

## CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY FINANCE & DELIVERY COMMITTEE

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### FOR DECISION

**Title:** Design Awards Postponement to 2016/17

**Prepared by:** Gavin Miles, Strategic Planning & Improvement  
Manager

### Purpose

To seek approval to postpone the National Park Design Awards till 2016/17, during the 2016 Scotland Homecoming Year of Innovation, Architecture and Design celebrations.

### Recommendations

The Finance & Delivery Committee is requested to:

- a) Note the operational need to postpone the running of National Park Design Awards in 2014/15;
- b) Agree to postpone the Awards to 2016/17 as part of the Scotland Homecoming Year of Innovation, Architecture and Design.

### Executive Summary

The CNPA planning service will not be able to run a successful Design Awards competition in 2014 as operational priorities mean we need to use money and staff time on improving the efficiency of our development management service. We recommend that the CNPA postpones the running of the Design Awards to 2016/17 to coincide with the 2016 Year of Homecoming celebrations on Innovation, Architecture and Design. This option will maximise the potential exposure of the Design Awards and increase our ability to attract sponsorship to pay for the awards. It will also allow the core planning service improvements and efficiencies we are putting in place to have taken effect in performance statistics and the public image of the service, increasing the CNPAs credibility with a range of stakeholders.

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## Design Awards Postponement to 2016/17

### Background

1. We had programmed the second National Park Design Awards for 2014 and had identified a budget of £15k in this year's operational plan for the awards. As we have refined the planning service priorities for the year ahead and identified the most critical work, it has become apparent that we will not be able to run a successful Design Awards competition in 2014/15 for two reasons:
2. We are likely to spend £20-30k on a contractor to assist with urgent development management caseload for 6 months, using the money originally allocated for the design awards and from other parts of the planning team budget;
3. We don't have enough staff time to plan for and run the awards in a way that provides enough exposure and good news. To run well, the awards need dedicated staff time (the last awards used about a third of 1 FTE) and our priorities for planning service improvement are based around speeding up application processing and demonstrating we are providing an effective and efficient planning service. There is a potential reputational risk to us appearing to resource 'nice to have' work over core service delivery.

### Options

4. There are three immediate options:
  - a) **Postpone indefinitely or cancel altogether.** This would be unpopular with many groups. The Design Awards are also part of the work packages associated with the Partnership Plan.
  - b) **Postpone to 2015/16.** We will have reduced application processing timescales, should have adopted the Local Development Plan and be in a stronger position to shout about our whole planning service and to promote the design awards from a position of strength. There should also be more potential developments to be entered; or
  - c) **Our recommended option: Postpone to 2016/17.** 2016 is the Scotland Homecoming Year of Innovation, Architecture and Design. We will have consolidated our planning service as a high performing one, where applications are dealt with quickly and efficiently and will have been using the Local Development Plan for a year. The awards can be explicitly linked to the Year of Homecoming celebrations (potentially attracting more outside funding and sponsorship). Again, there should also be more potential developments to be entered, increasing the likelihood of entries that the CNPA had improved through pre-app work and approved within agreed timescales.

### Next steps

5. Following the Finance and Delivery Committee decision we will notify the whole Planning Committee and then Developers Forum and Planning Reps Network. The planning team will continue to identify examples of good design and are looking at ways of improving and strengthening advice on planning applications and in the development of the second Local Development Plan. The financial commitment and staff time needed for the Design Awards would be incorporated in the next within the next corporate plan for 2015-18.

**Gavin Miles**

**30/4/14**

[gavinmiles@cairngorms.co.uk](mailto:gavinmiles@cairngorms.co.uk)