used wastefully is water lost from the environment and there is wasted energy in treating water that is surplus to requirements. All built development and activities using water in the Park should seek to minimise wastage and implement sustainable systems of water-use through efficient systems. Reducing both leakage from water supply networks and the demand for water should be encouraged.

d) **Promote sustainable flood management consistent with natural fluvial processes.**

Potential flooding should be managed through a process of identifying risks. As the implications of climate change become clearer, these should be taken into account. Until then, a precautionary approach should be adopted. Opportunities to reduce flood risk should be taken, within and beyond the Park, such as modifying the flow through management of floodplains, wetland creation, sustainable urban drainage systems, surface flow and upstream activities. The Local Plan should minimise the risk of flooding affecting or resulting from new development.

Existing policy context

- Water Framework Directive 2000
- SPP7 Planning and Flooding

Key implementation strategies

- Integrated Land Management Strategy
- Natural Heritage Strategy
- Cairngorms Local Plan
- Spey Catchment Management Plan

Cross-reference

- 5.4 Integrated Land Management
- 6.6 Housing
- 7.2 Outdoor Access and Recreation

5.3.3 Air

The air quality in the Cairngorms is high in comparison with many other areas of Scotland. The prevailing westerly maritime airflow and the absence of major industry in the area means there is little air pollution. As well as underpinning the natural heritage, the sense of 'fresh air' and lack of air pollution is a key quality that people come to the area to enjoy.

Strategic Objectives:

a) Maintain, and where possible enhance, the existing high level of air quality.

The air quality is a key part of the natural environment that people come to enjoy in the Park, and helps to sustain many of the habitats and species as well as contributing to the quality of life. Emissions from transport, industry and settlements should be minimised.

b) Retain dark night skies and minimise light and noise pollution.

As well as the physical quality of the air, the low level of light pollution means the Park is one of the best areas in the UK for dark night skies. The tranquillity of the area is also a particular quality that should be retained and enhanced. The low noise and light pollution contributes significantly to the sense of wildness and to people's enjoyment and perceptions of the Park.

Existing policy context

- Air Quality Framework Directive 1996
- UK Air Quality Strategy
- Air Quality (Scotland) Regulations 2003

Cross-reference

- 6.5 Transport and Communications

5.4 Integrated Land Management

Land and water management on farms, crofts, estates and reserves is a major influence on all four aims of the Park, and particularly the landscape, and the natural and cultural heritage qualities of the Park. It creates and maintains many of the important habitats, as well as sustaining businesses and creating employment. The ongoing conservation and enhancement of the special qualities of the Park will rely on a viable land management sector whose varied objectives contribute positively to the outstanding natural and cultural environment.

Integration is a familiar concept at a policy level across rural Scotland. However, the challenge and opportunity in the Park is to identify the practical ways in which both policy-makers and land managers can take a joined-up approach and work with others to the benefit of both land management and the National Park.

This section identifies strategic objectives for all land management sectors, aimed at ensuring an integrated approach across different activities. It then identifies further strategic objectives that are specific to particular land management sectors and resources.

There are potential conflicts inherent in identifying objectives for the management of different land-uses across the Park. In particular, the application of these objectives at an individual site level will require choices to be made within this overall framework, but this is the essence of

integrated management. More detailed spatial guidance will be developed where appropriate to help resolve conflicts and integration.

Strategic Objectives for all Land Management:

- a) **Maintain and enhance a viable land management sector that delivers private and public objectives and enhances the special qualities of the Park.**

The ongoing management of the land underpins many of the qualities for which the Park is valued. A vibrant land management sector that supports private enterprise and employment and provides active management is a key means to conserve and enhance the special qualities of the Park and deliver other benefits for the public.

- b) **Integrate support for all land and water management activities to deliver public benefits that conserve and enhance the special qualities of the Park.**

Land management can deliver many public benefits, such as access infrastructure, nature conservation or education. These are benefits that the public enjoy and use, but which have a cost attached to their provision and management. Currently there is a range of public support measures for land managers. In the future these should be targeted at delivering benefits that are relevant to the Park area, transparent in what they buy, straight-forward for managers to access and integrated across the varied land management sectors.

- c) **Develop and promote best practice in land and water management and its interactions with people and other land-uses.**

Land managers and public agencies should work together with local communities and other interests, to ensure that land and water management in the Park is an example of best

5. CONSERVING, ENHANCING AND MANAGING THE PARK...cont

practice. It should take into account the range of objectives and the interactions of different land-uses, outdoor access and local communities.

d) **Develop collaboration and communication between statutory agencies, land managers, non-governmental organisations, voluntary groups, communities and other interests.**

The interactions between land management, the natural heritage and the economy of the Park requires all sectors to work together, share information and be pro-active in developing understanding and best practice in land management. Agencies and land managers should share information and management plans with local communities and each other.

e) **Develop local supply chains and markets for local produce.**

The local consumption of local produce offers many benefits including enhanced viability of production, a greater share of the value captured for producers and businesses within the Park, and a reduced need to transport goods over long distances. Currently there are weak links in the supply chains for local processing and marketing which need to be addressed.

f) **Reduce waste, energy use and pollution from all land management activities.**

All land management activities should actively seek ways to minimise waste, energy use and pollution. Where pollution incidents do occur, managers should have the necessary plans and infrastructure to deal with them quickly and effectively and minimise adverse impacts.

Diverse land ownership and management

There is a wide diversity of land ownership across the Park. The majority of land is in diverse private ownership, with smaller areas owned by Non-Governmental Organisations (including the National Trust for Scotland and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds) and public organisations (including the Forestry Commission and Scottish Natural Heritage).

Different owners and managers set varied objectives. For example, some land is managed primarily for nature conservation, whilst other areas are managed primarily for agricultural production, for sporting businesses or for recreation.

While the primary objective or context will vary, most land managers will be delivering several different objectives within one area. Managing this mosaic of uses, managers should therefore have regard to the objectives of their neighbours and potential implications beyond their own land holding.

The following sections 5.4.1 to 5.4.5 set out the objectives for the main land-uses within the Park. It is though, recognised that any one manager or land holding is likely to be involved in several of these activities within the context of their own aims and objectives. The diversity of ownership and management across the Park helps to support the varied landscape and special qualities that give the Park its character. However, greater integration is also required to achieve the vision of the Park.

5.4.1 Farming and Crofting

With approximately 570 farm holdings and 105 crofts covering over 70 per cent of the Cairngorms area, agriculture has a significant influence on the landscape and natural heritage of the Park. Much of this area is rough grazing and moorland, with the improved grassland and arable production generally being restricted to the straths.

The following objectives promote and support sensitive and sustainable forms of agriculture and crofting. These seek to produce good quality food in association with the conservation and enhancement of semi-natural habitats and their associated wildlife; the landforms and landscapes; and the re-creation of features such as dykes and hedges that have diminished.

Strategic Objectives:

a) Manage agricultural production to be consistent with, and enhance, the special qualities of the Park.

The farmland of the Park supports many valuable habitats, for example for breeding waders such as lapwing and oyster catchers. Farming methods should be consistent with the conservation of habitats and species present. These should actively seek to maximise the opportunities to create and support habitat networks, enhance the landscape and contribute to the natural heritage of the Park. This includes features that have diminished such as dykes and scrub where appropriate.

b) Maintain a productive and viable agricultural sector.

A productive and viable agricultural sector underpins many of the public benefits that land management delivers, particularly some farmland habitats. As well as support for

public benefits, it is important for long-term sustainability that agricultural businesses throughout the Park are producing a range of marketable goods.

c) Encourage the continued development of crofting.

Crofting tenure applies only to the Badenoch and Strathspey area within the Park, where it provides opportunities for small-scale and part-time land management and production in addition to the mainstream farming sector. Crofting in this area helps to maintain people living in rural locations and forms a part of the land-use pattern, particularly around settlements. Outside Badenoch and Strathspey, similar small-scale agricultural activity should be encouraged that will contribute to supporting rural communities and local production.

d) Make available land for those who wish to farm, particularly new-entrants.

The availability of land is a key constraint on the number of new people able to take up farming or crofting. This is the result of many factors including the viability of existing holdings, access to finance and the existing pattern of land holdings. Where possible, assistance in sourcing land for those wishing to farm should be encouraged in locations consistent with good management of the natural and cultural heritage.

Existing policy context

- Common Agricultural Policy Reform
- Forward Strategy for Scottish Agriculture
- Single Farm Payment Scheme
- Rural Development Regulation and Plan for Scotland
- Agricultural Environmental Impact Assessments

5. CONSERVING, ENHANCING AND MANAGING THE PARK...cont

Key implementation strategies

- Integrated Land Management Strategy
- Cairngorms Local Plan

Cross-reference

- 6.2 Economy and Employment

5.4.2 Forestry

The woodlands of Strathspey, Deeside, Donside and the Angus Glens form an extensive forest resource that is predominantly native and renewable. The extent of this forest, together with the close proximity and connectivity of individual woodlands combines to form one of the most valuable ecological networks in Britain, and is one of the widely recognised special qualities of the Park.

The conservation and enhancement of this network and its predominantly native character is important. It should be integrated with work to support the production, processing and local use of timber in pursuit of broader objectives, including sustainable design, construction and renewable energy. Public support and policy needs to encourage the wide range of benefits provided by forests, including timber production, landscape enhancement, nature conservation, sport, recreation, water management and carbon sequestration.

Strategic Objectives:

a) Maintain existing native woodland cover and expand to develop habitat networks that complement the landscape character of the Park.

The existing native woodland is an important special quality of the Park, forming a distinctive part of the landscape and biodiversity. The existing native woods should be conserved and expanded, irrespective of whether or not they are listed on the Native Pinewood Register. This is because they all make an important contribution to the Park's natural and cultural heritage.

Expansion should establish large-scale habitat networks that enhance their viability and help to encourage species that require large habitat areas in which to thrive. Networks will also enhance the landscape character and non-woodland habitats. In the long-term they could lead to links between the rivers Spey and Dee. Where expansion is through planting rather than natural regeneration, seed of local origin should be used.

b) Support multi-objective woodland management that includes timber production, fuel wood, recreation and nature conservation.

Woodlands can deliver many benefits for both managers and the wider community, ranging from the production of marketable timber to outdoor access and nature conservation. Management of woodlands in the Park should reflect this range of objectives and seek to deliver multiple benefits in each case. Public support for woodland management should focus on delivering these multiple benefits.

c) Encourage a mix of tree species, ages and woodland structure to complement the landscape character of the Park.

