

Cairngorms Tourism Emergency Response Group

8th June 2020

MEETING NOTE

Present: Matt Smith, Grant Moir, Pete Crane, Mark Tate, Chris Taylor, Janet Hunter, Heather Trench, Rhona Taylor, Alistair Reid, Laurie Piper, Murray Ferguson, Colin Simpson.
Apologies: Colin Knight, Geva Blackett.

1. Welcome and introductions

Janet welcomed Matt Smith from Wild Scotland.

2. RESPOND:

Wild Scotland update

Matt gave an update on a meeting last week with key partners to discuss priorities for the wildlife sector. There is a need to bring guidance together from lots of different organisations and Wild Scotland will just signpost to relevant guidelines when they are produced. There were discussions about risk assessments and insurance liability, and agreement of the social distance requirements of 2m / 1.5m / 1m is crucial for the sector. Some members are working with OS on a map of what activities can take place and where, as restrictions ease.

Grant gave an update on the STERG meeting last Friday about sectoral guidance. He had fed in comments from DMOs. The guidance is to be available by 18th June for the next lockdown review.

Key issues from DMOs

CBP have finished initial 'Preparing to Open' workshops and the framework for communications is almost ready to sign-off after final community engagement meetings this week. This approach is likely to be a case study with VisitScotland, who may also pick up on the key messages. Mark has been interviewed about re-opening by BBC Scotland for The 9 tonight, along with Landmark adventure park.

In **Moray Speyside** there remain concerns that large businesses are still falling through gaps in support. Recovery groups meetings are planned with the local Chamber of Commerce, and Laurie is encouraging Moray council to engage with communities on re-opening. Moray Council will be sending bid levy invoices in early July.

The **VisitAberdeenshire** focus is looking internally to get the team up and running again to support businesses and plan future marketing activity. The consumer survey will close in the next couple of days and findings will be shared.

VisitScotland Overview

VS are working with the other UK National Tourist boards on a new consumer sentiment survey.

They have recently run webinars about their marketing plan and insights research, and will be organising others on marketing tips for business, and events. They are aware that there lots of other webinars are also happening, but keen for suggestions for future topics later in the programme. (Chris F suggested a webinar on the state of the travel trade industry in the current circumstances) They are working on tones, themes and messages for future

marketing phases and will run those past partners in future weeks. The outcome of applications for destination & sector group funding have now been decided.

A 'Good to Go' scheme paper will go to VisitScotland board to agree if Scotland wants to take part in this UK-level approach, which is an online checklist platform that businesses use to self-certify. The scheme is due to be launched on 15th June at UK level, so a decision should be taken before then if Scotland is to be involved, but sectoral guidance will not be available until the 18th which may be an issue.

Murray and Janet gave an update on the European perspective on Covid-19 recovery from a Europarc webinar. Murray gave a presentation on our work for which there was a lot of interest and support. All destinations are dealing with the same issues, but at a different level. There is a feeling that there is not enough nature for people at the moment and we need to provide more green space and active travel close to home.

Business Support update

Highland Council have still been processing grants but numbers are tailing off. 6400 grants totalling £61 million have been paid. A new scheme launched this morning for tenants / occupiers of buildings rather than rate-payers but numbers are not expected to be high, and the new B&B scheme launches next week.

Highland Council are looking into the re-opening of public toilets. Colin will find out more about the timescale and operational issues, and pass information back to CNPA, ideally for the visitor management meeting on Wednesday.

Aberdeenshire Council are also gearing up for the new B&B/self-catering scheme for those without a business bank account, with funding diverted from newly self-employed fund. They are also supporting businesses with advice for re-opening, including looking at pavement widening and road closures in areas.

HIE continue to work on communities fund (much already paid out to anchor organisations) and business funds. The Pivotal Enterprise resilience fund applications are taking longer to process than expected, but staff are trying to process as soon as possible. There will then be an appeals process.

Rhona also gave an update on Cairngorm Mountain, where 26 staff are furloughed, 13 working from home and 5 working on the mountain. They have stored winter kit and are now doing maintenance work. A re-opening date is dependant on business case, and the options appraisal will include options for when to re-open. They are working towards likely winter season opening. If the funicular is to be repaired they will want to move quickly so working with contractors on planning for the work if it gets the go-ahead. Masterplanners are working with CNPA and other partners on second stage consultation online probably in July, so the work is likely to conclude Aug-Sept.

3.RESET

Overview of consumer insights and other research - Heather

The latest research reports are available at:

[VS marketing intelligence 03/06/20](#)

<https://www.visitbritain.org/covid-19-consumer-sentiment-tracker>

Heather is pulling together a draft brief to compare visitor survey 2019/20 with emerging data around visitor sentiments in the wake of the Covid-19 Lockdown. There are two elements to the work: 1) What are our usual visitors thinking? The CBP survey gives us a really good sense of that; 2) What new visitor audiences are we more likely to see? Heather has requested data from VisitScotland's new tracker and Mark will liaise with 56 Degrees over data from their Scottish Tourism Index. It may also be possible to include SNH survey data if it is available in time.

The draft visitor survey report has arrived and will be discussed at a meeting next Wednesday 17th June. Draft 2019 STEAM data has also just arrived, but has not yet been signed off.

4. RESTART

Visitor Management Planning and Issues

Last weekend was much quieter than the previous, due largely to the poor weather. This weekend looks to be better weather and plans for visitor management will be discussed at a meeting on Wednesday morning. CNPA will be interviewing tomorrow for seasonal rangers. There had been a small amount of feedback on local social media that access messages were too negative. Scottish Government are looking at countryside capacity for phase 2, and CNPA has fed back information about key sites and likely visitor numbers.

Community Engagement Meetings

Community meetings to discuss the communications framework and re-opening plans have gone fairly well so far, and there has been an appreciation of the work done to date. The concerns raised are generally the same as we've been addressing. Two of the meetings have taken place, with another two to go.

Communications work

After the final community meetings, the Communications Framework will be agreed, with the hashtag #cairngormstogether. CBP are organising webinars with community business and tourism associations throughout the park to distribute it more widely. It will also be available for Thursday's economic steering group meeting which will include chairs of local business associations.

5. RECOVER

The CNPA Green Recovery Plan is now in the public domain and will be discussed by CNPA board on Friday.

6. Any Other Updates

There is a Badenoch Great Place Project board meeting this afternoon.

7. Date of next meeting.

Monday 15th June. It was noted that meetings were often taking longer than an hour, and agreed that updates should focus on any new or important details, with other information circulated in writing where necessary.

RESPOND (March 2020 – May 2020) Immediate provision of information and support to businesses

RESET (June 2020 – September 2020) Support, planning and preparation for restart
RESTART (June 2020 – February 2021) Support and guidance for safe re-opening
RECOVER (September 2020 – December 2022) Guidance and support for operating in a new post COVID-19 environment

Remit of Group: The group has been set up to provide consistent and comprehensive analysis of the implications of Covid-19 for tourism, to coordinate communications with the tourism industry, ensure close working between key agencies and the private sector, to gather, share, facilitate, interpret and disseminate information and agree relevant actions and delivery plans.

Membership: The Group consists of representatives from Cairngorms Business Partnership, VisitAberdeenshire, MoraySpeyside, VisitScotland, Aberdeenshire Council, The Highland Council, Highlands and Islands Enterprise and CNPA (Chair).