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# CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

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## FOR DECISION

**Title: PROPOSED COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT AND RENEWAL BILL**

**Prepared by: Françoise van Buuren, Communications and Engagement Director  
Claire Ross, Community Support and Education Programme Manager**

### **Purpose**

This paper is to inform Board Members of the background and general content of the Scottish Government Consultation document on the proposed Community Empowerment and Renewal Bill and to agree our proposed response.

### **Recommendation**

That the Board agree the proposed response to the consultation outlined in paragraph 15.

### **Executive Summary**

The Scottish Government and COSLA are undertaking a radical review of how public services can be improved to deliver better outcomes for local communities. Whilst this will build on existing structures and processes there is a need for new statutory duties if the review recommendations are to be implemented successfully. The emphasis is on taking a preventative, early intervention and stronger and more integrated focus on 'place'. Community Planning Partnerships and Single Outcome Agreements are seen as the cornerstone to deliver this fundamental change in how public services can deliver better outcomes for local communities across Scotland. This review provides a real opportunity to demonstrate how the collaborative approach taken by Scotland's National Parks is helping to deliver better outcomes in local communities and gain increased support from our public sector partners for the delivery of the National Park Partnership Plans. It should also support our future vision for how we provide community support which aims to help communities to do things for themselves.

## PROPOSED COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT AND RENEWAL BILL - FOR DECISION

### Background

1. Community Planning is a process which helps public agencies to work together with the community to plan and deliver better services which make a real difference to people's lives.
2. The aims of Community Planning in Scotland are:
  - a) Making sure people and communities are genuinely engaged in the decisions made on public services which affect them; allied to
  - b) A commitment from organisations to work together, not apart, in providing better public services.
3. Two key principles are:
  - a) Community Planning is the key over-arching partnership framework helping to co-ordinate other initiatives and partnerships and where necessary acting to rationalise and simplify a cluttered landscape;
  - b) The ability of Community Planning to improve the connection between national priorities and those at regional, local and neighbourhood levels.
4. Earlier this year the Scottish Government and COSLA held a review of Community Planning and Single Outcome Agreements (SOAs). At the heart of the review is the desire to establish a genuine step change in the outcomes approach and partnership working across public services in Scotland.
5. Public services in Scotland face unprecedented challenges: to improve outcomes for the people of Scotland and reduce inequalities at a time of increased demand, by ensuring the best use of increasingly limited resources. As the report of the Christie Commission made clear, many of the answers to these challenges require public agencies to focus on communities and work more effectively together to reduce demand pressures through a significant shift towards prevention, early intervention and a stronger and much more integrated focus on 'place'.
6. The review produced a Statement of Ambition setting out a vision and key principles for the future of community planning, which was endorsed by the Scottish Government and COSLA and published on 15 March 2012. A copy of the statement is attached in Annex I.
7. The Scottish Government and COSLA subsequently agreed a set of proposals to implement the review's conclusions. Those proposals are:
  - a) A new statutory duty on individual partners to work together to improve outcomes for local communities through participation in community

- planning partnerships (CPPs) and the provision of resources to deliver SOAs;
- b) Placing formal requirements on CPPs to ensure that collaboration is made as effective as possible; and
  - c) Establishment of a joint national group to provide strategic leadership and guidance to CPPs.
8. This set of practical measures is designed to significantly strengthen community planning as a core part of the public service reform agenda. Ensuring that the conclusions of the review are fully delivered therefore presents major opportunities to achieve a real step change in the outcomes approach and partnership working across the public sector.

