

CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

FOR DECISION

Title: ACTIVE CAIRNGORMS: A NEW OUTDOOR ACCESS STRATEGY FOR THE CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK

**Prepared by: David Clyne, Recreation and Access Manager
Pete Crane, Head of Visitor Services**

Purpose

To update the Board on our work in developing Active Cairngorms and seek approval to adopt the strategy and action plan.

Recommendations

That the Board:

- a) adopts the Active Cairngorms Strategy and Action Plan;**
- b) agrees to the formation of an Active Cairngorms delivery partnership;**
- c) agrees at its September meeting a board nominee to sit on the Active Cairngorms delivery partnership;**
- d) will be presented with an annual report setting out progress on Active Cairngorms.**

Executive Summary

This paper sets out the strategic context for developing Active Cairngorms; a new outdoor access strategy for the National Park. The work undertaken in developing and consulting on the strategy is outlined and the final draft for adoption is included as Annex I.

ACTIVE CAIRNGORMS - FOR DECISION

Strategic Context

1. Renewal of the Outdoor Access Strategy is identified in the National Park Partnership Plan and is a key means to deliver many of the plan's programmes, particularly outcome three: People enjoying the Park, but also integral to delivering conservation management and economic development.
2. Delivery of Active Cairngorms is visitor experience key priority 3 in the Cairngorms National Park Authority Corporate Plan (2015 – 2018): Increase participation and use of the Park through the development and implementation of Active Cairngorms Strategy.
3. This new strategy reinforces the role that outdoor access has in underpinning the National Park as a quality tourism destination and also seeks to energise partners around the opportunity that the Park presents in delivering the active health agenda.
4. This work has been developed in parallel with work on Cairngorms Nature, particularly the Capercaillie Framework, and this is reflected in the strategy.
5. At the meeting in December 2014 the Board commented on the scope, aims and objectives of the strategy and agreed for the draft strategy to be open to public consultation.
6. Active Cairngorms can make a significant contribution to the Scottish Government's Active Scotland outcomes. We want to position Active Cairngorms as a rural exemplar in integrating the recreation, physical activity and active travel agendas.

Summary of Work to Date

7. Since June 2014 we have met with a wide range of partners to develop the final draft. Together we have agreed an overall aim of encouraging residents and visitors to use the National Park for physical activity once a day: '*outdoors active everyday*'. The final draft strategy is in Annex I.
8. Discussions identified three strategic themes for activity required to deliver this overall aim:-
 - a) Active Places – designing places that encourage activity;
 - b) Active Management – best practice in recreation management;
 - c) Active Promotion – promoting healthy lifestyles.

9. With partners we have developed a final draft Action Plan of priority work based around these themes together with a monitoring framework to indicate progress in delivery of the strategy.
10. We have also revised and simplified the Outdoor Access Policies developed in the first strategy.
11. Finally, we have summarised the work undertaken delivering the first strategy and presented it in three easy to read 'infographics'.

Consultation

12. From 10th January 2014 – 12th April 2015 the draft strategy and action plan was available for consultation on the CNPA website.
13. The consultation was promoted using our contacts and through social media including the Active Cairngorms Twitter account. Additional press coverage included an interview on BBC Radio (Out of Doors) and articles in national newsletters and magazines.
14. There were 52 responses to the public consultation which was held from 12th January 2015 to 10th April 2015 (Annex 2).
 - a) Responses were received from members of the public and key stakeholders such as Regional Transport Partnerships, Sustrans, SportScotland, Paths for All Partnership, NHS Highland and Local Authorities.
 - b) Feedback was broadly positive and supportive of the strategic aims, priorities and policies.
15. In addition to seeking general feedback, the consultation asked respondents to answer specific questions. The feedback is summarised below.

a)	Is the overall aim of encouraging residents and visitors to be active outdoors every day an appropriate ambition for Active Cairngorms?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A majority of respondents consider this to be an appropriate strategic aim. • A minority view was that it was too ambitious. • It is proposed to adopt this strategic aim.
b)	Are the priorities identified in the three strategic themes the best focus for activity to deliver Active Cairngorms?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A majority of respondents consider the strategic themes to be appropriate. • It is proposed to adopt the strategic themes.

c)	Does Active Cairngorms contain the right policies to promote and manage outdoor access in the National Park?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A majority of respondents agreed the strategy contains the right policies. • A minority of submissions sought additional protection for the perceived conservation impact of access development and promotion. The strategy addresses this directly through the ‘active management’ section and will be delivered alongside Cairngorms Nature with full recognition of the potential tensions. A Habitats Regulations assessment has been carried out and we are satisfied there are no additional impacts that cannot be addressed through the proposed policies and approach. • It is proposed to adopt the policies with some minor text changes.
d)	Will the Action Plan deliver the strategy, and what can you or your organisation contribute to the Action Plan?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A majority of respondents consider the action plan to be suitable. • A range of opinion was submitted on additional actions. • It is important to note the action plan will be dynamic. Further development of projects and partnerships will be required from a range of stakeholders. • It is proposed the action plan is adopted with minor text changes.
e)	Will the monitoring framework provide a clear indication of the ongoing effectiveness of the strategy?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A majority of respondents queried the effectiveness of the monitoring framework. • Measuring levels of physical activity will take place following each project. Data from existing national surveys will be incorporated to monitor the strategy. • The monitoring framework will take time to develop following the gathering of baseline data – this will be a key role of the partnership.
f)	Ranger Services across the National Park are a key partner in supporting the delivery of Active Cairngorms, is the current provision of rangers best placed to help deliver the strategy?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many respondents had limited knowledge of the ranger service structure within the Park. As such, they did not feel qualified to comment on the current service provision. • For those that had experience of the services, many thought the current service provision was not sufficient. • These comments will be incorporated into the on-going ranger service and volunteering review.

