

## **ANNEX I - Proposed CNPA Response to LDS Consultation**

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### **General Points**

1. CNPA is pleased to note the level of background work which has gone into the identification of the proposed themes and outcomes for the draft LEADER Local Development Strategy, specifically reviews of all of the Community Action Plans; the National Park Partnership Plan; and the relevant Single Outcome Agreements and Economic Strategies produced by the five Community Planning Partnerships, who cover areas of the National Park. This ensures a bottom-up approach to the development of the draft themes and outcomes; makes effective use of previous consultation and engagement output; and provides a sound basis for the specific LEADER consultation process. In addition, as the themes relate to strategic plans from relevant local authorities and other partners, there may be opportunities for drawing down match funding to support initiatives in particular areas.
2. This background work has resulted in the production of proposed themes and outcomes which reflect the breadth of issues and opportunities across communities and businesses within the National Park. As a result, CNPA is broadly supportive of the draft themes and outcomes, but recognises that the best test for their representativeness is through consultation with communities (of place and interest) and other relevant networks in the National Park. The Park Authority is pleased to note that a number of consultation events have been organised in communities across the Park; that an online survey has been advertised widely; and that significant attempts have been made to ensure that all sections of society and the business community have the opportunity to contribute through these routes.

### **Strategic Relevance**

3. From a strategic perspective, the Park Authority is pleased to note that the draft themes and outcomes clearly reflect and complement the strategic aims of the National Park, as set out in the National Park Partnership Plan and associated strategy documents. Clear links to the overarching National Performance Framework have also been demonstrated.

### **Role of Local Development Strategy**

4. Reflecting the Scottish Government's ongoing focus on community empowerment and community planning, it is important to ensure that there is an appropriate

strategic focus on the fourth aim of the National Park. As a result, community-led development is increasingly important in terms of building community capacity and resilience in a period of significant economic and social change. To that end CNPA is keen to ensure that the Local Development Strategy provides a framework for community-led development across the National Park.

5. In order for community-led development to be truly successful, it needs to be “owned” by active community organisations and have the support of the broader community. This requires ongoing community leadership, engagement and consultation, to be sustainable. Therefore, CNPA would like to continue to work with LEADER staff, LAG members and other relevant partners to support a Local Development Strategy which sets out good practice in terms of what public agencies, businesses and community bodies should be seeking to achieve in community engagement and support activity within the National Park.
6. Within both of the elements outlined above, the role of the Community Development Officer network as project animators and supporters of community-led development is crucial. CNPA is pleased to note the level of liaison between LEADER staff, LAG members, Park Authority staff and the Community Development Officer network to date and hopes to see this continue throughout the delivery of the LDS.
7. In the spirit of community empowerment and community-led development, CNPA would encourage the LEADER LAG to move away from the use of phraseology such as “giving grants”(language used in draft LDS, which suggests a form of dependency); to “providing investment” in community initiatives, which suggests a desire for long term sustainability.

### **Proposed Grants Programme Structure**

8. CNPA believes that the proposal, through the Main Grants programme, to seek to shift the focus from small scale projects, often focusing on one theme or one community (of place or interest), to a focus on more strategic projects cutting across themes and communities, is ambitious and welcome.
9. The Park Authority believes that this will provide an incentive for communities and create a culture of greater collaboration across the National Park. In addition, it should help applicants to consider the broader impact of any proposals or projects they seek to take forward. Again, the role of the CDO network, with their profound knowledge of their areas, will be essential in supporting different communities to work together, where appropriate, to collaborate on larger and more strategic projects. To some degree, this collaboration is already taking place, for example

through the “Team Badenoch” initiative around a Badenoch Cultural Heritage Project.

10. The Park Authority thinks it would be helpful for the LDS to say more about the building of partnerships as part of the Main Grants programme. Involvement from larger private sector organisations could potentially be encouraged by appealing to their Corporate Social Responsibility needs.
11. There will be cases where a community seeks to deliver a one-off project specific to their area (for example priorities identified in Community Action Plans). Where this meets a theme of the LDS there should be a level of support available. CNPA is therefore pleased to note the creation of a Small Grants programme, which should fulfil this role.
12. Successful community-led development requires a cohort of committed and knowledgeable people, who are willing to see a project to its conclusion. There are numerous examples of this across the National Park and this LDS should continue to support this process. However, for successful community-led development to become sustainable it requires, among other things, succession planning. This ensures that when the current cohort of community activists step down, there are sufficiently skilled and knowledgeable people available to take their place. Succession planning in community-led development can be very difficult as it is heavily reliant on voluntary commitment and individual personalities.
13. Involving young people in community-led development as early as possible can help them to build their knowledge and skills, as well as their commitment to development of this nature. This is arguably even more important in remote rural areas where it is particularly difficult to retain young people beyond secondary school. Therefore, CNPA is supportive of the proposed Youth LAG, which could provide meaningful pathways for young people, with potential progression for those involved in projects such as the John Muir Award and Junior Rangers programme through Europarc. We would ask, however, that any projects coming through the Youth LAG should also fit with the themes in the LDS rather than simply being ‘youth’ related projects.
14. These transferrable skills (coupled with more specific skills related to a specific project) can provide opportunities for young people, and by involving them in community-led development programmes at an early stage, it is hoped that staying in their communities and contributing positively beyond secondary school may become a more attractive prospect. This also supports CNPA’s Communication and Engagement Strategy, which aims to build a sense of closeness and ownership of the Park by getting people involved.

