
CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

FOR INFORMATION

Title: MAJOR PROJECTS UPDATE

Prepared by: GRANT MOIR, CEO

Purpose

This paper seeks the update members on the major projects in the Cairngorms National park where the CNPA is accountable body or is a major funding partner.

Recommendations

The Board is requested to:

- a) **Note the updates in this report**

Background

1. The CNPA has taken forward a number of major projects as an organisation over the past 5 years. This has involved leveraging in a significant amount of external funding that has contributed across the 4 Park aims. They are all partnership projects involving many different partners. The CNPA is accountable body financially for 4 of the 5 (not TMTP) but the delivery of these projects is spread across many partners with partners contributing financially and with staff input.
2. The total funding of these projects is £15million (not including additional LEADER match funding secured by applicants which equates to a further £1.5m). This is a significant amount of funding that the CNPA and partners has leveraged through these projects. The direct financial CNPA contribution is £855,000. That is a leverage rate of roughly £17.50 for every £1 invested. That is a very high rate.
3. There has been considerable CNPA staff input to these projects over and above funding contributions especially on the corporate side (HR, finance, project management, senior staff time). Board members have been involved directly with all of these projects sitting on the Project Boards responsible for their delivery.
4. These projects have all been identified in the National Park Partnership Plans and CNPA Corporate Plans and have been subject to individual board papers as required, NPPP annual reports and Corporate Plan 6 monthly reports, as well as financial information going to the Finance and Delivery Committee at their meetings.
5. All the projects are either Park-wide or, where they are related to specific geographic areas, these have been identified in advance as spatial priority areas within the NPPP

which has been important in developing funding proposals and getting partners engaged.

6. Finally, these major projects deliver across all 4 aims of the National Park creating significant assets, employment opportunities, biodiversity and landscape benefits, cultural benefits, health benefits and much more. No project focusses on one aim and never has.
7. The information in this paper covers 5 major projects:

Name of Project	Major Funder	Strategic context
Badenoch Great Place CNPA accountable body	NLHF	P67 NPPP 2017 – 2022 CNPA Corporate Plan 2018 - 2022
Cairngorms Capercaillie Project CNPA accountable body	NLHF	P27 NPPP 2017 – 2022 CNPA Corporate Plan 2018 - 2022
The Mountains and the People OATS accountable body	NLHF	P66 NPPP 2012 – 2017 CNPA Corporate Plan 2018 - 2022
Tomintoul and Glenlivet Landscape Partnership CNPA accountable body	NLHF	P47 NPPP 2012 -2017 P68 NPPP 2017 – 2022 CNPA Corporate Plan 2018 - 2022
LEADER Programme CNPA accountable body	European Union and Scottish Government	CNPA Corporate Plan 2018 - 2022 Local Development Strategy

Project 1 – Badenoch Great Place Project

Project	Badenoch Great Place Project
Funder	National Lottery Heritage Fund
Aim of Project	<p>Vision - that by the end of 2021 Badenoch will be renowned as a place within the Cairngorms National Park with a strong character and identity that is based on its distinctive cultural heritage</p> <p>The Project aims are to deliver a Place:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> I. Where there is a strong destination within the Cairngorms National Park and Scotland with a reputation based on its heritage, where the many key heritage attractions and features of interest are promoted to create a great visitor

