
CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING held at the Albert Hall, Ballater on 4th June 2004 at 1.30pm

PRESENT

Peter Argyle
Eric Baird
Stuart Black
Duncan Bryden
Sally Dowden
Basil Dunlop
Douglas Glass
Angus Gordon
Mrs Lucy Grant
David Green
Bruce Luffman
Eleanor Mackintosh

Anne MacLean
Alastair MacLennan
William McKenna
Gregor Rimell
David Selfridge
Robert Severn
Joyce Simpson
Richard Stroud
Andrew Thin
Susan Walker
Bob Wilson

In Attendance:

Danny Alexander
Rita Callander
Nick Halfhide
Andrew Harper
Jane Hope
Quentin McLaren

Apologies:

Andrew Rafferty
Sheena Slimon

Welcome and Introduction

1. Andrew Thin welcomed everyone to the meeting. He particularly extended the welcome to Jane Candlish from the Badenoch and Strathspey Herald and thanked her for coming over from Grantown-on-Spey in order to cover the meeting. He also welcomed Quentin McLaren, the newly appointed External Funding Advisor, who had joined the staff of the CNPA that week. Finally, he drew members attention to the latest version of "Park Life" (the CNPA magazine, circulated to all residents in the Park) and congratulated Danny Alexander on this as the first edition which he had produced.

Minutes of Last Meeting – approval

2. The minutes of the previous meeting (7th May) were approved with no changes.

Matters Arising

3. All action points from the previous minutes were in hand or had been dealt with. Two particular points were made:
 - a) In relation to paragraph 7 (d) Jane Hope reported that following further discussions, SNH had now written formally inviting the Cairngorms National Park Authority and the Loch Lomond and the Trossach National Park Authority to jointly nominate a representative and a deputy to sit on the National Access Forum.
 - b) In relation to paragraph 11 (b) Danny Alexander and Jane Hope were meeting the following week to consider further how best to publish an easy-read guide to both the Corporate Plan and the Annual Report.
4. Andrew Thin drew the attention of members to the nature of the agenda, and how this reflected a move towards Board meetings that increasingly focused on establishing policy and strategy. In future, there would be a series of policy and strategy papers coming to the Board for consideration, as well as background briefing papers which would be provided to Members but which would not be Board papers. Members had been given a handout which gave a forward look for the next nine months of all the briefing, strategy and policy papers expected to come to the Board. This list would be constantly updated and some of the dates may change, however it gave Members a feel for papers likely to come forward over the coming months. These papers reflected the work of the Board over the coming months in developing a robust set of policies and strategies which would direct the work of the CNPA over the next few years.

Communications Strategy (Paper 1)

5. The paper was introduced by Danny Alexander, and sought the Board's approval for a proposed communication strategy. The principle aim of the communication strategy was to develop the reputation of the CNPA as an enabling organisation that is trusted and respected. The intention was to do this by communicating what the CNPA was doing to deliver the first five themes of the Corporate Plan in a way that was open, clear, responsive and proactive. These values applied to how the organisation communicated about the Park as well as about the work of the Park Authority.
6. In discussion the following points were made:
 - a) The paper was highly commended as a very comprehensive and clear set of proposals for how the organisation should approach the important issue of communications.
 - b) The actions listed needed to reflect the audiences of opinion formers and decision makers, in other words public bodies, politicians and NGOs.
 - c) Under the PR/promotion strategy, it was important to emphasise that wherever the CNPA was actively providing funding through grants etc the recipient should

acknowledge the source of the funding. This would help to raise the profile of the CNPA.

- d) Post offices could be used to display posters, explaining the availability of facilities such as brail and tape versions of the newsletter Park Life.
- e) There might be merit in using the newsletter "Park Life" or the CNPA website to invite questions from readers and provide clear answers to these.
- f) The production of Park Life and the website needed to ensure full accessibility. The important CNPA publications needed to be on brail/tape, and further, residents needed to be aware that these facilities were available to those who needed them. It was also suggested that local charities should be contacted to assist in the production of these facilities.
- g) The key audiences (paragraph 18) could also include other National Parks, given the large number of visitors they attracted and hence may be encouraged to visit further National Parks. Young people and schools also should be included as target audiences.
- h) Under paragraph 26 a further indent (d) should be added to emphasise the importance of ensuring information was being received from the communities by the CNPA. In other words, there should be a bottom up, as well as top down process.
- i) In the actions listed under paragraph 30, it was important to emphasise that communications should be a two way process. The experience of the interactive area of a website e.g. Highland Thinknet provided a good example of how such a facility could be used for getting a feel for what people were thinking.
- j) Paragraph 25 referred to target media. It was important not just to concentrate on the mass media, but to use other more focused and specialised media as well.
- k) As well all strategy papers being approved by the Board, it might be helpful to put all the approved papers together on the website in one place. In any event it was important to avoid these important papers being put to one side and overlooked. They would be important reference documents, and be readily accessible.

