

# NEVIS STRATEGY



## Summary of the Strategy for Environmental & Visitor Management in the Nevis Area

*Prepared by the -  
The Nevis Working Party  
with funding from -*



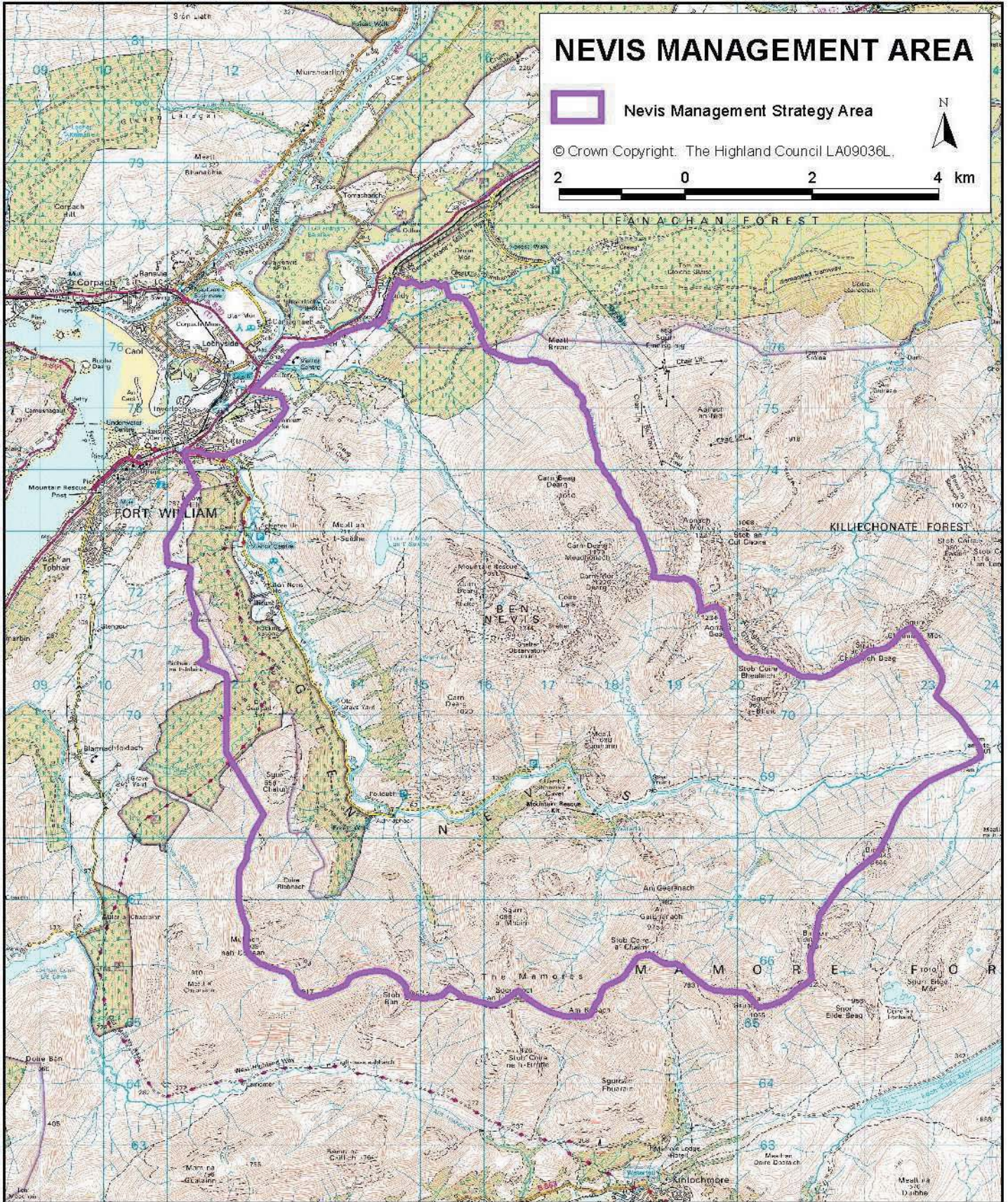
# NEVIS MANAGEMENT AREA



Nevis Management Strategy Area



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## CHAIRMAN'S PREFACE

*Ben Nevis and Glen Nevis are cherished by the people of Lochaber and all who visit this area. The conservation, enhancement and management of the Nevis Area are essential to safeguard its landscapes, wildlife and recreational opportunities, which bring enjoyment to the local community and large numbers of visitors each year. In turn, these visitors bring important income and employment to Fort William and Lochaber.*

*The Nevis Strategy presents -*

- *a dynamic, long-term **Vision** for the future of the Nevis Area*
- *a 10-year **Action Programme** for environmental and visitor management*
- *proposed **arrangements for implementing the Strategy**.*

*Progress on implementing the Strategy will depend on the availability of public and other funding and the agreement of landowners and others with specific interests in the Nevis Area. In these respects, the Action Programme provides a 'menu' of projects, from which individual projects, or groups of projects, may be progressed as funding and consents become available.*

*The Vision was developed in 1999 through consultations and workshops with the community, land managers and wider interest groups. A Public Meeting and further consultations were undertaken at the Draft Strategy stage (mid-2001). The Nevis Working Party is committed to progressing the Strategy and future management arrangements through consultation with all those with interests in the Nevis Area.*

*As a guide to readers of this Summary -*

- *sections 1 and 2 provide an introduction to the Strategy and its preparation*
- *sections 3 to 9 discuss specific topics - for example, land and environmental management, visitor provision and management, and planning and development*
- *sections 10 and 11 outline proposals and next steps for implementing the Strategy.*

*I should like to thank all those who have assisted the development of the Nevis Strategy, including members of the community and interest groups who participated in the initial Workshops, from which many of the proposals in the Strategy have been derived, and those who provided responses to the Draft Strategy.*

**Councillor Neil M. Clark,**  
*Chairman, Nevis Working Party,  
October 2001.*

## FURTHER INFORMATION AND COPIES OF THIS SUMMARY

Information on the Nevis Strategy and further copies of this Summary are available on request from -

**The Nevis Working Party, c/o The Highland Council, Lochaber House, High Street,  
Fort William PH33 6EL.** (tel. 01397 707234; e-mail: [lochaber.area@highland.gov.uk](mailto:lochaber.area@highland.gov.uk)).

This document can be viewed on [http://www.highland.gov.uk/what's\\_new.htm](http://www.highland.gov.uk/what's_new.htm)

# NEVIS STRATEGY : SUMMARY

## Strategy for Environmental & Visitor Management in the Nevis Area

### 1. THE NEVIS STRATEGY

#### THE STRATEGY

The **Nevis Strategy** provides a framework and action programme to safeguard, manage and, where appropriate, enhance the environmental qualities and visitor opportunities and appreciation of the Nevis Area (map on back cover). It has been prepared by the Nevis Working Party and six Topic Groups over the last 18 months and builds on previous consultations. As an advisory document, the Strategy will not commit any organisations to specific actions, but provides an **agenda for partnership action**, which can be agreed by organisations and individuals with interests in the Nevis Area.

This **Summary** outlines the contents of the Nevis Strategy and is intended to stimulate interest and support. For brevity, the Summary is selective and some wording may vary from the full Strategy.

**Figure 1.1 Membership of the Nevis Working Party**

The Nevis Working Party comprises representatives of -

- The Highland Council (Chair)
- Alcan and other landowners\*
- Forest Enterprise
- Fort William Community Council and neighbouring community councils
- Glen Nevis Estate/Holidays
- Glen Nevis Graziers
- Glen Nevis Residents
- Highlands of Scotland Tourist Board
- John Muir Trust
- Lochaber Enterprise
- Mountaineering Council of Scotland
- Scottish Natural Heritage
- sportscotland

\* Alcan, the Mid West Association of Highland Estates and other landowners are represented by Bidwells

#### THE NEED FOR A MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

A robust, pro-active and well-resourced management strategy is required for the Nevis Area -

- to protect and enhance the landscape and natural heritage qualities**; especially of the Ben Nevis & Glen Coe NSA and the Ben Nevis SSSI and cSAC, including through -
  - enhancing biodiversity and achieving landscape benefits - e.g. by encouraging native woodland regeneration, further restructuring Glen Nevis Forest and enhancing river habitats
  - addressing visual impacts, erosion and threats to vulnerable habitats and species and wild country qualities of high levels of recreational activity, mountain biking, wild camping, etc.
  - preventing further landscape intrusion of insensitive development
  - up-grading poor quality environments and resolving issues of litter and fly-tipping.
- to safeguard and increase awareness and care for cultural heritage sites and features**, by -
  - ensuring that visitor pressures, insensitive development and land uses do not put these at risk
  - stabilising the Observatory Ruins and cleaning-up the Ben Summit
- to provide an enjoyable visitor experience and resolve issues arising from high levels of visits, shortfalls in visitor provision and management and conflicts between activities**, by -
  - ensuring an appropriate range and quality of visitor facilities and services and overcoming shortfalls in, for example, peak period parking provision, toilets and information
  - overcoming problems of path damage, through a coordinated and prioritised programme of repairs and pre-emptive maintenance
  - reducing the impacts of events and stunts, including traffic congestion, litter, indiscriminate toileting and disturbance to residents and other visitors
  - resolving other issues of inconsiderate or irresponsible behaviour - e.g. disturbance of farm stock
- to review planning policies and ensure explicit, up-to-date and robust planning guidance** - the 1984 Management Plan is out-of-date and more explicit policies are required to ensure a robust planning framework and prevent isolated development, etc.
- to overcome current shortfalls in funding, staffing and the coordination of management programmes.**

## KEY PRINCIPLES

The following principles will underpin and guide the implementation of the Nevis Strategy -

**Sustainability** - to be achieved through management, which safeguards and, where appropriate, enhances environmental conditions and qualities and meets the needs and aspirations of land managers, the community and visitors, without compromising the area's values and future opportunities.

**Partnership and joint working** - involving public bodies, land managers, community, business, recreation and other interest groups and individuals.

**Community and landowners' and managers' involvement, agreement and support for management initiatives** - these will be essential to the area's effective and harmonious management.

**Recognition of the area's international and national conservation, tourism and recreation importance** - management will seek a sustainable balance between the area's outstanding natural heritage and landscape qualities and tourism and recreation activities and pressures. Importantly, the Nevis Strategy takes account of, and will be progressed in parallel with, other initiatives, such as the Lochaber Tourism Action Plan and Great Glen Way.

**Commitment to action and investment** - new investment and sustained action will be required to provide the conservation management and standards of visitor provision and management, which match the natural qualities and tourism and recreational importance of the Nevis Area.

