Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan
2017-2022

Final Strategic Environmental Assessment Environmental Report

April 2017

Cover Note

PART 1

To: SEA.gateway@scotland.gsi.gov.uk
or
SEA Gateway
2 H (South)
Victoria Quay
Edinburgh
EH6 6QQ

PART 2

An SEA Environmental Report is attached for the plan, programme or strategy (PPS) entitled:

The Cairngorms National Park National Park Partnership Plan 2017-2022

The Responsible Authority is:

The Cairngorms National Park Authority

PART 3

Please tick the appropriate box

☑ The PPS falls under the scope of Section 5(3) of the Act and requires an SEA under the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005. ***or***

☐ The PPS falls under the scope of Section 5(4) of the Act and requires an SEA under the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005. ***or***

☐ The PPS does not require an SEA under the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005. However, we wish to carry out an SEA on a voluntary basis. We accept that, as this SEA is voluntary, the statutory 5 week timescale for views from the Consultation Authorities cannot be guaranteed.

PART 4

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PART 5

Signature (electronic signature is acceptable)

Date

28/04/2017

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List of Abbreviations

2000 Act	National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000
2005 Act	Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005
ABD	Aberdeenshire
AQMA	Air Quality Management Area
BARR	Buildings at Risk Register
BGS	British Geological Society
CA	Consultation Authority
CNAP	Cairngorms Nature Action Plan
CNP	Cairngorms National Park
CNPA	Cairngorms National Park Authority
EC	European Commission
EEC	European Economic Community
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EU	European Union
FWPM	Freshwater Pearl Mussel
GCR	Geological Conservation Review
GHG	Greenhouse Gas
GP	General Practitioner
Ha	Hectares
HES	Historic Environment Scotland
JSA	Job Seekers Allowance
LA	Local Authority
LDP	Local Development Plan
LPA	Local Planning Authority
MW	Megawatts
NH_3	Ammonia
NFM	Natural Flood Management
NMVOC	Non-methane volatile organic compound
NNR	National Nature Reserve
NO_2	Nitrogen dioxide
NO_x	Nitrogen oxides
NPF	National Planning Framework
NPPP	National Park Partnership Plan
NRS	National Records of Scotland
NSA	National Scenic Area
O_3	Ground-level ozone
ODPM	Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
PIP	Pearls in Peril
PKC	Perth and Kinross Council
$PM_{2.5}$	Particulate matter with particles with a diameter of 2.5 micrometres or less
PM_{10}	Particulate matter with particles with a diameter of 10 micrometres or less

PPS	Plans, Programmes and Strategies
pSPA	Potential Special Protection Area
PVA	Potentially Vulnerable Area
RCAHMS	Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland
RSPB	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
SAC	Special Area of Conservation
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
SEPA	Scottish Environment Protection Agency
SEP	Socio Economic Performance (Index)
SIMD	Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivations
SM	Scheduled Monument
SNH	Scottish Natural Heritage
SO_2	Sulphur dioxide
SPA	Special Protection Area
SPP	Scottish Planning Policy
SPRI	Scottish Pollutant Release Inventory
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest
SW	Scottish Water
SWWI	Strathspey Wetlands and Waders Initiative
TTWA	Travel To Work Area
WFD	Water Framework Directive
UK	United Kingdom
UK GAP	United Kingdom Geodiversity Action Plan
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Education

A glossary of terms may be found in **Appendix 8** (p. 440)

Non-Technical Summary

Introduction

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the Cairngorms National Park National Park Partnership Plan (NPPP) is a statutory requirement under the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005. SEA is a systematic process developed to ensure that potential environmental impacts of Plans, Programmes and Strategies (PPS) (both positive and negative) are assessed and considered during the course of their preparation.

Summary of the NPPP Process

The NPPP will be the management plan for the Cairngorms National Park as required under section 11 of the National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000.

It is a plan for all those with an interest in and responsibility for managing the National Park. This includes public bodies that must have regard to the Plan in carrying out their functions and the private and voluntary sectors including businesses, land managers and communities who are all integral to managing the National Park.

In particular, the NPPP will:

- Set out the vision and overarching strategy for managing the National Park;
- Provide focus and priorities at a time of limited financial resources;
- Provide a strategic context for the next Local Development Plan;
- Show how the four aims of the National Park can be achieved together, benefiting people and place.

The NPPP will set out the strategic direction and priorities, identifying the things that the CNPA and its partners think will make the biggest contribution to a successful National Park over the plan's lifetime and beyond.

Summary of the SEA Process

SEA aims to:

- integrate environmental factors into NPPP preparation and decision making;
- improve the NPPP and enhance environmental protection;
- increase public participation in decision making; and
- facilitate openness and transparency of decision making.

The SEA process is divided into five main stages which are:

- Stage A: Setting the context and objectives, establishing the baseline and deciding on the scope;
- Stage B: Developing and refining alternatives and assessing effects;
- Stage C: Preparing the Environmental Report.
- Stage D: Consulting on the draft NPPP and its Environmental Report; and
- Stage E: Monitoring implementation of the NPPP.

This is the second 'Environmental Report' for the SEA of the NPPP. The first report represented **Stages C** and **D** of the SEA process (see **Figure 1**) and outlines the findings from the environmental assessment of the NPPP's preferred options and reasonable alternatives (**Stage B**). This environmental report presents the assessment of the final NPPP, building on the work carried out in **Stages B** to **D**.

This assessment has not identified any substantial changes between the preferred options assessed in the first report and the policies assessed in this one and indeed none that would result in any negative effects, minor or significant. In fact the assessment identified a number of additional positive effects. It has not therefore been considered necessary to conduct a formal consultation on this Environmental Report as all matters have been covered in the previous one.

This environmental assessment therefore establishes the likely significant (positive and negative) environmental effects of implementing the NPPP as adopted. The effects of the NPPP and any potential reasonable alternatives have been considered, along with viable mitigation measures to avoid, reduce or offset adverse effects.

Summary of SEA Objectives

SEA Objectives have been developed as a result of the review of PPS (**Policy Context**, p.12) and baseline information (**Baseline**, p. 13). Identifying objectives is an important part of the SEA process as these will be used as the primary tool for testing the emerging NPPP to ensure it will not result in any significant environmental effects.

The SEA Objectives have been separated into 'main' and 'sub' objectives. It is important that the assessment process is proportional, practical and manageable. Consequently, the assessment process will utilise the 'main' SEA Objectives, but take account of the SEA Sub-Objectives. This distinction is important to ensure the assessment work is practical and achievable. The Objectives for the SEA of the Cairngorms National Park NPPP are shown in **Table 3** (p. 22).

Summary of the Assessment of Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan

Generally, the NPPP's outcomes and preferred policy options scored well in the assessment (**Figure 7** and **Table 8**), with around 66% of assessments predicting potentially positive effects.

Only 4% of assessments predicted potentially adverse effects, none of which were considered to be significant in nature. However, measures have been designed into the Plan's outcomes and policy options with an aim of mitigating any adverse effects. For example issues relating to biodiversity can be mitigated with measures such as those proposed in the Capercaillie Framework (2015). These are described in more detail in **Table 9** (p. 52).

Summary of Next Steps

The final NPPP and its Environmental Report will be submitted to the Scottish Government for approval in April 2017.

Once the NPPP has been approved by the Minister a Post-adoption Statement will be published. The Post-adoption Statement will summarise how the CNPA took the findings of the SEA process into account and how environmental considerations more generally have been integrated into the NPPP. It will also be stated within the Post-adoption Statement if any changes have been made to the NPPP as a result of the SEA process and following responses to consultation. If changes have been rejected this will also be explained.

It will also be necessary for the CNPA to monitor significant effects following the adoption of the NPPP in accordance with the Scottish Government's SEA Guidance (2013). This monitoring framework will be finalised in the Post-adoption Statement.

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Introduction

> "*The objective of this Directive is to provide for a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes with a view to promoting sustainable development, by ensuring that, in accordance with this Directive, an environmental assessment is carried out of certain plans and programmes which are likely to have significant effects on the environment.*"
>
> Directive 2001/42/EC

What is a Strategic Environmental Assessment?[1]

As part of the preparation of the Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan (NPPP), the Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA) is required under the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 to carry out a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). SEA is a systematic method for considering the likely environmental effects of certain Plans, Programmes or Strategies (PPS). SEA aims to:

- integrate environmental factors into PPS preparation and decision making;
- improve PPS and enhance environmental protection;
- increase public participation in decision making; and
- facilitate openness and transparency of decision making.

The SEA process is divided into five main stages which are:

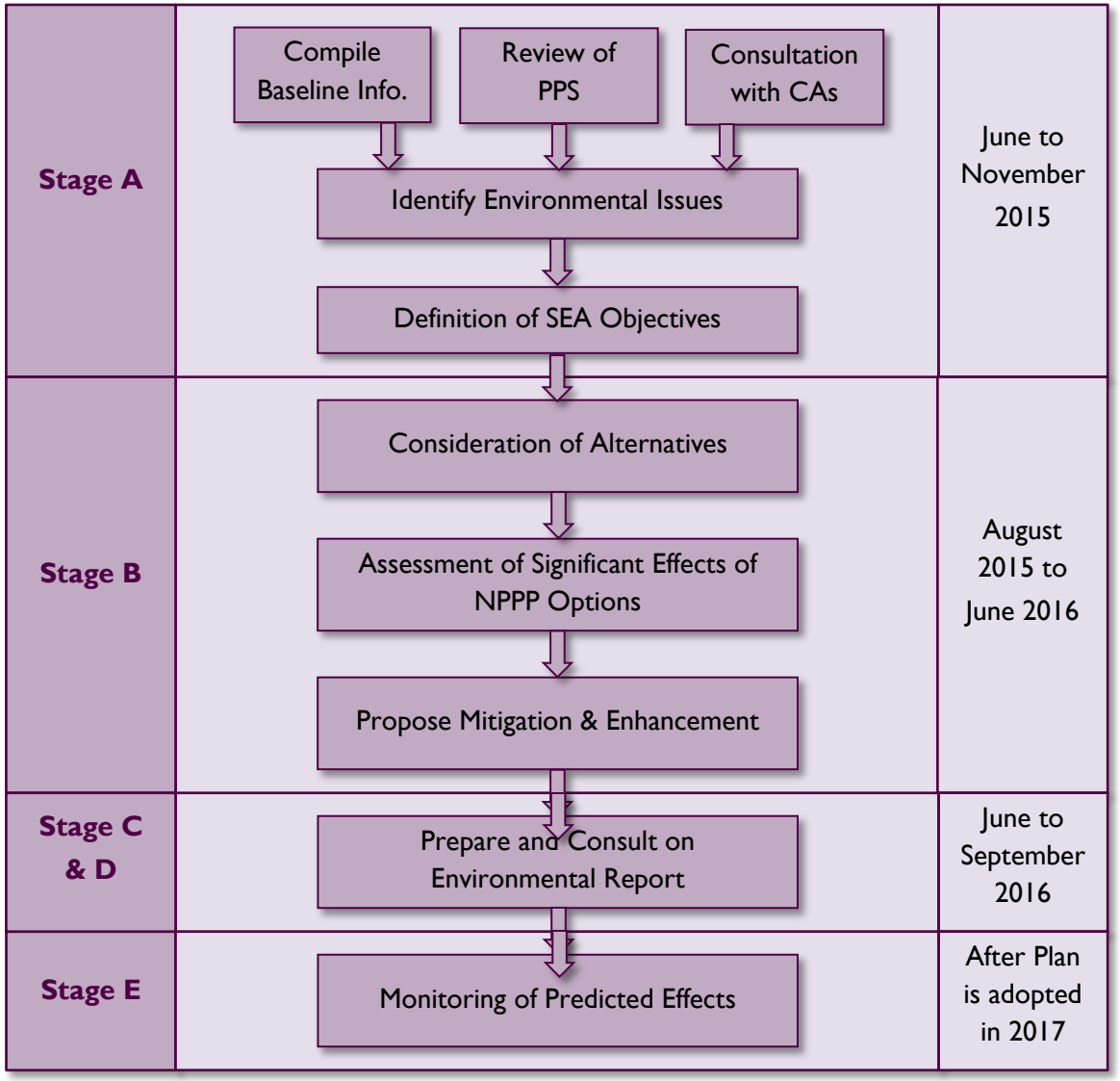
- Stage A: Setting the context and objectives, establishing the baseline and deciding on the scope;
- Stage B: Developing and refining alternatives and assessing effects;
- Stage C: Preparing the Environmental Report.
- Stage D: Consulting on the draft NPPP and its Environmental Report; and
- Stage E: Monitoring implementation of the NPPP.

Figure 1 provides details of the actions required during these stages as well as the indicative timetable for their completion alongside the production of the NPPP.

It is also necessary for the CNPA to undertake a Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) in accordance with The Conservation (Natural Habitats &c) Regulations 1994 (as amended). The HRA will be reported separately during the NPPP process.

[1] A glossary of terms used in this report is provided in Appendix 5.

Figure 1 Stages of the SEA of the Cairngorms National Park NPPP and its indicative timetable.



What is a Scoping Report?

> "*The purpose of scoping is to define the level of detail to be covered in the assessment, and to reach agreement on the consultation timescales.*"
>
> SEA Guidance (Scottish Government, 2013)

This is the second 'Environmental Report' for the SEA of the NPPP. The first report represented **Stages C** and **D** of the SEA process (see **Figure 1**) and outlines the findings from the environmental assessment of the NPPP's NPPP's preferred options and reasonable alternatives (**Stage B**). This environmental report presents the assessment of the final NPPP, building on the work carried out in **Stages B** to **D**.

