

CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

FOR INFORMATION

**Title: PARK FOR ALL UPDATE INCLUDING CNPA'S
EQUALITY SCHEMES ANNUAL UPDATE**

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Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to update the Board on the progress that has been made on taking forward the CNPA's wider inclusion work as well as reporting on the Action Plans for the CNPA's Joint Equality Scheme covering disability, gender and race.

Recommendation

That the Board acknowledge:

- a) The progress made on developing a Park for all, including the proposed framework for an Outreach programme,
- b) The progress made on implementing the action plans within the CNPA Joint Equality Scheme (JES).
- c) The requirement for a 3 year review of the Joint Equality Scheme by June 2010, and the Single Equality Duty coming into force in 2011 covering all six equality strands.

Executive Summary

Equality and inclusion underpin three of the guiding principles within the Park Plan, namely Social Justice – A National Park for All, People Participating in the Park, and Managing Change. A number of inclusion projects are being delivered mainly falling under the Awareness and Understanding priorities for action.

The CNPA has a statutory duty to develop, implement and monitor Equality Schemes on Disability, Gender and Race. The CNPA published CNPA Equality Schemes on Disability, Gender and Race in 2006/2007. Under the duties, the CNPA must report annually on these schemes, including their action plans.

PARK FOR ALL UPDATE INCLUDING CNPA'S EQUALITY SCHEMES ANNUAL UPDATE – FOR INFORMATION

Background

1. The CNPA is committed to developing a National Park which is inclusive by providing opportunities for everyone to access and enjoy it, whatever their background, age or ability. This is reflected in the National Park Plan's guiding principles of Social Justice, People Participating in the Park and Managing Change, with a particular focus on young people, people with disabilities, and people on low incomes. The CNPA is involved in several areas of inclusion activity that is helping to deliver the Park Plan, eg outreach project, and projects supported through grants scheme. The importance of this work is reinforced through the requirement for CNPA to prepare and implement Equality Schemes, and these activities are referred to throughout the Equality Scheme Action Plans.
2. As a public authority, CNPA has a legal duty to prepare and publish Equality Schemes for disability, gender and race. The CNPA published three Equality Schemes through 2006/2007.
 - a) Disability Equality Scheme (DES)- Dec 06-approved by the Board April 07
 - b) Gender Equality Scheme (GES)- June 07- approved by the Board Aug 07
 - c) Race Equality Scheme (RES)- Nov 07-approved by the Board Jan 08

These Schemes set out how CNPA will promote equal opportunities in the delivery of its public functions and as an employer. They complement three of the guiding principles set out in the Park Plan, namely Social Justice – A National Park for All, People Participating in the Park and Managing Change. We are required to publish and report annually to the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) an update on progress on each scheme. This was done for the DES in December 2007 and for all three schemes collectively in June 2008 as the Joint Equality Scheme (Board paper July 08). This paper provides highlights from our second annual update (at Annex 1) alongside an update of wider inclusion activities that are delivering the Park Plan.

Equality within CNPA

3. CNPA has an internal Equalities Working Group which oversees the production and implementation of the Equality Schemes. Fourteen staff with representation from each Group, undertook impact assessment training in July and Oct 2008. Meetings with Programme Team Managers are scheduled for June / July 09 to identify areas within the Operational Plan that will impact on equality groups, as well as identifying Equality Champions for each Group who can advise and support colleagues in this area.

Inclusive Cairngorms

4. CNPA staff work closely with Inclusive Cairngorms as a means of advising on and embedding equality and inclusion into our work. This forum, which represents a wide diversity of organisations and interests, meets quarterly, and provides an

opportunity for CNPA staff to consult on the equality impacts of their projects. Another key aim of Inclusive Cairngorms is to encourage partners to be more inclusive, and all meetings feature a case study presentation to share ideas and promote best practice amongst members.

5. Following election of new office bearers in April 09, the group is chaired by Jim Brown of Blackrock Productions (formerly Big Issue Foundation Scotland), while Morag Redwood of Highlands and Islands Equality Forum is the vice-chairperson. IC continues to grow with new members attending from Loch Lomond and the Trossachs NP, and other equality groups such as Grampian Society for the Blind, Crathie Opportunity Holidays, Sport Anyway in Braemar. Terms of Reference have been produced for the group, and a page is being created on the CNPA website.

