

## CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

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### FOR INFORMATION

**Title:** OPERATIONAL PLAN 2005/06

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#### **Purpose**

To inform the Board of the coming year's operational plan, delivering the goals agreed in the 2005/08 Corporate Plan.

#### **Recommendations**

- That the Board take note.

#### **Executive Summary**

The operational plan for 2005/06 is presented, showing the actions which will be taken forward to deliver the 20 goals identified in the corporate plan for 2005-08. Of major importance will be the production of the draft Local Plan and National Park Plans, and the launch of a joint consultation on both towards the end of the reporting period.

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## OPERATIONAL PLAN 2005/06

### Background

1. The Board recently approved the Corporate Plan for 2005-2008, setting the strategic direction for the CNPA for the next 3 years. The Plan set out 5 strategic themes, and 20 goals for delivering these. The key message underpinning the corporate plan is that there are many issues to deal with in the Park, as set out in the 20 goals; we cannot deal with them all immediately, and the corporate plan recognises that there will be some prioritisation over the 3 year period of the plan, with the focus in the early years being on 7 priority goals (including the production of the Local Plan and National Park plan).
2. This operational plan sets out the actions to be undertaken in the first year of the corporate plan. It is both a planning and a monitoring document which:
  - a) Shows goals broken down into actions, and then into tasks for completion in a specified quarter of the year. This detailed list of tasks forms the basis of:
    - a work plan for managing and monitoring progress with planned actions and tasks.
    - individual job plans for staff.
  - b) Provides for budgets to be allocated and managed, on a bottom-up basis;
  - c) Provides for an assessment of staff needs through allocation of staff time input to the various tasks;
  - d) Provides a structure for risk management: alongside goals, actions and tasks the related risks are highlighted which are subject to active management and monitoring.
3. The complete operational plan is therefore a relatively complex and detailed document, setting out actions, budgets, staff resource allocation, risk management priorities. The complete plan is too large to present here, but a version showing all the goals, actions and tasks is attached.

### Issues

#### Monitoring

4. There are several elements to monitoring progress:
  - a) Completion of actions: there will be a quarterly report to the Board on progress with the actions and tasks set out in the operational plan.
  - b) Delivery of outcomes/goals: twice a year, there will be a report to the Board on each corporate plan theme. This will provide an opportunity to take a more strategic view of how successfully the corporate plan themes and goals are being achieved (which may depend on more than simply completing specific tasks).
  - c) Expenditure: The Finance Committee receives quarterly monitoring reports on expenditure/income (and these are copied to the whole board for information).

- d) Risk Management: The approach to this has been overseen by the Audit Committee (see below), and the Board will receive a report once a year.

### **Mechanisms for Delivery/ Integrated Grant Scheme**

5. The operational plan strikes a balance between actions to deliver relatively long term strategic planning and on the other hand, actions which deliver relatively quick outcomes. A range of mechanisms are implicit in the operational plan for delivery of these:
- a) Use of core staff;
  - b) The use of consultancies/ contracts where the CNPA does not possess the necessary capacity, or specialist knowledge to deal with a piece of work by the given deadline;
  - c) Joint working with other organisations/stakeholders;
  - d) Giving grant to enable a third party to achieve/help to achieve a particular outcome.
6. On the last of these, we propose putting in place an integrated grant scheme, allowing us to administer a portfolio of grants (which may alter from year to year in its priorities). It will regularise procedures, and allow us to take more strategic decisions on what categories and types of grant we will award. Under the scheme we propose to promote different themes through grant “strands” which will in effect be presented as separate focused areas of support. These strands will be determined against delivery of the Corporate Plan/operational plan goals.
7. For example, the goal of “residents, businesses organisations and visitors contribute to protection of wildlife etc”, and the goal of “Improved community capacity to deliver the 4 aims of the Park” might well be partially delivered by offering grants through strands within the integrated grant scheme.
8. The aim of the scheme will be to:
- a) Be customer friendly;
  - b) Be simple to administer;
  - c) Enable a greater focus, by freeing up programme staff from the job of administration, and enabling them to focus their time on designing the strand objectives;
  - d) Where possible, have activities developed and organised by communities (of locale and of interest), allowing them to engage and contribute to delivering the Corporate Plan goals;
  - e) To develop local capacity to plan, manage and deliver programme activities;
  - f) Ensure integration that will contribute to a greater emphasis on joined up working internally and externally.

### **Risk Management**

9. The Audit Committee recently approved the risk register and risk management strategy for the organisation. Of the 77 strategic risks identified, 19 were considered to fall within the definition of risks requiring proactive management and action planning,

while a further 36 required ongoing monitoring. As part of the objective of embedding risk management processes within the organisation, the operational plan will include those risks subject to active management and monitoring alongside the goals and actions which may be affected by that risk. Reporting on the operational plan will therefore encompass a report on risk management. The audit committee will receive reports during the year on the organisation's risk management; the Board will also wish to receive a report once a year.

