
CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

FOR DECISION

Title: Cultural Heritage – taking forward CNPA’s approach

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Purpose

This paper highlights the current activity of the Community Heritage Officer and project as it nears completion. It seeks agreement to extend key parts of this role as well as for development of two major projects, one in Aviemore and Glenmore and the other linking communities across the mountain core in a Heritage Lottery Fund bid. Approval in principle is sought at this stage for all three elements subject to agreement on financial contributions by the Finance Committee.

Recommendations

That the board approved in principle:

- a) An extension to the current Community Heritage Project post on a two day a week basis until the end of March 2013
- b) The preparation of a Landscape Partnership stage 1 and, if successful, stage 2 bid for a major cultural and natural heritage project
- c) The collaboration with RCAHMS on a pilot project within the Aviemore/Glenmore area for community based cultural heritage recording

Executive Summary

The community Heritage project has continued the direct support to communities of the last 18 months and has also begun to address more strategic issues. This has included contributing to the National Park Plan and closer working with Scottish Government bodies. This latter work has raised the prospect of a new project aimed at training communities in the Aviemore and Glenmore area, including the new residents of An Camas Mor, in recording the historic environment around them. In addition the CHO has carried out initial work on scoping a major bid to the HLF Landscape Partnership fund. This would be for a series of connected projects aimed at landscape improvements through natural and cultural heritage enhancements. These projects would have a high input from local communities. The value of the project could be up to £2 million. Finally the need to address the ongoing work of the park within cultural heritage is addressed by an extension to the CHO post for a further 18 months, during which time discussions with other potential delivery partners will continue.

CULTURAL HERITAGE – TAKING FORWARD CNPA’S APPROACH – FOR DECISION

Background

Community Heritage Project

1. The Community Heritage Project is a two year initiative, supported by funding from LEADER until August 2011, with the objectives:
 - a) To support communities to develop and implement projects to understand, conserve, promote and enjoy their local cultural heritage;
 - b) To co-ordinate the work of communities, NGO’s and public bodies for the benefit of cultural heritage within the National Park.
2. At the outset it was agreed that the Community Heritage Officer (CHO) should concentrate on developing projects within three key themes for the Park – land use, routes, languages. Four goals were set to be achieved over the two year period:
 - a) Support and develop up to six community projects within the project themes;
 - b) Compile a web site promoting cultural heritage within the Park;
 - c) Organise a community cultural heritage conference;
 - d) Compile an initial community heritage audit for the Park.
3. Following discussion last October the board agreed that the CHO would also undertake a more strategic role within the authority. To this end the CHO has engaged with the development of the National Park Plan and wider community engagement process. She has also met with a number of national bodies towards developing wider projects.
4. A full report on this project will be brought to the board after its completion in August this year. However two significant potential projects have emerged from the strategic activity.

HLF Landscape Partnership Bid

5. The Heritage Lottery Fund has a stream of funding under the Landscape Partnership programme. The CNPA drafted an initial bid to this scheme back in 2008. However it did not progress to submission because the conditions of the fund at the time did not fit in with our own objectives.
6. However there is now stronger convergence and there is considerable scope for a successful bid. The maximum project size is for £2 million of which the HLF will contribute up to 75%. For projects below £1 million the contributing rate is higher. The purpose of any project must be to create landscape improvements of an area not exceeding 200 sq km. The projects must equally combine cultural and natural heritage. They must also focus on community participation, learning and understanding about the landscape, skills development within the community and social and economic benefits. This set of objectives clearly parallels the aims of the park.

7. The bidding process is in two stages. The first, to be submitted in February 2012 is to be well scoped out with the component projects clearly identified along with a clear statement on how they will collectively achieve the HLF objectives. The second stage, submitted a year later, is a fully detailed and costed breakdown of the project activity. If successful, the project would be likely to last for five years from summer 2013. Funding for the first stage must be financed from the applicant. We have approval in principle from LEADER to part fund (45%) the first stage bid from August 2011 until approval is potentially granted in July 2012. Funding for the second stage bid is available directly from the HLF.
8. Currently the initial scoping has been undertaken by the CHO with assistance from other staff members. A potential submission could be based on connecting communities across the mountain core of the Park. Braemar and Kingussie/Kincraig have been connected via Glen Feshie and Glen Geldie for centuries as a natural pass. This goes back to pre history but includes use as a drove road in the 16-18th centuries and of course in more recent times as a popular recreational route. It also has great potential for habitat connectivity for native woodland and other biodiversity. For example it has long been an ambition to support the population of great crested tits on Deeside and this could potentially be a project objective. The key land owners along this route have indicated they are supportive and wish to explore the potential of this bid.
9. The project could be a significant delivery vehicle for the strategic objectives within the new National Park Plan. The focus on linking cultural and natural heritage, delivering enhancement on the ground as well as the emphasis on community benefits fits well within the developing plan. This project could in itself be a key programme element.
10. To progress this work, we estimate that a part time post, at two days per week, could manage, organise and prepare the staged bids for the project. This will involve considerable consultation with the relevant communities and potential project partners. LEADER has approved a 45% funding for such a post from August 2011 until July 2012. Provision has been made within the conserving and enhancing programme within the operational plan for funding from August 2011 to the end of the current financial year by initiating the work once the current phase of the community heritage project is completed.

