

CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

FOR INFORMATION

Title: Corporate Plan Report: Theme 4

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Purpose

To inform the Board of our work to date to achieve the fourth 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 fourth theme of the Corporate Plan for 2005-08.

Executive Summary

The fourth theme of the Corporate Plan for 2005-08 states:

“To ensure our commitment to future generations we will look beyond the horizon and put in place plans to guide and co-ordinate the long-term integrated management of the Park”

The CNPA’s main work to date on this theme has concentrated on developing the Park Plan and Local Plan, and associated interim planning policy. These will continue to be the focus of our work over the next 18 months.

During that time, we will also continue to develop more detailed plans to help deliver the Park Plan. Some of these are already well advanced, for example the Sustainable Tourism and Outdoor Access Strategies, whilst other are scheduled to begin later in the three-year timeframe of this Corporate Plan.

Finally, through the State of the Park Report we are beginning to develop a picture of gaps in our knowledge about the Park and interactions between different aspects. We have begun to work with a number of our partners to fill these gaps, including the Macaulay Institute, and to consider how all the existing knowledge about the Park can be made more easily available to a wide audience.

Corporate Plan Report: Theme 4

Background

1. This is the second monthly report on the five strategic themes within the CNPA's Corporate Plan for 2005-08. This paper concerns the fourth theme:

“To ensure our commitment to future generations we will look beyond the horizon and put in place plans to guide and co-ordinate the long-term integrated management of the Park”
2. This theme is concerned with providing strategic guidance focused on the area of the National Park. This guidance should help to integrate the four aims of the Park and look beyond the immediate, providing a policy framework in which all those involved in the management of the Park, including ourselves, can then develop more detailed activity.
3. This is an essential theme for the CNPA because it goes to the heart of our general purpose to ensure that the 4 aims of the Park are collectively delivered in a co-ordinated way; through setting out clear and long-term plans, we enable others to deliver. This helps us to provide focus for others and bring their actions more into line with one another; and in pulling these plans together, we provide leadership that is centred on the needs of the National Park.
4. Most of our forward planning efforts to date have focused on the Park Plan and Local Plan. Our role in preparing both is set out in statute.

National Park Plan

5. The Board is familiar with the background and progress on the Park Plan through Board papers in September 2003, July 2004, and January 2005. The most recent progress report is contained in Paper 2 of this meeting.
6. Overall, the Park Plan is progressing according to the schedule agreed by the Board in July 2004. The main challenge here is to ensure that the Park Plan effectively tackles the more complicated issues for the future management of the Park and is not simply the bringing together of existing plans. It must add value and bring a clear sense of purpose and direction to the Park.

Local Plan

7. Work is progressing well on the first draft of the Local Plan. Such is the scale of the task that it is virtually the sole focus of detailed planning policy activity at present.
8. Following the successful pre-drafting consultation with communities in 2004 a report of the results will be brought to the Planning Committee in April 2005. This huge body of information is helping to shape policy formulation.

9. The Local Plan is being drafted with a view to reflecting the intended shape of the National Park Plan so that it should be relatively straightforward to read the two documents side by side.
10. Preparation of maps and statements for each of the community areas is well underway. Drafting of policies is progressing and we await the first feedback from the Heriot Watt work to help us to refine housing policy. It has been agreed that there will be an iterative process with members of the Local Plan Working Group to ensure that a range of views feed into the drafting process. There will also be a meeting with the Housing Strategy Implementation Group in April to discuss the Heriot Watt work.
11. Work is continuing on the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Sustainability Appraisal (SA) process as agreed by the Board in February 2005. This is a pre-requisite for both the Local and Park Plans.
12. It is still intended that the first draft of the Local Plan should be brought to the Planning Committee in May.

Future Planning Policy Activity

13. The draft Local Plan will refer to various topics and issues that will be addressed in more detail by Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG). It is intended that work will commence on these following the Local Plan consultation this summer, and in greater depth following the finalised Plan going on deposit in Spring 2006.
14. SPG will be prepared setting some aspirational but not prescriptive standards for design, sustainability and biodiversity in developments within the Park. This would cover individual developments.
15. At a community level we would like to prepare Countryside Design Summaries (CDS). This will involve working closely with communities to identify traditions, form, styles, materials, features etc that are distinctive to an area and use these CDS as the basis for informing the location and character of future development.

Other Plans

16. The CNPA has begun work on a number of other plans that will help to flesh out in more detail the strategic direction provided by the Park Plan. Some of these are well underway, including the Sustainable Tourism and Outdoor Access Strategies, while others are scheduled to begin later in the three-year timeframe of this Corporate Plan.

Knowledge Base

17. Forward planning relies on a good understanding of the facts. To that end, we have spent considerable time drawing together existing information about the Park, and seeking to understand better how the different aspects and activities in the Park interact. This will continue to be an important aspect of our work and we have begun to work with a number of our partners to fill these gaps, including the Macaulay Institute.

18. Equally important is making the knowledge accessible and understandable to as wide an audience as possible on the basis that better management will be assisted through better information and understanding. We are tackling this in the first instance through pulling together our knowledge through the State of the Park Report and considering innovative ways of disseminating this. For the medium term, we are considering some form of e-library, a facility that gathers together in one place all information about the Park.

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