
CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

FOR INFORMATION

Title: The CNPA's Role in Community Planning

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Purpose

This paper seeks to clarify the linkages between Community Planning and the Park Plan and to highlight the opportunities for collaborative working.

Recommendations

That the Board note the work taking place with Local Authorities and other Community Planning partners to achieve a more integrated approach to specific activities.

Executive Summary

Community Planning is a process, facilitated by Local Authorities, which helps public agencies to work together with the community (including communities of place and of common interest) to plan and deliver better services which make a real difference to people's lives. There is an area of common interest between the Park Plan and the Community Plans that cover parts of the Park. Officers are therefore engaging with the Community Planning process to achieve the objectives of strategic alignment, a joined up approach to community engagement and communications, and joined up delivery of activities/projects, which takes account of locally identified and prioritised needs and opportunities.

THE CNPA'S ROLE IN COMMUNITY PLANNING - FOR DECISION

Background

1. Community planning is a process which helps public agencies to work together with the community (including communities of place and of common interest) to plan and deliver better services which make a real difference to people's lives. Local Authorities have a statutory duty to initiate and facilitate Community Planning in their respective areas and certain bodies have a duty to participate (police, fire and health services, and the enterprise networks).
2. The aims of Community Planning in Scotland are:
 - a) Making sure people and communities are genuinely engaged in the decisions made on public services which affect them; allied to
 - b) A commitment from organisations to work together, not apart, in providing better public services.
3. There are two further key principles in addition to the two main aims outlined above:
 - a) Community Planning as the key overarching partnership framework helping to co-ordinate other initiatives and partnerships and where necessary acting to rationalise and simplify a cluttered landscape.
 - b) The ability of Community Planning to improve the connection between national priorities and those at regional, local and neighbourhood levels.
4. The Park Plan is similar in many ways to Community Plans. It seeks to co-ordinate the public sector, and as far as is possible the private and voluntary/community sectors, in delivering the four aims of the Park.
5. Thus the CNPA and the local authorities need to work together to ensure that the Park Plan and the Community Plans are consistent for those areas of common interest.
6. Community Planning, though, is as much about the process of planning and delivery as it is about the plan itself. There are partnership structures in place at a Local Authority-wide level and more localised structures and sub-plans are being developed across their areas. Of particular relevance to the Park are the local Community Planning partnerships that have been, or are being, established in Badenoch & Strathspey, Speyside, Marr and Kirriemuir and the Glens.
7. This paper therefore seeks to clarify the linkages between Community Planning and the Park Plan and to highlight the opportunities for collaborative working.

Areas of Common Interest

8. In comparing the draft Park Plan priorities for action against the strategic themes identified within the various Community Plans, it is clear that there are many areas of common interest (See Annex 1).
9. A key focus of the Community Plans, though, relates to improving the delivery of statutory services in relation to education, health, crime, etc, where the Park Plan priorities for action are only likely to have indirect linkages.
10. However, many of the activities and projects being progressed under the banner of Community Planning relate not to statutory service provision but to areas of discretionary expenditure. It is these areas where there is more common ground with the Park Plan priorities for action.
11. Also relevant is the geographical area for which it makes sense to plan and deliver a particular activity or project. For example, given that we are the access authority for the Park and are preparing a Core Paths Plan, it makes sense that access activity is planned and delivered on a Park wide basis. On the other hand, if there was a desire to drive up the quality of tourism attractions the detail of this may best be planned and delivered in partnership at a local level via Community Planning partners.
12. Of particular significance to the Park are developments relating to the Scottish Rural Development Programme (SRDP). The Authority previously pushed the case for a Cairngorms Regional Committee to –
 - a) identify the priorities for the SRDP in the Cairngorms and the measures required for their delivery;
 - b) establish and oversee an effective advisory mechanism; and
 - c) work closely with the Scottish Executive to monitor the outcomes delivered by the SRDP and use this as a basis to review its implementation.
13. There is now a possibility that regional decision making will be linked to Community Planning, although no decisions have been made and the details are as yet unclear. As the SRDP will be a key delivery mechanism for the Park, the CNPA will need to engage fully in any future Community Planning Partnership discussions on this issue to help shape delivery mechanisms in a way that fully supports the delivery of the Park Plan.

