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# CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

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## FOR DECISION

**Title: CNPA CONSULTATION RESPONSE: CAIRNGORMS  
LOCAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2014-2020  
(LEADER)**

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### **Purpose**

The Cairngorms Local Action Group (CLAG) is developing a Local Development Strategy (LDS) for the new LEADER Programme 2014-2020. The CLAG have identified six proposed investment themes and seventeen strategic outcomes for consultation. This paper and associated annex outlines the proposed CNPA response to the consultation.

### **Strategic Context**

1. The CLAG is one of around 20 in Scotland which award financial support aimed at projects with a wide community benefit that show an element of originality or experimentation and link with the LDS. The National Park boundary forms the operating area for the CLAG investment. In the last LEADER programme 2007-2013 the CLAG supported 250 projects with a LEADER investment of around £2.5m and total project spend of over £7m.
2. The aim of LEADER is to increase the capacity of local rural community and business networks to build knowledge and skills, and encourage innovation and co-operation to tackle local development objectives. LEADER supports community owned actions with investment from the European Union. It is based on the principles of Community Led Local Development. It is part of the Scotland Rural Development Programme, which is a European investment programme for rural development in Scotland. In addition, LEADER links local action with European and Scottish Government priorities.

3. Following invitation from Scottish Government, the CLAG submitted a bid to form a Local Action Group for the new LEADER programme running from 2014 to 2020. This bid was successful. The CLAG have since formed a wider working group of current CLAG members, local authority, public agency, community and business representatives to support the development of a LEADER Local Development Strategy (LDS) for the new programme. The National Park Partnership Plan, Community Action Plans, and their associated consultations have informed the CLAG in the formation of the themes. A number of workshops and discussions with the LAG, key partners and CNPA staff have also helped in their development.
4. The LDS themes once agreed will determine the investment priorities for the Cairngorms Local Action Group under the new programme of funding. The LDS will be subject to review and comment by Scottish Government and will develop further over the remainder of 2014. The CLAG are also required to develop a business case to target local investment of LEADER funding and secure delivery of LDS priorities.
5. The draft themes around which the CLAG Working Group propose to structure their initial LDS submission to Scottish Government is set out at Annex 1 to this paper. Board members have previously received email notification of this consultation document prior to its public release on 10 February.
6. A proposed CNPA response to the consultation proposals is set out at Annex 2 to this paper.

## Recommendations

7. **The Board endorse the proposed CNPA consultation response to the LAG Consultation as per Annex 1 of this paper**

## Strategic Policy Considerations

8. Key relevant sections of the NPPP are outlined below:
  - a) **Long term outcome 1** - A sustainable economy supporting thriving businesses and communities
  - b) **5 year outcome** - Communities will be more empowered and able to develop their own models of sustainability
  - c) **Work Programme 4c** - Establish a Cairngorms LEADER fund from 2013 as part of the next LEADER programme
9. The proposed investment themes and strategic outcomes for the LDS have strong links to other key plans and strategies for the CNP as outlined in Table 1 below.

**Table 1 - CNP Plans and Strategies**

<b>CNP Plan/Strategy</b>	<b>Relationship with LDS Themes and Outcomes</b>
<b>Cairngorms Nature</b>	One of the aims of the Cairngorms Nature Action Plan is to encourage, support, and provide opportunities for people to realise the benefits from, and help to look after, nature. Actions 4.5 and 4.6 in the Plan relate to provision of opportunities for community involvement. The LDS has the potential to support this through proposed theme 5 'Protection and enhancement of the National Park landscape, wildlife and local heritage through sustainable living' and outcomes 12 and 13.
<b>Proposed Active Cairngorms</b>	Proposed Theme 6 of the LDS is 'Excellence in sustainable tourism and outdoor recreation to enhance enjoyment of residents and visitors' and the associated outcome 17 is 'The Park's recreation opportunities have improved the health and enjoyment of residents and visitors'. Both the Theme and associated outcome fit well with the proposed purpose of Active Cairngorms and will contribute to its delivery as it is developed.
<b>Sustainable Tourism Strategy (STS)</b>	Proposed Theme 6 of the LDS is 'Excellence in sustainable tourism and outdoor recreation to enhance enjoyment of residents and visitors' will directly support delivery of the STS. In addition, Theme 2 relates to growing the economy, Theme 4 relates to transport and connectivity, and Theme 5 relates to sustainable living. The outcomes associated with these themes in terms of the economy, sustainable transport, and reducing carbon emissions also have capacity to deliver key elements of the STS.
<b>Local Plan/ Local Development Plan</b>	Proposed Theme 3 of the LDS is 'Attract, support and retain young people in the National Park' with a specific focus on affordable living. Theme 1 is to 'Build community capacity to facilitate and support local development and promote partnership working', the associated outcomes and action support community involvement in determining what happens in their communities. Community involvement and affordable accommodation are key elements of the LDP process.

