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**CAIRNGORMS SUSTAINABLE TOURISM FORUM**

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**Title:** Sustainable Tourism Strategy Action Plan: Implementation and Monitoring

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**Purpose:** To outline a proposed implementation and monitoring process for the strategy, highlighting the role for the Forum.

**Advice Sought:** The forum is asked to consider and advise on the proposed process, their role and the proposed key indicators.

## **STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION**

1. **National Park Plan 2.** The Sustainable Tourism Strategy (STS) shaped the development of National Park Plan 2 (NPP2) which has as one of three strategic objectives: *ensuring that the Cairngorms National Park delivers an outstanding visitor experience and is an international benchmark for sustainable tourism.* The actions required to implement the STS link to all of the 10 'Five Year Outcomes' in the draft plan with particular relevance to:
  - a. **Outcome 1.** *More people will learn about, enjoy, and help to conserve the special nature and cultural qualities of the Park.*
  - b. **Outcome 6.** *The economy of the Park will have grown and diversified, drawing on the Parks' special qualities.*
  - c. **Outcome 8.** *Business and communities will be successfully adapting to a low carbon economy.*
2. The wider public consultation on the draft NPP2 may further refine the detail and how it may best be delivered.
3. **STS Action Plan.** The strategy document contains a comprehensive section on action and implementation. A summary action table is shown at Annex A. The eight action areas and 53 actions provide a framework for delivery and the basis for more specific actions to be worked up by stakeholders. Many are already underway and may require little, if any, additional attention whilst others remain more challenging and may require further detailed development. The descriptions have been kept deliberately broad to enable a degree of flexibility with future development work.

4. The EUROPARC Verifiers Re-evaluation Report helps highlight areas where further attention is required (covered under Paper 1), however, more detail is needed, particularly with timeframes. After the NPP2 consultation has completed it is proposed that the format at Annex A is amended to show a more detailed priority list (with suggested timeframes), short updates on progress and a colour coding to easily illustrate areas where more focus may be required. The development of an interactive online version will also be investigated.

5. **Delivery Mechanisms.** It is proposed to continue detailed implementation discussions via the existing Park Delivery Teams<sup>1</sup> and via project specific partnerships between stakeholders. The CBP is a good example of an existing partnership where their business plan for 2011/12 highlights that some 45 of the 53 actions in the strategy will be progressed via their work either as the lead partner or in a supporting capacity.

## MONITORING PROGRESS

6. The strategy provided 6 clear strategic objectives, each with an outcome and some suggested indicators. These are shown in the table at Annex B. The indicators need to be refined and a shortlist of indicators is highlighted in bold at Annex B and summarised below.

7. **Key Indicators.** This list of key indicators is linked to existing or proposed indicators for the NPP2 and for other organisations such as the CBP. They have also been selected because they are measurable on a regular basis (at least annually).

	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Indicators</b>
1	Tourism growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tourism spend (STEAM)</li> <li>• Attraction visitor numbers</li> <li>• Accommodation occupancy (VS)</li> </ul>
2	Customer focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visitor satisfaction (DOVE, visitor survey)</li> <li>• Visitors making repeat visits (Baro, visitor survey)</li> </ul>
3	Special qualities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visitors awareness of and influence of the Park</li> </ul>
4	Geographic diversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attraction visitor numbers</li> <li>• Accommodation occupancy (VS)</li> </ul>
5	Environmental impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contributions to conservation/management (COAT)</li> <li>• Park brand use (CNPA)</li> </ul>
6	Leadership and partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CBP membership (CBP)</li> <li>• Financial commitment for strategy implementation</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> The Tourism, Business, Awareness and Understanding Delivery Team is the main one although the delivery team formats may be reviewed in line with adopting NPP2.

## CSTF ROLE

8. The strategy states that *'the responsibility for ensuring implementation and providing coordination rests with the Cairngorms Sustainable Tourism Forum. Individual actions will be carried out by a range of players acting independently and in partnership'*. This is a complex area and care needs to be taken to avoid duplication of effort between organisations. The Forum has a key role to play in helping to coordinate delivery and to shape and guide the work of the many stakeholders involved.

9. It is proposed that the updated Action Plan will be made available at each Forum meeting. Partner organisations will be asked to help update and contribute to the document, with a secretariat function remaining with the CNPA. Monitoring progress against the list of indicators is probably best done on an annual basis. Areas of focus for the Forum are likely to be:

- a. Providing guidance and direction on priorities.
- b. Influencing partner and stakeholder support, if required.
- c. Monitoring progress against the key indicators.

