



For Discussion

**Title: Cairngorms Trust and Community Led Local
Development Update**

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Purpose

This paper presents an update on the work of the Cairngorms Local Action Group Trust ('the Cairngorms Trust') and the collective work of the Cairngorms Trust and the Park Authority in Community Led Local Development (CLLD) activity.

Recommendations

The Board is asked to:

- a) Whether the programmes of activity are making the expected contribution to the Cairngorms National Park Authority's agreed strategic outcomes.
- b) Whether the delivery updates suggest any strategically significant impacts on the Cairngorms National Park Authority's agreed performance objectives.
- c) Whether any material impacts on the Cairngorms National Park Authority's strategic risk management and mitigation measures arise from assessment of programme delivery.

Performance Dashboard

Assessment of the delivery of work being taken forward by the Cairngorms Trust and in development of Community Led Local Development (CLLD) within the Cairngorms National Park against key performance measures is presented in the following table. The overall assessment and risk rating against these measures is presented as compared to the previous rating last reported to the Committee in June 2023.



Performance Measure	Prior Rating	Current Rating	Commentary
Finance: Deliver Cairngorms LEADER Programme, maximising use of resources made available.	Blue (Complete)	Blue (complete)	Programme concluded 31 December 2021, with final project LEADER spend at 95% of allocation and total project expenditure at 168% of allocation after accounting for match funding levered into projects.
Audit: clean closure of LEADER Programme including monitoring and evaluation of performance indicators.	Blue (Complete)	Blue (complete)	All project records finalised. No matters arising with respect to LEADER closure over last 8 months. Suggest this can now be closed as an element of performance monitoring.
Policy: secure future Community Led Local Development (CLLD) of equivalent value to LEADER Programme allocation.	Amber	Green	Final allocation of £320,000 secured from national allocation of £7 million for 2022/23. Initial allocation of £225,000 for 2023/24, has been increased subsequently to £373,000 and in November to £403,000 through accessing further capital funds made available and successfully bid for. While no long term or multi-year commitment is in place, funding allocations to CLLD is now approaching previous LEADER Programme values.
Policy: Develop and implement voluntary giving mechanisms through Cairngorms Trust.	Amber	Amber	This remains a challenging area of work. Cairngorms Trust is seeking to reinvigorate the stakeholder group advising on the development of voluntary giving approaches while continuing to trial and test approaches.
Finance: increase voluntary giving returns within Trust's	Red	Red	Current level of returns over period of COVID restrictions well below



Performance Measure	Prior Rating	Current Rating	Commentary
future funding profile to a level which sustain costs of infrastructure and return meaningful surpluses for investment.			targeted levels and remain below original targets.
Policy: operation of charitable mechanism an effective element of National Park Partnership Plan priority delivery.	Green	Green	The capacity to work in partnership with an independent charity covering the Cairngorms has been a crucial element in successful delivery of Green Recovery Funding; in securing resource for CLLD made available over the last three years; and in community engagement in delivering local priorities. The use of the charity mechanism to establish the Cairngorms Youth Local Action Group as a delegated grant awarding body has received national prominence and now features as an exemplar approach in Scottish Government CLLD guidance for 2023/2024.

Strategic context

1. The National Park Partnership Plan for 2022 to 2027 includes the following objective:
 - a) B7 Community-led Planning and Development: Communities have up to-date community action plans and are supported by a community-led local development funding programme, delivering the National Park Partnership Plan.
2. This objective has an associated action of: develop and administer a new community-led development funding stream, which is being taken forward through the work covered by this paper.



3. The Park Authority's Corporate Plan agreed by the board in March 2023 includes the following relevant strategic objectives associated with this aspect of the National Park Partnership Plan:
 - a) Direct activity by the Park Authority: act as accountable body or other supporting role as required to underpin delivery of CLLD in Cairngorms.
 - b) Indirect activity supported or resourced by the Park Authority: influence strategic development of national focus on and design of CLLD to secure an adequate level of resourcing which continues to focus on Cairngorms NP as an administrative boundary.

Strategic risk management

4. Strategic risks of relevance to consideration of performance of the programmes of work considered by this paper are:
 - a) A1: Resource risk remedial mitigation: Continuing to support “delivery bodies” such as Cairngorms Nature, Cairngorms Trust in securing inward investment.
 - b) A11.1 Strategic Risk on Resourcing: Role as Lead / Accountable body for major programmes (e.g. LEADER, Landscape Partnership) has risk of significant financial clawback should expenditure prove to be not eligible for funding, while CNPA carries responsibilities as employer for programme staff.
 - c) A11.2 Strategic Risk Resourcing: the end of major programme investments (Tomintoul and Glenlivet, LEADER) requires significant ongoing staffing to manage audit and legacy which the Authority finds difficult to resource.
 - d) A12.2 Strategic Risk on Resourcing: future community led local development funding currently delivered through LEADER, together with wider funding previously from EU structural and agricultural sources is lost and creates a significant gap in our capacity to deliver against our development priorities.
 - e) A28 Strategic Risk on Staffing: delivery of key outcomes is impacted by staff turnover, particularly in project teams.
5. There are no matters of strategic significance which are assessed to merit escalation at this time in the opinion of senior managers leading the Cairngorms National Park Authority's linkage to the areas of activity covered by this paper and associated reports.

Supporting information

6. The Cairngorms Trust working with the Park Authority as its Accountable Body has successfully secured additional funding for the current year in support of CLLD



activities for 2023/24. The original allocation of £225,000 in resource (revenue) funding was supplemented by a successful bid for an additional £179,000 in capital funding. This capital finance has now been further increased by a further £30,000 from remaining finances available within the national programme. Total CLLD resources of over £400,000 for the current financial year are now at a level of total funding which approach the equivalent annual values available in previous multi-year LEADER programmes of between £2m and £3m over a 5 to 6 year period.

7. The lack of confirmed multi-year funding remains a key limitation in our support of CLLD activities. Community groups are not able to plan and develop their project proposals over the long term without facing the risks of finances not being available in future years. This acts to prevent support to significant 'step-change' projects in local communities.
8. The funds made available over the course of the current year have supported a total of 22 projects over a range of Cairngorms communities: Grantown-on-Spey, Kingussie, Glenmore, Carr-Bridge, Badenoch & Strathspey, Braemar, Newtonmore, Aviemore, Dalwhinnie, Marr Area, and Park-Wide projects.
9. The most recent update presented by the Trust Manager to the Trust's board meeting of 21 November is presented at Annex 1 to this report. This report gives a flavour of the recent activities of the Cairngorms Trust to Committee members.
10. The Trust continues to receive small value voluntary donations each quarter. The Trust is seeking to reinvigorate an advisory group of stakeholders established to advise on its work in development of voluntary giving schemes. This has proven to be a very difficult area to develop, and impacted significantly by the COVID19 pandemic and the wider focus on recovery from that by communities and businesses in recent years.
11. The Trust will develop its business case to 2027 over the coming months and future work in developing voluntary giving approaches is expected to feature as part of that business plan.
12. The collective work of the Cairngorms Trust and Park Authority in this area of activity is to an extent leading the way for development of approaches to CLLD in Scotland. Our decision to incorporate the Local Action Group (LAG) some years ago as a Scottish Incorporated Charitable Organisation (SCIO) is now a highlighted aspect of



good governance within the Scottish Government's policy documentation. Similarly, our decision to establish the Youth LAG, and to do so within the Trust's charitable structure, is also now reflected as an exemplar approach by Scottish Government's CLLD guidance.

David Cameron