CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

FOR INFORMATION

Title: **CORPORATE PLAN UPDATE, THEME 5**

Prepared by: **David Cameron, Head of Corporate Services**
                       Francoise van Buuren, Head of Communications

Purpose

To inform the Board of our work to date to achieve the fifth strategic theme of the Corporate Plan for 2005-08, and our plans for future activity.

Recommendations

  a) That the Board note the progress and plan for achieving the fifth theme of the Corporate Plan for 2005-08.

Executive Summary

The Board agreed the Authority's Corporate Plan for 2005 to 2008 at its February 2005 meeting.   The Corporate Plan was framed around 5 themes, setting the overarching framework for the Authority's plans over the next three years. The fifth of those themes is:

> "to be an open, innovative and professional organisation that engages effectively with the public and behaves with integrity".

The purpose of this paper is to provide a fourth update on progress made and plans in place to deliver this fifth strategic theme of the Corporate Plan. This paper seeks to complement the more detailed papers providing regular quarterly updates on delivery of the 20 goals set out in the Corporate Plan through actions and tasks developed in the operational plan, by providing an overview of activity within this general theme.

Corporate Plan Update, Theme 5 – For Information

Background

1.   The Board considered a paper in March 2005 which gave the first in this series of updates on delivery of the Corporate Plan, looking at the work undertaken during 2004 on areas covered by Theme 5 of the Corporate Plan and exploring the key activities to be undertaken in the coming years. A second update was presented to the Board in September 2005 by David Cameron as Danny Alexander had left the organisation in March and Francoise van Buuren did not join CNPA until mid-October. A third update was presented to the Board in April 2006 by David Cameron and Francoise van Buuren which included details of the proposed communications programme for 2006-2008.

2.   Theme five of the current Corporate Plan is: **"to be an open, innovative and professional organisation that engages effectively with the public and behaves with integrity"**. This theme relates both to the internal workings of the organisation and its relations with the general public. The wording of the theme reflects the outcome of work to identity our core organisational values. These are as follows:

   a) **Integrity -** Honest, trustworthy, fair, reliable, consistent, clarity of vision, good leadership, prudent.
   b) **Open & inclusive -** Transparent, clear, approachable, accessible, accountable, responsive, listening, user-friendly, public-focused, fun to work for and with.
   c) **Innovative -** Dynamic, bold, willing to take risks, supportive and trusting atmosphere, learning from mistakes, embracing new technology, high environmental standards.
   d) **Professional -** Committed, competent, knowledgeable, responsible, efficient, getting things done.

3.   Everyone in the organisation - staff and board - is responsible for ensuring that we live up to these values. However, specific work to deliver this theme is largely the responsibility of two Groups with an organisation wide responsibility - Communications and Corporate Services. This paper therefore primarily focuses on the work programme being taken forward by these two groups.

4.   This paper aims to complement the regular, more detailed, quarterly updates on delivery of the operational plan, by providing an overview of activity within this general theme.

Open and Inclusive, Engaging with the public

5.   The Communications Strategy prepared in June 2004, identified four principles that should underpin our communication - openness, clarity, pro-activity, and responsiveness and four target audiences - local people; opinion formers; the people of Scotland; and visitors and potential visitors to the area. In each case, our objective

has been to develop our reputation as an 'enabling' organisation that is trusted and respected and to keep these audiences informed about our work through our programme of communications activity.

6.   Effective communication is needed to ensure all partners and interested parties understand why there is a Cairngorms National Park, what makes it so special and what needs to be done to protect and promote the Park for the benefit and enjoyment of everyone. Partners need to understand and support the Park aims and priority initiatives set out in the National Park Plan and be aware of their role and contribution to achieve them. A Communications Programme was presented to the Board in the last Theme 5 report and is being implemented to achieve this objective.

7.   Progress to date includes the launch of the draft National Park Plan consultation at Holyrood and Coylumbridge, production and distribution of CNPA and Cairngorms National Park promotional materials, production and distribution of *Parklife* to all residents and businesses within the Park, production of a monthly e-bulletin, continued development of the CNPA website, positive media coverage promoting the work of the CNPA and the National Park Plan in particular, two Ministerial visits to the Park, attendance at all the Party Political conferences and attendance at the Lonach and Braemar Games. The Outdoor Access Strategy and the initial Core Path Plan consultations have also been launched and communication plans to support the production of the final National Park Plan and Local Plan is ongoing.

