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# CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

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## FOR DECISION

**Title: CAPITAL INVESTMENT PLAN**

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### **Purpose**

To agree the first stage in a rolling capital investment plan for the National Park that will:

- a) Enable co-ordination in fund-raising and investment priorities among partners;
- b) Enable identification of priorities to be developed to 'shovel-ready' status;
- c) Provide a framework to further develop capital priorities in future partnership and corporate plans.

The agreement of capital investment priorities is a strategic decision for the board which will direct future capital spend and staff time in project development. It is part of CNPA's leadership role to draw together a set of priorities in collaboration with partners that will align efforts in both seeking and spending capital investment. The initial Capital Investment Plan is at Annex I. This captures the current range of significant capital proposals and will be used to agree priorities and direct resources.

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## CAPITAL INVESTMENT PLAN – FOR DECISION

### Strategic Context

#### ***Capital investment delivering the National Park Partnership Plan***

1. Capital investment is key to delivering the outcomes of the National Park Partnership Plan, through enhanced infrastructure, facilities and quality of place. Capital investment will ensure the natural capital and infrastructure of the Park is of a sufficiently high standard to underpin and support the high quality conservation, visitor experiences, community and economic development we aspire to deliver.
2. The capital investment plan is structured by the three long term outcomes of the Partnership Plan. It is further guided by the set of Park strategies: Cairngorms Nature, Active Cairngorms, Economic Development, Sustainable Tourism and the LEADER Local Development Strategy.

#### ***Track record of delivering capital investment***

3. In recent years CNPA has a good record of delivering significant capital spend, principally through Scottish Government ‘shovel ready’ funds, with demonstrable benefits on the ground. Over the last three financial years we have received £3,426,000 of shovel ready funds for capital investment.
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 effective prioritisation and co-ordination between organisations.

#### ***Using the capital investment plan***

5. The plan will remain a live, working document that is developed and adjusted on an annual basis. We will use the plan to:
  - a) Co-ordinate fund-raising and investment priorities among partners;
  - b) Identify priorities to be developed to ‘shovel-ready’ status;
  - c) Inform future corporate and partnership plans and funding strategies.

#### **Priorities for CNPA project development in 2014/15**

6. CNPA has a role to play in supporting delivery of proposals across the plan to varying extents. However, there are some where CNPA is identified as the lead partner, and these are proposed as the priorities for CNPA staff time in project development – i.e. developing these projects to shovel-ready status. Generally, these projects are those in which CNPA has a clear statutory role (e.g. as access authority), or a significant leadership role in wider partnerships.

7. Table I identifies those projects for which it is proposed CNPA takes a lead role in project development in the financial year 2014/15. It shows the contribution to partnership plan outcomes (X = contribution; XX = strong contribution; XXX= top priority).

<b>Table I</b>			
<b>Partnership Plan Outcomes:</b>	<b>1. Sustainable business and communities</b>	<b>2. Special place for people and nature</b>	<b>3. People Enjoying the Park</b>
Cairngorm & Glenmore masterplan	XXX	XXX	XXX
Aviemore Active Travel Plan	XX		XX
Scenic Routes Initiative	X	X	XX
Speyside Way & Deeside Way	XX	X	XX
Core Paths	XX		
Tomintoul & Glenlivet Landscape Partnership	X	XX	XX
Montane Woodland		XX	
Peatland Restoration		XX	

### Recommendations

8. **That the Board**
- a) **Agree the first stage of the capital investment plan;**
  - b) **Consider prioritisation and agree the project development priorities for CNPA in 2014/15;**
  - c) **Agree to keep the plan under annual review and development.**

### Strategic Policy Considerations

**Key questions for the board to consider are:**

9. **Prioritisation - is the scope of investment priorities sufficiently targeted to make the most effective contribution to the National Park Partnership Plan?**
10. This first stage in the plan draws together a wide range of capital projects on which partners are working across the Park. While it is useful to capture this breadth of activity, it will also be necessary for CNPA and the National Park Partnership to further prioritise through corporate and partnership planning. Community Development Officers may also need to prioritise the wide range of community projects identified through community action planning.

11. **Ambition - Is the scope of investment priorities both realistic yet ambitious enough?**
12. The scope and value of projects appears ambitious overall. However, projects identified are realistic proposals with a wider range of groups, and therefore capacity, identified to lead project development.
13. **Partnership - Do we have buy-in from the right partners to deliver a co-ordinated approach to investment?**
14. A wide range of partners has contributed to development of the plan and members of the strategic delivery group recognise the value of collaboration and co-ordination in seeking and prioritising investment. The strategic delivery group will continue to use and develop the plan on an annual basis to align joint working.
15. **CNPA focus - Do we have a clear and focused set of priorities for CNPA project development?**
16. There is a clear set of projects identified for CNPA focus on project development in 2014/15 that make a significant impact on partnership plan delivery. Over time, CNPA's focus in delivering capital investment will be prioritised through corporate and operational 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 direct and proactively plan for the staff resource required to deliver capital investment priorities.
(15) CNPA fails to deliver against high profile projects e.g. shovel ready capital investment	The plan will identify priority projects in order that they can be developed 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.

## Implications

17. 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.
  
18. 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 within the normal process of project and financial approvals.
  
19. **Success Measures**
  - a) Value of capital investment
  - b) Priority projects delivered
  - c) Number of collaborative investments with partners/leverage achieved

## Supporting Information

### Consultation

20. The capital investment plan was initiated with partners in the Strategic Delivery Group in March 2013 and refined through discussions with partners since then. In early 2014 the draft was circulated to the group for final input.
21. Community Development Officers have been fully involved in the development of the plan, to ensure it reflects the priorities identified through community action planning.

### Capacity to deliver and sustain projects

22. In December 2013 the Board identified the capacity of communities and other partners to deliver and sustain projects as a key factor to be considered in prioritising investment. This is built into our checklist for assessing individual projects and resource commitment. CNPA also plays an active role in helping build community capacity for delivery, providing guidance, training and direct support. We will therefore be able to prioritise support towards agreed capital investment priorities.

### Criteria guiding prioritisation

23. The criteria below will continue to guide prioritisation within CNPA and with partners:
  - a) Does it deliver against one or more of the key strategic plans?
  - 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?

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**4<sup>th</sup> March 2014**

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