7. Subject to the points made above, the Board welcomed and endorsed the Communications Strategy.

8. Action:

- a) **Danny Alexander to consider how to make all the Strategy and Policy papers readily available and accessible.**

Tourism Marketing Strategy (paper 2)

9. Andrew Harper introduced the paper, which sought the Board's endorsement of the Cairngorms National Park Marketing Strategy. The Strategy set out the long-term vision for tourism in the Cairngorms; identified the key marketing aims, and outlined the mechanisms for the delivery of these aims. The strategy would be supported in due course by an action plan outlining who would be doing what to deliver the strategy, and where the resources would come from. This piece of work would be developed over the coming few months.

10. In discussion the following points were made:

- a) Despite the title, it was suggested that this was in effect a tourism marketing strategy and not a marketing strategy for the whole Cairngorms which went wider

than tourism. It was important that the paper was developed further and made holistic to reflect the non tourism elements of marketing the Cairngorms National Park. In response, it was confirmed that the paper was basically a Tourism Marketing Strategy but it was acknowledged to be part of a wider strategy which would be the Sustainable Tourism Strategy. Work on developing the Sustainable Tourism Strategy was currently in hand and was being taken forward by recently appointed consultants. The paper in front of the Board was not taking account of all of the things which the Sustainable Tourism Development Strategy would.

- b) There was a choice to be made with this paper. Either it could focus on tourism marketing, which would be perfectly legitimate or it should be widened out to be more holistic.
- c) This was clearly intended as a tourism strategy. The document had been developed through a lot of work by the Tourism Development Working Group who had reached a consensus that what was needed was something short and readable. There would be dangers in now expanding the document, creating something much larger and something less likely to be read. It was important to recognise that a lot of detail would be set out in the associated action plan which was still being developed. There were many linkages between the Tourism Development Working Group and other working groups and other areas of interest. These had always been acknowledged, and were reflected in the paper. However, it had been decided to focus the document clearly on tourism and that was had had happened.
- d) A plea was made for a standard format of visual presentations. By far the easiest slides to read were those comprising white text on a deep blue background. As part of both the Communications Strategy and the Marketing Strategy, this should be the standard format of presentations at Board meetings. This was noted.
- e) A plea was made for the use of plain English on all Park Board papers. The Marketing Strategy was not a good example.
- f) In response to a question of clarification regarding the paragraph on page 4 about Visit Britain, it was recognised that the role of the Cairngorms National Park Authority in marketing National Parks was not passive. There would be a briefing paper to the Board shortly on the restructuring of the tourism agencies in Scotland, and the role of the CNPA as a result. The restructuring provided good opportunities for both National Parks to position themselves strongly both nationally and internationally.
- g) In response to a question regarding quality service standards (page 9) it was reported that decisions had not yet been made on the actions aimed at developing and improving the quality of service throughout the park, but the CNPA would be looking at how this might be pursued.
- h) In response to a question on the partnership approach (page 9) it was confirmed that the Tourism Development Working Group included representatives from all sectors of the industry.
- i) The Appendix to the Marketing Strategy appeared to suggest that other National Park Authorities should be seen as competitors. It was questioned whether this was really the case, given that a good experience in one National Park could lead to visitors going to other National Parks.
- j) Some points of correction were made in respect of the introduction (area context) and appendix 5.
- k) A concentrated effort had been put into the production of this Marketing Strategy both by staff and by the Tourism Development Working Group which included

which included many industry representatives. It was a good document, and they were to be congratulated.

11. Andrew Thin summed up the discussion by saying that this was a good document, funded by CNPA which represented a lot of thinking and work, by the industry and public agencies. However, there needed to be greater clarity as to what issues it was trying to address. Was it purely a Tourism Marketing Strategy, or was it a wider Marketing Strategy for the Cairngorms? He also suggested that the Strategy was essentially for the industry, and what was missing from the paper was a clear indication of the strategic direction for the National Park Authority and its staff. He therefore suggested that greater clarity was needed as to what the Strategy was addressing. In addition some of the detailed points made during the discussion needed to be incorporated and in respect of this Board Members were asked to contact Andrew Harper by the end of the following week with any detailed points they wish to make. Staff, in conjunction with the Tourism Development Working Group as appropriate, should therefore think further about the paper before bringing it back to the Board.

