

CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

FOR DECISION

Title: Land Based Business Training Project: Plans for the future

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Purpose

The Project team brought a paper to Board in May 2005, wherein initial ideas for the development of the Land Based Business Training Project were explored. The Project team is now currently working with a range of CNPA staff on a business plan for the development of the project. The purpose of this paper is to get the Board's support for and views about the 3 projects that will form the basis of that business plan.

Recommendations

That the Board takes note of the success of the current project, and agrees that we progress with our plans for the 3 projects.

Executive Summary

The May 2005 Board paper outlined the history of the project, the project's performance in its first year, and made suggestions for the future of the project. There was strong support for the project, and for its continuation.

The success of the project to date, and particularly in the last 8 months, has highlighted the fact that the project continues to fill an important gap. It is helping to make training more accessible and user friendly for the land based sector, which in turn, increasingly continues to demand the support of the project.

The project framework is simple and successful. The project team is currently preparing a business plan for the next three years, which proposes that we build upon this framework and utilise it to develop three similar, but independent projects:

- 1. The Land Based Business Training Project**
- 2. Public Benefits for All Training Project**
- 3. Youth Training Project**

LAND BASED BUSINESS TRAINING PROJECT: PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

Introduction

1. In May 2005, a paper was brought to the Board, detailing the framework of the Land Based Business Training Project (LBBTP). This paper covered the background to the project, as well as the project aims, its initial first year performance and various options for the future of the project.
2. Since May 2005, the project has continued to grow, with a substantial increase in the amount of money committed to training, and in the number of beneficiary businesses and individuals receiving support through the project. Appendix 1 provides a detailed analysis of the project's financial and performance results in the last two years.
3. Clearly the LBBTP must continue. The difficulty for businesses prior to the project was not the existence of training courses, but in the sourcing, facilitating and organising of these courses. The LBBTP meets all these elements, and the need for these elements will remain. Although several of these elements can be delivered by other organisations, the project must be managed by the CNPA, as the success of the project rests on the facts that:-
 - a) No other organisation provides the "one stop shop" that the LBBTP provides i.e. the "brokering" function it fulfils.
 - b) The project team has established such good relationships with beneficiary businesses and individuals, that these businesses/individuals feel comfortable about approaching the team with their needs, and feel confident that their needs will be acted upon.
 - c) The CNPA is uniquely placed to deliver the "non-commercial" Public Benefit training to help businesses deliver the Park's aims.
4. It was suggested at the May 2005 Board meeting that there may be potential to bring all the independent trainers together as a training consortium, and for those trainers to create a business that was free standing of the CNPA. Our research indicates that the CNPA should continue to lead on the project for the following reasons:-
 - a) The LBBTP, as delivered by the CNPA, delivers an unbiased, non profit making "service" that is not being delivered elsewhere.
 - b) The CNPA is well placed to source external public match funding, which is an essential criterion for the future of the project.
 - c) The CNPA has a wider interest in ensuring the delivery of the Park's aims, which is achieved through the training project.
5. With reference to the various possibilities that were brought to and discussed by Board in May, the project team is in the process of writing a business plan for the next 3 years of the project, which, in collaboration with the other Groups, particularly Education and Inclusion, sets out the vision, market appraisal, sales and revenue forecast, marketing plan and staffing and resource implications for three distinct projects;

- a) The Land Based Business Training Project
- b) Public Benefit Training for All Project;
- c) Youth Training Project.

The business plan will be brought to the Board in the summer.

