

Cairngorm Chairlift Company Ltd.

Visitor Management Plan

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1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. The purpose of the Visitor Management Plan (VMP) is to protect the integrity of the adjacent areas which have been designated or proposed under the European Habitats and Birds Directives, from the potential impacts of non-skiing visitors as a direct consequence of the funicular development.
- 1.2. The availability of new information has been taken into account in refining the draft VMP to create the final VMP:
 - The 1997/8 visitor surveys: the Cairngorms Mountain Recreation Survey (97/98) and Visitor Use of the Cairngorm-Ben Macdui Area (97/98).
 - The Rothiemurchus and Glenmore Working Group Draft Management Strategy (R&G DMS)
- 1.3. The objectives of this final VMP are unchanged from the Draft. The final VMP establishes the anticipated changes in visitor levels and patterns of use as a consequence of the funicular “Closed system” of management, and sets out the framework for monitoring these anticipated changes and their possible impacts.
- 1.4. The implementation of Reserve Powers identified in the VMP will be subject to consultation and prior approval by THC and SNH.
- 1.5. Cairngorm Chairlift Company will undertake to consult with THC and SNH on any proposed change to its Visitor Management arrangements in order that THC and SNH may consider whether any such change is likely to have a significant effect on the EU sites, in accordance with The Conservation (Natural Habitats, & c) Regulations 1994.
- 1.6. Further to a transfer in land ownership between Highlands and Islands Enterprise (Cairngorm Estate) and Forest Enterprise in June 1999 Forest Enterprise is explicitly a party to all matters which relate to its land lying within the Ski Area as defined by the S50 Agreement (ref Appendix 1, Map 1).

Key provisions of the VMP

A range of management provisions have been established to assist with ensuring the funicular development has no adverse impacts on the integrity of adjacent EU sites. These include:

- 1.7. **Car Parking**
 - A voluntary car park contribution policy will be introduced at the Coire Cas car park throughout the year for all visitors. The voluntary contribution policy will be introduced at the outset of the funicular operation. A commercial car park charging regime will be held as a reserve option for consideration by CCC Ltd in consultation with the S50 signatories.
 - Proceeds derived from car park contributions will be devoted to site management and the implementation of the VMP, including footpath repair, monitoring and car park management.
 - Dedicated car parking for mountain users will be provided in the lower car park at Coire Cas. The separation of sightseers and mountain users will assist in concentrating the former within the Ski Area.
 - Any further traffic management measures will be dependent on final decisions made in the R&G DMS and the outcome of the annual monitoring programme.
 - Car park charges escalating with the length of stay and the Clearway order as prescribed in the Draft VMP are included but proposed as reserve powers.
- 1.8. **Funicular**
 - The implementation of a “Closed system” prevents non-skiing visitors from leaving the Ptarmigan throughout the year.
 - Skiing visitors have egress in suitable snow conditions but should not enter the EU sites from the funicular. This request is reinforced by the conditions of sale for skiing tickets.
 - Emergency services and public agents have egress at all times.

1.9. Footpaths

- Public access on foot from Coire Cas car park will be maintained. Walkers will be encouraged to use existing footpaths.
- Alternative walking routes from Glen More will be provided.
- A network of paths within the Ski Area will be provided.

1.10. Monitoring

- The monitoring scheme will be designed to provide essential input to decisions on the adequacy of management of non skiing funicular visitors in protecting the adjacent proposed and designated European sites, namely the Cairngorms Special Protection Area (SPA) and the Cairngorms Candidate Special Area of Conservation (cSAC)
- Monitoring will consider all topics already subject to Baseline Surveys, such as visitor numbers, behaviour and impacts, birds, habitats, soils, and geomorphology.
- An independent reporting officer will review the monitoring process and make recommendations on the management effectiveness of the VMP to The Highland Council (THC) and Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) as part of an Annual Report.

2. Introduction

The purpose of this section of the VMP is to set out the changed circumstances and assumptions which have contributed to the refinement of the draft Visitor Management Plan of January 1997.

- 2.1. This document is submitted to the Highland Council Planning Authority and Scottish Natural Heritage as the final version of the Visitor Management Plan (VMP) as required by conditions 1, 28 and 29 of the planning permission of 27 March 1997 and Clause Sixth, Eighth and Ninth of the Section 50 Agreement (hereafter the S50 Agreement), which forms part of that permission.
- 2.2. The primary purpose of this VMP, as set out in the S50 Agreement, is to protect the integrity of the adjacent areas which have been designated or proposed under the European Habitats and Birds Directives from the potential impacts of non-skiing visitors as a direct consequence of the funicular development.
- 2.3. Non-skiing visitors are defined in Clause Second of the S50 Agreement as:
“visitors to the Ski Area at any time of the year who come for a purpose other than skiing, snow boarding, tobogganing, ski bobbing and other winter sports activities of a similar nature. The term also includes skiers, snow boarders and others undertaking the aforementioned sports who move from the Ski Area to adjoining land in the proposed European Sites.”

All categories of visitors are fully defined in Appendix 2.

- 2.4. Since the Draft VMP was prepared in 1997:
 - Significant visitor information has become available from surveys, particularly Visitor Use of the Cairn Gorm-Ben Macdui Area 97-98, Bayfield & Sinka (subsequently referred to as ITE, 2000); Cairngorms Mountain Recreation Survey 97-98, Taylor & MacGregor (subsequently referred to as CMRS); Car park users, The Highland Council (THC) traffic counters; Observation of Access for Mountain Recreation at Cairngorm, 97-99, Bullivant (subsequently referred to as Bullivant 2000); and Rothiemurchus and Glenmore Recreation Survey 98-99, A. S. Mather. The findings of these surveys have confirmed the importance of Glen More and the Coire Cas car park as the principal access route into the Cairngorms. Thus access to the hills via Coire Cas is a key issue in any management strategy for the Cairngorms.
 - This research information is being used to assist with the development of a visitor management strategy, which is being prepared for the Rothiemurchus-Glen More area by a Working Group of which the Chairlift Company is a member. The area covered by the Rothiemurchus & Glenmore Draft Management Strategy (R&G DMS) includes the Ski Area and the adjacent Cairngorm Estate, managed by Highlands and Islands Enterprise.
- 2.5. The relationship between the VMP and the R&G DMS has to be clearly understood. The VMP has a legal status, set out in the S50 Agreement, and aims to protect the EU proposed and designated sites from the potential impacts of non-skiing visitors to the Ski Area, which may arise as a direct consequence of the funicular development. The R&G DMS aims to integrate visitor management between landowners and agencies within the study area and is concerned with access to the high hills of the Cairngorms via Glen More, including the Coire Cas car park. The R&G DMS has therefore to take account of measures included in the VMP which reflect planning conditions. However, the recent consideration of access to the hills, which has followed the public consultation undertaken as part of the R&G DMS, has certain implications for the VMP and these are set out below (2.7 -2.8).
- 2.6. The main provisions of the VMP, geared to protecting the European designated sites, are:
 - Egress from the Ptarmigan throughout the year will be limited to skiing visitors, the emergency services and public agents. The activities of skiing visitors are excluded from the EU sites by the detailed terms and conditions of carriage (Appendix 4). The egress of emergency services and public agents are detailed in Appendix 5.
 - Access for non-skiing visitors from the Ski Area into the EU sites via the funicular will be managed by the operation of the “Closed system”.

- The “Closed system” will operate under the conditions of planning and be supported by the terms and conditions of carriage for ticket sales (Appendix 4).
- 2.7. The R&G DMS has considered available evidence on whether radical measures are justified to reduce access to the mountains. It notes that the numbers of mountain users are likely to remain stable and that overall demand is unlikely to increase, although the establishment of a National Park could affect this assumption. The introduction of radical measures to reduce access by any particular group of users would be impractical and inequitable, such measures would have to make access difficult for all groups and there is no consensus that this is necessary. Such measures are also likely to displace the impacts of access to other locations where conditions are less well understood and the ability to manage them is less well developed than at Coire Cas.
- 2.8. The implications for the VMP are that:
- Provisions made in the Draft VMP to reduce length of stay in the Coire Cas car park using escalating car park charges and associated restrictions on parking along the ski road will now be held in reserve.
 - A voluntary parking donation policy will be introduced at Coire Cas during the year to provide funds for site management associated with the Ski Area’s visitor management plan including car park management, footpath works and monitoring.
 - The Summer Season has been redefined as 1 May to 30 November inclusive, while the Ski Season has been redefined as 1 December [previously 1 November] to 30 April. These definitions are based on calculations of incidence of snow cover suitable for skiing over the last five years and are set out in Section 3 of this document (Table 3.1)
 - All charges including funicular tickets, ski tickets and the voluntary car park donation policy will be reviewable at the discretion of the Chairlift Company in light of operational costs and management costs associated with the VMP.
- 2.9. The approval by SNH and THC for the Company's present proposals for visitor management within the Ski Area will not preclude later modifications to accommodate and support management proposals for the wider area under a potential National Park Management Plan or a R&G DMS, subject of course to compliance with applicable EU conservation responsibilities and the agreement of the S50 signatories as provided for in Clause Ninth of the S50 Agreement.
- 2.10. Layout of sections
- The contents of this document can be summarised as follows:
- Section 3 describes the location of the Ski Area, its relation to designated conservation areas, details of the ski season and the facilities available for non-skiing visitors.
 - Sections 4 and 5 outline the objectives of visitor management at Cairngorm Ski Area and the principles that are fundamental to the rest of the paper. It is recognised that visitors fall into a number of different categories, that each category will require different management measures and techniques, and that management objectives will be achieved by the cumulative effect of a variety of different management measures applied at all stages of a visit to Cairngorm Ski Area.
 - Sections 6 to 10 describe the measures to be implemented by the Cairngorm Chairlift Company at key points of the visitor journey to Cairngorm Ski Area.
 - Section 11 covers arrangements for health and safety.
 - Section 12 deals with the monitoring scheme framework and process.
 - Appendices 1 to 6 cover a number of aspects in more detail than is appropriate in the main text.

