

CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

FOR DECISION

Title: A LANDSCAPE PARTNERSHIP PROJECT FOR THE
PARK

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Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to describe the use of the Heritage Lottery Fund's Landscape Partnership Project as a means of delivering various Priority Actions of the National Park Plan and to seek the Board's permission to proceed with a Stage 1 application to the Heritage Lottery Fund by 1st October, 2007.

Recommendation

That the Board:

- a) agrees that the Cairngorms National Park Authority should submit a Stage 1 application to the Heritage Lottery Fund for a Landscapes Partnership Project on October 1st.

Executive Summary

With the draft National Park Plan now resting with Scottish Ministers the Authority is now looking to establish partnerships and methods to co-ordinate delivery of the 7 Priorities for Action set out in the draft Plan. The development of a Heritage Lottery Fund 'Landscape Partnership Project' is an ideal delivery mechanism that would not only provide a clear and beneficial approach for prioritising and funding public benefits but would also through its development, aid the establishment of effective working partnerships. A Landscape Partnership Project' could deliver elements of most Priorities for Action. If successful the Landscape Partnership Project would invest up to £2m of Lottery money – doubled with match funding - over a 3-year period through a suite of projects and initiatives across the Park working in partnership with a range of interests.

A LANDSCAPE PARTNERSHIP PROJECT FOR THE PARK – FOR DECISION

Policy Context

1. The National Parks (Scotland) 2000 Act sets out 4 aims :
 - i. To conserve and enhance the natural and cultural heritage of the area;
 - ii. To promote sustainable use of natural resources of the area;
 - iii. To promote understanding and enjoyment (including enjoyment in the form of recreation) of the special qualities of the area by the public;
 - iv. To promote sustainable economic and social development of the area's communities.
2. These four aims must be achieved collectively and in a co-ordinated way, and it is the statutory function of the National Park Authority to ensure this collective and coordinated approach. This makes Scotland's National Parks a new kind of National Park in the UK. The very process of a Landscapes Partnership process embodies such a philosophy in its approach to landscape management.
3. The Cairngorms National Park Plan was submitted to Scottish Ministers for approval in December 2006. Contained within the Plan are 7 'Priorities for Action' which the partners in the Plan-making process have agreed to be implemented as a matter of priority. These are:-
 - a) Integrating Public Support for Land Management
 - b) Conserving and Enhancing Biodiversity and Landscapes
 - c) Supporting Sustainable Deer Management
 - d) Providing High Quality Opportunities for Outdoor Access
 - e) Making Tourism and Business More Sustainable
 - f) Making Housing More Affordable and Sustainable
 - g) Raising Awareness and Understanding of the Park
4. In looking to deliver these Priorities for Action the Authority's External Funding Officer has determined that the Heritage Lottery Fund's 'Landscape Partnership Project' has the ability to assist delivery on various elements of these priorities. One of the first actions under priority for Action 6.2 - *Integrating Public Support for Land Management* is:

"to identify the various public benefits that are priorities in the National Park and tailor public support mechanisms to deliver them." 6.2 (1a)
5. The process of the bid in defining the public benefits for targeted support, and the potential to lever other sources of funding, makes the LPP an ideal mechanism for delivering this action.
6. A Landscape Partnership Project is one of a suite of programmes managed by the Heritage Lottery Fund and is defined as :-

“allowing partnerships representing a range of heritage and community interests to tackle the needs of an identified landscape whose various elements may be in different ownership”.

7. The initiative comprises a portfolio of projects which combine to provide a varied package of benefits to an area and its communities which live, work, and visit it and is designed to use heritage conservation as an integral part of rural regeneration. Between £250k and £2M is on offer to fund Landscape Partnership Project bids - which can include any development funding – but which must be matched with other monies. For grants under £1m, 10% of match funding must be found by the applicant and for grants of £1m or more 25% must be found – although in practise the Heritage Lottery Fund would expect to see match funding closer to 50%. Such match funding can however include in-kind contributions which is a very useful mechanism for local groups and communities which may lack cash but has time, human resources, and enthusiasm.
8. Currently there are 2 important match funding Programmes which the Landscape Partnership Project could access. Firstly the new EU ERDF funding programme for 2007-13 will be better understood by the time the funding mix for the Landscape Partnership Project is being established. Looking at the priorities as currently set out in the Scottish Executive’s consultation document it would appear that a Landscape Partnership Project could sit well under ‘green’ tourism, eco-energy, and other heritage objectives in both Programmes on either side of the hill.
9. Secondly the developing Rural Development Programme Tier 3 of the Land Management Contract could provide important match funding for the landscape management elements of the Landscape Partnership Project. This plus potential EU funding therefore represents key sources of significant additional funding through which the Authority and its partners may finance delivery of National Park Plan objectives.
10. The Heritage Lottery Fund states that programmes of work, projects, and activities MUST include the following 4 priorities to ensure long term social, economic, and environmental benefits :-
 - a) Conserving or restoring the built and natural features that create the character of the landscape - *Landscape conservation*
 - b) Conserving and celebrating the cultural associations and activities of the area - *Celebrating culture*
 - c) Encouraging more people to access, learn about, become involved in, and take decisions on their landscape heritage - *understanding and enjoyment*
 - d) Improving understanding of local craft and other skills by providing training opportunities - *heritage skills*.
11. The Heritage Lottery Fund intends to utilise this programme on land which has a distinct local landscape character which is recognised and valued by local people. The Heritage Lottery Fund states that “You will need to know what makes this landscape area a special and distinctive part of the UK culture”.