12. Action:

- a) **Andrew Harper, in conjunction with the Tourism Development Working Group as appropriate to revise the paper and the accompanying Marketing Strategy and return to the Board in due course.**

Brand Development (paper 3)

13. Danny Alexander introduced the paper, which brought Board Members up to date on progress with brand development, outlined the next steps in the development of a Cairngorms Brand, and sought the Board's approval for this approach and associated expenditure. The development of a Cairngorms Brand was widely supported by the tourism industry as a means of presenting a coherent visual identity, based on agreed brand values for the Park area. A strong brand would provide a useful tool in the delivery of a wide range of marketing and promotional activity, both on a Park-wide basis and by individual businesses/organisations, the latter being subject to the satisfaction of certain criteria.

14. In discussion the following points were made:

- a) Further clarification was sought on paragraph 7, and the development of criteria for the use of the Brand. It was explained that if the CNPA developed the brand, there had to be some way of licensing its use. All those seeking to use the brand must satisfy certain criteria prior to their use of brand being endorsed by the CNPA. Only through this means could the quality implicit in the brand be re-enforced. Work was at an early stage on this aspect. The intention was to try and link into existing schemes. It was recognised that the implementation was actually far more difficult than the development of the brand. Once proposals had been developed these would be brought back to the Board.
- b) Designing the brand was comparatively straightforward while setting the criteria for use, and establishing the monitoring, would be far more difficult. It was suggested that the work of establishing the criteria and the monitoring should be carried out at the same time as, and in conjunction, with the work on developing the brand itself. It was confirmed that this would indeed be the case, and that work on the criteria would take place in parallel with the work on developing the

brand. However, both these elements would not be part of the same contract for the brand development, as they represented very different jobs requiring very different skills.

- c) There was a suggestion that the proposed brand development appeared to be focused purely on tourism. It was suggested that in practice it needed to take account of many other possible uses of the brand. The image had to be widely applicable. It was however pointed out that the tender specification attached to the paper made quite clear that a wide range of uses for the brand was envisaged.
- d) Clarification was sought on the development of the brand wheel as described in paragraph 2 of the paper and in particular, whether the process had been sufficiently bottom-up. In response it was pointed out that the brand wheel process was well established and had been used because it was already well understood by major organisations and agencies, and this would make the process of letting the branding contract easier. The brand wheel itself had not been intended for public consumption, it was simply a process which had been used to take forward the thinking that lay behind the specification of the brand development contract. It was also pointed out that a wide range of individuals from various backgrounds had been used to develop the brand wheel, and this ensured that the output would be widely applicable. The individuals involved in the brand wheel exercise were those interacting on a daily basis with their customer base, and would therefore be expected to reflect the range of consumer views.
- e) The brand wheel did not appear to cover the arts and culture. The education function of the National Park Authority was also not represented.

15. Andrew Thin summed up the discussion by concluding that it was important to take forward the work on developing the Cairngorms National Park brand. However, the paper was apparently focused on tourism products, and it would be essential that in taking this work forward it was recognised that the brand would have to cover a wide diversity of different products. With that caveat the Board were content with the paper and for the work on developing the brand to be taken forward as proposed.

16. The Board endorsed the proposed next steps for development of the Cairngorms National Park Brand as proposed in the paper, subject to the caveat that while tourism was extremely important, the brand had to cover a wide diversity of non-tourism products as well.

17. Action:

- a) **Danny Alexander to take forward the work on developing a Cairngorms Brand and developing the criteria for use of the brand, and to report back to the Board in due course.**

Community Development Strategy (paper 4)

18. Andrew Harper and Rita Callander introduced the paper which sought the Board's endorsement of an interim community development policy framework for the Park Authority, to be used as a basis for consultation with key stakeholders. In introducing the paper, Andrew Harper explained the background which was that any community development strategy for the National Park must involve all stakeholders, and not just the Park Authority. However, this would take time, and would be taken forward as part of the

National Park Plan. In the interim it would be important to avoid a policy vacuum, and the paper under consideration was therefore attempting to set out an interim policy framework drawing on recent work. It represented an interim policy statement, and a starting point for engagement with stakeholders in producing a community development strategy for the whole National Park.

