
CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

FOR DECISION

Title: CNPA CONSULTATION RESPONSE: CAIRNGORMS LOCAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2014-2020 (LEADER)

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Purpose

The Cairngorms Local Action Group (CLAG) is developing a Local Development Strategy (LDS) for the new LEADER Programme 2014-2020. The CLAG have identified six proposed investment themes and seventeen strategic outcomes for consultation. This paper and associated annex outlines the proposed CNPA response to the consultation.

Strategic Context

1. The CLAG is one of around 20 in Scotland which award financial support aimed at projects with a wide community benefit that show an element of originality or experimentation and link with the LDS. The National Park boundary forms the operating area for the CLAG investment. In the last LEADER programme 2007-2013 the CLAG supported 250 projects with a LEADER investment of around £2.5m and total project spend of over £7m.
2. The aim of LEADER is to increase the capacity of local rural community and business networks to build knowledge and skills, and encourage innovation and co-operation to tackle local development objectives. LEADER supports community owned actions with investment from the European Union. It is based on the principles of Community Led Local Development. It is part of the Scotland Rural Development Programme, which is a European investment programme for rural development in Scotland. In addition, LEADER links local action with European and Scottish Government priorities.

3. Following invitation from Scottish Government, the CLAG submitted a bid to form a Local Action Group for the new LEADER programme running from 2014 to 2020. This bid was successful. The CLAG have since formed a wider working group of current CLAG members, local authority, public agency, community and business representatives to support the development of a LEADER Local Development Strategy (LDS) for the new programme. The National Park Partnership Plan, Community Action Plans, and their associated consultations have informed the CLAG in the formation of the themes. A number of workshops and discussions with the LAG, key partners and CNPA staff have also helped in their development.
4. The LDS themes once agreed will determine the investment priorities for the Cairngorms Local Action Group under the new programme of funding. The LDS will be subject to review and comment by Scottish Government and will develop further over the remainder of 2014. The CLAG are also required to develop a business case to target local investment of LEADER funding and secure delivery of LDS priorities.
5. The draft themes around which the CLAG Working Group propose to structure their initial LDS submission to Scottish Government is set out at Annex 1 to this paper. Board members have previously received email notification of this consultation document prior to its public release on 10 February.
6. A proposed CNPA response to the consultation proposals is set out at Annex 2 to this paper.

Recommendations

7. **The Board endorse the proposed CNPA consultation response to the LAG Consultation as per Annex 1 of this paper**

Strategic Policy Considerations

8. Key relevant sections of the NPPP are outlined below:
 - a) **Long term outcome 1** - A sustainable economy supporting thriving businesses and communities
 - b) **5 year outcome** - Communities will be more empowered and able to develop their own models of sustainability
 - c) **Work Programme 4c** - Establish a Cairngorms LEADER fund from 2013 as part of the next LEADER programme

9. The proposed investment themes and strategic outcomes for the LDS have strong links to other key plans and strategies for the CNP as outlined in Table I below.

Table I - CNP Plans and Strategies

CNP Plan/Strategy	Relationship with LDS Themes and Outcomes
Cairngorms Nature	One of the aims of the Cairngorms Nature Action Plan is to encourage, support, and provide opportunities for people to realise the benefits from, and help to look after, nature. Actions 4.5 and 4.6 in the Plan relate to provision of opportunities for community involvement. The LDS has the potential to support this through proposed theme 5 'Protection and enhancement of the National Park landscape, wildlife and local heritage through sustainable living' and outcomes 12 and 13.
Proposed Active Cairngorms	Proposed Theme 6 of the LDS is 'Excellence in sustainable tourism and outdoor recreation to enhance enjoyment of residents and visitors' and the associated outcome 17 is 'The Park's recreation opportunities have improved the health and enjoyment of residents and visitors'. Both the Theme and associated outcome fit well with the proposed purpose of Active Cairngorms and will contribute to its delivery as it is developed.
Sustainable Tourism Strategy (STS)	Proposed Theme 6 of the LDS is 'Excellence in sustainable tourism and outdoor recreation to enhance enjoyment of residents and visitors' will directly support delivery of the STS. In addition, Theme 2 relates to growing the economy, Theme 4 relates to transport and connectivity, and Theme 5 relates to sustainable living. The outcomes associated with these themes in terms of the economy, sustainable transport, and reducing carbon emissions also have capacity to deliver key elements of the STS.
Local Plan/ Local Development Plan	Proposed Theme 3 of the LDS is 'Attract, support and retain young people in the National Park' with a specific focus on affordable living. Theme 1 is to 'Build community capacity to facilitate and support local development and promote partnership working', the associated outcomes and action support community involvement in determining what happens in their communities. Community involvement and affordable accommodation are key elements of the LDP process.

