

## CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

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### FOR DISCUSSION

**Title: COMMUNICATIONS AND THE CNPA PLANNING SERVICE**

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#### **Purpose**

The purpose of this paper is to report on progress with communications activity about the Planning Service and the management of the Park, to clarify the key messages we wish to convey and to look ahead to communications issues associated with the adoption of the Local Development Plan later in 2014.

#### **Recommendations**

##### **That the Committee:**

- i. note progress to date with communications activity about the Planning Service**
- ii. endorse the key themes we wish to convey about Planning Service in the management of the Park**
- iii. discuss what more we can do, within existing resources, to promote a positive role for planning in the Park.**

#### **Background**

- I. The CNPA Communications and Engagement Strategy 2012-2017 aims to create a sense of 'closeness' to the Park, an appreciation of what makes it special and to create an increased sense of responsibility and ownership – all so that people get involved in managing/caring for the Park. This work contributes to delivering the Vision set out in the NP Partnership Plan: “An outstanding National Park enjoyed and valued by everyone, where nature and people thrive together”. There is already a comprehensive programme of work in place to implement this Strategy including three**

Campaigns – Cairngorms Nature, Active Cairngorms and the Make it Yours campaign and the National Park brand development work.

2. Planning Committee approved the Planning Service Improvement Priorities for 2014/15 in April (Annex 1). Three of the identified priorities specifically concern communications activity:
  - **Establish a series of Planning Advice Notes across the Planning Service** to help customers understand key topics associated with implementation of the Local Development Plan and some key procedural issues.
  - **Simplify and improve the customer focus of the CNPA planning web pages** and provide easier access to information about planning applications and live consultations.
  - **Establish a Customer Service Charter for the Planning Service** focussing on development management and the day-to-day service provision. This will complement the Enforcement Charter and Development Plan Scheme that are already in place.

### **Progress to date**

3. Good progress is being made with number of Improvement Priorities as shown below:
  - a) We have a template for **Planning Advice Notes** and a publication programme for the year ahead:

<b>CNPA Planning Advice Note</b>	<b>Target Publication Month</b>
Applying to change an existing planning permission	Completed
Applying for planning permission in the Cairngorms National Park	Completed
European Protected Species and planning permission	Completed
Processing Agreements	Sept.
Pre-Application Advice	Sept.
Planning Committee meetings: How to participate	Sept.
S75 Agreements/Planning Obligations	Dec.
Standard conditions and planning permission	Dec.
Other topics to be programmed	Mar.

- b) We are making changes to the **CNPA planning web pages to simplify and improve the customer focus**. Our first changes are removal of unnecessary text and creation of a page for the new Planning Advice Notes. Further changes will include a clearer 'weekly list' section to show applications open for representation and creation of pages for the Developers Forum and Community Representatives Planning Network.
- c) We are developing a **Customer Service Charter for the Planning Service** and intend to publish by September 2014 with approval from Management Team in consultation with Planning Committee Convenor and Deputy Convenor.
- d) In addition we are maintaining previous strands of our communications activity though
  - i. regular meetings of the Developers Forum and Community Representatives Planning Network
  - ii. enhanced contact with local authority planners and regular protocol meetings

## Communications Themes

- 4. A wide variety of communication work is already built into Corporate and Operational Plans. However, given the emphasis of the Communications and Engagement Strategy there is a need to clarify the themes that are specific to communications activity about planning. The proposed themes, attached at **Annex 2**, will not be used directly in public but will influence the set of communication messages and activities that we develop. They encapsulate the impression we wish to leave with customers.

## Implementation

- 5. Implementation of the communications plan is delivered through the Operational Plan. Oversight will be undertaken through the monthly Planning Conveners meeting and periodic consideration with the Board Communications and Engagement Group.

<b>Key Audience</b>	<b>How?</b>	<b>Who?</b>
<i>Scottish Govt and Ministers</i>	<i>Regular briefings; Liaison meetings</i>	<i>Convenor and PC Convener, Chief Executive, Director of Planning &amp; Rural Development</i>
<i>Local MSPs/MP</i>	<i>Regular briefings; site visits</i>	<i>PC Convener, Director of Planning &amp; Rural Development</i>
<i>Local Authority Directors and Heads of Planning</i>	<i>Regular briefings, Annual Protocol meetings</i>	<i>Director of Planning &amp; Rural Development, Head of Planning</i>
<i>Developers/architects, applicants, landowners and key agencies</i>	<i>Developers Forum, Design Awards in 2016</i>	<i>PC Convener, Director of Planning and Rural Development</i>
<i>Community Councils and associations</i>	<i>Community Representatives Planning Network, Regular bulletins</i>	<i>Director of Planning Rural Development, Head of Planning</i>

### **Looking ahead to implementation of the Local Development Plan**

6. When the Local Development Plan is adopted (currently programmed towards the end of 2014) we will, for the first time, have a single Development Plan for the Park with a set of new policies and supplementary guidance. We propose to use that opportunity to enhance the communication about planning in the Park through a programme of:
  - launch activity – to generate interest and promote the new Plan
  - training and development for partners – to ensure partners are well-equipped and focused on delivery
  - social media – to promote inclusion and widen involvement in the planning process.
  
7. Looking to the next Corporate Plan period and the preparation of the next Local Development Plan we will require making decisions about how to resource the proactive communications and engagement activity around the essential planning process. There are examples emerging elsewhere in the UK of innovative approaches, particularly though use of social media and the engagement of younger people, and this would fit well with our overall approach to community-led development, communications and engagement.

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