3. Cairngorm Ski Area

This section provides background material about the geographical location of the Cairngorm Ski Area and its relation to adjacent designated conservation areas, as well as a summary of the facilities which will be available to non-skiing visitors to the Ski Area when the funicular project is complete.

- 3.1. The Cairngorm Ski Area lies some 10 miles east of the village of Aviemore on the northern slopes of Cairn Gorm, the most northerly major peak of the Cairngorm mountains. The Ski Area covers 598 hectares of the 1,418-hectare Cairngorm Estate. The Chairlift Company leases the Ski Area and car parks from Highlands and Islands Enterprise, owners of the Cairngorm Estate (Appendix 1, Boundaries Map).
- 3.2. Along its southern boundary the Ski Area abuts the Cairngorms National Nature Reserve (and Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)) and part of its eastern boundary marches with part of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds' Abernethy Reserve (formerly the Upper Glenavon Estate). To the north, the Ski Area and the Cairngorm Estate are bounded by the Glen More Forest Park, owned by the Forestry Commission.
- 3.3. The Cairngorm Estate lies wholly within the Cairngorm Mountains National Scenic Area. The Northern Corries SSSI covers the entire western part of the Estate. The Cairngorm Estate is nominally designated as part of the Glen More Forest Park.
- 3.4. Almost all the SSSIs in the neighbourhood, including Abernethy, Cairngorms, Eastern Cairngorms, Inchroty, Glen More Forest, North Rothiemurchus Pinewood and Cairngorm Northern Corries, have collectively been proposed as a candidate Special Area of Conservation (cSAC) under the EU Habitats Directive. The area is also designated as a Special Protection Area (SPA) under the EU Birds Directive. Several European habitats and species are noted in the published reasons for the cSAC and SPA designations (Appendix 1, Boundaries Map).
- 3.5. Based on calculations of incidence of snow cover suitable for skiing over the last five years, the Ski Season has been redefined as 1 December [previously 1 November] to 30 April and the Summer Season as 1 May to 30 November [previously 31 October]. The rationale for changing the definition of the Ski Season is that, given the historical evidence, the redefined Ski Season is a more accurate reflection of the activity on the ground. This redefinition does not have any implication for the operation of the "Closed system" and the management of non-skiing visitors.
- 3.6. Historic records show that skiing is possible in November and May (i.e. outside the defined ski season) but mechanised uplift is usually limited to a few lifts and for short periods of time (Table 3.1). Thus, it is not "usual" to open mechanised uplift in the months of November or May. This situation does arise but only when suitable snow conditions permit. (For the definition of suitable snow conditions – see Appendix 2).
- 3.7. Snow conditions are presently assessed on a daily basis by the Hill Manager, Ski Patrol and the Ranger Service and the decision to open mechanised uplift is based on the information received from each department regarding weather, ground conditions and snow cover. The decision to open skiing runs and operate mechanised lifts for skiing is guided by the need to protect the environmental integrity of the Ski Area. This decision making process regarding 'suitable snow conditions' for skiing will continue to operate when the funicular is in operation.
- 3.8. The boundaries of the Ski Area (as defined in the S50 Agreement), the Cairngorm Estate and other designated areas are indicated on the Boundaries Map 1 (Appendix 1). The operational boundary of the Ski Area is indicated on this map.

Table 3.1. Cairngorm Ski Season Start and Finish Dates 1995 - 1999

Year	1998/99	1997/98	1996/97	1995/96	1994/95
Start Date	28 Dec	27 Dec	28 Nov	24 Dec	21 Dec
Finish Date	22 Apr	30 Apr	20 Apr	6 May	7 May
Days on which skiing with mechanised uplift occurred outwith the newly defined season					
Ciste tow	6, 16-19 Nov			4-6 May	3 May
Ptarmigan tow	16-19 Nov			1-6 May	
M1 tow	19 Nov		29, 30 Nov		
Cas tow					1-7 May
Fiacail Tow			29, 30 Nov		
Day Lodge Tow			30 Nov		

Table 3.1 indicates those days during the past five years when some mechanised uplift operated for skiers outside the defined ski season. For season 1999/00 the ski season start date was the 3 December and the ski season finish date was the 30 April. Start/Finish dates indicate consecutive days skiing.

- 3.9. Access to the Cairngorm Ski Area is by public road from Aviemore via Glen More (B970). From Glen More the road rises past an informal car park at the Sugar Bowl (now under the operation of Forest Enterprise); from the Sugar Bowl a path can be accessed running westwards past the Reindeer Company's enclosure on the upper slopes of the Forest Enterprise Estate to the Chalamain Gap. The road then enters the Ski Area and passes a car park at Coire na Ciste which is used mainly as an overflow car park in the ski season, before it terminates at the entrance to the main car park at Coire Cas (Appendix 1, Footpath and Utilities Map).
- 3.10. The public road and the Coire Cas car park currently serve as the principal northern access point to the main Cairngorm massif (see Appendix 2). The Cairngorm massif is recognised as having high recreational qualities for walkers, climbers, birdwatchers and others. These mountain users access the Coire Cas car park and continue to the high ground either by chairlift or on foot through the Ski Area and other parts of the Cairngorm Estate. The Cairngorms Mountain Recreation Survey 97-98 revealed that 'the Glen More corridor' is used by over half of all mountain users of the Cairngorms, and the Coire Cas car park by almost one-third of them. It estimated that 32 per cent of those who walk in the Cairngorms gain access via the Coire Cas car park, which is even more popular with winter users who ice climb or ski-tour (see Appendix 1, Table 1.2A).
- 3.11. The facilities at the old Day Lodge include catering, a shop, information displays and other interpretive material, and access to the ticket office. Beside the Day Lodge, the Northern Corries footpath leads westwards into the Northern Corries SSSI, SPA and the cSAC and provides one route for access to the Cairn Gorm - Ben Macdui plateau (Appendix 1, Footpath Map Ref E2). The main footpath to the summit leads through the Ski Area (E3) past the Shielling (at the mid-point of the funicular), past the Ptarmigan, and serves as the other main walking route to the plateau (Appendix 1, Footpath Map Ref E7 and E8). Above the Shielling, a branch of this path leads to the Fiacail a'Choire Chais (Appendix 1, Footpath Map Ref E6) and the closest point of the Cairngorms National Nature Reserve (NNR). There is at present no direct footpath access back to Glen More from the Coire Cas car park, which encourages some walking on the public road.
- 3.12. The funicular will run between the new Base Station, next to the existing Day Lodge, and the new Ptarmigan building. The new Ptarmigan will include an interpretive experience (complementing the interpretive material at the new Base Station) as well as extensive catering facilities, a shop and a viewing area from which panoramic views from the north-west round to the north-east can be seen.
- 3.13. Prior to the funicular development, all visitors could access the path from the old Ptarmigan leading approximately 800 metres to the summit of Cairn Gorm, or the path from the old Ptarmigan back down to the car park. However, the proposals in this VMP require non-skiing visitors who have used the funicular to reach the new Ptarmigan, not to leave the building and its terrace except to travel back down the funicular with the operation of the "Closed system". Skiing

visitors will be permitted to leave the Ptarmigan building to pursue their activity. Separating skiing visitors from non-skiing visitors will be managed via the sale and inspection of tickets and associated terms and conditions of carriage (Appendix 4).

4. Visitor Management Objectives

The purpose of this section of the VMP is to state the objectives of visitor management.

- 4.1. The overall aim of this VMP, as specified in the S50 Agreement (see paragraph 2.2 above) is to ensure that visitor management complies with international conservation legislation, while at the same time permitting the Company to achieve its operating objectives and thus continue in its key role of underpinning the local tourist economy.
- 4.2. The objectives of visitor management are therefore:
 - to safeguard the environmental and tourism resource;
 - to promote greater understanding and appreciation for the mountain heritage;
 - to enhance the quality of the visitor experience; and
 - to assist in addressing existing problems within the ski area
- 4.3. Once the funicular is in place, the key objectives of management reflect those for the zones identified in the Cairn Gorm Summit Tourism Management Plan of 1994 (the Ski Area; the Northern Corries Rim and the Plateau). These objectives are:
 - to contain the bulk of visitor activity within the Ski Area boundary;
 - to educate and inform visitors about the sensitivity of the Cairn Gorm environment and the need for management;
 - to enhance the quality of the visitor experience;
 - to monitor the impact of non-skiing visitors as a direct result of the funicular development and thereby guide future management;
 - to prevent non-skiing visitors from using the funicular to gain access to the Plateau Zone and adjoining designated EU areas; and
 - to ensure that overall levels of visitor impact on the Northern Corries Rim Zone are no greater than present levels.

5. Principles of Visitor Management - Anticipated Changes in Levels and Patterns of Use

The purpose of this section of the VMP is to set out the principles on which visitor management will be based, particularly in relation to the R&G DMS. This section also establishes the anticipated changes in visitor levels and patterns of use as a consequence of the funicular “closed” management system.

- 5.1. The R&G DMS seeks to implement the objectives for the ‘high hills’, established in “*Managing the Cairngorms*” (Cairngorms Partnership Strategy), by finding a balance between the demands for recreational access and the contribution that these make to the local economy with the legal obligation to protect sensitive EU sites. Following public consultation in March and April 1999, the R&G DMS recognises that:
 - Coire Cas will remain the main access point to the Cairngorms as there are environmental risks in dispersing use to other locations where conditions are less well understood and the ability to manage them is less well developed.
 - a significant increase in mountain users visiting the high hills is unlikely.
- 5.2. The R&G DMS assumes that access to the Plateau and the Northern Corries rim will be reduced by the operation of a “Closed system” for non-skiing funicular visitors. It proposes to:
 - continue the present access arrangements from Coire Cas, while continuing maintenance on and improvements to the Northern Corries and Fiacaille paths, as the principal walking routes into the mountains;
 - monitor levels of use and their impacts; and
 - review future options to car park access to Coire Cas with the proviso that any alternative must enable the Ski Area to continue to function and to provide a quality service to skiers.
- 5.3. The R&G DMS proposes to approach the management of access to the high hills by a series of incremental measures to be reviewed in the light of information and experience provided by the monitoring scheme, that is, by relying on voluntary restraint and self-regulation by users. The Working Group consultations did not consider that limitations on long stay users by the introduction of escalating car park charges and prohibitions on the introduction of roadside parking, proposed in the draft VMP, were warranted on present evidence. The use of such powers would depend on the outcome of future monitoring.
- 5.4. The VMP has adopted a similar approach to traffic management, whereby the provisions of parking restrictions on the access road and levels of car park charges to deter long stay parking will be held in reserve, pending the outcome of future monitoring, both of visitor use and visitor impacts. The management measures are specified at the end of Sections 8 to 10 respectively and the framework and process of the monitoring scheme are set out in Section 12. As the monitoring programme develops, the VMP will be further refined in the light of experience, as envisaged in the S50 Agreement (Clause Ninth). The monitoring scheme will play a key role in directing any future changes in the visitor management regime. In line with this approach, the Company has requested THC to consider removal of the Clearway Order under the planning conditions associated with the Funicular Planning Permission BS/1994/254.

