
CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

FOR DISCUSSION

**Title: Cairngorms Youth Apprenticeship Scheme:
Increasing Training Opportunities for Young People in
the Park**

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Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to report on work over the last year to develop a local youth apprenticeship scheme, and to outline plans for further work.

Recommendations

That the Board:

- Note the developmental work that has been undertaken in phase 1
- Give their views on the work proposed

Executive Summary

Locally, vocational training career paths have been highlighted as being inadequate by several reports in recent years. CNPA staff have developed options for addressing this issue in consultation with public agencies and industry. This has led through a process of meetings, a workshop and has now reached the early planning stages to implement a vocational training scheme. Phase 1 (investigative) is underway, and phase 2 (implementation of pilot scheme) is dependant upon Board approval later in 2005.

Background

1. Vocational training is an important part of the overall education and training sector, but initial research has found that local schools, colleges, businesses and public agencies find current vocational training opportunities are not as flexible or accessible as industry and local people need.
2. The CNPA have an interest in vocational training as part of its aim to promote sustainable economic and social development in the area's communities. The CNPA Corporate Plan fixes a 3 year goal to develop:
 - "improved training with a special emphasis on the Park's special qualities, and to have a Park apprenticeship scheme available".
3. In 2003 the 2 Scottish Enterprise Networks commissioned SQW Consultants to conduct economic research in the Cairngorms Partnership area. The report showed that the area has:
 - a lower than average number of young people under 25 at 28% (Scottish average 31%)
 - a higher over 60s population at 26% (21% Scottish average)
 - falling numbers of employed people
 - inadequate career paths for young people
 - a large seasonal workforce
 - a heavy dependency on employment on too few sectors, especially tourism and agriculture, which were both declining.

The 2001 census and the State of the Park Report echo similar concerns.

4. Based on the SQW report, Highlands & Islands Enterprise (HIE) commissioned Macdonald Associates in 2003 to investigate the opportunities for developing skills in the sports and leisure industries in the Cairngorms. Macdonald reported:
 - a lack of established vocational routes which offered no option for those school leavers disengaged with mainstream academic study
 - missing career progression for rangers and outdoor activity professionals, leading to local people often being excluded from these sectors
 - year-round employment was difficult to obtain with short, variable ski-seasons with knock-on effects for affording housing and a range of other social issues
 - the cost of some outdoor activity accreditation schemes creates barriers to entry
 - local employers felt that there was no local training provision derived from their needs.
5. In November 2004, CNPA brought together HIE, the Association of Cairngorms Community Councils, Cairngorms Chamber of Commerce, Moray Badenoch & Strathspey Enterprise, Highland Council, Scottish Enterprise Grampian (SEG) and Careers Scotland to discuss the options for training in the Park. The consensus was to

consult more widely with industry and agencies, and a workshop was organised in early 2005 at the Lecht Ski Centre.

6. In addition to the original steering group members, the workshop brought together more industry representatives such as Aviemore Highland Resort, colleges, local training providers under BASIL+, all 22 sector skills councils (SSCs) represented by Lantra, possible funders such as LEADER+, community representatives and sector groups including SnowScotland. Lesley Campbell and Ron Dalton attended from Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Authority (LLTNPA) and presented their plans for a local apprenticeship scheme. Kate Christie manager of CNPA's Land Based Business Training (LBBT) scheme presented her demand-led training approach.
7. Good quality vocational training schemes already exist in Scotland. However, the SQW and Macdonald reports, supported by evidence from the recent CNPA workshop, found that gaps still appear to exist between the skills businesses need and the skills young people can offer.
8. The LLTNPA scheme is focusing on traditional skills development in building, plumbing and electrical trades to meet local demand. Whilst our project investigations will look at these trades, the workshop agreed that a major issue was the seasonality of work patterns in the Park and that employers found difficulty in recruiting workers with a variety of skills. Both industry and agencies went on to agree that a multi-skilling initiative was required and that the CNP made a natural area in which to run a pilot project. CNPA were judged best placed to be the co-ordinating body for any scheme.
9. The first meeting of the Implementation Group (IG) took place in April 2005 and identified the requirement for 3 pieces of investigative work:
 - a skills audit to be completed with businesses to establish the skills needs and shortages in the area
 - a training needs analysis to establish school leavers and recent school leavers needs.
 - a study of available modules, trainers and administration requirements.

