



Cairngorms
NATIONAL PARK
Pàirc Nàiseanta a' Mhonaidh Ruaidh

MANAGEMENT PLANS

Cairngorms National Park Economic Action Plan 2019-2022

Consultation

26 June to 20 September 2019



About the Consultation

Background

The Cairngorms Economic Action Plan 2019-2022 will ensure that all relevant organisations in the Park – in the public, private and third sectors – work together to deliver the economic strategy which is set out in the Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan 2017-2022. The proposed Action Plan will be out for public consultation between 26 June and 20 September 2019.

Where you can view the Action Plan

The Action Plan is available to view online at www.cairngorms.co.uk, at the CNPA offices (see addresses below), and at libraries and council offices within the Park.

14 The Square
Grantown on Spey PH26 3HG

Albert Memorial Hall
Station Square, Ballater AB35 5QB
Tel: 01479 870578

(please phone to make an appointment to view the document in the Ballater office)

How to comment

- Email: economy@cairngorms.co.uk
- Post:
Cairngorms National Park Authority
FREEPOST NAT 21454
Grantown-on-Spey PH26 3BR

Please include your name, address, **organisation** details (if relevant) and email address.

All comments must be received by 5pm, Friday 20 September 2019.

Data Protection

Details provided in response to the consultation will only be used for purposes associated with the Cairngorms National Park Economic Action Plan. You may request to see personal information held by the CNPA at any time.

Queries

Please contact us if you have any queries about the consultation:

economy@cairngorms.co.uk
01479 873535

Contents

1. Introduction	03
2. Strategic Context	04
National context	04
Cairngorms National Park context	04
3. Economic Strategy for the Park	07
4. Review of Changes in Strategic Context	09
Climate change and loss of biodiversity	09
Brexit	09
Regional economic partnerships and the Enterprise Review	09
Infrastructure improvements	09
A place for investment	10
Predicted changes in population	10
Delivery of housing	11
Ski centres	11
Availability and use of data	11
5. Themes and Actions	12
1. Building on economic strengths of the Park	13
2. Supporting and attracting businesses	14
3. Education, training and skills development	14
4. Infrastructure and capital investment	15
5. Community and enterprise	17
6. Delivery and Monitoring	18
Annex A	19
Summary of the economic strategy in the Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan 2017-2022	
Glossary	23

I. Introduction

The Cairngorms National Park covers 6% of Scotland and is the UK's most important place for wildlife and the conservation of nature. It is home to around 18,000 people who live in towns, villages and dispersed rural communities. The National Park's outstanding natural and cultural heritage attracts around 1.8 million visitors each year, underpinning many jobs.

There is increasing interest in Scotland in the concept of 'natural capital' which describes the stocks of natural assets on which our lives depend and which aims to highlight the connections between natural resources and economic development. If ever there was a place where these connections are both obvious and important then it must be in the Cairngorms National Park.

Cairngorms National Park Vision

“ An outstanding National Park, enjoyed and valued by everyone, where nature and people thrive together.

The word 'thrive' comes from an old Norse word meaning to flourish and prosper and is a good word to summarise our approach: growing the economy and the natural capital of the Park sustainably and in an inclusive way.

This Action Plan is a plan for all the relevant organisations in the Park, in the public, private and third sectors. We want to ensure that we work well together to deliver the economic strategy set out in the [Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan 2017-2022](#)¹ and to focus our efforts on priority issues in the years ahead.



¹ cairngorms.co.uk/working-partnership/national-park-partnership-plan/

2. Strategic Context

National context

The National Performance Framework and Scottish Economic Strategy set out the Government's vision for sustainable and inclusive economic growth:

“Scotland is to be a leader in the technological and social innovations of the future. There are plans to harness that innovation to boost productivity and business competitiveness, improve lives for the better across all of Scotland, and to export our solutions, goods and services to the rest of the world. Competitive, innovative businesses focused on best practice, leadership and management are vital to delivering this vision. They support sustainable jobs, incomes and our quality of life. The Government is committed to work in partnership with business to deliver the kind of economy we want.