This assessment has not identified any substantial changes between the preferred options assessed in the first report and the policies assessed in this one and indeed none that would result in any negative effects, minor or significant. In fact the

assessment identified a number of additional positive effects. It has not therefore been considered necessary to conduct a formal consultation on this Environmental Report as all matters have been covered in the previous one.

This environmental assessment therefore establishes the likely significant (positive and negative) environmental effects of implementing the NPPP as adopted. The effects of the NPPP and any potential reasonable alternatives have been considered, along with viable mitigation measures to avoid, reduce or offset adverse effects.

The Cairngorms National Park

The Cairngorms National Park was designated in 2003 by the Scottish Parliament because it satisfied the conditions for a National Park as set out in the National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000.

The National Park is the UK's largest, with a total land area of some 4,528km^2. Dominated by mountain plateau, it boasts extensive moorland, forest and straths and is home to around 25% of the UK's threatened bird, animal and plant species. Approximately 18,000 people live in the National Park and it welcomes around 1.6 million visitors each year (see **Appendix 2** for a comprehensive baseline).

The general purpose of the National Park Authority (NPA), as set out in the 2000 Act, is to ensure that the National Park aims are collectively achieved in a co-ordinated way. The CNPA is therefore an enabling organisation that must work with and through other bodies to bring added value to the management of the National Park, to achieve the four aims.

The aims of the National Park are:

- to conserve and enhance the natural and cultural heritage of the area;
- to promote sustainable use of the natural resources of the area;
- to promote understanding and enjoyment (including enjoyment in the form of recreation) of the special qualities of the area by the public;
- to promote sustainable economic and social development of the area's communities.

If it appears to the authority that there is conflict between the first aim and the others, the first aim must be given greater weight.

National Park Partnership Plan

NPAs are required to prepare a National Park Plan (NPP) under section 11 of the National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000.

Under section 13 of the 2000 Act, NPAs must from time to time review their NPPs and, if thought fit, prepare and submit an amended Plan to the Scottish Ministers. The review of the Plan is to take place not more than 5 years (unless directed by Scottish Ministers) from the adoption of the National Park Plan or, as the case may be, the previous review.

Therefore, a review of the current National Park Partnership Plan 2012-2017 must now take place if ministerial approval is to be gained within the set timescale.

The Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan (NPPP) 2017-2022 will be the management plan for the Cairngorms National Park.

It is a plan for all those with an interest in and responsibility for managing the National Park. This includes public bodies that must have regard to the Plan in carrying out their functions and the private and voluntary sectors including businesses, land managers and communities who are all integral to managing the National Park.

In particular, the NPPP 2017-2022 will:

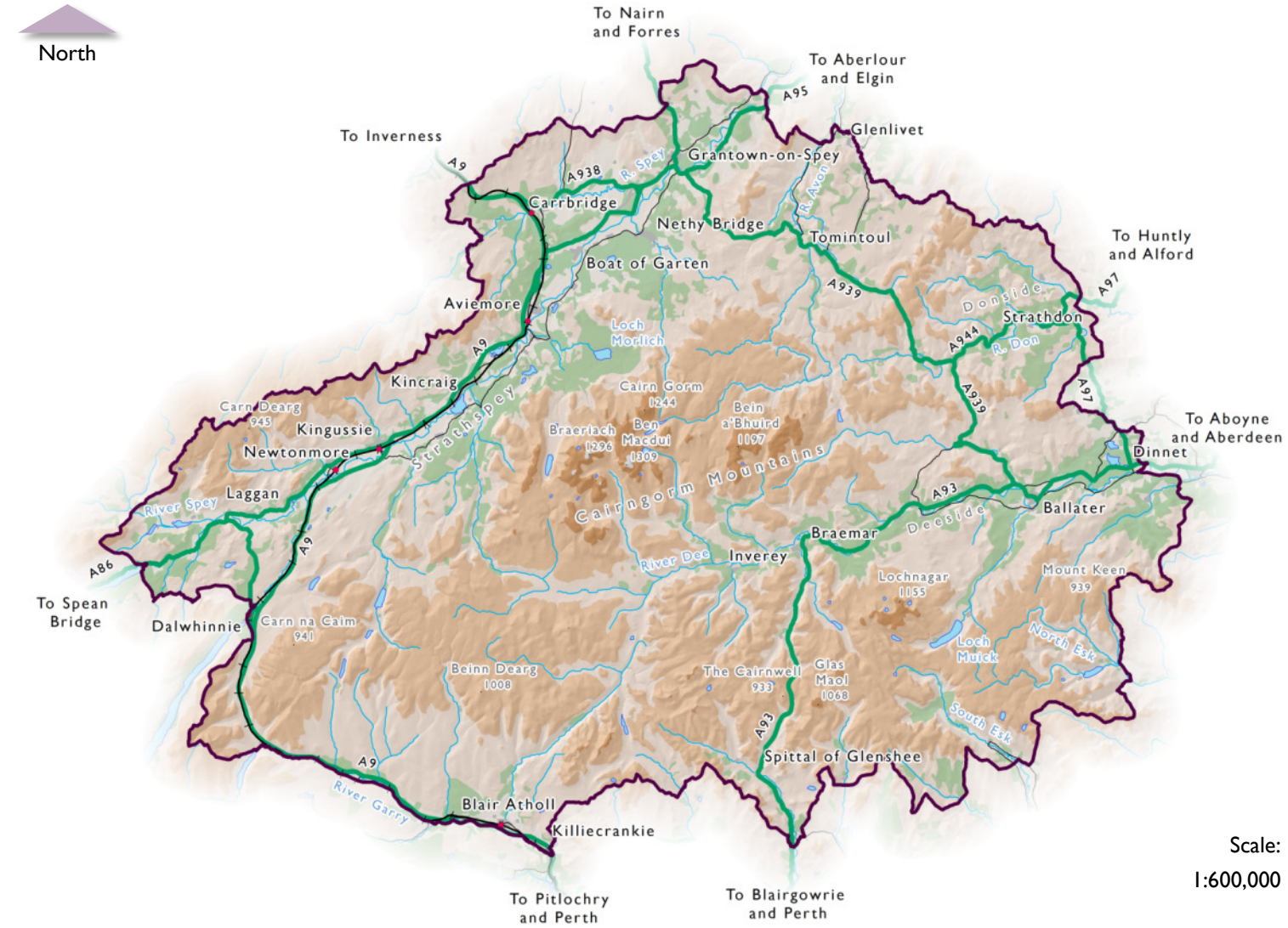
- Set out the vision and overarching strategy for managing the National Park;
- Provide focus and priorities at a time of limited financial resources;
- Provide a strategic context for the Local Development Plan (2020-2025);
- Show how the four aims of the National Park can be achieved together, benefiting people and place.

The NPPP will set out the strategic direction and priorities for the National Park, identifying the things that the CNPA and its partners think will make the biggest contribution to a successful National Park over the plan's lifetime and beyond. The key facts relating to the proposed NPPP are set out in **Table 1**.

Table 1 Key facts about the NPPP.

Responsible Authority	Cairngorms National Park Authority
Title of PPS	National Park Partnership Plan 2017-2022
Purpose of PPS	The Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan (NPPP) 2017-2022 will be the management plan for the Cairngorms National Park as required under section 11 of the National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000. It is a plan for all those with an interest in and responsibility for managing the National Park. This includes public bodies that must have regard to the Plan in carrying out their functions and the private and voluntary sectors including businesses, land managers and communities who are all integral to managing the National Park. In particular, the NPPP 2017-2022 will: ➢ Set out the vision and overarching strategy for managing the National Park; ➢ Provide focus and priorities at a time of limited financial resources; ➢ Provide a strategic context for the next Local Development Plan (2020-2025); ➢ Show how the four aims of the National Park can be achieved together, benefiting people and place. The NPPP will set out the strategic direction and priorities, identifying the things that the CNPA and its partners think will make the biggest contribution to a successful National Park over the plan's lifetime and beyond.
What prompted the PPS?	National Park Authorities (NPA) are required to prepare a National Park Plan (NPP) under section 11 of the National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000. Under section 13 of the 2000 Act, NPAs must from time to time review their NPPs and, if thought fit, prepare and submit an amended Plan to the Scottish Ministers. The review of the Plan should not take place more than 5 years (unless directed by Scottish Ministers) from the adoption of the National Park Plan or, as the case may be, the previous review. Therefore, a review of the current National Park Partnership Plan 2012-2017 must now take place if ministerial approval is to be gained within the set timescale.

Subject (e.g. Planning, transport etc)	The strategic nature of the NPPP means that it will have influence over a wide range of subjects, including: ➢ Natural heritage; ➢ Spatial planning; ➢ The economy; ➢ Historic and cultural heritage; ➢ Tourism; ➢ Education and research.
Summary of the nature / content of PPS	The NPPP 2017-2022 will include the long term vision and key outcomes for the Cairngorms National Park. It will outline the National Park's key characteristics and identify the important issues that need to be addressed. The NPPP will provide a framework for delivering the outcomes and measuring the progress made towards achieving them. The nature of these outcomes will be diverse and will encompass environmental, social and economic factors. As a result the NPPP will provide strategic direction for a number of other Plans, Programmes and Strategies (PPS), notably the next LDP (2020-2025). The Scottish Ministers, the NPA, local authorities and any other public body or office-holders must, in exercising functions so far as affecting the National Park, have regard to the NPPP as adopted.
Period Covered by PPS	2017-2022.
Frequency of Updates	Document reviewed every 5 years.
Area covered by PPS	4,528 km^2
Map included?	A map of the Cairngorms National Park is provided on page 11.
Are there any proposed PPS objectives	A set of Long Term Outcomes have been identified, which may be regarded as being terminologically synonymous with objectives. To facilitate their delivery, policies have been developed, assessed and preferred options identified. The outcome of this assessment and refinement is presented in this report.



Map of PPS Area

Legend

- Land greater than1,250m
- 1,000m to 1,250m
- 600 to 1,000m
- 300 to 600m
- Land less than 300m
- River
- Loch
- Woodland
- Built up area
- Main Road
- Minor Road
- Railway
- Railway station

Scale: 1:600,000

Figure 2 Area covered by the PPS.

Policy Context

> "*A plan or programme may be influenced in various ways by other plans or programmes, or by external environmental protection objectives such as those laid down in policies or legislation. These relationships enable the Responsible Authority to take advantage of potential synergies and to deal with any inconsistencies and constraints.*"
>
> A Practical Guide to the SEA Directive (ODPM, 2005)

The NPPP must have appropriate regard to a wide range of national and international laws, policy and strategy. A review of Plans, Programmes and Strategies (PPS) has therefore been conducted in accordance with the Scottish Government's SEA Guidance (2013) and the ODPM Guidance on SEA (2005). This is an important part of the SEA process as it ensures the work is consistent with up to date policy, is informed by robust information and also helps in the process of identifying environmental issues, which are discussed further under the Baseline section of this report (p. 13).

Review Findings

A broad review of all the PPSs considered is presented in **Appendix 1**. The PPSs are categorised according to their international, national and local scales and are accompanied by information on their purpose, relationship with the NPPP and the SEA Issue they relate to.

The SEA Environmental Report considers the PPSs that are active at the time of writing and therefore this aspect of the SEA process has been kept under continual review.

Baseline

> "*Baseline information provides the basis for predicting and monitoring environmental effects and helps to identify environmental problems and alternative ways of dealing with them.*"
>
> A Practical Guide to the SEA Directive (ODPM, 2005)

The Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 requires that information should be provided on the "relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan or programme" and "the environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected". This section aims to describe the environmental context within which the NPPP operates and the constraints and targets that this context imposes on the NPPP.

Baseline information serves two purposes, it helps to identify the issues on which the SEA should focus, and provides a benchmark against which the performance of the Plan (and the accuracy of any predictions) can be assessed. As well as showing the current situation the baseline data shows where possible the situation in the past and projections for the future, in order to indicate trends. It is important to recognise that where information on trends is available, the extrapolation of trends into the future can change in response to changes in legislation or other interventions.

An environmental baseline for the Cairngorms National Park is presented in **Appendix 2** of this report. The baseline is presented using a topic based approach, which reflects the Issues set out within Schedule 3 of the 2005 Act:

- Topic 1: Climatic Factors (p. 88);
- Topic 2: Air (p. 97);
- Topic 3: Water (p. 101);
- Topic 4: Soil (p. 118);
- Topic 5: Material Assets (p. 129);
- Topic 6: Biodiversity, Fauna and Flora (p. 148);
- Topic 7: Landscape and Cultural Heritage (p. 221); and
- Topic 8: Population and Human Health (p. 250).

While it is recognised that all topics will inter-relate to some degree, it is beyond the scope of this assessment to describe them all in full detail. However, the report does highlight important inter-relationships where they exist and describes their effects under the most relevant topic.

A summary of the baseline may be found in **Table 2**.

Summary of the Environmental Baseline and Main Issues

Table 2 Summary of baseline information and main issues; see Appendix 2 for full details.

