

Cairngorms National Park Green Recovery Plan

Introduction

The Cairngorms National Park is the most tourism intensive economy in Scotland. 43% of people are employed in the industry with many more supported by the visitor economy. 2 million people visit the Park each year and the Covid-19 pandemic shows how much the economy relies on this trade. Nature and landscape underpin much of the area's economy.

The recovery is going to take time and different businesses and communities will be affected in different ways. There is a need to ensure that the CNPA and partners support this recovery and in doing so continue to deliver against the Park Plan's long-term outcomes. There is an opportunity to support the recovery by making the right investments for the long term.

Green Recovery

A green recovery is about ensuring that as we rebuild the economy of the National Park we do this in a way that also ensures that we protect and replenish our natural and social capital. The Scottish Government has set out that the recovery needs to deliver a fairer, greener and more equal society.



As we rebuild the economy and work closely with business and communities we must ensure that this helps us to tackle the climate emergency and biodiversity crisis. These are not separate issues. The sustainable recovery of the economy and especially the tourism economy are key issues and there will not be a quick fix to this.

This Recovery Plan is not about replicating or duplicating work ongoing at a national level or about summarising existing national/regional schemes. There are many people facing extreme hardship as their businesses face an uncertain future. This plan and the funding contained will help but cannot ameliorate all the issues being faced by businesses or individuals. The CNPA will do its best to help where it can and to lever in funding to deliver long term economic well-being underpinned by our natural capital.

Strategic Context

The Scottish Government published '[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): framework for decision making - Scotland's route map through and out of the crisis](#)' on 21 May 2020. This sets the framework for the approach that Scottish Government are taking and sets out what people can expect in the phases as Scotland transitions out of lockdown towards exit from the crisis.

At the same time the Scottish Tourism Emergency Response Group has produced a national plan set around 4 themes.

- RESPOND - Immediate provision of information and support to businesses
- RESET - Support, planning and preparation for restart
- RESTART - Support and guidance for safe re-opening
- RECOVER - Guidance and support for operating in a new post COVID-19 environment

Local Context

The local context for the Cairngorms Recovery Plan are the aims of the National Park and the National Park Partnership Plan. The long term outcomes of the Plan are:

- A special place for people and nature with natural and cultural heritage enhanced
- People enjoying the Park through outstanding visitor and learning experiences
- A sustainable economy supporting thriving businesses and communities.

These in turn are supported by accompanying strategies, such as, Cairngorms Economic Action Plan, Tourism Action Plan, Cairngorms Nature, Active Cairngorms, Local Development Plan and Local Development Strategy. The continuing funding of many of the CNPA operational plan priorities will support COVID recovery (e.g. ranger service grants, volunteer cairngorms etc) and we must continue to deliver across the aims of the National Park.

This Recovery Plan is about looking at what areas to accelerate to deliver on the long term Park outcomes and boost, in the short-term, employment & sustainable economic activity. This can be done as much through conservation projects (supporting contractors in the Park to remove fencing, restore peatland etc), visitor projects (capital spend on path infrastructure or facilities) as it can through support for businesses (events, marketing etc) and communities (specific local projects).

As an example: Support for local nurseries to supply native woodland species creates local jobs, this in turn helps with the expansion of native woodland which contributes to jobs, climate and biodiversity, this in turn provides a long-term resource that can be harvested and used creating jobs and economic activity and finally using stock of local provenance

means reducing imports with the potential for pests and disease. A green recovery is not an addendum to economic activity. It is central.

CNPA Focus

One of the main focusses of the CNPA will be to continue to lever in significant funding on top of the annual Grant in Aid funding from Scottish Government to benefit the area of the Park and enable recovery.

We will also want to capture and reinforce many of the good examples of partnership work that have emerged in the last few weeks – for example reducing travel distances though holding meeting online, speed of decision-making and stronger partnership efforts towards place based outcomes.

