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## CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

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### FOR DECISION

**Title: ACTIVE AVIEMORE AND ACTIVE GLENMORE**

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**Purpose:**

To review the CNPA's ongoing support for two areas of specific work that aim to increase levels of active travel and improve the access infrastructure in both Aviemore and Glenmore.

**Recommendations:**

**That the Board:**

- a) **Note the successful first stage outputs of both Active Aviemore and Active Glenmore projects to date; and**
- b) **Agree that CNPA should continue being a key partner supporting the ongoing development and delivery of both projects.**

**Executive Summary**

Cairngorms National Park Partnership plan identifies both Aviemore and Cairngorm and Glenmore as key areas requiring significant work to improve active travel and the visitor experience. This paper sets out the partnership work to date in planning major improvement to the way people can choose travel in both areas and recommends our continued support of this work.

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## ACTIVE AVIEMORE AND ACTIVE GLENMORE – FOR DECISION

### Strategic Context

- I. National Park Partnership Plan (NPPP) 2017 – 22 covers both pieces of work discussed in this paper:
  - a) 5g Improving opportunities for active travel in **Aviemore** that deliver improved transport for visitors and residents.
  - b) 4c Improving the visitor infrastructure in Cairngorm and **Glenmore**.

The Cairngorm and Glenmore Strategy approved by CNPA and four other public partners (Forestry Commission Scotland, Highland Council, Highlands & Islands Enterprise and Scottish Natural Heritage) identified the requirement of; *‘Contributing to Active Cairngorms priorities to improve access and active travel infrastructure, champion best practice in recreation management in sensitive environments and inspire outdoor activity and involvement’*.

2. This work was also reflected in the NPPP visitor target; ‘increase the percentage of visitors using active travel during their stay to 19% by 2022.’

### Active Aviemore Project Development

3. CNPA supported by Highland Council, Hitrans, Sustrans, NHS Highland and Aviemore and Vicinity Community Council commissioned AECOM to carry out community and stakeholder engagement, feasibility and design for active travel corridors in Aviemore. The project was funded by Sustrans at a cost of some £40k.
4. The project had five objectives:
  - a) Make streets and public spaces more effective in supporting active and sustainable travel;
  - b) Inspire and support the community and stakeholders interest in their immediate surroundings through the redesign of their streets and neighbourhood;
  - c) Re-design streets and neighbourhoods to improve relationships between different users, make them safer, more attractive and more sociable;
  - d) Create an exemplar project that can be used to promote best practice; and
  - e) Work with and enhance the streets existing infrastructure.
5. The study was broken down into the eight stages:
  - a) Desk Top Review
  - b) Review Design Guidance and Standards
  - c) Review Place Making Principles
  - d) Identify Aviemore Project Sections
  - e) Present Design Options
  - f) Consultation
  - g) Preferred Solution
  - h) Draft Action Plan

6. Engagement was key to the work investigating the delivery of enhanced walking and cycling facilities within Aviemore and some 89 comment inputs were received online.
7. The project was discussed at the Local Development Plan public consultation in Aviemore on 30th January. Badenoch & Strathspey Ramblers Group, Stagecoach (North), Badenoch and Strathspey Transport Company, Sustrans and Transport Scotland attended a workshop; and we met with Aviemore Business Association.
8. Some 45 people attended a public drop-in session on 28 March at Aviemore Community and Leisure Centre. The session provided an opportunity for engagement with the wider community, and for people to find out more about the study and to provide any comments in relation to the draft drawings and visualisations of the concept designs.

### **Active Aviemore Project Outputs**

9. Work clearly identifies the benefits and capacity to develop separate multi-use (walking and cycling) paths on both sides of the Grampian Road linking; railway station, accommodation, shops, school and proposed new hospital. This work has been split into five sections shown on the map in Annex I. The identification of these sections allows priority choices and development to be phased over several years.
10. Improvements to the Aviemore Orbital path are also recommended to encourage effective use of the wider path network throughout Aviemore. Here, there are links to Speyside Way, National Cycle Route 7 and Old Logging Way (Glenmore).
11. Initial survey work undertaken confirms the ability to build the paths but is not detailed enough to produce accurate costs. Industry standard estimates are designed to raise awareness of 'worst case scenario'. The project indicates that full delivery would be in the range £6.7m -£17m.
12. The next stage would be the development of a design phase at an estimated cost of £175k with potential funding from Sustrans Scotland Community Links project.
13. In August Highland Council Badenoch and Strathspey Area Committee approved their support for the submission to Sustrans Community Links funding for a design phase.