Recommendation

11. **That the board approves in principle the development of the HLF stage 1 and if successful stage 2 bid as outlined above. A fully costed project breakdown will be taken to financial committee for final approval.**

Aviemore and Glenmore cultural heritage project

12. The second key project to arise from the strategic work of the CHO is collaboration with the Royal Commission on Ancient and Historic Monuments Scotland (RCAHMS). They ran a successful national project called Scotland's Rural Past. This focused upon working with local communities and groups on archaeological

recording. It ran until 2011 and reached dozens of groups around the country, more than twice the original number planned for. RCAHMS is keen to pilot a more locally based approach with a wider cultural heritage remit using some of the good practice developed in the Cairngorms National Park. There are several benefits of this approach:

- a) Recording archaeological and historical artefacts in the landscape
 - b) Gathering archival and oral evidence of the historic landscape
 - c) Providing quality training to local groups, providing skills that are readily transferable
 - d) Developing self confidence to participants through skills development
 - e) Providing a greater understanding of the history of local landscapes
 - f) The potential to bring a wide range of participants together
13. With the forthcoming development of the new community at An Camas Mor there could be significant benefits from active participation of the new residents together with the more established communities of Coylumbridge and Aviemore. The development of understanding of their shared landscape could be a vehicle for strengthening communication between communities.
14. The purpose of the project will be to establish a core group of participants from the area and develop the key skills required:
- a) Field skills such as landscape assessment and interpretation
 - b) Surveying and excavating sites
 - c) Recording finds
 - d) Presentation skills for demonstration events
 - e) Group organising
 - f) Funding bid development
 - g) Archive investigation – including local and national archives as well as internet resources
 - h) Oral history recording
15. Many of these skills can be used to good effect elsewhere and increase capacity and self confidence of individuals and the group as a whole.
16. The project would run over three years and could form a template for similar projects around the Park. Participants within this pilot would also be encouraged to actively guide other areas in the future, sustaining an ongoing process. Eventually it is hoped that the whole park would have well skilled groups actively working on cultural heritage recording and conservation.

Financial implications

17. This would be a three year project and support will come from CNPA and RCAHMS initially. There is provision for £20K included within the Conserving and Enhancing Programme for 2011-2012. RCAHMS has offered a contribution in kind through technical training and advice and shared project management. They will support the groups as they develop their own projects. They will also be undertaking some archaeological surveying in their own right. It is anticipated that CNPA staff will also be involved in co-ordination and project management. Additional funding will be sought for individual projects from a variety of sources.

18. It is planned that over the three years the level of financial support from the CNPA will reduce significantly. This will be achieved as additional funding is obtained for the individual projects through grant applications. A detailed project cost breakdown will be brought to the next finance committee.

Recommendation

19. It is recommended that the board approves in principle subject to final approval from the finance committee.

Continuation of Community Heritage Officer Post

20. The work of the CHO has clearly demonstrated the high demand for a number of issues within the Park
- a) Technical advice on establishing and running heritage projects
 - b) Co-ordinating the activity of groups and facilitate the communication between them and development of required skills
 - c) Need to liaise with national and regional cultural heritage organisations and to facilitate local engagement in their initiatives and projects so they may benefit fully from opportunities as they arise
 - d) Seek to ensure national programmes consider National Park Plan objectives fully
 - e) Co-ordination of CNPA programmes and strategic work to ensure the appropriate consideration of cultural heritage
 - f) Manage strategic projects such as the Glen More work and seek additional opportunities
21. In considering how to maintain momentum on this activity, while ensuring CNPA focuses on the connections and Park-wide view, we propose that the CHO role is extended, but on a two day a week basis, from August this year until the end of the financial year 2012/13. This time scale allows the continued contribution to the development of the National Park Plan and the full development of the Glen More project. If the HLF stage 1 bid were to fail then there would be time and capacity to restructure the project so that key elements can be achieved by alternative methods. The time of the CHO officer will be directed to strategic work, joining up and developing the bigger project opportunities. We have begun discussions with other partners including local authorities, about further direct project support to communities in the longer term

Financial Implications

22. To date the cost of the CHO has been met through the operational plan with LEADER contribution on a full time basis. The budget for the CHO was carried over in full into the operational plan for 2011/2012. The suggested extension of the post for two days per week for the remainder of the year following the end of the current contract would be contained with this provision. Similar provision would need to be made for 2012/13. Full details will be set out in a report to the next finance committee.

Recommendation

23. It is recommended that approval in principle is given to the extension of the current CHO project post until end of March 2013, subject to finance committee approval of costs.

Consultation

24. Discussions with partners have been held on both the proposed Landscape Partnership bid and the Aviemore and Glenmore recording project. This has included the land managers for the relevant areas. So far both proposals have been received with interest. The HLF bid proposal was welcomed by RSPB, Glen Feshie Estate and National Trust for Scotland and they have expressed a willingness to participate with developing proposals. The next stage is community consultation.

Policy Context

25. The proposals continue delivery of our current corporate plan objectives and are well placed to deliver to themes we expect to emerge through the next National Park Plan. In particular, the proposed projects would be an effective way to deliver against the proposed outcome in the draft National Park Plan 'more people will learn about, enjoy and help to look after the special natural and cultural heritage of the Park'.

Implications

Financial Implications

26. The financial implications are set out within each section of the report.

Presentational Implications

27. There are no significant presentational issues.

Implications for Stakeholders

28. The development of these proposals will provide positive opportunities for community and business stakeholders. These will become more apparent as the proposals progress.

Next Steps

29. This paper sets out a number of proposals that would require detailed discussion at the finance committee.

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