

ANGUS COUNCIL

COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE – 14 APRIL 2015

**PLANS, ACTIVITIES AND PROJECTS WITHIN THE ANGUS AREA OF THE CAIRNGORMS
NATIONAL PARK IN 2014 AND 2015**

REPORT BY HEAD OF PLANNING AND PLACE

Abstract:

This report provides information to members with regard to plans, activities and projects which have taken place in the Angus area of the Cairngorms National Park within the last 2014 as well as providing information on plans, projects and activities which are scheduled for 2015.

1. RECOMMENDATION

1.1 The Committee is requested to:-

- Note the progress of the Cairngorms National Park Local Development Plan which will represent the primary basis for the assessment of planning applications within the Angus area of the national park;
- Note the range of plans, activities and projects which have taken place within the park during 2014 and those which are planned for 2015; and
- Agree that officers will engage with national park staff to represent Angus interests including drafting a revised Protocol Agreement relating to the exercise of planning and housing policy functions within and affecting the national park.

**2. ALIGNMENT TO THE ANGUS COMMUNITY PLAN/SINGLE OUTCOME
AGREEMENT/COPORATE PLAN**

2.1 This report contributes to the following local outcomes contained within the Angus Community Plan and Single Outcome Agreement 2013-2016:

- Our communities are developed in a sustainable manner
- Our natural and built environment is protected and enjoyed

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 The Cairngorms National Park was designated in 2003 by the Scottish Parliament. The Cairngorms National Park is the largest national park in the British Isles and was expanded in 2010 to encompass highland parts of Perth and Kinross. The Angus area of the Cairngorms National Park covers the isolated upper parts of the Angus Glens over an area of approximately 320sqkm including areas within Glen Isla, Glen Prosen, Glen Clova, Glen Doll and Glen Esk. There have been a number of plans, activities and projects within that area in 2014 and more are planned for 2015 (see Appendix 1 for further information on this).

4. PROPOSALS

4.1 Land use planning within the Angus area of the national park is informed by the Cairngorms National Park Local Plan (October 2010) and that plan forms the primary basis for decision making on applications for planning permission within the park. The Cairngorms National Park Authority has reviewed the content of that plan and adopted the Cairngorms National Park Local Development Plan on 27 March 2015. Further information on the Cairngorms National Park Local Development Plan is detailed in **Appendix 1** of this report.

4.2 The Cairngorms National Park Authority and the 5 local authorities who administer land within the park have been operating to a Protocol Agreement relating to the exercise of planning and housing policy functions within and affecting the national park since 2012. Angus Council

officers have engaged with the park authority to develop that protocol and intend to finalise a revised Protocol Agreement during 2015. The Protocol Agreement is a voluntary agreement to assist the 5 local authorities in carrying out their functions and in working towards achieving the aims of the national park. It sets out the manner in which planning applications are processed and details arrangements for the Cairngorms National Park Authority to exercise its call in powers for applications within the park. It also clarifies roles and responsibilities for pre applications discussions, planning enforcement, planning policy and housing policy within and affecting the national park.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

NOTE: No background papers, as detailed by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to a material extent in preparing the above report.

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APPENDIX 1: PROJECTS, PROPOSAL AND PLANS WITHIN THE ANGUS AREA OF THE CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK WHICH HAVE TAKEN PLACE IN 2014 OR ARE PLANNED FOR 2015

The Cairngorms National Park was designated in 2003 by the Scottish Parliament. The Cairngorms National Park is the largest national park in the British Isles and was expanded in 2010 to encompass highland parts of Perth and Kinross. The Angus area of the Cairngorms National Park covers the isolated upper parts of the Angus Glens over an area of approximately 320sqkm including areas within Glen Isla, Glen Prosen, Glen Clova, Glen Doll and Glen Esk.

There are a number of different land uses within the Angus area of the national park from agriculture and forestry in the more lowland areas to the more wild upland areas regularly used for sport and recreation. There are a numerous projects which have taken place during 2014 and there are projects planned for 2015 which attempt to maximise the potential the park offers for sustainable developments, recreation and tourism.

Cairngorms National Park Local Development Plan (LDP) – a new land use strategy

Work on the Cairngorms National Park Local Development Plan is now complete. The new Plan replaces the Cairngorms National Park Local Plan, adopted in 2010. On 21 November 2014 the Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA) Planning Committee approved Modifications to the Proposed Local Development Plan following the receipt of the Report of the Examination of the Plan by the Scottish Government's Department for Planning and Environmental Appeals. They also approved the Publication of the Modifications, of the Proposed Plan as modified and the notification of parties who made representations on the Plan. Scottish Ministers directed one change to a site boundary in Carrbridge but, overall, the DPEA report and the Ministerial process has been a strong endorsement of the Plan put forwards on the CNPA Board adopted the Cairngorm National Park Local Development Plan on 27 March 2015.