CNP Plan/Strategy	Relationship with LDS Themes and Outcomes
<p><b>Economic Development and Diversification Strategy (EDDS)</b></p>	<p>The aim of the EDDS is taken from the NPPP and is the same as Proposed Theme 2 of the LDS, 'Grow the economy of the Park by strengthening existing business sectors, supporting business start-ups and diversification, and increasing the number of workers employed in the Park.' Themes 3, 4 and 6 are also of particular relevance to delivery of the EDDS.</p>
<p><b>Capital Investment Plan</b></p>	<p>The Capital Investment Plan identifies a range of potential projects which have the potential to deliver against the outcomes in the NPPP. The proposed Themes and outcomes within the LDS are well aligned with these priorities and could assist in further developing these projects through communities.</p>

## Strategic Risk Management

10. The CNPA Strategic Risk register identifies five risks which directly relate to this area of work, and which have been identified in Table 2 below.

**Table 2 - CNPA Strategic Risk**

Strategic Risk	Risk management and the LDS
Insufficient Funding	The proposed themes and outcomes in the LDS align well with the NPPP and work of CNPA and has the capacity to help support funding the delivery of projects.
Broadband and telecom technologies do not develop within the NP as quickly or as fully as we would like.	Theme 4 of the LDS supports improvement to connectivity with a key outcome relating to next generation broadband which will enable support for community broadband initiatives.
The communities within the National Park do not engage with the Authority or buy into their part in delivering the NPPP.	The proposed LDS themes and outcomes will support communities in delivering projects which support delivery of the NPPP.
Community capacity and leadership is not adequate to fully engage in delivery of NPPP.	The proposed LDS Theme 1 is to 'Build community capacity to facilitate and support local development and promote partnership working'. This will help support community engagement in delivering NPPP.
Public may not be fully signed up for "low carbon economy". It can appear to be a more expensive alternative. Government support is variable.	The proposed LDS Theme 5 has a specific outcome relating to reduction in carbon emissions in the National Park. This will encourage engagement in the concept of a low carbon economy.

## Implications

11. The CNPA Corporate Plan Programme 2 identifies an Active LEADER programme contributing to National Park Partnership Plan vision as a key outcome. The draft themes and outcomes for the LDS reflect the ambitions within the NPPP and have the potential to support and fund a range of projects to support its delivery and encourage engagement.
12. CNPA currently employs the LEADER team which administer the LEADER Programme and LAG. These staff are funded at between 50% and 100% from LEADER grant. The Director of Corporate Services also sits on the LAG to liaise with the CLAG in his role as responsible Director for delivery of the Service Level

Agreement between Scottish Government and CNPA in its role as lead partner for LEADER in the Cairngorms.

13. In order to maintain integrity of governance and management arrangements in development of the LEADER LDS proposals and in management of the programme within the Authority as lead partner, the Director of Corporate Services and LEADER team act in support of the LAG. The Director of Rural Development and his team act to support the Board in their influencing on the LAG's activities.
14. A number of additional CNPA staff will work closely with the team and LAG to support development and delivery of the LDS. CNPA also supports a network of Community Development Officers in the National Park who work with communities to 'animate' projects that align with the LDS.

