

Annex 4: Summary of the Approach to Interpretation at Point of Entry Markers

Introduction

1. This annex summarises the broad approach proposed to interpretation planning at the entry points.
2. As a result of further consideration the work to develop this interpretation has been split into two linked parts. The first part concerns interpretation of themes that relate to the Park as a whole and it has been determined that this should be the priority at the key sites. The second part concerns development of opportunities for providing local interpretation and information and will form phase two of this scheme. Further work will be required in consultation with the local communities in each area to determine the most suitable sites and the range of suitable topics or themes.
3. An interpretive plan for Park wide sites (part 1) has been written providing a framework for design and production, identifying the concepts we would like to convey, the audience profile, locations and considerations for how it is to be presented.

Locations for interpretation facilities

4. The priority for interpretation is at the high profile entry points identified in the Scoping Report (i.e. at Drumochter, Kinloch Laggan, the Slochd, Advie, Dinnet and Glen Shee).
5. Of these six locations further investigation has determined that there are difficulties in progressing interpretation as part of this phase of improvements at:
 - Slochd – there is no prospect of encouraging visitors to stop close to this site for safety reasons and because of planned road improvements; and
 - Glen Shee – the car park needs significant upgrading before any stand alone interpretation can be considered and interpretation may be better sited along with the buildings. This can be taken forward in partnership with Grampian Enterprise who are currently considering development options; and
 - Advie – this site is not felt to have high enough volume of traffic to warrant development of interpretation at this stage.

Therefore three key, cardinal entry points for Park wide interpretation have been identified as Drumochter, Kinloch Laggan and Dinnet.

Interpretation content

6. The Interpretive Framework which has already been approved by the Board provides a good starting point, identifying as a central theme that:

“It is really important for visitors to understand that the Cairngorms Mountains have shaped the people, culture, landscapes and natural heritage of the Park; it is the mountains that make the Park”.
7. With this in mind the main message we would like visitors to leave an entry point marker site with is:

“The Cairngorms National Park is a living, working landscape with wild land at its heart”

8. To enable visitors to realise and recognise this, the theme has been broken down into a number of more strategic objectives:
 - The majority (>75%) of visitors will appreciate the topography and scale of the National Park (i.e. a broad, dome made up of a high and extensive central plateau, deeply dissected by troughs and corries, with wide Straths at the periphery.);
 - The majority of visitors will understand that people live and work in the National Park;
 - Most (>50%) of visitors will learn that there is a wealth of recreational opportunities available within the National Park for all ages and abilities;
 - Most visitors will learn that the National Park is home to wildlife that cannot be found anywhere else in the UK and which is of international importance;
 - Some (>25%) visitors will learn the National Park contains forests, lochs, glens, rivers and mountains; and
 - Some visitors will realise the landscape has been shaped by both man and nature.

Visitor Profile

9. It is expected that the points of entry will attract a broad spectrum of visitors, reflecting the profile of visitors to the Park as a whole. The visit to the site will predominantly be prompted by the marker itself or by the need to take a break from driving. It is expected that visitors would stay at each of the key sites for a maximum of 20 minutes.

Consideration for design

10. The aims and objectives for interpretation are the same for all entry points, yet each exhibits slightly different characteristics. It is recognised this may present opportunities for a designer to adapt the objectives at particular locations. However, it is the intention to have the option to reproduce features at future locations, without the need for new interpretive plans or designs. More importantly, it is felt that installing generic features reinforces a common approach to the National Park and implies cohesion across a very diverse area.
11. CNPA is relying on the consultant to give proper consideration to all relevant design issues (including health and safety, value for money, quality and maintenance issues), bearing in mind that:
 - CNP is a new Park, within a very traditional field;
 - With low dwell times, a diverse audience and such broad concepts to be conveyed, messages should be presented in a visually arresting manner with reading time kept to an absolute minimum.
 - Designs should complement the entry point markers and be appropriate and sympathetic to the character of the area.

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