
TOMINTOUL & GLENLIVET REGENERATION STRATEGY & ACTION PLAN



Prepared by
Urban Animation and Dhu Rural
for the Crown Estate and
Cairngorms National Park Authority

January 2012



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SUMMARY : A Vision For Tomintoul and Glenlivet

This Regeneration Strategy and Action Plan provide a framework to help local people, community organisations, businesses and agencies revitalise Tomintoul and Glenlivet. Four key ambitions anchor the Strategy :

1. Enable people to meet more of their daily living and working needs locally;
2. Enhance the area's recreation, hospitality, natural and heritage assets to attract visitors and investors;
3. Involve local people in shaping the future of their community;
4. Build a sustainable, flourishing low carbon economy.

The over-riding VISION is to promote Tomintoul and Glenlivet as a vibrant and distinctive place within the Cairngorms National Park.



1. The Community's Vision

In April 2011 members of the local community described their vision for Tomintoul and Glenlivet. They see the area as the Northern gateway to the Cairngorms, with opportunities to grow the visitor economy. Tomintoul is viewed as a focal point for a flourishing community of dispersed and remote settlements. These include the Braes of Glenlivet, Tomnavoulin, Chapeltown of Glenlivet and other isolated hamlets.

These areas also look to Grantown, Elgin and other Speyside towns for services and facilities. The area is described as 'isolated' and 'out on a limb' – detached from the key centres of Aviemore and Elgin, though many local people treat the latter as their main shopping destination.

The community values strongly its natural environment and generally regards living here as a privilege. This was underscored in consultations. However, there is evident anxiety about :

- The closure of local hotels;
- The loss of activity and employment;
- Fewer facilities and shops;
- A lack of choice;
- Potential threats to local services and the increasing impact on the area's tourism economy.

Distance from the main centres and lack of public transport limits opportunity, is a key cause of isolation and contributes to the high cost of alternative travel. People are also concerned about the scarcity of affordable housing for younger people and the ageing structure of their community. The community is seen as resilient – but only to a point. Many see their future compromised by lack of resources and by rising uncertainty.

Addressing this uncertainty by actively drawing on the community's own efforts and history of self-determination is seen as one way forward; another is to build stronger relationships with the two agencies which commissioned this study - the Crown Estate and the CNPA - and with the local authority Moray Council. These considerations are uppermost in the Regeneration Strategy and Action Plan.



The Framework for the Regeneration Strategy and Action Plan

The Brief for the Regeneration Strategy and Action Plan was launched August 2011 by the Crown Estate in conjunction with the Cairngorms National Park Authority. It followed on from the 2010 Consultation on the Cairngorms National Park Plan 2012-2017 and was subsequently informed by a Main Issues Report which identified seven key considerations likely to shape and safeguard the future of the National Park and its communities. These are :

- The special qualities of the National Park;
- Responsible use and consumption of resources;
- The need to support communities;
- Delivery of housing including affordable homes;
- Development of a coherent spatial strategy;
- Support for rural areas;
- Ensuring communities and businesses have improving connectivity and communications.

The Brief has produced four outcomes. A Baseline Assessment establishes the current 'health' and capacity of Tomintoul & Glenlivet, the challenges ahead and the policy and resources context within which regeneration and action will need to be delivered.

An Opportunities Paper identifies where and how the community and its partners might best deploy limited resources, recover failing assets, galvanise economic activity and unlock the potential of the community itself. A central aim is to build community and economic capital through local initiative and self determination.

The Regeneration Strategy and Action Plan set out the main building blocks for recovery and how these interconnect.

The Development Master Plan draws on each of the above. It brings the core themes – economic growth, effective use of land and building assets, social wellbeing, opportunities to 'unlock' potential and extract value, and prevailing policy and planning considerations – into a coherent spatial framework for sustainable regeneration.



What Are We Trying To Achieve?

The Baseline Assessment concluded that Tomintoul in particular is in 'structural decline' – it has lost much of its retail and hospitality base and has few alternatives on the horizon. The community may already be experiencing 'relative deprivation' in areas such as transport, access to local shops, consumer choice, localised education and training, connectivity and inward investment.

However the Baseline Assessment also concluded that T&G shares its recession experience with many other communities – larger and smaller. It is not unique. Accordingly, Tomintoul and Glenlivet will need to organise and compete for attention and for resources against other communities. Resources are scarce and prioritised. The community will need to make a cogent case for investment. It needs to differentiate its needs and clearly establish its aspirations. It lacks a clear identity and must build an 'offer' to attract funders, partners and visitors. This needs to demonstrate its potential.

A number of initiatives are already in the pipeline. A start has been made. But scalable and sustainable recovery depends on prioritising and implementing the Action Plan and Master Plan proposals. These have been designed to tackle key issues and deficits raised by the Baseline Assessment, notably :

- Reverse structural decline;
- Reinststate and sustain Tomintoul as a rural hub;
- Identify and find the means to unlock underused/redundant land and buildings;
- Improve promotion, attract attention, win investment, enable new enterprise;
- Build a broader and more resilient economy;
- Tackle social and economic disadvantages;
- Use the 7 issues in the Main Issues Report as a framework for aims and action;
- Involve the community in determining its own future;
- Build social capital and community capacity.



What Are The Main Challenges Ahead?

If the potential of the assets and opportunities at Tomintoul and Glenlivet is to be realised, a number of challenges must be addressed. These begin with the need to form stronger working relationships between those who will play a role in implementing the Regeneration Strategy - the local community, businesses, agencies, individuals. Some of these challenges will require long term action to achieve change, such as creating a more balanced and resilient community at Tomintoul and Glenlivet.

MAIN CHALLENGES

- Engaging the interest and sustaining involvement of the community
- Establishing a Community Development Trust
- Putting a T&G community-driven 'transform team' and regeneration strategy in place
- Working through opportunities/needs/aspirations and agreeing priorities
- Securing interim resources to pump prime early stage initiatives
- Building real effective partnerships - public, private, third sector
- Unlocking non-public sources of investment - housing, enterprise, services, transport etc.
- Defining and differentiating T&G - developing the main selling points
- Retrieving and re-using optimally the core assets - hotels, school, redundant land
- Strengthening the economic base, facilitating new durable enterprise
- Rebuilding Tomintoul's hospitality sector and recasting its visitor offer
- Making the best of wider housing, development, leisure opportunities
- Successfully working through relevant planning and policy constraints
- Creating a more balanced and resilient community
- Anticipating ageing, attracting young families to the area
- Improving connectivity and communications
- A coherent plan and action programme connecting with the National Park



How Do We Deliver Our Objectives?