SEA Topic	Summary of environmental baseline
Climatic Factors Pages 88- 96	➢ Historic trends show an increase in minimum and maximum temperatures and rainfall and a reduction in the number of days of frost. ➢ Climate change projections offer a central estimate of a: ➢ 2.4°C increase in mean annual temperature, ➢ 2.7°C increase in mean summer temperature, ➢ 2.1°C increase in mean winter temperature, ➢ 0.07% increase in mean annual precipitation, but with a ➢ 13.5% decrease in mean summer precipitation, and a ➢ 2% decrease in mean winter precipitation. ➢ Per capita carbon emissions in the form of CO_2 are estimated to have decreased from 10.3 tonnes in 2006 to 7.7 tonnes to 2014.
Air Pages 97 - 100	➢ Air quality is relatively high within the National Park. ➢ No Air Quality Management Areas within National Park. ➢ Most air pollution associated with transport, with emissions of PM_{10} and NO_2 highest along the National Park's main roads, with the A9 being the greatest contributor.
Water Pages 101 - 117	➢ Water quality is relatively high within the National Park. ➢ In 2014 the overall status of waterbodies within and overlapping the Cairngorms National Park was: ➢ 7.8% High, ➢ 49.7% Good, ➢ 25.5% Moderate, ➢ 14.4% Poor, and

SEA Topic	Summary of environmental baseline
	➢ 2.6% Bad. ➢ 2014 saw: ➢ 10.4% of waterbodies improve in overall status, ➢ 80.9% remain the same, and ➢ 8.7% degraded in overall status. ➢ Data from the Spey and Dee indicates a general trend for higher annual maximum instantaneous peak flows. ➢ There is insufficient capacity in the water and sewage treatment works that serve the National Park to meet the projected level of housing growth for the Plan period. ➢ Flood risk: there are nine Potentially Vulnerable Areas (PVAs) within the National Park. The estimated total average annual cost of damage in these areas is £1,071,000.
Soil Pages 118 - 128	➢ The Cairngorms National Park does not contain any mapped areas of Prime Agricultural Land. ➢ Around 1,700km^2 of peat soils within the National Park. ➢ Soil erosion represents a risk to soils with high organic content (such as peat) over large areas of the National Park.
Material Assets Pages 129 - 147	➢ 39 GCR sites within or overlapping the National Park boundary. Combined they cover an area of around 592 km^2. ➢ CNPA has permitted around 4.2MW of renewable energy since 2010 although data gaps remain in the exact level of energy generated in the National Park. ➢ Household waste produced is reducing, while the recycling rate is increasing. ➢ In 2015, the Cairngorms National Park: ➢ Produced 10,080 tonnes of household waste, ➢ Recycled 4,608 tonnes of household waste (45.8%). ➢ Transport infrastructure, while good along the National Park's main corridors, is poor elsewhere in the National Park, resulting in long drive times and high levels of deprivation in SIMD domains relating to access. ➢ Rail use is on the increase, although the reliance on private transport remains high. ➢ The National Park's internet infrastructure is currently being upgraded, although plans are yet to be confirmed for a

SEA Topic	Summary of environmental baseline
	third of the exchanges servicing the area.

Biodiversity, Fauna and Flora
Pages 148 - 220
	➢ Cairngorms National Park is home to 25% of the UK's rare animal, insect, lichen, fungi and insect species.
	➢ There are around 1,200 species considered to be important for nature conservation within the National Park.
	➢ National Park contains 11 National Nature Reserves (NNRs), covering an area of around 513 km^2.
	➢ National Park contains 59 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), covering an area of around 1,128 km^2. Of these:
	  ➢ 40 are Biological SSSIs, covering around 449 km^2.
	  ➢ 9 are Geological SSSIs, covering an area of around 9 km^2.
	  ➢ 10 are Mixed SSSI's, covering an area of around 671 km^2.
	➢ Of the 50 SSSIs with biological notifiable interests, 28 have at least one notifiable interest that is in unfavourable condition.
	➢ 5 SSSIs, namely Aldclune and Invervack Meadows, Blair Atholl Meadow, Craigendarroch, Creag Dhubh and Garbh Choire, have no notifiable interests in favourable condition.
	➢ National Park contains 39 sites within the Natura 2000 Network. Of these:
	  ➢ 23 are Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), covering around 1,083 km^2.
	  ➢ 16 are Special Protection Areas (SPAs), covering an area of around 2,536 km^2.
	➢ 16 SACs have at least one qualifying feature that is in unfavourable condition.
	➢ 4 SACs, namely Monadhliath, River South Esk, Kinveachy Forest and The Maim, have no qualifying features in favourable condition.
	➢ 33 Annex I (Habitats Directive) habitats occur in the National Park.
	➢ 10 Annex II (Habitats Directive) species are native to, and normally resident in, the National Park.
	➢ 9 SPAs have at least one qualifying feature that is in unfavourable condition.
	➢ 3 SPAs, namely Craigmore Wood, Creag Meagaidh and Muir of Dinnet have no qualifying features in favourable condition.
	➢ National Park contains one candidate SPA, namely Ladder Hills.

SEA Topic	Summary of environmental baseline
	➢ 35 Annex I (Birds Directive) species can be found within the Cairngorms National Park. ➢ National Park contains 3 Ramsar Sites, covering an area of around 15 km^2. ➢ National Park contains one Biogenetic Reserve at Muir of Dinnet. ➢ National Park contains 2 Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) Reserves at Loch Garten and Insh Marshes. ➢ National Park contains the most extensive tracts of Caledonian forest in Britain. ➢ Native tree species comprise around 79% of the National Park's woodlands, representing a quarter of the entire Scottish native woodland resource. ➢ Aspen dominated woodland is unique to the Cairngorms National Park, the stands are small and total less than 350ha concentrated in Strathspey and Deeside. ➢ Around 340 km^2 of the National Park's woodlands are identified as being ancient according to SNH's Ancient Woodland Inventory. ➢ Around 160 km^2 of this has also been identified as being semi-natural. ➢ Some of the UK's best ancient floodplain woodlands are located in the Cairngorms National Park. ➢ Caledonian Pinewood is at threat from habitat loss lack of regeneration, limited deadwood and poor structural diversity. ➢ Approximately 1,120ha of new native woodland was created between 2013 and 2017. ➢ Conifer plantations make up 50% of the woodland resource and are of limited value for biodiversity. ➢ Lack of regeneration, poor structural diversity and grazing pressure has reduced the biodiversity value of upland oak. ➢ Capercaillie populations in Scotland have declined significantly from an estimated 20,000 birds in 1970 to around 1,285 at the most recent national winter survey in 2009/10. ➢ The National Park holds a significant proportion of the national Capercaillie population – at least 75% of the national number of lekking males, with the majority in Strathspey. ➢ The Strathspey capercaillie population is crucial to the long-term survival of the species in the UK. ➢ The National Park is one of the last strongholds for red squirrel and Scottish Wildcat in the UK. ➢ The National Park is one of the most important sites for breeding waders due to the combination of wetlands, wet

SEA Topic	Summary of environmental baseline
	grassland and low-intensity mixed farming. ➢ Wetlands have historically been drained for agriculture, suffered water shortages as a result of over abstraction and impoundment and been subject to pollution pressure from diffuse and point sources. The remaining wetlands are now often small and fragmented. ➢ Wet grasslands are under threat from over-grazing and poaching by livestock, cutting for hay at critical wader breeding times and drainage to create productive agricultural land. ➢ Rivers, lochs and the species they support have been affected by large scale impoundments which have a hydrological impact and also affect sediment dynamics, create barriers to fish passage, diffuse and point source pollution and invasive species ➢ The freshwater pearl mussel is declining dramatically throughout its range. Mussel populations have been affected by multiple issues, including wildlife crime, habitat degradation and declining water quality. ➢ The Cairngorms Mountains support a rich arctic montane flora. ➢ Montane and moorland habitat under threat from climate change, trampling, erosion and disturbance. ➢ Upland heathland under threat from drainage issues. ➢ Blanket bog under threat from erosion, which is likely to be a significant cause of carbon emissions. ➢ Montaine scrub is under threat from overgrazing and burning. ➢ Small fragmented areas of lowland and upland hay meadows, which are locally important for biodiversity and include many species of orchid and waxcap fungi, still exist in places.
Landscape and Cultural Heritage Pages 221 - 249	➢ At 4,528 square kilometres, and comprising 6% of Scotland's land area, the Cairngorms National Park is the UK's largest protected landscape. ➢ National Park contains 3 National Scenic Areas (NSA), with two, namely the Cairngorm Mountains NSA and Deeside and Lochnagar NSA, located entirely within the National Park's boundary. ➢ Combined, the two main NSAs cover an area of around 1,072 km^2, which equates to just under 25% of the National Park's land area.

SEA Topic	Summary of environmental baseline

	➢ Around 2,100 km^2 (46%) of the Cairngorms National Park has been identified as 'wild land'.
	➢ There are 110 Scheduled Monuments recorded within the National Park.
	➢ 'The Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes in Scotland' lists 10 gardens and designed landscapes within the National Park.
	➢ There are 2 Inventory Battlefields within the National Park.
	➢ There are 5 historic planned towns within the National Park.
	➢ There are 6 Conservation Areas within the National Park.
	➢ There are around 753 Listed buildings or structures within the National Park, with:
	  ➢ 56 in Category A,
	  ➢ 341 in Category B, and
	  ➢ 356 in Category C.
	➢ There are 17 buildings on the Buildings at Risk Register within the National Park.
	➢ There are around 370 Gaelic and 5,400 Scots speakers living in the National Park.

Population and Human Health Pages 250 - 288	➢ In 2014, the population of the population of the National Park was estimated to be 18,594, with 9,186 males and 9,408 females. ➢ The National Park has a relatively high proportion of people within the 10 to 29 and 55 to 74 age cohorts. ➢ National Park has a working age population of approximately 10,909 people (51.9% of total population), with 5,666 males and 5,243 females. ➢ Those of pensionable age numbered 4,539 (24.6% of total population) with 1,911 males and 2,628 females. ➢ Since 2001, the National Park has experienced a significant net increase in its resident population, rising by approximately 2,087 persons (a growth of 12.8%). ➢ Greatest rate of population growth occurred in Aviemore, which increased by around 1,009 people since 2001. ➢ Population projections for the National Park estimate that between 2014 and 2039, the population is projected to drop from 19010 to 18337 (an increase of around 4%).

SEA Topic	Summary of environmental baseline

	➢ Over the projection period:
	  ➢ Number of children aged under 16 are projected to decrease by 21% from 3,030 to 2,383.
	  ➢ The working age population is projected to decrease by 10% from 11,250 to 10,178.
	  ➢ People of pensionable age are projected to rise by 23% from 4,730 to 5,776.
	➢ Household projections suggest that households are set to increase from 8,653 in 2012 to 9,195 in 2039, an increase of 6%.
	➢ The average household size is projected to fall from 2.12 people in 2014 to 1.91 people in 2039.
	➢ Around 76.8% of the 16+ Census population had NVQ1 level and above (Scotland 73.2%), and around 30.8% had NVQ4 and above (Scotland 26.1%).
	➢ Around 95% of people classed as being economically active were in employment in 2011, which is slightly higher than the Scottish level of 91.9%.
	➢ Of the economically inactive in 2011, who numbered 5,377 (around 33.9% of the 16+ population), 75.1% were inactive due to retirement.
	➢ The level of full time (72.8%) and part time (27.2%) employee jobs (excludes self-employed, government, trainees and HM Forces) is generally consistent with Scotland as a whole.
	➢ Unemployment levels are low, with only 225 people claiming Job Seekers Allowance in Q 4 of 2012.
	➢ Gross median wage is relatively low in the National Park, but gross household income is above the Scottish median.
	➢ Estimated life expectancy of the National Park is 79 for males and 82.3 for females.
	➢ Low levels of people with long term health problems or disabilities and high levels of people with good health within the National Park.
	➢ Low levels of overall deprivation within the National Park, with 3 data zones being in the 20% least deprived in Scotland.
	➢ Extensive public footpath network, including 1,073km of Core Path.

Environmental Assessment

SEA Objectives

> "*The review of relevant environmental objectives can be used to construct a framework of objectives against which a plan can be assessed. This can identify whether a plan supports wider environmental objectives or whether there are any environmental gaps.*"
>
> SEA Guidance
> (Scottish Government, 2013)

This section of the Scoping Report sets out the CNPA's proposed approach to assessment of the NPPP.

Proposed SEA Objectives have been developed as a result of the review of PPS (**Policy Context**, p. 12) and baseline information (**Baseline**, p. 13) as well as the responses to the consultation on the Scoping Report (**Appendix 5**, p. 305). Identifying objectives is an important part of the SEA process as these will be used as the primary tool for testing the emerging NPPP to ensure it will not result in any significant environmental effects.

The SEA Objectives are thematically based and are designed to cover the environmental assets that the Plan could potentially affect. It is important to recognise that environmental effects are rarely confined to a single issue, therefore it has been highlighted where significant inter-relationships occur. The SEA Objectives proposed here therefore represent the scope of the assessment that will be undertaken to identify potential environmental effects of the NPPP.

It is important that the assessment process is proportional, practical and manageable. Consequently, the assessment process will utilise the 'main' SEA Objectives, but take account of the SEA Sub-Objectives. This distinction is important to ensure the assessment work is practical and achievable. It should also be noted that not all SEA Sub-Objectives will be relevant to every aspect of the Plan. Therefore, in the interest of proportionality, where they are not relevant, they will not be considered as part of the assessment process.

The Objectives and their relationship with the SEA Issues identified for the National Park are outlined in **Table 3**, along with any associated sub objectives. The main objectives have been tested for their compatibility with one another, the findings of which can be found in the section on the **Compatibility of Objectives** (p. 29). The framework in which they will be utilised is set out on page 31.

Table 3 SEA Objectives.

