
CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

FOR DISCUSSION

**Title: NATIONAL PARK PARTNERSHIP PLAN 2017-2022
DELIVERY UPDATE**

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Purpose

This paper presents an update on delivery against the Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan 2017-2022.

Recommendations

The Board is asked to

- a) **Review the update on delivery against the Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan 2017-2022 set out in this paper.**
- b) **Highlight any achievements or exceptions which, from a strategic leadership perspective, Board members believe are of particular significance to the delivery of the Authority's strategic objectives.**

NATIONAL PARK PARTNERSHIP PLAN 2017-2022 DELIVERY UPDATE – FOR DISCUSSION

Strategic Context

1. The Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan (NPPP) for 2017-2022 is approved by Scottish Ministers in 2017 as the management plan for the Cairngorms National Park. It sets out how all those with a responsibility for the Cairngorms National Park will co-ordinate their work to tackle the most important issues. This current NPPP is the third such 5-year plan coordinating work in the Cairngorms.
2. The Cairngorms NPPP provides strategic direction for five key strategies and plans which support its delivery and are also supported by close partnership working with different sectors:
 - a) Active Cairngorms: the outdoor access strategy for the National Park;
 - b) Cairngorms Nature: setting out the National Park's conservation priorities;
 - c) Economic Strategy: sets out the economic priorities for the National Park;
 - d) Local Development Plan: sets out the policies for land use planning within the National Park;
 - e) Local Development Strategy: sets out the priorities for promoting Community Led Local Development (CLLD) to support a sustainable rural economy in the National Park.

Strategic Policy Considerations

3. The Cairngorms NPPP:
 - a) Sets out the vision and overarching strategy for managing the Park;
 - b) Guides the work of public bodies and all other partners to deliver the aims of the Park;
 - c) Provides the strategic context for the Local Development Plan;
 - d) Sets out the regional land use framework for the Park;
 - e) Provides the strategic context for managing the Park as a sustainable tourism destination;
 - f) Shows how the Park will contribute to the Scottish Government's core purpose and national outcomes.

Strategic Risk Management

4. The National Park Authority is responsible for leading various partnerships and stakeholder groups with interests and responsibilities for delivering services within the

Cairngorms, to ensure priorities established in the approved NPPP are achieved and that various stakeholders each make their expected contributions.

5. The update on NPPP delivery presented with this paper is drawn up on a risk management basis. Agendas for action within each of the 9 NPPP priorities for action are set out, along with their expected 5-year outcomes and milestones leading to those outcomes. Each action area has been risk assessed in terms of delivery progress to date.
6. More detailed project oriented risk assessment and risk management is undertaken at appropriate levels within delivery partnerships and / or project management arrangements.

Implications

7. The NPPP Monitoring Framework has been developed with a view to managing and limiting the staff time resource required to support the administration of these processes, while ensuring that the processes themselves are fit for purpose in managing risk of delivery and measuring success in achieving agreed outcomes.
8. The delivery monitoring template developed will also be used in coordinating delivery with key partners and in managing the input of the Authority's own financial and staff resources by Management Team and the Operational Management Group.
9. This paper presents a review of NPPP delivery over the first year of the 5 year period.

Success Measures

10. The 5-year outcomes set out within the NPPP approved by Scottish Ministers establish the success measures against which delivery of the NPPP will be assessed.
11. Milestones have been established to identify, where appropriate, interim outputs or points expected in the work toward successful delivery of these outcomes. While the outcomes will be static over the period of the Cairngorms NPPP, milestones will be reviewed by the Authority and partners and may be modified and adapted to fit with changing circumstances.

**David Cameron, for Management Team and Operational Management Group
May 2018**

Supporting Information:

National Park Partnership Plan 2017/2022 Delivery Update

- I. A summary of the Authority's NPPP delivery and monitoring information is presented in Annex I. More information on the highlights and issues arising over the course of 2017/18, the first year of delivery of the NPPP, is presented in the following sections of this paper.

Conservation

Highlights and Achievements to Date

Ia. A new Cairngorms National Park Forest Strategy has been developed and put out to consultation. This has ambitious targets for both woodland expansion and improved management of the 62,300 ha of woodland currently in the Park. A specific example of CNPA engagement with this strategic process is that CNPA staff are helping to coordinate work on montane woodland expansion within Park.

Ic. Cairngorms Connect is now fully established by the four landowning partners (RSPB, FCS, SNH, Wildland) with CNPA as a supporting partner. This is the largest ecological restoration project in Britain (60,000 ha). A major funding application is in the final stages of preparation. The East Cairngorms Moorland Partnership (ECMP) is also fully established with initial work developing on waders, woodland expansion, muirburn and raptors.

Id. The HLF Capercaillie project bid (£3.5 mill) was successful for its initial development phase (15 months). 5 new staff are being recruited. One of the key project aims is to ensure that legitimate recreation by local people does not seriously affect the long term viability of the Capercaillie population in Strathspey.

Ie. The HLF funded Tomintoul and Glenlivet Partnership projects are well underway. Highlights include the submission of a large collaborative AECS scheme to restore 3km of the River Avon and the completion of the Discovery Centre in Tomintoul. The Blairfindy Castle project is now underway and an application has been developed which, if successful, would make Tomintoul the first Dark Skies area in the CNP.

2b. Deer population models are being developed for several Deer Management Groups (DMGs) with assistance from CNPA and SNH. Associated Habitat Impact Assessments are also being developed.

2e. Cross boundary communication between estates and DMGs continues to be key to future land management within the Park e.g. Atholl Estates and Wildland, South Deeside North Angus DMG and West Grampian DMG. CNPA is engaged in much of this work.