Without clear mechanisms for delivery, the Regeneration Strategy, Action Plan and Master Plan will not achieve their full potential. A Community Development Trust and a 'Transform Team' should take the lead on delivery but the other relationships and approaches set out below could also be important in driving successful outcomes.

DELIVERING THE OBJECTIVES:

Identify and support 'local champions' to drive interest and transpose ideas into initiatives

Sustain a Community Development Trust (CDT) with a brief to attract resources and lead change

A core aim should be 3 year funding for the CDT and to support a Development Officer

Establish a 'Transform Team' for T&G, bringing together the CDT, the local community, public agencies such as CNPA, Moray Council and HIE, major landowners such as the Crown Estate to lead the delivery of key Actions

Agree from the Action Plan and Master Plan a set of viable early priorities

Devise targets, desired outcomes and a timetable for delivery

Identify and pursue 'early wins' - keeping a shop open, sustaining the SYHA hostel, develop local workspace

Determine quickly the possibilities for social enterprise on the school site - test the reality and detail of the Community Asset Transfer Strategy with Moray Council

Develop longer term projects with multiple outcomes eg live work housing, broadband for enterprise and eCare, conservation area status and visitor strategy, community enterprise and empowerment

Approach HIE, Crown Estate, Moray Council, CNPA and others to help identify and bid for grant funding in all areas of interest and activity - enterprise, economy, environment, food, energy, training, tourism

Create an 'officers contact group' to share resources, advice, mentoring, information

Link T&G into 'pilots' & projects - rural broadband, food & drink, eCare, remote learning

Approach Business Gateway and HIE to explore how new business can be 'incubated' at T&G

Ask HIE to help the CDT simulate an account managed community if it can't approve one here

Develop a T&G Development Prospectus - ask HIE to help - incorporate into the Master Plan

Invite providers to a symposium to explore how a mixed housing strategy can be delivered

Make someone responsible for active PR and promotion of T&G - establish and unify effort through a definitive brand



Route Map and Order Of Priority

Implementation of the Regeneration Strategy, the Action Plan and the Master Plan will require numerous short, mid and longer term Actions. Work on some of these Actions is already underway, such as the Crown Estate's proposed Mountain Bike centre.

Devising a firm 'route map' and prioritising proposed Actions lies in the hands of the local community, businesses, agencies and individuals working at Tomintoul, and Glenlivet.

1. ADDRESS THE MAIN UNCERTAINTIES

Determine what key partners CNPA, HIE, Moray, Crown Estate can actually contribute

Identify other partners/players - housing associations, social enterprises, developers

Take the initiative to influence the future end-uses of the Richmond Arms Hotel and Gordon Hotel, so that these accord with the community's needs and aspirations

Clarify with Moray Council how it sees the future of the school site - how can the community share in this as a 'player' or by way of 'planning gain'

Establish if possible the future of existing local services ... are any under imminent threat

Seek clarity from owners of all local shops/enterprises on their future plans

Determine quickly if T&G can secure any first stage funding for projects

Clarify long term future of the Tomintoul Surgery and the Glenlivet Surgery

2. CREATE AN EARLY WINS' STRATEGY TO BUILD CONFIDENCE AND IMPETUS

Develop the Mountain Bike Centre and ensure it has community spin-offs

Deliver the Outdoor Activity Hub - Glenlivet Estate Office

Progress a Caravan Site

Progress a Camp Site with full amenities

Secure the long term future of the SYHA hostel

Win funding to develop and enlarge the Tomintoul Walking Festival

Take forward the Landscape Partnership Bid for T&G

Source budgets and self help to improve presentation of Tomintoul

Explore if T&G can be part of the Highland and Island Broadband pilot

Link quickly with 'live' local initiatives eg Cairngorms Food for Life, Transition Towns

Identify early initiatives for Glenlivet and outlying settlements - tourism, crafts, B&B

Publicise wins, bring activity/successes to attention of media and investors

3. ESTABLISH THE LONG TERM STRATEGY - 'A SUSTAINABLE VISION FOR TOMINTOUL & GLENLIVET'

Long term funding for the Community Development Team

A new proactive and commercially focused 'Transform T&G' website

Establish a USP/theme around which a dedicated strategy can develop - 'Rural Hub', 'Gateway', Authenticity

Create an 'Investment Prospectus' - aim for a symposium June 2012

Agree a 10 point 5 Year Vision - set out what T&G should have achieved by 2017

Prioritise the Action Plan & circulate to partners

Engage Moray Council & CNPA on implementation of the Master Plan



What Are The Most Desirable Outcomes?

The long term sustainability of Tomintoul and Glenlivet - and the success of the Regeneration Strategy - should be judged by a number of long term desirable outcomes. These underlie the VISION set out in the Summary at the opening of this document. They would see Tomintoul re-established and reinforced as a confident and flourishing rural hub, serving a rejuvenated community and economy at Glenlivet and the surrounding area.

DESIRABLE OUTCOMES FOR THE REGENERATION OF TOMINTOUL AND GLENLIVET

An engaged, balanced and resilient community

A diverse, all year round and evening based economy

Secure and sustainable employment options

A calendar of 6 key annual events to drive interest and build cohesion

A range of new housing options and tenures in place to facilitate growth

Improved connectivity and communications - an active telecommunity

Significant evidential progress towards making Tomintoul and Glenlivet a low carbon community - establish modest achievable goals with full community buy-in

The wider rural area established by 2017 as a primary visitor gateway

An efficient and sustainable transport plan for the area - involve the private sector

Implementation of the Master Plan

Affirmation to the community that it is not 'an economic backwater'

The re-establishment of Tomintoul as a flourishing rural hub - open for business

PART 2 : ACTION PLAN



A FRAMEWORK FOR PRIORITISATION

The Action Plan sets out a range of proposals and opportunities which are intended to contribute towards delivery of the Regeneration Strategy. Prioritisation of these Actions lies in the hands of the local community, businesses and agencies working at Tomintoul, and Glenlivet.

A close working relationship between these parties and the successful formation of a Community Development Trust and 'Transform Team' as enabling and potential delivery vehicles will be crucial to the overall success of the Regeneration Strategy.

