CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

1. How important do you think it is that we aim to be a Good Food Nation?

Very important. We consider that the Cairngorms National Park is a good place to help make it happen. The Cairngorms National Park is an iconic visitor destination, a home to a resident population of over 18000 people and a place that produces some high quality food in an outstanding landscape. Food and Drink is a key part of the Park’s economy and is linked to the wider regional economy of North Scotland. The four aims of Scottish National Parks are relevant and the Park therefore provides an important place for policy integration at a regional level with opportunities to help people make the connections between Scotland, the land and the production and consumption of quality food.

2. How would we know when we had got there? What would success look like?

- Scotland’s food and drink economy would be thriving;
- Scotland would be considered by people from overseas to be a world-class food and drink destination; and,
- Scotland’s people, regardless of income, would be healthy and happy, benefiting from the economic success of the sector and the readily available and affordable produce.

There would also be:

- an increase in the amount of quality food and drink produced - more producers and processors producing quality food;
- an increase in the use of local food - more local producers supplying more businesses and customers locally;
- an increase in the consumption of locally produced food - more of the people of Scotland and tourists consuming local food;
- expansion of the local food economy - increase in the development of new businesses and increase in the productivity of existing businesses;
- a decrease in Scotland’s carbon footprint - reduction in food miles, resource consumption and food waste through the supply chain;
- an increase in the health of Scotland’s people - more people adopting healthy and sustainable diets;
- an increase in the strength and resilience of Scotland’s communities - more people participating in community activities and initiatives; and,
- an increase in the value people placed on local produce.

3. Do you agree with the proposed vision? How would you improve it?

Yes, we broadly agree with the proposed vision. In addition, we would add a short phrase or sentence about the connection between quality food production and the outstanding landscapes of Scotland – because this is so important to the image of quality food and to
the future of such landscapes. In addition, the vision should reflect:

- the need for change and the Government’s commitment to making this happen, through legislation where necessary (see comments in Section 6 below);
- the social goals that are picked up in the consultation response from Nourish Scotland in relation to nutrition, poverty and health inequalities – these are real issues in parts of the Cairngorms National Park; and,
- the need for jobs relating to farming and primary production to be seen as valuable, well paid, and with more young people choosing that career path.

4. How would your life be better? What does being a Good Food Nation mean in your locality?

In the Cairngorms National Park we can describe what being a Good Food Nation means in terms of the three long-term outcomes that have been agreed for delivery with partners through the Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan:

1. A sustainable economy supporting thriving businesses and communities:
   - a Cairngorms Economic Strategy is now in place and sets out how we will grow our Agriculture, Food, and Drink sectors locally overseen by an industry-led Food and Drink Delivery Group;
   - addressing health inequalities and issues related to hunger and malnutrition in parts of the Park that are particularly disadvantaged;
   - building skills, knowledge, capacity, and best practice learning in local food & drink businesses e.g. monitor farms and a land based business training programme have been operating in the National Park for a number of years supporting development and training for agriculture businesses; and,
   - increasing awareness and availability of local produce e.g. a Directory of local producers has been created to enable local residents and businesses to find out what is produced locally and where to source it therefore encouraging increased purchase and use of local produce.

2. People enjoying the Park through outstanding visitor and learning experiences:
   - quality food and drink from the area is considered as part of the visitor experience, e.g. we have produced a food and drink trail leaflet for visitors;
   - opportunities to take local food and drink home after a visit;
   - opportunities to collect and consume wild food e.g. using ranger service, local providers and businesses to enable residents and visitors to learn about foraging and where their food comes and providing opportunities from fishing and hunting to foraging events; and,
   - opportunities to learn about food production e.g. we have promoted this in schools and as training opportunities including operating a schools ‘Adopt a Chef’ Programme and through a ‘Community Orchards’ scheme.

