

---

# CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

---

## MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING held at The Richmond Memorial Hall, Tomintoul on Friday 10<sup>th</sup> March 2006 at 1.30pm

### PRESENT

Eric Baird  
Stuart Black  
Duncan Bryden  
Basil Dunlop  
Lucy Grant  
David Green  
Marcus Humphrey  
Bruce Luffman  
Eleanor Mackintosh

Anne MacLean  
Alastair MacLennan  
Sandy Park  
Andrew Rafferty  
Gregor Rimell  
David Selfridge  
Joyce Simpson  
Andrew Thin  
Bob Wilson

### In Attendance:

David Cameron  
Murray Ferguson  
Andy Ford  
Nick Halfhide  
Andrew Harper

Jane Hope  
Fiona Newcombe  
Andy Rinning  
Francoise van Buuren

### Apologies:

Sally Dowden  
Angus Gordon  
Douglas Glass  
Sheena Slimon

Richard Stroud  
William McKenna  
Susan Walker

### Welcome and Apologies

1. The 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 10<sup>th</sup> February 2006 were approved with no changes.

## **Matters Arising**

3. None

## **Operational Plan 2006/2007 (Paper 1)**

4. Jane Hope introduced the paper which set out an outline of the coming year's Operational Plan, covering the second year of the existing Corporate Plan 2005 – 2008. The proposed Operational Plan for 06/07 continued to focus resources on the 7 priority goals identified in the Corporate Plan. By the end of the 06/07 year the plan was to have substantially delivered all seven of the priority goals as set out at paragraph 3 of the paper. (It was noted that paragraph 3 set out six of the seven priority goals, the seventh being a goal that related to internal organisation rather than the externally focused like the other six.) In order to achieve that delivery of the priority goals, the Management Team had made the assessment that more resources were required than had been originally envisaged when drawing up the Corporate Plan; (table 2, paragraph 10). To a large extent, the increase in resources needed was largely a reflection of the increase in staff time required on important goals such as the National Park Plan, the Local Plan, and delivery of the development control service. The consequence of increasing the resources devoted to the seven priority goals was that some reassessment of the allocation of resources to the other goals 8 – 20 was also required; as well as there being some readjustments of time input required for those goals as well. The Finance Committee had already reviewed the input (i.e. the financial allocations) to the Operational Plan; it was for the Board to consider whether it was content with the proposed delivery of output during the year.
5. In discussion the following points were made:
  - a) Having some flexibility to move money between goals during a year and indeed from one year to another was essential. It was noted that the proposed budget at table 1 did provide for a degree of over programming to allow for some slippage of proposed expenditure within the year. Internal control systems involved the Finance Committee approving such expenditures in year.
  - b) There was some discussion about the importance of monitoring effectiveness and efficiency of the use of inputs. In respect of money, this function was exercised by the Finance Committee and the Audit Committee; on Human Resources, the Audit Committee and Staffing and Recruitment Committee. In addition processes were in place such as staff appraisal, linked to job plans which in turn were derived from the Operational Plan, to ensure that individuals were clear what was expected of them, and what they would be assessed against during the year. There was scope on an organisational basis to bench mark the CNPA against other organisations, and this was something that would be done in due course. It was noted that the three organisational committees, Finance

Committee, Audit Committee, and Staffing and Recruitment Committee, all of which had complementary roles in respect of effectiveness and efficiency.

- c) It would be important to guard against inadvertent growth in the organisation and of the organisation as a whole. It was noted that the Corporate Plan had set a limit on staff numbers. The existing systems would need to be used to carefully monitor growth of individual budgets and extent of individual pieces of work.
- d) The major outputs listed at Paragraph 3, relating to the priority goals, were welcomed as major achievements, taking a number of years to complete.
- e) There appeared to be no specific reference in the Operational Plan to "Greening" – however it was noted there was a reference in the more detailed Operational Plan which was not currently in front of the Board. It was also noted that the following paper on the agenda made clear the plans and the resources being put into this particular area of work.
- f) The point was made in respect of goal 16 (an increase in value of sustainable tourism spend) that Visitscotland did not appear to be devoting much effort in the Cairngorms area; it would be very important to monitor the activities of other organisations in respect of this particular issue.
- g) The focus of resources on the 7 priority goals was inherently correct and in line with the Corporate Plan, but decisions on how resources were devoted to delivery on the other goals was something on which the Board ought to see more detail. It was noted that the Finance Committee had already seen and approved the financial allocations and while there should be no duplication of the effort of the Finance Committee, nevertheless it was appropriate for the Board to at least be aware of the full implications and intentions of the Operational Plan for the coming year.

