CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

FOR DISCUSSION

Title: STRATEGIC RISK MANAGEMENT AND MONITORING CORPORATE PERFORMANCE

Prepared by: DAVID CAMERON, DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES

Purpose

This paper presents an update on the Authority's performance over the first half of the 2016/17 financial and operational year, the second year of the current Corporate Plan and the last year of the current five-year Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan.

The paper presents any particular successes achieved over the course of the last 6 months, while highlighting by exception any significant constraints, risks or shortcomings on planned delivery.

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
     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.

National Park Partnership Plan

3.   Much of the Authority's work is directed toward leadership and coordination of the
     National Park Partnership Plan (NPPP). This has a twofold effect on our corporate
     monitoring framework: many indicators have reliance on partner activity as well as the
     work of the Authority; and there is inevitably some linkage between our Corporate
     Plan measures and those monitoring delivery of the NPPP.

4.   Recognising this linkage, we have also integrated our reporting on delivery of the
     NPPP with our proposals for monitoring Corporate Plan delivery. There is some
     complication in our NPPP and Corporate Plan cycles not being the same. However,
     we have sought to retain historic delivery information on the NPPP indicators
     commencing in 2012, which are presented in Annex 2, while adopting appropriate
     baseline data – typically 2014 figures - on which to base assessment of our
     achievement of Corporate Plan priorities presented in Annex 1.

Strategic Policy Considerations

5.   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

6.   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.

7.   The strategic risk register has been reviewed and updated by both the Audit and Risk Committee and the Management Team since it was last considered by the Board. The current version of the strategic risk register is set out for consideration at Annex 3 to this paper.

8.   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 and Risk Committee and Management Team.

Implications

9.   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.

10. Our strategic risk management process and practices build on existing methods already reviewed and approved by Audit and Risk Committee and evaluated by internal and external audit.

11. 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.

12. 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

13. 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.

14. The work in bringing these processes together therefore forms a key aspect of the Authority's strategic management processes.

Supporting Information:
Update on Corporate and National Park Plan Monitoring

1.   Summaries of the Authority's Corporate and National Park Plan monitoring information are presented in Annexes 1 and 2 respectively. More information on the highlights and issues arising in each area over the first half of 2016/17 is presented in this section of the paper.

Conservation

Habitat Restoration, Priority Species, Sustainable Moorland Management & Catchment Management

2.   The Cairngorms Nature Strategy Group continues to keep an overview of conservation work by partners across the Park and to stimulate action where it is needed most. For example, Plantlife Scotland is currently advertising for a Cairngorms project officer to help deliver land management advice relating to the Cairngorms 'Important Plan Area'.

3.   The Cairngorms Nature Seminar on 28th June addressed the topic of woodland expansion providing useful input to the Partnership Plan consultation. Work is also starting on refreshing the Forest and Woodland Strategy, which will now replace previous local authority woodland strategies for the Park area.

4.   The East Cairngorms Moorland Partnership continues to progress with strong commitment from the 6 estates. Funding from the Environmental Co-operative Action Fund has been confirmed and the partnership has started to take forward collaboration work on collating baseline data.

5.   The Cairngorms Connect initiative is now developing to an implementation phase. This is a collaboration between Glenfeshie Estate, RSPB Insh Marshes and Abernethy Reserves, Forest Enterprise and the SNH Invereshie National Nature Reserve to deliver landscape scale conservation outcomes including woodland expansion, peatland restoration, river restoration.

6.   CNPA has continued to assist Deer Management Groups and land managers to meet the expectations of Scottish Government with regard to delivering public interest. CNPA facilitated working discussions between landowners and land managers where conflicts between neighbouring deer management policies occur.

7.   The next phase of the Capercaillie Framework project is to obtain a major funding package to help with habitat and recreation management. CNPA is leading the preparation of an application to HLF with input from partners which is due for submission in 2017.