3. A special place for people and nature with natural and cultural heritage enhanced:
   - a quality environment to produce food and drink, meat production and processing and game are particularly important in the area; and,
   - providing opportunities for food producers to improve practices and promote their environmental credentials as a key selling point e.g. close working with businesses to utilise the Cairngorms National Park brand to connect their product to the area, this has been particularly effective with Cairngorm Brewery who carry the brand on their bottles and donate some of their profit to key natural heritage projects.
5. Are there any other essential steps we need to take before setting out on this journey?

No – best to get on with the work now.

6. How do you think a Food Commission could best help?

While the Strategy is phrased very positively, we believe there are also significant issues where Scottish Government will require to take a harder line, through legislation and compulsion where necessary, to challenge the most significant players in the food industry (including the larger food manufacturers, food processors and the supermarkets) and compel them to take action. The influence of these stakeholders is highly significant on peoples’ food choices and behaviours and the Government must act robustly to improve the quality of food and people’s diets, reduce harmful elements (including fats, sugar and salts), modify pricing (including on alcohol) and improve food labelling and packaging. If these issues are left unaddressed then the wider aspects of the National Food and Drink Policy will have limited impact. We believe the Commission can play a strong role in helping to make this happen.

A Food Commission must be focussed on adding value to what existing players do. Lines of accountability to Ministers and connections to industry must be clear for all to understand. The Commission could make recommendations on strategic direction of Government policy. It should also work to celebrate good practice and identify and challenge any barriers to progress. The Commission should work to promote the integration of what happens at national, regional, and local level.

7. In what areas should indicators be set to check we are on track towards our goals?

We need to avoid the selection of too many indicators and make sure they are built into, and complement, the National Performance Framework. Indicators could include:

- social indicators – e.g. Health of population, number of new community food projects, number of children and adults learning about where their food comes from;
- economic indicators – e.g. Number of new food & drink business start ups; number of farms selling directly to consumer with shorter supply chains; and,
- environmental indicators – e.g. Number of new community gardens and allotments, number of measures introduced to promote environmentally sensitive, sustainable farming.

8. What are your views on the different approaches that could be taken to help us become a Good Food Nation?

It is right that a range of different approaches are utilised. Government needs to ensure that all arms of Government are clear about the priority to be given to this area of work and we agree with the points made by Nourish Scotland about the need for greater policy integration. The flow from national to local level needs to be thought through and resourced.
National Parks are great places to try out new or different approaches to provide exemplars for the rest of Scotland and we would be interested to host further discussions about what may be possible, particularly if it is linked to strengthening this key sector of the local economy, to the visitor experience and to and the quality of the natural environment.

We know from our work in the National Park that people working at community level have considerable capacity to make a difference on issues such as this but they do need to be resourced effectively and encouraged. Clearly there are opportunities to encourage communities to use the Community Empowerment legislation to take this forward.

In the period since 2010 we have worked on the basis of a Food for Life Development Plan which is a strategic regional food and drink plan that was developed collaboratively by the Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA) and Soil Association Scotland (SAS). The Plan was developed on the shared understanding that local food production, procurement, and consumption within and around the Cairngorms National Park should respect the overall aim of caring for the soil, biodiversity, resources and communities of one of the most unique and important natural environments in Scotland.

The overall vision of the Plan is to:
- ‘increase the availability and use of local, fresh and seasonal produce for both residents and visitors in the Cairngorms National Park, and in so doing to seek long-term improvements to our health, environment and economy’.

A Food for Life Development Officer was employed, supported by funding from the LEADER programme, to co-ordinate work with schools and communities whilst wider work was undertaken to improve market intelligence improve understanding of the local food sector, improve skills and capabilities and increasing promotion and information about what is available to local residents, businesses and visitors. Improving availability and distribution of local produce is also an ambition but has proved particularly challenging to deliver. **We have attached a summary of what we have achieved with partners over the last few years through this approach at Annex A.**

Finally, we have some experience of encouraging the supply of locally produced food in supermarkets – both through use of planning conditions to address the proportion of shelf-space available but also through brokering local agreements with local suppliers. We believe there is scope to expend and promote such approaches further while also encouraging consumer-led approaches.