Progress on Social Inclusion activities

In delivering the National Park Plan:

6. Joint National Parks “Barriers to Engagement” Outreach Project - this action based research conducted in partnership with Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park and Scottish Natural Heritage has flagged up a wide range of recommendations for the partners to consider. Some of the recommendations to be delivered collectively with others and some by the individual partners. The main areas highlighted for action include:
 - a) **Building relationships and developing networks:** identifying more clearly the target groups for additional support, developing better relationships with agencies supporting those groups.
 - b) **Building commitment, confidence and competence:** making sure that a commitment to inclusion is embedded throughout the CNPA staff, providing appropriate training.
 - c) **Raising awareness and providing information:** create a single point of contact for access and information for disadvantaged groups, develop a wider range of promotional materials that reflect the diversity of groups that the Park seeks to engage.
 - d) **Practical Support:** planning and managing risk for groups visiting the Park, develop support packages that help people access the Park more easily: transport, equipment, funding and staff support.

The three commissioning partners will be meeting in mid July to plan how best to take forward the recommendations of the report. Those wishing to see the full report please contact Claire Ross or Elspeth Grant.

7. Continuing to promote delivery of John Muir Award, an educational award scheme that provides an ideal framework for working with people from disadvantaged backgrounds.
8. Supporting inclusive projects through Leader / CNPA Grants programme:
 - a) Equal Adventure Festival, July 09 – inclusive team challenge event
 - b) Women’s Active Life Project, Inverness – walking project for women from minority ethnic groups.

- c) Several youth related projects including Youth Development worker, outdoor classroom, Wildlife gardens and a Countryside Event on 9/10 Sept 09 in Braemar.
- 9. CNPA has adopted a tailored version of the National Standards for Community Engagement (NSCE), which provides guidance on how to consult and involve communities in an inclusive way.
- 10. Community Needs Initiative is being rolled out across Badenoch and Strathspey and Ballater (BOVOF), using 'community action planning toolkit' and NSCE.
- 11. Cairngorms Explorer – 2008 edition included 'Cairngorms on a Shoestring' information for people visiting on a budget. The current 2009 edition includes 'access for all' information.
- 12. Supporting the development of health walks across the National Park through Cairngorms Outdoor Access Trust (COAT) and local health walk schemes.
- 13. Outdoor access – through COAT, CNPA has supported improvements to path infrastructure for all abilities including at Gynack Bridge in Kingussie, Kynintra Meadow in Grantown and the school path in Strathdon.

Progress on Equality Schemes

- 14. There has been progress made on all three strands of the CNPA's Equality Schemes between June 08 and June 09. A summary of the key actions include:

General

- a) 14 staff attended Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) training in July and October 2008
- b) Inclusive Cairngorms identified key policy areas in CNPA Corporate Plan that impact on equality and inclusion. These include: Outdoor access, Visitor services and information, Communities, Housing and Planning, and Equality Schemes. These will form the priority areas for Equality Impact Assessment, which is required under our Equality Duties.
- c) Equality Impact Assessment process has been approved, and is being rolled out across CNPA. Two EqIA's completed for Core Paths Planning and HR Recruitment.
- d) Mechanisms approved to embed equality into policy and project development through:
 - i. Board papers
 - ii. Expenditure Justification Forms
 - iii. Programme and Project Management Guidance
 - iv. Grant Scheme appraisal process
- e) Equality and Diversity Training for Park Service Providers held in June 09, delivered by Highlands and Islands Equality Forum.

Disability

- a) Consulted Inclusive Cairngorms on development of guidance for path signage, leaflets, Cairngorms Explorer and community engagement.
- b) Accessibility audit of CNPA Ballater office and recommendation implemented.
- c) Portable hearing loop system in Grantown office reception and available for meetings.
- d) CNPA purchased computer software for staff, Board and public which magnifies and reads text.

Gender

- a) Inclusive Cairngorms and Leader hosted women's group meeting in Jan 09 to explore development opportunities for women in the National Park.
- b) Sourcing images from Inclusive Cairngorms and other events to show more appropriate balanced mix of genders in CNPA publications.

Race

- a) Visitor Survey (May 09 – Apr 10) includes additional questions on ethnic origin and disability.
- b) Advert placed in Ethnic Britain Directory, promoting CNPA as equal opportunities employer.
- c) Inclusive Cairngorms meeting in September 08 was themed on ethnic participation in the countryside with presentation by Pammy Johal, Backbone.
- d) CNPA supported 'Highlands R Us' diversity event in July 08, to raise public awareness of equality and different racial groups in Highland.

Recommendation

15. **That the Board note the progress made against the full set of actions in Annex I.**

Future Equality Schemes

16. A three year review of CNPA's Disability Equality Scheme is due in December 2009, followed by the Gender Equality Scheme and Race Equality Scheme in June 2010. Equality Schemes including Action Plans will require to be reviewed in consultation with user groups, and new targets set.
17. The UK Government's new Equality Bill was published in April 2009 to consolidate and simplify, and where appropriate, harmonise the various pieces of equalities legislation that have been produced over the last 40 years. It will also introduce a new single public sector duty which intends to replace the three existing duties and extend the legislation to cover the three other equality strands of age, sexual orientation, religion and belief. While the general duty is contained in the Bill, it is intended that Scottish Ministers will be given the power to develop the specific duties for Scottish public authorities (which may or may not include a duty to develop single schemes). It is foreseen that the single equality duty will come into place in 2011 at the earliest.

