

ANNEX 2: SCOPING PAPER FOR A LOCAL FOOD AND DRINK ACTION PLAN - FOR INFORMATION

A Local Food and Drink Action Plan - Helping Sustain Rural Economic Activity in the Cairngorms National Park

February 2009

Introduction

1. **Why Have a Food and Drink Action Plan?** The Cairngorms National Park Plan was published in 2007 and its development over the preceding years involved considerable liaison, cooperation and engagement with all those living and working in and caring for, the National Park. The Park Plan identified a number of areas relating to local food and drink worthy of further action and a number of initiatives have since been supported by the Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA) and partner organisations. However, thus far, there has not been a concentrated effort to promote local food and drink across all market sectors and alongside other initiatives such as the development of the Park brand. There is strong Scottish Government support for and considerable public interest in, local food and drink, including key links with health, the environment and wider sustainability. The current economic situation, and the difficulties facing many hill farming units and rural communities in Scotland¹, has further focussed the need for action in the short-term.
2. **Who Is It For?** The principal driver for the Action Plan has been the short-term need to support and stimulate viable land use across the Park. However, this does not restrict the potential benefits of the plan to land managers as a coordinated and integrated approach from all those involved in food and drink is needed in order to fully exploit the opportunities that currently exist. All elements within, and linked to, the food and drink sector stand to benefit including primary producers, processors, retailers, restaurants and a range of wider tourism and service sector businesses.
3. **Scope.** The Action Plan is concentrating on measures related to food and drink that could be progressed relatively easily within the National Park, with appropriate support from private and public sector bodies. There are other related land-use issues linked to wider agricultural strategy that fall outwith the scope of this Action Plan. Where appropriate, these are highlighted for completeness.

¹ Highlighted in a series of recent reports in 2008 including: SAC Retreat from the Hills and the RSE Committee of inquiry into the Future of Scotland's Hills and Islands.

Aim

4. The aim of this Scoping Paper is to provide a framework to highlight potential food and drink work relevant to the Cairngorms National Park in the short term, stimulate debate and improve co-ordination and integration with and between all stakeholders.

Objectives

5. The key objectives of this work are to:

- a) Identify opportunities for adding value to local produce.
- b) Prioritise potential projects and identify resource implications.
- c) Identify mechanisms for wider engagement and delivery.

In order to:

- a) Provide short term support for fragile rural businesses to sustain economic activity and rural communities.
- b) Build longer-term resilience within the land-based sector to better withstand future challenges.
- c) Maximise the wide range of potential benefits to the Cairngorms National Park.

Context

6. **Scottish Government.** Food and drink is one of the five key sectors for the Scottish Government. As a result of this prominence, and the concurrent development of a national food policy², there has been considerable recent interest in food and drink at national and local government level. Local Authorities and the Enterprise Networks are positive in their support policies³ for food and drink and engage directly in project work or via bodies such as the Grampian Food Forum.

7. **Cairngorms National Park Plan.** Local food and drink has a direct and indirect effect on many of the objectives, outcomes and actions throughout the Park Plan. Particular areas for emphasis are noted below and illustrate the input and thought process that has already been applied by all involved in developing the Park Plan; in other words, the justification already exists to take this work forward.

a. **Strategic Objectives.**

² **Scotland's First National Food Policy** was established in 2008 and 5 workstreams are now taking the work forward: Sustainable Economic Growth; Food and Drink Choices; Celebrating and Safeguarding Scotland's Reputation; Walking the Talk; and, Access, Affordability and Security.

³ Recent key publications include: Aberdeenshire Council and Scottish Enterprise – **Agriculture in Aberdeenshire Looking to the Future** (2008) and The Highland Council – **Strengthening the Highlands** (a specific local food action plan is currently under consideration by THC) and HIE sponsored review of the **Current Supply and Demand for Local Food in the Highlands and Islands** (2008).