9. Do you agree with the proposed initial focus on:
- Food in the public sector
- A children’s food policy
- Local food
- Good food choices and
- Continued economic growth?

Yes in part. Within the Cairngorms National Park we are particularly interested in picking up the national priorities relating to Continued Economic Growth and Local Food. See below. See also our comments in Section 6 about the need for Scottish Government to take a robust approach with the larger food and drink industry players.
10. Which other areas would you prioritise?

Nothing – there is enough in the priorities above.

11. What other steps toward achieving a Good Food Nation would you recommend?

Nothing to add.

12. What else should be considered?

Nothing to add.

13. What steps do you plan to take to help Scotland on the journey toward becoming a Good Food Nation – in the next month and in the next 12 months?

We have just approved a new Economic Development and Diversification Strategy for the National Park. The preparation of the Strategy was led by key businesses in the Park under the umbrella of the Cairngorms Business Partnership, guided by discussions through the Cairngorms Economic Forum.

Each of the 6 Priority Themes of the Strategy has potential to deliver the Vision for a Good Food Nation. These are

1. Building on the key strengths of the Park (grow key economic sectors: Tourism, Forestry, Agriculture, Food & Drink; and, Renewables and Energy Efficiency)
2. Supporting and attracting Businesses
3. Strengthening education and training as an economic asset
4. Attracting Investment
5. Infrastructure (accommodation, transport, connectivity)
6. Planning for the future

The Strategy sets out how we wish to build on the key strengths, including Agriculture, Food & Drink, over the next few years. We will be discussing how best to do that in the near future with Food and Drink Delivery Group. Key priorities include collaboration, training, and removal of barriers to doing effective business e.g. infrastructure, telecommunications, etc.

14. How did you hear about this Discussion Document?

Scottish Government communication.
Summary of achievements through Cairngorms Food for Life Development Plan

This Annex details the activities undertaken over the last three years by the Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA) and Soil Association Scotland (SAS) as partners responsible for the delivery of the Cairngorms Food for Life Development Plan.

INTRODUCTION

The food and drink sector is of key importance to the Cairngorms National Park and plays a central role in supporting the Park’s economy and its communities. The quality and diversity of the Park’s natural larder is outstanding. The sector employs the full-time equivalent of around 700 people – 15% of the Park’s workforce.

However, despite the sector’s strengths and its importance to the Park, recent research indicates that there are major gaps in food and drink production within the Park. The research also shows that there are significant opportunities to increase the production, distribution and consumption of local food and drink.

As a result, CNPA and the Soil Association Scotland working in partnership, in consultation with a wide range of stakeholders, produced a Cairngorms Food for Life Development Plan, which is a strategic regional food and drink plan for the National Park.

The aim of the Cairngorms Food for Life Development Plan was to create a sustainable food economy, which has local food production, distribution and consumption at its heart. The Plan identified seven outcomes, which not only deliver the aspirations and aims of Food for Life, but help deliver strategic priorities for Cairngorms National Park and the Scottish Government.

Cairngorms Food for Life Development Plan outcomes:

- **Increase in the amount of quality food and drink produced in the Park** – more producers and processors producing quality food.
- **Increase in the use of local food across the Park** – more local producers supplying more businesses locally.
- **Increase in the consumption of locally produced food in the Park** – more residents and tourists consuming local food.
- **Expansion in the Park’s local food economy** – increase in the development of new businesses and increase in the productivity of existing businesses.
- **Decrease in the Park’s food carbon footprint** – reduction in food miles, resource consumption and food waste throughout the supply chain.
- **Improvement in the health of the Park’s residents** – more people adopting healthy and sustainable diets.
- **Increase in the strength and resilience of the Park’s communities** – more people participating in community activities and initiatives.
The development of a Park-wide Food for Life Plan offered distinct benefits by bringing together economic, educational, social and environmental activities in a coordinated way.