The IG is a diverse mix of agencies and private sector organisations and has considerable resources available to it using individual members' areas of expertise. Proposals were requested from various members to complete this initial work. The Skills Audit will shortly be commissioned, Macdonald Associates are to carry out a Training Needs Analysis, and CNPA are co-ordinating a response from HIE, SEG, colleges and BASIL+ on modules and trainers.

10. The investigative phase will report back by end September 2005. The third piece of investigative work (modules and trainers) will be developed further into a learning framework. The setting up of any scheme will then be discussed according to the demand, needs and provision available. Existing schemes will have to be taken into consideration. For example:

Scottish Progression Awards (SPAs) are a new award, seen as an entry into vocational training for use in S4-6 and build on the existing Skills for Work from S3. SPAs fit in

well as a preparatory route to other apprenticeship schemes. Eddie Broadley at Kingussie High School has been instrumental in the development of the Rural Skills SPA and will be rolling it out from this summer. SPAs are for all attainment levels, and will provide the opportunity for school children to replace some academic study with vocational credits of equal or greater value, such as basic handling of horses, introduction to game keeping or tractor operations.

Professional Development Awards (PDAs) allow specialist industry sectors in Scotland to tailor Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQs) to their needs in a more flexible way and are usually undertaken by those in work but training part-time. These may be a route for developing a Cairngorms scheme, although they are not directly funded by Enterprise Networks.

Modern Apprenticeships are designed for a single employer to employ and train an apprentice in one sector. In Scotland these are directly funded by Enterprise Networks and made up of level 3 SVQs (level 2 NVQs in England). There is no flexibility to include other modules other than level 3 SVQs.

The Board is asked to note the developmental work that has been undertaken in phase 1

New Scheme Structure

11. It is vital that any local scheme identifies and fills a training gap. Phase 1 investigative work will identify these needs, but feedback from the workshop has already found that:

- Modern Apprenticeships tend to be too inflexible, with one sector and one employer the model
- college time is usually unpaid and not attractive to apprentices
- delivery is often too distant, not allowing students to live at home, or entailing long commutes to a city college
- a lack of bursaries & pay during training, along with business administration burdens may all be barriers
- training provision is sometimes missing or too remote.

Whilst not wishing to pre-empt the investigations, there has already been strong local support for a scheme that would allow apprentices to choose from a range of sector skills and core skills to build up enough qualifications to sustain year-round employment. For example, an apprentice may choose hospitality, ski centre and game keeper skills along with technology and customer service training. Some academic modules may also be offered recognising that vocational skills do not sit completely apart from academic ones. The aim will be to place the apprentice in control of what modules they take, within a framework of available subject groups.

12. It will tie into a variety of industries which require seasonal employment, but could include ranger, conservation and land management sectors as well as hospitality.

Investigations will consider the barriers to entry to more traditional apprenticeship routes such as the building trades.

13. The publicity and interest around the setting up of a local scheme will raise the profile of vocational training in schools, and will better inform and re-engage young people at a time when they may be losing interest in education. By working with Enterprise Networks and Careers Scotland, applicants who do not fit scheme criteria will be redirected to industry schemes and other training options.
14. An important role for any scheme is to build training and module capacity within the Park, rather than relying on external deliverers.
15. If investigations confirm the research so far phase 2 (Sept 2005 - Sept 2006) would:
 - identify the 'hook' from which to hang the apprenticeship scheme, be it Modern Apprenticeships, Professional Development Awards or another route
 - draw together a framework of courses
 - identify potential businesses as employers
 - select apprentices from a variety of routes including those who have successfully completed their Scottish Progression Awards, returners to work or those with existing academic qualifications
 - establish a funding package
 - establish an administration & payment mechanism for the pilot study
 - recruit a scheme manager
 - establish an administrative base for the scheme
 - establish a practical approach to matching apprentices to employers, based on the LBBT model
 - publicly launch the scheme