Community Planning Structures

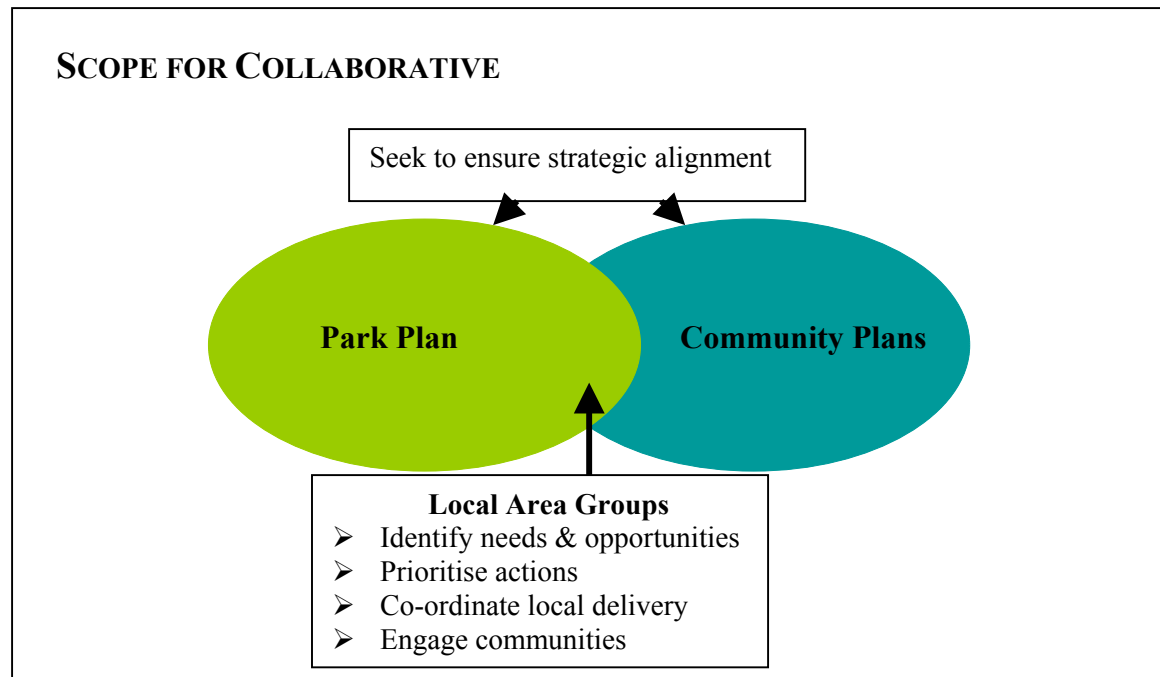
14. The partnership structures for Community Planning are necessarily complex and, to an extent, differ between local authority areas. They have, though, the following key elements in common –
 - a) A Board
 - b) An Executive Group
 - c) Various Theme Groups

d) Local Area Groups

15. The development of Local Area Groups is at different stages in each Local Authority area. The general intention of working at this local level is to improve community engagement in the Community Planning process and to facilitate joined up delivery within the context of the relevant Community Plan. The local groups that cover the CNP area are –
 - a) Badenoch and Strathspey Community Planning Partnership (Highland)
 - b) Speyside Local Neighbourhood Forum (Moray)
 - c) Marr Local Community Planning Group (Aberdeenshire)
 - d) Kirriemuir and the Glens Partnership (Angus)
16. To ensure that, within the context of the Park Plan, the Authority is contributing to local planning and delivery, links have been or are being established with each of these groups either through direct attendance or regular liaison.
17. At the broader local authority-wide level the CNPA is currently not represented, either on the core partnerships or the theme groups. This will need to be kept under review to ensure that we do not miss opportunities to help shape the overarching Community Plans.

Scope for Collaborative Working

18. Rather than duplicating structures and activities, we should seek greater integration where it makes good sense to do so. Thus, for those areas of common interest between the Park Plan and the respective Community Plans, we will work with Local Authorities and other Community Planning partners to achieve the following:
 - a) Strategic alignment between the Park Plan and each Community Plan;
 - b) A joined up approach to community engagement and communications (via Local Area Groups); and
 - c) A joined up approach to the delivery of activities/projects, which takes account of locally identified and prioritised needs and opportunities (via Local Area Groups).