5.5. Visitor Levels and Patterns of Use.

In order to establish the basis for visitor management during the funicular operation, the remainder of this section considers:

- current (i.e. pre-funicular) levels of recreational use at Coire Cas in the skiing and summer seasons, as defined in paragraph 3.5; and
- probable changes in use due to both prevailing trends in recreational demand and the operation of the funicular under the “Closed system”.

The risk of significant impacts arising out of these changes is considered in Section 12. Although the VMP is primarily concerned with the management of non-skiing visitors, use of the area by skiers has been included in this section for the sake of completeness. The approach of assessing likely changes in use has been consistently applied to the types of recreational visitor in both

seasons.

The categories of visitor are:

- Skiing visitors – subdivided into downhill skiers (including snowboarders) and ski-spectators.
- Non-skiing visitors – sub-divided into mountain users including: climbers, ski-tourers/ski-mountaineers, long-distance walkers and bird watchers, short-distance walkers and sightseers.

Where reliable data are available, the levels of existing use for each category of visitor have been calculated (the methods of calculation are set out in tables in Appendix 1). The principal sources of information on which these calculations are based are:

- Mountain users – Cairngorms Mountain Recreation Survey 1997/98;
- Car park users - THC traffic counters;
- Distribution of different types of visitor within the plan area - Visitor Use of the Cairn Gorm-Ben Macdui Area September 1997 – August 1998 (ITE, 2000);
- Observation of Access for Mountain Recreation at Cairngorm, 1997-1999 (Bullivant, 2000).

5.6. Skiing Visitors

5.6.1. Downhill Skiers

Between 1996/7 and 1998/9 the numbers of skiing visits fluctuated between 75,000 – 110,000, (Appendix 1, Table 1.1) being highly dependent on snow conditions. The rolling average of 94,000 visits (Appendix 1, Table 1.1) for those years is predicted to rise to a rolling average of 150,000 following the opening of the funicular.

At present, nearly all skiers undertake their activity within the Ski Area boundary - the ability to leave the Ski Area is based on skiers' competency levels, local knowledge and snow cover. The Company knows that 55-65 per cent (Strathclyde Post Graduate Research Group Intelligence Unit, 1997) of the skier market are of beginner/low intermediate competence, 18 per cent of Cairngorms skiers describe themselves as experts and only a small portion of this group have the local knowledge and mountain competence to ski beyond the Ski Area boundary. Even then, the efforts of this group will be largely directed towards Coire Laogh Mor and Beag from the snow fences in Coire na Ciste (both outside the EU sites) and down into Coire an t-Sneachda from the top of the Fiacaill ski tow to the bottom of the Fiacaill Ridge poma. To a lesser extent there will be sorties over the summit westward round the Coire rims to Allt Creag an Leth-choin (Lurcher's Gully) and from the top of the Ptarmigan tow down into Ciste Mhearad. Both these latter runs involve some effort to get back to the Ski Area or car park, so are only for the more committed individuals.

It is not envisaged that the availability of uplift via the funicular will fundamentally change the market profile of Cairngorm's skiing market. However, operation of the funicular will increase the number of skiing days available on higher lying snowfields and permit more reliable access to the top nursery slopes than is currently provided by the chairlift. This will be crucial in winters when there is poor snow coverage on the lower slopes. Funicular access is not likely to change the geographic scope of skiers' activities beyond the Ski Area: this will continue to be determined by skier ability, local knowledge and extent of snow cover.

5.6.2. Skiing Spectators

Total winter chairlift ticket sales to visitors who do not buy a skiing ticket range between 5,000 – 11,000 tickets (Cairngorm ski season chair ticket sales). At present, the chairlift ticket can be purchased by:

- mountain users,
- those beginner skiers who only purchase a chairlift ticket (as opposed to a beginner skiing ticket), and
- skiing spectators.

The Company estimates that 30 per cent of winter chairlift tickets are sold to spectators, (i.e. between 1,500 and 3,300 winter chairlift tickets) usually family members accompanying young

beginners and/or watching special events, who are not equipped for winter sports and are not likely to venture far beyond the Ptarmigan building. Under the funicular operation, the numbers of skiing spectators are envisaged to increase marginally as the funicular will provide a more reliable and comfortable ride to the new Ptarmigan, which will also provide a higher level of comfort than the old Ptarmigan. However, skiing spectators will be managed within the Ski Area and in poor snow conditions, the sale of skiing spectator tickets may be suspended (Appendix 4).

5.7. Non-Skiing Visitors

5.7.1. Mountain Use in Winter.

Present estimates of winter use (December to April) of Coire Cas car park by mountain users are estimated to be 15,000 visits (Appendix 1, Table 1.2A, Note 4). Use is not predicted to change significantly. Winter climbers undertake activities beyond the Ski Area boundary and the large bulk of this activity is in the Northern Corries and Plateau Rim, where the best ice climbing conditions exist. The main route into this area is via the Northern Corries and Fiacail a' Choire Chais Path. In winter most winter mountain users leave early in the morning (prior to chairlifts opening), with an estimated number of 2,250 using the chairlifts (Appendix 1, Table 1.2A Note 5).

The operation of the funicular is unlikely to change the levels of winter use, which is more likely to be influenced by winter climbing conditions. However, the "Closed system" may result in a slight increase in mountain users (who might otherwise have used the chairlift) walking through the Ski Area to the Fiacail a' Choire Chais Path by the Middle Station/Car Park Route. The car parking arrangements together with pre-visit and on-site information will assist in directing winter mountain users to preferred walking routes through the Ski Area. This should also help to avoid potential difficulties for early morning and late evening piste grooming and increase awareness of the need to avoid walking down lift lines and across ski pistes.

5.7.2. Ski Tourers/Ski Mountaineers.

Although this activity is confined to the winter and spring months and is also determined by the snow conditions on the plateau, it was defined as a category of non-skiing visitor in the S50 Agreement on the basis that it takes place outside the Ski Area. The estimated level of use (1,900 visits) is based on responses by those mountain users interviewed in the Cairngorms Mountain Recreation Survey, who gave this activity as the main or secondary purpose of their visit in the winter and spring months. According to this survey, 62 per cent of these visitors accessed the mountains via Coire Cas and 11 per cent of them (210 visits) indicated they used the chairlift to reach the plateau (Appendix 1, Table 1.2B). As ski tourers and ski mountaineers will not be able to make use of the funicular as a means of access to the EU sites, a small number of these users may use other uplift in good snow conditions.

5.7.3. Mountain Use outwith the Ski season.

The visitor surveys recognised separate categories of mountain users according to the time spent on their activity. Mountain users (who spend more than one hour beyond the Ski Area boundary) were estimated in 1997/8 at 27,000 visits outwith the ski season (Appendix 1, Table 1.2A, Note 6). This was probably an underestimate of average use due to poor weather throughout the survey period. Fifteen per cent of this type of user (4,050) indicated they had used the chairlift to gain access to the summit. However the methods used in the Cairngorms Mountain Recreation Survey did not include two other categories of walkers. The ITE 2000 survey estimated that another 16,000 visitors annually undertake a walk of between 30 minutes and 1 hour within the Ski Area boundary or go as far as the Cairn Gorm Summit and that 4 per cent of visitors to Coire Cas car park (i.e. 14,500 visits) walk for less than 30 minutes or remain within the Ski Area (Appendix 1, Table 1.2C). A proportion of these short stay walkers would have been chairlift users and their walk would have been taken from the Ptarmigan. While it is not possible to produce a firm estimate of the chairlift use by walkers and other mountain users outwith the ski season, it has been estimated that chairlift use in the summer season is circa 6,000 visits by this group.

A high proportion of mountain users traversed a circuit from the Coire Cas car park up through the Ski Area, around the top of the Northern Corries and back to the car park via the Northern Corries path, a route also used in reverse. The heaviest use of walking routes from the car park, is:

- 1) Coire Cas to Middle station (Footpath Map Ref E3),
- 2) Middle to Top station (Footpath Map Ref E3 + E7),
- 3) Top station to summit (Footpath Map Ref E8),
- 4) Northern Corries (Footpath Map Ref E2) (ITE 2000).

There were few differences between routes undertaken by mountain users over the seasons. Spring, summer and autumn route use was very similar with only slight variations in volume, although winter mountain users do not travel as extensively as those in other seasons (CMRS), and detailed route use is affected by snow conditions (Bullivant 2000).

5.7.4. Bird watchers.

Bird watching visits to the Cairngorms were estimated to be 2 per cent of total visitor numbers, i.e. approximately 7,000 (Appendix 1, Table 1.2C). Their visits were confined principally to the spring and summer months during the breeding season. Many made use of the chairlift to gain relatively easy access to the Plateau and bird watchers in the Northern Corries were more likely to walk off footpaths (Bullivant, 2000).

5.7.5. Summer Chairlift/Potential Funicular Use

Current summer use of the chairlift varies between 35,000 and 55,000 visits a year (Cairngorm summer chair ticket sales); with 50 per cent of all visitors who arrive at Coire Cas car park staying for less than 2 hours (ITE 2000). Visitors giving sightseeing and the chairlift as the main reason for their visit stayed on site for the shortest amount of time (1.5 hours). ITE 2000 indicated that there has always been more upward, rather than downward, use of the chairlift and that weather has been a powerful constraint on both the operation of the top chairlift and its use by visitors when operational. The chairlift has had operational reliability of between 120 and 170 days annually depending on weather conditions.