## Investment Themes and Strategic Outcomes

15. The CNPA welcomes the proposed investment themes and outcomes which demonstrate a close fit with the key priorities for the area. More specific comments on each of the Themes and Outcomes are detailed in Table I below. The Consultation document also identifies a range of illustrative actions. There are a wide range of potential projects that CNPA could suggest in terms of illustrative actions, however, as indicated by the consultation we will limit our comments to the themes and outcomes at this time.

**Table I - DRAFT LDS Themes and Outcomes**

LDS Theme	LDS Outcomes	CNPA Proposed Comment
1. Build community capacity to facilitate and support local development and promote partnership working.	Outcome 1: Communities and businesses are more sustainable through innovation and knowledge sharing by 2020. Outcome 2: Community members are more active in determining what happens in their communities by 2020.	Underpins CNPA commitment to community-led development and sustainable business growth throughout the National Park; and reflects Government commitment to community empowerment.
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.	Outcome 3: More jobs and employment opportunities for people living and working in the National Par by 2020. Outcome 4: A growing and more diverse local economy by 2020 Outcome 5: Improvement in the benchmarked average wages in the national park by 2020	Theme 3 directly reflects the aim of the emerging Economic Development & Diversification Strategy and supports key elements of the action plan. Supporting women back into the workplace through incentivising homeworking and offering extend childcare provision is a key socio-economic issue in rural areas. As such we propose that Outcome 3 should be altered to: “More jobs, employment opportunities <b>and flexible working support</b> for people...”, to allow for this.

LDS Theme	LDS Outcomes	CNPA Proposed Comment
<p>3. Attract, support and retain young people in the National Park.</p>	<p>Outcome 6: There will be a sustained increase in the number of young people living, learning and working in the National Park by 2020.            Outcome 7: Improved career path choices for young people and less seasonality in employment.            Outcome 8: Increased access to further and higher education opportunities</p>	<p>CNPA is supportive of efforts to retain young people in rural communities and recognises the need to offer improved access to learning, training and employment. However, this should not be to the exclusion of other members of the community. It should be recognised that travel is a key issue for young people in terms of accessing education and this should be allowed for both in Theme 3 and 4 in terms of improved transport but also capacity for rural learning centres.</p>
<p>4. Improve transport, connectivity and service provision</p>	<p>Outcome 9: There will be an increase in community service provision by 2020.            Outcome 10: People will have access to affordable green transport networks which meet their needs by 2020            Outcome 11: Communities have equality of access to next generation 24 meg plus broadband by 2020.</p>	<p>Theme 4 reflects key programmes of work in the NPPP, Sustainable Tourism Strategy and Economic Strategy providing the infrastructure that enables the economy and communities to thrive.</p> <p>The NPPP encourages active travel modes. We therefore suggest that an additional outcome: “More residents will walk or cycle to work and more visitors will walk or cycle during their stay in the National Park.”</p> <p>Transport and connectivity are a key issue for education and learning in the Park and as such both Theme 3 and 4 should allow for improved transport but also capacity for rural learning centres to improve access to learning opportunities.</p>

LDS Theme	LDS Outcomes	CNPA Proposed Comment
<p>5. Protection and enhancement of the National Park landscape, wildlife and local heritage through sustainable living.</p>	<p>Outcome 12: Increased community support for, and engagement in enhancing the Park landscape, wildlife, heritage and wider environment by 2020.</p> <p>Outcome 13: Communities have the skills, knowledge and opportunity to engage in preserving and enhancing the Park landscape, wildlife, heritage and wider environment by 2020.</p> <p>Outcome 14: Reduction of the carbon emissions of the National Park by 2020.</p>	<p>This Theme and related outcomes support key aims within the Cairngorms Nature Action Plan to provide opportunities for people to realise the benefits from, and help to look after, nature. Direct links between the LDS, LAG, and the Cairngorms Nature Partnership would be welcomed.</p> <p>Phrase “sustainable living” is ambiguous and does not add to the underlying principle of the theme. Suggest that the last three words are deleted.</p> <p>The outcome relating to reduction in carbon emissions could be combined with other themes to support extended community transport, access to broadband and distance learning (among other initiatives).</p>
<p>6. Excellence in sustainable tourism and outdoor recreation to enhance enjoyment of residents and visitors</p>	<p>Outcome 15: A more resilient, competitive and diverse tourism sector benefiting all communities by 2020.</p> <p>Outcome 16: An increase in quality of tourism offered by 2020.</p> <p>Outcome 17: The Park’s recreation opportunities have improved the health and enjoyment of residents and visitors.</p>	<p>This theme and outcomes are welcomed as they support the delivery of both the Economic Strategy and Sustainable Tourism Strategy for the Park. It is suggested that Outcome 16 be altered to read “An improvement in the visitor experience by 2020.” This helps reflect both the quality of the tourism offering but also the customer experience provision and can be measured through the Visitor Survey as well as quality assurance schemes.</p>