

---

# CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

---

## FOR INFORMATION

**Title: OPERATIONAL PLAN 2005/06 QUARTER 1 -UPDATE**

**Prepared by: Jane Hope, Chief Executive  
David Cameron, Head of Corporate Services**

### **Purpose**

To present a review of progress on the 2005/06 Operational Plan.

### **Recommendation**

The Board is requested to note the progress made to date on 2005/06 Operational Plan actions, and in particular:

- Progress on 17 of 20 goals is broadly in line with intentions set out in the Operational Plan.
- The remaining three goals have each been identified as affected by some changes to the timetable and/or intended delivery plans, which pose some risk to delivery of intended outcomes. All three of these goals are expected to be delivered prior to the end of the year.

### **Executive Summary**

The Operational Plan sets out a range of actions, and milestones associated with these actions, which contribute over the course of 2005/06 to the ultimate delivery of the 20 Corporate Plan goals over the next few years. The Management Team's review of the 2005/06 Operational Plan has sought to identify whether planned activities remain broadly on target in terms of timetable and delivery of intended outcomes, or whether, for any reason, there is any risk of actions not being delivered within target timescales.

The main focus has been on actions where milestones were planned to be achieved by the end of the first quarter of 2005/06, i.e. by 30 June. Additionally, the opportunity has also been taken to look forward and highlight, at this still relatively early point of the year, any issues relating to delivery of outcomes intended in the latter part of the year.

The review indicates that progress on 17 of 20 goals is broadly in line with intentions set out in the Operational Plan. Although some changes to the timetable and/or intended delivery plans have been identified within the remaining three goals, intended outcomes in these areas for 2005/06 are expected to be delivered prior to the end of the year.

---

## OPERATIONAL PLAN 2005/06 QUARTER 1 - UPDATE

### Background

1. The Operational Plan for 2005/06 was presented to the Board for information at its meeting in April. This plan stems from the Corporate Plan for 2005/06 to 2007/08, approved by the Board in February.
2. The Corporate Plan sets out 20 goals which set out the outcomes to which the Authority will direct its resources over the three years to 2008. The goals will not all be completed over the course of the current three year corporate planning period: progress will be made on all goals over this time and further direction will be given by the National Park Plan. Of the 20 goals, 7 have been identified as taking priority given that they are statutory duties and /or in most cases will provide the strategic framework which will guide activities within the Park for the next 10 years or so.
3. The Operational Plan sets out a range of actions, and milestones associated with these actions, which contribute over the course of 2005/06 to the ultimate delivery of the 20 Corporate Plan goals over the next few years.
4. The Management Team has now undertaken a review of the operational plan for 2005/06, as we come towards the end of the first quarter of the year. This review has sought to identify whether planned activities remain broadly on target in terms of timetable and delivery of intended outcomes, or whether, for any reason, there is any risk of actions not being delivered within target timescales.

### 2005/06 Operational Plan Review Process

5. In reviewing the status of delivery of operational plan actions, the Management Team have used a three way system of categorisation:
  - a) Green: action being delivered broadly in line with timetable and intended milestones/outcomes envisaged in operational plan.
  - b) Amber: there are some changes to the timetable and/or intended delivery plans which poses some risk to delivery of intended outcomes.
  - c) Red: changes to timetable and/or delivery plans pose a significant risk to delivery of intended outcomes.
6. At this stage, the main focus has been on actions where milestones were planned to be achieved by the end of the first quarter of 2005/06, i.e. by 30 June. Additionally, the opportunity has also been taken to look forward and highlight, at this still relatively early point of the year, any issues relating to delivery of outcomes intended in the latter part of the year.
7. Following from the review of the status of actions, the status of the goals to which the actions contribute have also been categorised as green, amber or red. This is intended to provide some early indication of progress being made, through delivery of 2005/06 operational plans, to the three year goals.

8. Assessing the delivery status of goals also attempts to take some account of the fact that not all actions will make an equal contribution to the achievement of goals. Rather, some actions will be of lower priority, and it may be appropriate as the year progresses to halt delivery of the outcomes intended by those actions in order to prioritise others and ensure overall contribution to delivery of goals is maximised.