**6. The Board approved the recommendations of the paper as follows:**

- a) **Approved the allocation of resources to the 7 priority goals;**
- b) **Endorsed the output to be delivered during the 06/07 year; and**
- c) **Agreed to receive a further paper showing the full operational plan for 2006/07**

**7. Action:**

- a) **Full Operational Plan for 06/07 to be brought to the Board for approval as soon as possible.**

**Organisational Greening Policy and Indicative Targets for Action (Paper 2)**

8. David Bale introduced the paper which sought Members' formal approval for an organisational greening policy. This would be submitted to the Environment Minister and would be published on the CNPA website. It would also form the basis of the Indicative Action Plan which would require further refinement by a staff working group and endorsed by the Management Team. The intention of policy and the associated action plan was to ensure that the CNPA was able to take account of the impact of its activities on the environment, and to set an example for other businesses and organisations within the National Park.

9. In discussion the following points were made:

- a) The policy and associated action plan were a welcome development.
- b) It was important to embed the greening policy and its underlying philosophy into the culture of the organisation. Mechanisms for doing this would be for the Head of Corporate Services to take forward. However, one suggestion was that job descriptions should contain a reference to the expectation of environmental stewardship. It was noted that the policies and procedures that would be developed through the work of the staff group on greening policy would eventually be incorporated into the staff handbook.
- c) A considerable amount of paper was generated for Board meetings. If Members were concerned about disposal and recycling, papers should be returned to the office at the end of a meeting.
- d) It was noted that SEPA had already made very good progress in developing indicators for reporting on environmental indicators such as those related to travel by Members of the organisation. In drawing up targets for the CNPA we should draw on the experience of others.
- e) On travel, it was noted that in remote rural areas such as the Cairngorms National Park the lack of public transport could result in very long journey times, and inefficiencies in use of people's time. These difficulties should be flagged up under paragraph 2 of the policy and drawn to the attention of the Environment Minister.
- f) It was noted that some measures were likely to be much more cost effective than others in delivering environmental benefits. It also needed to be recognised that in some cases some expenditure was required upfront to generate savings in the longer term. Developing an action plan needed to take account of these points.
- g) In the CNPA's activities on procurement and grant giving, sustainability should be taken account of in the decision making.

**10. The Board approved the recommendations of the paper as follows:**

- a) Approved the organisational greening policy for submission to the Environment Minister, subject to insertion into the second bullet point regarding transport a qualifier referring to the difficulties of public transport within a remote rural area such as the Cairngorms;**
- b) Approved the indicative action plan for refinement and finalisation by the Management Team, subject to ensuring that priority was given to those activities which would yield the greatest gains relative to input of effort.**

**11. Action:**

- a) David Bale to submit greening policy to Scottish Executive Environment Minister in response to his request;**
- b) Report on progress with the delivery of the action plan to be brought back to the Audit Committee and the Board in due course.**