High level principles for a resilient recovery

The principles set out below are the response from the Committee on Climate Change to the letter from the Cabinet Secretary asking for advice on a ‘green recovery for Scotland’.

1. Use climate investments to support the economic recovery and jobs.
2. Lead a shift towards positive long-term behaviours.
3. Tackle the wider ‘resilience deficit’ on climate change.
4. Embed fairness as a core principle
5. Ensure the recovery does not ‘lock-in’ greenhouse gas emissions or increased climate risk.
6. Strengthen incentives to reduce emissions when considering fiscal changes

The Scottish Government has also set out its approach to transition

- **Suppress** the virus through compliance with physical distancing and hygiene measures, ensuring that R_0 remains below 1 and that our NHS remains within capacity.
- **Care** for those infected by the virus.
- **Support** people and organisations affected by the crisis.
- **Recover** to a new normal, carefully easing restrictions when safe to do so while maintaining necessary measures and ensuring that transmission remains controlled, supported by developments in medicine and technology.
- **Protect** against this and future pandemics, including through effective testing, contact tracing and isolation.
- **Renew** our country, building a fairer and more sustainable economy and society.

Aim of Plan

The aim of this plan is to help the economic recovery of the Cairngorms National Park and ensure this is done in a way that benefits local communities & businesses, is inclusive and delivers on the climate emergency & biodiversity crisis. The Plan will change as further information on Recovery emerges and will look to tie in with the development of national recovery plans in due course.

The thinking in this plan will also feed into the development of the next NPPP 2022 – 2027.

Cairngorms Recovery Plan

This plan contains specific sections setting out the approach to recovery within the National Park. As part of that the CNPA, in conjunction with the Cairngorms Trust, is developing a Cairngorms Recovery Fund that will be available to support initiatives and ideas across the different areas of work.

| Action | Lead | Key Partners | Timescale | Resources | Objective | Theme | CNP Plan / Strategy |
|--|-------------|----------------------------------|------------------------|--|--|------------------|---|
| Cairngorms Recovery Fund to be developed | Grant Moir | Cairngorms Trust, CBP, VABS, MAP | Sept 2020 – March 2021 | CNPA £100k + staff resource Cairngorms Trust £30k | To provide a local fund to support business and community activity to help the recovery. Embed fairness as key principle | Restart, Recover | Economic Action Plan, Local Development Strategy, Cairngorms Nature |

Business - There has been significant schemes put in place by the UK Govt & Scottish Govt (and administered locally by local authorities and enterprise agencies) to help businesses and individuals. The main issue for the National Park is to ensure that schemes are not withdrawn too soon for businesses to support themselves or this will lead to businesses entering administration and increasing unemployment later in the year. This transition is especially acute in the travel and tourism sector as it may take time for visitors to come back and there will be issues about attracting staff and reopening visitor facilities. Cashflow and financial capital will be a key issue for all businesses.

Senior Responsible Officer – Murray Ferguson

| Action | Lead | Key Partners | Timescale | Resources | Objective | Theme | CNP Plan / Strategy |
|---|-----------------|---|------------------|------------------|--|----------------|----------------------------|
| Support Cairngorms Tourism Emergency Response Group | Murray Ferguson | CBP, LA's, VisitAberdeenshire, Moray/Speyside, HIE, VisitScotland | Ongoing | Staff resource | To provide clear and consistent leadership and ensure key Cairngorms issues are being discussed. | Respond, Reset | Tourism Action Plan |

CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY
Formal Board Paper 2 Annex 1 12 June 2020