### **Consultation on the Proposed Community Empowerment and Renewal Bill**

9. To deliver the Statement of Ambition, new statutory duties will be needed to fulfil the recommendations of the review. On 6 June the Scottish Government launched an initial public consultation on its proposed Community Empowerment and Renewal Bill.
10. The proposed aim of the Bill is to strengthen opportunities for communities to take independent action to achieve their own goals and aspirations and ensure communities are able to have a greater role in determining how their local public services are delivered. The deadline for responses to the consultation is 19 September 2012 and responses will then inform the preparation of the draft Bill, which is expected to be the subject of formal consultation in summer 2013.
11. The Consultation is asking for views on three topics:
- a) **Strengthening Participation** – services should be built around and with people and communities, paying attention to their needs, aspirations, capacities and skills
  - b) **Unlocking Enterprising Community Development** – communities owning assets, being able to bring unused and underused assets in their areas back into use
  - c) **Renewing our Communities** – local authorities should have appropriate powers and communities can play an important role to take action to deal with vacant or unused property
12. The consultation will also consider how to empower communities and reinvigorate participation and how legislation can build on and promote best practice, remove barriers and provide a framework of support where necessary. Community Capacity building will be dealt with through new strategic guidance for CPPs on Community Learning and Development (CLD) and the Bill will be developed alongside national policies on equality and strengthening communities.

## Implications for CNPA and Cairngorms National Park

13. This review and associated consultation provides an excellent opportunity to improve how community services are delivered across Scotland and within the Cairngorms National Park. The Government is looking for radical reform in order to deliver better outcomes through a greater emphasis on prevention, early intervention and a stronger and much more integrated focus on 'place'. National Park Partnership Plans provide an excellent start in this process and we should look to ensure that National Parks and the contribution they can make are fully understood by our Local Authority partners and those involved in the national review.
14. Our approach to community engagement, planning and support has a number of strengths which could contribute towards identifying best practice through our consultation response. In addition, the consultation provides us with the opportunity to make strong recommendations for changes in statutory duties which will help ensure the delivery of the National Park Partnership Plan.

## Recommendations

15. **In order to make an impact through our consultation response it is proposed we should focus on three main points. We are also working with Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Authority and SNH to see whether our response can be strengthened by endorsing each of our responses where this is possible.**
  - a) **Community Planning Partnerships operating within National Parks should have a statutory duty to fully incorporate the National Park Partnership Plan and associated Local Development Plan as the basis for their integrated plans focused on 'place' that affect communities within the Park. National Park Authorities should also have a statutory duty to be active partners in the community planning process that affects communities in the National Park area.**
  - b) **The community planning process should include a requirement to support the delivery of the Land Use Strategy when developing their integrated plans for 'place'. This will ensure environmental requirements are taken into account to allow for sustainable economic growth which balances the needs of the community, environment and the economy.**
  - c) **National Park Partnership Plans are integrated plans for 'place' and have a strong emphasis on bringing public, private and voluntary organisations and individuals to work together to deliver improved outcomes. Community engagement and planning processes have**

played an essential role in preparing these plans. The approach taken in the Cairngorms National Park should be used to inform the consultation on how to empower communities, reinvigorate participation and how legislation can build on and promote best practice, remove barriers and provide a framework of support where necessary. An excellent example of how this has been delivered is the Tomintoul and Glenlivet Development Trust and regeneration plan.

## Implications

### *Financial Implications*

16. There are no financial implications involved in preparing this consultation response.

### *Presentational Implications*

17. The consultation response will be presented jointly with Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Authority if a shared response can be agreed and will support recommendations made by SNH which fit with the aims of the Park. The Tomintoul and Glenlivet Development Trust will be presented as an example of best practice involving a number of partners including the Cairngorms National Park Authority, Moral Council and HIE.

### *Implications for Stakeholders*

18. There are no implications for other organisations, stakeholders and communities.

## Next Steps

19. Subject to the Board's agreement to our proposed response as outlined in this paper this will be submitted before 19<sup>th</sup> September. Input to the final response will be sought from Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Authority, SNH and local community representatives and it is proposed the final response is approved by the Convener and Vice-Convener on behalf of the Board. We will also invite the Scottish Government team dealing with the Bill up for a visit to see our approach to community engagement, planning and support in action and to allow them to meet with community representatives.

**Francoise van Buuren**

**Claire Ross**

**31<sup>st</sup> August 2012**

[francoisevanbuuren@cairngorms.co.uk](mailto:francoisevanbuuren@cairngorms.co.uk)

[claireross@cairngorms.co.uk](mailto:claireross@cairngorms.co.uk)