

## CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

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### FOR DISCUSSION

**Title: STRATEGIC RISK MANAGEMENT AND MONITORING CORPORATE PERFORMANCE**

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#### **Purpose**

This paper presents an update on the Authority's performance over the 2017/18 financial and operational year, the final year of the current Corporate Plan.

The paper focuses on delivery against the Key Performance Indicators adopted as measures of performance in delivery of our Corporate Plan, while highlighting by exception any significant constraints, risks or shortcomings on planned delivery.

Information is presented on delivery against the Corporate Plan only. Updates on delivery of the new National Park Partnership Plan for 2017 to 2022 will commence in 2018.

#### **Recommendations**

##### **The Board is asked to**

- a) Review the update on corporate performance and strategic risk management set out in this paper.**
- b) Highlight any achievements or exceptions which, from a strategic leadership perspective, Board members believe are of particular significance to the delivery of the Authority's strategic objectives.**

## STRATEGIC RISK MANAGEMENT AND MONITORING CORPORATE PERFORMANCE – FOR DISCUSSION

### Strategic Context

1. The Authority's Corporate Plan, [http://cairngorms.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/CorporatePlan2015\\_2018Final1.pdf](http://cairngorms.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/CorporatePlan2015_2018Final1.pdf) describes how we will contribute to the delivery of the Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan (NPPP). The Corporate Plan also sets out how the CNPA will support the Government's central purpose: 'to focus the Government and public services on creating a more successful country, with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish, through increasing sustainable economic growth' and delivery of the Programme for Government. To this end, the plan highlights (page 13) that the work of the Authority makes a contribution to 9 of the Scottish Government's 16 National Outcomes agreed within the National Performance Framework.
2. A corporate performance framework is required to measure the extent to which we succeed in delivering the priorities agreed in the corporate plan and make the desired contributions to wider national government strategies. The Board agreed the Authority's corporate performance framework at its meeting in December 2015. The information presented with this paper follows that agreed format.

### Strategic Policy Considerations

3. The Authority's Corporate Plan makes reference to our contribution to National Outcomes. While in most cases the corporate performance indicators do not present a direct measure of contribution to the specific outcomes, they are agreed to represent an appropriate "proxy" indicator, whereby our demonstration of achievement in a specific area of the Authority's operations is accepted as a reasonable measure of our contribution to wider national or portfolio objectives.

### Strategic Risk Management

4. The Board considered and approved the new strategic risk register supporting delivery of the 2015 to 2018 Corporate Plan at its meeting in December 2015.
5. The strategic risk register has been regularly reviewed and updated by both the Audit and Risk Committee and the Management Team throughout the period since it was first agreed. A number of original strategic risks have been removed as risk has declined through management and implementation of mitigation or as monitoring of

risk has led to a decline in likelihood. The current version of the strategic risk register is set out for consideration at the Annex to the Audit & Risk Committee's Annual Report, included elsewhere on the agenda for the current Board meeting.

6. The Board are invited at this point to review the draft of the Strategic Risk Register; identify any potential strategic risks not currently included; comment on the draft assessment of significance of risks identified and adequacy of proposed mitigation. Between the presentation of the strategic risk register to the Board in June and December each year, the oversight of the Strategic Risk register is undertaken by the Audit & Risk Committee and Management Team.

### **Implications**

7. Both the Corporate Performance Monitoring Framework and Strategic Risk Register have been developed with a view to managing and limiting the staff time resource required to support the administration of these processes, while ensuring that the processes themselves are fit for purpose in managing risk to which the Authority is exposed and measuring our success in achieving agreed corporate priorities. We are aiming to make best use of data already collected by ourselves and our partners and hence tap into existing work rather than create new, often costly, data collection processes. Some indicators have data collected annually or over longer periods. Therefore not all indicators will have changed over the six months since these monitoring reports were last presented to the Board.
8. Our strategic risk management process and practices build on existing methods already reviewed and approved by Audit & Risk Committee and evaluated by internal and external audit.
9. Our risk management processes require staff to reference the agreed strategic risks in developing specific strategies and policies and tailor their plans accordingly, to both ensure these policies and strategies are not impacted by the recognised risks and also help manage these risks.
10. In taking forward actions and projects to help deliver Corporate Plan priorities, Directors and their Heads of Service are expected to ensure that operational plans and / or project plans where required are covered by more specific risk registers and risk management practices.

## **Success Measures**

11. Implementation of an effective Corporate Performance Monitoring System is an essential component of enabling identification of success in delivery of the Board's agreed Corporate Plan. Effective risk management processes ensure that risks that may impact on success are identified, managed and / or monitored appropriately.
  12. The work in bringing these processes together therefore forms a key aspect of the Authority's strategic management processes.
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**Supporting Information:**  
**Update on Corporate Plan Monitoring**

1. A summary of the Authority's Corporate Plan monitoring information is presented in Annex I. More information on the highlights and issues arising over the course of 2017/18 to date is presented in the following sections of this paper.