Consultation

19. Discussions have been held with Community Planning officers/Area Managers from each of the four Local Authorities and their input has helped shape this paper.
20. The paper has been discussed and agreed by the Authority's Management Team.

Policy Context

21. Strengthening the Authority's engagement within Community Planning should help deliver aspects of all seven Park Plan priorities for action.
22. In addition, within the draft Park Plan, we have an action under the 'Awareness and Understanding' priority to ensure:

'Participation by community interests in policy development and operational decision making (building on Community Planning)'.
23. It is also worth noting that the process of Community Planning is currently being assessed by the Scottish Executive. Audit Scotland published 'Community planning: an initial review' in June and this has fed into the broader work on 'Transforming the Public Sector – The next Phase of Reform' being led by Tom McCabe. Key issues to be considered include –
 - a) How best to ensure that local communities are aware of and involved in the Community Planning process;
 - b) What more needs to be done to ensure that appropriate organisations engage fully in Community Planning. This may include both extending the statutory duties to other organisations and strengthening the engagement of bodies already subject to a statutory duty;

- c) Whether Community Planning partnerships could play a more direct role in planning and co-ordinating integrated services – perhaps through outcome agreements to achieve agreed priorities, which are shared amongst different Community Planning partners;
- d) How to strengthen the democratic accountability of Community Planning building upon local authorities' democratic mandate and community leadership role – including through ways in which local councillors can participate in and scrutinise the work of partnerships;
- e) Whether Community Planning can help to rationalise the many partnerships and structures which operate at a regional level.

Delivering Sustainability

- 24. The proposals would help deliver sustainability objectives as they would aid in delivering aspects of the Park Plan at the local level.

Delivering a Park for All

- 25. The proposals would help deliver a Park for All through joining up public sector approaches to community engagement.

Delivering Economy, Effectiveness and Efficiency

- 26. Formalising the linkages between the Park Plan and the Community Plans and actively participating within the Community Planning process will help to deliver on those areas of common interest in a more joined-up way. If done right, this should lead to reduced duplication and a more productive use of collective partner effort.

Implications

Financial Implications

- 27. There are no direct financial implications. There are likely to be implications for some of our grant processes (see related Board report) and potentially for the Authority's organisational structure. The latter issue will be considered when the overall staff structure of the Authority is reviewed.

Presentational Implications

- 28. No specific presentational issues have been identified.

Implications for Stakeholders

- 29. If we are successful in achieving the objectives set out in paragraph 16, then the implications for other stakeholders involved in the Community Planning process are likely to be positive.

Next Steps

30. Officers will work with Local Authorities and other Community Planning partners to achieve the objectives of strategic alignment, a joined up approach to community engagement and communications, and joined up delivery of activities/projects, which takes account of locally identified and prioritised needs and opportunities.
31. Specific steps will be made clear within the Authority's Corporate and Operational Plans and progress will be fed back through normal operational reporting processes.

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COMPARISON OF DRAFT PARK PLAN PRIORITIES FOR ACTION AND COMMUNITY PLAN STRATEGIC THEMES

Draft Park Plan

- Conserving and Enhancing the Parks Biodiversity and Landscapes
- Developing Sustainable Deer Management
- Supporting Integrated Land Management
- Providing High Quality Opportunities for Outdoor Access
- Making Housing Affordable and Sustainable
- Making Tourism and Businesses Sustainable
- Developing Awareness and Understanding of the Park

Highland

- Developing a Strong Sustainable and Competitive Economy
- Encouraging Lifelong Learning and Developing Community Capacity
- Improving Health and Wellbeing
- Investing in Housing and its Infrastructure
- Enhancing Cultures, Heritage, the Gaelic Language and the Natural Environment
- Developing Safe, Strong and Attractive Communities

Moray

- Involving the Community
- Providing Quality Co-ordinated Services
- Encouraging Safe, Healthy and Caring Communities
- Encouraging Economic Development
- Responding Positively to Sustainable Development

Aberdeenshire

- Community Wellbeing
- Jobs and the Economy
- Lifelong Learning
- Sustainable Environment
- Developing Our Partnership

Angus

- The Economy
- Lifelong Learning
- Healthy and Safe Communities
- Caring Communities
- The Environment