Land Based Business Training Project

6. Clearly land based businesses are beginning to adopt a training culture, but the impact of this is that their training needs are increasing and therefore that demand for the LBBTP continues.
7. Evidence from business beneficiaries strongly suggests that the project is adding value to their businesses, and is indeed helping their businesses operate more efficiently. Several of the business beneficiaries have recently won training awards which they have attributed directly to the support they received through the LBBTP.
8. The benefits of the LBBTP to the CNPA, include:
 - a) The project links to and helps deliver various other CNPA strategies eg sustainable tourism strategy, interpretation framework, integrated land management strategy. Furthermore, the project links directly to several of the Corporate goals, and also has very clear direct links to two of the CNPA's Corporate Plan Strategic Themes (appendix 3). In addition, it is a vehicle to deliver the priority actions for the Park Plan.
 - b) The project helps to create a stronger, more efficient economy and community within the Park, through helping LBBs become more viable, and through supporting local communities by hosting courses at village halls, and sourcing local caterers and local trainers where possible.
 - c) Through the project, the CNPA is seen to be delivering practical actions on the ground – generating good, positive publicity for the CNPA.
 - d) Through the delivery of Public Benefit Courses, the project helps ensure a sector of land managers delivering and committed to the NP aims.
9. The LBBTP has become and should continue to be a major vehicle for delivering on the ground CNPA Corporate Goals and Priority Actions for the Park Plan. The European Social Fund continues to support the project and has agreed to contribute £116,456 to the LBBTP for 2006 (split 50:50 across the two National Park regions). The CNPA contribution for 2006 is £53,853. INBSE has agreed in principle to contribute to the project, and further funding partners for the future will be sourced.

Plan 1: The land based business training project should continue into the foreseeable future, along the same tried and tested lines as it is currently being managed.

“Public Benefit Training for All” Project

10. Over 20 courses were delivered last year, attended by 407 delegates. These courses are well accepted by land managers as a tool for the CNPA to engage positively with them, and they are a proven vehicle to help LBBs deliver the aims of the National Park. To date the courses have been specifically targeted to LBBs, with the focus being on issues relevant to these businesses, and the Public Benefits they deliver. However, these courses should be developed as a tool to help **all** those living and working within the National Park to take ownership of and help deliver the Park's aims. A separate project is therefore proposed, "Public Benefit Training for All", through which bespoke, focused Public Benefit courses are arranged and delivered to the general communities of the National Park.
11. This project will not take the place of the Public Benefit element of the LBBTP, but will work alongside it. We recognise that the LBBTP Public Benefit courses can be specific to the land based sector e.g. "Tick Control and Heather Management". Furthermore, many gamekeepers, farmers and crofters feel more at ease amongst their own. Nevertheless, whilst we would not expect those Public Benefit Courses that are specific to land based businesses to be combined with those aimed at the general public, the more generic courses, like "the identification of the Cairngorms Wildlife" could be delivered to a mix of land managers and general public, as potentially a good way of spreading understanding.
12. Through discussions with CNPA staff and Board, as well as public consultation later this year, we will identify, plan and prioritise Public Benefit training for the public. Some examples that have already been put forward include - The roles and responsibilities of the general public in terms of the SOAC; What makes the Cairngorms Special; Conserving the Cairngorms.
13. This project will be built on the same tried and tested model as the LBBTP, although it will be managed as an independent project, and in partnership with other agencies. It is clear from our market research that there is currently no similar project in place. The CNPA is well placed to lead on this project, given the LBBTP team's experience in this regard, and given the project's role in helping communities to deliver the Park's aims, and its potential with regards the achievement of CNPA Goals, Strategic Themes and the Park Plan. External public match funding will be sourced, although the CNPA will make a financial contribution.

Plan 2: The CNPA should develop a "Public Benefit Training for All" project, wherein specific, focused Public Benefit courses become accessible to all communities within the Park, helping them deliver the aims of the National Park

Youth training Project

14. The Youth Apprenticeship Scheme (YAS), currently in the early stages of its development, focuses on the idea of developing a "passport" apprenticeship scheme, specific to the National Park, whereby school leavers can do a variety of apprenticeships, equipping them to work for several employers, in several sectors in

the National Park, like outdoor tourism, together with farming and game keeping. The apprenticeship could be long term, involving work experience as well as college tuition/courses and accreditation

