

# CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

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## FOR DECISION

**Title:** Food for Life Development Plan – Next Steps

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### Purpose

To update members on the progress made on the Food for Life Development Plan for the Park and to agree a way forward including future CNPA support.

### Recommendations

That the Board:

- a) note the progress made with the Food for Life Plan and the future opportunity it provides for the Park;
- b) agree to implement the Food for Life Plan and acknowledge that other project activity is given a lower priority;
- c) agree the proposed staff resource to coordinate the project and CNPA funding of up to £55k over 3 years (£25k for 2010/11 and £15k per year thereafter).

### Executive Summary

Food and drink is an area that has not been fully explored thus far in the Park yet it offers significant opportunity to help deliver numerous actions within the National Park Plan. The development of a regional Park-wide model under the Food for Life concept offers distinct advantages by bringing together economic, educational, social, and environmental activities in a coordinated way.

The Food for Life plan could enable rural and urban communities to develop, manage and sustain high quality food action plans, networks and supply chains that are economically and environmentally sustainable and that bring long term benefits including: health improvement; education opportunities; skills development and employment; business diversity; increasing retention of wealth at a local level; and, carbon reduction through localised food chains.

Previous successful work such as the Farmer's Market, LBBT and Crofting Connections can be built upon. Engagement with the CBP, wider private sector and other stakeholders, including the Scottish Government, has indicated significant external support.

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## FOOD FOR LIFE DEVELOPMENT PLAN - NEXT STEPS FOR DECISION

### Background

1. A Food and Drink Action Plan for the Park was developed in late 2008/early 2009 and presented to the Board in February and June 2009. Restrictions on our internal staff resource delayed follow-up work until early 2010 but considerable progress has now been made to build on the initial action plan.
2. At a national level the first National Food Policy 'A Recipe for Success' was published in June 2009. A Leadership Forum has been established to drive forward the implementation of the policy and is supported by five workstreams. Many local authorities have since developed their own food strategies or action plans. More generally, interest in local food and food provenance continues to build.
3. Following on from the previous Board meeting a food producers' survey of the Park was conducted by CNPA in February 2010 and a partnership project was developed with Soil Association Scotland to use their existing Food for Life framework as a means of developing a more comprehensive regional development plan for food and drink in the Park.
4. Other ongoing food related initiatives in the Park have continued including Crofting Connections, Food on Film with local schools, venison promotion, Cairngorms Farmers Market and the Deeside Food Tourism Initiative.

### **Food for Life Development Plan**

5. The Cairngorms Food for Life Development Plan is shown at Annex I, with an executive summary on p4. It provides a strong rationale, p8-10, for integrated action around food and drink as well as a framework that should enable the partnership work and collaboration that will be required to overcome many of the barriers that exist. The Plan aims to:
  - a) Increase food production across the Park through strengthening and developing the viability of primary food producers and food processors;
  - b) Increase consumption of locally produced food through developing supply chains and markets for local produce;
  - c) Reduce food miles and thus contribute to a low carbon National Park;
  - d) Strengthen and develop the viability of the tourism industry across the Park;
  - e) Develop stronger links between the food and drink, tourism retail and land management sectors, health agencies and communities (including education) through the medium of food and drink;
  - f) Provide an exemplar model for a deliverable and forward thinking Sustainable Regional Food Strategy which can be replicated across the UK.
6. Food for Life has its origins in improving school meals and delivering food education in schools. However in Scotland the Soil Association have broadened this approach to embrace increasing the supply chain of available local food and support for public procurement of local food. This forms a strong base on which to develop and implement a regional model for a more sustainable food economy. The Food for Life Scotland programme is outlined further on p13 of the Plan.
7. The Plan is closely aligned with the Scottish Government's National Food Policy and with the National Park Plan. It is more ambitious and far-reaching than any of the food related strategies or plans that are currently in place amongst the local authorities. The regional and integrated approach is unique and as a result it has

generated much interest and support, including within the Scottish Government. The thorough research and engagement process that was followed is shown on p15. Section 2 on p17 sets the scene and highlights the links to national, regional and local initiatives.