10. **CSTF Advice.** The Forum are asked to consider and advise on:

- a. The broad proposals for CSTF engagement with the implementation process.
- b. The proposed key indicators for each strategic objective.

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Annexes:

- A. STS Action Plan.
- B. Strategic Objectives and Key Indicators.

## ANNEX A: CAIRNGORMS SUSTAINABLE TOURISM STRATEGY - ACTION PLAN 2011-15

### Initial indication of priority actions, funding implications and key partners

The table below shows each of the headline actions in the Cairngorms Sustainable Tourism and Action Plan. Actions considered to be highest priority are indicated, while recognising that all are important.

Financial implications are broadly distinguished on the scale:

Low – Under £10,000

Medium – £10,000 - £50,000

High – Over £50,000

A lead partner is identified in each case (by underling) together with some other key partners, while recognising that in many cases other stakeholders should be involved in the action. Abbreviations used are as follows:

CSTF - Cairngorms Sustainable Tourism Forum

CNPA – Cairngorms National Park Authority

CBP – Cairngorms Business Partnership

DMOs – Destination Management Organisations

ACC – Association of Cairngorms Communities

LAs – Local Authorities

LMs – Land managers

COAT – Cairngorms Outdoor Access Forum

COAPG – Cairngorms Outdoor Activity Providers Group

CC – Creative Cairngorms

HIE – Highland and Island Enterprise

SE – Scottish Enterprise

BGS – Business Gateway Scotland

VS – Visit Scotland

HS – Historic Scotland

	Action	Priority	Financial implication	Lead and key partners
<b>I</b>	<b>Stakeholder engagement and working together</b>			
Ia	Support and promote an active Cairngorms Sustainable Tourism Forum	*	Low	<u>CSTE</u> , CNPA
Ib	Maintain an effective private sector body for the Cairngorms	*	High	<u>CBP</u> , CNPA, HIE, SE

Ic	Establish coordination and collaborative relationships between DMOs	*	Low	<u>CSTF</u> , <u>CBP</u> , DMOs
Id	Encourage sector or thematic networks		Low	<u>CNPA</u> , <u>CBP</u>
Ie	Encourage active local area groups		Low	<u>CNPA</u> , <u>CBP</u> , <u>ACC</u> , <u>LAs</u>
If	Ensure public and third sector bodies link in to CNP tourism structures and initiatives		Low	<u>CSTF</u> , <u>CNPA</u> , <u>Nat Bodies</u>
Ig	Maintain accessible communication with all tourism stakeholders	*	Med	<u>CSTF</u> , <u>CBP</u> , <u>DMOs</u>
<b>2 Brand awareness and marketing</b>				
2a	Develop and convey the essence of the brand, based on the Cairngorms' core values	*	Med	<u>CBP</u> , <u>CNPA</u>
2b	Promote further exposure and meaningful use of the brand		Low	<u>CBP</u> , <u>CNPA</u>
2c	Maintain a world class destination website as the central vehicle for marketing	*	Med	<u>CBP</u> , <u>VS</u>
2d	Plan and implement an annual marketing campaign for the Cairngorms	*	High	<u>CBP</u>
2e	Maximise exposure of the Cairngorms in campaigns by VisitScotland and others		Low	<u>CBP</u> , <u>VS</u> , <u>CSTF</u>
<b>3 Information and interpretation</b>				
3a	Follow a strategic approach to information and interpretation delivery	*	Low	<u>CNPA</u> , <u>CBP</u> , <u>VS</u> , <u>DMOs</u>
3b	Review the medium term position of the VIC network and its relationship to the National Park	*	High	<u>VS</u> , <u>CNPA</u> , <u>CBP</u> , <u>DMOs</u>
3c	Maintain a wider set of information points at key sites and in communities		High	<u>CNPA</u> , <u>DMOs</u> , <u>LAs</u>
3d	Strengthen provision of Cairngorms information interpretation by tourism enterprises / other stakeholders	*	Med	<u>CBP</u> , <u>CNPA</u>
3e	Further develop the role of rangers in information and interpretation		Low	<u>CNPA</u> , <u>LMs</u>
3f	Maintain orientation material for the whole Park		Med	<u>CNPA</u> , <u>CBP</u>
3g	Develop the use of mobile IT applications		Med	<u>CBP</u>