### **Success Measures**

15. The endorsement of the LDS by the LAG and Scottish Government will be a key measure of success. The LDS will include monitoring indicators to enable assessment of delivery and impact. The CLAG has let a tender to a contractor to support consideration of specific performance measures and relevant monitoring benchmarks through which to assess performance against delivery of the LDS. CNPA will also monitor project delivery through the LDS in relation to delivery of the NPPP.

### **Next steps**

16. The consultation responses will be compiled and analysed by the LAG and a final LDS compiled for submission to Scottish Government on 31<sup>st</sup> March. The CLAG's Working Group will consider the draft of the LDS prior to its submission.
17. The LEADER Manager aims to be in a position to circulate an early draft of the LDS following consideration of the consultation comment to Board members prior to the meeting on 21 March, in order that members will have some sight of the extent to which the CNPA's proposed consultation comments have been incorporated into the draft LDS. The draft LDS can of course be further refined prior to sign off by the Working Group, depending upon feedback from the Board at its meeting.
18. The LEADER team expects there to be an iterative process in finalising the LDS. Some feedback comments from Scottish Government are expected together with some targeted consultation exercises to be considered in further revising the LDS. This will take place in the period to September 2014. The LEADER team will also

coordinate the development of the proposed business case for project investment in parallel with the ongoing iterative development of the LDS.

19. If approved by Scottish Government, the LAG intends to open the next LEADER programme in January 2015. This timetable will of course depend on overall national progress with development of the LEADER scheme.

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## ANNEX I - Proposed CNPA Response to LDS Consultation

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### General Points

1. CNPA is pleased to note the level of background work which has gone into the identification of the proposed themes and outcomes for the draft LEADER Local Development Strategy, specifically reviews of all of the Community Action Plans; the National Park Partnership Plan; and the relevant Single Outcome Agreements and Economic Strategies produced by the five Community Planning Partnerships, who cover areas of the National Park. This ensures a bottom-up approach to the development of the draft themes and outcomes; makes effective use of previous consultation and engagement output; and provides a sound basis for the specific LEADER consultation process. In addition, as the themes relate to strategic plans from relevant local authorities and other partners, there may be opportunities for drawing down match funding to support initiatives in particular areas.
2. This background work has resulted in the production of proposed themes and outcomes which reflect the breadth of issues and opportunities across communities and businesses within the National Park. As a result, CNPA is broadly supportive of the draft themes and outcomes, but recognises that the best test for their representativeness is through consultation with communities (of place and interest) and other relevant networks in the National Park. The Park Authority is pleased to note that a number of consultation events have been organised in communities across the Park; that an online survey has been advertised widely; and that significant attempts have been made to ensure that all sections of society and the business community have the opportunity to contribute through these routes.

### Strategic Relevance

3. From a strategic perspective, the Park Authority is pleased to note that the draft themes and outcomes clearly reflect and complement the strategic aims of the National Park, as set out in the National Park Partnership Plan and associated strategy documents. Clear links to the overarching National Performance Framework have also been demonstrated.

### Role of Local Development Strategy

4. Reflecting the Scottish Government's ongoing focus on community empowerment and community planning, it is important to ensure that there is an appropriate



strategic focus on the fourth aim of the National Park. As a result, community-led development is increasingly important in terms of building community capacity and resilience in a period of significant economic and social change. To that end CNPA is keen to ensure that the Local Development Strategy provides a framework for community-led development across the National Park.

5. In order for community-led development to be truly successful, it needs to be “owned” by active community organisations and have the support of the broader community. This requires ongoing community leadership, engagement and consultation, to be sustainable. Therefore, CNPA would like to continue to work with LEADER staff, LAG members and other relevant partners to support a Local Development Strategy which sets out good practice in terms of what public agencies, businesses and community bodies should be seeking to achieve in community engagement and support activity within the National Park.
6. Within both of the elements outlined above, the role of the Community Development Officer network as project animators and supporters of community-led development is crucial. CNPA is pleased to note the level of liaison between LEADER staff, LAG members, Park Authority staff and the Community Development Officer network to date and hopes to see this continue throughout the delivery of the LDS.
7. In the spirit of community empowerment and community-led development, CNPA would encourage the LEADER LAG to move away from the use of phraseology such as “giving grants”(language used in draft LDS, which suggests a form of dependency); to “providing investment” in community initiatives, which suggests a desire for long term sustainability.