## YOUR VIEWS

While the Nevis Working Party has considered responses to consultations on the Draft Strategy and amended elements of the Strategy accordingly, any further comments or suggestions will be welcome and should be forwarded to the address below.

**The Nevis Working Party,**

**c/o The Highland Council, Lochaber House, High Street, Fort William PH33 6EL.**

(tel. 01397 707234; e-mail: [lochaber.area@highland.gov.uk](mailto:lochaber.area@highland.gov.uk)).



## 2. FUTURE VISION FOR THE NEVIS AREA

### THE VISION

Members of the community and interest groups helped to develop a **Vision for the Nevis Area**, through workshops and written responses (see *Future Management of the Nevis Area: Initial Participative Programme and Future Vision*). The Vision looks ahead to 2020-2025. The Nevis Strategy shows how the Vision may be achieved. Some elements may be achieved in the short-term (e.g. path repairs, visitor information); others will take longer (e.g. woodland regeneration). The Vision comprises -

#### a. Overall Longer - Term Vision for the Nevis Area

*The Nevis Area will comprise, and present to the visitor, -*

- a. *an area of outstanding scenic grandeur*
- b. *a spectrum of tourism and recreational opportunities - from relatively easy, to more challenging, access to, and enjoyment of, the Glen, mountains and wild country*
- c. *essential, high quality visitor facilities and services*
- d. *the local community living and working in harmony with visitors*
- e. *an exemplar of effective and sustainable approaches to managing an accessible and popular Glen and surrounding mountains, and conserving and enhancing the area's important landscape, natural heritage and wild country values.*

*These attributes and, especially, the landscape and natural and cultural heritage -*

- i. *will be appreciated, cherished and enjoyed by residents and visitors*
- ii. *will contribute to the livelihoods, employment and well-being of the local and Lochaber communities.*

#### b. Visions for Specific Areas or Topics

##### Ben Nevis and Other Mountains

*Ben Nevis will continue to be an 'icon' and favoured destination for mountaineers and other visitors. The mountain environment and mountaineers' and other visitors' experience of Ben Nevis will have been enhanced by the removal of rubbish and unnecessary structures from the summit and continuing, sensitive and sustainable maintenance of paths, without diminishing the sense of challenge or intruding on the natural grandeur of the Ben.*

*The other mountains will be managed to high standards, but with minimum impact on their natural environment. Enhanced information and advice from rangers, information staff and remote access information points, and controls on stunts and events, will help to reduce damage and promote safe and sustainable enjoyment of the mountains.*

##### Recreational and Tourist Access and Associated Facilities

*New and improved paths and cycleways in Glen Nevis will link to a network of routes from Fort William to other parts of Lochaber. These routes will relieve some pressures on the Ben paths and encourage visitors to walk or cycle to, and in, the Glen. Traffic management measures will slow speeds and discourage parking outwith car parks. If necessary, peak season restraints on vehicular access to the Upper Glen - possibly with alternative public transport - will enhance the enjoyment, wild country experience and safety of walkers and cyclists. Outwith peak periods, vehicular access will remain available to the Upper Glen, except for coaches, provided that agreed levels of use are not regularly exceeded.*

*Redevelopment and expansion of the Glen Nevis Visitor Centre and selected smaller-scale visitor facilities will provide an enhanced visitor experience and reduce pressures on vulnerable areas. A voluntary code for stunts, events, wild camping and other group activities - backed by reserve powers to control such activities - will minimise environmental damage and nuisance to the community.*

##### The Future Landscape and Natural and Cultural Environment

*Environmental improvements at the Glen Entrance - particularly at Claggan - will enhance visitors' impressions of the Nevis Area and generate pride and encourage care amongst residents and visitors. Management programmes will safeguard and enhance the quality of habitats, range of species and sites of cultural significance. There will be an increase in native woodland cover, especially in Mid and Upper Glen Nevis.*

Programmes to maintain and enhance the Glen will involve public authorities, management partners, residents, land managers and businesses. A strengthened countryside management team, with voluntary support, will undertake conservation tasks and environmental enhancement. Sensitive landscape, wildlife and heritage interpretation will promote appreciation, enjoyment and care for these interests and management and educational programmes will seek to promote and maintain a litter- and waste-free environment.

### Built Development in Glen Nevis

Planning policies and other programmes (e.g. tourism marketing), including initiatives by local businesses, will be supporting the sustainable development of tourism throughout Lochaber, including facilities and services for visitors to Glen Nevis, but with most new commercial visitor services sited outwith the Glen.

Enhanced planning policies and guidance for the Nevis Area will have the support of residents and the wider community and will safeguard the area's landscapes and related attributes. Provision will be available for -

- a. essential up-grading, redevelopment or moderate extension of existing residential, tourism or other properties, but with a presumption against new residential, commercial or other development outwith existing development clusters in Lower Glen Nevis
- b. development, refurbishment or enhancement of non-commercial facilities (e.g. car parks, paths)
- c. essential development, refurbishment or other operations associated with land and catchment management, public services and infrastructure,

insofar as a. - c. are consistent with agreed planning criteria and guidance and environmental and visitor management objectives.

### Land Management and Ownership

Substantial regeneration of the native woodland cover will take many decades. However, modifications to grazing regimes, deer management and the scale and characteristics of higher level coniferous forestry in Glen Nevis will be achieving landscape benefits. Low level forest holdings will continue to be managed for public benefit and provide important 'hidden' car parks and walking and cycling routes. Grazing management will be consistent with woodland regeneration policies and contribute to the control of bracken, maintenance of grass cover on the Glen 'floor' and regeneration of the riverside woodlands.

Managers of the hill and other estate lands will continue to co-operate to achieve agreed environmental and visitor management objectives and the management partnership and community will be actively involved in managing key lands for the community's and visitors' benefits (e.g. key mountain land, potential community woodland in Glen Nevis). Public agencies will not have needed to use their reserve powers to acquire land, or assist its acquisition, to ensure sustainable management or prevent the fragmentation of key holdings.

### Management Framework

An effective and well-resourced management partnership will be implementing an agreed and dynamic environmental and visitor management strategy, intended to ensure the sustainable development and management of the Nevis Area. The partnership will inform and actively involve the local and Lochaber communities and wider environmental, recreation and tourism interests in its decisions and actions.

The management partnership will have an effective countryside and visitor management capability, provided by a modest team of professional and practical staff. Rangers and other visitor services staff will be helping to prevent and resolve visitor impacts on the environment and community, and encouraging appreciation, care for, and responsible and safe enjoyment of, the mountains and Glen. Community and interest groups' involvement in the area's management will be encouraged through a voluntary ranger service (supporting full-time rangers) and specific projects (e.g. youth projects).

The Nevis Area may comprise part of a wider national park (e.g. Glen Nevis & Glen Coe National Park), with the management partnership acting as the advisory forum and management unit for the Nevis Area.



### **c. The Wider Perspective - The Nevis Area in its Lochaber Context**

*The Nevis Area will remain a principal destination for visitors to the Highlands and contribute to tourist income and employment in Lochaber. Through on-going environmental improvements, and additions and improvements to its visitor attractions, facilities and services, Lochaber - especially Fort William - will have further developed its roles as a focal point and 'gateway' for mountain-oriented visitors to the Highlands.*

*Ben Nevis will continue to be important for mountain visits, but enhanced information, facilities and services, paths, cycleways and improved public transport in other parts of Lochaber will encourage viewing of the Ben from outwith Glen Nevis and help to spread visitors in Lochaber and beyond.*

*Environmental and visitor management in the Nevis Area, and initiatives throughout Lochaber, will have*

- *enhanced the qualities of the environment and visitor provision in the Nevis Area - helping to raise the image, local confidence and standards throughout Lochaber*
- *contributed to increased visitor numbers, longer stays and higher expenditures - boosting the local economy and encouraging new investment in Lochaber*
- *secured and created new jobs in environmental management and visitor services.*





### 3. LAND AND ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT <sup>1</sup>

#### Background

The Nevis Area has diverse private, public and voluntary sector landowners (e.g. Alcan, Glen Nevis Estate, Forest Enterprise, John Muir Trust) and land uses, including grazing, water catchment, multi-purpose forestry and conservation. The landowners and managers have major investments in the area and play important roles in its conservation and visitor provision.

The Ben Nevis and Glen Coe National Scenic Area (NSA) designation recognises the area's outstanding landscape values. The Strategy identifies key characteristics and features, which contribute to its special landscape qualities and variety - ranging from settlement areas in the Lower Glen and managed landscapes the River Nevis corridor, to the wild, rugged scenery of the mountains and Glen of the Water of Nevis.

The area's wildlife values are reflected in the Ben Nevis Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and candidate Special Area of Conservation (cSAC) designations. Several species are of particular importance, including rare plant, insect and bird species associated with the montane, snowbed, semi-natural woodland, grass and heathland habitats. Ben Nevis and adjacent mountains are important for their geology. While there is only one scheduled ancient monument - Dun Deardail (a vitrified fort), several earthworks, charcoal burning platforms and burial grounds are of archaeological and historic interest. The role of the Ben Nevis Observatory in meteorological and astronomical research is of interest to the history of science.

#### Aims

**Land Management** - *To recognise the interests, encourage the agreement and support the involvement of landowners and managers - individually, and in partnership with others - towards achieving sustainable, multi-objective management of the grazings, forests and native woodlands, mountains, River Nevis and its catchment, and other lands and amenities of the Nevis Area.*

**Landscape, Natural and Cultural Heritage** - *To safeguard, manage, enhance, and promote appreciation and care for the nationally important landscapes and natural and cultural heritage of the Nevis Area - for their intrinsic values, and for the benefits of all.*

#### Objectives for Land and Environmental Management

- a. To encourage the continuing co-operation and involvement of landowners and managers in working individually and jointly towards achieving the agreed strategy for environmental and visitor management.
- b. To encourage and support the continuing management of the grazings, in ways and at levels, which are compatible with other objectives (e.g. woodland regeneration).
- c. To encourage further native woodland regeneration, in co-operation with landowners and managers.
- d. To encourage and support the on-going restructuring and sensitive management of Glen Nevis Forest and other forestry, according to agreed management plans and to secure multi-objective forestry.
- e. To explore the scope for community involvement in managing Lower Glen sections of Glen Nevis Forest.
- f. To enhance management arrangements for the River Nevis and its catchment - in particular, to maintain water flows within agreed limits, enhance fisheries, prevent flooding and maintain the amenity of the River and stability of its banks.
- g. To identify key attributes and safeguard and maintain the wild and natural appearance and scenery of the Nevis Area - particularly, land beyond the Lower Falls and the mountains and other land over 200m
- h. To encourage continuing maintenance and improvements to the built environment, especially at Claggan.
- i. To safeguard and, where appropriate, enhance the diversity and vitality of the natural heritage - especially habitats, communities and species at risk from visitor activities, land management or other influences.
- j. To safeguard and maintain the fabric of sites and features of archaeological or historical interest.
- k. To promote awareness, understanding and care for the landscape and natural and cultural heritage.
- l. To monitor change in the landscape and natural and cultural heritage and take management action where specific changes approach or breach agreed thresholds.