8.   The Strathspey Wetland Waders Initiative (SWWI) has been able to submit and monitor over 50 farm plans, encompassing over 3,000Ha of farmland which is managed for wading birds, as well as 862Ha of land managed as wetlands or floodplain. By working with farmers managing productive land, SWWI have gone beyond the remit of the SRDP and utilised other sources of funding for works, which have, on some sites increased the wading bird population to three times its level in 2005.

9.   The Peatland Action Programme is funding additional time for our Peatland Officer Stephen Corcoran between November and March in order to complete existing projects and bring more potential projects to the development stage. To date nearly 800ha of peatland has been restored in the Park with an estimated 11,500 tons of carbon emission savings per year, 1000 tons of increased storage, water quality improvements, flood alleviation and biodiversity benefits.

10.   The Cairngorms Scenic Photo Posts Project with 14 fixed points across the National park is continuing to grow in popularity. It is shortlisted for a Nature of Scotland Innovation Award and the next phase of additional post sites is now identified for installation in the next 6 months.

11.   The new Spey Catchment Management Plan is now completed and due for publication this month. The next step is for partners to complete the business plan for the catchment initiative and secure funding for delivery of the next phase.

Conservation – Exception Reporting

12.   There are no exception reports to raise regarding the conservation priorities within the Corporate Plan at this time, other than the pressure on staff resources from major project initiatives highlighted as an escalating risk in the risk register.

Visitor Experience

13.   Pre planning application discussions are underway on sections of Speyside Way extension from Ardgeal to Kingussie and we are seeking funding to develop this route. We are also seeking funds from Scottish Enterprise to develop detailed proposals and seek planning permission for a section of Deeside Way from Braemar to Invercauld Bridge.

14. The HLF funded Mountains and People Project, covering both National Parks, started in summer 2015. Path improvements in 2016 being undertaken on Lochnagar, Mayar path in Angus Glens, and Beinn a'Ghlo in Perthshire. Work will continue on mountain paths in Deeside, Angus and Highland Perthshire for next three years along with education and public engagement work. The six 2016 Cairngorm trainees will complete their training in November. The project has generated 216 volunteer days repairing paths across both National Parks.

15. The refurbishment of Ballater Station has been granted planning approval and we are working with the partnership to develop the information and interpretation content.

16. The three Scenic Routes installations at Glenshee, Corgarff and Tomintoul are nearing completion and will be ready to launch in spring 2017. Cairngorms Business Partnership are finalising the details with Scottish Enterprise for a two year grant to support a £314,000 project to work with partners to develop the route.

17. The Cairngorm and Glenmore Strategy was approved by CNPA Board in September and the Transport Working Group is starting to develop a project outline. The Visitor Services Working Group will form early in 2017.

18. CNPA, with support from Paths for All and NHS Highland has been successful in obtaining three year LEADER Funding to support volunteering and Health Walks in the Cairngorms. Following competitive interview we have appointed a volunteer coordinator to start in November 2016.

19. Some 2,639 John Muir Awards have been presented so far in 2016. Some 54 young people completed five day Junior Ranger programmes with four young people attending the 15th International Europarc Junior Ranger Camp in Latvia.

20. We awarded 34 travel grants to 12 primary schools, 14 secondary schools and 8 voluntary groups supporting 1180 people to visit and learn about the National Park.

21. Backbone's Community Leadership Programme has 11 trainees working with over 2500 people from BME and marginalised communities through events, projects and volunteering, and through visiting the National Parks, NNRS, FCS and other local green space

Visitor Experience – Exception Reporting

22. As previously reported, we saw a significant downturn in volunteer activity supported by partner ranger services in 2015. This will be addressed by the three year volunteer programme outlined above.

23. As previously reported, we saw a slight downturn in health walk participants but anticipate that this will increase in 2016/17 as the Newtonmore group is re-started and the GP referral schemes start to operate, and by the three year volunteer programme outlined above.

24. The strategic risk register highlights an escalating risk on increasing capacity constraints being experienced by partners potentially leading to less joined up and / or less ambitious delivery of the Cairngorms and Glenmore Strategy.

