

CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

FOR INFORMATION

Title: Corporate Plan Update, Theme 5

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Purpose

To inform the Board of our work to date to achieve the fifth strategic theme of the Corporate Plan for 2005-08, and our plans for future activity.

Recommendations

- That the Board note the progress and plan for achieving the fifth theme of the Corporate Plan for 2005-08.

Executive Summary

The Board agreed the Authority's Corporate Plan for 2005 to 2008 at its February 2005 meeting. The Corporate Plan was framed around 5 themes, setting the overarching framework for the Authority's plans over the next three years. The fifth of those themes is:

“to be an open, innovative and professional organisation that engages effectively with the public and behaves with integrity”.

The purpose of this paper is to provide a third update on progress made and plans in place to deliver this fifth strategic theme of the Corporate Plan. This paper seeks to complement the more detailed papers providing regular quarterly updates on delivery of the 20 goals set out in the Corporate Plan through actions and tasks developed in the operational plan, by providing an overview of activity within this general theme.

Corporate Plan Update, Theme 5 – For Information

Background

1. The Board considered a paper in March 2005 which gave the first in this series of updates on delivery of the Corporate Plan, looking at the work undertaken over the last year on areas covered by Theme 5 of the Corporate Plan and exploring the key activities to be undertaken in the coming years. A second update was presented to the Board in September 2005 by David Cameron as Danny Alexander had left the organisation in March and Françoise van Buuren did not join CNPA until mid-October.
2. Theme five of the current Corporate Plan is: **“to be an open, innovative and professional organisation that engages effectively with the public and behaves with integrity”**. This theme relates both to the internal workings of the organisation and its relations with the general public. The wording of the theme reflects the outcome of work to identify and specify our core organisational values. These are as follows:
 - a) **Integrity** - Honest, trustworthy, fair, reliable, consistent, clarity of vision, good leadership, prudent.
 - b) **Open & inclusive** - Transparent, clear, approachable, accessible, accountable, responsive, listening, user-friendly, public-focused, fun to work for and with.
 - c) **Innovative** - Dynamic, bold, willing to take risks, supportive and trusting atmosphere, learning from mistakes, embracing new technology, high environmental standards.
 - d) **Professional** - Committed, competent, knowledgeable, responsible, efficient, getting things done.
3. Everyone in the organisation - staff and board - is responsible for ensuring that we live up to these values. However, specific work to deliver this theme is largely the responsibility of two Groups with an organisation wide responsibility - Communications and Corporate Services. This paper therefore primarily focuses on the work programme being taken forward by these two groups.
4. This paper aims to complement the regular, more detailed, quarterly updates on delivery of the operational plan, by providing an overview of activity within this general theme. The paper looks at our work under each of the major elements of themes in turn.

Integrity, Open and Inclusive, Engaging with the public

5. The previous updates on this theme related to the Communications Strategy prepared in June 2004, which identified four principles that should underpin our communication - openness, clarity, pro-activity, and responsiveness and four target audiences - local people; opinion formers; the people of Scotland; and visitors and

potential visitors to the area. In each case, our objective has been to develop our reputation as an enabling organisation that is trusted and respected and to keep these audiences informed about our work through our programme of communications activity. Since the last update virtually all the communication activities outlined in the Operational Plan 2005/06 in relation to the goal *to develop high levels of understanding and appreciation of the Park, the role of the Authority, and ensuring high local and national media profile* have been delivered. Karen Archer and Alison Fleming should be congratulated for their hard work and commitment to achieve this.