Recommendation

18. That the Board note the requirement for a 3 year review of the Joint Equality Scheme by June 2010, and be aware of the Single Equality Duty coming into force in 2011 covering all six equality strands.

Policy Context National Policy

19. The CNPA Equality Schemes make a significant contribution to delivering five out of fifteen of the Scottish Government's outcomes in the National Performance Framework:
- We live longer, healthier lives.
 - We have tackled the significant inequalities in Scottish society.
 - We live in well designed, sustainable places where we are able to access the amenities and services we need.
 - We take pride in a strong, fair and inclusive national identity.
 - Our public services are high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive to local people's needs.

These five outcomes are also included within the 9 national outcomes to which the CNPA will contribute as part of our business plan for 2009/10 and 2010/11 agreed with Scottish Government.

National Park Plan

20. The guiding principles and many of the outcomes and actions set out in the National Park Plan along side the development of a "Park for All" culture should ensure that an inclusive attitude is applied, as standard practice to the delivery of the Park Plan by the CNPA and its partners.
21. The guiding principles that set out how the CNPA and its Partners should address inequality within the Park Plan are:
- "Social Justice - a National Park for All"** the CNPA has established links with inclusion and equalities groups and interests and will continue to involve them in creating opportunities for everyone to engage with the park. This includes groups that focus on Minority Ethnic, Disability and Gender interests.
 - "People Participating in the Park - A National Park for People"** The CNPA has established links with inclusion groups and interests, and will continue to involve them in shaping the Park and its management.
 - "Managing Change - A National Park Open to Ideas"** The CNPA will seek to listen and work with equalities groups and interests to achieve best possible solutions to manage change within the Park.

Corporate Plan Achievements

22. The CNPA's work in developing a Park for All and progressing statutory equalities schemes delivers two of the achievements set out in the Authority's Corporate Plan for 2008 to 2011.

Implement internal equalities action plans	The Authority's policies and procedures address any potential inequality of access to this organisation or the Park, while our operations fit with and are complementary to development of a strong, fair and active society
Encourage others to deliver equality action plans and meet best practice standards.	All businesses, private, public and voluntary are actively encouraged to operate in a way that meets the highest equality standards to develop a strong, fair and inclusive society.

Delivering Sustainability

23. Developing and reviewing our Equality Schemes with clear action plans with monitoring built in will mean that resources can be dedicated in a more effective manner ensuring greater impact. Involving a wide range of Partners in the development of these schemes increases a sense of collective ownership.

Delivering Economy, Effectiveness and Efficiency

24. Producing Equality Schemes will encourage a wider range of visitors to the Park. It is important to build on the existing visitor demographic base and encourage the development (and marketing) of a diverse range of transport, accommodation and activities geared to a variety requirements. Addressing recruitment and employment barriers ensures that we get the very best talent working for the Park Authority.

Financial Implications

25. Developing, implementing and reviewing Equality Schemes will take time, resources and commitment from the CNPA and its key partners (particularly Inclusive Cairngorms.) Budget provision has been made to support our activities in this area in 2009/10 from within existing budget resources. We are also continuing to work closely with Scottish National Heritage in the delivery of impact assessment training for staff and looking at other areas for collaborative working.

Presentational Implications

26. Developing and reviewing our Equality Schemes ensures that the CNPA meets its statutory duties with regards to disability, gender and race. Working in partnership with under represented groups to build a more equal, fairer and diverse Scotland, specifically, in creating opportunities for a wider sense of ownership and access to its National Parks.

Implications for Stakeholders

27. Promoting equality of opportunity through the Equality Schemes will ensure a heightened priority on equality issues and help to realise the full benefit of the National Park to Park users and service providers, eg by increasing customer base, creating new business opportunities.
28. The Equality Schemes will create a clear benchmark for not only the Authority but its partners to work towards. As the CNPA does not deliver many public services directly to Park users, it will have a key role in influencing partners and service providers to be aware of equalities issues and to demonstrate good practice in meeting the needs of all users of the Park, including minority ethnic groups and people with disabilities.

Next Steps

29. The equality impact assessment process is being rolled out across CNPA to embed equality into policy and project development. Staff will be preparing a three year review of the Disability Equality Scheme for December 2009, followed by the review of GES and RES in June 2010.

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