## Actions

8. The plan details eight areas for development and action in Section 3, p30:
  - a) Developing Market Intelligence: Understanding the local food sector
  - b) Improving distribution of local produce
  - c) Improving supply and availability of local produce
  - d) Increasing procurement of local produce
  - e) Increasing demand for local produce
  - f) Developing food tourism
  - g) Building skills and improving collaboration
  - h) Engaging schools and communities
  
9. Each for action area has a number of clear and tangible actions recommended that could be delivered on an individual basis. However, one of the key strengths behind the plan is that of coordinated delivery; making sure that individual project work is connected with complementary work elsewhere. This requires a degree of flexibility that is further influenced by the enthusiasm and drive of partner organisations to help deliver the work. Specific work packages include:
  - a) Audit of food and drink producers and processors;
  - b) Directory of food and drink producers and processors (*underway*);
  - c) Local food guide to promote local food to residents and visitors (*underway*);
  - d) Website (*possibly hosted on the CBP website*);
  - e) Feasibility study into distribution needs and solutions;
  - f) Analysis and action plan for food processing infrastructure;
  - g) Support for development of supply chain;
  - h) Support for public procurement of locally produced food and implementation of Food for Life Catering Mark;
  - i) Food for Life educational and community programme.

## Implementation

10. The Plan sets out a proposed means of implementation in Section 4 at p49. Areas of particular note are:
  - a) **Food Group.** There is an emerging 'food group' of enthusiastic and committed producers, chefs, processors and public sector representatives that will provide oversight to the project and ensure connection with wider national and regional policy developments. In addition the establishment of a more informal 'food forum' is being explored by the CBP to encourage networking and wider collaboration.
  - b) **Project Coordination.** It is proposed that CNPA provide the overall project coordination, connecting strands of activity being delivered by partners and, in some cases, managing specific projects. Ruathy Donald would continue with this responsibility on a part-time basis, supported by Chris Bremner, rather than the full-time post suggested in the plan. This will require a re-prioritisation of other CNPA work within the Making Tourism and Business More Sustainable programme. Specific project activities that it is

proposed are given a lower priority are: the promotion of environmental plans with businesses and visitor payback.

- c) **Partner Collaboration.** Partner collaboration is essential to delivering the plan and many have already expressed support or interest in helping. Soil Association Scotland are prepared to deliver the education and community themes and discussions are ongoing with the Scottish Government over direct support as well as with other key partners including Scotland Food and Drink, Society Agricultural Organisations Scotland, Highland Council and the CBP. There is significant potential to build on existing work such as Highland Council's excellent progress with sourcing local produce under their public procurement policy and with expanding the ethos and aims of Crofting Connections in schools beyond Badenoch and Strathspey.
- d) **Funding.** Funding requirements are being developed in detail under a LEADER bid for submission on 24 September 2010. LEADER is already funding the food guide and producers directory and the LAG is very keen to support more local food initiatives. In addition, the ongoing discussions with the Scottish Government may provide central funding for some aspects of the plan. Potential partner contributions are still being discussed. It is proposed to provide up to £25k of CNPA funding in 2010/11 with subsequent funding of up to £15k per year for 2011/12 and 2012/13 to match fund any LEADER bid and to start key activities.

## Outcomes and Monitoring

- 11. The Plan sets out seven main outcomes for the Park:
  - a) An increase in the amount of quality food & drink produced in the Park – more producers and processors producing quality food.
  - b) An increase in the use of local food across the Park – local producers supplying more local businesses.
  - c) An increase in the consumption of locally produced food in the Park – more residents and tourists consuming local food.
  - d) Expansion of the Park's local food economy – increase in the development of businesses and increase in the productivity of existing businesses.
  - e) A decrease in the Park's food carbon footprint – reduction in food miles, resource consumption and food waste throughout the supply chain.
  - f) An improvement in the health of the Park's residents – more people adopting healthy and sustainable diets.
  - g) An increase in the strength and resilience of the Park's communities – more people participating in community activities and initiatives.
- 12. Linked to these outcomes are a series of distinct measurable outputs (p48). These, along with the initial baseline market research, provide a detailed mechanism for ongoing monitoring and evaluation.