SEA Topic	No.	SEA Objective	SEA Sub-Objectives	Inter-relationships
Climatic Factors	1a	Reduce greenhouse gas emissions	➢ Reduce the emissions of greenhouse gases with particular focus on emissions from buildings, transport, energy generation and industry (especially CO_2). ➢ Encourage energy conservation and higher energy efficiency. ➢ Encourage investment in cleaner technologies. ➢ Support investment in suitable renewable energy sources. ➢ Decouple increase in GDP and greenhouse gas emissions. ➢ Encourage the appropriate local sourcing of materials, resources and food produce.	➢ Air ➢ Water ➢ Soil ➢ Material Assets ➢ Population and Human health
	1b	Increase resilience to the effects of climate change	➢ Ensure that new development is appropriately located, having considered the potential effects of future climate conditions. ➢ Ensure infrastructure and buildings are designed to cope with future climate conditions. ➢ Encourage climate change adaptation through green infrastructure. ➢ Encourage existing infrastructure and buildings to adapt to cope with future climate conditions.	➢ Water ➢ Soil ➢ Landscape and Cultural Heritage ➢ Biodiversity, Fauna and Flora ➢ Population and Human health

SEA Topic	No.	SEA Objective	SEA Sub-Objectives	Inter-relationships
Air	2	Protect and enhance air quality	➢ Reduce levels of the UK National Air Quality pollutants (e.g. NO_2, PM_{10}, SO_2). ➢ Reduce levels of ground-level ozone (O_3). ➢ Reduce the need for travel, through appropriate siting of new developments and provision of public infrastructure. ➢ Reduce negative effects of power generation, industry and transport on local air quality. ➢ Contribute towards reducing levels of stratospheric ozone depletions. ➢ Encourage appropriate cleaner technology for power generation, industry and transport. ➢ Reduce levels of acid deposition. ➢ Reduce levels of ammonia deposition.	➢ Water ➢ Soil ➢ Biodiversity, Fauna and Flora ➢ Population and Human health
Water	3a	Reduce flood risk	➢ Safeguard the functional floodplain. ➢ Encourage the restoration of a natural flood regime. ➢ Promote land uses and habitat changes that will help to decrease run-off, stablise slopes, and attenuate flows. ➢ Ensure new development is not located in areas of high or medium flood risk. ➢ Ensure new development does not increase flood risk on site or elsewhere. ➢ Increase the use of sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) in both new and refurbished developments. ➢ Avoid loss of soils to non-permeable surfaces. ➢ Reduce reliance on flood mitigation and hard engineered solutions.	➢ Climatic factors ➢ Soil ➢ Biodiversity, Fauna and Flora ➢ Landscape and Cultural Heritage ➢ Population and Human health

SEA Topic	No.	SEA Objective	SEA Sub-Objectives	Inter-relationships
			➢ Increase provision to manage stormwater.	
	3b	Maintain and improve the quality of water resources	➢ Ensure the water quality of rivers, lochs and ground-water is maintained or improved. ➢ Maintain and improve the ability of river catchments to store water. ➢ Conserve public water supply. ➢ Reduce demand for water and minimise unnecessary water use. ➢ Reduce diffuse pollution from urban and rural areas. ➢ Limit land use related pollution (particularly nitrates) on water resources.	➢ Climatic factors ➢ Soil ➢ Material Assets ➢ Biodiversity, Fauna and Flora ➢ Population and Human health

SEA Topic	No.	SEA Objective	SEA Sub-Objectives	Inter-relationships
Soil	4	Minimise contamination and safeguard and improve soil and peat quality.	➢ Maintain or improve the productive capacity of soils. ➢ Maintain or improve the ability of farmland in the Park to sustainably produce high quality local and seasonal food. ➢ Avoid increased diffuse pollution, particularly SO_2 and NO_2 emissions and nitrate pollution from agriculture and other economic activities. ➢ Protect and enhance soil quantity (including non-chemical soil functions and processes such as permeability) and quantity, especially of carbon rich soils. ➢ Maintain, restore or improve the carbon storage capacity of peat and soils. ➢ Minimise carbon emissions from land use (e.g. muirburn). ➢ Avoid and reduce contamination of soils. ➢ Promote the regeneration and redevelopment of brownfield and contaminated land. ➢ Take account of soil function. ➢ Minimise soil erosion. ➢ Minimise soil sealing. ➢ Minimise soil compaction.	➢ Climatic factors ➢ Water ➢ Material Assets ➢ Biodiversity, Fauna and Flora ➢ Landscape and Cultural Heritage ➢ Population and Human health

SEA Topic	No.	SEA Objective	SEA Sub-Objectives	Inter-relationships
Material Assets	5	Encourage the sustainable use and reuse of material assets	➢ Promote decoupling of resource use from economic prosperity. ➢ Encourage sustainable use of natural resources e.g. water, timber, aggregates. ➢ Minimise the use of finite resources and promote higher resource efficiency and the use of secondary and recycled materials. ➢ Promote the waste hierarchy of reduce, reuse and recycle. ➢ Value, conserve and enhance geodiversity.	➢ Climatic factors ➢ Air ➢ Water ➢ Soil ➢ Biodiversity, Fauna and Flora ➢ Landscape and Cultural Heritage ➢ Population and Human Health
Biodiversity, Fauna and Flora	6a	Value, conserve and enhance biodiversity, distinctive native species and habitats	➢ Protect the integrity of European sites, proposed European sites and listed Ramsar sites, and to conserve or, where not at a favourable conservation status, enhance their qualifying features. ➢ Avoid damage or fragmentation of designated sites, habitats and protected species and encourage their enhancement and connection. ➢ Conserve and enhance the viability and diversity of distinctive species and habitats and their connectivity. ➢ Avoid the introduction and spread of invasive non-native species and tree diseases. ➢ Conserve, enhance and create appropriate natural habitats and wider biodiversity within and outwith settlements. ➢ Encourage innovative methods of producing biodiversity gain for both new and existing developments. ➢ Reduce the ecological footprint of the Cairngorms National Park.	➢ Climatic factors ➢ Air ➢ Water ➢ Soil ➢ Material Assets ➢ Landscape and Cultural Heritage ➢ Population and Human Health

SEA Topic	No.	SEA Objective	SEA Sub-Objectives	Inter-relationships
			➢ Enable people to access and appreciate the Cairngorms National Park's natural heritage more.	
	6b	Maintain and improve the sustainable management of woodland for multiple benefits	➢ Maintain or improve the capacity of woodland to sequester and store carbon. ➢ Enhance the ecological functioning of woodland at a landscape scale. ➢ Avoid the loss of ancient woodland and veteran trees. ➢ Protect and enhance the ecosystem services woodland provide (e.g. flood alleviation and pollution mitigation). ➢ Protect and promote the recreational, cultural, landscape and economic value of woodland.	➢ Climatic factors ➢ Air ➢ Water ➢ Soil ➢ Material Assets ➢ Landscape and Cultural Heritage ➢ Population and Human Health
Landscape and Cultural Heritage	7	Protect and enhance the character, diversity and special qualities of the National Park's landscape and cultural heritage	➢ Protect and enhance the National Park's special landscape qualities**.** ➢ Work towards creating landscapes that are ecologically functional. ➢ Minimise the loss of wild land. ➢ Reduce light pollution. ➢ Value, protect and enhance the historic and cultural environment and its assets. ➢ To promote high quality design based on a comprehensive understanding of landscape character and distinctiveness. ➢ Protect and enhance townscape and respect the existing pattern, form and setting of settlements.	➢ Climatic Factors ➢ Material Assets ➢ Biodiversity, Fauna and Flora ➢ Population and Human health

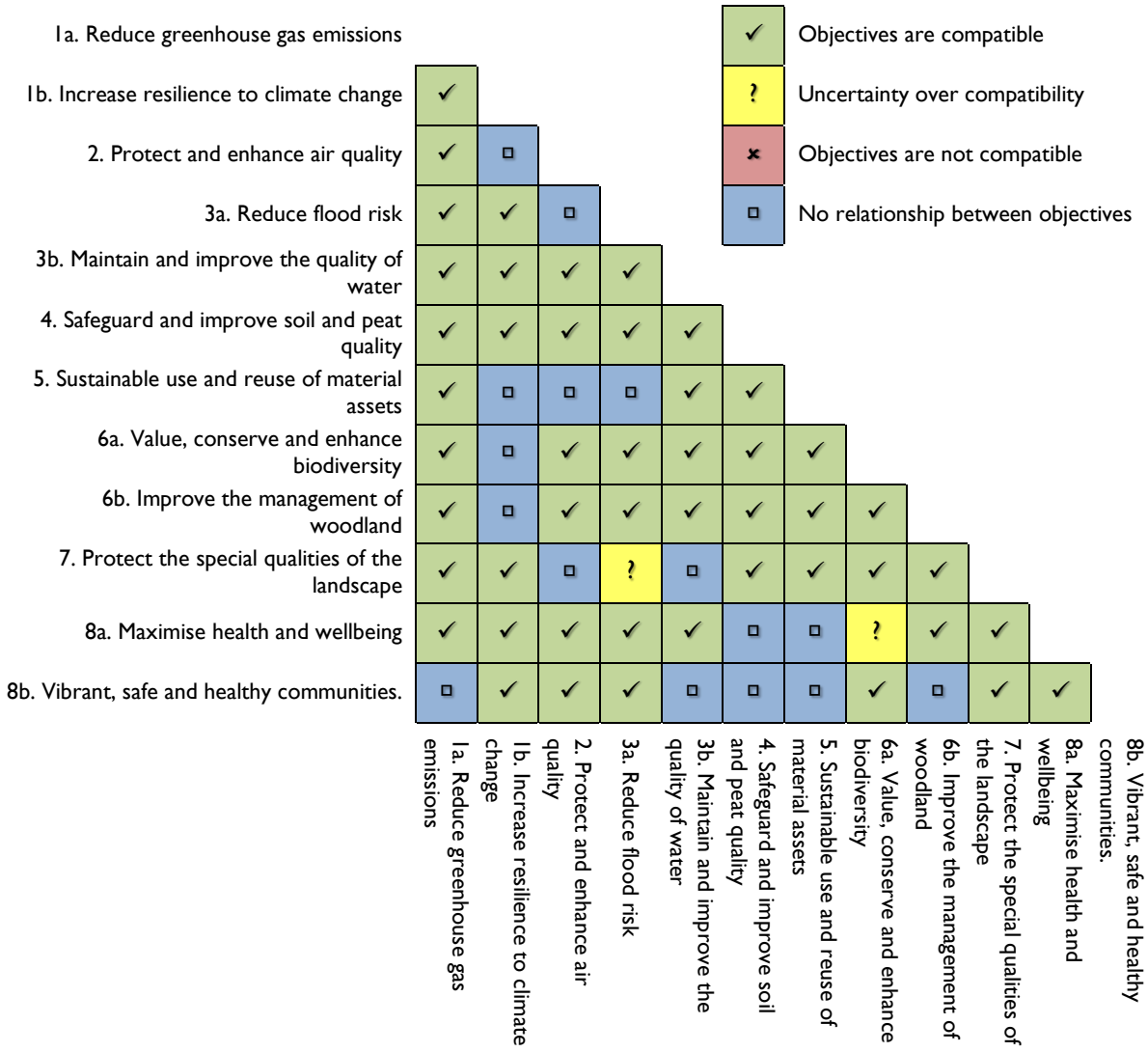
SEA Topic	No.	SEA Objective	SEA Sub-Objectives	Inter-relationships
Population and Human Health	8a	Promote opportunities that maximise the health and wellbeing of local people, visitors and communities.	➢ Maintain the recreational value of the Cairngorms National Park. ➢ Promote and maintain opportunities for people to enjoy physical recreation and lead healthy lifestyles. ➢ Encourage walking or cycling as an alternative means of transportation. ➢ Empower people to experience, learn about and share the Cairngorms National Park's historic, cultural and natural heritage. ➢ Promote the improvement and maintenance of social and physical environments / facilities that provide opportunities to enhance health and wellbeing.	➢ Landscape and Cultural Heritage ➢ Population and Human Health
	8b	Support vibrant, safe and healthy communities.	➢ Ensure the population and household growth is accommodated in appropriate locations. ➢ Ensure a suitable affordable housing stock is available to meet needs. ➢ Promote the design of settlements that improve social fabric by removing barriers and creating opportunities for positive interactions. ➢ Promote the inclusion of disadvantaged and minority groups. ➢ Redress imbalances of inequality, deprivation and exclusion. ➢ Provide easy access to high quality facilities and services. ➢ Ensure that adequate healthcare premises are provided throughout the National Park. ➢ Reduce burden of ill-health in the population. ➢ Reduce the causes of accidents. ➢ Ensure the quality of the built environment complements the high quality natural environment.	➢ Climatic factors ➢ Air ➢ Water ➢ Soil ➢ Material Assets ➢ Biodiversity, Fauna and Flora ➢ Landscape and Cultural Heritage ➢ Population and Human Health

Compatibility of SEA Objectives

> "*It may be useful to test the internal compatibility of the SEA objectives... There may be tensions between objectives that cannot be resolved: the compatibility assessment will clarify these so that subsequent decisions are well based, and mitigation or alternatives can be considered.*"
>
> A Practical Guide to the SEA Directive (ODPM, 2005)

The SEA Objectives identified in **Table 3** have been tested for compatibility in accordance with the guidance as set out by the ODPM. A matrix approach has been used which is consistent with this guidance. The results of the compatibility assessment are summarised in **Figure 3**. Only the 'main' objectives have been considered as part of the compatibility test, since the sub-objectives effectively feed into these.

Figure 3 Compatibility assessment of SEA objectives (abridged).



As can be seen from **Figure 3**, a large number of the SEA objectives are either compatible with each other, or there is no relationship between them. Where there is no relationship between objectives this means they can be achieved simultaneously without conflict. However, there is uncertainty between the compatibility of some objectives, for example the objectives 3a and 7. This uncertainty will be considered in greater detail in the Environmental Report.

Likely changes to the environment in the absence of a Plan

> "*It is important to be aware that baselines will change over time under 'no plan or programme' and 'business as usual' alternatives, as well as under new plans or programmes.*"
>
> A Practical Guide to the SEA Directive (ODPM, 2005)

In forecasting the 'business as usual', or 'without the plan' scenario it is first necessary to determine what that means. In the case of the NPPP, the absence of a Plan is taken to mean the continued implementation of the CNPA's overarching Plans such as the current NPPP 2012-2017 and Local Development Plan (LDP) 2015 as well as the international and national PPS listed in **Appendix 1** (p. 65).

