

*Red Kite*

Nevis and Glen Coe  
Options for Integrated Management  
Integrated Management Working Group



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# Nevis and Glen Coe Options for Integrated Management

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Integrated Management Working Group

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## Foreword

This report is the output of a detailed study of possible options for the integrated management of the Nevis and Glen Coe area. The report is in two parts – this main report and a separate Appendices document. The main report contains the key findings and recommendations of the study. The Appendices contain detailed background information to support the findings of the report.

Information in the Appendices is referenced in the report by an Icon: 

followed by the Section number in the Appendices.

# Executive summary



Ben Nevis from Corpach *RKE*

## Executive summary

This study, by Red Kite Environment, was commissioned in January 2012 by the Integrated Management Working Group to explore opportunities for a more integrated land management approach within the existing National Scenic Area of Nevis and Glen Coe. The main aims of the study were to:

- Identify the issues that might benefit from a management approach that was more integrated
- Identify criteria for selecting a boundary for a 'management area'
- Identify a series of options for an integrated structure – and their advantages and disadvantages
- Recommend an option that would best suit the characteristics of the area – the governance structure and the likely costs
- Make recommendations on how planning should be tackled in the area
- Advise on how further consultation should take place after the contract is completed (separate document)

The study used the existing Ben Nevis and Glen Coe National Scenic Area (NSA) as its focus. The outputs of the study are two documents – this main report and a separate 'Appendices' document that contains detailed findings.

**Chapter 1** of this report explains that the study was undertaken in four stages:

**Understanding the landscape** – a brief landscape character study was carried out to identify the main landscape types..

**Consultation** – consisting of questionnaires, workshops, individual meetings and telephone interviews with many organisations and individuals.

**Research** – seeking information from other studies, relevant strategies and plans and other documents.

**Draft and final reports** – production of discussion papers, two draft reports and a final report.

**Chapter 2** presents the findings of the consultation phase. Consultees' opinions on the special qualities of the area included its wild character, the opportunities it provides for outdoor recreation and its value for preserving the area's cultural history.

The main concerns people have about the area are the impacts of visitor numbers and a changing landscape due to changes in land use; concerns about the local economy and limited employment opportunities; a perceived lack of communication and coordination of economic development and land management activities; short term funding of new initiatives; the remoteness of planning decision-making; and the lack of investment in infrastructure and services.

Potential future directions include greater coordination and integration of activity, particularly as a 'bottom-up' approach; some form of common vision for the area; and secure funding and coordinated bidding for funds. There was much debate about the opportunity for designating a national park in the area; and varied views about its desirability.

**Chapter 3** summarises some of the key issues and forces for change for Nevis and Glencoe. Ward 22 (Fort William and Ardnamurchan) is close to being an economically fragile area with higher unemployment and lower average household incomes than the rest of Highland average. A high proportion of people work in ‘distribution, hotels and restaurants’, and tourism generates 35% of the local GDP. There has been only a small increase in population, fuelled largely by incomers retiring to the area and immigration for seasonal work. Changes in agriculture and climate are impacting on landscape and habitats and this trend is likely to continue. Tourism income is increasing though there has been no real increase in visitor numbers.

**Chapter 4** analyses the management issues in detail and identifies ten key issues that could be tackled by introducing integrated management for the area. These key issues are:

- **Perceived poor communication between communities, and between communities and organisations and a lack of trust, mutual cooperation and active community participation in the future management of the area**
- **There is no overall vision or management strategy to address the integrated management of Nevis and Glen Coe**
- **No strategic approach to landscape management and no consistent description of landscape character outside the Nevis area**
- **No coordinated approach to habitat management and conservation**
- **The lack of an ‘identity’ for Nevis and Glen Coe which can capture its character and define its profile with the community.**
- **The planning service and planning decisions are perceived to be remote from the Lochaber area.**
- **The relative fragility, low wage and seasonal nature of employment**
- **The fragmentation, low investment and lack of coordination of tourism marketing and enterprise**
- **The overall lack of significant investment in infrastructure and local services**
- **Short term funding of economic, environmental and community initiatives**

**Chapter 5** reviews examples of management models that can inform the choice of an integrated management approach for Nevis and Glen Coe.

- **Community partnerships or initiatives** are generally short term schemes to achieve a specific purpose, shaped by their supporting funding streams.
- **National Scenic Areas** are areas of special protection and represent the ‘very best of Scotland’s scenery’, but there is no requirement to manage them pro-actively within the legislation.
- **Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty** are statutory designations in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. They are equivalent to NSAs and are included to show a type of governance that could be relevant for NSAs, and to illustrate how a vision can be provided for management through the preparation of management plans.
- **Geoparks** are a means of focusing attention on the geological heritage of an area without the need for any formal state sponsorship. They are partnership organisations, the network of geoparks being endorsed by United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO).
- **Biosphere reserves** are also accredited through UNESCO. They have three key functions – conservation, development, and research and monitoring – which are delivered across three interrelated zones; a core area, a surrounding buffer zone and an outer transition zone.
- **National Parks** in Scotland are created under the National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000. There are four purposes of a national park:

- a) to conserve and enhance the natural and cultural heritage of the area,

- b) to promote sustainable use of the natural resources of the area,
  - c) to promote understanding and enjoyment (including enjoyment in the form of recreation) of the special qualities of the area by the public, and
  - d) to promote sustainable economic and social development of the area's communities.
- **Regional Parks in Scotland** are generally close to large settlements and are managed to integrate access and conservation. They are designated by local authorities to manage *locally* important areas.
  - **National Recreation Areas** in the United States are managed by a variety of federal agencies, most of which operate within the Department of the Interior or the Department of Agriculture.

**Chapter 6** selects four integrated management models that would be appropriate for the Nevis and Glencoe area. These are:

- **Enhanced NSA management**
- **Community partnership or initiative**
- **Biosphere Reserve**
- **National Park**

The chapter describes each model in more detail, shows how they could be developed and how they would function. It provides criteria for selecting an area for each model and shows how each model can address the ten key issues identified in Chapter 4. Finally, it presents social, economic and environmental advantages and disadvantages for each model.

**Chapter 7** contains our recommended integrated management approach for Nevis and Glen Coe. We recommend a staged approach involving three of the models described in Chapter 6:

### **Enhanced NSA Management → Community Initiative → Biosphere Reserve**

The model is shown as a sequence but in practice there is likely to be some overlap. A key feature of the approach is a strong participation by stakeholders who can assess progress and determine at any time the nature of the next stage. The chapter describes the process for implementing each stage, and how each would help resolve the key management issues for the area.

The chapter then provides costing and a five year programme for implementing the recommended approach.

**Chapter 8** provides a suggested process and indicative costs for pursuing the recommended option, with comparable costs for establishing and running a national park.

**Chapter 9** outlines how the recommended approach could relate to the planning system. There are three main parts of the planning system:

- **Development Plans** which set out how places should change and also set out the policies used to make decisions about planning applications.
- **Development Management** which is the process for making decisions about planning applications.
- **Enforcement** which is the process that makes sure that development is carried out correctly and takes action when development happens without permission or when conditions have not been followed.

A third party – in this case a governance body for Nevis and Glen Coe – could relate to the planning system by:

- Developing a coordinated planning response
- Securing a planning protocol
- Preparing supplementary guidance

The chapter gives details on how each of these can be developed.

## **Conclusion**

This study identified the main issues that are affecting the Nevis and Glen Coe area and considered a range of options that could provide a more integrated approach to its management. Of the four approaches that we feel could work for the area, we have chosen three, to be implemented in sequence, that would be the most appropriate for the area. These are:

**Enhanced NSA Management → Community Initiative → Biosphere Reserve**

We consider this approach to be the most effective solution for tackling the management issues for the area and for encouraging wide stakeholder participation in its delivery.

# 1 Introduction



Glen Nevis *RKE*

## 1 Introduction

This document is the start of a process to explore options for the integrated management of the Nevis and Glen Coe area. It describes some of the issues and challenges faced by communities and the landscape, and presents options that could help bring people together for a more sustainable future. It also presents an approach that will invite people from communities and organisations to get involved in finding solutions that are *fit for purpose* to care for this outstanding Scottish landscape.

### The study

In January 2012 a reference group of organisations appointed an **Integrated Management Working Group** which in turn let a contract to Red Kite Environment to explore options to managing the Nevis and Glen Coe area in a more 'joined up' way.

The contract involved:

- Identifying the issues that might benefit from a management approach that was more integrated
- Identifying criteria for selecting a boundary for a 'management area'
- Identifying a series of options for an integrated structure – and their advantages and disadvantages
- Recommending an option that would best suit the characteristics of the area – the governance structure and the likely costs
- Making recommendations on how planning should be tackled in the area
- Advising on how further consultation should take place after the contract is completed

The contract used as its focus the existing Nevis and Glen Coe National Scenic Area (NSA), already recognised through its designation as an area of landscape importance. The contract was completed in October 2012.

### Nevis, Glen Coe and Lochaber

Ben Nevis, the Nevis Range, Glen Coe and Rannoch Moor – the principal landscapes of the NSA – are some of the most rugged and spectacular landscapes in Scotland. They include its highest mountain, a diversity of upland and moorland habitats, seawater and freshwater lochs and upland streams, and the high plateau of Rannoch Moor with its blanket bogs and innumerable lochans. They also include lower lying land with grasslands and fragments of native woodland, and scattered communities that straddle the A82 road, along Loch Leven and near Glencoe.

The NSA lies in the eastern part of Lochaber, an area that stretches to the west to include Strontian, Sunart, Ardnamurchan and part of Knoydart, and the small isles of Rum, Eigg, Muck and Canna. Lochaber has immense variety in its mountains, coastline, lochs and marine landscapes, and the superlatives of Scotland's highest mountain, deepest loch, longest glen, deepest pothole and most westerly mainland point. The people of Nevis and

Glen Coe identify closely with Lochaber – it is an ancient district and a traditional homeland, centred on the Highlands' second largest settlement, Fort William.

Nevis, Glen Coe and the wider Lochaber area, are some of Scotland's most important destinations for walking, climbing and other outdoor activities. They attract many thousands of visitors a year for active outdoor pursuits, or simply to enjoy the spectacular scenery. The area also has a wealth of designations that help to protect its habitats and species. Any form of management in this area needs to reflect these varied functions and interests, and be **fit for purpose** – capable of sustaining livelihoods **and** setting objectives for long term conservation.

## How the study was carried out

Red Kite's process for undertaking this study went through the following stages:

### Understanding the landscape

A brief study was carried out to identify the main landscape types within the NSA and in an area 5-10kms beyond the NSA boundary. The purpose of the study was to understand the type of landscapes that occur through the area and to recognise how the NSA boundary may have been defined.



**Section 5**

### Consultation

Consultation consisted of questionnaires, workshops, telephone interviews, email exchanges, and individual meetings with community councils, local organisations, local authorities, national agencies and with protected areas in England and Wales. The aim was to find out what people felt was really special about Nevis, Glen Coe and Lochaber, what were the problems and issues and how it could work better in the future.



**Sections 1&2, and Section 3 for a list of consultees**

### Research

There is already a lot of information available on how areas like Nevis and Glen Coe are managed, and how organisations can work together to care for protected areas. Some of this information has been used to write this report, and a list has been drawn up of other documents that could be useful for future reference.



**Section 9**

### Draft and final reports

Following the consultation and research phases, a series of discussion papers were produced that detailed the main findings. Draft reports were prepared for the Working Group, and then this final report produced for further consultation. The discussion papers formed the basis of the Appendices.

## 2 Summary of consultation



Loch Leven *RKE*

## 2 Summary of consultation

This chapter reports what people said about the Nevis and Glen Coe area, its special qualities, problems and issues and how it could be cared for in the future.

The consultation consisted of a questionnaire survey, an e-mail exchange and a series of meetings with a wide range of local, regional and national stakeholders. Each meeting consisted of general discussions based on the following themes:

- The area and its special qualities
- Problems, issues and functioning
- Future directions

Responses from the consultation are summarised below. Perceptions (sometimes contradictory) are a critical factor in the success or otherwise of any collaborative initiative, and whilst these statements are not tested for accuracy, they reflect what the consultees feel about their place and the challenges facing it. All text in **bold** below is direct, unedited, quotation from respondents.



**Sections 1&2 for more information and Section 3 for a list of consultees**

### The area and its special qualities

A number of people attested to the wild character of the area, with references to its **'rough scenic jagged landscape'**. One individual said that it was **'a truly wild and potentially dangerous environment'**, whilst another stated that the **'large sea lochs, which penetrate far into Glencoe and Nevis area, and the wild rivers, create a unique landscape'**. In one case, the area's **'peace and tranquillity'** were seen as particularly important.

The opportunities for outdoor recreation were seen as significant, in one case referring to its **'good network of walking and cycling trails'**, in another to **'the fact that people can walk from Fort William to the top of the UK's highest mountain is special'**. Such opportunities make it a **'highly regarded resource locally, nationally and internationally'**.

For some, the area's cultural history was seen as valuable, in one case referring to **the 'preservation of the Gaelic language in the place names of the rivers, lochs, mountains and hills'**. For others it was the wildlife **'Red deer and golden eagle are particularly attractive to visitors'**.

As well as a focus for outdoor recreation, the area is of great significance for research, at a **'world class'** level, **'...on aspects of geology and earth science...'**

Identity was discussed by some consultees, in one case stating that **'Glen Coe and Nevis are very different in character'**. More than one group identified most strongly with Lochaber, as the following statements indicate: **'the area we are in is Lochaber.'** **'People from outside the area don't know Lochaber, but local people do, and use it regularly.'** **'Nether Lochaber - Lochaber - Glen Coe - Nevis'**. Referring to the importance of education, one person referred to **'...the importance of the Lochaber landscape and its place in the wellbeing of Lochaber.'**

## Problems, issues and functioning

More than one consultee referred to the challenge of maintaining the balance between access and other interests, including *'...threatening the environment through erosion of paths.'* One individual said that *'There are tensions between landowners and land users...mountaineers accessing remote areas and ignoring stalking notices and rules.'*

Whilst one respondent stated that *'there is probably more joined up thinking among landowners than we think'*, others indicated that there was some disagreement between various landowners on the future way forward *'for example over deer densities'*. There were contradictory statements such as *'Deer numbers were at their peak in the early 1990's but have declined since then'* on the one hand, and *'deer numbers are increasing'* on the other. However, there was some consensus that *'There is declining ecological condition of the area'* including *'a huge increase in bracken and ragwort'* as a result of significant decline in sheep grazing.

There was a wide range of perceptions on the issue of economic performance, with one person stating that this *'...is not an economically fragile area'* and others saying *'This is a severely economically deprived area'*.

More than one person implied significant contrasts in income in the area: *'There are well off communities and the economy is supported by incomers, tourism, lots of micro-businesses, etc'*, *'Incomers skew the statistics...'* whilst *'locals are on minimum wage.'*

There were contrasting views about the nature of the economy and opportunities. On the one hand it was said that *'Unemployment is low. There are 1m tourism nights in Fort William per year. Lots of people commute to Alcan, BSW, etc.'* and *'Employment levels are OK'*, but on the other hand, one person asserted that *'...the locals do not want a high income so there is no incentive to innovate or experiment. Settlers are only after pin money to bolster a pension, do not want to pay VAT etc, so do not develop their businesses, keeping standards low.'*

Others stated that there were *'Limited employment opportunities, remote settlements causing social breakdown'* and that there was a *'Lack of self-sustaining employment.'* One well-placed commentator stated that *'The Lochaber area is classed as fragile – characterised by limited commercial opportunities and restricted provision of services, there is low population density and remoteness.'*

Some comments referred to problems with communication. Typically, one person stated that *'there is a lack of communication between organisations and communities.'* Another said tersely that *'communications are poor'*. One community council stated that they *'communicate with other CCs around, and with other organisations, but they feel it's an uphill task trying to get information from other organisations. They are sent letters, but there are few opportunities to meet'* whilst another group stated that *'There is poor communication with the community – many are not aware of what's going on with the council and initiatives.'*

Beyond the communication issue, a number of respondents referred to a lack of co-ordination, one person referring to a *'Lack of joined up thinking both at local level and regional/national and between and within organisations/ agencies.'* Another implied that funding opportunities might be lost as a result: *'A lack of any co-ordinated management of this large area, which probably allows precious funding for projects to be poorly attributed'*.

More than one person referred to a sense of resentment: **'Mutual suspicions, fear of additional bureaucracy.'** **'People not working together, vested interests, mutual distrust.'** **'Conflict and/or polarisation of interests, remits and agendas.'**

In the view of one person **'Businesses tend to compete rather than co-operate'**, and in that of another **'Businesses are very protective of their business – not outgoing enough.'**

At a local level it was said that **'Socially, the communities are very strong.'** But there seemed to be a divide between some groups of community councils. For example, one council stated that its community association **'works well'** and it did not wish to join the wider Association of Lochaber Community Councils, nor did its marketing group wish to be part of the Outdoor Capital of the United Kingdom (OCUK).

**'Sporadic funding and an over-reliance on voluntary bodies'** was seen as a block to progress. In one person's view, the **'Complete lack of appropriate and consistent funding streams for management/ preservation of the natural environment'** was linked to the **'inability or unwillingness to acknowledge or accept the full extent of the impact of the major natural assets on the area's economy.'**

Some people indicated their concerns at the remoteness of decision-making on planning and the limited capacity of officers to enforce planning contraventions, which **'makes the area vulnerable to inappropriate development such as housing and business sites.'** One person reckoned that people **'flout the rules.'** More than one person stated that local representatives **'would like more say on local planning issues/decisions'** but in the view of one person **'this has its advantages and disadvantages.'**

One issue on which there was some concern was a lack of investment in infrastructure. In the view of some there was simply a **'Lack of integrated management of transport into and within the area.'** Others specifically referred to the A82: **'It is not wide enough and there is major congestion in summer months.'** **'There is insufficient investment in the road, it is deteriorating, and HC just do essential repairs but no major reassessment of the long term problems of traffic.'** **'Roads too small, railway rolling stock old, no direct access to Edinburgh (have to go via Glasgow).'** **'Long way from an airport, no really local buses, all long distance coaches.'**

In one case this lack of infrastructure centred on tourism, referring to a **'Lack of tourism facilities, e.g. lay-byes, picnic sites and viewing points.'** Another comment suggested that **'We are not taking enough notice of the 'grey market' – OCUK is good but it focuses on young people doing extreme sports. There are lots of people, particularly older people, who come here to enjoy the 'scenery'.'**

## **Future directions**

A number of people reflected on the idea of a national park proposal. One organisation stated that in its consultation response on the proposed Harris National Park **'Our thinking has always been that if there was to be another NP in Scotland we would support the Glen Coe – Lochaber area as the leading contender.'** One set of respondents stated **'There have been two National Parks going in Scotland now for 10 years – there is lots of evidence that they have encouraged and fostered economic development.'** On the other hand the same party stated that **'The Nevis Partnership was set up to avoid having to go through the national park designation process'**. Some were non-committal about the notion of a national park; **'it makes no difference to us whether it's a national park or some other form of designation'** and **'I would prefer one of the existing bodies leading**

***better integration than another new body being set up'***. Some were strongly opposed to the idea; ***'A national park would be another quango telling people what to do.'*** Overall the response to the notion of a national park was equivocal. A response that perhaps sums up people's sentiment was ***'A national park would be good if it is done properly, and if there is good economic benefit. It would not work if it resulted in a lot more rules imposed from above.'***

There was a strongly expressed need for greater coordination and communication, and for any initiative to be 'bottom-up'. One group stated that ***'Communities are capable of thinking for themselves – they don't need other people telling them what to do. This initiative will only work if it comes out of the community.'*** But this would require local people ***'...to move outside the accepted comfort zones and think longer term and strategically.'*** One person asserted the ***'need to show that Glen Coe and Nevis get more by joining together'***. Finally on this point, one person aspired to ***'A model of governance that is community represented in order to encompass local needs, working in partnership with the statutory agencies and the Local Authority and a high profile at national level.'***

Two specific mechanisms were mentioned. One party referred to the need for ***'outreach workers to offer venues or develop ideas'***, whilst another stated that ***'The area needs a management plan, a visitor management plan, or some common vision.'***

Secure funding is clearly at the forefront of concerns. A number of people alluded to the need for securing funds, for co-ordinating bids, and a need to avoid duplication (see above). As one person put it, ***'The risk is that restoration work and protection of the environment will not be continued in the longer term unless we can find a way of securing investment for the future.'***

## 3 Key issues and forces for change



Glen Etive *RKE*

### 3 Key issues and forces for change

Here is a selection of facts and figures that help to explain the current situation and how it might be changing, for Nevis, Glen Coe and the wider Lochaber area.



#### Section 4

#### Society and Economy

- Fort William and Ardnamurchan (Ward 22) is close to being an economically fragile area – Fort William has only just risen above the threshold of ‘deprived’ in the index of social deprivation, though one area – Plantation – is still classed as severely deprived.
- Unemployment in Ward 22 is slightly higher at 4.1% than for the rest of Highland (3.3%), but lower than for Scotland as a whole (4.6%). There has been a steady increase in unemployment rates since 2007. See tables 1 and 2 for trends in unemployment rates.
- The proportion of people in Ward 22 classed as ‘income deprived’ (12.8%) is above the Highland average but the proportion classed as ‘employment deprived’ (8.3%) is slightly below (9.2%). The average annual household income is around £29,500, compared with £32,100 for Highland and £33,900 for Scotland. The low income is due to the large number of seasonal workers on minimum wage – 35% of GDP comes from tourism and is low paid and seasonal.
- Distribution, hotels and restaurants in Ward 22 is the largest employment sector, accounting for 34% of jobs in 2008. This is followed by the female dominated public administration, education and health sector, which accounts for a further 30% of all employees in the area.
- House prices in Ward 22 have been rising in recent years. The median house price in Lochaber in 2010 was £127,500 compared with £147,000 in Highland and £137,000 in Scotland.

#### Population

- In 2010, the population of Fort William and Ardnamurchan (Ward 22) was 11,412, an increase of 0.9% since 2005. This compares with a 3.1% increase overall in the Highlands and Islands and a 2.5% increase in Scotland. Population density is 4.4 persons per square kilometre, which compares with 8.4 persons for Highland and 67 persons for Scotland.
- Much of the population increase has been fuelled by immigration, particularly people retiring to the area, especially to the extreme east and west of the ward. Many young people continue to leave in pursuit of tertiary education.
- Forecasts in the West Highlands and Islands Local Plan suggest that the housing stock in Lochaber would need to increase by 1450 – 1600 by 2018 to provide for new households and holiday accommodation.<sup>1</sup>

#### Habitats and landscape

- Significant changes in habitats include loss of amount and condition of native woodland, impoverishment of moorland and upland habitats, reduction in landscape diversity, and erosion and loss of riparian vegetation, with adverse effects on freshwater fisheries.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> All figures for Fort William and Ardnamurchan, Ward 22, from Highland Council <http://www.highland.gov.uk/yourcouncil/yourward/ward22/ward-22-z-wardstats.htm>

<sup>2</sup> From East Lochaber Natural Heritage Futures, SNH, 2002

## Climate change

- Concerns about the impact of climate change include reduced snowfall by up to 50% or more across Scotland by 2080<sup>3</sup>, reduction in mountain snow cover; changing plant communities; increased likelihood of summer droughts; Changes in abundance and distribution of species and length of growing season<sup>4</sup>. 'These changes are causing significant shifts in the growing, breeding and migration seasons, as well as species abundance and diversity. Higher river flows are leading to flood risks and sea level rise is causing coastal erosion'<sup>5</sup>.

## Agriculture

- Changes in agricultural support mechanisms, from headage payments to the single farm premium, have resulted in massive reduction in the number of sheep grazing the mountains.
- The agricultural economy has moved from active management with sustained jobs to a much more degraded state with much fewer, and irregular, jobs.
- Although the volume of beef meat production has increased in Scotland by 22% since 2001, the volume of mutton and lamb has declined by 22%.
- The average price of sheep has increased by 118% since 2001 with more than half that increase occurring since 2008. The price of cattle has increased by 56% since 2001.
- From 2001 to 2010 the net value of Scottish agriculture has increased from £11.7bn to £34.2bn, due largely to a rise in the value of land and buildings.
- The total income from farming has increased by 58% (£284m) from 2001 to 2010.<sup>6</sup>

## Tourism

- 35% of GDP is generated through tourism. It is seasonal and traditionally is low wage. There is a high seasonal population, which often has difficulty finding affordable accommodation.
- Glen Nevis receives around 660,000 visitors a year. Ben Nevis gets between 70,000 and 160,000 a year.
- Lochaber tourism income in 2011 was £120m, 11% up on the previous year, and supporting over 1000 jobs.
- There has been no real increase in visitor pressure on the land, though many paths are in need of regular maintenance.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> An Online Handbook of Climate Change Across Scotland  
<http://www.climatetrendshandbook.adaptationscotland.org.uk/index.html>

<sup>4</sup> SNH website <http://www.snh.gov.uk/climate-change/impacts-in-scotland/effects/habitats/>

<sup>5</sup> SEPA website, [http://www.sepa.org.uk/climate\\_change.aspx](http://www.sepa.org.uk/climate_change.aspx)

<sup>6</sup> From Scottish Government

<sup>7</sup> From Highlands and Islands Enterprise website

## 4 Management issues



Glen Nevis *RKE*

## 4 Management issues

In this chapter we present the main findings of the study, discuss the management impacts on the Nevis and Glen Coe area and identify **ten key issues** that could be addressed to manage the area in a more effective and coordinated way.

### Community

The consultation with community councils clearly showed that communities are robust and are actively involved in their own development. Some of the communities have marketing initiatives that are involved in tourism and some have received funding to develop visitor centres and community facilities. There has been community involvement in the Nevis Partnership and the Geopark, and also with the Sunart Oakwoods Initiative. These activities show that the potential for active involvement in sustaining and developing the rural economy is significant as well as recognising the link between society, economy and the environment.

A significant issue arising from the consultation, however, is an apparent lack of communication between some communities, and between communities and organisations operating in the area. This is to some extent inevitable in mountain areas where communities can be remote and where infrastructure is limited to a few key roads. It is also inevitable where organisations may be underfunded and have limited capacity to access communities. The comments we received suggest that a lack of communication and coordination has led at times to a poor coordination of development tourism activities, duplication of services and a lack of efficient use of resources.

This contrasts with the situation in 2008 when the Lochaber Community Development Plan found that *"Lochaber is an area, which, over many years, has developed excellent partnership working – between agencies, between voluntary groups and between communities"*. At that time there was a Lochaber Area Committee with an Area Manager, one of whose responsibilities was to lead community planning. The downward change in local partnership working may be attributable to the loss of these local services.

### Key issue

**Perceived poor communication between communities, and between communities and organisations and a lack mutual cooperation and active community participation in the future management of the area**

### Vision

There are many documents that describe the Nevis and Glen Coe area, its habitats and species, its recreational use, its development and its economy. These include the Lochaber Biodiversity Action Plan, East Lochaber Natural Heritage Futures, the Ben Nevis Management Plan, the Nevis Strategy and the Fort William Chamber of Commerce's document 'Going for Growth 2011'.

Each of these documents provides visions, aims, objectives, actions and policies that are largely complementary and, if implemented, would help significantly to provide enhanced management of Nevis and Glen Coe, and the wider East Lochaber area. Some actions are already being implemented, particularly footpath and recreation management on Nevis, and

their impacts can clearly be seen. The implementation of many other actions appears to be constrained through lack of funding.

There is no comprehensive plan, however, that provides a vision for all elements of the management of the area in one document that would consider landscape and biodiversity management, agriculture and forestry, heritage management, social and economic development, interpretation and learning as one integrated approach. Such a plan has been developed for the three NSAs in Dumfries and Galloway, the two Scottish national parks and for national parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) in England and Wales. Adopting an integrated management approach would help to secure a vision for Nevis and Glen Coe, as the first task would be to prepare a management plan that provides a set of aims, objectives and actions for the environmental, social and economic issues of the area.

A vision for the future of the area could include new mechanisms to achieve more effective governance and coordination of activities. The consultation revealed a desire to improve on the current situation and wide-ranging opinions on the best form of governance to achieve this improvement. There was recognition that the Nevis Partnership has been successful in coordinating activity and in channelling funding into management action, and that this approach could be extended to a wider area. The existing NSA was not widely understood but it was acknowledged to be an existing designation and therefore a potential platform for enhanced management. There was generally only lukewarm support for a national park designation, with some feeling it is the most effective option in the long term while others rejected the notion very strongly. The most important opinion was that any form of integrated management or governance would only succeed if it was developed as a 'bottom up' rather than 'top down' exercise.

### **Key issue**

**There is no overall vision or management strategy to address the integrated management of Nevis and Glen Coe**

## **Landscape and habitats**

Consultation for this report revealed that the landscape quality of Nevis and Glen Coe is clearly appreciated by residents and visitors. They value its wild character, its wealth of landscapes and habitats and the many opportunities for outdoor recreation<sup>8</sup>. Residents feel a close empathy with their environment and recognise it not just as an opportunity for sustaining their livelihoods but as an intrinsic part of their lives. It is part of the cultural identity for both long-term residents and more recent incomers, and helps to maintain a link with the Gaelic language through traditional place names<sup>9,10</sup>.

This close link between people and place is an important facet of the character of the area and a crucial feature for its long-term protection and management<sup>11</sup>. In fact the West Highlands and Islands Local Plan, 2010, includes the phrase: "*Local custodianship of the area's outstanding heritage is commonplace.*"<sup>12</sup> Any workable solution for integrated management needs the active participation of the community in both initiation and implementation.

<sup>8</sup> See also SNH Commissioned Report 291 'Perceptions of Wildlands'

<sup>9</sup> SNH Commissioned Report 194 - states that '*Appreciation of wild landscape may be considered as part of the national psyche in Scotland*'

<sup>10</sup> See also Scottish Environment Link 'Living With the Land paras 52/53 p12

<sup>11</sup> National Planning Framework for Scotland 2004

<sup>12</sup> West Highlands and Islands Local Plan, 2010

The landscape of the Nevis and Glen Coe area has been influenced by man's activities over a long period of time, from ancient forests through to today's mix of open moorland, fragmented native woodland and stands of planted coniferous forest. Forestry operations during the last century have influenced the landscape with substantial areas of coniferous forest planted by Forest Enterprise Scotland (FES) and private landowners<sup>13</sup>.

In response to a range of factors, including public antipathy with the creation of blanket coniferous plantations, recent changes in forest policy by FES have resulted in a more 'natural' appearance to forest stands, with forest management now focusing far more on conservation and recreation objectives<sup>14</sup>.

While this has made a positive impact on the landscape there is no consistent coordination in the approaches of FES and private landowners at the wider *landscape* scale. Reports that reflect concerns such as the loss of red squirrel populations<sup>15</sup> or the risk of invasive species<sup>16</sup> and disease<sup>17</sup> indicate the need for greater integration.