- i. 5.1.4a – Maintain and enhance a viable and productive land management sector that delivers private and public objectives and enhances the special qualities of the Park.
- ii. 5.1.4e – Develop local supply chains and markets for local produce.
- iii. 5.2.3a – Create conditions conducive to business growth and investment that are consistent with the special qualities of the Park and its strategic location.
- iv. 5.2.3b – Encourage entrepreneurship, especially in young people and in sectors which complement the special qualities of the Park.
- v. 5.2.3d – Promote opportunities for economic diversification across all areas of the Park.
- vi. 5.2.3f – Raise the profile and excellence of local produce and services.
- vii. 5.2.3h – Ensure a match between training provision and current/future skills needs.
- viii. 5.3.2e – Strengthen and maintain the viability of the tourism industry in the Park and the contribution that it makes to the local and regional economy.

b. Five Year Outcomes.

- i. A diverse, viable and productive land management sector will continue to provide high quality primary produce such as food and timber; whilst delivering public benefits which are compatible with the Park's special qualities and will make a growing contribution to employment and the local economy.
- ii. The economic value of the deer resource will be enhanced.
- iii. An increasing proportion of the economic activity will be based on the special qualities of the Park.
- iv. There will be an increase in use of local suppliers and produce.

c. Priorities for Action.

- i. 6.3.1e - Investigate opportunities to increase the socio-economic value of deer.
- ii. 6.5.1e - Develop stronger links between tourism and transport, land management, food and drink, retail and other sectors.
- iii. 6.5.2a - Promote economic opportunities created by National Park status and ensure expert advice is available in relation to sustainable development.
- iv. 6.5.2c - Strengthen awareness and spending on local crafts and produce by carrying out research on producers, branding and visitor information.
- v. 6.5.2h – Provide more advice and support for business development, including the marketing and processing of primary

produce and add further value through appropriate use of the Cairngorms brand.

- vi. 6.5.2i – Develop innovative schemes to assist land management units develop their economic and environmental sustainability.

Food and Drink in the Cairngorms National Park

8. **Current Status.** Although agriculture makes up less than 17% of all business activity in the Park and provides directly a relatively small proportion of jobs and financial output, the wider agricultural and food and drink sectors are vital to the viability of most rural communities in the Park. Current business intelligence⁴ on the sector is incomplete but it is estimated that there are over 500 farms, over 100 registered crofts, numerous large sporting estates and approximately 30 food and drink processors. Many of the agricultural and estate holdings do not produce any food product and livestock production dominates those that do. This is research that requires updating to establish a baseline level of knowledge, including the likely willingness and capacity for increased or adapted supply of primary produce.
9. **Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats.** The following table highlights key issues from an outline SWOT analysis on the food and drink sector in the Park. It does not encompass every issue but provides a useful background to the actions listed at Annex A.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A strong and internationally renowned environment and landscape • Good quality produce, particularly whisky, red meat and venison • An established farmer’s market • Existing mechanisms for partnership working across sectors and interests • Partner endorsement for the Park Plan and an integrated approach to addressing issues across the Park • Support for local food and drink in the local communities • High quality restaurants and several retail outlets with a strong presence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of a single focus for food and drink issues • Limited production capacity (primary producers) • Differing approaches and ethos across the Park • Poor baseline knowledge of producers and processors • Climate and conditions limit production options • Limited finishing of produce in the Park • Difficulty accessing support funding (SRDP in particular) • Limited processing facilities • Infrastructure variable across the Park • Lack of sizeable market in close proximity (critical mass for marketing) • Tourism businesses not yet fully connected to local produce and the value it can add • Tourists and visitors not connected to local food and drink • Lack of a Park agricultural strategy to help link the Park Plan with specific actions on

⁴ A study of Food Producers and Processors in the Park was conducted in 2004.