Rural Development

25. CNPA staff have reviewed delivery of the Sustainable Tourism Strategy and led the review of the Tourism Action Plan through the Cairngorms Tourism Partnership. A new Tourism Action Plan has now been developed with the CTP and the re-application process is underway.

26. The Make it Yours Project has delivered a range of materials and presentations to businesses. This includes a tear-off map pad which has been delivered to businesses and feedback is now being sought to inform future iterations and possible sponsorship of the map.

27. A Regional Marketing Strategy for the Cairngorms National Park has been produced by VisitScotland in a similar format to other Regional Strategies it has produced. This is a first for the CNP and has been developed with CNPA staff in conjunction with the CBP and CTP. Funding for annual marketing campaigns has supported collaborative campaigns with VS and CBP and has achieved positive results. CBP have been successful in drawing in both Growth Fund and private funding from Caledonian Sleeper. The current collaborative campaign has resulted in production of high quality digital imagery and video to support digital campaigns. The regional strategy can now be used in working with community groups in helping them develop their own approach to marketing and tapping into wider opportunities.

28. CNPA continues to support the communities of Tomintoul and Glenlivet through the Development Trust and delivery of key projects. A review of the Regeneration Project is underway and monitoring and performance indicators reviewed to measure

success. The Tomintoul and Glenlivet Landscape Partnership Bid has been successful and work is ongoing to support delivery of the project and the Development Trust.

29. 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.

30. CNPA have supported the development of a Community Broadband Scotland aggregation scheme for the Cairngorms National Park. The Cairngorms Community Broadband Project is now being established with CNPA staff support.

Rural Development – Exception Reporting

31. There are no exception reports to raise regarding the rural development priorities within the Corporate Plan at this time.

Communications

32. The Cairngorms Nature Campaign continues to gain support following a very successful Cairngorms Nature Festival which hosted 80 events across the Park with 1635 attendees (a 92% increase over last year). Feedback survey results confirm 90% of attendees said the Festival was excellent/very good, 87% said it exceeded their expectations and 97% would recommend it to others. The 2017 Cairngorms Nature Young Presenter competition was launched in June and 8 finalists to go online for a public vote in November with the final winner being announced in December. Last Year's winner James Miller produced [A film](#) of his experience and he continues to act as a young ambassador for Cairngorms Nature at events and through his blog '[*Knee Deep in Nature'*](#). Digital communications activity has also grown to reach over 9000 followers on [CN Twitter](#) and [CN Facebook](#).

33. Active Cairngorms 'Wee Walks Week' was a great success with 455 people undertaking at least one short walk (1-4 miles) during the week 5-11 September which resulted in a total of 1,199 miles being walked. Many people shared their experiences via social media and Active Cairngorms has over 1,800 social media followers on [AC Twitter](#) and [AC Facebook](#). This is a good first year to build on in 2017 with a hard to reach audience.

34. The 'Make it Yours' campaign has been rolled out to 126 visitor facing staff across the Park along with the online Communicating Cairngorms toolkit. Feedback so far has

been positive and support materials are available via the CNP website. We have 128 Brand Charter holders and the MIY e-bulletin goes out to 148 subscribers.

35. The National Park Partnership Plan consultation ran from June –September and was very well received resulting in 319 responses being submitted. A final consultation report will go for formal approval on 9 December and a final plan will be prepared for board approval in April 2017. The Local Development Plan Main Issues report will be prepared for consultation following the local authority elections on 4 May 2017.

36. CNPA's [Annual Review 2015/16](#) has been submitted to Ministers and a [Gaelic Language Plan progress report](#) has been submitted to Bòrd na Gàidhlig. Both are available on our website. A Gaelic Language Plan implementation plan for 2016 is in place and an application for £2.5K support funding from the Gaelic Language Action Implementation Fund has been successful.