	<p>experience;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Where the rich heritage assets are turned into a wide range of experiences and economic opportunities; 3. Where a wider range of people are more directly involved in caring for and presenting the area’s heritage 4. Which is managed by a sustainable partnership of organisations and communities who work and embed heritage at the heart of their plans.
Timescale	Originally Apr 18 – Dec 20 but extended to Oct 21 due to change in PO (Jan 20) and COVID
Overall Funding Package	<p>£438,000 split as follows:</p> <p>NLHF £352,000 (80.4%) (£175,400 received to date)</p> <p>Partners £86,000 (19.6%)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CNPA - £30,000 (upfront) • Transport Scotland - £30,000 (upfront) • Highland Council - £6,000 (upfront) • HIE - £20,000 (to be claimed 2021)
Key Partners	<p>CNPA, Voluntary Action in Badenoch and Strathspey, Badenoch Heritage, High Life Highland, The Highland Council, Historic Environment Scotland, Royal Zoological Society Scotland, Transport Scotland, Local Businesses</p> <p>VABS employ and manage the Project Officer.</p> <p>Other partners about to become more involved as enter the final phase are: CBP & Visit Scotland</p>
Project outline	
<p>Background - In 2017, the National Park Partnership Plan 2017-22 (NPPP) identified Badenoch as a “spatial priority area” requiring focused investment and assistance. This was based on identified socio-economic issues and the need to plan positively for the impact caused by the dualling of the A9 between Inverness and Perth. Although visitor numbers to the CNP as a whole grow yearly, Badenoch has not benefited proportionately from this tourism expansion, yet it has two large visitor attractions and some of the best heritage sites and potential experiences in the whole of the NP, indeed Scotland.</p> <p>The Project is being delivered through a package of over 20 interconnected activities that including research, visual, audio and digital material creation, destination development, heritage celebration, training, skills building and marketing and interpretation in all their forms.</p>	

the project outputs. Specialists are currently developing a range of media including GIS mapping, aerial imagery of key heritage sites, 3D visualisations of 6 key sites, recording of stories and songs and creation and recording of musical pieces

The website, <https://badenochstorylands.com/> was launched at end of August 2020. It continues to be populated as content is developed. A Badenoch Storylands App is due to be launched in Spring 2021. It will be an “Area Destination” App, showcasing the heritage of the area and bringing it alive for visitors in modern innovative ways. A virtual festival was held in Oct 20.

Current Situation

The proposed tourist routes have evolved into suggested itineraries for walkers, cyclists and drivers. These will identify key heritage points of interest that can be either be physically visited, viewed from afar or learnt about through digital mediums. The project is about to embark on a programme of working with businesses and communities to refine further before launching through the App and a marketing campaign in late Spring 21 which should coincide with the project organising familiarisation visits for trade bodies and launching the area at Visit Scotland Expo 21 (if it goes ahead).

Interpretation and marketing plans are being developed and increasingly, BGPP will be looking to work more closely with local businesses, communities and key stakeholders to maximise the opportunities and potential benefits that this project could bring for Badenoch, its residents and visitors.

A digital archive is being set up and skills building workshops for local schoolchildren will take place in May. As the project draws to a close it plans to host a conference along with another 2 week festival in Sep.

In many respects, the project is just the start of the journey. It is putting in place the building blocks from which it is hoped the community and partners will continue to develop the area to sustain a vibrant rural community and a place tourists will choose to visit and prolong their stay. The opportunities to build on the work undertaken will be numerous and multifaceted. To this end a Legacy Plan is being developed to help shape and guide future work beyond 2021. It will outline how the investment made during the project will be secured and developed for the future. The aspiration is that the legacy will facilitate new projects that will build on the communities’ assets and result in new opportunities for ongoing community benefit

2022 will be the Year of Scotland’s Stories which will be a showcase of the country’s rich literature, oral traditions and myths and legends. Badenoch should be well positioned to benefit from the opportunities that this year of celebration will bring and has the chance to become renowned for its rich cultural heritage.

Next Steps

- Deliver the remainder of delivery plan to Oct 2021 and the Legacy Plan that has been approved by the Project Board
- Culmination of project is conference on Badenoch celebrating the area, the work undertaken and the cultural heritage of the Park
- Secure the special priority status of Badenoch within the NPPP 2022 - 2027 to allow more time for focused partnership attention on the area.

