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## CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE

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### FOR DISCUSSION

**Title: CAIRGORMS LEADER AND COMMUNITY LED LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FUNDING**

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#### **Purpose**

This paper presents the latest delivery updates on the Cairngorms LEADER Programme and voluntary and charitable giving activities as managed by the Cairngorms LEADER Local Action Group Trust (Cairngorms Trust). This update focuses on the ongoing work to seek replacement LEADER funding to support Community Led Local Development (CLLD).

#### **Recommendations**

**The Performance Committee is asked to review the delivery updates presented with this paper and consider:**

- a) whether the programmes of activity are making the expected contribution to the Cairngorms NPA's agreed strategic outcomes;**
- b) whether the delivery updates suggest any strategically significant impacts on the Cairngorms NPA's agreed performance objectives;**
- c) whether any material impacts on the Cairngorms NPA's strategic risk management and mitigation measures arise from assessment of programme delivery.**

#### **Performance Dashboard**

Performance Measure	Rating	Commentary
Finance: Deliver Cairngorms LEADER Programme, maximising use of resources made available	Blue (Complete)	Programme concluded 31 December 2021, with final project LEADER spend at 95% of allocation and total project expenditure at 168% of allocation after accounting for match funding levered into projects.
Audit: clean closure of LEADER Programme including monitoring and evaluation of performance indicators	Green	All project records finalised. Continuing to respond to Scottish Government LEADER Delivery Team coordinated response to EU audit points. No local issues arising.

Performance Measure	Rating	Commentary
Policy: secure future Community Led Local Development (CLLD) of equivalent value to LEADER Programme allocation	Amber	Testing change funding of £50,000 secured in 2021/22.; allocation of £281,000 now secured from national allocation of £7 million for 2022/23. No long term or multi-year commitment in place.
Policy: Develop and implement voluntary giving mechanisms through Cairngorms Trust	Amber	Cairngorms Trust have now outsourced a contract for support in developing voluntary giving approaches.
Finance: increase voluntary giving returns within Trust's future funding profile to a level which sustain costs of infrastructure and return meaningful surpluses for investment.	Red	Current level of returns over period of COVID restrictions well below targeted levels, while receipts of around £1,000 per quarter from various voluntary donation sources continue to demonstrate viability of approaches.
Policy: operation of charitable mechanism an effective element of NPPP priority delivery	Green	The capacity to work in partnership with an independent charity covering the Cairngorms has been a crucial element in successful delivery of Green Recovery Funding; in securing resource for CLLD made available over the last two years; and in community engagement in delivering local priorities.

## Strategic Background

1. The most recent update to the Board on delivery of the Authority's strategic objectives as set out in the agreed Corporate Plan for 2018 to 2022 was presented at the March 2022 meeting. The Corporate Plan delivery report may be accessed at: [Meeting - Cairngorms National Park Authority](#). The Authority's strategic objectives of relevance to consideration of the delivery of the programme reporting presented with this paper are:
  - a. Successfully conclude the Cairngorms LEADER Programme and consider future funding for community led local development (CLLD);
  - b. Develop and deliver a visitor giving scheme with partners. This objective has since been refocused as development of a voluntary giving scheme.
  
2. The latest review of the Strategic Risk Register was considered by the Board in March 2022 and may also be accessed at the above link. Strategic risks of relevance to consideration of performance of the programmes of work considered by this paper are:
  - a. AI: Resource risk remedial mitigation: Continuing to support "delivery bodies" such as Cairngorms Nature, Cairngorms Trust in securing inward investment.

- b. A11.1 Strategic Risk on Resourcing: Role as Lead / Accountable body for major programmes (e.g. LEADER, Landscape Partnership) has risk of significant financial clawback should expenditure prove to be not eligible for funding, while CNPA carries responsibilities as employer for programme staff.
  - c. A11.2 Strategic Risk Resourcing: the end of major programme investments (Tomintoul and Glenlivet, LEADER) requires significant ongoing staffing to manage audit and legacy which the Authority finds difficult to resource.
  - d. A12.2 Strategic Risk on Resourcing: future community led local development funding currently delivered through LEADER, together with wider funding previously from EU structural and agricultural sources is lost and creates a significant gap in our capacity to deliver against our development priorities.
  - e. A28 Strategic Risk on Staffing: delivery of key outcomes is impacted by staff turnover, particularly in project teams.
3. The programmes of activity under consideration here also fit with the priorities of the 2022/23 Transitional Plan approved by the board in March 2025, specifically the priority “to promote community led development and management of land / assets”.

### **Performance Overview: Delivery Against Strategic Expectations**

4. The significant development since the Committee’s last consideration of this area of performance at its meeting in May 2022 is the confirmation by Scottish Government of an award of £281,000 to the Cairngorms Trust (operating as the Cairngorms Local Action Group) for CLLD investment in 2022/23.
5. The £50,000 “Testing Change” fund made available in 2021/22 to test new CLLD approaches successfully completed, with delivery of a Youth Local Action Group with grant awarding powers, and a Green Change Fund providing community grants.
6. The funding for 2022/23 represents a significant increase over prior year funding levels, supporting the continuation of evolution of the Youth Local Action Group and several other investment programmes. More information can be found on the Cairngorms Trust’s website: [Apply for Funding \(cairngormstrust.org.uk\)](https://www.cairngormstrust.org.uk)
7. The increased funding allocation for the Cairngorms in 2022/23 signals a very positive step forward toward the objective of securing equivalent levels of CLLD funding for the Cairngorms over the new Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan period of 2022 to 2027 as was received in the previous plan period of approximately £3 million. This allocation still falls well short of average annual funding levels required to achieve that objective. The funding also continues to operate over a single financial year rather than a long-term programme, which constrains planning time and capacity for applicants to develop and refine project ideas. Nevertheless, the funding increase does support an increased scale in CLLD activity. This work also allows the Cairngorms 2030 Heritage Horizons Programme approach to community grant schemes to be developed and tested through “live”, funded approaches rather than solely through policy development.
8. The Trust continues to receive small value voluntary donations each quarter. Funding has been made available to the Trust to reinvigorate the voluntary giving scheme over the course of 2022/23 with an objective of establishing whether there is potential for

such an initiative to generate a level of return in the medium to long term which would become self-sustaining and provide meaningful levels of investment in the Trust's charitable objectives.

**Conclusions: Performance Overview and Matters Meriting Strategic Review**

9. There are no matters of strategic significance which merit escalation at this time in the opinion of senior managers leading the Cairngorms NPA's linkage to the areas of activity covered by this paper and associated reports.

**David Cameron**

**28 July 2022**

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