<sup>1</sup> This section and subsequent sections draw on detailed assessments in the Draft Strategy and in the Topic Papers, prepared by representatives of key organisations and invited experts.

## Proposed Land Use and Environmental Management Programmes

The proposals are summarised below and described in more detail in the Strategy.

### A1. NATIVE WOODLANDS REGENERATION

**Proposal** - to maintain and enhance the native woodlands, through -

- **mapping and describing the native woodlands**
- **reviewing research and assessing woodland and grazing management options**
- **agreeing and implementing woodland and grazing management approaches**
- **monitoring woodland regeneration** - including habitat conditions and the effects of grazing.

### A2. FORESTRY ENHANCEMENT PROGRAMME

**Proposal** - to build on the Forest Design Plan and provide further benefits, through -

- **forest amenity improvements** - e.g. amenity thinning, streamside planting of native species, open space creation and improving forest entrances
- **up-grading and extending recreation, information and interpretive provision** - see programme B4.
- **involving the community, volunteers and local contractors in implementing this programme.**

### A3. DEER MONITORING AND CONTROLS

**Proposal** - deer management to encourage woodland regeneration and prevent nuisance to residents, including -

- **annual deer counts** - throughout the Nevis Area
- **deer culling programmes.**

### A4. RIVER NEVIS AND CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT SCHEME

**Proposal** - modifications to river management regimes may reduce flooding and enhance riverbank stability, fisheries, wildlife and amenity. This proposal includes -

- **baseline data collection** - on river flows, peak water levels, river and riverside ecology and fisheries
- **identifying legal responsibilities and issues** - e.g. responsibilities for stabilising riverbanks
- **developing and agreeing a river and catchment management plan**
- **implementing, monitoring and reviewing the management scheme.**

### A5. GLEN NEVIS ENTRANCE - ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS

**Proposal** - a scheme to enhance the appearance of the area from Old Nevis Bridge to the Roaring Mill -

- **built design and landscape assessments**
- **preparing and agreeing an enhancement scheme** - including property facelifts, removing litter and eyesores and riverside tree planting, to be undertaken in liaison with residents and property owners
- **implementing and continuing maintenance of the enhancement scheme.**

### A6. ENVIRONMENTAL SMALL PROJECTS SCHEME

**Proposal** - the promotion of small-scale landscape, habitat other environmental improvements through -

- **a small grants scheme**
- **small projects action programme** - including under-grounding selected overhead wires
- **advice to owners on landscaping or other improvements.**

### A7. ARCHAEOLOGICAL & HISTORIC SITES PROGRAMME

**Proposal** - enhanced protection and conservation of specific archaeological and historic sites, through -

- **field surveys and desk research** - to identify further sites/features of interest
- **management guidelines and conservation action programmes for key sites** - e.g. Observatory ruins
- **monitoring of sites** - to ensure their protection and prevent further deterioration or damage
- **sensitive interpretation of selected sites** - to increase awareness of their significance.

### A8. ENVIRONMENTAL DATABASE AND MONITORING

**Proposal** - building on existing surveys and monitoring and undertake joint initiatives to -

- **develop an environmental management database for the Nevis Area**
- **undertake targeted land use, landscape and environmental monitoring.**
- **prepare periodic assessments and reviews of key topics** - e.g. woodland regeneration, River Nevis.

Data collection, sample surveys and key indicators will focus on landscape change, environmental quality, key habitats, the River Nevis and selected sites/features of archaeological or historical importance.

## 4. VISITOR PROVISION AND MANAGEMENT

### Background

The Nevis Area is a popular destination for tourists and day visitors - largely due to Ben Nevis' status as the U.K.'s highest mountain, and for residents of Lochaber. Popular locations and activities include -

- Ben Nevis - some 75,000 tourists, hill walkers and others use the Ben Path each year. Also, the Ben is popular for climbing and for competitive, charity and other events (e.g. 3 Peaks Races)
- other mountains - attract climbers and hill walkers
- Glen Nevis - is a focus for sightseeing, picnics, low level and long-distance walking, climbing (Polldubh Crags), cycling, canoeing, angling and organised camping and caravanning
- Glen Nevis and Leanachan Forests - attract walkers and off-road cyclists.

Tourist and other visits, and commercial visitor accommodation and services, support around 60 jobs (full-time equivalents) in the Nevis Area and generate important income and employment throughout Lochaber. Non-commercial facilities and services include Glen Nevis Visitor Centre, car parks, picnic areas, viewpoints, paths and a seasonal bus service. Visitor information services in Glen Nevis are seasonal and there is a ranger service, but this is under-resourced.

Visitor pressures, including some organised events, can result in overcrowding of car parks and traffic hazards, erosion of popular paths, pressures on toilets and other facilities, litter and human wastes, and disturbance of livestock, residents and other visitors. The proposed Scottish Outdoor Access Code will promote responsible access and help to control organised events.

### Towards a Strategic Framework for Visitor Provision and Management

The Strategy assesses several options for future visitor provision and management - ranging from *Major Visitor Development* to *Reduction of Visits*, with intermediate options including *Medium-Scale Visitor Development & Promotion*, *Visitor Management & Facilities Enhancement* and the *Status Quo*. It concludes that the most appropriate option is **Visitor Management & Facilities Enhancement** and this may be achieved through -

- moderate expansion and/or upgrading of selected visitor facilities, in locations most capable of sustaining visitor activities - primarily Lower Glen Nevis
- deflecting visitor pressures from more sensitive areas
- strengthening visitor management capabilities, such as the Ranger Service.

A zoning approach underlies this option and is illustrated below.

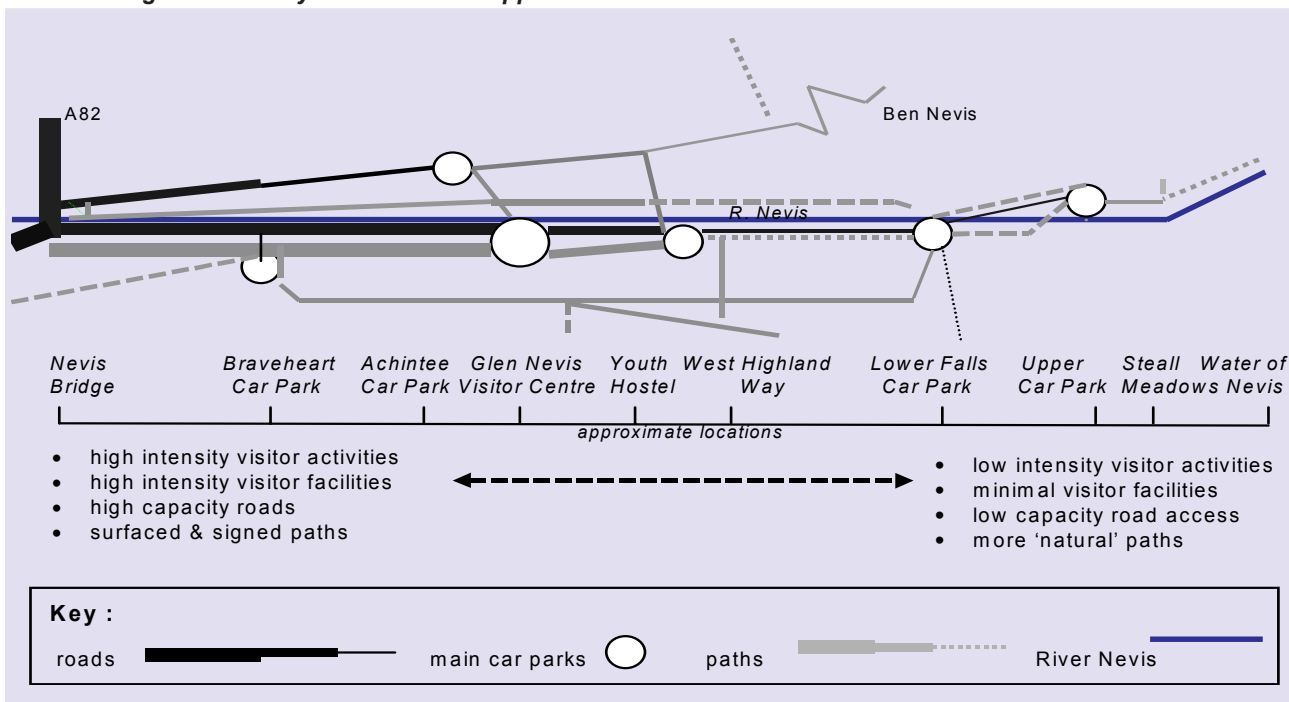
### Visitor Activity Zones (illustrative, not comprehensive examples)

Recommended Activity Zones	Location	Principal Characteristics	Typical Levels of Activity	Wild Country Experience	Visitor Services & Facilities (examples)	Principal Visitor Activities (examples)
<b>NEVIS VISITOR ACTIVITY AREA</b>	Visitor Centre to Cattle Grid (Incl. Caravan Park & Achintee services)	Visitor services area	high	nil - low	Accommodation, Café, restaurant, Visitor Centre, car parks, picnic areas, information / orientation & low level walks.	Landscape viewing, picnics, play, low level walks, Ben walks (start), camping & caravanning.
<b>LOWER GLEN - RIVER CORRIDOR</b>	Nevis Bridge to Cattle Grid	Riverside activities corridor	moderate	low	Riverside paths, picnic areas, information & orientation.	Landscape viewing, picnics, play, cycling, low level / river walks.
<b>FOREST ACTIVITY AREA</b>	Glen Nevis Forest + Leanachan Forest (at Torlundy)	Informal forest recreation and amenity area	Moderate - low	Low - moderate	car parks, picnic areas, viewpoints, interpretation, forest walks & West Highland Way.	Landscape viewing, picnics, play, walking, cycling, running.
<b>BEN PATH CORRIDOR</b>	Ben Nevis Path and link paths	Principal path to Ben Nevis Summit	Moderate - low	Low - high	Ben Path (repaired / maintained).	Landscape viewing, mountain walking, access to climbs, events.
<b>MID / UPPER GLEN CORRIDOR</b>	Cattle Grid to Upper Falls	Undeveloped amenity corridor	Moderate - low	Moderate - high	car parks, viewpoints, low level walks, Basic information.	Landscape viewing, mountain access walks, climbing (crags).
<b>MOUNTAINS &amp; WILD COUNTRY</b>	Mountains, hills, Nevis Gorge, Glen of Water of Nevis	Mountains and wild country	low	high	Mountain paths, Wild country paths	Landscape viewing, Hill / long walks, climbing, mountaineering.