3h	Ensure effective park identity and directional signing		High	<u>CNPA</u> , LAs
<b>4 Resource management and conservation</b>				
4a	Guard against damaging and intrusive development	*	Low	<u>CNPA</u> , LAs
4b	Strengthen spatial tourism planning and visitor management, based on evidence of impact	*	Med	<u>CNPA</u>
4c	Encourage and assist tourism businesses to strengthen environmental management	*	Med	<u>CBP</u> , DMOs, <u>CNPA</u> , BG, LAs
4d	Pursue support for conservation and management from enterprises and visitors		Med	<u>CNPA</u> , <u>CBP</u>
4e	Encourage visitors to use greener modes of transport		High	<u>CNPA</u> , LAs, <u>CBP</u>
<b>5 Outdoor access</b>				
5a	Maintain a good range of access routes based on popular paths	*	High	<u>CNPA</u> , COAT, LMs
5b	Provide guidance to visitors on responsible access	*	Low	<u>CNPA</u> , COAT, LMs, <u>CBP</u>
5c	Work with communities, land managers and other stakeholders on the promotion of access opportunities	*	Med	<u>CNPA</u> , COAT, LMs, COAPG
5d	Clarify and facilitate opportunities for safe enjoyment of the mountains		High	<u>CNPA</u> , COAT, LMs, COAPG
5e	Provide and promote specific opportunities for cycling and mountain biking		High	<u>CNPA</u> , COAT, LMs, COAPG
5f	Seek to address adverse impacts from wild camping		Low	<u>CNPA</u> , COAT, LMs
5g	Consider opportunities for promoting water borne access		Med	<u>CNPA</u> , COAPG
5h	Establish a strategy on broadening the base for snow sport related activities	*	Med	<u>CNPA</u> , <u>CBP</u> , HIE, SE
<b>6 Product diversification and distinctiveness</b>				
6a	Support the work of local operators in providing and packaging offers	*	Low	<u>CBP</u> , DMOs, COAPG
6b	Strengthen the range of leading wildlife tourism experiences	*	Med	<u>CNPA</u> , <u>CBP</u> , LMs, COAPG
6c	Coordinate and promote a full programme of events		Low	<u>CBP</u> , DMOs

6d	Make more of Cairngorms produce	*	Med	<u>CBP</u> , CNPA, DMOs
6e	Encourage the enjoyment and purchase of local arts and crafts		Low	<u>CBP</u> , CC, DMOs, CNPA
6f	Strengthen opportunities to experience local cultural heritage		High	<u>CNPA</u> , ACC, HS
6g	Integrate sporting into the broader tourism offer		Low	<u>CNPA</u> , LMs, CBP
<b>7 Business support and investment</b>				
7a	Coordinate the delivery of business advice, training and support services	*	Med	<u>CBP</u> , DMOs, BGS, HIE, SE
7b	Help local people to gain relevant skills		Med	<u>CBP</u> , LAs
7c	Support appropriate investment in infrastructure		High	<u>CNPA</u> , LAs, HIE, SE
7d	Identify and seek to reduce bureaucracy as a burden on business	*	Low	<u>CBP</u>
7e	Foster positive engagement with the planning process		Low	<u>CNPA</u> , CBP
7f	<b><u>Encourage improvement in the range and quality of accommodation and catering</u></b>		High	<u>CBP</u> , DMOs, CNPA, HIE, SE
7g	Recognise and support the role of visitor attractions		High	<u>CBP</u> , CAG, CNPA, HIE, SE
<b>8 Knowledge gathering and sharing</b>				
8a	Keep abreast of enterprise performance and needs	*	Med	<u>CBP</u> , DMOs
8b	Maintain a programme of regular visitor feedback and surveys	*	Med	<u>CBP</u> , CNPA, DMOs
8c	Seek feedback from local communities		Low	<u>ACC</u> , CNPA
8d	Keep records of visitor flows and environmental quality and analyse trends		Low	<u>CNPA</u>
8e	Obtain relevant research findings on markets and products		Med	<u>CSTE</u> , CBP, CNPA
8f	Encourage effective sharing and dissemination of knowledge	*	Low	<u>CSTE</u>

