
CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

FOR DISCUSSION

Title: CAPITAL INVESTMENT PLAN

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Purpose

1. To update the Board on progress in developing the capital investment plan for the National Park. The attached working draft sets out the headline areas being identified to date, incorporating responses from some partners following the Strategic Delivery Group meeting in September. The Plan will provide the strategic direction to guide future capital investment by CNPA and partners in the Park – leading to a more co-ordinated and collaborative approach to investing in the priorities.
2. The Board is asked to consider whether the working draft provides an appropriate basis at a strategic level to ensure capital investment is well targeted to deliver the National Park Partnership Plan.

Strategic Context

3. Capital investment is a key mechanism for delivering the enhanced infrastructure, facilities and quality of place integral to our National Park Partnership Plan outcomes. The capital investment plan contributes to outcomes across all three themes of the partnership plan – sustainable communities and business, a special place, and enjoying the Park. Capital investment is further guided and prioritised by the set of Park strategies including Cairngorms Nature, Outdoor Access Strategy, Economic Development Strategy and the LEADER Local Development Strategy.
4. To date, capital investment in the Park has been handled on an ad-hoc basis as funds have become available. There is now a need to have a long term planned approach to investment in order to ensure the right priorities and effective co-ordination between organisations. Capital investment can come from a range of sources, including Scottish Government 'shovel-ready' funding, but also potential corporate social responsibility funding, private or other charitable investment. Having the long term plan will allow us to be more proactive in seeking capital investment from other sources beyond government.
5. The plan is integral to effective governance arrangements for CNPA and to joint business planning with partners. Although capital funding opportunities may still be

difficult to predict or arise at short notice, the plan will give us a clear basis for prioritising and taking decisions on allocating capital spend.

Recommendations

6. **That the Board consider whether the working draft provides an appropriate basis at a strategic level to ensure capital investment is well targeted to deliver the National Park Partnership Plan.**

Strategic Policy Considerations

The key questions for the Board to consider at this stage are:

7. Does the working draft cover the appropriate scope of investment priorities to guide capital investment to make the most effective contribution to the National Park Partnership Plan?
 - a) The Plan identifies priorities under four themes that can make a significant contribution to the Partnership Plan.
8. Is the scope of investment proposed both realistic yet ambitious enough?
 - a) The Plan includes priorities that can be broken down into short term priorities (1-3 yrs) and longer term priorities (up to 10 years). Note value of investment will be included in the final plan.
9. Do we have buy-in from the right partners to deliver a co-ordinated approach to investment?
 - a) Forestry Commission Scotland has indicated its investment priority is focused on Glenmore, supporting the priority the Partnership Plan gives to improving the visitor experience here, and connecting with Cairngorm Mountain.
 - b) Scottish Natural Heritage has indicated that its investment priorities support the Partnership Plan's focus on access management, river restoration, peatland restoration and montane woodland expansion.
 - c) HIE and Scottish Enterprise have not yet indicated any specific investment priorities in the Park. HIE has indicated that its capital investment is handled on a reactive basis.
 - d) The Cairngorms Business Partnership has indicated that its priorities will be guided by the emerging Economic Development Strategy.
 - e) The Cairngorms Outdoor access Trust is focused on capital investment for the Mountain Paths project and is a potential delivery body for other infrastructure investments.
 - f) Aberdeenshire Council has identified community and heritage priorities, in line with community action planning.

Strategic Risk Management

Strategic Risk	Risk management
(2) Insufficient Funding	Preparation of investment plans is identified as mitigation in strategic risk register. The plan will position CNPA and partners to source more capital funding.
(3) Insufficient staff capacity to deliver on expectations	The plan will help to proactively plan for the staff resource required to deliver capital investment priorities.
(15) CNPA fails to deliver against high profile projects eg shovel ready capital investment	The plan will identify priority projects in order that they can be set up to genuine 'shovel-ready' status in advance, reducing risk to delivery when funding becomes available.
(19) Partner commitment to NPPP is reduced as a result of capacity pressures	The plan identifies capital investment priorities around which partners will focus the limited resources and effort available, and helps demonstrate the value for all partners of collaboration when resources are constrained.

10. Developing the plan brings its own risk in terms of managing expectations – most of the priorities identified will not have any guarantee of funding. This is well understood by partner organisations but needs good communication with relevant communities and businesses. The plan needs to remain a live working plan in which progress and changes are communicated to relevant stakeholders.

Implications

11. The Capital Investment Plan will:
- a) Commit CNPA and partners to agreed priorities for investment. In itself it does not commit levels of funding from individual partners or cut across the governance processes for CNPA or other organisations to approve expenditure, it does though provide a reference point for those decisions and create some certainty between partners about mutual priorities.
 - b) Provide a basis for managing expectations about which projects are prioritised for capital funding and those that are less likely to be funded.
 - c) Provide a clear sense of direction and basis for attracting long term investment into improving the quality of place in the Park.
12. Some individual projects may increase CNPA's liability for ongoing management or maintenance, for example the Speyside Way extension, but decisions on the levels of liability acceptable remain with the normal process of project and financial approvals.

Success Measures

13. Proposed measures of success are:
- a) Value of capital investment
 - b) Priority projects delivered

- c) Number of collaborative investments with partners

Supporting Information

- 14. The working draft is attached as Annex I. Priorities are identified under four headings:
 - a) Communications Infrastructure
 - b) Visitor Experience
 - c) Nature and Heritage
 - d) Community Development

- 15. The draft plan as it stands incorporates priorities identified together with some partners within the Strategic Delivery Group. This will continue to be refined using the following criteria, with estimated values identified:
 - a) Does it deliver against one or more of the key strategic documents?
 - b) Are there other sources of funding for the project available?
 - c) What does it deliver?
 - i. Return on the investment
 - ii. Jobs created directly/indirectly
 - iii. Biodiversity/landscape gains
 - iv. Cultural heritage gains
 - v. Health gains
 - vi. Social/community cohesion
 - d) Is it part of a wider investment plan for the area?
 - e) Who is delivering the project?
 - i. Project management expertise & track record
 - ii. Is it delivered in partnership
 - iii. Other funding/match funding in place
 - f) Timescale for delivery
 - g) Does it have community, business or NGO Support?
 - h) Is there a reputational risk to the NPA?
 - i) Sustainability – Will it require further funding in future years?

Next Steps

- 16. We will continue to refine the capital investment plan with partners before bringing a completed plan to the Board for approval in March 2014.

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December 2013

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