A further relevant concept is **Visitor Management by Accessibility**. This involves matching levels of signing and information, and the capacities of roads, paths and visitor facilities, to the capacities of the landscape, environment and land uses to 'absorb' and sustain varying levels of visitors and their activities. Hence, signing and the capacity of roads, paths, car parks and other facilities may be reduced progressively - from the Glen Entrance towards the more sensitive landscapes and habitats and more natural countryside of the Upper Glen, Water of Nevis and mountains. This is illustrated below.

**Illustrative Application of the 'Visitor Management by Accessibility' Approach to Glen Nevis**

**Decreasing Accessibility from Lower to Upper Glen Nevis**



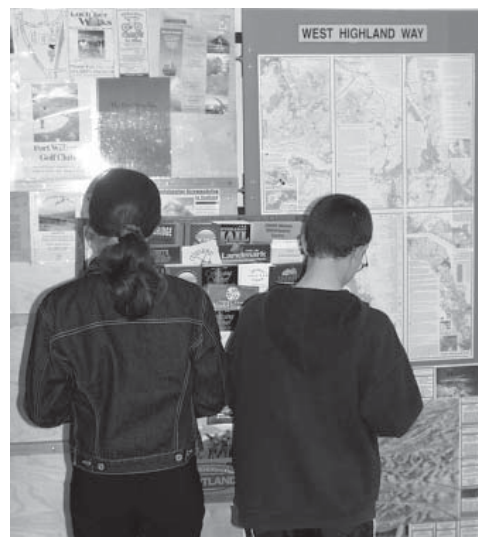
**Aims for Visitor Provision and Management**

**Visitor Provision** - To encourage and ensure the provision of a range of formal and informal visitor and recreational facilities, services and information in the Nevis Area, or in adjacent areas (e.g. Fort William), which meet visitors' needs, are environmentally and economically sustainable, and are located, designed and managed in ways which complement the area's special landscape qualities.

**Visitor Management** - To further develop and maintain effective visitor management arrangements, which facilitate and enhance opportunities for recreation, enjoyment and appreciation of the special qualities of the Nevis Area, in ways which are sustainable and are in harmony with other visitors' activities and the interests of those who live, work, or manage land in the Nevis Area.

## Objectives

- a. To encourage and support the continuing provision of quality accommodation, catering, information and related visitor services and, where appropriate, improvements to these.
- b. To encourage the provision and appropriate upgrading and/or extension of informal visitor facilities (e.g. car parks, viewpoints, toilets) and ensure that their location and management contributes towards achieving the other intentions of the Strategy.
- c. To encourage further development and promotion of facilities and services outwith the Nevis Area, which may relieve visitor pressures on the area (e.g. Ben Nevis viewpoints outwith Glen Nevis).
- d. To take account of the needs of the less able and special needs groups in the planning and design of new visitor facilities and paths, insofar as practical in the Nevis Area.
- e. To enhance opportunities for recreation, enjoyment and environmental appreciation by young people.
- f. To encourage visitors to avoid leaving litter and other wastes and establish effective arrangements to avoid the accumulation of litter and wastes.
- g. To provide, maintain and, where appropriate, sign and provide information on a network of walking, cycling and riding routes, including multi-use routes and paths for less-able users.
- h. To encourage improvements in the availability of, and information on, public bus and other transport services to and within the Nevis Area, especially outwith the main tourist season and to encourage visitors to use public transport.
- i. To seek events organisers' agreement and co-operation on voluntary limitations on the timing and frequency of events and other conditions applying to their activities - especially events on Ben Nevis.
- j. To promote visitors' awareness and appreciation of the area's environmental qualities and productive land uses and encourage their care and consideration for the environment, land management activities, and others who live or work in, or are visiting, the area.
- k. To promote visitors' awareness and compliance with the Outdoor Access Code and monitor the effects of the new access legislation and review visitor management measures, as appropriate.
- l. To clarify and strengthen the remit and operational locus of countryside staff in the Nevis Area (i.e. rangers, implementation wardens) - enabling these staff to make a more effective contribution to visitor provision, services and management.



## Proposed Visitor Provision and Management Programmes

### B1. PARKING IMPROVEMENT AND MANAGEMENT

**Proposal** - this programme will overcome most problems of parking congestion and hazardous on-road parking at peak periods (e.g. at Hostel Bridge) and contribute to the 'management by capacity' strategy, by -

- **improving and managing the principal car parks and providing a new car park near the Hostel Bridge**
- **improving advance/entrance signing of car parks, picnic areas, etc.** - especially in the Lower Glen
- **providing overspill parking at selected main car parks** - e.g. Visitor Centre car park
- **managing lay-bye parking and informal pull-offs and discouraging verge parking**
- **discouraging parking in 'unofficial' spaces and passing places between the Lower Falls and Upper Falls car parks** - but providing some parking for climbers in the vicinity of Polldubh Crags.

### B2. PICNIC AREAS AND VIEWPOINTS

**Proposal** - the popularity of picnics and mountain and landscape viewing is recognised. Proposals include

- **enhanced provision and management of picnic areas and viewpoints**
- **improving Ben Nevis viewpoints outwith Nevis Area and promoting these as a photo-trail** - e.g. viewpoints at Banavie, Strone and on the Aonach Mor access road
- **creating small picnic glades and viewpoints in Glen Nevis Forest.**

### B3. RIVERSIDE AND OTHER LOWER LEVEL PATHS

**Proposal** - a hierarchical approach to path improvements, with signed, higher capacity, surfaced paths in areas of intensive use and more basic paths in more sensitive areas. Including -

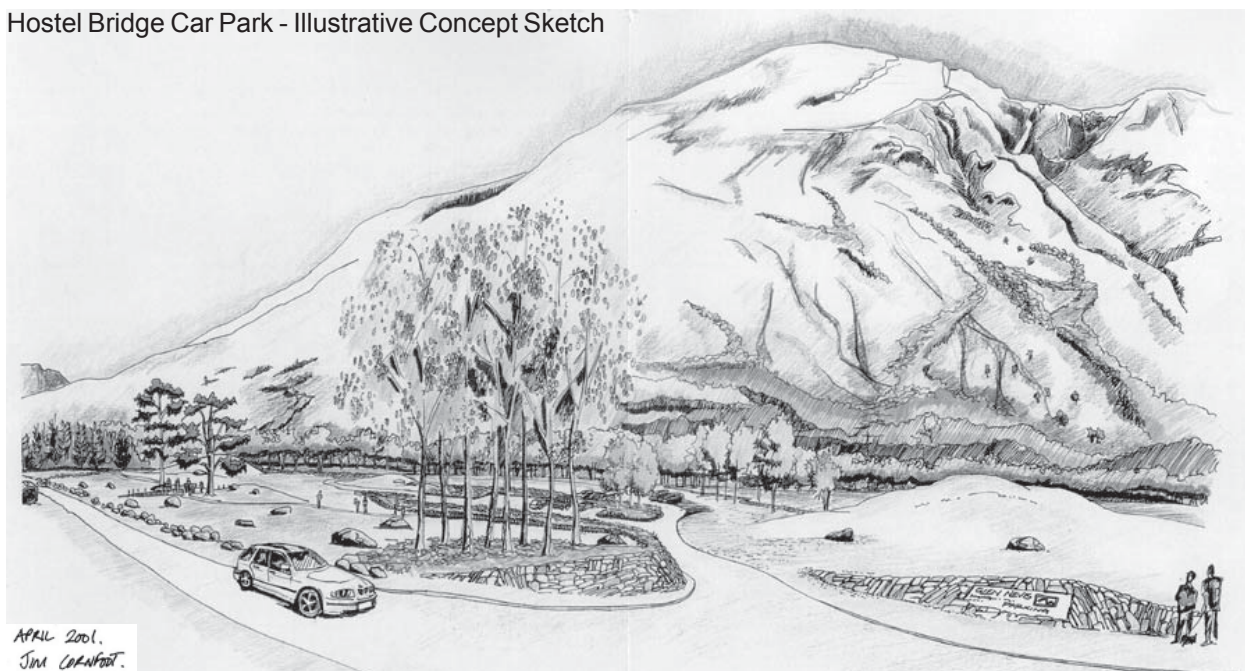
- **improvements to paths alongside the River Nevis** - especially in the Lower Glen
- **circular path from Visitor Centre to Ben Path junction with Youth Hostel link path and return along riverside**
- **path on edge of Cow Hill from Glen Nevis and West Highland Way to the Leisure Centre**
- **Peat Track** - signing of the circular route from Fort William to Glen Nevis
- **assessing the feasibility of a link track between Achintee Road and Torlundy**
- **Glen Nevis Forest paths and tracks network** - see below.

### B4. FOREST RECREATION

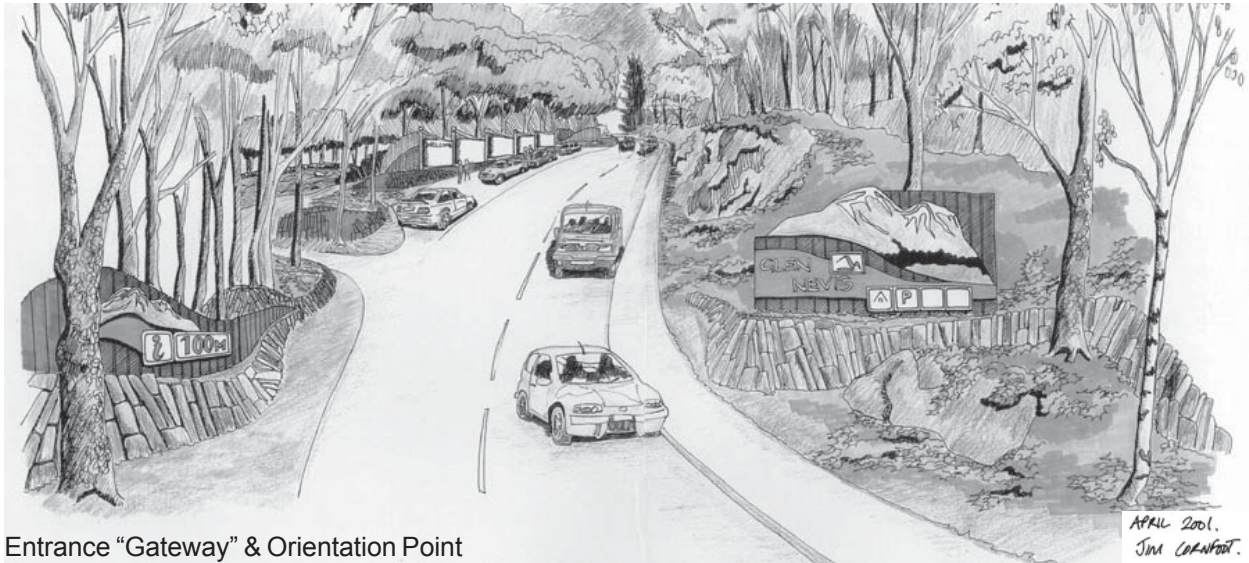
**Proposal** - this programme will improve opportunities for forest enjoyment and recreation, by -