In October 2018, Scotland's Economic Action Plan was launched. This highlighted, amongst other things, the importance of the rural economy, where 20% of the Scottish population live, and making commitments to:

- support the development of a diverse and healthy rural economy through the growth of traditional and non-traditional sectors;
- invest in our infrastructure to deliver housing, improved access to services and connectivity enabling improved sustainable and inclusive economic growth;
- deliver a rural skills action plan to ensure that rural enterprises have access to a highly-skilled workforce,

In September 2018, the National Council of Rural Advisers recommended in their final report that:

“... a vibrant, sustainable and inclusive rural economy can only be achieved by recognising its strategic importance – and effectively mainstreaming it within all policy and decision-making processes.

The Council further recommended the establishment of a Rural Economic Framework, aligned to the National Performance Framework to enable a new approach and delivery model for rural policy, development support and investment. In February 2019, the Scottish Government announced that a new Rural Economy Action Group would be established, chaired by Carol Tannahill, the Scottish Government's Head of Social Policy.

Cairngorms National Park context

The Cairngorms National Park is the largest Park in the UK and was designated in September 2003 with four aims set out in the National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000:

1. To conserve and enhance the natural and cultural heritage of the area
2. To promote sustainable use of the natural resources of the area
3. To promote understanding and enjoyment (including enjoyment in the form of recreation) of the special qualities of the area by the public
4. To promote sustainable economic and social development of the area's communities

These four aims are to be delivered by all relevant organisations working together. The purpose of the National Park Authority (CNPA) is “... to ensure that the National Park aims are collectively achieved ... in a coordinated way”. If it appears there is conflict between the first aim and any of the other aims then the CNPA must “... give greater weight ...” to the first aim.

This integrated approach to delivery of the four aims is encapsulated in the National Park Partnership Plan and in the subsidiary action plans.

Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan
The overarching management plan for the Cairngorms National Park



There are also several other initiatives within the Cairngorms National Park taking forward workstreams that are directly relevant to the economy of the Park, including:

- [Cairngorms Tourism Action Plan 2017-2022](http://www.cairngorms.co.uk/caring-future/local-economy/tourism/)¹ sets out actions required to deliver the Park's status under the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism – delivery is overseen by the Cairngorms Tourism Partnership;
- [Cairngorms Forest Strategy 2019](http://www.cairngorms.co.uk/working-partnership/national-park-strategies/forest-woodland-framework/)², aims to encourage forest expansion and increase employability in the forestry sector and encourage innovation in the use and marketing of native forest products;
- the various Community Planning processes that take place within each local authority area, in line with national requirements, and their associated Local Outcome Improvement Plans;

- the City Region Deals that are being implemented (eg in Inverness and Highlands; in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire) and that are in development (eg in Moray).



¹ www.cairngorms.co.uk/caring-future/local-economy/tourism/
² www.cairngorms.co.uk/working-partnership/national-park-strategies/forest-woodland-framework/

Map I Regional Context



The National Park is already covered by the various economic strategies which have been developed, based on the five local authority boundaries, each of which is supported by a range of economic partnerships and forums. For example, The Moray Economic Strategy sets out the vision and high level actions to deliver a successful and vibrant economy over a 10 year period 2019 to 2029, coordinated by the Moray Economic Partnership.

From an organisational perspective, Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE), Scottish Enterprise (SE) and Skills Development Scotland (SDS) all have operating plans to deliver the Scottish Government’s economic

priorities and Scotland’s Economic Strategy in their areas. And each of the five local authorities in the Park have specific economic development functions and powers.

The successful delivery of all these plans and strategies is dependent on the work undertaken by the businesses, land managers, communities, charities and other parts of the public sector – all working well together in mutual support and cooperation.

3. Economic Strategy for the Park

The strategy for promoting a sustainable economy in the Park is set out within the [Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan 2017-2022](#)¹, which has been signed off by Scottish Ministers.

The Partnership Plan identifies nine priorities across three long term outcomes.