### **Proposed Grants Programme Structure**

8. CNPA believes that the proposal, through the Main Grants programme, to seek to shift the focus from small scale projects, often focusing on one theme or one community (of place or interest), to a focus on more strategic projects cutting across themes and communities, is ambitious and welcome.
9. The Park Authority believes that this will provide an incentive for communities and create a culture of greater collaboration across the National Park. In addition, it should help applicants to consider the broader impact of any proposals or projects they seek to take forward. Again, the role of the CDO network, with their profound knowledge of their areas, will be essential in supporting different communities to work together, where appropriate, to collaborate on larger and more strategic projects. To some degree, this collaboration is already taking place, for example

through the “Team Badenoch” initiative around a Badenoch Cultural Heritage Project.

10. The Park Authority thinks it would be helpful for the LDS to say more about the building of partnerships as part of the Main Grants programme. Involvement from larger private sector organisations could potentially be encouraged by appealing to their Corporate Social Responsibility needs.
11. There will be cases where a community seeks to deliver a one-off project specific to their area (for example priorities identified in Community Action Plans). Where this meets a theme of the LDS there should be a level of support available. CNPA is therefore pleased to note the creation of a Small Grants programme, which should fulfil this role.
12. Successful community-led development requires a cohort of committed and knowledgeable people, who are willing to see a project to its conclusion. There are numerous examples of this across the National Park and this LDS should continue to support this process. However, for successful community-led development to become sustainable it requires, among other things, succession planning. This ensures that when the current cohort of community activists step down, there are sufficiently skilled and knowledgeable people available to take their place. Succession planning in community-led development can be very difficult as it is heavily reliant on voluntary commitment and individual personalities.
13. Involving young people in community-led development as early as possible can help them to build their knowledge and skills, as well as their commitment to development of this nature. This is arguably even more important in remote rural areas where it is particularly difficult to retain young people beyond secondary school. Therefore, CNPA is supportive of the proposed Youth LAG, which could provide meaningful pathways for young people, with potential progression for those involved in projects such as the John Muir Award and Junior Rangers programme through Europarc. We would ask, however, that any projects coming through the Youth LAG should also fit with the themes in the LDS rather than simply being ‘youth’ related projects.
14. These transferrable skills (coupled with more specific skills related to a specific project) can provide opportunities for young people, and by involving them in community-led development programmes at an early stage, it is hoped that staying in their communities and contributing positively beyond secondary school may become a more attractive prospect. This also supports CNPA’s Communication and Engagement Strategy, which aims to build a sense of closeness and ownership of the Park by getting people involved.

## Investment Themes and Strategic Outcomes

15. The CNPA welcomes the proposed investment themes and outcomes which demonstrate a close fit with the key priorities for the area. More specific comments on each of the Themes and Outcomes are detailed in Table I below. The Consultation document also identifies a range of illustrative actions. There are a wide range of potential projects that CNPA could suggest in terms of illustrative actions, however, as indicated by the consultation we will limit our comments to the themes and outcomes at this time.

**Table I - DRAFT LDS Themes and Outcomes**

<b>LDS Theme</b>	<b>LDS Outcomes</b>	<b>CNPA Proposed Comment</b>
1. Build community capacity to facilitate and support local development and promote partnership working.	Outcome 1: Communities and businesses are more sustainable through innovation and knowledge sharing by 2020. Outcome 2: Community members are more active in determining what happens in their communities by 2020.	Underpins CNPA commitment to community-led development and sustainable business growth throughout the National Park; and reflects Government commitment to community empowerment.
2. Grow the economy of the Park by strengthening existing business sectors, supporting business start-ups and diversification, and increasing the number of workers employed in the Park.	Outcome 3: More jobs and employment opportunities for people living and working in the National Par by 2020. Outcome 4: A growing and more diverse local economy by 2020 Outcome 5: Improvement in the benchmarked average wages in the national park by 2020	Theme 3 directly reflects the aim of the emerging Economic Development & Diversification Strategy and supports key elements of the action plan. Supporting women back into the workplace through incentivising homeworking and offering extend childcare provision is a key socio-economic issue in rural areas. As such we propose that Outcome 3 should be altered to: “More jobs, employment opportunities <b>and flexible working support</b> for people...”, to allow for this.