A more integrated landscape scale management approach could lead to more diverse forest stands over a wider area and also integrate the management of the age class structure, making forests ecologically more diverse<sup>18,19,20</sup>. Furthermore, such an approach is seen as increasingly necessary in the face of climate change concerns<sup>21</sup>.

The Scottish Government has a policy to increase woodland cover over the next 10 years<sup>22</sup> and also to increase non-forest products<sup>23</sup>. More land therefore is needed for forest planting to satisfy this demand. Integrated landscape management would help guide new planting that is appropriate to the landscape and to the sensitive habitats of the uplands.

Water extraction has also had a major impact on the landscape, through the creation of reservoirs. The River Nevis and the River Leven are classified by Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA) as a Heavily Modified Water Body because of the diversion of the river in the 1920s and subsequent abstraction of water for the Alcan hydropower scheme, but the river is at a good ecological status and is likely to experience no deterioration by 2015<sup>24</sup>. Other rivers in the area, such as the Allt a Mhuilinn, the Allt Coire an Eoin and the Allt Daim, are classified as of poor ecological potential. Extraction from the Allt a Mhuilinn is considerable with water being taken for both the Rio Tinto Alcan smelter and Ben Nevis Distillery.

<sup>13</sup> Lochaber LBAP, p32, Calvert 2009

<sup>14</sup> Lochaber LBAP p32; Calvert 2009

<sup>15</sup> See [http://www.nesbiodiversity.org.uk/actionplans/woodland/Red\\_Squirrel\\_actionplan.htm](http://www.nesbiodiversity.org.uk/actionplans/woodland/Red_Squirrel_actionplan.htm)

<sup>16</sup> See <http://www.highland.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/65233B2E-1071-4289-8171-3C0A4A204580/0/Item8les0610.pdf>

<sup>17</sup> See <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/news1/5B4F9D7D69F6D60380257A0600305974>

<sup>18</sup> FCS Achieving Diversity in Scotland's Forest Landscapes 2012

[http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/fcpg103.pdf/\\$FILE/fcpg103.pdf](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/fcpg103.pdf/$FILE/fcpg103.pdf)

<sup>19</sup> Scottish Biodiversity Forum <http://www.biodiversityscotland.gov.uk/doing/ecosystems/habitat-restoration/>

<sup>20</sup> See also Lochaber LBAP Ch4 p3

<sup>21</sup> Scottish Government: Land Use Strategy for Scotland

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/345946/0115155.pdf>

<sup>22</sup> [http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/ForestExpansion.pdf/\\$FILE/ForestExpansion.pdf](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/ForestExpansion.pdf/$FILE/ForestExpansion.pdf)

<sup>23</sup> [http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/NTFPpolicypublic.pdf/\\$FILE/NTFPpolicypublic.pdf](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/NTFPpolicypublic.pdf/$FILE/NTFPpolicypublic.pdf)

<sup>24</sup> Appin Coastal Catchment Summary, Argyll and Lochaber area management plan catchment summary, August 2010, SEPA <http://gis.sepa.org.uk/rbmp/>

The habitats of Lochaber have changed significantly, particularly over the last 15 years<sup>25</sup>.<sup>26</sup> Changes in agricultural support mechanisms have resulted in farmers reducing sheep flocks in upland areas<sup>27</sup> <sup>28</sup> <sup>29</sup> and concentrating sheep grazing instead in lower pastures nearer their farms. Sheep grazing in the uplands is therefore significantly reduced, resulting in denser grass swards, bracken encroachment and loss of wildflowers<sup>30</sup>. At the same time it is likely there has been an intensification of 'in-bye' grazing, resulting in negative impacts on grasslands at lower levels<sup>31</sup>. Sheep also 'poach' the land by trampling, which encourages natural regeneration, particularly of flower and tree species, though cattle are better at doing this in upland rough grass systems. The decline in cattle management has been less marked, although the trend is downwards<sup>32</sup>.

Deer numbers are also changing in the uplands. The deer population is declining slightly though it is difficult to source accurate figures. The Mammal Society has estimated an overall decline in numbers from 360,000 (1995) to 316,000 (2004)<sup>33</sup>. Some consider the numbers still to be higher than they should be for optimum habitat conservation, though owners of shooting estates are said to support higher numbers<sup>34</sup>. Overstocking has been linked to higher land prices and has been the subject of debate at least since the 1950's<sup>35</sup>.

Deer graze land differently from sheep, and if numbers are high they can significantly impact on natural tree regeneration. The John Muir Trust has an annual deer culling programme on its Ben Nevis estate with the aim of reducing the population to enable existing native woodland to regenerate without using fencing<sup>36</sup>.

The Nevis Partnership has commissioned a Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) of the Nevis area that provides a detailed understanding of its range of character types. Part of the study to prepare this report included a brief exercise to emulate this LCA over a larger area. A more detailed study is needed, though, to provide a thorough LCA, which should be undertaken as part of the wider landscape management approach.

The success of the Nevis Partnership's application for Landscape Partnership Scheme funding for the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) from July 2012 will enable it to implement a range of landscape management work that will enhance the Nevis area. It will also maintain the Partnership's role in integrating and coordinating the work of the many organisations that participate in the management of the area and demonstrate the value of adopting an integrated management approach across a wider area.

<sup>25</sup> SNH Ben Nevis and Glencoe: A Landscape Fashioned by Geology p30  
<http://www.snh.org.uk/pdfs/publications/geology/bennevisandglencoe.pdf>

<sup>26</sup> Lochaber LBAP p8

<sup>27</sup> Lochaber LBAP p44

<sup>28</sup> see also Irvine J (ed.) 2011 'Sustainable Upland Management' MacAulay Institute p16  
<http://www.macaulay.ac.uk/biodiversity/sustainable-upland-management.pdf>

<sup>29</sup> see also SAC Rural Policy Centre 'Farming's Retreat from the Hills' p5  
<http://www.sac.ac.uk/mainrep/pdfs/retreatreport.pdf>

<sup>30</sup> Lochaber LBAP p35

<sup>31</sup> SAC Rural Policy Centre 'Farming's Retreat from the Hills' p5

<sup>32</sup> ibid pp8-18

<sup>33</sup> [http://www.mammal.org.uk/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=270:new-population-estimates-for-british-mammal-populations&catid=52:press-releases](http://www.mammal.org.uk/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=270:new-population-estimates-for-british-mammal-populations&catid=52:press-releases)

<sup>34</sup> see <http://www.bscq.org.uk/archive/savingcapers.htm>;  
[http://nora.nerc.ac.uk/5137/1/Ecology\\_Red\\_Deer\\_Scotland\\_.pdf](http://nora.nerc.ac.uk/5137/1/Ecology_Red_Deer_Scotland_.pdf)

<sup>35</sup> see for example the Lords debate on the Deer (Scotland) Bill 1959  
[http://www.google.co.uk/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=5&ved=0CHcQFjAE&url=http%3A%2F%2Fhansard.millbanksystems.com%2Fcommons%2F1959%2Ffeb%2F03%2Fdeer-scotland-bill-lords&ei=mPXmT\\_yXAcOL8gOirfCxKg&usq=AFQjCNEPEnrqblfksStwsOCUuJdD6uX20g](http://www.google.co.uk/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=5&ved=0CHcQFjAE&url=http%3A%2F%2Fhansard.millbanksystems.com%2Fcommons%2F1959%2Ffeb%2F03%2Fdeer-scotland-bill-lords&ei=mPXmT_yXAcOL8gOirfCxKg&usq=AFQjCNEPEnrqblfksStwsOCUuJdD6uX20g)

<sup>36</sup> Management Plan, Ben Nevis Estate, 2007-2012, John Muir Trust

## Key issues

**No strategic approach to landscape management and no consistent description of landscape character outside the Nevis area**

**No coordinated approach to habitat management and conservation**

## Identity

Most consultees were asked what identity they considered their area to have. Although the National Scenic Area had been an entity since 1980 it is little known and understood and has a very low profile with the community. Few of the consultees had any empathy with the combined name 'Nevis and Glen Coe'. They were seen as separate entities or part of a much larger geographic area.

Communities in the south of the area, in Ballachulish, Glencoe and Kinlochleven, have a strong sense of local identity and this is reflected in the local marketing company promoting Glen Coe as part of Lochaber. Glen Coe has strong historical connections and is widely understood outside the area.

Nevis, including Ben Nevis, Glen Nevis and the Nevis Range, is a widely used term and is known internationally. It has strong associations with Ben Nevis, Britain's highest mountain, and with outdoor recreation.

The name 'Lochaber' is used widely and is clearly understood by residents. It is a strong traditional name and is often used as 'South Lochaber' for the Glen Coe area, and 'East Lochaber' for the area to the east of the Great Glen. Lochaber, however, is not known well outside the area, and very few visitors are familiar with the term.

A strong sense of identity is an important part of the 'ownership' that people have for an area, but identity is also part of its marketing for tourism. The OCUK has provided Lochaber with an identity based on its attraction for outdoor activities and this has certainly been successful in drawing tourists to the area. The Lochaber Geopark has raised the profile of Lochaber significantly by providing a geological identity that is promoted through its website and other interpretive materials. The Nevis Partnership has provided a strong lead for Nevis in integrating the management of partner organisations and helping to promote an identity for the Nevis area. An integrated management approach for the whole of Nevis and Glen Coe, or a wider area, could help to bring communities together to create a clearer regional identity which would help support funding applications, activities and niche marketing.

## Key issue

**The lack of an 'identity' for Nevis and Glen Coe which can capture its character and define its profile with the community.**

## Planning

The primary local planning authority is Highland Council. The council has an existing West Highlands and Islands Local Plan and its new-style Highland-wide Local Development Plan was adopted on 5th April 2012<sup>37</sup> which will update and replace parts of Highland Structure Plan and parts of the existing local development plans. The Plan includes policies for the National Scenic Area.



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<sup>37</sup> Highland-wide Local Development Plan, Highland Council, 2012  
<http://www.highland.gov.uk/yourcouncil/news/newsreleases/2012/April/2012-04-05-03.htm>

Although there were many comments about the remoteness, and slowness, of development management there was little indication there is anything fundamentally wrong with the planning system. From 1996 to 2007, the Lochaber Area Committee of the Highland Council had development control functions and sat in Fort William. From 2007 until 2012 the Planning Applications Committee covered the Corporate Area of Ross, Skye and Lochaber and the Committee sat in each of these former areas consecutively, meaning that Lochaber applications could be decided in Portree or Dingwall. The recent (January 2012) change in the system that further transferred development management to a South Planning Applications Committee in Inverness has poor community support. Although there is little evidence yet of any significant problems with the new arrangement, there is a strong sense of dissatisfaction that planning is too remote, with few representatives on the committee from the Lochaber area, and staff have limited capacity to enforce planning contraventions. The majority of applications, however, are still dealt with locally through delegated powers by dedicated planning officers in Fort William.

If a national park were to be designated for Nevis and Glen Coe there is opportunity to create a new planning authority for the park, which would have a more local focus<sup>38</sup>. However, the transfer of planning powers to a national park authority is not obligatory. It is for the Scottish Government to decide what powers a national park authority would have, and as most of the area of a national park for Nevis and Glen Coe would already be within a single planning authority (Highland Council) it may decide to keep the status quo.

Other types of governance, or integrated management, can have an influence on planning by providing an opportunity to coordinate a robust response to planning issues and applications, in an advisory capacity or through a negotiated consultee arrangement. A body that can demonstrate its commitment to integrated working and has the capacity to do so is more likely to carry weight in commenting on planning issues.

### **Key issue**

**The planning service and planning decisions are perceived to be remote from the Fort William area.**

### **The economy**

Fort William and Ardnamurchan (Ward 22) is close to being an economically fragile area on the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation, the Scottish Government's official measure for identifying small area concentrations of deprivation. Fort William itself has just risen above the threshold of 'deprived', but one data zone, Plantation, is still classed as severely deprived. Unemployment is slightly higher (3%) than the rest of Highland (2.8%), though lower than Scotland as a whole (4.3%) and the average annual household income (£29,528) is slightly below that of Highland (£32,113) and the whole of Scotland (£33,907)<sup>39</sup>. A significant issue is that seasonal, tourism related, employment is a relatively larger proportion of the local GDP (35%), and traditionally this is low paid<sup>40</sup>. This results in a relatively high population transient workers that have a high demand on rented accommodation. There is some disparity of data though, as the criteria of fragility of Highland Council and Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) shows Fort William and hinterland classed as 'least fragile'.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>38</sup> See 'Going for Growth 2011' - Fort William Chamber of Commerce - section on Planning & Development

<sup>39</sup> All figures from Highland Council Ward Statistics

<http://www.highland.gov.uk/yourcouncil/yourward/ward22/ward-22-z-wardstats.htm>

<sup>40</sup> HIE Lochaber Profile

<sup>41</sup> [http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2009/08/07115535/14\\_s3](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2009/08/07115535/14_s3)

Farming has seen great changes in recent years with the reduction in sheep grazing of between 35% and 60% in the North West<sup>42</sup> and an assumed accompanied reduction in farm workers. Where there was once regular long-term employment opportunities for farm workers there are now probably much fewer seasonal and irregular jobs<sup>43</sup>. This is likely to have had a significant impact on the local economy<sup>44</sup>. This contrasts with the net value of farming which has seen a significant increase in the last ten years due to a rise in the value of land and buildings. At the same time, whilst stock prices have risen, this has been negated by rising costs<sup>45</sup>.

Forestry generates a significant amount of employment across Lochaber, including jobs in the forest for planting and felling, as well as in timber haulage, processing sawmills and pulp mills. There are about 70 full-time equivalent posts employed by, or dependent on, FES and a significant number in the private sector<sup>46</sup>.

Tourism is clearly a crucial part of the local economy, accounting for 34% of jobs in 2008 in Lochaber, Skye and Wester Ross<sup>47</sup>. Many people in communities have tourism-related enterprises, such as B&Bs and cafes, while many others work in hotels and guest houses, and in ski resorts and outdoor adventure companies<sup>50</sup>. This economy is highly seasonally dependent and is generally low paid. There is also a significant migrant population that requires seasonal accommodation<sup>51</sup>. The development and management of tourism-related business, however, appears to be fragmented and below its optimum level. HIE supports the growth of sustainable tourism, targeting 'regionally significant investments' to help grow the tourism economy<sup>52</sup>. Research for Highland Council recommends that real growth will require greater collaboration amongst agencies, and better two-way communication between the agencies and the trade<sup>53</sup>.

Tourism marketing is provided at three levels. Visit Scotland provides marketing for the whole of Scotland, aimed at identified market segments, while OCUK provides destination marketing for the outdoor activity in Lochaber. The third level is the individual marketing initiatives at community level that provide local products and services. This system appears to work reasonably well but there is still much fragmentation of service and lack of coordination of activity.

<sup>42</sup> SAC Rural Policy Centre 'Farming's Retreat from the Hills' p1  
<http://www.sac.ac.uk/mainrep/pdfs/retreatreport.pdf>

<sup>43</sup> *ibid.* p39

<sup>44</sup> See Hanley et al (2009) 'Likely Impacts of Future Agricultural Change on Upland Farming and Biodiversity' p2 <http://www.eco-delivery.stir.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2010/04/discrete-policy-scenarios.pdf>

<sup>45</sup> SAC Rural Policy Centre 'Farming's Retreat from the Hills' p1  
<http://www.sac.ac.uk/mainrep/pdfs/retreatreport.pdf>

<sup>46</sup> Lochaber Forest District Strategic Plan 2007 – 2017, Forestry Commission Scotland

<sup>47</sup> HIE website <http://www.hie.co.uk/highlands-and-islands/area-information/lochaber-skye-and-wester-ross/economic-profile.html>

<sup>48</sup> Scottish Executive: 'The Prospects for Tourism in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland. COHI(04)(01) 2004 paragraphs 5-8

<sup>49</sup> Highland Council Policy & Information Briefing Note 27 (2008)

<sup>50</sup> See for example HIE Tourism Case Studies <http://www.hie.co.uk/highlands-and-islands/growth-sectors/tourism/tourism-case-studies.html>

<sup>51</sup> HIE Lochaber profile p3

<sup>52</sup> HIE website, Developing growth sectors – sustainable tourism. <http://www.hie.co.uk/about-hie/what-we-do/developing-growth-sectors/developing-growth-sectors-sustainable-tourism.html>

<sup>53</sup> See Rowan Tree Consulting 'Highland Council Review of Tourism Spend' paragraph 12.4 p42  
<http://www.highland.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/B503271D-84D8-4454-BD3F-7C67C8AD6E3A/0/TheHighlandCouncilReviewofTourismSpendReport.pdf>

The emphasis on marketing, and on the provision of tourism facilities, is on 'adventure' tourism, such as walking, climbing and mountain biking. The National Strategic Framework for mountain biking in Scotland aims to increase the sport by 50% over 5 years and make it an international venue<sup>54</sup>. Some consultees felt, though, that facilities for families and older people are poorly developed and there is little to do in the area, especially in Fort William, in bad weather. The 'grey market' in particular is less seasonally dependent and better provision for this market would extend the tourism season.

Fort William is an important economic centre, yet its range of shops is limited. There are many empty properties and there are few outlets for local characteristic products. There are also few non-adventure based activities for families and older people to experience in the Fort William area, which could help boost the economy. A Business Improvement BID, led by OCUK and the Fort William Chamber of Commerce, is being worked up which will involve tourism related initiatives and embrace a range of business sectors.

The A82 is the only route through the area from the south and is the major road that links Fort William with Glasgow and Inverness. Many consultees expressed their disenchantment with the condition of the route, including its width and state of surfacing. There was also anger at the piecemeal improvements made that frequently close the road or cause considerable delays, often at peak times. There is clearly a lack of investment in the route. Funding from Scottish Government is sufficient only for repair and for piecemeal improvements, but there is no comprehensive masterplan for improvement in the route despite campaigns by the A82 Partnership and by Fort William Chamber of Commerce<sup>55</sup>.

Funding has been made available for a number of economic development and environmental initiatives in the area, including for the Nevis Partnership, OCUK, businesses and communities, from a variety of sources. Much of this funding is for specific projects or for tourism or community facilities, and has been for a limited duration. Many consultees expressed the need for longer term funding, particularly core funding for a coordinative initiative that could tackle longer-term management issues. It was felt that only through sustained funding could many of these issues be properly addressed. Short term funding is invariably a problem for initiatives that aim to stimulate the economy or enhance the environment. Most funding streams are for a limited duration and many organisations face the problems of searching for repeat, or alternative, funding once the grant has expired, at a time when public sector funding is increasingly constrained.

## **Key issues**

**The relative fragility, low wage and seasonal nature of employment**

**The fragmentation, low investment and lack of coordination of tourism marketing and enterprise**

**The overall lack of significant investment in infrastructure and local services.**

**Short term funding of economic, environmental and community initiatives**

## **Conclusion**

The communities of Nevis and Glen Coe are robust and many are involved in activities that help to protect the environment and support the local economy. A number of initiatives and organisations have been active in the area, showing that there is potential for community

<sup>54</sup> See National Strategic Framework for Mountain Biking, Forestry Commission Scotland, [http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/MTBstrategycomplete.pdf/\\$FILE/MTBstrategycomplete.pdf](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/MTBstrategycomplete.pdf/$FILE/MTBstrategycomplete.pdf)

<sup>55</sup> see Sunday Herald article August 2011 'Road Rage on the A82' <http://www.fortwilliamchamber.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/Sunday-Herald-28-August-2011.pdf>

participation in social, economic and environmental issues. Many people in the community, though, say there is poor communication, which prevents effective cooperative working.

There are many documents and plans that relate to the area and provide strategy for biodiversity, recreation management and economic development. These documents offer strategies for the area, but there is no comprehensive plan that provides an overall vision for all elements of the area's management.

Nevis and Glen Coe is one of Scotland's most characteristic and recognised landscapes. It has an international reputation for wonderful scenery, diverse wildlife and geology and some of the best adventure tourism opportunities in the country. This landscape is changing though, due to a variety of influences, and collective action is needed to help prevent loss of natural resources.

People identify with the area in different ways, in particular Nevis, Glencoe and especially Lochaber, which are all used to help promote and market its attractions. This diversity of attachment to the place recognises the broad cultural and historical differences through the area but a clearer regional identity could help to support funding applications, activities and niche marketing.

Although there is little real evidence that the planning system is failing the community there is a strong perception that planning is too remote, with limited local representation on the planning committee that determines major applications for this area.

There are pockets of high deprivation but unemployment is only slightly higher than the rest of Highland and average annual household incomes slightly lower. There is a large amount of low-paid seasonal work, which tends to lower the average incomes and results in a significant proportion of the population in the tourism industry being transient. Tourism is a major contribution to the economy although its development is below its optimum level.

Fort William is an important economic centre yet there are many empty properties on the high street and few shops provide locally made products. The A82 is the only route through the area, linking Fort William to other centres. There is considerable local feeling about the condition of the route and generally about long-term investment in infrastructure and services.

**The key issues for Nevis and Glen Coe, therefore, are:**

- **Perceived poor communication between communities, and between communities and organisations and a lack mutual cooperation and active community participation in the future management of the area**
- **There is no overall vision or management strategy to address the integrated management of Nevis and Glen Coe**
- **No strategic approach to landscape management and no consistent description of landscape character outside the Nevis area**
- **No coordinated approach to habitat management and conservation**
- **The lack of an 'identity' for Nevis and Glen Coe which can capture its character and define its profile with the community.**
- **The planning service and planning decisions are perceived to be remote from the Fort William area.**
- **The relative fragility, low wage and seasonal nature of employment**
- **The fragmentation, low investment and lack of coordination of tourism marketing and enterprise**
- **The overall lack of significant investment in infrastructure and local services**
- **Short term funding of economic, environmental and community initiatives**

## 5 Integrated management models



Nevis Range *RKE*

## 5 Integrated management models

Integrated management is about bringing organisations together to achieve common goals more effectively. This chapter reviews a selection of models that help to integrate and coordinate landscape management.

There are many different models for integrated management and different types of governance that can make those models work. The models can include simple projects that galvanise communities and achieve specific targets, through to national parks that can tackle large-scale social, economic and environmental issues. The models below show how integrated management can work at different scales; and the type of governance that can be put into place for them to be effective.



### Section 6

There is no 'one best fit' in terms of management model and governance structure. What matters is that whichever form of model is adopted, it is effective in addressing the needs of an area and its people at a particular time; and may change over time.

Engaging the greatest number of stakeholders and encouraging them to participate at every opportunity is essential when developing integrated management models. Different individuals and groups have different perspectives and can operate at different scales and timescales. The key question is to decide what you want to achieve, who should be involved and who/what will benefit; and to select a model that will satisfy your requirements.

The models below are examples of how communities and organisations can be brought together to help manage an area. Some already operate in Scotland, while others are from other countries and illustrate how governance can be structured to make them work.



### Section 6

#### Community partnership schemes

There are a range of non-statutory schemes in use throughout the United Kingdom. Each is tailor made for its circumstances but shaped by the funding stream that supports it. Many have a narrow purpose and limited life. Local examples include:

- The Nevis Partnership
- The Lochaber Partnership
- The Sunart Oak Woodlands Initiative

Whilst examples from elsewhere include:

- The Cambrian Mountains Initiative
- The Blaenau Ymllaen Partnership
- Two Villages, Two Valleys Project

**The Nevis Partnership** is a company limited by guarantee and a Scottish registered charity formed in 2002 to guide future policies and actions to safeguard, manage and where appropriate enhance the environmental qualities and opportunities for visitor enjoyment and appreciation of the Nevis area. Its members are public, private and community bodies. The overall aim of its strategy is to facilitate responsible access to the whole of the Nevis Area through integrated management for the benefit of all. Though a significant aspect of the Partnership's work has been to improve the footpath network there has also been an important contribution to the fostering of skills through training in collaboration with West Highland College – University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI).

**The Lochaber Partnership** is a wide-ranging community planning partnership formed in 2004. Its most recent plan is a Community Development Plan that was published in 2008. Based on five strategic objectives set by government, the purpose of the plan was to identify areas for improvement and to deliver better outcomes for Lochaber's residents and visitors, through specific action points. The aspirations are relevant but there appears to be a lack of a delivery mechanism.

**The Sunart Oakwoods Initiative** is a project based on a collaboration between public, private and community groups. It developed in response to community interests in Morvern, Moidart and Sunart. A particular strength of the project lies in its inclusiveness; and in the way it has developed organically, based on relatively small and rapid successes. However, the lack of a clear partnership agreement and management structure resulted in an inability to sustain a substantial funding source.

**The Cambrian Mountains Initiative** is a recently formed partner-based organisation. Its main purpose is to raise the profile of this area of mid-Wales. Its main motivation is to promote sustainable farm-based products such as branded lamb, which is sold through the Co-operative Group, one of the partners. The Cambrian Mountains Trust receives an income through this sale, which it then uses to support community projects in the area.

**The Blaenau Ymlaen Partnership** was formed as a voluntary group to bring various regeneration groups and plans together. Blaenau Ffestiniog is a former slate mining town that has a high incidence of unemployment and associated social problems.

**Two Villages, Two Valleys Project** was a 7-year research project based in the Peak District National Park (1981-1988) to demonstrate an integrated approach to land use management. It was based on community-level initiatives and was considered to be highly successful in generating funding from a variety of sources.

## National Scenic Areas

NSAs were introduced into Scotland by Order in 1980 as areas suitable for special protection for planning purposes. There is now a statutory process for reviewing and designating such areas. In its 2006 consultation on NSAs, Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) stated that NSAs 'represent the very best of Scotland's scenery' and are 'natural heritage designations of the highest national standing, identifying the national interest in the scenic qualities of an area'. However, there is no requirement to manage them and so, as a group, they may fail International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN Category tests). The Scottish Government (SG) wishes to encourage their management and there may be opportunities to be innovative.

Dumfries and Galloway Council employs a NSA Officer, the only one in Scotland, and has produced management strategies for its three NSAs. The NSA Officer encourages the communities to act within the NSA, with a number of successful projects and initiatives reported. As a part of their government support, Dumfries and Galloway Council is willing to share best practice with other NSAs.

There are 40 NSAs representing some of the finest landscapes in Scotland.

## Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

AONBs are said to be an equivalent designation to NSAs but this is not the case. In Northern Ireland they are similar, in that they are formally designated, carry some weight in the planning system but there is no requirement to manage them. But unlike the majority of the NSAs, the Northern Irish AONBs are all managed. This is generally by Charitable Trusts that are part state funded and have local authority membership.

In England and Wales there is a statutory requirement for local authorities to prepare a management plan and there is a central government funding stream to support its production

and implementation. There are three principal models of governance in use in England and Wales, each now having at least one dedicated member of staff but more often a team. Two are founded in local government:

- AONB Joint Advisory Committee or partnership – a body of local authority members and a wide range of stakeholders who are asked to advise the local authority committees who manage the AONB. There are 34 AONBs in England and Wales in this category.
- AONB Joint Committee – a formally constituted committee of all the relevant local authorities with a range of delegated powers and budgets to manage the AONB. Only two exist (Cannock Chase and Surrey Hills), one also has a partnership of stakeholder advisers; the other has taken special powers to enable some stakeholders to be full members of the Joint Committee.

And independent of local government:

- AONB Conservation Boards – statutory bodies similar in nature to national park authorities but without planning powers or the right to precept funds. There are two Conservation Boards; The Cotswolds and The Chilterns AONBs.

## Geopark

Geoparks are a means of focusing attention on an area without requiring any formal state sponsorship but they must have an outstanding geological heritage. There is considerable effort to conserve this heritage and encourage its enjoyment and understanding by the public, with the aim of supporting sustainable development by involving the local community. The Geopark concept adopts a three-pronged approach combining conservation, education and geotourism. Examples of activities include geological walking trails, education tours and resources, information centres, museums, school outreach, and the creation of local enterprises and cottage industries related to geotourism and geoproducts.

Geoparks are essentially partnership organisations that are also associations and limited companies. There is a European network with which any geopark must work in order to be formally recognised as such. Membership, which is for a three-year reviewable period, also requires a management and action plan. The network is endorsed by UNESCO, which is represented, alongside IUCN, on its governing body. As with biosphere reserves, the label does not of itself have implications for planning but it is a material consideration. The European Network requires each geopark to retain staff and failure to do so is likely to result in loss of 'geopark status'. Lochaber Geopark has recently lost its status for this reason.

There are currently seven Geoparks in the UK. They include Fforest Fawr Geopark in South Wales, North West Highlands Geopark in Scotland, and Marble Arch Caves Geopark in Northern Ireland.

## Biosphere Reserve

A non-statutory accreditation made by UNESCO at the invitation of the Scottish Government. It does not come with significant funding but offers the possibility of attracting European funding for specific projects; and as a brand it offers opportunities for local enterprises such as food, tourism, culture and heritage. They have no formal authority and no legislative or regulatory power. This is one of their greatest strengths but also one of their greatest limitations.

Each biosphere reserve is intended to fulfil three basic functions:

- a conservation function
- a development function
- a research and monitoring function

All three functions are to occur to varying degrees across three interrelated zones:

- a legally protected core area (such as national nature reserve)
- surrounding buffer zone
- outer transition (or human settlement) area

There are currently seven Biosphere Reserves in the UK. They include North Devon's Biosphere Reserve in England, Dyfi Biosphere in Wales and Benn Eighe Biosphere Reserve in Scotland.

## Regional parks

Regional parks were established under the 1967 Countryside (Scotland) Act at a time when there were no other protected landscape designations in Scotland. The act provided local authorities with the power to designate and manage *locally* important areas, following a public enquiry, with the support of central government through SNH. Regional parks were not created to introduce a comprehensive model of integrated management.

Regional parks lie close to large settlements, and are popular for outdoor recreation, and therefore require appropriate management in order to integrate access and conservation efforts and to avoid conflict with other land uses.

Regional parks are typically managed by a committee (sometimes joint) of voting councillors and non-voting members such as SNH, and a consultative forum of land use, conservation and recreation interests that meets twice a year. Whilst the committee has no planning powers, the designation of a regional park is a material consideration. None of the existing regional parks is NSA, since their landscape is considered to be of regional rather than national importance.

There are currently three regional parks:

**Pentland Hills Regional Park** Located to the south of Edinburgh

**Lomond Hills Regional Park** Located about 30 miles north of Edinburgh

**Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park** Located just 30 minutes west of Glasgow

There is a local campaign for a new regional park in the Campsie Fells.

## National Recreation Areas

National Recreation Area (NRA) is a protected area designation in the United States. Early NRAs were established by memoranda of understanding and agreement between the US Bureau of Reclamation and the National Park Service but after 1963 they were designated by statute under an act of the US Congress<sup>56</sup>. NRAs are managed by different federal agencies, most of which operate within the Department of the Interior (National Parks Service/Bureau of Land Management) or the Department of Agriculture (US Forest Service). In some cases the state parks service is involved in management.

The system of National Recreation Areas is intended to provide places primarily for outdoor recreation though many have wilderness areas that are important landscape and biodiversity resources. There are 41 designated NRAs representing a wide spectrum of recreation opportunities from urban to remote wilderness. Some provide recreation opportunities on reservoirs while others allow vehicle access to areas managed as wilderness. They have a high carrying capacity for visitor use, though the management of the areas has more of an effect of increasing quality of life of local people rather than of increasing visitor numbers.

