

## **COMMUNICATIONS PLAN: EUROPEAN CHARTER FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM IN PROTECTED AREAS AND THE CAIRNGORMS BRAND**

### **European Charter for Sustainable Tourism**

1. The Cairngorms National Park Authority has recently been awarded the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas. It is the first National Park in the UK to receive this. In essence, the Charter should be seen as an accreditation of the Park's Sustainable Tourism Strategy and Action Plan. Put simply, it shows that the way in which tourism development and support is to be taken forward (by various partners - not just the CNPA) strikes an appropriate balance between economic, social and environmental objectives.

### **Cairngorms Brand**

2. One of the key actions within the Sustainable Tourism Strategy and Action Plan is the development and roll out of a Cairngorms Brand. This brand is not simply about establishing an identity for the CNP. It is also a tool for helping to embed some of the values associated with the Park, specifically high standards of quality and of environmental management. If customers understand this, it provides even greater marketing advantage for those businesses/groups or products that are eligible to use the brand than would be the case if it was purely a geographical logo. At the same time, if businesses/groups see the brand as creating marketing advantage, those that do not currently meet the eligibility criteria for the brand will be more likely to pursue the accreditation that is required to access it.
3. Information on the criteria that have been set so far by the Cairngorms Brand Management Group (BMG) for use of the Brand has recently been circulated to Board members, the ViSIT Forum and all tourism enterprises on the Park Authority database. The current criteria will continue to evolve and develop as the criteria for additional business sectors such as golf clubs, ski schools etc is agreed by the BMG.

### **Relationship between the Charter and the Brand**

4. At this stage, use of the Cairngorms Brand is intended to convey a message about the group/business/product with which it is being associated, i.e. that they are of high quality and meet high environmental standards. Use of the European Charter mark at this level would not mean the same thing. Care therefore needs to be taken as to how the Charter mark and the brand are used, if we are to avoid sending out confusing messages.
5. As an added complication, Part 2 of the European Charter is to be developed so that individual enterprises can be accredited, based on a commitment to quality standards and environmental sustainability. The administration of this stage will be the responsibility of the individual Charter Park although

there is an assumption that existing accreditation schemes will be built upon. Thus, the current eligibility criteria and administrative arrangements for the Cairngorms Brand could almost certainly be used to allow business use of the Charter mark. As work progresses at the European level on the use of the Charter Mark by individual businesses, consideration will need to be given as to whether this is a route we would want to go down in the CNP or not.

6. Given the link between the European Charter and the Cairngorms Brand, and the importance of getting key messages out to stakeholders, this communications plan seeks to clarify the key messages, target audiences and channels of communication.

Audience	Messages	Intended Effect	Channels of Communication	Timescale
<i>European Charter for Sustainable Tourism</i>				
<b>Private Sector</b> Marketing Groups Community Associations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Reference to the Park having achieved the Charter within destination marketing material is a useful 'hook' for the green tourism market.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Destination marketing materials include reference to the Charter which positively influences customers' choice of holiday location.</li> </ul>	Mailshot of summary booklet Website info ViSIT Forum Input to e-newsletters eg. VisitScotland, Chamber of Commerce Cairngorms Tourism Conference Meetings with key groups	Sept 2005 Oct 2005 14 <sup>th</sup> Sept 2005 Oct / Nov 2005 26 <sup>th</sup> Oct 2005 Ongoing
<b>Customers</b> Visitors  Local communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Tourism in the Cairngorms National Park is conducted in an environmentally responsible manner.</li> <li>➤ CNP residents live somewhere that is being managed in a well-planned and responsible manner.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Positively influences customers' choice of holiday location or decision to return to the CNP in future.</li> <li>➤ Residents take pride in the CNP and engage in planning and management of tourism.</li> </ul>	Information in <i>Cairngorms Visitor Guide</i> Information in <i>Park i</i> Article in <i>Parklife</i> Information in other publications as appropriate	Feb 2006 Oct 2005 Nov / Dec 2005 Ongoing

<i>Cairngorms Brand</i>				
<p><b>Private Sector</b></p> <p>Individual businesses Marketing Groups Community Associations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ As well as associating themselves or their products with the Park, use of the brand also creates marketing advantage through customers associating it with quality and high standards of environmental management.</li> <li>➤ Complying with quality accreditation can increase levels of repeat customers and recommendations.</li> <li>➤ Complying with environmental accreditation standards can lead to reductions in operating costs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Increased take-up of the brand.</li> <li>➤ Increased levels of quality and custom.</li> <li>➤ Environmental improvements and increased profitability.</li> </ul>	<p>Brand criteria form sent in mailshot with sustainable tourism summary booklet.</p> <p>Information on website</p> <p>ViSIT Forum</p> <p>Input to e-newsletters eg. VisitScotland, Chamber of Commerce</p> <p>Cairngorms Tourism Conference</p>	<p>Sept 2005</p> <p>Oct 2005</p> <p>14<sup>th</sup> Sept 2005</p> <p>Oct / Nov 2005</p> <p>26<sup>th</sup> Oct 2005</p>
<p><b>Customers</b></p> <p>Visitors</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The brand is associated with the Cairngorms National Park and those businesses/groups/products that use it are committed to</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Positively influences customers' purchasing decisions, leading to –</li> <li>a) <i>Higher customer satisfaction;</i></li> <li>b) <i>Longer stays and higher rates of return visits;</i></li> </ul>	<p>Information in <i>Cairngorms Visitor Guide</i></p> <p>Article in <i>Parklife</i></p> <p>Information in other</p>	<p>Feb 2006</p> <p>Nov / Dec 2005</p>

<p>Local communities</p>	<p>quality and high standards of environmental management.</p> <p>➤ The brand is associated with the Cairngorms National Park and those local tourist associations/businesses/groups/products that use it are committed to quality and high standards of environmental management.</p>	<p><i>return visits;</i></p> <p>c) <i>Improvements in quality and environmental performance.</i></p> <p>➤ Helps to build sense of identity in relation to the Park.</p>	<p>publications as appropriate</p> <p>Focus groups to test brand awareness</p> <p>Cairngorms Tourism Conference</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Summer 2006</p> <p>26<sup>th</sup> October 2005</p>
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