
CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

FOR DECISION

Title: Cultural Heritage – Update on CNPA’s Work and Proposed Community Heritage Project

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Purpose

To provide an update of CNPA’s work to deliver the cultural heritage objectives of the National Park Plan and approve development of a community heritage project.

Recommendations

That the Board

- a) note the recent and current work on cultural heritage being delivered through the National Park Plan.
- b) agree the focus for CNPA’s role during the current Park Plan period including the establishment of a community heritage project.

Executive Summary

CNPA has been taking forward cultural heritage work in six strands agreed by the Board in 2005. The paper gives an update on work in these areas and sets out how these are now embedded in the National Park Plan and its delivery mechanisms.

Recent discussions with stakeholders over how best CNPA can add value to the wide range of partners already engaged in cultural heritage in the Park have identified three key strands:

- a) continue to develop the partnership to provide an effective framework for managing the historic environment;
- b) work with local authorities to secure specialist historic environment advice as required to support planning and development management; and
- c) develop a community heritage project to address a gap in support for communities to understand, conserve, promote and enjoy their local cultural heritage.

The third strand is a new initiative designed to fill a gap in current support and provide a point of co-ordination with seed-corn funding to stimulate and support community heritage projects.

CULTURAL HERITAGE – UPDATE ON CNPA'S WORK AND PROPOSED COMMUNITY HERITAGE PROJECT - FOR INFORMATION

Background

1. This paper draws together the strands of work currently being undertaken by CNPA on cultural heritage and sets out the direction for focusing our resources on cultural heritage during the current National Park Plan period.
2. The Board previously considered formal papers on cultural heritage in August and October 2005. Since that time, the role and focus established through those papers has been taken forward into the National Park Plan. It is now timely to review our approach and agree the focus for CNPA's effort and resources to deliver the objectives and priorities of the National Park Plan.

Role of CNPA in Cultural Heritage

3. The National Park Plan sets out the following strategic objectives that are explicitly related to cultural heritage:
 - a) Develop a sound knowledge and understanding of the cultural traditions associated with the Park's places and communities;
 - b) Support and promote the diverse cultural traditions of communities within the Park;
 - c) Understand and conserve the archaeological record, historic landscapes and historic built environment.
4. There are of course several other objectives relating to communities and to understanding and awareness of the Park that have a significant cultural heritage dimension. The priorities for action also include a specific set of actions to understand, conserve and promote the historic environment.
5. The National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000 defines cultural heritage as '*structures and other remains resulting from human activity of all periods, language, traditions, ways of life and the historic, artistic and literary associations of people, places and landscapes*'. This reflects the wide scope of cultural heritage interests which are closely intertwined with the natural heritage of the area and are a key part of the sense of identity of communities in the Cairngorms.
6. CNPA's role is to enable the partners in the Park to achieve the relevant strategic objectives and priorities set out in the Park Plan. There are a number of partners actively engaged in cultural heritage in the Park.
7. The key public sector partners in this field are:

- a) **Historic Scotland** – Scottish Government agency responsible for listed buildings, safeguarding the historic environment and promoting its understanding and enjoyment (examples of work in the Park include a publication on the Park's architectural heritage, management of properties including Corgarff Castle and Ruthven Barracks and advice on listed building management).
 - b) **Royal Commission for Ancient and Historical Monuments in Scotland (RCAHMS)** – an NDPB responsible for surveying and interpreting the built environment, recoding information and promoting public understanding and enjoyment of the National Monuments Record (examples of work in the Park include the Historic Landuse Assessment, site surveys, Scotland's Rural Past project and involvement in the Landscape Framework).
 - c) **Local Authorities** – responsible for managing the historic environment primarily through the planning system and local monuments recording, and a wide ranging role covering community heritage, museums, arts and culture (examples of work in the Park include the Highland Folk Museum, archaeology service, maintenance of Sites and Monuments Records).
8. There are also several NGOs and local community based groups actively involved in indentifying, caring for and promoting cultural heritage. These include:
- a) **The National Trust for Scotland** – an independent charity with the mission to 'protect and preserve Scotland's natural, cultural and built heritage for present and future generations to enjoy' (examples of work in the Park are focused around Mar Lodge Estate)
 - b) **The Scottish Civic Trust** – an independent charity focused on the protection, enhancement and development of Scotland's built environment. (examples of work in the Park include the 'Buildings at Risk' register).
 - c) **Local heritage groups** – local groups focused around archaeology, local history or particular local sites and heritage interests, for example the Laggan Heritage Trust and Braemar Community Company.

Recent and Current work

9. Based on the role agreed by the Board in October 2005, CNPA has been taking forward cultural heritage work under the following six strands, which are now embedded in the National Park Plan.

Knowledge

10. Following research for the State of the Park Report, an audit of the historic environment was carried out. This provided a partial picture of the cultural heritage resources of the Park and further research will be

taken forward through the National Park Plan and future reviews of the State of the Park Report. The Land-Based Business Training Project has run several successful and fully subscribed courses on cultural heritage in conjunction with local training providers. These include courses on managing historic buildings, the relationship between people and the land and the role of estates in the culture and natural heritage of the area.