Strengths	Weaknesses
	the ground
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing development of local food networks and food distribution hubs – HILFN work with HIE and others to establish a network in and around Inverness and Grampian Food Forum exploring similar options in the NE • A significant ready tourist market exists⁵ • A CNP Brand is now in place which is growing in strength – but has yet to be fully exploited by the food and drink sector • CNPA responsibility for the CNP Local Plan and associated guidance – should help shape economic developments to support local business in a more coherent way • Wider public interest in, and enthusiasm for, local food and produce (and with the public sector) • Scottish Government interest and support for local food and drink – National food Policy, SRDP funding • Potential for the Park to lead the way in integrated delivery of many of the actions – an exemplar of sustainable development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time lag in the sector reacting quickly enough to ensure prompt action and help business survival • Failing to get full engagement, co-operation and support from (and between) producers, processors and retailers • Co-ordination and management of individual projects – who leads and who funds larger projects? • Tension with other Park aims (environmental and landscape) • Key processing facilities stop functioning (slaughterhouse in particular)

Potential Actions

10. There is an enormous range of options and areas for action that could be explored but much depends on the buy-in and enthusiasm from producers, processors, retailers and restaurants. Only by working together will the full potential of the market opportunities that currently exist be realised. Annex A contains a series of tables that highlight an initial selection of actions that are worth exploring. This is not a list of things that should be done but it highlights areas already identified that are worthy of further exploration and debate; some have been looked at in previous years, some are being implemented now and others may not be applicable in the Park at this time.

⁵ 1.48 million visitors per annum to the Park with 25% of their spend being on food and drink (Visit Scotland, 2006) and in 2006 this was estimated at £26 million (STEAM data, 2006). 85% of visitors to the Park wanted to experience more local produce (CNPA Visitor Survey, 2005). The tourism market is repeatedly highlighted as a key opportunity in a number of key recent reports including: CNP Sustainable Tourism Strategy (2005); SNH Valuing our Environment (2008); RSE Committee of Inquiry into the Future of Scotland's Hills and Islands (2008); NESAG Agriculture in Aberdeenshire (2008); and, SAC Local Food Marketing Guide (2008).

11. Potential actions have been grouped under three themes: marketing; knowledge and training; and, infrastructure. There is much overlap between themes and in many cases the impact of a particular project or action would be enhanced significantly if the delivery was closely co-ordinated with other related actions. The same principle applies to a number of complementary partner projects and actions; it is the coordinated and integrated delivery within and across all themes that could have the greatest positive economic and social impact. The Park offers real advantages in this regard as an integrated approach to land use and wider social and economic development already exists.

Stakeholders

12. An initial summary of likely stakeholders is shown below. This list is not exhaustive.

Stakeholders	Notes	Stakeholders	Notes
Producers	Representative body?	HIE	
Processors		SE	
Retailers		Local Authorities: The Highland Council Aberdeenshire Council Moray Council Angus Council Perth and Kinross Council	Education, Economic Development and Infrastructure departments in particular
Restaurants, cafes, hotels		Grampian Food Forum	
CFMA		Highlands & Islands Food Forum	
Cairngorms Business Partnership (CBP)	CCC and DMOs may have a distinct role until CBP is established	Highlands & Islands Local Food Network (HILFN)	
Local communities		SAOS	Recently awarded Scot Gov contract for co-operative development work for primary producers.
CNPA (ESD and HLM Groups in particular)		National Farmers Union Scotland (NFUS)	
CNPA Board		SRPBA	
Macauley Land Use Research Institute		NHS	UKPHA work connecting health and sustainable development
North East Scotland		Food for Life	Promotion of local

Stakeholders	Notes	Stakeholders	Notes
Agriculture Advisory Service (NESAAG)		Partnership	food in schools
Deer Commission Scotland		University of The Highlands & Islands	
Scotland Food and Drink	Key stakeholder in national policy work and workstream development	LL&TNP	
LANTRA and Skills Scotland	Skills Development	Sustainable Development Commission Scotland	