The current ratio of native and non-native woodland (approximately 85:15) is a distinctive characteristic of the Park's landscape. There should continue to be a mix of species, age and woodland structure that can deliver the objectives of production, recreation and conservation. The use of locally sourced seed should be promoted. Woodland structure should include dead-wood, a valuable resource for biodiversity.

d) Encourage a gradation of tree and scrub cover from valley floor to tree-line in targeted areas and the re-development of woodland types that have declined.

Woodland cover in the Cairngorms has

generally retreated to a lower altitude than its previous natural extent. In targeted locations identified as part of a strategic approach to a habitat network, the upper tree-line, including scrub cover such as juniper, should be encouraged to extend up to its natural altitudinal limit. This will bring benefits to landscape and biodiversity.

The broad-leaved woodland community component of the forest has been much reduced, and where it still exists is often under pressure from domestic and wild grazing animals. Forestry strategy should promote the regeneration of remnants, or replanting where appropriate, on suitable sites retaining soils and ground flora and enhancing riparian woodlands. This objective requires particular integration with deer management objectives.

e) Support the development of local markets, processing and supply chains for forest products.

The economic viability of forestry remains key to ensuring the varied benefits of woodlands in the long-term. Opportunities to link producers with processors and customers should be developed to ensure effective supply chains, and markets for timber and value-added products should be supported.

f) Promote community participation in woodland planning and management and an understanding of local woodland characteristics and distinctiveness.

Many communities have woodland nearby which is used for informal recreation and valued for its amenity. Woodland management also offers potential economic and social benefits to communities through local contracting, use and marketing of timber products, and education and interpretation. Communities should also be able to inform forest policy development and contribute to the objectives and planning for forest policy in order to maximise the local benefits.

Existing policy context

- Scottish Forestry Strategy
- Scottish Forestry Grant Scheme
- Scottish Forest Industries Cluster
- UK Forest Standard

Key implementation strategies

- Integrated Land Management Strategy
- Forestry and Woodland Framework
- Natural Heritage Strategy
- Cairngorms Local Plan

Cross-reference

- 6.2 Economy and Employment
- 6.7 Renewable Energy
- 6.9 Strengthening Communities
- 7.2 Outdoor Access and Recreation

The Caledonian Pine Forest

The Park contains the most extensive area of Caledonian Forest in Scotland. These native pine woodlands of self-sown Scots pine have regenerated from generation to generation, and are now the western-most link to the extensive boreal forest which formerly covered a much larger area of northern Europe. They usually also contain birch, juniper and other tree species and communities and provide a distinctive habitat that is home to several rare species, including capercaillie, crested tit and Scottish crossbill.

The Caledonian Forest is very important for biodiversity and is also a distinctive part of the Cairngorms landscape. Native pine woods are a priority habitat in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan and Caledonian Forest is a notified feature in four Special Areas of Conservation within the Park. The conservation of the remaining Caledonian Forest through natural regeneration should be a key factor in guiding future expansion and habitat networks. Management should aim to reduce fragmentation, encourage regeneration and restore forest structure.

5. CONSERVING, ENHANCING AND MANAGING THE PARK...cont

5.4.3 Moorland Management

Just as woodlands are a characteristic part of the Park's landscape character, so are the extensive moorlands, defined here as the open areas below the montane zone, dominated by heather, juniper scrub, wet heath, blanket bog and semi-natural dry grasslands. This includes a significant area of lowland heath.

Moorland covers approximately 40 per cent of the Park so its management has a significant impact on the landscape and biodiversity resource, contributing to a number of the special qualities of the Park. Moorland management is closely connected with the cultural heritage of land-use in the Park and brings significant socio-economic investment.

Strategic Objectives:

a) **Maintain extensive moorlands as a high value and sustainable resource for nature**

conservation, sport, agriculture, landscape and recreation.

The grazing and trampling of deer and agricultural stock, combined with burning can have a significant impact on moorland vegetation, including heather regeneration. Through carefully planned grazing and muirburn regimes, the landscape, biodiversity and sporting benefits of moorland can be optimised. Active management of moorlands, including stock and game, disease and tick control, and infrastructure is needed to deliver the potential benefits which in turn support local communities and employment.

b) **Demonstrate and enhance the links between moorland management and biodiversity.**

The moorland habitat is an internationally significant biodiversity resource. The profile of this resource amongst managers and the public should be increased, so that moorland

Forestry and Moorlands – a network of habitats

In the Park as a whole, forestry and moorlands are both important components of the landscape, habitats and economy. In fact it is the particular combination of forests, moorlands and montane areas that contribute to the Park's special character. However, there are tensions between the objectives for each, not least because the two cannot occupy the same site. While the objectives give long-term encouragement to both land-uses, decisions on the appropriate locations for each can only be made on a more detailed assessment by managers of the characteristics and opportunities of particular sites.

The expansion of native woodland should focus on areas which will give the best advantages in terms of habitat networks and links, particularly among and between the existing core areas of

Strathspey and Deeside; the establishment of a full sequence of woodland types including oak/birch, pine/birch, and sub-alpine scrub; and the enhancement of the landscape character.

There are also places where it will be appropriate to fell woodland plantations and restore ground to moorland, particularly where inappropriate and unproductive forest planting has taken place in the past.

Overall, a mosaic of forest and open moorland is likely to deliver a valuable mix of benefits for biodiversity, land-use, recreation and landscape. Management decisions should be informed by the opportunities to develop a network that meets the needs of different land-uses and enhances the species valued as part of the special qualities of the Park. Spatial guidance to help target networks in the most effective locations will be developed.

management, and the understanding of it, can recognise and improve the opportunities to benefit biodiversity. Management for grouse should respect the full moorland ecosystem.

c) Manage the interaction of moorlands with surrounding land-uses to maintain the integrity of the moorland landscape, ecosystems and hydrology.

Individual moorlands cannot be managed in isolation. The extent of ecosystems and hydrology associated with moorlands means that they need to be managed on a large scale, and integrated with neighbouring woodland edges and other habitat networks.

Existing policy context

- Principles of Moorland Management (Scotland's Moorland Forum)
- The Muirburn Code

Key implementation strategies

- Integrated Land Management Strategy
- Natural Heritage Strategy

Cross-reference

- 6.2 Economy and Employment
- 6.4 Sustainable Tourism
- 7.2 Outdoor Access and Recreation

5.4.4 Deer Management

Red, roe and sika deer are present in the Park. They are a valuable part of the natural and cultural heritage of the Park and contribute significantly to the economic viability of some communities. They are a feature of the natural heritage that visitors associate with the Park and wish to see. Deer can have a beneficial impact on some habitats, but there are areas within the Park where deer populations are currently having a significant adverse impact on the natural heritage qualities which is a particular management issue to be addressed.

The management of deer populations interacts with a number of other land management activities. These include moorland management, forestry and farming, and with the management of other habitats and species. While the management of deer will vary across the Park according to species, different land units and conditions, the following objectives set out a framework to address deer management consistently.

Strategic Objectives:

a) Manage deer populations at densities consistent with the special natural heritage qualities of the Park, particularly native woodland, montane and moorland habitats.

Deer are an essential part in the functioning of many of the Park's habitats, and need to be present within the carrying capacity of the land. However, deer can have an adverse impact on some habitats through over-grazing and trampling. Management of deer populations should be based on regular assessments of habitat impact, co-ordinated at the level of biological populations and maintained at levels that do not cause significant adverse impact to habitats.

b) Encourage co-ordination of deer management across the Park.

As deer move across ownership and management boundaries throughout the Park, their management needs to be co-ordinated. There are opportunities to develop the existing collaboration of Deer Management Groups to include managers, communities and public agencies, to further co-ordinate the planning and implementation of management and address issues at a scale appropriate to deer populations.

5. CONSERVING, ENHANCING AND MANAGING THE PARK...cont

c) **Maintain and enhance the socio-economic sustainability of the deer resource.**

Deer management contributes significantly to the economy of the Park and provides employment, direct and indirect, often in the more remote areas. The skills and expertise of deer managers are important to the management of the Park and their roles often support communities in remote areas.

d) **Make accessible, research and use the best available data on habitat impacts, population models and good practice to inform deer management planning.**

Deer management should be based as far as possible on sound data and evidence. Existing sources of data should be collated and be easily accessible to managers and others, to develop greater understanding of the issues and impacts of management, and promote informed debate.

e) **Where deer fencing is considered appropriate, minimise the impacts on public safety, deer welfare, biodiversity, landscape, cultural heritage and recreation.**

Deer fencing can serve a useful purpose, but its potential negative impacts should be considered and minimised. Decisions on whether fencing is appropriate should refer to the Joint Agency Statement and Guidance on Deer Fencing adopted by public agencies in 2004 as a starting point. Fencing should only be used as part of a wider management plan and should remain in place only as long as necessary. Further guidance on appropriate use of fencing should be developed.

Existing policy context

- Deer (Scotland) Act 1996
- Deer Commission for Scotland Long Term Strategy
- Deer Commission for Scotland Best Practice Guidance

- Joint Agency Statement and Guidance on Deer Fencing

Key implementation strategies

- Strategic Deer Plan
- Integrated Land Management Strategy
- Forestry and Woodland Framework

Cross-reference

- 6.2 Economy and Employment
- 6.4 Sustainable Tourism
- 7.2 Outdoor Access and Recreation

5.4.5 Fisheries Management

Atlantic Salmon, Sea Trout and Brown Trout are the principal species for which river fisheries are managed in the Park. Significant lengths of the Spey, Dee, Don, North and South Esk are within the Park and make up an important fishery resource in the Scottish context. The surrounding land-uses, water abstraction and use, river engineering and interactions with non-native species all have a significant impact on the quality of the fishery resource.

Strategic Objectives:

a) Encourage co-ordination of fisheries management at river system and catchment level.

The issues affecting river fisheries within the Park, including the proliferation of invasive weed species, non-native fish and the need for broader integration of fisheries management with the positive management of riparian habitats, surrounding land-uses and recreation requires co-ordination at the scale of catchments and river systems between river managers and with other interests.

Building on the existing work of District Fishery Boards, management should support the implementation of Catchment Management Plans through regulation and incentive schemes, education, awareness and targeted initiatives for specific issues.

b) Encourage removal and minimisation of physical barriers that impede passage of fish and affect river flow.