<b>LDS Theme</b>	<b>LDS Outcomes</b>	<b>CNPA Proposed Comment</b>
<p>3. Attract, support and retain young people in the National Park.</p>	<p>Outcome 6: There will be a sustained increase in the number of young people living, learning and working in the National Park by 2020.            Outcome 7: Improved career path choices for young people and less seasonality in employment.            Outcome 8: Increased access to further and higher education opportunities</p>	<p>CNPA is supportive of efforts to retain young people in rural communities and recognises the need to offer improved access to learning, training and employment. However, this should not be to the exclusion of other members of the community. It should be recognised that travel is a key issue for young people in terms of accessing education and this should be allowed for both in Theme 3 and 4 in terms of improved transport but also capacity for rural learning centres.</p>
<p>4. Improve transport, connectivity and service provision</p>	<p>Outcome 9: There will be an increase in community service provision by 2020.            Outcome 10: People will have access to affordable green transport networks which meet their needs by 2020            Outcome 11: Communities have equality of access to next generation 24 meg plus broadband by 2020.</p>	<p>Theme 4 reflects key programmes of work in the NPPP, Sustainable Tourism Strategy and Economic Strategy providing the infrastructure that enables the economy and communities to thrive.</p> <p>The NPPP encourages active travel modes. We therefore suggest that an additional outcome: “More residents will walk or cycle to work and more visitors will walk or cycle during their stay in the National Park.”</p> <p>Transport and connectivity are a key issue for education and learning in the Park and as such both Theme 3 and 4 should allow for improved transport but also capacity for rural learning centres to improve access to learning opportunities.</p>

LDS Theme	LDS Outcomes	CNPA Proposed Comment
<p>5. Protection and enhancement of the National Park landscape, wildlife and local heritage through sustainable living.</p>	<p>Outcome 12: Increased community support for, and engagement in enhancing the Park landscape, wildlife, heritage and wider environment by 2020.</p> <p>Outcome 13: Communities have the skills, knowledge and opportunity to engage in preserving and enhancing the Park landscape, wildlife, heritage and wider environment by 2020.</p> <p>Outcome 14: Reduction of the carbon emissions of the National Park by 2020.</p>	<p>This Theme and related outcomes support key aims within the Cairngorms Nature Action Plan to provide opportunities for people to realise the benefits from, and help to look after, nature. Direct links between the LDS, LAG, and the Cairngorms Nature Partnership would be welcomed.</p> <p>Phrase “sustainable living” is ambiguous and does not add to the underlying principle of the theme. Suggest that the last three words are deleted.</p> <p>The outcome relating to reduction in carbon emissions could be combined with other themes to support extended community transport, access to broadband and distance learning (among other initiatives).</p>
<p>6. Excellence in sustainable tourism and outdoor recreation to enhance enjoyment of residents and visitors</p>	<p>Outcome 15: A more resilient, competitive and diverse tourism sector benefiting all communities by 2020.</p> <p>Outcome 16: An increase in quality of tourism offered by 2020.</p> <p>Outcome 17: The Park’s recreation opportunities have improved the health and enjoyment of residents and visitors.</p>	<p>This theme and outcomes are welcomed as they support the delivery of both the Economic Strategy and Sustainable Tourism Strategy for the Park. It is suggested that Outcome 16 be altered to read “An improvement in the visitor experience by 2020.” This helps reflect both the quality of the tourism offering but also the customer experience provision and can be measured through the Visitor Survey as well as quality assurance schemes.</p>