

CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

Title: Park Gateways and Information Working Group:
Purpose and Short-term Outputs

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Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to inform the Board of the work of this Group; and seek their approval for the Group's purpose, short-term outputs and for expenditure on external consultancy for entry point signage.

Recommendations

- The Board is invited to agree the Group's purpose and short-term outputs; and approve expenditure of approximately £12,000 on external consultancy for the first phase of the entry point signage project.

Executive Summary

The Board agreed the provisional purpose and short-term outputs for this Working Group on 12th September 2003. The Working Group has now met twice, is chaired by Bob Wilson, and has invited external interests to join it.

The Group agrees with the provisional purpose and that its short-term outputs should be to produce two reports by the end of April. One will set out detailed proposals for entry point signage, and one will make proposals to improve public information, including orientation, about the special qualities of the Park.

There is sufficient expertise within the Authority and on the Group to prepare the report on public information, but work to develop entry point signage will need to be bought in. This is likely to cost up to £12,000 and so will need the approval of the Board and the Scottish Executive.

Park Gateways and Information Working Group: Purpose and Short-term Outputs

Introduction

1. At its meeting on 12th September 2003 in Edzell, the Board agreed the provisional purpose and short-term outputs of 11 Working Groups; and requested that each Group define these more tightly and clearly for final agreement by the Board.

Membership

2. The Park Gateways and Information Working Group has now met twice. Bob Wilson has agreed to chair the Group. In addition to the chairman, there are currently three other Board members on the Group – Andrew Rafferty, Gregor Rimell, and David Selfridge.
3. At their second meeting, the Group agreed to invite representatives from the Scottish Countryside Rangers Association, Area Tourist Boards, and Association of Scottish Visitor Attractions/Cairngorms Attraction Group to sit on the Group; and to invite other representatives in due course should it become apparent that a particular sector of expertise was missing.
4. Two officials are currently supporting the Group. Miranda Whitcomb is focusing on the provision of public information, and Debbie Strang will be taking forward the entry point signage.
5. The Group recognises the importance of working closely with the other Working Groups, particularly the Tourism Development Working Group; and to that end Debbie Strang attends the meetings of both.

Purpose and Short-term Outputs

6. Its provisional purpose and short-term outputs were as follows:

Purpose

To develop and implement a coordinated approach to establishing appropriate “gateways” at the main entry points to the CNP.

Short-term Outputs

To produce a report to the CNPA board by the end of [Feb’ 04] setting out detailed proposals (including funding arrangements) for signage at all the main entry points to the CNP.

To produce a report to the CNPA board by the end of [Mar’ 04] outlining proposals for any other facilities that may be required at specified entry points to the CNP.

To produce a report for the CNPA board by end [Feb' 04] setting out specific proposals for implementation during 2004/05 so as to improve generally available public information about, and hence understanding of, the "special qualities" of the Park.

7. Following discussion, the Working Group is content with the provisional purpose, and agrees with the first and third outputs, aiming to deliver both reports by the end of April 2004.
8. The Working Group was of the view that the second provisional output – proposals for facilities other than signage at entry points – is premature; the immediate priority is to put in place entry point signage, followed by information provision within key existing sites.

Progress Update

9. In view of the need to meet the suggested target dates for short-term outputs, the Group has already commissioned work for the two reports. Initial research on the provision of public information is being taken forward in house, and will be supplemented in due course by the Head of Communications.
10. For the entry point signage, there is limited in-house expertise. The best value route is therefore to seek external assistance, and on that basis, we have invited tenders to take forward this work. We envisage that this will take place in two phases. The first will scope the exercise, identifying the resources required and a realistic timescale, and present all the issues for further decision making by the CNPA. The second phase will be the manufacture and placement of the signage itself.
11. We are currently considering the tenders, and the maximum cost for the first phase will be approximately £12,000. In line with the draft Management Statement and Financial Memorandum, and the Board's agreed project approval process, this level of expenditure on consultancies requires the Board's specific approval, as well as that of the Scottish Executive.
12. There is provision for this level of expenditure for the first phase within the budget for 2003-04.
13. For the second phase, the Corporate Plan for 2004-07 identifies a budget of £400,000 over the next 3 financial years for signage.

Recommendation

14. The Board is invited to agree the Group's purpose and short-term outputs; and approve expenditure of £12,000 on the first phase of the entry point signage project.

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