The Action Plan identifies ten main themes :

- ACTION 1 : Boost the Local Economy
- ACTION 2 : Assets - Unlocking Potential
- ACTION 3 : Community and Wellbeing
- ACTION 4 : Connectivity, Live Work, Telecommunity
- ACTION 5 : Early Outcomes, Quick Wins
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Action 1 : Boost the Local Economy

CREATE A 'TRANSFORM TEAM'

Identify and support 'local champions' to drive interest and help transpose ideas into initiative. Establish and secure interim funding for a local Community Development Trust (CDT) comprising local people with business, PR, IT, leadership skills and energy to drive this. Encourage the wider community to accept change and to review/adapt behaviour. It will need to seek out partners to 'enable' it to establish relevant structures, objectives and bids for funding. There is not a 'do nothing' option. A positive first step has been taken in organising a meeting between the local community and representatives of the Development Trusts Association Scotland. A key objective should be funding for a 3 year Development Officer post (full time or shared). Ensure that key agencies, businesses and community groups participate effectively in a 'Transform Team'.

SKILLS FOR RECOVERY

- (i) Continue to press the case with HIE for establishing T&G as an 'Account Managed Community' (AMC) in an adapted form if T&G do not meet the established criteria;
- (ii) At the very least ask HIE to help simulate an AMC-type strategy that the CDT can build on;
- (iii) CNPA to raise with local MSP;
- (iv) Enlist the expertise of community organisations/social enterprises skilled in making grant applications;
- (v) Explore short term - 6 month - secondment opportunities with HIE, CNPA, Moray Council, Crown Estate, private sector.

WORK WITH THE CAIRNGORMS BUSINESS PARTNERSHIP

- (i) Support proposals for a Cairngorms Economic Development & Diversification Strategy. Submit findings / recommendations from the Baseline Assessment and Opportunities Paper;
- (ii) Get involved with the proposed Cairngorms Enterprise Forum;
- (iii) Support the CBP in its proposals to establish sustainable businesses and viable infrastructure in the National Park. In particular promote, via the Community Development Trust, the importance of training and skills development to enable the economic base of T&G to diversify and to facilitate new start-up enterprise.
- (iv) Lobby to ease restrictions that may confine support to Account Managed Communities (see above)
- (v) Promote the need for a dedicated economic development strategy that embraces small remote communities like T&G;
- (vi) Promote a small 'incubator' centre for start ups at Tomintoul based on the CBP idea for 'business development parks' Focus on a specific strategy of the CNP eg a food and drink cluster, low carbon enterprise, rural activity & pursuits, green tourism. Start-ups will benefit from the critical mass and peer reinforcement that 'clustering' will bring. This could be developed at The Richmond Hotel if emerging ideas proposed by its recent purchaser do not materialise.

BUILD THE EVENING ECONOMY

The impact and prospects of the proposed Outdoor Hub and Mountain Bike Centre and events like the Walking Festival will be significantly enhanced by creating a wider 'critical mass'. Efforts should be made to support the Crown Estate's investment by exploring where and how a social outlet aimed directly at younger people can be developed in Tomintoul, for example an outdoor themed 'Sports Café/Bar'. This would also attract trade from Lecht and discussions should be held with the owners of Lecht 2090 and local social enterprises, among others, to establish their interest in supporting the development of a combined Café/Bar with all year round 'bunk house' accommodation. This should include approaching the new owner of the Richmond Arms Hotel.

LOW CARBON ECONOMY

The aim must be to ensure a sustainable regeneration strategy for Tomintoul and Glenlivet that synchronises in all areas – enterprise, environment, household, leisure, transport, use of resources - with the Scottish Government Economic Strategy to exploit Scotland’s primary objective, a low carbon economy.

The CDT should seek guidance from the CNPA in devising a mission statement and strategy for promoting a low carbon community at T&G. The Baseline Assessment and the Opportunities Paper identified sequestering carbon, flood management, the development of sports and more active ‘green tourism’ as likely to provide opportunities locally to expand the role of the natural environment as an economic driver and tool for regeneration.

There are notable sensitivities and ‘costs/benefits’ in developing some aspects of the low carbon economy locally and the CDT will need to tread with care and with the benefit of expertise to hand. We recommend that discussions are held specifically with the CNPA on where T&G might best meet the aspirations of the Cairngorms National Park Plan 2012-2017. Relevant interests will include the Crown Estate, the Forestry Commission and other local estates. Additional advice can be sought from, among others, low carbon enterprises such as the Laggan Forest Trust, Green-heat Initiative, Caledonian Forest Services.

PUMP PRIMING INITIATIVES

The Moray Council is trying to put in place a Moray Renewables Benefit Fund, which is intended to assist those areas which have no direct community benefit from wind farms. This too should be explored as a potential source of funding for researching low carbon projects at Tomintoul and Glenlivet.

PROVIDE LOW COST START-UP SPACE

Tomintoul lacks a ‘rural workspace’ or ‘rural hub’ that could attract and serve the needs of a small cluster of individuals, SMEs and start-ups in a single location. Not everyone will wish to work from home and some may outgrow it. There is currently no suitable place to graduate to.

The area lacks a low cost ‘incubator’ facility – an increasingly valued asset in remote rural communities. This is a serious deficit and should be remedied quickly, not least given that proposals to provide this at the school could take a long time or not materialise at all. The opportunity needs to be seized now.

Local landowners and estates could play an instrumental role in either building or converting suitable premises to a Rural Workspace Hub. Evidence in a large number of rural locations – many of them ‘remote rural’ – proves time and again that facilities of this sort fill quickly. They are a key factor in the decision of many individuals to take a chance and start their own business, particularly where recession forecloses employment. CNPA, HIE, the Crown Estate and Moray Council should be approached in the first instance.

ESTABLISH A DEFINITIVE BRAND

Tomintoul’s future may lie in strengthening its ‘Gateway’ status. The focus could be on being better value, more tranquil, less congested and more characteristic of the area/region. Authenticity is a strong suit for T&G. Better presentation is also required. Tomintoul lacks a ‘marketing presence’ but the emerging relationship between Tomintoul & Glenlivet Highland Holidays and the Cairngorms Business Partnership could address this.