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<sup>56</sup> Policy on the Establishment and Administration of Recreation Areas, Recreational Advisory Council Circular No 1, March 1963

The first NRA to be designated was Boulder Dam, now named Lake Mead Recreation Area. Subsequent NRAs include Mount Baker and Lake Chelan in Washington State and Mount Hood in Oregon. Lake Chelan, adjoining North Cascades National Park, has a significant mountain leisure element which includes the Pacific Crest Trail.

## National Park

The means of finding and creating a national park in Scotland is laid down in the National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000. The four purposes of a national park are set out in the Act as follows:

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

The Act sets out the constitution, duties and functions of the National Park Authority (NPA). A NPA is an independent body corporate. Its general purpose is to ensure that the National Park aims are achieved in a co-ordinated way. Scottish Ministers may make the NPA the planning authority for the area but are not obliged to do so. The NPA must prepare and submit to the Scottish Ministers a National Park Plan that sets out its policy for managing the National Park and co-ordinating the functions of the NPA and other public bodies so far as this affects the National Park. All public body or office-holders must, in exercising functions affecting a National Park, have regard to the National Park Plan. NPAs are funded by the Scottish Government.

There are two National Parks in Scotland; Cairngorms National Park and Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park. There are ten national parks in England and three in Wales. They include the Lake District National Park in England and Snowdonia National Park in Wales.

## Conclusions

Eight management models were considered in this chapter, as mechanisms to help integrate management activity. Four of these models – NSA management, Community Partnership, Biosphere Reserve and National Park – are taken through to the next stage for further consideration as **potential** models to be applied to Nevis and Glen Coe. The four remaining are considered to be less suitable as explained below.

### AONB

AONBs are an English/Welsh model that is equivalent to the NSA in Scotland. Lessons learned in England and Wales during the last 20 years during which the management of AONBs has been significantly upgraded can be applied to the Scottish designation, and this is considered in the next chapter.

### Geopark

Geopark is a valuable designation for recognising and valuing the geological and landscape resource of an area, and for promoting interpretation and geotourism that can help to support the local economy. The endorsement of an area as a Geopark, though, is not a means of integrating the management of the area which is the requirement for this brief.

### Regional Park

Regional parks provide coordinated management for recreation alongside other land uses such as farming and forestry. They have a strong recreation focus in areas of land with **regional** importance within the locality of large cities. While the Nevis and Glen Coe area

has an important recreation function, it is of **national** importance, through its existing designation as a National Scenic Area, and is located remotely from large areas of population. The designation also has no influence on economic development and only limited influence on the planning system.

**National Recreation Area**

This US designation has a focus on recreation, integrated with the protection of the environment from development that could harm recreational potential. It could be emulated for Nevis by creating a similar designation through new legislation by the Scottish Government. The integrated management of recreation and the environment can be achieved, though, by other existing mechanisms, including National Scenic Area and National Park.

## 6 Potential management models



Glen Coe *RKE*

## 6 Potential management models

This chapter presents **four** potential integrated management models selected from those discussed in chapter 5 that we believe are most suited for managing the Nevis and Glen Coe area. It describes how each model would work in practice and then explains the criteria that should be used for selecting the boundary for each model. It finishes by showing how each of the **ten key issues** identified in chapter 4 could be tackled by integrated management and by each management model.

The four potential integrated management models are:

- **Enhanced NSA management**
- **Community partnership or initiative**
- **Biosphere Reserve**
- **National Park**

### Key points about management models

There are three points to note:

- Management models are not fixed - they evolve over time. Experience shows that the current governance structures and management systems found in protected landscapes throughout the UK bear little resemblance to those that existed, say, thirty years ago. There is, therefore, no perfect model – priorities, perceptions and politics change over time, and governance structures have to change in the light of this dynamic if they are to remain efficient and effective.
- The ten key issues are not exhaustive, nor are they prioritised, and furthermore there is no indication of the synergies in addressing particular issues. Attempting to resolve one issue may have both positive and negative impacts, and these might be direct and immediate, or indirect and gradual. There is not the scope within this contract to explore all the possibilities. However, addressing the apparent communication gap is both a solution in itself and a platform for arriving at a collective vision, reinforcing the area's identity and engaging with the planning system.
- Some of the issues relate to *processes*, i.e. they help to reinforce cohesion, they facilitate channels for different interests to engage with each other and they strengthen understanding, identity etc. Others relate to *outcomes*, i.e. economic development, increased protection for biodiversity etc.



#### Section 6

## How the management models would work

### Model 1 – Enhanced NSA management - a partnership based on the National Scenic Area

Using the existing NSA as a focus, this model would emulate the approach taken by Dumfries and Galloway Council for three NSAs in its region, where the council has aimed to prepare a management strategy for each NSA through a participatory process, define their landscapes by preparing landscape character assessments, propose actions to be delivered by partners and appoint a project officer to deliver the strategies. The aim for Ben Nevis and Glen Coe NSA would be to transfer its identity from being a largely ‘constraining’ designation to an ‘empowering’ entity that delivers positive social, economic and environmental benefits to the landscape and the community.

#### What do we mean?

The NSA is invigorated as a viable protected landscape, based on management principles not unlike regional parks or areas of outstanding natural beauty. This is based on the existing NSA boundary.

#### Examples

East Stewartry Coast NSA, Fleet Valley NSA, SNH NSA special qualities report.



#### Chapter 6

#### Developing this model

This model should be developed through a combination of top-down and bottom-up approaches. The government/Highland Council/agencies need to be persuaded that this is a viable way forward and that it merits central funding reflecting their national status. At the same time there needs to be a collective desire by the NSA's communities to make it work<sup>57</sup>. The success of the Nevis Partnership's bid for the first round of a Landscape Partnership Scheme will be an important pre-cursor for a wider landscape management approach.

Enhanced NSA management could be delivered by:

- existing partnerships engaging with other community interests within the NSA, recognising the need to work together for mutual benefit, initially through informal networks or other fora;
- raising awareness of the designation, through existing websites, showing how it might help support the approach;
- setting up a website/link for gathering & storing data including reports, policies, etc;
- establishing a Memorandum of Understanding/Co-operation between key community companies, NGOs and friends groups e.g. Nevis Partnership, Friends of Nevis, Glencoe/Glen Etive Community Company, Kinlochleven Community Trust, National Trust for Scotland (NTS), etc;
- securing funding to run a series of community events and special qualities workshops leading to the development of an NSA vision/issues statement;

<sup>57</sup> See responses to SNH's consultation on the document 'Enhancing our Care of Scotland's Landscapes',

<http://www.scotlink.org/files/policy/ConsultationResponses/LINKItfConsultNatScenArea06.pdf> and <http://www.jmt.org/consultation-responses-national-scenic-area.asp>

- establishing a standing forum/consultative committee and core steering group, in order to lobby Government and demonstrate commitment;
- securing funding to carry out a NSA-wide Landscape Character Assessment, potentially reviewing the boundary;
- initiating a 'home-grown' NSA management strategy in draft form based on existing models, using existing skills;
- persuading Scottish Government through SNH/Highland Council to support proactive management of selected NSAs, based on pilots previously carried out in Wester Ross and Ayrshire;
- appointing a dedicated NSA Officer through funding drawn from Scottish Regional Development Programme (SRDP) to build on and develop the draft management strategy and action plan, work with communities and organisations, and deliver project work;
- extending the work of the Nevis Partnership's Landscape Partnership Scheme over a wider area, and expanding its network of partners and stakeholders;
- empowering local communities to participate in the management of the NSA, and to engage in socio-economic activity that would promote sustainable development linked to the protected area; and
- seeking approval of the Management Plan as Supplementary Planning Guidance by HC.

### **How might it function?**

- A core body of HC/Argyll & Bute politicians is established, with SNH acting as observers.
- The core body is advised by a stakeholder advisory forum with a membership drawn from organisations such as Forestry Commission Scotland, National Farmers' Union, National Trust for Scotland, landowners, community councils, tourism and OCUK.
- Appoint an NSA officer.
- Adopt a non-statutory consultation approach on planning matters.

### **Model 2 – a community partnership or initiative - an enterprise, or environmental enhancement and management scheme centred on a cluster of communities**

This model is for a community-based partnership or initiative with a clearly focused aim. It would be firmly based in the community, with clearly defined outputs, a coordinating dedicated project officer, and with a finite duration. Critically, it would have an integrated social, economic and environmental focus, driven by community and landscape need. Funding would be sourced from a variety of public and private sector donors attracted by a project with clearly identified sustainable development outcomes.

#### **What do we mean?**

By 'partnership' we mean a formal relationship between interested parties that is core funded and whose purpose is to manage a resource (human, environmental and/or economic) on a long-term basis, usually through prioritising, funding and implementing projects.

By 'initiative' we mean a relatively short to medium term relationship between interested parties established for the purpose of accomplishing a specific task based on an identified need.

It is critical not to confuse the two, but they are not mutually exclusive. The latter may be valuable as a way in to establishing the former, especially where there might be some uncertainty about the ability of interested people to sustain a partnership. At the same time, partnerships sustain themselves through project management.

There are many examples of partnerships and projects, ranging from relatively small scale, short term and informal initiatives taken up by citizens to address immediate priorities, to large scale, complex, long term, public-private-voluntary partnerships. There are various partnerships, trusts and community companies in the NSA.

## Examples

Sunart Oaklands Initiative; Glen Etive and Glencoe Community Company; Peak National Park 'Two Villages Two Valleys' Initiative; Nevis Partnership; Cambrian Mountains Initiative; OCUK; South Wales Valleys Regional Park Strategy; Sulwath Connections Landscape Partnership.



## Chapter 6

### Developing this model

Assuming that the focus is on the NSA a **community partnership** can be developed by:

- making initial contacts through informal discussions leading to joint meetings of interested parties held to explore issues and find ways forward;
- agreeing the need to establish a standing organisation of parties with a common interest;
- formalising the relationship by establishing a trust or company through the Office of the Scottish Charity Register (OSCR) or Companies House; and
- the partnership identifying specific projects that require collaborative effort/funding e.g. woodland regeneration, path restoration, cycleway development, and interpretation at a landscape level.

The kind of partnerships relevant to this study are typically established to:

- develop a rolling programme of projects over a medium term;
- carry out longer-term monitoring and maintenance programmes;
- formulate a common voice on policies and proposals, reinforcing their identity beyond practical tasks; and
- carry out programmes of awareness raising and education.

**Community initiatives** might be established in response to funding agency agendas or institutional policies or initiatives. They are usually identified and funded by established partnerships, or come about through informal contacts of interested groups who formalise their arrangements specifically for the purpose of achieving a set of tasks.

Initiating projects typically require the parties to:

- define their goals;
- identify time, costs and resources (including expertise) available;
- carry out a detailed management scheme with targets and success indicators;
- agree a programme of work; and
- define the end point and its celebration.

In this necessarily limited scenario, we describe the development of a formal partnership by initiating a specific project as a pilot.

- Set up a forum for communicating ideas, identifying needs, categorising them as predominantly social, economic or environmental themes, identifying projects that can address the needs and reconciling them so that they deliver as far as possible on either of the other two themes.

- Identify potential sources of funding.
- Agree on a project that would meet the needs of the community and balance the interests of sustainable economic development and environmental conservation.
- Establish a formal collaboration between representatives of the community, other relevant organisations, and Highland Council to seek funding and administer the project. Constitute the collaboration (registered charity, limited company, or other administrative body), with a steering board and consultative group.
- Develop a coherent project plan with clear outputs and outcomes.
- Appoint a project officer for the period of the project.
- Celebrate the project's conclusion.
- Evaluate the project's success and consider cementing or extending the relationship, by seeking a formal partnership.

### How might it function?

- A board of directors nominated by funders and community interests meets every three months to review progress and advise on funding and logistics.
- A Project officer works on day-to-day management, in contact with the steering group chair.
- Members as volunteers carry out implementation, acting as a reference group to the steering group and meeting every six months.

## Model 3 – Biosphere Reserve

A biosphere reserve (or simply biosphere) is a non-statutory accreditation. A biosphere is recognised by UNESCO as an area that meets certain standards of integrated working to protect biodiversity and to address the social and economic needs of people who live or work in or near, and depend on, the natural resources of that area. The point of biosphere reserves is that they encourage people to come together under the common purpose of sustainable development.

### What do we mean?

A biosphere reserve has three functions:

- **Conservation** – conserving landscapes, ecosystems, species and genetic variety
- **Development** – encouraging economic development that is sustainable
- **Research and monitoring** – providing support for research, monitoring, education and information exchange

Whilst they have no formal authority or legislative/regulatory powers, biospheres (and certainly sites within them) may be a material planning consideration<sup>58</sup>. In many parts of the world, parts of biospheres are also IUCN category II and V national parks<sup>59</sup>, so the two are not necessarily mutually exclusive. They would not necessarily attract state funding in the case of Scotland, though they may attract funding for specific projects or programmes of work.

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<sup>58</sup> See Devon CC Waste Local Plan 2006 para. 7.3.2.4

<sup>59</sup> For example, Kosciuszko NP, Fitzgerald River NP Australia; Iroise NP France; Berchtesgaden Alps, Germany; Waterton Lakes, Canada

Biospheres need to be large enough to accommodate a substantial core zone and buffer/transition zones, and be able to serve the above three functions. The NSA at 90,334 Ha is theoretically large enough (Dyfi Biosphere is 81,883 Ha), but it is likely to be more viable at a larger scale, given the relative dispersal of its communities. East Lochaber may be a more appropriate area, using the catchments of the rivers Coe, Spean and Leven.

It should be noted that appropriate forms of recreation are acceptable in Biospheres, and therefore the term 'Biosphere Recreation Area' or 'Biosphere Recreation Reserve' is neither necessary, nor would it be acceptable to UNESCO.

### Some Examples

North Devon Biosphere, Dyfi Biosphere, Galloway and South Ayrshire Biosphere development process; Wester Ross BR feasibility.



### Section 6

### Developing this model

A Biosphere Reserve can be developed by:

- further investigation of the principle including discussions with relevant institutions e.g. UHI, UNESCO UK Committee, HC;
- holding meetings and events at which the concept can be discussed – support for the concept by sufficient cross-sectoral interests – business, voluntary sector, communities, NGOs, education and research, conservation, forestry, agriculture, recreation & access, land managers/owners;
- seeking HC and SNH interest in the principle perhaps to fund a one-off promotional event;
- seeking an influential champion of the concept to support its promotion;
- identifying funds to initiate further studies, for example an LCA, to help identify potential core and buffer zones;
- electing a core steering group and membership/consultative forum to progress the idea;
- appointing a support officer, perhaps as a SNH/HC secondment, to provide technical advice/secretariat;
- securing LEADER funding for 2 to 3-year development stage;
- developing a Biosphere Charter;
- appointing a project manager, possibly as an extension of NSA officer role;
- conducting a wider dissemination/public engagement/awareness programme and establish a website and links;
- identifying 'winners'; projects and partnerships that demonstrate the biosphere principles;
- drafting a management strategy with agreed vision, principles, map, issues and actions; and
- applying through the ministry for accreditation. UNESCO then determines and lists the Biosphere Reserve.

### How might it function?

- A Biosphere Partnership Board (BPB) provides strategic direction. The partnership may be drawn from a wider constituency than any other model with representatives from Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA), NTS, John Muir Trust (JMT), Community Companies, HC, Argyll & Bute Council, SNH, Chamber of Commerce,

Landowners, voluntary and interest groups, and the education sector (some as observers). The partnership should meet every three months.

- Funding is sought from partners for projects that deliver multiple benefits and address management strategy issues, but a key driver is to identify significant sources of support, such as through Heritage Lottery Fund or SRDP.
- The wider membership acts as a consultative forum, involving communities, business, tourism, academic/research, education, and marketing. The wider forum meets every six months, or annually.
- An Officer Working Group provides operational oversight.
- Thematic groups develop their own initiatives and seek endorsement/support from BPB, identify funding sources for project development.
- Initiatives might include:
  - Food/fuel supply chains
  - Branding/marketing for activity/accommodation
  - Research partnerships and education
  - Carbon reduction schemes
- A Biosphere Foundation, such as Friends of the BR, should be established as a charitable community company to trade on the biosphere brand.
- Communication is maintained via website/sub-groups/social networks and events.

## Model 4 - National Park

In Scotland, a national park is determined and designated by the Scottish Government, which also establishes the national park authority and determines its responsibilities. Scotland currently has two national parks – Cairngorms and Loch Lomond and the Trossachs. There are currently no plans to increase that number.

### What do we mean?

Under the National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000 Section 9, the general purpose of a national park authority is to ensure that the national park aims are collectively achieved in relation to the national park in a coordinated way. It may have full planning powers and may therefore produce its own development plan for managing development. It must also produce a statutory park-wide management plan.

### Some Case Studies

Cairngorms National Park planning enforcement protocol and related documents; Mourne Heritage Trust and Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) National Park proposal/process; South Downs NP designation process; Northumberland & Peak NPs; Defra National Park Governance Review 2010.



### Section 6

### Developing this model

A National Park would be developed by:

- an existing partnership investigating this model further by consulting with relevant bodies such as SNH, Ministries, community bodies, Chambers of Commerce, local authorities, Cairngorm National Park and Trossachs and Loch Lomond National Park, sample of English/Welsh NPs, UK IUCN;

- UHI, or similar body, undertaking a full feasibility study, testing acceptability of the concept and considering a spatial scoping that prioritises needs and how the designation can help to address them;
- disseminating and persuading partners of the justification for a national park;
- partners developing an agreed position, vision and management principles for a national park, securing a memorandum of understanding within the partnership to promote the concept in line with the principles and establishing a standing forum or committee;
- partners lobbying and securing agreement from constituent local authorities;
- securing agreement in principle to lobby the Scottish Parliament, securing an agreement to consider Nevis and Glen Coe as a candidate national park 'when the conditions are right' and promoting it as a priority candidate;
- raising awareness of the need, showing how designation will address priority concerns, through media and web links, promoting debate and taking opportunities at community events to raise issues;
- securing funds to carry out a Landscape Character Assessment of the proposed area to identify and confirm boundaries;
- the Scottish Government agreeing to designate under the 2000 Act and the process of notification, inquiry and designation confirmed; and
- the national park authority being established with or without full planning powers, producing a management plan/development plan and securing core funding.

### **How might it function?**

- The constitution and function of a Scottish national park is set out in legislation. Scottish national parks are managed by an autonomous park authority. The Scottish Government decides how many members the authority will have but it can be no more than 25. At least one fifth of those members will be directly elected to the authority and they must live in a ward wholly or partly within the national park. No person may be appointed as a directly appointed member unless the person appears to the Scottish Ministers to have knowledge or experience relevant to the functions of the National Park Authority or the national park. The remaining members are all appointed by the Scottish Ministers, with half of these members being appointed on the nomination of the local authorities specified in the designation order.
- The Loch Lomond and The Trossachs NP has 17 members: five local members directly elected by a postal ballot for a period of four years; six members appointed by Scottish Ministers; and six members appointed by Scottish Ministers following nomination by the four Local Authorities within the national park boundaries.
- The Cairngorms NP has 19 members: five local members; seven members appointed by Scottish Ministers; and seven members appointed by Scottish Ministers following nomination by the five Local Authorities within the national park boundaries.
- The general purpose of a National Park Authority is to ensure that the national park aims are collectively achieved in a co-ordinated way. The park authority will produce a park-wide statutory management plan. The Authority has the general powers and functions as set out in the legislation. Scottish Ministers decide on the scope of the planning functions and any other specific functions they deem appropriate. It is pertinent that different arrangements operate within the two Scottish National Parks and there are further possible options.

- If the NP Authority is a planning authority for its area or a part of its area, it will produce a local development plan. In the case of a Lochaber NP, planning might be acquired or delegated, shared through a protocol, or retained by HC.
- Engagement with park communities is a central function. Most parks create forums and working groups based on geographical areas or topics, to provide them with feedback on management plan development.
- None of the above models is precluded by national park designation. For example, lottery funded landscape partnership schemes are in process in the Lake District (Windermere and Bassenthwaite) and the Peak District (Moors for the Future); NSAs have been retained in the two Scottish NPs; and Dyfi Biosphere includes part of Snowdonia NP.



**Section 8**

**Choosing a boundary for each management model**

Each integrated management model has the potential to operate at different scales. For example, a community initiative could operate within a cluster of communities with similar needs and aspirations, while a designated protected area, such as a national park, could embrace a range of landscapes with a strong cultural identity over a wide area. Defining a boundary for any model is fraught with difficulties. A general list of guiding principles is presented in **Appendices, Section 9**. The table below presents criteria that would help to select a boundary for each model.



**Table 1 – Integrated Management models for Nevis and Glencoe**

Model		Boundary selection criteria
1	<p><b>Enhanced NSA Management</b> A discrete, cohesive and recognisable landscape</p>	<p><b>Boundary is already established</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A mosaic of landscapes including river valley catchment and mountain massif.</li> <li>• A cluster of communities with identified social, economic and environmental requirements</li> <li>• Focus on landscape conservation, appropriate development and agri-environment support</li> </ul>
2	<p><b>Community Initiative</b> A cluster of discrete communities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An area with common needs and aspirations</li> <li>• An area with grassroots level community initiative</li> <li>• Focus on social, economic and environmental outputs at the community level</li> </ul>
3	<p><b>Biosphere Reserve</b> A cohesive, catchment scale landscape</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Boundary is to reflect the physical characteristics of the natural environment - the area must be a living and working ecosystem</li> <li>• Area defined by a mosaic of landscapes at a catchment, or wider, scale, with recognisable homogeneity of ecological character</li> <li>• Core areas with buffer and transition zones</li> <li>• Focus on diversity of activity consistent with conservation objectives and sustainable development</li> </ul>
4	<p><b>National Park</b> An area of recognisable regional identity</p>	<p><b>Criteria laid down by statute</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The area must be of outstanding national importance because of its natural heritage or the combination of its natural and cultural heritage</li> <li>• The area must have a distinctive character and a coherent identity</li> <li>• Designation must meet the special needs of the area and would be the best means of ensuring that National Park aims are collectively achieved in relation to the area in a co-ordinated way</li> </ul>

## Key issues that could be addressed through integrated management

The table below lists the **ten key issues** identified in Chapter 4 that could be addressed by integrating management activity at different scales. Against each issue is commentary on how each issue can be addressed by integrated management and the effectiveness of each model.

**Table 2 – Key issues for integrated management**

Issues that could be addressed through integrated management	How integrated management might address the issues	The models compared
<b>Communication.</b> Poor communication between communities; and between communities and organisations and a lack of trust, mutual cooperation and active community participation in the future management of the area.	Integrated management requires coordination. The management partnerships will encourage consultation and involvement.	Communication is likely to be strongest at the community initiative level. The NSA and biosphere reserve options will find effective communication challenging and will depend on the willingness of parties to work together. In a national park this will be institutionalised.
<b>Strategic vision.</b> There is no overall vision or management strategy to address the integrated management of Nevis and Glen Coe.	Integrated management requires a long-term sustainable management strategy. Such a strategy would be framed by a vision supported by social/economic/environmental aims and objectives.	The management strategy for an NSA is likely to rely on wider regional policies and strategies. A biosphere reserve may offer a robust, co-ordinated strategy but will rely on external funds to realise the objectives. In a national park, the vision will lie within a statutory management plan. The community initiative is less likely to develop a strong strategic vision as the priorities will be local.
<b>Landscape scale management coordination.</b> There is no strategic approach to landscape management and no consistent description of landscape character outside the Nevis area.	Integrated management breaks down professional barriers. Data and expertise is shared, allowing the preparation of integrated landscape scale management strategy/guidelines.	Each option will require an integrated landscape scale management strategy or guidelines. Only a national park plan will be statutory but the local authorities can choose to recognise / adopt the plans from the other options.
<b>Habitat conservation.</b> No coordinated approach to habitat management and conservation.	Integrated management can coordinate landscape and habitat management work, through an integrated strategy, funding support and advisory work.	At the community or NSA level this may be project-based and funded; practical and relatively short term; and subject to higher-level policies or programmes. In a biosphere reserve or national park this will be strategic and based on regional or national policy and incentives.
<b>Identity.</b> The lack of an 'identity' for Nevis and Glen Coe which can capture its character and define its	Integrated management can create a clear regional identity, to support funding applications, activities and niche marketing.	Initiatives can be taken in each option. Local markets and branding are likely in the community initiative whilst the other options will be

profile with the community.		stronger in the regional and national context.
<b>Planning.</b> The planning service and planning decisions are perceived to be remote from the Fort William area.	Integrated management can win influence within the planning processes. It may become a part of the planning process (a planning authority or statutory consultee).	A national park authority is likely to have the greatest effect, either as the planning authority or as a statutory consultee. Non-statutory advice from the NSA or biosphere reserve bodies will depend on a robust, co-ordinated position based on sound understanding of planning. The community initiative is likely to have only a limited impact.
<b>Economic activity.</b> The relative fragility, low wage and seasonal nature of employment.	Integrated management can focus economic development activity on a clear area 'identity' with aims to seek long-term employment opportunities.	Impact within the NSA option is likely to be weak. The community initiative could be effective if there are highly motivated self-help groups with agency support. A biosphere reserve may be a key driver for integration between statutory and non-statutory interests. In a national park this will reflect the policy and legal instruments defining the area and include economic development activity.
<b>Sustainable tourism.</b> Although OCUK coordinates tourism marketing for Lochaber there is fragmentation, low investment and lack of coordination of tourism marketing and enterprise.	Integrated management can coordinate tourism marketing through an integrated strategy with clear aims and complementary activities.	Strategic funding for tourism initiatives is most likely to occur in a biosphere reserve or national park. Individual providers in either the NSA or community option will need incentives to co-operate rather than compete.
<b>Lack of continuity of funding.</b> Short term funding of economic, environmental and community initiatives.	Integrated management may secure long term funding to support projects, sustain community activity and develop habitat and landscape conservation.	Only a national park has guaranteed funding but the level may not be sufficient to deal with all the issues. The NSA should attract government support. A biosphere reserve can be an effective tool for attracting funding. The community initiative would rely on local authority and SNH support.
<b>Investment in services.</b> The overall lack of significant investment in infrastructure and local services	Integrated management may attract significant investment in major infrastructure enhancement through an integrated strategy with clear aims and complementary activities.	Only a national park authority can expect success in this area. The other options would require the goodwill of other agencies to make an impact.

## Summary of the relationships between the key issues and the models

This table summarises the relationships between the **ten key issues** and the four potential integrated management models. The impact of each model on an issue is indicated by a coloured box. The darker colour indicates a significant impact.

**Table 3 – Summary of relationships between the key issues and models**

Issues that can be addressed through integrated management	Models									
	Community Initiative	Enhanced NSA Management	Biosphere Reserve	National Park						
Communication										
Strategic vision										
Management coordination										
Habitat conservation										
Identity										
Sustainable tourism										
Economic activity										
Planning										
Funding										
Investment in services										
<p><b>Key</b></p> <table style="display: inline-table; vertical-align: middle;"> <tr> <td style="width: 20px; height: 15px; background-color: #ffffff;"></td> <td>No impact on the issue</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="width: 20px; height: 15px; background-color: #d9e1f2;"></td> <td>Some impact on the issue</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="width: 20px; height: 15px; background-color: #4f81bd;"></td> <td>Significant impact on the issue</td> </tr> </table>						No impact on the issue		Some impact on the issue		Significant impact on the issue
	No impact on the issue									
	Some impact on the issue									
	Significant impact on the issue									

## Advantages and disadvantages of Integrated Management options

Each of the integrated management models has its advantages and disadvantages. Each has its benefits for different purposes, but there are distinct disadvantages that can constrain its application. Here are some social, economic and environmental advantages and disadvantages for each option.

### Social

Option	Advantages	Disadvantages
<b>Enhanced NSA management</b>		NSA does not link into social structure
<b>Community initiative</b>	Instigated and developed wholly within the community	Relies on a strong lead from volunteers in the community
<b>Biosphere reserve</b>	Opportunity for people to come	Not well known as a management concept

	<p>together</p> <p>Bottom up - relies on creativity &amp; drive of people</p> <p>Has a socio/economic element as one of its core purposes</p> <p>Engages the Scottish Government, by requiring its support</p>	<p>Non-statutory designation/body</p> <p>May be seen by some as too conservation-led, by others as too development-led</p> <p>Relies on creativity &amp; drive of people</p> <p>Needs a lot of work to generate enthusiasm</p> <p>Lead in time and dependence on UNESCO application</p>
<b>National park</b>	<p>Statutory designation</p> <p>Represents both local and national interests</p> <p>Can attract international interest</p> <p>Thinking is generally joined up</p>	<p>Seen as not prioritising community well-being</p> <p>Seen as another layer of bureaucracy</p> <p>Seen as overly restrictive</p> <p>Seen as distant from its constituents</p> <p>Top-down - seen as 'imposed' on people</p> <p>No current political will</p> <p>Lead in time</p>

## Economic

Option	Advantages	Disadvantages
<b>Enhanced NSA management</b>	<p>Potentially flexible management options</p>	<p>No dedicated management system</p> <p>Associated with a negative, protectionist, approach to development management</p> <p>Has hitherto lacked any reference to recreation/access</p> <p>No dedicated secure funding</p> <p>No economic drivers unless developed through a management strategy</p>
<b>Community initiative</b>	<p>Funding and expenditure decided within the community</p> <p>Established as a charity which can attract a wider range of public sector donors than can statutory bodies</p>	<p>Short term funding</p> <p>Uncertainty of funding</p> <p>Needs strong Unique Selling Point to attract significant donors</p>
<b>Biosphere reserve</b>	<p>Allows groups/communities to develop ideas &amp; enterprises</p> <p>Strong brand</p> <p>Of global interest</p>	<p>May lack a clear strategy - no obvious focus</p> <p>May be seen as a compromise with no real teeth</p> <p>Limited funding</p> <p>Of limited value in planning terms</p>
<b>National park</b>	<p>Planning powers</p> <p>Secure long-term funding</p> <p>Strong image</p> <p>Can attract international interest</p> <p>Can influence infrastructural development on the back of tourism</p> <p>Would enhance Lochaber's competitiveness in Scotland and the UK.</p>	<p>Seen as too supportive of conservation/recreation interests</p> <p>May promote a 'two-tier' countryside</p> <p>May constrain development of SMEs/enterprises</p> <p>May be seen as too expensive and of limited management effectiveness</p>

## Environmental

Option	Advantages	Disadvantages
<b>Enhanced NSA management</b>	Uses existing designation and boundary as its base Has the potential to evolve into a proactive management system along AONB lines Opportunity for boundary reviews to extend protection to a larger area	
<b>Community initiative</b>	Community led, so has potential for long term community interest beyond the life of the project	Without coordination they may be too small to make a significant difference to the environment in the long term
<b>Biosphere reserve</b>	Flexible in management terms – governance reflects needs of the area Can integrate planning and land-use management	
<b>National park</b>	Focused aim - conservation first - sends out a clear message Can integrate planning and land-use management	

## 7 Recommended approach



## 7 Recommended approach

The brief asks for a preferred option for the management area. This option should be informed by the consultation process and should represent the best means of achieving a more integrated approach to match the needs, and constraints, of consultees.