Project 2 – Cairngorms Capercaillie Project

Project	Cairngorms Capercaillie Project	
Funder	National Lottery Heritage Fund	
Aim of Project	To involve a wide range of people in finding ways people and capercaillie can co-exist in the shared forests in the straths and glens; and play a part in securing the long-term future of capercaillie through habitat creation and furthering understanding of the causes of decline.	
Timescale	June 2020 - July 2023	
Overall Funding Package	National Lottery Heritage Fund	£2,034,500
	Public sector (CNPA, NatureScot & Scottish Forestry)	£149,000
	SRDP (Forest Grant Scheme)	£127,473
	Trusts/Charities/Foundations/ Private (RSPB, Developing Mountain Biking in Scotland, Balmoral Estate, Rothiemurchus Estate, Seafield & Strathspey Estates)	£448,243
	Non cash contributions (RSPB)	£27,897
	Volunteer Time	£120,000
	Total	£2,907,113
Key Partners	<p>NatureScot; Seafield and Strathspey Estates; Forestry and Land Scotland; Scottish Forestry; RSPB; Balmoral Estate; Cairngorms Business Partnership; Developing Mountain Biking in Scotland; Rothiemurchus Estate; Carrbridge Capercaillie Group; Brook Forestry, Groves Forestry, Badenoch & Strathspey Trail Association</p> <p>Note: Cairngorms LEADER support key in financially assisting development phase of project which led to securing current delivery phase.</p>	
Project outline		
<p>The Cairngorms Capercaillie Project brings together key communities of place and interest to raise awareness, enable wider involvement in conservation, improving and expanding habitats, furthering our understanding and providing resource to help secure the long-term future of capercaillie in the Cairngorms. The approved purposes of the project are to:</p> <p>1. Work with landowners to implement plans to improve and manage approximately 9,000 hectares of habitat across six estates for the benefit of capercaillie; enable landowners to play their part in capercaillie conservation via a third-party grant scheme</p>		

targeting landholdings in capercaillie areas.

2. Raise awareness and increase understanding of the challenges facing capercaillie through a variety of means including social media activities and events, a new online engagement platform, volunteer work, a public app, new resources for schools and genetics analysis.

3. Empower communities to help ensure the survival of capercaillie through community-led conservation, by implementing the Carrbridge Capercaillie Conservation Strategy and developing, agreeing and implementing action plans with a further five communities of place and interest: mountain bikers, visitors to Abernethy, Rothiemurchus & Glenmore, businesses, a whole estate approach (Balmoral) and a second community of place .

4. Monitor, test, and evaluate ideas throughout delivery, applying learning from the project to refine activities including habitat improvement work, survey techniques, promotional activities and the community action planning model.

5. Develop an innovative and replicable model for community-led species conservation that enables communities to successfully coexist with their natural heritage, sharing the project's findings internally and externally with UK organisations, and further afield, to create a legacy of learning.

Current Situation

Recruitment is complete. A Project Manager, Community Ranger, Gamekeeper, Capercaillie Advisory Officer, Capercaillie Advisory Assistant, Communications Officer, Administration Officer and Project Officer are all now in post and form the Project Team. An Operational Management Team is also now in place.

Baseline surveys have been conducted to measure the impact of the project's habitat improvement work and predator control in targeted areas is underway. A contractor has been recruited to analyse the genetic diversity of the capercaillie population in the National Park using DNA extracted from capercaillie feathers.

The Carrbridge Capercaillie Group have published their priorities within the Carrbridge Capercaillie Conservation Strategy for the next six months; based on the community consultation results, brood survey results and changes necessary in light of Covid-19. Community-led action work with mountain bikers is continuing to develop. A workshop to identify ways in which the project can help the business community to help capercaillie was hosted by the Cairngorms Business Partnership in early December. And plans to undertake visitor research in Abernethy, Rothiemurchus and Glenmore are underway to help identify ways to better meet the needs of visitors to the area in a way that also enables Capercaillie to thrive.

Next Steps

- Support the Carrbridge Capercaillie Group in delivering the priorities in the Carrbridge Capercaillie Conservation Strategy and Action Plan
- Further work with communities of interest, identifying issues, establishing priorities and consensus and developing action plans.
- Launch of habitat enhancement grant scheme and implementation of Habitat

<p>Improvement Plans on estates across the National Park</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of genetic material • Implementation of the communication plan for raising awareness and understanding <p>More info - https://cairngormscapercaillie.scot/</p>
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Project 3 - The Mountains and the People