Conservation

2. *Area of new native woodland* – Forestry Commission Scotland has indicated that they have received applications for a total of 3185 ha of new native woodland since 2012 in the National Park. This is in line with the target to achieve 5000 ha of woodland expansion by 2018. There is additional natural regeneration that is not currently captured in the data but we are working with partners to address this.
3. *Number of Capercaillie* – Capercaillie continue to be a serious concern. Lek counts have been carried out across their range during April/May 2017 but the full results have not yet been collated. 2016 figures indicated relatively stable numbers of adult birds but productivity was 0.24 chicks per hen, considerably lower than the 1.1 chick/hen target. The Capercaillie Framework remains a high conservation priority. The bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund to assist critical conservation work is due to be resubmitted in December.
4. *Status of designated sites* – Out of the 426 sites surveyed, a total of 346 features are reported by Scottish Natural Heritage as being in favourable or recovering condition (81%), reflecting the national position. Further work to deliver site targets and integrate with wider landscape scale management is set out in the Agenda for Action in the new National Park Partnership Plan.

Visitor Experience

5. Walking for Health participation figures will be available at the end of the year. There remains the ongoing challenge of ensuring that volunteers pass these on – the main focus of their work being a great walk not recording the statistics associated with their volunteering activities.
6. We are still awaiting data from partners on length of path upgraded or extended but understand that we are on target.

7. Path building and improvement is on schedule with Mountains and People 37% complete and next section of Speyside Way extension receiving planning consent.

*Visitor Experience – Exception Reporting*

8. The measure of number of people using key paths in the park as measured is not expanding as much as aimed for despite the National Park getting more visitors. However, this is most likely because four of the five people counters managed by partners have suffered break downs in the year and therefore a result of errors in the data rather than underlying issues in terms of level of usage. We are working with partners to try and ensure that this data is accurate.

Rural Development

9. Number of visitors to the Park in 2015/16 is estimated at 1.8 million; an increase of 5.4% over the previous year.
10. The Sustainable Tourism Strategy for 2017-22 has been approved by Europarc.
11. CNPA continues to support the communities of Tomintoul and Glenlivet through the Development Trust. The direct support that the CNPA gives the Development Trust will reduce over future years. The Tomintoul and Glenlivet Landscape Partnership is now established and developing and delivering projects.
12. We have provided feedback and advice to Transport Scotland to inform the A9 Dualling project which has helped to inform final route options. We have responded to all projects within the National Park at Stage 2. The Stage 3 reports are currently under development and required CNPA input is being assessed at present. CNPA is also working with a wider tourism group on potential opportunities for maximising the visitor experiences.

*Rural Development – Exception Reporting*

13. While there are no exceptions to report on the KPIs for rural development activities, it is worth noting that the risk register at risk A I I notes some increasing risks for the Cairngorms LEADER programme as a consequence of uncertainties emerging over interpretation of eligibility guidance for the programme. Support for the Cairngorms LEADER project is covered in a separate paper to this Board meeting.
14. The development and roll-out of the Scottish Government's R100 project should deliver high speed broadband to 100% of Scotland. The announcement of the project

means that Cairngorms Community Broadband's work to develop an aggregation scheme for the Cairngorms National Park has stopped.

### Communications

15. Cairngorms Nature has over 12,770 social media followers plus 1372 e-bulletin subscribers. The CN BIG Weekend (13 & 14 May 2017) had over 2000 attendees and received extremely positive feedback. A full evaluation report was prepared in June. A development officer, with LEADER funding support, is creating a business plan to develop a sustainable future for the ongoing delivery of the event by 2020.
16. Active Cairngorms has over 2,550 social media followers on [AC Twitter](#) and [AC Facebook](#) plus 427 AC e-bulletin subscribers. Wee Walks Week held in September received extensive publicity helping to raise the profile of the Park and encouraging both residents and visitors to be more active. A review is underway to see how this event can be developed into the future.
17. The 'Make it Yours' presentation has been rolled out to 26 organisations and 212 visitor facing staff across the Park. We have 146 Brand Charter holders and the MIY e-bulletin goes out to 167 subscribers.
18. The National Park Partnership Plan has been approved by the Board and was officially launched by the Minister on 1<sup>st</sup> June. The Local Development Plan Main Issues report has gone out for public consultation for 15 weeks (17 November - 2 March 2018).
19. An MSP survey carried out in December shows 100% have heard of the Cairngorms National Park and a third say they know a fair amount or know it well. A little under half (43%) are favourable towards the Cairngorms National Park with 51% claiming to be neutral. Both national parks are held in strong regard at the Parliament, stronger than may be expected given the level of awareness compared to other organisations.
20. We launched a new [Cairngorms National Park Facebook account](#) aimed at people who live and work in the Park. In September our main social media accounts had 22,549 followers with an average monthly engagement rate of 16.6%. In addition, our e-bulletins have a total of 1,966 subscribers. We work closely with the Cairngorms Business Partnership and their visitor focused VisitCairngorms social media accounts which have a total of 77,767 subscribers.
21. Website statistics at 1<sup>st</sup> September 2017 show steady improvement towards our target figures for 2018 (in brackets): 162,346 unique users (180,000), 3.14 average pages visited (3), 2.21 average time on site (2.4), 46.48% bounce rate (50% or less).