The consultation revealed some strong opinions, not just about desired approaches to management, but also about how the **process** should be managed. The means of reaching the end point of that process – a decision on the best form of governance – is equally as important as the end point itself. Many consultees stressed that the process should be ‘bottom up’, firmly based in the community, with decisions made by consensus.

The recommended option needs stakeholder ‘buy-in’ in order to achieve the long-term aim of conserving the qualities of the area’s landscape, its cultural and historic heritage, and of managing the use of the area and its natural resources in a sustainable way for the present and for future generations. It is therefore critical that stakeholders to this process subscribe to a vision that will achieve this aim.

Additional local resources are needed, though, for stakeholders to collectively guide its delivery and ensure that a management system is chosen that is most **relevant** for the area, and most **appropriate** for the range of stakeholders whose support will be needed to make it work. There is a need to nurture community enthusiasm and energy whilst ensuring focused and effective action. In time, community champions will take a lead but initially someone needs to be given the task.

### Recommendation

#### A staged approach



The recommendation is to adopt a **staged approach** to achieving a more integrated management. Three stages are envisaged, starting with the management of the designated landscape and finishing with a Biosphere Reserve. Whilst the stages should theoretically run in sequence, in practice there will be overlap in their activities. A key feature of the approach is a strong participation by stakeholders who can assess progress and determine at any time the nature of the next stage.

Whereas in the past, successful community initiatives have failed to evolve through a lack of sustained funding and management, in this scenario such initiatives will be set in the context of a core funded dedicated team to maintain support, to build on learning from community initiatives and to maintain direction.

## The stages

### Stage 1– Enhanced NSA management

This stage involves establishing a management project based on the Ben Nevis and Glen Coe NSA. Building on the experiences of Dumfries and Galloway Council in its positive approaches to the management of the three NSAs in its area, this stage will involve preparing a management plan for the NSA, and delivering a programme of environmental management works for the benefit of the landscape and the community. The initiative will build on the Scottish Government's desire to bring the NSAs under management and secure support for community development within the surrounding area.

#### Justification for NSA management as the first stage

##### Satisfies six key issues for integrated management

This option has the potential to tackle **communication** by bringing communities and organisations together, **landscape scale management coordination** by preparing and implementing management guidelines, **habitat conservation** by enhancing key habitats, **branding/identity** by providing a sense of identity in its operation, by having the potential to gain local determination of **planning** by developing planning protocols, and increases opportunities for **strategic vision** by preparing a long term sustainable management strategy with social, economic and environmental vision and objectives.

##### Existing designation

The NSA is already designated. It needs no further designations. It is an established entity and its special qualities have been defined by SNH. There is existing SG policy to enhance the management of NSAs.

##### Funding

There is opportunity for funding by SG and to seek funding from other sources.

### Stage 2– Community initiative

As a second stage in the process a community-based initiative adds a crucial element to NSA management of social and economic development that is determined and governed largely by the community itself. It would be firmly based on community need and bring people together to find solutions that fit their requirements. The consultation responses suggest that a project based on aspects of community enterprise, sustainable tourism, community landscape enhancement or recreation management would be most desired by the community. The outputs of a community initiative would help in the development of the next stage.

#### Justification for a community initiative as the second stage

##### Continuity with the first stage

The approach builds heavily on the outputs and outcomes of the first stage, maintaining strong stakeholder participation and seeking mutually beneficial solutions to local issues. It is a logical next step in enhanced integrated management.

##### Satisfies two further key issues for integrated management

This stage introduces **economic activity** by targeting sustainable development, and **sustainable tourism** by helping tourism providers.

### **Achieving wide 'buy-in' from the community**

Any solution for integrated management will only succeed with significant buy-in from the communities it affects. With this approach the community itself determines the approach that is most appropriate for its needs, and considers the next stages in order to fulfil its future requirements.

### **Empowering the community**

Many of the communities consulted during the course of this study were highly organised and some had their own marketing organisations. The initiative would work closely with communities to seek solutions, building confidence and capacity for decision-making and for determining the next stages. It would also share experiences between communities and encourage mutual support and cooperation.

### **Attracting funding**

Building upon the impetus of stage 1, a community-led exercise has an opportunity to attract funding from a wide range of sources.

## **Stage 3 – Biosphere reserve**

Biosphere reserve, as the final stage in the process, is an opportunity to build on the achievements of enhanced management of the NSA and the outputs of the community initiative, and applying them to a larger area recognised as a cohesive, catchment scale landscape. Although biosphere reserve is not a well-understood concept its application here satisfies many of the requirements for Integrated Management. As the biosphere reserve accreditation process is an inherently 'bottom up' exercise it builds on the approaches used during stages 1 and 2, and applies it to a potentially wider area.

### **Justification for biosphere reserve as the final stage**

#### **Continuity with the first stage**

The approach builds heavily on the outputs and outcomes of the first stage, maintaining stakeholder participation and a strong focus on landscape and habitat management.

#### **Satisfies one further issue for integrated management**

Building on the issues tackled in Stages 1 and 2, this stage provides opportunity for developing longer term funding to support projects and sustain community activity from a range of sources including the EU. The biosphere reserve identity would provide funding applications with a clear set of purposes and objectives and a sense of long-term direction for management.

#### **Identity**

The biosphere reserve status would provide the area with an identity that is different from other existing protected area designations and clearly identifies it as an area of international importance recognised by UNESCO. As a brand, the biosphere reserve accolade offers an identity for local enterprises that are based on food, tourism, culture and heritage. The biosphere reserve identity would also make the most of the positive aspects of the NSA, which it should include within its boundary.

#### **No formal authority**

Biosphere reserves have no formal authority and no formal legislative or regulatory power. This is, of course a limitation, in that it lacks legislative governance powers or regulatory authority, but it is also a great strength. Biosphere reserves are, by their nature, politically neutral, independent and open forums.

### **Protection**

The Biosphere Reserve accolade carries no protection in itself, but it focuses partner organisations to fulfil three complementary functions – conservation, development and monitoring/research. Appropriate forms of recreation are acceptable and are a crucial part of a Biosphere's role of enhancing people's livelihoods and ensuring environmental sustainability. These functions should operate over three interrelated zones – a legally protected core area (National Nature Reserves, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, the NSA, other NSAs, etc), surrounding buffer zones and an outer transition zone.

### **Inclusion**

The process of recognising a biosphere reserve is, of necessity, a 'bottom up' approach. The process is community based and locally driven, with an aim to find social, economic and environmental benefits through consensus.

### **Achievability**

Although the process to gain recognition as a biosphere reserve is complex, involving consultation, defining boundaries, preparing a justification and application to UNESCO, it is a much simpler process than other designations, such as for a national park. As the Scottish Government has made it clear it has no plans for further national park designations in the foreseeable future the biosphere reserve option would be an effective way of focusing communities and organisations on finding solutions to integrating management activity.

## **Why not a national park?**

It was clear during the consultation exercise that many people presumed that the recommendation of this study would be for a new national park, irrespective of their views. Calls for a national park have been made over many years and the ensuing debates have been vigorous and contentious. The two reasons for not recommending a national park as a means of securing the integrated management of the Ben Nevis and Glen Coe area are set out below.

Firstly, during the consultation there was no clear consensus of support for the creation of a national park. Even some of those who supported the national park concept added qualifiers such as being unable to think of any other model that would lead to coordinated management or that it was the only model that guaranteed funding. A few people were enthusiastic about a national park, but most people we consulted were equivocal or cautious. Very few national parks in the UK have been created with 100% local support but all have had a strong supportive local base. We believe that there is currently insufficient support for a national park proposal to be both realistic and achievable and that the recommendations we have made above would have far greater chances of success.

Secondly, having studied the area in some detail, and considered the existing Scottish national parks, it was clear that the study area was an inappropriate starting point. The legislation sets out a number of conditions to be met before a designation order is made, one of which is that the area must have a distinctive character and a coherent identity. The landscape character assessment study, though limited in scale, showed that the boundaries of a coherent area lay well beyond the boundaries set by the brief. Ben Nevis and Glen Coe are of the highest landscape and recreational quality. Likewise the area has a similar range of heritage, recreational management and community development needs to Scotland's existing national parks. However, the area is a part of a larger landscape character area and so in itself does not justify national park status, nor may it be seen as a priority for Scotland's next national park compared to other areas. It is possible that an area that not only included the peaks and cultural heritage of Ben Nevis and Glen Coe but also the grandeur of the coast and sea would present a significant addition to the national park experience. There would need to be further work to establish the most appropriate study area and it is beyond the scope of this study.

## 8 Preferred option



Glen Nevis *RKE*

## 8 Preferred option - governance process and indicative costs

The table below shows the pathway for the recommended option, together with suggested actions for each part of the governance, and indicative costs for establishing and running the initiative. Given the elastic nature of community projects it is difficult to provide costs for this element of the process, but indicative costs are included. Costs for this type of project range widely; for example, Nevis Partnership’s successful application to HLF Landscape Partnership for 49% of £4M for identified projects. The South Pennines Watershed Landscape Project was costed at £1,878,000; Applecross Landscape at £999,000; and Sulwath Connections at £3.4 million. A joint project such as a 'Mountains to the Sea' landscape project based on ecosystem enhancement might cost up to £3 million.



A more detailed assessment of types of governance is provided in the Appendices.

**Table – Governance process**

Item	Governance	Actions	Cost Yr 1	Cost Yr 2	Cost Yr 3	Cost Yr 4	Cost Yr 5	Achievement
<b>Stage 1 – Enhanced NSA Management</b>								
1	<b>Towards NSA Partnership, with fully constituted status</b>	Initial stakeholder event - 'let's make it work' - awareness raising - examples from elsewhere - costs - potential benefits - vision	£5,000 <i>Assume event hosted by HC/SNH Consultant costs</i>					Understanding of potential for NSAs Agreement in principle that NSA is worth pursuing Champions committed to the cause Identify working group to progress
		Engage community and other stakeholders in a programme of consultation and participation - series of workshops	£7,000 <i>Consultancy + stakeholder expenses</i>					Wider understanding of NSA potential Understanding of the need for positive management Broad consensus from community
		Appoint project officer to co-ordinate initial process	£45,000 <i>Wage + office and other costs</i>					Focus on bringing stakeholders together, data gathering, publicity, converging priorities/agendas Secretariat

Item	Governance	Actions	Cost Yr 1	Cost Yr 2	Cost Yr 3	Cost Yr 4	Cost Yr 5	Achievement
		NSA website/exhibition/ media management/presentations - 'why we need it to work' Publicise, evangelise, raise awareness, champion	£30,000 <i>Technical inputs/design Marketing/media release/displays</i>					Understanding of NSA values - why it is special - potential tourism marketing tool Broad consensus from community
		Database - historic land use, monuments, biodiversity, geology, social data etc etc	£5,000 <i>Gathering data/inputting into system - assume community participation</i>					Accessible database linked to HC/SG sites
		Social/economic impact of designation		£20,000 <i>Consultancy</i>				Understanding of costs and benefits of NSA management including 'do nothing' option
		LCA of defined boundary and surroundings - include trends, threats etc to quality/character		£30,000 <i>Consultancy</i>				LCA could be scoped beyond LCA boundary to raise potential for BR definition later (see below) Understanding of landscape character and special qualities
		Formal management group meetings - topic working groups to identify basis for management strategy		£4,800 <i>Officer and stakeholder costs</i> £10,000 <i>Secretariat/ communication etc (x% of project officer time)</i>	£4,800 <i>Officer and stakeholder costs</i> £10,000 <i>Secretariat/ communication etc (x% of project officer time)</i>			Formal 'buy in' by SG/HC - agreement to support process - in principle support for core support funding Management strategy criteria identified
		Management strategy & action -consulted, prioritised, time-scaled and costed		£45,000 <i>Consultancy</i>				Broad buy-in to vision, ways forward, priorities, costs and co-ordinated actions - convergence of

Item	Governance	Actions	Cost Yr 1	Cost Yr 2	Cost Yr 3	Cost Yr 4	Cost Yr 5	Achievement
								funder support for projects
2	Dedicated NSA Officer	Appoint dedicated NSA officer		£50,000 <i>Wage + office and other costs</i>	£50,000 <i>Wage + office and other costs</i>			Capacity to co-ordinate action, mediate, build success and confidence, maintain momentum, lobby on behalf of group etc
		Secure a delivery mechanism - agree governance for managing implementation Seek funds for implementation			£50,000 <i>average per project identified</i>			Robust governance structure - communication hub/forum - regular contact and trust between stakeholders - synergies promote cost effective and positive management Capacity to lobby effectively for significant funds for discrete projects
<b>Total costs for NSA Management</b>			<b>£92,000</b>	<b>£159,800</b>	<b>£64,800 + £50,000 per project</b> →			
<b>Stage 2 – Community Initiative</b>								
1	Dedicated Community Development Officer	Appoint dedicated officer		£40,000 <i>Wage + office and other costs</i>	£40,000 <i>Wage + office and other costs</i>	£40,000 <i>Wage + office and other costs</i>		Community Development Officer appointed
		Engage community and other stakeholders in a programme of consultation and participation		<i>In core costs</i>	<i>In core costs</i>	<i>In core costs</i>		Media campaign / awareness started. Website established Public engagement establishes level of support
		Seek funding for establishment of project – Leader, HC, trusts, etc		£50-100,000 <i>Project costs</i>	£50-100,000 <i>Project costs</i>	£50-100,000 <i>Project costs</i>		Funding secured for 3 years
	Establish limited company	Seek incorporation as a limited company		<i>In core costs</i>				Limited company status achieved
<b>Total costs for Community Initiative</b>				<i>Up to £140,000</i>	<i>Up to £140,000</i>	<i>Up to £140,000</i>		
<b>Stage 3 – Biosphere Reserve</b>								

Item	Governance	Actions	Cost Yr 1	Cost Yr 2	Cost Yr 3	Cost Yr 4	Cost Yr 5	Achievement
1	<b>Biosphere Reserve Partnership, with fully constituted status</b>	Establish a BR Partnership with a membership representing key interests for the area. Appoint a 'champion' for the BR, as partnership chair, or patron. Visits to other BRs to build knowledge			£3,000 <i>Initial meetings discussions - communication</i> £5000 <i>Travel, accommodation, subsistence, meetings</i>	£5,000 <i>Formalising partnership - set up system - charity, Co Ltd etc</i>	£5,000 <i>Partnership costs - space, travel, materials, printing etc</i>	Stakeholder buy-into BR Structure agreed Organisation registered at Charities Commission/Companies House Funder support secured for Yr 1 Visits completed
		Engage community and other stakeholders in a programme of consultation and participation			£20,000 <i>Raise awareness - evangelise - website</i>	£10,000 <i>Series of workshops - thematic teams</i>		Media campaign/awareness programme started Brand agreed Steering group/membership/theme champions established Website established Public engagement establishes level of support
		Seek funding for establishment of project – Leader, HC, trusts, etc			£5,000 <i>Largely voluntary + some expertise</i>	£5,000 <i>Largely voluntary + officer support</i>	HC/SG/SNH agreement to support BR development costs Funding secured for Yrs 2/3	
		Commission LCA and other relevant studies to define area – core, buffer, transition				£30,000 <i>Consultancy support</i>		
		Social/economic impact analysis			£20,000 <i>Consultancy</i>			
2	<b>Dedicated BR Officer (may be continuation of NSA Officer role)</b>	Appoint BR Officer, employed through existing organisation (HC, HIE, UHI Centre for Mountain Studies)				£45,000 <i>Wage + office costs</i>	£45,000 <i>Wage + office costs</i>	BR officer appointed/seconded
		Officer to draw up programme of consultation and community				<i>In core costs</i>	<i>In core costs</i>	Thematic subgroups established Identity/brand recognised

Item	Governance	Actions	Cost Yr 1	Cost Yr 2	Cost Yr 3	Cost Yr 4	Cost Yr 5	Achievement
		participation - develop thematic groups						
		Draw up BR application, submit to SG and UNESCO				£25,000 <i>Consultancy support</i>		BR proposal formulated and submitted
		Prepare management plan / action plan			£25,000 <i>Consultancy support</i>			Management plan developed Action plan costed and prioritised
		Officer to prepare funding bid for implementation with officer/ steering group support			<i>In core costs</i>			Funding secured for implementation to year 6
3	<b>Dedicated BR team</b>	Appoint further BR staff as appropriate, for implementation of management plan					£30/40,000 <i>1 F/T equivalent support + admin</i>	Staff appointed to deliver agreed priorities/support thematic groups High levels of awareness among residents Identity/brand used on 'products'
<b>Total costs for Biosphere Reserve</b>					<b>£78,000.00</b>	<b>£140,000.00</b>	<b>£70/£80,000</b>	

**Comparable costs for establishing a National Park (indicative)**

Item	Governance	Actions	Cost Yr 1	Cost Yr 2	Cost Yr 3	Cost Yr 4	Cost Yr 5	Achievement
<b>National Park</b>								
	<b>Establish National Park</b>	Boundary search, survey and inquiry	£300k	£300k	£300k			
		SNH team 4 F/T equivalents	£160k	£160k	£160k			
	<b>NPA Revenue Budget</b>					£7m	£7m	
<b>Total costs for National Park</b>			<b>£460k</b>	<b>£460k</b>	<b>£460k</b>	<b>£7m</b>	<b>£7m</b>	

## 9 The planning system



Glen Etive *RKE*

## 9 The planning system

This section outlines how the recommended Integrated Management approach could relate to the planning system. It explains how to navigate through development planning and development control to optimise planning regulation for a management area.



### Section 8

There are three main parts to the planning system:

- **Development Plans** which set out how places should change and also set out the policies used to make decisions about planning applications.
- **Development Management** which is the process for making decisions about planning applications.
- **Enforcement** which is the process that makes sure that development is carried out correctly and takes action when development happens without permission or when conditions have not been followed.

Only the planning authority can decide if enforcement action happens. There is no duty to enforce and, in any case, action can only be taken if it is in the public interest. All a third party can do is collect evidence of a breach of planning permission and pass this on to the planning authority.

Third parties can develop a role in the preparation of planning policy (Development Plans and associated documents) and its implementation (Development Management). The strategies set out below are equally applicable to each option considered in this report. Their success is dependent upon the relationship with the planning authority and its staff. The more local those staff are (whether based locally or being responsible for a defined local patch), the better the relationship will be. Ideally, decisions should also be made locally.

There are only three ways in which a third party can relate to the planning system:

1. Develop a coordinated planning response
2. Secure a planning protocol
3. Prepare supplementary guidance

### Coordinated planning response

Anyone can comment upon planning policy documents and decisions. To be effective, there is a need to put in place a person or group that is seen as representing the whole area. Once recognised by the planning authorities, that person or group can ensure that authoritative responses on planning policy consultations and planning applications are sent to the planning authorities. This is best achieved by empowering a chartered planner or by undertaking training in the planning system. Scrutiny of the Scottish Government's web site<sup>60</sup> and access to the Planning Aid for Scotland web site<sup>61</sup> are a good source of advice.

An NSA Officer may be an employee of a planning authority and should be a part of the internal consultation process. A forum supporting the NSA Officer may be allowed to have an independent voice (as is the case in the English AONBs). The relationship is less complicated for the other options.

<sup>60</sup> <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Built-Environment/planning>

<sup>61</sup> <http://www.planningaidscotland.org.uk/>

## Planning protocol

If a body is established that is recognised as championing a specific area then it may be possible to negotiate a protocol with the planning authorities that ensures an appropriate engagement with the planning system (both during the development and review of policies, and in during the implementation of policies). The planning authorities may agree to work with a group responsible for the NSA or a Biosphere Reserve. It may be harder for a small scale community project to secure a protocol.

Once a body is recognised, it may be possible to negotiate a planning protocol to establish a process for engagement with the planning system, similar to the one developed by the Nevis Partnership. Protocols are not usually large documents but they must be formally agreed; they can take some time to negotiate with each planning authority. A range of examples can be found on the web sites of AONBs in England.

## Supplementary Guidance

There are two ways of influencing planning policy. The first is to engage actively with the planning authorities during the preparation of their Development Plans. To be effective, the input needs to be both authoritative and timely. The second is to prepare specific policy documents and have them adopted by the planning authorities. Such documents are known as Supplementary Guidance.

Anyone can work with a planning authority to prepare Supplementary Guidance. For it to be a part of the decision making process (a 'material planning consideration') and form part of the local development plan the guidance must be:

- derived from the plan, and
- have been the subject of discussion and engagement.

New policy cannot be created through this mechanism. The intent is to provide such specific advice that the interpretation of the policy is appropriate for the area or subject. Legislation requires a standard form of consultation to be completed before a planning authority can adopt the guidance as a material consideration. Common types include:

- **Development briefs or master plans** which provide a detailed explanation of how the council would like to see particular sites or small areas develop within a defined area. This could be the NSA, identified communities or a Biosphere Reserve.
- **Strategies or frameworks on specific issues** for example, the NSA or Biosphere Reserve management strategies.
- **Detailed policies** for example on the design of new development in a defined area. This could be the NSA, identified communities or a Biosphere Reserve.

These documents are best developed by working in partnership with each planning authority as the process must be approved by statute.

*Red Kite*

Nevis and Glen Coe  
Options for Integrated Management  
Appendices  
Integrated Management Working Group



Peter Seccombe, Paul Tiplady, Charlie Falzon  
Steven Warnock & Caroline Stanton

November 2012

# Nevis and Glen Coe Options for Integrated Management Appendices

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Integrated Management Working Group

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## Foreword

This Appendices document accompanies a detailed study of possible options for the integrated management of the Nevis and Glen Coe area. The main report contains the key findings and recommendations of the study. These Appendices contain detailed background information to support the findings of the report.

Information in the Appendices is referenced in the report by an Icon: 

followed by the Section number in the Appendices.



# 1 Summary of consultation responses

## Introduction

Consultation consisted of an initial questionnaire survey followed by a series of meetings with politicians, landowning and managing interests, and user groups, academics, local citizens and NGOs.

These meetings took place over three separate periods. The first consisted of two poorly attended but informative events during the week February 13. The other meetings were held with individuals and groups during the weeks of April 2 and 16. Each event consisted of general discussions, based on the following themes:

- The area and its special qualities
- Problems, issues and functioning
- Future directions

This paper compiles the responses from all the events to date and attempts to analyse some of the implications.

## Consultation Response - The area and its special qualities

Landscape	Historically, culturally and environmentally of national importance - stunning mountain and seascapes - highest mountain in UK
Experiential/sensory	Truly wild and potentially dangerous - peaceful and tranquil
Language	Gaelic language preserved in natural features
Biodiversity and geodiversity	Of international importance, and a major educational resource - world class research opportunities - magnificent ancient Atlantic oakwoods Lochaber-wide - limited woodland regeneration.
Tourism	Iconic tourist attraction - many people returning to the 'homeland' - casual visitors wishing simply to experience the scenery
Link between mountains and the sea	The sea lochs and wild rivers make this a unique and special landscape
Industrial history	Blackwater dam - Ballachulish Slate Quarry and lead mines
Opportunities for outdoor activity	Range and diversity of outdoor opportunities - of international interest - good network of walking/cycling routes - loch and river based activities are of high quality - some of the best walking and climbing in Europe.
Energy/employment	Extensive water catchment provides energy and therefore jobs. Many jobs supported through tourism.
Opportunity for country sports	As well as providing for more gregarious forms of outdoor activity, the area is significant for 'wild' pursuits such as game fishing and deer stalking
Accessibility by rail and	The area can be accessed directly from Scotland's central cities,

*Please note that consultees' responses are presented as individual perceptions. Statements and assumption may be individual or collective but have not been tested.*

road	both by road and by rail though access to Edinburgh is perceived to be difficult
Society	There is a strong sense of identity for 'Lochaber'. Lochaber people don't like being told what to do.
Identity	Most people have strong empathy with either Nevis, or Glen Coe, but very few identified with 'Nevis and Glen Coe'. There is a strong feeling of identity with 'Lochaber', or 'South Lochaber'.

**Comment**

Many people attested to the wild character of the area, to the wealth of its biodiversity and to the opportunities it offers for a wide range of water and land-based outdoor activity. This is a highly appreciated landscape, both by residents and visitors, though inevitably there is some complacency about its value.

Some people referred to the preservation of the Gaelic language in the area's natural features. This presents a significant opportunity to educate visitors about the links between language and place.

Understandably people referred to both the sense of wildness and danger, and also to the tranquillity of the area. The weather is clearly a key factor, and especially in some months it would be possible to experience all the seasons in a single day.

An important observation is that which links the extensive catchment with employment, based on its delivery of a renewable energy source - a direct reference to what is increasingly referred to as an 'ecosystem service' of major value to the region.

The A82 is an arterial link to Scotland's central belt and the south. Many people are concerned about the poor condition and quality of the road and the slowness of the rail link.

Identity is a major factor. An early response indicated that Glen Coe and Nevis are different in character, largely because of the latter's proximity to Fort William and the dominance of the smelter. The responses from the Ballachulish and Glencoe area imply a strong sense of attachment to Lochaber, but not a Lochaber dominated by Fort William. There was also a sense that Lochaber is not being marketed adequately.

**Consultation Response - Problems, issues and functioning**

Environmental impact	Erosion of footpaths - balancing access and sense of wilderness - disruption of stalking by walkers - maintenance of tracks/ footpaths - litter - HC has 3/4 rangers working out of Nevis area
Conflicting interests/agendas	Tensions between landowners and land users - lack of co-ordinated management - businesses tend to compete rather than co-operate - businesses are too protective of their interests - lack of leadership/young blood - recreational tourism too dominant - RTZ highly protective of their land catchment - some disagreement on deer density, though deer management groups are active.
Lack of communication/engagement	Vested interests, mutual distrust - lack of communication between organisations/communities - lack of marketing - lack of willingness

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	to contribute to the area's care - fear of bureaucracy - perceived threats - resentment about present bureaucracy - lack of social inclusion - high level of bureaucracy/imposition of rules - complacency about changes - poor communication with the community - lack of forum for organisations to engage with each other and people - lack of drive/ambition.
Landscape, biodiversity	Loss of sheep grazing is significantly changing habitats - deer grazing is not controlling habitats in the same way as sheep - birch and other tree species are increasing in places through regeneration - bracken is spreading. It will be very difficult to return sheep to the mountains – Lack of coordination of forestry operations.
Economy	Project funding poorly attributed - sporadic funding/over-reliance on voluntary bodies - high property and fuel prices - limited employment opportunities/lack of self-sustaining employment - HC has no area resource for economic development - not an economically fragile area - unemployment is relatively low - severely economically deprived area - FW has declined - opportunity for funding to be generated through renewable power generation
Agriculture, land management	Big decline in the number of farmers and shepherds in the last 20 years - all agricultural support goes through SRDP which is a far more complex application process - significant decline in the number of farmers and shepherds, and this is unlikely to change.
Infrastructure	Lack of investment in core infrastructure - lack of tourism facilities - lack of integrated transport - A82 in poor condition
Lack of awareness	Lack of strategic vision - lack of awareness about designations and their purposes -
Development management	Poor planning decisions lead to inappropriate development - encroachment out of Fort William/villages - lack of defined boundaries - planning decisions are taken remotely - planning staff good but lack capacity - lack of planning enforcement - planning works well
Tourism	Lack of a wildlife focus to tourism promotion, and of any real coordination of tourism generally - lack of facilities for families and non-adventure seekers.

### Comment

The landscape of Nevis and Glen Coe is highly appreciated but its habitats have changed significantly in recent years. The cause is largely due to the loss of sheep grazing as a result of changes in agricultural subsidy, which results in denser grass swards, bracken encroachment and loss of wildflowers. There is uncertainty about trends in deer numbers but the consensus is that there are probably too many in certain places for habitat management and for tree regeneration.

The region's economic performance is probably similar to that of many relatively isolated rural/coastal communities, with high levels of dependence on a few primary industries, service and public sector employment, and tourism. Some people may commute long distances to work, which adds to the expense. Where there is a high degree of dependence on tourism, this is likely to be seasonal and low-paid, and where some providers are settlers seeking a low-key lifestyle there is little interest in investment. Local people may be risk averse, and even where they are not, may lack the resources to develop enterprises. In

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many such places, relatively well-off incoming retired people, as well as relatively few affluent business people, tend to skew the statistics and conceal pockets of significant deprivation.

One of the most apparent issues from the responses is the significant lack of communication and coordination. Many consultees noted the fragmentation of services, the lack of consultation about important issues, and the lack of coordination in promoting the area's features and bidding for project funding. There is also a defensiveness in organisations and the community and an unwillingness sometimes to work together to achieve common aims. The result is poor strategic thinking, a lack of efficient use of resources and a loss of potential synergies that a more collaborative approach would provide.

Despite the apparent lack of engagement and communication, one comment was that 'socially, the communities are very strong'. There are strong local attachments but also a reluctance to look outwards. People tend not to travel so they have no knowledge of alternative ways of doing things. They do not perceive competition. They are not informed because they have not seen.'

There are good examples of co-operative working. The Nevis Partnership and the Sunart Oakwoods project are good examples of collaborative working, especially for the funding they attracted. The Geopark project was also praised as an example of co-operation to highlight the important natural values of the area. Both were seen as low bureaucracy/high output initiatives.

A lack of secure funding was seen as a major block to progress. There have been many short term projects and initiatives in Lochaber that have had success, but once completed their impact diminishes and their project staff are dissipated. A real impact could only be achieved through long-term committed funding.

Mention was made of the arrangement by some hydro companies to pay 'community benefit' to communities and trusts. There are currently 5 such hydro schemes in Lochaber. These apparently operate on a voluntary basis, although HC encourages communities to negotiate with companies to secure agreements on payments.

A number of people indicated their concerns at the remoteness of decision-making on planning, and the limited capacity of officers to enforce planning contraventions. Some alluded to inappropriate development and encroachment into rural fringes of settlements. Whilst this is a genuine area of concern, it should not be assumed that a more local process would of itself improve the quality of decision-making and development.

In common with similar 'marginal' regions, congestion is frequently concentrated spatially and temporally. This may be especially problematic in this part of Lochaber, given the narrowness of the few roads that intersect it. The A82 in particular is seen as a challenge, and there is consensus that upgrades and improvements will be necessary. Generally, train connections are seen as below standard, and travel throughout Lochaber is generally costly and time consuming.

Some people stated that the emphasis on adventure tourism might fail to capture the 'grey' market, which is potentially less seasonally dependent. One person implied that the two national parks had sucked people away from Lochaber. It would be interesting to see evidence of this, given the iconic status of this region. There may be other reasons, not least that Ben Nevis and Glen Coe are being increasingly viewed as centres of adventure and physical activity, and less likely to attract visitors who are more aesthetically inclined.