There are a number of barriers and physical deterrents to fish migration within rivers which can also alter the river habitat and structure through erosion and deposition. Where not required for current use, these barriers should be removed and their impact on the river flow minimised, in consultation with the Scottish Environment Protection Agency. Fisheries should be managed as a part of naturally functioning dynamic river systems.

Cross-reference

- 5.2.2 Nature Conservation
- 5.3.2 Water

5.5 Conserving and Enhancing the Cultural Heritage

5.5.1 The Built and Historic Environment

There is a rich built heritage and archaeology in the Park, including building traditions in estates, farms and country houses, military barracks, roads and bridges, designed landscapes and planned settlements. There are local traditions of design and materials across the Park that give a distinctive local character to different areas. The historic environment reflects the long interaction between people and place in the Park. New development and management of the settlements in the Park should be based on a sound understanding of this heritage.

Strategic Objectives:

a) Develop a sound knowledge and understanding of the archaeological, historic and built environment resources.

There is a wide range of archaeological and built heritage across the Park that contributes significantly to the cultural heritage and character of the Park, but knowledge of the range and state of these resources is patchy and not easily available.

b) Conserve and enhance the resources of the archaeological, historic and built environment.

The physical heritage needs greater repair and maintenance to secure its long-term conservation and enhancement. It also requires the maintenance of traditional skills to care for these resources, many of which have declined.

c) Promote awareness and interpretation of the value of the archaeological, historic and built environment.

A greater awareness of the range and value of the built and historic environment is important to underpin the long-term conservation and enhancement and future development. It also plays an important role in understanding the history of the Park and how the qualities we value today came into being.

d) New development and management of public space in settlements should complement and enhance the character, pattern and local identity of the built and historic environment.

The existing settlements and their surroundings have distinctive local character and identity. New development should complement and demonstrate an understanding of this. It should enhance the local identity, public space and surrounding environment.

5. CONSERVING, ENHANCING AND MANAGING THE PARK...cont

Existing policy context

- World Heritage Convention
- 'Passed to the Future' Historic Scotland (2002)
- Memorandum of Guidance on Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas (1998)
- Planning (Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings)(Scotland) Act 1997

Key implementation strategies

- Cairngorms Local Plan

Cross-reference

- 5.2.1 Landscape
- 5.3 Sustainable Use of Natural Resources

5.5.2 Culture and Traditions

There is a wealth of culture and tradition associated with the long history of people living in the Park area. Many of these traditions and cultures remain a strong influence on the identity of the Park and its communities. The cultural traditions in the Park range from language and arts to sports and music. All express the connections between people and places and reflect the development of society in the Park.

Strategic Objectives:

- a) **Develop a sound knowledge and understanding of the cultural traditions associated with the Park's places and communities.**

Knowledge and understanding of the cultural heritage and traditions in the Park is often patchy, or specific to particular individuals, communities or places. There is a need to develop a sound knowledge of the

cultural heritage of the Park. This includes arts and crafts, language, folklore, dance and other traditions in order to inform improved communication and co-operation between those involved in conserving and promoting cultural heritage in the Park.

- b) **Support and promote the diverse cultural traditions of communities within the Park.**

The diversity of cultural traditions within the Park forms a key part of its identity. As well as being closely linked with community life, the cultural heritage of the Park is also one of the qualities visitors to the area can enjoy. The promotion of local cultural heritage and traditions by communities and others should be supported.

Existing policy context

- UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (2001)
- National Cultural Strategy 'Creating Our Future... Minding Our Past'
- Cultural Policy Statement (Scottish Executive 2004)
- National Plan for Gaelic

Cross-reference

- 6.9 Strengthening Communities

6. COMMUNITIES LIVING AND WORKING IN THE PARK



6. COMMUNITIES LIVING AND WORKING IN THE PARK

6.1 Introduction – Encouraging Sustainable Development

As well as being a national asset and a place of recreation and enjoyment, the Park is a place of work and daily life for approximately 16,000 people. The economic and social needs and issues in the Park are similar to those throughout rural Scotland, but its designation as a National Park brings a new focus to finding solutions that are sustainable in the long-term.

The goal of sustainable development means that the basic resources and special qualities of the Park must be safeguarded. In turn, these support the health and well-being and meet the needs of communities.

There is an opportunity in the Park to bring a renewed focus to sustainable development, building on the existing links between the economy, the natural environment and communities. The integration of these interests should ensure that economic development builds on the special qualities of the Park, is consistent with their conservation and enhancement, and meets the needs of the Park's communities.

The Park needs strong communities that are actively engaged in its management and shaping their own future. This section sets out strategic objectives to support and encourage the development of communities and the economy to help improve the well-being of those living and working in the Park and contribute to its long-term sustainability.

6.2 Economy and Employment

The economy of the Park is focused on a few key sectors, principally tourism, land management, public service and small-scale production such as brewing and distilling. The land management objectives in Section 5 contribute significantly to supporting the economy and communities, through those sectors that are directly related

to managing the resources of the Park. This section sets out objectives for the broader economy in the Park to strengthen its viability and ensure it contributes positively to all four aims of the Park.

Compared with Scotland as a whole, there is low unemployment and a high number of self-employed. However, many jobs in these sectors are highly seasonal with little long-term security, and these figures may mask the fact that many have to look elsewhere or leave the area to find work. There is an opportunity to focus on developing the economy in ways which are consistent with the special qualities of the Park and help to sustain thriving communities.

Strategic Objectives:

a) Create conditions conducive to business growth and investment that are consistent with the special qualities of the Park.

The special qualities and environment of the Park provide an opportunity to underpin business growth and investment in the area. The long-term management of the Park requires the development of the economy and communities to go hand-in-hand with the conservation and enhancement of the special qualities which give the Park its identity and provide many of its resources.

b) Encourage entrepreneurship, especially in young people and in sectors which complement the special qualities of the Park.

Entrepreneurship is vital to encourage more business growth and raise income levels in the Park. Young people with good ideas need to be supported, whether through better vocational training or information from an early stage on how they can obtain the skills they seek. In particular, the opportunities associated with the sustainable use of the natural and cultural resources of the Park should be encouraged.

c) Promote ‘green business’ opportunities.

As well as an area of outstanding conservation value, the Park is a place to work, and should be a place where businesses can thrive. Promoting green business means encouraging sectors that complement the Park’s aims and do not adversely impact on the special qualities. Assisting with resource and energy efficiency, waste management, promoting green tourism, stewardship by land-based businesses and backing of research and development within the Park are all opportunities for support.

d) Promote diversity and equality of employment opportunities across all areas of the Park.

Everyone living in the Park should have the same chance of developing to their full professional potential. This means ensuring that the Park encompasses a variety of sectors and does not rely on a narrow economic base. Specific groups need support to make certain that there is access for everyone in the jobs market, within and outside the Park.

e) Address barriers to employment uptake.

Currently there are a number of barriers to employment such as poor access to transport, seasonal demand for employment, lack of childcare and the inflexibility of working hours. Childcare is often inadequate to meet parents’ needs, particularly in sparsely populated areas. Through Childcare Partnerships, childminder and nursery provision can be improved in some places. Measures to address these barriers will encourage greater employment, contributing to more sustainable communities.

f) Raise the profile and excellence of local produce and services.

A relatively high proportion of the value of local products is currently taken out of the local economy through processing and sale

elsewhere. Strengthening local supply chains, branding and marketing, and adding value through processing local produce can all help to retain a greater share of the economic value deriving from the resources in the Park.

g) Encourage a population level and mix in the Park that meets the current and future needs of its communities and businesses.

Many of the objectives in this section of the Plan will influence and contribute to the population level and mix. However, at a time when the national population is expected to decline and age, it is an important aspiration to encourage a population in the Park that can continue to support thriving communities in the long-term.

Existing policy context

- Framework for Economic Development in Scotland 2004
- Smart Successful Scotland 2005
- Highlands and Islands Special Transitional Programme
- European Union Objective 2 Programme

Key implementation strategies

- Sustainable Business Framework
- Education and Youth Strategy
- Cairngorms Local Plan

Cross-reference

- 5.4 Integrated Land Management
- 6.4 Sustainable Tourism

6.3 Education and Training

The availability and quality of education and training for everyone is a key part of strengthening both the communities and the economy of the Park. There is a need to ensure that learning opportunities meet the needs of the communities and businesses in the Park, together with education that equips people with the skills, knowledge and confidence they need to reach their full potential.

Formal and informal education and training should seek to draw on the special qualities of

6. COMMUNITIES LIVING AND WORKING IN THE PARK...cont

the Park and use the Park as a context for learning. This section complements the broader objectives for informal learning and understanding set out in Section 7.4 – Learning and Understanding.

Strategic Objectives:

a) Promote access to education and vocational training at all levels across the Park.

Those wishing to study and train locally require more opportunities to do so. The provision of more trainers, courses and modules delivered in the Park will assist local people to gain skills that will ensure long-term and year-round levels of better-paid work.

b) Develop educational resources that draw on the special qualities of the Park.

There are opportunities to develop education at all levels that draw on, and in turn develop understanding of, the special qualities of the Park. These include the use of local examples, case studies and site visits within the school curriculum, and opportunities to build on the existing provision of outdoor education and tourism training provided within the Park. A focus on the educational resources the Park offers will help to ensure relevant training for future business needs and develop a longer-term understanding of the Park.

c) Ensure a match between training provision and current/future skills needs.

It is vital that the needs of local businesses and school leavers are met by local and national training and education schemes. Schemes should be both relevant and useful to local companies and young people.

d) Develop and support opportunities for volunteering.

Some local schemes are already in place to help people volunteer across a range of areas. The opportunity exists to better co-ordinate volunteering in all sectors,

particularly related to the special qualities of the Park and to develop more local initiatives to allow residents and visitors to take part in caring for the National Park.

Existing policy context

- Education and Training (Scotland) Act 2000
- Smart Successful Scotland 2005

Key implementation strategies

- Education and Youth Strategy
- Land-Based Business Training Project

Cross-reference

- 7.4 Learning and Understanding

6.4 Sustainable Tourism

European Charter for Sustainable Tourism

In July 2005, the Cairngorms National Park was the first UK National Park to be awarded the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism by the EUROPARC Federation. The Charter recognises that the management of tourism in the Cairngorms National Park addresses the balance between the needs of visitors, the environment and the local communities. It emphasises the need to conserve and promote the special qualities of the Park as the basis of tourism and sets four key aims on which management is based:

- To conserve, enhance and gain value from the environment and heritage;
- To increase economic and social benefits from tourism;
- To protect and improve the quality of life of local people;
- To engage in effective visitor management and enhance the quality of tourism offered.