- **providing, extending and/or up-grading and maintaining recreation provision** - e.g. car parks, viewpoints and other recreation facilities
- **further developing forest path and trail networks** - including path improvements and provision of all-ability, family and child-oriented trails
- **visitor information and interpretation improvements and forest education programmes.**

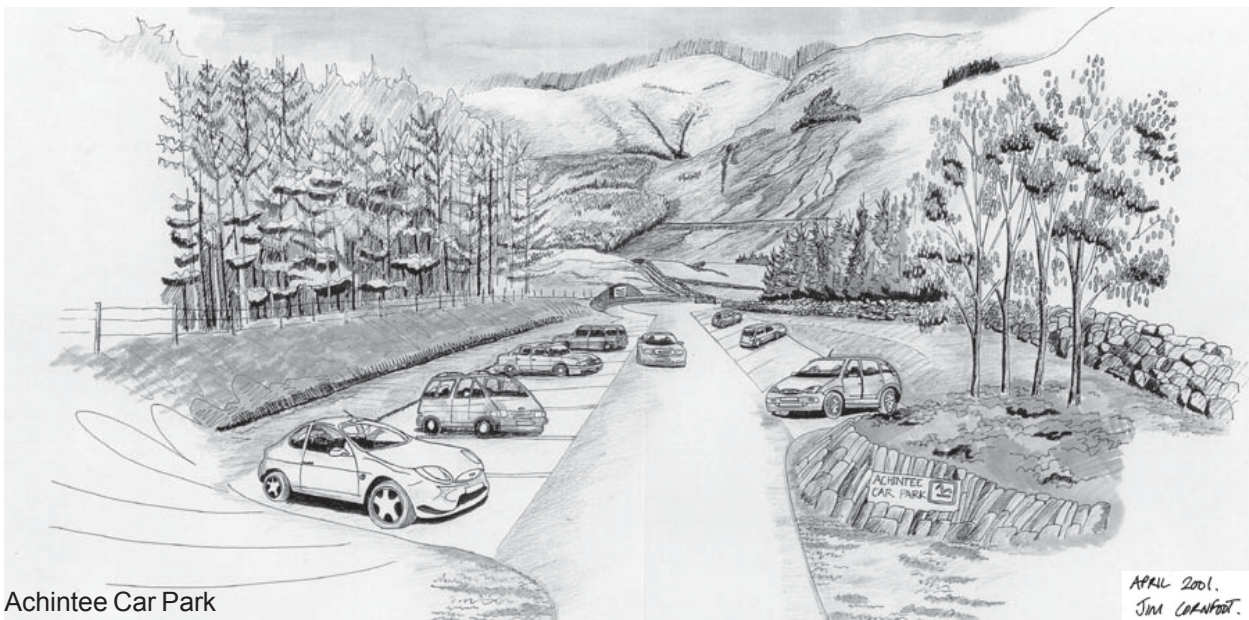
Hostel Bridge Car Park - Illustrative Concept Sketch



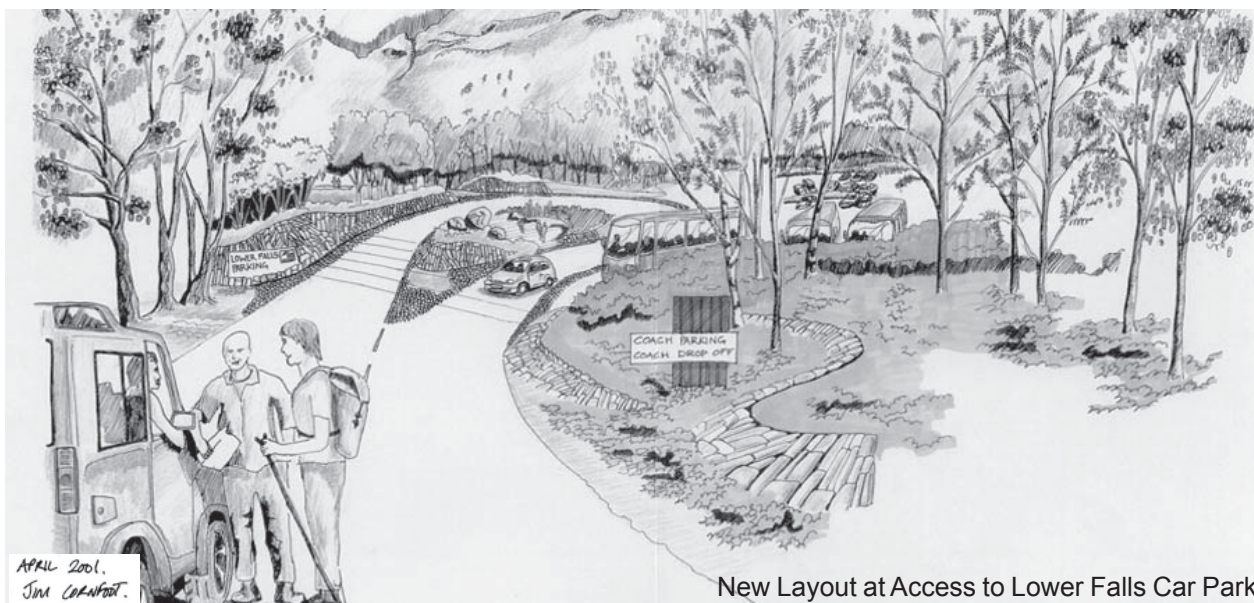
Illustrative Concept Sketches - for discussion purposes



Entrance "Gateway" & Orientation Point



Achintee Car Park



New Layout at Access to Lower Falls Car Park

## 5. MOUNTAIN MANAGEMENT

### Background

Ben Nevis and the area's other Munros are a mecca for mountaineers, snow, ice and rock climbers, hill walkers and runners, and photographers, and are used by outdoor activity centres, clubs and the armed forces for mountain training and experience. Also, Ben Nevis attracts charity and competitive events.

Income and employment resulting from mountain visits are significant - especially outwith the peak visitor season. The Strategy estimates (from HIE data) that, if 10% of mountaineering and hill walking visits to the Highlands are in Lochaber, then these visitors may spend some £3.5m/year and help to support around 400 ft jobs in Lochaber.

The often extreme conditions, inherent hazards and popularity of the mountains with users with a wide range abilities - including those who may be ill-equipped and inexperienced, contribute to the high numbers of mountain rescue incidents, accidents and fatalities in the Nevis Area (e.g. 41 rescues and 4 fatalities on Ben Nevis, alone, in 1999).

Many popular mountain and wild country paths are badly eroded and braided, due to relatively high levels of use, fragile sub-/surfaces, waterlogging and other weather damage and users avoiding difficult surfaces. Pathwork is expensive, requires on-going maintenance, and there are shortfalls in funding and labour.

Mountain management often involves controversial issues - for example, summit cairns and navigation markers, memorials, shelters, litter and events. A Mountain Management Workshop in 2000 (sponsored by sportscotland) sought agreement on key issues and provided guidance for the Strategy,

### Aims

**Conserving the Nevis Mountains** - *To safeguard and enhance the intrinsic scenic, wildlife and related values of the mountains and wild country of the Nevis Area.*

**Managing Mountain Visits** - *To facilitate and sensitively manage mountaineering and related mountain and wild country activities, in ways which respect and sustain the Nevis Area's natural qualities and land and water catchment management interests, and promote responsible mountain recreation and enjoyment and awareness of mountain safety issues.*

### Objectives

- a. to safeguard and enhance the scenic, natural heritage and related attributes of the summit and plateau of Ben Nevis.
- b. To stabilise and keep tidy the Observatory ruins and promote awareness of its significance to the history of science and related human interests, through interpretation elsewhere.
- c. To promote awareness and care for the environmental values of the Nevis mountains and responsible behaviour by mountain and other wild country users - especially, through promoting avoidance of litter, fouling of land and exacerbating erosion or other damage to vegetation or wildlife.
- d. To promote awareness and respect for the potential hazards associated with the Nevis mountains and ensure the availability of up-to-date information on mountain conditions (e.g. weather, avalanche risks) and more general information for less experienced mountain users.
- e. To develop and promote effective voluntary measures to manage charity, competitive, commercial and other mountain events, which promote safety and seek to ensure that organisers and participants minimise impacts on the environment, community, visitors, land management and other interests.
- f. To deter commercial and other stunts and similar activities, which may damage or disturb the environment, community, visitors, land management and other interests.
- g. To facilitate and encourage the involvement of mountaineers and others in discussions and decisions on mountain management.
- h. To seek financial, practical or other support for environmental, paths and other mountain and wild country management programmes, from mountaineering clubs, businesses and casual users.



## Proposed Mountain Management Programmes

### C1. BEN NEVIS SUMMIT, HIGH PLATEAU & COIRE LEIS MANAGEMENT

**Proposals** - a programme to promote exemplary care of the Ben, tackle degradation of the summit, etc.

- **regular clearance of litter and other wastes from Ben Nevis** - especially its summit
- **consolidation of the Observatory ruins and removal of non-essential cairns, memorials** (except the Peace Cairn) **and other artefacts** - a collective memorial may be provided in Glen Nevis
- **maintaining waymarking cairns at a minimum number of strategic locations on the Summit section of the Ben Path, where necessary to assist less-experienced users in adverse conditions** - details to be advised by proposed Mountain Management Advisory Group
- **agreeing and implementing a management programme around the CIC Hut** - with support of SMC **establishing a Mountain Management Advisory Group**
- **further Ben Nevis Appeal** (e.g. in 5 years) - to seek funds for summit, paths and environmental initiatives.

### C2. MOUNTAIN AND WILD COUNTRY PATHS

**Proposals** - essential path improvements, pre-emptive repairs and maintenance. Pathwork priorities should be - i. for safety; ii. to control/repair erosion; iii. essential upgrading and improvements.