Interpretation

11. The interpretation guidance currently nearing completion encourages people to tell the stories of life, history and culture in their part of the Park. One of the four themes for the guidance is 'people of the Park', making particular reference to the historic environment and cultural traditions of the area. This area of work is now being taken forward with partners through the priority for action 'raising awareness and understanding of the Park'.
12. Scotways are working on a national initiative on 'heritage paths' which gather information on historical routes for interpretation. They are looking at a number of routes within the Park and we are encouraging them to consider opportunities for interpretation in partnership with relevant land managers and communities.

Landscape

13. CNPA has an ongoing role through our function as a planning authority to safeguard the historic environment, which is carried out in conjunction with local authorities. We are currently holding discussions with Aberdeenshire Council about making more use of their specialist expertise in this area in particular cases. We are also now carrying out more proactive work to understand and safeguard the historic environment through the Landscape Framework. This work is being taken forward with partners through the priority for action on 'conserving and enhancing biodiversity and landscapes'.

Language

14. In line with the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005, CNPA will be preparing a Gaelic language plan in collaboration with Bord na Gaidhlig. CNPA has also supported projects to produce a place-names leaflet for the Park explaining Gaelic place-names and groups promoting Doric.

Communities

15. Through the grants programmes operated by CNPA over recent years, a significant number of community-based cultural heritage projects have been supported with funding and advice from the CNPA and the Cairngorms LEADER programme. The LBBT courses noted above have indicated a high level of interest among communities. Support for community-based cultural heritage initiatives is a key role in enabling

delivery of the National Park Plan and the proposals for a community heritage project below set out the basis on which this area of work is now being developed.

Partnership

16. During the preparation and completion of the National Park Plan CNPA convened a cultural heritage forum to advise on the cultural heritage aspects, and subsequently on the audit work that was commissioned. Subsequently that advisory role has been combined with the advisory forums and a smaller group of partners has met over the last six months to discuss the community heritage project in particular and shape the approach set out in the next section. The delivery and advisory roles provided by partners to date will continue through the delivery teams and advisory forums connected to the Park Plan.

Recommendation:

17. **The Board is asked to note the recent and current work on cultural heritage being delivered through the National Park Plan.**

Future Direction

18. Work on the strands set out above will continue, now set in the context of the objectives and priorities of the National Park Plan and its delivery mechanisms. Discussions with stakeholders (listed under 'consultation' below) over the last six months have considered how best CNPA can add value to and support the range of partners working on cultural heritage.
19. The main conclusions from these discussions are:
 - a) there is a significant number of organisations and local groups engaged in cultural heritage activity in the Park, but a resource to provide support, co-ordination and focus is needed to make the most of this activity for the Park as a whole;
 - b) there is relatively good coverage of policy and advice on the physical aspects of the historic environment (though limited funds) through national bodies and statutory remits and this will be further supported at a Park-wide scale through the Landscape Framework;
 - c) there is a gap in support and promotion for community heritage, such as social history, history of local places and particularly relatively recent heritage that is not addressed by national bodies, but is key to local identity.
20. Therefore in addition to our contributions to the delivery teams in the areas described above, the proposed focus for CNPA's role in cultural heritage over the next three years is:

- a) Continue to bring together the partnership of national bodies and local interests to develop effective research and policy on the historic environment. This will be carried out principally through the delivery team for the National Park Plan priority 'conserving and enhancing biodiversity and landscapes', in which the landscape framework is a major project involving partners.
 - b) Work with local authorities to secure specialist advice on the historic environment where required to inform planning and development management.
 - c) Establish a project on community heritage which will provide a project officer to take a proactive approach to supporting communities to understand, conserve, enjoy and promote aspects of their local community heritage.
21. While (a) and (b) are developments of work we are already engaged in, the development of a community heritage project is a significant new development that will increase CNPA's capacity to support communities in caring for and promoting their cultural heritage. Further information on the project is given in the next section.

Community Heritage Project

22. The project will run for a fixed term of three years with the objectives:
- a) to support communities to develop and implement projects to understand, conserve, promote and enjoy their local cultural heritage;
 - b) to co-ordinate the work of communities, NGOs and public bodies for the benefit of cultural heritage within the National Park.
23. The essence of the project is to provide a resource in the form of a project officer and seed-corn budget to stimulate activity on community heritage and to put together tailored packages of advice, funding and support to help communities work with aspects of their local heritage. In this way, the project should lever in a much greater network of partnerships and funding to assist community projects.
24. The project would support communities to work with particular aspects of their local heritage, which could include for example oral history projects, survey and recording, interpretation and research. The project would build the capacity of communities to undertake the work, but also to make connections with others and explore and present their local stories in the wider context of the Park. In particular, connections to local businesses and tourism organisations will be encouraged, to support the local economy.