15. Building on the YAS development work as set out in the “*Cairngorms Youth Apprenticeship Scheme: Increasing Training Opportunities for Young People in the Park*” board paper (July 2005), a parallel project is proposed, using the same simple but successful framework that is used to manage the LBBTP, to meet the training needs of those young people (16 – 24, finished school, employed or not) who do not wish to go on a formal, long term apprenticeship scheme, but who still wish to live and work in the National Park. Whilst working alongside the YAS, the project will fill the gaps, by supporting shorter, 1 – 4 day snapshot courses, some of which may be certificated, that will help those young people become more employable in the area, thereby retaining them in the National Park. Examples of courses include Food Hygiene; All Terrain Vehicles; Tractor driving, Photography etc.
16. The idea is that the “Youth Training Project” is run along the same lines as the LBBTP, i.e. helping young people find courses, bringing them together to go on courses, co-ordinating and facilitating courses, monitoring the quality of courses etc.
17. Informal research indicates that there is no similar project currently in place to support young people in this way. Nevertheless, to avoid duplication on this and other projects, we have commissioned a piece of research into all current training provision in the National Park. This research report will highlight the roles of other agencies in delivering, arranging and funding training, and will inform the business plan in terms of identifying partners, as clearly this project will be managed and funded in partnership with a number of other agencies. Ideally, it will be administered by the same project team that administer the YAS, to ensure continuity of administration and expertise.

Plan 3: The CNPA should develop a “Youth Training Project”, whereby all young people living within the National Park should be able to access informal, short, “snapshot” training that will help them to become more employable in the Park.

18. **The Board is recommended to agree that we progress with our plans for the three projects.**

Policy Context

19. Each project links to the strategic themes and goals of the CNPA’s Corporate Plan (Appendix 3). Furthermore, the Park Plan recognises that Education and Training for all is a key part of strengthening both the communities and the economy of the Park. The projects link to the Education and Inclusion Plan Brief. All three projects help fulfil the Plan’s goals to develop and improve access to education and training. All three projects could be used to deliver the priority actions for the Park Plan, and could also be a mechanism for delivering a number of National Park strategies.

Delivering Sustainability

20. The concept of sustainability lies at the heart of each of the three projects. Each project plays a role in making communities within the Park more sustainable.

Delivering a Park for All

21. The cross cutting theme "A Park for All" is implicit within each of the three projects. In addition, the projects fit with the Scottish Executive's lifelong learning strategy "*Life through Learning; learning through Life*", that aims to provide training for a more inclusive society. Furthermore, the projects encourage people to stay and work effectively in the Park.

Delivering Economy, Effectiveness and Efficiency

22. Each of the new proposed projects will be developed in consultation with key partners, who may contribute to the delivery, and funding of the projects. Whilst it is apparent that the LBBTP does not duplicate the work/support of any other agency, and continues to deliver economy, effectiveness and efficiency, the research report will form the foundation of the process of identifying potential partners and funders for the proposed "Public Benefit Training for All" and "Youth Training" projects. This will also help avoid the risk of duplication.

Implications

Financial Implications

23. The current Operational Plan makes provision for £85 000 to cover the CNPA's contribution towards the 2006 and early stages 2007 LBBTP, as well as the initial 2007 period of a "Public Benefit Training for All" and "Youth training Project." External funding for the LBBTP has been secured until the end of 2006. The business plan will investigate further funding opportunities.

Presentational Implications

24. The LBBTP has been widely publicised through 2004 and 2005, with various strategies in place to promote it further in 2006. The feedback to this publicity has contributed to the identification of a need to deliver public benefit training to all those living and working in the National Park. All three projects are important tools for positive engagement with young people and the general public, as well as with land owners and land managers.

Implications for Stakeholder

25. The main stakeholders of the LBBTP, land based businesses, are heavily involved in the project. They contribute 50% funding towards commercial training costs, but also play an active role in identifying training needs, and in supporting a training culture. Most business have reported added value to their businesses.
26. The proposed new projects will require partnership working for a number of public agency partners, who will also be required to provide funding towards the projects.

Conclusions and Next Steps

27. This paper highlights the benefits of and continuing demand for the LBBTP. It builds upon and refines the suggestions and comments to the various proposals, made by the Board in May 2005, towards three unique projects 1) the Land Based Business Training Project; 2) the Public Benefits for All Training Project; and 3) the Youth Training Project. The next steps and actions for the development of these projects will be set out in the business plan, which will be informed by the Board's feedback to this paper. The business plan will be brought to the Board in the summer.

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