CNP Plan/Strategy	Relationship with LDS Themes and Outcomes
<p>Economic Development and Diversification Strategy (EDDS)</p>	<p>The aim of the EDDS is taken from the NPPP and is the same as Proposed Theme 2 of the LDS, '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.' Themes 3, 4 and 6 are also of particular relevance to delivery of the EDDS.</p>
<p>Capital Investment Plan</p>	<p>The Capital Investment Plan identifies a range of potential projects which have the potential to deliver against the outcomes in the NPPP. The proposed Themes and outcomes within the LDS are well aligned with these priorities and could assist in further developing these projects through communities.</p>

Strategic Risk Management

10. The CNPA Strategic Risk register identifies five risks which directly relate to this area of work, and which have been identified in Table 2 below.

Table 2 - CNPA Strategic Risk

Strategic Risk	Risk management and the LDS
Insufficient Funding	The proposed themes and outcomes in the LDS align well with the NPPP and work of CNPA and has the capacity to help support funding the delivery of projects.
Broadband and telecom technologies do not develop within the NP as quickly or as fully as we would like.	Theme 4 of the LDS supports improvement to connectivity with a key outcome relating to next generation broadband which will enable support for community broadband initiatives.
The communities within the National Park do not engage with the Authority or buy into their part in delivering the NPPP.	The proposed LDS themes and outcomes will support communities in delivering projects which support delivery of the NPPP.
Community capacity and leadership is not adequate to fully engage in delivery of NPPP.	The proposed LDS Theme 1 is to 'Build community capacity to facilitate and support local development and promote partnership working'. This will help support community engagement in delivering NPPP.
Public may not be fully signed up for "low carbon economy". It can appear to be a more expensive alternative. Government support is variable.	The proposed LDS Theme 5 has a specific outcome relating to reduction in carbon emissions in the National Park. This will encourage engagement in the concept of a low carbon economy.

Implications

11. The CNPA Corporate Plan Programme 2 identifies an Active LEADER programme contributing to National Park Partnership Plan vision as a key outcome. The draft themes and outcomes for the LDS reflect the ambitions within the NPPP and have the potential to support and fund a range of projects to support its delivery and encourage engagement.
12. CNPA currently employs the LEADER team which administer the LEADER Programme and LAG. These staff are funded at between 50% and 100% from LEADER grant. The Director of Corporate Services also sits on the LAG to liaise with the CLAG in his role as responsible Director for delivery of the Service Level

Agreement between Scottish Government and CNPA in its role as lead partner for LEADER in the Cairngorms.

13. In order to maintain integrity of governance and management arrangements in development of the LEADER LDS proposals and in management of the programme within the Authority as lead partner, the Director of Corporate Services and LEADER team act in support of the LAG. The Director of Rural Development and his team act to support the Board in their influencing on the LAG's activities.
14. A number of additional CNPA staff will work closely with the team and LAG to support development and delivery of the LDS. CNPA also supports a network of Community Development Officers in the National Park who work with communities to 'animate' projects that align with the LDS.

Success Measures

15. The endorsement of the LDS by the LAG and Scottish Government will be a key measure of success. The LDS will include monitoring indicators to enable assessment of delivery and impact. The CLAG has let a tender to a contractor to support consideration of specific performance measures and relevant monitoring benchmarks through which to assess performance against delivery of the LDS. CNPA will also monitor project delivery through the LDS in relation to delivery of the NPPP.

Next steps

16. The consultation responses will be compiled and analysed by the LAG and a final LDS compiled for submission to Scottish Government on 31st March. The CLAG's Working Group will consider the draft of the LDS prior to its submission.
17. The LEADER Manager aims to be in a position to circulate an early draft of the LDS following consideration of the consultation comment to Board members prior to the meeting on 21 March, in order that members will have some sight of the extent to which the CNPA's proposed consultation comments have been incorporated into the draft LDS. The draft LDS can of course be further refined prior to sign off by the Working Group, depending upon feedback from the Board at its meeting.
18. The LEADER team expects there to be an iterative process in finalising the LDS. Some feedback comments from Scottish Government are expected together with some targeted consultation exercises to be considered in further revising the LDS. This will take place in the period to September 2014. The LEADER team will also

coordinate the development of the proposed business case for project investment in parallel with the ongoing iterative development of the LDS.

19. If approved by Scottish Government, the LAG intends to open the next LEADER programme in January 2015. This timetable will of course depend on overall national progress with development of the LEADER scheme.

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