The gateway function needs to be far better defined :

- (i) Setting out the components, goods, services associated with this role;
- (ii) It requires much improved signage to and at the entry points and within the village;
- (iii) A dedicated well-produced promotional brochure;
- (iv) A separate enterprise and investment-focused website ‘Open for Business’;
- (v) Definitive and active branding with a simple strap line ‘eg Tomintoul - Your Gateway to the Cairngorms’ or similar. This should be driven home in everything it says and does.

Action 2 : Assets - Unlocking Potential

SECURE THE FUTURE OF THE HOTELS

Now that the two hotels have secured a buyer it is vital to the long term sustainability of Tomintoul that any proposed end uses are consistent with both the community's and economy's needs. High level exploration concerning the future use of both hotels and what is best for the area should be explored. CNPA and HIE are best placed to lead on this. Exploration here means

- (i) Securing an early meeting with the new owners;
- (ii) Determining and assessing their intentions within the context of the Baseline Assessment and the Regeneration Strategy;
- (iii) A review of public sector means to influence and support a preferred end use for both assets;
- (iv) Development of an early vision statement from the owners that can be considered by the CDT and the community at large;
- (v) Clarification of the new owners intentions for each building, timescales for proposed reinstatement and confirmation that resources are in place to restore both assets to a full vitality.

CLARIFY ASSET TRANSFER

A formal discussion must begin quickly with The Moray Council to explore if and how the local community could engage with Moray's Community Asset Transfer strategy and whether this is a realistic way of 'unlocking' development and re-use of the former high school. This discussion should also explore potential 'planning gain' and 'windfall' scenarios if the school is demolished and the site is developed commercially by a private sector party.

Action 3 : Community Wellbeing

CLARIFY THE FUTURE OF LOCAL SERVICES

Wellbeing must be the ultimate aim of a regeneration strategy. It is enhanced where people have a greater degree of confidence about the services that affect their daily lives. 4/5ths of people consulted about the effects of public service cuts thought that these would be severe in Tomintoul. There is considerable uncertainty locally regarding the future sustainability of the village.

An important practical starter for the Action Plan should include establishing a degree of clarity where possible on the medium future of :

- (i) Both primary schools;
- (ii) Tomintoul library;
- (iii) The GP surgeries at Tomintoul and Glenlivet;
- (iv) Museum and Tourist Information Point;
- (v) Post Office/General Store;
- (vi) Glen Avon Hotel;
- (vii) The two churches;
- (viii) The Youth Hostel (CNPA currently exploring);
- (ix) The future intentions of local shops/hospitality providers;
- (x) Prospects for any transport initiatives.

SUPPORT YOUNGER PEOPLE

The Regeneration Strategy must embrace education and training and promote social opportunity. Loss of young people needs to be addressed by a raft of measures :

- (i) Accessible training and education;
- (ii) Employment choices;
- (iii) Affordable housing
- (iv) Leisure opportunities;
- (v) It is vital that distance and virtual learning and other forms of educational access are made available. Moray College UHI has expressed its willingness to review how it might improve access to learning at Tomintoul;
- (vi) This should be taken up immediately in the form of a College-Community evening meeting to explore issues, gaps, opportunities and ideas for rural education and training delivery;
- (vii) This should also incorporate the work already underway led by Moray Council's Libraries and Museums Manager in developing a network of rural learning centres.

Action 4: Connectivity, Live Work, Telecommunity

SECURE FASTER BROADBAND

A concerted effort should be made to secure a faster broadband infrastructure for the area. The regeneration strategy should include exploring with CNPA, Moray Council and HIE if and how Tomintoul and Glenlivet could be included as one of the 50 or so 'hubs' in the HIE-led broadband pilot for the Highlands and Islands funded by BDUK. The nearest proposed hub currently is Dufftown.

An economic case needs to be made to HIE. This should focus on the structural decline of Tomintoul and on the positive opportunities for creating enterprising, sustainable rural communities which contribute to the social, cultural and economic health of the Cairngorms National Park. This would synchronise with a number of the key issues captured in the Main Issues Report. CNPA, the CDT and Transform Team should co-operate fully on this campaign.

ESTABLISH A RURAL PILOT

The potential for Tomintoul and Glenlivet to benefit from broadband improvement driven by Aberdeenshire Council for its isolated rural communities could also be explored. CNPA and Moray Council are exploring potential collaborative bids with Aberdeenshire for rural broadband funding. There is still scope to influence this. Tomintoul and Glenlivet may offer a suitable test-bed for an 'isolated rural community hub' that also facilitates joined-up public sector services.

MOBILE CONNECTIVITY

Approaches could also be made to Virgin and to BT to explore if T&G could be a remote rural pilot for new home based transceivers currently being trialled as a solution to poor rural signals and cumbersome reception structures. These new generation 'femtocells' or 'nanocells' are expected to shift and speed the technical access to improved phone signals by strengthening the traditional service provided from a few isolated masts to a new network of transceivers located in the home. The user would have their own dedicated mobile phone receiver located at their home which would provide phone coverage over an extensive area.

DEVELOP LIVE WORK HOUSING OPTIONS

The lack of affordable rural Live Work housing is a primary deficit in housing supply and function nationally but also within remote rural communities. Currently, only a tiny proportion of new affordable dwellings in Scotland have the space and functionality to enable people on low incomes or without employment to reshape their economic circumstances by working from home.

Housing linked with employment is essential to sustainable villages. Housing outcomes here should incorporate the connectivity infrastructure and the design and specification to enable home working. This should be explored with local housing associations with wider social enterprise objectives - Grampian HA, Langstane HA and Albyn – and with larger regional private house builders who may see an opportunity for new product development and 'market edge'.

CREATE A TELECOMMUNITY

This could bring a significant economic impetus to Tomintoul and Glenlivet :

- (i) It should be an essential aim of both new build development and housing refurbishment here;
- (ii) The development of a small Live Work pilot scheme, ideally linked to the BDUK broadband strategy, will drive forward this concept of community and association. It will provide the physical evidence that Tomintoul and Glenlivet is a service gateway for businesses which need to access skilled home workers. This IT gateway will act as a window on other skills in the community. This is simple, low cost capacity-building.
- (iii) Resources should also be sought to enable householders to 'retrofit' their homes with the relatively modest infrastructure and connectivity required to establish home-based enterprise.
- (iv) The Action Plan could promote a solution in which a grant of up to £500 per household matched by the householder might be bid from the funding currently available in the Highlands and Islands for the BDUK broadband pilot.