Conservation

A special place for people and nature with natural and cultural heritage enhanced

Visitor Experience

People enjoying the Park through outstanding visitor and learning experiences

Rural Development

A sustainable economy supporting thriving businesses and communities



Rural Development Challenges

There are specific challenges to be addressed in achieving the Rural Development outcome.

Delivering housing that meets the needs of communities

- increasing the supply of affordable housing, and ensuring that it remains affordable in the long term;
- helping to reduce the proportion of second homes by making sure that when new housing is built more of it is accessible to and targeted at people working in the National Park;
- securing an appropriate level of public funding and making the most effective use of it to deliver affordable housing and infrastructure to meet local needs;
- helping communities make the most of the right to buy land in order to secure local housing solutions;
- meeting the bulk of housing needs by the existing larger sites in the Local Development Plan and, in the future, enabling communities to grow in a more small scale 'organic' way.

Community-led development and regeneration

- identifying those communities most in need of support and building their capacity to get the most out of opportunities to shape their places;
- making resources available to support community aspirations;
- giving communities control over assets and helping them maximise their returns;
- increasing community resilience;
- strengthening local democracy and participation;
- supporting and encouraging a partnership approach between and within communities.

Strengthening and diversifying the economy

- strengthening the tourism sector – a sustainable approach – visitors staying longer and spending more;
- encouraging start-ups and business diversification;
- improving access to housing for workers;
- improving digital communications – especially in remoter areas.

See [Annex A \(p19\)](#) for a summary of the economic strategy that is set out in the Partnership Plan to address these challenges.

¹ www.cairngorms.co.uk/working-partnership/national-park-partnership-plan/

The Cairngorms Economy

Facts and Figures



The Park has a unique rural economy with a particularly strong tourism sector

Challenges



Infrastructure limitations

Roads, rail, local public transport, housing, business premises, broadband and mobile

Heavy reliance on low waged tourism sector



Increased logistics costs



Gaps in business support



Lack of Higher and Further Education facilities



87%

of businesses employ less than 10 people



18,000 residents in the Park

↑ Increase of young people living in the Park



9,400 employed in the Park

↑ 4.5% increase since 2010



Small Businesses



House Prices



Yearly Earnings



than the Scottish average

Source: 2010 State of the Park Report and 2013 update, some figures relate to earlier years, both reports can be viewed online at www.cairngorms.co.uk

Opportunities



An attractive place to live, work and visit



A unique natural environment



Increased digital connectivity (fibre broadband)



Academic research opportunities



Distinctive economic sectors with potential for diversification



Increasing number of young people



Links to other parts of Scotland (dualling of A9)

Employment by Sector

Source: CNP Economic Benchmark Review 2013

2%
Other Production

3%
Forestry

43%
Tourism

6%
Property and Construction

2%
Information Industries

12%
Food and Agriculture

1%
Whisky and Drink

14%
Services and Activities

17%
Public Sector

www.cairngorms.co.uk June 2015

4. Review of Changes in Strategic Context

In preparing this Economic Action Plan it is important to consider changes to any strategic factors since 2015 when the economic strategy was first developed.



Climate change and loss of biodiversity

There is very significantly increased public awareness and political attention being given to these important issues due to very recent reports by the Committee on Climate Change and Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services.

The Scottish Government have declared a climate emergency and are committed to net zero emissions by 2045. The First Minister said in May 2019 on biodiversity “... that the difficulties, complexities and challenges are not to be underestimated but that we all want Scotland to be leading the way”. The need to tackle climate change and biodiversity loss will have implications for the National Park and specifically land use, housing, transport and tourism. We need to ensure that growth in the Park economy is sustainable and helps to meet the target of net zero emissions and the biodiversity targets.



Brexit

Depending on what happens with the UK Government’s proposals to leave the European Union there are likely to be significant implications for the rural economy. There are already signs of adverse impacts on the labour market, causing particular concern in the tourism sector, and which appear likely to continue under most Brexit scenarios.

