

CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

Title: REVISED CORPORATE PLAN

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Purpose

To seek the Board's approval to a revised corporate plan, following the confirmation from Scottish Executive of the CNPA's funding for the next 2 years.

Recommendations

- That the Board approve the revised corporate plan.
- That the Convener should send this to Scottish Ministers
- That the plan is published and put on the internet, but that the Head of Communications advises on how best to publicise and publish the document so that it is accessible.

Executive Summary

The Board approved the CNPA's first corporate plan in December 2003, which was submitted to Scottish Ministers as the Board's best estimate of the organisation's funding needs for its first three years. Following the Scottish Executive's confirmation of funding levels for 2004/05 and 2005/06, the corporate plan now needs some revision before finalising and publishing. It is proposed that the text of the draft corporate plan remains unaltered, and that a revised budget is approved as part of the plan.

REVISED CORPORATE PLAN

Introduction

1. The organisation's first Corporate Plan, covering the three financial years from 2004/05 to 2006/07, was approved by the Board and submitted in draft to the Scottish Executive in December last year. Scottish Ministers have recently confirmed the funding levels for both Scottish National Park Authorities (NPA's). This represented a considerable increase in the amount allocated to National Parks through the last spending review, and for the CNPA, represents significant growth in funding in years 2 and 3 of the Park's existence.
2. The draft corporate plan now needs to be revised to take account of the funding allocations for 2004/05 and 2005/06, which although generous, are slightly lower than had been proposed in the plan's budget.
3. The aspirations and aims of the CNPA, as expressed in the draft plan remain unchanged, and are not affected by the funding allocations. It is therefore proposed that the text of the Corporate Plan is not altered (apart from some minor corrections). The 6 themes for our activities over the next 3 years remain a good articulation of what we are aiming to achieve and what will guide our work. As the National Park Plan is developed over that same period that may affect some of the CNPA's aims and objectives and how these are expressed – we would therefore expect to amend the Corporate plan to reflect that developing thinking. Nevertheless, we cannot work in a vacuum in the meantime, and this corporate plan will explain to partners, stakeholders, Ministers and the general public the priorities which will drive our work.

Operational Plans

4. We have always acknowledged that we need to flesh out the Corporate Plan with more detail about how we intend to deliver the main themes set out. That will be done through operational plans, which are currently being prepared by each Head of Group. We hope to have these available (or a summary of them) for the Board in June/July. The operational plans are an important vehicle for focusing the thinking of staff and Members on exactly how the CNPA can add value, and what issues it will be able to play a useful role in (and by implication those in which we feel we do not have a useful role). These plans will form the detailed work plan for each Group, and from it will flow each staff member's job plan.
5. While the Board need not get sucked in to the fine detail of such plans, it will be important that you are kept sufficiently aware of, and content with, proposed work on developing and implementing policy. As set out in paper 3 (Delegated Authority), we intend to use operational plans, as well as strategy and policy papers, as means of achieving this.

Revisions to Current Corporate Plan

6. The draft corporate plan identified 6 main themes:

- To foster a Park for All;
 - To encourage the enjoyment, understanding and appreciation of the special qualities of the area;
 - To develop clear, cohesive strategies for the stewardship of the natural resources of the National Park;
 - To encourage and support balanced, thriving, stable communities in the Park;
 - To ensure an integrated approach to the Park's 4 statutory aims by all public bodies through the preparation and implementation of the National Park Plan for the Cairngorms;
 - To develop an enabling organisation that is trusted and respected.
7. Given that operational plans are being prepared which will show in more detail how the 6 main "themes" of the plan will be delivered, I propose that the budgets in the final Corporate Plan are simplified to show just the totals for each of these headings.
 8. Further, I propose that the budget shows as a distinct item the spending on "developing an organisation which is trusted and respected" – previously these items of spend (website, corporate ID, publications etc) had been shown under operational costs. Operational costs are sometimes dismissed as "bureaucracy" – they are of course necessary to keep an organisation functioning so it can deliver its aims, but since we are committed to taking positive steps to do more than simply "function", to ensure that the organisation is effective in engaging with its stakeholders, is accessible, and is trusted, then it is logical to show the expenditure that is directed towards that specific objective.
 9. Finally, for ease of accounting in the draft Corporate Plan, we showed existing commitments to projects (i.e. largely those inherited from the Cairngorms Partnership) under a single line. We have now removed that line, having allocated amounts to the 6 themes, better reflecting the reality that projects help to deliver each of those themes, rather than being free standing.
 10. The adjustments above have been combined with revisions to the total expenditure lines in the budget (largely maintaining proportionate relationships between the various themes), to generate the budget shown in Annex 1. Figures for 2006/07 are not shown, as we await the allocation from the Scottish Executive which will emerge from the current spending review. That will be reflected in the 3 year corporate plan prepared at the end of this calendar year.

Staffing Levels

11. The corporate plan proposes average staffing levels in the two years of the plan as shown (these refer to permanent staff, paid for direct from the CNPA budget. The CNPA also employs project staff who are funded through individual time limited project budgets, administered by the CNPA on behalf of the project funders.).
12. Although allocation of staff within budget is proposed (in paper 3 on delegated authority) as being delegated to the Chief Executive, this paper on the corporate plan is a suitable opportunity to flag up to the board the proposals for additional staffing in

the coming year. Having recently arrived in post, the Heads of Group have made some early assessment of the additional staff needed to deliver our objectives. In summary it is likely that our current staffing capacity will need to be expanded as follows:

- Corporate services: 3 posts covering administration, accounting support, Board support.
- Natural Resources Group: 1 post
- Visitor Svcs and Recreation: 3 posts focusing on access and interpretation
- Communications: 2 posts (dealing with website, PR, events, internal communications)
- Economic & Social Development: 2 posts
- Strategic Policy: 2 possible posts (Strategic policy, possible general GIS support)
- Planning and DC: monitor need for additional DC support

This amounts to a further 13 posts. This would be within our current budget.

Next Steps

13. If the Board is content, I propose that the Convener should submit the revised and final corporate plan to Scottish Ministers, and that the Head of Communications should advise on how best to publish and publicise the plan in ways that are effective but also efficient given that large expenditure on a glossy publication may not be appropriate at this stage. We would be placing the emphasis on finding ways of promoting a broader understanding of what the CNPA is and what it is trying to do, and reaching people who would not generally read a corporate plan. There may be scope for a leaflet combining our annual report with our corporate plan. We will in any event put the corporate plan in full (and annual report in due course) on the CNPA website.

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2 YEAR BUDGET FOR 2004/05 TO 2005/06

BUDGET HEAD	2004-05	2005-06
OPERATIONAL EXPENDITURE		
Staff numbers	40	50
Staff Salaries	1,416,503	1,850,830
Other Staff Costs	151,000	169,500
Board Costs	273,712	278,670
Accommodation	146,500	146,500
Office Services	70,000	71,000
Support Services	75,000	75,000
Sub total	2,132,715	2,591,500
 Depreciation	 72,000	 75,000
Cost of Capital	13,500	12,500
TOTAL OVERHEADS	2,218,215	2,679,000
 PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE		
Park for All	313,700	600,000
Understanding & Appreciation	83,500	124,000
Stewardship of Natural resources	226,300	260,000
Balanced & Thriving Communities	351,000	380,000
Integration/NP Plan	167,300	87,000
Developing a trusted respected organisation	190,000	170,000
 TOTAL PROGRAMME	 1,331,800	 1,621,000
 TOTAL BUDGET	 3,550,015	 4,300,000