

Badenoch & Strathspey Conservation Group

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Dear Chief Planner

Implementation Net Economic Benefit and Planning Guidance

The Badenoch & Strathspey Conservation Group is a community group covering the district of Badenoch & Strathspey. This district is almost wholly within the Cairngorms National Park. The Group's aims include encouraging active conservation of the area through wise use, and encouraging high standards of planning in harmony with the environment.

We welcome the opportunity to comment on the Draft Advice on Net Economic Benefit and Planning.

We have two principal comments:

1. We are concerned as to how economic benefits and costs are to be assessed and compared.

The Cairngorms National Park is renowned for its exceptional importance in terms of natural heritage and landscape. It is especially important to recognise the economic benefit of the area's exceptional natural heritage and the economic cost of negatively impacting on this heritage.

The results of a recent visitor survey by the National Park Authority demonstrate that "most visitors" come to the Cairngorms National Park "for the scenery and wildlife", indicating that these two features generate an economic benefit. However, these are two features of the National Park that are particularly liable to suffer negative impacts as a result of built development, with a consequent economic cost.

2. We are concerned that the process of assessing economic benefits and costs should be accessible, transparent and clear to the general public; and that it is ensured that local communities and communities of interest are in a position to fully engage with the subject.

Yours sincerely

Dr Gus Jones
Convener