Project	The Mountains and the People	
Funder	National Lottery Heritage Fund	
Aim of Project	To improve, and engage people with, the key mountain paths in Scotland's National Parks	
Timescale	May 2015 - June 2020 (Ext Dec 2020)	
Overall Funding Package	National Lottery	£3,250,000
	OATS (inc partner support)	£833,000
	LL&T NPA	£520,000
	Forestry & Land Scotland	£520,000
	Nature Scotland	£202,000
	CNPA	£275,000
	Total	£5,600,000
Key Partners	Outdoor Access Trust for Scotland, Cairngorms NPA, Forestry & Land Scotland, Loch Lomond & Trossachs NPA, and Nature Scotland.	
Project outline		
<p>TMTTP represents the largest and most complex upland path partnership project ever to be undertaken in the UK. The project delivered a wide range of both physical improvements as well as opportunities for people to get involved with conserving and learning about the mountains within Scotland's national parks.</p> <p>The TMTTP project built and rebuilt more than 120km of paths at a cost of £5.6M. Walkers, landowners and conservation interests have seen remarkable upgrades to high pressure "front-line" upland paths in both national parks, protecting the mountain environment with un-obtrusive yet durable builds.</p> <p>Key outputs from the project are:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 36 students completed the SVQ2 in Environmental Conservation and 6 students 		

<p>completed the SVQ3.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over 1400 volunteer work days via 181 work parties. • 45 mountain paths adopted through the ‘Adopt a path’ scheme. • A digital learning pack designed for the secondary schools curriculum. • Extensive and multiplier engagement actions: training promotion, open public events, higher level health walks, promotional leaflets, films, articles and presentations. • Repair of over 120km of upland paths in Scotland’s national parks (53 km in Cairngorms National Park).
Current Situation
<p>The five year project came to an end in December 2020 (extended from June 2020 due to Covid-19 restrictions). A final end of year report is being agreed with the key partners to be submitted to National Lottery in January 2021.</p>
Next Steps
<p>Collectively, formally complete the 5 year National Lottery Bid and celebrate the considerable achievements of Mountains and People Project</p> <p>Agree with OATS CNPA support for the committed 10 year maintenance of the path improvements delivered by the project (partnership agreement in discussion) and collectively consider ways, with landowners, that such maintenance can be sustained.</p> <p>Agree with partners the potential and opportunities to use the Adopt A Path scheme nationally to encourage volunteers to provide useful and useable path condition data on paths across Scotland – a wider opportunity than just mountain paths.</p> <p>Offer volunteers engaged with TMTP the opportunity to support Volunteer Cairngorms</p> <p>Further engage with partners including Cairngorms Trust on developing ways that visitors not only volunteer to maintain paths but ways that significant giving can be trialled to raise funds to maintain the paths of Cairngorms.</p> <p>Annex I Mountain Paths in Cairngorms upgraded, repaired and rebuilt</p> <p>Path Name & Length (metres)</p> <p>Deeside</p> <p>UL-13 Mount Keen* 2005</p> <p>UL-14 Lochnagar Main Path* 2494</p> <p>UL-15 Lochnagar Plateau Path 2306</p> <p>UL-16 Meikle Pap 286</p> <p>UL-17 Glas Allt path 1410</p> <p>UL-17 Glas Allt Bridge 6</p> <p>UL-18 Dubh Loch 2853</p>

UL-33 Mount Keen (Mounth path) 1560

UL-19 Corrie Chash and Broad Cairn 1443

- Coire na Ciste 2270

Total 16,633 m

Angus Glens

UL-20 Glittering Skellies 1078

UL-21 Jock's Road* 598

UL-22 The Snub - Loch Brandy 2904

UL-30 Mayar 3184

UL-31 Dreish 2497

UL-32 Mayar-Dreish summit 2080

- Roy Tait Memorial Bridge 6

Total 12,347 m

Highland/Perthshire

UL-37 A' Mharconaich from Balsporran Cottages* 2710

UL-39 A' Mharconaich to Geal-charn 3872

UL-40 Cairn Liath (Beinn a Ghlo)* 5942

UL-41 Airgoid Bheinn (Beinn a Ghlo) 5460

UL-42 Beinn a Ghlo return 3796

UL-44 Allt Gargh Buidhe (upper Glen Tilt) 1063

Total 22,843 m

TOTAL CAIRNGORMS 51,823 m

Or 51.8 km 32.2 miles.