The more reliable operation of the funicular and the provision of an attractive destination at the Ptarmigan are expected to generate a large increase in the number of funicular visitors to 165,000 per year. This increase will predominantly come from sightseeing visitors able to take advantage of the reliability and comfort of a mountain railway journey. It is possible that this group will continue to take short walks from the Coire Cas car park, utilising parts of the most popular walking routes within the Ski Area. The length of stay of this type of visitor is anticipated to increase slightly compared to visitors previously using the chairlift. Winter funicular visitors are anticipated to increase (particularly the December holiday period and the March and April spring months). The operation of the "Closed system" will ensure that these visitors are managed within the Ptarmigan (see Section 9).

5.7.6. Sightseeing Visitors to Car Park

Sightseeing was the most cited reason for visiting Coire Cas at all times of the year. Sightseeing visitors stay on average less than 2 hours, visiting the Day Lodge cafe and shop (ITE 2000). These visitors are not experienced mountain users and do not venture far from the Coire Cas car park. This group is anticipated to grow as a result of the funicular. However any increase in overall domestic and overseas tourist numbers will be driven by a number of external factors affecting levels of tourism in Scotland, such as the strength of sterling, and local factors such as National Park designation and the redevelopment of Aviemore Centre. It is estimated there could be a maximum of 48,500 sightseeing visitors who continue to visit the car park for sightseeing purposes only, stay for a short period (less than 2 hours), and possibly take a short walk within the Ski Area (Appendix 1, Table 1.3, Note 6).

5.7.7. Summary of anticipated changes in use by user groups.

If there is no substantial change in the numbers of mountain users that come to the Coire Cas car

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park after the opening of the funicular, and the pattern of walk destinations and durations remains similar, the changes in numbers going to different destinations resulting from the “Closed system” are likely to be quite modest.

Indeed, variation in use from year to year, as a consequence of weather, might have a greater effect on proportions of visitors to key destinations than the operation of the “Closed system”. For example, some of the differences in summer use between the 1996 (good summer weather) and 1997/98 (poor summer weather) visitor surveys appear to have been as high or even higher than those calculated for the effects of the “Closed system”. In 1996 the proportion of walkers getting to Ben Macdui was only about 7 per cent of the traffic to the Cairn Gorm summit, compared to 29 per cent in 1997/98 (ITE 2000, Table 19).

Although general trends suggest that the overall level of mountain use is not expected to increase (R&G DMS, see 5.1), there is likely to be some redistribution of users following the operation of the funicular and the “Closed system”. Those mountain users who have formerly used the chairlift will still aim to reach the peaks and the longer walk from car park level is unlikely to dissuade the committed hill walker. It is anticipated that they are likely to use the Ski Area hill road, Fiacail a’ Choire Chais or the Northern Corries Footpath to get to the plateau rim routes and thereby gain access to Cairn Gorm, Ben Macdui and the plateau. The impact of increased use of the Northern Corries by mountain users will be managed by encouraging them to use selected paths (see Section 10).

Visitors walking for a shorter time are unlikely to reach the plateau with a resulting redistribution of these walkers in the ski area, with potentially some increased use of the Northern Corries path. It is anticipated that the numbers of birdwatchers visiting the plateau could fall significantly once the funicular is in operation. Those that continue to visit the area are anticipated to be redistributed within Coire Cas and the Northern Corries.

Table 5.7.1 illustrates the possible changes in visitor use of key locations resulting from the operation of the “Closed system”. These calculations assume an increase in numbers of sightseeing tourists from the operation of the funicular but no change in the overall numbers of mountain users.

Table 5.7.1. Possible changes in the distribution of non-skiing visitors after the operation of the “Closed system”

Visitor type	Ski Area	Northern Corries	Cairn Lochan	Ben Macdui	Loch Avon
Ski-tourers	na	na	-	-	-
Short distance walkers	++	++	na	na	na
Long distance walkers	+	+	+	=	-
Climbers	+	+	na	na	-
Bird watchers	+	+	--	--	na

Sightseers	++	+	na	na	na
++ increase; + small increase; -- decrease; - small decrease; = no change; na, not applicable					

5.8. Implications for Management

The preceding analysis of likely changes in levels and re-distribution of non-skiing visitors related to the operation of the funicular and the introduction of the “Closed system”, suggests that the principal risks of potentially damaging impacts will be from the use of alternative routes by various categories of mountain users and short walkers, previously using the chairlift and from sightseers staying to walk in the area. The greater risk, albeit from relatively small increases in numbers will be in the Northern Corries, while the relatively larger increases in use will be in the Ski Area.

The potential impacts of this anticipated use would be path widening, path proliferation (new path formation) and damage to vegetation. The risk of disturbance to ground-nesting birds is likely to decline as fewer birdwatchers gain easy access to the plateau. The range of management measures which will be used to minimise the risk of the potential impacts are:

- Advance information and on-site interpretation – detailed in Sections 6 and 7, which cover Marketing and the Approach to the Ski Area respectively;
- Car Park Management – covered in Section 8;
- The operation of the funicular and the “Closed system” – covered in Section 9; and
- Footpath management – covered in Section 10.

A framework and process for the monitoring programme is given in Section 12.

6. Visitor Management Stage 1 – The Marketing of Cairngorm Ski Area

The purpose of this section of the VMP is to establish the principles to be applied in the Company's Marketing Strategy.

- 6.1. Following the development of the funicular, the Company will offer a unique product within the British tourism and leisure industry, namely a quality visitor attraction offering a year round mountain experience for visitors of all ages and physical ability. The Company will offer two distinct products:
 - Cairngorm Mountain Experience. The Cairngorm Funicular Railway will provide an unrivalled opportunity for visitors of all ages to enjoy one of Britain's most outstanding scenic mountain areas on a funicular railway system designed and managed to help secure the environmental integrity of this special Scottish mountain landscape.
 - Cairngorm Skiing Experience. The Cairngorm Ski Area is Scotland's most popular snow sports destination, providing spectacular scenery, excellent terrain with modern facilities and friendly service.
- 6.2. The focus of the Company's marketing of the "Cairngorm Mountain Experience" will be on non-skiing visitors, specifically the sightseeing visitor and organised group markets. A consistent and co-ordinated message will reinforce the site's environmental values and obligations and ensure that these categories of visitors are directed to the areas and activities capable of accommodating them. In addition, effective management will be achieved by the cumulative effect of a variety of different measures applied at all stages of a visit to Cairngorm and the marketing strategy will play an important role in shaping visitor expectations (both pre-visit and on site).
- 6.3. The operation of the "Closed system" is a unique environmental management tool and will be a key contributor to environmental protection at Cairn Gorm. The reasons for the "Closed system" will be highlighted in all promotional activity and on site interpretation will reinforce the rationale for the "Closed system".
- 6.4. Interpretation will play a key role in raising visitors' awareness and understanding of the special nature of the landscape and the need for management.
- 6.5. Whilst some aspects of interpretation will be in place before December 2001, it is anticipated the on-site interpretive facility will be complete by summer 2002. The interpretive strategy for the site is a key management tool that will assist in influencing positive visitor behaviour and action in favour of looking after the resource. The Chairlift Company are committed to this endeavour and aim to achieve a Gold Award under the "Green Tourism Business Scheme". This is a clearly identified objective in the Company's Interpretive Strategy.
- 6.6. Interpretation provided at the Base Station and the new Ptarmigan will play an integral part in communicating the key site management messages to visitors. The interpretive strategy will be developed to assist with the wider management strategy of balancing resource protection with responsible recreation. It is recognised that the inability to access the EU Sites from the top of the funicular may present a frustration for some visitors. It is therefore paramount that the interpretive strategy minimises any frustration or disappointment by creating a destination experience within the Ptarmigan of exceptionally high value which explains why the mountain is subject to the management measures in operation. The interpretive objectives for the Ptarmigan will encompass the following:
 - Interpret the significance of the Cairngorms in terms of their natural, recreational and social heritage.
 - Encourage and promote a responsible and pro-active approach to conserving the environment.
 - Promote sustainable activities in suitable areas within the Ski Area boundary.
 - Provide visitors with an understanding of the importance of the Cairngorms and raise visitor awareness of the role every visitor can play in helping to maintain the quality of the mountain for the enjoyment of all.
 - Interpret in a way that is engaging, entertaining and stimulating.

- 6.7. It is also recognised that due to the Ski Area's location and the availability of high elevation parking, the Company provides a popular access point for mountain users, including climbers, walkers, ski tourers and bird watchers, wishing to pursue activities in the Cairngorms beyond the Ski Area boundary. The primary responsibility for managing these users rests with R&GWG and the Chairlift Company will assist with their management within the ski area boundary. With the development of the R&G DMS, the Company will ensure that its activities are marketed within the visitor management framework provided by that strategy. This will contribute to a consistent approach being adopted by the various organisations operating within the area.
- 6.8. It is hoped that relationships can be built with mountain user representative bodies (e.g. MCoFS, BMC, SORN and SportsScotland) and other organisations such as RSPB. These organisations can play a key role in informing mountain users of the visitor management measures operating at Cairngorm for the benefit of environmental protection.
- 6.9. The Company's marketing strategy recognises the strategic influence of the many organisations seeking to promote tourism in the Badenoch & Strathspey area including the Scottish Tourist Board, the Highlands of Scotland Tourist Board, hotel operators and local community trade associations. The Company has already co-operated with some of these groups on joint marketing and orientation initiatives and will continue to look for joint marketing opportunities that are compatible with its target markets and visitor management objectives.
- 6.10. The marketing strategy is reviewed on a three year basis and is delivered through a yearly action plan with performance indicators. The monitoring process together with the marketing performance indicators will play an important role in directing strategic marketing reviews and future visitor management strategies.