- **potential inclusion of key mountain and wild country paths in the core path network for Lochaber** (e.g. Ben Path, Corroul Path) - as a means of ensuring their future care and maintenance
- **further repairs, improvements and maintenance of the Ben Path, Allt a'Mhuilinn Path and the Corroul Path across Steall Meadows**
- **monitoring and repairing other paths** - for safety and to pre-empt, control and repair damage
- **discouraging mountain and trial bike use of mountain and wild country paths.**

### C3. MOUNTAIN INFORMATION

**Proposals** - providing basic information to promote safe and responsible use of the mountains and wild land

- **providing readily accessible, real-time weather forecasts and basic information on mountain conditions, equipment requirements, etc.** - e.g. web site, remote access information points
- **information on popular mountain paths** - including grading key paths according to difficulty
- **developing and promoting information on responsible access and safeguarding wildlife**
- **employing a seasonal Ranger/Information Assistant, with mountain experience, to provide basic information at peak periods on mountain conditions and hazards**
- **awareness training for Visitor Centre and tourist information staff** - on providing information to mountains and wild country users
- **multi-language leaflets for mountain visitors** - advising on basic equipment, availability of guides, etc..

A **Mountain Management Advisory Group** may advise on the development of this programme.

### C4. MANAGEMENT OF MOUNTAIN EVENTS AND STUNTS

**Proposals** - many events are well-organised, but some result in parking congestion, disturbance, litter, etc.. The proposed voluntary arrangements build on good practice adopted by some events organisers -

- **a voluntary management scheme for events** - this may comprise :
  - **a Code of Practice for Organised Events and Activities**
  - **voluntary registration for organised events and an Events and Activities Bond**
  - **encouraging organisers and participants to contribute to paths and environmental management**
  - **encouraging the Ben Race organisers and participants, and organisers of similar events, to keep to the Ben Path and avoid further hillside erosion.**
- **establishing a Nevis Activities Organisers' Liaison Group**
- **Nevis Charter Award** - an annual accolade for responsible behaviour and environmental good practice
- **prohibiting potentially environmentally damaging stunts and encouraging organisers of other stunts to comply with the proposed management scheme.**

## 6. VISITOR INFORMATION AND INTERPRETATION

### Background

In the Strategy, *information* and *interpretation* apply to all forms of information, orientation, explanation and informal education, which help visitors and local people to find their way around, and promote awareness, appreciation and care for the landscape, natural and cultural heritage, and needs of land managers and residents. Information and interpretation may be conveyed by a range of media (e.g. word-of-mouth, publications, signs, Web-site) and can -

- support visitor management - for example, through directing visitors to key car parks and encouraging use of more robust paths and sites, rather than fragile areas
- foster appreciation of the special qualities of the Glen, Ben and other mountains - thereby, securing and fostering the area's conservation, well-being and unique identity.

Assessments of information and interpretation in the Nevis Area demonstrate -

- the wide range of providers, content and styles of publications, signs, etc.
- issues relating to the quality, maintenance and 'accessibility' (e.g. for non-English speakers) of publications, signs and displays and need to keep information up-to-date (e.g. weather forecasts)
- opportunities to improve information and interpretation at, and around, the Glen Nevis Visitor Centre
- need to promote awareness of, and compliance with, the proposed Scottish Outdoor Access Code
- potential to reinforce the identity and sense of place of the Nevis Area - e.g. through a 'Nevis style' of publications, 'gateways' at entry to Glen Nevis, Upper Glen, etc.
- need to avoid signs intruding in the landscape - especially in the mountains and wild areas.

The Strategy sets out guiding principles for information and interpretation - e.g. planned and co-ordinated approach between various agencies, involving local people, adopting a 'light footprint' and sensitive designs, and regular up-dating, maintenance and evaluation of information. The focus for information will be on meeting the needs and enhancing the experience of existing and intending visitors, rather than, necessarily, actively promoting additional visits. However, while the Nevis Area will not be actively marketed, enhanced facilities and information may result in a modest increase in visitors and encourage longer stays and repeat visits.

### Aim

**Visitor Information** - *To ensure the provision of information, which assists responsible enjoyment of the area's recreational and other special qualities and helps to achieve visitor management and related objectives.*

**Interpretation and Promoting Sense of Place** - *To enhance awareness, understanding and care for the Nevis Area's landscape, natural and cultural heritage and land uses, through sensitive interpretation; thereby, influencing visitors' behaviour and activities, contributing to the area's conservation and consolidating its unique sense of place.*

**Promoting Safe Access** - *To foster visitors' awareness of the natural characteristics and inherent hazards of the Nevis mountains and wild country.*

### Objectives

- a. to ensure a welcome for visitors and encourage their awareness of opportunities for responsible access, recreation and enjoyment of the area.
- b. to encourage awareness and understanding of the landscape, wildlife and cultural heritage, land management practices and other aspects of relevance to visitors' appreciation and respect for the environment, enjoyment and safety - for example, encouraging visitors to avoid disturbing sensitive habitats and increasing awareness of the potential hazards of the mountains
- c. to take account of wild land values and maintain a minimum of signing and interpretation in mountain and other wild areas, consistent with essential safety requirements.
- d. to encourage partner organisations to adopt integrated approaches, high standards and, where appropriate, a Nevis 'house style' for information and interpretive provision.
- e. to ensure that information and interpretive provision is accessible to a wide range of visitors - e.g. key 'messages' in common foreign languages, displays accessible to less-able users.
- f. to encourage organisers of events and group activities to engage in dialogue on the area's management and co-operate with voluntary management initiatives - e.g. Events Code
- g. to link information and interpretation with related themes (e.g. native woodland regeneration), facilities and alternative locations (e.g. off-road cycling in Leanachan Forest)
- h. to encourage visitors and local people to care for the Nevis Area and foster their interest and involvement in its long-term conservation.

## Proposed Information and Interpretive Programmes

### D1. VISITOR INFORMATION AND ORIENTATION

**Proposals:** this programme will provide pre-visit and on-site information to assist visitors' orientation and raise their awareness of the area's facilities and recreational opportunities. Information will be selective and developed in agreement with land managers, and will include -

- **information and orientation publications** - e.g. Nevis guide-map, walks leaflets
- **Nevis Web-site** and **Nevis Information-line**
- **TIC and Visitor Centre orientation displays and information** - including out-of-hours information
- **information and signing** - e.g. orientation point at Glen Entrance, information points at key car parks
- **employing a Visitor Information Officer** - to develop, maintain and communicate key information.

### D2. MOUNTAIN INFORMATION

As described in Mountain Management Programme C3 (above)

### D3. GLEN NEVIS VISITOR CENTRE - REVIEW AND REFURBISHMENT

**Proposals:** subject to preliminary investigations, it is proposed to redesign and refurbish the public area and displays in the Visitor Centre and extend the building -

- **Visitor Centre options and feasibility study** - including assessments of its visitor services (including potential provision of showers and changing facilities), interpretive and office/workshop functions, and redesign and extension opportunities, costs and potential funding
- **Visitor Centre modifications and refurbishment.**

### D4. 'RESPONSIBLE VISITOR' PROGRAMME

**Proposals:** this programme will raise awareness of the issues and promote responsible behaviour by individuals and participants in group activities and events, through developing and promoting -

- **Nevis Code** - a simple code promoting responsible and safe access and recreation
- **Nevis Events Code** - see Programme C4.
- **'Leave no trace' programme** - e.g. promoting Nevis as a litter-free area and distributing toilet trowels
- **'responsible visitor' and 'leave no trace' promotions** - e.g. car stickers, kids' badges.  
(see also programmes C3, C4, D1, D6).

### D5. NEVIS IDENTITY AND SENSE OF PLACE PROGRAMME

**Proposals:** this programme will promote the area's identity and enhance its special characteristics, through -

- **developing and adopting design guidelines for visitor information, 'furniture' (e.g. signs, stiles), etc.** - which promote a common identity (e.g. a 'family' style of leaflets)
- **'gateways' at key transitional points** - e.g. Glen Entrance and entry to Upper Glen, which portray the special features of each area
- **selective signing of features of local or cultural interest** - but not in the mountains or wild areas
- **information and interpretation, which promote awareness and appreciation of the special characteristics of the Nevis Area and contribute to its sense of place.**

The principles of promoting the identity and sense of place of the Nevis Area should underpin the Strategy.

### D6. INTERPRETATION PROGRAMME

**Proposals:** interpretation can raise visitors' and local people's awareness of the area's special features and sensitivities, and stimulate thinking about, support for, and active involvement in its sustainable management. A selective programme of non-intrusive interpretation is proposed (i.e. not in the mountains or wild areas) -

- **interpretive components in information and orientation programmes** - e.g. Nevis Web-site
- **selective interpretive displays & leaflets** - e.g. interpretive posts in Glen Nevis Forest and Lower Glen
- **participative interpretation and learning** - e.g. guided walks, schools' visits, kid's forest fun trail
- **Nevis management newsletters, etc.** - to inform the community and visitors of management issues, intentions and progress, and encourage their active involvement.

## 7. TRAFFIC AND PARKING MANAGEMENT

### Background

Data on traffic in the Nevis Area are limited, but these and visitor data for Lochaber show -

- total daily traffic flows in Glen Nevis in peak summer are up to 6-times average winter flows and peak period flows in the Lower Glen are over double those in the Mid Glen
- high levels of private/hire car use by visitors to Lochaber, but lower than the Highland average use of public transport, cycles and walking. However, there may be more use of public buses and taxis, and more cycling and walking in the Nevis Area, due to the many walkers, hostellers, etc.
- 47 traffic accidents were reported in Glen Nevis from 1992 to 1997, including 1 fatality and 8 serious accidents. Accidents and perceived speeding concern local residents.

The Strategy shows the distribution, capacities and use of car parks. Key issues include -

- peak period parking demands exceed available spaces at the Visitor Centre, Achintee and Lower Falls
- congestion and road safety hazards result from roadside parking near the Hostel Bridge
- litter, toileting, unauthorised camping and erosion around some popular car parks and lay-byes.

There are mixed opinions on potential peak period traffic restrictions on the Upper Falls access road.

There is a summer bus service from Fort William to the Youth Hostel and, less frequently, to the Lower Falls, but there is a lack of information on bus and taxi services at key locations in Glen Nevis and demand from walkers and hostellers for off-peak public bus services.

### Aim

*To achieve integrated and effective traffic management and parking arrangements, which enhance road safety, satisfy the needs and aspirations of users, and contribute to the enjoyment, appreciation, conservation and enhancement of the area's special scenic and environmental qualities.*

### Objectives

- a. to encourage and support the effective and sensitive development and maintenance of traffic management schemes, which contribute to safety and amenity and relieve congestion.
- b. to promote the use of, and enhance information on, public bus and taxi transport to and within the Nevis Area and encourage out-of-season bus services - at least to the Hostel.
- c. to further develop off-road walking and cycling routes and enhance walkers' and cyclists' safety.
- d. to encourage integrated approaches to parking provision and management - including, where appropriate, developing further car and coach parking and enhancing existing car parks.
- e. to encourage and support initiatives to enhance the design and landscaping of roads, road 'furniture', signing and parking areas - with priority for landscaping specific parking areas (e.g. Lower Falls).



