
CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

FOR DECISION

Title: Brand Management Group Update

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Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to update the Board on the work of the Brand Management Group, to seek a decision on Board representation on the Group, and to seek a steer on the use of Gaelic in conjunction with the brand.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Board:

- a) note the progress that has been made by the Brand Management Group in developing and promoting the brand;
- b) consider an increase in the number of Board members on the Group to three, and decide who the Board representative(s) will be;
- c) agree a preferred option in relation to the use of Gaelic with the brand.

Executive Summary

The Brand Management Group has now been in operation for a year and has met six times. Eligibility criteria linked to high standards of quality and environmental management have been agreed for the majority of potential uses for the Brand. While there is still some work to be undertaken on eligibility criteria, the focus of work is now shifting towards encouraging uptake of the Brand and raising consumer awareness of the Brand and its values, as well as exploring merchandising opportunities. The Board is also asked to take a view on changes to Board member representation on the Group and to provide a steer on the use of Gaelic in conjunction with the brand.

Brand Management Group Update – For Decision

Background

1. On 11 February 2005, the Board agreed a number of recommendations relating to the implementation of the Cairngorms Brand, including that of establishing a Brand Management Group to take decisions about how the brand should be implemented and used. This group was subsequently established and has met on six occasions. The group comprises representatives from the Association of Cairngorms Community Councils, the Cairngorms Chamber of Commerce, VisitScotland, CNPA Board members and relevant staff.
2. The last update to the Board on the work of the Brand Management Group was given in July 2005. Since then, further substantial progress has been made, as is reported below.

Eligibility Criteria

3. Quality and environmental standards are the fundamental cornerstones on which use of the brand has been based, with all those seeking to use the brand required to meet relevant standards before use is approved.
4. In developing the criteria, the Group has sought, as far as possible, to link the use of the Brand to existing accreditation schemes.
5. Criteria have now been approved for a variety of sectors including tourism businesses, community & tourist associations, events, non edible products (e.g. arts & crafts), golf courses, outdoor activity providers and some edible produce. The agreed criteria for each sector is shown in Annex 1. The Group have also recently agreed quality and environmental criteria for the more “non commercial” aspects of using the brand e.g. on information leaflets, signage etc.

Promoting the Brand

6. In September 2005, a Communications Plan (see Annex 2) was circulated to Board members. This explains how the link between the Cairngorms Brand, the Cairngorms Sustainable Tourism Strategy and Action Plan, and the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas. It sets out a clear programme to encourage uptake and use of the brand, while at the same time communicating its meaning to consumers.
7. With the currently agreed criteria, around 400 businesses are now eligible to use the brand. So far over 40 businesses, tourist and community associations and events throughout the Park have had approval to use the brand in their marketing activity (see Annex 3).

8. Further design work is being developed on straplines to be used in conjunction with the brand which will assist in conveying the brand values and can be used by all eligible businesses in their marketing.

Merchandising

9. In February 2005, the Board agreed in principle that the brand could be used on products for sale, subject to licence and that further work to develop the best management system to do this should be undertaken. As a result the Group are currently investigating the opportunities afforded by the use of the brand on product merchandise. A consultant with a merchandising expertise has been contracted to:
 - a) quantify potential demand for use of the Cairngorms Brand on retail merchandising;
 - b) identify the number of potential suppliers, and the number of potential sales outlets for any merchandise and an estimated sales value of merchandising produce;
 - c) develop a rationale for merchandise to be sold at selected outlets outwith the Park area; and
 - d) indicate how much businesses would be prepared to pay to use the brand under licence.
10. The report addressing these objectives is being finalised by the consultant and will be discussed by the Brand Management Group at its next meeting in April.

Recommendation

11. **That the Board note the progress made by the Brand Management Group in developing and promoting the brand.**

Change in Composition of the Brand Management Group

12. Currently two Board members sit on the Brand Management Group – Sally Dowden and Eleanor Mackintosh. In the event of consensus not being reached on a particular issue within the Group, the Board members are charged with taking the decision. In practice, all decisions have so far been by consensus.
13. However, in April this will fall to one Board member, as Sally Dowden will be stepping down from the Board. The Head of Corporate Services acts as Standards Officer for the Authority, and has advised that a minimum of three Board members (two new members) should be appointed to the Brand Management Group, or any similar group with a remit from the Board to take decisions on specific areas. Of these two new appointments at least one member should have no specific background or commercial interest in the subject area.
14. This advice seeks to recognise that there is a balance to be struck in determining the appropriate number of members to serve on a group with delegated decision-making

powers vested in it by the Board. The advice also seeks to recognise the potential impact of the Code of Conduct, which may require members to withdraw from consideration of some elements of business where there may be a perceived conflict of interest. Hence, the Board may not wish to overly consume valuable Board member time by appointing a large number of members to a group. The Board may also wish to have regard to the number of appointees being sufficient to allow for any instances where a conflict of interest may stop member(s) from contributing, in order to ensure sufficient representation remains to discharge the Board's interests on the group.

15. An option available to the Board is therefore to appoint one new member to the Brand Management Group to replace Sally Dowden.
16. In light of the advice set out above, the Board may wish to take this opportunity to strengthen its membership on the Brand Management Group by appointing a further member to serve on the group and take the total number of Board members on the group to three. In doing so, it may be appropriate to seek one of the two new members with a background unlikely to have a direct interest in Brand Development.
17. The Board may also wish to consider whether its representation on the Group should be further enhanced by appointing additional members.