19. In discussion the following points were made:

- a) It was important that in working with Community Councils, and the Association of Cairngorm Community Councils (ACCC) that the CNPA worked closely with the relevant local authorities who had a strong interest in Community Councils, and indeed provided funding to individual Community Councils. The point was made that the ACCC which was part funded by the CNPA had been set up very much at the request of the Community Councils themselves who wished to have an independent and free standing grouping.
- b) There was some discussion about the role of Community Councils and their ability to represent all members of the community. The point was made that while Community Councils may not be a perfect model for representation of the community, they comprised a level of statutory representation and as such deserved to be supported. Paragraph 14 of the paper therefore emphasised that part of the strategy of the National Park Authority should be to forge links with Community Councils and help and support their development. Nevertheless, it was also pointed out that the CNPA would not rely solely on Community Councils as a means of engagement. The CNPA was already working with local authority officials, and was also establishing a relationship with the ACCC and through this addressing problems of communication with the community. It was suggested that the purpose of a community development strategy was to build vibrant communities. The CNPA needed to be clear what process it wished to support - was this one targeted on particular issues and particular communities, or was it focused on taking Community Councils and other groups and forums and working with them to develop their skills? It would be important to ensure that the strategy empowered communities to develop their own solutions. There was a general feeling that Community Councils were useful starting points for engagement with the community. While these were by no means the only way of engaging with communities, the statutory position required that they be taken seriously and be helped and encouraged to develop and be made stronger. The two community consultation coordinators who had been recently appointed as part of taking forward the local plan consultation would be useful facilitators in the CNPA's engagement with communities.
- c) One community of interest which was not represented either in Community Councils or elsewhere was young people. They had no democratic representation but it was important to encourage them to participate. The CNPA's work through schools was an important link with this group. It would be taken up in the development of a social inclusion strategy.
- d) There was some discussion about the second recommendation of the paper, namely that the Board agree to the development of a community development strategy for the Park. There was a clear distinction to be made between a strategy for the National Park Authority, which had already been discussed, and a strategy for the National Park itself. The latter would be part of the National Park Plan, which would provide a plan for the whole Park. Early work on developing a community developing strategy was therefore essential in order to feed into the

National Park Plan over the next eighteen months. During a discussion about the stakeholders and consultees for the development of the strategy for the Park, there was a general view that the principle should be to make the process as inclusive as possible. It was not helpful to draw a distinction between communities of interest as suggested in paragraph 19. In practice, all interest groups needed to be brought into the process. The process must be utterly inclusive.

- e) Paragraph 19 listed key stakeholders and Board Members were invited to suggest any additional stakeholders for consultation. For Badenoch and Strathspey, the Community Care Forum was suggested as an important consultee as it represented the needs of the elderly, disabled, and disadvantaged. All Board Members were invited to send their further suggestions for consultees to Rita Callander by the end of the following week.
 - f) It was proposed that a further paper should be brought to the Board to clarify the linkages between the development of a community development strategy, and the preparation of the National Park Plan.
 - g) The paper included an attachment which was the summary of a research report on community development in the Cairngorms. This included a number of recommendations which had no formal status but had informed the thinking behind the paper.
20. Andrew Thin summed up the discussion on the paper by concluding that in broad terms the Board supported the paper as an interim policy framework for community development. It was an excellent paper reflecting the core principles of the National Park Authority and Rita Callander was congratulated. . However, there were some caveats, namely the recognition that Community Councils were not the sole means of engaging with communities and that consultation should be very wide and inclusive. Nevertheless it was an important role of the CNPA to support and help the Community Councils become a strong and representative voice for communities. It was also essential that the Community Development Policy Framework should focus on empowerment rather than doing things for people. Subject to those caveats the paper was endorsed as an interim policy framework for community development
21. However, on the second and third recommendations of the paper Andrew Thin summarised the discussion by concluding that further clarity was required on the relationship between the proposed community development strategy for the Park, and the National Park Plan, as well as the process that would be used and the consultees involved in developing this. A further paper should therefore be brought back to the Board in due course with a clearer proposal for the way forward in developing a community development strategy for the Park.
- 22. The Board approved the first recommendation of the paper, but concluded the second and third recommendations required further clarification.**
- 23. Action:**
- a) **Andrew Harper and Rita Callander to report back to the Board in due course explaining the process for producing a community development strategy for the Park and how this linked in with the process for developing the National Park Plan.**

Gaelic Language Policy (paper 5)