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|--|-----------------|--|---------------------|--|---|---------------------------|---|
| Attend Scottish Government Rural Economy Stakeholder Group, | David Cameron | n/a | Ongoing | Staff Resource | To feed into information to SG on key issues affecting the Park and to cover LEADER issues on behalf of the network | Respond, Reset | Economic Action Plan, Local Development Strategy, |
| CNPA to support Cairngorms Business Partnership through grant funding. | Murray Ferguson | CBP | Ongoing | CNPA £25k + staff resource | To promote business collaboration and communication | Respond, Restart, Recover | Economic Action Plan |
| Visitor & resident marketing to be developed at appropriate time as lockdown measures ease | Heather Trench | CBP, VisitScotland, VisitAberdeenshire, Moray/Speyside, CNPA | Ongoing | CNPA £15k + staff resource Tie in with CBP, Visit Aberdeenshire & VisitScotland | To support the recovering tourism market and to attract closer at home visitors at appropriate time | Restart, Recover | Tourism Action Plan |
| Develop Growbiz 'Smart Villages' to enhance digital connectivity and business resilience post Covid. | Murray Ferguson | Growbiz, CBP, LA's, Communities, HIE, SE | Summer 2020 onwards | CNPA £15k + staff resources | To support business and community resilience | Restart, Recover | Economic Action Plan |
| Deliver a comprehensive planning service to enable recovery | Gavin Miles | LA's | Ongoing | Staff resources | Underpins economic recovery | Restart, Recover | Local Development Plan |
| Seek resources to research, investigate and plan for how we | Murray Ferguson | CBP, LA's, HIE, SE, SG | Autumn 2020 | Staff resources | To develop new approach to economic | Recover | Economic Action Plan |

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| build resilience, sustainability and diversification into Cairngorms economy and communities as part of the next iteration of the National Park Partnership Plan | | | | | development in the Park with climate and sustainability at its centre. | | |
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Communities - The communities in the Park have been at the forefront of ensuring resilience and supporting the frontline services. They have had access to resilience funding through local authorities & HIE/SE funding. The CNPA has supported in the background and provided support where it adds value.

Senior Responsible Officer – Murray Ferguson

| Action | Lead | Key Partners | Timescale | Resources | Objective | Theme | CNP Plan / Strategy |
|---|-----------------|--|------------------|--|---|----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| CNPA to support VABS, Marr Area Partnership & T&G Development Trust through Grant in Aid funding | Liz Henderson | VABS, Marr Area Partnership, T&G Community Trust, CBP | Ongoing | CNPA £60k (ongoing commitment) + staff resources | Ensure that professional capacity to keep supporting community and volunteer effort is in place | Respond, Reset, Restart, Recover | Local Development Strategy |
| Develop a new approach to community engagement (e.g. citizen's assembly) at National Park level to build on the work undertaken | Murray Ferguson | VABS, MAP, Community Councils, Trust AoCC, CBP, Cairngorms Youth Action Team | Autumn 2020 | CNPA £10k + Staff resource | To ensure an effective collaboration across communities within the National Park and provide resilience for the future. | Recover | Local Development Strategy |

CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY
Formal Board Paper 2 Annex 1 12 June 2020

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| through Covid response. | | | | | Build on the increased use of video conferencing & social comms to change the way we consult & engage | | |
| Funding Bids in Progress | | | | | | | |
| Cairngorms Dark Skies Observatory Project | Crown Estate Scotland | T&GLP, T>rust, CNPA, HIE, Moray Council, CBP, Dark Skies Group, | Completion by June 2022 | CNPA - £40k + staff resource £1.3m SNH ERDF Funding secured subject to conditions. £560k match funding required. | Build on success of T&GLP and generate a long term tourism draw to the area through promotion of dark skies | Restart Recover | Tourism |
| Request funding from Scottish Government for LEADER network to support community and business development. Potential to update LDS as part of preparing for next NPPP | David Cameron | Scottish Government, Cairngorms Trust | Summer 2020 | Staff resource | An established mechanism that could be used to support medium term community development projects | Recover | Economic Action Plan, Local Development Strategy |

Land Management, Climate Change and Conservation - A significant number of estates will have seen income decrease from sporting activity and from accommodation offerings. This may impact on their ability to fund conservation and visitor management work etc. There will be a need to support estates and others with relevant funding to deliver climate and biodiversity outcomes that also support economic activity.