25. The seed-corn budget will be used for project development costs, prior to funding applications to other sources, although where other funding is available those sources will be used. The project officer will work closely with Cairngorms LEADER which is likely to continue to be a significant source of funding for community projects.
26. We are currently seeking funding for the project from the Heritage Lottery Fund (Your Heritage programme) and Cairngorms LEADER, to combine with a funding contribution from CNPA (see section on financial implications below).
27. Subject to successful funding, the project would start in April 2009 and run for three years (the remainder of the current National Park Plan period). The project officer would be hosted by CNPA, to encourage synergies with other community development, natural heritage and interpretation work.
28. The project outputs will include:
 - a) greater uptake of national programmes such as 'Scotland's Rural Past' in the Park;
 - b) tailored funding and advice packages for up to ten community projects per year;
 - c) interpretation and promotion of projects in the context of the National Park and in line with interpretation guidance.
29. The success of the project will be evaluated by the number of community projects enabled, the contribution they make to the National Park Plan and the partnerships/networks established. The project will be reviewed after two years to evaluate the success and consider the options at the end of the three year project.

Recommendation:

30. **The Board is asked to agree the focus for CNPA's role during the current Park Plan period including the establishment of a community heritage project.**

Consultation

31. Discussions on the direction of cultural heritage work in the Park and CNPA's role have been held with representatives of:
 - a) Aberdeenshire Council
 - b) Highland Council
 - c) National Trust for Scotland
 - d) Scottish Civic Trust
 - e) Historic Scotland
 - f) Royal Commission for Ancient and Historical Monuments in Scotland

- g) Highland Folk Park
- h) Laggan Heritage Trust
- i) Archaeology Scotland

32. These representatives have shaped the proposed community heritage project, provided letters of support for the project and have agreed to retain a role in supporting the project's implementation.

Policy Context

33. The policy context of the National Park Plan is set out at the start of this paper. The approach to CNPA's cultural heritage work described contributes to both the long term strategic objectives, through establishing effective policies and carrying out our statutory functions with sufficient cultural heritage information, and to the priorities for communities and the historic environment. The community heritage project allows CNPA to add value and enable communities to take action, consistent with the guiding principles of the National Park Plan.

34. The focus described above will contribute directly to two of the achievements identified in CNPA's corporate plan 2008-11:
- a) A landscape framework is in place which supports the management of the Park's forests, woodland, moorland, upland and farmland areas (through the integration of historic environment into the landscape framework);
 - b) Information on the cultural heritage resource within the Park is collated, accessible and used to conserve and promote the cultural heritage (by working through communities to collate information, conserve and promote the cultural heritage);

35. and to two of the Scottish Government outcomes to which CNPA's corporate plan contributes:
- a) We value and enjoy our built and natural environment and protect it and enhance it for future generations (by encouraging communities to find out about, care for and promote their local heritage);
 - b) We take pride in a strong, fair and inclusive national identity (by encouraging an awareness of community heritage).

Delivering Sustainability

36. CNPA's role in cultural heritage seeks to ensure that several of the special qualities that underpin the Park's designation are conserved – fundamental to sustainability. It also seeks to realise broader benefits for the people and economy of the Park through the cultural heritage resource.

Delivering A Park for All

37. The proposed approach is in line with the guiding principles of the National Park Plan in working through communities. Park for all will be a consideration in the development of individual projects.

Delivering Economy, Effectiveness and Efficiency

38. The role played by CNPA in cultural heritage seeks to add value to the wide range of partners already engaged in cultural heritage work, through making connections and enabling projects. The community heritage project is designed to provide a point of co-ordination and a resource to lever in a wider network of partnerships and funding that avoids substitution of roles and draws greater value out of the network of activities on cultural heritage.

Implications

Financial Implications

39. The most significant financial implication is in the Park Authority's contribution to the community heritage project. It is anticipated that the funding for this project will be split three ways, subject to current applications for funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund (Your Heritage programme) and Cairngorms LEADER. The total cost of the project proposed is £150,562 over three years. The proposed contribution by the CNPA is £47,000 over three years beginning in April 2009, plus provision of office accommodation and management.
40. An outline of the project and the proposed CNPA expenditure was considered by Finance Committee on 8th August 2008. The committee approved the proposed spend in principle subject to maximising the available seed-corn fund and minimising recruitment costs. The committee also expressed the need to manage expectations over what one post will be able to achieve.

Presentational Implications

41. Subject to successful funding applications, there will be an opportunity to promote the community heritage project which is anticipated to start in April 2009. There will be a clear need to promote this project among communities in the Park, and an opportunity to promote the results of the project and the work of communities on heritage to others beyond the Park.

Implications for Stakeholders

42. This paper seeks to provide some clarity for CNPA and our stakeholders about our work on cultural heritage and draws together discussions with a range of stakeholders. The work on historic environment policy should help to develop further our relationships with local authorities in particular in relation to planning and development management, and

with national bodies in relation to the state of the Park's cultural heritage. The community heritage project will offer a significant new resource to support community groups that should help improve connections between the wide range of stakeholders involved.

Next Steps

43. Funding applications for the community heritage project are currently being prepared. The outcomes are likely to be known by December. If successful, recruitment for the project officer will take place early in 2009 with the intention of launching the project in April 2009.

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August 2008

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