### **Active Cairngorms**

14. On 29<sup>th</sup> March Visit Scotland launched the Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund with submissions of interest to be submitted in four weeks and final applications on 27<sup>th</sup> July. Submissions could only be made by local and national park authorities.
15. Cairngorm and Glenmore Strategy (C&GS) clearly identified the need to improve active travel in the area: *'Contributing to Active Cairngorms priorities to improve access*

*and active travel infrastructure, champion best practice in recreation management in sensitive environments and inspire outdoor activity and involvement’.*

16. Ongoing work by Forest Enterprise Scotland developing the Glenmore Action Plan identified the need to improve non-motorised access through Glenmore linking visitor attractions, car parks and path network by building a multiuse path (walking and cycling) alongside the road. Annex 2 shows a map the multiuse path route.
17. Six partner meetings were held during the period ranging from C&GS public sector partners, to an open public meeting, and Aviemore and Vicinity Community Council. Support for a ‘bid’ for a multiuse path was consistent with the clear caveat that if successful this was not seen as ‘the solution’ but the start of a range of activity required to improve access and responsible behaviour in the area.
18. Sustrans funded the development of an initial design and the contract was awarded to AECOM as an extension of the Aviemore work. The research demonstrated that a 1.1km length 2.5m wide (with 2.2m pinch points) tarmac multi-use path can be constructed along the road linking Beach car park to Hayfield and all the facilities between.
19. The application is for a total project of £326,000 with 30% support from CNPA, FES and Sustrans. Applications will be determined by 5<sup>th</sup> October with project delivery required by March 2020. If successful FES will manage the project supported by CNPA. The path will be maintained by FES.
20. In addition to Active Cairngorms CNPA has submitted one other application for Muir of Dinnet National Nature Reserve. This has been developed and will be delivered by SNH. The project is to upgrade the existing toilet facilities at the Reserve and improve the capacity and design of the car park. The project will increase the capacity of the Reserve to accommodate visitors, improving the appearance of the visitor facilities generally and providing an enhanced visitor experience. The project will also provide extra capacity in the local area for campervans and provide for safe disposal for waste from chemical toilets. The cost is estimated at £72k with SNH contributing 30%.

## Discussion

21. It is timely to report progress on both Active Aviemore and Cairngorm and Glenmore as in terms of visitor experience and local employment these areas are clearly linked with growing evidence of increased demand and impact. STEAM data shows an increasing number of visitors to both the National Park and Speyside. Visit Scotland data indicates increased overseas visitors supported by local anecdotal evidence. Experience in other national parks suggests that many overseas visitors are likely to want a ‘one day’ experience of the Cairngorms National Park as part of a wider Highland or Scottish holiday, with Aviemore, Glenmore and Cairngorm being a key destination.
22. The work presented is the start of a wider programme to deliver useable active travel opportunities to both visitors and residents in the area. This work supports a

range of actions in National Park Partnership Plan including the target of 'increasing the percentage of visitors using active travel during their stay to 19% by 2022.'

23. In addition to this work Leader+ are at the early stages of developing joint Rural Transport Cooperation project with Kilkenny in Ireland trialling sustainable rural transport that meets the seasonal needs of visitors and residents. If successful in obtaining funds trials in the Aviemore Glenmore area are likely to be scoped and tested in 2019.

## Recommendations

24. **That the Board:**
- a) **Note the successful first stage outputs of both Active Aviemore and Active Glenmore projects to date; and**
  - b) **Agree that CNPA should continue being a key partner supporting the ongoing development and delivery of both projects.**