Senior Responsible Officer – Pete Mayhew

| Action | Lead | Key Partners | Timescale | Resources | Objective | Theme | CNP Plan / Strategy |
|--|------------------|--|-----------------------|--|---|----------------------------------|---|
| Support woodland expansion & peatland restoration work in the Cairngorms National Park | Will Boyd Wallis | Scottish Government, SNH, SF, landowners | Ongoing | SG funding + CNPA staff resources SF funding + CNPA staff resources | Climate change objectives being met that also support contractors and economic activity | Respond, Reset, Restart, Recover | Cairngorms Nature |
| Biodiversity Challenge Fund delivery. | Andy Ford | SNH, SG | Ongoing to March 2021 | SNH £120k + CNPA staff resources | To provide employment for land management and ecological fieldwork | Reset, recover | Cairngorms Nature |
| Catchment Management & river restoration delivery | Will Boyd Wallis | Spey Catchment Initiative, River Dee Trust | Jan – Dec 2021 | CNPA £42k + staff resources | Promotion of natural flood management, riparian woodland and fishing related tourism | Restart Recover | Cairngorms Nature Economic Action Plan, |
| Funding Bids in progress | | | | | | | |
| Stage 2 of Capercaillie Project submitted to NLHF | CNPA | SNH, RSPB, NLHF, community groups, land managers | June 2020 – May 2023 | NLHF - £2.907m total project funding. | To provide employment for land management and ecological fieldwork. To support tourism economy and visitor | Reset, Restart, Recover | Cairngorms Nature, Cairngorms Economic Action Plan |

CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY
Formal Board Paper 2 Annex 1 12 June 2020

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| | | | | | management + biodiversity | | |
| Developing Heritage Horizons bid to NLHF | CNPA | Across all partnerships of the NP | Feb 2021 application date | NLHF - £50 million total project funding. | Flagship climate change and people focused project for the National Park. Three key themes are being developed – Active Travel; Land Use and Communities; Park for All | Restart, Recover | All Strategies & Plans |

Visitor Management – The way that the countryside reopens and the facilities that will need to be open to manage this will be a key issue. How the countryside operates in the light of ongoing physical distancing guidelines and the requirements of staff working in these circumstances will be key.

Senior Responsible Officer – Pete Mayhew

| Action | Lead | Key Partners | Timescale | Resources | Objective | Theme | CNP Plan / Strategy |
|--|--------------------|---|------------------|-----------------------------|---|----------------------------------|--|
| Develop an easing of lockdown visitor management plan for the Cairngorms | Pete Crane | Landowners, CBP, FLS, NGO's, SNH, Communities, LA's, Police Scotland, CBP | June 2020 | CNPA £20k + staff resources | To ensure that we have a comprehensive plan for the Cairngorms as the countryside reopens | Reset, Restart, Recover | Active Cairngorms, Tourism Action Plan |
| Develop easing of lockdown comms strategy as part of wider visitor management plan | Francoise V Buuren | CBP, VisitAber, Moray/Speyside, VisitScotland | Ongoing | Staff resources | To ensure clear and consistent messaging. | Respond, Reset, Restart, Recover | As above |

CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY
Formal Board Paper 2 Annex 1 12 June 2020