Cairngorm Chairlift Company will

- 6.11. *continue to promote environmental awareness and responsibility with messages that are consistent with visitor management objectives in pre - visit information and on site information;*
- 6.12. *look for joint marketing opportunities with other partners and ensure that messages given to the public are consistent with visitor management objectives;*
- 6.13. *provide and promote a pre-booking service for funicular visitors which will enable them to receive specific information and advice in advance of their visit;*
- 6.14. *provide engaging, enjoyable and stimulating interpretation in the Base Station and the Ptarmigan that promotes awareness and understanding of the mountain environment and its special qualities and encourage responsible enjoyment of the site; and*
- 6.15. *the interpretive strategy, together with any future changes to it, to be submitted to SNH and THC for their prior approval.*

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7. Visitor Management Stage 2 – Approach to the Ski Area

The purpose of this section of the VMP is to ensure that visitors approaching the Ski Area are well informed of the facilities on offer and site conditions relating to their use prior to arrival.

- 7.1. There are varied opportunities to increase visitor awareness before arrival and much is covered in the marketing strategy, including partnership promotion with other visitor attractions and facilities along the public road, such as the Rothiemurchus Visitor Centre at Inverdrue and the Forest Enterprise Visitor Centre at Glen More. A range of communication tools including print and the web will be used to inform visitors of the experience in advance of their arrival.
- 7.2. The approach along the public road offers an opportunity to inform visitors about what to expect at Cairngorm, so that they arrive at the car park with a sense of anticipation but in the knowledge that they are about to enter a special and sensitive environment. A review of existing signage between Aviemore and the Ski Area (taking into account work that has already been carried out by the Aviemore Projects Office in Aviemore) is ongoing. The redesign and placement of directional and orientation signs will enhance the feeling of anticipation along the Ski Road and on arrival at the Coire Cas car park and improve the visual quality of the approach road as well as establishing a sense of “place”.
- 7.3. Other advance information opportunities include the use of the Cairngorm Ski Area web site and the radio and telephone Hotlines operated by the Cairngorm Chairlift Company (radio operates in the winter only). These will aim to inform potential visitors to Cairngorm, in advance of their arrival, of the existence of the “Closed system”, its operation and weather conditions at the car park. The Company will continue to provide 24 hour telephone information messages which will inform visitors of opening times and pre-booking arrangements at busy times, thus helping to reduce pressure at Coire Cas and minimise random exploration of the hillside by visitors who cannot gain immediate access to the funicular. The Company provides a radio information Hotline programme (Ski FM) in the ski season in association with Moray Firth Radio and Speysound Radio. This could (with the co-operation of License holders, Moray Firth Radio and Speysound Radio) be extended to the busy summer period of July and August to reinforce a number of desirable environmental messages for the area including, weather conditions, fire risk, queuing times and events throughout the area.
- 7.4. It should be noted that the viewing of reindeer within the enclosure on the upper slopes of the Forest Enterprise Estate is now a significant visitor attraction. Access to the reindeer enclosure is by foot from the informal Sugar Bowl car park. Access for the Reindeer Company via the Sugar Bowl car park is to be maintained and the proposed arrangements are set out in Appendix 3.

Cairngorm Chairlift Company will

- 7.5. *continue to co-operate with other attractions along the Glen More corridor and with tourist facilities in Badenoch & Strathspey to ensure that information on management measures including the “Closed system” and facilities at Cairngorm is available to visitors before they arrive at the Coire Cas car park. Such information will include details of the facilities themselves, opening and closing times, the car park arrangements, environmental information and advice to visitors on appropriate behaviour, and will be disseminated by means of print, PR and other communication tools identified in the Company’s marketing strategy;*
- 7.6. *continue to review with potential partners the need for extending use of the radio hotline in the peak summer months (July and August) as a possible future management tool for the wider area of Glen More and Rothiemurchus;*
- 7.7. *continue to use the Cairngorm Ski Area web site and telephone hotline to provide visitor information on weather conditions, opening times and booking arrangements in advance of visitors arriving on site;*

- 7.8. *review the signage along the Glen More corridor, in collaboration with partners in the Rothiemurchus and Glenmore Working Group and the Aviemore Projects Office, with a view to maximising its effectiveness in promoting the area as "special", and creating a sense of "place". It is anticipated that implementation of the recommendations of this review will be through these partnerships and will take account of the sensitivity of Rothiemurchus and Glen More; and*
- 7.9. *ensure that the interests of the Reindeer Company are taken into account in any proposals for signage and information at the Sugar Bowl car park.*

8. Visitor Management Stage 3 – Management of Car Parks

The purpose of this section of the VMP is to indicate the potential levels of use, seasonal variations and the measures to be applied in various conditions in relation to car parking arrangements.

8.1. Coire Cas car park is owned by HIE and leased to the Cairngorm Chairlift Company Ltd as part of the Ski Area. It is the main arrival point for visitors to the Cairngorm Ski Area and is also the main access point for mountain users wishing to enjoy the Cairngorm Massif (SNH Mountain Recreation User Survey - June 1997-98). Current calculations of visitors using the Coire Cas car park estimate use at between 307,000 - 363,000 visits per year (Appendix 1, Table 1.1). These total visitor numbers are projected to rise to between 380,000 and 441,000 comprising estimates of a 59 per cent increase in skier visits from 94,000 to 150,000, no increase in mountain users, and a 10 per cent increase in sightseeing visitors (Appendix 1, Table 1.3).

The objectives of visitor management at the Coire Cas car park are:

- to promote visitor satisfaction and enjoyment of the visit;
- to manage the access roads and car parks in a way that ensures the efficient movement of visitors towards their chosen activity; and
- to manage the access roads and car parks to meet health and safety requirements.

These objectives will be achieved through a combination of measures, including personal contact with visitors, signposting and the provision of information boards and the development of the Ranger Service. These measures will be designed to be sequential and complementary, so that each measure reinforces preceding measures. Details of the physical infrastructure will be subject to agreement by the Planning Authority and SNH.

In response to comments received with regard to car park charges through the VMP public consultation exercise, the Chairlift Company propose to introduce the principle of a financial contribution to site management with the introduction of a voluntary car park donation policy, which will operate year round. All visitors to Coire Cas will be invited to make a voluntary contribution towards "The Cairn Gorm Mountain Fund". The revenue raised via the voluntary car park donation policy will directly contribute towards the costs of future site management, including car park management, monitoring, footpath works and other management issues associated with the VMP and relevant to all visitors to Coire Cas.

8.2. The Company will consider the need to introduce a more comprehensive traffic management scheme in consultation with FE, HIE, THC and SNH. The principle of voluntary contributions to site management via the car park donation policy will be considered in this context and changes will be reviewed in light of monitoring evidence and the costs of site management.

8.3 Main operational features at Coire Cas car park will be: supervised car parking and car park welcome signage explaining the voluntary site management contribution policy and location of honesty boxes where contributions can be made.

Cairngorm Chairlift Company will

8.4 provide the opportunity for all visitors to Coire Cas to make voluntary contributions for car parking which will provide revenue towards site management within the ski area.

The **reserve powers** which Cairngorm Chairlift Company may implement, if necessary, following monitoring are:

8.5 the introduction of summer car park charges at Coire Cas based on commercial considerations, so that revenue is provided towards site management obligations under the VMP and S50;

- 8.6. *in light of monitoring evidence, the preparation and operation of a traffic management scheme for the ski road and car parks which may include:*
- *seasonal car parking charges at Coire Cas;*
 - *closure of Coire na Ciste and/or Sugar Bowl car parks to the general public during the summer season;*
 - *the introduction of an associated Clearway Order on the ski access road; and*
- 8.7. *consideration of future options for car access to Coire Cas with the proviso that any alternative must enable the Ski Area to continue to function and provide a quality service to skiers.*

9. Visitor Management Stage 4 – Operation of the Funicular

The purpose of this section of the VMP is to define the operation of the “Closed system” to be introduced to protect adjacent European designated sites.

- 9.1. The Cairngorm Ski Area is located in a mountain area which, over a period of time has come to enjoy a high degree of environmental recognition and protection under both EU and UK legislation. Under ERDF funding approval document BD/98/001, the Cairngorm Chairlift Company are required to manage visitors to the Ski Area under specific conditions, which are listed under Annex A of the Approval Document in recognition and support of environmental protection of adjacent EU sites.

The purpose of the funicular, compliant with these conditions is to provide:

- uplift for skiing visitors and egress under suitable snow conditions.
- a year round destination for visitors to the Ptarmigan.
- use by emergency rescue services year round.
- access for public agents and recognised contractors (see Appendix 5).

While the passenger-carrying capacity of the proposed funicular will not be greater in summer than that of the Chairlift system it will replace (500 passengers per hour for the funicular compared with 550 passengers per hour for the existing Chairlift), it is certain that the total numbers carried each summer will increase substantially. The funicular will operate for many more days each summer than the Chairlift, which is often closed by high winds. The closed carriages of the funicular will be much more attractive to visitors than the present open chairs, which offer no protection against the weather. The potential impact of a substantial increase in numbers reaching the adjacent EU sites has been recognised and the funicular project does provide opportunities for managing visitors in ways which were not possible prior to development.

- 9.2. Cairngorm Chairlift Company records show that since 1980, non-skiing usage of the Cairngorm Chairlift has been fairly stable, with 50,000 passengers each year. In the years before 1980, summer usage was higher, with circa. 120,000 passengers in at least one year during the early 1970s. Projections for the funicular railway anticipate annual usage in the region of 165,000 passengers (not including skiing visitors). In the summer season (1st May - 30th November) the funicular will carry passengers from the Base Station directly to the Ptarmigan with no halt at the middle station Shielling platform, hence egress at this point will not be possible.
- 9.3. From the 1st December to the 30th April (the ski season) the Company's primary source of income will be from skiing, and the funicular will operate for skiers as long as suitable snow conditions prevail and there is viable operational demand. Non skiing visitors using the funicular during the winter months will purchase a funicular ticket which entitles the holder to reach the Ptarmigan destination. In the winter months the funicular will stop at the middle station for skiing visitors and carriage attendants will remind non skiing visitors that their final destination is the Ptarmigan and egress at the Shielling is for skier access only. The Shielling will be subject to monitoring in the first winter of operation in order that any unforeseen visitor management issues can be identified.
- 9.4. During the ski season, seating will be removed from the funicular carriages (each will carry 42 seated passengers in summer or up to 120 standing passengers in winter with seating removed). Non-skiing visitors will be able to use the funicular in the ski season and enjoy the restaurant facilities and exhibition provided at the Ptarmigan. The management of skiing and non-skiing visitors is detailed in Appendix 4.