## Results of Review Process

9. The Appendix to this paper sets out the Operational Plan, with actions colour coded according to the above broad guidelines, together with a brief commentary on progress to date. As indicated, focus has been concentrated on actions with milestones due for achievement in the first quarter and some actions, with milestones/outcomes not due until later in the year, may not have any indication of progress at this stage.
10. Only one action within the 2005/06 operational plan is classed as red, and therefore at significant risk of the intended outcome not being delivered in the year: completion of a pan-park visitors survey. This is noted as currently on hold and subject to discussion to be held with Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park. This action contributes to the goal of providing a wider range of opportunities to experience the special qualities of the park in a sustainable manner. All other actions within this goal are currently on track and the goal itself is therefore categorised as “green” and running broadly to plan.
11. Three of the twenty goals are classified as amber as a result of a balance of actions within those goals showing some changes to the timetable and/or intended delivery plans which pose some risk to delivery of intended outcomes. Those three goals are considered below.
12. **Delivery of an effective and efficient development control service, seamlessly blending planning policy and park aims (Priority 1).** At present the operational plan sets out only a single action within this goal, focusing on achieving a reduction in application backlogs by October. The plan review now notes that, since the appointment of a third development control officer, the backlog is no longer increasing but that backlog is likely to take longer to clear than had been intended. January or February is now thought a more realistic deadline for clearing the backlog, than October as had been originally planned.
13. **Increased access to all forms of housing tenure for park residents or people who are meeting economic or social needs within the Park (Priority 1).** While the Heriot-Watt housing study commissioned by the Authority’s officers has been completed, this goal is set at amber as a result of delays in a number of pieces of work being undertaken by a number of external, partner organisations. Overall, delivery of outcomes from these actions is still expected within the year.
14. **Good understanding and appreciation of the Cairngorms National Park by young people, and appreciation of its importance (Priority 2).** In this instance, two of the three actions contributing to this goal are classed as amber as a result of some delay in delivery from a lack of in-house staff resource and pending the appointment of the Education and Inclusion Manager to progress these actions.

15. Of the three goals classed as amber, two are priority 1 areas. Overall, however, all three goals which have been flagged as amber at the end of the first quarter are still expected to be delivered prior to the end of the year.
16. All 17 other goals are, therefore, categorised as green and progressing broadly in line with the operational plan's intentions.

## **Delivering Sustainability, A Park for All and Economy, Efficiency and Effectiveness**

17. Delivery of the three cross-cutting themes agreed within the Corporate Plan remain core elements against which Operational Plan activities are proofed as they are taken forward.

## **Implications**

### *Financial Implications*

18. With the preparation of this paper just prior to the end of the quarter, the financial implications of operational plan delivery to 30 June has yet to be assessed. It is intended that this will form the basis of a report to the Board's Finance Committee at its meeting in August, in order that financial results for the first quarter can be considered in the context of operational activity presented here.
19. With some aspects of Operational Plan activity now flagged as at some risk of non-delivery in the year, there is a requirement to focus attention and consider investment requirements in those areas.

### *Presentational Implications*

20. Overall, the review of the first quarter presents a view of generally successful work and resource investment in delivering operational and, ultimately, corporate plan objectives. Only 3 of 20 goals are flagged as being at some risk as to delivery of outcomes intended for 2005/06, and current expectations are for current situations in all three areas to be corrected before the end of the year.
21. Therefore, the Authority is able to highlight a successful first three months of delivery of its objectives, often involving working with and through others, maximising the effect of its relatively small limited resources by acting as a catalyst, a co-ordinator, and an enabler.

### *Implications for Stakeholders*

22. In working with and through others in meeting the Authority's objectives to date, other stakeholders will also benefit from that process of co-ordination and joint activity. There is, therefore, some confidence that in delivering our operational plan for the year, the Authority will also be contributing to the wider delivery objectives for a range of stakeholders with an interest in the Cairngorms National Park area.

## Next Steps

23. A review of the status of the 2005/06 Operational Plan delivery at the half-year point will be presented to the Board at its meeting in October 2005. In the meantime, the Management Team will undertake a review of the robustness of current financial allocations made to progress operational plan actions and consider any new investment plans proposed. This will be undertaken in conjunction with the Board's Finance Committee as appropriate.
24. Having highlighted areas where delivery is at some risk, officers will also be seeking to bring those actions back on track where possible while continuing progress on the other, vast majority of areas, which are currently running to plan.
25. Work also requires to be undertaken to fully embed the Authority's risk management processes within these operational plan reviews.

**Jane Hope**  
**David Cameron**  
**July 2005**

janehope@ Cairngorms.co.uk  
davidcameron@ Cairngorms.co.uk