Work is underway to improve the visitor experience to continue to improve on these figures and our social media activity aims to drive more traffic to our website.

Corporate Services - Finance

22. Final accounts for the 2016/17 financial year show an excess of expenditure over income of £16,000 for the year, a variation of only 0.32% on total turnover of £5.063 million. External audit undertaken during June 2017 finalised accounts, which were approved following the Audit and Risk Committee meeting at the end of September.

*Finance - Exception Report*

23. The Management Team has commenced scenario planning for 2018/19 and future year budgets over the summer and autumn of 2017. Initial forward projections have been incorporated into the outline Corporate Plan for 2018 to 2022. Work will continue on these forward projections as information emerges on the Scottish Government budget figures over the course of December.
24. The 2017/18 budget paper presented to and approved by the Board in March 2017 highlighted that levels of project commitments were higher than target as a consequence of the end of Corporate Plan cycle and also a number of longer term high value projects being supported in order to lever significant external resources into the National Park.

Corporate Services – Governance

25. We have continued to support the Cairngorms Trust, the Outdoor Access Trust for Scotland (previously Cairngorms Outdoor Access Trust) and Cairngorms Community Broadband to promote good governance across these key voluntary and charitable organisations in their delivery of NPPP priorities.
26. There has been a notable reduction in the number of complaints received and an increase in performance on complaints handling and time to respond. Four complaints were lodged in the last 6 months; all were responded to within the required timescales.

*Governance – Exception Report*

27. We do have one instance of a response to a Freedom of Information request being provided outside of the 20 day period. This was a request involving a number of external stakeholders with varying views on release which did create some additional



complexity in handling. Nevertheless, we will review our internal processes and timetables where multiple stakeholder views must be taken into account.

#### Human Resource Management

28. Over the last six months there has been no formal HR caseload. This indicator is therefore green, and an indicator that there are improving levels of staff satisfaction and morale.
29. Following a restructure of the Planning team, we sought to recruit a part time Planning Officer (as a job share), and a full time Planning Officer. The part time post was successfully recruited, but we were not able to recruit the full-time post. As such, we altered the structure to include 2 Graduate Planners rather than one and a full-time Planning Officer. This recruitment exercise was successful and the Planning team is now fully resourced.
30. There have been no stress linked causes of absence, and this indicator is now therefore green.
31. Staff turnover (4 leavers in the last 6 months) has also declined and is now within our accepted thresholds.
32. Overall, the Management Team supported by HR continues to give close attention to HR matters to ensure risks associated are managed and seek to identify any underlying causal factors which may need resolution. The staff survey has just been completed, and the results will be helpful in informing the wider morale of the organisation.

#### *Human Resource Management – Exception Report*

33. The failure to recruit a part-time planner as originally intended does represent an exception to highlight in our Corporate Performance statistics. However, as reported above, this situation was satisfactorily resolved through reviewing structure and staff responsibilities and successfully recruiting to revised posts.

#### Cross-cutting Indicators

34. We have included two cross-cutting indicators in the corporate performance management framework through which to monitor our performance as an organisation in making a reduction in carbon emissions and hence contributing to climate change goals, and also to equalities work.

35. With regard to the carbon emissions measure, we have taken the opportunity of a new Scottish Government reporting framework to evolve our internal measures from one focused on vehicle based business travel and emissions from that to a more holistic model encompassing electricity, oil and biomass consumption. We have also now incorporated factors such as rail and air travel into the model. The model shows a significant reduction in emissions since the adoption of the 2007/08 baseline for the Authority's original carbon management plan which is far in excess of our original 3% per annum target.
36. Our equalities indicator focuses on the work we undertake and previously highlighted as best practice on equal pay audit and analysis.
37. There are no exceptions to report at this time on the cross-cutting indicators