## Implications

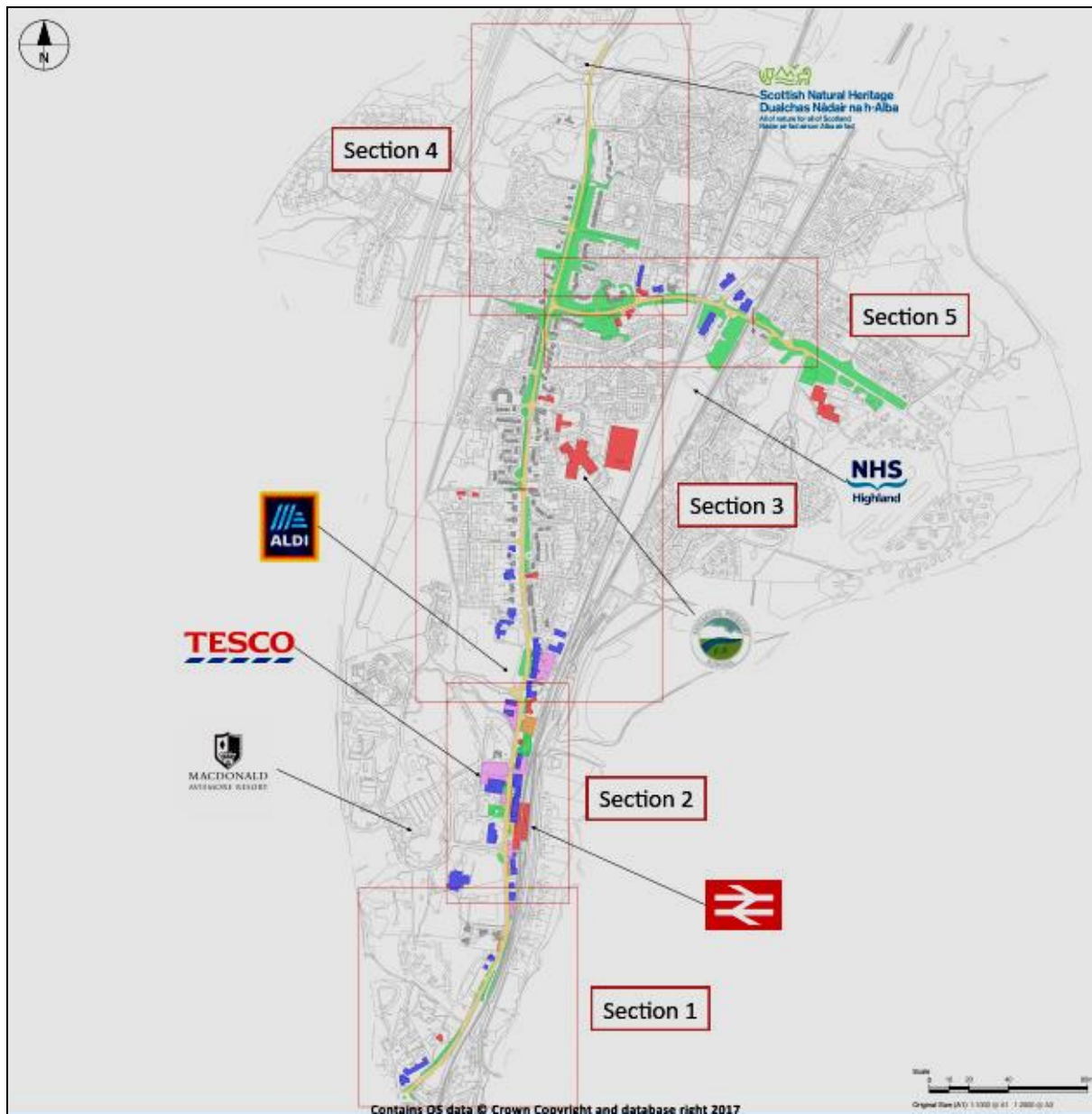
25. The ongoing development of Active Aviemore to design phase has no financial implication but will require significant staff input. NPP3 identifies this work as a key priority and we see obvious benefit in providing this support.
26. Active Glenmore also requires staff support linked to the ongoing delivery of Cairngorm and Glenmore Strategy. A successful bid to the Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund requires £44k from CNPA split over two financial years and this is within the current operational plan.

## Success Measures

27. The next stage successes will be:
- a) Development of detailed Design Phase for Active Aviemore.
  - b) Grant aid for multiuse path in Glenmore with construction in 2019.
28. Longer term, an increase in the number of residents and visitors using active travel in the area.

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## Annex I - Five Sections for Multi-use Path development along Grampian Road



## Annex 2 - Location of Multi use path in Glenmore