The Environmental effects of this interpretation are forecast in the context of the SEA Objectives (**Table 3**). The SEA Objectives have been chosen as a context for this exercise because:

- They provide the context against which the likely effects of the Plan have been assessed; and
- They provide the proposed framework for SEA monitoring.

Table 4 Likely environmental changes in the absence of a Plan.

SEA Objective	Business as Usual Scenario
1a Reduce greenhouse gas emissions	In the absence of the Plan, statutory plans such as the LDP (2015) will continue to direct development to the most appropriate locations and promote sustainable development. However, efforts towards reducing greenhouse gas emissions are likely to be piecemeal and uncoordinated, since the National Park would lack an overarching strategy coordinating the actions of the various partners. The NPPP also provides the policy basis which all daughter PPS should follow, therefore its existence ensures that issues such as climate change are not missed at a lower level. Given that climate change is a macro scale issue that requires the attention of all organisations operating within the National Park, it is clear that the NPPP would play an important role in managing it. It is likely therefore, that in the absence of am NPPP, a reduction in local greenhouse gas emissions would be harder to achieve.
1b Increase resilience to the effects of climate change	Policy 3 of the LDP (2015) requires any new development to be sustainably designed and therefore resilient to the effects of a changing climate. It is unlikely that such a policy will be dropped from the next LDP (to be adopted by 2020) and therefore climate change adaptation, at least where it relates to development requiring planning permission, will continue to be a policy concern within the National Park. However, the absence of an NPPP would make other means of increasing resilience harder to achieve. For example, the implementation of natural flood management techniques, particularly those relating to landscape scale habitat management, require a strategic approach to implementation, which would not exist in the absence of a NPPP. It is likely therefore, that in the absence of a NPPP opportunities do develop comprehensive adaptation measures will be lost.
2a Protect and enhance air quality	With a growing population, increasing visitor numbers and high levels of private motor vehicle use, there is likely to be a minor negative impact on air quality over the Plan period. While the LDP (2015) and planning system may deal with matters relating to the scale and distribution of development, it cannot play a role in delivering services such as better public transport. Since one of the NPPP's aims is to integrate sustainable patterns of development and travel, its absence would lead to a reduction in the ability of partners to manage negative effects, as projects, particularly those relating to visitor attraction or the provision of public transport, are delivered less effectively when managed on an ad-hoc basis. The absence of a NPPP is therefore likely to

SEA Objective	Business as Usual Scenario
	result in more pronounced negative effects, particularly in areas that receive a high number of visitors.
3a Reduce flood risk	The LDP (2015) and national guidance aim to prevent an increase in flood risk as a result of development. The planning system cannot however be a proactive tool in reducing flood risk caused by existing land uses. The NPPP may act as a means of coordinating the delivery of natural flood management measures, particularly when they are implemented as part of broader landscape scale habitat management priorities, such woodland expansion or peatland restoration. The absence of the NPPP would make this task harder as there would be no framework for coordinating actions between partners with land ownership interests. It is likely therefore, that in the absence of a NPPP, that significant opportunities for reducing flood risk would be missed.
3b Maintain and improve the quality of water resources	Water quality within the National Park is generally good and the LDP (2015) has policies that aim to protect with respect to new development. However, land management activities that fall outside spatial planning's remit, such as those related to forestry or moorland, can also have a negative effect on water quality. The NPPP provides a framework for the coordinated and sustainable management of these, including natural flood interventions such as management and landscape scale habitat management, and can therefore play a significant role in improving water quality. In its absence therefore, there is a greater likelihood of existing problems remaining and further negative effects occurring.
4 Minimise contamination and safeguard and improve soil and peat quality.	The LDP (2015) directs development to the most sustainable locations, encourages the use of previously developed land and seeks to limit the loss of land with the highest agricultural value. However, land management activities that fall outside spatial planning's remit, such as those related to forestry or moorland, can also have a negative effect on soil quality, leading to soil erosion and peatland degradation. The NPPP provides a framework for the coordinated and sustainable management of these areas and can therefore play a significant role in protecting the National Parks soils. In its absence therefore, there is a greater likelihood of existing problems remaining and further negative effects occurring.
5 Encourage the sustainable use and reuse of material assets	The LDP (2015) encourages the sustainable use of resources; however in the absence of a coordinated approach to development, nature conservation and visitor management, opportunities for the reduction, reuse or recycling of materials may be lost. Partnership working may also offer opportunities to make more efficient use of natural resources, such as water, timber and aggregates, which may also be lost if a NPP were not in

SEA Objective	Business as Usual Scenario
	place.
6a Value, conserve and enhance biodiversity, distinctive wild species and habitats	The National Park is protected by many tiers of protected site and even in the absence of the NPPP, development and land management practices would still have to meet the requirements of Natura legislation. However, biodiversity is more than just protected sites and the National Park is home to many important yet undesignated habitats, many of which are important to the protected sites themselves. Gains through landscape scale habitat management would not easily be achieved without the direction provided by the NPPP. The NPPP may also offer benefit through implementation of coordinated compensation, mitigation and enhancement measures associated with the management of land or the development of settlements. In its absence therefore, it's likely that the CNPA would have difficulty meeting its aim "*to conserve and enhance the natural and cultural heritage of the area*" and that without its ability to intervene where poor land management practices are identified, it's probable that adverse effects would arise.
6b Maintain and improve the sustainable management of woodland for multiple benefits	The National Park contains the most extensive tract of Caledonian forest in Britain. It has around 340 km^2 of ancient woodland, of which around 160 km^2 is semi-natural. Woodland is therefore an important habitat and resource of interest to many of the national Park's partners. Without the NPPP, priorities such as woodland expansion and other landscape scale habitat management principles related to woodland, would be harder to realise.
7 Protect and enhance the character, diversity and special qualities of the National Park's landscape and cultural and historic heritage	The Cairngorms National Park represents the UK's largest protected landscape. Adverse effects from development may be prevented or mitigated through the policies of the LDP (2015); however broader scale landscape changes, caused by land management practices are beyond its remit. Furthermore, as Provision 14 of the National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000 states that "…*Scottish Ministers, a National Park authority, a local authority and any other public body or office-holder must, in exercising functions so far as affecting a National Park, have regard to the National Park Plan…"* the NPPP offers the CNPA the ability to protect the special qualities of the National Park from development or land management practices that take place outside of its boundary. The absence of the NPPP would therefore weaken the ability of the CNPA to protect and, where possible enhance, the National Park's landscape.
8a Promote opportunities that maximise the health and	One of the aims of the National Park is "*to promote understanding and enjoyment (including enjoyment in the form of recreation) of the special qualities of the area by the public*". The NPPP offers a framework for the coordinated

SEA Objective	Business as Usual Scenario
wellbeing of local people, visitors and communities	delivery of services and facilities that support healthy living and in its absence, it will be unlikely that opportunities for benefits could be maximised, particularly in relation to the overall visitor experience of the area.
8b Support vibrant, safe and healthy communities	One of the aims of the National Park is "*to promote sustainable economic and social development of the area's communities*". Issues include a growing but aging population, relatively high house prices and relatively low median incomes. The LDP (2015) may address some of these through the provision of housing that meets affordable and other special needs, however it is but one tool with significant limits. The NPPP may be the framework for the provision of affordable housing though alternative means, while it can also play a part in supporting the provision of community facilities and events. In its absence, such opportunities may be lost with potentially significant effects.

Development of the Cairngorm and NPPP Outcomes and Policies

> "[Reasonable alternatives] *can be used to achieve environmental benefits and, where well executed, can be an opportunity for the SEA to add value to the planning process by encouraging lateral or creative thinking. Alternatives must be realistic and are likely to emerge from the plan-making process. However, the SEA can encourage further thinking around alternatives, and highlight where environmentally preferable options exist.*"
>
> SEA Guidance
> (Scottish Government, 2013)

The NPPP identifies nine key priorities to be addressed:

- Supporting landscape scale collaboration;
- Deer management;
- Moorland management;
- Visitor infrastructure and information;
- Active Cairngorms;
- Learning and inclusion;
- Housing;
- Community capacity and empowerment; and
- Infrastructure development.

The Environmental Assessment (Scotland) 2005 requires that reasonable alternatives to the Plan be considered as part of the SEA. Therefore, a range of options were considered as a means of best addressing the identified issues.

This however presented a challenge for the NPPP, as the National Park Plan, as it does not deliver changes itself, but is intended to co-ordinate and focus the delivery of a wide range of other PPSs and work that does deliver change. The process of developing the NPPP involves interpreting the National Park's four aims and other national policy objectives in order to make the most of those PPSs. On the one hand there are therefore potentially an infinite number of alternatives, but in practice there are few 'reasonable alternatives' of substance that could reasonably be assessed.

A further limit to the availability of reasonable alternatives is that the NPPP to be considered in the SEA is that the NPPP is not being created in without reference to earlier incarnations. Indeed, no issues have been identified that would lead to a radical change to the strategy adopted by the previous NPPP (2012-2017), which itself was subject to SEA (Cairngorms National Park Authority, 2011). It has not therefore been possible to identify reasonable alternatives for the NPPP's vision, Long Term Outcomes, or indeed many of its policies.

The exception to these scenarios may however be found in a number of the policy options, where reasonable alternatives to delivering the vision and outcomes have been identified. These by and large represent a slight break from previous policy approaches and in these instances, previous policies may be regarded as the reasonable alternative.

It should be noted however that there are still a number of areas where hypothetical alternatives exist but where for practical reasons none are considered reasonable:

- The upgrading of the A9 road and the Highland line will be major projects that have a range of environmental impact. However, both are states policy objectives of the Scottish Government. The current NPPP (2012-2017) notes that the planning of these projects would need to minimise and avoid negative environmental impacts. This will also be the policy approach of this NPPP. It should also be noted that both projects have been subjected to their own SEA processes.
- There will be a need for new housing in the National Park to meet the needs of the local populace and to accommodate future growth. The LDP considers the need and how to meet it in detail. Hypothetically, the NPPP could set a low target or constrain growth. However, the National Park has a consented land supply that is likely to last around 20 years into the future. It must be assumed therefore, that those consented sites will be built and that there is no deliverable reasonable alternative to this scenario.
- The NPPP supports the existing settlement hierarchy within the National Park, using the existing larger settlements as the main service centres because they are already places where most people live and have the widest range of facilities and services. To adopt a radically different hierarchy would lead to substantial changes in the character of other settlements, threaten the viability of others and increase the need for people to travel. It is not therefore considered to be a reasonable alternative as it would likely result in many significant adverse environmental, social and economic effects.

All reasonable alternatives were assessed at the time of the development of the consultation draft for the NPPP. The consultation on that document took place between 27th June and 30th September 2016, and it was accompanied by an environmental report that presented the findings of this assessment.

Remit of the Environmental Report

This environmental report presents the assessment of the final NPPP. Reasonable alternatives are not therefore presented here as they have already been considered, assessed and discarded. This report only presents the assessments of the finalised outcomes and policies, which were based on the consultation documents preferred options and refined following the public consultation.

An addition to the final NPPP is the identification of public interest priorities and an agenda for action. As stated in the Plan, these are not tools for decision making in themselves, but elements to be delivered through the NPPP's policies:

"*The National Park Partnership Plan has been finalised following a period of extensive public consultation, where views were sought on nine key issues – the Big 9. These have evolved into nine priorities in the final Partnership Plan. An 'Agenda for Action' is identified for each of the nine priorities, and a series of clearly defined policies provide a framework for delivering the priorities and actions.*"

These elements of the final plan have therefore been considered within the assessment of this policy framework.

The assessment has not identified any substantial changes in these policies and indeed none that would result in any negative effects, minor or significant. In fact the assessment identified a number of additional positive effects. It has not therefore been considered necessary to conduct a formal consultation on this Environmental Report as all matters have been covered in the previous one.

Compatibility of NPPP Outcomes with SEA Objectives

> "*The objectives of the plan or programme will need to be tested against the SEA objectives to identify both potential synergies and inconsistencies. This information may help in developing alternatives during the development of the plan or programme, and may in some cases help to refine the objectives of the plan or programme itself. Where a plan or programme has several objectives it may also be helpful to test them against each other, as inconsistencies may give rise to adverse environmental effects.*"
>
> A Practical Guide to the SEA Directive (ODPM, 2005)

The NPPP's Outcomes, which are regarded as being terminologically synonymous with objectives, were assessed for their compatibility with the SEA Objectives (**Table 5**). That is to say, are the steps necessary to pursue the NPPP's Outcomes likely to be the same as those that would arrive at the SEA Objectives? Unlike the SEA, which assesses whether the NPPP's Outcomes will contribute (or not) to meeting the SEA Objective, this assessment also allows the reverse consideration, i.e. will pursuing the SEA's Objective help in pursuing the NPPP's Outcome.

The compatibility of the objectives was assessed using the following criteria:

✓	Objectives / outcomes are compatible
?	Uncertainty over compatibility
×	Objectives / outcomes are not compatible
□	No relationship between objectives / outcomes

For the purposes of legibility, abridged versions of the objectives have been used in the assessment. Full versions of the SEA Objectives may be found in **Table 3** (p. 22). Full versions of the NPPP Outcomes can be found in **Appendix 4**.

Generally the NPPP Outcomes were found to be compatible with the SEA Objectives; the few exceptions usually reflect an uncertainty on how the objective /outcome might be expressed in particular circumstances. Some question marks as to the compatibility of objectives / outcomes also arise from the fact that pursuing one NPPP outcome or SEA Objective, without heed to the others could result in success in one to the detriment of another. For instance goals for enhancing the encouraging economic growth may result in a negative impact on climate change objectives if development is allowed to become too great or is allowed to occur in inappropriate locations.