The Federation of Small Businesses estimates that 41% of businesses in the Highlands and Islands employ EU citizens compared to an average of 25% across Scotland. The most recent quarterly survey of business confidence undertaken by the Cairngorms

Business Partnership in late 2018 recorded levels well below average. EU funding has supported business, communities and infrastructure projects in recent decades, for example through the Cairngorms LEADER programme. Although there are likely to be some replacement schemes, there is little clarity on how future funding programmes will be developed. The potential loss of community-led local development funding and changes to agricultural support mechanisms are a significant risk to the rural economy going forward.



Regional economic partnerships and the Enterprise Review

The city/region growth deals have provided funding for long term economic development in the local authority areas overlapping the National Park. The deals are leading to significant infrastructure investment and stronger marketing of the regions as places to do business. The Cairngorms National Park supports the marketability of the wider regions by providing unrivalled landscapes and recreational opportunities.

Following the Enterprise Review, the Strategic Plan for the Enterprise and Skills Board was published in October 2018, giving new strategic direction to the enterprise and skills agencies – Scottish Enterprise, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Skills Development Scotland and the Scottish Funding Council.



Infrastructure improvements

We have made very significant progress in delivering on the capital investment priorities set out in the National Park Partnership Plan and an update on progress and plans is presented on page 12 of this Action Plan.

With regards to digital connectivity, the availability of broadband services and mobile coverage on 3G and 4G networks has improved significantly since 2015, especially in the main settlements. By January 2019, 86.4% of premises had access to fibre broadband at

speeds of over 24Mbps. Looking ahead, the Scottish Government's R100 programme will significantly extend superfast broadband to provide access to all homes and businesses that have not yet been connected. Most communities in the National Park, and much of the transport network, are now covered by either 3G or 4G mobile data services and there are plans to address particular gaps.



A place for investment

There are increasingly positive signs that the Park is seen as a good place to invest. Significant private sector investment is underway in Braemar with the new Fife Arms open since December 2018; the renovation of the Invercauld Hotel is planned in the year ahead. In Strathspey, significant new tourism facilities have been developed at Grantown East and a new distillery is planned nearby, alongside the proposed steam railway extension.

Funding from Scottish Government has allowed the CNPA, working with partners, to bring in around £14 million of additional funding over the last five years to help deliver projects covering outdoor access, nature conservation, health, tourism infrastructure and developing our local communities. For example, there are four significant projects underway funded by the National Heritage Lottery Fund – the Mountains and the People, Capercaillie, Tomintoul/Glenlivet Landscape Partnership and the Badenoch Great Place projects. And recently the Cairngorms Connect project has seen the start of a multi-million pound investment in nature conservation and rewilding on four estates in the west of the Park.

The CNPA was also successful in securing funds via Peatland ACTION totalling £2.1 million. LEADER funding in the region of £4 million has been distributed to a variety of community-led projects during this time allowing community groups to develop and deliver priority actions for their own communities, while also supporting economic development and farm diversification – 32 approved

projects covering 13 different communities, and with a further 14 projects covering the entire Park or regions of it. There has been investment of £1.6 million in farm diversification and enterprise initiated by and supported through the LEADER process since 2015.

The Cairngorms Business Partnership have been successful in developing new investment streams for the SnowRoads Scenic Route (from Scottish Enterprise Destination Development Fund) to build business collaboration and new digital products and, more recently, for marketing (from the VisitScotland Growth Fund). The CNPA has secured Scottish Government funding through the Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund (VisitScotland) for two significant projects on National Nature Reserves at Dinnet and Glenmore, providing enhanced parking, toilets, paths and signposts; all to alleviate tourism pressure.

All of this investment has benefited the visitor economy – the number of visits has grown from 1.3 million visitors in 2003 to 1.85 million in 2017. The most recent results from the STEAM Tourism impacts study are available at www.cairngorms.co.uk¹.



Predicted changes in population

There is a significant awareness across Scotland of the importance of maintaining and enhancing the working age population in rural areas. There are national statistical projections of a gradually ageing population in the Cairngorms and elsewhere. These projections have been taken into account in developing the allocation of land for built development within the Cairngorms Local Development Plan 2020. This Plan has potential to accommodate an increase in population by 7% over the period to 2030. The EUROPARC Youth Manifesto, which was significantly developed by young people from the Cairngorms and which was launched in Aviemore in September 2018, highlighted the priorities for young people living and working in Protected Areas.

