

## Cairngorms National Park Economic Action Plan 2019-2022

### Consultation 26 June to 20 September 2019 - Questions

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.

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#### General comments:

We welcome the chance to comment on this draft Economic Action Plan and would be happy to continue the dialogue as the draft becomes finalised.

In general terms, we feel that there is scope for there to be more made of the linkages between business and nature. Although there is strong statement on natural capital and nature in the introductory section, it would be good to see this focus carried on throughout the document.

The Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan highlights the scope for NPs to deliver against national priorities – among them climate change, biodiversity loss and natural capital – and it is not clear how the Priority Themes identified in the Economic Action Plan align with delivery of these priorities.

There is scope for a greater degree of integration between this plan and the other subsidiary CNP action plans.

#### ***Q1. Are there other significant economic trends, challenges, opportunities or data sources that we should be taking into account in developing this Economic Action Plan?***

Yes:

##### **1. Investment in natural capital**

We recommend incorporating investment in natural capital as a key principle on which to the economic strategy and ideally, a Priority Theme from which actions flow.

The World Economic Forum, in its 2019 [Global Risk Report](#), identified environmental risks as among the greatest systemic risks to our global economy, both in terms of impact and likelihood. The risks are equally relevant at a national and regional scale. In the Cairngorms National Park, particular risks relevant to the economy are likely to include risks from climate change such as increased flood risk to businesses and communities, impacts on natural resources such as salmon and soils, and increase in extreme weather events affecting infrastructure. Investment in nature through nature-based solutions can be a cost-effective way of managing these risks to the economy.

The draft plan rightly recognises the very significant, and linked, challenges of global biodiversity loss and climate change, and under the heading of 'investment', reports significant projects which have investment in nature and natural capital as a focus. It stops short however, of calling for or specifying urgent action and collaboration to support the natural systems that underpin our lives, our communities and economies.

The connections between nature and the economy are highlighted at strategic level in the Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan, which recognises the role of natural capital in underpinning tourism and land-based businesses and acknowledges the fact that the high quality of the environment makes the National Park an attractive place to invest and do business. This strategic overview would usefully be carried over into this Economic Plan to help identify opportunities to enhance the natural capital of the Park whilst supporting prosperous, healthy communities.

Investment in natural capital should be integral to all public and private investment, whether targeted at nature conservation activities, tourism, land-based businesses, housing development, energy, or wider infrastructure development.

**We advise action to encourage investment in nature, and to highlight the extent to which prosperous businesses rely on nature, should be a key feature of the Economic Action Plan.**

## 2. Circular Economy

Increasing recognition of the benefits of a more **circular economy**, in greater resource efficiency, increased competitiveness and resilience should form part of the strategic context of the Economic Action Plan and be given greater prominence in the actions springing from this Plan.

Opportunities for more circular economies could be identified by analysing material flows and waste generated by key sectors within and surrounding the National Park. Working with key stakeholders would help understand where circularity could complement other activity and offer opportunities for business growth, economic resilience, and carbon reduction.

### In tourism

As climate change continues to have an adverse impact across the globe, applying circular thinking will become essential for the survival and evolution of the tourism industry. The concept of more efficient resource use must be driven forward to ensure a sustainable circular industry is developed.

Measures might involve optimising the energy efficiency of buildings and making them self-reliant for water supply and waste management, using green energy sources and setting strict targets for waste disposal and landfill. Looking at ways to deal with food waste is of utmost importance as currently a third of all food grown globally is thrown away. Hotels and restaurants need to monitor and measure their food waste to establish where waste is occurring. It is estimated that more than 60% of food waste in the hospitality industry is avoidable so if this could be reduced it would massively cut costs.

### In agriculture

'Circular economy' principles can offer many opportunities for agriculture in general, and livestock production in particular, to become more resource efficient.

**Q2. Do you support these Actions to deliver the economic strategy as set out in the Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan? Please explain why.**

We support the actions listed in the Plan under each theme. Under Theme 1, we are keen to assist with, and advise on, the development of Cairngorm Mountain, although we appreciate we are not in the lead. Under Priority 4, the A9 dualling project might usefully include work to include lay-bys and viewpoints.

However, as indicated in our comments above, the existing themes and actions identified in the Plan could be developed to include a greater focus on investment in natural capital and the development of the circular economy.

Under Priority 3, the actions listed under Circular Economy could be expanded to include, for example

- working with Zero Waste Scotland to identify circular economy opportunities in key sectors within the Park to understand where circularity could complement other activity and offer opportunities for business growth, economic resilience, and carbon reduction. (See ZeroWasteScotland case studies on Edinburgh, Tayside, North East Scotland. <sup>1</sup>)
- Promotion of funding support available to target sector business through the Circular Economy Investment Fund <sup>2</sup>.
- Engagement with UNWTO Tourism for SDGs (CNPA, Cairngorms Business Partnership)
- Project to explore CE and precision farming in upland livestock systems. Perhaps there is scope for a CE Monitor farm to discuss and disseminate?
- Ensure high standards of design and energy efficiency in new homes.

Under a Priority Theme for Investment in Natural Capital, actions might include;

- encouraging growth and diversification of business sectors that draw on the special qualities of the Park such as sustainable tourism and food and drink;
- identify value chains that link natural assets with local business needs (and potential investors beyond the Park) and use these to explore opportunities for collaborative business investment in natural assets for business and wider benefits, such as through a Landscape Enterprise Network;
- review implications of changes in support for agriculture and assist in the development of future policy to support delivery of public goods from land management

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.zerowastescotland.org.uk/circular-economy/circular-edinburgh>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.zerowastescotland.org.uk/circular-economy/investment-fund>

- work to connect the value of and delivery of public goods by land management with wider community and economic benefit, such as through natural flood management or other nature-based solutions
- sector-specific plans to identify risks and opportunities relating to natural assets, tackle investment, enhance skills, improve long-term resilience and building business on the natural capital of the National Park.

**Q3. Are these delivery and monitoring arrangements appropriate for the Economic Action Plan? Please explain why.**

These delivery and monitoring arrangements sound suitable for the Economic Action Plan.