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# CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

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## FOR DECISION

**Title: CYCLING ACTION PLAN**

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### **Purpose**

This paper seeks Board in principle approval for a Cairngorms Cycling Action Plan.

### **Recommendations**

That the Board:

- a) Approves, in principle, the Cycling Action Plan subject to final decisions on future funding commitment being made as part of the Corporate Plan once we have reached agreement with partners.

### **Executive Summary**

There is a huge resurgence in cycling in Scotland and this is demonstrated in the National Park in recent activity, uptake and interest. Current national policy and our own National Park Partnership Plan recognise the value of cycling, and include actions that promote cycling and make it safer and easier to access. We have both the opportunity and the support from partners to make the Cairngorms an outstanding place for cycling. This paper outlines the work undertaken with partners to develop a coordinated action plan, linked to National policy, to meet this aspiration. A detailed cycling action plan is presented for approval in principle with final agreement deferred to when we have more accurate cost estimates and commitment from partners and other funders. Success will be measured through a range of indicators developed from the action plan including length of new cycleway constructed and cycle use on key routes including Old Logging and Deeside Ways.

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## CYCLING ACTION PLAN- FOR DECISION

### Introduction and Context

1. Cycling is undergoing a renaissance in Scotland. High fuel prices, improvements in bike design and specific pro cycling initiatives such as 'cycle to work scheme' have all encouraged a resurgence in the use of bikes for sport, health, recreation and travel. This has been boosted by medal successes at two Olympic Games, and two consecutive Tour de France wins. Ticket demand this August for cycling at Sir Chris Hoy Velodrome at the Commonwealth Games far exceeded availability in the first week of them going on offer.
2. Nationally and locally we have inspiring cross generational role models in Sir Chris Hoy, free riding Danny MacAskill, round the world cyclist Mark Beaumont and Craig McLean ( with his 'own' golden post box in Grantown-on-Spey).
3. This popularity is manifest in the National Park with the increasing number of cycle shops and cycle hire outlets and the development of new bike facilities such as:-
  - a) Laggan Wolftrax – 16 to 18,000 cyclists per annum
  - b) Tomintoul Mt Bike Centre (due to open 2013)
  - c) Old Logging Way – 36,000 cyclists per annum
  - d) Anagach Bike Park (2012)
  - e) Carr-bridge Bike Park (2013)
4. The success of the recent bike festival at Glenmore Lodge and the electric bike scheme are further clear indicators of the growing popularity of cycling.
5. This groundswell of demand saw the development of a National Strategic Framework for Mountain Biking (2010), Cycling Action Plan for Scotland (2013) and agreement in the National Park Partnership Plan (NPPP) to both promote cycling and improve cycle routes. This work follows on directly from that commitment in the current NPPP.
6. Cairngorms National Park Authority, SportsScotland and the Cairngorms Business Partnership (the Steering Group), with the support of the Cairngorms Sustainable Tourism Forum and the Cairngorms Local Outdoor Access Forum, came together to take this work forward.
7. In November 2012 thirty-six delegates from a broad range of organisations attended an initial workshop. The workshop report is in Annex I. To ensure as wide a range of views were heard, and to prime the thinking on the day, a survey was sent out in advance seeking views on:
  - a) The main strengths of the Park for cycling;
  - b) The main weaknesses of the Park in terms of cycling;
  - c) The opportunities for developing cycling;
  - d) The benefits of a co-ordinated approach;
  - e) The main challenges in taking forward a strategic approach; and
  - f) The top priorities for action.
8. The responses set the agenda for the workshop and the delegates identified a shared ambition for cycling in the National Park that could be delivered over a five year

timeframe. Delegates identified the need for a strategic framework and five key areas that should form the main headings in a Cycling Action Plan (see below). It was also agreed that promotion of responsible cycling should run throughout the plan.

### **Key Area of Activity for Cairngorms Cycling Action Plan**

Marketing, promotion and information;  
Development and investment;  
Access and inclusion;  
Shared understanding; and  
Local participation.