The majority of homes – both old and new - should have the capacity and flexibility to accommodate home working. Housing linked with employment is essential to long term sustainability. This would create economic opportunity and promote inclusion. With no 'overhead', Live Work is the most affordable form of accommodation for the 'rural entrepreneur'. A Telecommunity Association here would have economic, social and educational benefits.

Action 5 : Early Outcomes, Quick Wins

MOUNTAIN BIKE CENTRE

This has now received planning permission. Its development in 2012 will provide a visible and valuable demonstration that regeneration is now 'work in progress.' The proposal is to develop an all year round mountain bike centre consisting of visitor hub (car park and building) and to construct 19km of single track bike trail in the commercial forest plantations of Carn Meilich and Carn Daimh, on the Glenlivet Estate, Tomintoul. It will comprise a free-standing wooden building, which will incorporate a cafe area, information area and toilets. This will be sited to reduce visual impact.

The 2010 Scottish Recreation Survey reports that after walking and family outings (the main activity on 8% of visits) cycling/mountain biking (main activity on 5% visits) is the next most popular activity. The Estate estimates that this would attract up to 12,000 visitors in its first year helping to focus interest and expenditure in the area. The Centre should have a wider positive economic impact increasing demand for hospitality services and transport and likely to trigger new business and job creation locally. This should provide a platform for the CDT to promote wider investment in the tourism and leisure economy and particularly for short stay accommodation aimed at younger people.

It is intended to create 3 jobs on site and 3 more in Tomintoul. Visitors will be directed through Tomintoul, giving local businesses opportunity to benefit from increased trade. Expressions of interest have been invited for the operation of a catering business with potential opportunities to additionally explore a retail business, bike shop/hire etc. It is projected to open in Spring/Summer 2013.

CARAVAN SITE

The development of a caravan site is long overdue. However, discussions are now under way for a site located at the ED3 site in Tomintoul, beyond the commercial area adjoining the central tree belt to the rear of Conglass Lane. We understand that a planning application is envisaged for 2012 to enable opening in 2013.

This is a practical demonstration of the Crown Estate's role in helping to build much needed visitor infrastructure and in regenerating the area. This proposal should be delivered quickly so that it also supports demand arising from the Outdoor Hub proposal discussed below. Consideration should also be given to 'log cabin' facilities for active visitors seeking a longer holiday centred on Tomintoul, at this location, or as part of a proposed camp site development at the south of the village.

EXPAND THE WALKING FESTIVAL

The 2010 Scottish Recreation Survey estimated 48% of adults visited the outdoors for leisure or recreation at least once a week. Walking is the most popular outdoor recreational activity among adults and was the main activity on 73% of visits to the outdoors in 2010.

Tomintoul should be supported financially to develop its Walking Festival (just £6,500 invested in 2011) and build a significant year round offer as the low level walking centre for the Cairngorms. It should look to local landowners to support this with modest initiatives for caravan and camp sites. Moray Council and CNPA could provide a range of in kind support to the Festival team, notably advertising, PR, volunteers, office space, printing and distribution.

The community should review where it can help to grow the event – accommodation, transport & storage, refreshments, evening economy, a children's event. There is a potential food and drink dimension to be explored with Cairngorms Food for Life. The organisers should also be assisted to identify and access relevant grant streams.

SECURE THE FUTURE OF THE YOUTH HOSTEL

The Tomintoul Youth Hostel is underperforming and we noted in the Baseline Assessment that it closed early this year and appears not to employ anyone from the local community. SYHA have confirmed to CNPA that they intend to keep the Hostel open for now but that its future is under consideration. CNPA is urging a minimum 3 year commitment from SYHA which would help support and then derive benefits from the proposed Outdoor Activity Hub.

The Baseline Assessment noted that younger householder/property owners were unlikely to provide a B&B service locally and consideration should be given to encouraging/enabling young entrepreneurs to take on this facility if the SYHA withdraws. This should include exploring with SYHA whether it is able to 'joint venture' during a transition period of handover and whether it is able to provide a 'dowry' to a young investor/operator or a social enterprise. This is a useful well defined initiative for the CDT to support and to explore future potential.

OUTDOOR ACTIVITY HUB

The CDT should involve itself with current and proposed initiatives that would bring early outcomes for the regeneration strategy. A proposal is under discussion to establish the Glenlivet Estate Office as an 'Outdoor Hub' providing an information and service point for walking, cross country skiing and the new mountain bike centre. The proposal envisages creating a commercial opportunity around bike and ski hire, supply of outdoor gear, with possible facilities also provided for fishing needs. It is important that this proposal is accelerated. It would provide the area with an 'quick' win and would help to position Tomintoul as 'youth destination'. Addressing 'youth' and 'extreme sports' markets could be transformative.

- (i) It would refresh Tomintoul's image;
- (ii) it would provide a much needed spark to the evening economy;
- (iii) it would add strength to proposals cited elsewhere for attracting young entrepreneurs and developing a Creative Cluster.
- (iv) The proposal should be accompanied by a strong marketing platform.
- (v) It will need to address the lack of accommodation locally aimed at younger and more active visitors.

There are opportunities here to explore how the Hub would synergise with the Youth Hostel which appears to need an impetus of this type. Additional accommodation would also be required. This invites exploration of a low cost acquisition and specification for the Richmond Arms for this purpose. It would be very helpful to promote the centre as the Tomintoul Outdoor Hub.

ESTABLISH TOMINTOUL AND GLENLIVET YOUTHBUILD

Moray's Tourism Strategy calls for a programme of small scale infrastructure improvements to assist continued maintenance and repair of existing infrastructure and visitor amenity. There is an opportunity to establish a delivery vehicle that would serve a number of social and economic objectives:

- (i) Exploit the potential for regeneration works locally;
- (ii) Respond to the need to create employment opportunities;
- (iii) Find ways to retain young people in the community;
- (iv) Engage young people in new build & housing, refurbishment projects;
- (v) Involve them in the low carbon programme likely to develop in the National Park over the next ten years;
- (vi) Deliver Opportunity 10 - T&G Youthbuild. This is one way of re-building interest in apprenticeship - an aim of the Scottish Government;
- (vii) Explore this with Youthbuild UK, The Scottish Regeneration Centre, Business Gateway and Moray College. It would help realise the concept of Tomintoul as a 'service hub' playing its full part in the Park.

Action 6 : Housing

IMPROVE THE EVIDENCE BASE

Perceptions of what constitutes 'affordability' are low.