¹ www.cairngorms.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/CNP-Narrative.pdf



Delivery of housing

House prices have risen steadily and remain higher than the national average. There are significant issues with deliverability of housing on allocated sites – several sites have been allocated for many years and have had repeated live planning permission but no delivery. Many businesses are experiencing problems housing key staff and see this as a barrier to growth. More housing is being bought as second and holiday accommodation and there are signs of increasing community concern about the social impact of holiday homes. The proposed Local Development Plan 2020 will, once approved, increase the proportion of affordable housing from 25% to 45% in some communities.



Ski centres

A significant review of uplift facilities at Cairngorm Mountain by Highlands and Islands Enterprise in 2018 identified a programme of recommendations for uplift improvements and other facilities estimated at £27 million. However, the closure of the funicular railway at Cairngorm Mountain for ground investigations in late 2018 has created considerable uncertainty about the facility and there is need for a concerted effort to ensure a viable way forward is found, involving a new masterplan for the site in line with the Cairngorm and Glenmore Strategy. At the Lecht and Glenshee there is a need to continue to invest in and diversify activity on these sites to underpin their role in the regional economies and for visitors.



Availability and use of data

It continues to be challenging to access and collate socio-economic data in a way that is meaningful at the National Park scale. There are several reasons for this: data is frequently collected for different spatial units overlapping the National Park; some data cannot be disclosed due to data protection requirements; and some data relates most strongly

to specific organisational economic development functions, eg local authorities or development agencies; and frequently in rural areas the statistical data available does not illustrate the real life challenges that people face living in the area. This area of work does require greater attention in future. In the meantime, a very good evidence base has been collated for the preparation of the [Local Development Plan 2020](#)¹, covering topics from housing to economic development.

What strategic factors have not changed significantly since 2015?

- There has been no significant change in employment sectors, especially in the dominance of the tourism sector. The tourism sector still has a reputation for low wages and seasonal and/or insecure work.
- No significant change in the relatively high importance of small businesses.
- Unemployment remains low.

Consultation Question

Q

Are there other significant economic trends, challenges, opportunities or data sources that we should be taking into account in developing this Economic Action Plan?

5. Themes and Actions

Five priority themes have been developed to structure the Economic Action Plan and provide focus.

Priority themes delivering the long term outcome for rural development



Priority Theme I

Building on economic strengths of the Park

Actions	Lead
<p>Wages Investigate and promote adoption of a living wage scheme for the Cairngorms National Park</p>	CNPA
<p>Tourism Implement the Tourism Action Plan¹ through the Cairngorms Tourism Partnership</p>	CNPA
<p>Forestry Pilot a woodland challenge fund scheme to incentivise woodland planting and uptake of Forestry Grant Scheme applications</p>	CNPA; Scottish Forestry
<p>Rural development frameworks Pilot development of Rural Development Frameworks with estates and communities to provide long term planning for land use, business development and housing across estates</p>	CNPA; Estates; Scottish Land and Estates
<p>Agriculture Build the case for a regionalised approach to future support for land management in the Cairngorms</p>	CNPA; NFUS
<p>Cairngorm Mountain Develop a long term masterplan and investment package for Cairngorm Mountain as part of the Cairngorm and Glenmore Strategy</p>	HIE; CMSL; CNPA; THC; Community Trust
<p>Glenshee and the Lecht Develop plans to invest in and diversify these sites to sustain local employment and enhance the visitor experience</p>	SE; HIE; P&K; Aberdeenshire Council; CNPA; Operators
<p>Economic and social data Work to improve the availability and use of economic and social data on the Park</p>	CNPA; Scottish Government

¹ www.cairngorms.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/171122TourismActionPlan.pdf