Reception at Base Station

- 9.5. The objectives of visitor management at the Base Station are:
- to welcome, inform and direct all visitors.
 - to ensure efficient access for visitors to the funicular.
 - to encourage visitors to spend time enjoying facilities available within the Ski Area boundary.
 - to promote awareness of the special qualities of the mountain environment.

- 9.6. It is recognised that many visitors (for example those on coach tours) will have a restricted length of time at Cairn Gorm, so that time spent within the built facilities will reduce the time these visitors might otherwise spend walking on the open hillside.
- 9.7. At peak times the flow of passengers will be maintained by issuing tickets for descent at a specific time to ensure that visitors do not remain at the Ptarmigan for an excessive length of time. The relative capacities of the Ptarmigan and of the funicular will allow an average "residence time" of one hour at peak times. It is anticipated that this will be required only on a limited number of days in the summer season (July/August).

Further details on Access Control Management are given in Appendix 4.

Cairngorm Chairlift Company will

- 9.8. *operate a welcome host service at the car park with information provided at the Base Station, Ranger Office and Day Lodge Visitor Reception on the visitor facilities available and on any sensitive access areas;*
- 9.9. *provide effective and attractive interpretive displays in the foyer of the Base Station positioned so that they are available to all visitors to the car park. Further detail of the displays is to be discussed and agreed with SNH and incorporated in a formal plan of interpretation;*
- 9.10. *operate a booking system for the funicular to ensure that block bookings do not exclude other visitors from the funicular;*
- 9.11. *allow guide dogs and working dogs used in search and rescue operations onto the funicular (other dogs will be excluded); and*
- 9.12. *make it a condition of sale and carriage that skiing ticket holders respect the EU site boundaries. This condition will be emphasised in Company literature and reiterated by ticket office sales staff.*

Egress at the Ptarmigan

9.13. Ticket policy, including both pricing and conditions, will be used to prevent, so far as is reasonably possible, use of the funicular as a transport system for access to the Cairn Gorm plateau and specifically the EU sites. Changes to the Company's existing ticket policy will include:

- Restriction of the validity of ski season tickets to the ski season only. (Previously the 365 day a year season ticket was valid for 12 months and could be used on the chairlift system throughout the year).

—• Discontinuance of the single ticket option currently available for the chairlift. The funicular

ticket will be valid for one return trip only and will include:

- return travel on the funicular, and
- admission to the full visitor experience at the Ptarmigan.
- As indicated, the Company will operate a return ticket only policy for non-skiing visitors using the funicular at all times of year. The ticket policy (Appendix 4) clearly differentiates skiing tickets from non-skiing tickets. The funicular ticket is a non-skiing ticket valid for a return journey to the Ptarmigan and can be purchased at any time of the year. Its conditions are consistent with the "Closed system" policy for use of the funicular, i.e. no egress for non-skiing visitors.
- A condition of sale of tickets to skiing visitors requires the holder to respect the EU site boundaries. Cross-country skiers and ski mountaineers who wish to use the funicular will have to purchase a skiing ticket. The conditions of sale also add validity to refuse access to the funicular to any individual obviously equipped for ski mountaineering, ski touring,

mountaineering, hill-walking or bird-watching and carrying a funicular ticket. If these groups purchase a skiing ticket they will thus be accepting the terms and conditions that requires the holder to respect the EU site boundaries.

- In order to fulfil the obligations of the S50 definition of non-skiing visitor, a ski spectator ticket or a funicular ticket will not permit the carriage of sports equipment.

9.14. There is only one public exit from the Ptarmigan building (excluding fire escapes), and managing and monitoring skiing visitor egress will be co-ordinated from this exit point. Monitoring of ticket types sold, access to the funicular itself and of the exit from the Ptarmigan during the first winter of operation will confirm patterns of use so that trigger points can then be agreed if fallback mechanisms are required (e.g. suspending ski spectator ticket sales).

Cairngorm Chairlift Company will

9.15. *throughout the year manage use of the funicular so that it is not used as a transport system for access to the EU sites, through a comprehensive ticket sales and carriage policy (Appendix 4);*

9.16. *monitor so far as is practical non-skiing use of the funicular and exits from the Ptarmigan throughout the ski season, with baseline levels to be established during the first winter season of operation and trigger points to be established thereafter at which the fall-back option would be implemented if required;*

9.17. *continue to carry out a daily assessment of the likelihood of ground being vulnerable to impacts and continue to provide additional information and advice through telephone messages, the web, radio and at the ticket office and Ranger Office when that likelihood is high. Particular attention will be paid to monitoring and limiting ski ticket sales to reflect the capacity available. The Company will continue to manage ski ticket sales (or suspend ski ticket sales) at such vulnerable times; and*

9.18. *monitor so far as is practical non-skiing use of the Coire Cas car park and walking exit points to the Northern Corries during these periods.*

The Reserve power which may provide a fall-back option is to:

9.19. *close the funicular to certain categories of visitors or suspend the ski spectator category of ticket during the ski season, should the monitoring and review programme show that management techniques for funicular visitors are insufficient in managing environmental impacts in the EU sites.*

Sightseeing Visitors to the Ptarmigan

9.20. The introduction of the “Closed system” will play a significant management role in reducing the potential for visitors using the funicular railway to access the plateau and the protected EU sites adjacent to the Ski Area. Access for those who wish to walk in the high hills is retained through the existing footpath network from Coire Cas car park; however the easy access to the plateau and EU sites previously provided by the chairlift system will no longer be possible under the funicular “Closed system”.

9.21. The objectives of visitor management at the Ptarmigan are:

- to provide maximum enjoyment and fulfilment for all visitors using the funicular to reach the Ptarmigan;
- to manage the volume of visitors effectively at peak times;
- to ensure that non-skiing visitors are retained within the funicular system and the new Ptarmigan building i.e. operate the “Closed system” management policy.

9.22. The new Ptarmigan building will provide visitor facilities at two levels:

- lower level: funicular arrival point, interpretive centre, exhibition and shop;
 - upper level: restaurant, viewing terrace, meeting point and return point for the funicular and egress point for skiing visitors in the ski season.
- 9.23. Summer visitors will arrive on the funicular railway at the lower level platform, where they will disembark. They will then pass through the interpretive experience, which will complement the interpretation at the Base Station and exit via the shop to the stairs or lift ascending to the upper level.
- 9.24. On reaching the upper level, visitors will be able to make use of the restaurant facilities and (in suitable weather conditions) go outside onto the viewing terrace, where further interpretation and orientation facilities will be provided. Departure of the funicular with descending passengers will be from the platform at the upper level of the Ptarmigan.
- 9.25. Non-skiing visitors at the Ptarmigan will not be permitted to leave the building or viewing terrace. Visitors who have arrived at the Ptarmigan by funicular will return the same way. Only return tickets from car park level to the Ptarmigan will be available.
- 9.26. Management of funicular passengers from the Base Station will also be required to ensure that the capacity of the Ptarmigan building (450 visitors) is not exceeded at any time. The numbers at the Ptarmigan at any time can easily be assessed as the difference between the numbers who have ascended by funicular since the beginning of the day and the numbers who have descended, managed by the platform access control systems.
- 9.27. Monitoring these numbers on a continuous basis each day will give warning when the number of visitors at the Ptarmigan approaches capacity. At this point the number of passengers permitted to ascend the funicular will be limited to ensure that no more ascend than descend.

The Cairngorm Chairlift Company will:

- 9.28. manage the funicular so that outwith the ski season all passengers disembark at the lower level of the Ptarmigan and pass through the exhibition and interpretive areas before ascending to the upper level for departure back down to the car park;***
- 9.29. ensure that the capacity of the Ptarmigan building is not exceeded;***
- 9.30. where necessary, divide large groups such as coach parties into appropriately sized groups for ascending the hill and visiting the Ptarmigan interpretive experience;***
- 9.31. provide and maintain an interpretive experience at the Ptarmigan (which will complement the interpretation at the Base Station) to the highest quality standards;***
- 9.32. provide interpretation and orientation facilities on the viewing terrace;***
- 9.33. ensure as far as is practical visitors remain in the building or on its terrace and return to the Coire Cas car park by the funicular; and***
- 9.34. through monitoring ensure that the patterns of use are collated and reported in order that the information can guide future management refinements.***

10. Visitor Management Stage 5 - Footpaths

The purpose of this section of the VMP is to establish the primary walking routes within the operational ski area and how they will be managed

10.1. A comprehensive footpath network extends from the Coire Cas car park. Visitors can access a number of footpaths, some of which remain within the operational ski area boundary and others lead into adjacent areas (see Appendix 6).

10.2. Research indicates the following routes have the heaviest use within the Ski Area (ITE 2000):

1. Car park to mid station (Shieling)
2. Mid station (Shieling) to Top Station (Ptarmigan)
3. Top Station to Summit (Cairn Gorm)

Changes in levels and patterns of footpath use have been anticipated in Section 5 of the VMP and footpaths will be managed in accordance with these anticipated changes.

10.3. The anticipated changes in patterns and levels of footpath use as a result of the funicular and "Closed system" can be summarised for each user category as follows:

User Group	Assessment of Risk
Short Walkers < 1 hr	Reduction in use of summit path. Increase in use on lower ground within Ski Area and some redistribution onto Northern Corries path.
Long Walkers > 1hr	Overall numbers unlikely to change significantly. Redistribution of those previously using the chairlift onto lower ground routes, specifically Northern Corries, Bottom to Mid Station and Mid Station to Ptarmigan and Fiaciall a' Choire Chais Ridge. Penetration onto the plateau area is anticipated to decrease slightly.
Climbers	Overall numbers unlikely to change. Some increase in route use through the Ski Area as above for Long Walkers.
Birdwatchers	Overall numbers likely to decrease. Some redistribution of this group in spring months and summer onto Northern Corries and within Ski Area.
Sightseers	Increase in overall numbers. Increase likely on lower ground routes within the Ski Area with some dispersal into the Northern Corries.