9. The Steering Group has used this structure to develop the detailed Action Plan (Annex 2).

## **The Cycling Action Plan**

10. There is a huge amount of interest and enthusiasm for developing cycling with a wide range of partners keen to support activity. There is also consensus that if we work together we can make the National Park an outstanding place for cycling.
11. The first key message that came out of the workshop is that the Plan should recognise all the good work that is currently happening and build on it rather than starting everything afresh.
12. The second key message is that the effective delivery of the Action Plan requires a broad range of partners to come together to deliver. It is not the sole responsibility of one organisation. Both these approaches are fully reflected in the Cycling Action Plan.
13. A consultation draft of the Cycling Action Plan was sent to all invitees and attendees of the workshop. Feedback was also sought from members of the Local Outdoor Access Forum at the meeting held on 7 May 2013.
14. The consultation responses majored on three significant areas:
  - a) The need to show how the Plan fits with other Government policy and strategies and in particular, the fit with the Cycling Action Plan for Scotland (CAPS). This document, which is the responsibility of Transport Scotland, has been reviewed and refreshed in June this year.
  - b) The need to ensure that actions are costed wherever possible and how the actions are likely to be funded.
  - c) The need to build in a review and monitoring framework to ensure progress can be tracked and managed.
15. These changes have all been incorporated in the Action Plan together with a range of minor, action specific comments. To help show the linkages between CAPS and the Cairngorms Cycling Action Plan, Annex One of the Plan lists the 19 actions identified in CAPs and highlights in bold the significant ones that the Cairngorms National Park Cycling Action Plan will assist in delivering.

16. The Plan provides a real opportunity to bring all the key agencies and groups together to work towards a common goal which will:
- a) Make the Cairngorms National Park an outstanding place for cycling;
  - b) Improve the health and enjoyment of a wide range of participants;
  - c) Make small but significant reductions in our use of fossil fuels;
  - d) Diversify the economy of the Park into a sustainable activity;
  - e) Further encourage responsible cycling;
  - f) Create an approach that makes best use of the resources available; and
  - g) Provide a focus for all organisations, groups and individuals who wish to further the development of cycling in the National Park

## **Implications**

### ***Financial and Staff Implications***

17. This is an ambitious plan requiring large capital expenditure to provide good quality cycle links between communities. We estimate that a total investment of between £3 - 4 million will be needed over the five year period of the Plan. Around 50% of this will be delivered by the extension of the Speyside Way. (The key linkages that still require to be constructed are Dulnain Bridge to Grantown, Carrbridge to Aviemore, and the Deeside Way south to Braemar.)
18. If approved in principle we will have further discussion with partners to develop the detailed financial package. We have a good track record of working with the key partners and funders including COAT, Transport Scotland, Sport Scotland, Sustrans, local authorities. At this age we anticipate that our direct contribution over the period would amount to 10 percent.
19. Again, if the plan is approved we will include the capital elements within the National Park Capital Investment Programme and put works forward for any ad hoc capital bidding as appropriate.
20. Other funding is also required to deliver a range of non-capital items such as leaflets, web design and promotion. Our commitment to this area of work is estimated at £5,000 per annum – within current budgets.
21. The partners agree that a dedicated full-time project officer for the first two years of the plan is the best way of ensure success, and develop a project that can, beyond the first years, be delivered by partners within our existing resources. We are in discussion with Sustrans about the funding of this post. Note, Sustrans currently fund the development officer promoting electric assisted cycles in CNP.

### ***Presentational Implications***

22. As stated in paragraphs 1-4 interest in cycling is at the greatest it has been in the last half century. There are real opportunities to capture this enthusiasm and build on an already strong and committed partnership to make cycling outstanding in the Cairngorms. Collectively we can create a cycling legacy that we all wish to see arising from having the Commonwealth Games taking place in Scotland.

### ***Implications for Stakeholders***

23. There is strong support amongst stakeholders for an effective and integrated approach to delivering the Cycling Action Plan. The workshop at the Lecht

demonstrated this very effectively and stakeholders will be enthused to see it in place and, for those involved in funding, it will be an effective mechanism to show value for money.

## Recommendations

24. **That the Board:**
- a) **Approves, in principle, the Cycling Action Plan subject to final decisions on future funding commitment being made as part of the Corporate Plan once we have reached agreement with partners.**

## Next Steps

25. If approved, the next step will be to work closely with partners to develop more detailed and allocated costs, including support for a potential two year project officer, for approval as part of the Corporate Plan process. We will also develop individual capital projects in readiness for ad hoc capital bids and other funding packages such as Lottery bids. During this work we will also use the monitoring framework in the action plan to develop a set of key indicators that will allow us to regularly and concisely determine the effectiveness of the plan. These indicators will include length of new cycle way constructed and cycle use on key routes such as Old Logging and Deeside Ways.

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**27 September 2013**  
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