- (i) Greater clarity is required on whether local people are actually being denied accommodation and whether their existing accommodation is unsuitable.
- (ii) A clearer account of unoccupied dwellings and second homes ownership is required.
- (iii) An 'audit' of housing needs, conditions and availability should precede and inform the housing regeneration strategy. This could be undertaken by the Moray Council or a local RSL.

ENSURE HOUSING MIX

New housing development should not be preoccupied exclusively with affordable housing. Demographic balance, investment, enterprise and vitality will be better served by a programme of mixed housing development creating a 'mixed income community'. CNPA and Moray Council should focus in particular on :

- (i) Housing as a factor in local economic sustainability and which groups it should serve;
- (ii) The delivery of housing with employment options;
- (iii) How a mixed income/mixed tenure programme can be delivered through non-public subsidy;
- (iv) Provision of advice and support to community initiatives intended to promote alternative funding routes.

LOWER THE COST OF DEVELOPMENT

The development costs of new open market housing here are likely to be beyond the resources of most people seeking 'affordable accommodation' to buy. This presents two challenges :

- (i) The cost of residential land will need to be free or significantly discounted to attract housing providers (this may generate pressure for release of the school site at low or nominal cost under the Community Asset Transfer strategy if a housing trust can make a cogent case that low cost housing here would be an economic catalyst). In which case other ideas for this site (eg Creative Cluster) may be displaced to an alternative site such as the Richmond Arms Hotel, if the new owners are amenable and if some public funding was available.
- (ii) Volumes may need to be of a level (greater than the provisions of the Local Plan) where the developer can achieve economies of scale. The paradox is that Tomintoul has a number of brownfield and backland sites and empty properties requiring renovation that ought to be tackled alongside any new build programme. A number of residents made this point in their feedback.

Action 7 : Investing Here

CREATIVE CLUSTER

A programme of investment, business and enterprise start up initiatives is advocated locally involving funders, developers, local enterprises and people interested in starting their own business for the first time - especially young people. We have cited above as one Opportunity the idea of a Creative Cluster based on the high school or in the Richmond Arms Hotel. However, the Master Plan also identifies other sites in Tomintoul where a small cluster of creative businesses (or generic rural workspace) could be established.

(i) The CDT should approach Business Gateway and HIE to seek advice on sourcing funding and convening an 'awareness & interest event' for younger would be entrepreneurs focused on attracting start-ups to Tomintoul and Glenlivet. This will require cheap workspace accommodation being or soon likely to be in place.

Business Gateway should be invited to set out where it could;

(ii) Enable new micros and incubator businesses to originate locally and;

(iii) Eet out how it could help existing businesses to grow or prevent them from failing.

The CDT should encourage the Business Gateway to bring to bear a combination of online support, local workshops, training, impartial advice and specialist advisory services, access to resources and funding and also to provide valuable case studies for new 'learners' to draw on. A local seminar from the young Elgin-based software business Hunted Cow would demonstrate the steps and ingredients for local success.

LOCAL BUSINESS MONITORING

It is difficult to intervene in the disposal or sustainability arrangements of private enterprises but where business expectations and community confidence are low that there may be a strong case for doing so. While there is considerable speculation in Tomintoul that this business or that shop is bound to close soon this remains 'speculation' until the trader/owner actually places the property on the market.

It is very important that organisations which have a measure of interest in or responsibility for local sustainability, like CNPA and the Moray Council, have a clear and continuously up to date fix on the trading intentions and, ideally, the financial circumstances of local businesses functioning in a 'fragile economy'.

The Cairngorms Business Partnership publishes a 'Business Barometer' survey which has a T&G section. This could be developed further to ensure it offers detailed information which can inform economic planning and enable appropriate interventions and support (or simply buy time to help source replacement investors).

ESTABLISH AN INVESTMENT TEAM

A number of local business people have commented that 'the banks aren't lending in Tomintoul'. The prospect for new investment and new enterprise is likely to be very difficult if this proves to be the case. The community has a pool of business expertise that the CDT and a Transform Team should be able to draw on and it is important that knowledge and expertise is made available to the Trust in the first instance. A number of steps are required;

(i) A 'business case' for T&G needs to be drawn up so that local investors and borrowers have something to encourage banks and other lenders that regeneration initiatives are under way. This needs to be done now - well ahead of formal requests for loans and other funding applications 6-12 months down the line. Otherwise they will fail. This will require some leadership from the main public sector agencies who may also need to build lender confidence by setting out what they can do for borrowers - particularly for new start-ups and expansion of SMEs (grants, advice, interim support);

(ii) We suggest that someone with investment expertise is tasked with identifying progressive and less conventional lenders such as Triodos Bank, The Ecology Building Society, Cooperative Bank and Trusts and Foundations which have 'sustainability objectives' such as the Tudor Trust and Esmee Fairbairn Foundation;

(iii) An investment programme should also explore funding through partnership, equity stakeholding and joint venture and through pump priming by social enterprises;

(iv) It should also investigate any support available from the Scottish Government's Regeneration Team. This is likely to involve matching business 'silos' with relevant funding streams. This work needs to be undertaken before the Regeneration Strategy is under way;

(v) A Transform Team comprising a mix of public, private, voluntary agencies and representatives of the local community could be tasked with winning investment and progressing development. The idea of a rural pilot charged with testing a model for inward investment could synchronise with other HIE objectives (and provide a self help initiative capable of wider roll out in remoter areas) if the proposal to secure Account Managed Community status fails;

(vi) We recommend that the Regeneration Strategy and Action Plan incorporate a Tomintoul and Glenlivet Investment Prospectus (see closing para of the Opportunities Paper) and a series of investment symposia held at Tomintoul funded by CNPA and HIE (see The Heseltine Option - Opportunity 15).