**THE APPROACH - Delivering Food for Life in Cairngorms National Park**

Food for Life is a national campaign to transform food culture in communities throughout Scotland. The Cairngorms Food for Life Development Plan seeks to give communities and visitors a better understanding of the importance of eating locally and seasonally and promoting access to local, fresh and organic food which is healthy, sustainable and affordable. It also encourages people to understand about farming and food production and where there is interest to get involved in growing food and encourages people to explore how their food choices impact on their health and that of the environment.

Food for Life takes a unique approach, by promoting a holistic delivery model for education, access and sustainability, to deliver a range of health, environmental and socio-economic benefits.

**ACTIVITY UNDERTAKEN**

**An Audit of Food and Drink in the Cairngorms National Park**

An audit of food and drink in the Cairngorms National Park and immediate environs was produced by SAC Consulting in March 2011. This helped to gain a better understanding of the issues surrounding the distribution of locally produced food and drink and could be used to develop realistic and practical solutions to any barriers identified in order to make it easier and cost effective for businesses to sell their products within the Cairngorms National Park as well as further afield where appropriate.

**Cairngorms Producers’ Directory for the Catering Industry**

A Producers Directory, aimed at the catering industry and those providing food and drink in the National Park, was produced in June 2011.

**Cairngorms Food and Drink Trail**

The food and drink trail leaflet is used as a tool to encourage visitors, in the main, to source, use and eat local produce and is widely promoted and distributed throughout the Park. The Trail takes the form of a pull out leaflet including a map of the Park and is in line with existing design and style guidelines. An electronic web version of the Food & Drink Trail is also available at www.visitcairngorms.com.

**Orchard Project**

In order to promote eating healthy local produce, villages and communities within the Cairngorms National Park were asked to send us nominations so they could receive Scottish heritage fruit trees under the auspices of helping celebrate the 10 year anniversary of the Park.

We were overwhelmed by responses from the communities and with some additional funding from the CNPA were able to plant not just 10 but 19 orchard sites within the Cairngorms National Park. And in addition to this, two communities bought additional orchard trees to double the numbers planted.

The successful sites were: Abernethy Primary, Anagach Woods Trust, Ardgell, Aviemore Primary, Ballater, Blair Atholl, Braemar, Crathie Primary, Cromdale, Dalwhinnie, Deshar
Primary, Glenlivet Drumin Castle, Grantown Primary, Highland Folk Museum, Kingussie, Laggan, Newtonmore Primary, Strathdon Primary and Tomintoul.
In addition, primary school children were invited to enter our apple drawing contest. The winning apple pictures are featured on the signs at each orchard site.

Orchard Workshops
For each of the orchard plantings, the Apple Tree Man provided training and advice on how to look after and maintain the orchards. This will help ensure the future sustainability of the orchards by ensuring that the communities have the know how to look after them for years to come.

Orchard Day Event
An Orchard Day event was held at the Highland Folk Museum in Newtonmore, and the first of the orchard plantings took place at the Lochanhully House site. The Orchard Day was a vehicle to engage with the communities of the National Park and enthuse them about all things apple as well as local produce in general. There was apple themed activities, two chefs demonstrating apple recipes, a hog roast and an apple press to allow visitors to sample the freshly squeezes juice of Heritage apples.
Growing
As part of developing confidence amongst teachers on what could be grown in the NP training was delivered on growing veg in the Cairngorms. 15 teachers from local schools took part in the training in April 2012, with a view to each of them using these new skills and confidence to grow more produce in school gardens.

Chefs Adopt a School
The Cairngorms National Park Authority teamed up with the Academy of Culinary Arts to deliver their highly successful Chefs Adopt a School programme. The programme aims to develop childrens understanding and enjoyment of ‘taste’, and provenance of ingredients. Training was held in November 2011 & January 2012 with 16 chefs taking part. All chefs were allocated a school and were tasked with undertaking sessions with children that were practical and very hands-on, making for fun and informative learning.
Cookery Clubs
3 Primary Schools involving 50 pupils have benefitted from the purchase of cooking equipment to enable them to establish afterschool cookery clubs and encourage more cooking in class as part of the Curriculum for Excellence.

