

CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

FOR DISCUSSION

**Title: UPDATE ON CAIRNGORMS LEADER PROGRAMME:
FORMATION OF CHARITABLE TRUST**

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Purpose

This paper updates the Board on the development of the Cairngorms LEADER Programme for 2014 to 2020.

Recommendations

The Board is requested to:

- a) note the update on development of the Cairngorms LEADER Programme for 2014 to 2020;**
 - b) consider the draft constitution for the formation of a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO) and agree any feedback on this draft to the CLAG, prior to the CLAG's finalisation of the document and subsequent incorporation.**
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UPDATE ON CAIRNGORMS LEADER PROGRAMME: FORMATION OF CHARITABLE TRUST – FOR DISCUSSION

Strategic Context

1. Establishment of the Cairngorms LEADER Programme 2014 to 2020 and consequent delivery of the Local Development Strategy over that period contributes toward National Park Partnership Plan (NPPP) Strategic Outcome 1 – A sustainable economy supporting thriving businesses and communities, and the NPPP 5 year outcome that communities will become more empowered and able to develop their own models of sustainability. This work also completes NPPP work programme 4c – establish a Cairngorms LEADER fund from 2013 as part of the next LEADER programme.
2. The Cairngorms LEADER Local Action Group (CLAG) is also recognised as one of the key partners in delivery of Rural Development Priority 4 “Support communities through capacity-building specifically focussing on the most fragile communities to deliver transformational change” set out in the draft Corporate Plan 2015 to 2018, separately presented to this meeting of the Board for consideration.

Strategic Policy Considerations

3. 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.
4. The Board has previously endorsed the Local Development Strategy and business case for delivery of the Cairngorms LEADER programme prepared by the CLAG, and agreed to act as the Accountable Body for Cairngorms LEADER with provision of £70,000 annual support toward the management of the programme.
5. The Board has also previously agreed that the CLAG is best placed to take forward ideas previously discussed around the formation of a Charitable Trust to transparently receive and disburse any donations made by third party individuals and organisations toward delivery of the NPPP. The CLAG has subsequently agreed that it is willing to take on this responsibility.

6. This paper updates the Board on the overall development to date of the LEADER programme by the CLAG and its support team, and presents the draft constitution for the proposed Charitable Trust.

Local Development Strategy Feedback from Evaluation Panel

7. Following resolution of various points of feedback from the National Evaluation Panel, we received confirmation from Scottish Government of a proposed allocation of LEADER resources to the CLAG of £2.97 million, compared to an original allocation of £2.17m at the start of the 2007-2013 Programme. This figure is yet to be formally confirmed by Scottish Government as the Managing Authority: we understand pending overall confirmation of the terms of the Scottish Rural Development Programme.

LEADER Timetable

8. With the delay in confirmation of allocations, and also the ongoing development work by Scottish Government centrally on the development of both technical guidance and IT systems to underpin programme delivery, the CLAG has delayed the launch of the Cairngorms LEADER programme until September 2015.
9. Signs are now more positive that September 2015 will be a viable timing for launch, with notification at the end of May 2015 that centrally developed, formal LEADER funding expressions of interest forms will be available in July 2015. This will allow a launch event to be backed up by interested community groups capable of submitting formal expressions of interest.
10. At this point, the objective of the CLAG is to commence making project funding decisions by the first quarter of the 2016 calendar year.

LEADER Service Level Agreement (SLA) with Cairngorms NPA

11. The SLA sets out the roles and responsibilities of Scottish Government as the Managing Authority for the LEADER programme in Scotland, and the Cairngorms NPA as the Accountable Body for the operation of LEADER in the Cairngorms. The final SLA proposed by Scottish Government will be taken to Finance and Delivery Committee prior to signing.
12. We already have a Memorandum of Understanding in place between the CLAG and the Authority setting out their respective responsibilities.

Development of Charitable Trust

13. The proposed development of the CLAG as a Charitable Trust achieves two goals:
 - a) Provides the CLAG with its own legal personality and makes clearer the roles and responsibilities of organisations involved in the LEADER processes within the Cairngorms;
 - b) Takes forward the development of a charitable entity to administer donations and contributions made toward delivery of the aims of the National Park and objectives of the NPPP.
14. As regards the second point above, the Board has at various points over the course of the last 3 to 4 years discussed the potential value of having a “Common Good Fund” or some form of charitable entity in place to receive and disburse and financial donations that may be made toward delivery of NPPP priorities. This work was deemed by the Board to be of value. However, the development of a charity or trust was only justified if the resource input required was minimised. Members also had some concern over the potential increased complexity created by further adding to the number of organisations active within the NP through creation of such a Trust.
15. Taking forward the Trust development in tandem with the evolution and incorporation of the CLAG has achieved both minimisation of resource inputs to achieve delivery of the charitable entity and avoided creation of additional organisational entities.
16. The draft constitution for the SCIO is set out at Annex I to this paper. The CLAG seeks any comments or views of the Board on this draft at this point of development, while advice is being taken from legal advisors and prior to formal adoption.

Strategic Risk Management

17. Support for the development and implementation of a new LEADER Programme for the 2014 to 2020 period is a key mitigation for the strategic risk identified by the Authority that “communities within the National Park do not ... engage in delivering the NPPP” (strategic risk register, risk #8).
18. Similarly, the work acts as a key mitigation to strategic risk #16, that community capacity and leadership is not adequate to fully engage in delivery of the NPPP.
19. The strategic risk that the climate change agenda is not fully adopted into development and delivery of policies and projects also has direct mitigation through the inclusion of climate change as a key strand of activity for delivery through the LDS.

20. Furthermore, in supporting the CLAG's pursuit of the delivery of the six themes set out in the Local Development Strategy, there is a potential for a number of further more indirect mitigations to the Authority's strategic risks, in particular:
- a) #17: role of the National Park and importance of it is not recognised by young people (key strand of LDS is to improve engagement with young people as an under-represented participant group within LEADER in the Cairngorms)
 - b) #18 and #28: "public may not be fully signed up for a low carbon economy" (low carbon is again a specific strand of activity identified within the LDS)

Implications

21. There are no new implications arising from the development of LEADER in the Cairngorms to report at this time.

Success Measures

22. Final, formal approval of the LDS and LEADER Business Plan by the Scottish Government as the Managing Authority for LEADER in Scotland remains the first success measure for this programme.
23. The level of allocated funding to the Cairngorms LAG in comparison with national budgets and previous allocation levels will represent a further measure of success. The current draft allocation represents an increase of £800,000 (or 37%) on the original allocation for the previous programme.
24. The CLAG has developed a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation framework to measure the outputs gained from LEADER investment in the Cairngorms, monitor progress made against the LDS themes and also establish the contribution made to the national outcomes for LEADER established by Scottish Government. The key indicators included in this programme monitoring and evaluation framework, supplemented by project specific indicators, will provide the means of measuring the success of the programme.

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