



For decision

Title: Wellbeing Economy Action Plan

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Strategic context

1. The National Park Partnership Plan identifies that a Wellbeing Economy Action Plan will support the delivery of the economic strategy set out in the Partnership Plan. The concept of a wellbeing economy is a holistic one that reflects the entirety of work encompassed by the National Park Partnership Plan, but the Wellbeing Economy Action Plan is intended to provide a focus for partners work and collaboration.

Purpose

2. The Board are asked to approve the Wellbeing Economy Action Plan as a working document for the Economic Steering Group and its partners on three priority areas for the economy in the National Park where focussed collaboration and coordination can better add value to other actions delivered by the Partnership Plan and Regional Economic Strategies.

Recommendations

3. The Board Is asked to:
 - a) Agree the Wellbeing Economy Action Plan as a working document for the Economic Steering Group.

Strategic policy consideration

4. The National Park Partnership Plan provides the economic strategy for the National Park; is based on the principles of a wellbeing economy; and addresses place-based issues across the scope of a wellbeing economy. The Partnership Plan is supported by Regional Economic Strategies that cover the National Park and the regional economic partnerships that prepare them and are brought together with funding via Scottish and UK governments. Both Partnership Plan and Regional Economic Strategies contribute to the delivery of the National Strategy for Economic Transformation.



5. While the principles of a wellbeing economy are easy to understand, the Board have had two informal discussions over the past year that explored the tension between the theory of a holistic approach to the economy and the challenge of translating that to practical work in the National Park. In practice, different organisations, business and sectors require focus on specific action to deliver change and a wellbeing economy action plan for the National Park needs to provide focus and prioritisation of action that is within control of partners.

Stakeholder engagement

6. The approach to a wellbeing economy action plan was discussed by the Cairngorms Economic Steering Group and by a smaller wellbeing economy working sub-group during 2023. While members of the steering group found it easy to agree with the principles, the all-encompassing approach seemed to draw organisations and individuals towards areas of work that were outside their expertise, remit or experience and distract from the issues they had the power to influence positively.
7. The wellbeing economy sub group concluded that given the scope and range of action already being addressed through partners' agreed work across the National Park Partnership Plan and Regional Economic Strategies; the constrained public sector resources and uncertain annual budgets; that a wellbeing economy action plan should focus on a few areas where partners on the Economic Steering Group could add value to existing work, improving or refining delivery on a few prioritised areas of work.

Strategic risk management

8. The finalisation of a Wellbeing Economy Action Plan and focus for the Economic Steering Group will support delivery of the National Park Partnership Plan and should lead to more efficient use of partner resources. Unlike some other action plans prepared by the National Park Authority, the Park Authority does not bring significant resource or direct power to economic development, which is dominated by the national enterprise and skills development agencies and local authorities, all of whom have shrinking budgets. Bringing partners together to make better use of those shrinking budgets or identify other sources of funding will benefit everyone.

Implications

9. The finalisation of the Wellbeing Economy Action Plan as a working document does not have a significant resource implication for the Park Authority. The Park Authority



will continue to facilitate meetings of the Economic Steering Group, to collate information on delivery of the Partnership Plan and to support the delivery of work by other organisations.

10. The Park Authority's financial support to other delivery organisations (Cairngorms Business Partnership as destination marketing organisation and chamber of commerce for the Cairngorms, GrowBiz providing targeted support to small and start-up businesses, and Countryside Learning Scotland providing pathways for young people to rural employment, as well as Voluntary Action Badenoch and Strathspey, Marr Area Partnership and Tomintoul and Glenlivet Development Trust who support community development and social enterprise) is not directly affected by the Wellbeing Economy Action Plan, but could be affected by other budget pressures in future.
11. The Wellbeing Economy Action Plan is intended to be a working document for the Economic Steering Group, to make it easy for partners to collaborate and focus available resource without duplicating effort. The Wellbeing Economy Action Plan should be presented in the context of the National Park Partnership Plan and its overall economic strategy.

Success measures

12. It is proposed that Board will receive an annual report on delivery of the Wellbeing Economy Action Plan, the work that has happened as a result of it and the added value or specific value it has brought to the National Park, alongside any wider review of the contribution of other actions in the Partnership Plan or Regional Economic Strategies. In a more practical sense, success will be new collaborative projects between partners to improve targeted business support, deliver skills and training opportunities for the National Park and support community enterprise in it.

