Cairngorms National Park

Local Development Plan 2021

Non-statutory guidance: Policy 2 Supporting Economic Growth

Cairngorms
NATIONAL PARK

Contents

How to use this guidance

This non-statutory guidance supports the Cairngorms National Park Local Development Plan 2021 and applies to all planning applications within the Cairngorms National Park. The Local Development Plan is available via https://cairngorms.co.uk/planning-development/ and should be read alongside this guidance.

This guidance should be used during the preparation and assessment of planning applications with potential economic impacts.

Introduction and context

Sustainable Economic development is an integral part of the National Park's purpose with one of its aims:

"*To promote sustainable economic and social development of the area's communities.*"

Policy 2 of the Local Development Plan[1] provides the framework for consideration of how development should support sustainable economic growth. However proposals will also be assessed against all other relevant policies within the Local Development Plan, with Policy 3 Design & Placemaking of particular relevance.

The Local Development Plan also provides explanatory notes on how Policy 2 will be applied - this guidance provides additional advice on what needs to be considered and provides links to other sources of relevant information.

Policy 2 – Supporting Economic Growth

2.1 Town Centres First

Proposals for high footfall generating developments, including retail, commercial, leisure, offices and community facilities, will be supported where they are located in a way which uses a sequential approach to site selection:
a) within an identified town centre;
b) within identified settlement boundaries;
c) outwith settlements where the development supports the economic vitality and viability of that community.

Developments should have no adverse impact on neighbouring properties and should support the vibrancy, vitality and viability of existing town centres or settlements. Exceptions to this should demonstrate social or community need for the proposal. The potential cumulative impact of similar proposals will also be taken into account.

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[1] Note, policy wording may change following the examination of the Proposed Plan.

2.2 Tourist accommodation

Proposals for tourism related accommodation, other than dwellings built to residential standards, will be supported where they:

a) have no adverse environmental or amenity impacts on the site or neighbouring areas; and
b) contribute to/support the provision of a wide range of visitor accommodation options including low cost accommodation; and
c) support or contribute to a year round economy.

2.3 Other tourism and leisure developments

Development which enhances formal and informal recreation and leisure facilities; tourism and leisure based business activities and attractions; and improved opportunities for responsible outdoor access will be supported where:

a) it has no adverse environmental or amenity impacts on the site or neighbouring areas; and
b) it makes a positive contribution to the experience of visitors; and
c) it supports or contributes to a year round economy.

2.4 Other economic development

Proposals which support or extend the economy, or which enhance the range and quality of economic opportunities or facilities, will be considered favourably where they:

a) a) have no adverse environmental or amenity impacts on the site or neighbouring areas
b) are compatible/complementary with existing business activity in the area; and
c) support the vitality and viability of the local economy.

Developments that contribute to the provision of an identified local economic need, such as the provision of small business units, or contribute to the delivery of the Cairngorms National Park Economic Action Plan, will be particularly encouraged.

2.5 Protecting existing economic activity

Proposals for the alternative use of allocated economic development or tourism sites and non-allocated sites or buildings currently in, or last used for, economic, employment or tourism purposes will only be supported where:

a) it is satisfactorily demonstrated that it is not practical for financial or other reasons to sustain the existing or last economic, employment or tourism use; or
b) the site or buildings are unsuitable for the business needs and impact adversely on the built or natural environment, local character or neighbouring properties.

All Economic Development Proposals

Applicants should also be aware of:

- Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan[2] which sets out the overarching aims for the National Park including those for Economic Development
- Cairngorms National Park Economic Action Plan[3] which sets out the economic priorities for the National Park, including capital projects
- the Communities section of the Local Development Plan identifies local priorities & land that has previously been assessed as suitable for economic development.

Proposals that contribute to the identified economic priorities, including the development of a circular economy, are particularly encouraged.

Your proposal must also demonstrate it is compatible with or complementary to existing businesses in the area.

Tourism & Leisure developments

Policy 2.2: Tourism accommodation and 2.3: Other tourism and leisure developments

Your proposal must demonstrate how it achieves best practice in terms of facility development and future management. It must have no adverse impact on the environment, both on site and on the neighbouring area.

Large developments

These may require a Future Management Plan demonstrating the overall environmental and economic sustainability of the proposal over the longer term. This should include details of how existing infrastructure is sufficient to support the proposal or how any additional infrastructure will be provided.

If the proposal is for visitor attraction or facility a Visitor Management Plan may be required. The scope and level of detail should be proportionate to the scale of the proposed development. It should as a minimum include:

- how the proposal has been designed to extend the tourist season;
- how the proposal will improve the availability of facilities for local communities; and
- what arrangements have been put in place for the long-term maintenance of visitor facilities

A visitor management plan may also need to show:

- access arrangements to/from/within the proposed

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[2] https://cairngorms.co.uk/working-together/national-park-partnership-plan/

[3] https://cairngorms.co.uk/working-together/authority/national-park-strategies/economic-action-plan/

development site, including non-car modes;

- proposed parking arrangements;
- signage to and within the proposed development site;
- additional facilities such as toilets, reception and storage facilities;
- the impact of the development on adjacent sites and/or facilities, and management requirements needed to mitigate any negative impacts; and
- the impact of the development on the natural environment both within & beyond the site - Policy 4 Natural heritage provides additional information on key considerations & requirements.'

Tourist accommodation

One of the National Park's aims is *"to conserve and enhance the natural and cultural heritage of the area"* and therefore the location and design of new housing and accommodation is an important consideration.

Any accommodation that meets residential standards will be assessed under Policy 1 New Housing Development and subject to contributions under Policy 11 Developer Obligations.

The National Park Partnership Plan (2017) encourages the provision of low cost tourist accommodation including motor home and camping sites in suitable locations.

Protecting existing economic activity

Over time circumstances may change and lead to applications to change the use of existing economic developments. In considering the closure and change of use of an economic enterprise, a primary consideration will be the impact this will have on local people and the need to protect the local centres and allocations which service their needs. Where possible these centres will be protected to ensure a viable hierarchy of settlements is maintained.

There is a presumption against change of use from economic, employment or tourism uses on Economic Development and Tourism allocations to uses that do not fit the site's criteria.

As set out in Policy 2, proposals for the alternative use of economic or business developments must demonstrate that it is not practical for financial or other reasons to sustain the existing or previous economic, employment or tourism use.

Applicants must demonstrate that they have sought to find an alternative economic, employment or tourism use for a site before considering a complete change of use.

Evidence must be provided to show that every effort has been made to market the property or site for its existing or last use. In addition, any new proposals must be compatible with its surrounding/ neighbouring uses and will be subject to all other relevant policies.

Useful sources of advice and information

Highlands and Islands Enterprise
Public agency supporting economic & community development in the North & West of Scotland. (https://www.hie.co.uk/)

Business Gateway

Supports new business opportunities in all areas of Scotland (https://www.bgateway.com/local-offices/highland/local-support)

The Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan provides further information on local business groups, sources of information, delivery mechanisms & strategies. (https://cairngorms.co.uk/working-together/national-park-partnership-plan/)

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Policy 2 Supporting Economic Growth

This document is available in large print on request. Please contact the Cairngorms National Park Authority on 01479 873535. It is also available to view at www.cairngorms.co.uk