More info - <https://themountainsandthepeople.org.uk/>

Project 4 – Tomintoul and Glenlivet Landscape Partnership

Project	Tomintoul and Glenlivet landscape Partnership
Funders	National Lottery Heritage Fund
Aim of Project	<p><i>Improving Heritage •</i></p> <p>To take action to restore, conserve and enhance important natural and built heritage features for a sustainable future.</p> <p><i>Learning about Heritage •</i></p> <p>To provide opportunities for people to participate in, or be supported to, record and research elements of the natural and</p>

	<p>cultural heritage of the area. We will provide opportunities to volunteer, develop new skills and learn more about heritage.</p> <p>Engaging with Heritage •</p> <p>To provide better access to the area’s rich heritage through engaging and inspiring interpretation - as well as improving footpaths. We will make the area a better place to be by developing events and celebrations for locals and visitors.</p>																
Timescale	Nov 2016- Feb 2021																
Overall Funding Package	<p>£3,594,553</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 60%;">National Lottery Heritage Fund</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£2,338,100</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Moray Council</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£200,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CNPA</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£200,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Crown Estate Scotland</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£200,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Highlands and islands Enterprise</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£200,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>European Union – LEADER, SRDP</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£320,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Chivas</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£20,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Trusts/Charities/Foundations</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£17,900</td> </tr> </table>	National Lottery Heritage Fund	£2,338,100	Moray Council	£200,000	CNPA	£200,000	Crown Estate Scotland	£200,000	Highlands and islands Enterprise	£200,000	European Union – LEADER, SRDP	£320,000	Chivas	£20,000	Trusts/Charities/Foundations	£17,900
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Key Partners	<p>The Programme Board with representatives of the following organisations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cairngorms National Park Authority • Tomintoul & Glenlivet Development Trust • Crown Estate Scotland • Highlands & Islands Enterprise (Moray) • Historic Environment Scotland 																
Project outlines																	
<p>Improving heritage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peesie Project -wetland habitat improvements, new bird-hide & interpretation • Our Water Environment – (Slowing the flow, water margin management & fish barrier easement) – 3 projects to improve the water environment in Spey catchment • Scalan Mills - buildings secured, recorded, visited • Blairfindy Castle - secured, marketed and opened to public <p>Learning about heritage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training & skills – skills development, especially young people • Oral history - local stories captured through and made accessible online 																	

- **Access**– Speyside way spur and improved access
- **Fishing for the Future** - promotion of fishing especially young people
- **Community Cultural Heritage** - activities and training provided for local people
- **Community Natural Heritage** - activities offered and grants for community projects
- **Education** - new locally centred education opportunities
- **Our heritage school** - pupils create heritage films

Engaging with heritage

- **Discovery Centre** - new community offices, digital archive and visitor facilities part financed with support of Cairngorms LEADER
- **Interpretation & digital** – new interpretation to support other projects and local marketing archive
- **Events & celebration** - of the area’s heritage
- **Access improvements** - new paths, better signposting
- **Woodland improvements** - new woodlands created
- **Dark Skies Park** - designated, promoted and enhanced
- **Landscape heritage & song** - workshops & events

Current Situation

The full programme of over 20 projects was due for completion at the end of September 2020, but we extended the NLHF Grant Expiry Date to the end of February 2021 to accommodate delays caused by Covid 19 restrictions.

Next Steps

The Tomintoul & Glenlivet Landscape Partnership programme is coming to an end, but it was always envisaged that it would lead to further progress in the area. A new ‘Legacy Board’ brings together local groups and key agencies to oversee further developments and marketing of the area and all the many assets created and restored by the TGLP programme.