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## Consultation Response - Future directions

Planning and infrastructure	Good quality infrastructure and development that does not damage the tourism potential - good transport systems - good pre-planning and applications - low carbon infrastructure and digital connectivity
Coordination	Greater coordination of activities, including promotion and marketing, land management, economic development, recreation management, funding bids.
Common vision	Greater sense of common vision for land management, tourism, recreation management, etc. - opportunities include management plan, integrated landscape scale management approach,
National Park	Another quango - Lochaber NP would be preferred to Nevis/Glen Coe - national park or similar protection - if there was to be another NP in Scotland there could be support the Glen Coe – Lochaber area as the leading contender. The operation of any national park would need to be considered very carefully, and would need to bring real benefit for everyone.
Role of communities	Projects must be community led and owned - cultural shift in attitudes - leadership - need to show that Nevis and Glen Coe get more by joining together - consultation needs very active management - population growth to address aging population - shopper buses. The community should have a strong voice in deciding the future management and governance of the area.
Tourism	There is a need to spread the benefits of tourism - greater access to high quality tourism, whilst managing wild areas - quality wet weather alternatives - integrated interpretation - strong, active, co-ordinated marketing - dedicated routes for cyclists
Governance and funding	One strong management organisation and business investment - long term cohesive partnership - co-ordinated funding - secure funding. Long term initiative that is credible and has tangible outputs, rather than short term projects. Opportunity for renewables to provide funding – micro-hydro, wind, solar.
Economy	More marketing of local products and services

### Comment

Unsurprisingly, people's visions for the future reflected their particular positions. Sport Scotland, for example, are keen to promote the area as an important hub for international adventure sports events, whilst HIE would see the area as 'a highly successful and competitive region in which increasing numbers of people choose to live, work, study and invest.' The two (and other aspirations) are not incompatible, but need co-ordinated management.

Few people explicitly stated that they would support proposals for a national park, though few were explicitly against it. This may reflect a degree of timidity in the knowledge that further national park designation in Scotland is not a political priority. Some felt that it would be an unnecessary layer of bureaucracy, while others stressed that a national park would only work for an area significantly larger than Nevis/Glen Coe, perhaps embracing the whole of 'Lochaber'.

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It was recognised by some that the existing two parks have encouraged and fostered economic development, and may in fact have drawn people away from Nevis/Glen Coe. It was also stated that the Nevis Partnership was established in the first place to avoid the process of national park designation. Sport Scotland indicated that neither the existing NSA system nor the established parks had a high reputation with outdoor sports interests, since they do not explicitly foster these.

There was some discussion about the brand, and whilst somebody indicated that Ben Nevis and Glen Coe might be a good brand name, this would probably be unacceptable to many interests in the area. Given the issue of identity, 'selling' the name Lochaber is challenging, especially to visitors. There is an expressed need to raise awareness about the area's importance, not only nationally and internationally, but locally as well, in order to engage local people to actively contribute to caring for the area.

The key issue in most people's estimation, however, was not a designation or a name, but the expressed need for greater coordination and communication, and the need for this to be a 'bottom-up' rather than a 'top down' exercise. For any approach to be a success it needed to come from the community, to achieve a high degree of 'buy-in' by the community and other organisations, to be led by a 'champion' that was well-respected by all, and for it to have clear and tangible outputs and outcomes that are beneficial to all stakeholders.

On the planning issue, it is possible that a SNP-led HC may support a more local approach to decision-making. A number of people aspired to restoring more local inputs into the planning process, and it was implied that the establishment of national park would have that effect.

Secure funding is a key issue. According to some, this has to be on a statutory basis, for a sustained and consistent approach to managing the area. Whatever management system is proposed it has to address this. OCUK and the Chamber of Commerce are currently leading a Business Improvement Bid, based on tourism and on Fort William High Street. Success will be conditional on support from the relevant sectors.

The revised Scottish Rural Development Programme was referred to as a potential funding source, especially with the linking of LEADER to the programme. This was a major contributor to delivering the management plans of both Cairngorms and Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Parks. In the case of the former, the Cairngorm LEADER Local Action Group and the strategic land use group (through the Rural Development Contract) were able to access SRDP funding.

Finally, a telling comment stated that there is a 'need to show that Glen Coe and Nevis get more by joining together'.

## **Summary of the perceived key issues arising from the consultation**

### **Social and economic change**

- The most significant growth areas in recent years have been in the outdoor activity sector and the higher-end market for food and accommodation. This has contributed to an increase in the number of year-round visitors and to a reduction in the seasonality of employment.
- There is a low incentive for innovation and business development. Local people do not want a high income while incomers may only want 'pin money' to bolster a pension.

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- There are many 'stand still' businesses – B&Bs and other tourism related businesses. Owners are not wanting them to grow and are happy for them to open for only four months of the year.
- Fort William high street is in decline, with many empty shops, and a domination of outdoor clothing and equipment outlets.
- There has been investment in adventure activities but a decline in basic facilities such as local hospitals and libraries.
- There has been significant decline in the number of farmers and shepherds in the area.
- People want to see the economic benefits of Ben Nevis spread more widely
- The population commutes long distances to work.
- There are strong ties between people and place, with the many incomers choosing to live here for the quality of the landscape
- Socially, the communities are very strong, with active participation in community activities

### **Population**

- Lochaber, Skye and Wester Ross is the area in Scotland which sends the highest percentage of its school students to university. While this is a tribute to a well-educated population, it also highlights the lack of opportunity for vocational training in the area, and the narrowness of the local economic base.

### **Habitats and landscape**

- Habitats in mountain areas are changing significantly due to loss of sheep grazing. Grass swards are denser, flowers declining, bracken is increasing and ragwort is becoming more obvious in places.

### **Climate change**

- Concerns about the impact of climate change include snow lying for shorter periods in winter particularly on north-facing alpine slopes; changing planting communities; changing water levels in reservoirs.

### **Agriculture**

- Changes in agricultural support mechanisms, from headage payments to the single farm premium, have resulted in massive reduction in the number of sheep grazing the mountains.
- Farmers now tend to keep much fewer sheep in in-bye land, and sheep/cattle tend to be larger breeds that are more productive.
- The agricultural economy has moved from active management with sustained jobs to a much more degraded state with much fewer, and irregular, jobs.

### **Tourism**

- There is concern that there are insufficient high quality facilities for tourism, and facilities for families and non-adventure seekers.
- There is not much change in visitor use. Summer walking and climbing is stable. Winter climbing is increasing, but is highly dependent on weather.
- There has been no real increase in visitor pressure on the land, though many paths are in need of regular maintenance.
- The bedstock is increasing, along with tourism income.

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## **Traffic**

- Traffic and the condition of the major roads are big issues for the community. The roads are slow and narrow, and can be very congested in summer. There is a tendency for people not to travel if they can avoid it – and tend to be more introspective than in more populated areas.
- There is insufficient investment in the A82, which is deteriorating. Highland Council repairs the surface but there appears to be no major assessment of long term traffic problems. Many businesses are completely dependent on the road, and when it closes, businesses stop working.

## **Development planning**

- The planning system generally works well, though is rather remote from Lochaber, with planning applications being considered in Inverness since January 2012.

## **Landscape designation of Nevis and Glen Coe**

- There is very little understanding about the National Scenic Area – what it is and what it means
- There is little empathy for the term ‘Nevis and Glen Coe’, especially in Glencoe. There is much more empathy with ‘Lochaber’

## **Coordination of activities**

- Coordination of activities is very ad-hoc. There are some good local projects (e.g. Sunart Oakwoods Initiative) that are effective, but there is no coherent coordinated system.
- Projects tend to be short-lived with expert and experienced staff then moving on, or moving away.
- Communication appears to be particularly poor in the area, with communities complaining they are not adequately consulted about issues that impact on their lives and their livelihoods.
- Communities tend to operate very independently with little communication or coordinated working.

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## 2 Table of questionnaire and workshop responses

This table is a selection of responses from a questionnaire completed by Working Group members and from the workshop sessions held in February 2012.

<b>What is <i>special</i> about Nevis and Glen Coe?</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The range, contrast and diversity of landscape, wildlife and geology, which is historically, culturally and environmentally of national importance. It is an iconic tourism attraction with stunning mountain and seascapes and includes the highest mountain in the UK. Red deer and golden eagle are particularly attractive to visitors. A truly wild and potentially dangerous environment, combined with a strong sense of peace and tranquillity.</li> <li>• Glen Coe and Nevis are very different in character. Glen Coe is a wild area devoid for the most part of large buildings and industry, while Nevis area is on the edge of a large town with heavy and light industry visible. The fact that people can walk from Fort William to the top of the UK's highest mountain is special.</li> <li>• The close proximity of water. The large sea lochs, which penetrate far into Glen Coe and Nevis area, and the wild rivers, create a unique landscape special to the West Highlands.</li> <li>• The range and diversity of outdoor activities and uses and good access to the land through walking and cycling trails. It is a highly regarded resource locally, nationally and internationally. It is a centre for organised outdoor events, e.g. the Glen Nevis river race.</li> <li>• Industrial history, for example Blackwater dam, Ballachulish Slate Quarry and lead mines.</li> <li>• Tourism activity that includes many people from around the world returning to 'the homeland' or visitors just wanting nothing more than to experience the sheer pleasure of the stunning scenery. An important resource for physical and mental well-being and 're-creation'.</li> <li>• World-class research opportunities on aspects of geology/earth science of Lochaber – there is a considerable amount of research data available.</li> <li>• The preservation of the Gaelic language in place names of rivers, lochs, mountains and hills.</li> <li>• A major catchment and a natural resource for energy, and therefore jobs.</li> <li>• A sporting resource – for fishing and deer stalking.</li> <li>• Loch Etive is a natural datum point for water quality.</li> <li>• An important area for water-based sports for sea and river.</li> <li>• The A82 is a key artery through the Western Highlands.</li> </ul>
<b>What <i>threatens</i> the area – what are the problems?</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The difficulty of maintaining access without threatening the environment through path erosion.</li> <li>• Maintaining the balance between wilderness and access.</li> <li>• Disagreement on the future way forward between the various landowners – for example over deer densities. There is lack of awareness also on neighbour impacts.</li> <li>• Lack of strategic vision which acknowledges the socio-economic importance of the landscape.</li> <li>• People not working together, vested interests, mutual distrust, perceived and real threats. There is a lack of communication between organisations and communities.</li> <li>• There are tensions between landowners and land users, for example mountaineers accessing remote areas and ignoring stalking notices and rules.</li> <li>• Lack of investment in core infrastructure (including environmental)</li> <li>• Lack of tourism facilities, e.g. lay-byes, picnic sites and viewing points</li> <li>• A lack of any co-ordinated management of this large area, which probably allows precious funding for projects to be poorly attributed.</li> <li>• A lack of marketing advantage and a strong message in a competitive and dynamic market.</li> <li>• Businesses tend to compete rather than co-operate.</li> <li>• Sporadic funding and an over-reliance on voluntary bodies.</li> <li>• Inappropriate development being allowed to happen by poor planning decisions.</li> <li>• Maintenance of the Ben Nevis Mountain Track and of footpaths in general.</li> <li>• Poor management of events on Ben Nevis.</li> <li>• Lack of integrated management of transport into and within the area.</li> <li>• Poor litter management.</li> </ul>

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- Lack of awareness-raising and a lack of willingness to contribute to caring for the area.
- The proximity of the Ben and Glen area to the town of Fort William makes the area vulnerable to inappropriate development such as housing and business sites. The boundary between urban and rural is more and more difficult to define and protect. This also affects Glencoe with the village stretching further and further into the Glen.
- There is a lack of awareness about existing designations – NSA, SAC, SSSI, etc – and their implications, opportunities and purposes.
- Mutual suspicions, perceived threats, fear of additional bureaucracy.
- Resentment about present bureaucracy
- High property prices and high fuel prices – domestic and travel.
- Conflict and/or polarisation of interests, remits and agendas.
- Lack of social inclusion.
- High level of bureaucracy and an imposition of rules.
- Limited employment opportunities, remote settlements causing social breakdown
- Lack of self-sustaining employment.
- Complacency about changes, such as development, that are impacting on the landscape.
- Changes in how other important areas are managed and marketed means Lochaber may be left behind or ‘miss out’.
- No improvements have been made to the A82.

### **What is *preventing* these issues being properly addressed?**

- As always there will be a multitude of interests and opinions and the difficulty is reaching a consensus which satisfies the various parties involved.
- In common with many issues, the availability of possible funding.
- Serious lack of strategic (and creative) vision. No champion for the area as a whole.
- Lack of will (empathy level) particularly at council and government level
- Short termism (see above)
- Poor or nonexistent long- or even mid-term planning.
- Shortage of available funds.
- Lack of joined up thinking both at local level and regional/national and between and within organisations/ agencies (Highland Council, SNH, HIE etc)
- Large landowners and industry protecting their own interests. A lack of understanding of tourism and how important it is to this area.
- Complete lack of appropriate and consistent funding stream for management/preservation of the natural environment – linked to inability or unwillingness to acknowledge or accept the full extent of the impact of the major natural assets on the area’s economy – a head in the sand approach
- Lack of coordination between interested parties.
- Unwillingness to make radical decisions/propose radical solutions, for example about some type of tourist tax to help fund some of the above.
- The management structure within its present budgetary constraints and reliability on volunteer enthusiasm is unsustainable for anything other than short term repair and maintenance work which may only be possible if funded by local partners in the future.
- There is continual uncertainty of securing future funding for the delivery of necessary long term objectives. The risk is that restoration work and protection of the environment will not be continued in the longer term unless we can find a way of securing investment for the future.

### **What is your long-term *vision* for Nevis and Glen Coe – what would you like to see in place in 20 years time?**

- A securely funded and balanced (between environment and visitor needs) approach to looking after Ben Nevis and the wider area.
- Improved intellectual access and access to the landscape itself resulting in a right of access to land and water for recreation and passage widely enjoyed and exercised responsibly. Sponsored events should focus on positive environmental action.
- Greater access to high quality visitor attractions, but restricted to a clearly defined area leaving the ‘wild’ areas un-developed.
- Improve and develop infrastructure for locals and tourists without damaging the landscape.
- Greater hands-on involvement in the care of the environment by the local community.
- Greater international awareness of where and what Nevis and Glen Coe are.

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- The area is seen as an exemplar of sustainable environmental and visitor management with the landscape clearly improved and restored visually and ecologically.
- Greater awareness and involvement of visitors and local communities, including the business community, in all aspects of landscape conservation and management. Visitors and local communities will be better informed about, more connected to, and will recognise the true value of, the heritage of the area.
- The area protected and promoted by National park status or something similar.
- Quality wet weather alternatives to being outdoors for both locals and tourists.
- Integrated interpretation (Styles/designs etc) right across the area.
- A far better maintained and managed transport system including better road surfaces, buses with bike racks, cycle ways, trains and public transport on the water, especially Caledonian Canal.
- A model of governance that is community represented in order to encompass local needs, working in partnership with the statutory agencies and the Local Authority and a high profile at national level.
- An area that does not have inappropriate development which endangers its environment or tourist economy, where visitors and locals alike can enjoy the scenic beauty and natural habitat and have awareness of the aims and ethos of future planning and the community working in partnership to protect the environment.

### **What do you think would be needed to *achieve this vision*?**

- One strong management organisation and business investment, with coordinated action.
- Develop a strategy for the future which recognizes the needs of the local community, local business interests and visitors.
- Establish a longer-term cohesive partnership approach to operate effectively and handle land and visitor management in a way that encourages economic growth and protects the environment.
- Greater awareness of the area's importance through education/participation and interpretation.
- A strong, active, coordinated marketing group. OCUK?
- Coordinate funding to ensure best value delivery and avoid duplication of action that wastes money.
- Coordinated provision of visitor facilities.
- Will, determination and widespread support.
- A cultural shift in attitudes.
- Education at a young age teaching the importance of the Lochaber landscape and its place in the wellbeing of Lochaber.
- Community leaders willing to stand up and fight for improvements.
- Vision itself – especially among local people – a willingness to move outside the accepted comfort zones and think longer term and strategically.
- A secure funding package for our mountain/landscape maintenance and an understanding of the need for such funding.
- Greater investment in the transport systems.
- Strong, nationally recognised community management group.
- Good pre-planning and applications for funding with community and business backing.
- Obligations and responsibilities need to be clarified, made more efficient and driven by common goals.
- Use the media.

### **What do you think might *prevent this vision* being achieved?**

- Lack of agreement between stakeholders.
- Apathy.
- Lack of adequate funding.
- Low empathy level and lack of will at regional and national level.
- Scarcity of available funds exacerbated by (low) perceived priority level.
- The Highland Council's lack of vision.
- Self-interest of large landowners and industry.
- Poor planning decisions and regulations.
- Unwillingness to accept change and dwelling too much on what has gone before.
- Continuing acceptance by many of second rate provision for visitors as the norm ("The area is so

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special, people will come anyway” approach)

- No security of funding and weak management group with a low profile.
- No time frames and piecemeal approach to necessary work.
- Lack of awareness of the importance of the area at a national level.

### 3 Consultees

Scott McCrombie	National Trust Scotland
Christopher Cassels	National Trust Scotland
Drew McFarlane Slack	Scottish Land and Estates
Marina Curran-Coulthart	Argyll and Bute Council
Tricia Jordan	Association of Lochaber Community Councils
Martin Faulkner	SNH
Sarah Bentley	SNH
Finlay Clark	Bidwells
Susanna Thomson	Bidwells
Lyndsay Sharp	Bidwells
Matthew Trewin	Bidwells
Sheila McLennan	Glen Nevis Residents' Association
John Hutchison	Nevis Partnership
Jim Blair	Lochaber Geopark
Noel Williams	Lochaber Geopark
Scott Donald	Fort William Chamber of Commerce
Charles Kennedy	MP
Colin Campbell	Nether Lochaber Community Council
Dot Fergusson	Highland Council
Geoff Robson	Highland Council
Peter Varley	UHI
Stephen Taylor	UHI
Martin Price	UHI
Stuart Ogg	Sport Scotland
Gerald Campbell	Sport Scotland
Scott Armstrong	Visit Scotland
Alison Gainsford	Highlands and Islands Enterprise
Anna Trafford	Friends of Nevis
Ben Lennon	Forest Enterprise Scotland
Jamie McKintyre	Forester
Paolo Berardelli	Farmer
Ron Payne	Mountaineering Council of Scotland
Brenda Clough	Mountaineering Council of Scotland
Kevin Howett	Mountaineering Council of Scotland
Bren Gormley	Highland Councillor
Donald Cameron	Highland Councillor
Michael Foxley	Highland Councillor
Brian Murphy	Highland Councillor
Eddie Hunter	Highland Councillor
Allan Henderson	Highland Councillor
Dave Wrigglesworth	OCUK
Frazer Coupland	OCUK
Fran Lockhart	John Muir Trust
Linda Blanchard	North Devon AONB Partnership
Nigel Wallace	AYR Joint Planning unit

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Anna Johnson  
Helen Jones  
Gordon Robertson  
Bob Garland  
Moir Anderson  
Don McKee  
Gordon Watson  
John Packman  
Colin White  
Richard Pearse  
Martin Small

NSA Officer, Dumfries and Galloway Council  
Scottish Government, Natural Resources Division  
Scottish Government, Sponsorship & Delivery Partners  
Head of Housing and Planning Studies, DCLG (London)  
AONB Sponsorship Team, Defra (London)  
Head of Planning Cairngorms NPA  
Director of Rural Development & Planning, LLTNPA  
CEO, Broads Authority  
Planning Officer, Chilterns AONB Conservation Board  
Planning Officer, Friends of the Lake District  
ex Planning Officer, South Downs AONB Joint Planning  
Committee and Interim Planning Officer, SDNPA

**Community Councils**

Ballachulish  
Nether Lochaber  
Glencoe – two members  
Spean, Roy Bridge  
Fort William  
Kilmallie

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## 4 Key Issues and Forces for Change

This is a summary of the main issues the Nevis and Glen Coe, and wider Lochaber, area faces and some of the key trends and forces for change.

The information has been sourced through consultation with organisations, and from data supplied by relevant organisations.

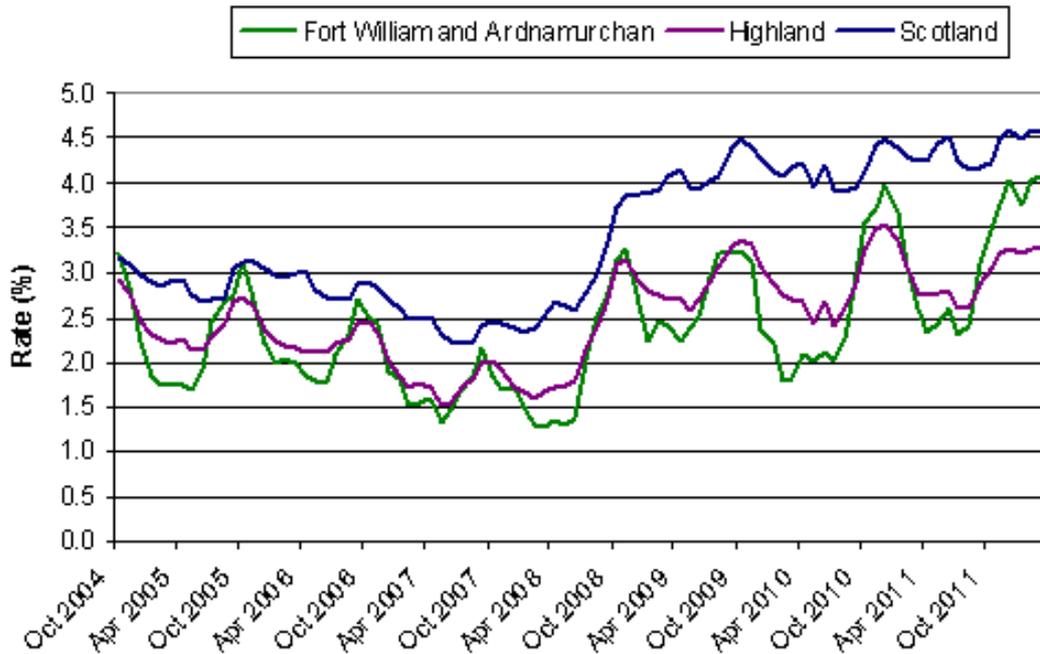
Issues and Forces for Change	Data
Social and economic change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ward 22, Fort William and Ardnamurchan, is close to being an economically fragile area – Fort William has only just risen above the threshold of 'deprived' in the index of social deprivation, though one area – Plantation – is still classed as severely deprived.</li> <li>• Unemployment in Ward 22 is slightly higher at 4.1% than for the rest of Highland (3.3%), but lower than for Scotland as a whole (4.6%). There has been a steady increase in unemployment rates since 2007. See tables 1 and 2 for trends in unemployment rates.</li> <li>• The proportion of people in Ward 22 classed as 'income deprived' (12.8%) is above the Highland average, but the proportion classed as 'employment deprived' (8.3%) is slightly below (9.2%). The average annual household income is around £29,500, compared with £32,100 for Highland and £33,900 for Scotland. The low income is due to the large number of seasonal workers on minimum wage – 35% of GDP comes from tourism and is low paid and seasonal.</li> <li>• Distribution, hotels and restaurants is the largest employment sector, accounting for 34% of jobs in 2008. This is followed by the female dominated public administration, education and health sector, which accounts for a further 30% of all employees in the area.</li> <li>• A larger proportion of workers (58%) were employed by companies with less than 25 employees in 2008 than in the Highlands and Islands (43%). This demonstrates the dominance of employment within small businesses in Lochaber, Skye and Wester Ross.</li> <li>• Business start-ups in Lochaber, Skye and Wester Ross are higher than average. There were 4.4 new start-ups per 1,000 of the population in 2008 compared to 4.0 in the Highlands and Islands.</li> <li>• House prices have been rising in recent years. The median house price in Lochaber in 2010 was £127,500 compared with £147,000 in Highland and £137,000 in Scotland.</li> <li>• The strategy of the West Highlands and Islands Local Plan is to focus commerce and major facilities on Fort William to 'expand its capacity for retailing and business, present itself as a unique and accessible location for economic development, and transform its image and appeal as a visitor destination / events venue'.</li> </ul>
Population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In 2010, the population of Fort William and Ardnamurchan (Ward 22) was 11,412, an increase of 0.9% since 2005. This compares with a 3.1% increase overall in the Highlands and Islands and a 2.5% increase in Scotland. Population density is 4.4 persons per square kilometre, which compares with</li> </ul>

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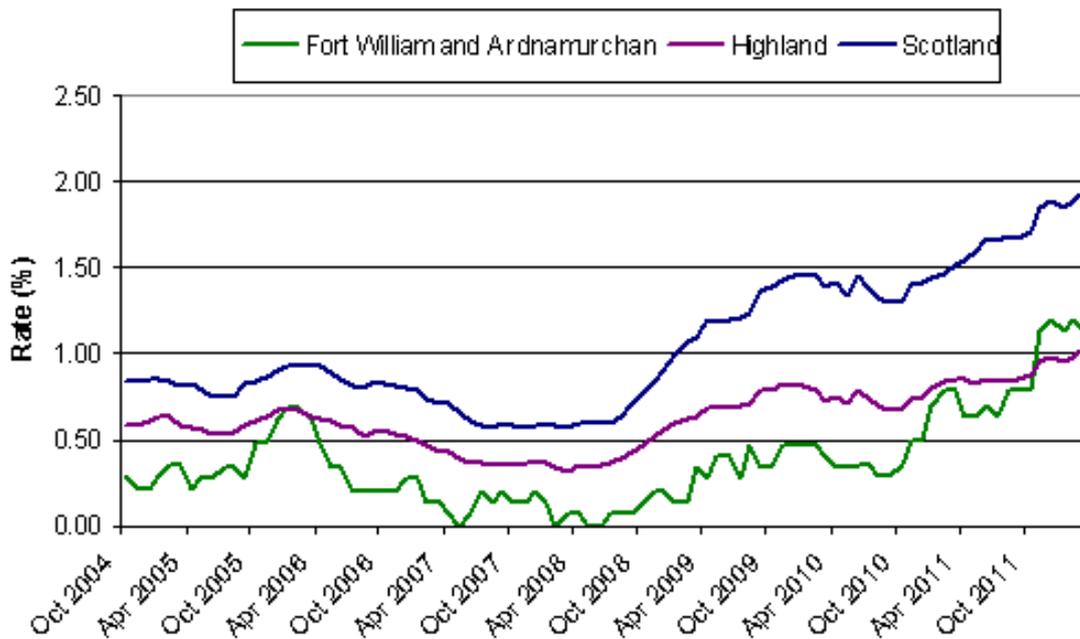
	<p>8.4 persons for Highland and 67 persons for Scotland.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The population of Lochaber, Skye and Wester Ross has shown steady, sometimes spectacular growth over the last 30 years, although many smaller rural communities have lost population to the larger centres.</li> <li>• Much of the population increase has been fuelled by immigration, particularly people retiring to the area, especially to the extreme east and west of the ward. Many young people continue to leave in pursuit of tertiary education.</li> <li>• Forecasts in the West Highlands and Islands Local Plan suggest that the housing stock in Lochaber would need to increase by 1450 – 1600 by 2018 to provide for new households and holiday accommodation.</li> </ul>
Habitats and landscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loss of amount and condition of native woodland.</li> <li>• Impoverishment of moorland and upland habitats.</li> <li>• Reduction in landscape diversity.</li> <li>• Erosion and loss of riparian vegetation, with adverse effects on freshwater fisheries.</li> <li>• Redesign of some conifer forests to better fit the landscape and providing wildlife and recreation benefits.</li> <li>• Establishment of native woodland, protected by deer fences.</li> </ul>
Climate change	<p>Climate change impacts may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased likelihood of summer droughts leading to river water quality problems and disruption of water supply</li> <li>• Changes in abundance and distribution of species and length of growing season</li> <li>• Higher temperatures less favourable for native species</li> <li>• Accelerated decomposition of peaty soils resulting in increased emissions of carbon dioxide and methane, fuelling further climate change</li> <li>• Increased soil loss through water and wind erosion</li> <li>• Enhanced plant/algal growth due to increased temperature</li> <li>• The weather will become more erratic and therefore less predictable, with a greater likelihood of extreme events.</li> </ul> <p>• Peatlands store significant amounts of carbon – they can sequester carbon, or they can release carbon through cultivation or if they dry out with higher global temperatures.</p>
Agriculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Although the volume of beef meat production has increased in Scotland by 22% since 2001, the volume of mutton and lamb has declined by 22%.</li> <li>• The average price of sheep has increased by 118% since 2001 with more than half that increase occurring since 2008. The price of cattle has increased by 56% since 2001.</li> <li>• From 2001 to 2010 the net value of Scottish agriculture has increased from £11.7bn to £34.2bn, due largely to a rise in the value of land and buildings.</li> <li>• The total income from farming has increased by 58% (£284m) from 2001 to 2010.</li> </ul>
Tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 35% of GDP is generated through tourism. It is seasonal and traditionally is low wage. There is a high seasonal population which often has difficulty finding affordable accommodation.</li> <li>• Glen Nevis receives around 660,000 visitors a year. Ben Nevis gets between 70,000 and 160,000 a year.</li> <li>• Lochaber tourism income in 2011 was £120m, 11% up on the previous year, and supporting over 1000 jobs.</li> </ul>

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**Table 1 Unemployment Rates**



**Table 2 Long-term Unemployment Rates**



Data supplied by Department of Work and Pensions, from NOMIS

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## 5 Landscape character

### Introduction

We included in our tender an exercise to develop an understanding of the Nevis and Glen Coe landscape through the preparation of a brief landscape character assessment (LCA) within a GIS framework which would coordinate existing LCA studies. The exercise would identify and analyse the key landscape characteristics that make the area distinctive and which are relevant to integrated management policies and practice.

The first part of the study was to produce a draft map of Landscape Character Types (LCTs) within the greater Nevis and East Lochaber area. We covered an area approximately 5-10 km beyond the existing NSA to give an overview of the wider landscape, including a zone of interest along the settled coastal landscapes of Loch Linnhe.

The initial characterisation process involved the analysis of a series of map overlays to systematically divide the study area into discrete and relatively homogenous units of land, within which the constituent physical, biological and historical elements occur in repeating patterns and share certain aesthetic characteristics. These units of land, termed **Land Description Units** (LDU for short), are the building blocks of the landscape and they form the framework on which all subsequent evaluation and decision making is based.

The definition of discrete LDUs provides a structured framework for gathering additional *descriptive* information about the landscape, including both character based information as well as qualitative information relating to the significance of particular attributes, their condition and their vulnerability to change. All of this information is held on a GIS database linked to the LDU polygons.

LDU's are defined by a series of **definitive** attributes derived from the process of map analysis. The process of LDU mapping involves 4 main phases of analysis, starting with the natural dimension of the landscape (physiography and ground type) and then using the results of this work to help understand and map the cultural dimension (landcover and settlement). These factors are summarised in the GIS database as a series of 2-digit codes, but as yet it has not been possible to provide a description of the historic character of the landscape. The study has also been an entirely desk-based exercise and there has been no 'ground-truthing' to check the validity of the character assessment, the boundaries of each unit, or how the different landscapes are experienced and valued. Neither has there been an opportunity to produce a base map overlay, nor to provide an indication of Search Areas for Wildland.

