
CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING held at The Ben Mhor Hotel, Grantown-on-Spey on Friday 10th February 2006 at 2.00pm

PRESENT

Eric Baird (In the Chair)	Alastair MacLennan
Stuart Black	William McKenna
Sally Dowden	Sandy Park
Basil Dunlop	Andrew Rafferty
Douglas Glass	David Selfridge
Angus Gordon	Joyce Simpson
Lucy Grant	Sheena Slimon
David Green	Richard Stroud
Bruce Luffman	Susan Walker
Eleanor Mackintosh	Bob Wilson
Anne MacLean	

In Attendance:

Kate Christie	Fiona Newcombe
Nick Halfhide	Andy Rinning
Andrew Harper	Francoise van Buuren
Jane Hope	

Apologies:

Duncan Bryden
Marcus Humphrey
Gregor Rimell
Andrew Thin

Welcome and Apologies

1. The Deputy Convenor welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted the apologies as above.

Minutes of Last Meeting – approval

2. The minutes of the meeting of the 13th January 2006 were approved with no changes.

Matters Arising

3. None

CNPA Role in Education and Inclusion (Paper 1)

4. Claire Ross introduced the paper which sought to prompt an initial Board discussion on the CNPA's role in relation to education and inclusion, with a view to informing the development of specific action plans in the future. Three questions were posed as a prompt for discussion:
 - a) An approach to inclusion was being threaded through the work of the Authority, what opportunities were there for a more visible commitment to a "Park for All"?
 - b) There was a broad range of expectations in relation to the CNPA's role in education. Were there any particular aspects in education that Board Members would prioritise?
 - c) As an enabling organisation the CNPA would seek to deliver actions through key partners as far as possible. Were there any specific education related activities where the Board Members felt it appropriate for the CNPA to take on a delivery role?
5. In discussion the following points were made:
 - a) There were four local authorities covering the National Park and spending a huge amount on education, and by implication on inclusion. The CNPA had very limited funds by comparison. It was essential that any work by the CNPA was integrated with that of local authorities.
 - b) Local authorities do a particular job, but the CNPA role was not to duplicate this, but to clearly relate to the circumstances of the National Park and relate education to the aims of the National Park. The National Park was designated as a very special area – policies on education and inclusion were a fundamental way of delivering and reflecting of that.
 - c) The role of the CNPA might better be described as being in the field of awareness raising or learning rather than education.
 - d) The National Park provided a focus for those young people growing up in the area – it provided a focus for learning and understanding, as well as being their area and one they could contribute to. An important role for the CNPA to play was to encourage a coordinated approach based on the special qualities of the National Park, to various elements of education and inclusion such as access for all to the Park, and understanding of the special qualities of the Park etc.
 - e) The CNPA's role in education and inclusion should predominately focus on coordination and integration of learning that supports the aims of the

National Park, in a Park that is accessible to people of all ages and backgrounds. For example, at a recent meeting of the Scottish Youth Parliament, the point had been made that the National Park was important and young people wanted to know how they could engage with the Park and contribute to it. Transport was identified as a big issue and one of the ways of delivering inclusion within the Park might well be achieved by homing in on transport as a significant barrier to inclusion, and an issue requiring a coordinated approach.

- f) The Steering Group (set up to advise on progress) should include some young people from within the Park.
- g) Some good work had been done in Denmark and Norway on introducing nursery age children to work with the environment. The CNPA should look at how to ensure information was available to nursery school teachers. We should also be looking at best practice elsewhere in the world.
- h) The discussion should not focus on education in too narrow a sense. The University of the Third Age (U3A) provided for education for older citizens. The old experience similar problems to the young, for example transport being a barrier to pursuing learning objectives. The CNPA's role needed to encompass the idea of life long learning, which in turn meant a wide range of people of different ages with many different interests. It could be argued that the easy part was educating people at school; the difficult part was education outside of this formal environment, and possibly the CNPA had a role there.
- i) Inclusion policies had to relate to people living within the Park, but it was important to be aware of the essential element that related to people living outside the Park e.g. providing access to the National Park by inner city groups. That also implied a certain amount of preparation before proactively attracting such groups into the park, so that they had a good experience.
- j) The CNPA was an enabler rather than a deliverer, and its role was to ensure that the National Park was on the agenda of other organisations who were responsible for delivery. There were many other organisations that could be disseminating and communicating information about the National Park and its special qualities and the CNPA should be tapping into these.
- k) A consultant had been appointed to map out who was delivering what in respect of education and inclusion and hence help to identify what role the Park Authority could play. A paper would be brought back to the Board in the middle of the year to report back on this work. It was noted that this was a potentially huge topic, and there was no intention that the Park Authority should be engaged in everything. The whole point of the consultancy was to help refine and define those areas where the CNPA could add value. The decision on the CNPA's role was ultimately one for the Board.
- l) A logical way of progressing with defining the CNPA's role would be to think about which specific groups needed to be targeted, identify the gaps in what was currently available, and then address the question of what role the CNPA could play in filling those gaps. Women in rural areas were clearly one disadvantaged group; other groups were more difficult to define but included those with no ready access to transport (the young and the old as mentioned earlier). In this context there was also the matter of how one developed the capacity of people