Implementation

13. **Engagement.** Establishing a workable and effective means of engagement with the wide variety of stakeholders is a key first step. Previous work in developing the Park Plan and other current National and regional food and drink initiatives suggest there is a desire to do more but this needs to be clarified with the key stakeholder groups from within the Park (producers in particular): do they need or want any of this work, have they got the capacity, and would they support or lead with its development? Existing forums and delivery groups provide an outline framework for engagement but do not necessarily provide a single coherent focus. A separate land-use/food and drink advisory/steering group could help make this work.
14. **Delivery.** Delivery of individual actions, and ensuring coordination and integration with other actions across the plan, is not straightforward. There is no central body adequately resourced or empowered to do this. The tables in Annex A highlight potential project leads and although some actions could be delivered relatively quickly, and in isolation from other work, it is the synergy between all possible actions that will provide the most substantial benefit, in both the short-term and the long-term. If a concerted effort is to be placed on adding value to local food and drink then early clarity on responsibilities and an appropriate delivery structure(s) is important. There may be a role for a dedicated project team to provide the necessary focus for the wide variety of potential work strands.
15. **Next Steps.** A suggested way forward is:
 - a) Establish an appropriate steering group to help shape and guide the next steps, particularly with engagement and delivery
 - b) Continue engagement with key stakeholders (both private and public sector) to enable debate and to seek clarity on project responsibilities and resource implications

- c) Commence work to update baseline information on the food and drink sector
- d) Continue to progress actions already in motions (such as brand awareness and CFMA marketing support)

Chris Bremner

Sustainable Economy Manager
Cairngorms National Park Authority

Annex A - Action Plan Summary Sheet

FOOD AND DRINK ACTION PLAN SUMMARY SHEET**THEME 1 – MARKETING****Objectives:**

- Exploit existing markets, in particular visitors to the Park
 - Raise awareness of local produce
 - Strengthen links between producer, retailer, restaurants and consumer
- Reinforce and enhance existing marketing activity
- Explore alternative markets

Ser	Potential Action	Priority in Short Term	Related Work	Complexity of Delivery and Resource Implications	Key Partners and Possible project Lead
1.1	Establish a Park-wide focus for food and drink marketing. Could have a wider remit covering a range of agricultural issues. Options: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New body - local producers group • Build on CFMA • Use HILFN • Use CBP • Use CNPA • Climate Challenge funding for a specific post? 	High	Development of Cairngorms Business Partnership (CBP) Examples of existing groups include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highlands & Islands Local Food Network (HILFN) • Skye and Lochalsh Food Link • Argyll and Bute Agricultural Forum • Forth Valley Food Links • Ayrshire Food Network • Taste of Arran • Northumbria Producers Group • Peak District Foods 	High	Steering Group , CBP, CNPA, CFMA
1.2	Food and drink directory (producers, retailers, restaurants)	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HILFN looking to produce a range of local food directories across the Highlands & Islands • Scotland wide guide by SFOC – The Larder • VisitScotland – Eat Scotland website 	Medium	CBP , CNPA, HILFN, VisitScotland