Within the NSA the main landscape types identified include:

- a rocky hills and summits type
- two associated open moorland types
- two lower lying wooded types (ancient broadleaved and Scots pine)
- two forested types (commercially planted conifers)
- a lower lying moor and bog type
- two settled agricultural types

## Findings

It is not unexpected that the study shows an almost complete lack of correspondence between the NSA boundary and the underlying pattern of draft Landscape Character Types. The boundary would appear to follow the high points and ridgelines along most of its length, with the result that it divides coherent landscape types. The NSA boundary was defined before Landscape Character Assessment had been properly developed and before the definition of 'natural areas' or 'natural heritage'.

No further work was undertaken on the study following the production of the LCT map, which coincided with the main consultation sessions. The reason for the halt was the significant variance amongst consultees on the extent of the management area – this could be as small as the Nevis area itself, or it could also include the Glencoe/Kinlochleven area, or even be as large as the Lochaber region, to include Sunart, Ardnamurchan, Knoydart and the Small Isles. If we were to overlay a map of 'identity', as perceived by the various groups with whom we consulted, this would show a variety of scales, again ranging from individual communities to the whole of 'Lochaber' itself. Following consultation with the working group it was agreed that any further work on a Landscape Character Assessment would be undertaken at some stage after the completion of this contract, when a decision had been made on the definitive boundary of the management area.

There still remained, however, the task of identifying criteria that could be used to select a boundary for the management area. As the opinions about a desired 'size' for the area varied so widely, and the optimum size and area for each governance option is likely to differ, we have provided criteria at different 'levels' which would equate with different options for governance. At this stage we have simply defined the criteria for each level. These levels are presented in the table below.

### Boundary selection criteria

Characteristic	Criteria
Cluster of discrete communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Convergence of recognised needs and aspirations</li> <li>• Grassroots level community initiative</li> <li>• Focus on social, economic and environmental outputs at the community level</li> <li>• Project success depends on resourcefulness and leadership within the communities</li> <li>• Funding for limited period project</li> <li>• Governance through community-led unconstituted partnership</li> </ul>
Discrete, cohesive, recognisable landscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Area defined by mosaic of landscapes including river valley catchment and mountain massif</li> <li>• Cluster of communities with identified social, economic and environmental requirements</li> <li>• Focus on landscape conservation, appropriate development and agri-environment support</li> <li>• Governance through partnership/steering group model</li> </ul>
Cohesive, catchment scale landscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Area defined by a mosaic of landscapes at a catchment, or wider, scale, with recognisable homogeneity of landscape character</li> <li>• Core areas with buffer and transition zones</li> <li>• Focus on diversity of activity consistent with conservation objectives and sustainable development</li> <li>• Governance through partnership/steering group model</li> </ul>

<p>Area of recognisable regional identity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Area defined by a mosaic of recognisable landscape and habitat types – terrestrial, coastal and marine</li><li>• Clusters of communities and medium sized towns</li><li>• Integration of agencies and public/private interests</li><li>• Focus on community, conservation, sustainable development issues</li><li>• Governance within a legally defined management body</li></ul>
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## 6 Governance

### Introduction

There is no 'one best fit' in terms of management structure/governance. What matters is that whichever form of governance is adopted, it is effective in addressing the needs of an area and its people at a particular time, and may change over time. The evolving nature of national park management is an example of this.

Apart from direct government ownership and management, a wide range of networks, partnerships, associations and alliances are possible, some informal, others formal and statutory. There are wide variations in exclusive and inclusive approaches (see selection criteria in the discussion paper on boundaries).

### Governance Principles and Indicators

There is no one perfect model of 'good' governance, there are a number of important principles and indicators<sup>1</sup>:

- An individual or group of individuals that have a lot of drive, a strong vision, excellent communication skills, energy, ideas, patience, time, and personality - *there has to be leadership*
- Keep as many people involved as possible - *there have to be good communication/information channels*
- Early small measurable successes - *ensure that these are celebrated*
- Understanding and consensus about values, what needs to be done and why - *people need to sing from the same song-sheet in harmony - not necessarily the same tune! People have to recognise the benefit of working in a particular way and the disbenefit of not doing so*
- Bottom up rather than top down - *though there is a need to recognise that this needs a lot of investment and may not always be the most efficient way - delegation based on trust is critical*
- A clear, distinctive geographical definition - *promotes a sense of place, cohesion and community*
- Power to make decisions and act on them - *there has to be confidence that action can be taken collectively, and people understand why decisions are taken*
- Access to funds - either through a public funding stream or through legal powers to seek funds - *action cannot be taken unless there are financial means to do so*
- Recognition by the central authority that the area is special - *political endorsement underpins confidence*

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<sup>1</sup> 1 adapted from Borrini-Feyerabend: Governance of Protected Areas: Innovation in the Air (2004) [http://www.earthlore.ca/clients/WPC/English/grfx/sessions/PDFs/session\\_1/Borrini\\_Feyerabend.pdf](http://www.earthlore.ca/clients/WPC/English/grfx/sessions/PDFs/session_1/Borrini_Feyerabend.pdf)

- Limited bureaucracy - *costs need to be targeted as far as possible towards social and human enterprise and to achieving goals, rather than for managing a heavy bureaucratic system - fast, cheap and open systems are what is needed*
- Focus on the positive - what can be achieved - rather than on the negative - *whilst substantive difficulties are always present, it is possible to move forward on areas that can be agreed on*
- An adaptive framework for management - *there is a need to be flexible, reflective and learning by experience - a framework that can deal with vulnerability, uncertainty and surprise - a fast, small management framework rather than a slow, large one*
- A long-term focus - *it can take decades to deliver substantive change for the better - it is important to look ahead and to keep reminding oneself what this is ultimately for*
- A clear understanding of social/ecological interactions - *these are complex and dynamic, and require evidence and research in order to make appropriate and tough decisions*
- Integrating different kinds of knowledge into decision making - *there is a role for economists, social scientists, private and public sector partners as well as natural scientists - a reference forum/links to academic institutions are valuable support mechanisms*

## **Stakeholders and Participation**

Stakeholders and participation are seen as key aspects of governance - there is a consensus that engaging the greatest number of stakeholders and encouraging them to participate at every possible opportunity is a good thing. However, poorly thought-out process and outcomes can be problematic and counter-productive.

Different individuals and groups - public, private and citizen - have different perspectives, different ways of seeing problems and different ways of expressing themselves - even using different vocabulary. They operate at different scales and timescales.

The key question is whether different interests want to collaborate or not?

- Why should they collaborate?
- What is in it for them?
- If they can be convinced that there is some benefit, how can they best collaborate?
- What are the limits to their agreement to collaborate?
- What kinds of bargains can be struck?
- What is the best alternative to the current situation?
- Who is calling for change, and why?
- Who might feel threatened by the different options, and who might be enthusiastic?

Whilst local communities are central to this exercise, it is important not to exclude a wider set of legitimate interests - the Scottish people, international visitors etc - any genuinely representative governance system has to be a contract between local, national and international interests, and it is therefore important to ask who will benefit from each governance option, and how?

## Mechanisms for integrated management

This section provides detailed information on models for integrated management identified in the main report. There is background information on each model, and case studies that show how each can operate.

### Community Partnership Schemes

Community partnership schemes include a wide range of initiatives that can help to develop integrated approaches to resource management. There are many examples of these initiatives, and some are themselves partners in wider landscape conservation/rural development programmes. The Heritage Lottery Funded funded landscape partnership programme is one such scheme, of which the Sulwath Connections is an example<sup>2</sup>.

The following examples illustrate some of the common features of such initiatives:

- **The Nevis Partnership** was established in 2002 with the aim of 'guiding future policies and actions to safeguard, manage and where appropriate enhance the environmental qualities and opportunities for visitor enjoyment and appreciation of the Nevis area.' The partnership is a charity, managed by a board of ten voting representatives that include the Highland Council, FCS, relevant community councils, Glen Nevis residents, the John Muir Trust, Sport Scotland, Mountaineering Council of Scotland, Fort William and District Chamber of Commerce and Lochaber Mountain Access Group. In addition there is an executive committee that meets monthly to advise on detailed management matters. Other interests that attend and advise (but do not have voting rights) include Bidwells (for Rio Tinto Alcan), Scottish Natural Heritage, Glen Nevis Estate and HIE Lochaber, as well as crofting interests.

A significant aspect of the Partnership's work has been to improve the footpath network around Ben Nevis, for which substantial funds have been awarded, including: £650,000 to restore part of the pony path and to provide training in conservation and restoration, as well as providing archiving facilities, £221,000 to improve access to the North Face and more recently (2009) £475,841 for further path repairs and improvements to Glen Nevis

An important aspect of the partnership's work has been to foster skills through training in collaboration with Lochaber UHI.

Funding and support for the above has come from a wide range of public and private sources in the past, including EAGGF, HLF, ERDF, SRDP, Highland Council, HIE, Rio Tinto Alcan, JMT, OCUK, Scottish Mountaineering Trust, SNH, North Face and Care International. LEADER+ funding was provided to support set-up costs. Core funding has come mainly from Highland Council and SNH.

In July 2012 the Nevis Partnership received approval from the HLF for a Landscape Partnership Scheme which will significantly aid management of the Nevis area.

Whilst the partners recognise the role of the partnership in delivering parts of their programmes on and around Ben Nevis, there is an interest in securing a sustainable source of core funding to support the work at a strategic level, and potentially in a wider spatial context within a wider partnership<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.hlf.org.uk/HowToApply/programmes/Pages/landscapepartnerships.aspx>

<sup>3</sup> See <http://www.nevispartnership.co.uk/>

- **Lochaber Partnership** produced a **community development plan** in 2008. Based on five strategic objectives set by government. The purpose of the plan was to identify areas for improvement and to deliver better outcomes for Lochaber's residents and visitors, through specific action points.

Some of the plan's objectives are particularly relevant to this discussion. These include:

- *'strengthen the image of Lochaber as a tourist destination of choice, and improve the quality of the tourism offering locally'*
- *'promote and encourage action on biodiversity and geodiversity within Lochaber to protect our natural environment'*
- *'provide learning opportunities which inform, educate and involve communities in environmental issues and impacts'*
- *'provide opportunity for and encourage the development of affordable sustainable, well maintained buildings which support the accommodation needs of the people, businesses and services'*
- *'promote responsible access to the natural environment for sustainable activity'*
- *'promote and develop opportunities for people to learn about our natural outdoor environment'*
- *'jointly promote opportunities for increased physical activity for children & young people'*
- *'provide opportunities that promote and support the Gaelic language & Culture'*
- *'develop structures which support and encourage the participation of young people in community based activities'*

The plan explores in some detail a number of action points arising from these, e.g. 12 action points linked to the first of the above objectives, to include 14 partners:

<b>What are we going to do?</b>	<b>Strengthen the image of Lochaber as a tourist destination of choice, and improve the quality of the tourism offering locally</b>
<b>How are we going to deliver it (projects)</b>	<p><b>A</b> Develop a strategy for tourism development locally focusing on key issues of quality, customer service and staff development</p> <p><b>B</b> Work with partners to promote Lochaber</p> <p><b>C</b> Improve infrastructure for marine tourism in particular in the remoter areas of Lochaber</p> <p><b>D</b> Provide opportunities for life long learning in tourism locally</p> <p><b>E</b> Development of relevant information &amp; marketing material</p> <p><b>F</b> Encourage sustainable tourism on the islands, through the establishment of sustainable tourism strategies &amp; development plans.</p> <p><b>G</b> Provide a community cinema – enabling a state of the art facility</p> <p><b>H</b> Create micro tourist information facilities and services using new technology as appropriate.</p> <p><b>I</b> Support NP and THC to safeguard the sustainable economic use of the natural and cultural assets within the Nevis Area</p> <p><b>j</b> Support the development of sustainable tourist attractions for both indoor and outdoor facilities – including photographic / view points</p> <p><b>k</b> Support Initiatives which specifically add value to Lochaber as a quality tourist destination</p> <p><b>l</b> Support for projects which underpin local tourist services e.g. rural filling stations</p>
<b>Who we are going to deliver it with</b>	HIE, OCUK, LC, HC, JMT, Cross Border partnership (Interreg IV) CDMC, AMH, CC, ABC Group, NP, LGP, SOI, SDS

What appears to be lacking is an overarching delivery mechanism. Whilst it is possible that all the above objectives will be met by the target date (2012), a review of the factors that have facilitated their delivery or otherwise might help guide thinking on an appropriate governance structure.

- **The Sunart Oakwoods Initiative (SOI)** is a project based on a partnership between public, private and community groups. Although the area is not extensive, it is thinly populated. Unemployment at 1% was low, but mainly based on tourism and land based activities.

Originally conceived as an EU/Natura 2000 LIFEIII (a European Union funding scheme for safeguarding biodiversity) part-funded woodland restoration/conservation project based on Ardnamurchan, the SOI developed in response to community interests in Morvern and other areas, mainly as a result of the willingness of the mainly technical SAC management forum to engage with others. Funding of £500,000 was secured to enable some community-based projects to proceed.

A group of woodland owners has formed a formal partnership with FCS, based on an agreed management plan, which was implemented through LEADER+ funding. This has included support for a joint training project with similar interests in north Italy. A range of forest-based initiatives have developed, including the marketing of high quality building hardwoods, wildlife and adventure tourism and woodfuel.

A particular strength of the project lies in its inclusiveness, and in the way it has developed organically based on relatively small and rapid successes. A strategy was developed in 2004 after 8 years of development, which was widely consulted on and received considerable consensus on priorities.

Although overseen by a steering group, the SOI partnership of councillors, statutory bodies, private enterprise and communities remains unconstituted. Whilst in the past this allowed a degree of flexibility, enabling it to import some £3 million investment into the area, its lack of a clear management structure resulted in an inability to sustain a substantial funding source<sup>4</sup>.

- **The Cambrian Mountains Initiative** is a partner-based organisation still in its infancy. Its main purpose is to raise the profile of this area of mid-Wales, which was earmarked as a national park in 1974, but never designated because of the opposition of 4 out of the 5 concerned councils. Partners include three councils, the Countryside Council for Wales, Tourism Partnership Mid-Wales, CADW (the statutory heritage body) and a range of businesses.

Its main motivation is to promote sustainable farm-based products such as branded lamb, which is sold through the Co-operative Group, one of the partners. The Cambrian Mountains Trust receives an income through this sale, which it then uses to support community projects in the area. The Countryside Council for Wales provides a small amount of financial and staff support to the project.

Proposals for funding under the RDP are being formulated by the councils involved, and a HLF-funded Landscape Partnership is being sought, though this is at an early stage.

As well as the trust, a not for profit trading company has also been formed to deliver contracts and to license the Cambrian mountains brand. Its board is chaired by the

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.sunartoakwoods.org.uk/soitech/soitech.htm>

Sustainable Commissioner for Wales, who also chairs the CMI steering group. Various thematic groups are slowly evolving.

A key aspiration is to encourage upland farmers to sustain their livelihoods from the land, and to maintain the landscape character of the area, at this stage through the development of small scale land-based projects<sup>5</sup>.

- **The Blaenau Ymlaen Partnership**

Set within the boundary of Snowdonia National Park but excluded from it, Blaenau Ffestiniog is a former slate mining town that has a high incidence of unemployment and associated social problems. It is what is known as a Communities First ward, based on a programme designed to attract enterprise funding for the most disadvantaged communities in Wales.

Antur 'Stiniog is a social enterprise that aims to develop the area as a hub for outdoor activities<sup>6</sup>. The Chamber of Commerce and Communities First have established a Business Start-Up Pack to encourage locals to develop their own businesses. In order to co-ordinate these and other development initiatives and to make sure they add value to each other, a strategic partnership called Blaenau Ymlaen has been formed.

The chair of the town council is also the chair of Blaenau Ymlaen, and is also a county council member for the Communities First ward. The chair thus holds an important strategic position.

The willingness of people to co-operate is critical to success so far. Key individuals are important, and there are a number of these willing to drive development through Blaenau Ymlaen. A co-ordinated and integrated approach, together with an astute combination of statutory and democratic processes has been the hallmark of the partnership.

Small early successes have built confidence, and there is a general consensus among locals that the town's geography and cultural history offer a unique selling point. In fact the heritage railway and slate mine and museum attract high numbers of tourists, but the town itself needs significant improvement.

Through its regeneration strategy Blaenau Ymlaen has been able to secure £4.5 million in funding for renewal projects, £3 million of which will come via ERDF and over £1 million from the Welsh Government.

This is now seen by the town council as an opportunity to lobby for integration into Snowdonia National Park. It argues that inclusion will boost tourism numbers and spending, will attract appropriate businesses by association, and will also increase the likelihood of securing further grants. The park authority has agreed in principle to support its inclusion. Subject to assessment, which could take some years, the final decision will be by referendum of the local people<sup>7</sup>.

- **Two Villages, Two Valleys** was a 7-year research project based in the Peak District National Park (1981-1988). The project sought to demonstrate an integrated approach to land use management. It was based on community-level initiatives that brought together three principles of individuality, involvement and interdependence. Initially a 'Trial

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<sup>5</sup> <http://www.cambrianmountains.co.uk/about-us>

<sup>6</sup> [http://www.bowyddarhiw.com/e\\_projects2.html](http://www.bowyddarhiw.com/e_projects2.html)

<sup>7</sup> [http://www.gwynedd.gov.uk/upload/public/attachments/1100/BlaenauYmlaen\\_Artwork\\_final.pdf](http://www.gwynedd.gov.uk/upload/public/attachments/1100/BlaenauYmlaen_Artwork_final.pdf)

Alternative Grant' system was established, steered by a consortium of public bodies. This had three themes – business development, community schemes and farm/land management. Bearing in mind the period during which this project operated, and the small scale of its operation (a total population of 748 in 268 households) it was seen as a highly successful experiment that was seen as a precursor to the EU LEADER scheme.

This community-level project was designed to test more accessible ways for individuals and communities to apply for grants by avoiding a multiplicity of forms, objectives and processes and managing funds through a single channel. Using a small injection of funds from contributing bodies (about £500,000 at 2012 prices), the value of work generated was calculated at £1,500,000 (2012 equivalent prices).

- **Pontbren Farmers**

The Pontbren Group consists of ten neighbouring families who farm about 1,000Ha in the catchment of Pontbren Stream near Llanfair Caereinion in North Powys. They came together first in 1997 as a group of three; the remainder joined in 2001. They have invested a great deal of time considering the future of their farming enterprises and have identified a number of changes which they can make, individually and collectively, to improve their lot.

The land they farm is productive beef and sheep land. It ranges from 200 to 400m above sea level in the rolling countryside of the old county of Montgomeryshire (Trefaldwyn). Most of the land has been ploughed and re-seeded, beginning in the 1970's. There is a small area of unimproved grassland and some interesting small wet areas. Woodland occupies 1.5% of the land and there is a complex network of hedgerows which are highly valued for stock shelter.

The same families have occupied the land for generations. Welsh is the first language of most of the adults and all the children. Co-operative working was necessary in the past when farm work was labour intensive but with greater mechanisation this changed. When the original three families came together it was primarily to restore hedgerows and shelterbelts, some of which were common boundaries, with a view to keeping hardier breeds of sheep which could lamb outdoors. That process gathered momentum very quickly with some financial support from the local LEADER group. Coed Cymru had worked with one of the original members since 1992 and a number of streamside plantings and broadleaf shelterbelts had been established.

The first step when the group was formed was to provide large-scale maps to each farmer to identify their priorities in the first and second five-year periods. Their hand-drawn maps were then digitised, the plans costed and work started. At this stage there was no grant aid available for this work but the sheep market was buoyant and the businesses bore the cost. Eventually the group secured funding for 2 years from Scottish Power under their Rural Care Scheme. As the landscape began to alter a farm walk was arranged to explain the plans to immediate neighbours. Without exception they asked to join and the group of three became ten. This all happened a few weeks before the foot and mouth outbreak which badly affected this particular area. Despite this, the maps were quickly extended to include the new farms and the group was formally constituted as a legal entity.

At this point there was already plenty to show for their efforts so it was relatively easy to grab the attention of the Welsh Assembly and its agencies. It was so much more than an idea on paper, and that was crucial in securing political and hence financial support for the group and their ideas. It has been a lengthy process but the group is now formally recognised and funded as a unique project.

Long-term funding for woodland work has been agreed with the Welsh Assembly Government and Forestry Commission and further funding for hedgerows, ponds and wetlands has been agreed through Enfys– a lottery funded programme administered by Wales Council for Voluntary Action. Animal feedstuff is a major expense on most Welsh hill farms, few of which now grow arable crops. To reduce expenditure on feedstuff the group has reduced ewe numbers and increased the proportion of hardy breeds in their flocks. The WAG is supporting this experiment and monitoring the financial consequences. The programme of capital works is ambitious – too ambitious to be undertaken by farm labour alone. The group has taken the decision to use local labour and materials wherever possible.

The Pontbren approach is different in many ways. Farming, since the Second World War, has been politically encouraged to increase production with grants and subsidies and it has responded to the extent that the industry is now heavily dependent on public sector support. This group has made a bold attempt to take control of their own destinies. Rather than undertaking work which attracts grant aid they have set their own programme and sought funding that fits. In the case of the Enfys funding they have taken a step further and the group has administered the fund on behalf of Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA). This involves setting their own standards and inspection procedures.

The consequences could be far-reaching. Pontbren has become an agri-environment scheme, tailored to a particular catchment, combined with co-operative marketing projects and run from the bottom up. Its achievements are manifest and it has won support across the political spectrum<sup>8</sup>.

- **Mourne Heritage Trust** operates within the Mourne AONB, which was designated in 1986, and includes NI's highest mountain, SlieveDonard. The Trust was established in 1997 as a **partnership** with no statutory powers. It has five core funders namely; DoE Environment and Heritage Service, the Northern Ireland Tourist Board, Banbridge District Council, Down District Council and Newry and Mourne District Council. The Trust is a registered charity and an independent body. It comprises 21 voluntary trustees and sub-committees/working groups. It also has 13 full/part time staff. The trust has attracted over £5 million in grants to date, and in 2010 was able to secure an HLF grant to develop a £2 million Landscape Partnership programme with local communities.

The trust co-ordinated the AONBs first management plan on behalf of a MP steering group appointed by the Department of the Environment. The plan was launched in 2010, the steering group being reformed as an implementation group<sup>9</sup>.

### **National Scenic Area**

NSAs were introduced by Order in 1980, following preparatory work by the then Countryside Commission for Scotland (CCS) that identified 40 areas suitable for special protection for planning purposes. This effectively required local authorities to have policies in their development plans to protect NSAs, by restricting some permitted development rights, requiring consultation with the CCS and or the Secretary of State on certain defined developments. The purpose of their designation appeared to many to be based solely on the need to restrict development.

In 1985, CCS chose Rannoch Moor and Glen Lyon NSA to pilot the development of policies for the conservation and management of the NSA. This initiative led to the idea of

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<sup>8</sup> [http://www.pontbrenfarmers.co.uk/project\\_background.html](http://www.pontbrenfarmers.co.uk/project_background.html)

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.mournelive.com/>

management strategies to identify the features that make each NSA special, and to agree the broad actions needed to safeguard these features and their special qualities. These were proposed by SNH in 1997/98, as part of its advice on improving the effectiveness of the NSA designation. In its 2006 consultation on NSAs, SNH stated that NSAs 'represent the very best of Scotland's scenery and are "*natural heritage designations of the highest national standing, identifying the national interest in the scenic qualities of an area.*"

At the same time, SNH argued that NSAs '*are not subject to the same degree of recreational and related pressures as the National Parks whose objectives are consequently broader and require more comprehensive integrated planning and management.*' The term 'related' is not defined, but perhaps refers to the necessary infrastructure to manage recreational pressure.

The following aim was proposed in the 2006 consultation:

*'...to manage changes arising from development and other pressures on the special qualities of the NSA consistent with the underlying purpose, whilst recognising the social and economic needs of communities.'*

Given the differences in scale and type of pressures that each NSA is subject to, it is arguable that in order to achieve this aim, different governance models should be acceptable within the NSA concept, just as they are within the AONB concept south of the border. It is possible that the powers to vary the governance arrangements could be made through secondary legislation.

The major difficulty is that NSAs were initially designated by virtue of their *scenic* as opposed to other qualities. At the time Landscape Character Assessment had not been developed, and therefore the criteria by which the 40 areas were identified (and their boundaries defined) were difficult to defend objectively. The designation as a purely scenic (i.e. visual one) was questionable in any case. It is an NSA's ecosystem functions, as well as a wide range of perceptive and experiential factors, that make its qualities so outstanding, and the exclusion of these factors (and of frequently outstanding biodiversity) would make a nonsense of any management strategy for these areas. This is acknowledged by SNH in its advice on NSA management strategies, which states that they should refer to '*the physical, cultural and economic influence that shaped the landscape...*'

NSAs were given something of a boost as a result of s50 of the Planning etc. (Scotland) Act 2006, which inserted a section (263) in the principal planning act (1997), setting out criteria for reviewing and designating NSAs. Section 263(10) is particularly interesting since it states that 'regulations under this section may make different provisions for different purposes.' This appears to offer the possibility of flexible approaches and management systems according to the needs of each NSA (see discussion paper on planning).

Furthermore, SNH has recommended that areas meriting designation for their national scenic value will need additional resources to enable effective management through special funding programmes, targeting of incentive schemes and grants. The current Scotland Rural Development Programme has provided some funding under priority 13, and the revised programme is likely to be a key tool for securing funding for such initiatives. What is needed is an extension of the current provisions under the existing SRDP towards a wider range of management options based on the health of the ecosystem as a whole rather than on discrete priority areas. Scotland's Sustainable Land Use System should offer some basis for taking this approach forward.

Ten times the size of North Devon BR, the Wester Ross NSA is the largest, and was one of two NSAs chosen to pilot the development of a management strategy in 2001 (the three

Dumfries and Galloway NSAs were the others - see below). A steering group was established, serviced by a project officer for a period of 19 months, to help guide the process.

The aims of the strategy seek to:

- Continue to encourage both local people's, the national and international appreciation of the landscape of the area.
- Protect and enhance the quality of the environment.
- Contribute to the promotion of the sustainable growth of the economy of the area.
- Contribute to the quality of people's lives within the area.
- Contribute to and celebrate the cultural identity and distinctiveness of the area.

Highland Council was identified as the lead body to implement the action points in the strategy. However, unless special funds can be secured to proactively address the key issues and to co-ordinate the action points, effectiveness will be limited, since these will otherwise depend on the motivation of the individual stakeholders.

John Muir Trust (JMT), in its response to consultations prior to the 2006 Planning Act, expressed concern that the voluntary approach to the production of management strategies, together with a lack of ring-fenced secure funding, is unlikely to release the necessary resources, especially since this becomes burdensome on particular authorities with extensive NSAs.

**National Scenic Areas**

Advantages	Disadvantages
Has the potential to evolve into a proactive management system along AONB lines Potentially flexible governance options Provisions for boundary reviews	Has lost credibility Questionable boundaries No dedicated management system Associated with a negative, protectionist, approach to development management Has hitherto lacked any reference to recreation/access No dedicated secure funding

**Dumfries and Galloway, East and South Ayrshire Council areas**

These council areas are interesting for this study because in many ways they exemplify some of the possibilities of a proactive approach to local and integrated management.

- Dumfries and Galloway was the first (and currently the only) region in Scotland whose (three) **NSAs** have active management strategies. These have been endorsed by SNH and, importantly, by the council, and they are adopted as supplementary guidance to the development plan. Advisory groups have been established in each of the NSAs to take the process forward, by helping to steer the implementation of each strategy. A project officer (the only NSA officer in Scotland) will work to co-ordinate activities and provide support to the partners.
- Each of the NSAs fell within the boundary of the **Sulwath Connections Landscape Partnership**, and benefitted from this three year programme. The partnership was awarded a total of £3.9 million from a range of funders including HLF, RSPB, the council and SNH to carry out some 20 conservation, restoration and access projects across the region. During its life the programme was managed by a core team of

three, while partner organisations provided the lead for projects that they had prioritised.

- Galloway and the Ayrshire councils, with the support of the Southern Uplands **LEADER+** initiative, have been able to progress the nomination and establishment of the Galloway/Southern Ayrshire Biosphere. The **enthusiasm and commitment of key officers** was a significant factor in bringing forward this proposal. In April 2011, two Biosphere Development Officers were appointed to work with communities in the area. Strategic direction is provided by a Biosphere Partnership Board, which will ensure that the Biosphere Charter is sustained. There is also a Biosphere Working Group of seconded officers from the public sector partners<sup>10</sup>.

The effective governance and management of NSAs seems to depend on a number of factors:

- A group of influential and committed individuals with the ability to co-ordinate, mediate and engage with sometimes disparate groups
- A willingness on the part of those groups to recognise the value of collaboration
- A supportive funding body such as LEADER/HIE that is able to inject funds to initiate a robust engagement and planning programme
- The active engagement of local authority politicians and executive officers willing to provide professional support
- Sources of significant funds from e.g. HLF (Landscape Partnership)
- A willingness on the part of government and its departments to recognise that the effective management of these areas contributes to its overall programme of sustainable development

### **Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty**

Governance across UK AONBs differs in subtle ways, and in Northern Ireland it is overtly different. Originally conceived as being less extensive than NPs, some AONBs (such as North Pennines, Chilterns, Cotswolds, Bowland) are significantly larger, and contain natural and cultural values that are equivalent to those of NPs. There are currently 46 AONBs, of which 8 are in Northern Ireland.

The designation in England and Wales differs from that in Northern Ireland, and there are some practical differences between some of the English/Welsh AONBs. In England and Wales, overall responsibility lies with the local authority/authorities, whereas in Northern Ireland it remains with the NI Environment Agency within the Department of the Environment.

Governance arrangements vary according to the perceived needs of each AONB. Some have **Joint Advisory Committees** represented by local council politicians, landowners, farmers, residents and conservation/recreation/enterprise interests. There might be a **core management board** of funders, with an advisory (non-funding) board. There might also (or only) be a scrutinising **partnership**, which is an advisory forum. There may also be **working groups** to co-ordinate action on particular issues. Two AONBs use **Joint Committees**, which have the delegated power to make decisions and to control a budget.

Some AONBs have a **conservation board**. These are not a legal requirement, and the initiative comes from the constituent local authorities. They do not have any planning

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<sup>10</sup> <http://www.gallowayandsouthernayrshirebiosphere.org.uk/>

powers, which remain with the local authorities. However, boards are seen as useful in the case of larger AONBs with a number of administrative boundaries. Such boards are independent of the constituent local authorities, which enables them to operate more flexibly than JACs. The Secretary of State typically appoints 33% of the board members. Although boards are not statutory consultees on planning matters, it would be possible to establish a non-statutory memorandum or protocol by agreement. Where a conservation board exists, its funding reflects the fact that it cannot reclaim VAT costs in the way that other AONBs can, and is therefore 80% as opposed to the 75% normally available<sup>11</sup>.

