

Cairngorms National Park
National Park Partnership Plan 2022 - 2027
Strategic Environmental Assessment
Post-adoption Report
August 2022

Introduction

This document is the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) post-adoption report for the National Park Partnership Plan (NPPP) 2022 - 2027, which was formally approved by Scottish Ministers on 23 August 2022. Prior to this, the drafting and consultation process for the NPPP occurred during 2020, 2021 and 2022. The environmental assessment process ran alongside and informed the preparation of the NPPP, with the Environmental Report published in June 2022.

Context - post-adoption report requirements

The Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 sets out six requirements for SEAs post-adoption of plans at section 18(3). These can be summarised and combined. This results in a set of four matters that this post-adoption report requires to address:

1. Taking account of the environmental assessment: how the environmental considerations and findings of the assessment presented in the Environmental Report have been taken into account in the plan or programme (in this case, the plan is the NPPP).
2. Taking account of consultation responses: how the opinions and results of relevant consultations have been taken into account (in this case, the responses to the consultations on the draft NPPP).
3. Consideration of alternatives: the reasons for choosing the plan or programme as adopted, in the light of the other reasonable alternatives considered.
4. Monitoring of environmental effects: the measures that are to be taken to monitor the significant environmental effects of the implementation of the plan or programme.

This report seeks to address these four questions.

Taking account of the environmental assessment

Environmental issues were considered from the outset and throughout the preparation of the NPPP, being an integral part of the preparation process. The Environmental Assessment (and Habitats Regulations Appraisal) have been used to inform the contents of the NPPP. Policies to tackle the effects of climate change, safeguard the landscapes, natural and cultural heritage of the National Park, support economic opportunities and improve health and wellbeing of people are included within the NPPP.

Taking account of consultation responses

Appendix VII of the Environmental Report sets out how the consultation responses have been addressed in the Environmental Report.

Consideration of alternatives

Section 1b of the Environmental Report (page 3) sets out an assessment of the alternative of having an out of date NPPP.

In summary, Having a NPPP is a legal requirement under section 11 of the National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000. This limits the options available for consideration of alternatives, as having no NPPP is not permitted. The alternative is not to update it and rely on the 2017 version. However, this would not take account of environmental issues that may have changed in the intervening 5 years. The draft NPPP was refined in early 2022 as a result of consultation feedback. Unfeasible alternative solutions were ruled out during the drafting and refining process, meaning that the solutions felt by partners to be most viable were put forward into the NPPP. It is therefore necessary and preferable to update the NPPP, as has been done.

Monitoring of environmental effects

None of the policies or objectives in the NPPP were predicted to have negative effects as a result of implementation of the NPPP. Two short term actions (relating to peatland restoration and capercaillie conservation) and four long term targets (relating to raptor conservation, increased habitat and species diversity on grouse moorlands, peatland and freshwater restoration) were assessed as having the potential to have positive or uncertain environmental effects. The Environmental Report sets out monitoring measures in Annex V. Direct and indirect monitoring is proposed. This will be used to monitor the state of the wider environment, emerging or unexpected environmental issues. Relevant measures will be implemented to address unexpected significant environmental effects or issues where required.