There are currently 19 protected areas throughout Europe where sustainable tourism management is recognised by award of the Charter. The tourism and visitor management objectives of the Park Plan will be delivered partly through the Sustainable Tourism Strategy. This has been developed by a partnership of the tourism sector in the Park.

Strategic Objectives:

- a) **Maintain a high quality environment by encouraging sound environmental management and support for nature conservation by all those involved in tourism in the Park.**

The high quality environment forms the basis for tourism in the Park and is therefore one of the sector's most important assets. Everyone involved in tourism should minimise negative impacts and support positive enhancement of the environment. This includes action for the landscape and habitat resources that underpin much of the visitor appeal, as well as sound environmental management practice in individual tourist businesses. Those advising and supporting the development of new tourism businesses should ensure that high environmental standards are built into business development.

- b) **Raise awareness of the Park as a premier, year-round rural tourism destination in the UK, recognising its outstanding natural heritage and its National Park status.**

A co-ordinated approach to marketing the special qualities of the Cairngorms National Park can increase awareness, nationally and internationally, and encourage more visits to the Park. Many businesses are seeking to increase their income throughout the year, particularly by boosting visits outside the current peak seasons. Marketing should be consistent with the good management of the special qualities that underpin the Park's appeal and bring together VisitScotland and private sector networks.

- c) **Ensure effective involvement by all stakeholders in the planning, development and management of tourism in the Park, and maintain good communication between them.**

Structures that bring together organisations and people with different interests to work in partnership are needed to deliver a sustainable approach to tourism. The interests of industry providers, visitors, land managers and communities need to come together to develop a mutual

understanding and communication of each other's needs and priorities.

- d) **Strengthen and maintain the viability of the tourism industry in the Park and the contribution that it makes to the local economy.**

Despite the importance of tourism to the local economy, many individual businesses are relatively fragile and are seeking additional income to underpin their viability. In addition to the promotion and marketing of the Park, there is a need to support business development and increase the economic benefits generated in the local economy through strengthening local supply chains.

- e) **Improve and maintain the quality of experience in the Park for all visitors, communities and those working within the tourism industry.**

The quality of experience is key to the long-term sustainability of tourism. This includes the experience that visitors enjoy when they come to the Park, the experience of those working in the industry and the interactions between communities and local tourism providers. In all these, good practice should be recognised and become the benchmark for everyone involved in tourism across the Park.

Existing policy context

- European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas
- New Strategy for Scottish Tourism 2000
- Tourism Framework for Action 2002
- Scottish Tourism Environment Forum

Key implementation strategies

- Sustainable Tourism Strategy

Cross-reference

- 5.2.2 Nature Conservation
- 6.2 Economy and Employment
- 7.2 Outdoor Access and Recreation
- 7.3 Visitor Services
- 7.4 Learning and Understanding

6. COMMUNITIES LIVING AND WORKING IN THE PARK...cont

6.5 Transport and Communications

Although the Park is relatively well served by road and rail transport links to outside centres such as Inverness, Aberdeen and Perth, links within the Park, particularly east-west, are less well developed. Bus services provide the main form of public transport within the Park, and provide an opportunity to expand the service provision to benefit residents, visitors and reduce the number of journeys by car. Telecommunications is generally good in the main settlements of the Park and most are able to handle broadband.

The A9 and A93 are significant transport and transmission corridors within the Park and their future development and impacts need to be managed with reference to the aims of the Park and minimising adverse effects on the special qualities.

Strategic Objectives:

a) Encourage and support improvements to public transport quality and accessibility to better meet demand and increase use.

Use of public transport is currently limited by route provision, frequency and a lack of connectivity in places. Services should be targeted to meet the needs of residents and visitors, with a particular focus on integration between transport types. Better information for residents and visitors on timetables will increase ease of access and use.

b) Ensure transport and communications infrastructure is managed and developed in ways consistent with the special qualities of the Park.

The transport and communications infrastructure provides valuable benefits to the Park, but the potential negative impacts of it on the landscape, natural heritage and other special qualities should be minimised.

The immediate surroundings of transport routes form an important part of the experience of the Park for both residents and visitors and should be managed to retain and enhance features such as walls and hedges and provide safe viewpoints.

c) Improve access to and encourage use of information technology, so creating opportunities for businesses and individuals to stay in, or locate to, the Park.

Most areas of Scotland have access to Broadband. The expansion of its use can assist in attracting hi-tech businesses to the Park, and better support home-workers and small or medium scale enterprises.

Existing policy context

- Transport White Paper 2004
- Scotland's Transport Future
- HITRANS Regional Transport Strategy
- NESTRANS 'Delivering a Modern Transport System'

Key implementation strategies

- Cairngorms Local Plan

Cross-reference

- 6.2 Economy and Employment
- 7.3 Visitor Services

6.6 Housing

The main housing challenge within the Park is the need to ensure greater access to affordable and good quality housing to meet the needs of the Park's communities. This includes both owner-occupier properties and those rented through social and private landlords.

New supply of housing should be consistent with the special qualities of the Park, use local materials where possible and meet the highest standards of water and energy efficiency and sustainable design.

Strategic Objectives:

a) Increase the accessibility of rented and owned housing to meet the needs of communities throughout the Park.

There is a need to ensure access to rented and low cost housing in perpetuity. This means identifying appropriate sites for housing and prioritising these in strategic planning as well as in funding programmes, and making appropriate provision for land through the Local Plan.

Access to housing could be increased by looking at new and existing properties, along with different mechanisms for housing, such as the use of local letting initiatives and the use of the rural housing burden to keep rented and home ownership affordable in the long term.

b) Promote effective co-ordination and co-operation between all public and private organisations involved in housing provision in the Park and the communities living there.

To achieve all the housing objectives, there is a need for all organisations involved to work closely together in developing the Housing Action Plan, sharing information and good practice and shaping future policy.

This requires good communication between the public and private sectors as well as within the public sector.

c) Improve the physical quality, energy efficiency and sustainable design of housing in all tenures throughout the Park.

Housing in the Park should aim to be an exemplar of good practice in energy and water efficiency and sustainable design. The lessons learned from different construction methods and approaches should be shared between partners to ensure a continuing improvement in quality and efficiency. The Local Plan and associated design guidance should promote high quality design and efficiency.

d) Ensure there is effective land and investment for market and affordable housing to meet the economic and social needs of communities throughout the Park.

The availability of appropriate land and investment in infrastructure and services is key to the provision of housing. To ensure the availability of land and investment in the Park that is consistent with the special qualities of the area and avoids damage to important nature conservation sites and species, a long-term strategy and partnership is required.

Existing policy context

- The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001
- The Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003
- Homelessness etc (Scotland) Act 2003
- Crofters Acts 1993 and 1997
- Title Conditions (Scotland) Act 2003

Key implementation strategies

- Housing Action Plan
- Cairngorms Local Plan

Cross-reference

- 6.2 Economy and Employment
- 6.9 Strengthening Communities

6. COMMUNITIES LIVING AND WORKING IN THE PARK...cont

6.7 Renewable Energy

There is currently no significant energy generation within the Park, and settlements draw their energy needs from the National Grid. In pursuit of more sustainable development, there is a significant opportunity in the Park to develop renewable sources of energy (including heat) such as biomass, wind and solar to serve communities and households. While large-scale commercial energy installations such as wind farms are not considered appropriate in the Park, the development of domestic and community-scale facilities should be pursued in appropriate locations.

Strategic Objectives:

a) Help achieve national targets for greater renewable production through community and domestic scale schemes.

There is a need to raise the awareness of the range of renewable energy sources available and to encourage the necessary supply chains and infrastructure. By supporting small-scale schemes within communities, in halls, houses, land-based industries and small businesses, the Park can help Scotland achieve its national targets and work towards an efficient use of energy within the Park. There is a particular opportunity to develop the use of wood-fuel energy within the Park. The public sector should take a lead in using renewable energy in its own facilities within the Park.

b) Help communities and households to obtain the information, expertise and support they need to reduce energy consumption and increase renewable generation.

There is a wide range of technology, expertise and information available on renewable energy technologies including biomass, wind and solar generation, together with measures to reduce energy consumption.

The key to realising this potential is to provide communities and householders with easily accessible support and guidance that links the process and organisations together.

c) Support research into renewable energies in the Park

As a rural area with low energy generation levels, the area has to import much of its power and technological know-how. By promoting the Park as a suitable place to develop renewable energy research and development, we can help Scotland take a lead in finding alternative energy sources, while contributing to the aims of the Park.

Existing policy context

- UK Climate Change Programme
- Securing a Renewable Future: Scotland's Renewable Energy

Key implementation strategies

- Cairngorms Local Plan

Cross-reference

- 5.2.1 Landscape
- 5.3 Sustainable Use of Natural Resources
- 6.2 Economy and Employment
- 6.9 Strengthening Communities

6.8 Waste Management

Current waste management schemes vary across local authority areas and include some kerbside provision and a number of recycling points. The long-term approach to waste management in the Park must firstly reduce the amount of waste to the minimum through careful use and re-use, then to ensure that there are easily accessible recycling facilities within communities.

Strategic Objectives:

a) Exceed national targets for better waste management through community and domestic scale schemes.

Management of waste should exceed national targets. Waste should be minimised, re-used or recycled and the necessary infrastructure to enable communities, individuals and businesses to re-use and recycle should be developed.

b) Increase awareness of the benefits of effective waste management through reducing, re-using and recycling.

Waste is a potential resource which can have economic and social benefits, but its inefficient processing, particularly through landfill, results in the loss of raw materials and further impact on the environment. Through raising awareness of the impacts of producing and processing waste, communities and businesses can adapt systems to manage resources more efficiently through their life-cycle. Termed

'Zero Waste', this approach includes increasing the number of local composting, re-use and recycling projects, through partnerships of community initiatives, private waste companies and local authorities.

c) Encourage provision of waste management infrastructure at domestic and commercial scale.

