
CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

FOR DECISION

Title: Update on Developing a Park for All 2006

Prepared by: Claire Ross, Education and Inclusion Manager
Elspeth Grant, Social Inclusion Policy Officer

Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to update Board members on progress of the CNPA's recent activities on Social Inclusion and to summarise potential future activity.

It is proposed that the Board revisit groups requiring additional support to engage with the Park as outlined in the "Developing a Park for All- Social Inclusion" Board paper (2004) and consider prioritising short-term positive action to three cross-cutting groups: young people, people living on low incomes, and people with disabilities.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Board:

- Note the progress made on social inclusion issues and plans for future activity including developing a pilot Outreach Project.
- Agree to prioritise three groups for additional support in taking up opportunities that the National Park provides: young people, people living on low income and people with disabilities.

Executive Summary

Following on from the Park for All recommendations approved by the Board in August 2004 and the Update Information paper in May 2005, the CNPA has been committed to addressing inclusion and equalities issues internally, as well as through policy and project development and its work with stakeholder groups. The Board previously agreed to support seven excluded groups. However to ensure our work is effective and sustainable within the resources available, it is proposed to narrow the focus of our work to three groups, namely young people (16-24 years), people on low incomes and people with disabilities. This is in order to align more closely with our partner's focus for engagement and the additional requirement to target these groups set out by the Scottish Executive and Westminster.

Background

1. The Board took an early view that it was important that the Cairngorms National Park should be available to all people regardless of age, culture or background. Putting this commitment into effect has implications both for the Park Authority and its Partners particularly in delivering the National Park Plan and the development of the Authority’s future Corporate and Operational Plans.
2. The implications of taking forward the ethos of a “Park for All” are two-fold. Firstly for the Authority itself to embed an inclusive approach in all its activities and to encourage its Partners to follow suit. Secondly to pursue with its Partners more focussed positive approaches and actions that enable groups that find it particularly difficult to access the Park to do so.
3. The Cairngorms National Park is an asset relevant to all the people of Scotland with opportunities for everyone to have the chance to contribute to and benefit from its aims. Therefore it is important as well as focussing on those living within the Park to be looking beyond the boundaries in encouraging participation and engagement
4. The two previous “Park for All” papers (Aug 2004/May 2005) have clearly outlined the potential barriers to people enjoying, learning about and getting involved in the Park including: transport, affordable housing, finance, access etc. It has also identified the particular groups that may require additional support to access the special qualities and opportunities the Park offers.

Current Social Inclusion Activities

5. This section outlines where the CNPA has got to both in embedding social inclusion principles within the organisation and promoting positive actions that support under represented groups to engage with the Park:

Mainstreaming an inclusive approach within the CNPA

<p>Extensive consultation processes on both the Local and National Park Plan with local communities & national Partners.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using various methodologies, venues and time frames to engage with more people effectively • Over 80 young people attended three Youth Consultation events on the draft National Park Plan held in June 2006.
<p>Using the National Standards for Community Engagement (Communities Scotland) as a check list for effective community engagement; widening representation and addressing barriers to participation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currently piloting the approach with the Core Path planning process

CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

Paper 1 06/10/06

Increasing awareness of social inclusion issues with the CNPA staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusion and equalities training for all CNPA staff • Updating accessible meetings check list.
Making communications more inclusive.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taped version of Park Life
Embedding inclusion into project development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All applications to the Integrated Grant Programme are required to demonstrate how projects are inclusive. • Expenditure Justification forms/project appraisal forms being reviewed to ensure that inclusion issues are being addressed.

Positive actions supporting groups that have difficulty engaging with the Park

Investment in inclusion activity through the Integrated Grant Programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summer Activity Programme for Young People in Badenoch and Strathspey • Health Walks Co-ordinator • Adult Education and conservation project in Upper Deeside • Big Issue Foundation visit to highlight issues for people on low income accessing the Park.
Hosting the John Muir Award	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides an ideal framework for working with people from disadvantaged backgrounds to raise their awareness of the National Park involving a wide range of partners
Supporting the Youth Communication Network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highly acclaimed youth media project involving seven secondary schools in producing their own 15-minute films on life in the National Park
Supporting the All Abilities Communication Network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bringing together disability organisations to inform the CNPA on disability issues. Group currently looking to expand its membership to cover a wider representation of hard to access groups.
Addressing barriers to accessing the Park: transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cairngorms Explorer: information on easier ways to get round the Park without a car. • Launch of the “Heather Hopper” cross Park bus route connecting villages on either side of the Park