6. Now that the Park has been established for three years with the CNPA up and running for two-and-a-half years, it is an opportune time to consider what our future communication priorities should be in order to build on the progress made to date. Effective communication is needed to ensure all partners and interested parties understand why there is a Cairngorms National Park, what makes it so special and what needs to be done to protect and promote the Park for the benefit and enjoyment of everyone. Partners need to understand and support the Park aims and priority initiatives set out in the National Park Plan and be aware of their role and contribution to achieve them. In addition, as the CNPA is in its third year, there is perhaps less of a need to raise the corporate identity of CNPA and more of a need to support the promotion of the Park as a whole.
7. The CNPA Communications Group will therefore concentrate on enabling partner organisations to promote the Park and its special qualities while continuing to promote and protect the corporate reputation of the CNPA with identified stakeholders. This is in addition to, and in support of the ongoing efforts of other Groups with specific responsibility for interpretation, visitor information and education and inclusion activities, presented to the Board in other theme reports.
8. Clear communication aims and objectives to achieve specific desired outcomes which can be measured over time are identified in Annex 1 along with key messages, target audiences, action plans and evaluation mechanisms to demonstrate how these aims and objectives can be delivered. It should, however, be remembered that given the limited resources of the Communication Group much of the success of this Communications programme will depend on the support and active involvement of the Board, CNPA staff and other partner organisations.
9. The Communications and Corporate Services Groups will be working very closely over the course of the coming years to deliver many of our joint objectives. Both Heads of Group and staff from both Groups are already heavily involved in the "Building the Organisation" project, which seeks to develop and implement improvements in our internal communications, IT, support services, training and in the way in which staff and Board works together.
10. In particular, the further development of the website, establishment of an intranet, development of effective two-way internal communication mechanisms and ongoing support for the development of the organisation in line with its values form key

common areas of activity for the Communications and Corporate Services Groups over the coming year.

Professionalism and Integrity

Developing staff and the organisation

11. We are now into the second cycle of the Authority's staff appraisal process, a key part of which is the consideration of appropriate staff development requirements, in line with individual and organisational aims. We are seeking to maximise the effectiveness of training budgets by consolidating all training needs identified through the appraisal process and determining the best and most cost effective means of delivery. We are also developing a calendar of training opportunities in order to support staff accessing the key training requirements identified in their appraisals.
12. Towards the end of 2006/07, we plan to review our systems of appraisal and internal communication with reference to the Investor in People (IiP) criteria, as a first step in potentially putting the Authority forward for the accreditation.

Developing the culture

13. We will continue to work with groups of staff drawn from throughout the organisation in seeking to develop the organisation and its culture.
14. We have been reviewing and progressing a wide range of feedback received from staff at the away day in September in conjunction with user groups established to consider areas of internal communications, IT development, training and induction, and facilities (such as accommodation, transport etc.). These user groups inform and support the workplans of the Communications and Corporate Services Groups.
15. The Staff Consultative Forum (SCF) also remains central to the ongoing development of the organisation and its culture. Over the course of 2005/06 we established a voluntary recognition agreement with the Prospect Trade Union, while the SCF also continues to include representation for staff who are not members of the union.
16. In conjunction with staff representatives on the SCF, we have developed and issued a staff survey, seeking confidential views from staff across a wide range of subjects, including job satisfaction, support, team-working, communication, stress, work environment, leadership and values. The survey is being conducted by an independent firm and results will be received towards the end of April. The results of this survey will form a further major influence on the development of work plans for our Groups over the coming year.
17. Over the second half of 2005/06, we held a number of workshops and informal discussions with staff and Board members on how to develop partnership working

between staff and members. One outcome from this has been the recent decision in principle to alter the format of Board and Planning Committee meetings. This will be followed with a more formal paper for decision in the first half of 2006/07 and we will work thereafter to implement the changes agreed, along with colleagues in Planning and Development Control Group.

Retention and Reward

18. The Authority's Performance Related Pay (PRP) system will be implemented for the first time in 2006/07, as part of the appraisal process. This has been drawn up with the approval of the Board's Staffing and Recruitment and Finance Committees, following consultation with staff, through the SCF.
19. A benchmarking exercise comparing the authority's terms and conditions with those of a range of other NDPBs has shown that general conditions of employment compare reasonably well with those of other organisations in the sector. The results of the exercise indicates that annual leave and standard weekly working hours are on the whole slightly less favourable within the Authority than elsewhere in the sector. Discussions on the results of the exercise are progressing as part of negotiations with staff representatives on the development of a pay offer for 2006/07.
20. Following fairly lengthy negotiations with both staff representatives and the Scottish Executive, the pay award for 2005/06 was agreed in December 2005 and backdated to the Authority's award date of 1 April 2005. Negotiations on pay for 2006/07 have already commenced through the SCF, following initial consultation with the Board's Staffing and Recruitment Committee.