Priority Theme 2

Supporting and attracting businesses

Actions	Lead
<p>Community-led housing delivery Promote new community-led approaches to delivery of housing in communities across the Park using Rural Housing Fund</p>	CNPA
<p>Business-led housing delivery Pilot and encourage business-led housing projects for employees</p>	CNPA; BSW Timber
<p>Attracting talent and investment Promote work/lifestyle benefits of the Cairngorms National Park through development of website content, eg Talent Scotland</p>	CoHI Talent Attraction Group
<p>Supporting business Investigate potential for new models of business support including community-led and social enterprise models</p>	CNPA; HIE; Local Authorities

Priority Theme 3

Education, training and skills development

Actions	Lead
<p>Circular economy and adaption to climate change Develop a business-led initiative to promote the circular economy of the National Park and to help businesses adapt to climate change</p>	Cairngorms Business Partnership; CNPA
<p>Digital training Deliver training for tourism sector</p>	Cairngorms Business Partnership
<p>Skills Continued delivery of regional Skills Investment Plans throughout the Park</p>	Skills Development Scotland

Priority Theme 4 Infrastructure and capital investment

Actions	Lead
<p>Housing delivery Undertake a review of vacant and derelict land and property, stalled development sites and impacts of short term lets, to identify interventions and opportunities for public interest development</p>	CNPA
<p>Digital connectivity Plan and deliver the Scottish Government “Reaching 100” Programme to deliver superfast broadband to all premises and enhance mobile connectivity</p>	Scottish Government; HIE
<p>Capital investment priorities Continue to deliver on the Priorities as set out the Park Partnership Plan - see below for update on progress and plans</p>	CNPA; specific project partners for each project

Capital investment priorities

Enhancement of visitor facilities at Glenmore

Speyside Way and Deeside Way extensions

Active Aviemore project

Aviemore community hospital project

A9 dualling project

Highland Folk Museum enhancements

Update on progress and plans

Forest and Land Scotland have completed a revised visitor management plan for Glenmore. Funding has been secured from Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund for a new multi-use path in Glenmore to link car parking and visitor facilities for completion by early 2020.

Speyside Way to be extended to Newtonmore by end of 2019; proposed new path from Braemar to Old Bridge of Dee has planning permissions.

Sustrans funding application for first phase of active travel improvements within Aviemore to be made 2019

Planning permission was granted in April 2019 and construction due to start 2020.

Transport Scotland have published draft orders for all sections within the Cairngorms National Park in 2018. Work is underway to scope new active travel paths between Aviemore and Carr-Bridge. In Aviemore there are significant plans to improve transport infrastructure to encourage active travel. TS and HIE are proposing to develop an A9 blueprint to maximise the economic benefits from the improved connectivity.

Application made to SNH Natural and Cultural Heritage Fund to support development of residential facilities for learning about nature and culture.

Priority Theme 4 Infrastructure and capital investment *continued*

Capital investment priorities

Tomintoul and Glenlivet Landscape Partnership

The Mountains and the People Project

Restoration of degraded peatland through the Peatland ACTION project

Further development at Macdonald Aviemore Highland Resort

Completion of the major refurbishment of the Fife Arms Hotel, Braemar

Delivery of key housing sites identified in the Local Development Plan

Improvements to Highland mainline railway and stations

Strathspey Steam Railway extension to Grantown-on-Spey

Enhancing facilities at Cairngorm Mountain

Highland Wildlife Park enhancements

Update on progress and plans

In year four of delivery of £3.6 million project and is developing capital assets including Tomintoul Discovery Centre, Scalan Seminary, bird hides, restored paths and the world's most northerly Dark Sky Park.

Project upgraded 35km of paths – 67% of the 53km target – by early 2019.

1600ha of peatland in the Park under restoration management by May 2019.

Land with planning permission for 130 houses now sold to housebuilder and development expected to start by end 2019.

The newly renovated Fife Arms Hotel was officially opened in early 2019, and renovation of Invercauld Arms Hotel is underway.

Sites in Beachan Court, Grantown-on-Spey; Carr Road, Carr-Bridge; and Spey House, Aviemore, are all under construction. Final plans have been approved for housing at the Old School in Ballater and Dalfaber in Aviemore and construction is due to commence in 2019/20. Planning permission in principle was granted for An Camas Mòr in April 2019.