24. Andrew Harper introduced the paper which sought the Board's approval to prepare a Gaelic language plan in due course, and for an Interim Policy Statement setting out the CNPA's approach to the Gaelic language. It also sought the Board's approval to form a Gaelic Advisory Panel to provide technical guidance as and when required. He explained that Gaelic was important in the National Park for a number of reasons. Gaelic was clearly part of the cultural heritage of the area; it also played an important role in the enjoyment and understanding of the National Park being that Gaelic place names abounded in the Park and their interpretation undoubtedly contributed to a better understanding of the history of the area. There was also an economic dimension to Gaelic in that cultural tourism was a growing market. The Gaelic language could not be seen in isolation but was part of the broader strategic context which would be set out in a cultural heritage strategy for the Park. It was very clear that the Scottish Executive was keen to create a more supportive environment for Gaelic, as reflected by the passage of the Gaelic Language Bill which was likely to require public bodies to prepare a Gaelic Language Plan. While such a plan, and indeed the broader cultural heritage strategy for the Park which would be part of the National Park Plan, would take some time to develop it was important that in the meantime the National Park Authority adopted an interim policy position on Gaelic, not least because the work involved in developing entry point signage would require a decision very soon as to whether or not Gaelic should be included on the signage.
25. In discussion the following points were made:
- a) There were several suggestions to minor changes of wording in the proposed interim policy statement set out in the paper. It was suggested that in the first sentence the phrase "important aspect" should be replaced by "integral foundation". It was also suggested that the first sentence should include the phrase "the CNPA recognises the Gaelic language as a living part of *past, present and future* part of Scottish life". In the second sentence it was suggested that the phrase "as and where appropriate" should be inserted. It was suggested that Andrew Harper consider these three suggestions and ensure that taken together they resulted in a readable and meaningful statement.
 - b) There was some discussion on the recommendation that the Park Gateways Working Group should adopt a dual language approach on entry point signage. In response to a question Andrew Harper suggested that this recommendation reflected not so much a need to provide a translation of English for Gaelic speakers, but more a recognition of the cultural heritage of the National Park, and a need to create a sense of arrival in a special area. He also pointed out that the inclusion of Gaelic on the point of entry signs was not pre-empting any decision on all other signage within the Park. The use of the Gaelic name of the National Park had also already been reflected in the CNPA's headed notepaper. The point was made that the work of the Gateways Working Group had already seen proposed designs for entry point signage which included Gaelic, and these were very clearly of a high quality, aesthetically pleasing, and avoided creating signs that were confusing and cluttered. The point was also made that having adopted an interim policy statement on the use of the Gaelic language, it was only logical that the Board should endorse the use of Gaelic on the entry point signs. The argument about confusion on signs was a matter of design rather than a matter of principle. The question was asked as to whether the claimed economic benefits of

using Gaelic on signage were proven. It was generally felt that there was a lot of anecdotal evidence, but inevitably there was no hard evidence, and this would be extremely difficult to obtain.

- c) There was some discussion about the proposal for a Gaelic Advisory Panel. There was general agreement that the term "advisory panel" carried implications of statutory status which were not intended. What was needed was an informal ad hoc grouping of Gaelic speakers and experts who could advise the National Park Authority on the use of Gaelic that was appropriate to the National Park. The grouping would need to be appropriately inclusive, but also to include the expertise appropriate to the National Park area, and the Gaelic spoken there.

26. The Board approved the first recommendation namely the adoption of an interim policy statement on the use of Gaelic, subject to the suggested amendments, and that the CNPA develop a Gaelic language plan. It also approved recommendation two which provided a steer to the Gateways Working Group to adopt a dual language approach on entry signage. On recommendation three, the Board agreed the principle of using Gaelic speakers and experts to advise the CNPA on the use of Gaelic language in the Park.

27. Action:

- a) **Andrew Harper to take forward the development of the Gaelic Language Plan in due course;**
- b) **Andrew Harper to ensure appropriate informal liaison with Gaelic groups/organisations/individuals in developing relevant policy and projects.**
- c) **Andrew Harper to refine the interim policy statement on Gaelic language taking account of comments made during the discussion, and circulate this to all Members;**
- d) **National Park Gateways Working Group to adopt a dual language approach on entry point signage.**

AOCB

28. It was reported that the Laggan shop had reopened the previous week.

29. Jane Hope drew Members attention to a list of proposed strategy papers, policy papers and briefing papers which it was intended to bring to the Board over the coming nine months. This was not a formal Board paper, but was just for Members information and would be updated at regular intervals and re-circulated to Members.

Date of Next Meeting

30. 2nd of July at Grantown-on-Spey.