Key Messages from the Compatibility Appraisal

The NPPP's Long Term Outcomes generally scored well in the appraisal and although a number of uncertainties were identified, none of the outcomes were found to be incompatible with the SEA Objectives.

Table 5 Compatibility assessment between SEA Objectives (top) and NPPP Outcomes (left) (abridged).

Objectives / Outcomes	SEA Objectives											
	1a Reduce greenhouse gas emissions	1b. Increase resilience to climate change	2. Protect and enhance air quality	3a. Reduce flood risk	3b. Maintain and improve the quality of water	4. Safeguard and improve soil and peat quality	5. Sustainable use and reuse of material assets	6a. Value, conserve and enhance biodiversity	6b. Improve the management of woodland	7. Protect the special qualities of the landscape	8a. Maximise health and wellbeing	8b. Vibrant, safe and healthy communities.
Long Term Outcomes												
1. A Special Place	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2. Outstanding experiences	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
3. A Sustainable Economy	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Assessing the effects of the Outcomes and Options

> "*Evaluation involves forming a judgement on whether or not a predicted effect will be environmentally significant.*"
>
> A Practical Guide to the SEA Directive (ODPM, 2005)

The outcomes and options for the NPPP were assessed for their likely effects in relation to the SEA Objectives. That is to say, are the steps necessary to pursue the NPPP likely to have an effect on the aims of the SEA Objective?

This stage of the SEA involves:

- Predicting the effects of the plan or programme, including alternatives;
- Evaluating the effects of the draft plan or programme, including alternatives;
- Considering ways of mitigating adverse effects; and
- Proposing measures to monitor the environmental and sustainability effects of plan or programme implementation.

A summary of the assessment of the outcomes and preferred options is shown in **Table 6**. The full appraisal matrices are included in **Appendix 7**.

The assessment was carried out using the following criteria:

++	Option would have a major positive effect.
+	Option would have a minor positive effect.
?	Effect of Option is uncertain.
□	Option would have no predicted effects or no site specific effects.
-	Option would have a minor adverse effect.
--	The Option would have a major adverse effect.

A full outline of the assessment criteria can be found in **Appendix 6**.

Radar graphs have been provided as a summary of the assessment for each outcome and option. **Figure 4** provides they key to these.

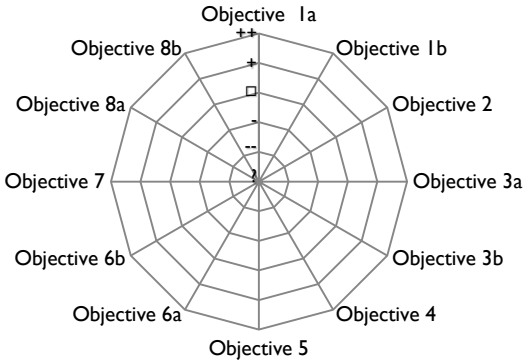


Figure 4 Key to radar graphs.

Table 6 Summary of the SEA of the NPPP's Outcomes and Policies.

Outcome / Policy		SEA Objectives												
		1a Reduce greenhouse gas emissions	1b. Increase resilience to climate change	2. Protect and enhance air quality	3a. Reduce flood risk	3b. Maintain and improve the quality of water	4. Safeguard and improve soil and peat quality	5. Sustainable use and reuse of material assets	6a. Value, conserve and enhance biodiversity	6b. Improve the management of woodland	7. Protect the special qualities of the landscape	8a. Maximise health and wellbeing	8b. Vibrant, safe and healthy communities.	Assessment Summary
Long Term Outcomes	Vision	+	+	+	++	+	+	+	++	++	++	++	++	
	1. A Special Place	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	++	++	++	++	++	
	2. Outstanding experiences	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	+	+	+	++	+	
	3. A Sustainable Economy	?	+	?	□	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	++	

Outcome / Policy		SEA Objectives												
		1a Reduce greenhouse gas emissions	1b. Increase resilience to climate change	2. Protect and enhance air quality	3a. Reduce flood risk	3b. Maintain and improve the quality of water	4. Safeguard and improve soil and peat quality	5. Sustainable use and reuse of material assets	6a. Value, conserve and enhance biodiversity	6b. Improve the management of woodland	7. Protect the special qualities of the landscape	8a. Maximise health and wellbeing	8b. Vibrant, safe and healthy communities.	Assessment Summary
Delivering Long Term Outcome 1	Policy 1.1	+	+	+	+	+	+	++	++	++	++	+	+	
	Policy 1.2	+	+	+	+	+	++	+	++	++	++	□	□	
	Policy 1.3	+	+	+	+	+	+	++	+	+	++	+	+	
	Policy 1.4	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	++	++	++	□	□	
	Policy 1.5	+	+	+	+	++	+	+	++	+	+	+	□	
	Policy 1.6	+	+	□	+	+	+	□	++	+	+	□	□	

Outcome / Policy		SEA Objectives												
		1a Reduce greenhouse gas emissions	1b. Increase resilience to climate change	2. Protect and enhance air quality	3a. Reduce flood risk	3b. Maintain and improve the quality of water	4. Safeguard and improve soil and peat quality	5. Sustainable use and reuse of material assets	6a. Value, conserve and enhance biodiversity	6b. Improve the management of woodland	7. Protect the special qualities of the landscape	8a. Maximise health and wellbeing	8b. Vibrant, safe and healthy communities.	Assessment Summary
	Policy 1.7	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	+	++	+	□	
Delivering Long Term Outcome 2	Policy 2.1	-	□	-	□	□	□	□	+	+	□	□	□	
	Policy 2.2	?	□	?	□	□	□	□	+	+	+	++	+	
	Policy 2.3	-	□	-	□	□	□	□	+	+	?	++	++	
	Policy 2.4	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	+	+	□	++	+	

Outcome / Policy		SEA Objectives												
		1a Reduce greenhouse gas emissions	1b. Increase resilience to climate change	2. Protect and enhance air quality	3a. Reduce flood risk	3b. Maintain and improve the quality of water	4. Safeguard and improve soil and peat quality	5. Sustainable use and reuse of material assets	6a. Value, conserve and enhance biodiversity	6b. Improve the management of woodland	7. Protect the special qualities of the landscape	8a. Maximise health and wellbeing	8b. Vibrant, safe and healthy communities.	Assessment Summary
Delivering Long Term Outcome 3	Policy 3.1	-	+	-	□	-	-	□	?	+	++	+	++	
	Policy 3.2	+	+	+	□	-	-	+	?	□	+	+	++	
	Policy 3.3	++	+	□	+	□	+	++	?	+	?	□	□	
	Policy 3.4	+	+	□	+	+	□	+	+	+	++	+	++	
	Policy 3.5	++	+	+	+	+	+	++	+	+	++	++	++	
Dalwhinnie and Laggan Spatial Prioirty Area		?	+	?	□	□	□	+	+	+	+	+	++	

Changes Arising from the Assessment

During the assessment of the outcomes, options and final polices of the NPPP a number of opportunities for enhancing the performance of the NPPP were identified. **Table 7** provides a history of these opportunities and the actions taken. The assessments outlined in **Appendix 7** (p. 331) and summaries presented in **Table 6** (p. 41) are for the amended versions of the outcomes and options.

Table 7 Changes arising from the SEA of the NPPP's outcomes, options and policies.

Stage of the SEA Process	NPPP Element	Issue	Action
Consultation Document	Policy 2.4 Preferred Option (Now Policy 1.4)	Flood management can take many forms including hard engineering as well as soft solutions, such as tree planting. Within the context of Policy 2.4, which is concerned with habitat conservation and enhancement, the policy would be stronger if flood management specifically meant natural flood management, as this method may deliver the aims of the policy more strongly.	**Policy 2.4** Conserve and enhance habitat quality and connectivity, with a particular focus on: a) woodland enhancement and expansion, especially montane, farm and riparian woodlands; b) wetland enhancement; c) delivering a combination of ecosystem services including **natural** flood management, carbon sequestration and storage, timber and food production.
Final NPPP	Policy 3.4	An opportunity to enhance the policy was identified. This change broadens the remit of the policy to cover all forms of private motor vehicles.	**Policy 3.4** Enhance the design and sense of place in new development and existing settlements, in particular: a) enabling new development which contributes positively to the sense of place; b) promoting a high standard of sustainable design, energy efficiency, sustainably sourced materials and construction in new development; c) supporting the retention and enhancement of local

Stage of the SEA Process	NPPP Element	Issue	Action
			character; d) facilitating the rehabilitation of redundant rural buildings and recycling of resources; e) ensuring road upgrades and improvements respond to local landscape character; f) promoting active travel and public transport provision **and** reducing the reliance on private ~~car~~ **motor vehicles**."

Assessing Cumulative Effects

> "*Many environmental problems result from the accumulation of multiple small and often indirect effects, rather than a few large and obvious ones.*"
>
> A Practical Guide to the SEA Directive (ODPM, 2005)

It is a requirement of the SEA Directive that the effects of Strategy's objectives and spatial options are assessed in combination with other Strategy elements (as opposed to in isolation) (**Figure 5**, **Figure 6**, **Figure 7** and **Table 8**). These combined effects are called cumulative effects; effects that arise due to the addition of the effects of a number of elements to produce a greater effect; and synergistic effects; those that arise from an interaction of the effects of objectives, and can be thought of as effects that are greater than the sum of the parts.

It is important to note that in isolation, no significant adverse effects were identified by the assessment. However, consideration

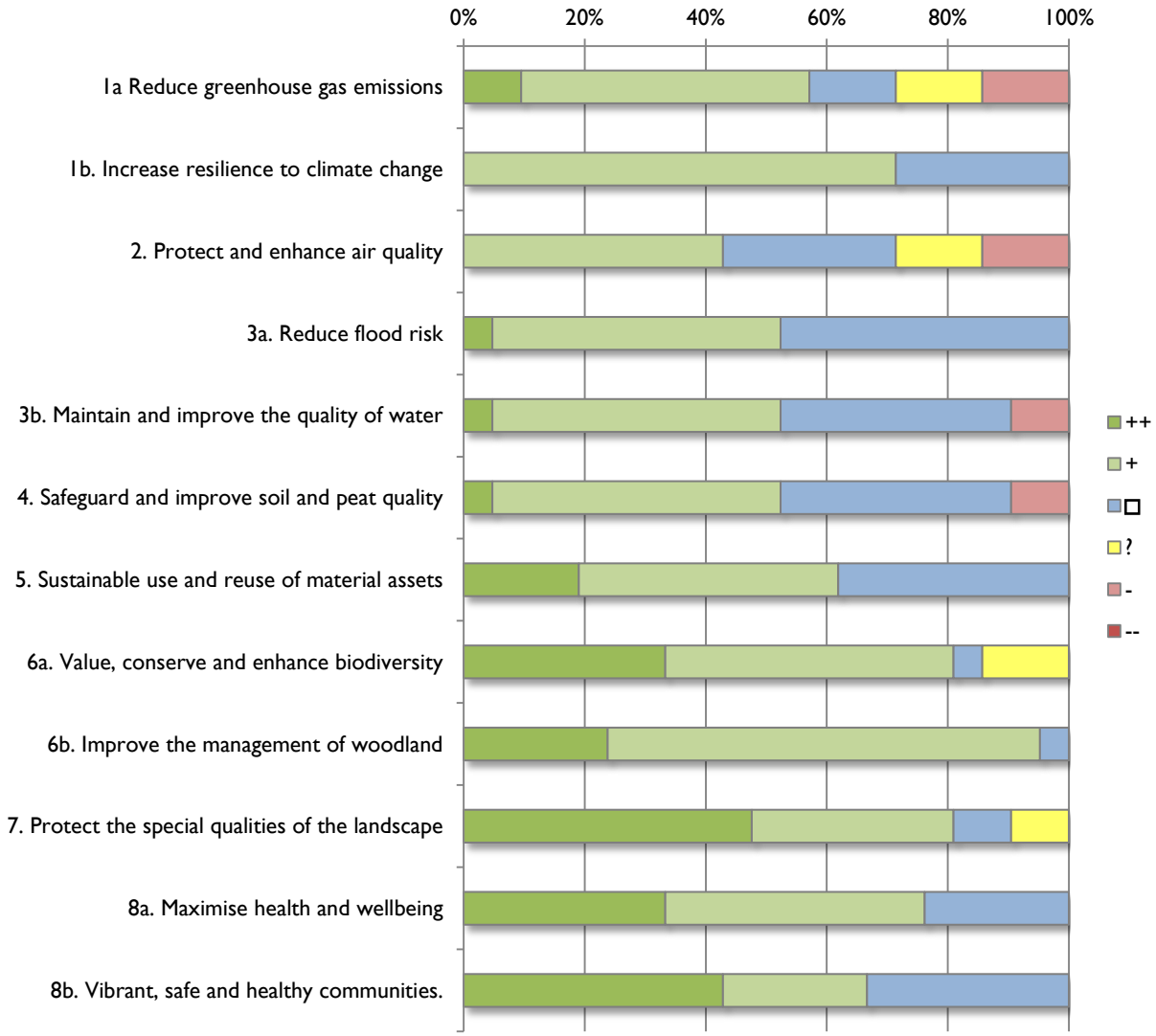


Figure 5 Summary of assessment by SEA Objective.

also needs to be given as to whether or not significant in-combination or cumulative effects might arise from the 10 predicted minor adverse effects identified in the assessment.

The adverse effects cluster around certain Strategy outcomes / policies and certain SEA Objectives. SEA Objective 1a to Reduce GHG emissions and Objective 2 to protect and enhance air quality returned the greatest number of minor adverse effects (3 in each). Most of these are associated with economic growth as well as the provision of additional housing for a growing population.