All English and Welsh AONBs have an officer (and in some cases dedicated staff) to co-ordinate management, and to prepare management plans as required by law (Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000). These are usually units within the relevant local authority.

Defra explains the funding arrangements: *'The responsibility for funding AONBs currently rests with Natural England. AONBs administered by their constitutional local authorities receive 75% of their funding from Natural England, the remaining 25% coming from their constituent local authorities. Each AONB's funding depends on agreement between the constituent local authorities and Natural England. The agreement has to take into account the resources of the local authorities and Natural England and their overall priorities.'*<sup>12</sup>

The following examples reflect how different AONBs approach the issue of governance.

- **Wye Valley AONB** has a **Joint Advisory Committee**, constituted in 1972. The committee consists of 12 councillors drawn from the three counties and one district, as well as the NFU and the Country Land and Business Association, and three local environmental/amenity groups. Up to 5 non-voting members can be co-opted. The JAC is supported by a technical officers' working group made up of staff from the four councils plus a number of government/agency representatives, drawn from both the Welsh and English sides of this trans-boundary AONB. The AONB unit has a staff of five whose task is to co-ordinate implementation of the management plan; advise the JAC on key issues; forging partnerships; seeking funding sources; and raising awareness of AONB values<sup>13</sup>.
- **Cannock Chase** is one of two AONBs managed by a **Joint Committee**, which operates in a similar manner to a JAC, but has delegated executive and decision making authority under a protocol agreed between the partnership, which allows it to consider applications that are likely to have an adverse impact on the AONB.
- **The Cotswolds AONB** is managed by a **Conservation Board**, established in 2004 under s86 of the CROW Act 2000, by an Establishment Order. The board consists of 37 members, of which 12 are ministerial appointees<sup>14</sup>.

There is a staff of 12, whose main tasks entail providing advice and co-ordinating the activities of volunteers and other groups. There are approximately 350 voluntary wardens supporting the work of the AONB on the ground.

- **Cornwall AONB** is managed by a **Partnership** of funding bodies and interests. It meets three times a year to discuss issues and to monitor progress of the

<sup>11</sup> <http://archive.defra.gov.uk/rural/documents/protected/aonb-cbguidance.pdf>

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.defra.gov.uk/rural/protected/nationally/aonb/>

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.wyevalleyaonb.org.uk/index.php/about-us/>

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/?page=boardmembers>

management plan. It has no powers as such, except insofar as its constituent members (Cornwall CC) have planning powers, or (English Heritage, Natural England, Environment Agency) statutory powers, or are significant landowners (National Trust). The partnership is supported by a small team of 2 full-time and 4 part-time staff<sup>15</sup>.

**Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty**

Advantages	Disadvantages
Focused aim - conservation first - sends out a clear message Flexible in management terms - governance reflects needs of the area Represents both local and national interests Strong brand Can integrate planning and land-use management Thinking is generally joined up Useful for managing conflict Statutory structure Secure core funding Statutory management plan - material planning document Accountable body	Focused aim - conservation first May be seen as not prioritising community well-being May be seen as too supportive of conservation interests May promote a 'two-tier' countryside Restricts development of SMEs/enterprises - does not allow for substantial increase in scale Seen as weak relative to NPs Limited funding

**Geopark**

Geoparks, like biosphere reserves, are not well understood by the public. These are areas of outstanding geological importance and the purpose of their designation is to promote their heritage for the benefit of local people. Although their interest is primarily geological, and based on sites of international importance, this is not exclusive, and they are as likely to be of important archaeological, ecological, cultural and aesthetic interest. These are often interrelated and are recognised as such. There are currently 8 UK geoparks including Lochaber.

A key aspect of their designation is therefore what is called 'geotourism', i.e. the promotion of an area's key values to visitors, driven by the communities that live in that area. Another key driver is the opportunity that an area provides for education and research.

There is a network of European Geoparks (established in 2000), with which any geopark must work in order to be formally recognised as such. Membership, which is for a three-year reviewable period, also requires a management and action plan. There are currently about 50 geoparks in the network, from 19 states, and it owns the label 'European Geopark'. The network is endorsed by UNESCO, which is represented, alongside IUCN, on its governing body.

As with biosphere reserves, the label does not of itself have implications for planning, but it is a material consideration.

Geoparks are essentially partnership organisations committed to the ideals of the geopark network. One such is **FforestFawr** in the Brecon Beacons National Park. Its partners include the national park authority and the Brecon Beacons Society, the local authorities, archaeological societies, academic institutions, agencies, the farmers' unions and tourism

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.cornwall-aonb.gov.uk/partnership.html>

associations. The partnership is serviced through a geopark development officer based in the national park.

Its current function is to audit all the sites of geological interest in the park area and beyond, which will feed into future planning and land management policy. It also works to raise awareness of the special geological qualities of the area's community landscapes<sup>16</sup>.

## Biosphere Reserve

The Biosphere Reserve concept is not generally well understood. It is non-statutory and does not come with significant funding. Furthermore, it is not so much as designation, but rather an accreditation given by UNESCO at the request of the government. However, it offers possibilities in terms of attracting European funding for specific projects; and as a brand it offers opportunities for local enterprises such as food, tourism, culture and heritage, based on the idea that the core natural resources provide significant 'services' to the surrounding population, and that it has an interest in maintaining and enhancing them.

Each BR is intended to fulfil **three basic functions** that are complementary and mutually reinforcing:

- a conservation function: to contribute to the conservation of landscapes, ecosystems, species and genetic variation;
- a development function: to foster economic and human development which is socio-culturally and ecologically sustainable; and,
- a logistic function: to provide support for research, monitoring, education and information exchange related to local, national and global issues of conservation and development.

All three functions are to occur to varying degrees, as it is deemed appropriate, across three interrelated zones: a legally protected core area (such as national nature reserve), surrounding buffer zones and outer transition (or human settlement) areas.

While the 531 BRs in 105 countries (in 2008) are intended to be community-based and locally-driven, individual biosphere reserves typically extend beyond the boundaries of local jurisdiction to incorporate surrounding interests and authorities. Some countries have state-sponsored BR agencies or private-sector partnerships, in many others, BRs are established non-governmental organizations or simply volunteer-based community groups.

One of the most important challenges of BRs is how they are governed since they have no formal authority and no legislative or regulatory power. This is at once one of their greatest strengths (i.e., perceived as politically neutral, non-advocacy, open forums) and one of their greatest limitations (i.e., lacking legislative governance powers or regulatory authority to control development activities)<sup>17</sup>.

In the UK there are currently 8 BRs, of which 4 are in Scotland. The following examples describe two BRs that have been resubmitted since the rules were amended in the 1990s:

- **North Devon Biosphere Reserve**

Braunton Burrows forms the core of this 14,177Ha BR on the North Devon coast.

The Biosphere Reserve Partnership is the body responsible for co-ordinating, on behalf of the constituent local authorities and stakeholders, the management of the

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.fforestfawrgeopark.org.uk/about/>

<sup>17</sup> Pollock RM, 2009

Biosphere Reserve. The Partnership includes the local authorities, educational establishments, National Trust, Dartmoor National Park, the Environment Agency, Christie Devon Estates, the North Devon AONB Partnership, the Taw-Torridge Estuary Forum and Natural England<sup>18</sup>.

The day to day running of the biosphere was until recently managed by a joint North Devon AONB/Biosphere Service of seven staff. The AONB element is funded mainly by Natural England, and the BR mainly by Devon County Council.

Close working between the AONB and the BR, under the umbrella of a single local authority, is a key element of the area's management<sup>19</sup>.

- **Dyfi Biosphere Area**

Wales' only BR, geographically, the area is essentially the catchment of the River Dovey (Dyfi in Welsh), which extends from the Aran Mountains to the estuary and coast of this mid-Wales region, and is based on a number of statutory and non-statutory reserves. It is 75,900 Ha in size.

First designated in 1976, Dyfi was seen to be too 'reserve focus' and largely irrelevant until it was reviewed under new rules, and re-registered in 2008/9.

It is based on a membership of individuals, supported by a partnership that includes the constituent local authorities, Snowdonia National Park, the Countryside Council for Wales, Welsh Government, Farmers' Unions, Tourism Partnership Mid-Wales, Forestry Commission and the Environment Agency. The partnership is serviced by Ecodyfi, the local regeneration organisation for the area, on a part-time basis. The funding arrangements are both limited and complicated, and are secured through considerable creative arrangements. Currently three staff are employed on a part time or short term basis, and whilst there is no doubt that all the partners are committed to the principle, there are undoubted difficulties in capacity.

It is interesting that there is no LEADER link here, nor (as yet) is an HLF-funded Landscape Partnership in place, which in any case will not cover the whole biosphere area.

There is no requirement by UNESCO to use the term 'Biosphere Reserve', and in the case of Dyfi, the term 'Biosphere Area' is preferred, in order to promote the notion that whilst the nationally/internationally designated reserves form the core, the linkage extends to the surrounding communities<sup>20</sup>.

## Biosphere Reserve

Advantages	Disadvantages
Opportunity for people to come together Flexible in management terms - governance reflects needs of the area Allows groups/communities to develop ideas & enterprises Strong brand	Not well known as a governance/ management concept May lack a clear strategy - no obvious focus Non-statutory designation/body May be seen by some as too conservation-led, by others as too development-led

<sup>18</sup> <http://www.northdevonbiosphere.org.uk/partnership-members/>

<sup>19</sup> <http://www.northdevonbiosphere.org.uk/management-partnership/>

<sup>20</sup> <http://www.biosfferdyfi.org.uk/start/>

<p>Of global interest                  Can integrate planning and land-use management                  Bottom up - relies on creativity &amp; drive of people</p>	<p>May be seen as a compromise with no real teeth                  Limited funding                  Relies on creativity &amp; drive of people                  Needs a lot of work to generate enthusiasm                  Of limited value in planning terms                  No clear boundary - though can be LCA-based</p>
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**Regional Park**

Regional Parks were established under the 1967 Countryside (Scotland) Act, at a time when there were no protected landscape designations (part V of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 did not apply to Scotland). This was at a time of expanding recreation in the countryside, and saw the establishment of country parks in England and Wales under the equivalent 1968 Act south of the border.

The act provided local authorities the power to designate and manage **locally** important areas, following a public inquiry, with the support of central government through SNH.

Regional parks are large areas of attractive countryside that lie close to large settlements, and are popular for outdoor recreation, and therefore require appropriate management in order to integrate access and conservation efforts and to avoid conflict with other land uses. By their nature, regional parks often include landscapes that are considered to be of regional importance and can also provide important havens for wildlife. They have been created in order to provide co-ordinated management for recreation alongside other land uses such as farming and forestry. Their relevance to the Ben Nevis/Glen Coe situation is the high profile given to public recreation.

Each regional park is funded through a combination of central and local authority sources, and is required to produce a regional park plan.

Regional parks are typically managed by a committee (sometimes joint) of voting councillors and non-voting members such as SNH, and a consultative forum of land use, conservation and recreation interests that meets twice a year. Whilst the committee has no planning powers, the designation of a regional park is a material consideration.

Although seen as 'large' areas of attractive countryside, they are small relative to, say Nevis and Glen Coe NSA. The three existing regional parks - Clyde Muirshiel, Pentland Hills and Lomond/Lochore - are 280, 90 and 65 sq km respectively, whilst Nevis and Glen Coe NSA is about 900 sq km (although many NSAs are considerably smaller).

Regional parks are designated by local authorities, with support from Scottish Natural Heritage, under section 48A of the Countryside (Scotland) Act 1967 as amended by section 8 of the Countryside (Scotland) Act 1981.

None of the existing regional parks is NSA, since their landscape is considered to be of regional rather than national importance.

**National Recreation Area**

National Recreation Area is a United States designation. They are designated under an act of the US Congress, although early NRAs were designated under memoranda of understanding and agreement between the US Bureau of Reclamation and the National Park Service. The designation prioritises recreation activities while protecting the environment and the land from incompatible development. Policies for NRA date from the time of the US Wilderness Act and the growing awareness of the benefits to society or outdoor recreation opportunities.

NRA policy specifies that these areas are managed with a priority for recreation rather preservation or resource development. This differs from standard US National Park Service policy which typically prioritises environment or cultural preservation over recreational use of the land. It also differs from the policies of the National Wildlife Protection Service which prioritises natural conditions, and the US Forestry Service that balances timber, minerals, wildlife, recreation and watersheds.

The US Recreation Advisory Council (RAC) envisaged a system of NRAs consisting of areas of land with high scenic and recreation appeal but of lower significance than the unique scenic and cultural elements of the National Park System. The RAC wanted the NRAs to be readily accessible to urban populations and to fulfil a range of outdoor recreational needs. The Council guidelines specify seven primary criteria for identifying lands for NRA designation. These are:

1. National Recreation Areas should be spacious areas, including within their perimeter an aggregate gross area of not less than acres<sup>21</sup> of land and water surface, except for riverways, narrow coastal strips, or areas where total population within a 250 – mile radius is in excess of 30 million people.
2. National Recreation Areas should be located and designed to achieve a comparatively high recreation carrying capacity, in relation to type of recreation primarily to be served.
3. National Recreation Areas should provide recreation opportunities significant enough to assure interstate patronage within the region of service, and to a limited extent should attract patronage from outside of the normal service region.
4. The scale of investment, development, and operational responsibility should be sufficiently high to require either direct Federal involvement, or substantial Federal participation to assure optimum public benefit.
5. Although nonurban in character, National Recreation Areas should nevertheless be strategically located within easy driving distance, i.e., not more than 250 miles from urban population centers which are to be served. Such areas should be readily accessible at all times, for all-purpose recreational use.
6. Within National Recreation Areas, outdoor recreation shall be recognized as the dominant or primary resource management purpose. If additional natural resource utilization is carried on, such additional use shall be compatible with fulfilling the recreation mission, and none will be carried on that is significantly detrimental to it.
7. National Recreation Areas should be established in only those areas where other programs (Federal and non-Federal) will not fulfill high priority recreation needs in the foreseeable future.<sup>22</sup>

Six secondary criteria should also be applied in situations where they have a meaningful relationship to a specific proposal.

1. Preference should be given to proposed National Recreation Areas that:
  - A. Are within or closely proximate to those official U.S. Census Divisions having the highest population densities;
  - B. Are in areas which have a serious deficiency in supply of both private and public outdoor recreation areas and facilities as determined by the National Recreation Plan.
  - C. Are in areas which have a comparatively low amount of federally provided recreation carrying capacity;
  - D. Show an optimum ratio of carrying capacity to estimated cost.
2. National Recreation Areas may be based upon existing or proposed Federal water

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<sup>21</sup> No figure for the number of acres is included in the guidelines

<sup>22</sup> Policy on the Establishment and Administration of Recreation Areas, Recreation Advisory Council Circular No 1, March 26, 1963

impoundments where it can be shown that significant increases in the scale of recreation development are required, beyond the level normally justified under standard multiple-purpose project development, in order to assure that full recreational potential is provided for projected needs.

3. National Recreation Areas may include within their boundaries scenic, historic, scientific, scarce or disappearing resources, provided the objectives of their preservation and enjoyment can be achieved on a basis compatible with the recreation mission.
4. National Recreation Areas should be in conformity with the National Recreation Plan prepared by the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation, and shall take into consideration State, regional, and local comprehensive plans.
5. Whenever possible, National Recreation Areas should be selected, developed, and managed to provide maximum compatibility with the recreation potential of adjacent rural areas in private ownership.
6. Preference should be given to areas within or proximate to a Redevelopment Area as officially designated by the Department of Commerce and deemed significant in the economic improvement of such a Redevelopment Area.

NRA's are managed by a variety of agencies. Of the 41 designated areas 19 are the responsibility of the US Forest Service, 19 the National Park Service and two are managed by the Federal Bureau of Land Management. These agencies operate within the Department of the Interior or the Department of Agriculture. One NRA, Cuyahoga Valley, has since been declared as a National Park.

The **Santa Monica Mountains NRA** is a useful example of an NRA. It contains 62,360ha of land in this area between the Pacific Ocean and the inland valleys. Its south-eastern slopes are part of the headwaters of the Los Angeles River. In terms of ownership and management, the California State Park Service owns 17,000ha, the National Parks Service controls 8,700ha, but the remainder is a patchwork of local agency parks, university study reserves and private conservation easements. The Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy, a state agency, was created in 1980 to acquire land for open space, for wildlife and habitat management. It is an interesting example of establishing links between critical habitats, as well as extending them where appropriate.

<b>National Recreation Areas and their Federal Management Agencies 2012</b>		
<b>US Forest Service</b>	<b>National Park Service</b>	<b>Federal Bureau of Land Management</b>
Allegheny	Amistad	White Mountains
Arapaho	Big South Fork	Lewiston
Flaming Gorge	Bighorn Canyon	
Grand Island	Boston Harbor Islands	
Hells Canyon	Chattahoochee River	
Land Between The Lakes	Chickasaw	
Moosalamoo	Curecanti	
Mount Baker	Delaware Water Gap Gateway	
Mount Hood	Gauley River	
Mount Rogers	Glen Canyon	
Oregon Dunes	Golden Gate	
Pine Ridge	Lake Chelan	
Rattlesnake Robert T. Stafford	Lake Mead	
White Rocks	Lake Meredith	
Sawtooth	Lake Roosevelt	
Whiskeytown-Shasta-Trinity		

(Shasta and Trinity Units) Smith River Spring Mountains Spruce Knob-Seneca Rocks Winding Stair Mountain	Mississippi Ross Lake Santa Monica Mountains Whiskeytown-Shasta-Trinity	
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## National Park

A UK national park is typically managed by a single authority (NPA) that has full planning powers within the local authority planning system, which enables it to produce its own **park-wide development plan** and to determine development proposals. It also has a role in co-ordinating the various bodies with an interest in land within its area, through liaising with them and collaborating on the production of a **park-wide management plan**. Its powers are thus extensive.

There are variations on this model. In the case of planning, the park authority may:

- produce a development plan and determine applications in full exercise of its powers e.g. Peak District NPA/Loch Lomond & Trossachs NPA
- produce a development plan and delegate back the development management functions to the constituent local planning authorities e.g. South Downs NPA (NB this is a 3-year interim arrangement)/Cairngorms NPA (for 'local' developments).

In the case of management:

- the park authority may by agreement take on delegated functions to manage and maintain rights of way on behalf of the relevant body e.g. Exmoor NPA manages the network in its area for Somerset County Council
- the authority might contribute/collaborate in various ways in regard to conservation and visitor management on privately and publicly owned land e.g. in the Derwent Valley, Peak District National Park (PDNP) wardens are funded jointly by Forestry Commission/Severn-Trent Water and PDNP

National parks are managed by a body that sets out to reflect and balance local and national concerns, and to balance the purposes for which the parks are designated. The managing body comprises a mix of elected local politicians (at parish/community level and at district/county level) and of representatives of the national interest, appointed by the relevant minister.

Snowdonia National Park Authority currently consists of 18 members, of which 12 are appointed by the representative local councils and 6 by the Welsh Government by virtue of their knowledge or experience in some key aspect of park management. In contrast, the Peak National Park has a membership of 30, of whom 14 are directly appointed by the Secretary of State. The membership in Cairngorm is 19, of whom 7 are appointed by the Scottish Government.

It is worth pointing out that national parks and AONBs in the UK have had a long gestation period, and different rates of development. Much of the structure and system that the Scottish parks have followed was not in place at the time of the English/Welsh parks designation.

- In 1961, i.e. 10 years after designation, Dartmoor NP was spending the equivalent of £200,000/year and had a dedicated staff of just 5. Its first national park officer was appointed in 1974, i.e. 23 years after designation. Its first management plan was produced in 1977.

- Snowdonia also had 5 staff in 1961, consisting of a consultant planner, two clerks and two treasurers. There were no field staff at this time. SNP's spend in 1961 was the equivalent of about £85,000 in today's money. The first park wardens were appointed by their constituent local authorities. In 1965 the first information officer was appointed.
- In contrast, the PDNP already had a dedicated planning team in 1951, and a national park officer by 1954. Its first development plan was in place by 1955.
- Nowadays, PDNP's visitor spend is £356m/year, Snowdonia's is £396m/year whilst that of Dartmoor is £111m/year. The calculation is largely based on visitor numbers and therefore on demand management costs.
- The budgets of each of these authorities are: PDNP £8.565 million; Snowdonia £5.819 million; Dartmoor £5.041 million<sup>23</sup>. Loch Lomond and Trossachs NPA spent £7.929 million in 2010/2011, whilst the spend of the Cairngorms NPA was £6.13 million<sup>24</sup>

National Parks in Scotland were envisaged to have a range of powers and responsibilities determined according to local circumstances. In its 1998 consultation document 'National Parks for Scotland'<sup>25</sup>, Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) stated that *'at one extreme, a Park body could have extensive executive powers...in effect to become a new form of public authority with a large staff and many functions. At the other extreme, it could be a non-executive body which acts to integrate and co-ordinate the efforts of others. **Where a park body should lie along this spectrum is likely to vary from park to park.**'* (my emphasis).

SNH envisages a range of key roles for park governance:

- Planner
- Guardian
- Co-ordinator
- Local voice
- Information provider
- Leader

Scotland has some history regarding national parks. A Scottish National Parks Survey Committee was established in 1945 under Sir Douglas Ramsay, which identified 5 so-called National Park Direction Areas. Proposals were set aside in 1951 with the change of government, and it was not until 1978 that any formal recognition was given to nationally important landscapes, through the designation of the weaker National Scenic Areas.

Scotland has two national parks, and there are currently no plans to increase their number. Importantly, Scottish Environment Link (SEL) points out that those who campaigned for national parks in Scotland aspired to have them designated as the equivalent of IUCN Category II areas, rather than the equivalent of Category V, as they have turned out to be (see paper on IUCN Categories).

<sup>23</sup> [http://www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/data/assets/pdf\\_file/0016/122092/2010-11accounts.pdf](http://www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0016/122092/2010-11accounts.pdf)  
[http://www.eryri-npa.gov.uk/data/assets/pdf\\_file/0007/139156/Accounts\\_2010-11.pdf](http://www.eryri-npa.gov.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0007/139156/Accounts_2010-11.pdf)  
[http://www.dartmoor-npa.gov.uk/data/assets/pdf\\_file/0007/129265/20110902-Authority-Reports.pdf](http://www.dartmoor-npa.gov.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0007/129265/20110902-Authority-Reports.pdf)

<sup>24</sup> [http://www.audit-scotland.gov.uk/docs/central/2010/fa\\_0910\\_loch\\_lomond\\_trossachs\\_national\\_park.pdf](http://www.audit-scotland.gov.uk/docs/central/2010/fa_0910_loch_lomond_trossachs_national_park.pdf)  
[http://www.audit-scotland.gov.uk/docs/central/2011/fa\\_1011\\_cairngorms\\_national\\_park.pdf](http://www.audit-scotland.gov.uk/docs/central/2011/fa_1011_cairngorms_national_park.pdf)

<sup>25</sup> <http://www.snh.org.uk/press/detail.asp?id=78>  
 see also <http://www.scottishcorpus.ac.uk/corpus/search/document.php?documentid=1248>

The implications of this distinction are significant in terms of spatial planning. Throughout the UK, there is a general assumption in favour of development, subject to a number of constraints, and the reality is that, even within UK National Parks, most proposals are approved. The Sandford Principle applies, so that where there is an irreconcilable conflict between Park objectives, the conservation objective takes priority.

A strict interpretation of the Category II approach could turn this presumption on its head. Many Category II areas are government owned and managed (though this is not a criterion for this category), some have been depopulated (though IUCN does not endorse this), and there is a presumption against any development except in pursuit of the park's main objectives to protect a natural/near natural system and to provide an educational/recreational resource.

The recent criticism of Cairngorms NP regarding housing developments at An Canas Mor near Aviemore is based on its failure to apply this principle under s9(6) of the National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000. According to SEL<sup>26</sup>, some have argued that Scotland's National Park Authorities operate more like rural development agencies than park authorities.

Category II is in fact a perfectly conceivable model for Scotland, but would require an extensive area of land capable of supporting an entire ecosystem in a natural state (or one capable of restoration to a near natural state). It is worth noting that many category II areas previously thought 'pristine' have a long history of sustainable use.

There is now some debate regarding the way forward for national parks in Scotland, with some believing that there should be a strategy and process for designating new parks, whilst opponents state that flaws in the existing system need to be addressed before any further parks are considered for designation.

Interestingly, there was considerable support for national park status in the referendum held in Harris in 2009, with more than twice as many in favour of the proposal as against it. But this has not been taken up by the Scottish Government; and nor has it pursued the proposal to identify at least one coastal and marine national park.

**National Park**

Advantages	Disadvantages
Focused aim - conservation first - sends out a clear message Planning powers Represents both local and national interests Secure long-term funding Strong image Can attract international interest Can influence infrastructural development on the back of tourism Can integrate planning and land-use management Thinking is generally joined up Useful for managing conflict	Focused aim - conservation first Seen as not prioritising community well-being Seen as another layer of bureaucracy Seen as overly restrictive Seen as distant from its constituents Seen as too supportive of conservation/recreation interests May promote a 'two-tier' countryside Restricts development of SMEs/enterprises - can prevent increase in scale May be seen as too expensive and of limited management effectiveness Top-down - seen as 'imposed' on people

<sup>26</sup> <http://www.scotlink.oOrg/files/publication/LINKReports/LINKEnvLawsRhetorictoReality.pdf>

## 7 IUCN protected area categories

### Introduction

The **International Union for Nature Conservation (IUCN)** was founded in 1948. Its aim is to influence, encourage and assist States, government agencies, research bodies and non-governmental organisations throughout the planet to conserve nature and to ensure that the use of natural resources is equitable and sustainable. It has a partnership of over 1000 members across 160 nations.

The **World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA)** is the global network of managers and experts, with over 1,300 members in 140 countries. It is one of six voluntary commissions, whose aim is to promote the designation and effective management of terrestrial and marine protected areas as part of IUCN's overall mission.

Scottish Environment Link is a member of IUCN, as are a number of conservation bodies linked to Scotland. At the UK level, Defra is a member. IUCN is in the process of developing a toolkit to assign all UK protected areas to IUCN categories.

This paper:

- Discusses the differences between IUCN and UNESCO designations
- Summarises the IUCN protected area management categories
- Considers Categories V (protected landscapes/seascapes) and VI (protected area with sustainable use of natural resources)

### UNESCO Designations

Before discussing the IUCN categories, it is critical to distinguish between these and the two well-known categories promoted by UNESCO - these are **World Heritage Sites** and **Biosphere Reserves**.

Under the UN World Heritage Convention, state parties agreed to identify and submit areas of high natural and/or of high cultural value for designation by the World Heritage Committee based in Paris. They also agreed to propose sites as biosphere reserves. The biosphere concept is straightforward, entailing the protection of a **core natural area**, surrounded by a **buffer area** and a **transition zone**, the latter two reflecting different levels/intensities of human intervention.

It is possible, as discussed below, to have an area designated under both UNESCO and under IUCN management guidelines, and this occurs fairly frequently.

### IUCN designations and governance guidelines

The International Union for the Conservation of Nature is the organisation through which stakeholders in conservation communicate and develop consensus. It has six sub-groups that provide technical support and expertise, one of which is the World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA). The purpose of this commission is to **provide a global standard**

for designating and managing protected areas. Whilst its work is no more than prescriptive, IUCN is unlikely to endorse areas that do not meet its overarching definition of a protected area:

*“A clearly defined geographical space, recognised, dedicated and managed, through legal or other effective means, to achieve the long-term conservation of nature with associated ecosystem services and cultural values”.*

A full explanation of what this definition implies is found in the IUCN Guidelines (2008)<sup>27</sup>. However, it is worth stressing that the conservation of *nature* has to be the overriding purpose of any designated protected area recognised by IUCN. Other uses are acceptable as long as they do not conflict with this key purpose<sup>28</sup>.

Since 1972 WCPA has worked to develop the six categories of protected area management described below. In its most recent review (2008), it has also summarised a range of governance types<sup>29</sup>. The six categories and the governance types are illustrated in table 1.

Bearing in mind that these are no more than guidelines, the six management categories reflect increasing levels of human interaction. They do not imply either that any one category is 'superior' to any other, nor that the biodiversity and ecosystems are any more or less valuable in terms of human wellbeing.

Each of the six categories (NB category I is subdivided) has a name, but as explained below, titles or labels can be confusing (and can also be politically charged), and it is more useful to understand what each category implies, rather than simply to memorise the numbers and their titles.

An example of how confusing these labels can be, the label 'national park' has been used in the past for protected areas in each of the six categories (Dipperu NP, Australia, Category 1a; The Burren NP, Ireland, Category II; YozgatCamligi NP, Turkey, Category III; Pallas Ounastunturi NP, Finland, Category IV; Snowdonia NP, UK, Category V; Expedition NP, Australia, Category VI).

The categories are:

**1a (Strict Nature Reserve).** These areas are tracts of more or less natural ecosystems, species or geodiversity features, which will be degraded or destroyed by all but the lightest human contact. The objective is to maintain their integrity, mainly through minimal

Governance types	A. Governance by government			B. Shared governance		C. Private governance		D. Governance by indigenous peoples and local communities			
	Federal or national ministry or agency in charge	Sub-national ministry or agency in charge	Government-delegated management (e.g., to an NGO)	Transboundary management	Collaborative management (various forms of pluralist influence)	Joint management (pluralist management board)	Declared and run by individual land-owners	...by non-profit organizations (e.g., NGOs, universities)	...by for-profit organizations (e.g., corporate owners, cooperatives)	Indigenous peoples' protected areas and territories – established and run by indigenous peoples	Community conserved areas – declared and run by local communities
Protected area categories											
Ia. Strict Nature Reserve											
Ib. Wilderness Area											
II. National Park											
III. Natural Monument											
IV. Habitat/ Species Management											
V. Protected Landscape/ Seascape											
VI. Protected Area with Sustainable Use of Natural Resources											

Table 1: IUCN protected area matrix  
Source IUCN (2010)

<sup>27</sup> [http://www.iucn.org/about/union/commissions/wcpa/wcpa\\_puball/wcpa\\_pubsubject/wcpa\\_categories\\_pub/?1662/Guidelines-for-applying-protected-area-management-categories](http://www.iucn.org/about/union/commissions/wcpa/wcpa_puball/wcpa_pubsubject/wcpa_categories_pub/?1662/Guidelines-for-applying-protected-area-management-categories)).

<sup>28</sup> for example, the presence of a reservoir or other infrastructure does not preclude designation. The question then is which category a protected area containing such infrastructure falls into.

<sup>29</sup> See Section 6 for information on protected area governance and integrated management mechanisms

disturbance. They need not be extensive, and it is therefore possible that such a designation might apply to **Rannoch Moor**. It is possible that such an area might be the **core of a biosphere reserve** or **contained within a Category V area**, as well as categories Ib, II, IV or VI.