Developing Staff and the Organisation: Conclusion

21. We are now moving towards finalising the basic organisational infrastructure. A significant amount of developmental work remains to be undertaken over the course of the coming year and we seek to engage and include staff in that through the consultative framework of the SCF and less formal discussions held in user groups.
22. We continue to look toward the potential application for Investor in People (IiP) accreditation, or some independent "kitemark" of our processes, perhaps towards the end of 2006/07. Internal process and communications are designed partly with this in mind.

Innovation

Risk management

23. To be an innovative organisation means having a culture which is conscious of, and supports, taking risks, and which manages those risks.

24. We now have the high-level risk management tools in place within the Authority, culminating in a strategic risk register presented to the Audit Committee in March 2006. The risk register sets out the key risks, in terms of their potential to adversely affect delivery of the Authority's Corporate Plan, and indicates how these will be managed. The risk register has initially been developed by Corporate Services staff, by matching activities set out in Operational Plans against these key strategic risks. This will now form a platform for embedding the process of risk management throughout the organisation over the course of the coming year, which will be co-ordinated by Corporate Services and implemented through Management Team.
25. The Management Team has also agreed a planning and monitoring framework to improve internal controls over operational plan delivery and financial management. This process has been considered by the Board's Finance Committee in February.

Efficient Government

26. The Authority continues to participate in the Scottish Executive's Efficient Government and On The Ground Initiatives. The latter of these, in particular, has gained momentum over the last few months, led by an On The Ground Programme Board and a Programme Director employed by the Scottish Executive.
27. We are now engaged with a number of other NDPBs in progressing projects considering potential for improving efficiency, effectiveness and economy in areas of recruitment advertising, payroll services, Information Technology supply and maintenance, and training procurement. Our work on "Efficient Government" over the coming year will therefore be focused on these areas, while continuing to maintain links with other initiatives.

Health and Safety

28. Over the course of 2005/06, we have developed and issued to staff three "generic risk assessments" covering field operations, travel and office working. These generic assessments are based on those used by Scottish Natural Heritage, and are intended to provide a list of potential health and safety hazards which may be encountered by staff in undertaking their duties for the organisation. Staff are required to review these general lists and identify those which specifically apply to their role; identify action which is taken or required to manage those aspects; and agree a personal risk assessment with their line manager. Staff are also reminded that when undertaking any activities which are out of the ordinary for their role, they should undertake a specific consideration of any additional risks to their safety associated with these extraordinary activities.
29. We have given training to all staff over the course of the year on the use of Display Screen Equipment and manual handling and lifting. The Business Services Manager, Andy Rinning, has also attended a four day Institute of Safety and Health (IOSH)

training course on Managing Safely, as part of Corporate Services role in delivering Health and Safety policy and practice on behalf of the Board.

30. The Audit Committee raised the issue of Health and Safety while considering the Authority's Strategic Risk Register at its meeting in March. Members of the Committee agreed that the Head of Corporate Services should submit a report on the Board's Health and Safety responsibilities and action being taken to address those responsibilities by officers to the full Board. A full paper on this subject will therefore come to the Board in May or June

Technology and Environment

31. Following the Board's approval of the Authority's Organisational Greening Policy at its meeting in March, a key action for Corporate Services over the coming year will be to work with staff from all Groups to deliver agreed actions.
32. The internal auditors, Deloitte, presented two reports on the Authority's IT operations and system security to the Audit Committee in March. While one report concluded that our security arrangements in place are above average when compared with other similar IT platforms in the government sector, there are a number of recommendations for improvements to be made. This will form a priority for the Corporate Services Group in this aspect of our activities for the early part of 2006/07.

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