10.4. Footpath management objectives to deal with these anticipated changes are to:

- contain use on existing footpaths and encourage use of footpath networks on lower ground within the Ski Area;
- provide a clearly defined, suitable footpath network within the Ski Area that will provide for short, safe walks complemented by portable and static interpretation where appropriate;
- ensure that all walkers keep to maintained footpaths, keep off all other routes and avoid straying onto the margins of paths where ground conditions can be particularly fragile;
- improve the overall levels of awareness and understanding of the consequences of all footpath users' actions and the need to minimise and manage the impacts of access on the environment.

10.5. However, footpath management will also reflect the needs of mountain users who wish to pursue recreational activities beyond the Ski Area, thus meeting the objectives of the R&G DMS for recreational access to the high hills. Objectives for these users will be to:

- maintain footpath access from Coire Cas car parks;

- ensure that all walkers keep to maintained footpaths, keep off all other routes and avoid straying onto the margins of paths where ground conditions can be particularly fragile;
- improve the overall levels of awareness and understanding of the consequences of all footpath users' actions and the need to minimise and manage the impacts of access on the environment.

10.6. Based on the above risk assessment it is proposed to;

- develop and promote the existing path network within the operational Ski Area boundary to manage the anticipated shifts in the short walkers, bird watchers and general sightseers. These visitor groups will be encouraged to use only this network of paths, through clear route marking from the upper car park at Coire Cas with support visitor information (i.e. print and interpretation material).
- co-operate with the R&GWG in managing/monitoring the path network from Coire Cas to cater for long walkers and climber

10.7. Existing and Potential New Paths within the Ski Area Boundary

10.7.1. Using all or parts of the most popular routes listed in 10.2 (with the exception of 3) a circular walking route will be established within the Ski Area called the Coire Cas Loop (Appendix 1, Footpath Map Ref E3). It is anticipated that the Coire Cas Loop will become the most frequently used footpath circuit within the Ski Area, the aim is to establish this route for visitor use by the summer of 2002.

10.7.2. A number of new paths which may encourage visitors to remain within the Ski Area boundary or lead walking visitors away from sensitive high hill areas have also been identified. Route planning and interpretation content for the proposed footpaths would be subject to consultation and approval by THC and SNH. These potential footpaths include:

- Glen More Link (Footpath Map Ref P1)
- An t-Aonach All Abilities Trail (Footpath Map Ref P4)

The footpath map (Appendix 1, Map 2) details all the above routes. The Glen More Link path is routed over land owned by Forest Enterprise which will link Glen More to Coire Cas and meet an existing gap in the footpath network and provide an attractive walking route which avoids the existing need to walk on the access road.

The An t-Aonach All Abilities Trail identified for the Eastern side of the Upper Coire Cas Car park provides excellent views of the funicular and Northern Corries. This route will be constructed in order to meet all ability design standards and include static and portable interpretation provision. It will be linked at various points directly back to the car park providing a safer and more attractive route for visitors to move from the car park to the reception buildings at the top of the Coire Cas car park.

The proposed new paths will be introduced in the priority order in which they are listed above. Subject to planning approval and funding availability it is hoped that these new footpaths would be available for public use by the summer of 2002.

10.8. Path Network beyond the Ski Area

The operation of the funicular is not anticipated to have any significant impact on the overall numbers of long walkers and climbers visiting the site. Hitherto a small proportion of these

mountain users took advantage of the access provided by the chairlift. It is anticipated that this group will redistribute onto the Fiacaille a'Choire Chais path and the Northern Corries footpath. Action is needed to ensure that, so far as possible, these mountain users are encouraged to use preferred routes to discourage the proliferation of other paths out of the Ski Area. This will be achieved by:

- maintaining footpath access routes from Coire Cas car park primarily for mountain users;
- providing car parking in the lower Coire Cas car park aimed specifically at this mountain user group;
- waymarking a preferred footpath route from this lower car park to the Northern Corries (Climbers Direct Footpath Map Ref E5);
- communicate with this user group on site through the Cairngorm Ranger Service and information lines to encourage movement through the Ski Area on preferred designated routes;
- in consultation with SNH and THC, installing and maintaining low-key "gateways" with information indicating the preferred routes at the starting points of the main path to the Ptarmigan and the Northern Corries footpath by summer 2002.

10.8.1 The preferred routes used to channel long walkers and climbers and minimise the tendency for new paths to be created are:

Northern Corries Footpath (Footpath Map Ref E2).
Fiacaille a' Choire Chais Footpath (Footpath Map Ref E6)
Climbers Direct (Footpath Map Ref E5)
Traverse Path (Footpath Map Ref E7)
Summit Path (Footpath Map Ref E8)

10.9 The wider issue regarding recreational access to EU adjacent sites continues to be reviewed by the R&G DMS and will also be a consideration for future National Park Access Management Policy. Monitoring work will continue on these routes and if in the light of monitoring evidence it becomes apparent that further measures are necessary, those proposed here would be modified accordingly in consultation with other parties.

10.10. Work on this footpath development network will be subject to the agreement of SNH, THC, HIE and neighbouring land interests.

Cairngorm Chairlift Company will

10.11. provide walking routes and promote those walking routes that are within the Ski Area Boundary and improve key access paths from Coire Cas to the Ski Area with the objective of encouraging users to stay on them and thereby reduce impact on adjoining sites;

10.12. provide ranger-led walks on the Coire Cas Loop ;

10.13. erect route marking from the the Base Station to the Coire Cas Loop, Glen More Link and An t-Aonach All Abilities paths only;

*10.14. work with others to promote the philosophy:
"Enjoy the Mountain, Please Leave It as You Would Wish to Find It";*

10.15. in consultation with SNH and THC through the interpretive strategy promote the walks within the ski area by means of promotional literature, information and interpretive displays ;

10.16. provide and maintain signposts at agreed points on footpaths within the Ski Area;

10.17. outside the ski season, remove or cover skiing signposts which might encourage visitors to use other footpaths;

10.18. monitor the use of all footpaths within the Ski Area by regular surveys and counts;

10.19. change the starting point for the key mountain access routes to the lower car park in Coire Cas and provide dedicated car parking in this car park for mountain users;

10.20. consult with and co-operate with HIE, SNH, THC and Forest Enterprise on the way the above measures might be modified if, in the light of changing evidence on recreational access to adjacent EU sites, it becomes apparent that further management is necessary as a consequence of the funicular development.

The reserve powers which the Chairlift Company may implement, if necessary, following monitoring evidence are:

10.21. temporarily suspending use of footpaths under sensitive conditions and the provision of suitable alternatives to allow regeneration of vulnerable areas.

10.22. consider the introduction of a “slipper stopper” or short destination turning point at an appropriate point on the Northern Corries footpath should monitoring evidence reveal unacceptable levels of visitor penetration and damage as a result of the funicular development.

11. Health and Safety

The purpose of this section of the VMP is to ensure that health and safety obligations are met.

11.1. The management of visitors in case of illness or accident is an integral part of the broader visitor management programme. The Company also has statutory obligations under the Health and Safety at Work Act, and obligations under ERDF funding approval to assist Mountain Rescue and Avalanche Services. The Company has nearly forty years' experience of dealing with the health and safety of the public as a result of its skiing operation. Dealing with casualties of all kinds and evacuating them from difficult places and in arduous climatic conditions is standard practice.

11.2. The management objectives are:

- to comply with all statutory obligations concerning the health and safety of visitors in the Ski Area, and in particular duties under the Health and Safety at Work Act and requirements under ERDF funding approval.

11.3. Members of the Ski Patrol are all professionally qualified through the British Association of Ski Patrollers and are trained to a high level in first aid and evacuation. It has also been Company policy for a number of years that in addition to the Ski Patrol, all full-time staff should be trained in emergency first aid.

11.4. All aspects of the operation of the funicular railway itself will be subject to approval by Her Majesty's Railway Inspectorate (a branch of the Health and Safety Executive). Evacuation procedures in particular will be developed and tested to HMRI satisfaction.

Cairngorm Chairlift Company will

11.5. provide first aid rooms at the Base Station and Ptarmigan;

11.6. ensure all full-time staff are trained in emergency first aid;

11.7. report and monitor health and safety incidents of visitors and staff;

11.8. allow access to and use of the funicular by emergency services and public agents (as specified in Appendix 5); and

11.9. allow access to and use of the funicular for the evacuation of mountain casualties.

12. Monitoring the Effectiveness of the Plan

The purpose of this section of the VMP is to set out the process whereby relevant information will be available to ensure that management decisions can be made in good time and thereby safeguard the proposed and designated European sites from the potential visitor impacts which might result directly from the operation of the funicular railway and the “Closed system”.

The Functional Role of Monitoring

12.1. An essential component of this visitor management plan is a rigorous programme of monitoring which is clearly linked to management decisions as required by Clause Sixth of the S50 Agreement. The basic objective of monitoring is to provide up-to-date and accurate information that enables management to be effective in minimising the impacts of visitors on the adjacent EU sites, which are a direct consequence of the operation of the funicular railway and associated “Closed system”. The results of the monitoring programme will be reported annually to the Planning Authority and SNH and will feed back into the management of the funicular and related facilities.

12.2. The VMP has estimated changes in numbers of visitors using Coire Cas car park and how they are likely to be re-distributed when a series of management measures designed to mitigate potential impacts on the EU sites are in place. The monitoring scheme will record whether these suggested changes in visitor use are confirmed. If the predicted levels of visitor use are exceeded by a significant factor or if simultaneous environmental monitoring shows that there is evidence of unacceptable levels of physical damage or disturbance related to visitor pressures, which are directly associated with the operation of the funicular, then management action will be taken.