In terms of GHG emissions, it is not considered that the cumulative effects are likely to become significant. This largely because the National Park's population is a small one and is not projected to grow let alone reach levels whereby considerable harm might be caused. Furthermore, improvements to the insulatory standards and energy efficiency of buildings means that the effects of any new development are likely to be limited.

Where the effects of SEA Objectives 1a and 2 meet is with the emissions caused by private motor vehicles. The SEA predicts that a growing population combined with growing visitor numbers is likely to result in a concurrent rise in the use of private motor vehicles.

These effects also need to be considered in combination with the dualling of the A9, which is set to take place over the Plan period, with work already underway within the National Park.

In terms of GHG emissions, it is not considered that the number of additional journeys created is likely to result in significant harm. Again, this is because the projections over the Plan period and beyond indicate a small reduction in the population and therefore the growth in car journeys is unlikely to be high.

In terms of the effect on air quality, the fact that no air quality objectives are currently failing within the National Park and that the duelling of the A9 is likely to result in a reduction in ambient air pollution means that again, the effects are unlikely to become significant.

A number of minor negative effects have also been identified around SEA Objective 3b, which is concerned with water quality and quantity. All of these relate to the pressure new development will place on water resources. Since all of these effects essentially relate to the same cause, cumulative effects are not considered likely. In fact, taken together with the work carried out by River Catchment Initiatives, the overall effects of the Plan are likely to be positive.

Further minor negative effects have also been identified in relation to SEA Objective 4, which is concerned with safeguarding and improving soil and peat quality. All of these relate to the sealing and / or loss of soils associated with development. Since all of these effects essentially relate to the same cause, cumulative effects are not considered likely.

Overall, the Strategy's cumulative effects are likely to be positive in nature, with strong environmental outcomes encouraging the conservation and enhancement of the National Park's important habitats and species and progressive economic and recreational outcomes generating positive effects on human health and wellbeing.

Evaluation of Uncertainties and Risks

Although some objectives and options score negatively against one or more SEA Objective, the implementation of mitigation measures can help alleviate, if not neutralise some of these effects. It is worth noting that the vast majority of potential adverse effects are only minor in nature, with only one significant adverse effect identified.

Policy 3.1, which deals with economic growth and diversification, has the highest number of predicted adverse effects. The basis for this is that economic growth is likely have some adverse environmental effects, as increases in footfall and energy

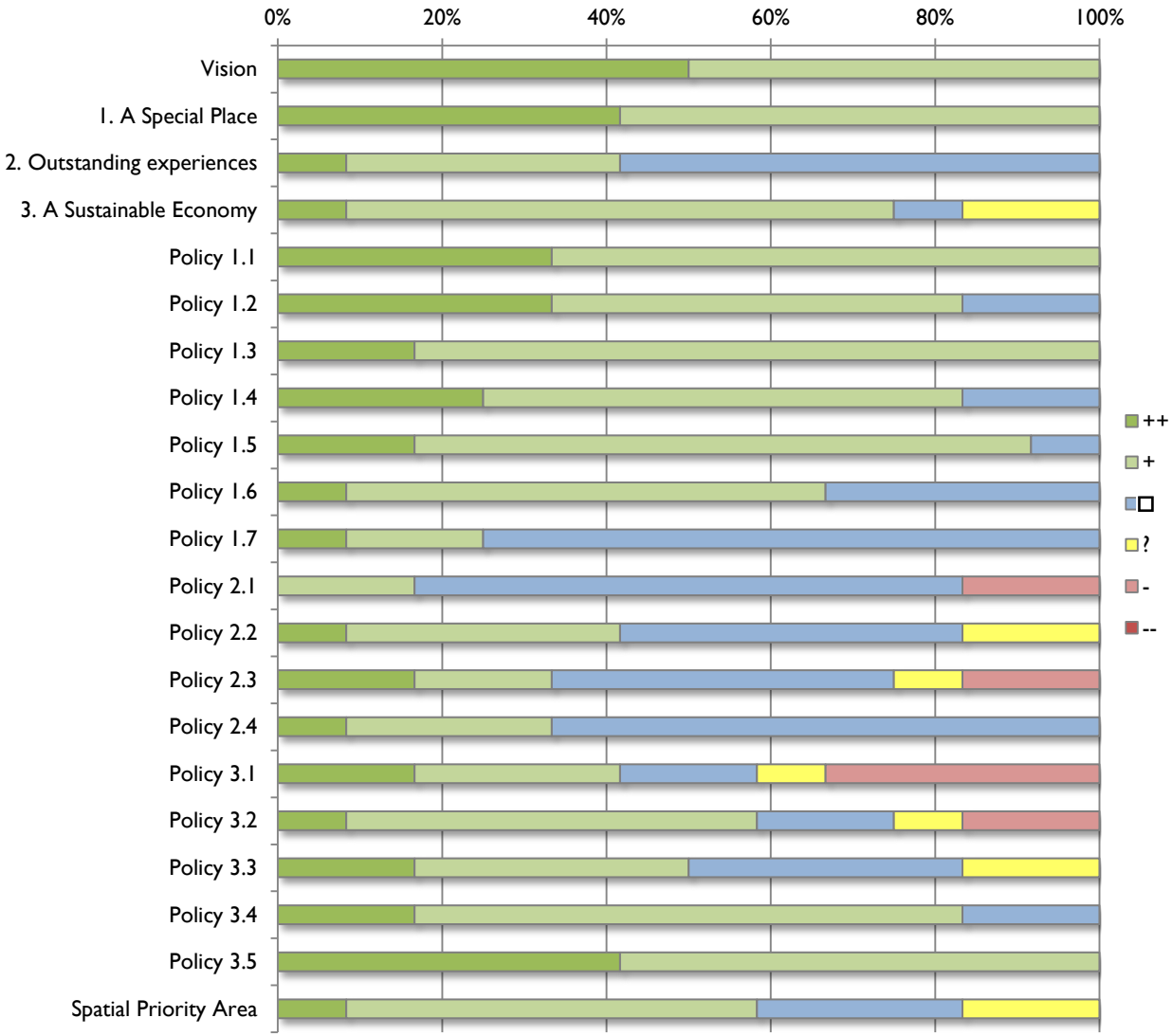


Figure 6 Summary of assessment by Plan element (e.g. outcomes and policies).

demand lead to an increase in GHG emissions, possible decreases in air quality and additional pressures on biodiversity.

Only around 4% of assessments concluded that the effects of an outcome or policy were uncertain.

Several uncertainties were identified around the Plan's potential effects on climatic factors and air quality and relate to the fact that effects could be both positive and negative depending on the balance and extent of policy implementation.

Other uncertainties were identified against objectives concerned with biodiversity and landscape. These related to the potential effects of renewable energy projects, with effects dependent on their scale and location.

While it is not predicted that any of these uncertainties will develop into significant adverse effects, as a precautionary measure mitigation measures have been identified in relation to them. These are described in **Table 9**.

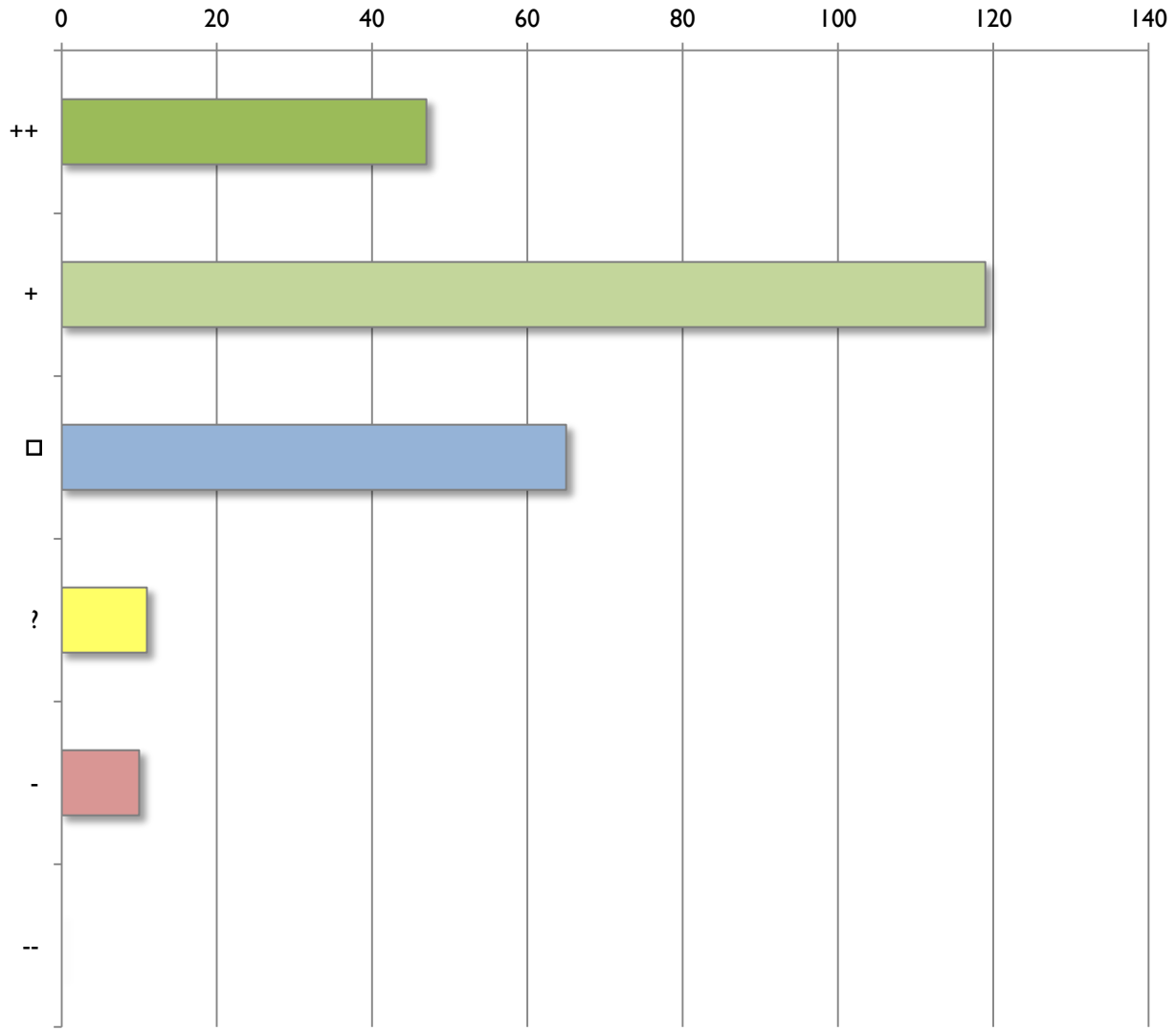


Figure 7 Overall summary of the NPPP's predicted long term effects.

Key Messages from Assessment

Generally, the NPPP's outcomes and policies scored well in the assessment (**Figure 7** and **Table 8**). No likely significant adverse effects were identified.

Some minor adverse effects were predicted, these being linked to economic growth, an increase in population and visitors and the land-take associated with these. These effects have not resulted in the need to make significant changes to the Plan's outcomes or policies, although minor improvements to wording have been identified for some (**Table 7**). Mitigation measures have been identified that address all potential negative effects (**Table 9**).

Table 8 Summary of SEA's conclusions.

Long Term Significance	Count	%
++	47	18.7%
+	119	47.2%
□	65	25.8%
?	11	4.4%
-	10	4.0%
--	0	0.0%

Overall, it is considered that the NPPP will result in significant positive effects that would not be realised under 'no plan' scenario.

Mitigation

Table 9 Summary of measures proposed to mitigate any negative effects arising from the implementation of the NPPP.