INVEST IN FOOD PRODUCTION AND RETAIL

A primary concern is whether food retail has a future in Tomintoul. This is one of the most urgent issues affecting the village. It affects choice and wellbeing. Less than 10% of households purchase their full shop from local stores. Business here is increasingly unviable and action is required to support it :

(i) An immediate and concerted effort must be made to explore all options that could sustain and improve existing food retail and/or provide new retailers;

(ii) This effort must embrace private sector and social enterprise/community interest options and should be supported by the Cairngorms Food for Life project. Aberdeenshire has had some success in supporting community shops;

(iii) The CDT may wish to contact social enterprises with valuable experience and expertise to draw on including The Aberdeen Foyer Restaurant and Gallery (www.foyerrestaurant.com); CFINE Enterprise (www.cfine.org); LarderBytes (www.larderbytes.com); and Craighursts Keith -Cafe & Restaurant at Keith;

(iv) We also recommend establishing a 'Food & Drink Team' from within the community and supported by relevant agencies/partners to promote and develop the Tomintoul and Glenlivet offer;

(v) A particular effort should focus on establishing a baker, butcher and greengrocer at Tomintoul;

(vi) Food for Life should be asked to advise on and help introduce demand and supply chains.

Action 8 : Local Plan, Placemaking, Landscape

AN INTEGRATED APPROACH TO DEVELOPMENT

Sites for small-scale housing and workspace development are or will be needed to support local communities and retain young people. Diversification of the economy at Tomintoul and Glenlivet is essential for long-term prosperity. The Local Plan recognises the need to create opportunities for investment and diversification across the National Park. This requires a proactive spatial framework which is currently lacking. The Master Plan provides a way forward.

We recommend a planned and integrated approach to housing, employment and workspace rather than relying on random and unplanned individual applications for development. The CDT should be the custodian of the Master Plan and it is important that they subscribe active public support for its proposals.

TOMINTOUL : FOCUS ON THE SETTLEMENT

Every effort must be made to facilitate development – housing, commercial, industrial, workspace – both within the existing settlement boundary of Tomintoul and on new development sites. Some sites are available in the village, including back land opportunities, which would support residential and small scale rural workspace. In the consultations the community generally favoured infill first. However, this relies on individuals bringing forward proposals. To meet the ambitions of the Regeneration Strategy, it will be necessary for larger landowners, such as the Crown Estate, to promote development on expansion sites. It is also vital to sustain the planned historic settlement pattern - not least if Tomintoul is to make a promotional virtue of it.

ENCOURAGING GOOD QUALITY DEVELOPMENT

It is important to endorse CNPA intentions to support rural communities by providing for growth which respects historic context and local identity. This is particularly relevant to Tomintoul given its history as a planned village and proposals advanced in this Action Plan for Conservation Area status. We support CNPA's use of the landscape character assessment and planning policy to encourage appropriate development.

The Master Plan examines opportunities for new development in Glenlivet and the rural area to support the proposals set out in the Regeneration Strategy and Action Plan. It also explains how detailed Design Guidance could help to establish clear principles which would assist architects, designers and developers in devising good quality proposals.

DESIGNATING A CONSERVATION AREA

Tomintoul is a unique asset in danger of being compromised by lack of resources and random development at odds with the historic form and concept. A first stage action would be to put a case to The Moray Council for the designation of a Conservation Area and the establishment of a heritage trail at Tomintoul. It is important that the proposed Conservation Area has the support of the CDT, CNPA, HIE and a future Transform Team (recognising the economic merits of designation). In our view no formal submission should be made until it is clear that this has broad support.

A Conservation Area Appraisal will be required, highlighting the history of the planned village; its historic features and buildings; location and landscape setting; and the need to conserve and reinstate architectural assets in decline or at risk. It should catalogue Tomintoul's buildings and identify those from the original planned settlement. Expertise could be sourced from UHI, North East Scotland Preservation Trust (NESPT), Scottish Civic Trust or suitable consultants.

The Master Plan sets out preliminary notes on the value and importance of Tomintoul's built heritage and discusses the proposed Conservation Area in greater detail.

LANDSCAPE PARTNERSHIP BID

A decision has been made to focus the CNPA Landscape Partnership Bid on the Tomintoul and Glenlivet area (and possibly into StrathDon). Landscape Partnerships (LP) is a Heritage Lottery Fund grant programme normally delivered by a partnership made up of regional, national and local organisations with an interest in the area, community groups and members of the community. The programme embraces a portfolio of smaller projects, which together provide long-term social, economic and environmental benefits for a rural area. This could provide an opportunity to explore :

- (i) establishing a Rural Youthbuild project to assist with small works;
- (ii) contributing to entry and exit landscape improvements to Tomintoul;
- (iii) linking to the Community of Crafts Opportunity in the wider hinterland;
- (iv) helping to shape the content of a future Visitor & Heritage Centre (or enlarged Museum) by contributing artefacts/ findings/interpretation developed from its archaeological and archival activity';
- (v) providing means and materials to help establish a visitor and schools offer based around field expeditions and landscape studies centred on 'archaeology, ancestry, people and landscape'.

Action 9 : Partners and Players

BUILD A BROAD SUPPORT AND CONSENSUS

It is important that the CDT builds a range of partners and 'mentors' in the public, private and third sectors and across the full range of its interests and responsibilities. The key areas are funding & investment (including grant applications), connectivity, economy, enterprise, environment, education & training, food & drink, healthcare, housing, leisure, tourism, wellbeing. Potential partners are identified throughout the Opportunities and Action Plan papers but the list is by no means exhaustive.

In particular, and given the depletion of public sector financial resources, we advise the CDT to take early steps to meet with social enterprises and community interest companies (a number operate in the Moray and Grampian areas). This will help to shorten the CDT's 'learning curve' and enable it to draw on proven expertise. These may provide opportunities for partnership and investment but, if not, can be valuable sources of information and advice. There are thriving social enterprises in the region in areas such as housing, food & drink, healthcare, education & training, and in business and community services.

Given the increasing emphasis on non-public funded development it is imperative that the CDT also explores how the private sector can contribute to the regeneration strategy particularly in areas such as housing, workspace, leisure, transport. The CDT might also wish to explore with large retailers such as Tesco, Asda, the Cooperative and Morrisons if and how they might be able to strengthen the rural retail offer by extending rather than reducing local choice. This might focus on improving the supply chain to local shops rather than simply undermining them through internet delivery.

In the public sector we have identified opportunities to investigate support from or explore 'pilots' with UHI Moray College (education & training); Dr Grays Hospital at Elgin (eCare & Telecare); HIE (rural broadband pilots); The Moray Council (transfer of community assets); Housing Associations (delivery of mixed housing schemes). The business sector also provides a strong platform for support, advice and for networking. Organisations like the Cairngorms Business Partnership with over 300 members, the Destinations Management Organisations, Creative Cairngorms, the Chambers of Commerce and Cairngorms Farmers Market all have something to offer T&G.