12.3. Monitoring is thus a management information tool that will indicate when and where problems occur and how effective visitor management is in dealing with them. The funicular development must also be seen in terms of overall visitor use of the Cairngorms, and the concerns that, in certain areas, existing use is causing progressive damage, especially damage to habitats and local erosion of mountain soils. Monitoring must therefore provide a basis through which perceived human impacts on the environment can be ascribed to the operation of the funicular and the associated management regime. The scheme should also be consistent with any system used to gauge the effectiveness of the R&G DMS.

Monitoring Hypotheses

12.4. The analysis of levels and distribution of visitors in Section 5 of the VMP postulated that the most likely changes in visitor use, due to the operation of the “Closed system” at the Ptarmigan, would be increased numbers of short-distance walkers and sightseers using the Ski Area and increased numbers of short distance walkers and bird watchers using the Northern Corries. Meanwhile fewer visits would be made to the Summit of Cairn Gorm and the Plateau by mountain users formerly using the chairlift. Use of the Northern Corries is also likely to increase by long-distance walkers and climbers passing through the area on their way to the Plateau. Management measures have therefore been prescribed to discourage additional use of the Northern Corries by short distance walkers and sightseers. Any effects of additional use in the Ski Area and the Northern Corries will be mitigated by footpath improvements, separating long-distance walkers and climbers into the lower car park at Coire Cas and by the use of interpretation.

12.5. Thus the specific hypotheses that the monitoring scheme is testing are:

- that use of the Summit Path from the Ptarmigan declines and that fewer recreational visits are made to the Summit of Cairn Gorm, due to the operation of the “Closed system” at the Ptarmigan;
- that the management measures prescribed in the VMP are effective in:
 - a) concentrating short-distance walkers and sightseers within the Ski Area; and
 - b) concentrating walkers entering the Northern Corries on selected paths, so that the risk of potential impacts on disturbance to wildlife, and damage to vegetation, soils and geomorphology are reduced.

12.6. Following work concluded on the Baseline Survey, future monitoring should focus on visitor numbers and distribution and those impacts (vegetation trampling, habitat changes, footpath widening and disturbance to birds) which can provide the most timely information to guide future management policy. The coverage of the other topics included in the Baseline Surveys undertaken as part of the S50 Agreement, namely, soils and geomorphology are considered to be of equal importance but less timely in their ability to guide management policy and will be kept under review. Flexibility will be retained to respond to new concerns and impacts that may arise.

Operation of The Monitoring Scheme

12.7. Clause Eighth a) of the Section 50 agreement requires that:

“The Planning Authority and SNH will after consultation with the Applicant and the Proprietor appoint a suitably qualified person or persons to provide for them, by the end of November in each year or such other date as may be agreed by the Planning Authority and SNH, at a reasonable cost to the Applicant, an annual report on the impact of non-skiing visitors using Coire Cas car park and the funicular railway and the effectiveness of the approved VMP in managing such visitors.”

Clause Eighth c) of the Section 50 agreement requires the Company and SNH to provide such person (s) with access to all of their data arising from the implementation of the Monitoring Scheme.

It is anticipated that monitoring will operate on an annual basis, following a programme prepared by the Company and agreed in advance with THC and SNH. Refinements to the visitor management plan and monitoring programme may be required from time to time (S50 Clause Ninth), and these will be agreed with THC and SNH within the framework of the Section 50 Agreement.

12.8. The sequence of steps and time scale to set up the monitoring scheme is shown schematically in Figure 12.1 at the end of this section. The approach is similar to the Limits of Acceptable Change (LAC) system developed by the American Forest Service (Stankey et al, 1985), recommended by the Countryside Commission for Scotland in the Management of Ski Areas handbook (1988) and used at the Aonach Mor Ski Area (Bayfield and McGowan, 1995). The diagram shows the preparatory stages prior to the implementation of the monitoring scheme, which concern the baseline study and the agreement of the detailed monitoring programme with SNH and THC.

12.9. The Company will establish a monitoring group which will be responsible for specifying the monitoring programme, to be implemented on commencement of funicular operation. The group will comprise a Cairngorm Chairlift Company Director, the Cairngorm Estate Head Ranger, and a Scientific Advisor. The group will seek advice from baseline survey and other scientific contractors or other scientific specialists. When the programme is implemented there will be routine monitoring of key indicators of change, and for some of these, indicative quality standards (LACs) will be set to guide the initiation of management responses.

12.10. It is likely that Company staff and Cairngorm Estate staff will undertake much of the monitoring work, particularly in relation to visitor monitoring. However, some tasks will require specialist skills and suitably qualified staff will be contracted to do this work.

Reporting

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12.11. The suitably qualified person or persons will be known as the Reporting Officer(s) and will be clearly independent from the monitoring group and any monitoring contractors. The Reporting Officer(s) will be responsible for preparing and presenting an Annual Report to the S50 signatories for final approval by SNH and THC. The Company will provide the Reporting Officer(s) with the raw data gathered in accordance with the monitoring scheme together with the contractors' basic description of this data. The Reporting Officer(s) will then analyse that data to prepare the Annual Report.

The Annual Report will present an analysis of the monitoring results making recommendations on the effectiveness of the VMP management techniques. The report will include recommendations to the S50 signatories on any future monitoring or management modifications that may be required and on any proposed remedial measures and their implementation.

An opportunity will be provided for the Company and HIE to comment on the Annual Report before it is finally approved by SNH and THC. Any decisions on monitoring issues which cannot be resolved will be arbitrated according to the procedures set out in Clause Thirteenth, Fourteenth and Eighteenth of the S50 Agreement.

Cairngorm Chairlift Company will:

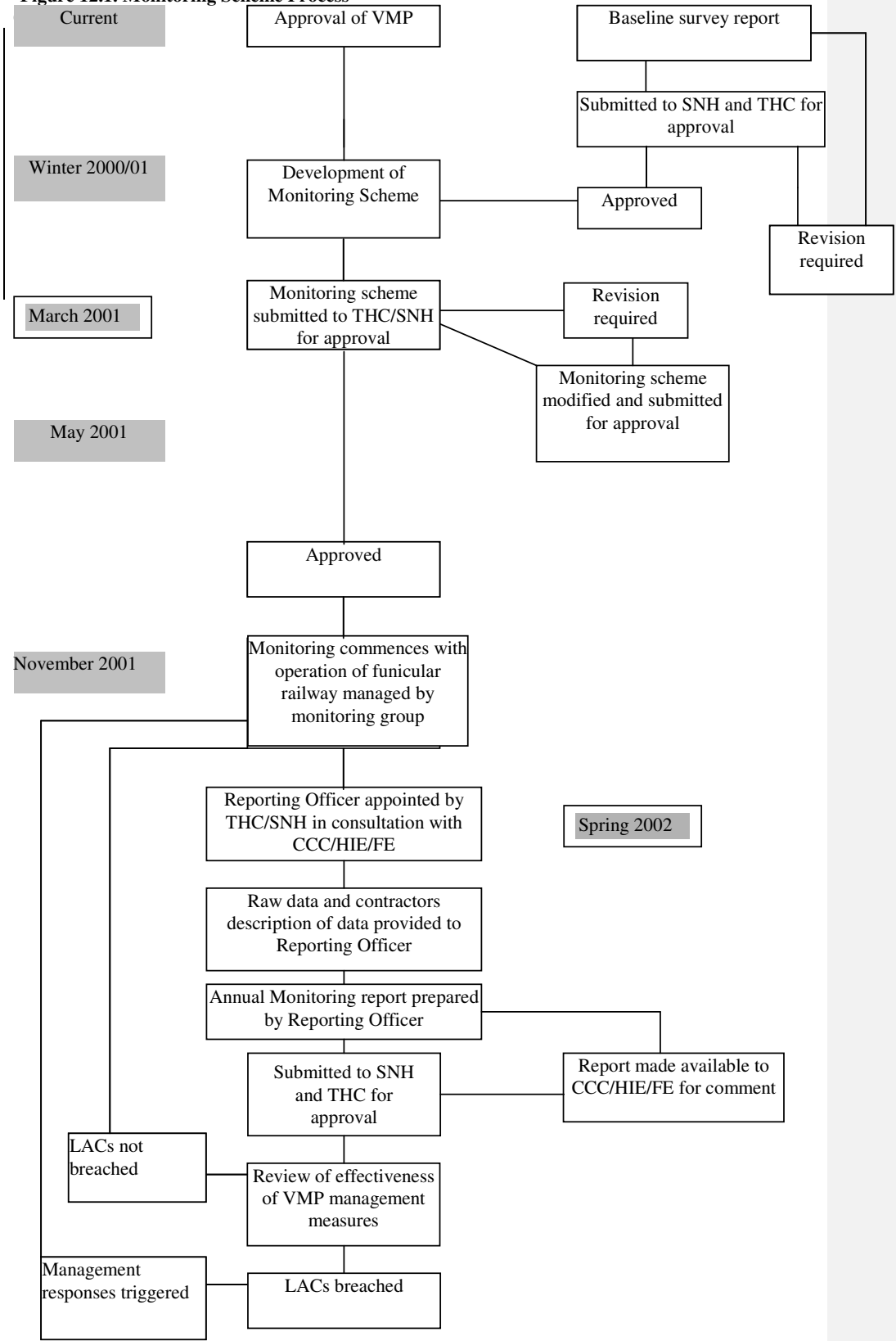
12.12. undertake primary responsibility for implementing the monitoring scheme in consultation with SNH and THC, and to the satisfaction of SNH and THC;

12.13. provide data obtained by the monitoring contractors to the Reporting Officer(s);

12.14. take part in an annual review of the effectiveness of the visitor management measures in the light of the Annual Monitoring Report; and

12.15. co-operate with the proposed Rothiemurchus and Glenmore monitoring forum on relevant areas of monitoring.

Figure 12.1. Monitoring Scheme Process



13. References and Key Documents

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European Regional Development Fund Approval Document, Project Reference number BD/98/001, Cairngorm Funicular Project.

Appendices

- Appendix 1** **Maps and Visitor Statistics**
- Appendix 2** **Glossary of Definitions**
- Appendix 3** **Car Park Management**
- Appendix 4** **Terms & Conditions of Carriage and “Closed system” Management**
- Appendix 5** **Emergency Services & Public Agents**
- Appendix 6** **Cairngorm Ski Area - Footpath Network**