## Proposed Traffic Management and Parking Proposals

### E1. GLEN NEVIS TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT SCHEME

**Proposals** - these seek to reduce congestion, enhance safety and contribute to wider objectives, by focusing activities and traffic in the Lower Glen and deflecting these from the Mid and Upper Glen, by -

- **A82 signing to encourage Glen and Ben traffic to use Glen Nevis Road and removal of the 'Ben Path' sign at the Claggan junction**
- **measures to encourage traffic to remain in the Lower Glen and deflect traffic from Upper Glen**
  - 'gateways' at transitional points in Glen Nevis and an orientation point at the Glen Entrance
  - new car park near Hostel Bridge and improved signing, layouts and capacities of key car parks
  - turning circle and 'gateway' before the Cattle Grid
  - turning circle before Lower Falls, improved car park entrance and road redesign to lower the profile of access to Upper Falls. Experimental peak period traffic management measures may be tested
- **assessing potential for speed reduction measures in the Lower Glen**
- **improving pedestrian amenity and safety, especially in the Lower Glen, including -**
  - continuous pavement at Glen Entrance and assessing scope for an off-road path in Lower Glen
  - signs to warn drivers of walkers, etc., and signs/road markings at key crossing points
- **providing drop-off points for coaches and public buses at the Visitor Centre and Youth Hostel.**

### E2. PARKING IMPROVEMENT AND MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME

As described in the Visitor Provision and Management Programmes (B1, above)

### E3. GLEN NEVIS PUBLIC TRANSPORT INITIATIVE

**Proposals** - provision for visitors without private cars and to promote visitors' use of public transport by -

- **encouraging an increased public bus service to, and in, Glen Nevis and more innovative tourist and walkers' transport** - e.g. themed midi-bus service.
- **enhanced information and promoting the use of public transport** (e.g. buses, taxis) for visits to Glen Nevis.



## 8. LITTER AND REFUSE MANAGEMENT

### Background

Responsibilities for collecting, preventing and remedying litter, fly-tipped wastes and other rubbish are split between various Council services and the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency. Collections from litter bins are undertaken by the Council's Protective Services. The rangers occasionally undertake litter-picks and organise clean-ups and some landowners clear refuse from their lands. The new access legislation and Outdoor Access Code may strengthen powers relating to littering by recreational users.

Key issues and concerns relate to -

- litter and refuse along the riverside at Claggan
- fly-tipping and other rubbish at roadside sites and in Glen Nevis Forest
- fouling of land by dogs and by hill walkers, climbers, wild campers, events participants and others
- litter - especially at popular parking and unauthorised roadside camping/caravanning areas, wild camping sites and mountain summits.

These problems are exacerbated by difficulties of enforcing the legislation, inadequate litter bins and lack of manpower to clear litter. The rangers are promoting litter-free areas at popular visitor sites.

### Aims

*To promote a litter, refuse and waste free environment; thereby, safeguarding and enhancing the Nevis Area's scenic and other environmental qualities and its attractiveness to visitors.*

### Objectives

- a. to develop more integrated and effective arrangements to prevent and remove litter, refuse and other wastes, especially from popular visitor sites and Ben Nevis.
- b. to promote awareness of litter and related issues, and encourage visitors to take their litter home.
- c. to encourage the removal of wastes and fly-tipped materials from riverside and other land and the sensitive management of sites by local businesses in the Claggan and Nevis Bridge areas.
- d. to discourage owners from allowing dogs to foul popular visitor sites and promote responsible toileting practices by visitors.



### Proposed Litter and Refuse Management Programme

#### F1. LITTER AND REFUSE MANAGEMENT

**Proposals** - this programme seeks to reduce problems and impacts of litter and other wastes, by -

- **preparing and implementing a Litter and Refuse Management Plan for Glen Nevis and establishing service level contracts for litter clearance at popular visitor sites**
- **litter and refuse clearance from Claggan riverside and a targeted programme to deter fly-tipping**
- **promoting greater awareness of litter and fouling issues**
- **promoting a "litter-free area", but providing litter bins at the Visitor Centre, Achintee and proposed Hostel Bridge car parks**
- **encouraging voluntary litter-picks in Glen Nevis and on Ben Nevis**
- **periodic review of cleanliness standards at specific sites and action to overcome shortfalls.**

## 9. PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

### Background

The Highland Council is the local planning authority. Key influences on planning policies and decisions include conservation designations, national policy guidance, and *The Highland Structure Plan* (1999), *Lochaber Local Plan* (adopted: 1999) and *Glen Nevis Management Plan* (1984).

The Strategy assesses the history and outcomes of planning in the Nevis Area over the past 20 years. Most development has been in the Lower Glen and has included new houses at the Glen Entrance and on Achintee Road, visitor accommodation and catering facilities at Glen Nevis Holiday's complex and at Achintee Farm, Glen Nevis Visitor Centre, farm buildings, overhead lines and other infrastructure, car parks, path reconstruction, etc.. Only 16 of some 160 planning applications have been refused - some of which have been subsequently approved after revisions. Most refusals have resulted from the proposals being considered inappropriate in this environmentally sensitive area, contrary to planning policies, or subject to representations by neighbours or the wider community.

Planning policies, decisions and advice have largely been successful in -

- restricting development to the Lower Glen and safeguarding the undeveloped character of the Mid and Upper Glens
- enabling appropriate diversification and improvements to commercial, residential and other properties
- ensuring a landscape framework and encouraging sensitive designs for new development - the electricity sub-station at Claggan is an obvious exception
- encouraging re-use of traditional buildings - for example, at Achintee Farm
- preventing over-development of housing land at the Glen Entrance
- encouraging development of permanent self-catering accommodation, rather than static caravans.

However, several shortfalls are evident, which the Nevis Strategy will seek to resolve; namely -

- uncertainties over planning intentions, pending replacement of the 1984 *Management Plan*
- planning decisions contrary to established policies - e.g. new bungalow on Achintee Road
- failure, as yet, to achieve specific policies - such as reducing the visual impacts of overhead lines.

### Aim

*To encourage and contribute to the further development of effective planning policies and appropriate and consistent planning decisions in the Nevis Area, which -*

- *ensure that development is environmentally and economically sustainable<sup>1</sup>*
- *are consistent with the other aims and objectives of the Nevis Strategy*
- *meet the aspirations of the local and wider communities.*

### Objectives and Key Criteria for Planning and Development

- To encourage and support planning policies and decisions which -
  - provide scope for the renewal, up-grading, diversification or moderate expansion of properties, or limited-scale residential or other development, in appropriate locations in Lower Glen Nevis
  - maintain the undeveloped characteristics of Mid and Upper Glen Nevis and mountain and wild country areas, while providing scope for improving informal visitor facilities and for essential development or operations associated with land or visitor management, health and safety.
- To contribute to effective and appropriate planning decisions for the Nevis Area, through providing guidance on, for example, the location, design and landscaping of proposed development, which is complementary to statutory planning policies.
- In considering any development proposals, which fall within the scope of a. (above), the planning authority will require to be satisfied that these -
  - meet a bona fide development need, which cannot be better satisfied outwith the Nevis Area
  - contribute to the well-being and amenity of local residents, landowners and/or businesses
  - do not conflict with, and where practical enhance, environmental qualities
  - are consistent with the management objectives and planning guidance in the Nevis Strategy.

<sup>1</sup> Some development and other activities will not be economically self-supporting (e.g. informal visitor facilities, paths).

## Recommended Planning Policies

The Strategy recommends the following policies (in *italics*) for adoption by The Highland Council -

- a. Zoning Framework - *The planning authority, in reviewing the Lochaber Local Plan, should adopt a revised 3 zones framework for development decisions affecting the Nevis Area; comprising -***
- zone 1. *Lower Glen Nevis (Nevis Bridge to Cattle Grid) - there will be a presumption against all development, except for residential and visitor accommodation, and facilities and services for visitors to the Nevis Area, which are consistent with the objectives and guidance in the Nevis Strategy.***
  - zone 2. *Mid Glen Nevis (Cattle Grid to Lower Falls)\* - there will be a presumption against all development other than for non-commercial day visitor facilities. Exceptionally, the sensitive conversion of the existing buildings at Achriabhach for land or visitor management purposes may be permitted. (\* similar restrictions should apply between Claggan and Torlundy).***
  - zone 3. *Upper Glen Nevis, Mountains and Other Remote Areas - there will be a presumption against all development, except where required to conserve or maintain basic day visitor facilities and existing buildings and structures (e.g. car parks, paths), or where there are specific environmental reasons for enhancing such facilities.***

This zoning policy will be applied in conjunction with the other policies and guidance set out below.

**b. Control of Other Development and Operations -**

- i. *The planning authority should seek formal agreements with statutory undertakers and others (e.g. land managers), to ensure that it and other interested parties are fully consulted on all development proposals and other substantive operations, including permitted development.***
- ii. *Where voluntary agreements are assessed to be ineffective in controlling the impacts of permitted development or other operations, the planning authority will consider applying for Article 4 Directions to bring such development within the scope of planning controls.***

Care will be required to ensure that any permitted development does not adversely affect the area's outstanding scenic qualities.

**c. Signing in Glen Nevis -**

***The planning authority should prepare and promote a simple strategy and design guidelines for commercial and other signs in the Nevis Area, in consultation with representatives of local residents, businesses and landowners.***

**d. Supplementary Policy Guidance -**

***The planning authority should adopt the planning guidance in the Nevis Strategy as supplementary policy guidance in support of the Lochaber Local Plan.*** Adoption of the planning guidance as supplementary guidance to the Local Plan will promote the standards of development and associated works expected in the Nevis Area.

Importantly, all planning policies and guidance applying to the Nevis Area will require to be consistent with the policies and proposals in **The Highland Structure Plan**.

## Planning Guidance

The recommended planning guidance sets out criteria and expectations, which future development will be expected to fulfil, and seeks to ensure that the siting, design and landscaping of future development -

- is sensitive to the high quality landscapes of the Nevis Area and wider Ben Nevis and Glen Coe NSA
- does not adversely affect, but seeks to enhance, the amenity and environmental qualities of adjacent buildings, can be integrated within the current pattern of development and its landscape setting, and is not intrusive from popular roads, paths or other vantage points.

The guidelines are summarised below, but are set out in full in the Nevis Strategy. The guidance advocates that-

- a. New development should be restricted to existing development clusters. Criteria are set for any exceptions.
- b. Any new houses should conform with The Highland Council's rural housing design guide (being prepared).
- c. In-fill housing or the sub-division of plots in the Lower Glen will be resisted, to prevent 'sub-urbanisation'.
- d. Ancillary buildings (e.g. sheds, feed-stores) should be sensitively sited and designed.
- e. Ancillary business use of homes, crofts or outbuildings should meet the stated criteria.