The Cairngorms National Park Local Development plan identifies objectives for the Angus Glens which include:-

- To ensure that new development respects the dispersed nature of the Angus Glens;
- To ensure development contributes to the economic wellbeing of the remote community living in the Angus Glens;
- To retain the Angus Glens as a sparsely populated community have creative solutions to employment and economic growth can thrive; and
- To ensure that new housing can progress in a way that helps the community remain sustainable.

Planning applications for development within the Angus area of the National Park received in 2014

There were 6 applications for planning permission within the Angus part of the national park received in 2014, 4 of which were called in by the park authority. Listed below are details of the 4 proposal which were called in.

14/00559/FULL - Installation Of A Micro-Hydro Electric Turbine including intake, Turbine House and Buried Pipeline - Re-Application - Land 80M North Of Shepherd's Cottage, Invermark, Glen Esk for Dalhousie Estate was granted planning permission by CNPA in December 2014. The development involves a pelton style of 84.1kW micro hydro scheme with an annual energy yield equivalent of the use of 74 average UK households. The scheme is located on the Burn of Laurie close to Loch Lee and would involve a pipeline conveying water from the intake weir to the pelton turbine located 580m downslope from the intake.

14/00562/FULL - Installation Of A Micro-Hydro Electric Turbine including Intake, Turbine House and Buried Pipeline - Re-Application - Field 800M North Of Auchronie, Glen Esk for Dalhousie Estates was granted planning permission by CNPA in December 2014. The development involves a pelton style of 99.7kW micro hydro scheme with an annual energy yield equivalent of the use of 87 average UK households. The scheme is located on Burn of Brannie close to Loch Lee and would involve a pipeline conveying water from the intake weir to the pelton turbine located 1.26km downslope from the intake.

14/00563/FULL - Installation Of A Micro-Hydro Electric Turbine including Intake, Turbine House and Buried Pipeline - Re-Application Field 200M North West Of Inchgrundle, Invermark, Glen Esk for Burghill Farms Partnership was granted planning permission by CNPA in December 2014. The development involved a turgo style of 57.5kW micro hydro scheme with an annual energy yield equivalent of the use of 54 average UK households. The scheme is located on Burn of Inchgrundle west of Loch Lee and would involve a pipeline conveying water from the intake weir to the turgo turbine located 620m downslope from the intake.

14/00614/FULL - Removal of 13 sections of rock armour river bank protection followed by bank reprofiling at Moulzie, Acharn and Braedownie. Re-connection of three paleochannels - one at Moulzie and two at Acharn on the River South Esk, Glen Doll for Scottish Natural Heritage. This river restoration project was granted planning permission by CNPA in December 2014. Further details of the project are provided later in this report.

Other Activities And Projects Within The National Park

Pearls in Peril EU LIFE Project: River South Esk and White Water in-stream restoration

'Pearls in Peril' (PIP) is a UK-wide LIFE project to safeguard the future of the freshwater pearl mussel. The project is working to restore natural river processes and the habitat of freshwater pearl mussels and salmonids (salmon and trout). The project has been granted permission by the landowners, SEPA and the Cairngorms National Park to restore 14 sections of riverbank and reconnect three in filled historic channels on the River South Esk at Moulzie and Braedownie, and on the White Water at Acharn.

The restoration designs involve the removal of rock armour and river bank re-profiling. The bank material is sand, gravel and cobble with little fine sediment, which when eroded into the river may help sustain the in-stream habitat for freshwater pearl mussels and salmonids. The proposals also include the reconnection of an old channel which has previously been in filled, providing additional habitat and reducing energy in the main channel.

The physical river restoration works are programmed to commence in May 2015. The below photographs illustrate parts of the river which will be restored.

Examples of structures selected for restoration:



Moulzie Site BP6



Moulzie Site BP7



Acharn Site BP2



Acharn Site BP6



Acharn Site BP8

The Glen Clova Contour Planting Project

A large scale forestry project aimed at reducing peak flows is being planned in Glen Clova. The pilot project and research is supported financially by the Forestry Commission, Angus Council, Esk District Salmon Fishery Board and the Cairngorms National Park Authority with in-kind support from RSPB. This follows the example of work carried out in a number of studies, principally that in Pontbren in Wales where following planting trees along the contours of the hillside a flood peak reduction of around 40% was achieved. Other studies have shown that the greatest attenuation occurs for the smaller events achieving predicted flood peak reductions approaching 60–70% as complete forest coverage is attained. The effects are less pronounced in the case of the larger events, where woodland coverage of c. 80% was reported to effect a 30% reduction in peak flow values.

