



For decision

Title: Integrated Wildfire Management Plan

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Purpose

This Board Paper presents a final version of the Integrated Wildfire Management Plan.

Recommendations

The Board is asked to:

- a) Approve the Integrated Wildfire Management Plan.

Strategic context

1. National Park Partnership Plan section A7. Fire Management contains an action to develop an Integrated Wildfire Management Plan (IWMP) by 2027.

Background

2. The prolonged dry spell in late winter and spring of this year has emphasised the importance of integrating wildfire prevention and mitigation in all land management planning in the Cairngorms. The development of an Integrated Wildfire Management Plan is an action in National Park Partnership Plan (NPPP4) and a draft was discussed by the Board on 14 February and approved for wider consultation. The Plan aims to help land managers prevent wildfires from starting, respond effectively to wildfires that do start and to increase wildfire resilience in the landscape. The Plan also considers the protection of communities.
3. The consultation ran from 24 February to 04 April, and 15 responses were received from a range of organisations, land managers and interested individuals. All comments were considered and the draft amended where it was thought appropriate. Many consultees appreciated the increased profile given to wildfire issues by the Park Authority. Many also argued that wildfire issues needed to be addressed nationally and not just regionally. Numerous specific points were raised around the draft IWMP including points about muirburn, training for wildfire, wildfire plans for landholdings, the management of campfires and barbeques,



landholdings with no permanent staff and the risk of crown fires. However most comments reflected different opinions on how land should be managed for wildfire, with some advocating the need for increased intervention in the management of fuel loads and others emphasising that ecological restoration would increase wildfire resilience over time.

4. A key aim of the Integrated Wildfire Management Plan is to promote collaboration between all land managers around the wildfire issue. The continuation of the long-held culture of mutual aid between all landholdings will be crucial in combating the threat of wildfire as the climate changes. The Plan therefore does not seek to change anyone's land management objectives but encourages land managers to work together and to consider wildfire in all aspects of their land management planning.

Implications

5. A resource allocation of £75,000 to deliver wildfire and responsible behaviour signage and communications is included in the operational plan budget. There is sufficient staff resource allocated in the operational plan to support patrolling and communications by the Park Authority ranger service.
6. The implementation of the plan will be monitored by the Cairngorms Upland Advisory Group with updates to the Park Authority Performance Committee on an annual basis.

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