generally to participate in the management of the Park – a good example was how people could make their contribution effectively at Planning committees which considered planning applications.

- m) The Cairngorms National Park was both the object of learning and understanding for the people living in it, as well as subject material as part of an educational tool. It was therefore both subject and object for a potentially huge range of people and this needed to be refined as part of the work of developing the CNPA's role.
- n) Aspects in education and inclusion that had been mentioned during this discussion included transport, taking care of the land (delivery of the first and second aims), counteracting the image of the Park as middleclass and elitist. To this list should be added access and recreation, and local culture (including music, Gaelic language, etc.)

[David Selfridge and Andrew Rafferty left the meeting]

6. Action:

- a) **Board Members to contact Claire Ross if they were interested in sitting on the Steering Group for the education and inclusion work;**
- b) **Claire Ross to bring a further paper to the Board around June 2006 with recommendation on the CNPA's role on education and inclusion.**

Land Based Business Training Project – Plans for the Future (Paper 2)

- 7. Kate Christie introduced the paper which updated the Board on progress in working up ideas for the development of the Land Based Business Training Project, further to the Board paper in May 2005. The paper set out a framework for developing the project, based on three independent strands which were:
 - a) The Land Based Business Training Project
 - b) Public Benefits for all Training Project
 - c) Youth Training Project

The Board was asked to note progress to date and agree that work should continue as proposed in developing plans for the project along these three strands, and around which a business plan for the next three years would be developed for final approval by the Board in due course.

- 8. A common thread running through the project to date, as well as the proposals for developments from this project, was the notion of a one-stop-shop. The CNPA was not the provider of training in these instances, merely the coordinator. It was noted that if the project were to continue beyond 2006, there would be a need to find more partners, and more funding. The question for the Board at this moment was whether the thinking for developing the project was on the right track.
- 9. In discussion the following points were made:
 - a) Plan one, for continuation of the Land Based Business Training Project, did not envisage any changes. The format was simple, and worked well. There seemed

to be a market for the coordination role which the CNPA was filling through this project, and there were strong arguments for continuing.

- b) Plan two was that the CNPA should develop a “public benefit training for all” project strand through which specific focused public benefit courses were made available much more widely than was currently the case, to all communities within the Park helping them to deliver the aims of the Park. A good example of this type of course was that previously run for land managers in respect of their responsibilities in delivering the Scottish Outdoor Access Code (SOAC). That type of course could be widened out to the general public and would then be orientated towards the public’s responsibilities, rather than the responsibilities and duties of land managers. It was noted that local communities might become involved in managing access locally, and therefore training courses in this respect would be appropriate. There was also scope for communities and the general public to become in wildlife survey work. Again, the proposed new project strand would be a good way of enabling that. This sort of training might need to consider ideas such as crèches, and delivery through distance learning mechanisms in order to reach its audience. The project needed to be open to the idea that training might need to be delivered in many different way for different people.
- c) An independent evaluation of the Land Based Business Training Project would be useful and a good way of persuading other potential partners that this was a project worthy of them contributing to and helping to deliver.

10. The Board noted the success of the current project, and agreed that progress with working up plans for the three projects as outlined in the paper should continue.

11. Action:

- a) **Firm proposals for the future development of the project, accompanied by a business plan, to be brought to the Board for decision in the summer of 2006.**

Integrated Land Management: Progress to Date and Next Steps (Paper 3)

12. Fiona Newcombe introduced the paper which sought the Board’s agreement to the way policies were emerging and being developed as part of the Integrated Land Management Strategy. She made the point that this was a good example of the CNPA working by influencing the activities of a number of other public agencies – ultimately the CNPA did not have control over the actions required to deliver integrated land management, and it was very much a case of influencing the policies and activities of others. A key part of this work would be the development over the next few months of the action plan for integrated land management which would be part of the National Park Plan. For the moment, the paper in front of the Board was seeking their input to the emerging policies, and some of the issues that remained to be addressed through the action plan.