The Trust has raised about £80,000 to initiate a pilot contour planting programme in Glen Clova during 2014. Currently the project is being developed and funding of the order of £2-4 million is under negotiation between Scottish Southern Energy, TilHill Forestry and The Forestry Commission deploying available funds for compensatory tree planting from renewable energy developments.

This project has multiple benefits not only for the river but its enhances Scottish Government policies (tree planting and carbon sequestration), agriculture, low ground shooting potential and biodiversity.

The Cairngorms Outdoor Access Trust – The Mountains and the People

The Cairngorms Outdoor Access Trust (COAT) Mountains and the People is a partnership project to protect the mountains of Scotland's National Parks and through training, volunteering, educational and promotional work to actively engage the people of Scotland in caring for their upland landscapes and habitats. The project will carry out a suite of integrated programmes with the overarching objective of involving the people of Scotland in the enhancement and protection of the wild and special qualities of the mountains within Scotland's National Parks. The project includes £278,539 of paths works which includes works within the Angus glens. The Upland Path Programme includes repairs to the paths to Mount Keen.

Angus Glens Walking Festival

The annual Angus Glens Walking Festival is scheduled for 4 to 7 June 2015. The 2015 festival represents the 13th annual event. The 2015 festival involves 24 guided walks over 4 days. The 2014 festival attracted 366 walkers who booked 559 walk places between them and a 5% increase in participation is projected for 2015.

Glen Clova Xtreme Duathlon

The Glen Clova Xtreme Duathlon is a combined cycling and hill running event which involves a 20km cycle around Glen Clova and Glen Doll and a run through Glen Doll and Corrie Fee to the summits of Mayar and Dreish before returning to Glen Clova with a final section of cycling. In 2014, 150 competitors entered the Duathlon. The 2015 event is scheduled for 19 September.

Cairngorms Nature Festival

The Cairngorms Nature Festival is held every May and is an opportunity for everyone to see first-hand the unique nature of the Cairngorms National Park. The 2015 event will take place on Saturday 16 and Sunday 17 May. In 2014 events happened from Angus to Highland and it was a fun-packed

weekend for all the family attracting hundreds of people on the many walks and activities that took place. A Peregrine Watch took place in Glen Doll in on Saturday 17 May 2014.

Angus Council Ranger Services Projects

Glen Doll Squirrel Project is an ongoing project. To determine the population of Red Squirrels in the Glen Doll Forest by means of cone transects. Also maintaining a database for all squirrel records received by the general public throughout Angus.

Pine Marten, Wildcat and Water Vole monitoring is an ongoing project. Recording and identification of individuals through the use of camera traps.

Rare Plant monitoring in Corrie Fee and Glen Doll is an ongoing project. Annual survey of purple coltsfoot, yellow oxytropis and twinflower.

Bird of Prey monitoring is an ongoing project. Recording the breeding output of Golden Eagle, Peregrine Falcon and Raven in Glen Clova/Glen Doll for CNPA and Tayside Raptor Study Group. This included the National Breeding Peregrine Survey 2014 and will include the National Golden Eagle Survey 2015. Associated with this is the CNPA Raptor Track Project in an attempt to fit radio transmitters to Peregrine and Golden Eagle.

Assisting SNH and Edinburgh Botanics with the monitoring and planting of Montane Scrub within the Corrie Fee NNR in an attempt to increase this declining habitat within CNP. This is an ongoing project.

Glen Doll Nest Box Monitoring Scheme. An ongoing project to record the breeding output of small passerine birds to provide data for the BTO Nest Recording Scheme.

CNPA Junior Ranger Programme. An ongoing activity week for pupils of Webster's School in Kirriemuir in order to gain the John Muir Award.

Cairngorm National Park Authority - joint catchments project

The River South Esk, Dee and Spey Partnerships share many common goals and encounter very similar issues to progress. All have head waters in the Cairngorm National Park Authority area (CNPA) and all three have been invited by the CNPA to consider joint catchment approaches to issues such as diffuse pollution, woodland planting, river restoration, peatland restoration, Invasive Non Native Species (INNS), biodiversity protection and awareness raising and PR. All three partnerships aim to share good practice, materials e.g. septic tank brochure and coordinate the future reviews and amendments to their catchment management plans.