Cairngorms Economic Steering Group

Hybrid meeting via Teams and in-person, at Grantown-on-Spey, on 25 June 2026 at 3pm

Present:	
Jackie Brierton	Cairngorms National Park Authority (chair)
Gavin Miles	Cairngorms National Park Authority
Eilidh Todd	Cairngorms National Park Authority
Kelly Wiltshire	Aberdeenshire Council
Ian Robertson	Countryside Learning Scotland
Nadia Fyvie-Feldmann	Federation of Small Businesses
Gareth Ruddock	GrowBiz
Susan Considine	The Highland Council
Alice Fogg	Voluntary Action Badenoch & Strathspey

Apologies:	
Paul Macari	Aberdeenshire Council
Craig Mills	Cairngorms Business Partnership
Kirsti Conti	Moray Council
Julia Latto	Scottish Enterprise
Michelle Hardie	The Highland Council

Welcome and apologies

Jackie Brierton welcomed everyone to the meeting, gave apologies, and all members in attendance introduced themselves to the group.

Note of last meeting and matters arising

The note of the last meeting was agreed and there were no matters arising.

Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan 2027-2032

Gavin Miles outlined the process for the development of the next Partnership Plan for 2027–2032 and talked the group through relevant sections of the draft plan which at this stage was confidential.

Although the current plan ends in 2027 the long-term visions set out in the current plan will continue. The intention is for the new plan to be action orientated and is set out around 3 missions.

1. Nature and climate resilience
2. Communities
3. Park for all

The new plan is currently in very draft format and will be shared with partners at high level meetings over the next few months prior to the formal consultation period October 2026 to beginning of January 2027.

It is important that opinions are gathered on the content of the plan, agree a way of monitoring the plan and agreeing how we focus and deliver work on what we want to happen.

To help pin this down a joint meeting between the Economic Steering Group (ESG) and the Sustainable Tourism Partnership will be arranged for some time during the consultation period.

Members also suggested that it would be good for the ESG to have a half-day session every year to focus on big picture/visionary landscape.

Members were broadly in agreement with the overall direction of the draft plan and made the following comments:

- Would be supportive of democratic business models.
- Would welcome more capacity building around community wealth building for businesses and communities.

Partner Updates

- **Countryside Learning Scotland**
  - Have launched Rural Employability Scheme (2-year structured programme designed to help upper-secondary pupils and school leavers transition from school and prepare for the world of work in their chosen rural related industries) and aim to start delivery when schools return in August. Hope to achieve 20 case studies per region over the next 2 years.
  - Youth Advisory Group has been established.

- **Voluntary Action Badenoch and Strathspey**
  - Continue to support groups around income generation and sustainability.
  - Following up with community action planning work.
  - Building community wealth building into work streams.
  - Large number of CICs in the National Park and work underway to see if those with similar remits have the potential to work in partnership.

- **Aberdeenshire Council**
  - Work continues around Regional Economic Partnerships and Investment Zones.
  - Visitor levy proposal is being progressed.
  - Developing a Good Food Nation Plan.
  - Business Gateway is happy to support National Park businesses in Aberdeenshire and is looking to be more visible with events in the National Park.

- **GrowBiz Scotland**
  - GrowBiz has supported more than 500 businesses across the National Park. They are growing the mentoring program in the National Park.
  - GrowBiz has moved to a single CEO model with Gareth as current CEO and Karen Martin and Jane Mason as Deputy CEOs.

- **Federation of Small Businesses**
  - Are running more events and engaging more people in the area.
  - Continuing Professionals in the Park with the next event taking place in September. The overarching theme is resilience - what does a business landscape look like?

- **Cairngorms National Park Authority**
  - Fire bylaw messaging is prominent on Park Authority social media feeds.
  - Cairngorms 2030 Communities Fund is planned to go live in August.

Next meeting

Thursday 24th of September at 10am, hybrid meeting on Teams or in-person at Cairngorms National Park Authority office, Grantown-on-Spey.