Narrowing the focus of positive action for target groups

15. Creating relationships with groups of people who find it difficult to engage with the Park can be challenging and resource intensive. Highlighting which groups need additional support and what that support should be is an important starting point for developing future approaches and actions. The "Park for All" Board paper (August 2004) identified: young people, people on low income, women, older people, disabled people, and ethnic minority and inner city groups as needing additional focus. It also identified transport, affordable housing, finances and cultural perceptions of the countryside as being some of the barriers that stop people engaging with the Park.
16. Focussing on all of the above groups in the short-term means that there could be a danger of developing a "scatter gun" approach that has little lasting effect and perceived as "tokenistic". Therefore it is recommended that although the CNPA will continue to engage with all the above groups additional focus will be given to: young people (16-24 years), people with disabilities and people living on low incomes.
17. These groups cover a wide range of people many that fall under more than one category and exist both within and without the Park. They are high on the agendas of many of our partners, including Community Planning Partnerships and in the case of young people and people with disabilities; the CNPA has a significant track record of activity and policy development to build on.
18. Young People: particular emphasis on 16-24 year olds. This group is a high priority for key inclusion partners particularly: education providers, community learning and development and the voluntary sector.
 - Work with young adults is an identified national priority by the Scottish Executive's social inclusion unit particularly in the rural context.
 - There is a national emphasis on getting 16-19 year olds back into employment, education/training. (*NEET not in employment, education or training and volunteering opportunities: Project Scotland*)
 - Scotland has an aging population that is particularly pronounced in rural areas. The attraction and retention of young people to the Park is critical in maintaining and sustaining viable communities. Young people are an essential partner in realising the long-term vision of the CNP.
19. **People living on Low-incomes**
 Many people from other marginalised groups are most likely to be included under this heading: disadvantaged inner city groups, ethnic minorities, lone parents, pensioners and long-term sick. Rural poverty and lack of opportunity is also an issue for many people living within the Park

- While people are excluded in many complex ways, poverty and low income are primary factors. Poverty organisations see the most significant inequality as that which exists between the richest and poorest people in our society.
- 70% of people that visit the Park (*Visitors Survey 2003*) are from socio-economic group ABC 1 as compared to 45.5% of the national population (*2001 census*). It is important to provide and market a range of affordable transport, activities and accommodation targeted at visitors from lower income brackets.

20. **People with disabilities**

Legislation such as Part III of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 means that countryside service providers must not discriminate against disabled people. Disabled people should not receive an inferior service and service providers are required to make reasonable adjustments to ensure that their service or facility can be enjoyed by all.

- As the CNPA is the access authority and it is a priority for action there is an opportunity to demonstrate best practice in promoting a high standard of access for all with our partners.
- Improving access for people with disabilities will enable a raft of other people to more readily access the special qualities of the Park i.e. People with small children, the elderly etc.

Recommendation: Having considered the criteria and rationale for focussing on the groups above the Board is invited to agree that the priority should be given to these three groups as a basis for future support

21. **Consultation**

As indicated in the recent Learning Information paper, there has been an extensive consultation process on the areas of learning and inclusion: including a postal survey, focus groups and two stakeholder events in Nethy Bridge and Strathdon. The consultation has generated reports on current policy/legislation and good practice in the area of social inclusion.

Policy Context

22. **Relationship with the Draft National Park Plan**

The development of an inclusive attitude should be applied, as standard practice to the delivery of the Park Plan by the CNPA and all its partners. A National Park that is accessible to all is expressed through the Draft Park Plan's guiding principles of "Social Justice" and "People participating in the Park". It also underpins the awareness element of the "Awareness and Understanding" priority for action.

There are strong links to the CNPA's Outdoor Access Strategy in particular through transport, health improvement and access issues for people with disabilities.