15. As a result of the public consultation, some text and layout changes have been made to the final draft.
16. The strategy has the support of the Cairngorms Local Outdoor Access Forum and Inclusive Cairngorms
17. The strategy and its action plan have undergone a Habitats Regulation Assessment. The HRA identified a number of likely significant effects within several Natura sites. Therefore an appropriate assessment was undertaken. Mitigation measures were identified and incorporated into the Active Cairngorms Strategy. No residual effects have been identified. (Annex 3).

Delivery Partnerships

18. To implement the strategy and develop the action plan, it is proposed to form a new partnership for leading the delivery of Active Cairngorms. Strategically this will fit alongside the Cairngorms Nature and Cairngorms Tourism Partnership and will bring greater collaboration and drive on the delivery of physical activity across the National Park.
19. The partnership will be administered and initially chaired by CNPA.
20. The functions of the new Active Cairngorms Partnership are to:
 - a) provide new and strong leadership in the delivery of the strategy
 - b) engage a wide partnership in developing and promoting physical activity
 - c) co-ordinate and keep an overview of the management and impact of projects
 - d) inspire community involvement
21. Two provisional steering group meetings have been held to date. Partners include
 - a) NHS Highland
 - b) NHS Grampian
 - c) Paths for All Partnership
 - d) COAT Health Walks Coordinator
 - e) Scottish Natural Heritage
22. It is proposed to invite the following stakeholders to join the partnership:
 - a) Land Manager representative
 - b) Local Authority representatives
 - c) Sustrans
 - d) SportScotland

23. It is proposed that the Board agrees at its September meeting a board nominee to sit on the Active Cairngorms delivery partnership.
24. The Board will be presented with an annual report setting out progress on active Cairngorms

Recommendation

25. That the Board:

- a) adopts the **Active Cairngorms Strategy and Action Plan;**
- b) agrees to the formation of an **Active Cairngorms delivery partnership;**
- c) agrees at its **September meeting a board nominee to sit on the Active Cairngorms delivery partnership;**
- d) will be presented with an annual report setting out progress on **Active Cairngorms.**

Resource Implications

25. Active Cairngorms has been developed to be coordinated using existing CNPA staff resources.
26. Once agreed, our main role will be focused on co-ordinating delivery and promotion of the strategy and sourcing funding to implement key priorities. For example, completing the Speyside Way extension will require funds well in excess of our budget.

Next Steps

27. An invitation has been sent to Jamie Hepburn MSP, Minister for Sport, Health Improvement and Mental Health, to launch Active Cairngorms and open the Speyside Way Extension to Kincaig during summer 2015.

David Clyne

Recreation and Access Manager

davidclyne@cairngorms.co.uk

Pete Crane

Head of Visitor Services

petercrane@cairngorms.co.uk

Annex 2: Respondants to Active Cairngorms Consultation

No	Format	Name	Area
1	Webform	Did not submit	Did not submit
2	Webform	Did not submit	Did not submit
3	Webform	Did not submit	Did not submit
4	Webform	Did not submit	Did not submit
5	Webform	Did not submit	Did not submit
6	Webform	Did not submit	Did not submit
7	Webform	Jane Angus	Ballater
8	Webform	Saranne Bish	THC Ranger
9	Webform	George Alan	North East Mountain trust
10	Webform	Did not submit	Did not submit
11	Email	John Grearson	Aviemore Community Council
12	Webform	Ian Bradbury	Croft Dhu
13	Webform	Nick Cole	P&K Access Forum
14	Webform	Did not submit	Did not submit
15	Webform	Did not submit	Did not submit
16	Webform	Did not submit	Did not submit
17	Webform	Dr LT Mansfield	University of Cumbria
18	Webform	Dawn Horsburgh	Active Schools Grantown
19	Webform	Lynne Walker	BASOC
20	Webform	Ron Payne	P&K Access Forum
21	Webform	A Miles	Did not submit
22	Webform	Michael Cairns	TACTRAN
25	Webform	Kathryn MacKay	NESTRANS
26	Webform	Janelle Clark and Linda Matheson	Aberdeenshire Council
27	Webform	DNA	DNA
28	Webform	Dr Katrina Brown	James Hutton Institute.
29	Webform	Dan Jenkins	NHS Highland
31	Email	Johnnie Grant	Rothiemurchus
32	Email	Matt David	SUSTRANS
33	Email	Drennan Wilson	Cairngorms Campaign
34	Email	Gareth Marshall	RSPB
35	Email	Cattie Anderson	SNH

CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY
Paper 3 Annex 2 26/06/15

No	Format	Name	Area
38	Email	Alison Fieldling	Boat of Garten
39	Email	Helen Todd	Ramblers Scotland
44	Email	Eildh Nicolson	NTS
45	Email	Paul Clark	Angus Access Forum
46	Email	Deborah Quinn	Strathspey Railway
47	Email	Jack McKay	FCS
48	Email	Polly Freeman	Atholl Estates
49	Email	Gus Jones	Badenoch and Strathspey Conservation Group
50	Email	Jane Pritchard	P & K Council
51	Email	Rona Gibb	Paths for All
52	Email	Megan Griffiths	Sport Scotland