Recommendation

18. **That the Board consider an increase in the number of Board members on the Group to three, and decide who the Board representative(s) will be.**

Use of Gaelic in conjunction with the Brand

19. Recently an issue has been raised as to whether Gaelic wording should be incorporated as part of the Brand, as is the case with the Point of Entry Markers. The interim policy statement, agreed by the Board in June 2004, is as follows –

‘The CNPA recognises the Gaelic language as a living part of Scottish life and an important aspect of the Park's cultural heritage. We will therefore seek to use the Gaelic language, as appropriate, to reflect the area's cultural heritage and to further the aims of the National Park. In due course, through the development of a Gaelic Language Plan in association with Bòrd na Gàidhlig, the Authority will more fully articulate ways in which Gaelic will be used in connection with its work. For the time being, the use of Gaelic will be considered on a case by case basis for each element of the programme of activity set out in the Authority's Corporate Plan’.
20. Whilst the Brand Management Group do not have the remit to decide on the use of Gaelic with the brand, they have considered the issue. They noted that none of the stakeholders involved in the initial wide ranging consultation on the Brand options

had raised this concern. Furthermore, they felt that Gaelic wording should not replace the English wording as more people would understand the English. They were also of the view that adding the Gaelic wording would, in most cases, make the brand appear too “wordy” and would limit the minimum size at which it would be legible. Their overall recommendation was that the brand, of which the wording forms an integral part, should remain unchanged.

21. Other options open to the Board would be to agree that Gaelic should be incorporated as part of the Brand in all circumstances, accepting that this places limits on the size to which the Brand can be reduced, or to agree that organisations who wish to use the Brand should be given the option of whether they wish to incorporate Gaelic wording. If the decision was to pursue the last option, then the Board would also need to decide whether the Park Authority should incorporate Gaelic wording whenever it makes use of the Brand.

Recommendation

22. **That the Board provide a steer as to which option in paragraphs 15 and 16 should be pursued.**

Consultation

23. Internally discussions have taken place within the Economic and Social Development and Corporate Services Groups. Externally discussions have taken place with members of the Brand Management Group, with design advice from Navyblue the team who developed the brand.

Policy Context

24. The Park Brand is essentially a tool that helps deliver a number of actions in the Cairngorms Sustainable Tourism Strategy and Action Plan, as follows:
 - a) **1d.** Strengthening participation in the Green Tourism Business Scheme, and other sustainable standards schemes;
 - b) **3a.** Apply Cairngorms brand to all National Park and internet sites. Develop policy and guidelines on the use of the Cairngorms brand for tourism, and effectively disseminate this;
 - c) **5b.** Set targets for participation in quality accreditation and consider ways of encouraging levels of participation;
 - d) **7e.** Strengthen awareness and spending on local crafts and produce, through researching producers, branding and strengthening information on sources for enterprises and visitors.
25. These actions have directly fed through into the draft Park Plan Priorities for Action on ‘Making Tourism and Business Sustainable’ and ‘Developing Awareness and Understanding of the Park’.

Delivering Sustainability

26. Linking use of the brand to quality and environmental accreditation schemes, where practical, sends out a strong sustainability message and ensures that the Brand contributes to more than simply the creation of marketing advantage.

Delivering a Park for All

27. The criteria for use of the brand are being carefully considered so as not to exclude relevant businesses or groups from using it in an appropriate manner. The potential for piloting codes of conduct for tourism related sectors, where there is no existing Quality Accreditation scheme in place, is being explored with VisitScotland. The brand is a registered trademark and approval must be sought from the CNPA before being used. The CNPA has, therefore, a legal right of recourse against businesses failing to seek approval, prior to using the brand.

Delivering Economy, Effectiveness and Efficiency

28. Economy, efficiency and effectiveness have been central to the way in which the Cairngorms Brand has been developed. Using existing accreditation schemes keeps bureaucracy and associated costs to a minimum, thus being both economical and efficient. Furthermore, VisitScotland have agreed to assist with the administration of the brand approval process, thereby minimising CNPA staff time and associated costs. Ensuring that there is a broad take-up in a manner that creates both marketing advantage, while at the same time contributing to quality and environmental objectives, should all contribute to the effectiveness of the brand.

Implications

Financial Implications

29. There are limited financial implications as currently the majority of work of the Group, has been to develop criteria and this has no financial implications. It is only the merchandise and brand design development work that incurs a financial element and expenditure for this work has been allocated within the 2005-06 Operational Plan costs.

Presentational Implications

30. There are two main presentational issues raised by this paper, the first is an awareness raising exercise amongst businesses in the area of the eligibility criteria, this is an ongoing process. The second is to raise awareness amongst consumers that the brand is more than a geographical marker and that businesses displaying the brand meet quality and environmental standards. Both of these issues are addressed within the Communications Plan (see Annex 2).

Implications for Stakeholders

31. The implications for stakeholders are that through the work of the Group, the number of businesses eligible to use the brand will continue to grow. More importantly, through the application of relevant quality and environmental standards, those who are already working within these standards will be rewarded by use of the brand, providing a competitive advantage. Those not meeting the standards but seeking to use the brand, will have to raise their standards in order to use the brand, which will be of benefit both to the consumer and to area as a whole.

Next Steps

32. While there is still some work to be undertaken on eligibility criteria, the focus of the Brand Management Group's work is now shifting towards encouraging uptake of the Brand and raising consumer awareness of the Brand and its values, as well as exploring merchandising opportunities.
33. There is also a requirement to put in place clear performance monitoring arrangements for the brand. This is being taken forward, initially through the development of output and outcome targets for the 2006/07 Operational Plan and the Park Plan
34. CNPA Officers will progress the decisions taken by the Board relating to Board member representation on the Brand Management Group and the use of Gaelic wording with the brand.
35. The Board will continue to be kept updated on progress through an annual update report and through the Operational Plan quarterly monitoring papers.

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