Greater provision at the domestic and commercial scale should be developed to ensure that it is easier to re-use and recycle waste.

d) Reduce litter in the Park.

As a National Park with an outstanding natural environment and an important tourist industry, reducing the presence of litter across the Park, particularly around roads, settlements and popular visitor attractions, will contribute significantly to the quality of life and experience in the Park.

Existing policy context

- National Waste Strategy
- Area Waste Plans
- NPPG 10
- Landfill Directive

Key implementation strategies

- Cairngorms Local Plan

6. COMMUNITIES LIVING AND WORKING IN THE PARK...cont

6.9 Strengthening Communities

The Park's population (16,024 in 2001 census) is focused in communities of varied size, spread across 23 community council areas. Key to fulfilling the over-arching principle of community participation in the Park's management as set out in Section 3 is the need to support communities in this role. The stronger the capacity, knowledge and resources of communities, the more effective will be their role in shaping the future of the Park.

Strategic Objectives:

a) Strengthen the capacity of local communities and encourage community development.

Communities should be supported in building their capacity, knowledge and resources to encourage development and activity within individual communities, and effective engagement with shaping the Park and other public policy.

b) Promote provision of local services that meet the needs of communities.

The provision of services should contribute to thriving communities that have the appropriate facilities to meet their needs. Access to services including schools, health care and social infrastructure such as shops, post offices, pubs and phone boxes is key to the long-term sustainability of communities. New development should seek to reinforce the sustainability of communities and support the provision of services in settlements.

c) Promote community involvement and wider representation in the management of the Park.

Local communities should be able to inform and participate in the management of the Park, and be well-informed about its management. Communities should be able

to understand the role of public bodies and how they can contribute to and influence their work. Public bodies should have an understanding of the needs and issues at a community level, and how to engage effectively with communities.

Community Planning

Community Planning has become established as an effective means for people to become involved in the planning and development of their area, and have a say in its future. The formal processes of Community Planning carried out through local authorities already provide a good basis for people to influence the future management and development of the Park and their communities.

The principles of Community Planning should be extended as a means to involve people in management planning across all aspects of this Park Plan – it is only through active engagement that the knowledge, needs and ambitions of communities can be shared and realised.

Existing policy context

- National Standards for Community Engagement

Key implementation strategies:

- Cairngorms Local Plan

Cross-reference

- 5.4 Integrated Land Management
- 5.5.2 Culture and Traditions
- 7.2 Outdoor Access and Recreation

7. UNDERSTANDING AND ENJOYING THE PARK



7. UNDERSTANDING AND ENJOYING THE PARK

7.1 Introduction – Understanding and Enjoying the Special Qualities of the Park

Combined with the outstanding natural environment and cultural heritage, the range of outdoor activities and visitor attractions in the Park make it a place that both residents and visitors enjoy. The experiences of residents and visitors enjoying the Park should be of the highest quality. Part of the integration required in managing the Park is to promote understanding and enjoyment, including recreation, in ways that are not only consistent with the special qualities, but actively develop understanding about the Park and contribute to its conservation and enhancement.

The promotion and management of outdoor access and visitor services is an integral part of developing a sustainable approach to tourism, in line with the principles of the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism (see Section 6.4). The right of responsible access to land and water, supported by the Scottish Outdoor Access Code, provides the starting point. The Park however, has an opportunity to build on this context and help those enjoying the countryside and those managing it to understand the others' needs and ensure that outdoor access contributes to all four aims of the Park.

The need to understand what makes the Park so special and how it functions does not just apply to visitors, but includes residents, businesses, specialist interest groups and people elsewhere in Scotland. The Park is a national asset, and effective future management relies on informed debate and understanding of the Park, and its national and international importance.

7.2 Outdoor Access and Recreation

Many people enjoy outdoor access in the Park in a wide variety of forms, whether as part of their everyday routine, regular visits or occasional holidays. It offers an exceptional range of recreation opportunities for people of varied interests.

The Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 and Scottish Outdoor Access Code provide for a right of responsible access to land and water. It is important to note that the responsibility lies with both those taking recreation and those providing access. The interaction between those taking access, land management and the natural heritage is key to the integrated approach required in the Park. The challenge within the Park is to establish a positive approach to managing and taking access that not only safeguards, but also enhances the special qualities and improves people's understanding of the Park.

Strategic Objectives:

a) Encourage people of all ages and abilities to enjoy and experience the outdoor environment.

People of all ages and abilities, regardless of social, economic or physical constraints, should be able to enjoy and experience the special qualities of the Cairngorms safely. This means that a range of opportunities should be available, from organised activities to informal exploration, from guided or way-marked routes through to unmarked routes, from quiet enjoyment to adventure sports. The quality of outdoor access infrastructure, for example the paths, should be enhanced so as to be accessible and appropriate for a range of different users and appropriate to the landscape and natural heritage setting.

b) Encourage responsible enjoyment of the Park so that its special qualities are understood and appreciated, and safeguarded now and for future generations to enjoy.

The enjoyment of the special qualities of the Park must be accompanied by an understanding of responsibilities to other visitors, land managers, communities and the natural and cultural heritage to ensure that the very qualities people come to enjoy are safeguarded. Those enjoying outdoor access should develop an understanding of their potential impacts and responsibilities and ensure that they help to maintain the special qualities of the Park.

c) Co-ordinate the effort of key public, private and voluntary sector interests in the sustainable management of outdoor access throughout the Park.

To secure responsible outdoor access throughout the Park in the long-term requires co-ordination of the efforts of a wide range of interests, to develop a mutual understanding and to communicate each other's needs and priorities. This includes public agencies, land managers, tourism operators, communities, sports and access user groups.

d) Support and encourage local community involvement in management of outdoor access throughout the Park.

People in communities have a particular interest in local outdoor access routes surrounding their homes. Often these provide access facilities for residents' recreation, dog-walking, routes to schools or shops, as well as being part of a wider access network used by others. Local routes can also form important attractions linked to local businesses and community interpretation facilities. It is therefore desirable that communities play a key role

in developing and managing the outdoor access routes around their homes, to maximise the potential benefits.

e) Encourage responsible management of outdoor access and develop a common understanding of the needs of managers and users.

The strong links between land management, access and tourism in the Park, together with the presence of some vulnerable habitats, requires a pro-active approach to managing outdoor access. Building on the approach to responsible management identified in the Scottish Outdoor Access Code, support should be given to land managers and access providers to share knowledge and experience in developing good practice in access management.

f) Protect the more fragile areas of the Park from pressures arising from outdoor access and recreation.

There are areas of the Park, particularly parts of the mountains, native woodlands and water, in which there are nationally and internationally important, but fragile, habitats or species present. These are a key part of the Park's natural heritage and underpin its designation and attraction.

There are also many important sites of cultural and historic significance in the Park, some of which are vulnerable. These areas must be protected from the physical pressures arising from outdoor access and recreation and sites that are currently suffering from these pressures should be addressed. Those enjoying the outdoors can contribute to this protection through responsible behaviour and taking positive action to conserve these important interests.

7. UNDERSTANDING AND ENJOYING THE PARK...cont

Existing policy context

- Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003
- Scottish Outdoor Access Code
- Scotland's Transport Future

Key implementation strategies

- Outdoor Access Strategy
- Sustainable Tourism Strategy
- Integrated Land Management Strategy
- Interpretation Framework
- Cairngorms Local Plan

Cross-reference

- 5.2.2 Nature Conservation
- 5.4 Integrated Land Management
- 6.4 Sustainable Tourism
- 7.3 Visitor Services

Local Outdoor Access Forum

The Park Authority has established a Local Outdoor Access Forum to advise on the exercise of access rights, rights of way and development of a core paths plan for the Park. The Park Authority has a statutory duty to establish this Forum, and its membership brings together experienced people from a variety of different fields – land managers, recreational users and community representatives – interested in or affected by access rights.

The Forum advises the Park Authority and others on:

- Strategic outdoor access issues;
- Preparation of an Outdoor Access Strategy;
- Preparation and adoption of a Core Paths Plan;
- Resolution of disputes concerning the exercise of access rights.

It also promotes responsible access and land management through the Scottish Outdoor Access Code, promotes discussion and sharing of good practice and supports the provision of appropriate infrastructure.

7.3 Visitor Services

The visitor experience in the Park should be of the highest quality and be renowned internationally as a well managed area that not only meets the needs of visitors, but gives them an understanding of the Park and allows them to contribute positively to its conservation and enhancement.

The services provided to visitors will have a significant impact on their understanding and enjoyment of the Park. The definition of visitors in this Plan includes all those who take access in and enjoy the Park, irrespective of whether they live within or outside it. Good quality information needs to be targeted at specific audiences, drawing out key themes and messages. The provision of information in different forms, before, during and after visits, is an important part of developing awareness and understanding, but face-to-face contact with people, such as accommodation providers and ranger services, is also important.

The impacts of visitors must also be managed so that the natural and cultural heritage qualities which underpin the Park's attraction are conserved and enhanced. Good information will help visitors to safeguard the special qualities and contribute positively to the Park. There is space within the Park to accommodate many different forms of recreation without impinging unduly on each other or other interests, but this requires active management to spread the benefits of visitors, and to encourage visitors to experience different parts of the Park.

Strategic Objectives:

- a) **Develop and maintain a wide range of opportunities for visitors to experience and enjoy the special qualities, distinctiveness and natural and cultural heritage of the Park.**

The special natural and cultural heritage qualities of the Park underpin its appeal and offer a distinctive visitor experience. Development of tourism products and services should help to develop discovery and understanding of the area through activities, events and products that draw on the special qualities of the Park. Focusing on this distinctiveness offers the potential for greater long-term sustainability in economic, environmental and social terms.

- b) **Ensure that visitors to the Cairngorms are aware of the range of opportunities, places to visit and things to do throughout the Park, and appreciate and respect its special qualities.**

The transfer of information to visitors about the Park, its special qualities and ways in which they can be experienced is key to

developing an appreciation and understanding of the area and what it offers. It is therefore an important process for managing tourism and encouraging greater exploration, longer stays, increased spending, responsible behaviour and repeat visits.

- c) **Encourage an optimum flow and spread of visitors across the Park and minimise social and environmental impact including traffic generated by visitors and conflicts between different forms of recreation.**

While tourism is a vital part of the local economy, its impacts on the environment and local communities need to be managed to ensure long-term sustainability. Certain attractions or areas may suffer damage to the habitats or species that people come to enjoy, disruption or congestion in local communities or more general traffic congestion. All these potential impacts should be taken into account in managing tourism, and their negative effects minimised. It is also desirable to spread the benefits of tourism across different areas of the Park and throughout the year.