**Ib (Wilderness Area).** Usually more extensive than Ia, and largely free of human impacts/infrastructure. Natural forces predominate, and whilst limited numbers of people may enter and explore such areas, they do so in self-reliant ways. Generally, such areas might be inhabited by small groups of indigenous pastoralists or hunter-gatherers.

**II (National Park).** Similar to Ib, and the main purpose is to conserve the natural forces that drive the ecosystem. However, management may include the provision of infrastructure for visitor use. Visitor experience and education is a key management purpose. Historically such areas were designated in order to exclude indigenous groups (e.g. Yosemite NP, USA) but this is not encouraged, and indigenous groups are part of the management system (e.g. Mount Everest/Sagarmatha NP, Nepal).

**The Highlands are the only region where the above two categories would be conceivable, e.g. Torridon, Dundonell/Fisherfield Forest.**

**III (Natural Monument/Feature).** This might be a outstanding landform, submarine cavern, waterfall or ancient sacred grove. Often relatively small sites, they are often of great interest to visitors, and require sensitive management to avoid erosion or congestion, and loss of their biodiversity or cultural values. A good example of a potential Category III site in Scotland might be **Fingal's Cave**. Such a site might be established within any of the other categories except Ia.

**IV (Habitat/Species Management Area).** Such areas are established to protect, enhance and/or restore particular valued species and habitats, and the management reflects this, so that there is extensive condition monitoring, and often (not always) active, regular intervention. This is because such areas may be fragmented or may be insufficient in size to sustain their integrity unsupported. This may have been historically done by traditional agricultural systems, and abandonment/intensification has often resulted in degradation. **Many SSSIs or NNRs fall into this category.**

**V (Protected Landscape/Seascape).** This category refers to protected areas where the interaction of people and nature over a long period of time has resulted in distinctive landscapes with significant ecological, biological, cultural and scenic value, and where safeguarding these special qualities is vital to sustaining the integrity of the area and the livelihoods of its people. This area requires active management, is generally extensive and often zoned to include sensitive and less sensitive areas within its boundaries. **This category applies to UK National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. It may also apply to some National Scenic Areas, Heritage Coasts and extensive tracts owned and managed by NGOs. In some countries, Biosphere Reserves also fall into this category.**

**VI (Protected area with sustainable use of natural resources).** This unwieldy title refers to protected areas where ecosystems and habitats, together with their cultural associations and traditional use practices are maintained. They are often extensive areas, mostly in a natural, 'no take' state, but where local people extract products in a low-level way that does not impact on the integrity of the area. The key point about such areas is the management of natural resources to provide direct benefit to associated communities. Least likely to apply in Europe, this category usually occurs in large, highly productive areas such as marine or tropical forest environments.

It is possible to 'nest' some discrete protected areas within others. For instance it is common to identify areas categorised as I, III or IV *within*, say, a category V or VI area.

For a full discussion of these categories, refer to the IUCN Guidelines (2008)<sup>30</sup>.

### **Category V protected landscapes/seascapes**

Globally there are many thousands of discrete areas where historic human interactions with nature have resulted in distinctive landscapes with high natural and cultural values that are nationally recognised. They are known by many names internationally, including (by no means exhaustively) nature parks (Canada), scenic areas (China), protected landscapes (Croatia), landscape parks (Poland), nature conservation areas (Sweden) etc. In the UK there are national parks, areas of outstanding natural beauty and national scenic areas.

This category is defined as:

*'An area of land, with coast and sea as appropriate, where the interaction of people and nature over time has produced an area of distinct character with significant aesthetic, ecological and/or cultural value, and often with high biological diversity.'*

The purpose of this designation is to maintain, enhance and restore the area's biological, ecological and cultural integrity.

Category V areas include Pacific islands, Himalayan massifs, traditional rice terraces in the Philippines or farmed landscapes in Canada and the USA, and many forms of governance have been adopted to address the particular management needs of each of these areas.

For a fuller discussion of IUCN Category V, refer to the Management Guidelines for IUCN Category V Protected Areas<sup>31</sup>.

### **Category VI protected areas with sustainable use of natural resources**

This category is appropriate for large areas that are largely natural, including tropical forests, deserts, large areas of wetland, coasts and marine areas, taiga etc. It is especially useful in establishing extensive areas where people are directly dependent on natural products to sustain their livelihoods, and where there is a need or an opportunity to link groups of protected areas, or ecological corridors or networks.

Category VI protected areas conserve ecosystems and habitats, together with associated cultural values and traditional natural resource management systems. They are generally large, with most of the area in a natural condition, where a proportion is under sustainable natural resource management and where low-level non-industrial use of natural resources compatible with nature conservation is seen as one of the main aims of the area.

Examples of category VI include Talamanca Forest Reserve, Costa Rica, mostly under strict protection but some indigenous forest use permitted; Mamiraua Reserve, Brazil comprising 6 million hectares of Amazon forest; Lake Titicaca, Peru; Fraser Heritage River, Canada; Donana National Park, Spain; San Francisco Peaks National Forest, USA; Great Barrier Reef, Australia.

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<sup>30</sup>

[http://www.iucn.org/about/union/commissions/wcpa/wcpa\\_puball/wcpa\\_pubsubject/wcpa\\_categoriespub/?1662/Guidelines-for-applying-protected-area-management-categories](http://www.iucn.org/about/union/commissions/wcpa/wcpa_puball/wcpa_pubsubject/wcpa_categoriespub/?1662/Guidelines-for-applying-protected-area-management-categories)

<sup>31</sup> <http://data.iucn.org/dbtw-wpd/edocs/PAG-009.pdf>

## Conclusion

What matters most is whether the area in question is being managed effectively, and what governance and management system is the most appropriate for achieving the agreed objectives, whether this is by central and/or local government, by an agency or NGO, by local citizens specially appointed or elected to steer management or by any combination of these. The key questions are:

- Is there a consensus that the area is nationally important?
- Does it conform to the appropriate category description?
- Is there a management/governance system in place to sustain its integrity?
- Are there sufficient funds to focus on the development and achievement of management objectives?

## 8 Planning

### Guide to the planning system

The Scottish Government produced a guide to the planning system in 2009<sup>32</sup> in which it states that the planning system exists to regulate the use of land and buildings by granting or refusing planning permission. Planning permission is only needed for 'development', which is defined by the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 to exclude agriculture and forestry operations<sup>33</sup>. The Scottish Government states that the effect of the planning system's decisions should be to help increase sustainable economic growth. This means that the planning system should help build a growing economy but at the same time protect the environment for future generations and make sure that communities can enjoy a better quality of life. There are three main parts to the planning system:

- **Development Plans** which set out how places should change and also set out the policies used to make decisions about planning applications.
- **Development Management** which is the process for making decisions about planning applications.
- **Enforcement** which is the process that makes sure that development is carried out correctly and takes action when development happens without permission or when conditions have not been followed.

The Scottish Government has set out the policy context for development plans<sup>34</sup> and expects them to:

- have a sharp focus on land and infrastructure;
- concentrate on what will happen, where and why;
- make more use of maps and plans to explain and justify the long-term settlement strategy; and
- contain policies and proposals that will achieve predictable outcomes.

### National Scenic Areas

National Scenic Areas (NSA) were established by Order under planning legislation by the Secretary of State in 1980. The Planning etc (Scotland) Act 2006 renews the powers of Scottish Ministers to designate NSAs where an area is of outstanding scenic value in a national context by adding a new section to the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997. Thereafter special attention is to be paid to the desirability of safeguarding or enhancing an NSA's character or appearance. These areas are protected by national policy in that the objectives or qualities of designation and the overall integrity of the area should not be compromised. The new legislation was brought into force in December 2010 through

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<sup>32</sup> Scottish Government. (2009). *A guide to the planning system in Scotland*. Edinburgh: Scottish Government.

<sup>33</sup> The Planning etc (Scotland) Act 2006 amends this to make marine fish farming development.

<sup>34</sup> Scottish Government. (2010). *Scottish Planning Policy*. Edinburgh: Scottish Government.

The Town and Country Planning (National Scenic Areas) (Scotland) Designation Directions 2010<sup>35</sup>.

In 2007 & 2008 Scottish Natural Heritage surveyed all the NSAs and, for each one, produced an up-to-date list of the landscape qualities that make each one special. This work, carried out in partnership with Historic Scotland and the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland, was published in 2010<sup>36</sup>. 'Special qualities' are defined here as 'the characteristics that, individually or combined, give rise to an area's outstanding scenery'. The Special Qualities of the Ben Nevis and Glen Coe National Scenic Area are listed as:

- A land of mountain grandeur
- A land of classic highland vistas
- Human settlement dwarfed by mountain and moorland
- The expansive Moor of Rannoch
- The spectacular drama of Glen Coe
- The wooded strath of lower Glen Coe
- The narrow and enclosed Loch Leven
- The impressive massif of Ben Nevis
- The wild Mamores and secretive Glen Nevis
- The fjord-like upper Loch Leven
- Long and green Glen Etive
- The dark heritage

## Local Planning Authority

The primary local planning authority is the Highland Council. Fort William and Ardnamurchan (ward 22) is one of 22 wards within the Highland area and is served by 4 councillors. It has a population of 11,412 with the main centres being Fort William, Ballachulish, Kinlochleven and Strontian. At the Highland Council meeting on 27 October 2011 it was agreed that from January 2012 the North Planning Applications Committee (Wards 1-11) and the South Planning Applications Committee (Wards 12-22) would replace the three Area Committees. The South Planning Applications Committee meets in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness<sup>37</sup>.

The Highland Council is one of the pilot authorities to deliver a new local development plan based on partnership working with SEPA, SNH, Scottish Water and Transport Scotland. The aim is to demonstrate the benefits of a partnership approach to the preparation of a new-style, concise, map-based plan.

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<sup>35</sup> Scottish Natural Heritage. (2012, 1-February). *National Scenic Areas: SNH*. Retrieved 2012 8-February from Scottish Natural Heritage web site: <http://www.snh.gov.uk/protecting-scotlands-nature/protected-areas/national-designations/nsa/>

<sup>36</sup> Scottish Natural Heritage. (2010). *The special qualities of the National Scenic Areas (Report No 374)*. Edinburgh: Scottish Natural Heritage.

<sup>37</sup> Highland Council. (2012, 16-January). *South Planning Application Committee: Highland Council*. Retrieved 2012, 15-March from Highland Council web site: <http://www.highland.gov.uk/yourcouncil/committees/spac-comms/>

The council is now at the notice of ‘Intention to Adopt’ stage for the Highland-wide Local Development Plan<sup>38</sup>. The Highland wide Local Development Plan will update and replace parts of the Highland Structure Plan as well as parts of existing Local Plans which cover strategic policy issues. It will set out:

- the spatial strategy and vision for the area;
- clear policy guidance for development of all types (including reference to Supplementary Guidance where appropriate); and
- the development principles of key action areas.

With respect to the NSA, there are two proposed policies of particular note:

- **Policy 58 Natural, Built and Cultural Heritage-** All development *proposals* will be assessed taking into account the level of importance and nature of heritage features, the nature and scale of development, and any impact on the feature and its setting ..... For features of national importance we will allow developments that can be shown not to compromise the amenity and heritage resource. Where there may be any significant adverse effects, these must be clearly outweighed by social or economic benefits of national importance. It must also be shown that the development will support communities in *fragile areas* who are having difficulties in keeping their population and services.
- **Policy 62 Landscape-** Development *proposals* should relate to the *landscape characteristics* and special qualities of the area in which it is proposed, including in scale, form, pattern and use of materials also taking into account cumulative effects where these occur. Developments should enhance *landscape characteristics* where the condition of these is deteriorating or has deteriorated, resulting in the loss of landscape quality and/or distinctiveness of place. *Landscape Character Assessments* and the Council’s *Supplementary Guidance on Sustainable Design* should be taken into account, in addition to relevant capacity studies, design guides and *Supplementary Guidance*.

## SWOT analysis of current mechanisms

Strengths (internal)	Weaknesses (internal)
Single local authority Pilot authority for partnership development plan production New development plan close to adoption with modern NSA policies Powerful stakeholders are happy with the status quo Highland Council has a dynamic planning improvement plan process Highland Council has developed planning protocols	Local authority covers an area far larger than the NSA (only a part of one ward out of 22 wards) Local authority has responsibilities far wider than landscape Large, remote planning committee NSA policies open to interpretation (presumption in favour of economic development) Lack of resources Highland Council recognises that it must improve its customer feedback processes
Opportunities (external)	Threats (external)
Scottish Government encouraging partnership working	Lack of funds Political apathy

<sup>38</sup> Highland Council. (2012, 7-March). *Highland Wide Local Development Plan: Highland Council*. Retrieved 2012, 15-March from Highland Council web site: <http://www.highland.gov.uk/yourenvironment/planning/developmentplans/localplans/HighlandWideLocalDevelopmentPlan.htm>

SNH seeking strategies for NSAs  
 A willingness by some stakeholders to experiment  
 People can influence the development of the Highland Council planning improvement plan  
 Highland Council may negotiate a planning protocol for the NSA  
 Supplementary Guidance recognising the NSA purposes can be adopted by the Highland Council

Antagonism to the existing alternative model (national park)  
 Powerful stakeholders are happy with the status quo  
 Highland Council may agree development briefs or master plans that undermine NSA purposes  
 Highland Council may agree strategies or frameworks on specific issues that undermine NSA purposes

<i>Comments from consultation</i>	<i>Comments from consultation</i>
<p>The area can have improved and developed infrastructure for locals and tourists without damaging the landscape.</p> <p>The area can be an exemplar of sustainable environmental and visitor management with the landscape clearly improved and restored visually and ecologically.</p> <p>The area can be one that does not have inappropriate development which endangers its environment or tourist economy; where visitors and locals alike can enjoy the scenic beauty and natural habitat; have awareness of the aims and ethos of future planning; and the community working in partnership to protect the environment.</p> <p>A strategy for the future can be developed which recognizes the needs of the local community, local business interests and visitors.</p> <p>A vision can be developed – especially among local people – that shows a willingness to move outside the accepted comfort zones and think longer term and strategically.</p>	<p>Lack of strategic vision which acknowledges the socio-economic importance of the landscape.</p> <p>No champion for the area as a whole.</p> <p>Poor or nonexistent long- or even mid-term planning.</p> <p>Inappropriate development being allowed to happen by poor planning decisions and regulations.</p> <p>The boundary between urban and rural is more and more difficult to define and protect. Makes the area vulnerable to inappropriate development such as housing and business sites.</p> <p>Perception that there is a lack of planning enforcement capacity.</p> <p>There is a lack of awareness about existing designations – NSA, SAC, SSSI, etc – and their implications, opportunities and purposes.</p> <p>Poor infrastructure - no improvements have been made to the A82, poor digital links and no low-carbon infrastructure.</p> <p>Lack of will (empathy level) particularly at council and government level</p> <p>Short-termism</p> <p>Remote planning determination by the South Area Committee in Inverness</p>

**Issues arising from SWOT analysis**

- Planning decisions are perceived by some to be remote and disinterested
- There are no specific Ben Nevis and Glen Coe planning policies or guidance
- The ‘planning system’ is perceived by some as harming the area
- There is no recognised strategic vision for the area
- The sustainability model (environment, economy and social) is perceived by some to be out of balance
- There is central government support for actions to conserve and enhance a NSA

## Review of models used in other protected landscapes

### National Scenic Area

Dumfries and Galloway Council has decided to enhance the protection of the three NSAs in its area by using its existing management structures. The Council, in partnership with SNH, has published Management Strategies for its three National Scenic Areas. These strategies have been adopted as supplementary guidance to the Local Development Plan and so are now used to inform planning decisions. In addition, a wide range of organisations and individuals have expressed support for the strategies and are committed to assisting in their implementation<sup>39</sup>.

### National Park

There are national parks in England, Scotland and Wales. None are state owned; they are IUCN Category 5 protected landscapes (as are NSAs). There are two national parks in Scotland, Loch Lomond and the Trossachs (designated 2002) and the Cairngorms (designated 2003) under the National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000 to safeguard areas of outstanding and diverse landscapes, habitats and communities. The Act sets out four National Park aims:

- To conserve and enhance the natural and cultural heritage,
- To promote the 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, and
- To promote sustainable social and economic development of the communities of the area.

Each aim is equal unless there is an internal conflict between them in which case the conservation and enhancement of the natural and cultural heritage must prevail.

**The Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park** Authority's board comprises 17 members, 10 of whom serve on the Planning and Access Committee. A Planning Forum has been established which consists of around 30 people from a variety of backgrounds and interests, including property development, renewable energy, tourism and affordable housing. Community Councils and other organisations, such as RSPB Scotland, the Scottish Council for National Parks and the Dunbritton Housing Association are also represented. The Forum meets to share views and experiences of the Planning Service and discuss ideas for its improvement.

The National Park Authority has planning powers to decide all planning and related applications within the boundary of Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park; it prepares and adopts a Local Plan to guide planning decision-making<sup>40</sup>.

**The Cairngorms National Park** Authority's board comprises 19 members, all of whom serve on the planning committee. Planning in the Cairngorms National Park is unique. It involves the Cairngorms National Park Authority working alongside the five local authorities

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<sup>39</sup> Dumfries & Galloway Council. (2012, 23-February). *National Scenic Areas: Dumfries & Galloway Council*. Retrieved 2012, 15-March from Dumfries & Galloway Council web site: <http://www.dumgal.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=1991>

<sup>40</sup> Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Authority. (2011, 12-May). *Planning in the National Park: Loch Lomond & The Trossachs NPA*. Retrieved 2012, 8-February from Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Authority web site: <http://www.lochlomond-trossachs.org/index.php/planning/>

which operate in the Park, namely Aberdeenshire, Angus, Highland, Moray and Perth & Kinross.

The Cairngorms National Park Local Plan is helping to deliver the Cairngorms National Park Plan, which provides an overarching management strategy for the National Park. There is a Development Control Protocol that is an agreement between the Cairngorms National Park Authority and four of the local authorities (Aberdeenshire, Angus, Highland, Moray) about the exercise of development control functions within and adjacent to the Cairngorms National Park. The Cairngorms National Park Local Plan and a range of Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) cover the Aberdeenshire, Angus, Highland and Moray parts of the Park only. The Cairngorms National Park Local Plan and SPG do not cover the Perth & Kinross area of the Park. The Perth & Kinross Highland Area Local Plan, or the Perth & Kinross Eastern Area Local Plan, and any associated SPG, apply.

Work is currently underway on a new Local Development Plan which will cover the whole of the extended Park. Until that is completed, in 2013, the arrangements set out above will apply<sup>41</sup>.

### **Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty**

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is a designation used in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. They are the equivalent to National Scenic Areas. There are a variety of management models for AONBs, which are discussed in our governance paper. None of these bodies are planning authorities; the planning powers remain with the local authorities in whose area the AONB lies. But the majority of the AONBs have some form of recognised group to champion their protection and this involves engagement with the planning authority. In England and Wales there is a statutory duty on the local authorities to produce a management strategy for each AONB. Such strategies are generally prepared by AONB staff and, once adopted after consultation, can inform planning decisions. There may also be supplementary guidance and advice. Where an AONB Unit has been established, there may be a specialist planning officer and a formal Planning Protocol agreed with each planning authority that defines the engagement with the planning system. Each planning authority would expect an AONB body to comment upon planning applications that affect their area.

### **Options for handling the planning system under integrated management**

There are a number of strategies that can be deployed to handle the planning system under integrated management. These can be considered under two main headings. Options can be developed to improve the engagement with the existing planning authority (primarily Highland Council). Alternatively, a new planning authority can be considered with a constitution suitable for Ben Nevis and Glen Coe.

#### **Engage with the existing planning authority**

Before the existing planning authority can consider changing how it handles the planning system in the area it will need to receive evidence that there are issues to address. There needs to be a consistent message given to the council and it must be able to respond to a group it recognises. There needs to be a body with which it can negotiate; it need not be a new body but it must be one supported by the local communities and with a clear and relevant purpose.

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<sup>41</sup> Cairngorms National Park Authority. (2009). *Planning: Cairngorms National Park Authority*. Retrieved 2012, 8-February from Cairngorms National Park Authority web site: <http://www.cairngorms.co.uk/park-authority/planning/>

### Coordinated planning responses

Anyone can comment upon planning actions and decisions, community councils do so regularly. There is a need to put in place a body that is seen as representing the whole area. Once recognised, that body can ensure that authoritative responses on planning policy consultations and planning applications are sent to the planning authority. This is best achieved by empowering a chartered planner or by undertaking training in the planning system. Scrutiny of the Scottish Government's web site<sup>42</sup> and access to the Planning Aid for Scotland web site<sup>43</sup> are a good source of advice.

Strengths	Weaknesses
No special powers or authorities needed Weekly list of planning applications is published on-line	It may be difficult to stand out in the crowd The planning authority may not recognise your knowledge/expertise Professional knowledge may be essential A lot of time can be wasted On-line searches are very time consuming Need good broadband connection

### Planning protocol

It is generally more effective if there is an agreed way of engaging with the planning authority. This ensures that a productive partnership can develop. Planning protocols are commonly agreed between bodies looking after a protected landscape and the planning authorities in England and Wales. These protocols establish a process for engagement with the planning system. They are not large documents but they must be formally agreed. They can take some time to negotiate with each planning authority.

Fortunately for the Nevis and Glen Coe area, one local planning authority, the Highland Council, covers the bulk of the area. Very small parts of the study fall within Argyll and Bute Council and Perth and Kinross Council areas. This would change if an area larger than the existing NSA were to be considered.

The Highland Council already has two planning protocols and believes that they help to provide a consistent service by setting out the operational rules and boundaries<sup>44</sup>. The Council undertakes to constantly to monitor the performance of its protocols. Its current protocols are:

- Planning protocol for handling planning applications for people with disabilities (operational from 11th October 2010)
- Planning protocol for handling planning applications for small business development (operational from 11th July 2011)

If a body is established that is recognised as championing a specific area then it may be possible to negotiate an additional protocol that ensures an appropriate engagement with the planning system. There are a number of examples that can be used as a model ranging from the simple (e.g. Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) to the complex (e.g. Sussex Downs Area of Outstanding Beauty).

<sup>42</sup> <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Built-Environment/planning>

<sup>43</sup> <http://www.planningaidscotland.org.uk/>

<sup>44</sup> Highland Council. (2011, 30-August). *Planning Protocols: Highland Council*. Retrieved 2012, 28-March from Highland Council web site:

<http://www.highland.gov.uk/yourenvironment/planning/protocols.htm>

Strengths	Weaknesses
<p>The planning authority gives clear recognition to a champion for the area</p> <p>There is certainty about the processes and actions</p> <p>Time wasting is avoided</p> <p>A partnership is established</p>	<p>It takes time and expertise to negotiate</p> <p>There needs to be a clearly defined champion</p> <p>Implementation needs monitoring</p>

### Supplementary Guidance

Rather than just reacting to the actions of the planning authority it is possible to be pro-active. The development plan for the area is about to be adopted so there are few opportunities in the short-term to influence policy development. But every opportunity should be taken to get policies written that either benefit the area or do not harm the area. The development plan system does allow opportunities to refine policies for areas or topics. There is a process that allows Supplementary Guidance to be drawn up and adopted. Where this is to form part of the local development plan, authorities should ensure the guidance:

- is derived from the plan, and
- has been the subject of discussion and engagement.

The guidance cannot go beyond the limits set by the approved development plan but meanings can be made clear. Supplementary guidance should not be applied in the consideration of development proposals until it has been formally agreed by the authority following consideration of comments and representations on the draft<sup>45</sup>. Common types include<sup>46</sup>:

- **Development briefs or master plans** which provide a detailed explanation of how the council would like to see particular sites or small areas develop.
- **Strategies or frameworks on specific issues** for example, guidance on the location of large wind farms.
- **Detailed policies** for example on the design of new development.

Significant resources are needed to create supplementary guidance but the Highland Council has already adopted such documents. The development plan does include two relevant policies that would frame supplementary guidance:

- Policy 58 Natural, Built and Cultural Heritage
- Policy 62 Landscape

The first task would be to agree with the council what topics were suitable for such guidance and what form these should take. A management plan for an area of interest can become Supplementary Guidance.

<sup>45</sup> Scottish Government. (2010). *Scottish Planning Policy*. Edinburgh: Scottish Government.

<sup>46</sup> Scottish Government. (2009). *A guide to the planning system in Scotland*. Edinburgh: Scottish Government.

Strengths	Weaknesses
A statutory basis A powerful way of influencing planning decisions A way of disseminating information / knowledge	Takes considerable time/resources to achieve Needs professional expertise (may come from the Council) Needs a rigorous process (including wide engagement / consultation)

### Enterprise Area

To help create a supportive business environment, the Scottish Economic Strategy provides for the creation of Enterprise Areas. To date, there is a commitment to establish four Enterprise Areas but further sites have not been ruled out. A range of incentives are available to encourage private investment at each Enterprise Area site. These could include a streamlined planning process<sup>47</sup>.

The focus is clearly on economic development but wider benefits can accrue to the area around the initiative, particularly in relation to communications. The initiative would have to come from Highlands and Island Enterprise and there is a rigorous identification and selection process using the following criteria:

- Evidence of market failure or barriers to growth which Enterprise Area incentives could help remove.
- Evidence of the ability to create new jobs and increase growth.
- Evidence of the need for improved local economic performance.
- Development challenges which could prevent early site delivery.

Strengths	Weaknesses
A statutory basis A stream-lined approach to planning High speed broadband connections International promotion and marketing Skills and training support New employment opportunities	Focus is on economic development and not environment Needs professional expertise from Highland and Island Enterprise Likely to be a relatively small area (Fort William)

### Create a new planning authority

If it is not possible to work with the present planning authority then there is the option of creating a new planning authority. Local government reorganisation is not likely to happen in the near future so the only way of achieving a new planning authority is to first create a national park. That is in the sole gift of the Scottish Government, as advised by SNH. The Scottish Government has also to decide on the powers to be given to the national park authority (NPA). They may not include planning when there is already a single planning authority for the designated area (boundary issues are discussed in a separate section).

If the NPA is given planning powers it may not be established as the sole planning authority for the area. The Loch Lomond and The Trossachs NPA is the sole planning authority for its designated area; currently the Cairngorms NPA is not. Even if the NPA is the sole planning authority, it may choose to delegate those powers back to the local authority (as the English Broads Authority did for some years). In any case, in the early years (probably the first three)

<sup>47</sup> Scottish Government. (2012, 2-March). *Enterprise Areas in Scotland*. Retrieved 2012 йил 14-April from The Scottish Government web site:  
<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Economy/EconomicStrategy/Enterprise-Areas>

the NPA is likely to adopt the existing development plan. It would be sometime before it had the knowledge and resources to produce its own policies. But it would be a new body with the narrow functions defined by the national park legislation. It would be focused on the conservation and enhancement of the natural and cultural heritage of the designated area.

The consultation exercise completed for this report identified the remoteness of planning decisions as a serious issue. Fewer concerns, though, were expressed about the quality of planning decisions. The Highland Council has offices in Fort William and a planning team is based there. The public has access to the relevant planning officers and applications in Fort William. Currently, over 90% of planning decisions are delegated to this team. This means that the majority of decisions are taken locally. Major or contentious applications are dealt with by the planning committee. Currently this meets in Inverness and may not have local councillors making the decisions. The planning officers are those based in Fort William but it is the remoteness of the Committee that causes the concern. It is understood that Highland Council is aware of these worries and is considering a response.

If a NPA were to be established with planning powers there will be locally based planning decisions and staff. It is likely that the Highland Council planning staff based in Fort William would be transferred in whole or part to the NPA, depending upon where the planning offices of the new authority are located. However, a large proportion of the members making planning decisions will be local to the park.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<p>A powerful statutory voice will champion the area</p> <p>Planning authority is focused on landscape issues</p> <p>Planning authority has only a small area to consider</p> <p>National / international scrutiny of decision making</p> <p>Additional central government funds into the area</p> <p>Some directly elected members for the area</p> <p>Planning authority will have no baggage or precedent to follow</p> <p>Planning authority is likely to be willing to innovate</p>	<p>The only option at the moment is to create a National Park</p> <p>There are no plans to designate new national parks in Scotland</p> <p>SNH wants to improve the way NSAs are managed without the need for further designations</p> <p>There needs to be strong local support</p> <p>Highland Council will feel disempowered</p> <p>National park authority has only a narrow remit – Highland Council will still provide the majority of local services</p> <p>Significant resources are required</p> <p>Central government may not grant planning powers (in full or in part) to the national park authority</p> <p>The park authority members may have contrary views about planning in the area</p> <p>The park authority may simply adopt the existing development plan</p> <p>Not all members will serve on the planning committee</p> <p>Voluntary and charitable bodies may feel disenfranchised</p>

## 9 Guiding principles for setting the boundary of a protected area

**Transition areas:** The boundary should not be expected to be a sharp barrier between areas of differing quality. Often there will be a transition of character across a sweep of land: in those cases the boundary chosen should be an easily identifiable feature within this transition. The boundary should be drawn towards the high quality end of the transition in a manner that includes areas of high quality land and excludes areas of lesser quality land. Visual associations may also be used to help define the extent of land for inclusion in these circumstances.

**Types of boundary:** Wherever possible, an easily distinguishable permanent physical boundary should be chosen. Boundaries should not be overly complex or convoluted. Where a boundary follows a road, the road verges and embankments may be included in the designation where they blend into the wider landscape but normally the metalled surface of the road will be excluded.

**Other administrative boundaries:** Where local government boundaries follow suitable lines, it may be administratively convenient to adopt them. In the majority of cases, however, they will be unsuitable. Similarly, land ownership is not itself a reason for including or excluding land from the designation – there will often be instances where part of a landholding sites within the designated area and part sits outside.

**Inclusion of settlements:** A settlement should only be included if it lies within a wider tract of qualifying land, having regard to the influence of the settlement on the land in question. Settlements should be assessed on their individual merits and particularly on their character, qualities and relationship to adjoining countryside. The extent to which countryside penetrates the built-up area may also be relevant.

**Integrity of settlements:** Towns or villages should not normally be cut in two by a boundary. The ability of a settlement to act as a gateway to a designated area is not dependent on its inclusion with a designation. A settlement does not equate to a community and the division of community council areas is acceptable in drawing a boundary.

**Incongruous development:** Unsightly development on the edge of the area should generally be excluded unless it is of a temporary or transient nature.

**Land allocated for development:** Land on the margins of the area identified in development plans (both adopted and emerging), or having the benefit of planning permission, for major built developments (including the extraction of minerals and other deposits) should normally be excluded, unless the land will be developed or restored to a land use and quality which contributes to the designation purpose. Land should not be included merely to seek to protect it from specific development proposals.

**Features of interest:** Areas and features, such as wildlife, historic, cultural or architectural value, which are situated on the margins of an area should be included where practicable providing that they are situated within a tract that meets the designation criteria.

**Marine boundaries:** In coastal areas where a marine boundary is to be drawn, the boundary should follow the mean low water mark.

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