37. Website statistics at 30 September show: 167,419 unique users (166,190), 2.86 average pages visited (2.98), 2.23 average time on site (2:33), 52.67% bounce rate (49.64%) compared with statistics (in brackets) taken from the old website. When new websites are launched it is normal for there to be a drop in performance and we are making steady progress towards the year end targets. Our 5 social media accounts – 3 twitter and 2 Facebook accounts – are performing very well. At the end of October the 5 main accounts had 16,199 followers with an average monthly engagement rate of 9%. In addition, our Cairngorms News, Cairngorms Nature and Active Cairngorms e-bulletins have a total of 1,599 subscribers.

Communications - Exception Report

38. Following the Scottish Parliament elections in May 2016 we will need to consider how we can build a strong and positive relationship with the 28 MSPs with responsibility for the Cairngorms National Park area and the newly appointed Cabinet Secretaries and Ministers. An MSP opinion survey will be carried out in December 2016 as a benchmark of the new Scottish Parliament.

Corporate Services - Finance

39. Final accounts for 2015/16 were approved by Audit Committee and Audit Scotland in June and released by the Auditor General to be laid before Parliament in early July 2016.

40. The Management Team and Operational Management Group has commenced budget and scenario planning for 2017/18 budgets.

41.   Looking forward, we will be developing various strategic financial planning scenarios to discuss with Finance and Delivery Committee and then Board in responding to the Scottish Government's forthcoming budget and spending review. We expect to have some sight of proposed budget allocations for 2017/18 by mid-December when budget figures are expected to be published.

42.   The Cairngorms LEADER Programme has been impacted by uncertainties in European funding following the decision to leave the EU. The Finance and Delivery Committee has considered recent announcements by Scottish Government that European funding commitments will be honoured to the point of exit from the EU and agreed to support the issue of LEADER grant letters of offer covering project expenditure up to the end of February 2019.

Finance - Exception Report

43.   The uncertainty over future levels of funding from 2017/18 onwards represents the only, albeit significant, exception and high risk area within the Authority's financial KPIs.

Corporate Services – Governance

44.   We have continued to support the CLAG's incorporation as a charitable entity with the application to establish a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO) now approved by the Office of the Scottish Charities Regulator (OSCR).

45.   We have also supported the Cairngorms Community Broadband initiative through establishing the incorporation of Cairngorms Community Broadband Ltd on 9 November.

46.   We have dealt with a relatively high number of Freedom of Information requests over the last six months across a wide variety of subjects.

Governance - Exception Report

47.   Performance on complaints handling has now moved from a red to amber rating on our corporate KPIs. There remain a small number of complaints that have not been dealt with within the required 5 or 20 day period. For those sought to be resolved by the frontline resolution, there may be still some need to realistically assess the time required to fully resolve a complaint and escalate this to a full investigation process.

Human Resource Management

48.   Over the last six months we have seen a fall in the level of formal HR caseloads. This indicator is now green as opposed to the red rating last reported, and an indicator that there is improving levels of staff satisfaction and morale.

49.   We have also successfully supported all recruitment activities to place candidates in vacancies, while management practice has assisted in maintaining low levels of staff absence.

Human Resource Management - Exception Reports

50.   We continue to see a few stress linked causes of absence which causes an exception report as a consequence of our target of zero cases.

51.   Staff turnover also has remained higher than our accepted thresholds, which has continued a pattern of staff change over the last 18 months or so. While as a small organisation we only need a few staff leaving the organisation to cause an exception in this KPI, the indicator does highlight some ongoing churn in staffing and consequent risk of disruption in service delivery and achieving goals. Equally, a degree of staff turnover is also an opportunity for the organisation to consider its staffing and resource needs while managing the risk of disruption and loss of knowledge and expertise.

52.   Overall, the Management Team supported by HR continues to give close attention to these matters to ensure risks associated are managed and seek to identify any underlying causal factors which may need resolution. We have also reported on these matters to the Staffing and Recruitment Committee in May. The staff survey results were helpful in informing the wider morale of the organisation and suggest that the current position gives an indication of the tail end of a few more historic issues.

Cross-cutting Indicators

53.   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.

54.   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 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.

55. Our equalities indicator focuses on the work we undertake and previously highlighted as best practice on equal pay audit and analysis.

56. There are no exceptions to report at this time on the cross-cutting indicators