Issues

16. Funding for phase 1 investigative work has been earmarked in the Operational Plan and falls within officers delegated authority. Phase 2 pilot project will necessitate new Board approval.
17. The investigative reports will identify barriers to entry and provision of local apprenticeships. It will therefore be unclear what costs are involved in Phase 2, and what funding is available from elsewhere, until they report around September 2005. A Board Paper will be presented in October or November 2005 with these costs and funders itemised for approval.
18. This scheme will be the first of its kind in Scotland. Where it sits in regard to other schemes is fundamental, and will determine its funding sources and effectiveness.
19. Accreditation will be essential for industry and apprentices.
20. Any pilot scheme will necessarily need to be run over several years to be meaningful, and this will be addressed in the upcoming Phase 2 Board paper.

Consultation

21. The scheme has been widely consulted upon and has a strong consensual basis. Industry has been fully involved, and further industry reps & agencies are expected to come on board as the scheme develops.
22. Internally, Quentin McLaren continues to be involved advising on external funding opportunities; Kate Christie drawing on her practical LBBT experience; Andrew Harper, management oversight.

Policy Context

23. The scheme meets the Corporate Plan's 3rd theme:
 - To support and stimulate economic and social development within the Park that sustains and is sustained by its special natural and cultural qualities.
24. It meets the 3 cross-cutting themes by economically, effectively and efficiently using the CNPA's resources to deliver a scheme with partners, drawing on their experience, skills and resources. Making the most of our experience with LBBT, it will be demanded by industry and the needs of young people. It ensures a Park for All by encouraging young people to stay and work effectively in the Park rather than move away to academic study or urban jobs; and it makes communities within the Park more sustainable and strengthens the position of future generations by securing better paid and more suitable employment patterns in the Park.
25. The CNPA's vocational training policy and actions to date are in full agreement with Enterprise companies who deliver national training policy for the Scottish Executive. UHI Millennium Institute and the SQA are being consulted and feedback from the Sector Skills Councils has been positive.
26. The draft Park Plan highlights the seasonality of employment; low pay; inflexible national schemes; administration burden in small local businesses; remote training providers and training providers not meeting industry needs. The scheme meets the Park Plan's goals to develop & improve access to education and training, and to match skills requirements and training needs.
27. Adequate training in improving skills levels, employment opportunities and career paths in the Park supports sustainable communities, encourages social inclusion and makes housing and transport more accessible.

Implications

Financial Implications

28. Costs for the investigative work will be spread between SEG, HIE and CNPA. These costs are relatively low and fit within the Operational Plan estimates. It is unclear what

resources will be required for phase 2, the pilot, though the scheme partners have access to several different sources of funding including LEADER+, the European Social Fund as well as tapping into established MA and other national funding.

Allocations in the operational plan are as follows:

2005/6 £10K
2006/7 £15K
2007/8 £20K

Costs per apprentice will vary, depending on the vocational route and barriers to entry.

Presentational Implications

29. Publicity is planned jointly with partners at key points towards the end of 2005 and from Spring 2006 to bring employers on board, and to start selection of apprentices.

Implications for Stakeholders

30. A new scheme will mean an innovative way of working for all public agency partners: Sector Skills Councils will be working for the first time in helping delivering cross-sectoral support; colleges will not have their own students on specific courses but will have to deliver individual modules to apprentices; apprentices will be working for two or several employers not one; funding will probably be diverted from usual routes.

Next Steps

31. The investigative work has been commissioned, and will report back by September. The Board will then be asked to decide on a proposal to move to Phase 2, the pilot scheme.

The Board is invited to give their views on the work proposed.

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