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## Update to Cairngorms Communities – March 2017

### **1. Purpose**

Cairngorms Community Broadband (CCB) exists to improve digital connectivity in the remote areas of the Cairngorms National Park and its surrounding areas. Its immediate focus is the improvement of the physical infrastructure and the provision of reliable fast and future-proof broadband but it maintains longer term objectives with regards to “soft” benefits such as improving digital skills, improving employment opportunities and assisting voluntary organisations, charities and social enterprises to prosper

CCB will serve those areas, known as “white” postcodes, which have not benefitted from the recent roll out of High Speed Fibre Broadband. CCB estimates that it has c1400 premises within its area of interest which will include both private premises and businesses.

### **2. Legal Structure**

CCB is a formally constituted Company limited by guarantee and not having a share capital (company registration SC549740). Companies House approval has been granted. Charitable status is being sought from OSCR.

### **3. Board Structure**

The Constitution of CCB allows for a maximum of 13 directors of which 7 are nominated by communities and 6 by other significant stakeholder bodies. These are Cairngorms National Park Authority (1), The Cairngorms Trust (2), Association of Cairngorm Communities (1), Cairngorms Business Partnership (1) and Scottish Land and Estates (1). Directors have been nominated for all these positions. There are currently 3 community directors in place and the intent is to fill the 4 remaining vacancies with directors from the areas within which CCB will operate.

### **4. Formation of CCB**

The Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA), working with Community Broadband Scotland (CBS), set up a steering group early in 2016 with attendees drawn from a number of, but not all, affected communities. The steering group met several times during 2016 and concluded with the group approving CCB’s Memorandum of Association. The steering group was then

dissolved. The 3 founder directors and the Company Secretary have since been responsible for CCB's ongoing activities.

## **5. Partner Organisations**

CCB has, and will continue to, partner with, CBS – it's infrastructure funder and provider of technical and contracting support – CNPA and the Cairngorms Trust who provide staff support, meeting premises and other ongoing general activities. We are grateful to CNPA for providing some working capital to help the company take our actions forward in the short term.

## **6. CCB activities to date and ongoing**

- CCB's area of responsibility includes Dalwhinnie and Kingussie in the south to Donside, Ballater and Crathie in the east and Tomintoul & Glenlivet in the north. CCB is keen to see all the communities involved in the project represented on the board and is actively seeking directors from these areas.
- The CCB Board, as currently constituted, met for the first time on 9<sup>th</sup> March and, amongst other items, decided on the operating model that it wishes to pursue for the provision of high speed broadband in its area of responsibility.
- Following some months of debate and discussion, within CCB, with communities and with CBS, CCB has decided to follow a contractor operated/community owned model. This, in simple terms, means that a contractor will be sought to build, then own and operate the installed network, while the community (CCB) will own the infrastructure that provides the service.
- The Board of CCB believes that this arrangement provides by far the best opportunity for communities to benefit – both in the short term but also in terms of improved employability and skills, business capability and improvements in community life in the Cairngorms National Park area.
- CCB is seeking a slight variation to the "standard" model and has decided this based on several factors, not least of which are the financial sustainability difficulties similar schemes in other rural communities in Scotland have encountered and which CCB wishes to avoid. CCB's revised model design is being submitted to Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK) – the determining body for issues such as this – for approval.
- The intention is to issue an Invitation to Tender (ITT) in April 2017 which will enable first connections, in the CCB area, to take place in mid-2018.
- CCB have and will continue to meet with communities to communicate our objectives and programme to them and to seek their views as to their needs. Initially CCB are doing this through Community Councils and other Community groups. CCB has already met with Tomintoul, Strathdon, and Ballater and has meetings arranged with Braemar, Nethy Bridge, Aviemore, Dalwhinnie, Carr-bridge and Dulnain Bridge in the coming weeks.
- CCB is working up a wider communications plan that will enable it to reach all communities, businesses and individuals who are affected by CCB's activity, keeping them informed of progress and how it affects them and allowing them to input their thoughts and needs on an ongoing basis. This, in turn, will allow CCB to begin a programme of member recruitment thus allowing community groups, individuals and businesses to have a say in how CCB operates and what it does. Ultimately, this is a community project and it will only succeed if communities support it.

March 2017

CCB's FB page can be found at <https://www.facebook.com/cairngormsbroadband/>  
CCB can be contacted at [cairngormsbroadband@gmail.com](mailto:cairngormsbroadband@gmail.com). Please don't hesitate to mail CCB if you have any questions.

You can find a short piece of video about the foundation of CCB at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zlikk7qFuVc>

A short 'Expression of Interest' survey can be filled in at: <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/BS93G87>