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| Support visitor management through the development of CNPA seasonal ranger service & existing ranger services through grant support | Pete Crane | Land managers and existing ranger services | June 2020 | CNPA Seasonal Rangers £126k + staff resources CNPA Ranger Grants - £120k + staff resources | To ensure that we have the resources on the ground to match the potential demand for access to the countryside and ensure social distancing guidelines are followed. | Reset, Restart, Recover | Active Cairngorms |
| Capitalise on the increase in physical activity, engagement with nature, increase in local food networks & volunteering that has been seen in lockdown to encourage long-term behaviour change that benefits climate change, biodiversity, local economy | Francoise VB | All CNP partnerships Cairngorms Youth Action Team | Ongoing | Staff resource & link to HH bid & recovery fund | To ensure that any positive behavioural change from lockdown is maintained and built upon | Respond, Reset, Restart, Recover | Cairngorms Nature' Active Cairngorms, Economic Action Plan. |
| Rural Transport in Cairngorms and Kilkenny (TICK) | David Cameron Cairngorms Trust | CNPA, Hitrans, THC etc | Invest May 2020 to March 2021, delivery ongoing thereafter | LEADER - £350k plus staff support to project steering group | Promote behaviour change to use of zero emission and active travel methods by residents and visitors; promote public and | Restart, Recover | Active Cairngorms, Economic Action Plan |

CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY
Formal Board Paper 2 Annex 1 12 June 2020

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| | | | | | community transport through investment and integrated transport information | | |
| Funding Bids in progress | | | | | | | |
| Spaces for People | CNPA & Aberdeenshire Council | Estates, Sustrans, local communities on Deeside | June 2020 | Sustrans – TBC circa £100k | Active travel provision as part of overall visitor management plans | Restart, Recover | Active Cairngorms |

Capital Investment - There is likely to be a significant economic hit on the local economy and the private sector is unlikely to have funds for significant investment over the next 18 months. The CNPA will look to work with partners and SG to identify potential shovel ready projects for capital funding that create local employment and deliver significant value to achieving the 2030 and 2045 climate change targets. Funding is not in place for any of the projects below and will need to be identified.

Senior Responsible Officer – David Cameron

| Title | Estimated Cost | Lead Body & CNPA key contact | Timescale | Permissions | Partners | What would this support? |
|--|-----------------------|---|--------------------------|--|---------------------|---|
| Shovel Ready (can happen in f/y 2020/21) | | | | | | |
| Glenmore NMU path extension to enhance RTIF funding. | £150k | FLS Pete Crane | Start Summer/Autumn 2020 | Permissions in place | FLS, THC | Tourism economy, contractor jobs, active travel |
| Deeside Way Extension – Braemar to Invercauld Bridge | £350k | CNPA Pete Crane | Start March 2021 | Planning permission in place. Landowner agreement needed | Braemar CC, Estates | Contractor jobs, tourism economy, active travel |

CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY
Formal Board Paper 2 Annex 1 12 June 2020

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| ECMP willow and juniper exclosures | £35k | CNPA Jos Milner | Sept 2020 – March 2021 | Landowner permission in place. | ECMP estates | Contractor jobs, biodiversity, climate change |
| Community Conservation Grant Scheme | £50k | CNPA Andy Ford | Sept 2020 – March 2022 | Landowner permissions would be required | Cairngorms Nature partnership | Supports local community initiatives aimed at joining people and nature. |
| Medium Term (can potentially happen in 2021/22) | | | | | | |
| Cairngorms Nature Big Weekend | £40k | CNPA Andy Ford | May 2021 | None needed | Cairngorms Nature partnership | Tourism economy, local businesses, biodiversity |
| Speyside Way – Boat to Aviemore resurfacing & traffic lights on Kingussie Bridge | £200k | CNPA Pete Crane | TBC | Permissions would be needed. | Highland Council, Local Community Councils | Tourism economy, contractor jobs, active travel |
| Dalnain to Grantown NMU | £400k | Dalnain CC Pete Crane | TBC | Landowners and planning permission needed | Sustrans, CNPA | Tourism economy, contractor jobs, active travel |
| Strathspey Riparian Planting – river Truim | £50k | Spey Catchment Initiative Andy Ford | TBC | Landowner permission needed | Partners through Spey Catchment Initiative | Contractor jobs, salmon fishing, biodiversity, climate change |
| Strathspey River Restoration | £200k | Spey Catchment Initiative Andy Ford | TBC | Landowner permissions, Highland Council permissions, planning (bridge) | Through SCI | Contractor jobs, salmon fishing, biodiversity, climate change |

CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY
Formal Board Paper 2 Annex 1 12 June 2020

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|--|---------------------|--------------------------------------|-----|--|--|---|
| Nethy/Spey Confluence Project | £300k | CNPA Andy Ford | TBC | Landowner permission, SEPA permission, Highland Council | SEPA, SNH, Nethy Community Council | Contractor jobs, reduce flooding, biodiversity, climate change |
| Aviemore Street Furniture and Interpretation project | £100k | CNPA Murray Ferguson | TBC | Planning permission needed | A&VCC, TICK | Tourism economy, |
| Motorhome discharge facilities at public toilets | £300k | CNPA/LA's Pete Crane | TBC | Planning permission and SEPA/Scottish Water needed | Community Councils, LA's, Development Trusts | Tourism economy, Contractor jobs, |
| Badenoch visitor information enhancement | 100k | CNPA Murray Ferguson | TBC | Planning Permission at key sites including Ralia to build on Badenoch project needed | Badenoch Project partners | Tourism Economy. Visitors to quieter areas of Park off A9 |
| Longer Term (2022 onwards) | | | | | | |
| Rails to Grantown | £5million (approx.) | Strathspey SRC Murray Ferguson | TBC | TAWS order, planning permission, landowner permission all required | HIE, LA | Tourism economy, Contractor jobs, climate change |
| Cairngorm Mountain masterplan | TBC | HIE Grant Moir | TBC | Planning permission for funicular repair granted. Masterplan due in Summer 2020. | Funicular Response Group members | Tourism economy, Contractor jobs, |
| Highland Folk Park enhancements | £1M | Highlife Highland Murray Ferguson | TBC | Planning permission required | HIE, THC, CNPA | To develop open air attraction suitable for physical distancing and open all year |

Implementation & Governance

Governance of the Cairngorms Green Recovery Plan

- This document will have to change as circumstances change. The CNPA Board will receive a quarterly update paper at its board meetings on the overall delivery of the plan and any operational issues that need input will be taken to the Finance and Delivery Committee. If there are any significant changes to the Plan these will be highlighted in the quarterly board report and agreement sought at this point.
- The CNPA Management Team will be standing Programme Board for executive management of the recovery programme;

Governance of the Cairngorms Recovery Fund

- It is proposed that a panel oversees the decisions associated with the Cairngorms Recovery Fund. This would include a representative from Cairngorms Trust, CBP, VABS, MAP, CNSG and a board member and staff member from CNPA. CNPA board member to chair.
- The fund and how it operates will be developed in June and will be taken to Finance & Delivery Committee in August for final agreement.

Communications

- A communication plan for the work in this recovery plan is being developed.

Partnerships

- CNPA will work closely with partners through existing effective structures rather than developing new processes to ensure continuity of joint working through recovery into ongoing NPPP delivery. This will focus initially on the:
 - Cairngorms Tourism Partnership
 - Economic Action Plan Group
 - Cairngorms Nature Strategy Group
 - Cairngorms Upland Advisory Group
 - Access Forum
 - Community Networks

Glossary

AC - Aberdeenshire Council

AoCC – Association of Cairngorms Communities

CBP - Cairngorms Business Partnership

CNAG – Cairngorms Nature Strategy Group

CNPA – Cairngorms National Park Authority

FLS – Forest and Land Scotland

LA's – Local Authorities (Moray, Angus, Perth & Kinross, Aberdeenshire, Highland)

MAP – Marr Area Partnership

NGO's – Non Government Organisations (e.g. RSPB, NTS etc)

NLHF – National Lottery Heritage Fund

SE – Scottish Enterprise

SNH – Scottish Natural Heritage

SF – Scottish Forestry

THC – The Highland Council

VABS – Voluntary Action Badenoch & Strathspey