SEA Objective	Issue / Impact Identified	Mitigation Measure	Lead Authority	Proposed Timescale
1a Reduce greenhouse gas emissions	Economic growth is rarely achieved without generating additional energy needs or transportation requirements and as such it is likely to result in an increase in GHG emissions. However, given the long term outcome's aim that the economy be sustainable and Policy 3.2 requirement that additional development accord with a strategy that concentrates growth on the main and most sustainable settlements, it is unlikely that this effect will be significant.	Mitigation measures are already built into the NPPP. Policy 3.2 concentrates the majority of economic growth in the strategic settlements as identified in the current and future Local Development Plans. As explained on page 35 of this report, a radically different strategy is not considered reasonable as it would lead to substantial changes in the character of other settlements, threaten the viability of others and increase the need for people to travel. Therefore current and future settlement strategies will be similar in nature. Following these strategies will have the effect of limiting the number of additional journeys needed to be made by private motor-vehicle as these locations already have a significant number of facilities within normal walking distances and also act as local public transport hubs. Furthermore, Policy 2.3 seeks to provide a high quality network of core paths which will also	CNPA and partners	The Plan period: 2017-2022

SEA Objective	Issue / Impact Identified	Mitigation Measure	Lead Authority	Proposed Timescale
		encourage walking and cycling. Policy 3.3, which supports the development of a low carbon economy, Policy 1.2 which seeks to secure the effective management of peat and carbon rich soils, Policy 1.4, which focuses on woodland expansion and enhancement and Policy 2.2, which seeks to ensure that facilities and infrastructure are deigned to manage the effects of visitor pressures on natural heritage and communities, also offer means of offsetting any negative effects arising from the outcome / policy.		
2 Protect and enhance air quality	Economic growth is rarely achieved without generating additional energy needs or transportation requirements and as such it is likely to result in an increase in roadside emissions. However, given that all air quality objectives are currently being met within the National Park, that no AQMAs exist within its boundary, that Long Term Outcome one aim's that the economy be sustainable and that Policy 3.1 requires that additional development accord with a strategy that concentrates growth on the main and most sustainable settlements, thereby reducing the need to travel by motor vehicle, it is	Mitigation measures are already built into the NPPP. Policy 3.2 concentrates the majority of economic growth in the strategic settlements as identified in the current and future Local Development Plans. As explained on page 35 of this report, a radically different strategy is not considered reasonable as it would lead to substantial changes in the character of other settlements, threaten the viability of others and increase the need for	CNPA and partners	The Plan period: 2017-2022

SEA Objective	Issue / Impact Identified	Mitigation Measure	Lead Authority	Proposed Timescale
	unlikely that the effects of the NPPP will be significant.	people to travel. Therefore current and future settlement strategies will be similar in nature. Following these strategies will have the effect of limiting the number of additional journeys needed to be made by private motor-vehicle as these locations already have a significant number of facilities within normal walking distances and also act as local public transport hubs. Furthermore, Policy 2.3 seeks to provide a high quality network of core paths which will also encourage walking and cycling. Policy 1.2, which seeks to enhance the health and connectivity of habitats, Policy 1.4, which focuses on woodland expansion and enhancement and Policy 2.2, which seeks to ensure that facilities and infrastructure are deigned to manage the effects of visitor pressures on natural heritage and communities, also offer means of offsetting any negative effects arising from the outcome / policy.		
3b Maintain and improve the quality of water resources	The construction of new buildings associated with economic uses will lead to increased pressure on water resources. It also has the potential to have an impact on water quality at certain locations, if	The LDP and national planning policy can be used to ensure that development does not have a negative effect on water quality. This can include effects that are	CNPA and LPAs	The Plan period: 2017-2022

SEA Objective	Issue / Impact Identified	Mitigation Measure	Lead Authority	Proposed Timescale
	not properly considered. Given the small scale at which development is likely to occur, the impact of the outcome is unlikely to be significant.	likely to arise from construction and be temporary in nature.		
3b Maintain and improve the quality of water resources	Policy 3.2 directs development to the strategic settlements as identified in the current and future Local Development Plans. The level of growth, particularly in the Aviemore area, is likely to place pressure on the local water supply, with the Aviemore water treatment works only having capacity for a further 966 housing units.	The LDP and national planning policy can be used to ensure that development does not have a negative effect on water quality. This can include effects that are likely to arise from construction and be temporary in nature. Where insufficient capacity is identified within the network, money may be levied from the developer(s) to make sure upgrades occur before the effects of the development can be felt.	CNPA, LPAs, Scottish Water	The Plan period: 2017-2022
4 Minimise contamination and safeguard and improve soil and peat quality.	Owing to the nature of growth, there will inevitably be some loss and sealing of soil through the development of new buildings and facilities. As there are few opportunities to develop for brownfield land within the National Park, much of this development is likely to occur on greenfield land. There is likely therefore to be the loss of some agricultural land as well as some associated soil sealing and compaction. The small scale of the likely development means that the impact of the policy on the SEA objective is unlikely to be significant.	Mitigation measures are already built into the NPPP. Policy 3.2 can play a part in minimising the loss of soil by directing development to the most sustainable locations and encouraging the coalescence of uses. Some of these locations are also home to areas of previously developed land, which can be used with no negative impact on soils. Overall, the LDP and national planning policy can be used to ensure that development makes efficient	CNPA and partners	The Plan period: 2017-2022

SEA Objective	Issue / Impact Identified	Mitigation Measure	Lead Authority	Proposed Timescale
		use of land and does not have a negative effect on soil quality.		
6a Value, conserve and enhance biodiversity, distinctive wild species and habitats	Some of the National Park's important species (e.g. capercaillie) are extremely sensitive to human disturbance, so improving recreation opportunities in certain areas may lead to a negative effect on their status, if it leads to an increase in their use. Encouraging outdoor recreation in woodland areas has the potential to disturb sensitive species such as capercaillie and other ground nesting birds. The construction of new buildings to facilitate economic development could have some negative effects on biodiversity. However, it's stated within Policy 3.1 that growth and diversification should draw on the National Park's special qualities, of which its rich biodiversity is one. It is implicit within the policy therefore that the valuing, conservation and enhancement of biodiversity will be an important aspect of achieving its aims. Overall, the nature of the effect will be dependent on the scale, location and nature of development and therefore the policy's effects are uncertain.	Combined, Policies 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5 and 1.6 offer a strong means of protecting and enhancing the National Park's biodiversity, which would help mitigate negative effects associated with disturbance. Furthermore, Policy 2.3 aims to ensure that the access and recreation objectives are not pursued without heed for conservation objectives. With regard to Capercaillie, the CNPA is in the process of developing a Capercaillie Framework, which will: ➢ Bring together existing knowledge on the state of Capercaillie across the Cairngorms National Park, the combined knowledge of the pressures they face, particularly with regard to recreation and housing development; and the suite of management measures currently being deployed, using spatial mapped data where	CNPA and partners	The Plan period: 2017-2022

SEA Objective	Issue / Impact Identified	Mitigation Measure	Lead Authority	Proposed Timescale
	Policy 3.2 focuses development in the strategic settlements as identified in the current and future Local Development Plans. As explained on page 35 of this report, a radically different strategy is not considered reasonable as it would lead to substantial changes in the character of other settlements, threaten the viability of others and increase the need for people to travel. Therefore current and future settlement strategies will be similar in nature. This development is to be delivered in while maintaining the integrity of designated sites. Overall the policy's effects are however uncertain as they will depend on site specific conditions that cannot be determined until either those sites are chosen or detailed assessments are carried out as part of a planning applications	possible; ➢ inform future decisions about co-ordinated deployment of management measures for Capercaillie conservation; ➢ identify what else we may need to do, where we may need further investment or resources and highlight the future agenda for management action. The CNPA has published a report on Phase 1 of the Framework (2015). This takes the form of a map-based framework that helps to co-ordinate the management of the National Park with the aim of safeguarding and expanding the Capercaillie population across the area.		
7 Protect and enhance the character, diversity and special qualities of the National Park's landscape and cultural and historic heritage	Improving recreational opportunities may have both positive and negative impacts on landscape quality. Improving and rationalising certain visitor destination may produce positive benefits as ad-hoc developments are redesigned. However, in sensitive areas, expansions to existing facilities, or the creation of new access arrangements may result in negative effects. The effect of the outcome is highly dependent on the nature,	Policy 1.3 seeks to ensure that the management of the National Park results in the conservation and enhancement of the National Park's special qualities.	CNPA and partners	The Plan period: 2017-2022

SEA Objective	Issue / Impact Identified	Mitigation Measure	Lead Authority	Proposed Timescale
	design and location of forthcoming proposals and therefore, the overall effects of the outcome are uncertain.			
	The development of renewable energy projects such as hydroelectric schemes and wind turbines can have a negative impact on landscape quality. The nature of the effect will however be dependent on the scale and location of development and therefore the overall effects of the policy are uncertain. It is however unlikely that the effects would ever be significant, as the option states that large scale commercial wind turbines are not compatible with the special qualities of the National Park.		CNPA and LPAs	The Plan period: 2017-2022

Monitoring

> "…*focusing monitoring on the significant environmental effects identified in the assessment is likely to encourage the creation of new monitoring regimes. It is therefore practical to make a clear link between the significant effects predicted within an assessment and the indicators selected to monitor the likely environmental effects.*"
>
> SEA Guidance
> (Scottish Government, 2013)

It is a requirement of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 that the significant environmental effects of implementing a plan or program are monitored. This environmental monitoring may in turn form part of the monitoring framework for the NPPP itself.

SEA monitoring should be undertaken for the following reasons:

- to identify whether the SEA's predictions of environmental effects were accurate;
- to identify unforeseen adverse effects and to enable appropriate remedial action to be taken;
- to identify whether the plan is contributing to the achievement of SEA Objectives;
- to identify whether mitigation measures are performing as well as expected;
- to identify whether any adverse effects are within acceptable limits or whether remedial action is required;
- to help compile a baseline for future plans and programmes; and
- to provide information for the EIAs of projects.

The 2005 Act does not require bespoke monitoring arrangements or timelines to be set out for SEA. Furthermore SEA monitoring should be based around the significant environmental effects identified during the assessment. The potential significantly adverse effects has not been identified by the assessment and therefore there is not a duty under the act to establish a monitoring framework.

However, owing to the special nature of the National Park's environment and the scope of the NPPP to affect it, a proposed monitoring framework is being been developed. The framework designed to monitor what are considered to be the key environmental impacts of the NPPP (**Table 10**). Indicators have not been developed for all SEA objectives as the potential for effects has been determined to be negligible. The indicators will be monitored as part of the NPPP's implementation and sit alongside the monitoring regimes of other PPS active within the Cairngorms, for example the LDP (2015) and its successors.

The Environmental Report is not the conclusion of the SEA process and the proposed monitoring framework will be refined following its publication. A finalised

set of indicators will be set out in the Post-adoption Statement, which will be published following the NPPP's approval by the Scottish Government.

Table 10 Proposed SEA Monitoring Framework.

Indicator	Related Objectives	Rationale	Source	Frequency
Estimated per capita CO_2 emissions (t) for the National Park	1a Reduce greenhouse gas emissions 1b Increase resilience to the effects of climate change	Carbon dioxide emissions account for around 82% of greenhouse gas emissions in the UK. As the population of the National Park grows it is important to ensure it does so sustainably and that per capita emissions continue to decline for significant adverse effects to be avoided.	Department of Energy and Climate Change	Annual
Area of land permitted on 1:200 floodplain	3a Reduce flood risk	The estimated total average annual cost of damage in Potentially Vulnerable Areas (PVAs) within and overlapping the National Park is £1,071,000. To avoid significant adverse effects it is important to ensure that floodplains remain functional and people and infrastructure are not placed at increased risk.	CNPA	Annual
Water quality classification of waterbodies within and overlapping the Cairngorms National Park	3b Maintain and improve the quality of water resources	Good water quality is essential for many of the National Park's important wetland habitats and species as well as for providing clean drinking water.	SEPA	Annual

Indicator	Related Objectives	Rationale	Source	Frequency
Area of peatland restoration	4 Minimise contamination and safeguard and improve soil and peat quality.	Peat and carbon rich soils offer a range of important ecosystem services as well as being important ecosystems in their own right.	CNPA	Annual
Estimated household waste per person (kg per person) in National Park	5 Encourage the sustainable use and reuse of material assets	Reducing the amount of waste produced and increasing the percentage of this waste that is recycled is essential for the sustainable use and management of our material assets.	Scottish Government	Annual
Estimated recycling rate (%) in National Park				
Number cappercaillie recorded during the annual lek count	6a Value, conserve and enhance biodiversity, distinctive native species and habitats	The NPPP's spatial strategy focuses growth on the main settlements as identified in the current and future LDP. Many of these settlements are near to important habitats and protected sites, for example Glenmore and the River Spey near Aviemore.	CNPA	Annual
Number cappercaillie recorded during the annual brood count			SNH RSPB FCS	Annual
Number of cappercaillie recorded during the National Winter Survey			SNH RSPB	Every 6 years (Most recent count Winter 15/16)
The Ecological status of waterbodies within and overlapping the National Park			SEPA	Annual

Indicator	Related Objectives	Rationale	Source	Frequency
Percentage of designated features in favourable condition		It is important that the application of the NPPP avoids having adverse effects on designated sites. The NPPP should have a positive effect. The indicator will provide information for a wide range of habitat types.	SNH	As and when sites are assessed.
Area of new native woodland created in the National Park	6b Maintain and improve the sustainable management of woodland for multiple benefits	Woodlands offer a range of important ecosystem services as well as being important ecosystems in their own right.	FCS	Annual
Change in the wildness of land within the National Park.	7 Protect and enhance the character, diversity and special qualities of the National Park's landscape and cultural heritage	Changes to land management practices and the development delivered through the LDP could have an effect of the special qualities of the landscape, with relative wildness being an important part.	CNPA SNH	Once at end of Plan period
Percentage of visitors using active travel during their stay	8a Promote opportunities that maximise the health and wellbeing of local people, visitors and communities.	In 2015, 16% of visitors used active travel during their stay in the National Park. An increase in this level would contribute towards the National Park's overall sustainability.	CNPA	2020
Percentage of new dwellings with a selling price below the overall median house price of the National Park	8b Support vibrant, safe and healthy communities.	Access to suitable housing is essential for the health and wellbeing of communities. Houses sold at or above the median price are however out of the range of those with incomes around the	CNPA	Annual

Indicator	Related Objectives	Rationale	Source	Frequency
		median. Delivering 'affordable housing' is therefore essential to avoid significant adverse effects.		
Average distance of households from key community facilities (e.g. post office, petrol station, primary school, secondary school, GP).		Facilities such as post offices and primary schools are essential for the viability of communities while facilities such as GPs are important for supporting healthy lifestyles. The indicator can be compared against 2012 and 2016 baselines.	Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation	2020

Next Steps

> "*Consultation with the Consultation Authorities at screening and scoping stages has a statutory duration period of 28 days and five weeks respectively.*"
>
> SEA of Development Plans
> (Scottish Government, 2010)

The final NPPP and its Environmental Report will be submitted to the Scottish Government for approval in April 2017.

Once the NPPP has been approved by the Minister a Post-adoption Statement will be published. The Post-adoption Statement will summarise how the CNPA took the findings of the SEA process into account and how environmental considerations more generally have been integrated into the NPPP. It will also be stated within the Post-adoption Statement if any changes have been made to the NPPP as a result of the SEA process and following responses to consultation. If changes have been rejected this will also be explained.

It will also be necessary for the CNPA to monitor significant effects following the adoption of the NPPP in accordance with the Scottish Government's SEA Guidance (2013). This monitoring framework will be finalised in the Post-adoption Statement.

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