8.   Work is currently ongoing to develop standards for community engagement for the Park Authority and a community relations programme in partnership with local authorities, establish how we can best progress the development of a Cairngorms National Park website to meet visitor needs and review how this may impact on the CNPA website and develop a stakeholder engagement programme which ensures partners and interested parties are kept informed of CNPA achievements and progress against the National Park Plan, as well as promoting common messages about Scotland's National Parks developed in partnership with Loch Lomond & the Trossach National Park Authority.

9.   It addition, considerable work is going into the development of the National Park Plan priority for action (led by Murray Ferguson) which focuses on developing awareness and understanding of the Park.

10.   It should be remembered, given the limited resources of the Communication Group, much of the success of the communications programme depends on the support and active involvement of the Board, CNPA staff and other partner organisations.

Professionalism and Integrity

11.   The Communications and Corporate Services Groups continue to work together to deliver our joint objectives.   The "Building the Organisation" project, which seeks to develop and implement improvements in our internal communications, IT, support

services, training and in the way in which staff and Board works together has made considerable progress, including the completion of a staff opinion survey, a review of our internal communications processes, and the launch of the CNPA Intranet.   We have developed a forward plan of work addressing other issues raised from the Building the Organisation project and agreed this with the Staff Consultative Forum. We will monitor completion of this workplan over the remainder of the year.

12.   An organisational Away-day has been organised for the 3 & 4 October which will focus on the role of the CNPA and how it will support the implementation of the National Park Plan.

13.   We continue to coordinate training opportunities, while supporting individual training requirements identified as part of the appraisal review process. We have put general programmes in place covering project management, customer service and developing effective staff and board working. Over the remainder of the year we also plan to put in place training for staff and line managers on health and safety practice and procedure and equality regulations.

Retention and Reward

14.   We have invested a considerable amount of time in the development and submission of a pay remit covering 2006/07 and 2007/08, following consultation with the Staff Forum. The Board's Staffing and Recruitment Committee have been kept up to date with the progress of this submission, which currently remains the subject of detailed negotiations between the Authority and the Pay Unit.

15.   The pay remit, once agreed with the Scottish Executive, sets out the Authority's permitted maximum levels of increases to salaries to cover changes in cost of living, and staff progression through established salary scales. The pay award and salary progression based on the approved Performance Related Pay system is clearly an important aspect of the Authority's retention policy, in which we aim to retain a high quality, professional staff group, while the consequential impact of pay awards on our salary scales will impact on our ability to recruit.

16.   Pay is, of course, by no means the sole focus of the Authority's recruitment and retention strategy.   We have engaged with staff representatives on the Staff Consultative Forum and benchmarked our terms and conditions against a range of other NDPBs. From this exercise, we have been able to demonstrate that we compare reasonably well with these comparable organisations, while being able to identify areas for further discussion with staff representatives.

Innovation

Risk management

17.   We have further progressed the Authority's risk management processes, embedding review of the strategic risk register as part of the Management Team's quarterly

review of progress against operational and corporate plans. As reported to the Board in August, we are also developing a balanced scorecard model to provide a risk based assessment of the organisation's progress in delivering priority activities, while monitoring the sustainability of that delivery in terms of the organisation's financial, staffing and governance position.

18.   These risk management process are intended to support rather than obstruct innovation. We seek to develop and advocate new ideas and methods of delivery, and our risk management processes are intended to highlight potential issues which may arise in implementing new methods in order that staff can take appropriate action.

Efficient Government

19.   We have invested a considerable amount of staff time over the last six months in progressing the Authority's involvement in the Efficient Government Initiative and also in the Scottish Executive's Environment and Rural Affairs Department's (SEERAD) "On the Ground" programme.   One strand of this latter project contributes to a degree to Efficient Government: looking at how bodies within the SEERAD "family" can collaborate to achieve efficiencies and improve effectiveness in operations. A second strand is focused more on the provision of integrated services to customers: for example common grant processes; reducing duplication and bureaucracy in the various returns clients may be required to make to different organisations within ERAD; common approach to land management contracts.

20.   This has given rise to a number of projects that we will be pursuing over the remainder of this year:
   a) We are collaborating in a consortium tendering for a joint recruitment advertising / media advertising contract, worth around £4.8m over 4 years and being led by the Forestry Commission.
   b) We are discussing the movement of our IT servers into SNH's Wide Area Network. This will greatly improve the communication capacity between Ballater and Grantown offices, and allow the Authority to use SNH's helpdesk function.
   c) We will consider the use of some of SNH's office systems, such as their financial software and electronic records and document management system.
   d) We are collaborating with other SEERAD NDPBs in delivery of training, with places on internal training programmes being offered to all other organisations.