Ser	Potential Action	Priority in Short Term	Related Work	Complexity of Delivery and Resource Implications	Key Partners and Possible project Lead
1.3	Improve Park Brand awareness, uptake and usage with food and drink <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Producers • Processors • Retailers • Restaurants 	High	CCC work on quality assurance schemes Park brand development and roll out	Medium	CNPA , CBP
1.4	CFMA development – scope for wider network or co-operative?	High	CNPA support for food and drink thus far has been primarily via the CFMA. LEADER support for marketing.	Medium	CFMA, CNPA
1.5	Food and drink trails (map, guide, link to existing trails such as for whisky)	Medium	VisitScotland food tourism initiatives	Low	VisitScotland , LAs, CBP, CNPA
1.6	Raise the profile of food and drink in interpretation and awareness work – ‘making the guest part of the action’	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interpretation guidance in place and workshops being rolled out • Web portal development • TIC/VIC presence • Food Tourism workshops planned for Deeside in 2009 	Low	VisitScotland, CBP, CNPA
1.7	Local food labelling in retail outlets and restaurants ‘Taste Local’ Award for restaurants	Medium	Link to brand usage and interpretation work	Medium	CBP , CNPA
1.8	Joint work with local retailers and supermarkets to promote local food	Medium	CNPA planning responsibility and supplementary planning guidance work	High	HILFN , CFMA, LAs, CNPA
1.9	Develop local food distribution hub(s)	Medium	HILFN developing Inverness hub with wider feeder hubs	High	HILFN , CFMA, CNPA, LAs, HIE, SE
1.10	Sponsorship or local champions for produce – use key high profile organisations to help raise the profile and act as a case	Medium	A number of outlets do actively promote local produce but more could be done Other options include:	High	CBP, LAs

Ser	Potential Action	Priority in Short Term	Related Work	Complexity of Delivery and Resource Implications	Key Partners and Possible project Lead
	study/pilot/best practise example		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HRH Prince Charles – Balmoral/Royal link to the Park • Hilton Hotels • MacDonald Aviemore Highland Resort • Public sector – schools, hospital 		
1.11	Maximise presence and profile of local food and drink at festivals, games and shows	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public funding and support for events enables a degree of influence over certain events • Kingussie annual Food and Film Festival already well established <p>Options include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outsider 2009 • Braemar Gathering • Speyside Whisky Festival 	Medium	CBP, CFMA
1.12	Promote and develop markets for venison	Medium	DCS – Scotland's Wild Deer Strategy	High	DCS, CNPA
1.13	Food and drink recipes – link to wider cookery opportunities. Possible links to cultural heritage	Low	Local chefs (some of whom already have a strong reputation)	Low	CBP, Auld Alliance
1.14	European Mountain Food promotion work	Low	Euromontana project	Low	CNPA, SAC, UHI
1.15	Develop external markets – using the National Park as the key driver of quality and appeal	Low	Requires significant buy-in and co-operation from producers but has the potential to realise significant future gain Existing examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mey Selections (Royal linkage being a strong driver) 	High	SE, HIE, Steering Group
1.16	Local Authority catering contracts – trial projects across National Park schools?	Low	Requires scale and supply reliability and margins for producers are traditionally very tight	High	LAs, HILFN

Ser	Potential Action	Priority in Short Term	Related Work	Complexity of Delivery and Resource Implications	Key Partners and Possible project Lead
			Existing examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • THC trial schools • East Ayrshire Council and Ayrshire Food Network local schools initiative • Western Isles Schools Project 		

THEME 2 – KNOWLEDGE AND TRAINING

Objectives:

- Improve information flow and communication
- Focus skills provision
 - Improve business profitability and sustainability
 - Enable diversification opportunities
- Enhance the wider reputation and benefits of local produce
 - Improve career opportunities in the land-based sector
- Better coordinate work at a local level with public sector organisations

Ser	Potential Action	Priority in Short Term	Related Work	Complexity of Delivery and Resource Implications	Key Partners and Possible project Lead
2.1	Establish a Park-wide group/voice for representing food & drink issues (link to 1.1).	High	Do NESAAG, NFUS, HILFN, GFF, SF&D and others provide enough at present?	High	Steering Group
2.2	Improve understanding of land-based and local business intelligence across the Park	High	CNP Economic Baseline Review (2009) will assist with some information. 2003/04 Producers Survey is current baseline.	Medium	CBP/CNPA , LAs, HIE, SE
2.3	Increase the knowledge of and access to funding support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SRDP • Food Processing Marketing and Co-operation Scheme • LEADER+ • SE/HIE 	High	CNPA Land Management Support Officers already improving communications	Medium	CNPA , HIE, SE
2.4	Diversification support – new products and new methods to access new markets or exploit existing market gaps such as:	Medium	CNPA sponsored LBBT and CAP programmes (can be tailored if the demand is there)	Low	CNPA , HILFN SAC, Colleges