New Caledonian Sleeper trains to come into service in 2019. New timetable with more frequent service and better connections to be introduced early in 2020. Enhanced station facilities and connections to visitor experience are planned.

Formal permission expected to be sought early in 2020. The project is being planned in conjunction with upgrade of A95 trunk road, proposed new distillery and new paths connecting two communities.

HIE invested in snowmaking facilities during winter 2018/19. Assistance has been provided to Aviemore and Glenmore Community Trust to strengthen their vision for community ownership / management. Long term masterplan and funicular railway repair options to be considered in summer 2019.

Development funding has been awarded to RZSS to help progress plans to create Scotland's Wildlife Discovery Centre and there are plans for a Scottish wildcat restoration facility. There are complementary plans for youth residential and accommodation facilities at the nearby Highland Folk Park as part of the Badenoch Great Place project.

Priority Theme 5 Community and enterprise

Actions	Lead
<p>Investment in community-led development Secure continuity of investment in local enterprise development, including farm diversification to follow on from current LEADER programme</p>	CNPA; The Cairngorms Trust
<p>Developing an entrepreneurial culture Develop a programme of events to stimulate a positive and creative approach to doing business within the Park in all sectors</p>	Entrepreneurial Scotland; CNPA
<p>Social enterprise training Review arrangements to follow on from Social Enterprise Academy training project</p>	HIE; CNPA
<p>Young people Develop a programme of action with young people to maximise opportunities, and address barriers, to living and working in the Park</p>	Cairngorms Youth Action Group; CNPA

Consultation Question

Q2

Do you support these Actions to deliver the economic strategy as set out in the Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan?

Please explain why.

6. Delivery and Monitoring

It is proposed that the arrangements for delivery should be based on:

- coordination of activity through the Cairngorms Economic Steering Group including: CNPA (chair), Cairngorms Business Partnership, local authorities, Highland and Islands Enterprise, Scottish Enterprise and Skills Development Scotland;
- preparation of an annual review of delivery associated with the Action Plan and consideration by the CNPA board along with the relevant partners;
- development, in collaboration with the Cairngorms Youth Action Group, of specific projects and initiatives that take forward the actions identified above in a way that addresses the concerns and interests of young people;
- greater involvement and engagement with the various local Business Associations across the Park;
- Enhanced communications about the many economic success stories in the Park and interdependence of the economy and the Park's natural capital.

Consultation Question

Q3

Are these delivery and monitoring arrangements appropriate for the Economic Action Plan?

Please explain why.

Annex A Summary of the economic strategy in the Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan 2017-2022

I. The priorities and agendas for action

In order to address the Rural Development challenges identified in the Partnership Plan, Agendas for Action were developed for each of the priority areas of work including Housing and Economic Development.

Due to the integrated nature of the Partnership Plan, any activity delivered relating to

the nine priorities plays a role in supporting the economy of the National Park – for example, investment in woodland expansion increases biological diversity, enhances the landscape for visitors and provides additional recreational experiences and new economic opportunities.

All nine priorities are therefore important to the delivery of a sustainable economy of the Park; but the two most significant priorities - Housing and Economic Development - are printed below.

Priority 7 Housing AGENDA FOR ACTION

Partners will respond to the unique housing challenges and pressures within the Park by developing a special approach that is based on:

- a) Reducing the proportion of second homes in new developments by ensuring the new housing development is targeted at meeting local needs as far as possible;
- b) Maximising the proportion of new housing that is affordable in perpetuity;
- c) Identifying sites in the next Local Development Plan where the affordable housing contribution will be more than the normal national maximum of 25% because of acute affordability pressures and the shortage of supply;
- d) Using the next Local Development Plan to manage the nature of new open market housing so it is better targeted towards local needs (eg by seeking a greater mix of house types and sizes, with an emphasis towards smaller homes in new developments);
- e) Applying flexible planning policies to promote majority affordable housing developments and encourage the use of innovative delivery models to maximise the number of affordable homes that are built;
- f) Targeting public sector funding towards the National Park and to sites with the greatest potential for delivering affordable housing;
- g) Supporting communities to deliver community-led housing solutions, including by making the most of powers to buy land and taking a more pro-active role in management where appropriate;
- h) Promoting high standards of sustainable design and energy efficiency in new homes to ensure they are affordable in terms of lifetime running costs.