Healthier Scotland Cooking Bus
The Food for Life Development officer made a successful application to the above initiative and as a result the Cooking Bus was in Aviemore in May 2012. All 140 P7 pupils in Badenoch and Strathspey visited the bus to learn new cooking skills and focusing on local food.

Countryside Food & Farming Day
The Food for Life project worked with RHET to hold an Estate day at Alvie Estate for 85 pupils from the primary schools in the Kingussie High catchment area.
The objective was to provide a ‘hands on’ experience for pupils by exposing them to elements of the countryside such as farming, forestry, wildlife and game keeping. A range of activities associated with these land-uses and the roles of the people who work on the estate let pupils encounter life on an estate.

**Culfoich Farm Visit**
This event provided a ‘hands on’ experience for pupils by exposing them to elements of the countryside and food production including farming, forestry, wildlife and the wider environment. A range of activities associated with these land-uses and the roles of the people who work on the farm and local area let pupils encounter life on a farm and food production and biodiversity in the National Park. These were supplemented by discussions covering responsible outdoor and countryside access and sustainable food production.
Schools Farmers Market
School Farmers’ Markets introduce pupils to the concept of local food produce and to give them information that will help them to make informed choices when buying food. It also introduces pupils to some of the farming methods in their local area and to learn how food is produced and processed.
In the lead up to the market pupils organise and manage a small enterprise activity within school and develop the skills required to do this. They work as part of a team and to allocate the various tasks/roles to different team members. On the day pupils are introduced to members of the local community and forge relationships with local organisations and businesses.
Grantown Primary School held the first School Farmers’ Market and was hugely successful. As well as being an exciting and relevant way to interpret the curriculum for teachers it was also great fun. Braemar Primary School are planning on holding a market and Grantown Primary has since held their second one.

Schools’ Farm
In December 2013 the CNPA commissioned a feasibility study to look at the demand for, practicalities of and economics of setting up a Schools’ Farm within the Cairngorms National Park.
As well as the opportunity to engage school children with hands on experience of producing food and farming there is great potential to deliver much more, particularly in relation to Rural Skills and Apprenticeships.
There is currently an opportunity to take this forward with Highlife Highland and the Highland Folk Museum very keen to develop the initiative at their site at Newtonmore.

Kingussie Garden
In Kingussie a community led project to improve the vegetable garden in the local primary school had assistance from the project by paying for wood to make raised beds and also by working in partnership with apprentices has ensured labour to install the beds was given free of charge.
**Hens in Schools**
Following a successful CPD course, 4 schools wanted to take up the offer from the project to provide them with a hen house and run. The schools were Grantown Grammar, Abernethy Primary, Carrbridge Primary and Kincraig Primary. Having hens in school is a fantastic opportunity to connect young people with where their food comes from. The eggs will be used in school cookery clubs and can be ‘sold’ to parents and staff. Hens are a creative and distinctive aid to teaching the National Curriculum, in areas such as Maths, English and Creative Writing, Art and Science. We expect the Hens to be incredibly popular and another great legacy for the project.

**Food for Life Catering Mark**

**Highland Council**
Highland Council has held the Food for Life Catering Mark since 2009 and a key focus of work has been to continue to support the catering team within the Council to retain the award. In February 2014 a silver Food for Life Catering Mark pilot was launched involving 5 primary schools in Nairn who are now receiving organic milk for drinking.

**Aberdeenshire Council**
Aberdeenshire Council is currently working towards achieving the Bronze CM for all primary schools and awaiting their first inspection which is expected to take place by summer 2014.

**Angus Council and Perth & Kinross Council**
Work has been ongoing with Tayside Contracts – the catering operation which supplies school meals for Dundee, Angus and Perth & Kinross – since August 2011. The catering team attended Linking Learning & Lunch event Sept 2011 and since then work has been underway to trial the Food for Life Catering Mark in three primary schools across a nine week period.