13. In discussion the following points were made:

- a) The idea that payments for delivering of public benefits should be based on outcomes rather than activities was right in theory, but the real question was how

to achieve this in practice. There were no easy answers, but it was clear that in moving to this output-led basis for payment, there would need to be quite fundamental changes in the thinking of public agencies, and new skills needed within the organisations responsible for monitoring. A particular difficulty would be that outcomes were influenced by many things other than just the activities of a farmer.

- b) In respect of the definition of public benefits, the challenge in the Cairngorms would be getting acceptance of the concept, as well as ensuring that the associated funding mechanisms did not disadvantage the Cairngorms compared with other areas of Scotland. An important stream of work was to get everyone else to understand and agree the concept, as well as the definition of public benefits.
- c) The definition of public benefits set out at paragraph 5 needed further thought. It raised the question of who decided. The important thing at this stage was to note that rather than the definition as written at the moment, what was important was establishing an understanding of the notion, as well as establishing a process for defining what was meant by public benefits based on principles that could be identified. What was sought from the Board at this stage was endorsement for continuing that line of work. The definition possibly needed to be reworded to make clear that this was not just something defined by the Park Authority or various other "experts". Associated with this was the need to promote the idea more widely, backed up by what we had already done to date. There was a huge job of communication to be done in this respect, coupled with the need to raise people's understanding of all the other changes taking place within agriculture. It was noted that the whole system of incentive payments within agriculture had changed as a result of decisions taken by the EU. The whole basis had moved on, and the scope for changing things had to be seen in the context of those decisions already made. In this respect, what the paper was putting forward was at the leading edge of new thinking.
- d) The work set out in the paper was novel and new. What was missing was the recognition that as part of this work, the CNPA needed to start promulgating ideas, and helping to develop everyone's thinking, on what we felt the public benefits were that were worthy of incentive payments. We needed to start to talk about our vision in that respect. Work was already underway to help refine those ideas, coupled with the work already done on consulting with people within the Park on public benefits.
- e) As part of that, there was a decision to be made about those public benefits that would be delivered through regulation, and those through voluntary incentives. Part of supporting the take-up of incentives on the voluntary side, was the importance of advice and training.
[Douglas Glass left the meeting]
- f) No section of the paper should stand alone, but the various elements should be considered as a whole.
- g) In respect of paragraph 15, it was suggested that it would be important to involve land managers in monitoring.

- h) An essential element of the thinking set out in the paper was the whole notion of integration and collaboration across a range of organisations, a range of sectors and a range of potential benefits.
- i) There was some discussion on funding mechanisms as set out at paragraphs 24 – 26. It was noted that of the options set out at paragraph 25, final decisions may depend on how national policies developed. It was observed that options c) and d) were contrary to the principle of all land managers being able to contribute to the delivery of public benefits. It was also observed that option c) represented something of a gambling approach, and not the best way of delivering long-term support for the natural heritage. Nevertheless, it might be justifiable as a pilot approach, a demonstration on how to deliver best practice. One additional option was suggested as a basis for allocating funding, namely the number of people employed on a unit. In respect of all the options, it was noted that in practice there may not be enough money to go round, in which case it would be important to ensure that the same amount of money in total came into the Park, and ideally increased. In this respect it was important that the CNPA continued to develop an influencing strategy, not just on its own, but by working with and through other agencies via the National Park Plan. It would be useful to see something formalised in this respect.
[Anne MacLean and Bob Wilson left the meeting]
- j) On option a) of paragraph 25 it was noted that smaller units often had disproportionately high costs. It was also observed that allocating funding simply on size was not appropriate, and option b) was more sensible.
[David Green left the meeting]
- k) Paragraphs 28 and 29 addressed the question of key locational targeting of support. It was noted that there would be some places on which one would want to focus support, but at the same time it would be important not to exclude areas. The process had to be fair, objective, open and transparent.
- l) In respect of advice, training, monitoring and feedback, as set out at paragraphs 31 to 36 it was observed that it was important to build on what already existed in respect of advice and not reinvent the wheel.
- m) This was a good paper, which was welcomed by the Board.

14. The Board endorsed the six recommendations as set out in the paper as a basis for continuing to develop policies on integrated land management, subject to the points made in discussion being incorporated into the development of those policies.

AOCB

15. None.

Date of Next Meeting

16. Friday 10th March 2006, at Richmond Memorial Hall, Tomintoul.