21.   While seeking to generate some financial savings, particularly in support service costs, these projects will help us to develop and maintain new systems where the costs of doing so as a single, small organisation would have been prohibitively expensive. Savings in support services may also be recycled into delivery of new "front-line" activities. There is no risk to the security of employment within the Authority from our participation in these projects.

Health and Safety

22.   Under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and its associated regulations, the Authority has a duty to comply with all relevant statutory obligations and actively manage health and safety within the organisation.   The Board ultimately has responsibility for ensuring the Authority complies with these various requirements. This duty is discharged through the Chief Executive ensuring that staff within the Authority put in place appropriate arrangements to ensure heath and safety at work, and act responsibly in accordance with these arrangements. The Corporate Services Group leads on the development, implementation and review of Health and Safety policy and practice within the organisation, while the Board's Audit Committee and the Staff Consultative Forum have an oversight of arrangements within the Authority to ensure adequate Health and Safety policies and procedures are in place.

23.   We have developed a Health and Safety Policy Statement that has been agreed with the Staff Consultative Forum, and also developed individual policies on Personal Protective Equipment and Incident and Accident Reporting.   We have drafted guidance on lone working and are seeking to contract with a call-logging service to give staff working out of hours a facility to register details of their work and intended return time.   A copy of the draft Health and Safety policy statement is presented at Annex 1 to this paper.

24.   A qualified Health and Safety consultant has also been engaged in reviewing all premises and health and safety documentation. Following receipt of the consultant's report, we are now in the process of revising the Authority's Health and Safety policy document. This will be finalised through the Authority's Management Team, Staff Consultative Forum and Audit Committee.

25.   The Authority's internal auditors have proposed to the Audit Committee that they should undertake an independent review of Health and Safety arrangements at the end of this year.

Technology and Environment

26.   In addition to the collaborative work on the development of the Authority's IT infrastructure mentioned at point 20 above, we have been developing draft business continuity plans for the continuation of operations in the event of system failures, together with associated risk assessments of the various elements of our IT systems. We are also in the process of developing a longer term IT strategy and associated IT investment plans.

27.   We have supported the work of the Authority's Greening Committee since the Board's approval of the Greening Strategy and action plan. In accordance with the Board's recommendation, the early work of the Greening Committee has been to focus on prioritising potential improvements on a cost:benefit basis. The Committee has focused on seeking to reduce carbon emissions from travel, promoting the use of

public transport when appropriate (e.g. use of trains for travel to the central belt) and considering the replacement of pool cars (three of which are due to be replaced over the course of this year). We have also initiated a review of the premises in order to prioritise any actions which may be taken on energy efficiency and recycling opportunities.

28.   Further updates will be made to the Audit Committee and in future theme update reports.

DAVID CAMERON
FRANCOISE VAN BUUREN
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davidcameron@cairngorms.co.uk
francoisevanbuuren@cairngorms.co.uk

Health and Safety Policy Statement

The Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA) Board recognises and accepts its responsibility for providing, as far as is reasonably practicable, a safe and healthy working environment for its staff, visitors and contractors. Members of the Board have the same responsibilities as employers and have overall corporate responsibility for health and safety. Operational responsibility for health and safety lies with the Chief Executive and Management Team.

The aims and provisions of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and its associated regulations are acknowledged by CNPA. We are committed to complying with all relevant statutory obligations and actively managing health and safety within the organisation. A procedure is in place to report to Management Team and the Audit Committee on health and safety issues.

CNPA policy statement is as follows:-

1. to provide adequate control of health and safety risks arising from our business activities, including a full management system;

2. to consult with staff through the Staff Consultative Forum (SCF) on matters affecting their health and safety;

3. to provide and maintain safe plant and equipment;

4. to provide safe access to and egress from all premises;

5. to ensure safe handling and use of substances;

6. to provide information, instruction and supervision for staff and third parties;

7. to ensure all staff are competent to do their tasks, and given adequate training;

8. to prevent accidents and cases of work related ill health;

9. to maintain safe and healthy working conditions;

10. to develop a positive health and safety culture across all offices; and

11. to review and revise this policy as necessary at regular intervals.

A copy of this policy will be available in all Park Authority offices.

Signed …………………………………….
Chief Executive