

**CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY**

---

**FOR DECISION**

**Title: CAIRNGORMS ECONOMIC ACTION PLAN**

**Prepared by: MURRAY FERGUSON, DIRECTOR OF PLANNING &  
RURAL DEVELOPMENT  
GAVIN MILES, HEAD OF PLANNING & COMMUNITIES**

**Purpose**

To seek the Board's agreement to undertake a focussed consultation exercise on the proposed Economic Action Plan 2019 – 2022.

**Recommendation**

**That the Board approve the Cairngorms Economic Action Plan 2019 – 2022 for consultation.**

---

## CAIRNGORMS ECONOMIC ACTION PLAN – FOR DECISION

### Background and Strategic Context

1. The first Cairngorms Economic Strategy 2015 – 2018 was prepared in partnership with the Cairngorms Business Partnership (CBP) and the relevant public sector partners, including Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) and the local authorities. The Strategy is available online at <https://cairngorms.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/151001CNPEconomicStrategyVI.pdf>
2. When the current National Park Partnership Plan 2017 – 2022 (NPPP) was prepared, in 2017, a specific Priority on Economic Development was agreed as one of the nine priorities. Several of the other Priorities (including Housing and Visitor Infrastructure) are also directly relevant to managing the economic issues in the Park. The NPPP therefore effectively now contains the strategy for economic development in the Park – including the Agendas for Action, a list of Capital Investment Priorities and a comprehensive set of Policies. All of this policy work helps to guide the actions that will deliver the four aims of the Park.

### Review of the Economic Strategy

3. During 2018 CNPA set up a steering group, including representation from the Cairngorms Business Partnership (CBP), Highlands and Islands Enterprise, local authorities, etc. to review the Economic Strategy. Partners agreed they wanted to continue with the proactive agenda on economic issues that had been set out in the original strategy but to make sure the approach was more pragmatic and action-focused.
4. The discussions in the group also highlighted that:
  - a) There were a number of overlapping strategies and initiatives already in place and we should take care to add value and not to add to the complexity.
  - b) Each of the larger organisations had structures and processes in place that would influence deployment of their resources (both financial and staffing).
  - c) The membership of the Cairngorms Business Partnership had grown steadily during the period and the organisation had developed a strong reputation for networking and delivery.
  - d) The delivery arrangements for the first Economic Strategy had not worked particularly well. Delivery was to be overseen by the Cairngorms Economic Forum. A number of delivery groups or partners had not managed to deliver the actions required. And the Economic Forum had met rather infrequently and there were misunderstandings about its role and the expectations of partners.

- e) There were continuing challenges in obtaining robust economic data for the Park in a cost effective way.
5. During the review process the CBP established its own Economic Advisory Group as a new way to engage with their members and businesses more widely than through their Board. The CBP Chief Executive chairs the meetings and feeds into the relevant discussions.
6. Key steps in developing this Action Plan
- a) The delivery highlights from the Economic Strategy were collated with input from partners (Annex I)
  - b) A review was undertaken of existing plans and strategies and input from recent consultation exercises
  - c) Update of the economic baseline data based on evidence paper prepared for the Main Issues Report for the Local Development Plan
  - d) Discussion with key business sector groups and organisations
  - e) Involvement in preparation of adjacent economic strategies

### **Approach to the Action Plan**

7. The general approach proposed for the Economic Action Plan is to:
- a) focus on the period to end of the current National Park Partnership Plan – i.e. to 2022
  - b) emphasise that the strategy for economic development is set out in the National Park Partnership Plan
  - c) take care not to cause uncertainty or inefficiency by duplicating any existing work – for example, the Cairngorms Tourism Action Plan is already established and has mechanisms in place (i.e. the Cairngorms Tourism Partnership) for implementation and annual review
  - d) reinforce and emphasise the role of the Local Development Plan as a detailed spatial plan that promotes economic development through allocation of sites and a supportive range of policies
  - e) give new emphasis to getting development moving on allocated sites in the LDP by working with partners to deliver the Local Development Plan Action Programme

### **Proposed Economic Action Plan**

8. The proposed Economic Action Plan is attached at Annex 2.

## **Next Steps**

9. Subject to Board approval, the Economic Action Plan will be subject to further discussion with key partners and some modest graphic design works before being published for a period of public consultation.
10. A range of detailed supporting information and evidence has been prepared to support the Economic Action Plan, principally a Rural Development Evidence Report which will be available online as part of the consultation.
11. Following the consultation period, all responses will be assessed and collated by issue. The results will be discussed with the economic delivery partners before being brought back to the Board for approval.
12. Many of the issues picked up in the Europarc Youth Manifesto concerned economic or rural development issues and as CNPA moves to develop a Youth Council there are opportunities to actively involve young people in further development and in delivery of the Action Plan.

**Murray Ferguson & Gavin Miles**  
**December 2018**

[murrayferguson@cairngorms.co.uk](mailto:murrayferguson@cairngorms.co.uk)

[gavinmiles@cairngorms.co.uk](mailto:gavinmiles@cairngorms.co.uk)