Ser	Potential Action	Priority in Short Term	Related Work	Complexity of Delivery and Resource Implications	Key Partners and Possible project Lead
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Horticulture • Organic • Gardening 				
2.5	Skills development (production, business and marketing, interpretation, processing)	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CNPA sponsored LBBT and CAP programmes (basic food processing courses in place for 2009) • Business Gateway • Planning to Succeed 	Low	CNPA, LAs, CBP, HIE, SE, HILFN
2.6	<p>Raise profile of local produce in cookery and hospitality training</p> <p>Use of guest/celebrity chef promotion event(s)</p>	Medium	<p>Links to wider marketing by strengthening links with chefs and hospitality staff</p> <p>Ongoing work:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Auld Alliance hospitality work in Kingussie High School • MacDonald Aviemore Highland Resort – Hospitality Academy • Springboard Scotland – Tourism and hospitality training 	Low	CBP
2.7	Improve access to food and drink for all sectors of the community	Low	Social Enterprise development - Community Supported Agriculture schemes. LEADER funding opportunities possible.	Medium	Community Groups, LAs.
2.8	<p>Retain a skilled labour force:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apprenticeship schemes 	Low	Recent CNPA Flexible Framework Qualification work	High	LANTRA, CNPA, Skills Development Scotland,
2.9	<p>Retain a skilled labour force:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curriculum work in schools • Farm visits 	Low	<p>Local food projects linking to the National Park and the special qualities</p> <p>Existing examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inverness High School REAL Food project 	Medium	LAs, Royal Highland Educational Trust, CNPA
2.10	Spread knowledge of best practice and information	Low	Farm/producer/processor visits – best practice, case studies	Low	CNPA, SAOS

Ser	Potential Action	Priority in Short Term	Related Work	Complexity of Delivery and Resource Implications	Key Partners and Possible project Lead
	exchange		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor Farms Programme 		
2.11	Promote health benefits of eating locally produced goods	Low	NHS health promotion work	Medium	LAs, NHS, CNPA

THEME 3 – INFRASTRUCTURE**Objectives:**

- Strengthen and develop an infrastructure that is compatible with a competitive food and drink sector
- Enable new business and community opportunities

Ser	Potential Action	Priority in Short Term	Related Work	Complexity of Delivery and Resource Implications	Key Partners and Possible project Lead
3.1	Provision of land for community growing and allotments	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • THC Allotments policy (draft) been issued • Demand for allotments has risen recently and there initiatives in a number of towns and villages across the Park • Climate Challenge Fund and LEADER opportunities 	Medium	LAs, Community Groups, CNPA
3.2	Protect and enhance processing facilities and services: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access • Reduction/control of associated costs 	Medium	A'shire Council/SE work with NESAAG	High	LAs, HIE, SE
3.3	Provision of land and facilities for new entrants to farming/horticulture	Medium	Demand unclear but links to wider concerns over lack of new entrants and retention of younger farmers	High	Landowners, Community Groups
3.4	Larger scale investment in food and drink processing skills and infrastructure – use a location within the National Park as a centre of excellence with advice, product development skills and facilities	Low	<p>SFD development work and working groups</p> <p>Existing examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Glasgow University KIT-Out project product development advice and support • Food Centre Wales 	High	HIE, SE, CBP

Notes:

1. Priority based on initial assessment of ease of project delivery and the likely positive impact on primary producers in the short term.
2. Complexity of delivery and resource implication assessment includes likely time required for initial consultation and stakeholder buy-in as well as for project delivery.
3. Possible lead organisation for project delivery highlighted in bold. Links to the National Food Policy work to be added in due course.