Photo: David Gowans.

7. UNDERSTANDING AND ENJOYING THE PARK...cont

- d) **Ensure that visitor information is targeted at specific audiences and encourages resource protection, responsible access, visitor safety, and the health benefits of regular outdoor exercise.**

As well as promoting the special qualities of the Park, visitor information should promote an understanding of visitor impacts on the natural heritage and help people to take action that reduces their impact and ensures long-term resource protection. It should also help people to understand their impacts on other users, land or water management and communities, and advise on responsible and safe ways to enjoy the Park. The health benefits of outdoor access and activities should also be promoted as part of a coherent approach to the benefits and responsibilities for visitors enjoying the Park.

- e) **Ensure a cohesive Park-wide approach to ranger services which meets the needs of visitors, communities and land managers.**

The ranger services in the Park are a valuable contact between visitors, communities and land managers, and contribute to many other strategic objectives through their roles in promoting enjoyment and understanding and managing the interactions of visitors with the places and communities they come to see. To the visitor, ranger services are a popular point of contact for information about the National Park. A cohesive approach to service delivery, closely linked to the Park, is needed to maximise the opportunities of both local and Park-wide knowledge.

- f) **Collate, analyse and use the best available information on visitor numbers, distribution, activities and perceptions to inform visitor management.**

To deliver all objectives relating to visitor management and tourism, from the quality of experience to resource protection, requires up-to-date information about visitor numbers, distribution, activities and perceptions. Although a wealth of information is currently collected, there are opportunities to put it to better use. Everyone involved in visitor management should seek to source and use the best available information in their planning and decision making, and the information should be widely available in a variety of forms.

Existing policy context

- New Strategy for Scottish Tourism, 2000
- Tourism Framework for Action 2002
- Scottish Tourism Environment Forum
- European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas

Key implementation strategies

- Sustainable Tourism Strategy
- Outdoor Access Strategy
- Interpretation Framework

Cross-reference

- 5.4 Integrated Land Management
- 6.4 Sustainable Tourism
- 6.5 Transport and Communications
- 7.2 Outdoor Access and Recreation

7.4 Learning and Understanding

Resolving the special management challenges that led to the area's designation as a National Park is complex. Many approaches have been tried over the years with varying success. It is clear that a renewed emphasis on bringing together the people involved in all aspects of the Park is needed, to strengthen their mutual understanding and capacity to tackle the sometimes conflicting challenges. Awareness of the Park and its special qualities is a necessary basis on which to influence future management and develop understanding about the connections between activities and the consequences of our collective actions.

As well as developing learning and understanding within the Park, it is important to raise awareness and understanding of the Park, its special qualities and its status as a national asset across Scotland and beyond. The lessons learned in other areas of the world should also be used in developing understanding of the Park in its Scottish and international context.

Strategic Objectives:

- a) **Encourage learning about sustainable development in ways that are related to people's everyday lives and focus on the special character and distinctive identity of the Park, and the management required to conserve and enhance it.**

The concept of sustainable development can best be explained and understood through reference to the interactions of the special qualities of the Park, their management and the use of resources and energy in everyday contexts. The challenge is to bring the concept to life in ways that are rooted in people's everyday experiences and the places they know.

- b) **Encourage people of all ages, abilities and walks of life to get outdoors frequently and experience the special natural and cultural qualities of the area at first hand.** Understanding about the Park and its management goes hand-in-hand with experiencing its places and its special qualities at first hand. Formal and informal education should take every opportunity to use the Park as a learning resource and help people of all ages to explore and get to know it. More should be made of the opportunities to use creative approaches to engage people in the outdoors including music, art and drama.
- c) **Capture knowledge and factual information about the Park in a range of appropriate ways so that it is easily available to anyone who wants to use it and can be passed on to future generations.** Information about the Park, its special qualities and its management needs to be widely available and accessible to people with a wide spectrum of interest and specialist knowledge. There is a great deal of information held locally or by individuals that is not formally recorded, but that contributes greatly to our understanding of the area's history, use and communities. Finding ways to capture and transfer both oral and written information is important to developing understanding about the Park and informing its future management.
- d) **Ensure that the Park is a place where both scientific and traditional forms of knowledge about the land and its management are valued and put to good use in the long-term management of the area.** There is a significant amount of scientific data on certain aspects of the Cairngorms,

7. UNDERSTANDING AND ENJOYING THE PARK...cont

and there is a wealth of knowledge amongst those who have lived and worked in the area. It is important that the future management draws on the full range of this knowledge, using the best available information from scientific study and formal monitoring, together with the experience of people that have lived and worked in the area.

e) **Increase mutual understanding and trust amongst people interested in the Park through exchange of ideas, perspectives and knowledge.**

The successful management of the Park in the long-term relies on a mutual understanding of the needs and priorities of different interests, and a trust between them in sharing information and working together to resolve potentially conflicting objectives. Communication and exchange of ideas, different perspectives and individual knowledge is the key to developing this understanding and trust and to ensuring that future management is based on well-informed and constructive debate. This will require, amongst other things, the formation of appropriate inter-disciplinary groups and skilled facilitation.

f) **Seek and share experience and knowledge from the management of other areas in Scotland and the world.**

There is a wide range of experience in managing protected areas around the world, and managing other rural areas in Scotland. Many other areas face similar challenges to the Park and everyone involved in it should look continually to identify good practice. They should also learn from experience elsewhere in order to inform management tailored to the particular circumstances of the Park. The transfer of experience to and from the Park is vital to informing Scottish and

international debate about resource management, land-use and rural development.

g) **Ensure that people across Scotland are aware of the Cairngorms National Park and understand why it is worth investing in.**

The Park is a national asset and information about the Park, its management and the opportunities for enjoying it should be widely available to everyone in Scotland and beyond. The Park has many important natural and cultural heritage qualities and it is important to develop understanding at a national level of its value, international status and management needs. In turn, management of the Park should be informed by national perspectives.

Existing policy context

- National Priorities for Schools: National Priority 4, Values and Citizenship

Key implementation strategies

- Sustainable Tourism Strategy
- Education and Youth Strategy
- Outdoor Access Strategy
- Interpretation Framework

Cross-reference

- 6.3 Education and Training
- 6.4 Sustainable Tourism

8. IMPLEMENTATION



8. IMPLEMENTATION

8.1 A Partnership Approach

The strategic objectives identified in the previous sections have been developed in partnership with a diverse range of organisations involved in managing the Park (see Annex 1). The implementation of these objectives and the priorities for action that flow from them relies equally on this diverse range of organisations. The agenda set out by the Park Plan has a scope beyond the remit of any one organisation, including the Park Authority. It sets out the co-ordinated approach needed across a range of organisations to work towards the aims of the Park.

The principal role of the Park Authority is to lead the partnerships required to achieve these objectives and co-ordinate delivery of the action programmes set out in the accompanying Priorities for Action, in which a range of organisations have responsibility to take action.

The Park Authority and all public bodies prepare corporate plans which set out the priorities for the organisation over a three to five year period, guide their allocation of resources and determine their operational activities. The Park Authority's corporate plan will in future be shaped by the objectives and priorities set out in the Park Plan. Similarly, the corporate plans of other public bodies will reflect the objectives and priorities of the Park Plan, so far as their work affects the aims of the Park.

This co-ordination will be overseen by the National Park's Advisory Panel on Joined-up Government, which brings together senior representatives of public agencies. Its role is to ensure sufficient co-ordination across the public sector to deliver the Plan effectively and efficiently.

8.2 Priorities for Action 2007-2012

The long-term strategy set out here identifies a broad range of objectives which will direct the strategic planning and day-to-day working of all public bodies in the Park, and influence the private, community and voluntary sectors. Work towards these objectives will form part of good day-to-day management and governance for all public bodies and others involved in managing the Park, through the partnership approach described above.

However, given the breadth of the long-term vision, a particular focus is required to ensure that the most pressing issues and challenges are tackled. This means that the varied partners need to combine and co-ordinate their resources over a common timescale to tackle the areas that will make most impact on achieving the objectives in the immediate future.

The second part of this Park Plan is therefore the Priorities for Action 2007-2012. This accompanying action plan identifies seven priority areas on which to focus resources and effort over the next five year period. It sets out an initial programme of action for each priority, to be delivered by a range of partners. These action programmes will be developed by the partners during 2006 and will be informed by the public consultation. The detailed work programmes that result will form a part of the final Park Plan that will be completed towards the end of 2006.

9. MONITORING AND REVIEW



9. MONITORING AND REVIEW

There are two distinct strands to the monitoring and review process. Firstly, the collective actions being achieved will be monitored. Secondly, the impact of everyone's work on the Park as a whole will be considered, and the extent to which the four aims of the Park are being achieved collectively will be monitored.

The first monitors work on the ground; and the second looks at its impact on the Park. Both will feed into a review of the Plan over time.

9.1 Monitoring Delivery of the Plan

Work programmes for delivery of the Plan's priorities for action will be monitored to assess whether they are being delivered. These work programmes will include actions that are the responsibility of several different organisations operating within the Park.

Under each of the priorities for action, detailed monitoring and review frameworks will be developed in conjunction with key partners as a part of working up the full work programme for 2007-2012, and will be included in the finalised Park Plan.

9.2 Monitoring the 'Health' of the Park

The Plan sets out a number of strategic objectives which seek to achieve the four aims of the Park. As well as detailed monitoring of actions which flow from these objectives, it is important to assess whether the aims and strategic objectives of the Park as a whole are being achieved. Key questions that we will need to be able to answer in the future include:

- Are the four aims being achieved collectively?
- Is the Park as a whole going in the right direction?
- Are the special qualities of the Park being conserved, enhanced and enjoyed?

To answer these questions, a set of indicators are proposed to provide a snapshot of the overall 'health' of the Park at any given time and to feed into a review of the cumulative impact of the Plan on the Park. The proposed themes for health indicators are detailed below as part of this consultation.

Monitoring the state of the Park will be an ongoing process, but the information will be formally collated and published at five-yearly intervals in an update to the State of the Park Report. This will also draw together updated information on the Park's resources deriving from the Park's ongoing research programme and other sources.