Priority 9 Economic development AGENDA FOR ACTION

Partners will deliver the current Economic Strategy for the Park to 2018 and then review, focusing on action plans for key business sectors:

- a) Developing sector-specific plans (eg forestry, food and drink) to tackle investment, enhance skills through stronger links with higher and further education, improve long term resilience and increase average wages, as well as building business on the natural capital of the National Park;
- b) Supporting Cairngorms Community Broadband* to deliver superfast broadband in the hardest to reach parts of the Park;
- c) Continuing to improve physical infrastructure, including access to affordable housing and digital connectivity;
- d) Maximising the opportunities for businesses, communities and visitors from the A9 dualling project;
- e) Review implications and options for the farming sector as changes in long term support become clearer;
- f) Using the next Local Development Plan (LDP) to identifying new sites for business use and expansion and the delivery of the LDP to target investment that opens up those sites to business.

** The Cairngorms Community Broadband project has been suspended and the Scottish Government now leads development of broadband in rural areas through the Reaching 100 (R100) Programme.*



2. Policy for economic development

The Partnership Plan has a comprehensive policy framework that guides development and provides continuity over the long term. The policy relating to economic development is reprinted below.







Policy 3.1 Economic development

Grow the economy of the Cairngorms National Park by strengthening existing business sectors, supporting business start-ups and diversification, and increasing the number of workers employed in the Park through:

- a) maintaining the population of the National Park and maintaining or growing the proportion of the working age population;
- b) supporting the diversification of existing land based businesses;
- c) encouraging growth of business sectors that draw on the special qualities of the Park such as sustainable tourism and food and drink;
- d) broadening the economic base of the Park into sectors such as creative industries, renewable energy, and making stronger links with higher and further education;
- e) increased provision for business land where there is an identified need and demand; and to support the use of land for small business particularly within settlements;
- f) slowing outward migration of young people; to encourage their return; and the inward migration of workers to the Park to meet business and community needs;
- g) provision of a housing land supply that supports migration of young people and workers to the Park and maintains vibrant communities;
- h) reducing the proportion of vacant and second homes to support community vibrancy by ensuring that new housing development best meets local needs;
- i) maximising the proportion of new housing development that is affordable in perpetuity.

3. Targets and indicators for rural development in the National Park Partnership Plan

A simple set of targets and indicators have been developed for the nine Partnership Plan priorities. Arrangements are in place with partner organisations to ensure they are monitored and delivered. Regular reports are provided to the CNPA board.

Theme	Targets	Indicators
 Affordable housing	 To deliver 200 new affordable houses during the Plan period	 Number of affordable housing completions 2017-2022
 Community enterprise	To increase the number of community enterprises reinvesting surplus profit into community projects	Number of community enterprises reinvesting surplus profit into community projects - baseline of 4 in 2017
 Relevance of National Park to businesses	To maintain or improve business perceptions of the National Park's influence on customer attraction and operations / profitability	Influence of the Cairngorms National Park as reported through the Cairngorms Business Barometer
 Digital connectivity	To achieve more than 30% uptake of high speed broadband in the Cairngorms Community Broadband project	<p>Note: The Scottish Government now leads development of broadband in rural areas through the R100 Programme. New target is provision of access to superfast broadband (more than 30Mbps) by 2021 to 100% of premises.</p>



Published by
Cairngorms National Park Authority
14 The Square
Grantown-on-Spey
PH26 3HG

enquiries@cairngorms.co.uk
01479 873535

www.cairngorms.co.uk

Photo credits: Jakub Iwanicki/VisitScotland/CNPA;
Will Boyd Wallis/CNPA; Wee Epics; Doreen Wood

© CNPA 2019. All rights reserved.