

## Community Action Plans



### Context

The National Park Authority works with several partners to provide communities with the support they need to achieve more for themselves, and Community Action Planning is a key part of this process.

Community Action Planning is a process through which communities can identify their own priorities and tackle the issues which are important to them. Since 2008, 18 communities in the National Park have produced a Community Action Plan. These are reviewed on a 5-yearly basis with the support of the community development organisations operating in the National Park, namely Voluntary Action Badenoch and Strathspey, and Mar Area Partnership.

With the process of reviewing and updating these community action plans coinciding with the preparation of the next Cairngorms National Park Local Development Plan, the Park Authority has increased its support for community action planning to make them more spatial in nature and bring them more closely into the development planning process.



## What Happened

The process of preparing community action plans follows a four-stage process of:

1. Gathering information.
2. Data sorting and collation.
3. Involving people and refining ideas.
4. Community action plan document production.

The first two actions are led by the community groups with support from a community development organisation. An important aspect of this is a survey which is distributed to all members of the community. Following these stages people are involved and ideas refined through public engagement events. This is the stage at which the park authority gets directly involved.

Planners from the local development plan team attend the event with a range of material designed to engage the public on the Park Authority's work on the local development plan and collect further information to inform the community action plan. A key part of this is the use of large print maps on which members of the public are asked to note where they would like priorities and actions implemented, including identifying issues and constraints.

Following the event, the Park Authority takes the information collected at it, as well as the content of the draft community action plan document, to create a map for the action plan. The map acts as the spatial expression of the identified priorities and actions. The results have been positively received by communities.

## Areas of Collaboration

Dan Harris, Planning Manager (Forward Planning and Service Improvement), is the lead officer on the planning service's work on community action plans. The Park Authority has worked closely with both Voluntary Action Badenoch and Strathspey, and Marr Area Partnership on the preparation of the new community action plans. To date, [action plans](#) have been updated for ten communities, namely:

1. Aviemore
2. Blair Atholl
3. Boat of Garten
4. Dalwhinnie
5. Dulnain Bridge
6. Grantown-on-Spey
7. Kincaig
8. Kingussie
9. Nethy Bridge
10. Strathdon



## Overall Result

The key result is the creation of ten updated community action plans that have had significant input from the planning service and are more spatially focused as a result. The events have formed a core part of the direct engagement on the next local development plan, and their content is to be highlighted within the Evidence Report. Looking forward to the proposed plan stage of the local development plan's preparation, the updated community action plans will form a foundational part of the place making process.

## Lessons Learned

The key message from the events:

1. Direct engagement through the community action plan process provides valuable information that can be used in the preparation of the Local Development Plan.
2. The updated plans are more spatially orientated which allows them to be more easily integrated into the place making aspects of the Local Development Plan.

The process of preparing the Local Development Plan builds productive working relationships with community organisations. The process is, however, time-consuming and requires a lot of staff resource. Initially, this was difficult to manage within a timely manner without having an impact on other duties. However, this issue has now been addressed with the addition of a new post within the local development plan team that provides technical and support with mapping.



*This case study has been prepared in collaboration by Cairngorms National Park Authority and the National Planning Improvement Team at the Improvement Service. We publish good practice case studies identified through our work on the National Planning Improvement Framework and the National Planning Hub. They aim to support the sharing of good practice and build collaboration across the sector in addressing common challenges. Please email us at [npi@improvementservice.org.uk](mailto:npi@improvementservice.org.uk) if your authority has a good practice case study to share.*