12. The National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000 sets three conditions which an area designated as a National Park must satisfy :-
 - a) That the area is of outstanding national importance because of its natural heritage, or the combination of its natural and cultural heritage;
 - b) That the area has a distinctive character and a coherent identity;
 - c) That designating the area as a National Park would meet the special needs of the area and would be the best means of ensuring that the National Park aims are collectively achieved in relation to the area in a co-ordinated way.

13. However despite the usefulness of the second condition the authority will still require to describe the character of the Cairngorms National Park more precisely in order to understand the trends, threats, and opportunities going on in the landscape and which any Landscape Partnership Project would address. A number of small contracts are already being let or are about to be let to assist in this process as part of existing research strategies within the 2006/07 Operational Plan and the information gained from these will assist in characterising the Cairngorms landscape for the purposes of any bid .

14. It is intended that this Landscape Partnership Project application will cover the whole of the Park and this will be emphasised in discussions with the Heritage Lottery Fund culminating in the submission of a pre-application form to indicate Cairngorms National Park Authority partners interest in taking the bid development further.

15. Following the completion of the pre-application form in March, a full Stage 1 application will be worked up for the submission date of the 1st October. A decision will be given by the Heritage Lottery Fund 6 months after that. If successful we will be allowed another 6 months or so to submit a Stage 2 submission with a further 6 months for a final decision. This means with a successful October 2007 Stage 1 application we could be in a position to commence the Landscape Partnership Project by early 2009. The project then needs to be completed within 3 years and all claims made and paid within 4 years.

16. This project does not exist in isolation from other Landscape Partnership Projects - nor indeed from other HLF-funded projects - and we will be in competition with other Landscape Partnership Project applications across the UK. It is important therefore to understand what is happening around Scotland and elsewhere. There are other LPP's being worked up in Scotland at the moment – one in Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park, one in Dumfries and Galloway, and one in the Northern Isles. Discussions with Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park have already been undertaken to ensure complementarity of bid as well as understanding the remits of their scheme.

Delivering Sustainability

17. The project is implementing some of the aspirations of the National Park Plan which in themselves have been drawn up under the remit of sustainability including an Environmental Impact Assessment. The Heritage Lottery Fund also seeks to include sustainability in all its funded projects. This Landscape Partnership Project bid will continue these aspirations and will continually address the issues of sustainability in project choice, synthesis, and delivery and maintenance.

Delivering a Park for All

18. As above, the Landscape Partnership Project will embody equality of opportunity and access throughout the project synthesis process including implementation and maintenance of the project portfolio.

Delivering Economy, Effectiveness and Efficiency

19. The Landscape Partnership Project will work within the proposed new management regime of delivering the National Park Plan ie through the Board, National Park Plan Theme Groups, National Park Plan Internal Co-ordination Teams, and Management Team. A small Working Group will be set up to progress the Landscape Partnership Project supported by the External Funding Officer.
20. The Project would be delivered using the 'PRINCE' – 'PRojects IN Controlled Environments' - methodology of project management (used in the Park Entry Points Project) which would ensure an open, robust, objective, and well-trying approach to competent project delivery.

Financial Implications

21. Starting from now it will require much of the time of the External Funding Officer up to September to take the project forward to a Stage 1 application along with officers' time servicing the Landscape Partnership Project Working Group to make the Landscape Partnership Project happen. We do have a great advantage in that the National Park Plan contains many of the aspirations of the community and stakeholders which other Landscape Partnership Projects have had to glean from original consultations. The potential high value of funding to support a wide range of agreed National Park Plan priorities merits the investment of this staff time.
22. There is the potential to access up to £2M of Heritage Lottery Fund monies which must be matched with other monies. Experience gained by the External Funding Officer as Manager of the Tweed Rivers Heritage Project (the first Landscape Partnership Project in the UK) demonstrated that of the £9m worth of project, £4M came from the Heritage Lottery Fund and £5M was levered from the various funding partners and external funding programmes (including £1M of 'in kind' contributions).

23. To invest :-
- a) such a large sum of money
 - b) across the whole Park
 - c) within 3 years and
 - d) in a coordinated manner
- will give huge long term added value to this investment.

Presentational Implications

24. Over the next 2 months there will require to be undertaken an intensive and extensive series of meetings with the various partners and stakeholders in and around the Park in order to ensure all groups have a chance to participate in the Landscape Partnership Project process. Ultimately some will be disappointed whether by their projects not making it through the synthesis process in the final bid, being rejected by the Heritage Lottery Fund at Stage 1, being absorbed into another project to make a better project, or deferred/taken forward by other means. Providing this is made clear in the 'rules of engagement' then the negative issues arising from this will be minimised.

Implications for Stakeholders

25. It is fair to say that this Landscape Partnership Project has the potential to positively engage a variety and number of stakeholders of the Park – including partners, residents, businesses, and visitors in a very practical and positive way

Next Steps

26. Cairngorms National Park staff will utilise the information contained in the National Park Plan Consultations report to arrive at a more precise idea of what the nature of the Cairngorms Landscape Partnership Project is about. This will then be trialled with partners and stakeholders over the next 2 months. From this the 'Expression of Interest' application will be prepared for discussion with the Heritage Lottery Fund.

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