9.3 Proposed Health Indicators

The table opposite proposes indicator themes that together will provide a snapshot of the state of the Park at any given time. We intend to develop indicators for each of these themes in conjunction with partners as part of the consultation on the Draft Park Plan. The agreed indicators will be included in the finalised Park Plan.

A monitoring regime will be established for the agreed indicators and will inform the interim reporting on the Park Plan and State of the Park Report, and its review at five-year intervals.

The table opposite summarises the proposed indicator themes and identifies their relevance to the four aims of the Park (see Section 1.1)

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED INDICATOR THEMES

No	Indicator Theme	Relevance to Park Aims			
		Aim 1	Aim 2	Aim 3	Aim 4
1.	Landscape change	•	•	•	•
2.	Affordable housing	•	•		•
3.	Population profile			•	•
4.	Seasonal employment rates by sector				•
5.	Agricultural activity	•	•	•	•
6.	Biodiversity	•	•	•	•
7.	Water quality	•	•	•	•
8.	Traffic volumes and modes	•	•	•	•
9.	Education and learning	•	•	•	•
10.	Waste	•	•		•
11.	Visitor enjoyment of the Park	•	•	•	•
12.	Cultural heritage	•	•	•	•
13.	Business health				•
14.	Geographical availability of services				•
15.	Community vibrancy	•		•	•

9.4 Explanation of Proposed Indicator Themes

9.4.1 Landscape Change

The distinctive landscape character of the Park has been identified as one of its most recognised special qualities. The landscape is a product of many different influences including natural processes, land management and the composition of habitats and species. Monitoring the landscape change over time will therefore give an insight into the cumulative impacts of several different processes influencing the Park.

Potential indicators include:

- Land-use cover change;
- Change in field boundary features (hedges and dykes).

9.4.2 Affordable Housing

Access to affordable housing is an essential component of sustainable economic and social development and influences whether people in lower income brackets are able to live and work in the Park. The affordability of housing is influenced by the demand for housing, proportion

of second homes, income levels, the supply of housing and co-ordination of housing needs and supply. Monitoring the affordability of housing therefore gives an indication of the health of communities.

Potential indicators include:

- Ratio of households in priority need, to number of annual social rented properties available;
- Level of private landlords' uptake of grants and other forms of assistance to provide affordable rented housing.

9.4.3 Population Profile

The population profile of the Park gives an insight into the structure and vitality of communities, the economic health, and the skills and labour necessary for long-term sustainability. Changes in population profile may have long-term implications for the Park's communities and economy, and the services required to meet the needs of communities.

9. MONITORING AND REVIEW...cont

Potential indicators include:

- Proportion of population of working age;
- Proportion of population under 25 years old.

9.4.4 Seasonal Employment Rates by Sector

Employment enables people to meet their needs and improve their living standard and addresses the problems of poverty and social exclusion. Monitoring employment, unemployment and vacancy levels, therefore gives an indication of the health of communities and society in the Park as well as the health of the economy. In the particular context of the Park, monitoring seasonal, full-time and part-time employment would be of value.

Potential indicators include:

- Employment rates by sector (full-time, part-time and seasonal).

9.4.5 Agricultural Activity

Agriculture is one of the main land uses within the Park, which has a significant influence on the special qualities and contributes to employment and the economy. Monitoring the extent of agricultural activity and its viability will therefore give an insight into the economy and culture of the area, and potential implications for the Park's management and its special qualities.

Potential indicators include:

- Total income from farming;
- Number and area of active farm units.

9.4.6 Biodiversity

Biodiversity is valued as one of the special qualities of the Park, and it is influenced by a range of physical conditions such as climate and pollution, and by human activity, including land management, recreation and development. Monitoring elements of biodiversity therefore offers a good insight into the cumulative effect of a number of different factors on the state of the Park.

Potential indicators include:

- Wild bird populations;
- Percentage of Local Biodiversity Action Plan species in favourable condition;
- Percentage of Local Biodiversity Action Plan habitats in favourable condition.

9.4.7 Water Quality

Water quality is a key indicator of impacts on the environment from pollution, land-use, development, waste management and other natural and human processes. It is also a key resource for many of the Park's special qualities of biodiversity, for human infrastructure and drinking water. Monitoring its quality will therefore give an insight into the impacts of a variety of factors on the state of the Park.

Potential indicators include:

- Ecological condition of river water;
- Conservation of hydromorphology.

9.4.8 Traffic Volumes and Modes

Traffic volumes in the Park may be affected by the popularity of the Park as a visitor destination and by the effectiveness of public transport within the Park. They have a significant impact on the environmental quality of the Park and on the sustainability of the communities and economy. Monitoring the modal split, ie: the use of different transport types, will give an insight into the ease with which people can get around, the effectiveness of public transport, and ultimately the sustainability of transport in the Park.

Potential indicators include:

- Traffic volumes by modal split on selected routes;
- Levels of use of public transport.

9.4.9 Education and Learning

Opportunities for education and learning enable individuals to achieve their full potential by contributing to a successful working life and

promoting understanding and active citizenship. They are also key to the long-term success of the Park through developing understanding about the Park, its special qualities and management needs. Monitoring the uptake of education and training related to the Park will therefore give an indication of understanding about the needs of the Park.

Potential indicators include:

- Number and percentage uptake of available outdoor education places;
- Number of participants in the Land Based Business Training Programme;
- Number of participants in the John Muir Award;
- Level of qualifications achieved.

9.4.10 Waste

Effective management of waste produced by households, commerce and industry is important if the Park is to improve resource efficiency. Monitoring waste arisings and the percentage of recycled and landfilled waste will indicate the Park's performance in terms of the sustainable use of resources.

Potential indicators include:

- Total waste arisings;
- Percentage of waste recycled;
- Access to kerbside recycling facilities.

9.4.11 Visitor Enjoyment of the Park

The Park is a valuable leisure and recreational resource, offering a range of active pursuits in a setting of exceptional natural and cultural heritage. The experience of visitors in the Park will be influenced by a wide range of factors including service levels, quality of facilities, quality of information and interpretation. Monitoring the satisfaction levels of visitor experiences in the Park will therefore give an insight into this range of factors and into the state of an industry that contributes significantly to the economy of the Park.

Potential indicators include:

- Visitor numbers;
- Visitor spend;
- Duration of visits.

9.4.12 Cultural Heritage

The cultural heritage of the Park is one of its valued special qualities and includes the built and historic environment as well as culture and traditions. The built heritage is influenced by development, land management and pressure from visitors and recreation. The culture and traditions of the area are influenced by population trends, the vitality of communities and the skills and informal learning opportunities available. Monitoring the state of the cultural heritage will therefore give an insight into these areas as well as the health of one of the Park's special qualities.

Potential indicators include:

- Percentage of listed buildings and scheduled ancient monuments at risk;
- Number of community heritage groups/museums;
- Number of cultural heritage events.

9.4.13 Business Health

Sustainable economic and social development of the Park will depend on the number, type (including self-employed) and stability of businesses within the Park and the number and range of employment opportunities they offer. Monitoring the turnover of businesses and number of registered businesses will provide an indication of the sustainability of economic development within the Park and its benefits for the communities.

Potential indicators include:

- Levels of employment by business type.

9.4.14 Geographical Availability of Services

Providing easily accessible services is key to tackling social disadvantage within the Park and

9. MONITORING AND REVIEW...cont

promoting sustainable communities. The availability of services is a function of the service locations, public transport and health of communities. Monitoring the distance of households from key services (post offices, primary schools, general store/supermarket, doctor's surgery, bank/cashline machine) will provide an insight into accessibility of current service provision.

Potential indicators include:

- Distance of services from households;
- Time taken to reach key services.

9.4.15 Community Vibrancy

Local community activity promotes vibrant and socially inclusive communities. It is an indication of how residents value their locality and identify with it, the number of active people within communities and the skills that they have.

Potential indicators include:

- Levels of use of community meeting places;
- Levels of volunteering;
- Levels of participation in community council elections.

9.5 Review of the Park Plan

The information collected during the monitoring process will be used not only to update the State of the Park Report, but also to feed into a review of the impact of the Plan on the Park and of the extent to which the four aims of the Park are being achieved collectively.

The Park Plan will be reviewed formally at five-yearly intervals, with the first review being due in 2012. The purpose of review will be:

- to review whether the Plan has successfully taken the Park towards achieving its four aims collectively;

- to review what changes to the long-term strategy are necessary;
- to review what the Priorities for Action in the next five year period should be.

The review of the Plan will be accompanied by a review of the State of the Park Report, which will inform consideration of the changes needed in the Plan.

It is anticipated that the vision and strategic objectives, which comprise the long-term look to 2030, should remain relatively constant but will be updated in the light of changing circumstances. The Priorities for Action will be fully reviewed to consider which of the previous action programmes have been superseded by new issues requiring priority action within the next five-year period.

9.6 Interim Reporting and Review

If within the five-year period there is a significant change in national policy or circumstances in the Park, then the relevant sections of the Park Plan will be updated to reflect any changes to the management approach in the Park that may prove necessary or desirable. It is important that the Plan remains an active process to guide management of the Park, rather than simply a formal document that is reviewed every five years. The Priorities for Action 2007-2012 will be a working action plan that is amended as necessary during the five year period.

In addition to the formal, five-yearly review, interim reviews of the performance of the Park Plan in delivering its four aims will be conducted every two years. To inform this process, the monitoring and review frameworks for each priority and associated strategies will report on a two-yearly basis.