## Consultation Arrangements for the Draft National Park Plan (Paper 3)

12. Nick Halfhide introduced the paper which informed Members of arrangements for the forthcoming consultation on the draft National Park Plan. The Deputy Minister for the Environment and Rural Affairs, Rhona Brankin MSP, would be launching the consultation at an event on the 11<sup>th</sup> April being held at Coylumbridge Hotel at 10.30 am. There would be a short introductory video, introductory speeches by the Deputy Minister and the CNPA Convenor, followed by the Young Persons' video about the Cairngorms National Park. The event was essentially a press launch, and an opportunity for the press to ask questions and to talk to guests.
13. Board Members had an essential role to play during the course of the consultation; as ambassadors for the Park Plan at a local level and at a national level. At the national level, a schedule would be drawn up of meetings with key opinion formers and it was hoped that members could be called on to take part in those meetings. A range of printed material would be available to accompany the launch.
14. In discussion the following points were made:
  - a) Members had several roles during this process. They had been leading the whole process and indeed had approved the draft for consultation. They also had a role as ambassadors, whatever their connections, local as well as national. In addition to these roles, the CNPA needed to decide, alongside all the other partners to the National Park Plan, what should go into the Plan, and what role the CNPA should play in delivering that Plan
  - b) Community Council meetings were an obvious forum where Members could play a useful role. All Members would have briefing packs and supplies of other printed material.
  - c) A key message to be conveyed during the consultation was the role of the CNPA within the National Park. There remained the danger that people would assume that the CNPA had taken over the running of the whole Park, and the delivery of the seven priorities for action identified in the draft Park Plan. In addition, people were still confused about the respective roles of the Local Plan and the National Park Plan. A good briefing pack on these issues, incorporating clear lines of explanation, was required.
  - d) One of the intentions was to ensure a high level of awareness during the consultation; building awareness of the Park would inevitably take a long time, and there were no specific targets for assessing awareness in the context of the consultation. In the three years since the establishment of the CNPA, the organisation had undertaken a number of important activities such as the consultation on the Local Plan, the consultation on the National Park Plan, and the consultation on access. All of these were likely to raise general levels of awareness, and this was likely to be reflected in the next opinion poll that would be undertaken.
  - e) Every avenue should be explored in terms of raising awareness and making leaflets available e.g. using post offices etc. Whereas the Local Plan was a spatial plan, and consultation meetings were targeted at localities, the National Park Plan was rather different in this respect and the intention was to target the

consultation on specific topics. There was some discussion as to whether or not this would be fully accessible to communities, and it was recognised that while every effort was being made to spread awareness of the consultation very widely, nevertheless there was always a limit to how far the organisation's resources would stretch. It was noted that in this respect there was an important role for Board Members in raising awareness of the consultation.

- f) Staff were commended for a very thorough and comprehensive piece of work with limited resources.

**15. The Board noted the arrangements for the forthcoming consultation.**

**Corporate Plan Report: Theme 1 (Paper 4)**

16. Murray Ferguson introduced the paper which was for information. It was one of a series of reports brought to the Board regularly on progress and future plans for delivery of a particular theme of the Corporate Plan. It complemented the quarterly reports to the Board on the detailed delivery of the Operational Plan.

17. In discussion the following points were made:

- a) There was some discussion of the distribution mechanisms for Park literature. The CNPA were working closely with Landmark on this. Board Members were asked to let the Communications Team know if they were aware of places which were apparently not receiving Park leaflets etc. so that those locations could be added to the list of those regularly receiving supplies.
- b) It was noted that paragraph 8 appeared to imply that the Programme of Countryside Events related only to the Angus Council area whereas in fact it applied to all countryside events taking place across the whole Park.
- c) Paragraph 12 and 13 referred to the John Muir Award. This had been extremely successful and it would be helpful to see it being given a higher profile.
- d) As a way of ensuring we genuinely were providing a Park for all, we needed to find ways of ensuring that literature relating to the National Park was very widely available. This included thinking about the disabled and disadvantaged groups who were less able to get to the Park. Various groups existed in Scotland, e.g. Inclusion Scotland, that could advise on how to spread the material widely to reach these groups.
- e) The first visitor survey for the Cairngorms National Park had been undertaken in 2003 to an agreed methodology and done in conjunction with the Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Authority. It had been costly, and it was envisaged that it would not be repeated annually, but every few years. In addition, there was a plethora of individual surveys and it might be possible in due course to look at how all of those smaller surveys might be brought together to the advantage of everyone.

**18. The Board noted the paper.**

**AOCB**

19. The Convenor noted that this was the last CNPA meeting for Joyce Simpson who was stepping down at the end of March. On behalf of the whole Board he thanked her for her contribution from the start of the CNPA's creation and wished her well for the future.

**Date of Next Meeting**

20. Friday 7<sup>th</sup> April 2006, at Newtonmore Village Hall, Newtonmore.