

## CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

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### FOR INFORMATION

**Title:** OPERATIONAL PLAN 2005/06 QUARTER 2 - UPDATE

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### **Purpose**

To present a review of progress on the 2005/06 Operational Plan.

### **Recommendation**

The Board is requested to note the progress made to date on 2005/06 Operational Plan actions, and in particular:

- Progress on 17 of 20 goals remains broadly in line with intentions set out in the Operational Plan.
- The remaining 3 goals have each been identified as affected by some changes to the timetable and/or intended delivery plans, which pose some risk to delivery of intended outcomes. Achievement of outcomes on all three of these goals remains targeted for 2005/06.

### **Executive Summary**

The Operational Plan sets out a range of actions, and milestones associated with these actions, which contribute over the course of 2005/06 to the ultimate delivery of the 20 Corporate Plan goals over the next few years. The Management Team's review of the 2005/06 Operational Plan has sought to identify whether planned activities remain broadly on target in terms of timetable and delivery of intended outcomes, or whether, for any reason, there is any risk of actions not being delivered within target timescales.

The main focus has been on actions where milestones were planned to be achieved by the end of the second quarter of 2005/06, i.e. by 30 September. Additionally, the opportunity has also been taken to look forward and highlight any issues relating to delivery of outcomes intended in the second half of the year.

The review indicates that progress on 17 of 20 goals is broadly in line with intentions set out in the Operational Plan. Although some changes to the timetable and/or intended delivery plans have been identified within the remaining 3 goals, intended outcomes in these areas for 2005/06 are expected to be delivered prior to the end of the year.

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## OPERATIONAL PLAN 2005/06 QUARTER 2 - UPDATE

### Background

1. The Operational Plan for 2005/06 was presented to the Board for information at its meeting in April. This plan stems from the Corporate Plan for 2005/06 to 2007/08, approved by the Board in February.
2. The Corporate Plan sets out 20 goals identifying the outcomes to which the Authority will direct its resources over the three years to 2008. The goals will not all be completed over the course of the current three year corporate planning period: progress will be made on all goals over this time and further direction will be given by the National Park Plan. Of the 20 goals, 7 have been identified as taking priority given that they are statutory duties and/or in most cases will provide the strategic framework which will guide activities within the Park for the next 10 years or so.
3. The Operational Plan sets out a range of actions, and milestones associated with these actions, which contribute over the course of 2005/06 to the ultimate delivery of the 20 Corporate Plan goals over the next few years.
4. The Management Team has now undertaken a second review of the operational plan for 2005/06, as we come towards the end of the first half of the year. This review has sought to identify whether planned activities remain broadly on target in terms of timetable and delivery of intended outcomes, or whether, for any reason, there is any risk of actions not being delivered within target timescales.
5. The results of the first review were reported to the Board at its meeting on 1 July, and this paper follows broadly the same format.

### 2005/06 Operational Plan Review Process

6. In reviewing the status of delivery of operational plan actions, the Management Team have used a three way system of categorisation:
  - a) Green: action being delivered broadly in line with timetable and intended milestones/outcomes envisaged in operational plan.
  - b) Amber: there are some changes to the timetable and/or intended delivery plans which pose some risk to delivery of intended outcomes.
  - c) Red: changes to timetable and/or delivery plans pose a significant risk to delivery of intended outcomes.
7. At this stage, the main focus has been on actions where milestones were planned to be achieved by the end of the second quarter of 2005/06, i.e. by 30 September. Additionally, the opportunity has also been taken to look forward and highlight, at this half-year point, any issues relating to delivery of outcomes intended in the latter part of the year.
8. Following from the review of the status of actions, the status of the goals to which the actions contribute have also been categorised as green, amber or red. This is intended

to provide some early indication of progress being made on three-year Corporate Plan goals through delivery of 2005/06 operational plans.

9. Assessing the delivery status of goals also attempts to take some account of the fact that not all actions will make an equal contribution to the achievement of goals. Rather, some actions will be of lower priority, and it may be appropriate as the year progresses to halt delivery of the outcomes intended by those actions in order to prioritise others and ensure overall contribution to delivery of goals is maximised.