3e. Five Special Constables have been appointed to assist with wildlife crime prevention in CNP, funded by CNPA, Scottish Government and Police Scotland

3g. 750ha of peatland restoration has been achieved in the last 3 years using Scotgov's Peatland Action fund, with a further 870ha planned.

3h . Woodland expansion plans are being developed for ECMP estates

3j. The Cairngorms Upland Advisory Group (CUAG) has been set up.

Exceptions and Heightened Risk Areas

1d. The Capercaillie population on Deeside continues in a parlous state (estimate around 60 individuals). Discussions with estates are commencing on improved habitat management for this species in the short term. In the longer term, population reinforcement may be required.

1f. Discussions with SNH and FCS on a Natura plan for the Park have been delayed due to lack of resources from all organisations, including CNPA as leaders of the project. This project will be taken forward in year 2 of the NPPP, as we re-structure the Conservation and Land Management teams

2b. Concerns over deer populations in the Caenlochan section 7 area in the south of the Park remain serious, even after a decade of Government intervention. SNH is engaging with this issue in a robust way, while the CNPA is assisting through work with adjacent DMGs.

3e. Raptor persecution remains a serious concern to the international reputation of the Park. The Special Constables project, ECMP, potential new raptor tracking devices through the Civtech challenge fund and Scotgov's Grouse Review Group (reporting in 2019) are all expected to improve this situation.

Visitor Experience

Highlights and Achievements to Date

4a. A paper on developing visitor giving scheme is the subject of a CNPA Board decision on 15 June 2018

4c. Improving visitor infrastructure in Cairngorm and Glenmore; Forestry Commission Scotland are redeveloping their visitor management plan including options for reciting & reopening the Allt Mor Trail that leads to CairnGorm Ski Centre. An Expression of Interest has been made to Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund to build a multiuse path linking Loch Morlich Beach car park with the Hayfield car park.

4c. Improving visitor infrastructure in Tomintoul and Glenlivet: the new Discovery Centre (visitor centre and museum) is now open in Tomintoul and good level of visitors to date .

4d. Completing the 'Snow Roads' Scenic Route: Brown tourist signage now agreed with installation in place in Perth & Kinross with other areas to follow soon. Cairngorms Business Partnership are making good progress in delivering their project to develop the route including development of a brand, leaflets, apps and website – CBP summer conference is focussed on this theme in late June.

5e. Delivering more environmental volunteering opportunities and developing volunteer rangers is the subject of a CNPA Board decision on 15 June 2018.

5g. Improving opportunities for active travel in Aviemore; the options phase is nearing completion and the support of the Highland Council and the local Councillors is confirmed for an Active Aviemore Project bid for further funding.

6b. Providing an opportunity for children across Scotland to visit the Cairngorms National Park is enhanced by youth involvement in the Europarc Conference

Exceptions and Heightened Risk Areas

4c. Improving visitor infrastructure in Cairngorm and Glenmore: Further work is required on implementation of the Strategy overall to ensure that key development proposals are well-integrated and the public can contribute effectively.

Rural Development

Highlights and Achievements to Date

7c, d, e. Local Development Plan 2020: Consultation Main Issues Report ended on 2 March. 330 formal responses received and a good turnout at consultation events throughout the Park. Summary of responses to be reported to Planning Committee on 29 June and Proposed Plan to be drafted and published in November 2018

Planning approvals and site progress

- Glenlivet Distillery: Planning permission granted February 2015 for major development to triple whisky production at Glenlivet from 10 million litres per year to 30 million (13 additional permanent jobs). First phase now complete and expect production to start later this summer. Excellent compliance with planning conditions including biodiversity enhancement and plans for road upgrades
- The first phase of council housing at Beachen Court, Grantown-on-Spey is due to be handed over to Highland Council soon and delivery of further phases is expected soon.

7g. Community-led Housing Delivery: Dulnain Bridge community have established a project team and development trust to look at options for community-led affordable housing. Its first public meeting will be on 20 June. Group in Badenoch and Strathspey has continued to meet and delivery of Dulnain Bridge project is progressing well at early stages.

8c. Community Action Plans: Programme of review continues with very successful events in Boat of Garten and launch of the Ballater Plan. Kingussie survey gone big conversation in June.

8d. Cairngorms Archive Trust: New SCIO now established with Liz Morris in the Chair. Work progressing to develop the organisation, build membership and work towards an agreement with High Life Highland on the Archive centre.

8 a, b, d. Social Enterprise Training: Project is progressing well progressing with more scope for development. Developing some thematic courses that are promoting good level of networking across Cairngorms and beyond.

8g. Badenoch Great Place Project: Project Manager Oliver O' Grady has now started, based in Kingussie. Activity plan for next three years developed and going to Project Board for approval later in June. Early work will develop an interpretation plan for the Badenoch area and programme of early actions.

Exceptions and Heightened Risk Areas

HLF funding is changing: A number of community groups are putting in funding applications at last minute and there is little clarity about what happens next, promoting some disquiet at community level.

LEADER funding is ending: the current allocation of LEADER funding is almost fully committed, with funds for community and economic diversification projects fully committed and some funds for farm diversification and co-operations projects (activities taking place across multiple Local Action Group areas) still available. Expressions of interest are still coming forward highlighting the ongoing demand for support for Community Led Local Development (CLLD) activities and the uncertainty of financial support for this aspect of our work following exit from the EU.

A9 dualling project: We are awaiting Environmental Statements for two key remaining sections within the Park and draft orders later in the year. There are concerns about the plans for non-motorised users (i.e. the associated paths) around and to the north of Aviemore and potentially about the Spey crossing near Kingussie. And we await progress with the plans for maximising the social and economic development associated with the route.