10. ANNEXES



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ANNEX I:

The following organisations and groups have been involved in discussions to develop the Draft Park Plan:

Aberdeenshire Council	John Muir Trust
Angus Council	
Association of Cairngorms Community Councils	Moray Council
Association of Deer Management Groups	
	National Farmers Union of Scotland
Badenoch and Strathspey Conservation Group	National Trust for Scotland
	North East Mountain Trust
Cairngorms Campaign	
Cairngorms Chamber of Commerce	Ramblers Association
Cairngorms Housing Group	Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historic Monuments of Scotland
Cairngorms Local Biodiversity Group	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
Cairngorms Local Outdoor Access Forum	Royal Zoological Society
Cairngorms Moorland Project Steering Group	
Cairngorms National Park Economic and Social Development Forum	Scottish Agricultural College
Cairngorms National Park Integrated Land Management Forum	Scottish Civic Trust
Cairngorms National Park Visitor Services Information and Tourism Forum	Scottish Countryside Rangers Association
Communities Scotland	Scottish Crofting Foundation
Crofters Commission	Scottish Estates Business Group
	Scottish Enterprise Grampian
Deer Commission for Scotland	Scottish Enterprise Tayside
	Scottish Environment Link
Elphinstone Institute, University of Aberdeen	Scottish Environment Protection Agency
	Scottish Executive Environment and Rural Affairs Department
Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group	Scottish Native Woods
Forestry Commission Scotland	Scottish Natural Heritage
Forest Enterprise	Scottish Rural Property and Business Association
	Scottish Water
HIE Moray	Scottish Wild Land Group
Highland Council	Scottish Wildlife Trust
Highlands and Islands Enterprise	SportScotland
Historic Scotland	
	VisitScotland
Inverness, Nairn, Badenoch and Strathspey Enterprise	

ANNEX 2:

IUCN Management Principles for Category V Protected Areas

(Taken from 'Management Guidelines for IUCN Category V Protected Areas', World Commission on Protected Areas Best Practice Guidelines Series No 9, 2002)

Principle 1:

Conserving landscape, biodiversity and cultural values are at the heart of the Category V protected area approach. Though much emphasis is placed in this guidance on economic and social considerations, Category V is a conservation approach which should reflect the over-arching objectives of all protected areas. It is therefore about managing change in such a way that environmental and cultural values endure: change should take place within limits that will not disrupt those values.

Principle 2:

The focus of management should be on the point of interaction between people and nature. To recall part of the definition used in the 1994 Guidelines: "Safeguarding the integrity of (the) traditional interaction is vital to the protection, maintenance and evolution of the area" (IUCN, 1994, p.22). Thus, whereas in many other kinds of protected areas it is nature itself that is the main focus of management, what distinguishes Category V is that management primarily addresses the linkage between people and nature.

Principle 3:

People should be seen as stewards of the landscape. As the occupants of lived-in, working landscapes that are of great value to society as a whole, the people living within Category V protected areas should be supported in their role as stewards of the landscape. They are the architects of much we value in the landscape, and their support is needed to ensure its survival. Ideally, they help to shape and care for the environment with the traditions of the past, but with an eye to the future. In that sense, they may more correctly be described as 'the managers' of Protected Landscapes than the professionals who are employed with that formal title: good managers in the professional sense will therefore see their role as 'facilitators' and 'negotiators'.

Principle 4:

Management must be undertaken with and through local people, and mainly for and by them. This principle recognises that the full involvement of local people is essential, and that Category V protected areas should never be planned against their long-term interests. It also recognises that local communities should play an important role in delivering protected area objectives and be among the principal beneficiaries of these. But note that local people are not the only source of expertise. Moreover, there are other stakeholders who can derive benefits from protected landscapes: for example, visitors from nearby urban areas or further afield, resource users from afar (e.g. consumers of water supplies downstream), or the wider community interested in biodiversity or landscape protection.

Principle 5:

Management should be based on co-operative approaches, such as co-management and multi-stakeholder equity. It follows from Principles 2-4 that structures and processes are needed to ensure that people are involved fully in shaping management decisions and come to see the protected area as theirs. This will require the operation of open, transparent procedures based on democratic principles. Co-management approaches may be particularly appropriate to Category V protected areas.

Principle 6:

Effective management requires a supportive political and economic environment. The foregoing principles cannot be followed unless broader governance structures and practices in society at large are committed to certain standards. The management of Protected Landscapes will be easier to achieve if the government recognises the need for a quality of life perspective, follows democratic processes, and engages willingly in participatory planning based upon a fair and equitable approach to all groups and respect for a plurality of cultures. It will also be greatly helped by a top-level national commitment to sustainability, the alleviation of poverty, addressing the root causes of inequality, promoting gender equity and supporting civil society.

10. ANNEXES...cont

Principle 7:

Management of Category V protected areas should not only be concerned with protection but also enhancement. Because Category V protected areas are lived-in landscapes, the environment will have been manipulated more than is the case with the other categories of protected areas. It follows that a more active role for management is appropriate, not only in the protection but also in restoration of natural or cultural values that have been eroded or lost. It may on occasion also include the creation of new environmental and social assets which are ecologically or culturally appropriate: examples would be a new woodland or forested areas established on degraded soils, and the development of a new market for goods produced by local people.

Principle 8:

When there is irreconcilable conflict between the objectives of management, priority should be given to retaining the special qualities of the area. Because Protected Landscapes have important social as well as environmental objectives, there is considerable potential for conflict between objectives. As far as possible, management should seek to reconcile such conflicts. In the last analysis there need to be clear rules about what would have priority in such a situation. This principle states that when this happens, priority should be given to protecting the qualities that make the area special (what economists sometimes call 'critical environmental capital'). Because such a claim is likely to be contested, the principle may need to be embodied in legislation.

Principle 9:

Economic activities that do not need to take place within the Protected Landscape should be located outside it. As a lived in, working landscape, a Category V protected area will contain a variety of economic activities and land uses, such as agriculture, forestry, tourism and some forms of industry, commerce and retailing, as well as residential areas, some infrastructure, etc. The tests for whether such an activity or use is acceptable within the protected area, are whether (i) it is sustainable, (ii) it contributes to the aims of the area, and (iii) there are strong reasons for it to be located within it. Where the proposed activity fails these tests, it should either be totally re-designed to fit

Category V objectives or located outside the area altogether.

Principle 10:

Management should be business-like and of the highest professional standard. Notwithstanding the strong social and environmental emphasis in the management of Protected Landscapes, the operation of management should be business-like, and hard headed if necessary. It requires effective marketing of conservation approaches too. While this may be difficult to achieve in the short term, financial sustainability should be an aim, rather than 100 per cent reliance on public funding. Procedures should be put in place to ensure that public, private and voluntary funds and other resources are used with due regard to economy, efficiency and effectiveness. All decision-making concerning the use of resources should be transparent and accountable.

Principle 11:

Management should be flexible and adaptive. Like protected area management in general, that of Category V protected areas needs to be capable of adjustment over time in light of experience and changing circumstances – but since its scope embraces both natural and human systems, the need for flexibility is all the greater. Management of Protected Landscapes should also be flexible and adaptive in the sense that it should respond to the very different social, cultural and economic situations in which it takes place: it should always be culturally appropriate and economically relevant.

Principle 12:

The success of management should be measured in environmental and social terms. Though absolutely central, biodiversity measures are only one of several indicators: others include social and economic welfare and the quality of life for local and other people, other environmental considerations such as energy efficiency or natural resource management, and measures relating to the conservation of the cultural environment. An aim should be to demonstrate the maximum social and economic benefits for the local community with the minimum environmental impact. The setting of objectives, also allocation of resources and monitoring of effectiveness should all be undertaken with this breadth of interest in mind.

Arctic-alpine habitat	Vegetation communities characteristic of high mountain environments.
Biodiversity	The total assemblage of living organisms.
Biomass	Material derived from plant or animal matter including agricultural and forestry residues that can be used for fuel.
Boreal Forest	The once extensive forest of northern Europe.
Cairngorms Partnership	A Partnership Board operational from 1995 to 2003 tasked with developing a coherent management strategy for the Cairngorms area.
Cairngorms Working Party	A working party which in 1992 recommended the establishment of the Cairngorms Partnership.
Cairngorms Local Plan	The Local Plan prepared by the Park Authority to guide planning and development control within the Park.
Caledonian Forest	Native Scots pine forest that has regenerated from generation to generation from the extensive boreal forest that once covered larger areas of northern Europe.
Ecosystem	The functioning system of habitats, species and natural processes that supports biodiversity.
European Charter for Sustainable Tourism	A charter developed by the Europarc Federation of Protected Areas to recognise and encourage the sustainable management of tourism.
Geological Conservation Review	A non-statutory list of sites identified as being of national importance for their geology, palaeontology, mineralogy or geomorphology.
Geomorphology	The landforms and features resulting from geological processes.
Habitat network	The interconnected pattern of habitats.
Hydrology	Study of water processes.
Hydromorphology	The landforms and features created by water processes.
IUCN (World Conservation Union)	The IUCN brings together 900 states, government agencies and other organisations in a partnership to promote the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources.
Landscape Capacity Studies	Analysis of the landscape's ability to absorb development and the implications for landscape character.
Landscape Character Assessments	A process designed to bring a consistent approach to describing and characterising landscapes.
Listed Buildings	Buildings listed as being of special architectural or historic interest and therefore requiring special protection.
Montane	Areas of high ground above the natural tree-line.
Munros	Mountains in Scotland over 3000 feet (914 metres) in height.
National Nature Reserves	A suite of sites containing examples of some of the most important natural and semi-natural ecosystems in the UK. They are managed to conserve their habitats or provide opportunities for scientific study.

10. ANNEXES GLOSSARY...cont

Natura 2000	A European Union network of nature conservation sites representing the best examples of the range of habitats found in the EU, comprising Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas.
National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG)	Statements of Scottish Executive policy on nationally important land use and planning matters. They are being superseded by the Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) series.
Priority Species	Species that are qualifying criteria of Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas; listed in Annex I, II, IV or V of the EC Habitats Directive; listed in Schedules 1,5 or 8 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981; or listed in the UK and Local Biodiversity Action Plan.
Public benefits	The benefits enjoyed by the public and the nation that result from land management or business practices.
Ramsar Sites	Sites designated as globally important wetlands to meet the UK's commitments under the Ramsar Convention.
Rural Housing Burden	A mechanism under the Title Conditions (Scotland) Act 2003 obliging an owner to offer the house back to the Rural Housing Body on sale, to ensure the property remains in the affordable stock.
Scheduled Ancient Monuments	Archaeological features recorded and protected by Historic Scotland.
Sites of Special Scientific Interest	A national suite of nature conservation sites protected as examples of the UK's flora, fauna, geological or examples of physiographical features.
Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)	Part of the Natura 2000 network, SACs are protected areas representative of the range of habitats and (non-bird) species of the European Union.
Special Protection Areas (SPA)	Part of the Natura 2000 network, SPAs are protected areas that are important habitats for rare and migratory birds in the European Union.
Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)	A process to ensure that the significant environmental effects of plans, policies and programmes are identified, assessed, consulted on, mitigated and monitored.



Cairngorms
NATIONAL PARK

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