

# Cairngorm Mountain

## Natural Retreats Cairngorm Mountain

**Cairngorm Mountain Ltd, who hold the lease for Cairngorm Mountain from Highlands and Islands Enterprise, is managed by Natural Retreats. A masterplan is currently being developed to map out how the ambitions for the Cairngorm and Glenmore Strategy will be delivered. Here, Natural Retreats summarise the vision for their masterplan.**

### Vision

Having recently taken over the management of Cairngorm Mountain, Natural Retreats have taken time to assess the current operation as well as the potential. During this process challenges have been identified which it seeks to resolve and enhance in order to create a world class mountain destination. Cairngorm Mountain has a rich history and spirit which Natural Retreats seek to add to in order to create a unique mountain resort that is renowned internationally as a year round destination. Natural Retreats understand how significant the success of the mountain is to the region and the National Park and fully respect and appreciate their role as temporary custodians of this national treasure.

In order to achieve this goal there are specific areas of focus which have governed the proposals for the site.

Families are a core target market for Natural Retreats, both young and old. The existing offering faces a number of challenges in how it caters for families who are sometimes discouraged by the lack of amenities and insufficient usability of the facilities. The vision is to turn the focus back to these families and create a welcoming, interactive and unique guest experience which will drive visitors back to Cairngorm Mountain time and time again. It is intended for this approach to resonate with families local to the area with the aspiration that young children will learn and grow up with the Mountain and everything it has to offer.

The Mountain has a strong sense of history amongst the people of Aviemore and its pioneering spirit is still entrenched in day to day life. Natural Retreats intends to further this spirit of innovation and adventure by creating a 'centre of excellence' with the aim to further enhance the progressive and ground breaking nature of the Mountain by helping children and adults to experience and develop their skills and discover new ones along the way.

Aviemore, wider Badenoch and Strathspey and Cairngorms National Park have the strongest and most familiar history with the Mountain and we believe there is further opportunity to strengthen the relationship between these areas so that people and businesses can work more closely to achieving overall objectives to improve the overall experience of the region and help to expand to a wider audience. A large part Natural Retreats hopes to play in this is improving transport links between Cairngorm Mountain and Aviemore and expand the operation so the guest experience is covered efficiently from every perspective, from accommodation, to food and beverage and year round activities up on the Mountains.

#### *Vision summary:-*

- *Create a year round, world class mountain destination*
- *A family focussed resort that resonates with the alpine community*
- *Establish a centre of excellence with a pioneering culture*
- *Forge stronger links with the village of Aviemore, wider Badenoch and Strathspey and the Cairngorms National Park.*

#### **Business Objectives**

The current offering at Cairngorm Mountain is impaired which significantly affect the overall guests experience to mountain users and mountains visitors. Initial objectives for the mountain have been based on experiences, observations and visitor input combined with the overall commercial aspirations. Primary objectives include reducing queues, creating improved food and beverage offerings and accompanying resting spaces. Accessibility is a key focus and a key objective is to ensure that all ages and abilities can access the mountain all year round and enjoy the facilities in their entirety.

Winter sports are key to the identity of the mountain and the major contributor to the commercial operation but are wholly weather dependant. For the long term benefit of the mountain operation and the wider benefactors, a commercial operation that broadens its reliance, diversifies its offering and creates a year round destination is vital. This also creates a number of opportunities extend the appeal across a wider audience, yet still remaining attractive to the core winter market. Active tourism is ever increasing, as is the demand for a variety of activity options. By improving the quality and diversity of key component parts of the operation the businesses and communities that benefit from the success of the Mountain in winter, will increase their benefits year round. This can be achieve by providing world class meeting, conference and event space both inside and outside to take advantage of the truly unique and potentially unrivalled, on-mountain location.

Improving and increasing the offering at Cairngorm Mountain will inevitably increasing visitor numbers across a broad demographic, encompassing all ages and abilities. This increase not only benefits the operation of the Mountain but the area as a whole, specifically Aviemore with which Natural Retreats strives to strengthen links. A wider demographic and increased dwell time will contribute to the local economy on a year round basis and help to strengthen local businesses and drive repeat business.

#### *Business objectives summary:-*

- *Improve visitor experience for both the mountain user and mountain visitor*
- *Improve the non-winter and weather resistant offerings*
- *Improve quality and diversity of component parts and the guest offering*
- *Increase visitor numbers, demographic spread and dwell time*
- *Introduce world class meeting, conference and event spaces*

## **Component Overview**

In order to deliver this vision and business objective a more detailed development plan is being assembled. This will cover three key areas:-

### **New Buildings**

- of appropriate scale to competently handle the current visitor numbers and allow for future growth
- to increase the variety of the staple offering namely food & beverage
- to greatly improve the customer flow
- to improve the sense of arrival
- to increase the usable space both internally and externally
- to allow greater community involvement and use of the mountain

### **Infrastructure**

- to improve transport connections
- to address the current car parking situation through improved connections
- to improve signage and wayfinding and increase access for all
- to introduce interpretation throughout the customer experience

### **On Mountain**

- improve weather resilience
- introduce true year round offerings and activities
- improve mountain uplift following a detailed review

# Cairngorm Mountain Masterplan Overview Future Aspirations

CAIRN GORM SUMMIT  
4084 ft / 1245 M