## ANNEX B – STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES, OUTCOMES AND KEY INDICATORS<sup>2</sup>

	Strategic Objective	Outcome	Indicators
1	<p><b>Tourism growth</b> To seek significant growth in the value of tourism generated and retained in the Cairngorms in the next five years, leading to an increase in the profitability of businesses and local prosperity</p>	<p>Total tourism spending in the Cairngorms has increased at a rate over 35% higher than the equivalent rate for Scotland as a whole. Relative higher growth has been seen in spring and autumn compared with the summer. Average length of stay has increased by over 35%. There has been increased business turnover (including visits and occupancy) especially out of season, leading to increased profitability, confidence, levels of investment and year round jobs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Total tourism spending – Cairngorms and Scotland (STEAM figures)</b></li> <li>• % enterprises reporting growth compared with equivalent quarter in previous year</li> <li>• <b>Attraction visitor numbers and accommodation occupancy levels</b></li> <li>• % enterprises making investments c.f. previous year</li> <li>• Enterprise feedback on profitability</li> </ul>
2	<p><b>Customer focus</b> To ensure that the expectations and needs of all visitors to the Cairngorms are fully understood and addressed</p>	<p>General enhanced experience of the Cairngorms by all kinds of visitor, leading to greater visitor satisfaction and improved business performance.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>% visitors satisfied with experience in the area</b></li> <li>• <b>% visitors making repeat visits</b></li> <li>• % enterprises collecting and acting on visitor feedback</li> <li>• Records of relevant enterprise training</li> <li>• % positive comments on user-generated response websites</li> <li>• Feedback from different types of visitor in response to their needs</li> </ul>
3	<p><b>Special qualities</b> To strengthen awareness and understanding of the special qualities of the Cairngorms and provide outstanding, distinctive experiences based on them</p>	<p>There is a greater range and number of products and packages available covering different experiences in the Cairngorms. In general, visitors have more awareness of the area's special designation and qualities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Amount of different experiences/ offers featured on destination website(s)</li> <li>• Audit of products and events</li> <li>• Media coverage records</li> <li>• <b>% visitors aware of area as a National Park and of different aspects</b></li> <li>• % visitors engaging in different activities during their stay</li> </ul>
4	<p><b>Geographical diversity</b> To recognise and promote the individual qualities of the different parts of</p>	<p>All parts of the Cairngorms are well covered in marketing and have seen appropriate levels of new investment in tourism development and projects.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relative amount of space devoted to different areas in Cairngorms communication material</li> <li>• % visitors spending time in different parts of park during their stay</li> <li>• <b>Visitor numbers at attractions</b></li> </ul>

<sup>2</sup> Suggested indicators are highlighted yellow and in bold.

	<b>Strategic Objective</b>	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Indicators</b>
	the Cairngorms, meet their needs and help them to benefit more from tourism	Relatively greater growth in visitor numbers has occurred in less visited areas. Enterprises, communities and representative bodies are satisfied with how their areas are presented and supported.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Occupancy levels at accommodation in different areas across the park</b></li> <li>• Product audit and record of new development/ projects in different areas</li> <li>• Feedback from enterprises, DMOs, communities across the park</li> </ul>
5	<p><b>Environmental impact</b></p> <p>To minimise negative environmental impacts from tourism and gain support for the conservation, management and enhancement of the Cairngorms' natural resources and heritage</p>	Tangible negative impacts on the local environment and biodiversity have been avoided and there are examples where tourism spending and investment has positively contributed to conservation. More tourism stakeholders are taking more measures to reduce environmental impacts and to support the local natural and cultural heritage and further recognition and support as been obtained from tourists.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Landscape and habitat quality/ change and species numbers in sensitive areas</li> <li>• % enterprises engaged in environmental management</li> <li>• <b>Records of specific contributions to conservation / management</b></li> <li>• % visitors using different transport options</li> <li>• % visitors satisfied/ concerned with quality of environment</li> <li>• Feedback from enterprises and communities on environment and heritage</li> <li>• <b>Park brand usage<sup>3</sup></b></li> </ul>
6	<p><b>Leadership and partnership</b></p> <p>To strengthen the engagement of public and private stakeholders in the development, promotion and management of tourism in the Cairngorms and provide coordination and leadership</p>	The Cairngorms Sustainable Tourism Forum (CSTF), CBP and other related structures are working effectively with strong participation from a wide range of interests who feel well represented and actively involved.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CSTF meeting and attendance records</li> <li>• <b>CBP membership numbers</b></li> <li>• % Enterprises satisfied with engagement/structures</li> <li>• Feedback from communities indicating satisfaction with engagement</li> <li>• <b>Financial commitment to actions from the strategy (budgets)</b></li> </ul>

<sup>3</sup> This possible indicator has been added since the strategy was submitted.