## Policy Context

10. The Corporate Plan for 2005/08 proposed that there should, in addition to the 5 strategic themes, be 3 cross cutting themes which that should run as threads through all the work undertaken by the CNPA, and against which all projects and plans would be proofed.
11. **Delivering Sustainability**  
This year's operational plan provides for a sustainability appraisal methodology to be developed and carried out on the draft Local Plan; development of green office policy and procedures; implementation of the action plan arising from the Sustainable Tourism Strategy for the Park (for which the European Charter will hopefully be awarded during the year); production of the state of the Park report and launch of the consultation on the draft National Park Plan and Local Plan.
12. **Delivering a Park for All**  
A wide range of actions will help to deliver this aim: supporting the Local Access Forum; production of an outdoor access strategy; production of a 3 year plan for implementing a core path plan; delivering with SNH a programme for publicising the Scottish Outdoor Access Code; implement placement of permanent entry point markers; start pilot project to improve orientation/interpretation in TICs; a park wide transport map and integrated timetable; a youth strategy and action plan.
13. **Delivering Efficiency, Effectiveness and Economy**  
A wide range of actions will contribute to this theme, including: implementation of a 2 year project to build the organisation; implementation of associated training programme across the organisation; embedding of risk management strategy; implementation of Efficient Government initiative within the organisation; development of staff Code of Conduct; establishment of integrated grant scheme.

## Implications

14. The financial, presentational and stakeholder implications are set out below, in keeping with the new format for all Board papers:
15. **Financial Implications**  
The allocation of resources (in terms of overhead costs (staff costs) and variable programme costs) to goals has already been approved by the Board. The operational plan sets out in more detail how those amounts will be spent through delivering specific actions and tasks. During the year authorisation of individual items of

expenditure will be in accordance with the agreed scheme of financial delegation (which engages the Management team, Finance Committee or Board at specified thresholds). Inevitably there may be some changes to the allocations set out in the operational plan, and these will be dealt with in accordance with the scheme of delegation.

16. **Presentational Implications**

The vision and strategic objectives presented with this paper are the first major public milestone in developing the Park Plan. Consistent with our desire to be open and transparent in our process, this paper is an opportunity to keep people informed about the work of the CNPA.

17. **Implications for Stakeholders**

Much of the work in the operational plan is dependent on partners; some of the major projects are jointly funded by a range of other stakeholders, while much of the policy and strategy development is done hand in hand with others – the National Park Plan and Local Plan being the most obvious examples. This operational plan will be shared with partners.

## CONCLUSIONS

18. This operational plan for the second year of the CNPA's operation covers long term strategic planning work as well as more immediate delivery of projects and actions. The Key elements of the coming year will be (see over page):

## OPERATIONAL PLAN 2005/06 - KEY OUTPUTS

GOAL	ACTION/OUTPUT BY END OF YEAR
Duties as outdoor access authority delivered	Cairngorms Local Outdoor Access Forum operational; secretariat support from CNPA; Outdoor access conference early 2006; Outdoor access strategy in place (including basis for Core Path Plan)
National Park Plan	Draft NP Plan prepared; Launch consultation on draft NPPlan and Lplan; State of the Park report published;
Local Plan	Report published on 2004 consultation; Draft Local Plan prepared; Consultation on LP and NPPlan;
Decision making process	Sustainability appraisal (on LP and NPP) implemented;
Professional Staffing complement	Staff consultative forum; Staff Code of conduct; 2 year project rolled out to “build the organisation” including integrated; training programme for whole organisation; Risk management embedded;
Planning	Backlog substantially cleared by Oct/Nov; Significant improvement in stats by end of year;
Outdoor Access infrastructure	Support to new projects; New mechanisms for developing and maintaining path networks; First permanent entry point markers in place on roads;
Opportunities to experience Park	Visitor information website operating; Easy read guide to visitor survey and sustainable tourism strategy; John Muir Trust project continuation;
Public benefits from Land Management	Public benefits identified and proposals for integrated approach; Agri waste project developed; Moorland project continuation; Land Based Business Training continuation;
Protection of natural resources	Biological records centre established; Small grants scheme to engage communities; Sustainable resource strategy commissioned; LBAP project continuation;
Tourism	European Charter for Sustainable Tourism anticipated; Cairngorms brand rolled out;
Housing	Policies on affordable housing set out in Local Plan;
Community Capacity	Continuation of LEADER + project; Continued support to ACCC; Develop Community investment programme;
Awareness	3 editions Parklife and range of other publications; Presence at summer shows;
Accessibility	Park wide transport map and integrated timetable;
Youth	Youth strategy and action plan;

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