## Recommendations

- 13. **The Board is asked to note the progress made under the Food for Life plan and the future opportunity it provides for the Park.**
- 14. **The Board is asked to agree to implement the Food for Life Development Plan and acknowledge that other project activity is given a lower priority.**

15. **The Board is asked to agree the proposed staff resource to coordinate the project and CNPA funding of £55k over 3 years (£25k for 2010/11 and £15k per year thereafter).**

## Policy Context

16. **National Park Plan.** Local food and drink has a direct and indirect effect on the following objectives, outcomes and actions throughout the Park Plan.

a) **Strategic Objectives.**

- i. 5.1.4a – Maintain and enhance a viable and productive land management sector that delivers private and public objectives and enhances the special qualities of the Park.
- ii. 5.1.4e – Develop local supply chains and markets for local produce.
- iii. 5.2.3a – Create conditions conducive to business growth and investment that are consistent with the special qualities of the Park and its strategic location.
- iv. 5.2.3b – Encourage entrepreneurship, especially in young people and in sectors which complement the special qualities of the Park.
- v. 5.2.3d – Promote opportunities for economic diversification across all areas of the Park.
- vi. 5.2.3f – Raise the profile and excellence of local produce and services.
- vii. 5.2.3h – Ensure a match between training provision and current/future skills needs.
- viii. 5.3.2e – Strengthen and maintain the viability of the tourism industry in the Park and the contribution that it makes to the local and regional economy.

b) **Five Year Outcomes.**

- i. A diverse, viable and productive land management sector will continue to provide high quality primary produce such as food and timber; whilst delivering public benefits which are compatible with the Park's special qualities and will make a growing contribution to employment and the local economy.
- ii. The economic value of the deer resource will be enhanced.
- iii. An increasing proportion of the economic activity will be based on the special qualities of the Park.
- iv. There will be an increase in use of local suppliers and produce.

c) **Priorities for Action.**

- i. 6.3.1e - Investigate opportunities to increase the socio-economic value of deer.
- ii. 6.5.1e - Develop stronger links between tourism and transport, land management, food and drink, retail and other sectors.
- iii. 6.5.2a - Promote economic opportunities created by National Park status and ensure expert advice is available in relation to sustainable development.

- iv. 6.5.2c - Strengthen awareness and spending on local crafts and produce by carrying out research on producers, branding and visitor information.
- v. 6.5.2h – Provide more advice and support for business development, including the marketing and processing of primary produce and add further value through appropriate use of the Cairngorms brand.
- vi. 6.5.2i – Develop innovative schemes to assist land management units develop their economic and environmental sustainability.

### ***Delivering Sustainability***

17. Developing a resilient and sustainable local food economy presents significant opportunity to deliver and demonstrate sustainability in practice. The plan also provides a key strand of activity to help deliver the Low Carbon National Park aspirations.

### ***Delivering A Park for All***

18. Equalities commitments will be built in to the delivery of the plan. Providing opportunity for all visitors, residents and different groups to benefit from greater awareness, understanding, quality and availability of local food is a key aim.

### ***Delivering Economy, Effectiveness and Efficiency***

19. The plan offers opportunity to establish long-term collaborative relationships with a number of key partners. This has the potential to attract significant additional project funding and investment in to the Park.

## **Implications**

### ***Financial Implications***

20. Financial implications are covered above.

### ***Presentational Implications***

21. The Food for Life Development Plan has already generated much positive interest during early consultations and discussions. Scottish Government and ministerial interest has been high. There is an option to launch the Plan during Scotland's Food and Drink Fortnight 4<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> September 2010 with ministerial backing.

### ***Implications for Stakeholders***

22. Many key stakeholders, particularly local authorities, have been very complementary of the work and acknowledge that it is an exciting and innovative project. It is an approach that many could not develop and so they see merit in supporting the proposal as it has the potential to bring significant benefit to the wider area. Other stakeholders see the project as an ideal opportunity to further existing strands of complementary work.

## **Next Steps**

23. The Food Group aims to meet formally in mid September to prioritise early project work. Discussions will continue with the Scottish Government in early September and with key partners throughout September. LEADER bid submitted 24 September for LAG decision in November 2010.

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**23<sup>rd</sup> August 2010**  
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**Annex I – Cairngorms Food for Life Development Plan**