## **Results of Review Process**

10. The Appendix to this paper sets out the Operational Plan, with actions colour coded according to the above broad guidelines, together with a brief commentary on progress to date. As indicated, focus has been concentrated on actions with milestones due for achievement in the first and second quarters of the year. Some actions, with milestones/outcomes not due until the second half of the year, may not have any indication of progress at this stage.
11. Only 3 actions within the 2005/06 operational plan are now classed as red, and therefore at significant risk of the intended activity and associated outcomes not being delivered in the year. These are spread across 3 different goals and therefore do not pose a significant risk to the achievement of any Corporate Plan goals.
12. As at the end of the first quarter, three of the twenty goals are classified as amber as a result of a balance of actions within those goals showing some changes to the timetable and/or intended delivery plans which pose some risk to delivery of intended outcomes. Those three goals are considered below.
13. **Increased access to all forms of housing tenure for park residents or people who are meeting economic or social needs within the Park (Priority 1).** While the Heriot-Watt housing study commissioned by the Authority's officers has been completed, this goal is set at amber as a result of delays in a number of pieces of work being undertaken by a number of external partner organisations. Overall, delivery of outcomes from these actions is still expected within the year and the Authority's officers continue to work with partners to achieve this.
14. **Delivery of an effective and efficient development control service, seamlessly blending planning policy and Park aims (Priority 1).** At present the operational plan sets out only a single action within this goal, focusing on achieving a reduction in application backlogs by October. The plan review now notes that, since the appointment of a third development control officer, the backlog is steadily reducing but likely to take longer to clear than had been estimated. January or February is now thought a more realistic deadline for clearing the backlog, than October as had been originally planned.
15. **Good understanding and appreciation of the Cairngorms National Park by young people, and appreciation of its importance (Priority 2).** In this instance, two of the three actions contributing to this goal are classed as amber as a result of some delay in delivery from a lack of in-house staff resource and pending the appointment of the

Education and Inclusion Manager to progress these actions. This post has now been appointed with the new member of staff to join the organisation in mid October.

16. Of the three goals classed as amber, two are priority 1 areas. Overall, however, all three goals which have been flagged as amber at the end of the second quarter are still expected to be delivered prior to the end of the year.
17. All 17 other goals are, therefore, categorised as green and progressing broadly in line with the operational plan's intentions.
18. This position, half way into the year, replicates that reported to the Board in July for performance over the first quarter of the year. While the detail of the Operational Plan review appended indicates that there has been some change of status on a number of individual actions planned for the year, overall achievements in 2005/06, contributing toward delivery of goals agreed in the Corporate Plan remains broadly in line with intentions.

### **Delivering Sustainability, A Park for All and Economy, Efficiency and Effectiveness**

19. Delivery of the three cross-cutting themes agreed within the Corporate Plan remain core elements against which Operational Plan activities are proofed as they are taken forward.

### **Implications**

#### ***Financial Implications***

20. A second financial review of operational plan delivery and associated resource commitments is being undertaken by the Head of Corporate Services with members of the Management Team in late September and early August.
21. The results of the first review of the financial position towards the end of the first quarter were reported to the Management Team in July and to the Board's Finance Committee in September. The review indicated that original planned expenditure of £1.52m on operational plan elements had increased to £1.76m. This had been facilitated by Management Team decisions to defer some staff recruitment, allowing a transfer of budget of around £0.24m from core expenditure to finance activities set out in the operational plan for 2005/06.
22. Management of budget allocations within the operational plan has also allowed additional expenditure required to progress 22 activities to be financed in part from resources reclaimed from 34 areas of activity where some or all of the original approved budget is no longer required to delivery planned outcomes. The Management Team seeks to maximise the use of the Authority's resource allocation for 2005/06 by ongoing, proactive management of budget allocations in this way throughout the year.
23. Resources have been redirected to support key priorities within the operational plan, for example the appointment of a Park Plan Assistant to support the development of the National Park Plan.

### *Presentational Implications*

24. Overall, this second quarterly review of the 2005/06 Operational Plan continues to present generally successful work and resource investment in delivering operational and, ultimately, corporate plan objectives. Only 3 of 20 goals are flagged as being at some risk as to delivery of outcomes intended for 2005/06, and current expectations are for current situations in all three areas to be corrected before the end of the year.
25. Therefore, the Authority is able to highlight a successful first six months of delivery of its Corporate Plan objectives, often involving working with and through others, maximising the effect of its relatively small limited resources by acting as a catalyst, a co-ordinator, and enabler.

### *Implications for Stakeholders*

26. In working with and through others in meeting the Authority's objectives to date, other stakeholders will also benefit from that process of co-ordination and joined-up activity. There is, therefore, some confidence that in delivering our operational plan for the year, the Authority will also be contributing to the wider delivery objectives for a range of stakeholders with an interest in the Cairngorms National Park area.

### **Next Steps**

27. A third review of the status of the 2005/06 Operational Plan delivery will be presented to the Board at its meeting in January 2006. In the meantime, the Management Team will continue to review of the robustness of financial allocations made to progress operational plan actions and consider any new investment plans proposed. Financial reviews will be undertaken in conjunction with the Board's Finance Committee as appropriate. To this end, the Finance Committee has agreed to reschedule its meetings to allow its views on financial performance to be better integrated within these reports on broader operational plan delivery.
28. Having highlighted areas where delivery is at some risk, officers will also be seeking to bring those actions back on track where possible while continuing progress on the other, vast majority of areas, which are currently running to plan.
29. Work also remains to be undertaken to fully embed the Authority's risk management processes within these operational plan reviews.

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