Supporting Information

13. A draft Wellbeing Economy Action Plan is attached as Annex 1. The draft plan sets out the principles of a wellbeing economy, the roles of the National Park Partnership Plan and Regional Economic Strategies and the challenge of creating an action plan that does not simply duplicate those strategies that have established delivery structures and action plans themselves.



14. The diagram on the following page is an attempt to show the relationship between the National Park Partnership Plan and Regional Economic Strategies which encompass strategic and structural issues across all facets of a wellbeing economy, often delivered through separate action plans, legislative frameworks and partnerships, and the proposed wellbeing economy action plan that has a much tighter focus to help partners collaborate in ways that deliver their organisational priorities.

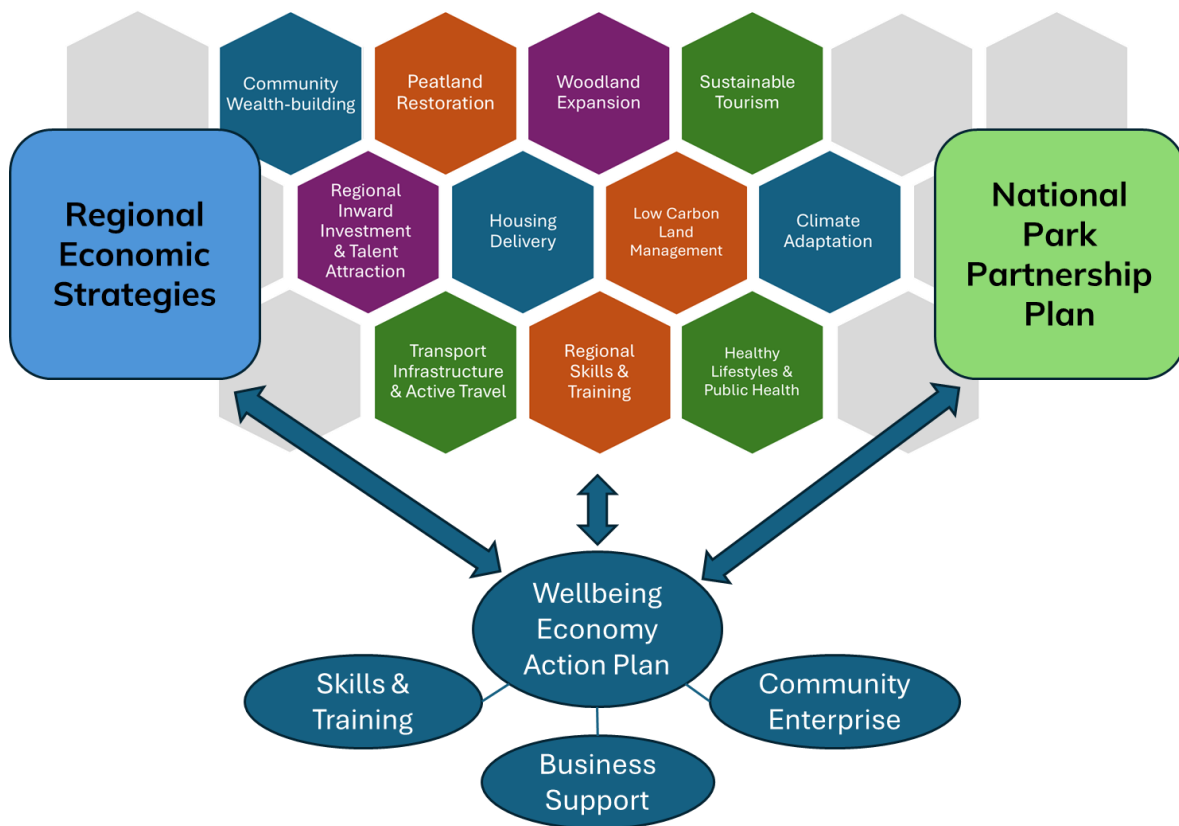


Figure1. Wellbeing Economy Action Plan and wider wellbeing economy support.

15. Although we have not had an action plan to provide that focus during past year, in practice partners have been looking for those opportunities to deliver better shared work and the [‘Your Future Here’](#) careers event held in September this year is an example of the type of collaborative work that the action plan will support, involving most member organisations of the Economic Steering Group in its planning and delivery.

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