**Cultural Exchange of Culinary Skills and Local Food Production**
French delegates visited the National Park in October 2013 as part one of exchanges planned for 2013 and 2014 to further develop mutual understanding of Scottish and French cultures as expressed through local produce and cooking. The overall objective was to allow our French visitors to engage with regional food producers and for local residents to experience and exchange information and practicalities of French and Scots cooking. The series of events over 5 days engaged with residents and visitors through the French theme and promoted local food and drink with the objective of increasing demand for local produce.

**Best of the Wurst**
A celebration of the local sausage! This was a one day food event centred around celebrating local produce from the Cairngorms National Park. The event encouraged residents and visitors to Eat Well Eat Local through the celebration of the local sausage and aims to become a regular fixture in the diary of the Cairngorms National Park.

**Production of Cairngorms Larder**
This guide to food and drink of the Cairngorms National Park was developed with The List and was launched at the Royal Highland Show in Jun 13.

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**Annex A**
Royal Highland Show 2013 CNPA Sponsorship
This was to support delivery of the Highlands Presidential Initiative at the Royal Highland Show 2013 including delivery of the Countryside Area and Food Hall.

Parliamentary Reception
The Cairngorms National Park Authority held a celebratory event at Holyrood in June 2013 to celebrate both Year of Natural Scotland and the 10th anniversary of the Cairngorms National Park. One of the three themes of the evening was local produce from the CNP. This was attended by Cambus O’May Cheese, Grants of Speyside and Cairngorms Brewery who offered samples of their fantastic produce to the MSPs and other attendees.

Highland and Islands Food and Drink Awards
The CNPA sponsored the Young Shining Star Award at the 2013 Highlands and Islands Food and Drink Awards and negotiated that the Awards be open to all businesses in CNP. The CNPA are again a sponsor of the Awards for 2014 extending the award area to cover the whole of the Cairngorms National Park.
The 2013 Young Shining Star Award was won by Seb Jones, Speyside Craft Brewery, Forres and Carlyn Keaney, Frankie’s fish & Chip Shop, Shetland (below). And in 2014 two of the category winners were from the Cairngorms National Park – the Cairngorm Brewery Company (Best Drink Award) and the Dalwhinnie Distillery (Best Marketing Initiative Award).
Annex A

Marketing Campaign Plan for the Food & Drink Sector in the Cairngorms National Park
The plan helped us to engage in a meaningful and productive way with our visitors and residents to encourage them to eat more local produce and to increase awareness of the area as a place with high quality locally produced food and drink. Various suggestions were detailed in the plan and it was felt that a great way to engage local visitors and residents was through local food and drink events. Investing a small amount of funding in these local events allowing them to blossom and grow in future years has been shown to make the events more sustainable and more likely to grow year on year.

Venison Demonstration
A masterclass on the use of local venison, which included a butchery demonstration, was delivered, working with MacDonald Highland Resorts (MHR) and involving local chefs. Over 20 chefs took part in the well received event. A further economic benefit is that as a result of the connection made at the masterclass between the butcher and MHR, an order of for 56kg of local venison was placed, which is a change in the current supply chain.

Food and Fiddle Festival
Following discussions with Royal Deeside and the Cairngorms DMO (now Visit Royal Deeside) and the Deeside Tourism Forum, Deeside and the Cairngorms DMO took forward the concept of a ‘Food and Fiddle Fortnight’ that took place 12th-26th October 2013. The festival encompassed all things food, culture and music and was centred around Upper Deeside including Ballater, Braemar and Donside extend outwith the Cairngorms National Park to Banchory. This was a pilot event with the potential to be replicated across the National Park.
Red Meat & Venison Collaboration
Initial collaboration focusing on red meat and venison in partnership with Scottish Enterprise, SOAS and Co-operative Development Scotland took place June 2012. This was followed by a facilitated session with red meat and venison producers in February 13.

CNPA
October 2014