23. National Policy

Social justice and equality are the twin themes of Scottish Executive policy. It favours a broad and inclusive use of the term 'social justice', as in the strategy document 'A Scotland Where Everyone Matters'. Equalities issues are considered in some milestones in the Social Justice Strategy but most equalities legislation i.e Disability Discrimination Act 2004 comes down through Westminster. The Executives first Social Justice Annual Report speaks of groups that 'experience exclusion by discrimination on the grounds of, for example, race, religion, gender, ability, age or sexual orientation...' and 'Better Communities in Scotland: Closing the Gap' (2002), states the need to 'tackle the inequalities between communities by narrowing the gap between the disadvantaged and everyone else'.

24. Delivering Sustainability

Narrowing the focus in the short term will mean that resources can be dedicated in a more effective manner ensuring greater impact. Long term shifts in culture and perceptions take time, commitment and resources. Therefore it is important to make sure that the people the CNPA wants to focus on for additional support are similar to those of its main delivery partners, to avoid duplication and maximise best value.

25. Delivering Economy, Effectiveness and Efficiency

Adopting a "Park for All" approach will encourage a wider range of visitors to the Park. It is important to build on the existing visitor demographic and encourage the development (and marketing) of a diverse range of transport, accommodation and activities geared to a variety of budgets and requirements.

Implications**26. Financial Implications**

Progressing social inclusion/equalities issues will take time, resources and commitment from the CNPA and its key partners. There is work to be done in marketing the Park especially to those that have difficulties engaging with it. The financial implications will be considered in due course and addressed via the Authority's corporate and operational planning processes. Currently it is anticipated that there are enough staff in place to carry forward this work.

27. Presentational Implications

It is important to give a clear message that this work is in addition and not at the expense of people that already engage with the Park and the opportunities it offers.

28. Implications for Stakeholders

Working with both young people and those on low income is clearly a priority for stakeholders particularly those in the public and community/voluntary sectors. This was highlighted in the consultation stakeholder events on “learning and Inclusion”. The local Government Act 2003 requires local authorities and all involved bodies to observe equal opportunity requirements and promote equal opportunities across community planning and Best Value and to report on their activities. In prioritising three groups the CNPA would seek to encourage others to also focus on these groups when delivering the relevant actions through the National Park Plan.

Next Steps

Future activities taking forward a “Park for All” approach (2007-2012)

This final section outlines some of the future activities on social inclusion that sit in context within the priorities for action in the draft Park Plan.

<p>Pilot Outreach Projects to further evaluate barriers to people Partners: Moray Against Poverty Network, National Children’s Homes, Local Authorities, Ranger services, John Muir Award, Badaguish, Scottish Youth Hostels Association.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • St Fitticks – (low income/ youth) travelling the length of the Dee using different modes of transport. • Moray Against Poverty Network: using the NP as a learning tool for personal and social development+ JMA
<p>Building on the above: developing a National Outreach Programme with inner city schools, young people, people with disability and people living on low income.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying potential partners: Scottish Youth Hostels Assoc. City Link, Local Authorities, John Muir award etc. • Developing “ambassadors” to promote the CNP to young people, people on low incomes, and those with disabilities.
<p>Create “Cairngorms on a Shoestring” information package for those living on a low income</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website and leaflet form. • Could be expanded to include sections for disabled visitors and young people.
<p>Schools Outreach Partnership project with Scottish Natural Heritage and Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research to identify the barriers for inner city schools/other groups • in participating in the NP, followed by visits raising awareness of the NP and creating long term links with schools and other groups outwith the NP.
<p>Volunteering and Conservation Project Partners: Project Scotland (BTCV), Rangers Services, local communities and John Muir Award</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing volunteering project for young people 16-24 with BTCV, Project Scotland, local placements providers.
<p>“Park for All” Conference</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual event bringing partners

	together around social inclusion issues and project development
--	-----------------------------------------------------------------

29. A “Park for All” approach will be embedded in the National Park Plan’s guiding principles of “Social Justice” and “People Participating in the Park”. Actions for additional support have already been identified within the National Park Plan. This will include: promoting the Park beyond the “usual suspects”, creating strong links with partners and developing an Outreach Programme to be launched at the Park for All Conference in November 2006. Future reporting of “Park for All” will be looked at in the context of how the Park Plan in general will be reported back to the Board.

Claire Ross

Elsbeth Grant

August 2006

claireross@cairngorms.co.uk

elsbethgrant@cairngorms.co.uk