There are also numerous trusts, venture philanthropists (about one fifth of Scotland's Rich List is Highlands based) and grant making foundations that are both Scotland and Highlands based and these should not be overlooked. A well targeted and skillfully produced grant application can be a valuable source of both capital and revenue funding.

WORK WITH THE CROWN ESTATE

The Estate could be an important partner to the CDT. This could involve support in kind through transfer of skills, expertise, advice, mentoring, meeting space and admin support. In particular a discussion should focus on :

- (i) assistance with grant applications;
- (ii) areas in which the Estate can provide 'in kind' advice and mentoring skills to the community;
- (iii) provision of a low cost rural workspace hub for micros and incubator enterprises;
- (iv) opportunities for renewable energy and land use;
- (v) specific support for a rural Youthbuild initiative at Tomintoul and Glenlivet;
- (vi) opportunities to enhance local food skills and produce and engagement with Food for Life;
- (vii) low cost or free interim office base for a Tomintoul & Glenlivet Development Worker (under active consideration).

Action 10 : Transport

EXPLORE A WIDER RANGE OF POTENTIAL OPTIONS

The lack of a regular bus service connecting Tomintoul and Glenlivet with main centres reduces employment, service and social options for both communities and amounts to 'relative deprivation'. It has a major impact on hospitality and food retail. This is an urgent area for review and for further exploration of options.

Transport is a key consideration in housing and employment sustainability. We urge a similar approach to that proposed for the hotels : exploring all avenues – public, private, social enterprise, voluntary - for viable propositions. This work could be undertaken as a short term project by a senior manager within HIE, CNPA or Moray Council or better still by an experienced transport manager within a regional transport provider persuaded to support the endeavour with 'in kind' expertise. The scope of search and consultation should include Stagecoach/Rapsons (Highland Country Buses); D&E Coaches; Bremners; Ewens (Ullapool); Moray Council's Dial-a-Bus, Taxi companies (Elgin, Aviemore, Grantown, Inverness); Private for Hire companies; Inverness Private Hire; Scottish Highland Tours; Inverness Airport (shuttle services); Social enterprises (or start one).

In addition a number of proposals put forward by the Cairngorms Business Partnership should be supported, notably :

- (i) facilities on buses or other transport to carry cycles/mountain bikes;
- (ii) better integration of bus and train timetables;
- (iii) the establishment within the National Park of a road haulage transport hub that will enable more efficient distribution of fresh produce;
- (iv) improved bus services to meet seasonal demand at key locations;
- (v) Creation of new tourism circular routes to open up the remoter areas and settlements of the Park.

We have suggested in the Opportunities Paper that the idea of a 'Roamer Bus Service' integrating transport needs including airport transfers, GP and hospital visits, tourism hire, work services, social hire and links to Grantown should be explored.

ROADS AUDIT

Moray Council's Roads Department has agreed to prepare an 'Access Audit', which will set out what the current roads asset in Tomintoul consists of. This should assist in determining who owns the various private lanes at Tomintoul - some of which are adopted but others may be private and possibly in Crown Estate ownership. It is important that ownership and status is understood to help inform a Design Guide, support proposals for Conservation Area status and clarify access to land, buildings and potential development sites.



ACTION PLAN CHECKLIST

ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMING
Establish a Transform Team - Community Development Trust	Community	Under Way
Build the T&G economy; create an Account Managed Community or simulate the model	CDT, CBP, HIE, CNPA	2012
Secure funding for a T&G Development Worker	CDT/HIE/CNPA/Others	2012
Help CDT identify grant opportunities	Crown Estate, HIE, CNPA , CBP, Business Gateway, Moray Council	2012
Work with the Cairngorms Business Partnership	CDT	2012
Sustained Focus on Tomintoul as a Rural Hub	CDT, CNPA, Moray Council	Ongoing
Determine possibilities for local social enterprise	CDT, Moray Council	Early 2012
Clarification statement on future of local services	CDT, Moray Council, NHS Grampian, CNPA	Without delay
Develop the Mountain Bike Centre-	Crown Estate, Private Operators	Progressing March 2013
Outdoor Activity Hub – Glenlivet Estate Office	Crown Estate, Private Operators	Progressing Spring 2013
Progress a Caravan Site	Crown Estate	Progressing March 2013
Develop a Creative Cluster	Business Gateway, CNPA, CDT, CBP	2013
Establish a Rural Youthbuild project	Business Gateway, Social Enterprise, CDT, CNPA	2012
Address localised education, training, skills needs	CDT, UHI Moray College	
Investigate Broadband pilots	CNPA, HIE, Moray Council	
Investigate eCare & Telecare pilots	CDT, UHI, Dr Grays, NHS Grampian	
Attract non-public subsidised housing investment	Community Land Trust, Private Housebuilders	2012-13
Create a T&G Investment Team. Monitor local business and retail performance; promote investment opportunities	CDT, CBP, Crown Estate, local businesses	2012
Promote Live Work; Develop a Tomintoul Telecommunity	HIE, Business Gateway, CNPA, housing providers,	2012-13

CONTINUES OVER /



ACTION PLAN CHECKLIST

ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMING
Focus development at the core of Tomintoul	CDT, CNPA, Moray Council, Crown Estate	2012
Lobby for inclusion of T&G as a 'remote rural pilot' for the HIE (BDUK) Broadband pilot	CDT, CNPA, Moray Council, HIE, Aberdeenshire Council	Without delay
Ideally, secure the reinstatement of The Gordon Hotel as a hotel and functions Centre	CNPA & HIE intervention Private Sector/Individual Social Enterprises, CDT	Without delay
Establish likely availability and value of the school site via the Community Asset Transfer Strategy	CDT, Moray Council, CNPA	Without delay
Promote and achieve a Low Carbon Economy	CDT, CNPA, householders. All agencies, businesses	Without delay
Secure Conservation Status	CDT, Moray Council	Mid 2012
Take forward the Landscape Partnership Bid for Tomintoul and Glenlivet	CNPA	Under way in 2012
Seek private sector support to explore Transport opportunities	CDT, CNPA	Without delay
Clarify the future of the Youth Hostel - explore youth enterprise	CNPA, SYHA, CDT	Under way
Expand the Walking Festival - make Tomintoul and Glenlivet the low level walking centre	Festival team, CNPA, CDT, Crown Estate, Visit Scotland	Summer 2012