More info - <https://www.tomintoulandglenlivet.com/>

Project 5 – LEADER

Project	LEADER 2014-2020 Programme
Funder	Scottish Government / European Union
Aim of Project	<p>LEADER is a bottom-up method of delivering support to communities for rural development: also known as Community Led Local Development. Grants are awarded by Local Action Groups (LAGs) to projects that support delivery of a Local Development Strategy.</p> <p>The aim of LEADER is to increase support to local rural community and business networks to build knowledge and skills, and encourage innovation and cooperation in order to</p>

	<p>tackle local development objectives.</p> <p>The Authority acts as the Accountable Body (AB) to the Cairngorms LAG: providing financial stewardship, governance support and risk management.</p> <p>While this was the third LEADER Programme supported by the Authority as the AB, it was novel for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The LAG one of only 2 in Scotland incorporated as charitable entities; • An expansion and real focus through a LEADER approach in supporting rural businesses and farm diversification, which was extremely successful in Cairngorms. 	
Timescale	2014 – March 2021	
Overall Funding Package	Allocation from Scottish Government (for SLA delivery)	£3,043,436.70
	Allocated to projects (LEADER awards) as at November 2020.	£2,466,158.66
	Total project value (including match funding)	£4,004,096.31
	CNPA contribution (proportion of admin support costs)	Approx £300,000
Key Partners	CNPA, SNH, VABs, Marr Area Partnership, LEADER teams from Aberdeenshire, Moray, Highland, Perth & Kinross and Angus, CBP.	
Project outline		
<p>Cairngorms LEADER 2014-2020 Local Development Strategy priority investment themes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Build Community Capacity to Facilitate and Support Local Development Through Partnership Working. 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 3. Attract, Support and Retain Young People in the National Park. 4. Improve Transport, Connectivity and Service Provision 5. Protection and Enhancement of the National Park Landscape, Wildlife and Local 		

Heritage

6. Excellence in Sustainable Tourism and Recreation to Enhance Enjoyment of Residents and Visitors

Cross cutting themes:

Equality, Knowledge sharing, Innovation, Partnership working, Sustainability

Current Situation

Project Allocation commitment was finalised in December 2019.

To November 2020 projects have drawn down £1,963,289 of an available £2,466,302 (79.6%) We anticipate near to 100% by programme closure which on 23 December was announced to be extended until end December 2021 rather than the planned closure date of 31 March. This extension has a minimal impact for Cairngorms LEADER as the programme is near completion, while allowing for some opportunities to complete and possibly add to the remaining live projects.

Total increase on LEADER cost (grant vs total project cost) is 162%. This is somewhat lower than national average. However, a number of LAG areas have not utilised their full allocation. Cairngorms LAG have sought to balance the attraction of additional match funding to projects with managing a full commitment of grant.

The projects funded and commissioned have achieved delivery against all 6 LDS targets and met all cross-cutting themes.

LEADER funding has been allocated to all communities of the CNP, either through direct funds or via Park-wide projects.

Next Steps

As a European Union fund, we lose access to LEADER funding with the end of this programme.

The continuation of some form of national funding for CLLD is prioritised as a key issue for continued delivery of current NPPP priorities on community development, and senior management expect this will remain a priority into the next NPPP.

The Authority has been active in influencing the replacement of this fund. The Director of Corporate Services is the lead representative for the Scottish LEADER Network on the Scottish Government's Rural Economy Working Group. We currently understand that there is high level government commitment to continuation of some form of CLLD.

On the replacement of LEADER funding, the UK Government's "Shared Prosperity Fund" is understood to be the vehicle through which previously EU funded programmes will be replaced. However, it remains highly uncertain whether this will cover CLLD and any mechanisms that will be deployed should it cover LEADER replacement funding. We continue to work as closely as possible with Scottish Government on the evolution of LEADER replacement funds.

Further info - [LEADER 2014-2020 Programme Local Development Strategy Cairngorms Trust](#)

Conclusion

8. The CNPA and its partners have successfully levered in funding to deliver the National Park Partnership Plan. The lessons learned from the each of the projects will be concluded at the end of each of the projects and will be taken to the relevant CNPA Board Committee for discussion. It is key that we continue to learn what worked well and what could be done better as we look at other funding mechanisms to deliver future NPPP outcomes.

Grant Moir
CEO
12 March 2021