- f. While providing scope for up-grading or extensions, the character of farmsteads and traditional buildings should generally be maintained.
- g. Farm, forestry and public utility buildings and works should be sensitively sited and designed.
- h. Any renewal or replacement of existing visitor accommodation should be within current site boundaries. New buildings should be sited within the framework of tree belts and other landscaping.
- i. New development should be restricted to sites with substantial landscape cover, or where significant screening is part of the proposal. Planting should be undertaken in advance of development on sites with no/little vegetation and should predominantly comprise locally native species.
- j. Provision should be made for the protection of important landscape features and proposed landscaping, especially where a condition of consent (e.g. management agreement).
- k. Traditional boundary features (e.g. stone walls) are favoured.
- l. There should be a presumption against mobile trading (e.g. burger vans).
- m. Development proposals should respect, maintain or enhance opportunities for recreational access.
- n. Structure Plan policies on advertising and signs should be adhered to, and these should be kept to a minimum and sensitively designed. Any unacceptable increase in signing may result in further controls.
- o. Statutory undertakers should take a more active approach to under-grounding power and 'phone lines. There should be no additional telecommunications masts.
- p. There will be a general presumption against new or extended hill tracks.
- q. Those proposing development are encouraged to seek professional advice and consult planning staff.



## 10. IMPLEMENTING THE NEVIS STRATEGY

### ACTION PROGRAMME

The Strategy presents a **10-year Action Programme** showing proposed programmes - as described in previous sections of this Summary, and their timing and illustrative costs. The Action Programme is in outline, and individual programmes will require further refinement and detailed discussions with potential funding and implementing agencies, landowners and other interested parties. Achievement of the Action Programme will largely depend on the availability of funding and other support.

### FUTURE MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

#### Background

The Strategy highlights the many organisations with management interests in the Nevis Area, various management initiatives (e.g. establishment of the ranger service, 1984 Management Plan) and current staffing arrangements and management expenditures. It emphasises the need for an integrated, partnership-based management approach and increase in ranger and other staff.

The Working Party recognises that the Nevis Area may be proposed for designation by the Scottish Ministers as part of a future national park (e.g. Glen Coe & Glen Nevis National Park). Such designation will require to follow statutory consultation procedures and be underpinned by evidence of local support. It is unlikely to be achieved within the next 5 to 10 years. **Irrespective of any future national park proposals, it is essential that -**

- a. **effective progress is made over the next 5 to 10 years in implementing the proposals in the Nevis Strategy**
- b. **effective management arrangements are established in the immediate future** - which could be incorporated in any future national park management structure and ensure strong influence on the management of the Nevis Area by local land managers and representatives of the Nevis, Fort William and adjacent communities, in addition to wider interests
- c. **on-going Government funding support be sought** - for the management of this area of national and international conservation and tourism significance.

#### Aim

*To develop and sustain effective, integrated, partnership-based management arrangements to implement the Nevis Strategy and otherwise ensure the sustainable management of the Nevis Area.*

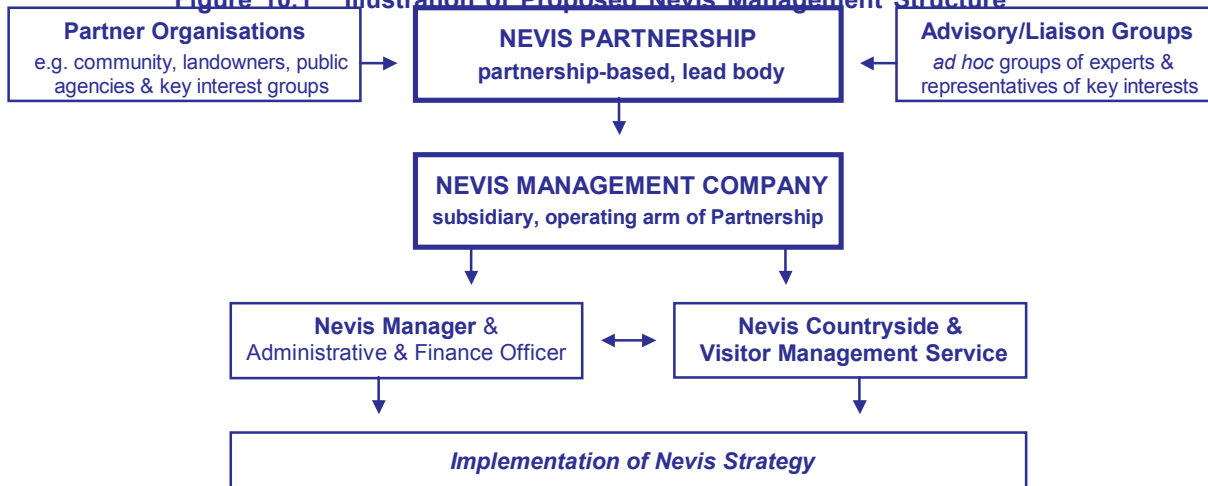
#### Objectives for Future Management Arrangements

- a. to establish and sustain an effective management partnership, which is representative of, and accountable to, key organisations with responsibilities in the Nevis Area and wider interests.
- b. to adopt integrated, proactive and often innovative approaches to implementing the Nevis Strategy and other initiatives.
- c. to develop and promote longer-term commitments of support from partner organisations and secure capital and revenue funding from a wide range of sources to sustain the management organisation and enable efficient progress towards achieving its intentions and programmes.
- d. to develop and maintain a small, but effective, staff capability to progress the Management Strategy and other initiatives, while drawing on a range of other labour (e.g. contractors, volunteers) to progress specific programmes and projects.

**Recommendations**

- a. **The Nevis Area should be managed in an integrated manner** - with a custom-designed management structure and boundaries relating to the Strategy’s objectives.
- b. **Management arrangements should be flexible** - to enable their potential integration within any future national park, which may include the Nevis Area.
- c. **The future management structure should comprise -**
  - i. **Nevis Partnership** - a representative, partner-based, charitable company to -
    - champion the interests and sustainable management of the Nevis Area
    - provide a forum for discussion and agreement on the area’s management
    - oversee, provide advice and mobilise support to progress the Strategy and related initiatives.
  - ii. **Nevis Management Company** - a subsidiary operating company to co-ordinate and manage the implementation of the Strategy.
- d. **To facilitate progress -**
  - i. **the Partnership may establish advisory groups** - e.g. Mountain Management Advisory Group
  - ii. **the Partnership should appoint a Nevis Manager and an Administrative & Finance Officer**
  - iii. **partner organisations may provide professional, technical and administrative support** - or such services may be gained through project and service contracts
  - iv. **the Countryside and Visitor Management Service should be strengthened** - by employing additional ranger, visitor information and implementation staff and a Countryside and Visitor Services Officer to co-ordinate and manage countryside management and visitor services staff.
  - v. **the Countryside and Visitor Management Service should be provided by The Highland Council, or another provider** - in accordance with an agreed service level contract.
  - vi. **the Management Company may gain support through secondments, employment trainees, volunteers and the armed forces.**
  - vii. **accommodation options should be assessed and additional accommodation provided.**

**Figure 10.1 Illustration of Proposed Nevis Management Structure**



## COSTS AND FUNDING

The overall estimated costs of implementing the Strategy and associated environmental and visitor management services, including management staff over the principal 5-year Action Programme period amount to some **£6 million**. Extrapolation of current levels of capital and revenue expenditures over the next 5 years suggests a total expenditure of over **£1.4m**.

The estimated costs are indicative and over the 5-years will comprise around £3.8m for capital costs (e.g. car park development, path improvements, Visitor Centre refurbishment, native woodland regeneration), £1.8m for staff and operational costs, and £0.4m for programmes with recurring costs. All estimates are at 2001 prices. Shortfalls in funding support, decisions to postpone or omit selected projects, or other constraints may result in lower costs being incurred, or investment being postponed.

In considering the above estimates, it should be noted that -

- there are already substantial capital, staff and operating costs of managing the Nevis Area
- the Strategy provides a framework for potential funding from a range of sources - including public sector partners, grant-aiding bodies, strategic funding sources (e.g. EU, Lottery) and land managers
- the proposed investment is modest, in comparison with the income generated in Lochaber and the Highlands by visitors to the Nevis Area, who expect a high quality of environment and visitor services
- future national park status could bring major new national funding.

## BENEFITS AND OUTCOMES OF THE NEVIS STRATEGY

The initial workshops and processes of developing the Vision and Strategy have helped to -

- raise awareness of management issues and the need for action and investment
- develop partnership approaches to management issues and decision-making
- develop goodwill, trust and confidence amongst key parties and in the wider community.

Intended benefits and outcomes of the Strategy include -

- a. **environmental benefits** - including protection and enhancement of the landscape character and qualities, wild land values, key habitats and species, and features of archaeological and historic interest
- b. **more sustainable land and water management** - for example, through promoting an appropriate balance between grazing and woodland regeneration, a river and catchment management scheme, and increasing visitors' understanding of land management issues
- c. **more sustainable tourism and enhanced visitor provision and management** - resulting from more integrated visitor management, improved facilities and information, and promoting responsible access
- d. **economic and employment benefits** - through sustaining and improving the area's attractions and services for visitors and resultant expenditure and employment spin-offs, and additional employment in the Nevis Management Service and contracts arising from the Strategy
- e. **community development** - including scope for voluntary involvement and training in practical projects and local residents', businesses' and others' involvement in the Nevis Partnership
- f. **improved framework for planning and development** - comprising an up-dated planning framework, more definitive planning guidelines and ensuring high quality development.
- g. **strengthened and effective management arrangements** - including a partnership-based lead organisation, agreed Strategy and framework for funding bids, and enhanced Management Service.

## MONITORING AND REVIEW

Monitoring will highlight changes (e.g. in visitor levels and key habitats), assist the evaluation of management policies and programmes, underpin management decision and enable targeted action and investment. The Strategy recommends a process and key topics for monitoring.

It will be vital, also, that the agreed Strategy and Action Programme are kept under review and up-dated, and that partner organisations and wider interests are informed on progress. Recommendations include -

- review of the Action Programme at least every 12 months
- review of the Strategy by Year 5
- publication of a twice-yearly newsletter and annual report for the Nevis Partnership and Management Company.

## 11. NEXT STEPS

### NEXT STEPS TO PROGRESS THE STRATEGY

The principal stages in progressing the Strategy and establishing the proposed management arrangements are illustrated below. Progress will depend on agreement with the Strategy, support from key partner organisations and the availability of funding.

